EUROPEAN JOURNAL
FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2012

ARTICLES

DISCUSSIONS AND REPLIES

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ATONEMENT AND THE CRY OF DERELICTION FROM THE CROSS

ELEONORE STUMP

Saint Louis University

Abstract. Any interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement has to take account of relevant biblical texts. Among these texts, one that has been the most difficult to interpret is that describing the cry of dereliction from the cross. According to the Gospels of Mathew and Mark, on the cross Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In this paper, I give a philosophical analysis of the options for understanding the cry of dereliction, interpreted within the constraints of orthodox Christian theology; and I show the suggestiveness of this analysis for interpretations of the doctrine of the atonement.

INTRODUCTION

Any interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement has to take account of those biblical texts traditionally taken to be foundational narratives for the doctrine. Among these texts, one of the narratives that has been the most difficult to interpret is the story describing what is commonly called 'the cry of dereliction from the Cross'. According to the Gospels of both Mathew and Mark, among the things Jesus says on the Cross is "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

There are so many things puzzling about this line attributed to Jesus that it is hard to know how to spell them all out. Furthermore, there is a rich biblical context for the line in other parts of the narrative in the Gospels, as well as in various places in the Hebrew Bible, including the Psalms and prophets. Here I will leave all of this to one side, helpful and important though it is. I have learned from consulting or considering it; but in this short paper, in the interest of focusing on just one set of

problems raised by the story of the cry of dereliction, I will concentrate only on this one line, the cry of dereliction itself. In addition, I will omit consideration of virtually all commentary on this line in the history of interpretation of the Gospels. My purpose here is not historical scholarship on the line but philosophical analysis of it. If the cry of dereliction is to be interpreted within the constraints of orthodox Christian theology, with the traditional assignment of attributes both to God and to Christ, philosophically considered, how is it possible to make sense of it?

UNION: CLOSENESS AND PSYCHIC INTEGRATION

We can begin by thinking in general about closeness between persons. If distance between persons is part of the story of the cry of dereliction, then what is closeness between persons? For that matter, what is union? Elsewhere I have explored these questions in detail in connection with the account of love given by Thomas Aquinas; here I can only summarize briefly the central points of that discussion.[1]

On Aquinas's account of love, love consists in the interaction of two mutually governing desires, one for the good of the beloved and one for union with the beloved.

Closeness is necessary for the union sought in love. It requires an ability and a willingness on the part of each person in the relationship to share herself, her thoughts and feelings, with the other. But this ability and willingness to share oneself in turn require psychic integration. That is because internal division in the psyche makes a person divided against herself in will or self-deceived in mind or both. Someone who is internally divided against herself in these ways is not united with herself and therefore cannot be united with anyone else either. She will be unable or unwilling to share at least certain parts of herself with anyone else, either because she doesn't really know herself or because she doesn't really want to want something that with another part of her divided self she wants or both.

On an optimistic view of human beings, it is not possible for a person to be internally integrated in moral evil. No one is so evil that there is not some part of his mind and will that retains some hold on the good. Given this view, it follows that all moral wrongdoing fragments a psyche. Since

[1] See my *Wandering in Darkness*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially chapters 6 and 7.

fragmentation in psyche diminishes a person's ability to share himself, it also is an impediment to closeness and union. Closeness and union therefore require integration around the good.

On Christian views, the ultimate good for any human person is union with God. Consequently, for God, the two desires of love collapse into one; they come to a desire for union with the beloved. Given the doctrine that God is perfectly loving and loves every person that he has made, it follows that God also always has a desire for union with every person.

UNION: CLOSENESS AND SHARED ATTENTION

Given these views of love and closeness, it is clear that one obstacle to closeness between a human person and God will come from internal fragmentation in a human being. A person's moral wrongdoing can leave him divided against himself, in a state that wards off closeness with others, including God. Such inner fragmentation is therefore sufficient to undermine or obviate union between persons.

But more than closeness is needed for union. For union itself, significant personal presence is required as well; and significant personal presence includes shared attention. Where shared attention is missing, union is precluded too.

It is difficult to define shared attention, but easy to illustrate it. When a mother looks intently into the eyes of her baby who is also looking intently into hers, there is a kind of shared attention between them. Each of them, mother and baby, is aware of the other *and* of the other's awareness of her and of the other's awareness of her awareness of the other, and so on. There is something iterative about shared attention.

When there is shared attention between two persons who are already mutually close, then the shared attention between them results in significant personal presence of each to the other and thereby produces union, of one sort or another. By the same token, the absence of such shared attention is an impediment to union. Even between persons who are mutually close, distance can be introduced and union can be warded off by a lack of shared attention.

For union between two persons, then, it has to be the case that each of them is dispositionally close to the other and occurrently sharing attention

with the other. Both of these conditions are necessary for union,[2] and the absence of either of them is sufficient for distance between persons. For distance, it is sufficient that one of the persons in the relation lacks closeness or fails to have shared attention with the other.

DISTANCE BETWEEN PERSONS AND THE CRY OF DERELICTION

Given these reflections on closeness and distance between persons, there are fundamentally three possibilities each of which would be sufficient to account for Christ's experience of distance from God.

First, it could be that

(1) something about God prevents closeness between God and Christ.

On this possibility, God fails to be close to Christ, at least at the time of the cry; and it is God's doing that he is not close to Christ.

Second, it could be that

(2) something about Christ prevents closeness between God and Christ.

On this possibility, the distance between God and Christ has its source in Christ, not God. Although God has the desires of love for Christ, Christ fails to be close to God, at least at the time of the cry; and it is Christ's doing that there is this lack of closeness.

Third, it could be that

(3) shared attention between God and Christ is hindered.

On this possibility, there is distance between God and Christ because one or the other of them lacks the occurrent condition of sharing attention with the other. In principle, this absence of shared attention is possible even if, at that time, God and Christ each have the dispositions that make for mutual closeness.

This third possibility itself admits of further sub-division, because the responsibility for the lack of shared attention can be assigned to either (or both) of the persons in the relationship. In the case of God and Christ, either

(3a) something about God hinders shared attention between him and Christ

or

(3b) something about Christ hinders shared attention between him and God.

[2] They might also be sufficient for union, but in my extensive discussion of this issue in *Wandering in Darkness*, chapter 6, I did not argue for this stronger conclusion because it is not necessary for my purposes.

Someone might object that (3b) is not a real possibility, because on this possibility Christ turns his face away from God, as it were. But no one who turned his face away from someone else, the putative objector supposes, could experience that other as having forsaken him.

But this is a mistaken supposition on the objector's part. A person in great psychological or physical pain can experience as absent even those gathered around him in love to care for him. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's description of Frodo's psychic state after he is wounded by the Black Riders makes the point in a sensitive and evocative manner. Something about that wound causes Frodo to be intensely aware of the minds of the Black Riders and to find the rest of the world fading or invisible to his view. In the anguish he experiences then, Frodo feels very lost and alone with the Black Riders. When he finally comes to himself again, he is surprised to find that his friends are around him and have been the whole time.

It was Frodo who in his suffering lost the ability to share attention with his friends; but, in *his* experience, *they* had disappeared from *him*. Anyone who has soothed someone in great pain by saying, "It's all right! It's all right! I'm *here*!" understands the insightful accuracy of Tolkien's story in these scenes depicting Frodo.

Finally, (3b) itself admits of a yet further division, because it is clear that the obstacle in Christ to the sharing of attention with God could be either (3b1) a function of states of intellect and will in Christ or (3b2) a result of something in Christ other than beliefs and desires of his.

These, then, seem to be the possibilities for explaining distance between God and Christ at the time of the cry of dereliction.

THE POSSIBILITIES

On possibility (1), at least at the time of the cry of dereliction, for one reason or another, God does not want to be close to Christ and so lacks a desire of love for Christ. In this case, Christ experiences God as distant from him because God really is not close to Christ, however much Christ might be willing to be close to God.

Put this way, however, this possibility is clearly ruled out by the divine attribute of love. God always has the desires of love for every person. God may fail to be united with a person; but if he is, it will be because that other person presents an obstacle to union with God, not because God does not have a *desire* for union with him. And so, as an explanation

for Christ's experience of distance between him and God, possibility (1) is excluded by the doctrine that God is perfectly loving.[3]

On possibility (2), at least at the time of the cry of dereliction, closeness between God and Christ is lacking because something in Christ blocks such closeness. However much Christ may want closeness with God, something in Christ turns away from it as well. To the extent that it does, in however double-minded a way, one of the desires of love for God – the desire for union – is diminished or over-ridden in Christ.

Manifestly, however, lacking closeness to God for this sort of reason is a morally bad state in the person who turns away from God. But it is part of orthodox Christian doctrine that Christ is never in a morally bad state. Consequently, it is not possible to attribute to Christ the turning away from closeness with God that possibility (2) would assign him. And so possibility (2) can be excluded as well.

On possibility (3), at least for the time of the cry of dereliction, distance between God and Christ is introduced by a lack of shared attention between them. Even if there is mutual closeness between God and Christ in general, one of them is not present to the other because shared attention between them is hindered at that time.

On possibility (3a), God is responsible for this lack of shared attention. But God can be responsible for it only if God has decided for some reason to block his sharing attention with Christ, since nothing external to God can block God's *willingness* to share attention with anyone.

There are very few attempts to explain why a good and loving God would turn his face away from Christ. The best is probably that given by Calvin. Calvin thinks that God turns away from Christ in order to let Christ feel himself lost, like one of the damned in hell. Since damnation

[3] This conclusion needs some nuancing, of course. A wife whose husband is unfaithful may move out of their home, in the hope that her absence will cause him to reconsider his behaviour. Similarly, when human persons turn away from God, it is possible for God to withdraw from them as a means to prompt them to be willing to return to him. In such a case, although God is absent, his absence is prompted by the lack of the desires of love for him on the part of human persons. A case of this sort is at issue in this line from Isaiah: "your evildoings have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you." (59:2) In this sort of case, God withdraws from human persons, but it remains true that God has the desires of love for the persons from whom he withdraws. His withdrawal is a response to their withdrawal from him. Since this nuancing in fact attributes ultimate responsibility for the distance between God and human persons to the human persons, then, it can safely be assimilated to possibility (2).

in hell is part of the penalty for human sin, on Calvin's view God lets Christ share in this part of the human penalty too.[4]

On Calvin's sort of explanation, God brings it about that Christ experiences as real what is in fact not real, namely, Christ's rejection and damnation by God. To this extent, however, God deceives Christ. Now it may be compatible with goodness to deceive a morally bad person, as when one lies to the Gestapo to protect the Jewish children in the house. But it is hard to see how it could be compatible with God's goodness to deceive a perfectly good person.

It is true that Calvin supposes God has a good goal for bringing about this experience for Christ, namely, that the suffering the experience entails is somehow necessary for the salvation Christ achieves for human beings. But, as even Calvin must acknowledge, a perfectly good God would not chose means incompatible with his love and goodness to bring about a good goal. If Calvin himself did not accept this very claim, his explanation of the need for Christ's suffering in hell would itself fail. If one did not accept this claim, one could simply reject Anselmian intuitions and attribute to God the salvation of human beings without anyone's bearing the human penalty for sin.

In my view, for these reasons, possibility (3a) can be excluded, too.

We are now apparently left with the two versions of possibility (3b), namely, that (3b1) some state of Christ's intellect and/or will or else (3b2) something in Christ other than his beliefs and desires is responsible for the lack of shared attention between God and Christ. In my view, we can quickly rule out (3b1), for just the reasons canvassed above in connection with possibility (2). If there were nothing external to him constraining him to do so, a perfectly good person would not think it was good or appropriate to turn his face away from a perfectly good God with whom he has mutual closeness, and he would not want to do so either. In no way would such a person want to turn his face from God's.

But (3b2) does not seem promising either. We could try making sense of this possibility by pointing to the great pain caused by crucifixion. But there seems to be an a fortiori argument against this explanation. Since so many others in Christian history seem to have experienced pain at least as great as crucifixion without losing their ability to stay connected

[4] See, for example, John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970], Book II, Chap.xvi, pp. 443-444.

to God, it seems implausible to suppose that physical pain alone would have such an effect on Christ.[5]

MINDREADING

At this point, it may seem as if we have excluded all the possibilities for making sense of the cry of dereliction. But, in my view, there is in fact one possibility left which is worth exploring in this connection. To see it, we have to understand something about mind-reading, as it often called in contemporary scientific literature.[6] In mind-reading, one person knows intuitively something about what another person is doing and with what motive and emotion he is doing it. Contemporary neurobiologists believe that this kind of knowledge of persons is subserved by a neurologically distinct system, currently thought to be the mirror neuron system. Mirror neurons fire both when a person does a particular kind of action and also when he sees someone else performing such an action.

The kind of knowledge given by the mirror neuron system is not a kind of knowledge *that*. Rather it is a matter of knowing from one's own internal state what someone else is doing and feeling. With regard to knowledge of the emotions of another person, for example, researchers hold that "[because of the mirror neuron system,] observing another person experiencing emotion can ... result in the direct mapping of that sensory information onto the motor structures that would produce the experience of that emotion in the observer. … [in that case] recognition [of the emotion of the other] is firsthand because the mirror mechanism elicits the same emotional state in the observer."[7]

The point is easier to appreciate if we think of empathy, which is currently thought to be subserved by the mirror neuron system, too.

[5] John Calvin says, "let the pious reader consider how far it is honourable to Christ to make him more effeminate and timid than the generality of men. Robbers and other malefactors contumaciously hasten to death, many men magnanimously despise it, others meet it calmly. If the Son of God was amazed and terror-struck at the prospect of it, where was his firmness or magnanimity?" [*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), Book II, Chap.xvi, p. 445.] Calvin is speaking of Christ's suffering in the garden before his passion, but the point applies as well to Christ's suffering on the cross.

[6] For more discussion of mind-reading, see chapter 4 of my *Wandering in Darkness,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). In this paper, I am developing and extending some of my remarks there.

[7] Rizzolatti et al., "Mirrors in the Mind", *Scientific American*, 295/5 (Nov. 2006), 60.

One person Paula empathizes with an emotion in another person Jerome because the mirror neuron system produces in her an emotional state like the emotion Jerome is experiencing, but taken off-line, as it were. In empathy with Jerome's suffering physical pain, for example, Paula will feel something of Jerome's pain, but she will feel it as Jerome's pain, not as hers. Paula doesn't actually suffer physical pain herself, but in empathy with Jerome the feeling Paula has is a feeling that is in some respects like the suffering of physical pain.

And, in general, in mind-reading Jerome, Paula will know what it feels like to do the action Jerome is doing, what it feels like to have the intention Jerome has in doing this action, and what it feels like to have the emotion Jerome has while doing this action. In all these cases, Paula will know these things through having herself some simulacrum of the mental state in Jerome. Something of Jerome's mental state will be in Paula, but off-line.

In this one respect, mind-reading is like dreaming. If Paula dreams that she is running, her brain will fire those motor programs it would fire if she were in fact running, but it fires them off-line, so that there is no muscle movement in Paula's legs even while her brain is running the motor programs usually used to produce that muscle movement. In the same way, through the mirror neuron system, Paula can have a mental state that mimics Jerome's mental state, but without herself actually being in that very mental state.

In such a case, the mental state in Paula really is Paula's. But, unlike the mental state of Jerome's that Paula is sharing, Paula's mental state is not connected in the usual way to other mental states of Paula's. Among other things, it is not accompanied by the states of will and intellect that mental state has in Jerome. For example, in empathy with Jerome when he has cut his finger badly, Paula may mind-read Jerome's feeling of pain. In that case, Paula will feel some kind of pain too, and the pain will really be Paula's, even if it is only empathic rather than physical pain. But Paula will not believe that it is her finger that is cut, and she will not want medical attention for her finger. So she will not have the states of intellect or will that she would have if she really had those very feelings of pain in her finger that Jerome has.

In the case of dreamed motion, the brain's motor programs for running are off-line in that while they are firing, they are disconnected from the muscles in the legs and so don't produce actual running. In the case of mind-reading, the brain's mirror neuron system runs the programs it

would run if Paula were doing what Jerome is doing, but it runs them disconnected from those states of will and intellect Paula would have if in fact she were doing those acts. In this way, Paula shares in Jerome's mental states but without having them as Jerome has them, in virtue of having her own states of intellect and will, not Jerome's, even while she feels what she would feel if she were doing what Jerome is doing.

MINDREADING AND MORAL EVIL

It is worth reflecting in this connection that mind-reading between two people Paula and Jerome can also occur when Jerome is engaged in doing actions that are evil or vile or morally repulsive in some other way. That this is so helps explain why watching such actions, in real life or in videos, for example, is so distressing to most people. Graphic videos of violence or abuse are disturbing because such scenes also prompt mind-reading in the viewer. The mirror neuron system gives the viewer some (no doubt limited) sense of what it feels like to do such things. And feeling what it feels like to do such things can be very troubling if the things in question are deeply revulsive to one's sensibilities.

To see better why this is so, it helps to understand that serious moral wrongdoing leaves its effects on parts of the wrongdoer's psyche other than just his intellect and will. There are cognitive faculties besides intellect and will, and wrongdoing can leave them morally worse, too. For example, most people cannot simulate the mind of a person who rapes a child; and we give expression to that incapacity by saying things like "I can't imagine how a person can do a thing like that!". But the rapist himself does understand how a person can do a thing like that. He knows what it feels like to do an evil of that sort and, what is worse, what it feels like to *want* to do an act of that sort.

