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Kavka - Rationality of Derrida's Religion - JCRT 1.1 ## The Rationality of Derrida's "Religion without Religion": A Phenomenological Gift for John D. Caputo

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The theme of doubleness stretches throughout the body of Jacques Derrida's written works. Most beginning students of Derrida read the rather lucid critique of structuralism in the chapter of *Writing and Difference* entitled "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences."¹ This 1966 essay is usually used to teach the undecidability between "two interpretations of interpretation."² One seeks to uncover truth in a fairly simple propositional and foundational sense; the other, in apparent conflict with the former, seeks to go beyond these modern hermeneutical notions of truth via a concept of metaphoric and antifoundationalist freeplay which Derrida associates with Nietzschean writings such as "On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense." Derrida claims that there can be no "question of choosing" between the two interpretations; rather, there is an irreducible and ineluctable relationship of *différance* between them which would render such a choice phenomenologically ignorant.³ Whatever turn there may or may not be in Derrida's writings—especially on the issue of religion—this rhetoric of undecidability between the doublet remains focussed. For example, on the opening page of the 1990 *Mémoires d'aveugle* (translated in 1993 as *Memoirs of the Blind*), Derrida once again writes in the rhetoric of doubleness. "Let me summarize: there would be two hypotheses."⁴ Although the immediate context of these two hypotheses is the question of the origin of drawing, it quickly becomes clear that drawing is a phenomenological limit-experience (structurally similar to mourning, the sentence "I am dead," autobiography, etc.) which illuminates interpretation in general. The two interpretations of interpretation are now a) "the transcendental", which hopelessly seeks after the unrepresentable and non-thematizable origin and resolutely leaves it hidden and invisible, and b) "the sacrificial," which represents and thematizes this unrepresentability and thus, in its failure, successfully conveys it to the understanding, in however slight or guarded a manner.⁵ The relationship between these two is now described as a "fold," yet the formal structure of this doubleness has not changed since the earlier essay. As the understanding of metaphor as the basis of truth is itself propositionally true, so does the faulty representation of the sacrificial interpretation "reflect" the inaccessibility of the origin.⁶ The undecidable fold between the two interpretations thus becomes the criterion for hermeneutical truth.

2. So, any Derridean interpretation of a book—or any interpretation of a book on Derrida—must begin by searching for its two apparently conflicting hypotheses, and then must search for the fold between them. In this essay, I claim that John D. Caputo's recent *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, a series of excellent readings of mostly post-1980 Derridean writings, more than adequately displays two apparently conflicting hypotheses, yet fails to represent the

¹Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–293.

²Ibid., 292.

³Ibid., 293.

⁴Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1.

⁵Ibid., 41.

⁶Ibid.

fold between them.⁷ In so doing, the importance of rationality (and the self) for Derridean phenomenology is downplayed, and the consequences of this shift for theological thinking are dramatic.

