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THE POETICS OF DISPOSSESSION:
A Tracking of George Grant's Speech-Act

by
R. Sibley
A thesis submitted
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies

Carleton, University
OTTAWA, Ontario
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A Tracking of George Grant's Speech-Act"

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ABSTRACT

Like Socrates, George Grant seeks the moral reform of his fellow citizens, seeks to turn them from worshipping the cave's shadows as the truth of reality. But, again like Socrates, he confronts a dominating language which precludes any speech that does not partake of that language. To speak against this language and to be heard, Grant adopts the poetic techniques of esoteric writing. This thesis analyzes the "how" of his writing as it reflects and embodies the "what" of his speech. It shows that the ontological ground of Grant's speech is not that of modernity, and, as such, necessitates his esoteric style. Ultimately, his poetics provide a pedagogical method for speaking against the modern discourse, and work to promote participation in and identification with the subject matter of his speech. In this fashion, Grant's speech provides a philosophical initiation for those seeking a spiritual ascent from the modernist cave.

DEDICATED to my father
Albert Cameron Sibley - (1929-1984)

Silent now, but still heard
by a son who remembers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This essay and its author owe many debts, including those to teachers and classmates who provided so much stimulation. But I especially want to thank Jill Vickers, for granting me the opportunity, and Jack Healy, who planted the seed. My deepest debt, though, is to Tom Darby, who, as thesis supervisor, performed the midwife's task. I hope the child is worthy.

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OUTFITTING:

AN INTRODUCTION

To rob us of discourse would be to rob us of philosophy
- Plato, Sophist

Philosophy's founding metaphor proclaims that man lives his life in a cave, watching shadows cast on a wall from a light behind him. Chained to his position, man takes the shadows he sees as reality, images from which he derives all truth, meaning and purpose in his life. But, according to Plato's Socrates, this is an illusion; the shadows offer only the appearance of reality. If man would cast off his chains and turn around he would see the source of the shadows. And in this seeing he would recognize the true source of both light and shadow, the true source of meaning and purpose.¹

A problem arises though when those few who have escaped from the cave return to tell the still-chained inhabitants what they have seen. They have great difficulty getting anybody to understand what they are talking about. Their speech is incapable of directly communicating their experience because the cave dwellers have themselves not partaken of that experience. Their reality remains that of the shadow world, not the sun world. Still, recognizing the metaxic nature of humankind and the necessity of the human community, the returning philosopher offers a story in hopes of motivating his fellow citizens to share vicariously in his experience and, in the sharing, perhaps consider the possibility of turning towards the light. But the philosopher is a prudent man. He knows that most will not believe him. He knows the purblind nature of the cave-dwellers, the fragile pride and fearful egotism they have invested in the worship of shadows. He knows that a direct and dogmatic

assertion of the truth of his experience, an assertion that denies the worth and truth of the shadows, will earn him mockery or angry dismissal. He could find himself ostracized from the community and left with no way to survive. He could even be condemned to death for his impiety.

Thus, the philosopher proceeds prudently, artfully. He speaks strategically, using rhetorical methods and poetic devices - metaphor, irony, silence, indirection and, if necessary, noble lies and dissimulation - to tell his tale.

In the end, of course, he will probably not succeed. Most, if not all, of the cave-dwellers will dismiss his tale. But maybe, just maybe, the tale will work its magic on some, causing them at the very least to listen carefully and study his speech seriously. A few might even begin to question the validity of the shadows. An even smaller number might hear in the tale hints of how to grope their way out of the cave.

This thesis is a study of the how of one particular philosopher's speech or logos - that of George Grant. It is my contention that Grant, like Socrates, sought the moral reform of his fellow citizens; sought, in other words, to persuade them to ascend from the cave of the modern discourse to the sunlight of a higher, more worthy discourse. And, again like Socrates, Grant's method of speaking, the form of his tale, was intimately related to the substance of what he was saying. That is to say, the forms of Grant's style reflect and, simultaneously, embody the contents of his discourse. To put it differently, I argue that the how of

Grant's logos both partakes of and reveals the what of his logos.

I use the Greek word logos deliberately. It is currently fashionable to refer to a writer's discourse. But discourse is little more than a modern variation on the classical and pre-modern concept of logos. Both refer to the process of understanding or reasoning and the pattern or mode of speech which reveals that understanding or reasoning. Both refer to the coherent aggregate of language-symbols that are structured or organized according to some pre-discursive ontological principle.

All discourses pre-suppose a certain sensibility regarding the world. The speech-act is one means by which that sense or understanding of the world is manifested. Discourse, then, both shapes and is shaped by language. Discourse is the whole Word and language is the particular words within the Word.²

This is not so different from the Greek noun logos, which is derived from the verb lego meaning "I say." In the classical period logos was interpreted as synonymous with speech, word, argument, thought and reason. In its original sense as used by Heraclitus it referred to cosmic reason or a rational principle which gives order and intelligibility to the world. In Heraclitean terms logos reflects human thought and speech about the whole, the rational structure of the universe itself and the ground of that structure.

For the Stoics, who reworked the Heraclitean concept, logos referred to the divine Word of God or the gods. The logos

manifested itself in man as the power of reason in his soul, which, in the act of speech, revealed the logos in the world. Since, for the Stoics, man was by nature a rational being and nature itself was the rational product of the logos, to live according to one's nature, to speak correctly, was to live according to the divine Word.

Such a concept was taken over in the Christian era when the logos was identified with the revelation of Jesus Christ. In Christianity, the logos became a cosmological principle or World-Idea to be equated with the work or image of God, although separate and distinct from God. The act of speech, the saying of the word, was the symbolization of the Word of God, of the Logos. The partial speech of temporal man could, if properly spoken, voice the eternal Logos. That is, in the act of saying the unsayable the Word of God is spoken, the whole or complete Logos could be experienced in the particular or partial logos.³

Both words, then, discourse and logos, can be taken as synonymous to the extent that they refer to a pre-discursive world-view that conditions all sensible speech about the world. This is to say that before there is any thought or action regarding the world, there exists a "language" that conditions whatever form thought or action takes. With this kept in mind, I use the two words interchangeably throughout my tracking of Grant's logos.

A few of Grant's many commentators have recognized the relationship between his use of language and his practise of

philosophy. But none have fully explicated just how deeply the form of his discourse embodies his philosophic meanings and purposes. To date, the most thorough analysis of Grant's thought, particularly his intellectual development and religious faith, is that offered by Joan O'Donovan in George Grant and the Twilight of Justice.⁴ However, while she persuasively shows how various thinkers - G.W.F. Hegel, Leo Strauss, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Simone Weil, to name a few - influenced Grant's thinking, she largely ignores that their influence was, in some cases, also stylistic.

Besides O'Donovan's book, there are only two other collections of Grantian criticism: Larry Schmidt's George Grant in Process and, more recently, Peter Emberley's By Loving Our Own: George Grant and the Legacy of Lament for a Nation. A number of essays in these collections deal directly or indirectly with Grant's use of language as it pertains to his philosophy.

One essay in Schmidt's book that discusses Weil's influence suggests that Grant's silence on certain matters reflects his humility and awareness of his limitations as a thinker. While such an analysis is valid, it does not take into account either the pedagogical purposes behind Grant's silence or, as I shall argue, the ontological significance of silence. Another essay makes a brief mention of Grant's use of irony and silence, but again the discussion is limited to seeing these poetic devices as rhetorical techniques and not as actual acts that embody Grant's abiding Platonism and his Christian faith. Another essayist in

this collection does make the connection between the forms of language and their philosophic content, suggesting Grant's response to modernity is hidden in his evocation of other traditions of faith and wisdom. However, this essayist does not develop the implications of his argument; that Grant, in accepting the truths of Platonism also adopted the rhetorical techniques of Platonism.⁵

In Emberley's collection, one commentator refers to Grant's "impasse" as his inability to think the unity of modern and ancient truths and bring them into some reconciliation. He claims that, in the end, Grant could only stand as a silent witness because he had no language or authoritative symbols by which to bring about this reconciliation. Such an analysis, I argue, is limited to a surface or exoteric reading of Grant's text. It ignores what I hope to show to be the subtext or esoteric elements of Grant's writing; a subtext that, if understood properly, functions as a guide out of the so-called Grantian impasse. Another essayist points out that Grant's rhetorical style was deliberately indirect, and suggests that such indirection reflected Grant's strategic philosophic purpose. This idea, however, is not developed beyond the making of that observation.⁶

Beyond these few references to Grant's style and the occasional observation in various periodicals and scholarly studies,⁷ there has been no detailed consideration of his use of language and its relationship to his philosophic thought. Yet, I

argue, that a proper understanding of Grant's philosophic discourse, particularly its oppositional relation to the modern discourse, requires the comprehension of his "poetics." (I use the word poetics as taken from the Greek poiesis, meaning to "bring-forth," to reveal something in the act of speaking).

Grant's poetics are intended to promote the respondent's participation in the speech, and, ultimately, his assent to and identification with the subject matter of the speech. Grant adopts rhetorical techniques and poetic devices with the intention of moving the reader from a ground of ignorance to that of a transformed consciousness. In this regard, Grant's method is essentially Socratic, both in style and, to a large degree, in content.

If I am correct, the question is: why does Grant adopt the Socratic method? I shall address this later in my discussion, but for now it is perhaps sufficient to say that Grant, like Plato's Socrates, was well aware of the biases and prejudices he faced in publicly articulating his own philosophic and religious views. His poetics, properly understood, are a response to this difficulty.

It has been observed by various critics that Grant attacks the shadows of the modernist cave - liberalism, technology, historicism, etc. - without providing any comprehensive or systematic solutions to the problems he raises. This argument is, I argue, an incomplete reading of Grant and a misunderstanding of the role of the philosopher in society, as Grant saw it. It is my

contention that Grant's public philosophizing and the style in which that philosophizing is done are part-and-parcel of the substance of Grant's political philosophy. And neither can be understood without the other.

However, having said this, I must place a caveat on my thesis. It must be emphasized that I am not offering a substantive analysis of the "content" of Grant's thought. Rather, I hope to provide what might be considered as a prolegomenon to his thought. To borrow another Socratic metaphor: I am a hunter engaged in tracking his prey. In this case, the prey is Grant's logos or speech. But like any novice hunter I must first learn the habits and characteristics of my prey. I must learn how to read the terrain in which my prey lives if I am to be able to track it. I must learn to read the signs of my prey's movements, the spoor of its passing. And, most importantly, I must come to know its nature. That is, I must partake as best I can of my prey's consciousness, its ways of thinking and acting. Only in this way, as Socrates would no doubt argue, can a worthy huntsman move unerringly through the forest towards the lair of his prey without misreading the signs of its passage or being led astray by other beasts.

My tracking begins in Part One with a mapping of the terrain where Grant's logos abides. If, as critics have suggested, the speech Grant wishes the reader to hear is not that of modernity, then what is his speech? Conversely, what is the modern speech? Why does Grant feel the modern discourse is inadequate for

communicating his tale? Why, in other words, is Grant dispossessed of a language by which he can express the truth of his existential experience? In attempting to answer these questions I focus, in this part of my discussion, on Grant's enucleation - to use a favorite Grantian term - of historicism as the ontological ground of the modern discourse, that language in which, and through which, modern man makes sense of the world.

As I shall show, Grant's Platonism and his Christian faith required the rejection of the historicist discourse. But in trying to track Grant's logos it is necessary to understand the distinctions between his discourse and that of historicism's. However, to understand this distinction necessitates an understanding of various theories of discourse, the problematic nature of language, and Grant's adoption of esoteric writing as a way of getting around the discursive confinements of modern language. This I undertake in Chapter One.

Chapter Two focuses on Grant's key symbol of the modern discourse - historicism. I argue that Grant's discursive battle is essentially the fight between the ancient and modern representations of ontological truth.

Chapters Three and Four develop these contrasting discourses through a consideration, first, of Hegelian thought and then, in Chapter Four, of the thinking of Strauss and Heidegger. Grant, of course, is not forgotten in this discussion. But what I have done is to make use of the concepts of those thinkers, with whom Grant was familiar, to see if their

thinking provides a perspective from which to understand Grant's thought.

In effect, I have reversed the usual procedure of critical analysis by applying the conceptual framework of others as a sort of overlay on Grant's thinking and seeing where their respective thinking matches or diverges. With Part One, then, I hope to establish how Grant's discourse differs from that of the modern discourse.

In Part Two, I begin the tracking of the Grantian logos, following its spoor and trailmarkers as it seeks to escape the encircling forest of the modern logos. In other words, I track those stylistic techniques that Grant adopts to escape his - and the reader's - enclosure in modernity.

It is in this section that I develop my argument regarding the exoteric-esoteric levels of Grant's philosophic writing. This is done through an exegesis of his major rhetorical and poetical techniques, both in terms of their pedagogical function and their ontological significance. My methodology is similar to that used in Part One; that is, I apply various theoretical frameworks - Kenneth Seeskin's analysis of Socratic method, J.L Austin's speech-act theories, Strauss's ideas regarding philosophic writing, Bernard Dauenhauer's studies on the ontology of silence and Hayden White's tropological theories - and then see how Grant's writing fits into these frames.

Chapter Five, for instance, focuses on Grant's use of indirection, in light of the nature and purpose of the Socratic

dialogue. Chapter Six examines Grant's use of silence as a teaching strategy that has ontological import. Chapter Seven considers Grant's ironic posture as reflected in his adoption of Platonic and Prophetic personae. Essentially, I argue in these chapters that Grant's adoption of Socratic rhetoric, his prefigurative tropes, his strategic use of irony and silence, as well as his adoption of different speaking voices, all reveal the esoteric message of his discourse. That is, the how embodies the what.

With this in mind I conclude that Grant's speech is, on its deepest level, a form of religious initiation, that ultimately his logos or discourse partakes of, and points to, a mystical conversion. Here, my conceptual guides are Rudolf Otto, W.T. Stace and Simone Weil. I argue that Grant's poetic devices seek to drive the reader to the limits of language in an attempt to break him of the unthought assumptions that hobble the search for wisdom. Now, this is not to say that Grant's final "message" is one of other-worldly contemplation. Grant is too much the Socratic realist to urge such an gnostic formula. He, like Socrates, knows that the philosopher must live in the cave. But what his "mysticism" points to, I argue, is Grant's certainty that it is only in the proper ordering of the soul that the proper ordering of society can be attempted. That is, soulcraft precedes statecraft.

This soulcraft-statecraft linkage is, as I shall argue in the conclusion, useful in approaching Grant's writings regarding

Canadian nationalism. In terms of what might be called his Canadian context, Grant's effort to transform his and the reader's soul, or consciousness, is also an attempt to craft through his speech a renewed national consciousness.

Naturally, the poetic techniques that reflect Grant's soulcraft cannot be so conveniently separated as the chapter divisions would suggest. Nor can they be considered apart from the content in which they are used. Recognizing this, I attempt to relate my analysis of Grant's forms of speech to the specific subject matter about which he speaks, without, however, forgetting that it is the how and not the what that I am tracking.

As to whether my particular hunt is successful, whether I can, as it were, snare my prey, I must confess I do not have the necessary spiritual experience - or, perhaps more accurately, the soul - to follow Grant's logos into what I believe to be its metaphysical lair. It is with this in mind that I say my tracking of the Grantian logos is a prolegomenon. In essence, I offer, in Part One, a description of the modern and ancient logoi, and an analysis of Grant's adoption of the latter logos. In Part Two, I move into the phenomenology of Grant's logos, tracking its movement and what is revealed in those movements.

Where I hope to arrive, at the end of my hunt, is at the entrance to the lair, at the borderland of philosophy and mysticism, at the frontier of speech and silence, where one can only wait in silence for what may or may not be revealed. If I

can go no further I am at least in excellent company. As Heraclitus says: "You would not find out the boundaries of the soul, even by travelling along every path: so deep a logos does it have."

ENDNOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. My source for Plato's cave metaphor is, of course, THE REPUBLIC. I have used Allan Bloom's translation. The Republic of Plato, (New York, 1968), Book VII, 514a - 532d. All further references to Republic are taken from this translation.
2. See Timothy Reiss, The Discourse of Modernism, (Ithaca and London, 1982), p. 28. I have adopted - and adapted - Reiss's definition of discourse. It is worthwhile to quote him in full: Discourse, he states, is a "coherent set of linguistic facts organized by some enunciating entity. . . By the use of the term discourse must be meant any semiotic system as practiced, not necessarily a simply 'linguistic' one in any narrow sense. I assert that such a broader definition is essential: language, in other words, is but one of the possible materials through and in which discursive order manifested itself. . . [Entity] does not, of course, mean to indicate any incontrovertible origin of discourse. It merely supposes that the practice of discourse, any discourse, appears to depend on a supposition of ens, of 'being,' even though such 'being' is of necessity itself produced by discourse. Entity is taken here as a meaning produced by all discourse, a meaning which is at the same time the producer of discourse."
3. See, W.R. Inge, "Logos," in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, James Hastings, ed., (Edinburgh, 1915), Vol. 8, pp. 133-138; Jean Pepin, "Logos," The Encyclopedia of Religion, Mircea Eliade, editor-in-chief, (New York, 1987), Vol. 9, pp. 9-15; Peter Angeles, ed., Dictionary of Philosophy, (New York, 1981), pp. 157-158.
4. Joan O'Donovan, George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, (Toronto, 1984).
5. Larry Schmidt, George Grant in Process, (Toronto, 1978). See, respectively, Edwin and David Heaven, "Some Influences of Simone Weil on George Grant's Silence," pp. 68-78; William Christian, "George Grant and the Terrifying Darkness," pp. 167-178; and F. Darrol Bryant, "The Barren Twilight. History and Faith in Grant's Lament," pp. 110-119.
6. Peter Emberley, ed., By Loving Our Own: George Grant and the Legacy of Lament for a Nation, (Ottawa, 1990). See, respectively, Dennis Lee, "Grant's Impasse," pp. 11-39; Barry Cooper, "The Revival of Political Philosophy," pp. 97-121.

7. See, in particular, Eli Mandel, "George Grant: Language, Nation, the Silence of God," Canadian Literature, 83, 1979, pp. 163-175; Dennis Lee, "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space," Boundary 2, Vol. 3, no. 1, 1974, pp. 151-158; David Venour, The Political Thought of George Grant, unpublished M.A. Thesis, (Calgary, 1986). The latter study deserves comment. Venour devotes a full chapter to Grant's writing style, especially in terms of whether there exists an esoteric side to Grant's writing. Despite what I see as Venour's misreading of the purposes of Grant's style - Venour goes so far as to say that "it is difficult to see much evidence of an esoteric message in the bulk of Grant's work (p. 85)" - I am indebted to his study for providing the initiating idea for my own discussion.

PART ONE:

LANDSCAPE

Each language draws a magic circle round the people to which it belongs, a circle from which there is no escape save by stepping out of it into another.¹

- Wilhelm Von Humboldt

CHAPTER ONE:
TRACKING THE WORD

In the beginning, according to the Gospel of St. John, there was one Word, one Discourse, one Logos. And for a time Word and World remained as one. In this arcadian realm there was a direct correspondence between the existents of the world and the naming of those existents in the world. The Word was the manifestation of the thing itself, the Logos was the Real. Then things fell apart.

As punishment for an act of hubris, God split Word and World, diversified the language. No longer able to understand each other, no longer able to make their speech correspond to their experience, the people of Babel abandoned their assault on heaven and scattered, taking their confusion of languages with them. Never again, the tale suggests, would human beings experience the immediate connection between speech and action. Never again would there be a unity of language and life, of word and world.²

Not that man has not tried over the long millennia. Indeed, it has been argued that the tale of Western man could be described as an effort to bring word and world together again, to find some equivalence between man's lived reality and the means by which he expresses that reality.³ In other words, man has sought, in vain, for a discourse that accurately and meaningfully reflects and embodies his life. That discourse has

taken many forms - religion, philosophy, art, politics and science.

There can be little doubt that man's experience of the world is largely sense-less without languages, including the "languages" of science and art. Certainly man can intuit meaning from experience, but without a language any meanings ascribed to or derived from that experience can neither be apprehended in thought or expressed in speech. Human life, thus, appears bound to language. Without language there is no community; or, as Hegel phrased it, language is the medium by which the world-as-culture is actualized.⁴

Both religion and philosophy have long been aware that language is inseparably tied to the human community. For primitive man language was a form of magic, a form of power and knowledge. In ancient Egypt, a dead man could gain entrance to the afterlife by threatening to reveal the names of the gods to the demons if they refused to let him pass. The Gilgamesh epic relates that the things of the world appeared as fast as the god of creation, Apsu, named them; without a name a thing could not exist.⁵ In classical Greece, Parmenides stated that the relation of language to the world - the word to the thing - is the pivot on which all knowledge turns. Plato, in the Seventh Letter, referred to the limited cognitive range of language and the difficulty of expressing the experience of the world in language. Isidore of Seville, in the early Christian era, propounded the idea that there is an inherent and meaningful connection between

a thing and its name, and the essence of a thing could be known by knowing its name.⁶ In Chapter Four of Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes wonders at the intricacies of language and warns of the dangers of misusing words. John Locke, in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, admits that his effort to determine the certainties of knowledge is so intimately connected with words that unless the words are clearly understood, there is very little knowledge of which he can be certain.⁷ In the twentieth century, cybernetic theorist Norbert Wiener finds human life and language so tightly entwined that he raises the possibility of the latter being used as a means for controlling the former.⁸ And some contemporary theorists, including Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault, claim language is a central preoccupation of twentieth-century thought, to the extent that it is only through the use of language that man can attempt to make sense of his experience of the world.

George Grant also takes cognizance of the problematics of language as an adequate representation of the experiential world. He accepts that language not only conditions experience of the world, but, equally, conditions the way that experience is understood and articulated in myriad symbolic forms. As he remarks:

It is clear that human beings take much of what they are and what their world is through the way that words bring forth that world and themselves to themselves.⁹

One of the problems, though, according to Grant, is that man all too often ascribes to language, to words, the power of defining

the world. Instead of recognizing language for what it is - a vast system of mobile metaphors, to use Friedrich Nietzsche's phrase - that express in abstract, symbolic terms man's consciousness of the world,¹⁰ man identifies the metaphors of his experience with the experience itself. That is, the allusory metaphor is accepted as the concrete truth, the abstraction as the reality.

In this fashion, Grant argues, language determines the world: "Like food, language not only makes human existence possible, but can also confine it."¹¹ While language permits the possession of the world, it also possesses its speaker. Grant expands on this point in his essay "Faith and the Multiversity," arguing that the paradigm of modern language is science and technology with their strict demand for so-called objective knowledge and utilitarian usefulness. Such a discourse, with its largely unquestioned ascription to a Cartesian subject-object duality, claims that modern man can only have knowledge of the world to the degree that the things of the world are represented as objects to be questioned as to their reason for existing. According to Grant, such a language of "subjects" and "objects," with its tendency to fragmentation and reductionism, all but precludes the possibility of perceiving or apprehending the world in any other way.¹²

What Grant's argument raises is the problematic nature of language. He sees language as more than just the form or medium by which thought and action are enunciated. He suggests that

language is an agent, perhaps the agent, for shaping thought and action (which includes speech) and, hence, determining the perceived "reality" of the world.

In terms of understanding Grant's discourse, this paradigmatic aspect of language must be well understood. If, as I shall argue, the modern discourse dispossesses Grant of a voice that authoritatively reflects his experience of the world, then it is crucial to understand the consciousness-shaping nature of language as he understood it. Indeed, it has been argued that to understand Grant's work as a whole and his view of the philosopher's role, calls for a theory of language.¹³ It is with this in mind that I undertake a brief foray into discourse theory. Such foraging will point up the nature of Grant's concerns with the way language both discloses and encloses.

Language, observes Allen Thiher, in discussing the necessary implications of Ludwig Wittgenstein's thought, provides a structure that "makes up the world."¹⁴ Indeed, to the degree that there is a common acceptance of the meanings of language and that it provides a generally authoritative method for describing the world, it can be said that language is the world, or, at the very least, that it provides the necessary representational structures by which the world is made coherent or sensible. This, according to Thiher, is Wittgenstein's point. As he remarks regarding Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: "Reality only exists in function of the discourse that articulates it."

Words or languages or discourses provide "a priori givens," that permit the individual to live in the world, and provide him with the myriad definitions by which he constitutes the world and the meanings it has for him.¹⁵

What this means, according to Wittgenstein, is that, before there is any knowledge of the world, there exists a language of the world that pre-determines whatever that knowledge will be. In this light, knowledge - those ideas, concepts and beliefs by which man claims to "know" the world - is both the product of and the producer of a certain dominating discourse. Language, then, is the symbolic representation of the order of thought or knowledge. And this order of thought, in turn, reflects an underlying discourse that orders the constituent parts of the world about which language speaks.

Michel Foucault makes much the same argument. In his book Archaeology of Knowledge, he states that languages are not merely collections of words that represent objects or concepts; in a certain sense they create the objects or concepts of which they speak. To use his terminology: Discourse should not be considered a matter of "treating groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents of representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak."¹⁶

This is to say that discourse pre-determines experience of the world, and the foundations of a particular discourse are the ground for any judgments regarding the meaning and truth of that experiential world.¹⁷ Knowledge of the world, then, is shaped

and confined by its own discursive nature. Man is, as it were, trapped by historical finitude, and his "knowledge" reflects the process of articulation of what he claims to know and not the "true" nature of the object being articulated. Paradoxically, man can be self-conscious of the meaning-shaping nature of his discourses, but he cannot escape their confines by the very fact that he is, as Foucault puts it, a creature of historical finitude and, thus, cannot step beyond the circle or discursive space created by his language. As Foucault observes:

To be finite, then, would simply be to be trapped in the laws of a perspective which, while allowing a certain apprehension - of the type of perception or understanding - prevents it from ever being universal and definitive intellection. All knowledge is rooted in a life, a society and a language that have a history.¹⁸

What Foucault opposes is the rationalist conception of some founding subject, some universal "beyond," some ground of Being, that is outside the historical, man-created world and in which man can ground his language in speaking about any essential knowledge of the world. As he asserts:

We must not imagine that there is a great universal or a great unthought which runs throughout the world and intertwines with all its forms and all its events, and which we have to articulate or to think about.¹⁹

Indeed, Foucault argues against any teleologically-oriented ontology. The world, he states, is not, as pre-modern thought would have it, "the accomplice of our knowledge." There is no prediscursive ground to which man can turn to have knowledge of the world. Rather, his discourses are simply the "violence which he does to things," the forms he imposes on a world neutral to

his purposes and meanings.²⁰

Timothy Reiss, in his book The Discourse of Modernism, picks up on this idea, arguing that language "is but one of the possible materials through and in which discursive order manifests itself." In this way, he says, language or discourse reflects and embodies the "modes of conceptualization"²¹ by which man patterns the world to suit his prefigured conscious apprehension of it. Furthermore, following Foucault, he states that while all discourses are dependent on an ontological ground, a supposition of Being, the suppositions of that ontology are themselves a product of discourse.²²

The modern understanding of the word "will," for instance, reflects a mode of conceptualization that is different from that of other ages. The ancients lacked the modern concepts of will. This does not betray a weakness on their part. Rather, it reflects, according to Reiss, a "different sort of human functioning, a different social and individual praxis, a different kind of conceptualization and action."²³

The classical world saw the human agent as actor within an ordered world to which he must attune himself. For the ancients the concept of will, to use Reiss's terminology, was the product of a discursive function within a pre-existing and readily perceptible ordering of the phenomenal world to which the will must conform. The modern discourse, however, is grounded in an ontology that presupposes a radical separation between man and the world. Hand in hand with this ontology, this sense of Being,

is a different mode of conceptualization that assumes man as standing over against the world. In this discourse, will reflects a consciousness that presupposes the human agent as apart from the world and, therefore, having to impose himself on the world. The world is conceptualized as an object exterior to an imposing, autonomous subject.²⁴

Thus, the difference between the pre-modern and modern worlds has been one of a passage from "a discursive exchange within the world to the expression of knowledge as a reasoning practice upon the world."²⁵ The latter is the discourse of modern natural science; the former the discourse of classical natural philosophy. The modern discourse, to use Claude Levi-Strauss's phrase, posits an ordering of the world by the mind, while the pre-modern discourse reflects an ordering of the mind by the world.²⁶

Returning to Grant, I argue that he makes the same point, when he describes the modern discourse as a "project of reason," in which man summons the world-as-object before him and forces from it its reasons for being what it is as an object: "Our paradigm is that we have knowledge when we represent anything to ourselves as object, and question it, so that it will give us its reasons."²⁷ By contrast, Grant says, the ancient discourse presupposed the world as reflecting a divine and eternal natural order, and man's truest purpose was to seek knowledge of that order and, in doing so, to attain an attunement to that order.

For the ancients, then, the world is not of man's making or willing, but one in which he must abide harmoniously to know his proper end.²⁸

In the ancient world the highest purpose of life was the vita contemplativa, not, as modernity would have it, the vita activa. What Grant recognizes in these contrasting teleologies is the displacement of the ancient concept of physis, or nature, as the determining standard for man by the modernist notion of man as the controller of nature; that is, modern man believes, as Max Weber put it, "that everything can, in principle, be controlled by calculation."²⁹

This modernist conceptualization is, according to Grant, reflected in modern language. He characterizes modern language as one of time-consciousness, as opposed to the ancient language of space-consciousness. The modern discourse presupposes man as strictly temporal or historical in contrast to the ancient discourse which saw the essence of man as reflecting an unchanging realm beyond a time-bounded world. Man's purpose, then, in modern terms, is not to attune himself to his surrounding space, but to impose his temporal-consciousness on space, or, in other words, to control his time-boundedness by controlling or claiming space - nature - as his own project. This is attempted through technology. Indeed, it is argued that technology "involves a simultaneous expansion over space and time, that is, over the rate at which reality is being created."³⁰

What this points up, in regard to my discussion, is that both moderns and ancients exist within distinctly different discursive spaces, and it is from within those spaces that each claims the validity and authority of its representations of the truth or reality of the world. But for both, this knowledge of the world is to all intents and purposes delimited and determined by the fact that each exists concretely only within a certain discursive paradigm - or magic circle, to use Hegel's phrase - that reflects their conscious apprehension of the world.

With this in mind, then, I would argue that Grant recognizes the confining nature of language and is concerned with seeking a way out of a particular language or discourse - in his case, the magic circle of western technological society. In other words, he seeks a way out of the cave of modernity, believing that it does not provide the best home or the best teleology for man as man. But what, one might ask, does Grant think man as man is best fitted for? Grant's entire discourse can perhaps be summed up as asking this question. This question resides beneath the surface of all of Grant's writings. As O'Donovan remarks: "The question that Grant's writing puts to us is whether the teleological order of nature extends to man; whether man too has a purpose, end, or good that is the law of history."³¹

Now, according to many critics, Grant does not answer this question. Grant is much praised for the acuteness of his analysis of the inadequacies of the modern project in its various guises - technology, historicism, contractual justice, for

example. Grant, according to the critics, reveals the "terrible nihilism"³² underlying modern society. He portrays the "destruction of man's inner life in a technological society."³³ Grant shows that the course of events in the modern world is "increasingly disastrous to mankind in the sense of being increasingly detrimental to human excellence."³⁴

At the same time, though, Grant is said to offer no realistic response to modernity. He is faulted for not answering his own questions. For instance, Larry Schmidt, in the 1978 essay collection George Grant in Process, remarks that despite Grant's acute analysis of historicism, the reader is left asking "What is a suitable conception of history?" According to Schmidt, "Grant does not give us an answer."³⁵

Likewise, other commentators say of Grant that "no constructive alternatives to our present disorder are put forward for consideration."³⁶ Another states that "in the face of Grant's analysis and hopes one cannot escape a sense of dissatisfaction. . . What does he stand for? What is his program?" Grant's writings "lack a direct statement of those positive teachings which he alludes to as his own means of survival, and which may seem to be presupposed as the ground of his critique of the modern. Grant gives only the most fragmentary intimations of their content."³⁷

Yet another critic, while admitting the prophetic quality of Grant's analysis, argues that, in the end, his response to modernity was a "panic remembrance,"³⁸ a retreat to the sinecure

of Platonism and Biblical revelation. Another writes that Grant gazed into the dark heart of modernity and stood as a witness to that darkness, but, in the end, he was "checkmated" and unable to move beyond that dark vision.³⁹ Even a generally laudatory critic accepts that Grant's discourse is a "negative task,"⁴⁰ implying by such a comment that any positive responses are derived through what is evoked in the act of negation.

Such criticism has some validity, but, I argue, it falls short of fully appreciating Grant's philosophic task and his use of philosophic writing. Indeed, as I intend to show, those who fault Grant for not providing a systematic response to modernity are to some degree betraying their own ascription to the paradigms of the modern discourse against which Grant is trying to speak. Certainly, Grant articulates no systematic philosophical program as a countervail to the modern project. His task, he claims, is limited to understanding what exactly modernity is, because only "by looking at modernity in its greatest power [is] one perhaps able even slightly to escape its power."⁴¹

Yet, Grant says that any effort to think through modernity, to escape its confinements, is hampered by the fact that such thinking must be done in the language of modernity. The very nature of the modern language reflects the assumptions of modern society and, hence, all but precludes any thinking that does not share in the assumptions that most need to be thought through. If this is the case, then anything he might say about the nature of

things which is not in accord with the prevailing paradigm is in danger of being dismissed or ignored as outdated or irrelevant.

Grant, of course, is fully aware of his predicament, fully aware of the power of conventional "truths" to prejudge any claims that run contrary to those truths.⁴² It would appear that the modern discourse, with its coevals of historicism, psychologism, behaviorism, technological efficiency and the belief in progress, is so all-encompassing that it can easily explain away any contradiction of itself that Grant would care to make.

Grant, thus, appears to be in something of a double-bind; he cannot argue against modernity without assuming the language of modernity. But such a language seems to preclude the possibility of expressing any thought that does not accept the assumptions of modernity. As he observes:

All coherent languages beyond those which serve the drive to unlimited freedom through technique have been broken up in the coming to be of what we are. Therefore it is impossible to articulate publicly any suggestions of loss, and perhaps even more frightening, almost impossible to articulate it to ourselves.⁴³

Given this, Grant seems to be, as Dennis Lee observed, locked into a discourse that provides "no terms in which to speak that do not issue from the space we are trying to speak against."⁴⁴ In other words, Grant seems to be forced into silence about those things, those truths, of which he wishes to speak. He is, as it were, confined within a magic circle out of which he cannot step. Grant himself alludes to this confinement:

We have been left with no words which cleave together and summon out of uncertainty the good of which we may sense the dispossession.⁴⁵

Yet, I argue, Grant's linguistic dispossession is not what it at first appears to be. Grant's deliberate use of the word publicly in the above quotation offers a clue to what I am getting at in this thesis, in arguing that Grant's claim of dispossession is, in part, like many of his other so-called negative or destructive discursive statements, a rhetorical or poetic device by which he can make his own voice heard amidst the cacophony of the modern discourse.

Implicit in the word publicly is its opposite, privately; that is, perhaps the dispossession of which Grant cannot speak publicly, can possibly be voiced privately and, in the articulation, reclaim a space from which the modern discourse dispossesses him. What this sets up is the idea that Grant's discourse is operating on two levels; a public, or exoteric, level, and an esoteric, or private, level. Such is my contention. Grant's speech-act, I argue, can only be understood in its totality if it is recognized as operating in this double-level fashion.

The idea of exoteric and esoteric textual levels needs, perhaps, some clarification. Put simply, I am saying that there is an interior - or esoteric - discourse or speech that is "hidden" in the exterior - or exoteric - form of Grant's speech. Moreover, I argue that Grant deliberately adopted such a form of philosophic writing. Now, there is nothing particularly unusual

about such writing. All serious discourses have a subtext or a hidden meaning beneath the surface of their words.

The Bible, for example, is meaningless to those who read it without seeing it as God's revelation in the world. To read the Bible strictly as an historical document or from a secular point of view is to misread the ontological ground, from which, and to which, it speaks. Now, this is not the place to offer an exegesis of the Bible. My point is that the Bible, as a discourse, has a superficial text - the creation of the world, the genealogies, the covenant, the prophets, the coming of the Messiah - that is sense-less without the comprehensive text of God's revelation in the world. The Bible's esoteric text - Eternity manifesting in Time - provides the meaningful whole to the particulars of the exoteric text. To read the exoteric text without comprehending the esoteric text is to miss the substantive meaning and purpose of Bible.

The same, I argue, can be said of philosophic discourse. Like the Bible, it can have both esoteric and an exoteric levels of meaning. At the same time, though, some philosophical writers adopt this double-level discourse with the deliberate intention of "beguiling" their readers. Or, more accurately perhaps, they write esoterically, with the express purpose of wanting to be properly read by those who are fitted, by nature and training, to penetrate the exoteric surface and tap the underlying message of their speech. Many, of course, will not penetrate to the esoteric level and will remain content with the text's surface meaning.

In Biblical terms, the reader can possibly understand intellectually the meaning of the discourse, but only those who truly experience the esoteric substance of the Word can actually be said to know its truth. Similarly, in philosophic discourse, only those properly initiated to the substantive experience represented by the words can be said to know the truth to which and from which the words speak.