That a person is morally the worse for knowing what such things feel like is clear, although the moral flaw here is not a matter of the agent's having morally wrong desires or morally wrong beliefs about what is good. That is why such a condition is not by itself culpable or worthy of punishment, but there is something morally lamentable about it all the same.[8] Even apart from morally deplorable states of intellect and will,

[8] Not everything that is morally deplorable is also culpable. That is at least in part because it is possible for a person to be in a morally bad condition without being responsible for being in that condition and therefore worthy of blame for it. A man

there is a kind of moral flabbiness in the psyche of a person who has engaged in serious evil, and that moral slackness causes others around him to react with revulsion to him even when there is no worry about continued evil on his part.

An extreme case of such moral plasticity can be found in the psychic state of Rudolf Hess at the end of the war. The psychiatrists who examined Hess at Nuremberg testified both to his self-serving cunning and to his "great instability"[9]; and Major Sheppard said of Hess, "I believe by the nature of his make-up, which reflects cruelty, bestiality, deceit, conceit, arrogance, and a yellow streak, that he has lost his soul and has willingly permitted himself to become plastic in the hands of a more powerful and compelling personality."[10] The malleability to which Sheppard called attention was itself morally revulsive to those around Hess.

Repentance can reshape previously bad states of intellect and will, but by itself it cannot take away totally the revulsive features in the psyche such as those Sheppard pointed to in Hess. Aquinas called such psychic leftovers of serious evil 'a stain on the soul', and the metaphor is helpful. Something that was lovely in Hess before he participated in the Nazi horrors was lost by his evil actions, and repentance is not by itself sufficient to restore him to the moral fitness he had before his evil acts.[11]

That this is so helps to explain why even if Hess had been completely repentant after the war, people would still have wanted to be at some distance from him. Hardly anyone would have been willing to invite even a totally repentant Hess to dinner if there were children at home.

---

in an isolated area in some much earlier time in human history might have been completely persuaded that wife-beating in certain circumstances was obligatory for him. When he beat his wife in those circumstances, his psychic state would have been morally deplorable. But most people would hesitate to consider him culpable or worthy of punishment for that act, because we would suppose that he is not responsible for his morally bad psychic condition.

[9] See *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands, 1945*, ed. Richard Overy (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), p. 419.

[10] Overy, 2001, p. 401.

[11] This is not to say that nothing could take away this stain. In my paper, "Personal Relations and Moral Residue" [in *History of the Human Sciences: Theorizing from the Holocaust: What is to be Learned?*, Paul Roth & Mark S. Peacock (eds.), Vol. 17 No 2/3 (August 2004), pp. 33-57], I discuss and argue for a certain kind of remedy for the stain, based on Aquinas's particular understanding of the notion of satisfaction. Satisfaction is NOT required for forgiveness. Its effect is to change comparative standing and relational attributes for the person making the satisfaction.

In complete repentance, Hess would have had the states of will and intellect which a morally good person has. But he still would have had the leftover stain on the soul, as Aquinas puts it, and those around him would have shrunk from him in consequence. Even if there is nothing worthy of blame or punishment in a thoroughly repentant wrong-doer, the leftover stain on the soul leaves him in a morally worse condition than he was in before he did the evil in question.

Many things go into this stain, but one central element of it is certainly the knowledge of what it is like to do the evil things Hess did. Mind-reading transfers some simulacrum of this knowledge. Seeing a person engaged in a seriously evil act such as the rape of a child, in real life or on videos, is disturbing because the mind-reading capacities of the mirror neuron system are engaged in such cases too. Because mind-reading introduces into the viewer a sense of what it feels like to do the evil acts being seen, and to want to do them, mind-reading the mental states of someone engaged in moral monstrosity will produce feelings that are horrible to ordinarily decent people.

If Paula views and mind-reads Jerome while he is engaged in morally evil acts, then Paula will gain something like a simulacrum of the moral slackness in Jerome even while she lacks those states of intellect and will which enabled Jerome actually to engage in the evil acts. The as-it-were slackness in Paula's psyche is not itself a moral evil on Paula's part, just because Paula lacks the states of will and intellect Jerome has while he does the evil acts in question. Because the mirror neuron system enables Paula to share something of Jerome's mental states off-line, as it were, Paula does not contract the moral evil Jerome has. Paula gains a simulacrum of the stain on Jerome's soul; but since Paula gains this imitation stain without any evil acts of her own intellect or will, she is not blameworthy or otherwise culpable for having it. She has only an off-line re-presentation of Jerome's psychic states, not the real thing.

On the other hand, the feeling that Paula has in such cases is real and is her own. For a morally decent person, the psychic states generated by a mind-reading connection with a person engaged in serious evil will produce psychological pain ranging from distress and revulsion to the catastrophically traumatic. When Tolkien's Frodo is connected in a telepathic way with the minds of Mordor's Black Riders, the horror is so traumatic for him that he never recovers from the experience. The

rest of his life is marked by a periodic recurrence of that experience of horror and its suffering.

Human beings are a highly social species, and the mirror neuron system is part of what enables human beings to function as the social animals they are. Mind-reading connects people into smaller or larger social groups which can function as one because the mind-reading unites them psychically to one extent or another. The great good of this system is highlighted by what happens when it is impaired, as it is in autistic children. But the other side of the coin is that the same system also enables a mind-reading union of sorts between the psyche of a morally decent person and the psyche of an evil person, and a psychic connection of that sort will be an affliction of one sort or another for the morally decent person.

MIND-READING, SHARED ATTENTION, AND CHRIST'S DISTANCE FROM GOD

Just as great physical pain can hinder or block a person's ability to share attention with another, even if the two of them love each other and are mutually close, so the psychological pain attendant on a mind-reading connection with a person engaged in serious evil can have the same effect. If Paula is connected with Jerome in the mind-reading way when Jerome is engaged in serious moral evil, that connection can leave Paula unable to share attention with another person Julia, even if Julia is right there for Paula, present to Paula in every respect except for Paula's inability to find Julia in her pain. When Frodo is in the grip of his mind-reading connection with the Black Riders, the whole world around him dims. His loving friends, deeply concerned for him, caring for him, and present with him, fade for him. In the grip of the telepathic connection to the Black Riders, everything else, even the surrounding inanimate environment, begins to disappear for Frodo. The horror of the minds of the Black Riders fills his whole conscious mind and blocks out everything else, until finally he faints from pain.

And so mind-reading and the connection between persons it effects give us another option for understanding the distance between Christ and God at the time of the cry of dereliction on the cross. The love and goodness of God and the love and goodness of Christ seemed to rule out all the possibilities for explaining that distance, except (3b).

That possibility assigns responsibility for interrupted shared attention between God and Christ to something having to do with Christ. But it was hard to know how anything having to do with Christ could be responsible for hindering shared attention between Christ and God in a context of mutual love and closeness between them. Morally bad states of intellect and will are ruled out for Christ, and physical pain is insufficient to explain Christ's experience of distance from God too.

But the mind-reading capacities of human beings shows us that, with regard to possibility (3), *tertium datur*. In principle, Christ can be the source of the blocking of shared attention between Christ and God because of

(3b1) something in Christ's intellect and/or will,

or

(3b2) something external to Christ,

or – as the description of the mind-reading system makes clear –

(3b3) something relational between Christ and other human beings.

It is Christian doctrine that on the cross Christ bore the sins of all human beings. There are, of course, many explanations of this claim. Virtually all of them suppose that in taking on human sin during his crucifixion, nothing about Christ's intellect and will became truly morally evil. On the other hand, most such explanations also suppose that there is some sense in which the evil of human beings became something Christ took into himself.

The mind-reading system provides one interesting explanation for how Christ could take into himself all human sin at once on the cross without having himself any morally evil beliefs or states of will. If on the cross Christ's human psyche is somehow connected with the psyches of every human being, then at one and the same time Christ will mind-read the mental states found in all the terribly evil human acts human beings have ever committed. Every vile, shocking, disgusting revulsive evil psychic state accompanying all human evil will also be at once in the psyche of Christ, only off-line. He will have in his psyche the simulacrum of all the stains of all the evil ever thought or done, without having any evil acts of his own. One might say that as the ravages of the crucifixion scar his body, this mind-read evil scars his psyche.

The mind-reading system therefore gives one kind of explanation for Christ's bearing all human sin himself while at the same time remaining without moral evil of his own.

But the mind-reading system also provides a way in which to understand Christ's experience of distance between himself and God. There is plausibility as well as sensitivity in Tolkien's portrayal of Frodo's mind as so filled with the minds of the Black Riders that all the world around him fades from his view. Overwhelmed by that telepathic connection, Frodo cannot find his friends, even though they are right there by him, filled with love and care for him. Their mutual love and closeness is not diminished, but Frodo cannot access it, because he loses his ability to share attention with his friends while he is suffering the horror of that telepathic connection.

If Tolkien's story seems plausible as regards Frodo, then it does not seem implausible to suppose that an analogous story, mutatis mutandis, could be told about Christ. The suffering of Christ's psychic connection all at once with all the evil mental states of every human evildoer would greatly eclipse any other human psychological suffering. It would dwarf an experience of suffering such as that brought about by Frodo's telepathic connection to the minds of Mordor, no matter how evil those minds are and no matter how terribly traumatic a telepathic union with such a mind would be. Flooded with such a horror, Christ might well lose entirely his ability to connect to the mind of God. For Christ in such a condition, God would be even more inaccessible than Frodo's friends were to him when the Black Riders occupied his mind.

Furthermore, because in his psychic connection with the evil in every human being Christ would also have a simulacrum of the stains on the soul accompanying all that evil, he would feel the moral ugliness of all that evil in himself. In that condition, why wouldn't he cry that God had forsaken him? The ugliness of those stains, even in their off-line or simulated form, is a world away from the beauty of God's goodness; and though the movement creating that distance is Christ's, the experience for him will be God's receding from him. For those on a boat moving out to sea, the shore seems to recede, although it is they who are moving, not the shore. An unwilling passenger on such a boat may well feel his home is leaving him as the shore becomes ever more distant, even while something in his mind also knows that it is he who is moving. In the same way, it is possible for Christ to feel that it is God who has gone from him even while it is the overwhelming of his mind by the connection with the evil in human minds that deprives him of his ability to share attention with God.

CONCLUSION

Philosophical reflection on the biblical narrative attributing to Christ the cry of dereliction from the cross gives an interpretation of one part of the atonement, that process whereby something about Christ's passion and death brought about a solution of some sort to the problem of human sin. On this interpretation, in crucifixion, the psyche of Christ was really united with the psyches of all human beings in all their good and also in all their evil. If this union makes the psyches of human beings accessible to Christ, then presumably, since union is a symmetric relation, the same union also makes the psyche of Christ accessible to every human being. Just as it is not hard to see how a deep psychic connection of a mind-reading sort with all the evil in every human psyche might be a shattering affliction for Christ, so it is not so hard to see that accessibility to the psyche of Christ might be a great redemptive good for human beings.

Wrestling with the story of the cry of dereliction therefore produces some significant insight into the atonement. But, however helpful it is, this insight by itself is hardly a complete interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement. Some of the most important questions about atonement still remain unanswered. What is there about psychic union of this mind-reading sort between Christ and human beings that makes it essential to the atonement? And what is there about crucifixion that is essential to this psychic union? Why couldn't the good brought about by atonement be gotten as well without such psychic union and crucifixion as with it?

By itself, this interpretation of the cry of dereliction cannot provide the answers to these questions, but it does help in discerning what directions could profitably be followed in looking for the answers.[12] It emphasizes the relation, the psychic union, between Christ and human beings as part of the process of the passion itself. And so it also opens the way for a more Trinitarian account of the atonement.

Traditionally, the Holy Spirit has been taken to have an essential role in the process of sanctification, which is one of the ends achieved by the atonement; but it hasn't been clear what the connection is between the passion and death of Christ, on the one hand, and the sanctification brought about by the Holy Spirit, on the other. The interpretation of the cry of dereliction I have argued for is suggestive on this score. On

[12] I am grateful to William Abraham, Paul Griffiths, and audiences at the American Academy of Religion and the University of Notre Dame for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Trinitarian doctrine, the Holy Spirit is united with Christ. And so, if on the cross the mind of Christ is united with all human psyches, then through this union the Holy Spirit is united with them as well. But pursuing a suggestion of this sort requires a book-length project. It is enough for this paper to have shown one way of understanding the cry of dereliction and the suffering that powers its expression.

ON PAIN AND THE PRIVATION THEORY OF EVIL

IRIT SAMET

King's College London

Abstract. The paper argues that pain is not a good counter-example to the privation theory of evil. Objectors to the privation thesis see pain as too real to be accounted for in privative terms. However, the properties for which pain is intuitively thought of as real, i.e. its localised nature, intensity, and quality (prickly, throbbing, etc.) are features of the senso-somatic aspect of pain. This is a problem for the objectors because, as findings of modern science clearly demonstrate, the senso-somatic aspect of pain is neurologically and clinically separate from the emotional-psychological aspect of suffering. The intuition that what seems so real in pain is also the source of pain's negative value thus falls apart. As far as the affective aspect of pain, i.e. 'painfulness' is concerned, it cannot refute the privation thesis either. For even if this is indeed the source of pain's badness, the affective aspect is best accounted for in privative terms of loss and negation. The same holds for the effect of pain on the aching person.

INTRODUCTION

> 'Just as there is no target set up for misses, so there is no nature of evil in the universe either'. (Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 27)

Philosophers since Plato have been making a striking claim about evil: evil, they said, is essentially devoid of being, an absence of good. This seemingly absurd statement became the standard conclusion of rationalistic investigations into the ontology of evil. The difference between the theories lay mainly in the way they arrived at the conclusion that evil is privation, and in the metaphysical framework they worked

with; about the ontological last line they were unanimous: evil has no independent being.

The concept of evil as privation implies that like silence and darkness, evil does not have an independent content, or definition, or existence – for all this it is dependent on the good. But in difference with the 'absence of sound' which is silence, and the 'non presence of light' which is darkness, 'badness' is a lack of what *ought* to be. It is, in other words, a privation of the normative. Such a view of evil is an inevitable result of the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics in which goodness is identified with being. But the privation thesis has also become a cornerstone in the philosophical engagement with the question of theodicy.

Very early on, we find Augustine using the idea of 'evil as privation' to conceptually isolate what we experience as evil from the idea of God, both as the Creator of all things and as the One who sustains them through constant affirmation. If evil is not a substance, it was not created, and the Manichean urge to stipulate a competitive evil deity is nipped in the bud. But an instinctual objection immediately arises: if 'being' is identified with 'goodness', why do we keep on coming across what seem like clearly bad states of affairs? In his answer to the objectors Augustine develops what has become known as 'the universality thesis': every thing is good inasmuch as it has being, and bad to the extent to which it lacks being; in his words:

> 'what is evil[?]… nothing else than corruption, either of the measure, or the form, or the order, that belong to nature. Nature therefore which has been corrupted, is called evil;… but even when corrupt, so far as it is nature it is good, so far as it is corrupted it is evil'.[1]

This paper does not offer a defence of the privation thesis. Instead, I propose to examine the objectors' favourite concrete counter-example: pain. Isn't it obvious, they ask, that pain is both evil and real? Conceptually, pain is situated in a unique crossroad between the discourses of natural science and morality, a fact which turns the ontological analysis into a particularly tricky business. But I shall argue that if we carefully analyse

[1] Augustine, 'On the Nature of the Good' in P. Schaff, ed. *A Select Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: A New Series* (Oxford, Buffalo: Parker & Co., The Christian literature company, 1886) chapter 17. For a modern Platonic concept of a supreme transcendent good, and the asymmetrical relationship between good and evil that it implies see R.M. Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 102-4.

the way in which pain is said to be bad in light of the findings of modern science, we will find that we can apply Augustine's 'universality thesis' to it: in as much as pain is real it is not bad, and in as much as pain is bad it is best accounted for in privative terms of negation.

THE PRIVATION THESIS

The relationship between 'bad' and 'good' can be depicted in one of three ways: contrast, negation, or privation. If the relationship is one of *contrast*, everything is either bad or good. Contrasting properties are distinguished from contrary properties X and Y, in that X and Y cannot be properties of the same item, but it is not the case that each item which can in principle be X or Y will indeed be either X or Y. Thus 'being red all over' and 'being blue all over' cannot be properties of the same item, but a coloured item need not be either blue or red; it can be yellow. If taken as contrasts, however, the properties 'bad' and 'good' are symmetrical and exhaustive; that is, in the relevant categories, items are either good or bad, [good] = [¬bad] and [¬good] = [bad].

If bad is a *negation* of good, this symmetry between the properties breaks down, as the good is not a negation of the bad. Here, badness is seen as a mere lack of goodness, parallel to the way in which darkness is defined as an absence of light. It is asymmetrical because light is not understood as a lack of darkness. As the example of darkness and light demonstrates, it is not the case that each object or state of affairs necessarily exhibits one of the two negating properties. But if [being illuminated] *can* in principle apply to an object, then either it or its negation must obtain (unlike asking whether my craving for ice cream is illuminated or dark, which is a categorical mistake). In difference to contrasts, though, [¬bad] ≠ [good], even though [bad] = [¬good].