3. So, let us summarize. There are two hypotheses in *Prayers and Tears*. The first hypothesis is that Derrida is at heart a religious thinker; he has a religion of his own which is inseparable from his philosophy. I think this hypothesis has three parts (others' mileage may vary). One: "deconstruction is itself faith" (57), and moreover a "faith without faith" that is always questioning its own boundaries that risk congealing it into a staid essence with its own propriety. Two: in this questioning, there is a move toward the impossible, i.e. toward that upon which I do not project my possibilities in a move of ownership, as some interpretations of Heidegger would have it. This move is toward the surprise of the *tout autre*, the wholly other, toward a Kierkegaardian singular. Three: in this rigorous thinking of alterity, the wholly other is always secret, never present, always uncognizable as such. For we know from Aristotle (and Maimonides) that in actual intellectual cognition there is union between the knower and the known object.⁸ Knowing-as-such is therefore heterophagy (from the Greek *heteros* "other," and *phagein* "to eat"). Cognition-as-such devours the alterity of the other, and is thereby ethically and phenomenologically suspect. This hypothesis sees the matter perfectly, transcendently, and I would even say eidetically.
4. The other hypothesis is more interesting to me, it makes me more impassioned, and the context of this passion perhaps marks in advance the death knell for all my resistance to what it claims to see, expressed in the following arguments. This hypothesis is that deconstructive faith, or deconstructive faith- without-faith has nothing whatsoever to do with knowledge, or reason. Thus, for Caputo the proposition "deconstruction is itself faith" is synonymous with the proposition "deconstruction is itself not knowledge." As Caputo writes in the preface to *Prayers and Tears* (xxvi), "deconstruction proceeds not by knowledge, but by faith and by passion, by the passion of faith, impassioned by the unbelievable, by the secret that there is no secret." Let us break this up into two subsidiary parts. Part A: there is an argument that "the passion for God renounces cognitivism" (334), which parallels Caputo's mantra-like citation of the closing line of *Memoirs of the Blind*, "I don't know. One has to believe. [*Je ne sais pas. Il faut croire.*]" Part B: there is no secret. The secret of deconstruction is so rigorously self-negating, so opposed to the metaphysics of presence, that we cannot make any identity-statements about it or predications of it. These two parts of this other hypothesis are bound together. If there were to be a secret, announced as such, it would no longer be a secret and would fall prey to cognition. If there were to be cognition in deconstruction, it would know what the secret was. The paradox of the matter eludes cognitive grasp, even though the first hypothesis grasped this very elusiveness.
5. Nevertheless, the way in which Caputo describes the secret and faith is so pure that the second hypothesis risks escaping its required sacrificial imbrication into the first hypothesis. And after all, it is the first hypothesis that guarantees the persuasiveness of the second, and prohibits the reader from dismissing it as the gobbledygook that is usually (and falsely) associated with Derrida. Caputo correctly warns us of the dangers of purity early on in *Prayers and Tears* (40), "a purely pure prayer is not prayer but union ... pure life is pure death." As a result, the implied rhetoric of purity, of immunity from the messiness of rationality or the order of the same in Caputo's description of faith and its secret should raise our eyebrows.

⁷John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997). Future references will be in parentheses in the main body of this text.

⁸For Aristotle, see the descriptions of God's intellect *in actu* in the final book of the *Metaphysics*. For Maimonides, cf. *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), I:68, 163–66.

6. So what I'd like to do is express this suspicion by focussing on why I think Derridean God-talk has to involve cognition and rationality to some extent. First, this will be a focus on Husserl, both on the place of Husserl in *Prayers and Tears*, and the place of Husserlian theology in Derrida. Second, I want to take this out of the realm of merely arguing over the history of ideas, and show how the move to the Derrida-Husserl relationship affects how we think about the messianic in the "later" Derrida. Here, we will to linger over a sentence in *Prayers and Tears* about the Messiah and savor its truth before Caputo moves away from it.
7. Caputo's arguments for the non-cognitive "essence" of deconstruction is often bound up in his text with a denigration of Husserl. Husserl is Greek through and through, not jewgreek like Derrida. Husserl's philosophy is bathed in the light of the *Anschaung* of phenomenological intuition (310) which sees essences in the light of the presence of the given (xxi), and in the light of the temporal present off of which past and future are constructed as present-departed and present-to-come (77-78). If Husserl is a code in Caputo's book for phenomenology understood as metaphysics of presence, then Derrida is as far removed from Husserl as possible. For Caputo, Derrida does a "counter-phenomenology" (317) which revolves around blindness and not seeing, darkness and not light, faith and not rationality as rigorous science, etc.
8. Yet there is no historical or philosophical reason why one cannot appropriate Husserl for the project of elucidating Derrida's "religion without religion," to cite Derrida's *The Gift of Death*. Indeed, Husserl sees himself as engaged in a similar project. The distance between Husserl and the Eckhartian and Kierkegaardian depiction of Derrida that Caputo gives in *Prayers and Tears* is not infinite, but infinitesimal. Two anecdotes demonstrate this. The first is relatively well-known: in the early 1930's, Husserl describes his thought in two letters (one to Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmidt and one to Edith Stein) as a path to a notion of a "God without God," a theology which makes no use of theological methods and proofs.⁹ In light of the role of the "without" (*sans*) in Derrida's thought, evidenced by his repeated use of the formula "X without X" as a tool for reinscribing and destabilizing the concepts of God, religion, name, etc., any account of an anti-Husserlian Derrida should proceed with fear and trembling. Indeed, there is some suspicion that Husserl's thoughts on theological matters may be grounded in an appreciation of the theologian most beloved by Caputo, Meister Eckhart. In a journal entry from 1917, Husserl confesses his love for Rhineland mysticism.¹⁰
9. The second anecdote is less well-known, and concerns a meeting between Husserl and the Russian-French quasi-Jewish existentialist Lev Shestov, recounted in Shestov's reminiscences written upon Husserl's death.^[^11] Shestov had written some of the first essays on Husserl in French, in 1926 and 1927. They were trenchant critiques which made an impression upon Husserl, and the two had several personal conversations throughout the late 1920's and early 1930's. In the course of one early conversation, as Shestov was explaining his project of an existentialist theology grounded in Dostoyevsky's rejection of rational constraints upon faith, Husserl demanded "with enigmatic insistence" that Shestov read Kierkegaard. Husserl's exclamation, according to Shestov's testimony and witness, was not the calm recommendation