Leo Strauss makes a similar argument regarding the writings of the ancient and pre-modern philosophers. These philosophers, he says, regularly adopted esoteric writing as a means by which to keep their deepest meanings from all but those who were able, by disposition and arduous study, to peer at the underside of their words.⁴⁶ Nietzsche, likewise, says "nobler spirits" wish both to be understood and not understood. Thus, he says

It is not by any means necessarily an objection to a book when anyone finds it impossible to understand: perhaps that was part of the author's intention - he did not want to be understood by just 'anybody.' All the nobler spirits and tastes select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against 'the others.' . . . while they open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours.⁴⁷

Applying these descriptions of philosophic writing to Grant, I would argue that on the exoteric level the reader is presented with Grant's "destruction of inadequate sources of hope,"⁴⁸ which, as has been noted, critics generally applaud. But on the esoteric level, the knowledgeable reader is offered Grant's truer teachings, those responses to the modern discourse that he feels cannot be publicly articulated because of the

enclosure of modern thought within a certain discursive horizon.

In this light, I contend that Grant tries in his esoteric writing to create a space in which he can find his own voice, his own consciousness, to articulate a valid and authoritative alternative to modernity for those who are prepared to listen. I shall pick up on this issue in Part Two.

In the meantime, though, the question becomes: what is Grant's discursive space, or at least, the one from which he is trying to speak and which, presumably, he wishes to share with his readers? Grant himself provides the answer. In his lengthy essay Time as History, Grant describes his task as that of enucleating the kernel of modernity, of bringing to consciousness the animating presence which, in the form of modern technological society, not only surrounds the individual, but is part of him. This presence, he says, not only defines modern man, but gives him the very definitions by which he is even capable of seeking definitions. This presence, this animating principle, is, he claims, captured in one word - History.

History, Grant says, "is one of those words which is present for us and was not present in any similar sense in the languages of other civilizations - including those from which ours sprang."⁴⁹ Indeed, according to Grant, history is for us both the study of the past and "an aspect of reality;"⁵⁰ which is to say, that history is the magic circle of modernity.

Thus, as preparation for tracking the Grantian logos or discourse, I must read the landscape in which his logos moves. I

must understand his understanding of history, and particularly those from whom he learned his history lessons. The remainder of Part One is intended as a sweep across the terrain of modern historicism confronted by Grant.

I endeavour to show why the concept of historicism is so important to Grant; why, indeed, it is for Grant the central beam of the house of modernity. My guides in this expedition will be some of those whom Grant followed in his expeditions through the modern landscape - Hegel (as interpreted by Alexandre Kojève), Strauss, and Heidegger.

In the end, I hope to show that the existential or experiential ground of Grant's discourse, the logos from which he speaks, is distinctly different from that which dominates the modern project. I try to show that Grant's consciousness is not that of the modern consciousness even though, as a man living in a certain time and place, he must partake of what is in effect for him an alien world, an alien consciousness. Having surveyed the Grantian terrain, I will then be in a position to track the esoteric trailmarkers that reveal Grant's logos: that is, I can begin in Part Two to look at the linguistic devices by which Grant could articulate an alternative to modern consciousness; what I refer to as his poetics of dispossession.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY

Grant's discursive space can be likened to that which Jonathan Swift adopted for himself in The Battle of the Books, the eighteenth-century satire on the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns.⁵¹ In that book the guardian of the King's library uses his position to shove the ancient books into the dustiest, most inaccessible corners of the library, while the modern books are given pride of place on the front shelves. Grant would have reversed the stacking, if he had held the keys to the library. Like Swift, Grant sides with the ancients, believing that their thought expressed the highest aspirations and truer purposes of man.

Grant had not always held the ancients as the epitome of the highest truths. Early in his career he staked his position as a "reluctant Hegelian" and as a confirmed liberal progressive.⁵² He saw, in Hegel's bringing together of classical Greek philosophy and Christian theology with Enlightenment rationality and modern science, a synthesis of religious and historical consciousness with which Western society could move into the future with some confidence.

Hegel, according to the early Grant, had attempted to reconcile the concept of modern man as an autonomous, history-making being with the pre-modern account of man as dwelling under the dispensation of divinely-given natural law.⁵³ With this Grant

could accept the liberal identification of human freedom with a progressive history, as opposed to the classical notion of human freedom as attunement with nature. Yet he remained ambivalent. He perceived a difficulty in bringing together classical natural law, with its conceptions of time as "the moving image of an unmoving eternity" and man as living under an eternal order, and the modern notion of time, as the history created by men free to make of themselves what they will. As he put it: "Both of these assertions seem true. The difficult is to understand how they both can be thought together."⁵⁴

Eventually though, Grant realized that the modernist and pre-modern ontologies could not be thought together. He repudiated Hegel and turned to Plato:

I came to the conclusion that Hegel was not correct in his claim to have taken the truth of antique thought and synthesized it with the modern to produce a higher (and perhaps highest) truth; that on many of the most important political matters Plato's teaching is truer than Hegel's. Particularly, I have come to the conclusion that Plato's account of what constitutes human excellence and the possibility of its realization in the world is more valid than that of Hegel.⁵⁵

Thus, Grant resolutely encamps himself among the tents of the ancients. Indeed, he describes his turn toward the ancients as an emergence from the cave of modernity.⁵⁶

Grant's turn from Hegel and liberal progressivism has been referred to as his era of retractions;⁵⁷ that time in his career when, under the influence of such thinkers as Strauss, Jacques Ellul, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Weil and, of course, Plato, Grant woke from his dogmatic slumbers to reject the shadows of

modernity - the belief in technological progress, value-free scientific positivism and secularized theism.

Any of Grant's major concepts - nationalism, technology, justice, the Good, to name a few - can provide a thematic entry point into his discourse. I prefer to focus on Grant's concepts of nature and history. This is not to say that other concepts are of lesser importance. Other Grant commentators have tended to focus on justice or technology or nationalism as themes from which to approach Grant. While I shall consider those themes myself, I argue that the concept of history provides something of a superstructure within which his other topics are positioned. At the core of Grant's discourse is his concern with displacement of nature as understood by the ancients, with the modern concept of history as the horizon within which man understands himself and his world. Some definitions are perhaps necessary.

Historicism posits a strictly temporal view of the world. As an epistemological doctrine, it sets up "the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of anything and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained by considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role it played within a process of development."⁵⁸ This is to say that historicism establishes a paradigm within which man's knowledge and experience of the world can only be understood in the context of historical change.

History, then, is all there is; there is nothing beyond or outside the historical process by which man can come to

understand himself and the world or know his purposes in the world. All is under the sway, to use Hans Georg-Gadamer's words, of "historical conditionedness"⁵⁹ and any meanings or purposes that may be determined from a given historical circumstance are meaningful only in that circumstance. There is no ultimate truth, only historical truth. And those truths are valid only to the time in which they operate. To step outside this paradigm, to argue for an eternal, non-historical or natural order that provides standards by which men can order their societies, is to step outside history. And, in the modern context, anything outside history is invalid and irrelevant. Historicism, then, is the only way to speak; all other voices are forced into silence.

Grant accepts such a definition of historicism:

I mean by historicism the doctrine that all thought (particularly the highest) depends, even in its essence, upon a particular set of existing experienced circumstances - which in the modern world we call 'history.'⁶⁰

But while he accepts such a teleology as the horizon of modernist thought, it is not the horizon to which he thinks man is best fitted. This historical order, in explaining all human purposes and meanings as historically relative, mere subjective preferences with no justifiable claim to absolute truth, results in an anthropocentric consciousness of man as the measure of all things. Such a claim denies the possibility of any absolute good, any absolute standard to which men might aspire in establishing their political orders. Man's values are relative to and contingent upon the prevailing climate of opinion.

Grant addresses the issue of historicism throughout his writings, explicitly or implicitly. In his earliest book, Philosophy in the Mass Age, published in 1959, Grant contrasts modern historical consciousness which renders time as an unending flow of unique and irreversible events that have to be dominated and controlled through creative will, with that of the ancient consciousness "in which time is considered as the moving image of an unmoving eternity and in which the passing events of life only have meaning as they lead men to the unchanging reality of God."⁶¹ The latter consciousness, according to Grant, provided man with a doctrine of natural law by which man sought his perfectability in a union of temporal reason and divine reason.

In a 1965 book, Lament for a Nation, Grant rejects "history" as the arbitrator of man's purposes, arguing that to make history "the final court of appeal" for man's meanings is tantamount to "worshipping force."⁶² Four years later, in a 1969 collection of essays, Technology and Empire, Grant argues in a similar vein: "The dominant tendency of the western world has been to divide history from nature and to consider history as dynamic and nature controllable as externality."⁶³

This loss of a sense of meaning and purpose in nature and the consequent rejection of natural law, has left man as a sovereign self whose one self-defining purpose, one singular good, is the idea of freedom. This identification of freedom as man's final purpose has, according to Grant, left man in the embrace of a nihilism that is intellectually shallow and

politically and morally corrosive:

It is now generally assumed that the race has meaning (call it if you will purpose) only on the condition that we view ourselves as purposive and that none of these views are truths concerning the nature of things, but only ideologies which we create to justify our man-made purposes. There is no objective purpose to human or non-human nature which men can come to know and in terms of which the various occasions of life can be ordered. Purpose and value are the creations of human will in an essentially purposeless world.⁶⁴

Grant's most comprehensive effort to understand the historicist mindset is an essay taken from a 1969 lecture series, Time as History, in which he sets out to examine the modernist belief in time as history, as opposed to the classical belief in time as eternity. According to Grant, the word history, besides referring to the study of the past, is "also used to denote a certain kind of reality - human existing." Both meanings - the study of the past and as an ascribed reality - go together: the past is scrutinized in the belief that "man is essentially an historical being and that . . . the riddle of what he is may be unfolded in those studies."⁶⁵ In other words, modern man believes he is fully understandable in terms of his historical development through time. Grant rejects this view. For him, man is not finally knowable as an historic being.

A similar view is repeated in Grant's 1974 book English-Speaking Justice, in which he links liberal notions of justice with the historicist denial of classical natural justice that claimed man was directed to a highest good under which all goods were known in a hierarchy of subordination and superordination. The modern lowering of standards of justice to the convenience of

the social contract is the result of man's radical abstractedness from nature and his acceptance of historical and moral relativism, Grant argues.⁶⁶

Finally, in the 1986 essay collection, Technology and Justice, Grant identifies historicism with the scientific positivism that resulted in the realization of a technological civilization that denies all meanings beyond those that man creates for himself through his mastery and domination of nature, including human nature.⁶⁷

History, then, for Grant is not simply a particular academic discipline. Nor is history merely one idea, or one discourse, among many others that shape the modern world. For Grant, history is, as O'Donovan argues, "the idea, the central theoretical and practical idea of our age."⁶⁸ Thus, to understand "history" is to gain some understanding of the modern consciousness, the modern discourse. As Grant states:

'History' is one of the key words in which English-speaking people now express what they think they are and what they think the world to be . . . Therefore if we desire to understand our own understanding of ourselves, it is well to think about this word which has come to have such a unique connotation amongst us.⁶⁹

Grant's effort to understand historicism - and, in the understanding, gain an exit from its confinements - is rooted in his turning away from Hegel, who epitomized for Grant the modern, historical consciousness.⁷⁰ Hegel postulated the existence of a general, purposive direction to history that shaped and gave meaning to cultural change throughout history. Behind the seeming

chaos, meaninglessness and bloodiness of historical events was an immanent meaning and purpose to which man's cultures, with their various laws, religions, arts and philosophies, were directed.

Hegel claimed to have tapped this order, to have perceived the "tale" of Western history. The driving theme of this tale, according to Hegel, was the gradual coming-to-consciousness of the concept of human freedom. When this concept was fully realized, that is, when everyone was conscious of the goal of history, when concept and reality had achieved a final conjuncture, then history would be at an end. And the end would be manifested in a world-state in which everyone's basic desire to be recognized as free and equal was satisfied.

What turned Grant from this seemingly marvelous concept was his eventual recognition that it smelled too much of the positivist idea of progress as the ultimate aim of man and made even evil a purposive good. Such a claim, according to Grant, ignores the idea of man's existence having a given highest purpose that transcends history. Grant could not accept Hegel's identification of necessity with goodness because such a linkage assumes that "what must come in the future will be 'higher,' 'more developed,' 'better,' 'freer,' than what has been in the past." This, argues Grant, posits the notion that history is little more than the judgement of those in positions of dominance; a world, in other words, where might makes right.⁷¹ Grant turned to Plato's thought, seeing in it a philosophic position that transcended history and was more compatible with

his own Christian faith.

Grant's turn from Hegel was influenced by his reading of Strauss, along with his study of Nietzsche and Heidegger. But Strauss was perhaps the more important of the three, at least initially.⁷² Strauss supplied Grant with the compass that directed his ascent from the cave of modernity. Following Strauss's trailblazing, Grant was able make his way through the thick undergrowth of historicism, marking the spoor of modern thought from Hobbes to Heidegger, until, finally, he gained a clearing that, in Gadamer's words, let him set "against the modern historical self-confidence the clear rightness of classical philosophy."⁷³

Following Strauss, Grant rejects historicism as man's true horizon, arguing that man can raise himself above his historical conditionedness in determining the good and the true, what is right and what is wrong. And it is classical philosophy, with its understanding of man as part of an unchanging whole, that provides the ground for knowing such distinctions.

Grant's turn from Hegel was explicitly stated in his new preface to the 1966 second edition Philosophy in the Mass Age. But his initial reconsideration of Hegelian philosophy and the clash between ancient and modern thought appeared in his 1963 essay "Tyranny and Wisdom."⁷⁴ In this essay, Grant offers an exposition of and commentary on a debate between Strauss and Alexandre Kojève. The subject of this debate was raised in Strauss's book On Tyranny - An Interpretation of Xenophon,⁷⁵ in

which Strauss argues that Xenophon, as a classical Greek, understood the relationship between tyranny and philosophy better than moderns, and understood the nature of tyranny better than moderns. The book contains Kojeve's essays responding to Strauss' argument and a rejoinder from Strauss to Kojeve.

For Grant, the differing positions of the two men draws a bead on certain fundamental questions in political philosophy. Indeed, it would perhaps be no exaggeration to suggest that Grant's exposition and commentary encapsulates much of his own thought regarding the ancient and modern discourses. At issue in the debate, according to Grant, is "whether the universal and homogeneous state is the best social order."⁷⁶

In Lament for a Nation, Grant reveals his turn from Hegelian liberalism in a sardonic - and ironic - definition of the universal and homogeneous state as the goal and pinnacle of historicist effort.

'Universal' implies a world-wide state, which would eliminate the cause of war among nations; 'homogeneous' means that all men would be equal, and war among classes would be eliminated. The masses and the philosophers have both agreed that this universal and egalitarian society is the goal of historical striving.⁷⁷

Such an Endstate, if realized, has profound political consequences. As Grant points out, the effort to actualize this world-state requires the extinguishment of Canada's political independence. Implicit in the possibility - or necessity - of Canada's political demise is the question whether the loss of such a particularity in the coming-to-be of a new world order is

good for man

If the best social order is the universal and homogeneous state, then the disappearance of Canada can be understood as a step towards that order. If the universal and homogeneous state would be a tyranny, then the disappearance of even this indigenous culture can be seen as the removal of a minor barrier on the road to that tyranny.⁷⁸

In "Tyranny and Wisdom" Grant looks at the issue somewhat differently. At this point, the truth regarding the universal and homogeneous state as "the best social order" is grounded in the question as to whether classical or modern philosophy provides the most adequate account of the relationship between politics and philosophy, between government and wise men. At issue is whether the philosopher can claim a knowledge that transcends particular historical circumstance, or whether all philosophical knowledge, and hence, men's political orders, is dependent on and determined by the historical process.⁷⁹

Strauss, Grant argues in the essay, claims that philosophy can know truths that are independent of historical change, and, therefore, these truths exist outside the magic circle of the historicist discourse. That is, philosophy transcends history. On the other hand, according to Grant, Strauss sees Kojève's argument as claiming that the truth of the best social order is contingent on the historical process and cannot be known prior to an interpretation of the process at a particular point in history. And this truth is only achieved by a dialectic which interprets the sum of historical epochs in their totality, which, as Grant notes, constitutes eternity for

Hegel.⁸⁰ In short, history is the horizon of all truths, including philosophic truth.

The debate, then, is between two opposing philosophic camps: the moderns, as exemplified by Kojève-Hegel, and the ancients, as epitomized by Strauss-Grant. Each sees the object and method of philosophy from different assumptions, or, perhaps more accurately, from different discursive spaces. In the modern circle is a philosophy of history; in the ancients' circle is a philosophy of nature. A somewhat lengthy sojourn in each camp is necessary to understand Grant's decision to place his colors under the classical battle flag.

Grant's own style of writing invites such an undertaking. Indeed, the compactness of his writing, with its allusions to, and cryptic summations of, other thinkers, necessitates such an exegesis. This suggests, I argue, that such a cryptic style is a form of esoteric writing in the sense that the reader, in trying to understand Grant, is forced to hunt beyond the boundaries of Grant's words for the underlying text that informs his thought.

In doing so, the reader is forced to philosophize, to search for wisdom. To the degree that the reader participates in this philosophic hunt, he is made privy to the deeper sources of Grant's philosophy and, in tapping these sources, he learns to decipher the deeper truths that Grant wishes him to know. In this regard, Allan Bloom's remarks on Kojève's study of Hegel might just as easily apply to Grant: "It is of pressing concern to find out precisely what a thinker meant, for he may well know much

more than we do about the things that we need to know."⁸¹

With this in mind, then, I turn in Chapter Three to one of Grant's guides across the landscape of history - Alexandre Kojève.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE DISCOURSE OF HISTORY

Alexandre Kojeve, in his "violent"⁸² interpretation of Hegel, argues that the German Idealist was the first thinker to see the goal of human effort throughout history as a striving for freedom by all autonomous individuals; a freedom in which one's desire for recognition by other equally free and similarly desiring individuals was satisfied. For Hegel, human history is not a meaningless tale of sound and fury told by idiots, a litany of slaughter and savagery, but rather the unfolding of reason, or spirit-in-the-world, in time.

The culmination of this unfolding of reason is accomplished from action and labour, until, in the end, it is actualized and man-as-freedom is self-consciously recognized. With this self-conscious recognition of the aim of history, the end of history is, in theory, accomplished and man-as-freedom can be actualized in the coming-to-be of the universal and homogeneous state in which all speak the same complete discourse of freedom and equality.

Philosophy also comes to an end because Wisdom, or, complete knowledge and satisfaction of desire, or, more abstractly, full self-consciousness, has been achieved; that is, the man of the Endstate has complete knowledge of what is, was and will be in the sense that he knows the goal of history, and, in addition, he is completely satisfied in that he is recognized as a free,

unique and equal citizen by all others in the state who are also free, unique and equal. Everybody is equal; everybody is the same.

Man can only be truly 'satisfied,' history can only end, in and through the formation of a Society, of a State, in which the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such . . . by all.⁸³

The genesis of Hegel's Endstate - and the motor of history's movement towards this arcadian state - is, according to Kojève, the dynamic of the master-slave dialectic. Hegel saw the beginnings of human society and discourse, the first stirring of self-consciousness - history, in other words - when proto-man was willing to risk the death of his "animal" body in a fight for something created in the mind, the abstract notion of "pure prestige," or the desire for recognition from another who also desires recognition. This fight for domination to decide who is master and who is slave sets history going. Without this fight "there would never have been human beings on earth."⁸⁴

Hegel's master/slave dialectic, then, is a code by which Hegel can comprehend the whole of human history: First comes Bloody Battle; next comes the domination of the Master and the fearful subservience of the Slave; and, in the end, after millennia of struggle and labour to transform the World, the slave's triumph over his slavery at the end of history.⁸⁵

It is not my intention to offer a full exegesis of this dialectic. What is germane to my argument, as it pertains to Grant's concerns, is the fundamental historicist assumptions of

Hegel's symbol of meaning. If the master-slave story is the ground of Hegel's philosophy, then it seems clear that for him the realization of human Being is accomplished only through the historical process. Indeed, that is Kojève's point: There is nothing outside history that defines and gives meaning to man as man; there is no "truth" that transcends man-as-historical being, no "beyond" to which man can look for truth.

In other words, Hegel is an atheist; he denies the existence of a God, of an external and eternal order to which man is subordinate. Kojève states this unequivocally in an essay that was not included in the 1969 English translation of his Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, although it was included in the original French version of 1947:

Hegel does not accept the Judeo-Christian anthropological tradition except in a radically secularized or atheistic form. The Spirit-Absolute of the Subject-Substance, of which Hegel speaks, is not God. The Hegelian Spirit is the spatio-temporal totality of the natural World and implies human Discourse revealing this World and itself. Or better, and what is the same thing, Spirit is Man-in-the-World: the mortal Man who lives in a World without God and who speaks of all that exists in it and of all that he creates in it, including himself.⁸⁶

Hegel, according to Kojève, saw man as the be-all, end-all. And man's meanings and purposes throughout time, which is history, are all self-created responses to his sense of time. Put simply, Time is identified as History as far as Hegel is concerned. This latter statement needs to be better understood. And that necessitates some comprehension of what Hegel means by time.

Tom Darby, in his book The Feast, argues that man's

awareness of himself as a finite creature, as a being towards death - to use Heidegger's phrase - is revealed in his sense of time. Man responds to this sense of time, to his sense of transience, through symbol systems. That is, man's awareness of death is manifested in his myriad symbol systems - philosophy, science, religion, art, politics - by which he attempts to give meaning and coherence and purpose to his existential condition.⁸⁷ According to Darby, Hegel's Phenomenology, as mediated by Kojève, is an attempt to articulate the whole of man's existential condition, to find meaning and purpose in the face of finitude. Hegel sought to understand the whole of history and tried to formulate a response to it in a final and complete speech that could account for and give meaning to history in time.

Darby argues that Kojève-Hegel's description of the historical process is a simultaneous demythologizing of the various pre-Hegelian responses of human reason to its existential condition, particularly Greek and Judeo-Christian theology, and a remythologizing of this condition in a form adequate for modern man. The result is the claim that human history is not a history of futility and absurdity, but rather the unfolding of consciousness, of Logos, of Discourse, in Time. Man's historical process has been the gradual coming-to-consciousness of this Logos, the growing self-consciousness of the appearances of consciousness in time.

Hegel was able to provide a theoretical absolute standard - Absolute Spirit - that could make the seemingly discontinuous

movement of Logos in history understandable as a whole. With the achievement of Absolute Spirit, Hegel could offer, in theory at least, the complete speech, the final Wisdom, the self-conscious Logos, that articulates the culmination of history and philosophy. Put metaphorically, this culmination sees God, or Eternity, brought down to earth, while man, or Time, ascends in complete self-consciousness to God.

This double-move is symbolized by the coming of the God-man as personified by the symbolic unification of Hegel and Napoleon. This monad is the perfect synthesis of thought and action, philosophy and politics, wisdom and power, concept and reality, and its achievement is, in principle, the completion of philosophy in the achievement of complete self-conscious knowledge and satisfaction of all desires.

The Phenomenology, then, is the description and reconstruction of the essential meaning of humanity in time. And this meaning is actualized in the universal and homogeneous state at the end of history. In effect, Hegel makes history conscious of itself, or, to put it differently, memory becomes understanding. And this is to say that man finds his essential meaning and purpose in the fullness of the historical process. Or, Time-as-Man is History-as-Eternity. Man comes to know, to understand, himself as essentially free in that he is the self-created product of history, and the end of history is reached in the full self-conscious articulation of his freedom in the historical process. All that remains to do at the end of history

is to make reality, the world, conform to this concept of freedom. This will be done through the actualization of the universal and homogeneous state under the principles of Hegelian philosophy.⁸⁸

Now, Kojève, in his essay "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," argues that the ontological ground of the universal and homogeneous state resides for Hegel in man's consciousness of himself as a being towards death. This awareness of death is "the ultimate source of all of Hegel's thought."⁸⁹ This is to say that Hegel's master-slave dialectic is, in the end, a philosophy of death, a meditation on and response to man's awareness of his mortality and temporality. Hegel's philosophy, thus, is a drawing out of the consequences of the awareness of death.

Kojève, as I have argued, claims that for Hegel history begins and man, as distinguished from his animal being, appears for the first time in the natural world, in the willing acceptance of the risk of death, in a Bloody Struggle for prestige. And when man fully and self-consciously accepts his death-boundedness, when he realizes that all the "beyonds," theistic or secular, are the self-created projections or negations of his death then he can have complete Wisdom.

Man comes to this realization of himself as a being toward death through the revelations of his discourses. It is in the articulation of a final Discourse of absolute Knowledge that man comes to full self-consciousness of his death and, in achieving

this state, realizes that there is no more to do in history, no more projections, no more future, in which he can hide his death. History, then, is at an end. This, according to Kojeve, is the core of Hegel's philosophy.

Hegel, starting out from the sense of time, the awareness of death, works out an absolute philosophy, a complete discourse, that can provide a logical and full account of the existence of finite man conscious of his finitude in a world that existed before he did, but which he makes his own through transforming it, which is the historical process.⁹⁰ In short, human finitude, or Time, and the coming to consciousness of Time, constitutes History; which is to say, that Time is History.

Returning to Grant, I would argue that it is this ontology of death, of man as essentially the product of his historical responses to his own death, that prompted Grant's turn from Hegel. That Grant was well acquainted with Kojeve's work, as well as that of Hegel's, including The Phenomenology of Spirit, there can be no doubt. He accepted Kojeve's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy, acknowledging that Kojeve had correctly interpreted Hegel as having secularized Biblical theism.⁹¹

But while he accepted Kojeve's interpretation of Hegel as true, Grant did not accept it as the final truth. In "Tyranny and Wisdom," he points out that Hegel's account of the western tale hinges of the establishment of the universal and homogeneous state through the appropriation of elements of Greek and Christian thought. Grant tracks Kojeve's argument in its claim

that western history advances dialectically in three stages towards this Endstate.

The first stage, the establishment in principle of a universal state, was initiated by Alexander the Great. Alexander created an empire in which membership depended not on common ethnic or geographic backgrounds, but on the common "essence" of members of a particular civilization, which, in this case, was the Greek culture of reason. But this universal state cannot be homogeneous in the sense that it has not done away with class distinction, with the fight between masters and slaves. The Greeks could accept that idea of a universal state because they understood men as having the same "immanent essence,"⁹² or inherent nature. To the degree that men were members of civilizations they shared this inherent nature and, thus, could be accorded citizenship in the empire.

However, some men did not share this inherent nature - the slaves and the barbarians. There was for the Greeks an essential and necessary differentiation of human beings into masters and slaves whose very natures shared little in common. Therefore, the slaves and the barbarians could not be granted equal status and, as a result, the empire could not be homogeneous.⁹³

This differentiation of masters and slaves was overcome in the second stage of western history under the influence of Semitic religions, particularly Christianity in the west, which, according to Kojève, provided the idea of homogeneity. Grant gives a great deal of space in "Tyranny and Wisdom" to Kojève's

idea of homogeneity. This homogeneity, Grant states, is "the idea of the fundamental equality of all who believe in a single God."⁹⁴ For Kojève's Christians there is no essential difference between humans in that they are all equal; that is, they are all the same, to the extent that they all share the same faith in the same God.

The Christian faith provided a mechanism - the unity of faith - by which all natural or class-created distinctions between human beings could be overcome. Through faith the Christians were able to negate the natural or essential differences that divide human beings and, in the act of negation, synthesize their differing qualities into "a homogeneous unity not innate or given but (freely) created by 'conversion.'"⁹⁵ The stage is thus set for the modern secular world.

In this third stage of history the ideas of universality and homogeneity are brought together. And it is here, on this interpretation and the consequences of this coming together of the universal and homogeneous ideas, that Grant turns from his early acceptance of Hegelian philosophy. In reading Kojève (among others), Grant saw the fracturing of Nature and History and the subsequent domination of the historicist discourse. Following Kojève, he saw that the establishment of the universal and homogeneous state, as a political reality in this world, necessitated the de-divinization or dethronement of God. The universal and homogeneous state could only be established by the

secularization of the Christian ideal, the negation of Christian theism - which Kojève terms the negation of a negation - in favour of an anthropomorphic historicism that reinterprets Christian eschatological hopes for a perfected human community in a transcendent "beyond" into a goal to be realized in the here-and-now.⁹⁶

But this can only be done, as Grant points out, if philosophy takes its ground not from "an ahistorical eternal order" but from an eternity that is "the totality of all historical epochs."⁹⁷ Which is to say, Hegel's philosophy only succeeds, and the principle of the universal and homogeneous state only succeeds, if philosophy is grounded in History and not Nature. Grant, however, with his Christian faith, cannot accept such a starkly hubristic act. He saw it as tantamount to making the emancipation and realization of human desires the ultimate goal of human endeavour. And for Grant, as has been argued, such a goal was not what man was best fitted for.

What man has, in replacing Nature by History as his ontological ground, is the establishment of a completely different discourse by which Being, both human and non-human, is revealed. And this, as should be clear by now, is the magic circle of modernity that Grant sought to speak against. To find a way to speak against modernity, Grant took counsel from Strauss. However, before turning to Grant's appropriation of Strauss, another hunting expedition is needed into what I believe to be the dark heart of Hegel's hubris, as Grant perceived it. Such a

foray will make clear the nightmare that disturbed the liberal Hegelian dream of Grant's early thought.

Grant points out that in the Hegelian system the melding of the political ideas of universality and homogeneity is not realizable as a political end under Christian theism, even though the union of the two ideas was made possible by Christianity. The Christian religion does not claim such an Endstate to be possible in the temporal world. Only in the eternal realm, the Kingdom of Heaven, can such a state come to pass.

For Hegel, then, the ability to bring the universal and homogeneous state into existence required the overcoming of Christian theism.⁹⁸ Thus, Hegelian philosophy had to take a radically atheistic stance because man can only be free - that is, satisfied in all his desires - if God does not exist. If God exists, if there is a transcendent and eternal realm outside of Time to which temporal man is subordinate and from which he derives his political orders, then man can never have complete knowledge, complete satisfaction, and, thus, can never be free. What then can be done? How can man be satisfied and free unto himself? Only, I argue, with the murder of God and Jesus Christ and their replacement with a new God and a new Christ.

Grant does not explicitly voice this argument. Yet it must have occurred to him by the very fact that such a claim is all but explicit in Kojève's interpretation of Hegel,⁹⁹ which, as I have pointed out, Grant accepted as true. Hegel, according to

Kojeve, propounds an atheistic philosophy, whose aim is to render an account of man's existence in a natural world without God.

Hegel's Spirit is an anthropological spirit, not a theological spirit. Where Christian consciousness places the essence of man, man's spirituality, in some after-death "beyond," Hegel's consciousness grounds man's spirituality in the temporal world; that is, Hegel makes the "beyond" immanent and thereby murders God. As Kojeve remarks:

He understood that Man could not be a free historical individual except on condition of being mortal . . . that is, finite in time and conscious of his finitude. And having understood that, Hegel denied survival [or, an immortal spirit]: The Man he has in mind is real only to the extent that he lives and acts in the midst of Nature; outside the natural world he is pure nothingness. But to deny survival is in fact to deny God himself. . . Thus, Hegel does not accept the Judeo-Christian anthropological tradition except in a radically secularized and atheistic form.¹⁰⁰

But to murder God is tantamount to being god, which, in claiming complete Wisdom, is what Hegel-as-a-man does. Hegel claims to have spoken a complete discourse, a complete Logos, that accounts for and explains the whole of human time, to have brought thought and reality, speech and action into a final conjunction. That is, Hegel is the sage, the wise man who, in his self-conscious knowledge, is perfectly satisfied and makes the Word and the World one again. Kojeve, thus, reveals Hegel as the newly-revealed god.¹⁰¹ Such a statement requires some explanation.

Darby points out that for Hegel the three phases of religion - animism (mythic), religion as art (Greek) and revealed religion

(Christian) - all expressed various modes of consciousness. And whatever their differences they all share one thing in common: a perception of man's separateness from the world, a separation of Subject from Substance, to use Hegel's terminology. Each of these religions, reflecting their specific modes of consciousness, posits a discourse in response to this separation in an effort to overcome it.

The first phase of religion, for instance, "animated" the world with gods. In the second, man saw the object of his consciousness - the Olympian gods, for example - as revealing his own essential self. That is, the substance is taken back into the self because in this mediating mode of consciousness, as Darby puts it, the emphasis is on the subject as the object of consciousness. In the third phase of religion, the previous two are sublated and the object of consciousness (the Substance) is set in some "beyond" in which man participates through the mediation of the God-man. In this mode of consciousness, time and eternity are radically other. To be connected they require an intermediary.

For Christians, this intermediary was Christ, who, as God-man, reveals himself to man and becomes aware of himself through man. Man, in turn, becomes aware of himself as the object of substance and, simultaneously, becomes aware of the substance that is his object. Put another way, in revealed religion there is the realization of the divine in the self, and the divine's realization of itself in the temporal. In other words,

Time and Eternity, while radically separated, are inextricably bound in that each has the other as its object.¹⁰² This conceptualization, however, has a fundamental problem. As Jean Hyppolite remarked in his study of Hegel: "Is religion the portrait that a finite spirit, man, draws of God, or is it the knowledge that God has of himself?"¹⁰³

Hegel's answer to this question was, according to Hyppolite, to bring both together; that is, Hegel sought to elevate man while, at the same time, bring God down to earth. This effort entailed another dialectical movement in which man, in becoming aware of the finiteness of his spiritual portrayals, perceives that his symbols to overcome his death are, in essence, limited discourses that stop short of complete knowledge or complete speech. In these discourses there is still a separation of subject and substance, of word and world. There can be no true reconciliation of man's spirit and the divine spirit at this level of consciousness. Hegel's response to this perception required the negation of such a partial discourse and the subsequent movement to a more self-conscious discourse. And this negation in search of a complete discourse was Hegel's confrontation with his own nothingness, his own death.

Darby argues that Hegel's "merging" of his consciousness with the body of Napoleon, the merging of thought and action, constituted an act of death, as understood in Socratic terms, in order to be reborn in a new synthesis.¹⁰⁴ But both Hegel and Napoleon exist in time. Hence, they are mortal. How, then, can

Eternity be achieved in Time? How can the fully self-conscious monad of Hegel/Napoleon step out of the magic circle of a temporal discourse? Kojève's answer is the Book, the Phenomenology. While Hegel has shuffled off the mortal coil, he has left behind a Book that is in his own terms the distillation of eternity-in-history.

If such a claim seems exaggerated it might be pointed out that for Christians, the Bible, as the word of God, is the discourse of Eternity as spoken in Time. Kojève makes this claim regarding the Phenomenology. Just as the Bible is considered by Christians to be the expression of God in the world, so too can Hegel's book be considered as the expression of Eternity in the post-Hegelian world. And just as the Bible provides a complete discourse for Christians, so too does the Phenomenology provide a complete discourse, a magic circle outside of which modern man cannot step.

Indeed, in Hegelian terms, the only way to step outside Hegelian science is to return to complete unself-consciousness, or animality. To do that, however, would necessitate the destruction of Western civilization. And even if that should happen, Hegel would no doubt argue that any newly emerging march towards civilization by men would only repeat the same recovery of self-consciousness. To that extent, then, Time as History is Time as Eternity. In the same fashion, it could be said that Christianity could be destroyed if the Bible and all its influences could be erased. To do so, of course, would require

the complete elimination of 2,000 years of Western history.

What the Phenomenology does in effect, then, is kill the Bible, negate the Judeo-Christian discourse as the mode of conceptualization, or the magic circle, within which man dwells. To achieve this, however, Hegel himself had to die; that is, he had to negate his Christian consciousness in order to move to a new dialectic, a new consciousness. Hegel's book, then, is a description of the suicide of a Christian consciousness. This psychic suicide required the killing of the Christian God. This is how Kojève describes Hegel's synthesis of Subject and Substance in the Concept of Absolute Spirit:

The Spirit-Absolute or the Subject-Substance, of which Hegel speaks, is not God. . . [For Hegel] Spirit is Man-in-the-World: the mortal Man who lives in a World without God and who speaks of all that exists in it and of all that he creates in it, including himself.¹⁰⁵

Kojève's claim that Hegel provides a complete discourse, complete Wisdom, raises the question of whether the Phenomenology can be refuted. The answer, it seems, is that it cannot be refuted on its own terms. There is, as it were, no stepping outside the magic circle unless one can provide another magic circle as complete as that offered by Hegel. Indeed, to participate in the book the reader is forced to partake of its meanings, if he is to understand it. Certainly, one can deny its Truth or get off the dialectical train at some point in the journey, but to do so is not to understand. Nor is simple denial of the discourse a refutation of that discourse.

Such a discursive encompassment is comparable to that of the

Bible. For a Christian, to participate in the Biblical discourse is to experience it as the revealed word of God. To deny God is to not understand the discourse. Conversely, to understand the Biblical discourse, to penetrate its deepest meaning, is to experience it. Equally, with the Phenomenology: to understand is to accept; to deny is not to understand.

In effect, what Hegel does in his negation of the Biblical discourse is to provide a discourse to set against it. Like the Bible, he too offers a complete logos that can account for the whole of history. It is thus a complete description of Eternity as Time, of Substance as Subject, as revealed by the attainment of complete Wisdom in the personage of the perfect and satisfied Sage. In short, the Phenomenology is the new Bible, with Hegel-as-God, creating a new world out of nothingness.