As a result, if the relationship between good and evil are put in terms of privation, then the relationship between good and bad is a-symmetrical. The good has precedence over the bad, because bad is a mere privation of good. To say of a state of affairs that it is bad, is to say that something which *ought* to have been there is lacking. Unlike silence or inactivity, badness is set against the normative; hence the relation is that of privation (rather than mere contrast or negation). Thus, anosmia is a privation of the sense of smell, and stupidity the absence of wisdom, but that is because, ideally, a person would possess

both wisdom and a sense of smell.[2] From an ontological point of view the bad will therefore be accounted for as some shortage/loss/lack of good that ought to exist. From an epistemological point of view, it will be impossible to understand the bad before we know the good.

It has been argued by many that all the elaborate theoretical edifice of the privation thesis crumbles in the face of one all-familiar experience: pain. Indeed, when asked about the intuitive appeal of the metaphysics of evil as privation, many would mention 'pain' as the first counter-example that comes to mind.[3] For there is something in the quality of pain that makes it look both obviously evil and undoubtedly real. The strong sense of reality most likely comes from the way in which pain is embedded in the body. Pain can be throbbing, prickling or burning; like a physical object, it has a location in the body, measurable intensity, and time – all so different from the hole in the bagel.

A number of writers tried to tackle the challenge of pain by showing that it is a privation of a specific X: some suggest that X is 'pleasure', others that it is 'well-being', 'health' or 'normal functioning'. None of these accounts is really satisfactory.[4] But not all is lost for the privation theory. If pain is to prove that evil can be accounted for independently of the good, it must first be defined more clearly; and that is a surprisingly tricky task. Perhaps the simplest definition of pain would describe it as a 'sensation that hurts'. This crude definition already reveals a baffling duality between a somatic aspect and a mental aspect of 'how it feels'. Recent findings on the way it is processed and experienced demonstrate that this duality in pain is far more complicated than in other sensations

[2] Here is how Aquinas puts it: '[E]vil imports the absence of good. But not every absence of good is evil. For absence of good can be taken in a privative and in a negative sense. Absence of good, taken negatively, is not evil; otherwise, it would follow that what does not exist is evil, and also that everything would be evil, through not having the good belonging to something else; for instance, a man would be evil who had not the swiftness of the roe, or the strength of a lion. But the absence of good, taken in a privative sense, is an evil; as, for instance, the privation of sight is called blindness' (T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1912-36), I q.48, Argument 3, Answer).

[3] See for example T. Calder, 'Is the privation theory of evil dead?', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 44 (2007), 371, p. 373.

[4] As persuasively shown by Ibid., 'The absence of pleasure, in itself, is not pain, although it may be the cause of pain' (p.373) and G.S. Kane, 'Evil and Privation', *Int J Phil Rel*, 11 (1980), 43, 'pain seems clearly to be more than merely the absence of its contrary opposite… when pain occurs in the body, there is something new and different in a person's experience which is not present when the body has simply lost feeling' (p. 49).

such as taste and sight. This peculiar relationship between the sensational and the emotive aspects of pain must be taken into account when we try to establish the source of pain's negative value. But once we have done that, we will see that the badness of pain is most successfully represented in negative terms of privation and loss.

THE SOMATIC ASPECT

Let us start then with the somatic element. By now, neuroscientists are pretty clear about the neurophysiologic aspects of pain processing.[5] Some 100 years after it was offered by Head and Holmes, researchers still hold to the basic idea that our pain sensory system is comprised of two subsystems: one is the sensory discriminative system, which works out the noxious stimuli's location, intensity, duration and kind (prickling, throbbing, burning etc.); the other is the 'affective-motivational' system which supports the unpleasantness aspect of the pain sensation.[6]
The two subsystems are served by different neurons (A-δ fibres, and C fibres respectively), with the effect that the sensory system transmits the first fast pain, and the affective system kicks in later and continues to fire even after the nerve endings are no longer stimulated. Although the A-δ fibres and C fibres pathways do interact (more than, say, the colour and distance pathways in the vision system), they eventually project into different areas in the brain: the fast pain information is processed by the somatosensory cortex which then produces data on the intensity, location and nature of pain, and the slow pain information arrives at the frontal lobe which handles the emotional reaction of hurt.[7]

The involvement of two quasi separate subsystems accounts for one of the most fascinating and baffling features of pain processing: the possibility of dissociation between the qualitative aspects of the experience (aching), and its quantitative ones (duration, intensity, etc.). We have, for example, a vast body of empirical datum which demonstrates how perception of the intensity of pain is in fact independent of its unpleasantness. Thus, patients who took morphine or suffered lesions to

[5] K. Sufka, 'Sensations and Pain Processes', *Philosophical Psychology*, 13 (2000), 299, p. 302.
[6] Ibid., p. 302.
[7] The structure is of course much more complicated than this embarrassingly simplistic description. For a more detailed, but user-friendly description, see for example: S. Horn and M. Munafò, *Pain: Theory, Research, and Intervention* (Buckingham: Health Psychology, Open University Press, 1997), chapter 2 and the sources cited there.

certain pain-processing areas in the brain can localise their pain, register its intensity and note its kind (probing, burning etc.), and all that without experiencing the slightest anguish.

More unfortunate are the Parkinson's patients who can often feel the agony of pain without being able to localise it in their body.[8] In a laboratory experiment, researchers managed to use hypnosis in order to change the subject's perception of the obnoxiousness of hot water, without thereby changing the subject's estimation of the intensity of the heat. PET scans showed that such changes in the unpleasantness were accompanied by activity in the anterior cingulated cortex- the area that is responsible for the processing of the 'painful' feeling, while the other pain-processing areas remained quiet.[9] With other sensations such division is hard even to conceptualise: it makes no sense to say that one perceives the tonal difference between different notes, and yet fails to experience the hearing of these notes. It is only with pain that a distinction between affect and sensation is possible.[10]

Let us go back to the privation thesis. It seems that the embodiment of pain (e.g. its localised nature or the physical way in which we describe its qualities) is the main reason why it is immediately thought of as a bad aspect of the world which is too real to be defined in privative terms. But now we see that with pain the analytical distinction between the sensory-detecting component and the psychological-emotional component of hurting is not merely conceptual – it is wired into the experience itself. And the 'realness' of pain, i.e. its locality and intensity, is obviously anchored in the somatic aspect. This is a big problem for the intuition that pain is a powerful counter-example to the privation thesis. Because as far as the somatic aspect is concerned, pain is a *good* thing, as its contribution to the ability to detect harm to body tissue is essential for the wellbeing of animals. Statistics shows that congenital or acquired

[8] See the sources cited in V. Grayhardcastle, 'When pain is not', *The Journal of Philosophy* 94 (1997), 381, pp. 392-3.

[9] Pierre Rainville, Gary H. Duncan, Donald D. Price, Benoît Carrier, M. Catherine Bushnell, 'Pain Affect Encoded in Human Anterior Cingulate But Not Somatosensory Cortex', *Science* 277 (1997), pp. 968 - 971.

[10] Note that this distinction is different from the distinction which philosophers make between 'Qualia' and sense data - what we called 'quantitative' aspects of pain comprise of both sense data *and* qualia; for example, the question whether a stimulus to nerve ends is prickling or burning can be answered from a purely objective point of view of the stimuli, but also from the subjective perspective of 'how does it feel'.

conditions which inhibit the sensation of pain (analgesia) are likely to shorten the patients' lives.[11] The sense of pain functions both as an alarm and as a powerful motivation to care for the body.[12] It is therefore clear that the purely sensory element of pain cannot be the source of pain's evil.[13] In as much as it has any normative significance, it is intrinsically good. The negative value of pain must be rooted in a different aspect of the phenomenon.

THE AFFECTIVE ASPECT

If the somatic aspect of pain is axiologically neutral (or positive), the best candidate for being the source of pain's negative value is the affective element, i.e. hurting or painfulness. Accounting for pain's badness in this way largely waters down the power of the original intuition that prompted pain as a prime counter-example to the privation thesis. For hurt cannot be located in the brain in the same fashion as pain can be located in a finger. Even the most ardent neuroscientists will be careful to stress that the great amount of data we have about the relation between (mainly cortical) activity in the brain and subjective unpleasantness still cannot prove that the psychological reaction to noxious stimuli can be *reduced* to the firing of neurons in the brain.[14] At the most, one can argue that the feeling of suffering *supervenes* on the activity in the relevant brain areas. But still, isn't the feeling of painfulness really there in your psyche?

---

[11] Even if such patients can be taught to pay careful attention to possible lesions on their skin, damage to internal body parts can be left unattended until it is too late. See for example John J. Haddad, 'On the Enigma of Pain and Hyperalgesia: A Molecular Perspective', *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*, 353 (2007), pp. 217-224.

[12] The way in which soldiers and athletes can sometimes function normally following a grievous injury without feeling any pain for a long time, does not show that we could do without pain; far from it. The reports on postponed pain reaction only attest to the sophistication of the pain mechanism. In times of extreme stress, when animals must fight or flee an enemy, they are better off if they can do so without the overwhelming effect of pain, even if that means that the damage to the limb is increased due to delayed care. When the injured eventually finds sanctuary, be it in the first-aid post or the showers, the sense of pain will kick in forcefully. Grayhardcastle, p. 407.

[13] R. Melzack, one of the fathers of the revolutionary 'gate theory' of pain, takes a similar stance: 'If… noxious input fails to evoke negative effect and aversive drive… the experience cannot be called pain.' R. Melzack, *The Puzzle of Pain* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[14] K. Sufka, 'Sensations and Pain Processes', *Philosophical Psychology*, 13 (2000), 299, p. 307.

Maybe. But the anti-privationists will also have to show why the badness of suffering does not lend itself to analysis in terms of privation. They will find it hard to do so. There are two main ways of analysing the normative significance of suffering, I will call them the 'naturalist' and the 'Kantian'. Significantly, both are expounded by their proponent in basically negative terms. The naturalist maintains that pain has a very unique role in the axiological discourse, as it is the point where the natural and the normative unite. Thus, according to Nagel, 'pains … provide at least agent-relative reasons for … avoidance, reasons that can be affirmed from an objective standpoint'.[15] The normative meaning of pain lies in the way it can *in itself* give us a reason to stop it (by taking pain killers, act to release the POW, make a donation to Oxfam, etc.).

The Kantian must disagree: for her, the normative is always built on consciousness, and therefore pain, like any natural phenomena, cannot *by itself* be normative. Being in pain means having a very strong inclination to put an end to the present state of affairs, and its normative significance lies in 'your perception that you have a reason to change your condition'.[16] The painfulness of pain is nature's way of ensuring that we are strongly inclined to take care of ourselves, but it is the harm (to the self or to others) and not the painfulness which gives us a reason to act. In arguing that pain has a negative value because of the way we want to break away from the sensation, one is not at all committed to a subjective view of pain (i.e., to the view that the normative value of pain is in the mind and not in the world). As Korsgaard explains, the reasons which pain gives rise to are derived from our shared humanity, and therefore they apply to your pain as much as to mine.[17]

For our purposes, it is important to note how despite deep differences in respect to the function of pain in the axiological scheme, both the naturalist and the Kantian account for the evil of pain in privative terms: painfulness is conceived as a condition which one wants to *put an end* to, as a space to *escape* from, a sensation whose significance lies in its *undesirability*. It seems therefore that if pain is defined as a hurting bodily

[15] T. Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 156-8.

[16] C.M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 146, therefore, pain which one does not want to avoid is not bad (p. 154); A. Swenson, 'Pain's Evils', *Utilitas*, 21 (2009), 197, p. 207.

[17] See also E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), who talks of pain as lacking a content of its own, a 'sheer aversiveness' (p. 52).

sensation the intuitive appeal of the counter-example is largely lost: the somatic aspect which makes it so irresistibly real cannot be the locus of pain's badness, and the way in which the affective aspect confers negative value on pain is best accounted for in privative terms of breaking away and ending.

PAIN AS ACCESS

But maybe the essence of pain can be described in a different way that more successfully grounds the original intuition about the realness of pain? In his masterful study of the ontology of evil, Adi Ophir argues that pain is not an independent bodily sensation, but rather an overload of other sensations. Thus, he suggests that pain is 'a sensation whose amplified presence overflows so as to make it unbearable, while the person who is present (to it) avoids, or is prevented from, discarding it'.[18] The definition alludes to the way in which sensations can turn into pain when they become excessive, i.e. over present. Thus, for example, too much touch can be experienced as a blow, harassment or 'Chinese torture'. Moreover, it is in the nature of these excesses that their presence to the sufferer is further augmented by her inability to make them disappear.[19] If pain is indeed an excess of X (x=sensation), then it is essentially an overload of reality and the exact opposite of privation.

Alas, his innovative account of pain as over-presence of other sensations does not save Ophir from slipping into the same trap as the more conventional definition. For his explanation of the *badness* of pain resorts to privative terminology of passivity and helplessness: '*inability* to get away from an overflowing sensation' (6.000); 'a desire to *break off*' (6.030); In other places Ophir offers an explicitly privative explanation of suffering as appearing as 'the *gap* between the unbearable [i.e., the sensation] and the impossible [i.e., the act needed in order to make it tolerable]' (6.400). It seems that when it comes to describing the badness of pain, the privation terms are unavoidable. Sensation in itself is axiologically neutral, and having more of it cannot change this. The essence of its transformation into value-laden phenomena, i.e., when pain becomes suffering, is best expressed in negative terms as the victim's inability to end it.

[18] A. Ophir, *Speaking Evil: Towards an Ontology of Morals* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved & Van Leer institute, 2000), Sec. 6.0.

[19] Ibid. 6.010.

But perhaps the account of pain's badness as 'inability to stop or escape it' is not really a definition in negative terms? In his 'Time and the Other' Emanuel Levinas argues that '[P]hysical suffering… in all its degrees entails the impossibility of detaching oneself from the instance of existence. It is the very irremissibility of being'.[20] Pain is *sui generis*, he says, in that it is defined by the impossibility of fleeing or avoiding the situation, but in that it exemplifies the 'impossibility of nothingness' (p. 40). If what makes pain bad is the way you want it not to exist but cannot do so (for otherwise you wouldn't be in pain), it is a negation of the possibility not to be ([pain] = ¬ ¬ [presence]).

Yet, the logic of the paradox here is flawed: [me wanting to end the state of pain] and [me not being able to do so] are two separate states that cannot negate each other, and my *perceptions* of these two states are also analytically separate. Think of a young child who has not yet developed an insight of himself as a person; he can still experience pain as something that he craves would stop, even while he cannot think of himself as being unable to stop it.

A similar view seems to underlie Jean Améry's observation that 'nowhere else in the world did reality have as much effective power as in the camp, nowhere else was reality so real'.[21] In the insightful and moving report of his experience in the Gestapo's torture chambers, Améry claims that physical pain has an exceptional power to immerse the victim in reality: 'Whoever is overcome by pain through torture experiences his body as never before. In self negation, his flesh becomes a total reality… the tortured person is only a body, and nothing besides that' (p. 33). But if we look carefully at what Améry has in mind when he talks about 'reality' here, we will see that he is using the term in a very different sense from that used by the privation thesis.

The question that interests Améry is not the metaphysics of being (Heidegger is mockingly referred to as 'the magus from the Alemannic regions'), but rather the effect which extreme conditions of misery have over the intellect. He finds that the severe pain of torture, or the prolonged anguish of the inmates of concentration camps, have a devastating effect on the power of the intellect to raise us above mere physical existence: 'in no other place did the attempt to transcend it [i.e. reality] prove so

[20] E. Lévinas and S. Hand, *The Levinas Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 39.

[21] J. Améry, *At The Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 19.

hopeless and so shoddy' (p. 19). The 'reality' he talks about is the physical, embodied existence to which the subject is locked by pain.

This is of course a much more limited sense of 'reality' than the abstract 'being' which the metaphysics of evil refers to. Moreover, Améry's depiction of the evil particular to excruciating pain is patently privative: the evil of extreme anguish, he says, lies in the way it prevents the sufferer from realising his humanity. Like a horrific mirror image of his torturer, the victim is unable to elevate himself to the loftier forms of existence where his humanity can be expressed in full.[22] And that takes us to another way in which pain can be thought to pose a serious problem for the privation theory, namely, its effect.

THE EFFECT

A person, or a limb, in pain is dramatically different from its healthy form. When strong enough, pain can change the sufferer beyond recognition, as it takes hold of her entire body and soul. How can the driving force behind such a momentous change be devoid of being? In the background lurks a more general question about the nature of evil. In the opening question of his treatise *On Evil* Aquinas asks 'whether evil is something'. The intuition that evil is indeed real is put in a straightforward manner in the first objection: 'Everything created is something. But evil is something created ... therefore evil is something'.[23] Evil, the objection goes on, even has its own proper activity – it corrupts. And corruption is a change, a movement from one state to another, a transformation that is as natural as creation. Can it be that such a potent agent is devoid of reality?

