



# Naturalism & Normativity in Transnational Ages

Lorenzo Zucca, King's College London

# The Santa Catarina





# 1. Religious Wars



# Deeper Religious Wars?



RELIGION VS SCIENCE

Faith does not give you the answers;  
it just stops you asking the questions.



# Philosophical Solutions

- 1. Grotius 'Etiamsi Daremus [...] non esse Deum'
- 2. Dworkin 'Religion without God'

# Normative Fundamentalism

- 1. Independent and Autonomous Domains
- 2. Internal Standards of Truth
- 3. Faith
- 4. Hope (in Dworkin's case of value coherentism)



# Normativity as a Leap of Faith

- What if you don't have faith?
- A stand-off?
- What does faith say about international standards?

# Local Normativity

- A second strange parallel:
- 1. Grotius 'Sociability as the Fountain of Right'
- 2. Dworkin's 'Associative Obligations'



# International Law's Weak Normativity

- Natural Law : Ius Cogens
- Is Grotius the father of Positive International Law?
- Dworkin's posthumous conversion in "A New Philosophy of International Law."
- Hobbes and Nagel

# Naturalism instead

- What if you don't have faith then?
- 1. Deus sive Natura => No Transcendental God
- 2. Nature does not act on account of an end => No Teleology
- 3. Nature is everywhere and always the same => No Anthropocentrism- No special domain of Normativity
- FULL REJECTION OF Natural Law Tradition



# Natural Normativity?

- All individuals have a natural right to strive to exist (i) and extend their control over the world (ii)
- Hobbes thinks that we incur binding obligations when we make pledges under the appropriate conditions.
- By contrast, Spinoza maintains that “the validity of an agreement rests on its utility, without which the agreement automatically becomes null and void” (TTP 16/182; cf. TP 2/12).

# The Contingency of the State

- Spinoza, unlike Hobbes, places the burden of political stability on the sovereign rather than the subject (see Wernham 1958, 27)...
- ...when there is excessive vice or non-compliance, the blame must be “laid at the door of the commonwealth” (TP 5/3).
- If a sovereign is to maintain its right, it must legislate wisely, so as not to incite insurrection



# The 'Spirit of the laws'

- Montesquieu's project is a Naturalist project
- Human laws represent the necessary relations between ruled and rulers
- To understand government is to understand the 'physical' and 'moral causes' constraining it

# National and International

- The Empire, the Church, the City-state, the National State are all historical contingencies
- The best political frames survive and thrive, the other perish
- Transnational Law is part of this story



# The Persistence of the Theologico-Political Conflict

- Theology versus Naturalism
- Does not mean Religion vs Naturalism
- For secular thinkers (Machiavelli/Spinoza), religion is a necessary source of piety and social stability
- One has to take a side