Now, Hegel's divinity is established only in principle. The actualization of Absolute Spirit throughout the world in the universal and homogeneous state requires work. This work, once fulfilled, would be Hegel's resurrection. That is, Hegel-as-Spirit would be resurrected in the new consciousness of the universal and homogeneous state. Thus, the Phenomenology is the holy Word of modernity and History is the eucharist that brings the Word and the World together. Or, to use Kojève's terminology: Concept, that coherent set of words by way of which Being is revealed to itself in the world, is identified with Time, which is man-in-the-world; that is, man in history. As he states:

Hegel's whole philosophy or 'Science,' therefore, can be summed up in the sentence cited: 'Time is the

Concept itself which is there in empirical existence' - that is, in real Space of World. Hegel. . . says that Nature is Space, where as Time is History. In other words: there is no natural, cosmic Time; there is Time only to the extent that there is History, that is, human existence - that is, speaking existence. Man who, in the course of History, reveals Being by his Discourse, is the 'empirically existing Concept,' and Time is nothing other than this Concept. Without Man, Nature would be Space and only Space. Only Man is in Time, and Time does not exist outside of Man; therefore, Man is Time, and Time is Man - that is, the 'Concept which is there in the [spatial] empirical existence' of Nature.¹⁰⁶

It is this atheism that turned Grant from his early acceptance of Hegel. That he recognized this atheism and its murder of the Christian God is certain. As he himself remarks:

According to Kojève, Hegel has produced the book (Bible) of wisdom which has definitely replaced the one with that title which we have had for two thousand years.¹⁰⁷

Grant saw that the fundamental assumption of Hegel's philosophy is that man is a time-bound creature and it is only in his responses to this existential condition that man derives meaning and purpose in life. In responding to his sense of time, to his awareness of death, man creates himself. History, then, is the process of that creative activity. Eternity, under this historicist formulation, is only the sum total of all historical events. That Grant understood the implications of this atheistic philosophy, there can be no doubt. As he remarks in

Time as History:

The modern concentration on man as historical is but an aspect of a whole way of conceiving temporality, which, it is claimed, allows us to understand more adequately the story not only of our own species, but of everything. . . The word 'history' does not mean a particular kind of reality, because it is used about

all forms of reality. It is what we must know about something to understand that something. . . History (call it, if you will 'process') is that to which all is subject, including our knowing . . . ¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, in "Tyranny and Wisdom," Grant applies to Kojève the Hegelian phrase on which Kojève based his interpretation of the German Idealist: "Was die Zeit betrifft, so ist sie der daseiende Begriff selbst." (As for Time, it is the empirically existing Concept itself). Thus, Grant saw in Hegel's Phenomenology, as interpreted by Kojève, the usurping of Biblical discourse by a modernist discourse, or, to put it differently, the displacement of a natural God-based logos by an historicist Man-based logos.

Grant, in conclusion, was originally attracted to Hegel because of what he thought to be its synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christian revelation. But his encounter with Kojève's Hegel, particularly under the tutelage of Strauss, showed him the synthesis was not possible. Kojève-Hegel spoke from a philosophic assumption, or, if you will, a discursive space that Grant does not reflect his existential experience. He has his Christian faith. He would possibly argue that Hegel's murder of God does not constitute proof that God does not exist. After all, denial is not refutation. As a Christian he could say that Hegel knows not of what he speaks.

At the same time, though, he recognizes that Hegel's atheistic consciousness is the dominating consciousness of modernity to the extent that appeals to God and Christian morality no longer carry authority.¹⁰⁹ I shall address this issue

later. Suffice to say at this point that Grant's self-prescribed task is to stir his society from the slumber of modern consciousness and reawaken it to the logos of God, to consciousness of eternity. That is, he seeks to have his fellow citizens hear the voice of God again. In this task Grant still follows Hegel despite his rejection of the Hegelian ontology. Like Hegel, Grant's constant concern was the moral reawakening of a society that he believed has lost its true soul. In this regard, Eric Voegelin's description of Hegel seems applicable to Grant: "As a philosopher Hegel had to be healthy enough to diagnose the spiritual state of society as diseased."¹¹⁰

Just how this spiritual reawakening is attempted is, as I have stated previously, to be undertaken in Part Two. In the meantime, though, I still have to show how Grant's consciousness, his discursive space, is outside that of the Hegelian, or modern, consciousness. I attempt this in Chapter Four through an exegesis of Strauss and Heidegger, arguing that in them Grant finds voices to help him speak against the Hegelian discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE HORIZON OF NATURE

In his "Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero," Leo Strauss argues against Hegel's universal and homogeneous state, suggesting it is the product of historicist assumptions. Such a state is predicated on the emancipation of passions which recognize no restraints, particularly a sacred or divine restraint, and, as such, cannot claim to be a synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem. Hegelian philosophy has taken Greek universality and Judeo-Christian homogeneity, but it has denied the concept of an eternal and unchanging order, dismissed the idea that human existence, as Grant puts it, has a "given highest purpose, and therefore an excellence which could be known and in terms of which all our activities could be brought into some order."¹¹¹ Hegel's state, in short, is a product of that modernist rejection of a restraining eternal realm.

According to Strauss, the modernist tradition began with Machiavelli's The Prince and Hobbes's Leviathan. With them began a conscious turn from the firm morality demanded by the Bible and the excellence demanded by classical ethics. Such a break resulted in a lowering of standards to the degree that man posits the satisfaction of his own desires in the here-and-now as his most worthy end. Gone is the notion that man's truer or best end is in contemplation and imitation of a natural and eternal order. What Hobbes and Machiavelli did, in effect, was to reject

the need for a transcendent order as the standard to which man's ordering of the temporal world must conform.⁸ The modern discourse proclaimed man as his own standard-setter. The consequence of this claim meant the rejection of those standards of political, theological and philosophical norms that had held sway since classical Greece. As Stanley Rosen remarks: "Modernity arises as a 'project,' namely, as the conscious rejection (by a few remarkable individuals) of antiquity."⁹

Hegel's thought, according to Strauss, extends that of Hobbes. Hegel, he says, "construct(s) human society by starting from the untrue assumption that man as man is thinkable as a being that lacks awareness of sacred restraints or as a being that is guided by nothing but a desire for recognition."¹⁰ Grant echoes this argument in arguing that the classical goal of private moral virtues being grounded in an emulation of the eternal order has been substituted for the social virtue of universal recognition as espoused by Hobbes and Hegel.¹¹

But for Grant, following Strauss, the rejection of antiquity is a rejection of philosophy; that is, the end of the search for wisdom, and its replacement with an historical mindedness that leads to such perversions of philosophy as ideology and relativism and, ultimately, the tyranny of the universal and homogeneous state. Both, however, see this historicism as erroneous.

In the first place, historicism subordinates the world of nature to the world of human action, thus ignoring a

universal a priori of human existence in nature. The natural ground, says Strauss, is the source of any effort to understand what human existence is and, hence, the source of all thinking regarding universal principles such as right and justice. This is to say that lacking a teleological philosophy of nature, history has no knowable order.

Following this, Strauss argues that there is a philosophy of nature implicit in Kojeve's interpretation of Hegel. Kojeve's differentiation of the human - or historical - and the natural presupposes a concept of nature in which this distinction can be made. And it is this conception of nature that allows Kojeve's Hegel to provide a paradigm for the historical process. In other words, nature remains the horizon of history, Strauss argues. Hegel's notion that desire begins history and its satisfaction ends history is, according to Strauss, for all intents a philosophy of nature, despite Kojeve's arguments to make the theory of desire distinct from nature.¹¹⁶ As Strauss remarks:

To the extent to which the historical process is accidental, it cannot supply man with a standard, and . . . if that process has a hidden purpose, its purposefulness cannot be recognized except if there are transhistorical standards. The historical process cannot be recognized as progressive without previous knowledge of the end or purpose of the process.¹¹⁷

For Strauss, then, historicism, the historical consciousness, is itself an arbitrary and abstract interpretation imposed on nature. Accordingly, concepts of right and justice are regarded as mutable, belonging to the historical world rather than the natural world. Grant argues similarly: "According to

[the historicists] all human thought is historical and hence unable to ever grasp anything eternal."¹¹⁸

The consequence of such thinking is historicism's inability to uphold any objective standards by which men can govern their actions and give meaning to their lives, according to Strauss. The rejection of natural right, with its doctrine that men have a natural end that determines what is good for them, leads to a nihilistic historicism in which all principles become mere preferences, all horizons merely the opinion or doxa of the age. No truth has validity beyond its historical context, and no individual thinker can provide a truth that is universally true for all time.¹¹⁹

As a result morality and ethics are whatever the dominant opinions or ideologies of the day determine them to be. And even these, following the logic of historical relativism, are ultimately unsupportable, since historical man recognizes that all his truths are inherently subjective. Again, Grant makes this point:

. . . once we know that horizons are relative and man-made, their power to sustain us is blighted. Once we know them to be relative, they no longer horizon us. We cannot live in an horizon when we know it to be one. When the historical sense teaches us that our values are not sustained in the nature of things, impotence descends.¹²⁰

But it is here that Strauss and, following him, Grant, detects the worm at the heart of historicism. If historicism denies the possibility of any knowledge of the absolute, if it asserts the utter relativism of all standards, then, Strauss

argues, is it not itself subject to its own claims?

Historicism asserts that all human thoughts or beliefs are historical; and hence deservedly destined to perish; but historicism itself is a human thought; hence historicism can be of only temporary validity, or it cannot be simply true. To assert the historicist thesis means to doubt it and thus to transcend it. . . . Historicism thrives on the fact that it inconsistently exempts itself from its own verdict about all human thought.¹²¹

Historicism, then, is guilty of that which it accuses philosophy; that is, it is guilty of dogmatism and arbitrariness.¹²² As Strauss says: Historicism is another image on the wall of Plato's cave, the "guise in which dogmatism likes to appear in our age."¹²³

Yet, in this failing of historicism, Strauss sees the possibility of leaving the cave and reawakening to philosophic comprehension of the world. He argues that the application of historicist premises to historicism itself results, ultimately, in a non-historicist recognition that the fundamental problems that require man's theoretical attention have remained basically unchanged throughout history. Rather than legitimizing historicism, history seems to show that all human thought is concerned with the same fundamental themes and problems. For Strauss, this suggests the existence of an unchanging framework of theoretical principles or concepts that persist despite changing conditions and factual knowledge.¹²⁴

Grant, likewise, finds in the persistence of fundamental concerns the possibility for a renewal of philosophic thinking and natural law and, therefore, the possibility of transcending

historicism.¹²⁵ But he cautions that philosophic thinking, while of necessity ascribing to universal absolutes, must take into account the nature of historicist thinking, without taking its soundness for granted.

The task of thought among those held by something which cannot allow them to make the complete 'yes' to time as history, is not to inoculate themselves against their present, but first to enter what is thought in that present.¹²⁶

Grant's entrance into the thought of the present - into the discourse of historicism, if you will - is through his attempt to understand those thinkers who have thought modernity most clearly.¹²⁷ Those minds are Nietzsche and Heidegger. While Grant cites Nietzsche as the thinker who "thought the conception of time as history more comprehensively than any other modern thinker,"¹²⁸ there is a distinct Heideggerian presence in Grant's discourse on historicism. In fact, some critics argue that Grant's interpretation of Nietzsche essentially reflects Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche.¹²⁹ Grant himself acknowledges Heidegger as "the great understander of the modern,"¹³⁰ and says that Nietzsche cannot be understood apart from Heidegger.

With this in mind, I shall largely restrict my approach to Grant's response to historicism to detailing its Heideggerian influences. Not only does Heidegger's "enucleation" of modernity aid Grant's thinking through of historicism, but Heidegger's philosophic response to modernity is, in many ways, echoed by Grant, despite their great differences.

It is worth noting that Strauss, in his criticism of radical historicism, had Heidegger in mind, even though he never mentions him by name.¹³¹ Similarly, while Grant constantly refers to Nietzsche in his enucleation of historicism, there are only a few directly acknowledged appropriations of Heidegger's thought in Grant's writings, even though his influence on Grant is, as I shall show, readily apparent. In particular, Grant's notion about the power of language to both enclose and disclose thought strongly parallels Heidegger's thinking.¹³² In one reference to Heidegger, Grant cites Heidegger's "beautiful metaphor" of language as the house of Being to convey his own argument about the confinements of the modern discourse.¹³³

This idea of language as "the house of Being,"¹³⁴ the home in which man dwells, suggests something quite different from Hegel's conception of language as a tool or medium for historical action. Where Hegel posits an anthropological vision of Being in which man is the creator of Being to the degree that he negates Nature and transforms the world by his thoughts and actions, Heidegger argues for a more fundamental ground of Being. For Heidegger, man, in his essence, is not primarily a creator; rather he is a revealer of Being, and language is one of the modes by which man reveals Being. For Hegel action is a negation to alter the world to satisfy our desires. The Hegelian philosophy of history is grounded in the subjective; history is the movement to achieve the conjunction of what is and what we want. By contrast, Heidegger posits a notion of the historical

process which, in its highest and best fulfillment, is essentially passive in that it is a "letting be" or a "preserving" of what is, of given-Being.

Michael Roth makes this argument in suggesting that for Heidegger the goal of history is not the justification of a self-satisfied civilization. Such a concept of history, as Roth points out, "depends on a notion of the person as the 'Subject of beings' or even the 'tyrant of Being.'" Heidegger, according to Roth, did not see the crowning glory of man to be the "lord of beings," but rather as the "shepherd of Being."¹³⁵

Language, for Heidegger, then, structures man's relationship to the world, to all that is: "it is the disclosure of the whole, the totality of being, with which individual beings are present to us."¹³⁶ Grant says something similar in positing the need to apprehend how man's "forms of thought" are both shapers of and shaped by language. For both thinkers the apprehension of language is the key to comprehending modernity in all its equivalent expressions; historicism, positivism, technology and will, for example.

In this regard it is worth comparing Heidegger's and Grant's appreciation of the language of historicism as it is manifested in the modern technological society. Consider, for example, the similarities in their respective statements on technology. Grant states:

We can hold in our minds the enormous benefits of technological society, but we cannot so easily hold the way it may have deprived us, because technique is ourselves. All descriptions of definitions of technique

which place it outside ourselves hide from us what it is. This applies to the simplest accounts which describe technological advance as new machines and inventions as well as to the more sophisticated which included within their understanding the whole hierarchy of interdependent organizations and their methods. Technique comes forth from and is sustained in our vision of ourselves as creative freedom, making ourselves, and conquering the chances of an indifferent world.¹³⁷

Heidegger, similarly, remarks:

. . . the essence of technology is by no means anything technological. Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it. Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.¹³⁸

For both, then, technology is not simply a means to an end, a human activity in which equipment, machines and tools are manufactured and used to serve specific purposes. Nor can technology be controlled for proper ends by the easy assumptions that it is man who masters technology. Rather, technology embodies a way of thinking, a world-view, an horizon of meaning and purpose - or lack of - in which man dwells. And, for Grant and Heidegger, the central ontology of that horizon, that world-view, is historicism.

History, according to Heidegger, is the revelation of Being through Time.¹³⁹ Man's entire identity he argues, is embedded in historicity, in a time-bound factual-historical experience. Man does not live in time as if it were some abstract movement external to his being. Rather, he lives time. In other words,

time-as-history is the ground and the horizon of our existence, the totality of all our knowledge and experience.¹⁴⁰ Modern man, with his historicist mindset, is entirely subjective; that is, he is the measure of all truth, the measure of all ethical and political life. The ancient grounding of universal principles in nature or a transcendent God is completely lowered to the perceptions, feelings, opinions and desires of the human subject. The essence of man is seen as a receptive freedom that makes of the world what it will, as it serves man's freely-chosen purposes. Man is, as it were, above and beyond nature.¹⁴¹

The consequence of this, says Heidegger, is that historical man has lost the encompassing presence of the what is, the Being of the things of the world. Modern man has forgotten Being. The question of Being is transformed into the question of the nature of reality, a reality that is always an object of some kind. It was this turning away from Being, and the consequent objectification of nature and subjectification of man on which Western civilization was built.¹⁴²

Heidegger pinpoints the onset of the modern subjectivist, historical consciousness to Descartes' view of man as complete self-consciousness in which all self-certainty, all knowledge comes from within man himself. Man represents reality to himself by setting it up as something against himself, something that appears to him as an object of thought. Gone is the effort to behold the truly real, the Beingness of the world; instead man takes himself as the being who determines the world, the being

who determines Being. Hence, if man is the measure of all things, all things must be measured, and mastered, including man himself.¹⁴³

Heidegger traces this subjectivism to its ultimate extreme in Nietzsche's interpretation of Being as only one of the many beings that are always becoming in a world that is in constant flux. And, it is with Nietzsche, who, in arguing that the world was always becoming and is governed only by the will to power, that historicism reaches its endpoint.¹⁴⁴

With the consciousness that 'God is dead,' there begins the consciousness of a radical revaluing of the highest values hitherto. Man himself, according to this consciousness, passes over into . . . the will to power, [which] is experienced and accepted expressly as the reality of the real, as the Being of everything that is. With this, the self-consciousness in which modern humanity has its essence completes its last step.¹⁴⁵

Thus, says Heidegger, there comes into the world the completely historicist man, the man who conceives of everything, including himself, in a subject-object dualism: "Man is only insofar as he perceives and thinks, and the world is only insofar as it can be thought and perceived."¹⁴⁶

But the result of this absolute historicism is, to paraphrase Nietzsche, knowers who are unknown to themselves. In other words, man has abstracted nature to such an extent that he no longer knows it in its immediate concreteness. Calculating reason has become man's only way of relating to the world. Such reasoning, however, makes of everything an object that is to be dominated by a subject. The world is no longer a home, no longer

a ground for morality and meaning, but an other to be mastered and subdued by will. Nature as the horizon for meaning and purpose disappears through mastery and manipulation, and man establishes the world in which the issue of will is dominant.¹⁴⁷

For modern man, then, will to power defines the essence of historicism, according to Heidegger. Man, in his alienation from the world, turns to history to make a place for himself. History, in this sense, is the objectification of past occurrence. This objectified History is continually remade, according to the exigencies of the particular age.

In this manner History not only fails to establish a secure place for man but indeed itself becomes . . . the crucial weapon in the struggle for power and thereby more thoroughly fosters human insecurity and alienation. History thus serves only as an apologetic and polemic for the various conflicting forces concerned with objectification and exploitation.¹⁴⁸

In short, History becomes Historicism, which, in turn, becomes ideology, as it replaces all other ways of thinking, including philosophy, as "the determinative explanation of human life."¹⁴⁹

This will to will that is inherent in historicism finds its clearest manifestation in technology, according to Heidegger. Technology reveals the Being of beings as will; that is, the will willing itself as the truth, the justice and the good of whatever is. In this light, historicism-as-will, by way of technology, is a transformation of Being-in-the-world.¹⁵⁰ Being in the technological world is only real to the extent that it is objectifiable, measurable and quantifiable.

But such a state of being is inauthentic, says Heidegger, in

that it denies to man an awareness of his proper and necessary relationship to all beings, including his own Being. Will conceals man's true Being. In claiming Being as will, man is estranged from himself, from his destiny to be more than a maker of history. Indeed, Heidegger argues that this estrangement from true Being delivers man into a nihilistic world, in which reason can find no ground for any meanings beyond those offered by the dominating will.¹⁵¹

At the same time, though, Heidegger argues that the nihilism of the modern world carries the seeds of a revelation of new Being. And the task of thinking, he says, is to bring this Being into existence through the "destructive recollection" of what it is. Heidegger, almost like Strauss, argues that the envisioning of the world as technique and will is only an "historical option, a certain dispensation that was inaugurated at a certain point in our history."¹⁵² Of course, man cannot set that dispensation aside and return to a pre-historicist, pre-technological society. But if he is to achieve a proper relationship to this "historical option" he must come to see it for what it is: "The sole route that leads anywhere passes through the contemporary axiomatic thought and through its invisible foundations."¹⁵³ In other words, only by thinking and recollecting the absence of Being, in its historical grounding, can the truth of Being become present again.

Certainly, Heidegger denies the simple historicist claim that everyone is a product of their time and cannot rise above

it. Such an argument assumes that man is solely determined by his historical circumstances, by an objective world that imposes a limit on what man can and cannot know and experience of the "truth." But Heidegger believes such historicism is based on the mistaken notion of man as embedded in a subject-object dualism. The truth, in Heidegger's view, is that man is fundamentally characterized by his relationship to Being, whether he forgets it or not.¹⁵⁴ And Being is ahistorical; that is, eternal.

From this atemporal point of view "history is a collection of the various projections of eternity upon temporality."¹⁵⁵ Still, Heidegger argues, this eternal Being can only be known through time. And time is temporality, finitude and historicity. That is, Being can only make its appearance in history, in the temporal horizon of beings-in-the-world, in the movement of language over time. This occurs, Heidegger states, when man grasps that the history to which he is bound is "the truth of the absence of Being in the rule of will."¹⁵⁶ Man then discovers, or re-discovers, that his proper involvement with the Being of the world - the world of nature - is that of "letting be," of nullifying the will, rather than that of calculating, determining, mastering and willing the things-that-are.¹⁵⁷

Given this, Heidegger's philosophy can be seen as "radical historicism,"¹⁵⁸ to use Strauss's phrase. While Heidegger grounds his ontology in an eternal Being, he still asserts that this Being, or its manifestations, whether authentic or not, are essentially dependent on historical situations for their

revelation. But while these revelations have no rational goal or ultimate purpose or meaning outside of history, History itself "is not a rational process."¹⁵⁹

Despite this radical historicism, there are deep undercurrents of Heidegger's thought in Grant's thinking. Like Heidegger, Grant believes that "recollection," even a destructive recollection, is a necessary prelude to stepping out of historicism's confinements. Like Heidegger, Grant sees the domination of will as the essence of historicism. He too links historicism to technology, seeing in both the manifestations of a subjectivity that aims to objectify and subordinate all that is to will. Even his language, in its explication of the subject-object dualism as the western world's primal, has distinct Heideggerian overtones:

. . . what is given in the modern paradigm is the project of reason to gain objective knowledge. What is meant by objective? Object means literally some thing that we have thrown over against ourselves . . . The German word for object is Gegenstand - that which stands against. Reason as project (that is, reason as thrown forth) is the summoning of something before us and the putting of questions to it, so that is it forced to give its reasons for being the way it is as an object. Our paradigm is that we have knowledge when we represent anything to ourselves as object, and question it, so that it will give us its reasons.¹⁶⁰

And, again like Heidegger, Grant argues that technique, as an exemplar of the historicist mindset, has replaced nature as the paradigm for human activity. All social actions, concepts and constructions are now situated within technique rather than influenced and framed by the external necessities and limits imposed by nature.

Grant contrasts this with past traditions in which nature was the stage on which all that there is appeared to man; the paradigm within which all standards of morality and justice, good and evil, purpose and meaning, were thought and acted. There was, he says, a perceived order to the universe. And it was because this order appeared to be beyond complete human understanding that it could be used as the standard against which man could judge his knowledge and actions. But in the world of historicism, man has traded the external standard of nature for an internal standard of his own willed creation. Man no longer accepts the natural definitions of reality; rather he defines what is natural and real in terms of his own will.

The belief in the mastering of knowledge of human and non-human beings arose together in the very way we conceive our humanity as an Archimedean freedom outside nature, so that we can creatively will to shape the world to our values.¹⁶¹

The consequence of this willing of the world, this claim that man is a sovereign subject and the source of all values and morality, is, according to Grant, nihilism. Following Heidegger, he argues that man, in having lost the eternal paradigm with its setting forth of a highest purpose to which man was subordinate, has come to view himself as the sole arbiter of purpose in the world. But historicism, in claiming the relativism of all conceptual ordering of the world and the reduction of all experiential truths to ideologies, has left man homeless and alienated, existing in a meaningless world.¹⁶²

Thus, like Heidegger, Grant sees willing as the essence of

modern man's relationship to himself and to the world. And he too rejects this conception, rejects willing as the truth of man's Being. Likewise, he echoes Heidegger in positing the belief that man's proper relationship to the world needs to be one of receptiveness rather than willfulness. As he puts it:

It may be that at any time or place, human beings can be opened to the whole in their loving and thinking, even as its complete intelligibility eludes them.¹⁶³

In living well together or being open to the whole in thought we are fulfilling the purpose which is given us in being human.¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, while Grant's recognition of language as a way of responding to the enclosures of modernity borrows from Heidegger, Grant is no Heideggerian. In the first place, Grant rejects Heidegger's claim that man's truest revelation of Being is his acceptance of his finite freedom, and that his authentic receptivity to Being is a projection of potentiality that surmounts any historical actuality. Nor does Grant accept Heidegger's contention that there is no transcendent, eternal, unalterable good to which man is subordinate.¹⁶⁵

Grant, following Strauss, claims that Heidegger makes his case against historicism from within what amounts to an essentially historicist assumption that man is essentially free to create himself as he sees fit and that he is ultimately responsible for his Being.¹⁶⁶ In particular, Grant cannot abide Heidegger's claim that Nietzsche's dictum, that "God is Dead," means only that the God of morality is dead. To think the possibility of morality without that God is not to understand

that without God there can be no authoritative morality, and that is to exclude what is basic and essential to Christianity.¹⁶⁷ Morality, says Grant, "is above all concerned with the frontiers and limitations of making,"¹⁶⁸ which, in turn, requires a language of absolute good and evil that speaks within the restraints of an eternal discourse or logos. Thus, for Grant, to abandon God for historicism is to destroy any sustaining moral standards by which man could order his soul and his society.

In conclusion, then, I believe I have in this part of the discussion established the nature of the modern discourse and why Grant cannot accept it as an authoritative account of his own consciousness, and why, as a result, he feels dispossessed of an authentic voice in the modern project. At the same time, I believe I have pointed to the discourse and the space of which, and in which, Grant speaks. Essentially, I have argued that Grant's logos is not that of modernity. Or, to put it differently, the modern discourse reflects the world of man-space, or Time as History; Grant's discourse reflects the world of God-space, or Time as Eternity.

Grant sees his philosophic task to be that of "enucleating" the modern historicist discourse and finding a space for God's voice. But the difficulty, as Grant well knew, is that the modern discourse, with its radical colonization from within of the psyche of the modern world,¹⁶⁹ has made the articulation of any authoritative alternative to the modern project almost

impossible.

But the key word here is "almost." Indeed, the word "almost" is a qualifier to which Grant frequently resorts. Recall, for example, Grant's statement about the enclosure of language that I quoted in Chapter One and how, as he states, "it is almost impossible to articulate publicly any suggestion of loss, and perhaps even more frightening, almost impossible to articulate it to ourselves." I pointed out that his use of the word "publicly" implies another way of speaking, a "private" speaking, as it were. And I suggested that such a differentiation between the two words sets up the notion that Grant's discourse is operating of two levels, the exoteric and esoteric levels.

Consider another example: Grant concludes English-Speaking Justice on a seemingly despairing note, saying ". . . it is improbable that the transcendence of justice over technology will be lived among English-speaking people."¹⁷⁰ There is, I suggest, little difference in meaning between "improbable" and "almost impossible." But I argue that both the word and the phrase function ironically; that is, they imply the opposite. In functional terms they place a caveat on the seemingly despairing statements in which they appear. While the latter statement seems at first glance to suggest the unlikelihood of transcendence justice and the former disparages the likelihood of a full articulation of the modernist dispossession, a closer reading of the text suggests Grant is implying something markedly different to that of his exoteric remarks.

I could, perhaps, be accused of reading too much into these qualifiers. But I think not. Grant himself provides supporting evidence. In the essay "Canadian Fate and Imperialism," Grant discusses the Vietnam War and remarks how Canada's indirect involvement in that war pushed him "to the point where the civilization almost ceases to be one's own." But in the very next sentence, he states: "Yet it is impossible to give up the word 'almost.'" ¹⁷¹ Similarly, in the essay "Faith and the Multiversity," he says man hungers for the bread of eternity, and he asserts that in ways "almost impossible" to perceive man can trust he is offered such bread. ¹⁷²

What such statements imply is that for Grant there remains the possibility of an alternative, the possibility of bringing light into the modern darkness. Grant's alternative, of course, is his Christian faith. Yet, as I have previously noted, this is not an alternative that Grant can assert with great confidence of it being accepted in the modern realm. The language of God is dead; the language of historicism reigns.

Still, for Grant, his discursive space, his language of Good, provides a critical perspective, a space from which he can try to articulate a set of meanings other than those offered by modernity, even though these meanings have lost most of their authority in the modern world. It is those meanings that provide Grant with the ability to imagine something to set against modernity. To assert an "almost" is, at the very least, to find a hairline fracture in the encircling wall of modernity. As one

We have been left with no words which cleave together and summon out of uncertainty the good of which we may sense the dispossession.⁴⁵

Yet, I argue, Grant's linguistic dispossession is not what it at first appears to be. Grant's deliberate use of the word publicly in the above quotation offers a clue to what I am getting at in this thesis, in arguing that Grant's claim of dispossession is, in part, like many of his other so-called negative or destructive discursive statements, a rhetorical or poetic device by which he can make his own voice heard amidst the cacophony of the modern discourse.

Implicit in the word publicly is its opposite, privately; that is, perhaps the dispossession of which Grant cannot speak publicly, can possibly be voiced privately and, in the articulation, reclaim a space from which the modern discourse dispossesses him. What this sets up is the idea that Grant's discourse is operating on two levels; a public, or exoteric, level, and an esoteric, or private, level. Such is my contention. Grant's speech-act, I argue, can only be understood in its totality if it is recognized as operating in this double-level fashion.

The idea of exoteric and esoteric textual levels needs, perhaps, some clarification. Put simply, I am saying that there is an interior - or esoteric - discourse or speech that is "hidden" in the exterior - or exoteric - form of Grant's speech. Moreover, I argue that Grant deliberately adopted such a form of philosophic writing. Now, there is nothing particularly unusual

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critic remarks, Grant speaks of the improbability, not the impossibility of manifesting God's justice in the modern world.¹⁷³

Most critics, however, in concluding that modernity presented an impasse to which Grant could offer no legitimate or authoritative alternative, have ignored Grant's qualifiers, his "almosts." I would argue, though, that given such qualifiers, such stylistic touches, the "form" of Grant's discourse must be read more deeply if its "content" is to be fully understood. Certainly, an exoteric reading confirms Grant's sense of dispossession, his alienation, his confinements. And Grant himself frequently confesses his inability to put forward the analyses necessary to prove his claims against modernity.¹⁷⁴ Such admissions have reinforced the notion of the Grantian impasse. But an esoteric reading, a tracking of those "almosts," points to something deeper, to a private or silent speech that can provide a space for the "recollection" of those goods of which, in Grant's view, western man has been dispossessed in his public speech.

O'Donovan notes this functional or rhetorical aspect to Grant's discursive "recollection," remarking that it is of necessity a solitary or private act because there is no "coherent language" in the modern realm of speech to communicate what must be recollected.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, Eli Mandel points out that Grant's philosophic writing "has its meaning . . . in his sense of how it is possible at all to speak of God in history, when it is

necessary, and what sorts of reticence are called for."¹⁷⁶

What such comments suggest is that there is an unsaid side to Grant's discourse. My task in Part Two is to bring out the forms, the how, of this private or esoteric speech.

ENDNOTES TO PART ONE

1. Wilhelm von Humboldt, quoted by Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. by Susanne Langer, (New York, 1953), p. 9.
2. See Philippe Wolff, Western Languages, A.D. 100 - 1500, trans. by Frances Partridge, (London, 1971), pp. 111-12. Wolff, discussing medieval thought on language, writes: "There was a general idea that what had been lost among these diverse tongues was the essential and primitive bond which had united a thing and its name ever since the time of the Creation. The languages at Babel were arbitrary and had no connection with things."
3. See Wilbur Urban, Language and Reality, (London, 1939), p. 22. He argues that reflection on language was and still is one of Western man's oldest and most constant concerns.
4. Cited by Urban, p. 30.
5. Cited by Wolff, p. 99.
6. See George Seffler, Language and the World, (Atlantic Heights, N.J., 1974), p. xviii. Also, Wolff, p. 110.
7. Cited by Seffler, p. xviii.
8. Norbert Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society, (New York, 1967), pp. 101 - 128.
9. George Grant, Time as History, (Toronto, 1969), p. 1.
10. Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra Moral Sense," in The Portable Nietzsche, Walter Kaufmann, tr. and ed., (New York, 1968), pp. 46-47. Nietzsche's statement is worth noting in full: "What then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms - in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are. . ."
11. Grant, Time as History, p. 2.
12. George Grant, Technology and Justice, (Toronto, 1986), pp. 35-41.
13. Mandel, p. 164.

14. Allen Thiher, Words in Reflection: Modern Language Theory and Postmodern Fiction, (Chicago and London, 1984), p. 29. I am indebted to Deborah Knight's essay Critical Practice and Critical Idioms: The Modern and Postmodern in Political, Cultural and Literary Theory, unpublished M.A. research essay, (Ottawa, 1986). Her essay introduced me to Thiher's writing, among others, and provided me with a concise overview of modernist and postmodernist language theory.
15. Thiher, p. 29.
16. Michel Foucault, Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A.M. Sheridan-Smith, (New York, 1976), p. 49.
17. Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other writings, 1972 - 1977, ed. Colin Gordon, (New York, 1980), p. 118. See also Alan Sheridan, Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth, (London, 1980), p. 98.
18. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, (New York, 1973), pp. 372-373.
19. Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," Untying the Text, Robert Young, ed., (Boston, 1981), p. 67.
20. Ibid, p. 68.
21. Reiss, p. 21.
22. Ibid, p. 28.
23. Ibid, p. 67.
24. Ibid, pp. 68-69.
25. Ibid, p. 30.
26. See Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, (Chicago, 1966), chapter 1, pp. 1-33.
27. George Grant, Technology and Justice, (Toronto, 1986), p. 36.
28. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, 2nd ed., (Toronto, 1966), pp. 28-32.
29. Quoted by Knight, p. 7.
30. Tom Darby, "Reflections on Technology: An Excursus as Introduction," Sojourns in the New World: Reflections on Technology, ed. and intro. by Tom Darby, (Ottawa, 1986), p. 8.

31. O'Donovan, p. 178.
32. Arthur Kroker, Technology and the Canadian Mind, (Montreal, 1984), p. 25.
33. Abraham Rotstein, "Running from Paradise," The Canadian Forum, (May, 1969), p. 26.
34. Laurence Lampert, "The Uses of Philosophy in George Grant," in Schmidt, p. 181.
35. Schmidt, "George Grant and the Problem of History," p. 136.
36. Ian Box, "George Grant and the Embrace of Technology," Canadian Journal of Political Science, XV: 3, (September, 1982), p. 504.
37. Lampert, in Schmidt, pp. 181, 192.
38. Kroker, pp. 50-51.
39. Dennis Lee, "Grant's Impasse," By Loving Our Own, pp. 26-27.
40. O'Donovan, p. 172.
41. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 67.
42. On this point, see Lampert, in Schmidt, p. 128.
43. Grant. Technology and Empire, (Toronto, 1969), p. 139. My emphasis.
44. Dennis Lee, "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space," Boundary 2, 3, no. 1, (Fall, 1974), p. 161.
45. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 139.
46. See, especially, Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing, (Glencoe, 1952), pp. 25-36.
47. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science, Book V, No. 381, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York, 1974), p. 343.
48. Edwin Heaven and David Heaven, "Some Influences of Simone Weil on George Grant's Silence," in Schmidt, p. 75.
49. Grant, Time as History, p. 1.
50. Ibid, p. 4.
51. I have borrowed the comparison from Venour, p. 1.

52. See O'Donovan, Chp. 1, pp. 8 - 27, for what she calls Grant's "Liberal-synthesizing phase." She remarks that Grant held out hope "for future reconciliation of 'history' and 'eternity' [because of] his faith in [Hegel's] dialectical progression of reason in time." p. 10.
53. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. vii.
54. Ibid, p. 20, 77. The "moving image" quotation is taken from Plato's Timaeus, 37d.
55. Ibid, p. viii.
56. Grant, Technology and Empire, (Toronto, 1969), pp. 26 - 37.
57. Frank Flinn, "Bibliographical Introduction," in Schmidt, p. 197.
58. Paul Edwards, chief ed., "Historicism," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 4, (New York, 1967), pp. 22-25.
59. Quoted by O'Donovan, p. 51.
60. Grant, Technology and Justice, pp. 84-85.
61. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. 22.
62. Grant, Lament for a Nation, (Toronto, 1965), p. 89.
63. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 72.
64. Ibid, p. 128.
65. Grant, Time as History, pp. 3-4.
66. George Grant, English-Speaking Justice, (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1985) pp. 17-21, 78-80. This book was originally published in 1974.
67. Grant, Technology and Justice, pp. 79-95.
68. O'Donovan, p. 5.
69. Grant, Time as History, pp. 1-2.
70. Ibid, p.6. Also, Grant, "Conversation," in Schmidt, p. 64.
71. Grant, Lament for a Nation, pp. 70-72.
72. O'Donovan writes that Strauss "reinterpreted to Grant the immediacies of his society through a far-reaching and systematic criticism of the western liberal tradition of

returning to the cave. Yet, as I have previously noted, Grant is said to have no language, no words, with which he can set his philosophic task against the contemporary shadows. How then did he practise his philosophizing? Or, to phrase the question more specifically: Since Grant was so obviously able to articulate his concerns and speak against modernity, despite its linguistic and conceptual confinements, what is the how of his philosophic speech?