Yes, says Aquinas. He begins by drawing a basic distinction between the notions of 'evil simply' and 'evil in some respect'. When we say of X that it is bad, what we really say is that some good aspect that pertains to it by its nature is missing. So 'X is bad' can mean 'X is bad in some way'; what it cannot mean is 'X is bad *simpliciter*'. The notion of evil *simpliciter* can never be an attribute of X because at the moment that X crosses the line from 'having some bad aspects' to 'being wholly bad' it disintegrates

[22] For a privative account of torture as a violation of the sacred see Adams, pp. 107-114. A similar theme of the biblical transgression as a violation of the bond between God and man is identified by P. Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon paperback Ariadne, Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 50-54.

[23] Aquinas Q1, A1, obj. 1.

and ceases to be X.[24] Thus, a bad washing machine can leave some stains on garments, fail to drain the water properly, leave clothes with too many creases, etc. But if the machine does not do any cleaning because it does not take in water, or has no receptacle for laundry or container for soap, it is not a 'bad washing machine'; rather, it is not a washing machine at all. Sometimes we have a word for the item in the new stage, such as 'wreck' or 'corpse', for example, but not always. Either way, when the bad aspects of an item take over completely, it ceases to exist as that item. This works for pain as well. Taken *simpliciter*, say for the sake of laboratory experiment on pain killers, a good pain is that which is really hurting; rather more chilling examples would be the pains that the torturer or the sadist seek to induce – when pain is sought for its own sake, the more anguish the better.

But the reason why pain is seen as a potential counter example to the privation theory is not as *per se* but rather as relational to the limb or the body it is 'in'. Can we say that as the agent of the change that is brought about on the aching body, a movement from one state to another, pain must be seen as an independent being? No, says Aquinas:

> [T]hat which is evil, if it is evil simply, i.e. in itself, so corrupts or actively and effectively makes the thing corrupt not by acting but by dis-acting, i.e. by failing to act by reason of a deficiency of active power, as for example defective seed generates defectively and produces a monstrosity, which is a corruption of the natural order.[25]

If we look at what happens with Y which has gone through a process of corruption, we see that it is actually a *loss* of *good* states. Ontologically, the change brought about by evil is akin to a ball rolling down the hill, in that there is no need for an active agent to push the ball. Epistemologically, the change can only be understood on the background of the *proper* state

[24] In Augustine's words: 'No nature, therefore, as far as it is nature, is evil; but to each nature there is no evil except to be diminished in respect of good. But if by being diminished it should be consumed so that there is no good, no nature would be left.' St. Augustine, 'On the Nature of Good' in P. Schaff, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), chapter 17.

[25] Q1, A1, Rep. 8. For the way his ontology of privation informs his analysis of moral wrongdoing and vice see J. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Bd. 52, Brill, Leiden: Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 1996), pp. 319-34, and N. Kretzman and E. Stump, 'Being and Goodness' in S. MacDonald, ed. *Being and Goodness: The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 103-6.

of the affected Y. As the change consists only of a loss of this proprietary, and has no independent content.

We tend indeed to talk about an X (say risky mortgage practices), as 'bad' when it induces a process of deterioration in another entity (the credit market). But the corruption itself always comes down to a *failure* to act or function well. An under-regulated market gradually ceases to function according to its proper action, and the process is best described as a (gradual or acute) *diminution* in the goods which it purportedly holds for the players. And this process cannot be accounted for without relying on the *goods* which a fully-functioning free market is supposed to produce.

The same holds for pain. If we try to analyse physical pain from the point of view of the *effect* it has over the victim, we see that far from being a counterexample to the privation thesis, it is actually a powerful expression of the rationalist tenets on which the thesis is based. This is because what is lost to those in severe pain is the logos. In her masterful 'The Body in Pain', Elaine Scarry offers a deep and systematic study of the way in which torture works to extinguish the building blocks of rational thought . Much of what she writes about the effects of manmade pain on the psyche is applicable to natural pain as well.

'Physical pain always mimes death' says Scarry (p. 31). For pain turns the sufferer's attention to an ever existing possibility for ending it: death. Death has a way of 'announcing itself in suffering', and thus foreshadow the ultimate extinction of knowledge and experience.[26] But in contrast with the total negation which is death, pain implies two specific losses: that of the unity between body and psyche, and that of words.

Pain dismantles the unity between body and soul when the body of the sufferer becomes the tool with which extreme anguish is brought about. The horrific experience of one's own body turning into an enemy is exceptionally salient in torture. But people with very painful illness also feel a sharp sense of betrayal on the part of their body. This is an effect that is unique to pain, but it is best described in terms of destruction and loss. And so, the evil of pain can only be understood on a background of the good – the integrity of body and soul – of which it is a privation.

A different, and perhaps deeper loss wrought by pain is that of the logos. Great physical pain tends to efface the content of consciousness.

[26] See also Lévinas and Hand, p. 40. See also Améry on 'the equation Body = Pain = Death' (p. 34).

In the depth of misery, physical pain erases all the subjects of human cognizance, leaving only the consciousness of the aching body: 'Frail in the face of violence, yelling out in pain, awaiting no help… the tortured person is only a body, and nothing else besides that.'[27] The destruction of consciousness wrecked by pain is most powerfully manifested in the gradual annihilation of language. First, pain becomes the dominant subject of language, as complaint takes over other forms of speech. But then (or if the pain is overwhelming, right at the start) coherent sentences and words give way to pre-lingual groans and cries.

Pain itself is stubbornly resistant to verbal expression,[28] and when it takes hold of the entire space of consciousness it drives language away and the sufferer regresses to a pre-lingual stage. As language collapses under the immense pressure of pain so does the entire complex content of the mature psyche. When the victim 'sees stars' she cannot see her loved ones, the political ideals in which she believed, the places she belongs to or the personal history that gives meaning and context to her life.[29] From the point of view of its effects pain is therefore a powerful expression of the privation thesis, as it comes down to a loss of reason and humanity.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to explore the hunch that pain is an 'evil in the flesh' and is therefore a 'real bad' that refutes the privation analysis of evil. It turns out that this intuition cannot survive a conceptual analysis that takes into account the findings of modern science. For these show us that the two components of the phenomenon of pain, the somatic and the affective, are separate not only analytically but also physically and psychologically. And so, while the anguish of pain is indeed generally thought to be bad, those features of pain that make people think that it is too real to be privative are rooted in the bodily sensation of pain. But pain as a bodily sensation is not bad at all, it is essential for the proper functioning of the

[27] Améry, p. 33; see also Korsgaard, p. 153, and Swenson, p. 208.

[28] As Virginia Woolf noted: 'English which can express the thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear has no words for the shiver or the headache.' V. Woolf, *On Being Ill* (Ashfield, Mass.: Paris Press, 2002).

[29] This is why the 'betrayal' under torture is nothing of the kind – one cannot betray what one cannot possibly feel loyal to. The purpose of the interrogation that always accompanies torture is first and foremost the affirmation of the world-destroying effect of pain, and thus of the absolute power of the regime (Scarry, pp. 29-38).

creature in which it occurs. The realness of pain and its negative value thus belong with different independent aspects of it.

The objectors are left with two other aspects of pain that can potentially refute the privation thesis: the condition of suffering, and pain's effect on the painful body and limb. But even if the badness of these aspects of pain is left undisputed, both these aspects are best described in negative terms of avoidance and lack: painfulness is a condition you want to put an end to, run away from, stop. The effects of pain are similarly rendered in privative terms, as a change that is essentially a destruction: of the body-soul integrity, and of the consciousness of anything besides the pain. Looked at from that angle, pain is actually a good example an analysis of evil in terms of privation. For as argued by Augustine, what is real in pain, i.e. its embodiment, is not the source of its negative value, and what is bad in pain is best understood as escape, loss and lack.[30]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Merrihew. *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Aertsen, Jan. *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Bd. 52, Brill, Leiden: Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 1996)

Améry, Jean. *At The Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980)

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1912-36)

Augustine. 'On the Nature of Good' in P. Schaff, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887)

Augustine. 'On the Nature of the Good' in P. Schaff, ed. *A Select Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: A New Series* (Oxford, Buffalo: Parker & Co., The Christian Literature Company, 1886)

Calder, Todd. 'Is the privation theory of evil dead?', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 44 (2007), 371

Hardcastle, Valerie Gray. 'When Pain is Not', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 94 (1997), 381 Horn, Sandra & Marcus Munafò. *Pain: Theory, Research, and Intervention* (Buckingham: Health Psychology, Open University Press, 1997)

Kane, G. Stanley. 'Evil and Privation', *Int J Phil Rel*, 11 (1980), 43

[30] I am grateful to Bill Edmundson, Moshe Halbertal, Dennis Patterson and Christian Schemmel and Leif Wenar for their helpful comments, and to the EUI in Florence for a generous Max Weber fellowship.

Korsgaard, Christine Marion. *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
Kretzman, Norman & Eleonore Stump. 'Being and Goodness' in S. MacDonald, ed. *Being and Goodness: The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)
Lévinas, Emmanuel & Sean Hand. *The Levinas Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989)
Melzack, Ronald. *The Puzzle of Pain* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)
Nagel, Thomas. *The View From Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)
Ophir, Adi. *Speaking Evil: Towards an Ontology of Morals* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved & Van Leer institute, 2000)
Ricœur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon paperback Ariadne, Beacon Press, 1969)
Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)
Sufka, Kenneth. 'Sensations and Pain Processes', *Philosophical Psychology*, 13 (2000), 299
Swenson, Adam. 'Pain's Evils', *Utilitas*, 21 (2009), 197
Woolf, Virginia. *On Being Ill* (Ashfield, Mass.: Paris Press, 2002)

OPENNESS, PRIVILEGE, AND OMNISCIENCE

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES

King's College London

Abstract. According to egalitarians, there is no privileged now-possible history. Egalitarianism seems to provide an attractive way to reconcile openness and omniscience, but, I argue, it does not.

Let us say it is *ahistorically possible* that *p* if and only if it could have been the case that *p*. And let us say that it is *historically possible* that *p* if and only if it could still be the case that *p* (could even now be the case that *p*). My living to 70 is (apparently) a historical possibility, but my dying before 20 is not. Let us say it is *historically contingent* that *p* just in case it is historically possible that *p,* and historically possible that it's not the case that *p*. In what follows, unless I explicitly say otherwise, possibility, contingency, and necessity should always be understood historically.

I. AN ARGUMENT FOR THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF OPENNESS AND OMNISCIENCE

1. Suppose that for some proposition p, it's contingent whether p.
2. Then for some proposition p, it is only contingently true that p.
3. Where p is some proposition that is only contingently true, either God accepts that p, or it's not the case that God accepts that p.
4. If God accepts that p, and it's only contingently true that p, then God accepts p, and it's (still) possible that it's not the case that p.
5. If God accepts that p, and it's still possible that it's not the case that p, then it's (still) possible that: God accepts that p, even though it's not the case that p.

EUROPEAN JOURNAL FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 4/1 (SPRING 2012), PP. 35-64

6. If it's (still) possible that: God accepts that p, even though it's not the case that p, then it's (still) possible that: God is mistaken to accept that p.
7. If it's (still) possible that God is mistaken to accept that p, then it's not the case that God knows that p.
8. So (by (4) –(7)), if God accepts that p, and it's only contingently true that p, it's not the case that God knows that p.
9. If on the other hand it's not the case that God accepts that p, and it's only contingently true that p, then once again it's not the case that God knows that p (it can't be true that someone knows that p, if it's not even true that that someone accepts that p).
10. So (by (3), (8), and (9)) for some true contingent proposition p, it's not the case that God knows that p.
11. If for some true contingent proposition p, it's not the case that God knows that p, then it's not the case that there is an omniscient God.
12. So ((by (1) – (11)) if there are contingent propositions, there is no omniscient God: the existence of an open future precludes the existence of an omniscient God.

Elaborately formulated arguments have their virtues, but elaborateness of formulation can make it harder to see what the core of an argument is. So it may be helpful to reformulate (the gist of) the above argument as follows:

Say that an epistemic subject *risks error* with respect to a proposition when there is a (still) possible future in which it turns out that s/he is in error with respect to that proposition. It seems that no epistemic subject can know that *p* unless s/he accepts *p*, without thereby risking error with respect to *p*. But the only way that any epistemic subject can avoid risking error with respect to a contingent proposition, is by not accepting it. Hence for any contingent proposition *p*, nobody knows that *p*. Moreover, if there are contingent propositions, some of those propositions are contingent truths. So if there are contingent propositions, there are truths that no one knows. In which case no one knows everything, so no one is omniscient. If there is an open future, there isn't an omniscient God.

Where – if anywhere – does this argument break down?

William of Occam would say: at premiss (5). Whenever *p* is a contingent truth, it is true that

God accepts that *p*, and it's (still) possible that it's not the case that *p*.
and false that

It's (still) possible that: God accepts that *p*, although it's not the case that *p*.[1]

(5) is the principle which underwrites the inference from *God accepts that p and p is contingent* to *God risks error with respect to p*. So, by denying (5), Occam can insist that, in spite of the contingency of *p*, God accepts *p* without thereby incurring the risk of error with respect to *p*.

But how could God commit Himself to a proposition that is still, as it were, at risk of falsity, without thereby exposing Himself to the risk of error (with respect to that proposition)? I have argued elsewhere[2] that if (as Occam seems to suppose) we suppose that God and His judgments are in time, then (as Occam forthrightly admits) there is something deeply mysterious about the idea that God commits to propositions at risk of falsity, without thereby incurring the risk of error.If risk of error with respect to a proposition *p* (on the part of the accepter of *p*) and liability to falsity (on the part of the accepted proposition *p*) are a package deal, then it will be true that

> (A) If someone now accepts that *p*, and it's (still) possible that it's not the case that *p*, then it's possible that: that someone now accepts that *p*, even though it's not the case that *p*.

But it does not follow that:

> (B) If someone *will* accept *p*, and it's (still) possible that it's not the case that *p*, then it's (still) possible that: someone *will* accept that *p*, even though it's not the case that *p*.

Suppose that although Elizabeth will in fact exist, and know that she exists, her (future) existence is not (as of now) inevitable. On those assumptions:

> Elizabeth will accept that she existed, or exists, or will exist, and it's still possible that she never did and never will exist.

But (for Cartesian reasons) it is obviously false that:

> It's (still) possible that: Elizabeth will accept that she exists, even though she never did and never will exist.

To say that risk of error (on the part of the accepter of a proposition) and liability to falsity (on the part of the proposition accepted) go hand

[1] For more on Occam's take on premiss (5), see my "Ockham on An Argument Against God's Knowledge of Future Contingents", in A. Cirino and J. Reischl, eds., *A Pilgrimage Through the Franciscan Tradition* (Canterbury: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2008).

[2] See "Ockham on An Argument Against God's Knowledge of Future Contingents".

in hand is not to deny that it may be true of one and the same proposition *p* both that it's liable to falsity at an earlier time, and that its accepter (at a later time) is not (then) at risk of error with respect to that proposition. The proposition, *Elizabeth existed or exists or will exist* is right now at risk of falsity. But at no time will Elizabeth risk error by accepting it, since her acceptance of it implies its truth.

Now assuming that God and His judgments are in time, (5) is true as long as it's true that

> (5')If God now accepts that *p*, and it's still possible that it's not the case that *p*, then it's (still) possible that: God now accepts that *p*, even though it's not the case that *p*.

But according to Boethius, the eternal present or *nunc stans* ("permanent now") that God and His judgments inhabit is an "un-time". If it is, then (5) could be false, even if (5') is true, as long as it is not true that

> (5*)If God timelessly accepts that *p*, and it's still (i.e. now) possible that's it's not the case that *p*, then it's still (i.e. now) possible that: God timelessly accepts that *p*, even though it's not the case that *p*.

And why should (5*) be true – even assuming that liability to falsity on the part of the proposition accepted and risk of error on the part of the accepter of the proposition go hand in hand? Why couldn't it be that that proposition is now at risk of falsity, but God is not at risk of error with respect to that proposition "unwhen" He accepts it (inasmuch as that proposition is not "unthen" at risk of falsity)?

The moral I want to draw is that, if we want to resist the argument set out above by (conceding the first four premises and) challenging premiss (5), we shall have a harder time motivating that challenge if we assume that God and His knowledge are temporal, than if we assume that they are extratemporal.

Of course, "temporalists" about God and His knowledge can challenge one of the premises before (5), enabling them to block the argument, despite conceding the truth of (5). In what follows, I shall consider the most promising way of implementing this strategy.

II. OPENNESS, PRIVILEGE, AND TRUTH

It appears that there are many different (complete) ways the future might still go. Occam and many other philosophers who accept that things are

as they appear hold that of those many (complete) ways the future could still go, one is special, or "privileged". That is, they hold that among the many different (complete) ways the future might still go, there is (just) one of which it is true that *that* is the way things not only might still go, but will in fact go. (As I'll understand it) *there is a privileged future* is equivalent to *there are many still genuinely possible (complete) futures, and one of them is actual*.[3]

By *inclusivism*, I shall understand the view that:

> Just as the real includes not just the individuals and events that there are here, but also the individuals and events there are in any other place, so too the real includes not just the individuals and events that there are now, but also the individuals and events that there are at any other (past or future) time. Just as there really are (exclusively) "otherplacely" individuals and events, there really are (exclusively) "othertimely" individuals and events – future ones, as well as past ones. Reality "extends into" the future as well as the past.