⁹The letter to Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmidt is cited in Steven W. Laycock, "Introduction: Toward an Overview of Phenomenological Theology," in *Essays in Phenomenological Theology*, ed. Laycock and James G. Hart (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 1-2. The letter to Edith Stein which uses the same phrase is cited in Laycock's other article in the same volume, "The Intersubjective Dimension of Husserl's Theology," 169.

¹⁰James G. Hart, in his "A Précis of a Husserlian Philosophical Theology" (in *Essays in Phenomenological Theology*, 167n. 92), cites from this entry: "I often read *Die Deutsche Theologie* [a fourteenth-century synthesis of Rhineland mystic texts] and have it by me. I love it very much. I have, in general, a great attraction to German mysticism. I think I have access to mysticism. But I haven't lived enough therein."

of a man who simply knows something about another field, but the outburst of a man who had a passionate relationship with Kierkegaard's work, and who in other conversations spoke of his own thought in terms of Kierkegaard's "either/or." Shestov was never quite able to reconcile this personal meeting with Husserl's rationalist writings, but testified that they were indeed unified in the name "Husserl", and this unity was for Shestov the central enigmatic legacy of Husserl.

10. The enigma of how phenomenology and faith can belong together is thus the enigma of Husserl. And this is the enigma which Derrida tackles in his first writings on religion. These are not located in his description of *différance* as not even negative theology, as Caputo implies in the opening chapter of *Prayers and Tears*. They are located even earlier, in his gloriously frustrating interpretation of the theological sections of Husserl's posthumous manuscripts, an interpretation located near the close of the 1962 *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*.^[12] In going back to this text, one should recall Derrida's statement at his 1980 thesis defense that the problems in the *Introduction* "have continued to organize the work I have subsequently attempted ... most notably that of pictorial works,"^[13] a testimony which would now include *Memoirs of the Blind*, the site of Caputo's mantra "*Je ne sais pas. Il faut croire.*"
11. Derrida notes in the 1962 text that Husserl has two different notions of God, and this is the standard reading of Husserlian theology, as found in the work of such thinkers as Stephan Strasser, Stephen Laycock, and James Hart.^[14] On the one hand, God is an infinite telos, absolutely exterior. God is the "idea of an absolute pole...absolute logos, absolute truth, toward which every finite being is oriented."^[15] On the other hand, God is an entelechy, the vitalistic ground of our actions, and absolutely interior. If we are to speak about God phenomenologically, then the consciousness of God must have the same structures of general consciousness, and hence we must ascribe intentionality to God. Thus God is not only the *tout autre* telos, but *also appears in the order of the same* through his intentional relation toward the world. God aims at the world as total intersubjectivity, and does this through governing the life of the human monad from the inside. God is imperceptibly incarnate in the human will as the principle of perfect humanity in accord with absolute reason. The correlation between divine and human consciousness is for Husserl expressed by a structure in which "the I bears its God in itself as the teleological idea which animates and directs all its pure actions."^[16] God is for Husserl therefore always dipolar, existing both as a totally other absolute, and existing in the innermost depths of the same. Phenomenology sees both of these scenarios as always already folded together.
12. Derrida expresses this doubleness as follows. In the case of the I bearing its God in itself, the notion of the God "who speaks in us" (as Husserl writes in another fragment), "transcendental phenomenology would be only the most rigorous *language* of a speculative metaphysics or an absolute idealism."^[17] Language is key because God *speaks* in us; but this is an idealist language because phenomenological method involves a higher-order intellectual intuition of God operating behind the blinds of consciousness. But in the case of God as infinite telos, Derrida writes that "the concepts borrowed from metaphysics would have only a *metaphorical* and indicative sense"^[18] because the Husserlian idea is "still less an existent than the Platonic *eidos*"; it is not, it is beyond being (*epekeina tes ousias*).^[19]
13. How can we reconcile a model of theology which involves both a present infinity in discursive process and a rigorous notion of transcendental finitude which cannot express this? It is indeed tempting to dismiss all of this as contradictory. Yet Derrida, as one would expect, opts for undecidability: "we could be no more unfaithful to Husserl than by seeing a dilemma here," and that "we must strive toward the necessarily *single* root of every dilemma."^[20]

