

A Corollary to Arthur C. Clarke's Third Law and his Use of Partial Revelation as Key to Successful Transformation to Maturity in *Childhood's End*

**Kyle Hansen, Undergraduate Student, Oral Roberts University
Dominic Halsmer, PhD, PE, Dean, Science & Engineering, Oral Roberts University**

**Abstract for the
Science and Science Fiction Conference, April 12-13, 2012**

Why is God so often silent and seemingly absent in the face of human suffering? Why is it not easier to find evidence for God's existence? What does divine mystery and silence afford human beings? These are just a few of the perplexing questions with which theologians, philosophers and scientists wrestle. In Arthur C. Clark's book *Childhood's End*, the reader gleans lessons about human transformation to maturity through the partial self-revelation of a higher power and intelligence. Clarke's third law, "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," also relates to the idea of partial revelation. Perhaps the magic of our reality is simply the sufficiently advanced technology of our divine engineer. Many reject this idea based on the significant amount of evil and suffering in the world. But an interesting corollary to Clarke's third law states that "any sufficiently advanced technology may also be confused with malevolence." This speaks to the theodicy problem and the hiddenness or silence of God. This paper will give a theistic defense of the problem of divine hiddenness along with biblical examples and investigations into natural theology as support.

Partial revelation often leads us to depend on God and continue to seek him while providing us second-order values and affordances for enduring through the maturation process, resulting in sustained hope and love for God. There is also an understanding of the need for a Kierkegaardian epistemic distance to facilitate true choice and devotion. God and angels are compared to the Overmind and Overlords, while the will and the person of God are compared with the text's philosophical inclinations. Immediate love and a future hope lay in a balance, with faith sustaining the tension. There is something we can learn about God through his silence, while also understanding that sometimes our preconceptions and analogies can obfuscate the divine situation. Theological aspects will be connected to Clarke's idea of a process leading to a 'supernormal' indwelling which leads to personal and global transformation.