The answer resides in Grant's appropriation of Strauss's distinction between what is true and what can be told about those truths; there are truths that simply cannot be stated in a didactic manner, or spoken in a completely exoteric fashion, if they are to be given a hearing. The truth must be offered esoterically and indirectly.

Strauss points out that the classical philosophers regularly disguised their true teachings to avoid rejection of their message, persecution or social ostracism. On the exoteric level the uninitiated reader is offered a discourse that appears both acceptable within the prevailing doxa and is of an edifying nature. But a closer reading reveals to the initiated reader - that is, the reader trained to philosophic thinking - a hidden, or esoteric, meaning more at odds with the prevailing climate of opinion and, hence, more subversive of the social and political order.⁶ This 'writing-between-the-lines,' as Strauss calls it, reflects both the philosopher's perception of his place in his society and his responsibility to that society.

87. Tom Darby, The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time, paperback edition, (Toronto, 1990), pp. 10-25.
88. See Darby, especially, pp. 90-117, 139-156.
89. Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," p. 124.
90. Ibid, p. 124.
91. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 104. In a footnote, Grant cryptically remarks that his "few words" on the Strauss-Kojève debate should be read in concert with Kojève's Introduction on Hegel and Hegel's Phenomenology. It should be noted that at the time of "Tyranny and Wisdom" being written in the early 1960s, there was no English translation of Introduction available. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Grant had access to the French version which included Kojève's "Death" essay.
92. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 87.
93. Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, p. 181. See also, O'Donovan's interpretation, pp. 70-71; and Venour, pp. 21-25, on the "three stages" of western history.
94. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 88.
95. Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," pp. 183-184.
96. Ibid, pp. 183-184. See also O'Donovan, p. 71.
97. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 90.
98. Ibid, p. 88.
99. Kojève, "Death." Kojève writes: "Now it is only by being, and by feeling himself to exist, in a universe without a beyond and without a God - that Man can affirm and make known his liberty, his historicity, and his individuality, 'unique in the world.'" p. 136.
100. Ibid, pp. 122-123. The bracketed insertion is mine.
101. Ibid, p. 123. Kojève states: "The Spirit that the Judeo Christians called 'God' is in reality Hegelian philosophy, to the extent that the latter is absolutely true, that is, to the extent that it reveals correctly and completely all that has been, is, and will be."
102. Darby, The Feast, pp. 197-205.

103. Quoted by Darby, The Feast, p. 202.
104. Ibid, pp. 206-207.
105. Kojève, "Death," pp. 122-123. My brackets.
106. Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 132-133.
107. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 90.
108. Grant, Time as History, p. 5.
109. On this point see, for example, Grant, "Conversation: Theology and History," in Schmidt, pp. 101-109.
110. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," Studium Generale, 24, (1971), p. 337.
111. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 128.
112. Leo Strauss, "The Three Waves of Modernity," An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays by Leo Straus, edited by Hilail Gildin, (Detroit, 1989), pp. 81-98.
113. Stanley Rosen, "Post-modernism and the End of Philosophy," Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, Vol. IX, No. 3, (Fall, 1985), p. 92.
114. Strauss, On Tyranny, p. 205. Venour makes the same observation, pp. 26-27.
115. Grant, Technology and Empire, pp. 104-105.
116. See Roth, pp. 126-127, for a full exegesis of Strauss's argument on this issue. Roth carries his analysis much further than I do, particularly in regard to the debate between Kojève and Strauss on whether the knowledge of the end of the historical process can be known, and, if so, what constitutes the criterion for that knowledge.
117. Strauss, Natural Right and History, (Chicago, 1950), p. 274.
118. Grant, Time as History, p. 12.
119. O'Donovan makes this point, too. p. 54.
120. Grant, Time as History, p. 29.
121. Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 25.
122. Ibid, pp. 30-31.

123. Ibid, p. 22.
124. Ibid, pp. 22-23.
125. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, pp. 109-112.
126. Grant, Time as History, p. 49.
127. O'Donovan, p. 107.
128. Grant, Time as History, p. 22.
129. Lampert, in Schmidt, pp. 186-187.
130. Grant, "Conversation," in Schmidt, pp. 66-67.
131. See Hilail Gildin, ed., "Introduction," An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays by Leo Strauss, (Detroit, 1989), pp. xxviii-xix.
132. See O'Donovan, pp. 108-119; and Lampert, in Schmidt, p. 186. O'Donovan, for instance, observes that by the late 1960s, Grant's interest in Heidegger was "still in early flowering," but as Grant delved more into the question of modernity, particularly technology, Heidegger's influence intensified. As to why neither Strauss nor Grant offer more explicit acknowledgement of Heidegger's influence, it is possible that given their own personal feelings regarding Nazi Germany and their knowledge of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism in the early 1930s, it may have been too politically sensitive even in the 1960s to have acknowledged Heidegger more overtly.
133. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 38.
134. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in Basic Writings, ed. D.F. Krell, (New York, 1977), pp. 193-242.
135. Roth, Knowing and History, pp. 62-64.
136. O'Donovan, p. 108.
137. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 137.
138. Martin Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology, trans. William Lovitt, (New York, 1977), p. 4.
139. Michael Gillespie, "Martin Heidegger," History of Political Philosophy, 3rd ed., Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., (Chicago, 1986), p. 903.
140. George Steiner, Heidegger, (Glasgow, 1978), pp. 73-77.

141. Michael Gillespie, Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History, (Chicago, 1984), pp. 124-125.
142. O'Donovan, p. 116.
143. Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, ed. William Lovitt, (New York, 1977), pp. 131-133, 147-148.
144. Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche," in Question Concerning Technology, pp. 95-97.
145. Ibid, p. 95.
146. Gillespie, Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History, p. 125.
147. Ibid, pp. 127-128.
148. Ibid, p. 129.
149. Ibid, p. 129.
150. A.F. Lingus, "On the Essence of Technique," Heidegger and the Quest for Truth, ed. by Manfred S. Frings, (Chicago, 1968), p. 127.
151. Gillespie, Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History, p. 133.
152. Lingus, p. 131.
153. Quoted by Lingus, p. 132.
154. Gillespie, Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History, p. 169.
155. Ibid, p. 153.
156. O'Donovan, pp 116-118.
157. William Barrett, The Illusion of Technique, (Garden City, 1978), p. 239.
158. See Gildin, p. xxviii.
159. Strauss, Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy, (Chicago, 1983), p. 30.
160. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 36.
161. Technology and Empire, p. 32.
162. See, for example, Grant's essay, "The University Curriculum, in Technology and Empire, pp. 113-133.

163. Grant, Time as History, p. 52.
164. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 42.
165. O'Donovan, pp. 118-119.
166. Ibid, p. 67.
167. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 76.
168. Grant, "Knowing and Making," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 4th series, 1975, p. 65.
169. I have borrowed the phrase from Kroker, p. 29.
170. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, p. 89.
171. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 76.
172. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 74.
173. William Christian, "The Magic of Art," in By Loving Our Own, pp. 193-194.
174. See, for example, "Religion and the State," and "Canadian Fate and Imperialism," in Technology and Empire, pp. 43 and 77.
175. O'Donovan, p. 168.
176. Mandel, p. 164.

PART TWO:

TRAILMARKERS

. . . is not Rhetoric the art of winning the soul by discourse.

- Plato, Phaedrus

Is language the adequate expression of all realities?¹

- Friedrich Nietzsche

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE PATH OF INDIRECTION

Throughout his career George Grant held that the purpose of philosophy was to define those standards by which society can properly function. As he wrote in 1951:

The study of philosophy is the analysis of the traditions of our society and the judgment of those traditions against varying intuitions of the Perfection of God. It is the contemplation of our own and others' activity, in the hope that in understanding it better we may make it less imperfect.²

Even earlier, in 1945 articles that look at the post-war era - The Empire: Yes or No? - and the future of Canadian nationalism - "Have we a Canadian Nation?" - Grant grounds his exhortations for supporting the British Commonwealth, and the need for Canada to hold to its conservative traditions, in the truths of philosophy and Christian revelation.³ Some thirty years later, he objected to the "simplification" of philosophy to little more than the ideological disputes of vested interest groups with little commitment to the good of the whole.⁴

Such statements point to a decidedly public role for the philosopher. Indeed, Grant was, as several critics point out, "the most public of philosophers."⁵ He was actively engaged in the life of his society, writing articles for popular magazines as well as professional journals. He was a regular contributor of book reviews to newspapers and he lectured frequently on radio programs.

In these functions Grant fulfills the philosopher's duty of

returning to the cave. Yet, as I have previously noted, Grant is said to have no language, no words, with which he can set his philosophic task against the contemporary shadows. How then did he practise his philosophizing? Or, to phrase the question more specifically: Since Grant was so obviously able to articulate his concerns and speak against modernity, despite its linguistic and conceptual confinements, what is the how of his philosophic speech?

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Strauss points out that the classical philosophers regularly disguised their true teachings to avoid rejection of their message, persecution or social ostracism. On the exoteric level the uninitiated reader is offered a discourse that appears both acceptable within the prevailing doxa and is of an edifying nature. But a closer reading reveals to the initiated reader - that is, the reader trained to philosophic thinking - a hidden, or esoteric, meaning more at odds with the prevailing climate of opinion and, hence, more subversive of the social and political order.⁶ This 'writing-between-the-lines,' as Strauss calls it, reflects both the philosopher's perception of his place in his society and his responsibility to that society.

The philosopher, says Strauss, is concerned with knowledge of the whole. Because of this the philosopher is not necessarily bound to the particularity of the regime in which he lives. In fact, his thinking may be actively opposed, or even destructive of, the opinions that support his particular regime. Hence, there is an antagonism between philosophic thought and the prevailing climate of opinion, between the philosopher and his society. At the same time, though, the philosopher is bound to his regime by his sense of responsibility to improve it and his recognition that society is a necessary form of human existence, both for others and for himself. The philosopher cannot survive outside the regime.

The philosopher's predicament is obvious. As a lover of wisdom, he wants men to seek knowledge, instead of accept the doxa. But, as a political philosopher, he recognizes that most men live by the conventions of their society and will dismiss those who argue against them. Thus, if the political philosopher is to communicate his truest teachings, those that go against the prevailing mode of thought, he must do so indirectly by structuring a hidden dialectic into his discourse. One way of doing this, according to Strauss, is through poetical speech.⁷ In using poetical speech the philosopher is engaged in a subtle subversion of his society. But it is a subversion whose purpose is to lead men to question their assumptions and, perhaps in the questioning, improve their regime.

That Grant adopts the techniques of indirect, or poetical

writing, cannot be doubted. He does so out of recognition that what he has to say, or, more precisely, the discourse out of which he speaks, is not acceptable to the conventions of his society. First and foremost is the fact that Grant is a Christian. While he never hides his faith, he knows it no longer embodies the authoritative speech for most moderns and, thus, can only be spoken circumspectly in the modern world, particularly if one wishes to be taken seriously by the intellectual and scientific elites.⁸

At one point in his life, Grant received "some glimmering" of an eternal order that weakened his faith in the civil theology of liberalism. But to argue didactically against the liberal faith, even with the certitude of his religious faith, would be, as Grant says, the imprudent dream of a neurotic.⁹ Indeed, Grant never explicitly discusses his religious faith in terms of trying to argue its premises, although it is certainly the foundation on which his moral philosophizing stands. Instead, he speaks his faith indirectly.

He is forced into this position, he says, because the modern discourse precludes the possibility of serious religious questions by reducing spirituality and its moral imperatives to a psychologism in which man is the helpless object of unconscious motives and attitudes.¹⁰ Because of this, because his discourse is not the modern discourse, Grant is forced to write indirectly and obliquely about his faith. As he states:

I have written indirectly all my life for one reason and one reason alone: I think there has been - I don't

think, I'm sure - in the last four centuries in the West, an intense and sustained attack on Christianity from within, and particularly by intellectual people. . . . Therefore I would see my work as a defence of two figures, Socrates and Christ. For different reasons. And therefore I have always written indirectly because I knew that the intellectual world or the world I inhabited was very hostile to both the figures I chiefly admired. That's why I haven't written directly.¹¹

Grant also says he writes indirectly because, in the academic environment in which he spent his career, religious questions were no longer the central concern of life, having been secularized into the dry debates of antiquarian scholarship.

If I wanted to have anything to say in [Canadian universities], I had to speak very indirectly. It was probably all right to talk about Socrates. But it was not all right to talk about Christ. I think the main thing is that there has been a sustained hostility to Christianity, which was powerful but hidden.¹²

This strategy of indirection is evident in Grant's description of his intentions in Time as History. His purpose, he says, is to "enucleate . . . the conception of time as history."¹³ As he states:

To enucleate means to extract the kernel of a nut, the seed of a tree. In the present case, there appears around us and in us the presence which western men have made - modern technical society. It has been made by men who did what they did out of a vision of what was important to do. In that vision was the conception of time as history. The word 'enucleation' implies that I am not simply interested in describing the manifestations of that vision [that is, participate in historicist explanation - my parentheses], for example the mastery of movement through space or the control of heredity. Rather I try to partake in the seed from which the tree of manifestation has come forth.¹⁴

This description of his purposes suggests, as O'Donovan observes, that Grant's "enucleation is a way of self-

understanding."¹⁵ That is, Grant's "partaking" of the seed of modernity, his extraction of the kernel of historicism, constitutes an effort to comprehend the predicament in which he finds himself and, in the comprehension, comes to terms with what he has found. Or, to keep to the terms of my hunting metaphor, Grant seeks to track the logos of modernity, to recognize the nature, habits and characteristics of a prey that would leave him powerless on the frontiers of his civilization. In effect, Grant engages in a dialectic battle of self-preservation, a battle that pits his language against a language that would deny him a voice.

In this regard, Grant's discourse amounts to a performative speech-act, in the sense of the term as used by J.L. Austin: an utterance that describes an act by the speaker in which the saying of the discourse is in itself the accomplishment of the action.¹⁶ Moreover, following Austin's terminology, Grant's explicitly performative verbal acts of "partaking" and "enucleating" constitute illocutionary acts in which the performance of the speech-act or the discourse is the goal and purpose of the utterance.

This illocutionary act is seen in Grant's rejection of time as history:

What then could be the position of those who cannot live through time as if it were simply history, who cannot believe that love of fate could be achieved together with the assertion of the finality of becoming, and yet must live in the dynamism of our present society. In that position there is a call to remembering and to loving and to thinking.¹⁷

The key words are the performative verbs: loving, thinking,

remembering. Grant does not explicitly say what is to be loved, remembered or thought in this desire to find the good in the realm of necessity. Yet, following Austin, these words constitute acts-in-the-world that counter that which would deny those capabilities.

What Grant is doing is engaging in a positive - if silent - response to the confinements of the modern language of will. That is, his performance of loving and remembering is an act in itself, rather than just a statement about something. In the act of speaking or writing, Grant engages in an escape attempt from what Frederic Jameson once called the prison house of language. This is to say that Grant's exhortation is not to be taken solely as a statement referring to something beyond or distinct from the act of its articulation. In Austin's terminology, Grant is engaged in the "performance of an act in saying something as opposed to the performance of an act of saying something."¹⁸

A parallel can be drawn between Grant's performative verbs and the act of religious worship or prayer. While on one level the act of prayer is, for a Christian, an action that points to something beyond itself, it is, at the same time, a performance that implicitly manifests or partakes of that to which it is directed. The praying subject has, as an object, the consciousness of God, but in the act of prayer there is implicitly a consciousness of God already being manifested. Thus, the prayer becomes the subject of a praying object, in the sense that it creates a discursive space wherein the divine presence

can make its appearance.

Prayer, in this sense, is an illocutionary form of spiritual exercise, an attempt to deepen insight and moral strength. In more secular and psychological terms, the act of prayer is an essentially illocutionary act that can "set in motion trains of psychological events, such as expectations and improvements of morale, which seem to come as answers to the prayer."¹⁹

Much the same function occurs in Grant's discourse. He not only voices an exoteric exhortation to the reader, but he also engages in a hidden, or esoteric, act of self-understanding. In urging the acts of loving and remembering and thinking, Grant manifests those qualities in the act of speaking. This is to say that, in speaking of love and remembrance, Grant performs an act that partakes of that about which he speaks. As a subject urging remembrance Grant has an object of remembrance in mind; thus, the urging of remembrance is in itself a conscious manifestation of that object. In speaking of loving, Grant is engaged in an act of loving. In other words, he does what he says and says what he does. He is not just talking to the reader, he is also addressing himself.

Understood in this way, then, Grant's discursive performance must be considered as a concrete act in the world, not as some abstract reference to something beyond the world which, for whatever reason, cannot be fully articulated. His illocutionary act is a positive manifestation of his conscious apprehension of the world, of his actual and concrete existence in the world.

Grant's speech-acts constitute the presence of his consciousness in the world, a consciousness which, as has been shown previously, apprehends the world differently from that of the modern historicist consciousness.

Grant's effort at self-understanding in his enucleation of historicism is, as I have argued, focused on the enclosures of modern language. He argues that man's historical consciousness, his awareness of who he is and what he does, is reflected in the nature of the modern discourse. Thus, in seeking to enucleate the word 'history,' Grant is not only trying to understand the modern consciousness but, in understanding it, stepping beyond it. His speech-act, then, is both an effort at understanding and, as Austin would have it, a performative act of stepping outside the magic circle of modernism.

What this means is that Grant's discourse is, by its very existence, a refutation of or, at the very least, a question mark, to be set against modernity. Hegel, it should be recalled, claimed a consciousness to supercede that of the Greco-Christian consciousness. Grant's discourse, in contrast, is a claim for a reawakening to the consciousness of Athens and Jerusalem. But Grant's illocutionary acts are not just self-serving. They redound to the reader who, in probing for Grant's meanings, taps the esoteric level and is made aware of the self-understanding that Grant has achieved. In effect, the reader is provided with a glimpse into the workings of Grant's consciousness, and, in gaining this insight, he awakens, hopefully, to his own deepening

consciousness. Following this, then, it can be said that Grant's form of discourse - his poetics - embodies his effort at self-understanding and, simultaneously, brings forth understanding in the reader.

This aspect of Grant's discourse carries what Austin calls a perlocutionary intent. Austin points out that, in saying something, one often, or even usually, produces certain consequential effects on the feelings, thoughts and actions of whomever is listening, or, in the case of a writer, whomever is reading. These effects may be produced with intent or purpose. Thus, according to Austin, a speech-act can have a perlocutionary intent. Such terminology can be readily applied to Grant. At the illocutionary level he is acting to create a space for himself where he can, as it were, manifest his own consciousness. At the same time, though, he seeks to open a discursive space into which he hopes others will enter. However, as Austin points out, there is a distinction between an attempt at producing a language effect and that effect being achieved.²⁰ The illocutionary act is not always successful in its perlocutionary intent.

Generally, Austin says, the success of the illocutionary act in achieving a perlocutionary effect depends on both the reader's capacity to understand the meaning of the locution and the linguistic means the writer adopts to aid the reader's comprehension. In this regard, the speaker may have to resort to certain tactics or strategies to secure his perlocutionary intent against misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Austin refers to

this as "securing the uptake" or the "securing of effects."²¹

In terms of Grant's discourse, he seeks, on the perlocutionary level, to effect the opening of a discursive space in the reader's consciousness, by way of which the dispossessions of modernity can be apprehended. The success of his perlocutionary effort depends both on the how of his discourse and, simultaneously, on the reader's willingness and ability to partake of Grant's speech-act and allow Grant's consciousness to penetrate his own.

This performative function in Grant's speech is reminiscent of the Hegelian "We." Hegel uses this pronoun throughout his introduction to his Phenomenology and it is reasonable to assume that the pronoun refers to some conjunction between the reader - the 'us' - and Hegel who describes the concept, the complete and fully self-conscious speech, through the medium of language. The We refers to both those who participate in Hegel's consciousness by reading the Phenomenology and Hegel himself, who describes the coming-to-be of consciousness.

Darby makes this argument, saying that in the Phenomenology there is a "dual participation in the observation of the constitution of consciousness"²² - the subject-reader participates with the subject-Hegel in the observation of the unfolding consciousness. That is, the reader observes Hegel's becoming self-conscious and, in the act of observing, participates in that awakening self-consciousness and makes it his own. The reader sees how, as this consciousness makes its

appearances in language, the subject under observation - Hegel - changes in the act of participating in the description of this emergent consciousness. At the same time, the reader, observing Hegel's participation and change, partakes himself of Hegel's experience of changing consciousness and, thus, experiences his own change of consciousness to the extent that both consciousnesses - Hegel's and the reader's - become one, or, in Hegel's terms, the We.

To use Austin's terminology, Hegel's illocutionary act has a perlocutionary intent which, in being achieved through the reader's participation in that act, engenders another illocutionary act on the part of the reader. This is to say, following Darby, that Hegel's experience becomes an experience for the reader, who, in the act of observing, sets up an internal dialogue, or, as Plato would have it, a speech "between me and myself,"²³ which entails an experience of the Hegelian consciousness and, hence, a participation in that consciousness. The consequence of this dual participation is the identity of the reader and Hegel as a We and, thus, a shift from dialogue to monologue. The We is not longer two-speeches and two consciousness, but rather one consciousness or, what is the same thing, one discourse and one speech or logos.

A similar consciousness shift is attempted in Grant's speech. In trying to understand Grant's thought through the medium of language, the reader becomes a participant in a multi-level dialogue: first between himself and Grant; second, within

himself, to the degree that he is aware of himself as a participant changing in the act of participation; and, finally, between this altered self and a Grant, who is also altered, in the sense that he is understood in a new light.

Theoretically, the reader reaches a point where his altered consciousness experiences that which Grant would have him experience and, in achieving this experience, identifies with that about which Grant speaks. In other words, as with Hegel, the dialogue becomes monologue, two logoi become one logos. In sum, Grant, in laying out his consciousness in the form of a discourse, engenders a confrontation with the reader's consciousness. The reader experiences Grant's consciousness in attempting to understand his discourse. To the degree the reader understands Grant; that is, to the degree the reader experiences Grant's consciousness, he partakes of Grant's apprehension of the world and makes it his own.

Following this, then, I argue that Grant's pedagogical effort is to secure the conditions for this dialogue, the essence of which resides in the interaction and relationship of human minds. To achieve his pedagogy Grant makes use of the devices of classical rhetoric to secure his perlocutionary intentions. This should not be surprising given his own Platonism.

It is well to recall that, for Socrates, the goal of philosophizing is self-knowledge or, more precisely, the proper order of one's soul. The task of the philosophical rhetorician - as opposed to the sophist rhetorician - was soulcraft.²⁴ Now,

according to Socrates, soulcraft was dependent on dialectic. And the key to the dialectical method is the generation or recollection of knowledge that is innate and eternal to the human psyche - knowledge of the Good, justice and virtue.

An extensive discussion of Plato's Theory of Knowledge is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice to say that for Plato knowledge of the Good is embedded in an immortal soul, which carries this knowledge into mortal life from a previous ideal existence. That is, prior to coming into the world, a soul has living knowledge of the Idea of the Good throughout eternity. But when the soul is embodied, this knowledge is forgotten, washed away just before birth, as myth would have it, in the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. What knowledge is gained in this world comes only through the thinking and remembering and, hence, the loving of that which was once known, but then forgotten. To use Austin's terms, remembrance and thinking are illocutionary acts by which temporal beings speak their memory of eternal Being. The task of the philosopher is to re-collect this knowledge in this life.

Grant, in his urging of remembrance, draws on Plato's Theory of Knowledge as recollection, rejecting the claims of science that "we are accidental inhabitants of a negligible planet in the endless spaces"²⁵ and have no fixed or eternal nature. Such a stance, though, cannot be sustained with any authority in the modern world "because of the fragmentation and complexity of our historical inheritance."²⁶ Yet this

fragmentation, this loss of an eternal order, is "still no reason not to open ourselves to all those occasions in which the reality of that sustaining makes itself present to us."²⁷ Man can still remember and recollect and love those things and experiences of the world that "might lead us to see the beautiful as the image, in the world, of the good."²⁸ In short, according to Grant, there exists the means to gain insight into the truths of a sustaining eternal order that modernity denies.

Among those methods for experiencing eternity in time Grant offers the aesthetic experience. In his essay "Faith and the Multiversity," Grant recounts Mozart's saying that after the composition of a piece of music he sees it "'all in one look;" that is, he knows it all at once and completely with what Grant calls "intellectual intuition."²⁹ Such intuition, as one critic notes, shows Grant drawing on Plato's theory of knowledge as recollection.³⁰

Grant also makes use of Plato's theory in his lamentation for the passing of Canadian sovereignty in Lament for a Nation. He draws the analogy between this experience of loss, in referring to the example of Mozart's song of lamentation in which "the Countess sings of la memoria di quel bene."³¹ With the memory of a particular good, how can man deny the Good exists, he asks? Or, as he puts it: "One cannot argue the meaninglessness of the world from the facts of evil, because what could evil deprive us of, if we had not some prior knowledge of good?"³² It is through the awareness of loss and deprivals, including the

loss of country, that the Good can be recollected, even if it cannot be made fully authoritative in the modern world.

It is this effort at recollection that provides the functional purpose of Grant's discourse. In trying to fulfill that task, Grant follows the methods of his classical masters, particularly Socrates. For Socrates, dialectic functioned to allow the participants to set in motion a process by which they could re-collect that which they have forgotten. Socratic dialogue involves the stimulation of memory in an effort to recollect a forgotten knowledge.

In this regard, the participants in a dialogue are like a hunter tracking his prey. The successful hunter is the one who learns the nature of the prey, the terrain through which it moves and the evidence of its passing, so as to be able to follow it. Such learning, though, requires experience. Which is to say the hunter needs to acquire the ability to recognize and remember what he has learned of his prey from past encounters. The hunter, thus, requires memory so he can recollect the true nature of what he seeks, in order to make the proper judgment about what he needs to do if he is to snare his prey.

So too, in the dialectical hunt for the logos. In tracking the logos, all the participants start from a position of ignorance. They must hold no preconceived hypothesis or systems that will mislead the direction of their hunt. They must be open to following the logos, the speech, where it will go. The success of their hunt, the answer they come to, depends very much on

what they have learned about the nature of the logos, its linguistic habits and suppositions, its discursive characteristics, the ontological lair in which it sleeps.

The acquisition of such skills, however, depends largely on the nature of the dialogue's participants. The guide or philosophic teacher can provide only so much. Just as there are those not fitted to be hunters and who come to a bad end in going hunting, so too are there those not fitted to be philosophers. They may give the appearance of being philosophers with their theories and systems and rhetoric. But like those unworthy men who use night lights to dazzle a deer, these philosophic hunters are mere rhetoricians, sophists, debaters. It is not the desire to know the nature of the logos that attracts them to the hunt. Rather, they want praise for the ideas they collect like a hunter's trophies. They are more concerned with scoring points, with making others bend to their opinions, with being thought wise.

This is not to say that the philosopher does not make use of certain weaponry and tools, certain techniques, to track the logos. But the philosopher uses rhetorical weaponry not to win adherents or admiration for his trophy collection. Rather, these devices - indirect speech, erotetic questionin,, elenctic refutation, claims of ignorance, irony and silence - are used as aids in the hunt, guides to crossing the terrain of discourse.

Socrates, for example, repeatedly reminds his interlocutors that he is ignorant, that he does not know the answers, that he

does not have wisdom. Repeatedly, he states that like those who question him, he is seeking answers, seeking wisdom.³³ The only role he claims for himself is that of being a midwife, whose task is to help those participating in the dialogue to give birth to their own knowledge.³⁴

Yet, Socrates is not impotent. His claims of not knowing, of barrenness, are a form of seduction. In a paradoxical fashion, Socrates is the most potent of men. His dissembling, his claims of ignorance, are intended to woo the young men into dialectical intercourse where, if his seduction is successful, he can impregnate them with the love of wisdom. And what he plants in the wombs of the mind will, he hopes, bring forth wise children.

Grant emulates his Platonic master. Like Socrates, he frequently claims ignorance or the inability to answer his own questions. He, too, asserts that his task is to encourage the seeking of wisdom, in the hope that, in the act of seeking, men will discover the Good that is inherent to them and, thus, act accordingly. And he, too, is engaged in a seduction. Just as Socrates sought to lure the young men away from the blandishments of the sophists, so too does Grant attempt to woo the reader away from the gaudy whore of modernity. In Socratic terms, his philosophic effort is erotic; that is, his eros is wedded to ratio in the remembrance of the Good. As one commentator points out, "philosophy for Grant was an erotic ascent, not the cool contemplation of the heavens."³⁵

Grant refers to his own ignorance and his philosophic aims

with considerable frequency. In the essay "Nietzsche and the Ancients," for example, Grant acknowledges his inability to refute radical historicism. He says he cannot refute Nietzsche, whom he describes as the greatest critic of Plato.³⁶ Similarly, in Lament for a Nation, he says he cannot answer the question as to whether it is good that Canada should disappear as an independent political entity.³⁷ In Time as History he admits his "simple incomprehension" at how Nietzsche's amor fati, the finality of becoming, can be anything but destructive, unless it is redeemed by some ontology of Being, some unchanging meaning that is untouched by history.³⁸

But Grant also says that, while he cannot argue against the truth of Nietzsche's description of modernity, he can, as a Christian, reject as true what Nietzsche has to say.³⁹ He knows, as an article of faith, that Nietzsche's truth is not the whole truth. At the same time, he knows he cannot base any arguments against Nietzsche or modern philosophy on faith. He recognizes that modernity is oblivious to eternity and to argue from within the paradigm of eternity is to be dismissed as an anachronism. Thus, he cannot argue or prove his own certain faith that man's ontological ground is the desire for the Good because the modern discourse precludes even the consideration of such arguments.⁴⁰ He is unable - or so he claims - to articulate a metaphysics to counter historicist doctrine. And, despite his avowal of a transcendent truth, he even claims, at times, not to know the truth of ultimate matters or what can be done to affirm these

matters.⁴¹

How seriously are such claims of ignorance to be taken? Or, perhaps more correctly, what is the purpose of such claims? The answer, I argue, lies in Grant's deliberate adoption of the techniques of classical rhetoric. Put simply, Grant, like Socrates, knows nothing for a purpose. He is prudent about speaking those ultimate truths because he knows it is neither good politics nor, given the nature of the modern world, a worthwhile pedagogical strategy to speak publicly of the eternal. In an era that mistrusts proselytizing, Grant recognizes that a detailed argument on what he asserts to be ultimate truths would be unSocratic didacticism.⁴²

Still, though, as a philosophic teacher, who dwells in the cave, he wants to communicate a better way than that of modernity. Like Socrates, he seeks to seduce his audience away from its illusory faith in the modern project. Indeed, in an allusive reference to Plato's Symposium, Grant casts himself, imagistically, as a philosophic lover, attempting to seduce the reader into an openness to the penetration of the Good, or, to use theological language, to grace.⁴³

In this light, then, it is a misinterpretation of Grant's philosophic task to expect that he provide demonstrable proofs against modernity. Instead, on the exoteric level, Grant offers a negative or destructive description of modernity that, as one critic notes, carries its own verification and cannot be proven or disproven by anything other than the act of description.⁴⁴

Still, the question remains: if Grant does not or cannot offer rational proofs against the modern project, how does he communicate an alternative? How, in other words, does he carry out his seduction? It is on this question that an esoteric level can be found to Grant's direct and negative discourse.

Recall, that for Socrates the purpose of dialogue was the fulfillment of the Delphic injunction: Know Thyself. Thus, Socratic rhetoric cannot be didactic or polemical. It is not aimed at winning converts or agreement to a certain point of view. It is not interested in asserting propositions that require unreflective obeisance. The philosophic effort is to encourage the participants in a dialogue to think for themselves. Such thinking drives the participant to admit ignorance. And it is only in the womb of ignorance that knowledge can be planted. W.K.C. Guthrie makes this point in stating that the function of the Socratic method

is to convince the interlocutor that whereas he thought he knew something, he in fact does not. The conviction of ignorance is a necessary step to the acquisition of knowledge, for no one is going to seek knowledge on a subject if he is under the delusion that he already possesses it.⁴⁵

Grant, as I have previously stated, argues that the mode of modern thought is the language of will, and this language all but precludes any other way of speaking. But Grant also shows the inadequacies and deprivations of this language. However, following Socrates, he knows that the philosopher cannot just offer alternative propositions and urge they be followed, no matter how worthy. That is not wisdom. Wisdom requires ignorance, or, at the

very least, the admission of ignorance. This, in turn, requires the ability or willingness to set aside one's ego; that is, self-knowledge requires the willingness to nullify the will. But to nullify the will, to drop the masks of the ego, means the often violent and frequently humiliating or shameful destruction of one's accumulated assumptions.

The search for wisdom, then, places a moral demand on the participants to submit to their own destruction, their own ego-death. This is the meaning behind the Socratic definition of philosophy as the practice of dying. This practice of dying is manifested in the Socratic practice of elenchus, or refutation, as a philosophical method.

Kenneth Seeskin points out that in the Platonic dialogues Socrates does not merely put forward various ideas about goodness or justice for discussion. He also has a method for reaching those ideas. This method is known by the Greek word elenchus, which means to refute, examine or to put to shame.⁴⁶ The major premise of elenchus is that it entails a confrontation, or, more properly, a relationship, between two or more people. That is, the elenctic method is grounded in the concrete human experience; it is not a debate of abstract ideas or the setting of various propositions against one another.

Secondly, elenchus imposes moral demands on the participants; one has to be honest with oneself, reasonable in discussion and, above all, courageous in following the dialogue to its conclusion regardless of the damage it does to one's

ego.⁴⁷ Thirdly, the aim of elenchus is self-knowledge; that is, in stripping away or refuting one's comfortable assumptions, one undergoes a sea-change in consciousness. This sea-change, however, does not come as some sudden flash of insight. Rather, it comes - if it does come - through a dialectical movement that requires preparation and work. Self-knowledge must be earned. And even then there are no guarantees. All the elenctic method can do is point the participant in the right direction, set him on the path towards recovering that which he knows but has forgotten. In Austin's terms, the elenchus functions in an illocutionary manner.

This can be seen in The Republic where Socrates tells Glaucon that if there were some method available to describe the path to certain truth, then such descriptions would no longer be necessary since one would already be taking the path.⁴⁸ In this light, Socrates' notoriety - and Grant's - for not answering questions, for an indecipherable silence, for a pretended ignorance, can be understood. In the Socratic epistemology, teaching is impossible, at least as practised by the Sophists. It is impossible and even pointless to impart true propositions to another person and expect that person to come away with any real knowledge. The philosopher cannot teach his interlocutors anything. Socrates admits this in the Apology. His whole effort he says in this dialogue is to persuade men to look to their souls,⁴⁹ to get them to change their minds. And he does this by asking questions, casting doubt, querying the unthought

assumption, stinging the inflated will.

In asking questions about justice, piety, virtue, the good life, Socrates is not indulging in abstract theorizing. Such concepts are rooted in the life of every man. In persuading his interlocutors to look for the truths of these concepts the philosopher is forcing them to look at themselves as men. Yet there is no direct and logical way of reasoning to moral truths. Given this, as Seeskin observes, "Socrates had no choice but to proceed indirectly, by way of refutation." In this way, self-discovery proceeds negatively: "it is more a matter of discarding false ideas than of finding an unbroken path to the true one."⁵⁰ In other words, elenchus is of necessity the way of indirection. The recovery of knowledge has to proceed negatively or, what is same thing, by refutation. And this act of destruction, of stripping away false opinion, of dying to the ego, entails a negation of will.

Returning to Grant, it can be argued that his discourse, like that of Socrates, proceeds elentically even in regard to his own self-judgment. This can be seen in his Platonic turn, as evidenced by his retrospective introduction to the second edition of Philosophy in the Mass Age. Here, in a harsh and uncompromising elenchus, he lays bare the desperateness of his earlier attempts to reconcile a faith in progress with an abiding faith in an eternal order. He ridicules his previous hopes as gnostic delusions, "the work of a neurotic seeking to escape from life into dreams."⁵¹ He recognizes that the unification of

modern political thought and modern technological society with the wisdom of Athens and Jerusalem simply will not happen. At the same time, though, Grant does not repudiate the hope of such a unification. However, the best he can offer is the necessity of questioning the suppositions of modern political philosophy in light of the wisdom of the ancients.

Grant repeats his elenchus in another retrospective commentary on his 1964 essay "Religion and the State." In a preface to the essay, as reprinted in his 1969 book Technology and Empire, Grant mocks the "virtuous proposals"⁵² put forward in the essay. In the essay, which argues for the necessity of religion and philosophy as practical responses to the nihilism of the theology of progress, Grant states that his purpose is to "raise doubts" concerning the debate over the issue of teaching religion in public schools. While such an effort may appear "negative and unconstructive," Grant argues that it is the task of the philosopher "to argue general principles," in an attempt to understand and articulate as a whole the nature of what is at stake in the debate.⁵³ That is, the philosopher must rise above the compromises and confusions of the practical political realm, in order to present the whole of the truth.

But in the essay's retrospective preface, Grant recognizes the "folly" of his efforts. Again, though, he does not repudiate the contents of his proposals. His folly is not that of having been wrong in saying what he said and in hoping that his philosophic truths would have a practical effect. Rather, his

folly is in not recognizing that such truths carry no public authority within the modern world and, therefore, cannot be heard.