14. What this means, I think, is that the key element of any Derridean thinking about religion has to be its simultaneous existence in two different orders—the order of metaphor *and* the order of metaphysics, the order of the heterological other *and* the order of the tautological same, the order of apophatics *and* the order of cataphatics, the order of ideas *and* the order of history, the order of faith *and* the order of reason. Derrida describes the nature of this “and” as a *Wechselspiel*, an “interplay of reciprocal inspiration.”[^21] As seen above, this oscillating “and” is visible from one end of the Derridean corpus to the other, including the concepts of *différance*, double interpretation, and the fold. Each conceptual scene that undergoes phenomenological analysis must undergo a *partage*, a splitting and a sharing between each of these two orders. Derrida’s description in *Memoirs of the Blind* of the two eyes of the blind-in-one-eye portraitist is exemplary in this regard. (Hence, I think that its status as the cover drawing is important, *pace* Caputo’s claims at *Prayers and Tears* 309–10.) One eye sees the state of blindness, and thus figuratively sees nothing; the other eye literally sees nothing, being “plunged into the night,” completely withdrawn from seeing.[^22]
15. What is seen is the *Sachverhalt* of *trait* and *retrait*, the play of the appearance of a feature and its withdrawal. In seeing this double movement, the phenomenologist realizes that he cannot know the state-of-affairs as such, giving it a list of proper predicates in S-is-p form that would always be true of the object at hand. But it is not necessarily the case that the inability to know as such is the same thing as the inability to know anything at all. The inability to know as such simply states that the list of proper predicates of the object is never *stable*. We cannot stabilize the oscillation and fold between two orders (same/other, reason/faith, etc.) that good phenomenology reveals. The essence of things is dipolar; I may know this, but this knowledge prohibits me from thinking along “essentialist” lines in the ordinary sense of the term. As Derrida himself says in *Memoirs of the Blind*, not being able to see “comes down to the same thing” as seeing “too far and too well.”[^23] Derrida, as a phenomenologist, is a man who knows too much. I use the Hitchcockian language here purposefully to supplement Caputo’s Kierkegaardian Derrida, who refers to Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac in order to show the irreducibility of faith to knowledge. For it is Hitchcock who teaches us that being a man who knows too much leads to prayers and tears, especially when a son’s life is at stake.[^24] Thus, Caputo’s mantra—the “I don’t know. One has to believe.” which closes *Memoirs of the Blind*—should, I think, always be read as “I don’t know anything as such, as anything unified or unitary or single or simplex. In the instability of the dipolar structure of knowledge, one has to believe.” Thus, Derrida’s Husserlian heritage is one of faith determined by the dipolarity of all knowledge, and is thus ineluctably linked with a certain kind of cognitivism, *pace* Caputo.
16. What does this mean for the Messiah? If this dipolar structure discovered in Husserl is to apply here as well, then the messianic must appear within the order of metaphysics, within the order of the self. The Messiah would thus be not merely an unspeakable, unknowable *secret*, but rather something that I *secrete* as a certain kind of possibility. This opens up the space for a notion of the Messiah that is here, now. Caputo hints at this possibility briefly in *Prayers and Tears*, when he writes (81) that “the Messiah might simply be each one of us just insofar as we wait for the coming,” but leaves this behind a bit too quickly, in my opinion, in order to cast his lot with a more rigorously shrouded secret (150: “we do not know what is coming, what is *tout autre*”). But the belief that the Messiah is each of us is a good phenomenological notion of the Messiah according to the principles of Derridean phenomenology, for it institutes a *partage* of the messianic idea, splitting the unitary Messiah across multiple ethically responsible individuals. And it solves what is for me a nagging problem in Caputo’s assertion that the Messiah will never come (e.g. 245–46, among other places). If the always-deferred nature of the Messiah manages to command a model of action that is supererogatory, always

going above and beyond the call of duty, in accordance with the singularity of the *tout autre*, the question arises: how I can hasten the arrival of justice if it will never come? Why should I hope? The delay of messianic arrival on every phenomenological stratum, I would think, would be too depressing to bear. Personally, it would compel me to act immorally. Can we get a little more interiority into this scene without violating it completely? Perhaps it is impossible. But I'd like to struggle forward.