What is the relation between inclusivism and the doctrine of privilege? It should be clear that inclusivism does not imply the existence of a privileged future, inasmuch as inclusivism is perfectly compatible with (indeed, some philosophers think, implies!) the claim that there is only one genuinely possible future. For reasons to be made explicit later, though, one would expect those who countenance a plurality of still possible futures, and accept inclusivism, to believe in a privileged future, which includes just those (future-located) individuals and events that are actually included in the real.

On the other hand, the doctrine of privilege does not evidently imply inclusivism. Even though many celebrated exclusivists have denied privilege (among them, C. D. Broad and Arthur Prior), the following view is not manifestly incoherent:

---

[3] A terminological note: the future is often understood as, so to speak, the venue in which things might go different ways, and will go some way or other. On that understanding of "future", the idea that there are many (complete) possible futures – that is, many different (maximal) venues in which things could go different ways, and will go some way or other – is bizarre. In what follows, though, I shall conform to the usage of many philosophical logicians, in using the term "future" to mean "way things will go", and "possible future" to mean "way things might (still) go". Thus, as I understand it *there is a privileged now-possible (complete) future* means *there is a privileged now-possible (complete) way things will go.*

> (However things might stand with individuals or events located (exclusively) in the past), there are no individuals or events located (exclusively) in the future. The real does not include anything located (exclusively) in the future; nevertheless, it is true both that there are many different ways things could still go, and (just) one way they will in fact go.

Someone might try to elaborate and motivate this view as follows:

> Suppose that a certain pair of (currently existing) human gametes *G* and *G'* could (still) combine, and that if they did combine, a particular human being, whom we may call Sara, would come into existence. Suppose also that *G* and *G'* will never in fact combine, and Sara will never in fact come into existence.

In that case, Sara's coming into existence is a now-possible state of affairs.

> But the fact that Sara could still come into existence does not imply that Sara is real (though non-actual), or that among the things there really are, are non-actual individuals. It is true that Sara could come to be, because there is a state of affairs, *Sara's coming to be*, which has the property of being still possible. That there is such a state of affairs, and that said state of affairs has the property of being (still) possible, do not jointly imply that there really is such an individual as Sara, or that there really are any *inactualia* (things that there actually aren't). If the state of affairs, *Sara's coming to be* were currently actualized, that would imply that Sara is among the things there really are. But a state of affairs can be real and be (still) possible, without being currently actualized. Now suppose that the gametes *G* and *G'* will in fact combine, and that Sara will in fact come to be. That implies that Sara is among the things that there really are *or will really be*, but it does not imply that Sara is among the things that there really are. More generally, it does not imply that any individuals located (exclusively) in the future are among the things there really are; it only implies that there really is (now) a state of affairs, *Sara's coming to be,* which state of affairs has the property of futurity (of going-to-be-actualized-ness). Even assuming there aren't really any individuals located (exclusively) in the future, we may still maintain that although both *Sara will come to be* and *Sara will never come to be* are (still) possible states of affairs, one of them is privileged with respect to the other, inasmuch as one of them not only could still come about, but will in fact come about. *Sara's coming to be* and *Sara's never coming to*

> *be* are "partial" ways the future might go. There are also "total" ways that the future might go. (A way the future might go is total just in case, if we knew that the future would go that way, we would know not just something, but everything about what will happen). Total ways that the future might go are (complete) possible futures. So we may hold that of all the complete possible futures there are, (just) one is privileged, in that it is the total way the future might go that it will in fact go – without supposing that any individuals (or any events) located exclusively in the future appear in the inventory of *realia*. So we can accept the doctrine of privilege, and reject inclusivism.

(My claim here is that the sort of "exclusivist privilegism" sketched here is a live option, and not that it is ultimately defensible. Perhaps the idea that an (unactualized) state of affairs can be real, even though the individual it "involves" is not, is ultimately unintelligible, however tempting that idea may be when we think about certain modal truths. Even if that is so, I think (a different sort of) exclusivist privilegism might still be true – one on which there are no exclusively othertimely individuals or events, because all individuals and events are necessary and thus current (even if they have "non-abstract" properties temporarily or contingently).[4] For reasons of brevity, I won't explore this sort of "Williamsonian" exclusivist privilegism further.)

The alternative to the doctrine of privilege is *egalitarianism*. Egalitarians think that no (complete) possible future is privileged with respect to the others. All the (complete) possible futures there are, are "equiactual" (or "equiunactual") as well as "equipossible" – either because (as Jonathan Edwards supposed) the actual future is the only possible one, or because there are many possible futures, none of which are actual. Egalitarians typically say they cannot make sense of the supposition that one (complete) possible future is, as it were, "already actual", assuming that alternative possible futures are still genuinely possible. As they see it, if there are many still possible futures, all of them are still possible (insofar as they could each still happen), and none of them is actual yet (insofar as none of them has actually happened yet).

Whether or not egalitarianism is true, it is surely a live option. One could devote an article – or indeed a book – to the defence of this claim, but I shall make do with the following: exclusivism is a live option. As philosophers from Augustine right through to Prior have averred, there

[4] See Timothy Williamson, "Bare Possibilia", *Erkenntnis*, 48 (1988).

is nothing obvious about the idea that the real includes individuals that do not exist and never have existed, or events that never took place, and are not taking place. Since exclusivism is not obviously incompatible with the doctrine of privilege, the defensibility of exclusivism does not obviously imply the defensibility of egalitarianism. Nevertheless, there is a very natural line of thought that leads from inclusivism to the rejection of egalitarianism, and no obviously natural line of thought that leads from exclusivism to the rejection of egalitarianism. Egalitarians hold that reality is neutral with respect to the future existence or otherwise of Sara. Well, maybe not completely neutral: reality might make either her existence or her non-existence more likely than the alternative. But egalitarians think that reality does not *settle* the question of the future existence or otherwise of Sara. How could they make this claim, if inclusivism were true? After all, if inclusivism is true, then perhaps reality includes a (future-located) Sara, thus settling the question of whether Sara will come into existence. If on the other hand exclusivism is true, then Sara is no more real than the daughter my wife and I would have had if the sperm cell from which our first daughter came had fertilized the egg cell from which our second daughter came. The daughter we would have had in the circumstances just described is permanently and inevitably a mere *possibile*, and the same cannot be said for Sara. But the fact remains that (for the standard exclusivist) Sara is possible, but unreal. And (for the exclusivist) the same goes for all individuals or events located (exclusively) in the future. So (by the exclusivist's lights) inasmuch as anything we might call "the future" is real, it is real only as actualisable-but-not-yet-actualized (sufficiently comprehensive) state of affairs. And – unless openness is an illusion – there are many actualisable-but-not-yet-actualized (sufficiently comprehensive) states of affairs. Why suppose that any one of those actualisable-but-not-yet-actualized and sufficiently comprehensive states of affairs deserves the name of *the* (complete) actual future? If we think of the future as analogous to the totality of things going on in a given "elsewhere" now – say, in the southern hemisphere – then it will seem obvious that there is a privileged future. For it seems obvious that there is some (maximal) bunch of the things going on in the southern hemisphere now, and of all the possible maximal bunches of things that might have been going on in the southern hemisphere now, one of them is privileged with respect to the others, in being the one and only (maximal) bunch of things that not only might have been going on there now, but is in fact going on

there now. But of course, the analogy drawn between othertimely and otherplacely events is part of an inclusivist way of thinking about the future: for the exclusivist, although there really are lots of things going on in the southern hemisphere now, there aren't really any things happening in the future. If the real does not include any of the diverse (exclusively future-located) individuals or events it might yet come to contain, why suppose that reality *must* include something which makes it true that, although the real might come to contain either these individuals and events or those individuals and events, it will in fact come to contain these ones, rather than those ones?[5]

Suppose that egalitarianism were true. What implications would that have for the relation between (historical) contingency and truth? Let us say that a proposition is (historically) contingent at a time just in case there is a (complete) then possible history in or according to which that proposition is true (then), and there is a (complete) then possible history in or according to which that proposition is not true (then). A proposition can be contingent (at a time) without being true (at that time). After all, if *in ten minutes time, you'll be having a cup of tea* is contingent (now), the same goes for *in ten minutes time, you won't be having a cup of tea.* And *in ten minutes time, you'll be having a cup of tea* and *in ten minutes time, you won't be having a cup of tea* can't both be true (now (or ever)). So a proposition can be contingent (now), without being true (now). On the other hand, a proposition cannot be contingently true (now), without being contingent (now), any more than a proposition can be contingently true (now), without being true (now). So, under what conditions will a proposition be not just contingent (at a time) but also contingently true (at that time)? The obvious answer is: if and only if it is true (then) in the *actual* then possible history, though not true (then) in all then possible histories. In other words, a proposition is contingently true at a time just in

[5] Here someone might object: *there is no (complete) way things will go* is obviously false. So *there is some (complete) way things will go* is obviously true. So there is an actual (complete) future, and an actual (complete) history. Given the (very plausible) assumption that there are many (still) possible histories, we may conclude that there is a privileged history. The egalitarian will reply that while things will go some (complete) way *or other*, there is no particular (complete) way things will go. (Compare: anti-molinists say that if you faced a certain moral dilemma, you would make some choice *or other*, but deny that there is a particular choice you would make, if you faced that dilemma. And a horse-promiser might say that although she promised you some horse *or other*, there's no particular horse she promised you.)

case it is true then in the privileged then possible history, but isn't true then in all then possible histories. Contingent truth is truth in the privileged history + untruth in some unprivileged (but still possible) history.

But egalitarians do not believe there is any such thing as the privileged history. So egalitarians don't believe there are any such things as (historically) contingent truths. Unless they are Edwardians, they will believe in (historically) contingent propositions, all of which are untruths.

III. EGALITARIANISM AND THE ARGUMENT FOR THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF OPENNESS AND OMNISCIENCE

It follows that egalitarians can take issue with our main argument for the incompatibility of openness with omniscience long before we get to premiss (5): they can say that (2) does not follow from (1), and is false, even if (1) is true. So egalitarians needn't challenge (5). Indeed, one would suspect that egalitarians would not want to challenge it (at least as long as (5) is understood in a straightforwardly "temporalist" way). As egalitarians see it, since no truths are (historically) contingent, all truths are (historically) necessary. So, for an egalitarian, *p and it is possible that q* will be true only if *p* is (historically) necessary (as well as true), and *q* is (historically) possible. If however, it is (historically) necessary that *p*, and it is (historically) possible that *q*, then it is (historically) possible that: both *p* and *q*. (Think about it this way: if *p* is true now in every now possible history, and *q* is true now in some now possible history, then *p & q* is true now in some now possible history (in all and only those now possible histories in which *q* is true.) Since egalitarians hold that

p and it's (historically) possible that q
implies
it's (historically) possible that: both *p* and *q*,
they hold that
God (now) accepts that p and it's (still) possible that it's not the case that p
implies
it's (still) possible that: God (now) accepts that p, even though it's not the case that p.

One would accordingly expect egalitarians to be happy with (5) (again, given a straightforwardly "temporalist" reading thereof). This means that, at least in one respect, egalitarians are better placed to block

the argument at issue than "temporalists" ("anti-boethians") about God who would block the argument by sticking at (5) (e.g., Alvin Plantinga). As we have seen, and as Occam concedes, it is difficult to understand how (5) could be false (on a straightforwardly temporalist reading), which makes (5) (straightforwardly read) hard to challenge. If the egalitarian doesn't need to make that challenge, so much the better for her.

So we now have on the table two strategies for blocking our main argument for the incompatibility of openness with omniscience. The first turns on challenging (5), and – if I am right – is difficult to motivate unless God is outside time. The second turns on the rejection of (2). It certainly does not depend on the supposition that God is extatemporal. This again might be thought to tell in its favour. There are various worries we might have about divine extratemporality. If we are attracted by presentism, we may be inclined to think that existing implies existing in the (temporal) present. If we are attracted by inclusivism, we may be inclined to think that existing implies existing at some (past, present, or future) time. Even if we are happy to countenance extratemporalia – say, because, like Quine or Lewis we think of numbers and pure sets as extratemporal – we may well worry about the idea of extratemporal beings that stand in causal relations to temporal ones (as an extratemporal God would have to). Even if we have no such worries, we may worry (as Norman Kretzmann once did) about whether an extratemporal being would really be in a position to know everything there is to know about a temporal world.[6]

So it might be thought that the egalitarian approach to blocking our argument is, at least in certain respects, preferable to approaches which turn on challenging (5), whether those approaches involve a Boethian or an anti-boethian conception of God's knowledge. In what follows, I shall try to ascertain how workable the egalitarian strategy for blocking our main argument is. My approach will be to consider in turn the three best-known versions of egalitarianism, and investigate to what extent they put us in a good position to block the main argument.

IV. PEIRCEAN EGALITARIANISM

If no proposition is both contingent and true, what should we say about the truth-value of a proposition at a time when it is contingent? (I put the

[6] Cf. Norman Kretzmann, "Omniscience and Immutability", in B. Brody, *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974).

point this way because a proposition may be (historically) contingent at one time, but not at another: on the assumption that your existence was not always inevitable, *you existed or you exist or you will exist was* once contingent, but is now (historically) necessary). Peircean egalitarians hold that (necessarily) when propositions are contingent, they are false. Assuming that *p* implies *q* just in case *p* could not be true, unless *q* were, this amounts to saying that just as *it is inevitable that p* implies *p*, *p* implies it is inevitable that *p*. So for, Peircean egalitarians, *p* means that – or at any rate "comes to" (necessarily has the same truth value as, is logically equivalent to) *it is inevitable that p*.[7]

From what Willard van Orman Quine would call "the logical point of view", Peircean egalitarianism has many attractions. Classical logic offers us a tidy package, which includes the law of non-contradiction (according to which *not: both p and it's not the case p* is true, for all *p*), the law of excluded middle (according to which *p or it's not the case that p* is true, for all *p*) and bivalence (according which *p* is true or false, for all *p*). Peircean egalitarians can accept the whole package, ending up with a simple, straightforward, and for the most part unsurprising logic. Perhaps the most obvious surprise is that pairs such as {*in ten years you'll be married, in ten years you won't be married*} turn out to be contraries but not contradictories. (For the Peircean, they are contraries, inasmuch at least one must be false, but they are not contradictories, inasmuch as they could both be false (will both be false, if it's contingent whether in ten years time, you'll be married).

Despite its logical tidiness, Peircean egalitarianism is severely problematic. Perhaps the most central problem is that *p* and *it is historically necessary* (*inevitable, settled*) *that p* do not in fact seem to be equivalent: *inevitably p* seems different from (and stronger than) *p*.

There are various ways in which we can bring this point out. Here's one: if *p* and *q* are logically equivalent, then no one who is sufficiently informed about logic, and sufficiently rational, can believe that *p* without believing that *q*. If for example, *that's a rabbit only if it is an animal* is logically equivalent to *if that's a rabbit, it's an animal*, then no one who knows enough logic (in this case, knows enough about the logic of conditionals), and is sufficiently rational, can believe the former, but not the latter. It seems as though this principle also holds for such

[7] For a discussion of Peircean egalitarianism, see A. Prior, "Time and Determinism", in his *Past, Present, and Future* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

propositional attitudes as hoping and fearing. If *that rabbit will feel much better tomorrow* is logically equivalent to the (more cumbersome) *it's not the case that it's not the case that that rabbit will feel much better tomorrow*, then no one who knows enough logic (in this case, knows enough about negation), and is sufficiently rational, can hope that that rabbit will feel much better tomorrow, without hoping that it's not the case that it's not the case that that rabbit will feel better tomorrow. To take another case, if *it's raining* is logically equivalent to *it's actually raining*, or *it's raining now*, then no one who is sufficiently informed about logic, and sufficiently rational, can fear that it's raining, but not fear that it's actually raining, or that it's raining now.

Now for Peircean egalitarians, *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p* (*it is inevitable that p, it is settled that p)* are logically equivalent. So it seems that Peirceans should accept that no one who is sufficiently informed about logic, and sufficiently rational, can fear that *p*, without fearing that it is inevitable that *p*. But this is very hard to believe. Surely, however much I knew about logic, I could entirely rationally fear that something will happen (because I think it could still happen, and I'd very much rather it didn't), even though I do *not* fear that it inevitably will happen (because I'm sure that it's not *inevitably* going to happen). I suspect that Peircean egalitarians themselves, whatever their official views on truth and inevitability, in fact sometimes find themselves in the position of hoping or fearing that *p*, without hoping or fearing that it is inevitable that *p*. (For example, if they think that there are free choices, and think that it cannot be inevitable that someone will freely choose *this*, then they will sometimes find themselves in the position of hoping or fearing that someone will freely choose *this*, without hoping or fearing that it is inevitable that someone will freely choose *this*). If my suspicions are well-founded, Peircean egalitarians themselves have propositional attitudes that, by their lights, they could not rationally have, if they were sufficiently well-informed logically.[8]

[8] John Burgess (in "The Unreal Future", *Theoria* 4 (1978)), and Prior (in "Time and Determinism") consider (but do not endorse) the worry that Perircean egalitarians cannot give a satisfactory account of propositional attitudes such as expecting, hoping, or fearing. In the latter piece, Prior discusses (but does not endorse) the idea that Peircean (egalitarian) tense logic is a mere fragment of Occamist (= privilegist)) tense logic, which contains a "strong future" (*it will inevitably be that*), but no "plain" or "weak" future" (*it will be that*). The points just raised concerning fearing and hoping suggest that there is indeed a "weak" future that Peircean egalitarians leave out of their tense logic.