Following Strauss, what Grant acknowledges in his retrospective judgment of "Religion and the State" is that in philosophic speech there must be a distinction between the truth that is to be told and the telling of that truth. There are truths to be voiced, but those truths cannot simply be said. Or, in pedagogic terms, there are teachings to be advanced, but they cannot simply be taught with any sure expectation of their being accepted.⁵⁴

Grant, in accepting the Platonic distinction between public opinion and private truth, reveals his philosophic task to be essentially Socratic. He recognizes that philosophic truths are seldom compatible with public truths and, indeed, the philosopher may be useless to his society to the extent that he cannot uphold the prevailing Zeitgeist.

In recognizing this, however, Grant, following Strauss, is equally aware that how he voices his truths is critical if those truths are to have any chance of being heard. He knows he must write indirectly and esoterically. That is, he must cover his truth with a palatable exoteric coating to even gain an audience. He must proceed elenctically, in a negative description of the deprivations of modernity, in the hope that his reader will experience his own sense of dispossession and, thus, be motivated to recollect that Good which he has lost. In short, to use

Kierkegaard's phrase, Grant must "wound from behind"⁵⁵ and offer his truths indirectly, if what he has to say is to heard amidst the noisy jangle of the modern discourse. Some critics have recognized this aspect of Grant's writing.

Charles Taylor, for instance, writes that despite Grant's apparent pessimism⁵⁶ there is an unstated but constructive side to his writings that somehow induces hope. He argues that "in predicting the worst, Grant also reminds us of the best - especially those classical standards of justice and freedom by which he judges our modern era and finds it wanting."⁵⁷ Grant stirs an awareness of the losses sustained in the coming-to-be of modernity and, in awakening us to these losses, "seems to challenge us to prove him wrong."⁵⁸

Taylor also sees throughout Grant's writings a fire burning in a forest of darkness: the description of living courageously in the world without retreating to despair or disillusion; the recognition that "intimations of deprival" can point to an abiding natural order; the judgment that justice is a good which man constantly seeks, despite his propensities to evil; and, finally, the possibility, as Taylor observes in quoting Grant, of living in an "ancient faith which asserts that changes in the world take place within an eternal order that is not affected by their taking place." Implicit in this, says Taylor, is the conviction, on Grant's part, that "our current course can be reversed."⁵⁹

Another commentator, William Christian, states that while

Grant's conclusions are "enigmatic," his message seems to be "a prophecy, which he hopes is self-defeating." Grant, he says, is issuing a challenge to unite the progressive achievements of modern science to the Good of classical philosophy. But, Christian writes, "only if he can terrify us enough with the prospects of the impending darkness, will we see the need to struggle to remain in the light."⁶⁰

In sum, then, the how of Grant's philosophic writing is substantially that of the Socratic method. Like Socrates, Grant constructs no system, no set of philosophic propositions that can be placed like some dogmatic battering ram against the walls of modernist dogmas. In a certain sense, his adoption of the elenctic method is his response to modernity. Time and time again he admits his not-knowing, his uncertainty at formulating an adequate countervail to the modern language of will. Yet, at the same time, he meets all the modernist assertions with an invitation to seek the ground of their truths. He urges a listening for the "intimations of authentic deprival," because the hearing of these deprivals "are the ways through which intimations of the good, unthinkable in public terms, may yet appear to us."⁶¹ His purpose is not to convey some new and easy truth, but to point out the path along which truth might be found. Or, to paraphrase Kierkegaard, the negative way is the way to truth.

Furthermore, Grant's following of the Socratic path of

indirection is a form of mental activity, a form of constant self-examination, an attempt at self-understanding. Or what Grant, in his typically cryptic fashion, refers to as living critically. This effort at critical living entails the need to comprehend the modern project as fully as possible. Only in achieving a full understanding of modernity is there any possibility of stepping outside its magic circle.

This is Grant's purpose. He enucleates the enclosures of modernity with the specific intention of destroying all inauthentic hope. He deliberately brings himself and the reader to what appears to be an impasse, a position of not-knowing. But it is in this admission of ignorance, of having come to the point where the prevailing conventions no longer hold one's loyalty, that one is ready to begin the philosophic hunt. In short, ignorance is the pre-condition for any true knowledge.

If, as Strauss argues, the philosopher and his society do not speak the same language, then the philosopher must proceed indirectly and structure a hidden or esoteric message into his discourse, in order to counter the convention against which he speaks. Without suggesting Grant is a Straussian, I argue that Grant adopts such a classical rhetorical technique. His poetic devices function as portals into his esoteric speech. They are part of his elenchus and function epistemologically as spurs to inquiry and, hopefully, recovery of a forgotten wisdom.

Given this, one cannot separate an understanding of Grant's philosophic teaching and the purposes of that teaching from the

form in which it is presented. This is to say, that the substantive meaning and intent of Grant's discourse is intrinsically tied to the form of that discourse. Strauss, in discussing the teachings implicit in Plato's dialogues, makes this point in saying that "one must pay as much attention to the How as to the What."⁶² Berel Lang similarly argues that the "literary appearances of philosophy have an intrinsic relation to the substantive work of philosophy."⁶³

Thus, the form of Grant's discourse, his poetics, if you will, should be seen as a strategic response to gain a voice in which, and a space from which, he can speak against the historicist discourse. I shall address just how this is done and the key poetical devices Grant uses in the following chapters.

CHAPTER SIX:
THE SPOOR OF SILENCE

In the essay "Tyranny and Wisdom" Grant sides with Strauss in rejecting the historicist ontology of Kojève-Hegel. But he also points out that Strauss avoids tackling the central core of the debate between the ancients and the moderns, namely "whether the Machiavellian and Hobbesian politics are at least in part a result of the Biblical orientation of western society."⁶⁴ Citing Strauss's critique of Machiavelli and Hobbes as the two modern philosophers, who more than anyone else, lowered the standard of the best social order, in an effort to make that order achievable, Grant argues that Strauss's apparent unwillingness to deal directly, as part of his philosophical task, with the relationship between modernity and Biblical religion, shows a "remarkable reticence."⁶⁵

Such reticence or silence, Grant suggests, was deliberate. Silence on this important issue implies, according to Grant, Strauss's true position on the matter. Grant argues that Strauss chose to remain silent about Biblical religion because, while he may reject religion as a theoretical truth, he knows, on a practical level, that a healthy state needs the salutary myths of piety and virtue that come out of religion.

For Strauss to pronounce that the revelatory claim of religion is responsible for the "false and dangerous conception of nature among modern philosophers" would be an irresponsible

act, given the necessity of maintaining whatever "remnants of sacred restraints" still claims modern man's allegiance.⁶⁶ Strauss, says Grant, is first and foremost a philosopher; that is, he is a lover of wisdom and not one of those modern sophists who consider it their duty to impose the truth on others, by weakening whatever lingering trust they may have in religion.⁶⁷

In remaining silent, Strauss is following the style of those philosophers who maintain a distinction between their exoteric and esoteric teachings, a distinction between what can and cannot be said. And one of the ways in esoteric writing for saying something, without actually committing oneself to words, is to remain silent. Or, to put it differently, the philosopher with an esoteric message embeds an unsaid side, or a silent speech, in his exoteric statements.

Can a similar purposive silence be found in Grant? This question has prompted considerable debate among various Grant commentators. Some reject the idea of there being a positive, if silent, side to Grant's discourse. Ian Box, for example, argues that Grant offers only a destructive or negative analysis of modernity. While Grant's views may be valuable and enlightening, "they are certainly not constructive," he says. At the core of Grant's late writings, according to Box, is the claim that all theoretical alternatives to modernity are necessarily inadequate, simply because no one believes any longer in the idea of an eternal order that can provide the ground for political orders.⁶⁸ Another commentator, David Venour, recognizes that Grant does

offer theoretical alternatives to modernity, but questions the suitability of attributing an esoteric dimension to his writing. Venour says that while Grant's reticence in detailing his philosophical position has parallels to the strategic silences of esoteric writers, it is questionable that Grant actually conceals anything since, ultimately, his personal views regarding the truth of Biblical revelation require no concealment.⁶⁹

Other critics, however, in seeing a positive message in Grant's discourse, argue that his constructive message is hidden in the elenctic nature of his writing. And this message, they say, is delivered indirectly by a variety of rhetorical devices, including that of strategic silence, or prudent speaking. William Christian compares Grant to the gadfly Socrates, who stings his fellow citizens to awaken them from their complacency.⁷⁰ But just as the impression of the Socratic dialogues as being merely negative is misleading, so too is the notion that Grant has nothing positive to offer. In his seeming destructiveness, Grant, like Socrates, "implicitly points the way to a deeper understanding of Grant's silence." The reader, however, in attempting to decipher the "hidden and dark recesses" of Grant's writings, must be prepared to "dot the i's and cross the t's"⁷¹ himself. Darrol Bryant, likewise, argues that Grant's constructive alternatives are "hidden"⁷² in his invocations of other traditions of faith and wisdom.

What these latter views point to is the argument that Grant's ultimate meanings or purposes are not to be picked up on

the surface of his text; they are rooted in the textual subsoil, hidden beneath a rich loam of rhetorical techniques, including strategic silence. In the use of these devices, Grant draws, in part, on Strauss's distinction between the esoteric and exoteric teachings of the pre-modern and classical thinkers.

Grant's exoteric teaching is often destructive and, in that sense, useful in awakening his audience to an awareness of the deprivations of modernity. But the more attentive reader, in probing beneath the surface of the text, in wanting to track the deeper logos, will come upon esoteric markers by which the hidden logos is revealed. One of these markers is silence or a reticence to take an argument to its logical conclusion. Such silence, though, has a perlocutionary intent, in that it points to a conclusion which the reader must achieve for himself by tapping the hidden structures of a writer's style of speaking. The failure to be aware of this style and the forms which it takes, can result in a failure to properly understand what the writer is really saying.

Grant himself lends support to this view. In the preface to the 1970 Carleton Library edition of Lament for a Nation, Grant suggests those who claimed that, in writing of the inevitability of Canada's political demise, he was furthering the defeat of Canadian nationalism, have failed to understand the function of esoteric writing, particularly as it is embodied in the classical concept of the noble lie. He explains that the idea of the noble lie - or, to use his words, the noble delusion - is the recognition by those in "practical authority" that a healthy

society "can often only be sustained by opinions which are less than perfectly true."⁷³ The philosopher, likewise, recognizes the need to maintain these noble delusions even though he, as a seeker of truth, may see them for what they are; that is, as worthy conventions that fall short of the truth he seeks.

What this suggests is that Grant does not see it as his task to bring enlightenment to those who are neither willing nor able to accept the truth, particularly a truth that undermines all the shibboleths of modernity. In light of this, then, the necessity of the noble lie requires "writing with prudence." Since modernity is an era in which most public men, particularly those with practical authority, are enthralled by "ignoble delusions," Grant argues that he has a "greater responsibility to ridicule the widespread ignoble delusions than to protect the few remaining beliefs which might result in nobility."⁷⁴

Furthermore, Grant says that, if there is a fault to Lament, it is a "failure of irony"⁷⁵ born of too much anger. That is, his anger at the betrayals of Canadian nationalism pushed him to write polemically and left him unequal to the task of writing with greater indirection. However, even such statements by Grant regarding his polemic can also be taken, as I shall show, as Socratic dissimulation or dissembling.

Grant declares, in Chapter One of Lament, that his intention is to go beyond the political situation that occasioned the book, to step beyond personalities, ideology and polemics. He refers to the book as a lament, a crying out at the death of something

loved by lost. Laments, he says, are written by those who

may have heard the proposition of the saints, but they do not know that they are true. A lament arises from a condition that is common to the majority of men, for we are situated between despair and absolute certainty.⁷⁶

He repeats his promise at the end of the chapter, saying his meditation is restricted to lamenting, to celebrating memory. He has no practical solutions to offer and no polemical argument to make.

But then, in Chapters Two through Five, the whip comes down. With biting invective and a scarring contempt, Grant lashes those he considers to have betrayed Canada: specifically Lester Pearson and the Liberal Party and all their business and bureaucratic retainers, who undermined John Diefenbaker and his efforts to protect Canadian sovereignty. He snipes at the ideologies of liberalism and Americanism which, in his view, have worked like acid to corrode the good of Canada. The result, he says in Chapter Six, is the impossibility of conservatism in Canada, and, hence, the impossibility of Canada's continuance as an independent nation.

Then, in Chapter Seven, in an apparent contradiction of his originally stated purpose of lamenting Canada's death, Grant offers what appears to be an argument for the necessity of the nation's demise. He presents the reader with the economic rational and justifications for Canada's succumbing to the American tide. But then, seemingly inconsistently, he rebuts these arguments as unworthy. He then offers the political reasons for the loss of sovereignty. But these too are dismissed.

Finally, Grant asks whether there is anything to be lamented and that "perhaps we should rejoice in the disappearance of Canada."⁷⁷

Such a structural style to Lament is consistent with the requirements of esoteric writing. Grant's celebration of Canada's demise is ironical. His apparent contradictions and inconsistencies, his tentativeness and claims of ignorance, his willingness to pose his opponents' arguments in all apparent seriousness, only to subtly undermine them, his silence regarding alternatives; all these techniques follow esoteric practices.

Grant presents a thoroughly destructive analysis of modernity in Lament. But his positive message is provided vaguely and in a fragmented fashion. He repeatedly hints that he has more to say, but has opted to hold back. Indeed, in another context, he goes so far as to imply that he deliberately couches his discourse to make it palatable to his audience when he claims (ironically, I would argue) that, if his

argument is to appear respectable and convincing publicly, it must be spoken within the broad assumptions of modern liberalism. Arguments from outside this tradition are put out of court as irrational and probably reactionary. This response is so part of the air we breathe that we often forget its existence.⁷⁸

What such statements point up, though, is Grant's recognition that his way of thinking is not that of his society's. His logos is not the modern logos. He knows that if he is to speak his truth he must do so esoterically, because a straightforward presentation of his knowledge would be, as it

were, put out of court, since it is not grounded in the prevailing liberal doxa. The consequence of Grant ignoring what might be called the conditions of speaking would be the outright dismissal of his views and the resulting dismissal of himself as a thinker to whom it is worth listening. Grant, thus, speaks prudently to even be able to speak at all. Such a tactic follows Strauss's prescription of the need for esoteric writing.

Strauss observes that even in those societies where the wrack or the burning stake have fallen into disuse, there is still persecution in the shape of social and intellectual ostracism, or, more accurately perhaps, the silence forced on those whose views do not coincide with the prevailing conventions.⁷⁹ In such a situation the modern philosopher, like his ancient counterpart, must write-between-the-lines. He must present his thought in such a way as to be palatable to the majority of "careless readers," while at the same time writing in a way that the "careful reader" will be able to follow his argument. As Strauss puts it:

Persecution, then, gives rise to a peculiar technique of writing . . . in which the truth about all crucial things is presented exclusively between the lines. That literature is addressed, not to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only. . . . [What] makes this literature possible can be expressed in the axiom that thoughtless men are careless readers, and only thoughtful men are careful readers. Therefore an author who wishes to address only thoughtful men has but to write in such a way that only a very careful reader can detect the meaning of his book.⁸⁰

With this in mind, says Strauss, the esoteric writer will use those techniques available to him to hide his truest message

from all but the most discerning reader, while giving the less discerning those truths they can comfortably accept without too much harm to themselves or, as the case may be, to the writer. These techniques, he says, include everything from ironic silence and "brief indication" to the seemingly enthusiastic presentation of opposing views and even bowing to the "noble lies" of prevailing conventions.⁸¹

Returning to Lament, such esoteric tactics are readily evident. Throughout the book Grant poses all the liberal arguments that he supposedly wishes to discredit. For example, he says Canada's inevitable absorption into the United States will be a step towards the much hailed idea of the new world order of global federalism. He suggests that economic and political union will offer more opportunities for employment and will encourage more freedom and equality.

On the other hand, as one critic remarks, Grant's book bristles with indignation and contempt for those who espouse such liberal doctrines. He seems, says R. D. MacDonald, to have written a polemic that is considerably at odds with his promise of a quiet, meditative lament. MacDonald, however, finds a purposive consistency in such a writing style.

In moving Lament from the polemical dialectics in the largest part of the book to the reconciliatory last chapter, with its allusion to Virgil's home-seeking Aeneas, Grant has moved mythically through the temporal realm, with all its confusions and contradictions, to a final vision of an eternal order in

which one can abide. As MacDonald puts it:

One can see now the consistency of Grant's turning from the temporal realm [of Diefenbaker's heroic fall] leaving the reader with the gesture 'of arms outstretched in love toward the further shore:' if one has been seriously affected by Grant's arguments - if our faith in ourselves and future has been seriously cast into doubt - the now-homeless or dispossessed reader may well peer anxiously and hopefully in the same direction as Grant.⁸²

In this light, says MacDonald, Grant's - and, presumably, the reader's - final position is not that of disillusionment and despair at Canada's situation. Rather, Grant has made the reader aware of his previously unquestioned acceptance of modernity and, in doing so, silently "offered a glimpse of an order which is beyond man, beyond the aspirations of the technocratic liberal, and yet somehow congenial to man's ultimate purposes."⁸³

What this raises is the idea that Grant's poetical silence has not only a pedagogical purpose, but also ontological significance. Which is to say, that Grant's silence works metaphorically to disclose meaning. But to understand the ontological ground of Grant's silence requires a rather lengthy expedition into the terrain of silence.

Silence, according to Bernard Dauenhauer,⁸⁴ is a complex phenomenon. It is not merely a lack of words or sounds. Nor does it refer to the absence of something or the negative of something. Nor does it necessarily imply passivity. Silence can be positive and active. Max Scheler, for example, observes that people "can be silent and keep their thoughts to themselves,

[but] that is quite different from simply saying nothing. It is an active attitude."⁸⁵ Similarly, Max Picard argues that silence is a presence and even a force in every aspect and dimension of man's activity, an a priori principle of all communicable discourse. As he states:

It is as though behind silence were the absolute word to which, through silence, human language moves. It is as though the human word were sustained by the absolute word. . . Silence is like a remembrance of that word.⁸⁶

Likewise, Gisele Brelet posits silence as the birth place of music:

A musical work supposes the silence which precedes it: it cannot be born until it has effaced the exterior world and space in order that the hearer, turning in upon himself, may find in himself that active and pure duration which music will fill with life.⁸⁷

Susan Sontag writes that among the myriad functions of silence is that of "a metaphor for a cleansed, non-interfering vision;" that is, silence as a source of spiritual and artistic nourishment amidst the malnourishment of the modern language.⁸⁸ And, lastly, Nietzsche sees silence as the creative fulcrum for moving the mountains of dead metaphors that bewitch thinking:

The greatest events - they are not our loudest but our stillest hours. Not around the inventors of new noise, but around the inventors of new values does the world revolve; it revolves inaudibly.⁸⁹

The dew falls on the grass when the night is most silent . . . It is the stillest words that bring on the storm. Thoughts that come on dove's feet guide the world.⁹⁰

What each of these writers points to is the idea that silence has ontological import. Dauenhauer makes this argument in

discussing Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theories. He says silence is the necessary ground of speech, in that all discourses are, in some fashion or another, an interrogation of, or response to, the silence of the given world or given-Being. The world is silent of meaning or purpose until it is questioned. But in the asking of questions the conditions for a dialogue are established; that is, there is an intrinsic relationship between the silence of given-Being and the revelation of Being in man's various speech-acts or discourses.

If such be the case, then silence is a presence in all speech as a precondition of speech. Or, as Dauenhauer says, quoting Merleau-Ponty, philosophical speech is the "reconversion of silence and speech into one another."⁹¹ Speech and silence are inextricably bound, in that speech is born of silence and seeks its end or conclusion in silence.

Dauenhauer differentiates various types of active silence. The first type of silence he calls performative silence. This silence is necessary in all discourse or, to use his terminology, all utterance, in that any active human performance - speech, music, painting, etc. - is "fringed" by silence. For example, the use of words in everyday speech requires a gap of silence between the articulation of the words for those words to be intelligible. Similarly, playwrights such as Harold Pinter or Samuel Beckett intersperse their words with silences that carry some sort of meaning or purpose in their relationship to the spoken words. These silences add or detract from what is actually

spoken. In other words, performative silence can be a way of saying something despite the absence of a spoken or written discourse. Or, as Dauenhauer says, "keeping silent . . . is a sort of utterance."⁹²

Two other types of discursive silence to which Dauenhauer refers are intervening and fore- and after-silence. Briefly, intervening silence is the pattern of occurrences of silence that punctuate both the words and phrases of a spoken sentence and the string of sentences and paragraphs that form the discourse.⁹³ Without this intervening silence words and sentences would be little more than senseless babbling. Intervening silence is that empty space that separates the filled space of speech and allows the listener or reader to discriminate between the words and, thus, know their meaning. Intervening silence thus functions as a frame in which discourse can make sense.

In a similar fashion, fore- and after-silence provide a "fringe of silence" which surrounds the whole of an utterance; for example, the preceding silence and the silent aftermath of a book or a piece of music. These silences, according to Dauenhauer, have a meaning-generative function. They provide a "frame of silence" or a frame of reference into which a discourse can be fitted to be intelligible and meaningful. Fore-silence can be likened to the setting of a stage for the performance of a speech-act, an opening function that precedes the utterance. It is the space of preparation for discourse, the realm of anticipatory readiness for the speech that is to come. In this

regard, says Dauenhauer, fore-silence can be said to be a sort of interrogative stance on the part of the listener or reader, in which he prepares himself for what is to be said, much in the manner of a concert audience preparing itself for the music that is to come.

After-silence, on the other hand, is that space created following the completion of an utterance. When a novel or poem is finished, the reader is moved beyond the words into an aftermath of silence, in which he contemplates or reflects on the meaning of the whole of the utterance. Taken together, fore- and after-silence comprise a unifying backdrop or ontological background for the emergent "figure" or sensible meaning of the discourse, says Dauenhauer. Fore-silence, he states, casts a spell; after-silence lifts the spell.⁹⁴

A fourth aspect of silence, and the one to which the others can ultimately lead to, is deep silence. Unlike the other three, deep silence does not necessarily have a correlation to a particular discourse, although, as Dauenhauer observes, it occurs only in relation to what might be called the discourse of life.

One mode of deep silence is found in religious worship, or prayer and contemplation. Dauenhauer calls this liturgical silence. In this mode of silence there is a cessation of speech in an attempt to hear an unsaid inner speech or utterance. Such silence, says Dauenhauer, has a particular ontological significance. In religious terms, liturgical silence is a form of speaking in that the act of silent prayer or worship gives voice

to the expectation of the divine revealing itself to the praying subject.

The worshipper, in his silence, creates a space in his consciousness, in which the word of God can be heard. If the worshipper is able, within his silence, to hear God's speech, he is able, presumably, to make that speech part of his own everyday speech-act.⁹⁵ Thus, liturgical silence is a form of silent speaking, in which the unspeakable side of a dialogue - God's word - is articulated in the speakable side of the dialogue; that is, man-in-the-world partakes of the divine Logos. The Word of God is manifested in the word of man: The Word is made Flesh.

Another mode of deep silence is what Dauenhauer refers to as mystical silence. Like liturgical silence, mystical silence refers to an ontological ground of silence that points to a transcendence of which finite man is able to speak. Dauenhauer characterizes mystical silence as the silence which authenticates a discourse, the unsaid side of discourse that structures the spoken or revealed discourse. He argues that, in all discourse, there is an appeal beyond form and content to something that authenticates it. No temporal discourse, he says, can be definitely authenticated by another temporal discourse.⁹⁶ Or, put differently, since the speech of time-bound man is necessarily finite and thereby limited, all man's speech-acts are likewise time-bound and are therefore only temporary. Words, in phenomenological terms, are only referential metaphors by which the meaning-silence of the given world is partially articulated

and made intelligible in the human consciousness.

Following Dauenhauer, then, silence can be seen as a phenomenon that has a distinct and active relationship to speech. To keep silent does not mean not thinking or the absence of thought. Rather, it means not knowing, not defining, not systematizing and leaving open, in order for thinking to take place.

This silence, however, must not be taken as some realm of thought which is beyond apprehension. Rather, it might be referred to as the unsaid, or unsayable side, to any discourse. This is to say that silence is an esoteric element in any discourse and it functions to disclose, invoke or bring forth a realm of experience that cannot be rendered in a fully rational or logical fashion. Silence, thus, can be understood as a poetical form of speaking that allows the voicing of what cannot be said exoterically; that is, silence is a poetical speech-act, by way of which the hidden aspects of a discourse can be made audible to those who have learned to hear properly. When set against speech, silence raises the possibility of stepping beyond the confinements of language, with its requirement for the clear and explicit saying of thought, to a realm in which thought is shown indirectly.

But this performative aspect to silence also points to the ontological ground in which speech must be authenticated. In religious terms, a true or valid discourse can only be authenticated by reference to eternity. And eternity, from the

position of finite man, is always silent. In this fallen world, the best that can be attempted is the possible conjunction of speech and silence, through which the logos can be manifested. This is to say, speech that partakes of silence expresses time as eternity, not time as history. Or, put differently, silence and speech are the two sides of discourse and each is necessary for either to have meaning.

Returning to Grant, then, the question to be asked is whether the practice of silence, as a performative function that embodies an ontological principle, is to be found in his discourse? Does his writing contain at least some of these various modes of silence and do they point to an ontological ground, as Dauenhauer would have it? If so, what is the ontological ground to which Grant's silence points?

Philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein once said, is a constant battle by the intellect against the bewitchment of words.⁹⁷ The task of philosophy, he says, is to get beneath the words, to uncover the "bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language."⁹⁸ According to Wittgenstein, language necessarily posits a logical structure that reflects the world-as-fact or object. This world, however, does not always cooperate, does not always correspond to the rules of language.

Religious, metaphysical and spiritual questions, as well as moral and ethical judgments, partake of an experience of the

world that is not necessarily logical. But when such questions and judgments occur in life they are necessarily given expression in language; that is, the non-logical is made to fit a logical structure. Words then serve to fill in or, more accurately perhaps, to cover over the silent spaces that open up in the asking of questions to which there are no strictly logical answers.

Wittgenstein argues that logically-structured language cannot express, in any coherent and systematic way, those non-logical experiences that are born in this silent realm. Language is incapable of fully articulating those "higher," non-logical realms of thought, which he calls the "mystical." As a result the answers to these "mystical" questions can only be offered indirectly or poetically or silently. As Wittgenstein puts it: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."⁹⁹

Critics have certainly detected a silent discourse or an unsaid logos in Grant's writings. Indeed, some suggest that Grant's alternative vision is brought-forth in his silence. Eli Mandel, for instance, observes that "no version of Grant's thought . . . is complete if it does not take into account not only that which is said in his major works but equally that which is not said." Grant, he says, is a writer "whose work finally presents itself through a series of reticences and silences."¹⁰⁰ Edwin and David Heaven also argue that Grant's writing is frequently purged of overt metaphysical teachings about those deepest truths to which is he known to adhere. Such silence, they

say, is born of his humility about his own intellectual and spiritual capacities to argue these truths in comparison to the capabilities of the great thinkers and saints. Equally, they argue, Grant's silence on ultimate matters is politically motivated; that is, Grant does not wish to alienate an audience which, as he well knows, gives little credence to the truths he holds to be self-evident.¹⁰¹ But to what does this silence refer? What is being said by such silence?

Hannah Arendt has referred to what is manifested in silence as the "ineffable." She finds that all the great philosophers and metaphysicians have regularly insisted that there is something "ineffable" beneath words, something of which they were fully conscious when they did not speak or write, but which was impossible to lay hold of in speech or writing. As she remarks, these philosophers "insisted that there was something that refused to lend itself to a transformation that would allow it to appear and take its place among the appearances of the world."¹⁰²

Philosophers, as Arendt points out, have used various metaphors to express this unspeakable ontology - Plato's "wonder," Aristotle's "astonishment," Heidegger's "Being," and Wittgenstein's "mystical" are a few examples. What this suggests is that words, in their symbolic function, point beyond themselves to a pre-discursive, silent realm that sustains discourse. The spoken or written word is merely the shell around a kernel of silence. And to hear or read only the outer

appearance of the word is to miss the inner truth of what is said in not being said. In short, silence is an unsaid logos.

Grant's unsaid logos, his strategic silence, is clearly evident in his use of the image of modernity as a deprivation. Throughout his writings there is a persistent sense of loss and deprivation. This sense of deprivation runs like a binding thread in his thought. It is evident in Lament for a Nation, where it is given voice as a lament for the submergence of Canada's traditions of order and restraint beneath the wave of American liberalism and technology. Yet, while mourning the loss of the particularity that was Canada because it touches him personally, Grant also recognizes that Canada's fate is a part of the wider fate of the whole world. The deprivation that is the loss of Canadian sovereignty is a deprivation that defines the coming-to-be of the universal and homogeneous world-state. And, understood as a silent Grantian coda, what this deprivation refers to, as one critic remarks, is the loss "of spirituality and a concept of 'the Good' which transcends man's quixotic struggle for domination in the name of 'freedom.'"¹⁰³

Grant's good, of course, is God. And his silence, for the most part, "has to do with God."¹⁰⁴ His silence, then, is not only a poetical device or a pedagogical practice, although it serves those functions. It is also the fore- and after-silence of his speech, a liturgical-mystical silence that reflects an ontological principle by which he authenticates or grounds his discourse. At the centre of Grant's discourse is the silent

presence of God. For Grant, who describes himself as "a political philosopher within Christianity,"¹⁰⁵ the essence of modernity is a deprivation of God's presence. As he states:

It may be said that to use the language of deprivation is to prejudice the issue, because what has gone can more properly be described as illusions, horizons, superstitions, taboos which bound men from taking their fate into their own hands. This may be the case. What has been lost may have been bad for men. But this does not change the fact that something has been lost. Call them what you will - superstitions or systems of meaning, taboos or sacred restraints - it is true that most Western men have been deprived of them.¹⁰⁶

Grant's suggestion, that a restraining order may have been bad for men, should be seen as an example of his esoteric writing, in that the statement is used ironically as a rhetorical device. Grant presents the liberal point of view, only to subtly undermine it by silently framing it as a deprivation of God. As he says elsewhere: "the idea of limit is unavoidably the idea of God . . . and not a value we create. God is that which we cannot manipulate. He is the limit of our right to change the world."¹⁰⁷

Grant's silence, thus, can be seen as functioning as an ontological frame that surrounds his discourse. In Dauenhauer's terms, Grant's discourse is fringed by a silence that functions both performatively and works in a meaning-generative capacity. The reader encountering this silence is forced to ask what it means. In coming to know its meaning the reader begins to participate in the consciousness that gives expression to the silent presence of God, recognizing that it provides the frame of reference into which the whole of Grant's discourse is fitted and out of which he speaks. As Dauenhauer would have it, Grant's

silence both casts the spell and, at the conclusion of his speech-act, in the act of reader recognition, it lifts the spell.

At the same time, I argue, Grant's silence functions in liturgical-mystical modes, to use Dauenhauer's terms. Not only is there a mystical mode of silence that points to a pre-discursive ontological principle and a spell-casting fore- and after-silence that functions pedagogically, but, finally, there is a liturgical practice of silence in which Grant himself attempts in an illocutionary fashion to hear and give voice to God's presence.

Grant's modes of deep silence are seen in his urging of "contemplative" thought as a way of "living critically" in the modern project. Grant, as I have stated previously, argues that the modern mode of thinking, the instrumentalist view of reason, the language of will, all but precludes any other type of thinking that would allow one to step outside the historicist, technological horizon. Yet, he says, the need for another type of thinking other than that of "calculating reason"¹⁰⁸ is paramount, if man is to enjoy the benefits of technology without being dominated by technology.

He observes that contemplative thought was the hallmark of both Biblical revelation and Greek philosophy. Contemplation was born of the recognition that man's highest achievement is reverence for given-Being, for what is. Such thinking, according to Grant, is missing from the modern world. The history-making society sees only means and no ends, only process and no reality; it is a world that believes "potentiality is higher than

actuality, that motion is nobler than rest, that dynamism rather than peace is the height."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Grant argues, contemplative thought is necessary if calculative thought is to perform its proper function since contemplation is "the only source from which purposes may be manifest to us for our necessary calculating."¹¹⁰ Contemplative thought can, as it were, "pass to something which [is] outside the limits"¹¹¹ of calculating reason.

Grant does not explicitly define that "something," but his meaning can be intimated from his performative verbs - remembering, recollecting, watching, waiting and listening; all of which posit the idea that the release from the magic circle of modernity resides in the effort to live critically, to dwell on the frontiers of interrogative thinking. Grant calls for a constant enucleating of our assumptions and our sense of dispossession in an effort "to see the beautiful as the image, in the world, of the good."¹¹² In other words, contemplative thought can release people to apprehend nature, including human nature, as the image of God. As Grant puts it:

Human excellence . . . [can] only be appropriated by those who have glimpsed that it is sustained by all that is. Although that sustainment cannot be adequately thought by us because of the fragmentation and complexity of our historical inheritance, this is still no reason not to open ourselves to all those occasions in which the reality of that sustaining makes itself present to us.¹¹³

This urging of contemplative thought is reminiscent of Heidegger's advocacy of silence and meditative thought. Heidegger makes just such an argument when he asserts the phenomenological

function of silence to be that of clearing a space in which the speech of the soundless voice of Being can be heard.¹¹⁴ Silence, he says, is the source of human speech, which is the prime cause of language as the enunciation of the Logos or the Word in words.¹¹⁵ Such an assertion echoes the opening of the Prologue to the Gospel according to St. John:

When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be. . . . All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it.¹¹⁶

The light in the dark is, of course, human reason. But human reason, according to the Bible, is dependent on the logos, the original Word. The logos is the foundation of human consciousness and must be understood metaphysically as that consciousness or thought that moves beyond the temporal, speech-making realm to speak in and speak of the eternal realm.¹¹⁷

According to Heidegger, speech in the Biblical viewpoint cannot be seen as merely a human performance; rather, human speech is inextricably bound to and part of the divine Word since it is the origin and source of human speech.¹¹⁸ Thus, human speech is pre-conditioned by silence.

This is Heidegger's argument in Being and Time. Silence, he says, is the necessary condition for any authentic speech about Being. In short, authentic speech manifests silence. As he states:

Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discourse. To be able to keep silent Dasein

[Being-in-the-world] must have something to say - that is, it must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself. In that case one's reticence makes something manifest, and does away with 'idle talk.' As a mode of discoursing, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality for hearing which is genuine, and a Being-with-another which is transparent.¹¹⁹

In other words, silence is itself a form of speaking that can either precede, antedate or support speech in manifesting Being. Silence is both a way of interpreting the logos and a relationship to logos.

Now, it is well to recall that Heidegger's self-proclaimed task was the recovery of Being. He saw himself as one who lived in a time when the gods have disappeared and new ones have yet to appear. His task was to think his way back to original Being. Such an effort is analogous to that of Eastern religious thinking, particularly Buddhism and Taoism. His effort to track Being is founded on the premise that ever since Plato and Aristotle the Western mind has been held by the sway of metaphysics. Even modern science, which conceives the world as an object or an entity to be mastered, is the form metaphysics has taken in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹²⁰ For Heidegger, then, the recovering of Being was essentially the enucleation of the forms of thought, the symbol systems, by which man has forgotten Being.

He defined the contemporary form of thought as that of calculative thinking, or technological thinking. Through the dominance of calculative thought man has lost his authentic

relationship to Being, to what is. Calculative thought is willful thinking, the kind of thinking that sets man on the path of mastering the things of the world, including himself. Such thinking, though, is "thoughtlessness," a "flight from thinking."¹²¹

The recovery of Being requires another type of thought, which Heidegger defines as meditative thought. Meditative thought allows a "releasement to things"¹²² by which man can apprehend his autochthonous relationship to Being, to the world of what is. Meditative thought, says Heidegger, allows man to live in the world of technology without being possessed by that world; that is, man can "affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, as so to warp, confine and lay waste our nature."¹²³ Through meditative thought man can live with technology but not be lived by technology.

However, this vita contemplativa requires the ability to dwell in silence. In doing so silence is able to determine its own way of disclosing itself and what it discloses will be authentic and concrete. This is in contrast to the willful conscious - or calculative thought - that seeks to transform silence into some abstracted and logical structure that obscures Being or reveals it only in an inauthentic fashion.

Heidegger recognizes that silence does not reveal itself in a vacuum. It reveals its meanings in relationship to consciousness and speech. But, he argues, the danger is that this meaning will be misconstrued by willfulness, by the will-to-will

a meaning. This is the tendency of the Western mindset: to understand silence or impose a meaning on silence rather than letting silence reveal its meanings. For silence to be meaningful, to reveal authentic Being, the will must be nullified. And it is through meditative thought that such a nullification and "releasement" can occur.

The parallels between Heidegger's and Grant's understanding of silence should be obvious. Both suggest contemplative thought requires learning to hear what is said in silence. That is, silence is a space or a zone of inner apprehension in which the "ineffable" can be voiced. Silence is a form of speaking an "inner speech." In ontological terms, silence is the womb in which all authentic speech is born. Or, to put it in Dauenhauer's terms, silence is the ontological principle on which all discourse depends for its very existence as authentic discourse.