17. Here, I think, it is important to turn to Levinas. In a talmudic commentary on B. Sanhedrin 99a published in *Difficult Freedom* as "Messianic Texts," Levinas argues as follows.^[25] The sugya, the section of the Talmud under consideration, interprets the nature and identity of the Messiah in accordance with Jeremiah 30:21—"His chieftain shall be one of his own, his ruler shall come from his midst." Levinas argues that this means that the "Messiah is the King who no longer commands from outside" and is thus radically interior. If the Messiah has no elements of exteriority to him, then as a result, the Messiah must be a figure for ipseity itself. "The Messiah is myself; to be Myself [*moi*] is to be the Messiah." However, this is not a moment of pure egoity. For earlier sugyot have drilled in the concept of the Messiah as the person who takes on the suffering of others. Hence the self that is appropriated as Messiah is always and everywhere expropriated outside of interiority toward the Other. This type of messianism—like Derrida's "messianic," both bracketed from determinable messianism yet founded in the Jewish tradition—is a corollary of Levinasian phenomenology. We can express this as a syllogism. If the phenomenology of the face in Levinas (as performed in *Totality and Infinity* and other early texts) argues that the taking-on of the suffering of Others is the essence of my ethical responsibility, and if the Messiah is the person who takes on the suffering of Others, then I am the Messiah. We can summarize Levinas' messianism with a slogan: no one comes to the Father except through *moi*. In this locution, the *moi* does not refer to any historical personage past, present, or future; the *moi* is not the upper-case *Moi* that refers to the totalizing ego, but rather the lower-case *moi*, the *moi* of substitution which is, according to Levinas' essay "God and Philosophy," "torn from the concept of the Ego," cored out, denucleated in its giving-itself without reserve.^[26]
18. Levinas' argumentation here fits the same dipolar structure that we've seen in Derrida. As soon as the equation between self and Messiah is given, in the wink of an eye, the Messiah within me has disappeared, withdrawn toward the Other, having lost its bearings. With one eye, I see myself as the Messiah; with the other eye, I see nothing because I have sacrificed myself in ethical responsibility. But at least in the double light of this vision and the interplay between the moments of appropriation and expropriation in this structure, I get a ground, an impulse, for the hope that propels my acting ethically. I have faith in myself, in myself being withdrawn, and thus in the future instantiation of justice. And this faith is grounded in solid phenomenological argumentation, in reason, and in cognitive claims, as twisted and knotted as they may be. Another slogan to express this oscillating movement within messianic identity: "The Messiah is here, and I am she." The identitarian nature of the "am" in this sentence is immediately taken away by the "she" which refers to something that I, personally, am not. The formula is simultaneously adequate and hopelessly inadequate. This is, of course, only one way to phrase it; the last word can be, I think, a placeholder for any other predicate which is not properly mine—either a class ("Christian") or the singular name of a friend (or a stranger)—any predicate which will withdraw the gift of identity that the copula gives.
19. A final note—what is at stake in my insistence upon the rationality of Derridean religion without religion, upon forcing it to adhere to good phenomenological arguments? For this, we can point to a recent article by James K. A. Smith which appeared in the spring 1998 *Journal of Religion*. Smith argues, citing Caputo, that since the Derridean messianic must have some de-

terminate content, then the determinate religions cannot be excluded from having a say in the production and determination of justice.[²⁷][²⁸] Religions for Smith are pharmacological in the sense of the Platonic *pharmakon* as both poison and cure, and thus even fundamentalism can be healing, if it takes the form of an ethical vigilance which was “modeled by a very determined Galilean who was the prophet of a very particular justice and religion.”[²⁹] To this, I reply: where is the withdrawal, the *retrait*, that the dipolar structure of Derridean “knowledge” requires? Why does the exemplarity of this Galilean even matter—after all, there are always the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, and there is always phenomenology—unless he is given a singular messianic position? And if this Galilean is the exemplar above all others, if he was the one and only Messiah, and if no one comes to the Father except through him, then does this not automatically reinstate all the violence within determinate structures which “ethical vigilance” was supposed to eliminate? To be sure, the situation could be worse. One could take the path of John Milbank[³⁰] and argue that the Church is the locus in which all differences are incorporated without sublation. I would imagine this would be news to non-Christians everywhere, especially as the Church prays for their conversion at the Easter Vigil. The question here of how to measure the exemplarity of this Galilean is difficult. Too much exemplarity reinstitutes violence, while too little exemplarity makes the Galilean irrelevant. Yet it is a question which his followers must answer. Pieties about the irreducibility of faith are not a valid shelter from it.[³¹]