A second argument for the non-equivalence of *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p* involves explicit reference to truth and falsity. Imagine the following bit of dialogue:

A: Just tell me what's going on, without beating around the bush. *Next year Jones will still be here* – true or false?
B: False.
A: Thank you. Last question: *next year Jones will be gone* – true or false?
B: ???

B would no doubt be puzzled about why A needed to ask the second question, given B's answer to the first one: if *next year Jones will still be here* is false, then *next year Jones will be gone* is true. For someone who takes *p* and *it is inevitable that p* to be equivalent, though, A's second question is a perfectly sensible one. Assume it's open whether Jones will be here next year. Then both *it is inevitable that next year Jones will be here* and *it is inevitable that next year Jones will be gone* are false. So, on the assumption that *p* and *it is inevitable that p* are (logically) equivalent, both *next year Jones will be here* and *next year Jones will be gone* are false. On the other hand, assume that it's inevitable that next year Jones will be gone. Then (whatever we assume about the equivalence or otherwise of *p* and *it is inevitable that p*), *next year Jones will be here* will be false, and *next year Jones will be gone* will be true. So, for Peircean egalitarians, B's second question is not otiose – which seems wrong.

Last argument for the non-equivalence of *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p*: something might be permitted in one system of laws, but not in another. For example, polygamy might be permitted in a system of laws *L*, and not in a system of laws *L'*. Let us call something that is permitted in a particular system of laws *L L*-legal, and something that is proscribed in a particular system of laws *L L-illegal.* If something is *L*-legal, or *L*-illegal, it is inevitably so. (The laws on polygamy might change someday, in such a way as to make polygamy legal; but, where *L* is the system of laws currently in force in England, it would still be true that polygamy is *L*-illegal, even after polygamy had been legalized). Imagine a society with a legal system *L** that proscribes what we might call "serial polygamy" – that is, a legal system which proscribes marrying more than one person over the course of a life (and not just marrying more than one person at a time). In this society it is true that:

It is inevitable that the number of persons you will (*L**-legally) marry is less than 2.

But (assuming you haven't yet married), it can perfectly well be false both that:

It is inevitable that the number of persons you will (L^*-legally) marry = 0.

and that

It is inevitable that the number of persons you will (L^*-legally) marry = 1.

For Peircean egalitarians, since *p* implies as well as being implied by *it is necessary that p*, *it is necessary that* is a "redundant" operator, like *indeed*. We can "subtract" it without making any difference to the truth-value of a statement. So Peirceans will have to say that, in the case under discussion it could be true that:

(i) The number of persons you will (L^*-legally) marry is less than 2.

and false both that

(ii) The number of persons you will (L^*-legally) marry = 1.

and that

(iii) The number of persons you will (L^*-legally) marry = 0.

But how can this be? If (i) is true, and (ii) and (iii) are false, then the following conditional is false:

(iv) If you'll (*L^*-legally)* marry fewer than two persons, either you'll (L^*-legally) marry one person, or you won't (L^*-legally) marry.

– and (iv) is surely true! What we want to say, intuitively, is that (iv) is true, although it would become false if in (iv) we uniformly replaced "you'll (L^*-legally marry)" by "you'll inevitably (L^*-legally) marry"; and Peircean egalitarianism leaves us no room to say that.

Summing up: if egalitarians say that *p* is (not just untrue, but) false when it's contingent whether *p*, inasmuch as *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p* are equivalent, they end up with a tidy logic, but not a few headaches. On the other hand, without a privileged future, it's hard to see how we can accept bivalence, without accepting the equivalence of *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p.* Absent a privileged future, whenever it is contingent whether *p*, *p* will be untrue. Assuming bivalence, if *p* is untrue, *p* is false. So if it's contingent whether *p*, it is false that *p*. Equally, if it's impossible that *p*, it is false that *p*. And of course, if it is necessary that *p*, it is true that *p*. So *p* is true if it's necessary that *p*, and false otherwise (since whatever isn't necessary, is either contingent or impossible) – in which case *p* and *it's necessary that p* are equivalent. Moral: egalitarians have a motivation for considering "non-classical" accounts of the relation between truth and inevitability – that is, accounts that give us bivalence (whether or not they also give up the classical principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle).

V. NON-CLASSICAL EGALITARIANISM

If the future is open, then there are different (still) possible (complete) histories "branching out" from the future, in which different things happen. So an egalitarian who shares the worries I have tried to raise about the equivalence of *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p* might naturally make the following suggestion:

> A proposition such as *you'll eat cake tonight* is true (now) if it is true (now) in every (still) possible history. It is false (now) if it is false (now) in every (still) possible history. And it is indeterminate (neither true nor false) (now) if it is true (now) in some but not all (still) possible histories.

If the egalitarian makes this (arguably, though not uncontroversially) Aristotelian move, she can say that *p* and *it is (historically) necessary that p* are not equivalent, inasmuch as *p* is indeterminate, and *it is (historically) necessary that p* is false, when *p* is true in only some still possible histories. *It is necessary that p* and *p* may still imply each other (if we say that *p* implies *q* just in case *p* cannot be true without *q* being true), but *p* and *it is necessary that p* won't "come to the same thing", in that they can have different truth values. So the suggestion just made allows the egalitarian to reject what (she takes to be) the myth of privilege, without having to accept equivalence and its discontents.

In fact, independently of the worries raised about equivalence, the suggestion under consideration might well attract egalitarians, because it is pleasingly symmetrical. For any egalitarian, *things will go this way* is untrue as long as things might still go a different way. So why not say, symmetrically, that *things will go this way* is unfalse, if things might still go this way? Unless we say that, we'll make it "easier" for *things will go this way* to be false, than for it be true. Now if we are already committed to the equivalence of *things will go this way* and *things will necessarily go this way*, there will be nothing surprising about the idea that it's "easier" for *things will go this way* to be false, than it is for it to be true: after all, it's "easier" for *things will necessarily go this way* to be false than it is for it to be true (in order for *things will necessarily go this way* to be true, it is required that things go this way in every still possible history; in order for *things will necessarily go this way* to be false, it is only required that things fail to go that way in one still possible history). But, absent an antecedent commitment to the equivalence of *p* and *it is necessary that p*,

it seems odd to build a "bias towards falsity" into our account of truths about the future.

So far, so good. But suppose an egalitarian says that *you'll have cake tonight* is true (now), false (now), or indeterminate (now) depending on whether it's true (now), in all, or no, or only some (still) possible histories. What should she say about "compound" statements built up from (one or more) simpler statements and sentential operators, such as *it's not the case that you'll have cake tonight, you'll have cake tonight or you'll have coffee tonight, it's not the case that both: you'll have cake tonight and you'll have cake tonight*, and the like? Classical logic provides an account of how the truth values of such compound statements are determined (exclusively) by the truth values of their simpler components (in a way that can be represented by truth tables), but the equivalence-denying egalitarian cannot help herself to (the entirety of) the classical logician's account of compound statements, since that implies bivalence, which the equivalence-denying egalitarian rejects. For the equivalence-denying egalitarian, what the classical logician says about negation (to wit: *it's not the case that p* is true if *p* is false, and false if *p* is true) is part, but only part of the truth about negation, since it doesn't tell us what to say about the truth value of *it's not the case that p* if *p* is indeterminate.

At this point, equivalence-denying egalitarians come to a fork in the road. Some have followed Lukasiewicz in holding onto the classical logician's idea that we can give a "truth-tabular" (that is, a truth-functional) account of negation, disjunction, etc., and extending the classical account to cover cases in which one or more of the components of the compound statements are indeterminate. On this approach, we say something like:

> *It is not the case that p* is true (now) if *p* is false (now), false (now) if *p* is true (now), and indeterminate (now) if *p* is indeterminate (now).
>
> A conjunction of the form *p and q* is true (now) if both *p and* q are true (now), false (now) if either *p* is false (now) or *q* is false (now), and indeterminate (now) at least one of {*p, q*} is indeterminate (now), and neither is false (now).
>
> A disjunction of the form *p or q* is true (now) if at least one of {*p, q*} is true (now), false (now) if both *p* and *q* are false (now), and indeterminate (now) if at least one of {*p, q*} is indeterminate (now), and neither is true (now).[9]

[9] For further discussion, see Prior's "Time and Determinism".

On this approach, assuming *you'll have cake tonight* and *you'll have coffee tonight* are both open and thus indeterminate (now), *it's not the case that you'll have cake tonight, it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight, you'll have cake tonight or you'll have coffee tonight,* and *you'll have cake tonight and you'll have coffee tonight* are all (indeterminate) now.

Arthur Prior, Richmond Thomason and others have argued that the approach just sketched is unsatisfactory, on the grounds that it makes disjunctions such as *you'll have coffee tonight or it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight* untrue (now) (because indeterminate (now)), and conjunctions such as *you'll have coffee tonight and it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight* unfalse (now) (because indeterminate (now)). As Prior, Thomason, *et al.* see it, *you'll have coffee tonight and it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight* is a contradiction, and contradictions are always false (as well as never true). And if we accept the (eternal) falsity of *you'll have coffee tonight and it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight,* and say the usual (and plausible) thing about the logical links between conjunctions and disjunctions, we'll have to say that *you'll have coffee tonight or it's not the case that you'll have coffee tonight* is always true (and not just never false). (Suppose *p and it's not the case that p* is false (now). Since *p and q* is false (now) just in case *it's not the case that p or it's not the case that q* is true (now), we can move from the (current) falsity of *p and it's not the case that p* to the (current) truth of *it's not the case that p or it's not the case that it's not the case that p*. Given that *it's not the case that it's not the case that p* is equivalent to *p*, we can move from the (current) truth of *it's not the case that p or it's not the case that it's not the case that p*, to the (current) truth of *it's not the case p or p*, and thus to the current truth of *p or it's not the case that p*. So if *p and it's not the case that p* is forever false, then *p or it's not the case that p* is forever true).

As Prior *et al.* see it, the moral of the story is not that the Lukasiewiczian approach gives the wrong (three-valued) truth-tables for conjunctions and disjunctions. It is instead that equivalence-denying egalitarians shouldn't be in the business of providing truth-tables for conjunctions and disjunctions. A truth-tabular account of conjunction and disjunction is feasible only if the truth-value of a conjunction or disjunction depends only on the truth-values of its conjuncts or disjuncts. But, Prior and co. hold, equivalence-denying egalitarians should deny that the truth-value of a conjunction or disjunction depends only on the truth-value of its conjuncts or disjuncts. For they should say that *you'll have cake tonight and it's not the case that you'll have cake tonight* is false (now),

and that (the needlessly prolix) *you'll have cake tonight and you'll have cake tonight* is indeterminate (now), as long as *you'll have cake tonight* is indeterminate (now) Similarly, they should say that *you'll have cake tonight or it's not the case that you'll have cake tonight* is true (now), and (the needlessly prolix) *you'll have cake tonight or you'll have cake tonight* is indeterminate (now), assuming *you'll have cake tonight* is indeterminate (now). As Prior puts it (in "Time and Determinism"), on the assumption of equivalence-excluding egalitarianism, the truth-functional approach seems "simply out of place". A more radical departure from the classical account of conjunction and disjunction is needed.

What might such a departure look like? Richmond Thomason and others have made the following suggestion:

> Start with the notion of truth at a time in a possible history. Assume that bivalence holds for truth at a time on a possible history: for example, if *t* is a time, and *h* is a possible history "passing through" *t*, it will be either true at *t* on *h* that you'll have cake, or it will be false at *t* on *h* that you'll have cake (It will be true at *t* on *h* that you'll have cake tonight if and only if at some *t' belonging to h* and later than *t* you have cake, and it will be false at *t* on *h* that you'll have cake tonight if and only if at no time *t' belonging to h* and later than *t* do you have cake.) Irrespective of whether a statement is simple or compound, we can distinguish three cases: (a) the statement will be true (at a time) on every then-possible history, (b) the statement will be true (at that time) on no then-possible history, and (c) the statement will be true (at that time) on some then-possible histories, and false (at that time) on some then-possible histories. If (a) holds, we say that the statement is true (then) (true (then) *simpliciter*, not just true (then) on this or that history). If (b) holds, we say that the statement is false (then) *simpliciter*. If (c) holds, we say that the statement is indeterminate (then) *simpliciter*.[10]

On this approach, the truth-value of conjunctions and disjunctions turns out not to depend exclusively on the truth values of their components, statements of the form *p and it's not the case that p* are always false, and statements of the form *p or it's not the case that p* are always true. A conjunction of the form *p and it's not the case that p* will be false at any given time *t*, because there will be no possible history passing through *t* on which both conjuncts of that conjunction are true. A disjunction

[10] Cf. Richmond Thomason, "Indeterminist Time and Truth-value Gaps", *Theoria* 36 (1970).

of the form *p or it's not the case that p* will be true at any given time *t*, because on every history passing through *h*, one or the other disjunct of that disjunction – and thus the entire disjunction – will be true. Truth-functionality will fail, because *you'll have cake or it's not the case that you won't have cake* will be true (now), but *you'll have cake or you'll have cake* will be (indeterminate) now (assuming it's open whether you'll eat cake).

Not a few philosophical logicians have supposed that what we might call "Thomasonian" or "supervaluationalist" egalitarianism represents a real advance on the Lukasiewiczian kind. I'm not so sure. I agree that there is something at least initially compelling about the idea that contradictions are in every case false (as well as untrue), and the idea that every instance of the law of excluded middle is true (as well as unfalse). I'm not sure, though, that an equivalence-denying egalitarian (as opposed to a Peircean egalitarian, or a privilegist) is well placed to insist on the truth of those ideas. For I find the following claims at least initially compelling:

> Reasoning that takes us from a pair of conjuncts to their conjunction is completely impeccable deductive reasoning.
>
> If we start from premises none of which is false, and do nothing but reason deductively completely impeccably, we will never arrive at a false conclusion.

But it seems that these claims can't both be true, if Thomasonian egalitarianism is true.

Why? Well, suppose that *p* is true in some but not all now-possible histories, and likewise *q*. Suppose also that the conjunction *p and q* is true in no now-possible history (either because *p* and *q* are logically inconsistent, or because, although *p* and *q* are logically consistent, there is some inevitably false *r* that *p* and *q* jointly entail).

Suppose finally that someone forthrightly believes that *p*, and forthrightly believes that *q* (because she takes herself to have very good evidence for both *p* and *q*, and (a) she is unaware that *p* and *q* are logically inconsistent (the inconsistency is quite subtle, and escapes her notice), or (b) she is unaware that there is an inevitably false *r* that *p* and *q* jointly imply). Now imagine this person reasoning as follows:

p
q

Therefore: *p and q*

I want to say that this person's reasoning is entirely irreproachable. But, given our assumptions about *p* and *q*, and assuming Thomasonian egalitarianism, the reasoning moves from premisses none of which is false, to a false conclusion. I find this at least initially baffling. A person starts out clear of the briar patch of falsity. She reasons deductively in an utterly impeccable way, and as a result ends up in the thick of that briar patch. How can this be? Isn't impeccable (deductive) reasoning unfalsity-preserving, as well as truth-preserving?

Notice that if there is a difficulty for Thomasonian egalitarians here, it is not one they can address simply by insisting on the plausibility of what we might call *strong non-contradiction* and *strong excluded middle.* (Strong non-contradiction says that conjunctions of the form *p and not-p* are always false, as well as untrue; strong excluded middle says disjunctions of the form *p or not-p* are always true, as well as unfalse). It's not as though we have to choose between the principles about reasoning I find intuitive, and strong non-contradiction + strong excluded middle. We can have both, as long as we are either Peircean egalitarianists or privilegists (aka Occamists).

So I am inclined to think that both Lukasiewicizian and Thomasonian egalitarians have to deny some initially appealing principles. It is true, though, that a Thomasonian can offer the following *tu quoque* argument against a Lukasiewiczian:

> Suppose p is indeterminate and q is false. Then for Lukasiewiczians, both *p or q*, and *it's not the case that p* will be indeterminate. But someone who reasons as follows – *p or q, it's not the case that p, therefore q* – is reasoning impeccably. So Lukasiewcizians, just like us Thomasonians, will have to say that impeccable reasoning need not preserve unfalsity. And unlike us Thomasonians, Lukasiewiczians will have to abandon the very plausible principle that *p or not p* is always true, and *p and not p* is always false.

Fair enough. There is an another respect in which Lukasiewiczian seems marginally problematic with respect to the Thomasonian kind. Both Thomasonian and Lukasiewiczian egalitarians will presumably have to admit there are cases in which a disjunction is true now in every still possible history, even though the same cannot be said for any of its disjuncts. (Assume you're in a society whose laws proscribe "serial polygamy", and have been single all your life. Then *you'll (legally) marry zero persons or you'll (legally) marry one person* is true (now) in every still

possible history, but the same cannot be said for either disjunct of that disjunction). Thomasonian egalitarians can say that in such cases, the whole disjunction is both true (now) and inevitable (now), and both disjuncts are untrue and evitable (now). Lukasiewiczian egalitarians have to say that the whole disjunction is untrue (now) (since it is a disjunction with two (currently) untrue disjuncts). So they have two options. They can say:

> The disjunction, *you'll (legally) marry zero persons or you'll (legally) marry one person* is true (now) in every still possible history, but it is not inevitable (now).