Dauenhauer, in his discussion of Heidegger's silence, makes this point in arguing that for Heidegger silence is the alpha and the omega of discourse: "Silence is that in which all discourse not only terminates but also originates."¹²⁴ But, at the same time, Heidegger recognizes that there are those ineffable experiences of Being that preclude articulation. And in the face of such experiences that which cannot be said must remain unsaid because to speak of them would not be an authentic revelation of the experience. Yet this silence remains, to use Dauenhauer's terminology, as a performative act of revealing Being, albeit a silent act. As Dauenhauer remarks in his

conclusions about Heidegger's silence:

In the face of the unsaid, man must cease to speak. He must remain silent. . . . [But for Heidegger] it is clear that not only man's speech but also his performances of silence are needed to allow to appear that which Being grants to him.¹²⁵

Such an understanding of silence in its ontological significance finds echoes in Eastern thought. In Taoism, for instance, silence and speech are seen as correlative. Each depends on the other for its existence. Indeed, it is argued that

in the metaphysical terminology of the I Ching . . . , speech is the yang of silence, and silence is the yin of speech. But 'one-yin-one-yang is called Tao.' The alternation of speech and silence is thus an instantiation of the cosmic law of I, the primordial process of Creativity which is the ultimate reality of the universe.¹²⁶

For Taoism silence is both an intelligible experience and efficacious for action (or speech). Silence is the necessary ground for any speech that is truthful and sincere and proper. There can be no real antithesis between authentic thought, action and discourse. But the interconnectedness of these modes of action depends on the proper achievement of an inner silence, which, in turn, depends on accepting the boundaries or limits that separate the worlds of silence and speech. To speak authentically is to dwell in the silent core of Being:

The embodiment of silence is action. Speech stems from the silence of action and returns to the silence of action. The Truth of Tao is not just to be thought and said but, above all, to be done and enacted.¹²⁷

The efficacy which such thought attributes to silence finds a strong echo in Heidegger's thinking regarding silence as necessary for the authentic revelation of Being, both of which

belong to the realm of the inexpressible. In attempting to say the unsayable, then, it is necessary to learn how not to speak about it. In effect, says Heidegger, it is necessary to learn the limits of the language of non-reflexive, calculative thought and, conversely, learn the language of meditative thought, which is silence. To learn the language of silence is to achieve a "releasement to things" and "openness to the mystery."¹²⁸

For both Heidegger and Grant, then, authentic silence provides the transcendent horizon for speech; that is, silence speaks the ineffable, the "hearing" of which is manifested in authentic speech. Or, to put in another way, silence is the esoteric disclosure of existence, the bringing-forth, by a poetic mode, of that ontology which the wilfulness of calculative thought is incapable of speaking.

Returning to Grant with this in mind, it can be reasonably argued that given the influence of Heidegger, his assertion of having no language in which he can speak with any authority, his claim that the classical language of the Good has disintegrated in the onslaught of the historicist discourse, is a bit of rhetorical dissembling. In the act of voicing of his confinement, his dispossession of language, Grant is, in fact, invoking an alternative speech, even if only implicitly. Or, to put it differently, his speech points beyond itself to a silent logos, to an eternity that cannot be truly spoken of in time. His truth, in effect, reveals itself in silence. His speech, his vita activa, culminates in the stillness of the vita

contemplativa.¹²⁹

To tap this logos is to "hear" the unsaid side of his speech and, in the proper comprehension of this speech, to partake as best as one can of the ontological ground of his discourse. Grant's silence forces the reader back into himself, back into the private realm, to find the source of his own words that can counter a modern language that no longer provides any discursive sustenance in the public realm.

Like Heidegger, Grant sees silence as creating that space where authentic speech is brought forth. He argues that the need for another type of thinking other than that of calculating reason is paramount if man is to know what he is fitted for, if man is to know his true nature. And, following Heidegger, he posits the need to nullify the will through contemplative thought.

Grant recognizes that the very mode of modern thinking makes its extremely difficult for any other type of thought to gain an authoritative public voice. Nonetheless, Grant affirms that even within the magic circle of modernity, even under the horizon of historicism at the end of history, it is possible to respond to the world outside the subject-object matrix of calculative thought, to receive an "apprehension of the world beyond that as a field of objects considered as pragmata."¹³⁰

This apprehension may at first only be accomplished negatively through the "intimations of essential deprivals."¹³¹ But in becoming aware of these deprivals there is opened up the

possibility of recollecting the language of the Good that is the inheritance of Athens and Jerusalem. Only the language of the Good, he says, expresses what "belongs to man as man."¹³² And it is this language, Grant asserts, that is man's true and everlasting speech, despite the denials of those who beat the drums for the language of value, of unlimited freedom, of will.

Such a stance may not be vouchsafed with much hope of claiming any authority in the public realm, and, to the degree this is so, Grant seems to be at an impasse. But, as Peter Emberley observes in discussing Grant's refusal to be silenced by modernity, at the private, experiential level "we are always capable of the meditative enactment of those spiritual experiences given to us as human beings."¹³³ Grant himself denies being at an impasse:

In using the language of good, therefore, I am refusing the modern at its height. . . . if there were to be twenty-one thousand civilizations or an infinite number after ours, in which all memories of Athens and Jerusalem had been destroyed, it still would be the condition of men to live within and not beyond good and evil. In this sense, the modern, which at its height denies this in thought, cannot in its existence be a total darkness.¹³⁴

In effect, Grant is saying that regardless of modernity's claims, the Good - or God - is ever-abiding. It can be denied or ignored or even dismissed with derision as unscientific and, thus, unworthy of consideration. Indeed, according to Grant, such a dismissal of metaphysics is at the foundation of modern western civilization. Modernity seeks to exclude the very asking of the question of the Good, of what is man's nature.

But there are those like Grant who become aware of the need to ask such questions, a need born of the inability to speak the language of modernity, of the awareness of the modern deprivals. And it is in the asking of such Socratic questions that one steps outside the magic circle. From being aware of the cave as a cave comes the determination to ascend the cave. In thinking of eternity, in contemplative thought, one has already made some small escape from history and calculative reason. Or, to state this differently, to dwell in silence is to speak a different discourse.

The fact that Grant speaks a different discourse than that of modernity can be exemplified by contrasting his Heideggerian understanding of silence with that of Hegel's. Silence for Hegel has no ontological significance because it is simply a deficiency that needs to be overcome.¹³⁵ According to Hegel, silence says nothing about reality because in the totality of Hegelian science there is no ineffable since, in theory, the whole has been explained.

Kojeve, it will be recalled, points out that in achieving absolute knowledge, or Wisdom, Hegel comprehended the totality of "what is" and thus arrived at the end of the historical process that led up to that comprehension. In comprehending the totality of history Hegel comprehended himself as revealed through history; that is, he achieved universal self-consciousness, he answered the Cartesian question of "What am I?" And this "fully self-conscious consciousness is absolute knowledge, which, by

being developed in discourse, will form the content of absolute philosophy or Science, of that Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences that contains the sum of all possible knowledge."¹³⁶

Kojeve goes on to argue that man is both consciousness and, above all, self-consciousness. As a result, man is that being that thinks; that is, he "reveals Being by Logos, by Speech formed of words that have a meaning." In addition, he reveals, again by speech, the being that reveals Being, the being that he is himself. And this revealing being he names as the I or the self.¹³⁷ Thus, self-consciousness is coeval with the I, the Self. But for there to be an I, a self-conscious being that reveals Being, there must be Speech. Without speech, which is manifested self-consciousness, there is no I. And without the I there is no world, or at least no human world. Thus, for Hegel, reality, or the world, is coeval with Logos. In effect, no speech, no world.

What this means, according to Dauenhauer, is that in the Hegelian equation, philosophic truth can only be expressed in speech, in words. And what is true is reality as revealed by knowledge, which is, of necessity, rational and conceptual. And with Hegel's achievement of absolute knowledge and full self-consciousness everything that can be said has been said. In short, there is no ineffable, no silence.

There once was silence, of course. But this was because before Hegelian science there were only partial discourses, i.e. cultic religion, epic, tragedy, comedy, revealed religion. But with the achievement of Hegelian science these deficient or

partial Logoi are overcome. With absolute knowledge, absolute speech there is simply no room for silence. And what may be asserted as some ostensible silent realm is invalid and unworthy of acknowledgement. As Hegel states: "What is called unspeakable is nothing else than what is called untrue, irrational, something barely and simply 'meant.'"138

With this excursus of Hegel's "silence" in mind, I conclude with the argument that Grant's turn from Hegel is even more understandable. In claiming the complete speech, Hegel was in effect negating any silent speech, any ineffable mystery, any transcendent God beyond man's rationality. And this, as I have argued earlier, did not fit with Grant's experience. But what I wish to drive home is the idea that not only does Grant's turn from Hegel reflect his rejection of the modern discourse, but it also reflects a conflict between two completely different ontological perspectives, to different logoi. Or, what amounts to the same thing, a conflict between two different states of consciousness.

Grant alludes to this in the concluding chapter of Time as History where, in expressing his suspicions of modernity, he nevertheless acknowledges he cannot present or defend his own beliefs because "it is questionable how much it would be possible to argue them in the modern world . . . [since] all those statements are made out of an ancient way of thinking."139

Such a statement can be interpreted on one level as

referring to the idea that the Biblical discourse is no longer an authoritative representation of the truth and, as such, it is difficult to assert its truth. But on another level, the esoteric level, it could also be referring to the philosopher's experience of the eternal, which Plato referred to as the "unspeakable" and Aristotle the "without word."¹⁴⁰

The experience of the eternal, as Plato's cave parable relates, can only be known outside the public realm, outside the vita activa. The "unspeakable" is a product of the vita contemplativa and therefore private and incommunicable in speech. To even attempt to speak of the experience of the eternal, to tell of what can only be known in silence, is to return to the temporal realm of the vita activa and, hence, to be lost to the eternal. As Arendt remarks:

. . . the experience of the eternal . . . has no correspondence with and cannot be transformed into any activity whatsoever since even the activity of thought, which goes on within one's self by means of words, is obviously not only inadequate to render it but would interrupt and ruin the experience itself.¹⁴¹

Furthermore, Grant, like Socrates, knows that since it is impossible to communicate his experience of the eternal a detailed statement of his ultimate truths would not serve a useful purpose.¹⁴² In this Grant follows the admonishment Plato makes in the Seventh Letter, when he says that the deepest truths simply cannot be expressed in language.¹⁴³ Given this, didacticism would win Grant no converts, or, at least, no worthy converts. Instead, Grant uses silence erotetically; he posits questions that do not necessarily have answers, but, in the

asking, disreput the reader's previously unthought assumptions.¹⁴⁴ Grant knows that, if truth is to be served, it is best done by prudent speech, or the art of strategic silence.¹⁴⁵ In other words, Grant uses silence purposefully. He knows that a detailed statement of his ultimate truths would defeat his pedagogical task.

The question remains though: How does Grant's silence manifest itself? Grant, as I have previously argued, asserts that the modern language, the language of historicism and technology, denies him the words to voice any alternative. As he remarks:

Have we not been told that to speak of what belongs to man as man is to forget that man creates himself in history? . . . All languages of good except the language of the drive to freedom have disintegrated.¹⁴⁶

The fact is, though, that Grant is able to articulate his concerns, is able to speak against modernity despite its discursive confinements. Grant, as Peter Emberley remarks, "is not silent before the technological dynamo."¹⁴⁷

Briefly stated, Grant's response to a modern language that would silence him is silence, or, more precisely, a poetic of silence. This is to say that Grant uses silence to create an inner space in which the dispossessions of modernity as manifested in technology and historicism can be heard. For Grant, poetical silence is the Archimedean lever by which he and, hopefully, the reader can hear their own authentic voices, the "language of good,"¹⁴⁸ amidst the cacophony of the modern language.

To put forth didactic or polemical propositions without

first creating a discursive space in which those propositions might gain some assent on the part of the reader would be self-defeating. Thus, Grant's poetical silence reflects his Socratic task. That is, silence serves Grant's pedagogical effort of leading the reader into his own silent space by which he can intimate his own deprivals, of opening the reader's consciousness to a self-examination that leads, hopefully, to self-knowledge.

Given this, Grant's silence - or, more accurately, his use of silence - can be seen for what it is: the strategic response of one consciousness in opposition to another consciousness. This is to say that Grant's discourse reflects his apprehension of the world, just as the modern discourse of freedom and will reflects the modern consciousness. What this points up is the idea that the form of Grant's discourse reflects his conscious apprehension of the world. Thus, in trying to "hear" Grant's poetics, it is necessary to "read" the consciousness from which those poetics speak. This is the task I undertake in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
THE BLAZE OF IRONY

The philosophic tradition has pronounced two versions of Socrates. There is the young and immature Socrates of Aristophanes' Clouds. This work presents Socrates the Sophist. Here, Socrates is portrayed as the mocker of morality, the debunker of the traditional gods, the imprudent teacher who, in teaching the rhetoric of Unjust Speech, seduces young men away from the Just Speech of their fathers. This immature Socrates lacks civic responsibility. He is the embodiment of optimistic rationality and the scientific spirit. Nothing is sacred, all is questioned. Perhaps worst of all, he foolishly accepts anyone into his Thinkery, believing wrongly, as it turns out, that all are fitted for what he has to teach.

Then, there is the mature Socrates. This is the converted Socrates, the philosophic teacher who had learned the lesson that all are not fitted for philosophizing and, if he is to teach, he must do so prudently. He knows that the traditional and the ancestral gods are frauds, mere products of imaginative ignorance. But he now also knows better than to hit people over the head with this knowledge. He recognizes that not all people are capable of giving up those beliefs that sustain them and give their lives purpose. Nor, he knows, is it wise to expect otherwise. Men need their noble delusions. To destroy those necessary delusions would not only destroy men, but also the

society in which they find meaning for their existence. Thus, he accepts civic responsibility. He cares about the human things. This mature Socrates is also more politically astute. While the philosopher can live without delusions, he depends on the unphilosophic citizens for his survival. Socrates, thus, prudently takes a wife and has children. He does his duty as a citizen and as a soldier. He may be an atheist, but he honors the gods of the city. He is patriotic. He goes to wars when the city's survival - and his - are at stake. In short, the converted Socrates practises the conventions that are necessary to the well-being of the prudent man, even though he does not necessarily believe those conventions reflect the truth.¹⁴⁹

More importantly, though, his speech does not seem dangerous and threatening. After all he only asks questions to which he claims he has no answers. Furthermore, the converted Socrates says different things to different people. He addresses the Sophists and the unphilosophic citizenry differently than he does the young men who might be led into philosophizing. The converted Socrates is a "safe speaker," to use Strauss's terms. That is, the mature Socrates recognizes that not all men are capable of being philosophers. Hence, he speaks indirectly and prudently of those things which he knows to be true.

To those, like Cephalus who are incapable of understanding, Socrates respectfully offers salutary myths. But to those such as Glaucon, who are potential philosophers, Socrates speaks more directly, on the off chance that they might detect the esoteric

meaning behind his exoteric statements. His speech, thus, becomes a testing ground for those who are or might be capable of listening behind the words. And it is this, as Strauss remarks, that makes the mature Socrates is "radically ironic."¹⁵⁰

Socrates seeks to pry the potential philosophers loose from their unthought assumptions, to make them question those truths they hold to be self-evident. One of levers by which Socrates tries to move the mountain of convention is irony. Whether one is moved depends on one's nature.¹⁵¹

This safe-speaking, ironic Socrates is the Platonic Socrates. As Plato states in his Seventh Letter, he fictionalized Socrates, made him noble and fair. He masked Socrates in the dramatic form of a dialogue to make him conventional and, hence, acceptable to an audience. In other words, Plato's dialogues hide Socrates' true speech, his esoteric speech, behind an exoteric text that is acceptable to a non-philosophic audience. Or, to put it differently, Plato, in his dialogues, presents the reader with Socrates as a teller of tales about such concepts as justice, virtue and the Good. He portrays this tale-teller in a dramatic dialogue-form as telling tales about the telling of those tales necessary to the good life.

Yet this teller of tales is always portrayed by Plato as saying one thing and meaning another. He asks questions, to which he claims he has no answer. He dissembles, dissimulates and pleads ignorance to those very things about which he asks questions. He says he is only a midwife to the truths others may

have. But Socrates' real tale, his real face, his true wisdom, is always hidden behind a mask of irony.¹⁵²

Socratic irony, however, is not simply or only a figure of speech or a rhetorical pose or even primarily a pedagogical method. Irony is also a mode of consciousness. In Socrates' case, as Soren Kierkegaard observes, irony was an existential position. Indeed, according to Kierkegaard, it was the midwifery of Socrates that delivered ironic consciousness into the world. In his book The Concept of Irony, Kierkegaard argues that Socrates' irony is "infinite absolute negativity"¹⁵³ in relation to the historical actuality in which he lived.

Kierkegaard argues that Socrates stood against the entire established order of things. His philosophic life was opposed to the substantive life of Athens. His negative questioning, his elenchus, was a destructive method that left nothing standing. Behind his irony there was nothing positive that could constitute a Socratic order. As Kierkegaard remarks:

He had become alien to the actuality of the whole substantial world . . . The whole substantial life of Greek culture had lost its validity for him, which means that to him the established actuality was unactual, not in this or that particular aspect, but in its totality.¹⁵⁴

Nonetheless, Kierkegaard states, this negativity points to a fundamental shift in the consciousness of man. With Plato's Socrates came the first expression of the universal criteria of reason as grounded in rational subjectivity. Socrates was the first to see that rational thought is the essence of man. He took the first step toward a self-conscious existence that

transcended the non-rational, unreflective, tradition-bound consciousness of the pre-Socratic world. He submitted the entire universe to the rational comprehension of his human consciousness. In doing so, he grasped that knowledge arises in the human mind, that it is not imposed from the outside by the gods and must be developed inwardly.

From his own inner experience Socrates knew that the Idea of the Good is not some supersensible reality beyond the temporal world, but rather the underlying rationality of the world. Which is to say, he knew that rationality is the ground of Being, and to the degree that men become fully self-conscious rational beings, they remember or recollect the truth of Being.

Thus, says Kierkegaard, Socrates' irony was not merely some instrument to be used as a bludgeon against the sophistry of his fellow Athenians; rather it was his position, his mode of consciousness.¹⁵⁵ He was conscious of the ground of Being, of the Idea of the Good, but, in the philosophic sense, he was ignorant of what it was and how it was manifested in actual life. Hence, he could only ask questions and, through the movement of dialectic, try to come to the concrete actuality of Being.¹⁵⁶ In this light, then, irony, in its negative function, is, simultaneously, the stimulus that drives the hunt for the logos, a trailmarker along the path of the logos, and the terminus of the logos. Or, as Kierkegaard puts it: "Irony as the negative is the way; it is not the truth but the way."¹⁵⁷

Grant, I argue, uses irony in a similar fashion. Like

Socrates, it has both a pedagogical function and an ontological significance for him. At least one Grant critic recognizes this and raises the possibility that Grant's irony was modeled on that of Socrates and Kierkegaard.¹⁵⁸ But I would submit there is more than a possibility of a connection between Grant's irony and Socratic irony. There are simply too many parallels between the two not to accept the idea that Grant adopts Socratic irony in its pedagogical function and as an existential position. And the latter suggests an even deeper irony to Grant's discourse. Grant, I submit, masks himself with a Socratic - or Platonic - persona. He too wears a mask of irony.

I shall develop this idea and what it means more fully later. For the moment, though, as a preliminary overture, I would point out some parallels between Plato-Socrates and Grant in their respective ironic postures that should be kept in mind. Most obvious, is the fact that Grant's ironic methodology, like that of Socrates, is erotetic; he asks questions, but does not necessarily have any answers.

There are also parallels between Grant and Plato in terms of their actual lives. Grant himself was undoubtedly aware of the parallels. In a 1954 essay, "Plato and Popper," Grant remarks that "Plato came of a family which for generations had helped to shape Athens in its glory. Yet he reached maturity just as the results of the Peloponnesian War became catastrophically clear both for Athens and its enemies."¹⁵⁹

Grant, similarly, came of a family whose members had long

been involved in shaping Canada as a nation. His United Empire Loyalist ancestors had made the exodus from revolutionary America to settle in the Maritimes. His grandfather, George Munro Grant, a clergyman and academic, was an ardent supporter of Confederation and actively promoted the expansionist vision of Canada as a transcontinental nation state within the British Empire. And, like Plato, Grant came of age at a time when his nation's traditions and those of its ruling class had been sundered by war. The Second World War was, as Grant himself put it, his "great primal experience."¹⁶⁰

For Grant, the consequences of that war entailed Canada's subsumation into the American empire. By 1945, he says, Canada's colonial subservience to Britain had been replaced by the threat of being an economic, political and cultural colony of the United States.¹⁶¹

Now, it is not my intention to offer a biography of Grant. Rather, I am interested in how certain aspects of his personal history shaped his philosophic effort. Grant himself provides justification for this. While his autobiographical references are few and far between, he himself remarks that it was his wartime experience and his perceptions of what the war had done to his country and its traditions that led him into philosophy. As he states: "Nothing so much can drive one to philosophy as being part of a class which is disappearing."¹⁶² Such a statement echoes Plato's own reasons for turning from the political chaos of his times to philosophy.¹⁶³

Such parallels set up the notion that philosophy was a way of understanding concrete experience for Grant. Moreover, his writing of philosophy has, as it were, an illocutionary function. In this regard Grant's discourse is a performative speech-act through which he acts to counter those forces that would dispossess him of an authentic life. His speech, when taken as a whole, functions much like a prayer or meditation in which the subject of the discourse or utterance, its locus of intentionality, is himself as the speaker.

Grant's discourse, then, constitutes his speech-act as an action-in-the-world to counter those forces that would force him into silence and, hence, into the voiceless and powerless margins of his society. Thus, Grant's reference in "Plato and Popper" to the circumstances of Plato's life functions, as Dennis Duffy suggests, as a "screened autobiography"¹⁶⁴ by which Grant presents an ironical and esoteric allusion to his own perceived position in relation to his times.

The parallel between Grant and Plato-Socrates extends even to the criticism both received for their methods. Just as Thrasyarchus in The Republic wants Socrates to stop his dissembling and answer his own questions, so too, as has been noted, have contemporary critics attacked Grant for not answering his own questions. Likewise, both are accused of having no positive and systematic alternatives to the conditions that they criticize. But such criticism ignores what I hold to be Grant's adopted Platonic persona and, hence, his use of Platonic

rhetorical techniques to achieve his philosophical purposes. Grant, like Plato, "hated nothing more than system-making."¹⁶⁵

Grant's position in the contemporary world also parallels that of Socrates in his time. Like the modern historicists, the Greek Sophists denied that men were governed by the gods, by a given eternal order that transcended all temporal machinations. The Sophists argued that morality and laws were mere conventions and customs and, as such, were intended only to allow men to live together in comfort and without warring against each other all the time. There was nothing to suggest a natural order, to which men were subordinate and to which they must conform in establishing their political orders. Socrates rejected this, arguing that man's conduct was dependent on his relationship to an unchanging natural order, to which he must attune himself.¹⁶⁶

Grant, likewise, portrays modern historicism and modern political philosophy as similar to the Sophists' teachings. The moral relativity of modernity and its rejection of naturally given limits, in the name of freedom, have practically destroyed any concept of human existence having a higher, unchanging meaning, beyond that of making morality and law subject to the exigencies of historical necessity.¹⁶⁷ For example, Grant castigates those like Karl Popper who reject the possibility of a transcendent morality while, at the same time, taking for granted that "the truths of morality are somehow immediately intelligible to all men of good will." The modern sophists, like their ancient counterparts, ask: "Why waste time on metaphysics

when we all know what is worth doing?"¹⁶⁸

Grant's Socratic or Platonic persona is also evident in his negative analysis of modern liberal justice in English-Speaking Justice. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the book's structure is reminiscent of the opening chapters of Plato's Republic. Just as Socrates uses dialectic to seek the truth of justice with his various interlocutors, so too does Grant seek to understand modern justice, in what amounts to a dialectic with John Rawls and other modernists.¹⁶⁹ And like Socrates, Grant's purpose is, in part at least, pedagogical. He too seeks to educate and persuade his fellow citizens in the virtues of the Good. In doing so, he makes use of classical rhetorical techniques, including irony.

Now, the purpose of rhetoric is to persuade. In the hands of the Sophists, rhetoric was intended to persuade a listener to the speaker's point of view. That is, to get the listener to change his opinion. But in the hands of Socrates rhetoric was intended to persuade the listener to change his mind. In this regard, then, rhetoric has both a public and a private function. In terms of Grant's rhetoric, he follows Socrates. As I have argued previously, his purpose is not didactic, not ultimately aimed at winning agreement to his point of view. Rather, the effort is to encourage the listener to think for himself.

What Grant is doing then in his Socratic persona is trying to persuade the reader to question his own assumptions. Grant, like Socrates, wants to reader to plumb the depths of his

own experience, his own understanding, knowing full well that only when an individual thinks through his assumptions is he capable of truly altering his consciousness. Thus, his refusal to answer questions, his seeming inability to offer a philosophic program, his reticence, is ironic.

Grant knows that men can only change their minds about something, come to some new consciousness, when they have done it themselves. All the true philosopher can do - as opposed to the philosophic scholar - is try to establish the conditions conducive to this hoped-for shift in consciousness. But the tool available to the philosopher is rhetoric, his arts of persuasion. The rhetorical devices Grant uses are, in essence, a way of gaining a beachhead on the shores of the reader's consciousness, as a preliminary to a radical sea-change.

Grant's irony, then, is a form of safe-speaking, a deliberate reticence that forces the reader who confronts it back on himself to seek his own answers. It functions performatively and poetically to bring-forth a zone of inner apprehension in which the "intimations of deprival" can be discerned. Thus, Grant's irony is a strategic response to the historicist discourse or consciousness. Implicit in this idea is the notion that Grant's consciousness is at odds with that of modernity. This, in turn, suggests that the form of Grant's discourse reflects his conscious apprehension of the world. To hear Grant's poetics then, it is necessary to learn the consciousness from which those poetics derive.

Hayden White's theory of the tropological nature of discourse provides an entrance into Grant's ironic posture. According to White, every discourse is "a kind of model of the processes of consciousness."¹⁷⁰ The style of a writer's discourse, he says, reveals the deep structures of his mind, its unconscious intentions and prediscursive apprehension of the phenomenal world.

The actual discourse, then, is the mind's dialectical movement between assumed or pre-conceived "encodings of experience" and an unknown or unfamiliar phenomenal experience that cannot be comprehended until it is subject to the mediation of language. But this dialectical process of understanding is of necessity tropological because, according to White, the mind inevitably engages in some sort of figurative troping in an attempt to make the unfamiliar or unknown experience familiar and known to the mind.¹⁷¹

To know a writer's tropes is to penetrate to the level of consciousness on which the writer's apprehension and experience of the world is constituted, even before it is analyzed by the reflective mind. That is, the writer's pre-discursive, pre-figurative consciousness is revealed by the dominating tropes that characterize his writing. In a sense, as Harold Bloom remarks, a writer's discourse is a "psychic battlefield" and his tropes are the defensive positions by which he endeavors to turn his words "toward [their] proper meaning."¹⁷² What this means is that knowing a writer's tropes is to come as close as one

possibly can to his true meanings.

Within this tropological framework, then, the proper meaning of Grant's discourse, and the poetical devices by which he expresses that meaning, can be viewed as reflecting his consciousness as it seeks to express the subject of his discourse. Moreover, the meaning of the discourse is prefigured as to what it comprehends and, hence, what the reader will comprehend, by the tropes embedded within it. Knowing Grant's tropes is a way to penetrate the recesses of this thought, a way to reveal the esoteric meaning that may not be exoterically transparent on the surface of the text.

White, following Kenneth Burke, identifies four master tropes by which various styles of thought can be determined - metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony.

According to White, all discourse begins with a particular metaphoric apprehension of the world. It then proceeds through metonymic and synecdochic expressions of that initial apprehension until, finally, with the writer's growing self-conscious awareness of his style, it comes to an ironic level of apprehension. In a similar manner, says White, consciousness and its figurative expression in language, proceeds through the same tetradic set of tropes.

There is a certain narrative order to a writer's logos or discourse. This logos follows an archetypal journey of moving out and back, of departure and return.¹⁷³ To track the tropic enfigurations as they appear in a discourse is to track the

movement of the logos; which is to say, that one moves through a text like a hunter pursuing his prey, trying to learn the character and habits of the prey so as to be able to bring it within sight.

Tropology, then, can be said to refer to the movement of a logos, or speech, that is inherent in its character or nature. (The word trope comes from the Greek tropos, which refers to the character or nature of a thing. It is related to the Greek trope, which refers to the involuntary or automatic movement of an organism). Following White's tetradic set of tropes, a writer's tropology can be characterized as moving from the preliminary naming operation of metaphor, to the process of reductiveness inherent to metonymy and then on to the integration of macrocosmic-microcosmic relationships characterized by synecdoche, through, finally, to the self-conscious awareness of all these processes of thought in irony.¹⁷⁴

White, in discussing Giambattista Vico's The New Science, remarks that all languages are inherently mythopoetic. In primitive societies language was used to "name" the things of the world and thus bring them into existence in a meaningful and purposeful manner. To name something is to distinguish it from something else and so create order among things. This naming function is essentially metaphoric. Thus, says White, the logos of primitive societies "was nothing but the operation by which they 'named' and thereby 'comprehended' the objects and processes of the world around and within themselves."¹⁷⁵

Metaphor, then, is a naming of the world out of an intuited comprehension of the relationship among and between the things of the world.¹⁷⁶ As Burke puts it: metaphor functions perspectivally as a "device for seeming something in terms of something else."¹⁷⁷ And metaphoric language asserts similarities or relationships between objects despite their often manifest differences.

Metaphysical thought is by necessity metaphorical in that it can only articulate its insights by analogy; that is, it offers something from the phenomenal world as a representation or symbol of the world of intuited experience. Metaphors, as James Edie observes, do not exist in nature. Nor are there any metaphors in perception. Metaphors come into existence only in the act of putting perceptions into words; that is, metaphors arise out of the naming of the world.¹⁷⁸

A modern example of a consciousness prefigured by the trope of metaphor is that of Nietzsche. Nietzsche's philosophic effort, in tropological terms, was to transcend his ironic consciousness and return to the immediacy of a metaphoric apprehension of the world in which there was a direct correspondence between the given world and the naming of that world. He sought to free his consciousness from the abstractions and linguistic habits typical of metonymic and synecdochic modes of consciousness.¹⁷⁹

This metaphoric state of consciousness, however, does not last. Intrinsic to metaphor is the recognition of "a tension

between things and the words used to characterize them."¹⁸⁰ The tropic movement of consciousness seeks refinements between words and world in metonymic and synecdochic apprehensions, both of which are forms of refined metaphor.

Metonymy is the substitution of the name of something with the name of something associated with it. White, for example, cites Vico's argument regarding the way he believed primitive man "named" a natural phenomenon such as thunder. At the initial metaphoric stage thunder is characterized as anger. But the move to metonymy identifies the effect of thunder with a causal agency, thus setting up the troping consciousness of a "god," who is conceived as the controlling agent behind the weather. In this regard, metonymy is reductive in that, as White observes, "the thunder is endowed with all the characteristics necessary to permit the conceptualization of it as a powerful, willful, and purposeful being, a great spirit which, because it is similar to man in some of its attributes, can be treated with, served, and placated."¹⁸¹

In effect, metonymic consciousness allows the reduction of the whole to one of its parts while retaining the part-whole relationship.¹⁸² According to White, such a mode of consciousness is reflected in all doctrines of mechanistic cause-and-effect.

Heidegger's apprehension of the world is prefigured by the trope of metonymy. As George Steiner points out, Heidegger reduces all metaphysics to the "forgetting of Being," and grounds

all of man's purposes and meanings in the radical historicity of a creative freedom thrusting continually into the future. His language embodies this reductionism by the "use of metonymy in which concrete attributes [of the world] stand for abstract entities and abstract segments [of the world] that represent a concrete whole."¹⁸³

This cause-and-effect linkage of metonymic consciousness undergoes further refinements in the tropic process of synecdoche. In synecdoche the thunder god is generalized into the abstract conception of a panoply of gods or a supreme God to such a degree that "the abstract is experienced as a tangible reality."¹⁸⁴ Synecdoches, then, move from the specific to the general in a representational fashion. Parts are elevated into wholes; particulars ascend to universals. In other words as Burke comments, synecdochic consciousness proclaims an identity or correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm; for instance, man and God, or man as microcosmic replica of the universe.¹⁸⁵

Hegel's thought is essentially synecdochic. He saw man as not merely a part of the world, but the reflection of the whole of the world, the manifestation of Spirit-in-the-world that expresses itself in the concrete form of nature as revealed in man's conscious expression.¹⁸⁶ According to White, Hegel conceives "synecdochic consciousness to have a more general applicability"¹⁸⁷ for understanding man as Spirit-in-the-world. White argues that Hegel's philosophy of history proceeds from an

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original metaphoric apprehension of Spirit through a metonymic reduction of Spirit in the historical process and then into the synecdochic elevation of Spirit-in-the-world as the whole that gives meaning to all the parts of the historical process.¹⁸⁸

Returning to Grant, I argue that his prefiguring consciousness is essentially synecdochic, but overlaid by irony. Before his turn from Hegel he revealed his synecdochic prefiguration of the world in the 1953 essay "Philosophy and Adult Education," in which he argues that science, art, religion and philosophy are "steps leading us to that great light" in which the individual consciousness partakes of the absolute consciousness. Such a position reveals, as O'Donovan observes, that Grant is following Hegel in the idea of a progressive perfectability of self-consciousness through various stages of reflective thought. For Grant, with his synecdochic apprehension of the world, man's desire for knowledge "involves a conception of infinity, because the faculty of knowing is one of continually transcending ourselves, and there is no limit to the possibility of that self-transcendence."¹⁸⁹

But even after his turning away from Hegel and his turn to Plato, Grant did not alter his tropic comprehension. Nor did he need to. Plato, according to Charles Cochrane, believes that men find the greatest satisfaction, their highest achievement, in contemplating the eternal order, rather than in the historicist goal trying to satisfying desire through the continuous creation

of meaning and purpose. Platonic cosmology, then, is essentially synecdochic. As Cochrane writes:

Man is envisaged as a microcosm of the universe, a composite of 'body,' 'soul,' and 'mind.' In this composite, the part designated 'mind' is . . . identified with the cosmic principle and conceived as a 'scintilla' of the divine essence; that is why (under certain conditions) it is held to be capable of apprehending the archetypal forms. Plato implies that a truly human order was one which involved the subjection to reason to all elements of irrationality; and this order he declared to be . . . a replica or counterpart to the fixed and immutable order of the universe.¹⁹⁰

Grant reflects this synecdochic apprehension throughout his writing. At the centre of his thought is the ontological premise of a divine order untouched and untouchable by history. He sees time as eternity. Indeed, he elucidates this synecdochic consciousness through a variety of metaphors in which he represents the macrocosmic in the microcosmic - "eternity," "the Good," "tradition," to name only a few. For Grant, history, in all its manifestations, is but the moving image on the unmoving wall of eternity, and all historical action is, or should be, subordinated to a divinely-given Good.

Grant, however, realizes that many, if not most, of his fellow citizens do not share his view of time as eternity. To use White's terminology: Unlike Grant, who apprehends the world synecdochically and subordinates man to a given higher purpose, most people in the western world apprehend the world metonymically with their acceptance of the reductionist doctrines of historical cause-and-effect and mastery of nature. Or, to rephrase a previously used statement in tropological terms, the

modern metonymic discourse reveals a world reduced to time and man-space; Grant's synecdochic discourse elevates a world of eternity and God-space.

Given this contrasting apprehension of the world, it is obvious that Grant is intellectually - and spiritually - alienated from modernity. His consciousness is not the consciousness of the technological, history-making society. Grant is well aware of his alienation. He expresses it frequently, saying that his thinking is outside the faith of historicism and progressive liberalism, making him "a stranger to the public realm."¹⁹¹ Such a position, he says, is a difficult one because "in no society is it possible for many men to live outside the dominant assumptions of their world for very long."¹⁹² And anyone like himself, who espouses a political philosophy grounded in the concept of the Good "must be a shadowy voice in a technological civilization"¹⁹³ whose ontological centre is the concept of freedom. Indeed, for anyone to hold to a vision of an eternal order in liberal society is, he says, "to jeopardise one's hold on North America and make oneself an impotent stranger in the practical realm of one's own society"¹⁹⁴ and "to invite an alienation far greater than the simply political."¹⁹⁵

It should be apparent, then, why Grant claims he cannot publicly articulate an alternative to modernity, with its prevailing assumptions of man as a history-maker, a species outside the natural order. The historicist paradigm not only enfolds all of nature, including human nature, but it determines

how the world is perceived and, indeed, how it is named. Grant must offer his synecdochic apprehension of the world by indirection; that is, poetically. It is on this point that the other major trope in Grant's discourse can be detected, the trope of irony.