Notes

Of course, Caputo’s own understanding of Derrida must be contextualized in his own passionate love for Eckhart. Cf. *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986). Although Caputo’s attachment to Heidegger has significantly abated (as evidenced by the 1993 collection of essays entitled *Demythologizing Heidegger* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press], there is no evidence in recent work that his attachment to Eckhart has. Indeed, the epigram of the first chapter of *Prayers and Tears* is Eckhart’s “I pray God to rid me of God,” and at one point (177) Caputo equates the Derridean thinking of the gift with Eckhart’s concept of giving-without-why. [¹¹]: Lev Shestov, “In Memory of a Great Philosopher: Edmund Husserl,” trans. George L. Kline, in *Speculation and Revelation*, ed. Bernard Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1982), 269–291. [¹²]: Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 147–48. Also cf. 45n. 37. [¹³]: Derrida, “The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations,” trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 39. My thanks to Leonard Lawlor for reminding me of the location of this passage. [¹⁴]: For Laycock and Hart, see the essays cited above. In addition, cf. Hart, “Phenomenological Time: Its Religious Significance,” in *Time and Religion*, ed. A. N. Balslev and J. N. Mohanty (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 17–45. For Strasser, cf. “History, Teleology, and God in the Philosophy of Husserl,” *Analecta Husserliana* IX (1979): 317–33. [¹⁵]: Husserl, E III 4, cited in Strasser, 324. [¹⁶]: Ibid., 325. [¹⁷]: Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry*, 147. The Husserl citation is from K III. [¹⁸]: Ibid. [¹⁹]: Ibid., 144. [²⁰]: Ibid., 148. [²¹]: Ibid., 149. [²²]: Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 57. [²³]: Ibid., 100. [²⁴]: It must be noted that, in distinction from the more popular 1956 version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* with James Stewart and Doris Day, Hitchcock’s 1934 version (featuring a great performance from Peter Lorre) features a girl’s life at stake. For more on the differences between the two films, cf. François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon &

Schuster, 1984), 89–94 and 227–31. [^25]: Emmanuel Levinas, “Messianic Texts,” in *Difficult Freedom*, trans. Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 59–96. The following quotations are from 89–90. [^26]: Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” trans. Alphonso Lingis, Richard Cohen, Robert Bernasconi, and Simon Critchley, in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Critchley, and Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 144. [^27]: James K. A. Smith, “Determined Violence: Derrida’s Structural Religion,” *Journal of Religion* 78 (1998), 197–212. [[^28]: Caputo’s argument (Prayers and Tears 139–42) uses the Heideggerean concept of formal indication. [^29]: Smith, 211–12. [^30]: John Milbank, “‘Postmodern Critical Augustinianism’: A Short Summa in Forty Two [sic] Responses to Unasked Questions,” *Modern Theology* 7:3 (1991), 225–37. [^31]: A shortened version of this paper was originally read at a panel devoted to The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* at the 1998 national meeting of the American Academy of Religion. My thanks to John D. Caputo for his reply, and to Clayton Crockett, David Hart, Luca D’Isanto, Willie Young, Beth McManus, M. Jamie Ferreira, and Edith Wyschogrod for their comments.

When this paper was originally read, Caputo responded by claiming that he was “all for knowledge,” yet knowledge is not an adequate guarantor for the hope that he finds to be at the heart of faith. Indeed, he worried that “the more you know, the less you might hope.” In response, I agree that knowledge cannot fully determine decision-making, and that faith and hope are necessary in this regard. Yet, in the face of dogmatic religious organizations of various political stripes, it is just as important, if not more so, to work through phenomenological epistemologies in order to find the limits of the tropes that express faith and hope, and in order to justify that hope in the first place. On the reading above, knowledge does not threaten hope, but is its bedrock. Back