Or they can say:

> The disjunction, *you'll (legally) marry zero persons or you'll (legally) marry one person* is inevitable (now), but it is not true (now).

Both options look pretty desperate: anything that would still be true, whichever now-possible future turned out to be actual, is inevitably true, and thus true.

VI. A WORRY FOR (ALL) EGALITARIANS

Consider the following (three-way) conversation:

(CV_1) *A*: It's inevitable that she'll marry him.
B: That's not true.
C: (*to B*): But didn't you say she could (still) marry him?
B (*to C)*: I did say that, and I still think it's true. But what *A* said is that she'll inevitably marry him, and that's not true.

Here, although *C's* question to *B* is odd, there is nothing odd about *B*'s part in the conversation. Now consider the following variant of (CV_1):

(CV_2) *A*: She'll marry him.
B: That's not true.
C (to B): But didn't you say she could (still) marry him?
B (to C): I did say that, and I still think it's true. But what *A* said is that she'll marry him, and that's not true.

In (CV_2), I want to say, *C*'s question is to *B* is perfectly natural, and *B's* part in the conversation is odd. It's perfectly fine to acknowledge that she could still marry him, and also assert (flatly, without any hedging or qualification) that *she will inevitably marry him* is not true. But it's at least odd to acknowledge that she could still marry him, and also assert (flatly, without any hedging or qualification) that *she will marry him* is

not true. Certainly, I would not do that, and I cannot recall ever having heard anyone else do it. If someone tells me that she'll marry him, and I believe that it's still possible but not yet inevitable that she'll marry him, then I might naturally say (without any hedging or qualification), "that's not necessarily true", or "that's not inevitable", but I wouldn't naturally say "not true!". (I *would* naturally say, "not true!", if we were living in a society whose laws proscribed serial polygamy, and I knew that she was already married to someone else (and I meant "legally marry" by "marry)"; that is, I would naturally say (without any hedging or qualification) "not true", if I thought it was *inevitable* that she wasn't going to (legally) marry him).

Believers in privilege have no difficulty explaining the (apparent) fact that *B*'s contribution to (CV_2) is odd. They can say:

> You are not supposed to assert something flatly (without hedging or qualification) unless you take yourself to know it. And in (CV_2), *B* shouldn't take himself to know what he flatly asserts (that she won't marry him). For *B* himself has admitted that there are now-possible histories in which she'll marry him, and should admit that for all he knows, the privileged now-possible history is such a history.

Egalitarians, on the other hand, seem ill-placed to explain (or explain away) the (apparent) oddity of *B*'s contribution to (CV_2). They admit that, in the circumstances, there would be nothing untoward in *B*'s asserting, without hedging or qualification, that it's open whether she'll marry him. And they think that *it's open whether she'll marry him* implies *it's not true that she'll marry him.* So why should there be anything untoward about *B*'s asserting, without hedging or qualification, that it's not true that she'll marry him?

There are also cases of apparent conversational non-untowardness that privilegists have no trouble explaining, but egalitarians have trouble explaining (or explaining away). Consider

(CV_3) *A:* She'll marry him.
B: I doubt that's true, though I grant things could go either way.

Here *B*'s contribution to (CV_3) seems perfectly in order. This raises problems for egalitarians. If you think that *p* is incompatible with *q*, you shouldn't say, "I doubt that *p*, though I grant that *q*": the adversative ("though") is inapposite. (Compare: "I doubt that's a golden retriever, though I grant that it's a guinea pig.") For example, if you think (as you should), that *it is inevitable that p* is incompatible with *p could still go either way*, you shouldn't say, "I doubt it's inevitable that *p*, though

I grant *p* could go either way". And if someone else says to you, "I doubt it's inevitable that *p*, though I grant *p* could go either way", you should respond that that's not the right way to put things. Now egalitarians think that just as *it is inevitable that p* is incompatible with *p could still go either way, it is true that p* is incompatible with *p could go either way.* So they should never say, "I doubt that's true, though I grant things could go either way". And if someone else says that to them, they should respond, "that's not the right way to put things". Egalitarians must insist on the untowardness of *B*'s contribution to (CV_3). Again, I find this more than slightly counterintuitive.

It may be worth underscoring that the worries raised here apply in equal measure not just to the three forms of egalitarianism discussed here, but to any possible form thereof. For the worries turn on the assumption that contingency implies untruth, and you can't be an egalitarian without accepting that assumption.

VII. VARIETIES OF EGALITARIANISM AND THE MAIN ARGUMENT

Suppose that, despite the many and varied difficulties besetting the forms of egalitarianism discussed here, (some form of) egalitarianism is as defensible as privilegism. On that supposition, for reasons already discussed, it is at least arguable that the egalitarian is in a better position than the (premiss (5) challenging) privilegist to insist on the reality of an omniscient God and an open future, in the face of the main argument. (Again, privilegists who concede (2) and challenge (5) have two options: they can say that (mysteriously) God can (now) accept (now) falsity-liable propositions without thereby incurring risk of error, or they can insist on God's extratemporality. Each of these options would seem more problematic than the denial of (2), *on the assumption that* some form of egalitarianism is as defensible as privilegism.)

Now we can raise the same question about the particular forms of egalitarianism discussed so far that we just raised (and (tentatively) answered) about egalitarianism in general. That is, we can ask: *assuming that Peircean (Lukasiewiczian, Thomasonian) egalitarianism is as defensible as privilegism*, is the Peircean (Lukasiewiczian, Thomasonian) egalitarian better placed than the (premises (5) challenging) privilegist to insist on the reality of an omniscient God and an open future, in the face of the main argument?

As best I can tell, the Peircean egalitarian is indeed better placed to fend off the main argument than the premiss (5) challenging privilegist, on the assumption that Peircean egalitarianism is no more problematic than privilegism. And it might seem obvious that the same goes for Lukasiewiczian and Thomasonian egalitarians. But it isn't.

Assume it's open whether you'll have cake tonight. Then, for Lukasiewiczian egalitarians, it's indeterminate whether you'll have cake tonight. Now consider the following pair of conjunctions:

(A) You will have cake tonight, and it's not the case that God accepts you will.

and

(B) You won't have cake tonight, and God does accept that you will.

Lukasiewiczians will say that (A) is untrue, because its left conjunct is indeterminate. Its right conjunct might be (i) true, (ii) false, or (iii) indeterminate. If the right conjunct of (A) is true, then (A) is a conjunction with one indeterminate and one true conjunct, and is accordingly indeterminate. If the right hand conjunct of (A) is false, then (A) is a conjunction with one indeterminate and one false conjunct, and is accordingly false. If the right hand conjunct of (A) is indeterminate, then (A) is a conjunction both of whose conjuncts are indeterminate, and is accordingly indeterminate.

If the right conjunct of (A) is true, then the right conjunct of (B) is false. And if the right conjunct of (B) is false, then (B) is a conjunction with one indeterminate conjunct and one false conjunct, and is accordingly false.

If the right conjunct of (A) is indeterminate, then the right conjunct of (B) is likewise indeterminate. And if the right conjunct of (B) is indeterminate, (B) is a conjunction with two indeterminate conjuncts, and is accordingly indeterminate. If on the other hand, the right conjunct of (A) is false (so that (A) itself is false), then (B) is a conjunction with one indeterminate conjunct and one true conjunct, and is thus once again indeterminate.

Summing up: (A) is either indeterminate or false. If (A) is indeterminate, (B) will be false (if the right conjunct of (A) is true), or indeterminate (if the right conjunct of (A) is either indeterminate or false). If (A) is false, (B) will be indeterminate (since it will have one indeterminate and one true conjunct). So, on Lukasiewiczian assumptions, there's no way for (A) and (B) to both be false. If we suppose

that the right conjunct of (A) is (not just untrue but) false, we can make (A) itself come out false; but that will make (B) come out indeterminate (since (B) will be a conjunction with one indeterminate and one true conjunct). Symmetrically, if we suppose the right conjunct of (B) is (not just indeterminate but) false, we can make (B) itself come out false; but that will make (A) indeterminate (since (A) will be a conjunction with one indeterminate and one true conjunct).

Now (A) and (B) may be rephrased (respectively) as:

(A') You're going to have cake tonight, even though God doesn't accept you will.

and

(B') God accepts that you're going to have cake tonight, even though you won't.

So, for a Lukasiewiczian egalitarian, at least one of {(A'), (B')} is indeterminate, rather than false. Surely, though, if *there is an omniscient God* is true, then both (A') and (B') are false (and not just untrue). It doesn't seem to make sense to say:

There is an omniscient God; that's true. That said, someone who believed that either (a') you're going to have cake tonight, even though God doesn't realize you will, or (b') God thinks you're going to have cake tonight, even though God thinks you won't, wouldn't believe anything false. *Either things will go a certain way, though God doesn't think they will or God thinks things will go a certain way, even though they won't* is unfalse, but there truly is an omniscient God.

If it doesn't make sense, then – even on the assumption that Lukasiewiczian egalitarianism is as defensible as privilegism – it's of no use to anyone who wants to defend the reality of an open future and an omniscient God, in the teeth of our main argument.

Assume now that Thomasonian egalitarianism is as defensible as privilegism. On that assumption, is the Thomasonian in a better position than the (premiss (5) challenging privilegist) to hold on to an omniscient God and an open future, in the teeth of our main argument? Surprisingly, it seems not.

It seems that a Lukasiewiczian egalitarian (who thinks it's open whether you'll have cake tonight) could deny the (current) truth of

> Either God accepts that you will have cake tonight, but it's still possible that you won't have cake tonight, or God does not accept that you will have cake tonight, but it's still possible that you won't have cake tonight.

on the grounds that neither disjunct of the above disjunction is true (now), because neither *God accepts that you'll have cake tonight* nor *God does not accept that you'll have cake tonight* is true (now). But a Thomasonian egalitarian cannot make this move. Think of it this way: Where *p = God accepts that you'll have cake tonight,* the Thomasonian holds that *p or not-p* is true (now), because it is true (now) on every now-possible history. Where *q* = it's contingent whether you'll have cake tonight, the Thomasonian (who thinks it's open whether you'll have cake tonight) again holds that *q* is true (now), because it is true (now) on every now-possible history. So, (for Thomasonians (who accept the openness of your having cake tonight)) *p or not-p* and *q* are both true. By elementary logic, this implies *p and q* or *not-p* and *q.* Translating back into English, (for Thomasonians (who accept the openness of your having cake tonight)) it's true that:

(α) (Either God accepts that you will have cake tonight, but it's (historically) contingent whether you will have cake tonight, or God does not accept that you'll have cake tonight, but it's (historically) contingent whether you will have cake tonight.

Since *it's (historically) contingent whether you'll have cake tonight* implies both *it's (still) possible that you'll have cake tonight*, and *it's (still) possible that you won't have cake tonight*, (α) implies

(β) Either God accepts that you will have cake tonight, but it's (still) possible that you won't have cake tonight, or God does not accept that you will have cake tonight, but it's (still) possible that you will have cake tonight.

If God accepts that you'll have cake tonight, but it's still possible that you won't, or God does not accept that you will have cake tonight, but it's still possible that you will, could there be an omniscient God? No – *assuming that*

(γ) God accepts you'll have cake tonight, but it's (still) possible that you won't.

implies

(δ) It's (still) possible that: God accepts you'll have cake tonight, even though you won't have cake tonight.

and that

(ε) God does not accept you'll have cake tonight, but it's (still) possible that you will have cake tonight.

implies

(η) It's (still) possible that: God does not accept that you'll have cake tonight, but you will have cake tonight.

If (γ) implies (δ) and (ε) implies (η), then (β) implies that it could still turn out that God was mistaken about or in ignorance of whether you'll eat cake tonight – which I take to imply that there isn't an omniscient God. So the Thomasonian egalitarian who wants to oppose our main argument will have to say resist either the inference from (γ) to (δ) or the inference from (ε) to (η). Since (I take it) those inferences stand or fall together, the Thomasonian will have to resist both.

So it looks as though (in resisting the inference from (γ) to (δ)) the (openness-acknowledging) Thomasonian egalitarian will still have to take issue with premiss (5), despite already having taken issue with (2). Like the privilegist, he must either say that God is at no risk of error now, even though what He in fact now believes about the open future is now at risk of falsity (!) – or take Boethius's way out, and say that currently contingent propositions are at risk of falsity in our *nunc fluens*, but God is not at risk of error in His *nunc stans*.

CONCLUSION

Exclusivism appears to be a live option. If exclusivism is true, there is no immediately obvious reason to think exclusivist privilegism, rather than exclusivist egalitarianism is true. If exclusivist egalitarianism is true, then premiss (2) of our main argument is false. So it's natural to wonder whether we would do better defending the reality of an omniscient God and an open future in the face of the main argument if we challenged that argument's second premiss, rather than conceding that premiss and challenging its fifth premiss instead. If I'm right, we wouldn't. Although there are no immediately obvious reasons to prefer exclusivist privilegism to exclusivist egalitarianism, I have argued that there are not immediately obvious reasons for doing so. Different varieties of egalitarianism encounter different problems, but it looks as though none of them are problem-free. Assuming that there is no privileged (complete) history, egalitarians working out a systematic account of truth and (historical) necessity seem to face a whole series of hard choices: should (historically)

contingent propositions be false, or indeterminate? Should disjunctions and conjunctions be thought of as determined exclusively by the truth-values of their disjuncts/conjuncts, or not? And so on. Even though some ways of answering these questions seem better than others, I am unaware of any entirely satisfactory way of answering them. (For instance, Peircean egalitarianism, unlike the Lukasiewiczian or Thomasonian kind, has the virtue of allowing us to accept both strong non-contradiction, and the unfalsity-preservingness of premiss-conjunction; but it has the vice of not leaving room for the idea that futurity, unlike inevitability, distributes over a disjunction (since, for Peircean egalitarians, futurity implies inevitability)).[11] The contrast with privilegism is dramatic: assuming that the idea of a privileged history makes sense, the privilegist doesn't seem to face any hard choices in working out a systematic account of truth and (historical) necessity. This contrast is due to the fact that a privilegist with a worked out account of truth-at-a-time-in-a-possible-history already has a worked out account of truth at a time (truth at a time is just a special case of truth-at-a-time-in-a-possible-history (*viz.*, truth-at-a-time-in-the-privileged-history)). The egalitarian with a worked out account of truth-at-time-in-a-possible-history faces all sorts of additional and difficult questions about the relation between truth-at-a-time-in-a-possible-history and truth at a time. Finally – and crucially – egalitarianism as such does not accommodate our reluctance to flatly assert *it's not true that p* when we think it's open whether *p*.

There is another reason to doubt that we would be better placed to defend the openness of the future and the omniscience of God in the face of the main argument if we embraced egalitarianism, rather than privilegism. Both the Peircean and the Lukasiewiczian versions of egalitarianism have consequences that are extremely difficult to accept. Of the versions of egalitarianism I am familiar with, the one that seems least hard to accept is the Thomasonian one. And (I have tried to show) Thomasonian egalitarians are no better placed than privilegists to defend the openness of the future and the existence of an omniscient God, in the face of the main argument, since Thomasonian egalitarians who want to resist the argument, just like privilegists who do, will have to challenge

[11] To say that inevitability "distributes over disjunction" is to say that *it is inevitable that: p or q* implies *it is inevitable that p or it is inevitable that q*. To say that futurity distributes over a disjunction is to say that *it will be that: p or q* implies *it will be that p or it will be that q*.

the sort of "possibility-exporting" inference that takes us from *God accepts that p and it is (still) possible that it's not the case that p* to *it's (still) possible that: God accepts that p, but it's not the case that p*. So, it seems, will the champions of any variety of egalitarianism that (plausibly enough) implies strong non-contradiction + strong excluded middle, and implies that whenever it's open that *p*, it is inevitably open that *p*.

So, after all that, how should we respond to the argument set out at the beginning of this paper? Following Occam, we can challenge the "possibility-exporting" inference from *God accepts that p and it is (still) possible that p to it's still possible that: God accepts that p, but it's not the case that p*. Otherwise – unless (like Richard Swinburne) we think there are truths beyond even the ken of omniscient being (so that premiss (11) is false) – our only remaining option appears to be saying (along with Jonathan Edwards) that the argument is sound, and compels those of us who would want to believe in an omniscient God and an open future to give up one or the other.[12]

[12] As readers hardy enough to have won through to the end of this paper may already have gathered, this paper has been growing a long time. Previous versions of (proper or improper parts of) this paper have been read to audiences at Oxford, Trinity College Dublin, and the universities of Genova, Milano (Statale), San Raffaele, Bergamo, and Padova. Special thanks to Peter van Inwagen, Richard Swinburne, Brian Leftow, Nicla Vassallo, Andrea Bottani, and Massimiliano Carrara, and to Rosa Maria Antognazza, who encouraged and probabilified the publication of this piece. Gratitude is also owed to students and colleagues at King's and Notre Dame for fruitful discussions of ideas that ended up in these pages.