Irony, according to White, is the tropic process that reflects the self-conscious awareness of the disparities and disjunctions between words and the realities expressed by those words. The ironic consciousness perceives that all previous metaphors no longer reflect the world with any authority. In irony language itself is an object of reflection in that language is seen as inadequate in fully representing the objects of the world with any generally accepted meaning. As such, irony provides something of a linguistic position or posture that reflects a self-critical and self-conscious mode of conceptualizing and characterizing the world.¹⁹⁶

In its primary linguistic use, irony implies saying something markedly different, sometimes even the opposite of what is actually said or meant. Humour, satire, sarcasm, cynicism, all can be used ironically. Burke, however, argues for a deeper understanding of irony. Irony, he says, is paradoxical. It is essentially dialectical in that it posits a stance that permits one to maintain a position of otherness or contradiction to what is actually being said or experienced. Yet, according to Burke, such an ironic posture also implies a relationship to the world, a "kinship" between oneself and the "other." Thus, he says,

irony is paradoxically a mode of consciousness by which one can identify and overcome one's otherness through the act of negation or refutation or contradiction. The ironic position is an act of detachment by which one affirms, in the negative, a relationship or connectedness to the world that one cannot state positively.¹⁹⁷ In short, irony is the mode of consciousness of both the sinner and the saint.

Following this, irony belongs to that realm of indirect discourse that is aware of the inadequacies of metaphorical language to capture all realities. The ironic discourse, while engaged in negation and dissembling, is also acting to clear away the linguistic debris and clutter of inauthentic words that impede an authentic apprehension of the world. Irony, thus, functions poetically to bring forth what can only be indirectly understood. The meaning embedded in ironic discourse is not found in what is said but in what is not said. Which is to say that ironic discourse is nurtured by silence.

In this light, then, it can be seen how Grant responds to his alienation from modernity, to the fact that his discourse is, so to speak, ultra vires the modern discourse. In his confrontation with the language of will, he overlays his synecdochic apprehension with the trope of irony, particularly in his use of ironic silence and his adoption of Platonic-Socratic and Prophetic personae. Grant uses ironic silence to create an inner space in which the dispossessions of modernity can be heard, if not articulated.

For Grant, then, irony and silence are the means through which he can attempt to intrude his synecdochic consciousness and his "language of good" into the modern discourse. These illocutionary and perlocutionary functions of silence are implicit in his concluding remarks in Technology and Empire. As he states:

. . . if we cannot speak of Good then we can either only celebrate or stand in silence before that (technological) drive. Only in listening for the intimations of deprival can we live critically in the dynamo. . . Any intimations of authentic deprival are precious, because they are the ways through which intimations of good, unthinkable in the public terms, may yet appear to us.¹⁹⁸

What is revealed in such silent standing is an essentially ironic posture of otherness in relation to the world, which, as Burke points out, simultaneously expresses a sense of identification with the world. Ironic silence is an act of negation or refutation which, paradoxically, speaks positively of a relationship or connectedness to the world.

Such a posture reflects Kierkegaard's definition of irony as the negative way to truth. Irony is a way of speaking in which meaning is not said but shown. One is able to speak and say something while, at the same, time dwelling in silence. In ordinary speech the speaker means something on a direct, surface level. But in ironic speech the meaning is hidden beneath the words because the ironic figure of speech cancels itself; that is, the ironic meaning is found not in what is said, but in what is not said, or in what is shown by not being said.

What is being shown, I argue, in Grant's ironic posture, is

Arendt's "ineffable" or Plato's "unspeakable;" that intuited knowledge which simply cannot be expressed in words - or exoterically - without being lost or distorted when given verbal expression. In Grant, this undefined, allusive ineffable quality is shown ironically by the fact that he frequently does not say completely what he means. Such ironies usually appear in the context of Grant's negative or elenctic statements on some aspect of modernity.

For example, he does not explain what he means by the "accidents of experience"¹⁹⁹ that turned him away from the historicist paradigm. In another context, referring to the capacity of a modern saint like Simone Weil to be reconciled to the "unspeakable evils and tragedies" of the twentieth century, Grant says such reconciliation is available only to those who possess "a supernatural gift."²⁰⁰ What gift he refers to he does not say explicitly. At the end of Lament for a Nation he quotes Virgil - "They were holding their arms outstretched in love toward the further shore" - without explicitly telling the reader what is on this further shore.²⁰¹

What Grant is referring to, as I have shown elsewhere, is God. But God is not a word Grant uses very often, and when he does, it is usually in a detached and scholarly manner. Usually he prefers, as one critic notes, to use the Platonic language of Good.²⁰² On one level such silence expresses Grant's awareness of his alienation from the modern discourse. But on a deeper level Grant's reticence reflects the illocutionary and perlocutionary

function of his speech and the performative capacities of an ironic silence.

Consider, for example, Grant's reference to "supernatural experiences." The reference drives the reader to Weil where he learns of the experience of God's grace. Similarly, the quotation from Virgil leads the reader to The Aeneid where he discovers that the quoted line appears at the point in the book where Aeneas is approaching the kingdom of the dead where his father resides. The newly-dead are holding out their arms in love toward that far shore where they hope to attain rest and surcease from the pain of life. In other words, the newly-dead are in tension towards the divine or, in Christian terms, to God.

Grant knows, though, that in an age mistrustful of proselytizing, any claims to faith and God are seen at best as unseemly didacticism or as embarrassing acts of self-exposure. But in its illocutionary function his reticence allows him to speak ironically of his faith. And whether the reader fulfills his perlocutionary intent depends on the reader's capacity to penetrate the surface of the text and undergo the necessary alteration in consciousness. To do this requires not only a wider reading of Grant, but the willingness to go beyond Grant to those other thinkers to whom he allusively refers.

Grant's irony, thus, is a rhetorical device, a form of speech that has a perlocutionary intent.²⁰³ The reader pursues Grant's logos to the degree his nature permits and participates in Grant's consciousness and, thus, fulfills Grant's

perlocutionary intention.

In effect, Grant's illocutionary speech-act is a conscious suppression of self and self-will; that is, Grant suppresses the language of will in his discourse in hopes of the achieving the perlocutionary goal of creating a space in the reader's consciousness by which the voice of God - or the Good - can be heard. This effort is implicit in the conclusion of Time as History:

. . . those who cannot live as if time were history are called, beyond remembering, to desiring and thinking. .
 . . For myself, as probably for most others,
 remembering only occasionally can pass over into
 thinking and loving what is good.²⁰⁴

Given this, it can be seen that Grant's discursive articulation of an alternative to the modern discourse is embedded in the rhetorical form of his discourse, or, to borrow Strauss's terms, the what is revealed in the how. In this light, Grant's silence is an ironic posture that embodies his own faith. No other stance is available to him given the enclosures of modernity and its prohibition on metaphysics. As Grant himself states:

How can one live as a Christian in a modern university without irony? If a Christian spoke frankly in a modern university, he would have to leave.²⁰⁵

For Grant, then, true irony is possible only with true faith. He knows that his apprehensions of the eternal are not something many, if any, of his readers share. To repeat: his synecdochic mode of comprehension stands against the mechanistic, cause-and-effect - or metonymic - understanding that prefigures modern

consciousness. His discourse is ironical in that it postulates a truth that can only be offered by indirection or silence. As such, it is eminently suitable to his Socratic task of leading the reader to those ways of thought and experience that can reveal the deprivals and dispossessions of the modern discourse.

This same ironic function is present in Grant's other poetic persona; that of the Prophet. Whereas in his Socratic role, Grant casts himself as the teacher of truths, in his prophetic role he is the keeper of truths. The critics have recognized this. As one remarks, Grant "is a Prophet . . . (who) calls us to account for what we have done to the world, in the biblical terms of good and evil."²⁰⁶ Once again, though, Grant's prophetic function is served by irony and silence. The reasons are the same. As Northrop Frye states: "The prophet with the authentic message is the man with the unpopular message."²⁰⁷

Grant's prophetic persona is most clearly evident in Lament for a Nation. Indeed, a number of critics have shown the similarities between the style of Grant's lament and that of Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet of the Jewish diaspora to Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem.²⁰⁸ Just as Jeremiah, the commonly accepted author of Lamentations, meditates on the death of Israel, so too is Grant meditating on the death of his nation.

To lament is to cry out at the death or the dying of something loved. This lament mourns the end of Canada as a sovereign state.²⁰⁹

A meditation, according to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, is a "mental prayer in its discursive mode."

Given the fact that Grant refers to his book as a meditation, it follows that rather than being a strictly political polemic or an indulgence in nostalgia, as some critics have labelled the book,²¹⁰ Lament should be read as a prophetic prayer. Indeed, the meditative method is defined as one of "devout reflection on a chosen theme, with a view to deepening spiritual insight and stimulating the will and affections."²¹¹

This, then, is not prophecy as prediction, but prophecy as prophetes, the speaking or saying of the word of God. Like the Old Testament prophets, who reminded the kings of Israel that they had fallen away from the Covenant and were sinning against God, so too does Grant call for a return to a life of the spirit, to attune the political order with the divine order. Following this, Grant, in the act of speaking, in giving voice to his lament, is engaged in the illocutionary act of deepening his, and perhaps the reader's, spiritual insight through the recollection and remembrance of something loved and now lost or doomed. Like the Biblical prophets during the Exile, he is the one seeking to maintain the Covenant, seeking to create the conditions for a return to God. As one critic remarks: Grant attempts to "deepen insight into the forces that we suffer, to create a community of shared attention through participation in the meditative lament."²¹²

Grant's stance, then, is that of the contemplative prophet, whose task is to illuminate the spiritual predicament of modernity and chart the paths of his nation's fate as a history-

bound and history-making society. But in keeping with his Socratic role, Grant offers his spiritual insight indirectly, allowing the form of the discourse to reflect the message of the discourse. This embedding of meaning in form is seen in Grant's formal allusion to Lamentations. Contrast, for instance, Grant's use of the line from Mozart -

I cannot but remember such things were
That were most precious to me.²¹³

with the lines from Lamentations -

Jerusalem remembers
in the days of her affliction and bitterness
all the precious things
that were hers from days of old.²¹⁴

Such statements are intrinsically ironic. Both offer a perception of human life as it is lived and a vision of life as it ought to be lived. Where Jeremiah exhorts the Jews not to forget their covenant with Yahweh, Grant exhorts Canadians to remember the traditions upon which their forefathers sought to establish an alternative political vision on the North American continent.

There is a parallel irony in the fact that both speakers are exiles. Jeremiah is exiled from Jerusalem; Grant is in intellectual and spiritual exile from the age of progress. Yet, at the same time, this exile serves their prophetic purposes. Only by being outsiders, so to speak, can they question the presumptions of their age and, in doing so, reaffirm their faith. This affirmation, however, can only be rooted in the recognition of the ironic incongruities of men's lives caught between

necessity and goodness. Grant recognizes this in his conclusion to Lament:

Beyond courage, it is also possible to live in the ancient faith, which asserts that changes in the world, even if they be recognized more a loss than a gain, take place within an eternal order that is not affected by their taking place. Whatever the difficulty of philosophy, the religious man has been told that process is not all.²¹⁵

To conclude, then, Grant's irony - and his ironic silence - should be seen as postures that reflect his faith. Grant's acceptance of Biblical revelation provides him with the basis of an ironic stance towards a world that denies the validity of his faith. His ironic silence can also be seen as an expression of devotion, a liturgical or deep silence, that is both the state from which Grant can authentically speak, and the ultimate aim of his speaking.²¹⁶ Grant attempts to embody God's grace in the silence spaces of his discourse, in the ironies of his speech-act. In Austin's terms, Grant's illocutionary act has the perlocutionary intent of creating a space in the reader's consciousness that will allow the voice of God to be heard.

But this message is not one that Grant can deliver, like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, not in this day and age. The worship of false idols is too deeply ingrained in the modern psyche. It is not that Grant would be burned at the stake for proselytizing. Nowadays he would suffer a worse fate. He would be ignored, or, even worse, mocked. In a metonymic age, Grant, with his synecdochic comprehension of the world, can only

listen, watch and wait and, when he does speak, deliver his esoteric message from behind a mask of irony. Thus, like Jeremiah, Grant "concentrates his work on the destruction of inadequate sources of hope,"²¹⁷ and, in doing so, reminds his fellow citizens of where their deepest loyalties reside. And that, essentially, is the prophet's task. As Northrop Frye remarks in a discussion of the Old Testament prophets:

Prophecy . . . is a comprehensive view of the human situation. The wise man thinks of the human situation as a kind of horizontal line, formed by precedent and tradition and extended by prudence: the prophet sees man in a state of alienation caused by his own distractions.²¹⁸

Grant's prophetic speech is also reminiscent of Eastern religious practices. (Given Grant's knowledge of religion it seems reasonable to suggest he would have been aware of such practices). For example, compare Grant's image of man as a being unable to recognize the land around him even while standing in the midst of that land in Time as History -

Our present is like being lost in the wilderness, when every pine and rock and bay appears to us as both known and unknown, and therefore as uncertain pointers on the way back to human habitation.²¹⁹

- with that of a similar Zen Buddhist image of man's effort to overcome his alienation from nature -

When I began to study Zen, mountains were mountains; when I thought I understood Zen, mountains were not mountains; but when I came to full knowledge of Zen, mountains were again mountains.²²⁰

What both are saying in their different ways is that only when man recognizes the fundamental identity between his self and the other, between Nature and Man, between God and Man, only then

does he comprehend his true nature.

But the knowledge of this truth can only be done outside the magic circle of language. In Zen Buddhism and Taoism, the highest reach of the contemplative effort, as George Steiner observes, "is that which has learned to leave language behind it. The ineffable lies beyond the frontiers of the word [and] it is only by breaking through the walls of language that visionary observance can enter the world of total and immediate understanding."²²¹

There are also parallels between the form of teaching used by Zen priests and the style of Grant's discourse. In Zen, the priests use silence to bring the pupil to a comprehension of the truth by means of connotative intellection. Similarly, affective and often paradoxical questions are asked which force the pupil into silence because the logic of verbal discourse cannot supply the correct answer.

Grant, I argue, has a similar intent with his elenchus, erotetic questions and silence. As such, Grant is fulfilling the role of the true philosophic teacher.

The teacher is often a man who shows his qualifications to teach by refusing to answer questions. . . . To answer a question is to consolidate the mental level on which the question is asked. Unless something is kept in reserve, suggesting the possibility of better and fuller questions, the student's mental advance is blocked.²²²

So too with Grant. He starts the reader out from a ground of ignorance and acceptance of the modern doxa. He attempts to escape that condition by asking questions, by reflection and by

silent contemplation. And through this process it is possible the reader's consciousness is altered to such a degree that he may repossess his true self.

In sum, Grant's discourse, whether delivered in the prophetic or Platonic mode, is a performative speech-act by which Grant acts his synecdochic comprehension of the world. And, in doing so, in making a speech-act, he acts to counter that which dispossesses him and would force him into silence and powerlessness.

At the same time, Grant is also performing a perlocutionary act. He wants to produce an effect on the reader - and, collectively, on Canada. Whether there is any perlocutionary effect on the reader, in terms of bringing about or achieving some alteration in the reader's consciousness, remains an unknown for Grant, and depends to a large extent on the capabilities of the reader to learn how to listen. But, in perlocutionary terms, Grant wants his laments to create doubt in the reader's mind about the worth of the modern discourse, and to stimulate remembrance of a past good. He wants to create a space by which intimations of deprivation can evoke a yearning for intimations of good.

His reticence, his silence, his irony, the claims of ignorance; all are poetic strategies that reflect his Socratic practice of non-persuasion, of undeception, of self-teaching, through a dialectical exposure of ignorance and dispossession. To the extent that the reader gets caught up in Grant's rhetorical

web, to the extent that his questions create fractures in the reader's assumptions, the reader becomes a participant in Grant's speech-act and, hence, determines whether the perlocutionary intent has been achieved. As Burke observes:

Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation. A yielding to the form prepares for assent to the matter identified with it. Thus, you are drawn to the form, not in your capacity as a partisan, but because of some 'universal' appeal in it. And this attitude of assent may then be transferred to the matter which happens to be associated with the form.²²³

In other words, Grant's poetics hook you; his questions become your questions, his speech becomes the inward echo of your voice, his ironies your ironies, his silence your own silent yearning for a way out of the cave.

ENDNOTES TO PART TWO

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense," The Portable Nietzsche, ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann, (New York, 1968), p. 45.
2. George Grant, "Philosophy in Canada," Royal Commission on National Development, Royal Commission Studies, (Ottawa, 1951), p. 119.
3. See Grant, The Empire: Yes or No?, (Toronto, 1945); "Have We a Canadian Nation?," Public Affairs, (Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, 1945), 8, pp. 161-166.
4. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, footnote, p. 97.
5. Charles Taylor, Radical Tories, (Toronto, 1982), p. 153.
6. Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing, pp. 25-36.
7. Ibid, pp. 34-35.
8. See, for example, the chapter "American morality," in Philosophy in the Mass Age, pp. 82-97.
9. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. v-vi.
10. Ibid, pp. 88-89.
11. Grant, in conversation with William Christian. Cited by Barry Cooper, "George Grant and the Revival of Political Philosophy," By Loving Our Own, p. 114. My emphasis.
12. Ibid, p. 114.
13. Grant, Time as History, p. 8.
14. Ibid, p. 8.
15. O'Donovan, p. 109.
16. J.L. Austin, How To Do Things With Words, (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 5-11.
17. Grant, Time as History, p. 49.
18. Austin, p. 99.
19. W.T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 24.

20. Austin, p. 105.
21. Ibid, pp. 116, 138.
22. Darby, The Feast, p. 142.
23. This idea of philosophy as an internal dialogue is expressed in Gorgias, 482.
24. See Plato's Phaedrus, 271-272.
25. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 127.
26. Ibid, p. 133.
27. Ibid, p. 133.
28. Ibid, p. 143.
29. Grant, Technology and Justice, pp. 48-49.
30. William Christian, "The Magic of Art," in By Loving our Own, p. 194-195.
31. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 3.
32. Ibid, p. 3.
33. Among Socrates' claims of ignorance are these:
Whereas the fact that I am inquiring with you into the truth of that which is advanced from time to time, just because I do not know. - Charmides.
Was I not telling you just now - but you have forgotten - that I knew nothing, and was I not proposing to share the inquiry with you? - Cratylus.
It isn't that, knowing the answers myself, I perplex other people. The truth is rather that I infect them also with the perplexity that I feel myself. - Meno.
34. Plato, Theaetetus. "God compels me to be a midwife, but does not allow me to bring forth." Also: "You forget . . . that I [Socrates] neither know, nor profess to know, anything of these matters; you are the person who is in labour, I am the barren midwife."
35. Darby makes this observation. See "Technology and Justice: A Round Table Discussion," By Loving Our Own, p. 186.
36. Grant, "Nietzsche and the Ancients," Technology and Justice, pp. 91-92.
37. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 96.

38. Grant, Time as History, pp. 18, 46-47.
39. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 92.
40. Grant, Time as History, p. 47.
41. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 96. See also: Philosophy in the Mass Age, pp. 100-101; and Technology and Empire, p. 78. In the latter, for example, he writes: "What is worth doing in the midst of this barren twilight is an incredibly difficult question."
42. Heavens and Lampert, in Schmidt, p. 73, pp. 191-193.
43. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 74.
44. Lampert, in Schmidt, pp. 179-194. To date, this essay is the best available on Grant's method of philosophic writing.
45. W.K.C. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers, (New York, 1974), p. 74.
46. See Kenneth Seeskin, Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method, (Albany, N.Y., 1987), p. 1. I have taken much of my discussion of the Socratic method from Seeskin's analysis. The first three chapters are particularly invaluable.
47. See, for instance, Plato, Seventh Letter, 344b, where Plato states that philosophic discovery can only occur when people ask and answer questions in a friendly and sincere manner.
48. Plato, The Republic of Plato, 532d-e.
49. Plato, Apology of Socrates, 30a, 33a-b, 36c, in Plato and Aristophanes: Four Texts on Socrates, trans. by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, (Ithaca, 1984).
50. Seeskin, p. 32.
51. Grant, "Introduction," Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. vi.
52. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 43.
53. Ibid, p. 46.
54. On this point, see Lampert, in Schmidt, pp. 182-183.
55. Quoted by Lampert, in Schmidt, p. 193.
56. It is worth noting that Grant addresses this notion of his pessimism by pointing out that he uses the word as it was applied to Leibniz in its original eighteenth-century

meaning when it referred not to a person's "feeling states or particular predictions," but rather to an interpretation of the state of the world as a whole. According to Grant, writing on p. vii of the preface to the 1970 Carleton Library edition of Lament for a Nation, "it would be the height of pessimism to believe that our society could go on in its present directions without bringing down upon itself catastrophes. To believe the foregoing would be pessimism, for it would imply that the nature of things does not bring forth human excellence." With this in mind it is obvious, as I noted in the body of my thesis, that Grant cannot be considered a pessimist since as a Christian he believes the nature of the whole resides in an eternal order, or in God.

57. Taylor, Radical Tories, p. 155.
58. Ibid, p. 155.
59. Ibid, p. 155.
60. William Christian, "George Grant and the Terrifying Darkness," in Schmidt, p. 178.
61. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 141.
62. Leo Strauss, The City and Man, (Chicago, 1964), p. 52.
63. Berel Lang, Philosophy and the Art of Writing: Studies in Philosophical and Literary Style, (London and Toronto, 1983), p.19.
64. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 105.
65. Ibid, p. 108.
66. Ibid, p. 109.
67. On this issue, see O'Donovan's commentary, pp. 77-78; also, Lampert, in Schmidt, p. 191.
68. See Box, pp. 511-513.
69. Venour, pp. 99-100.
70. Christian, "George Grant and the Terrifying Darkness," in Schmidt, p. 178.
71. Christian, "George Grant and the Twilight of our Justice," Queen's Quarterly, 85, (1978), pp. 490, 486.
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104. Mandel, p. 172.
105. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 92.
106. Ibid, pp. 137-138.
107. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. 81. See Noel, pp. 542-543, for a discussion on this matter.
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109. Grant, Time as History, p. 44; See also Technology and Empire, pp. 26-30.
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113. Ibid, p. 133.

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129. On this point, see Arendt, The Human Condition, (Chicago, 1958), p. 15.
130. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 35.
131. Ibid, p. 141.
132. Grant, "Revolution and Tradition," Tradition and Revolution, ed. Lionel Rubinoff, (Toronto, 1971), p. 86.
133. Emberley, "Preface," in By Loving Our Own, p. xx.
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135. Dauenhauer, p. 86. My discussion of Hegel's "silence" is largely derived from Dauenhauer's.
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140. On this issue see Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 20.
141. Ibid, p. 20.
142. See Lampert, in Schmidt, pp. 191-193; also Venour, p. 96.
143. Plato, "The Seventh Letter," in Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII, trans. Walter Hamilton, Penguin Books, no. 344, pp. 140-141.
144. See Grant, English-Speaking Justice, pp. 12-13, 15, 46, 48, for examples of erotetic questions. In classical rhetoric, erotetic questions are those which in the asking force the respondent to doubt what had previously been beyond doubt.
145. Christian, in Schmidt, p. 171.
146. Grant, Technology and Empire, pp. 140-141.
147. Peter Emberley, ed., "Preface," By Loving Our Own, p. xx.
148. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 139.
149. For this account of the "young" and the "mature" Socrates, I have relied on Strauss's Socrates and Aristophanes, (Chicago, 1966), pp. 7-8, 313-314.

150. Strauss, The City and Man, p. 53.
151. Ibid, pp. 53-54. In discussing Socrates' statements on writing in Plato's Phaedrus and Xenophon's portrait of Socrates' preference for philosophizing only with his "good friends," Strauss concludes: "the proper work of a writing is truly to talk, or to reveal the truth, to some while leading others to salutary opinions; the proper work of a writing is to arouse to thinking those who are by nature fit for it."
152. Strauss defines Socrates' irony as "the noble dissimulation of one's worth, of one's superiority. We may say, it is the humanity peculiar to the superior man: he spares the feelings of his inferiors by not displaying his superiority." See City and Man, p. 51.
153. Soren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, (Princeton, 1989), p. 271.
154. Ibid, pp. 264, 270-271.
155. Ibid, p. 213-214.
156. Ibid, p. 121, 267.
157. Ibid, p. 327.
158. Lampert, "The Uses of Philosophy in George Grant," in Schmidt, pp. 192-193.
159. George Grant, "Plato and Popper," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 20, (1954), p. 187.
160. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 63.
161. Grant, "Have We a Canadian Nation," p. 164.
162. Ibid, p. 63.
163. Plato, Seventh Letter, 326.
164. Dennis Duffy, "The Ancestral Journey: Travels with George Grant," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 22, 3, (Fall, 1987), p. 93.
165. A.E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work, 4th ed., (London, 1960), p. vii.

166. See Venour, pp. 80-82, on the "moral" parallel between Grant and Plato.
167. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, pp. 73-75.
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169. Venour, p. 96.
170. Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism, (Baltimore, 1978), p. 5.
171. Ibid, p. 5.
172. Harold Bloom, Poetry and Repression, (New Haven, 1976), pp. 2-10.
173. James Mellard, Doing Tropology: Analysis of Narrative Discourse, (Urbana and Chicago, 1987), p. ix.
174. Hans Kellner, "The Inflatable Trope," in Mellard, p. 13.
175. White, Tropics of Discourse, p. 204.
176. Mellard, Doing Tropology, pp. 14-15.
177. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 503.
178. James Edie, Speaking and Meaning: The Phenomenology of Language, (Bloomington, 1976), cited by Mellard, p. 6.
179. Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe, (Baltimore, 1978), pp. 334-335.
180. White, Tropics of Discourse, p. 206.
181. Ibid, pp. 206-207.
182. Burke, p. 506.
183. George Steiner, Heidegger, (Glasgow, 1978), pp. 16-17.
184. White, Tropics of Discourse, p. 207.
185. Burke, p. 508.
186. Charles Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, (London, 1979), p. 10.
187. White, Metahistory, p. 81.

188. Ibid, p. 122.
189. Quoted by O'Donovan, p. 22.
190. Charles Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine, revised edition, (Oxford, 1944), pp. 79-81. It is worth noting that Grant called Cochrane's book "the greatest scholarly book any Canadian ever wrote." See Schmidt, p. 61. O'Donovan, p. 18, also points out that Grant read Cochrane's book while a student at Queen's University and that it "made a great impact" on him.
191. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 28.
192. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 42.
193. Ibid, p. 72.
194. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 37.
195. Ibid, p. 77.
196. White, Tropics of Discourse, pp. 37-38.
197. Burke, pp. 508, 514.
198. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 141.
199. Ibid, p. 36.
200. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, pp. 99-100.
201. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 97.
202. Heavens, in Schmidt, p. 73.
203. See Austin, pp. 99-100. Also, J.R. Searle, The Philosophy of Language, (Oxford, 1971), pp. 1-11.
204. Grant, Time as History, p. 52.
205. Grant, "Conversation," in Schmidt, p. 19.
206. Abraham Rotstein, "Running from paradise," The Canadian Forum, (May, 1969), p. 26.
207. Northrop Frye, The Great Code, (Toronto, 1981), p. 126.
208. See Darby, in By Loving Our Own, pp. 186-187; Bryant, p. 117.
209. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 2.

210. See, in particular, Robert Blumstock, "Anglo-Saxon Lament," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, III, (May, 1966), pp. 98-105; and R.W. Crook, "Modernization and Nostalgia, A Note on the Sociology of Pessimism," Queen's Quarterly, LXXIII, (Summer, 1966), pp. 269-283.
211. Cited by Bryant, p. 112.
212. Bryant, p. 114.
213. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 3.
214. Lamentations, I:7a.
215. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 97.
216. See Richard Bauman, Let your words be few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers, (Cambridge, 1983), p. 125.
217. Heavens, p. 75.
218. Frye, p. 128.
219. Grant, Time as History, p. 52.
220. D.T. Suzuki, Studies in Zen, (New York, 1955), p. 187.
221. George Steiner, Language and Silence, (London, 1967), p. 30.
222. Frye, p. xv.
223. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 58.

LAIR:

A CONCLUSION

Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics.¹

- Charles Peguy

Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.

- Psalm 37:34

In 1942, after contracting tuberculosis, 24-year-old George Grant "deserted" from the Merchant Marine and went into the English countryside to work on a farm. One day, he relates

I went to work at five o'clock in the morning on a bicycle. I got off the bicycle to open a gate and when I got back on I accepted God.²

With that last sentence, describing the simple act of getting off and on a bicycle, an act that took at most a few seconds, Grant provides his only direct public account of an experience that saints and mystics and prophets recount as the ultimate human experience. For one brief moment Grant was graced with the knowledge that beyond time and space, beyond the temporal realm, there is an eternal order. For a few seconds in his life he stepped outside the magic circle of rationality and knew eternity in time. But Grant offers only eighteen words about this experience, which he acknowledges as the most important in his life, and the truth of which he never doubted.³

Such an experience is, as Grant commentators have noted, a classic conversion experience.⁴ Yet, these commentators have said little about this experience beyond acknowledging its obvious importance to Grant. Most say there is little to be said about such an experience since it is beyond logical questioning. Certainly, no rational apparatus can be applied that would reveal the content of the experience to those who have not undergone a

similar experience. It is difficult to even conceptualize the experience unless one has had the same experience. But, presumably, if one has had such an experience there is no need for conceptualization. One simply knows and accepts it.

Grant himself implies such willing acceptance in his remarks about Simone Weil's experience of Christ. Weil's conversion, he says, must simply be accepted: "When she says Christ visited her, came down to her, I have to believe her. I have to know that it did happen."⁵ Grant's statement about his own mystical experience has to be accepted in a like manner. In his typically cryptic and allusive fashion, he offers only the vaguest statement on what it meant to him: "If I try to put it into words, I would say it is the recognition that I am not my own."⁶

Grant's reticence regarding what can only be called mystical experience - his own and Weil's - has long puzzled his critics. Louis Greenspan, for instance, suggests that Weil's influence on Grant seems to have been one of subverting his theological rationalism, but since "Grant made no comprehensive statement on Weil . . . the exact nature of her influence on him is difficult to discern."⁷ Similarly, O'Donovan says Weil is "very much a silent partner in his writings."⁸ Other critics, as I have noted previously, have argued that Grant's reluctance to expand on his mystical experience reflects his awareness of the distance between himself and his capabilities as a thinker and those of a "saint" like Weil. They also argue that Grant's unwillingness to speak of obedience to and love of necessity is political: "he

does not wish to alienate his readership" since he knows "it is neither smart politics nor timely pedagogy to speak publicly of the eternal."⁹

There is justification to such arguments. Grant himself says most people who cannot live time as history, and seek to live it as the image of eternity, are only occasionally able to let their remembrance of a lost good pass over to loving the eternal good. It is, he says, "for the great thinkers and the saints to do more."¹⁰

I would argue, however, that Grant is once again being ironic. While his statement seems at first glance to be an expression of humility regarding his own abilities, a deeper reading suggests Grant is also engaging in a liturgical silence that manifests both the state from which he speaks and the aim of his speaking. In this regard, his silence, his seeming humility, as well as his political caution, can be seen as illocutionary acts that entails a sacrifice of self-will as one means of "attaining the proper state of spiritual grace."¹¹ Weil's statement about the diminishment of ego and willfulness in the attainment of grace sheds light on Grant's liturgical silence.

Every time a man rises to a degree of excellence which by participation makes of him a divine being, we are aware of something impersonal and anonymous about him. His voice is enveloped in silence. This is evident in all the great works of art or of thought, in the great deeds of saints and in their words.¹²

In other words, Grant's seeming negativity, or disavowal of knowledge of ultimate matters, points towards a mystical affirmation about which he remains silent. While this can be seen

on one level as an act of humility and good politics, it also reflects Plato's admonishment in the Seventh Letter about the impossibility of speaking about eternity in the temporal realm.

Grant's reticence, then, regarding his and Weil's mysticism is, I argue, deliberate. While there is no doubt a deep humility and an awareness of the political circumstances in which he speaks, I have offered too much evidence not to conclude that Grant's silence on this matter, like his silence on other ultimate matters, is purposive, a deliberate performative act.

Given this, while critics are correct to acknowledge that one cannot question Grant's mystical experience in terms of its authenticity, there is no reason why an attempt cannot be made to understand it in relation to Grant's overall task as a moral philosopher. Indeed, even if the content of Grant's mystical experience cannot be known, an attempt to comprehend its ontological significance is necessary given the importance of the experience to him. This, however, entails a brief foray into mysticism. My guides on this expedition are Rudolf Otto, W.T. Stace and, of course, Simone Weil.

I shall discuss Weil first, given her importance to Grant. First, though, I should like to recall my previous remarks on Grant's observation in "Tyranny and Wisdom" regarding Strauss's reluctance to deal with the question of whether modern political philosophy, as defined by Machiavelli and Hobbes, was, in part, the responsibility of biblical religion. If, as Grant suggests,

the historical appearance of the modern scientific conception of nature as something to be mastered and overcome is an outgrowth of Christianity, then fundamental questions about the nature of Christianity need to be asked. As Grant puts it: "Is Christianity fundamentally oriented to history or eternity?"¹³

Strauss, according to Grant, does not pronounce on the Bible's responsibility for the modern world's conception of nature because he recognizes the salutary benefits of religion for political order. For Grant, though, there is the recognition that, yes, biblical religion is historically the source of the modern historicism with its claims to unlimited freedom and the overcoming of necessity. This, however, does not invalidate the authority of biblical revelation for Grant, as it did for Strauss. His difficulty, though, is how to vindicate Christianity in light of Strauss's equally valid critique of historicism. The source for such a vindication is Weil.¹⁴

That Weil's influence on Grant was immense cannot be doubted. Indeed, Grant refers to her as his highest authority on Plato. Moreover, she showed him "what it is to hold Christ and Plato together." She provided him with "the great teaching concerning the eternal in this era."¹⁵ This is to say, that Weil offered Grant a way to hold classical philosophy and Biblical revelation as a unity. And her ability to do so, to speak of eternity and God, in an era that speaks only time and history, was because, as Grant puts it, "she had an immediate and direct encounter with the second person of the Trinity."¹⁶ That is,

Weil's conversion enabled her to filter her perceptions of philosophic truth through the prism of the mystical experience.¹⁷

Now, it is not my intention to offer a full examination of Weil's mysticism and its influence on Grant. Others have already attempted this, at least in a preliminary fashion.¹⁸ My interest lies in elucidating some of the parallels between Grant and Weil, particularly those that offer some insight into Grant's task as a philosopher.

One of the most striking parallels between Weil's and Grant's conversionary experiences is reflected in their appropriations of Plato's myth of the cave. In Grant's case, his use of the myth is most fully revealed in his ironic posture, which I have already discussed. It is sufficient here to observe that his writing bristles with a sort of double-vision of life beyond the cave and within the cave. With his irony he constantly evokes a sense of knowing the truth of what resides outside the cave, while restricting his enucleations to what he experiences in the cave. Indeed, he describes his own life as a struggle to ascend the cave.¹⁹ The cave, of course, is modernity with its philosophy of progress, its theology of positivism and its politics of technology. Grant frequently alludes to modernity as a cave of "terrifying darkness."²⁰

Analytic logistics plus historicist scholarship plus even rigorous science do not when added up equal philosophy. When added together they are not capable of producing that thought which is required if justice is to be taken out of the darkness which surrounds it in the technological era.²¹

Weil's philosophic and religious thought also draws on the

Platonic myth. She says that as cave-dwellers men live in a realm of sham and shadow. There is, she holds, another realm beyond the cave.

We are born and we live in falsehood. We are offered nothing but lies. . . we think we perceive ourselves, but all we see is our shadow. The precept 'Know thyself' is not practicable in the cave. All we see is the shadow of the artificial. The world in which we exist and of which we see only the shadows (appearances) is an artificial thing, a show, a simulacrum. A contrast calling for meditation: The intelligible world, of being which is real being, is produced by and emanates from the supreme Good; whereas the material world is an artefact.²²

But, according to Weil, knowledge of this intelligible world is available only to those who have undergone a conversion. Prior to conversion one is trapped in the cave, trapped in bondage to the material world. But conversion only comes through God's grace. Dwelling in darkness one can have no certain knowledge of the light that reveals the supreme Good. At best, one's effort to ascend the cave is an act of blind will, a seeking of a wisdom of which one has no clear conception. However, with grace one emerges into the sunlight and the will gives way to a new attitude of contemplation that opens one to a power beyond oneself.²³ At this point, says Weil,

No further efforts of will are needed; one has only to remain in a state of attention and contemplate something whose dazzle is almost unbearable.²⁴

This idea of attentiveness is reminiscent of Grant's urging of contemplative thought, which I discussed in Chapter Six. For Grant, following Weil, contemplation was the means for the proper ordering of the soul, that state by which, in the acts of

loving and remembering, one opens oneself to the possibility of the Platonic periagoge. Indeed, he argues that philosophy is little more than "the rational form of such contemplation."²⁵

Grant also echoes Weil in holding to the idea that aesthetic experience can lead to an ascent from the cave. It is this that he intimates in Lament for A Nation when, as I have mentioned previously, he refers to Mozart's poetic apprehension of transcendence.²⁶ Similarly, in Philosophy in the Mass Age he argues that, in the past, great art was "the instrument of a truth beyond us."²⁷ In the ancient world, he says, art, at its highest level, was the embodiment of a "mythic consciousness" which saw all worthy human activity as "the remembrance-creation of the sacred in the world."²⁸ In other words, as William Christian observes, great art, for Grant, has "a mystical quality which lifts us out of the morass of historicism and positivism."²⁹ This is to say, that through the experience of beauty, man is drawn to the Good.

Weil makes much the same argument. In her spiritual quest she refers to le choc du beau - the jolting experience of the beautiful - as leading to knowledge of the Good. In this view she, like Grant, draws on Plato's concept that all humans enter temporal existence with the buried memory of a previous higher state of existence. This memory of an eternal realm is obscured by life in the material realm. However, the aesthetic experience, the contemplation of beauty in the temporal realm, is one way of recollecting the eternal memories and, thus, stirring an

apprehension of an eternal order. And it is with this reawakened memory that the soul is opened to the possibility of grace and revelation.³⁰

Unlike Grant, who usually maintains a prudent and scholarly reticence on spiritual matters, Weil offers some autobiographical testimony regarding aesthetic and mystical experiences. In her "Spiritual Autobiography" Weil describes how during a 1937 visit to Assisi she went into a Franciscan chapel and became absorbed in its beauty. But this absorption in beauty went far beyond aesthetic appreciation. She later wrote that she felt "something stronger than I" which "compelled me for the first time in my life to go down on my knees."³¹

In early 1938, during Holy Week, she had a similarly intense experience while visiting a Benedictine abbey at Solesmes that was famous for its Gregorian chants. Through an act of intense concentration she was able to overcome a "splitting headache" and achieve a trance-like state in which her consciousness seemed to split in two and she was able to rise out of her body. She described the experience as

an extreme effort of concentration [by which she was able] to rise above this wretched flesh, to leave it to suffer by itself, heaped up in a corner, and to find a pure and perfect joy in the unimaginable beauty of the chanting and the words. . . In the course of these services the thought of the Passion of Christ entered into my being once and for all.³²

Later that year Weil underwent the conversion experience that so captivated Grant. Once again the experience was pre-conditioned by pain and intense concentration. This time, though,

the object of beauty was the poem Love, by the English metaphysical poet, George Herbert. While concentrating on the poem and reciting it aloud "at the culminating point of a violent headache," Weil felt the "presence of a love" and "Christ himself came down and took possession of me."³³ In her Notebooks, Weil refers to this and other such experiences with a cryptic fragment: "the insertion of eternity into time."³⁴

There is, as Grant's critics have remarked regarding his conversion, little that can be said about such events. I am not referring to Christ's manifestation or, in Grant's case, his acceptance of God. Both are events of a supernatural order and are thus beyond rational comprehension. What is important is that both Grant and Weil believed in the reality of their experiences. If that reality has to be expressed in the ill-fitting logic of language, then all that can be said is that they were certain they had been touched by something real that lies beyond subjectivity, something that is transsubjective. They were touched by something that lay beyond themselves; a beyond not in the sense of being a palpable exterior object, but a beyond within themselves, something not their own. In other words, they were certain they had experienced a reality that can only be known through the inner contemplative life. But this reality, however, extends way beyond what one is in oneself, way beyond the comprehension of the cave-dwelling, ego-bound self. In essence, they knew in themselves something much greater, much more primal than the self.

For both, though, what such experiences showed was the infinite distance between man and God. On his own man cannot ascend to God; God must, as it were, come down to man and, in the act of grace, take man up to Himself.³⁵ This points up another parallel between Weil and Grant. Both hold that necessity and goodness (or time and eternity, man and God) are infinitely distanced from each other. Both reject interpretations of divine providence that link or identify necessity and goodness. For both, necessity is distinctly other than good and, thus, is devoid of purpose and meaning without the good. To see God as intervening in the realm of necessity for some particular end is to identify God and eternity with time and history and, in the modern context, to link progress and providence. Both reject such a notion as false. "As a believer," says Grant,

I must . . . reject these Western interpretations of providence. Belief is blasphemy if it rests on any easy identification of necessity and good . . . It must be possible within the doctrine of providence to distinguish between the necessity of certain happenings and their goodness.³⁶

Likewise, Weil says:

The ridiculous conception of Providence as being a personal and particular intervention on the part of God for certain particular ends is incompatible with true faith.³⁷

For Grant and Weil, then, God is not in history. In creating the world God has, to quote Weil, "withdrawn Himself, permitting a part of Being to be other than God."³⁸

How then is one to link Being and being, eternity and time? How does one experience the perfect in the realm of the

imperfect? For Weil and, following her, Grant, one way is in loving contemplation of the beauty of the world. Since the world is the result of a "divine renunciation"³⁹ in which God set limits and, thereby, created necessity, then what connects eternity and time is the act of love and the beauty which was the product of that act of love. That is, love and beauty are mediations that unite the realm of necessity and the realm of the good without in anyway mixing them. To be sensible to the beauty of the realm of necessity is to partake in some measure of the Good.⁴⁰

Such an understanding of necessity and good is essentially Greek. Modern science, according to Grant and Weil, reflects the attempt to overcome the constraints of necessity or nature. In contrast, the Greeks saw necessity as something to be contemplated as "an image of the good."⁴¹ Plato was the epitome of this attitude. He sought knowledge of necessity through loving contemplation of the beauty of the world. In doing so, Plato partook of the Good, which is, according to Weil and Grant, nothing other than the presence of God in the soul. This presence, manifested in love of necessity, disposes the soul to grace, as experienced in the conversionary experience.⁴²

For moderns, who see the realm of necessity as something to be mastered, there is little likelihood of grace. In failing to love necessity and obey the Good, their souls are closed to salvation by the beauty of the world and, hence, closed to God's presence. Thus, what separates the modern and ancient ways of

seeing necessity is the possibility of conversion, the Platonic periagoge.⁴³ But what this sets up is the notion that only through God's love, through the act of grace, can men have knowledge of the supreme Good by which they can order their political realms. Necessity must be oriented to the Good, even though that Good remains a distant mystery. In this light, the contemplative or conversionary experience has profound sociopolitical implications. Grant says as much in his contribution to the Massey Commission:

The contemplative life, whether mystical, artistic or philosophic, has therefore been encouraged by societies not only for the good of the contemplative himself but because his influence upon more active members was considered of value.⁴⁴

The question, though, is what makes the mystical experience so crucial to political order? With this in mind I turn to my two other guides through mystical theory.

W.T. Stace, in Mysticism and Philosophy, observes that one of the key claims of mysticism is that the mystical experience is the basis of all morality.

Mystical experience . . . is that part of human experience out of which moral feelings flow. The experience is also the justification of moral values, not a logical but an empirical justification. For moral values are a function of that which is 'experienced' as the highest human good.⁴⁵

In a similar vein, Rudolf Otto, in his book The Idea of the Holy, says the concept of the holy, the sacred, the good, is the ethical in-filling of what he calls the ethically-neutral "feeling of the numinous." This numinous is not a subjective feeling in the mind, but rather an objective reality, a form of

awareness that is distinctly different from ordinary perception and rational sensibility. That is, the numinous is not a psychological process, but an object of the psyche. As such, it is a mental state on which knowledge of the "Holy," or the Good, is based. Man knows what is Good or Holy because he can experience the numinous, which, as a mental state, is sui generis and irreducible to any other state.⁴⁶ The experience of the numinous is the ground of all feelings of awe, wonder, love, sympathy and compassion and, hence, the source of all moral or ethical concepts.

Stace, likewise, says that, in claiming to be the ground of morality, mysticism asserts that men's separateness from each other results in an egoism that produces the evils and conflicts of the world; that is, separateness provides the Hobbesian condition of nature as the war of all against all. But the mystical experience, with its consciousness of the unity of life, annuls the ego's distinctions and eliminates the view of individual isolation.

Most men, however, do not achieve this mystical awareness of unity and oneness. Despite this, though, many exhibit love and unselfishness and, in general, live ethical lives. How then can mysticism claim to be the source of their morality since they do not experience it? The response of mystical theory is that all men's ethical and moral sentiments arise from an infiltration into their normal

consciousness of some faint mystical sense which is latent in all men and which influences their feelings

and lives without their knowing or understanding it.⁴⁷

This is to say that all feelings of affection, kindness and compassion have their source in a mystical side of man's nature that lies below consciousness. Without this mystical aspect of man's being, love and other such feelings and emotions would not be possible.

Stace points out that such a claim can be criticized as being entirely subjective. But the mystics assert that their experience is transsubjective in that the experience has its objective source in a higher order. Thus, following the logic of the mystical theory, all ethical values have their source in an eternal order. As Stace comments:

Ethical values arise out of mystical experience, and this experience itself has its source in the One or the Universal Self, which is the foundation of the world. It is therefore part of the theory that ethical value is not merely a human thing [that is, subjective], but reflects and is founded in the nature of the universe.⁴⁸

Such a claim, as Stace admits, is hard to swallow. After all, the love a man feels for his family and friends and even for his country seems to come quite naturally without any need for a mystical element to human nature. This, however, is not the view of the classical philosophers.

Plato, for instance, asserts that all desire is grounded in a mystical phenomenon. In the Republic, Socrates refers to the Idea of the Good as that which all souls seek as the end of their actions. This Good is manifested in a man's practise of his virtues - moral goodness, justice, courage, etc. - but also

throughout Nature in the sense that all living creatures have an intrinsic "good," which is nothing other than existing in accordance with their true nature.

The purpose of life, then, at least for men, is to gain insight into the knowledge of the Good that is their true end, in as much as knowledge of the Good is their highest nature. The Good is the rational principle operating in the universe, the divine Reason that makes the world intelligible to rational minds, which, in attuning themselves to the eternal order, fulfill their natural purposes. Plato, of course, does not explicitly define this supreme Good. Rather, the knowledge of the Good can only be apprehended as a revelation or insight following arduous training in dialectic.⁴⁹

Weil makes a similar argument, although she asserts it is God's will that determines whether men will actually experience the Good, the unity of love and truth. As she states, "to believe in God is not a decision that we can make."⁵⁰ Still, she says that for men to love what is truly good is to love God.

. . . it is only in so far as the soul orients itself towards what ought to be loved, that is to say in so far as it loves God, that it is qualified to know and understand. Man cannot exert his intelligence to the full without charity, because the only source of light is God. Therefore the faculty of supernatural love is higher than the intelligence and is its condition. The love of God is the unique source of all certainties. (Plato's philosophy is nothing else but an act of love towards God).⁵¹

From this point of view, then, the mystical experience is indeed the source of ethical and moral action, and results from the yearning for the Good, the Divine, the One. This mystical

experience is latent in all living creatures, although it is deeply buried in the subconscious of most men, and largely manifests itself in the conscious in the form of feelings of love and sympathy and moral action. Following this, moral sentiment and love are, as Stace puts it, a dim but unrecognized "groping towards the disappearance of individuality in the Universal Self which is part of the essence of mysticism." But only a few recognize these feelings as essentially mystical, because for most the experience of the unity of their separate selves in a Universal Self is hidden "in the abyss of the subliminal."⁵²

Grant and Weil were, it seems, among those few. What is it then that they experienced? Otto makes the distinction between two types of numinous or mystical experience - the "outward " or extroversive and the "inward" or introversive.⁵³ In the former the mystical experience occurs, as it were, spontaneously and, apparently, without any effort. The latter, however, is the result of often arduous discipline, exercise and technique. The training of Zen Buddhist priests is a good example of the introversive type of mysticism. This is not to say that the extrovertive type has had no preparation. There may well be some sort of mental condition that precedes the experience, including mental turmoil or physical illness.

Both conditions certainly apply to Grant and Weil in the time preceding their apparently spontaneous mystical experience. In Grant's case, before joining the Merchant Marine, he had worked, during the German Luftwaffe's bombing of London, with the

Air Raid Precaution service, at the Bermondsey dockyard area in the city's east end. Grant, as one commentator points out, "discovered that the secular liberalism of his youth could not come to terms with all that horror."⁵⁴ Grant himself referred to the war as the "great primal experience" that broke the patterns of his upbringing.⁵⁵ Then, after joining the Merchant Marine, he contracted tuberculosis and had to "desert" his post. One critic has observed that Grant's use of the word deserted reveals a Protestant guilt that can "inspire rather than paralyze."⁵⁶ All of this suggests, then, that Grant was certainly conditioned for a "spontaneous" mystical experience.

Weil's conversion, preceded as it was by violent headaches and long months of mental and emotion turmoil, appears to be of a similar nature. Nor, was she actively seeking mystical enlightenment.⁵⁷

What they actually experienced can only be spoken of metaphorically. Various religions and mystical traditions use different metaphors to describe the content of the numinous moment. Eastern religions refer to the Buddha-nature, Mind-Essence, the Universal Mind. Christianity talks of the union with God, the Oneness of God. The Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart, who influenced both Hegel and Heidegger, describes the mystical experience as the apex of the soul, the divine spark, the recognition of all external multiplicity as intrinsically One. All, however, as Stace argues, describe an experience in which the individual goes inward, even if only for a moment, to the

core of his soul or self to find "a single unified centre of consciousness," a pure sense of unity that binds all differentiated consciousnesses into one consciousness.⁵⁸

It is this sense of unified consciousness, of knowing the identity of all things despite their manifested differences, that Grant and Weil experienced. The phrase "not one's own" is Grant's prudent metaphor for this experience of oneness. Weil's metaphor is "absolute attention."⁵⁹ Both phrases suggests a certain dissolving of the ego, an escape from normal waking consciousness into some other consciousness, a sense of release from the common confines of time and space into some eternal present.

But while their experiences may have been essentially the same, their descriptions of the experience are utterly different. Grant largely conceals his experience. There is no mention of God or Christ. Instead, he takes a scholarly, almost ironic detachment:

In more academic terms, if modern liberalism is the affirmation that our essence is our freedom, then this experience was the denial of that definition, before the fact that we are not our own.⁶⁰

Weil, however, has no hesitation in saying that her conversion was a "real contact, person to person, here below, between a human being and God."⁶¹

Grant, I would argue, is too well aware of the anti-religious prejudices he faces to be as explicit as Weil. But it is not merely his recognition of the spiritual distance between himself and someone like Weil that makes him more hesitant to speak about his mystical experience, although it is that too.

Grant's silence about his conversion, and about mysticism in general, is also deliberate and purposive. Grant is too much the philosopher, the seeker of wisdom, to proclaim with certitude the revelatory knowledge of the mystic or the saint. Given this, the phrase "not one's own" is a sort of Grantian coda that has a performative function on both illocutionary and perlocutionary levels. It is a coda he uses in various erotetic configurations as a binding thread throughout his writings.

In English-Speaking Justice, Grant posits the penultimate question of "what are we fitted for?"⁶² In Technology and Justice he asks how Western man can possibly think the modern notion that man's essence is freedom is a sufficient description of man's nature: "How is it possible to think that the modern paradigm is sufficient to the needs of human beings."⁶³ In Philosophy in the Mass Age he asks whether man has a higher purpose beyond the self-interested gratification of desire: "Are we or are we not our own?"⁶⁴

This, finally, is the question that resides at the nucleus of Grant's thought. Grant's mystical experience provided him the answer that, no, man as man belongs to God and is subordinate to an eternal order. His phrase "not one's own" is the esoteric key to his philosophic message that there is an eternal order to which man is subordinate, no matter how much the modern discourse may deny such a sacred restraint and insist on freedom as man's essence. The words "not one's own" are Grant's way of saying that man, as man, belongs to God, that he is not his own creation.

But such a message is not one to be delivered in this metonymic age with any certainty of its being comprehended. Grant well knows that the knowledge he gained from his conversionary experience is not a knowledge to which most moderns give credence. Furthermore, even if his experience was taken seriously, the simple conveyance of its meaning does not mean that the reader will actually experience that to which Grant refers. As Otto observes, while the numinous can be the subject of speech, speech itself cannot convey the objective experience. At best, those who wish to speak of the Holy can only use language as a guide in bringing those they would instruct to "the point at which the numinous . . . begins to stir, to start into life and into consciousness."⁶⁵

It is this, I conclude, that is Grant's overall philosophic endeavour. And the form of his speech-act functions to fulfill that task.

Grant's philosophic writing functions performatively to make the reader a participant in his thought. To the degree the reader is able to track Grant's logos he becomes a participant in Grant's experience. Such participation constitutes a dialogue between the reader and Grant, or a dialogue between two consciousnesses. And the purpose of dialogue, as I have noted, is to engender changes in the consciousness of the participants, or, to put it in Platonic terms, to win the proper ordering of the soul.

This is not a task that can be accomplished with any great

ease given the enclosures of modern thought. Despite having glimpsed the light outside the cave, Grant knows he must adjust his speech to accommodate those who still know only darkness. He resorts to the techniques of esoteric writing, hoping to lure those able to listen to begin the ascent from the cave towards the light of true knowledge. But it is these techniques themselves, the "hows" of his writing, that embody the "what" of his philosophic message.

How Grant says what he says is both the product of and the producer of what he says. Like Socrates, he is the teller of a tale whose form of tale-telling, when properly understood, can be seen to contain the tale that he is telling. To repeat: Grant does what he says and says what he does.

In this regard, the techniques Grant employs in his philosophical writing, particularly his elenctic method, his silence and his irony, function both pedagogically and ontologically as a passage through, and a tracking of, his philosophic speech. This is to say, that through the symbols of his discourse - history, justice, technology, nationalism, etc. - Grant's speech-act reflects the experiential truths that his Socratic methods conceal. His philosophic logos, like that of the Platonic Forms, functions as a hunt for meaning and a form of symbolization that actually expresses his meaning.

Furthermore, it is because his philosophic speech functions as a tracking of meaning that his esoteric techniques are necessary. To embark as a potential philosopher on the Socratic

hunt (as opposed to talking in a scholarly fashion about some abstract philosophic idea) means to become a participant in the actual processes of thinking and consciousness. Thus, Grant's speech can be seen as a rite of passage to experiential truths that are available to those whose eros compels them to seek an exit from the cave. But only those initiated into the Socratic hunt, those capable of tracking the signs of the movement of the logos, can follow the logos to where it leads. And where the logos leads, according to Grant, is to the Idea of the Good, or God.

Following this, then, the style of Grant's writing can be seen as a function of his logos or speech as a religious or mystical initiation. Irony, silence and elenchus are required because while the approach to the Good is necessarily in and through speech, the actual experience of the Good is not something that can be given direct verbal expression. Plato's wonder, Wittgenstein's mystical, Aristotle's astonishment, Arendt's ineffable, Weil's attention and Grant's not-one's-own, can only be spoken of indirectly or metaphorically through the symbolism of language. Divine reality cannot be named in expectation that the naming directly corresponds to what is being named. Or, to use Dauenhauer's terms, the word God is a symbol by which a certain experience of truth is given temporal form in the utterance of the word. But while the word God can be uttered as an analogy of that experience, a distinction remains between the form of the utterance and the object of the utterance.

In terms of Grant's discourse, then, his irony and silence, his negativity and elenchus, function in an illocutionary manner to say the unsayable side of his logos. His experience of the ineffable, of not being one's own, can only be voiced through the medium of language, but the experience itself cannot be conveyed in language. Speech is the means by which the ineffable is sought, but, at the same time, speech is the magic circle which must be broken or transcended if one is to know the true - or silent - logos. In Dauenhauer's terms, Grant's speech-act points to a deep silence. Or, to put it differently, Grant's ironic silence is also his logos, his alternative to the spiritually empty modernist speech of values.

Such a practice of philosophic speech follows that of Plato, who, through his fair and noble Socrates, says that what cannot be put into words must be left to the philosophic initiate to discern for himself at the end of the dialectical inquiry.⁶⁶ For example, in his Seventh Letter, Plato states that in tracking the logos one cannot put into words and hand over to others what has been recollected in the expectation that what one says will provide the direct experience of recollection. Rather, it is only after long study and thought that, possibly, a divine spark suddenly ignites the soul⁶⁷ and the philosophic hunter undergoes a conversion that allows him to experience directly the knowledge he so ardently seeks.

For Plato, the passage to the life of philosophizing proceeds through the dialectical tracking of the logos, but to

consider the tracking as the purpose and end of the hunt is to remain trapped in the sophist intellectuality of cave-speech. The logos, as Plato says, needs to be completed by inward seeing, inward hearing.

Yet, Plato also says that given the nature of men as beings who exist between the beasts and the gods, the path towards philosophic insight must be followed in the realities of daily life.⁶⁸ The philosopher cannot ascend from the cave and live permanently in the light of the sun. As a mortal, earth-bound creature man cannot have complete knowledge and complete speech knowledge, as Hegel would like. Man is not a god. But neither is he a beast. Man has partial speech and partial knowledge. Man lives metaxically. He is an in-between being who can gain access to the eternal speech of the gods, but must always return to the partial speech of the cave. But even in the cave the memory of the sun can shine to the degree that man recollects, remembers and loves what he has heard of the gods.

This is to say that, in his re-collection, man can embody his memory of a transcendent realm in his temporal political orders. That is, man can partake of eternity to the degree that his symbolizations - art, science, philosophy, religion, politics, etc. - reflect his recollection of the eternal order. To the degree that man's symbolizations are in accord with his experience of the cosmic order, then, as Eric Voegelin puts it, the tension between the truth of the soul and the truth of society, between the private and the public realms, can be

mitigated.⁶⁹ In other words, when the political order and the eternal order are in reasonable correspondence, man's soul or spirit is no longer dispossessed. And this is to say that statecraft requires soulcraft and, conversely, that soulcraft necessitates statecraft.

Grant makes this point in English-Speaking Justice when he describes the difference between classical concepts of justice and modern contractarian justice. Modern justice, he says, is anchored in the calculation of self-interest. The classical concept of justice was grounded in a knowledge of what man is truly fitted for, which requires a harmony between the inner and outer selves:

For justice is the inward harmony which makes a self truly a self (or in more accurate language which today sounds archaic: Justice in its inward appearances is the harmony which makes a soul truly a soul).⁷⁰

Similarly, in the essay "Canadian Fate and Imperialism," Grant says that "man cannot help but imitate in action his vision of the nature of things."⁷¹ And if that vision is at odds with the reality of the given world, which, as Grant argues, is subject to a divine order, then men's lives will be violent, chaotic and without meaning.

For Grant, then, statecraft requires soulcraft. The outer world reflects the inner world. If the latter lacks harmony then so too does the former. This is Grant's concern as a political philosopher. As a philosopher, Grant seeks to reawaken for himself and for others the eros of the soul in its pursuit of the Good. But as a political philosopher Grant knows, as Plato

knows, that the Idea of the Good can only be known in the daily routines of life.⁷² It is impossible to leave the cave.

It is with this in mind that Grant says that only in loving our own - our bodies, our families and friends, our neighborhoods, cities and countries - is it possible to experience that which is beyond calculable reason and will-to-power, and, thus, achieve even a modicum of what it means to not be one's own and emerge, even if only briefly, from the cave. As he states:

It is true that no particularism can adequately incarnate the good. But is it not also true that only through some particular roots, however, partial, can human beings first grasp what is good and it is the juice of such roots which for most men sustain their partaking in a more universal good.⁷³

Love of the good is man's highest end, but it is of the nature of things that we come to know and to love what is good by first meeting it in that which is our own - this particular body, this family, these friends, this woman, this part of the world, this set of traditions, this country, this civilization.⁷⁴

In other words, only in the lived realities of the material world is any knowledge of a transcendent world possible. Man needs to stay rooted to the earth, to his land and his society, if he is to get a glimpse of heaven.

A similar perception of "our own," as the necessary ground or condition for any experience of the divine, is found in Weil. For her the notion of rootedness refers to the need to have a home of one's own, to have a country, culture and tradition as the a priori of spiritual fulfillment. To be rooted in one's history, memories and cultural traditions is of crucial

importance to the search for truth. As she states:

A human being has roots by his real, active and natural participation in the existence of a collectivity which preserves in its living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future. . . . Every human being needs to have multiple roots. He needs to receive practically the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life through the intermediary of those milieux in which he naturally participates.⁷⁵

Rootedness, then, pertains to the preservation of those traditions and cultural artefacts that enhance the spirit, that provide a nourishment for the soul, without which the human spirit withers. This need for roots, says Weil, is "perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul."⁷⁶

Furthermore, there is a link between the need to be physically rooted - in a culture, a country, a community, a tradition or an occupation - and the need to be connected to a transcendent realm. Without physical rootedness, a connection to the divine is impossible. Conversely, without the divine realm, one's physical roots are meaningless.

This connection between the temporal and the eternal is made for most people through tradition and culture, according to Weil. To lose one's culture and traditions is to lose one's past, one's memory and, hence, one's future. Such a loss results in uprootedness which, for Weil, closes one off from the possibility of experiencing the divine.

It is only the radiance from the spiritual treasures of the past that can induce in the soul that state which is the necessary condition for receiving grace. . . . The loss of the past is equivalent to the loss of the supernatural.⁷⁷

In this light, Grant's phrase "one's own" is his coda for the rootedness which the modern technological society seeks to deny or, at the very least, to relegate to being little more than replaceable unit of production necessary to the maintenance of the technological system as a whole. In effect, he argues, one's rootedness or particularity - culture, class, nation, traditions - is denied a uniqueness or meaning apart from its function in and value to the overall productive task of society.⁷⁸ But without "one's own" there can be no experience or knowledge of what it means to be "not one's own." And without this latter experience, the former is hollow and meaningless.

Such a view draws on classical thought which saw that the private realm, the household and the family, had to be adequately maintained to ensure the establishment of a worthy public or political realm. But technology, as that symbol by which moderns represent the order of the world, subjects the private realm, and the even individual and his body, to the productive and administrative imperatives and exigencies of society.⁷⁹ Even one's soul and one's thought becomes, according to Grant, an object for the distortions of technologically-oriented psychoanalysis and sociology.⁸⁰

Voegelin observes that all societies create an order that provides their existence with meaning in terms of some perceived end. This meaning is illuminated or expressed in and through various self-interpretive symbols - myths, rites, theoretical constructs. These symbols are created and borne by the

individuals who make up the society as the mode and condition of their self-realization. But these created symbols also provide individuals with an internal, self-referential structure by which they go about creating a society - or cosmion, to use his word.⁸¹

The individual and his cosmion are creations of, and the creators of, each other through symbolization. The cosmion's symbols both illuminate a society's meanings and ends, but are also the meanings and ends themselves. In pre-modern society, for example, God was the symbol by which society expressed its meaning and purposes, but also the symbol in which it experienced those meanings and purposes. Thus, the symbols of a society and its members are not to be thought of as abstract ideas overlaid on reality; they are conceptual metaphors by which a society and its members know and live the truths of their concrete experience. As Voegelin remarks:

The self-illumination of society through symbols is an integral part of society, and one may even say its essential part, for through such symbolization the members of a society experience it as more than an accident or a convenience; they experience it as of their human essence.⁸²

Symbols, then, are to be understood as language terms that are both the products of experience and the producers of experience. They are engendered from experience and they convey the meaning of experience. They are, to use Ernst Cassirer's phrase, "organs of reality."⁸³ And to the degree there is a correspondence between the symbols and the experience they both illuminate and create, a society and its members can be said to be participating in the truth of human existence as best as can

be known.

But when there is a discrepancy between the symbol and experience, when the organs of reality are opaque and no longer adequately illuminate human experience, when word and world are no longer in some reasonable correspondence, then humans can no longer achieve a valid self-realization. They become fragmented, rootless and trapped in darkness. There is no longer order in the cosmos because there is no meaning to be found in the cosmos.

Like Voegelin, Grant sees this loss of meaning in the closing of the North American mind to the idea of the Good in the collapse of the sustaining symbol of Christian revelation. Both recognize that for most people in the Western world the tales of the Christian tradition are all but lost. Only a few can still experience the spiritual content of this tradition, and partake of the reality that Christianity's symbols offer through mysticism and philosophical contemplation.

In his essay "In Defence of North America," Grant says North Americans have all but lost touch with the primal symbols of Western civilization provided by Greek philosophy and Biblical revelation. The ideology of pragmatic liberalism, with its obeisance to progressivism and the technological drive to mastery of nature, has created in North America a "monistic vulgarity in which nobility and wisdom have been exchanged for a pale belief in progress, alternating with boredom and weariness of spirit."⁸⁴

The result, he says, is the closing down for most North Americans of any openness to the Good. Instead, most Western

societies have turned to abstract and anti-cosmological doctrines or ideological systems as self-interpretative symbols. But these symbol systems have no roots in concrete experience. Rather, they are ideational overlays on reality. As such, they largely alienate people from real human experience. As Grant puts it: "one can find no fulfillment in working for, or celebrating, the dynamo."⁸⁵

For Grant, the dynamo of modernity, with its language of will, has sundered the pre-modern language of good. Throughout his writings, Grant portrays Western civilization as encompassed by the will-to-power driving to a universal and homogeneous tyranny under the agency of a technological order. Within this magic circle the drive to unlimited freedom has replaced the contemplation of the Good as man's highest purpose.

His philosophic effort, however, is aimed at re-collecting this highest purpose. He seeks to re-collect the meaning of the cosmos through an exegesis of the experiential reality that most moderns no longer recognize or, even if they do have some intimation of this reality, prefer to avoid. He seeks to re-collect for himself and his readers those symbols of eternity by which both can end their lostness, their dispossessions.

For Grant, the symbol-structure that is his particularity, his self-representation, is, of course, Canada. His philosophic enterprise, while moving in time and space back to Athens and Jerusalem, is rooted in the Canadian cosmion. Grant says as much when he states that his philosophizing was born out of the

exigencies of his life, particularly his sense of being an alien in a post-war Canadian society that was sacrificing its Loyalist traditions to American progressivist ideology.⁸⁶ Or, to put it in Voegelin's terms, the symbols that had once borne and created Grant's self-representation are no longer the same symbols by which the majority of his fellow citizens practise their self-representation.

What this sets up is the idea that if Canada is the symbol-scape within which Grant's philosophy moves, then it is, at the same time, the symbol to which his thought moves. That is, Canada-as-symbol is both the ground from which he speaks and the horizon to which he speaks. Or, to put it differently, the practice of philosophy is Grant's way of re-affirming his roots despite the denials of modernity, a way of negotiating a space for himself and his synecdochic consciousness, an attempt at crafting a home for his self or, to use Grant's preferred word, his soul.

Grant implies this in his remark that "philosophy must arise from the most immediate and concrete experience of our lives, both public and private."⁸⁷ Such a statement, as Dennis Duffy notes, not only defines the sources of Grant's philosophic effort, but also foreshadows its results. Furthermore, it can be argued that Grant's writing "projects a symbolic autobiography" of his life, both private and public.⁸⁸

If such is the case, then, I argue, that in his philosophic writing Grant works out the recrafting or recollection of his

soul or self in a highly symbolic fashion. In his thought Grant is engaged in what can only be called soul-searching, both for himself and for Canada. Grant is trying to work out a newly-constituted soul, or, if you will, a newly-constituted logos or discursive space in which word and world can dwell and speak as one.

His speech-acts, then, constitute a form of self-transformation of himself and, in a symbolic sense, of the particularity of Canada. A book such as Lament for a Nation, constitutes a symbolic artifact of consciousness-creation and self-transformation in the same manner as Hegel's Phenomenology. Grant's philosophic writing is an illocutionary investment in a culture or society that has the express purpose of transforming a space in which his re-collected self, his converted soul, can abide with as little tension as possible between the truth of his soul and the truth of his society.

Grant creates cultural artifacts - his writings - under the imperative of trying to establish a space - a culture, a tradition, a nation - that can nourish the souls of its inhabitants, enabling them to recollect themselves as part of a divine whole and, thus, end their spiritual dispossession.

ENDNOTES TO THE CONCLUSION

1. Quoted in translation by Morris Berman, Coming to Our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West, (New York, 1989), p. 136. In French: Tout commence en mystique et tout finit en politique.
2. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 62.
3. Ibid, p. 63.
4. See, for example, Duffy, p. 97; Taylor, Radical Tories, pp. 137-138.
5. Quoted by Taylor, Radical Tories, p. 132.
6. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 63.
7. Louis Greenspan, "Grant, Natural Law and Simone Weil," in By Loving Our Own, p. 154.
8. O'Donovan, p. 176.
9. Heavens, in Schmidt, p. 73.
10. Grant, Time and History, p. 52.
11. Bauman, p. 22.
12. Quoted by Heavens, p. 44.
13. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 107.
14. See O'Donovan on this issue, pp. 79-84.
15. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, pp. 65-66.
16. Ibid, pp. 65-66.
17. John Dunaway, Simone Weil, (Boston, 1984), p. 32.
18. See, in particular, O'Donovan's George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, pp. 80-84, 176-177; and her essay "Love, Law and the Common Good," in By Loving Our Own, pp. 135-151. Also, Edwin and David Heavens, in Schmidt, pp. 68-78. I have relied on these writings for my own discussion of Weil.

19. Grant, Technology and Empire, pp. 36-37.
20. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, p. 92.
21. Ibid, p. 93. My emphasis.
22. Simone Weil, On Science, Necessity, and the Love of God, trans. and ed. Richard Rees, (London, 1968), p. 108. Emphasis hers.
23. Ibid, pp. 109-110.
24. Ibid, pp. 110-111.
25. Quoted by Christian, "The Magic of Art," in By Loving Our Own, footnote, p. 200.
26. See also Grant, "Obedience," The Idler Magazine, 29, (August, 1990), p. 24. It is worth noting that in these posthumously published "notes," Grant refers to Mozart's art as exemplifying obedience. By this I take Grant to mean that Mozart obeys that which he is fitted for, which, in Grant's view, is the good. Thus, in obeying what he is fitted for, Mozart expresses the good. To quote: "(What I hear in Mozart is obedience - indeed his music is obedience. . .)."
27. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. 8.
28. Ibid, p. 19.
29. Christian, "The Magic of Art," p. 197.
30. Weil, On Science, Necessity and the Love of God, pp. 128-130.
31. Weil, Waiting on God, (Glasgow, 1959), p. 34.
32. Ibid, p. 34.
33. Ibid, pp. 35-36.
34. Weil, The Notebooks of Simone Weil, (2 vols.), trans. Arthur Wills, (New York, 1956), p. 96.
35. See Dunaway, pp. 38-40.
36. Grant, Lament for a Nation, p. 89.
37. Weil, The Need for Roots, trans. Arthur Wills, (New York, 1952), p. 282.

38. Weil, Intimations of Christianity, ed. and tr. Elisabeth Geissbuhler, (London, 1957), p. 193.
39. Ibid, p. 193.
40. O'Donovan, pp. 81-82.
41. Weil, On Science, Necessity and the Love of God, (London, 1968), p. 21.
42. Ibid, p. 81.
43. Heavens, pp. 72-73.
44. Grant, "Philosophy," Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (Ottawa, 1951), p. 119. Cited by Christian, "The Magic of Art," in By Loving Our Own, p. 200.
45. Stace, p. 323.
46. Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John Harvey, 2nd edit., (London, 1950). pp. 3-8.
47. Stace, pp. 324-325.
48. Ibid, p. 326. My brackets.
49. Plato, Republic, 505e-509b, 518b-d, 532d-534c. See also F.M. Cornford's discussion in his translation of The Republic of Plato, (New York, 1945), pp. 211-212.
50. Weil, On Science, Necessity and the Love of God, p. 148.
51. Ibid, p. 104.
52. Stace, p. 329.
53. Otto, Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism, trans. Bertha Bracey and Richenda Payne, paperback edition, (New York, 1970), p. 59.
54. Taylor, Radical Tories, p. 137.
55. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 63.
56. Duffy, p. 97.
57. Weil, Waiting on God, pp. 28-38. See also, Simone Petrement, Simone Weil: A Life, tr. Raymond Rosenthal, (New York, 1976), pp. 329, 333, 338-340. It is worth noting that Grant

reviewed this book in the Feb. 12, 1977 edition of the Globe and Mail, p. 43.

58. Stace, pp. 330-331.
59. Weil, Waiting on God, p. 38.
60. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, p. 63.
61. Weil, Waiting on God, p. 35.
62. Grant, Technology and Justice, p. 86.
63. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, p. 70.
64. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, p. 40.
65. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 7.
66. Beckman, The Religious Dimension of Socrates' Thought, p. 177. I have relied heavily on Beckman's discussion of the Socratic method as a religious initiation, particularly his linkage of the forms of dialectical inquiry to the purpose of the inquiry.
67. Plato, Seventh Letter, 340.
68. Ibid, 340.
69. Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics, paperback edition, (Chicago, 1987), pp. 156-161.
70. Grant, English-Speaking Justice, pp. 44-45.
71. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 72.
72. Plato, Seventh Letter, 340.
73. Grant, Technology and Empire, pp. 68-69.
74. Ibid, p. 73. See also, the essay "In Defence of North America," p. 36.
75. Weil, The Need for Roots, tr. Arthur Wills, (New York, 1952), p. 43.
76. Ibid, p. 43.
77. Quoted by Petrement, p. 503.

78. See Grant, "Thinking about Technology," Technology and Justice, pp. 11-34.
79. Ian Angus, George Grant's Platonic Rejoinder to Heidegger, (Lewiston and Queenston, 1987), pp. 17-18.
80. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 139.
81. Voegelin, The New Science of Politics, pp. 27-28. See also, "Preface," Order and History: Vol I - Israel and Revelation, (Baton Rouge, 1956), p. ix.
82. Voegelin, The New Science of Politics, p. 27. My emphasis.
83. Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 7.
84. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 24.
85. Ibid, p. 143.
86. Grant, "Conversation: Intellectual Background," in Schmidt, pp. 62-63, 67.
87. Ibid, p. 63.
88. Duffy, p. 90.

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