MOLINISM, CREATURE-TYPES, AND THE NATURE OF COUNTERFACTUAL IMPLICATION

DANIEL MURPHY

Cornell University

Abstract: Granting that there could be true subjunctive conditionals of libertarian freedom (SCLs), I argue (roughly) that there could be such conditionals only in connection with *individual* "possible creatures" (in contrast to *types*). This implies that Molinism depends on the view that, prior to creation, God grasps possible creatures in their individuality. In making my case, I explore the notions of *counterfactual implication* (that relationship between antecedent and consequent of an SCL which consists in its truth) and *counterfactual relevance* (that feature of an antecedent in virtue of which it counterfactually implies something or other).

I. INTRODUCTION

Let '*C*' stand for the history of our universe up to the time at which the apostle Peter freely performed some action *A*. According to the Molinist theory of divine providence,[1] we may say that God knew, prior to creation, a *subjunctive conditional of libertarian freedom* (SCL) to the effect that, were Peter in *C*, he would freely *A*. Let '*Truth*' stand for the thesis that there are, prior to creation, true SCLs; and '*Knowledge*' for the thesis that God knows, prior to creation, such SCLs. By 'prior to creation'

[1] See Alfred J. Freddoso, "Introduction", pp. 1-81 in Luis De Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the Concordia*, ed. and trans. Freddoso (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

I mean logically prior to God's making any creative decision. We may say that 'prior to creation' picks out the pre-creation *world phase*, where a "phase" need not be temporal.

Truth and *Knowledge* can be challenged in a way that, as far as I am aware, has not yet been explored. Molinists have recognized that there are thorny issues in connection with referring to a creature in the context of a pre-creation world phase at which the creature does not exist; and have accordingly suggested that the SCLs known in "middle knowledge" (that alleged logical moment of knowing posterior to God's "natural knowledge" and prior to a creative decree and "free knowledge") directly involve, not "possible creatures" *per se*, but possibly exemplified *individual essences*.[2] So one might suppose that, prior to creation, God knows not (1) but (2)

(1) Were Peter in *C*, he would freely *A* [in *C*]

(2) Were an exemplifier of *E* in *C*, it [that exemplifier] would freely *A*,

where '*E*' stands for a property the exemplifying of which is necessary and sufficient for being Peter. However, it is controversial whether essences of possible creatures exist prior to creation.[3] One might think that, prior to creation, God grasps neither (1) nor (2) but rather something like (3):

(3) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would freely *A*;

where '*F*' stands for a *type*, i.e., a property exemplified by more than one possible individual (whether *in* a possible world – for example, by Peter and Paul in *W* – or *across* possible worlds – for example, by Peter in *W* and Paul in *W**). Let us say that an *agent-singular* SCL concerns an individual possible agent, as (1) and (2) do;[4] and that an *agent-general* SCL concerns a type, as (3) does.

---

[2] See Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 187-188; Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 122, 124-126; and Flint, *Divine Providence*, pp. 46-47, 124.

[3] See, e.g., Robert Merrihew Adams, "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity", *Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979), 5-26; Robert Merrihew Adams, "Actualism and Thisness", *Synthese* 49 (1981), 3-41; Alvin Plantinga, "On Existentialism", *Philosophical Studies* 44 (1983), 1-20; Kit Fine, "Plantinga on the Reduction of Possibilist Discourse", pp. 145-186 in *Alvin Plantinga*, ed. James E. Tomberlin and Peter van Inwagen (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), pp. 155-156; Linda Zagzebski, "Individual Essence and the Creation", pp. 119-144 in *Divine and Human Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Christopher Menzel, "Temporal Actualism and Singular Foreknowledge", *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991), 475-507.

[4] I am ignoring "impossible agents" and SCLs involving them.

But suppose that there are no true agent-general SCLs. That is, suppose that, whatever one wants to say about individuals such as Peter and Paul, there are no facts of the matter about what kinds of agents would freely do in various circumstances. If there were true SCLs (if at all) only for individuals, and if no agent-singular SCLs were to exist prior to creation, then *Truth* (and therefore *Knowledge*) would be false.[5] And if there were true SCLs (if at all) only for individuals, and no agent-singular SCLs were grasped prior to creation, then *Knowledge* would be false. These considerations suggest the following anti-Molinism argument:

(4) An SCL is true only if agent-singular.

(5) Prior to creation, God does not grasp any agent-singular SCLs.

Therefore,

(6) Prior to creation, God does not know any SCLs.

(4) imposes a constraint on the nature of true SCLs (should there be any), and (5) implies that the constraint is not satisfied by any items of pre-creation divine cognizance. (5) could be true because there are no agent-singular SCLs at the pre-creation world phase, or because, though there are, they are not grasped. Now, there would seem to be no good reason to accept (5) apart from accepting a stronger premise denying a pre-creation divine grasp of "agent-singular" propositions more generally; such as

(7) Were an exemplifier of *E* in *C*, it might freely *A*

(8) Were Peter in *C*, he would probably freely *A*

(9) Were an exemplifier of *E* in *C*, it would *A*

(10) Were Peter to exist, he would exist

(11) Peter does not exist.

However, one might affirm such a view and nevertheless hold that (7) through (11) have certain "agent-general" correlates that God does grasp prior to creation; related true propositions that can play an action-guiding role for God. (4) precludes there being such correlates in the case of SCLs.

It may be instructive to contrast the nature of this challenge to Molinism with that posed by the "grounding objection", perhaps the most prominent objection to Molinism. The grounding objector attacks either *Truth* (and thereby *Knowledge*) or *Knowledge* by focusing on the connection – or lack thereof – between an allegedly true SCL's antecedent and consequent. (10)'s antecedent necessitates its consequent, as do those

[5] I am assuming that a proposition can have a truth-value prior to creation and be known prior to creation only if it exists prior to creation.

of (7), (8), and (9) (we could easily suppose, in each case); whereas the SCL (1)'s does not. The grounding objector thinks that the alleged pre-creation truth (or knowledge) of SCLs both needs and lacks grounds. However, the anti-Molinism argument I have sketched does not turn on the nature of the relationship between an SCL's antecedent and consequent, nor on the relevant propositions' even being conditionals; since the existence and graspability of a proposition turns on its "matter" rather than its "form" (so to speak). One might deny that there exists an agent-singular SCL prior to creation, while granting that, were one to so exist, it would non-vacuously take a truth-value. And were such an SCL to exist prior to creation, one might deny that God grasps it prior to creation, while granting that, were He to so grasp it, He would grasp its truth-value.

The "prior to creation" index is crucial in these considerations. It is consistent with this argument that God comes to know some agent-singular SCLs posterior to creation; either because He comes to grasp them then, or because they come to exist and take a truth-value then. Such knowledge would be "middle knowledge" *qua* content (contingent truths over which God has no control), but not "middle knowledge" proper or *qua* stage of knowing.[6] Other anti-Molinism arguments have turned on considerations pertaining to the pre-creation world phase, but the challenge I have described turns on considerations pertaining to the existence and/or graspability of agent-singular SCLs, not on considerations pertaining either to possible world semantics for counterfactuals[7] or to explanatory priority and libertarian freedom.[8]

My aim in this paper is not to argue for the soundness of this anti-Molinism argument. I am inclined to think that (5) is false, that God does grasp, prior to creation, possible creatures in their individuality; though I think cogently defending such a position in light of objections that have been raised is no easy task.[9] In what follows, my aim is to motivate

[6] It would be fallacious to infer, from a conditional's coming to be true "*post*-volitionally", that it becomes true *because of* divine volition; as William Craig seems to do – see William Lane Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'", *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001), 337-352, 339.

[7] See, e.g., Edward R. Wierenga, *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 148-150.

[8] See, e.g., Wes Morriston, "Explanatory Priority and the 'Counterfactuals of Freedom'", *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001), 21-35.

[9] See, e.g., "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity" and "Actualism and Thisness" by Adams, and Menzel's "Temporal Actualism and Singular Foreknowledge".

a qualified version of (4). If (4) is true, then to the extent that one finds a theory of pre-creation divine knowledge on which God grasps individual possible creatures implausible, to that extent (at least) one should find Molinism implausible. That is, Molinism could be no more plausible than such a theory of divine knowledge.

II. SCLs

By 'subjunctive conditional of libertarian freedom' ('SCL'), I mean a proposition to the effect that, were some agent in a certain circumstance, it *would* act in a certain way, *freely* (in a libertarian sense). SCLs constitute one kind of subjunctive conditional of indeterministic activity (SCI); where an SCI is a proposition to the effect that, were something with causal powers or liabilities in a certain circumstance, it *would* exercise such in a certain way, *contingently*. The class of SCLs is not wholly contained within that of SCIs, since some SCL consequents would obtain necessarily given their antecedents (e.g., "were God to freely *A*, He would freely *A*"); but I am only discussing SCLs that are SCIs. Further, I am only discussing SCIs the truth-values of which God cannot directly bring about (this qualification plausibly being redundant with SCLs for creatures), and I am only discussing SCIs with possible antecedents. I will assume in what follows that, for all we know, there could be true SCIs and SCLs; my argumentation not relying on assumptions that a Molinist should be expected to reject.

Let us think of an SCI as connecting two states of affairs. The truth of an SCI *p* implies, of some states of affairs *S* and *T*, that were *S* to obtain, *T* would contingently obtain. So, the truth of *p* could not consist in *S*'s necessitating *T*. Further, *p*'s truth could not be grounded in any connection between *S* and *T* established by divine decree. Moreover, *p*'s *pre-creation* truth plausibly could neither consist nor be otherwise grounded in either the obtaining of *S* and/or *T* or the obtaining of any categorical facts of the matter to the effect that *S* and/or *T* "will" obtain. Even were there such facts,[10] *p*'s truth "persists through" possible pre-creation world phases wherein there are not,[11] suggesting that *p*'s truth could be at most overdetermined by them. On my understanding, true

[10] See Timothy O'Connor, "The Impossibility of Middle Knowledge", *Philosophical Studies* 66 (1992), 139-166, 152.

[11] See Flint, *Divine Providence*, pp. 47, 124.

SCIs would be *just true*, and contingently: they could have been false instead. I will use the phrase 'counterfactual implication'[12] to denote this connection, insofar as it is a connection, between the antecedent and consequent of a true SCI. Counterfactual implication is a relation from one state of affairs to another that consists simply in the truth of an SCI, and the truth of an SCI is primitive.[13] More precisely, I think that Molinism implies the existence of a privileged class of SCIs – *perfect* SCIs – for which both of these claims would be true. A true perfect SCI is primitively true, and the counterfactual implying of such an SCI's antecedent of its consequent consists simply in its truth. However, there conceivably are *imperfect* SCIs which have their truth-values in virtue of other things; such as the truth-values of certain perfect SCIs.[14] In what follows, I will elucidate and motivate a qualified version of (4), in large part by exploring the distinction between perfect and imperfect SCIs.

III. PERFECT AND IMPERFECT SCLs

Consider the agent-general (3)

(3) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would freely *A*,

and suppose that Peter and Paul are each possible exemplifiers or tokens of *F* in *C*, that each one's being in *C* would partly consist in his exemplifying *F*, and – for simplicity – that they are the only possible tokens of *F* in *C*. In other words, the obtaining of either (1)'s or (12)'s antecedent

(1) Were Peter in *C*, he would freely *A*

(12) Were Paul in *C*, he would freely *A*

implies that of (3)'s, and the obtaining of (3)'s implies that of either (1)'s or (12)'s.

I am initially inclined to accept (4)

(4) An SCL is true only if agent-singular

[12] I have borrowed this phrase from Thomas Flint (Flint, *Divine Providence*); though it may be subjected to somewhat different treatment in my hands.

[13] One might think that true SCIs are grounded by certain "facts" (such as facts revealed by disquoting sentences expressing SCIs). If one does, he can qualify my remarks about primitive truth accordingly. But I think that the Molinist should just maintain that SCIs do not need grounds. Cf. ibid., p. 137; Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'"; and Trenton Merricks, *Truth and Ontology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 150-151.

[14] Cf. Flint, *Divine Providence*, p. 50, n. 21.

because I am initially inclined to think that there could not be any fact of the matter about what a *kind* of agent *would* freely do in any circumstance. A non-Molinist might favour such a view because he thinks that there could not be any fact of the matter about what *any* agent would freely do in any circumstance. However, I think that there are special problems for the truth of agent-general SCLs.

Accordingly, the idea that there could not be facts of the matter about what kinds of agents would freely do needs to be qualified, for there are conceivable ways in which there could be such facts in virtue of being parasitic on facts about what individual agents would do. For example, suppose that (1) and (12) are true. It follows from this and from the fact that Peter and Paul are the only possible *F*-tokens in *C* that (3) is true. That is, if it is true of every possible *F*-token in *C* that it would freely *A*, then it is true that, were an *F*-exemplifier in *C*, it would freely *A*. Alternatively, suppose that both (13)

(13) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, its identity would be that of Peter[15]

and (1) are true.[16] In these two cases, the agent-general (3) is imperfect, since it has its truth-value in virtue of other SCIs. In the first case, a true (3) would have import for possible *F*-tokens in general only through the logically prior obtaining of facts about every individual possible *F*-token (in *C*); and in the second case, a true (3) would not have import for possible *F*-tokens in general.

Because it is conceivable that there be true imperfect agent-general SCLs, I want to contend, not for (4) but for (14)

(4) An SCL is true only if agent-singular

(14) An SCL is perfect only if agent-singular.

(14) implies that the class of perfect SCLs falls completely within the class of agent-singular SCLs. Suppose, contrary to (14), that (3) is a perfect SCL that is true prior to creation. It seems to follow that (1) and (12) are

[15] This does not fit my description of an SCI, though it is an "SCI" in a broader sense, where "indeterministic activity" encompasses the contingent obtaining of facts about identity.

[16] This inference is not based on the assumption of any transitivity principle. Cf. David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1973), pp. 32-35. Since Peter's being in *C* entails an *F*-exemplifier's being in *C*, the "closest" possible worlds wherein (1)'s antecedent obtains are worlds wherein (13)'s and (3)'s does. And given (13), the closest ones wherein this antecedent obtains are ones wherein (1)'s does. Adding in (1), the closest ones wherein these antecedents obtain are ones wherein Peter freely *A*'s; such that (3) is true.

both true (or would be, if/when each exists to take a truth-value; this qualification being subsequently left implicit). For I do not understand what it means to affirm the agent-general (3), if its truth does not have implications for what some possible tokens of *F* in *C* would freely do; and the truth of a perfect (3) seems to have import for all possible *F*-tokens in *C* if it has import for any. More generally, it seems that an agent-general SCL will have *indiscriminate* import for possible tokens of the relevant type in the relevant circumstance, unless it is grounded – implying imperfection – by something that "refracts" the range of import to a proper subset of such tokens. For example, if (3) were true partly in virtue of (13), it might not imply (12); but it would not be perfect. And if (3) became true only posterior to creation, and became true in virtue of the obtaining of (1)'s antecedent and consequent, it might not imply (12); but it would be imperfect.

Now, suppose that *the law of conditional excluded middle* (CEM) holds for the perfect (3); that is, that it is necessary that either (3) or (3*) is true

(3) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would freely *A*

(3*) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would not freely *A*.[17]

It follows from CEM's holding for (3), (3)'s implying (1) and (12), and (3*)'s implying (1*) and (12*) that the conjunction of (1) and (12*)

(1) Were Peter in *C*, he would freely *A*

(12*) Were Paul in *C*, he would not freely *A*

is impossible. For if it is necessarily the case that either an *F*-exemplifier would freely *A* in *C* or an *F*-exemplifier would not freely *A* in *C*, then every possible world is such that it falls into (just) one of two groups: those in which an *F*-exemplifier would freely *A* in *C*, and those in which an *F*-exemplifier would not freely *A* in *C*. And if (3) implies (1) and (12) and (3*) (1*) and (12*), then there is no possible world in either group wherein Peter would and Paul would not freely *A* in *C*. If CEM holds for a perfect agent-general (3), then the agent-singular (1) and (12) necessarily take the same truth-value.

However, I find it plausible (granting that there are facts of the matter about what individuals would freely do in various circumstances) that

[17] In light of concerns that one might have over the modal status of the existence of agent-singular SCLs, we may interpret CEM's holding for an SCL *p* in terms of its being an essential property of the pair of *p* and *p** that one of them is true. Notice also that the SCI *p** will not itself be an SCL, since an agent's contingently failing to freely do something does not imply its freely refraining to do it.

it is *possible* that Peter would and a non-identical Paul would not freely *A* in *C* (and vice versa) – no matter how similar the *F*-tokens otherwise are (or would be). After all, it is possible that Peter would freely *A* in *C*, and it is possible that Peter would not freely *A* in *C*; and likewise with Paul. Why should not it be possible for it to be the case both that Peter would and Paul would not freely *A* in *C*? This possibility can be rendered compossible with (3) in two ways. First, suppose that (3) is true partly in virtue of (13). This undermines the reason for thinking that (3) precludes (12*). Second, suppose that, though (3) indeed entails (1) and (12), CEM fails for (3). (Let us say that such an SCI is *degenerate*.) This implies the possibility of worlds wherein neither (3) nor (3*) is true. Now, (3) is clearly imperfect on the first option: its truth-value depends (in a robust, asymmetric sense) on the truth-values of (1) and (13). And concerning the second option, it seems that the best (if not only) explanation for (3)'s being degenerate is that it is imperfect in a different way; namely, in that the truth-values of (3) and (3*) depend on how truth-values are distributed across (1) and (12). That is, the possible truth of the conjunction of (1) and (12*) explains (in a robust, asymmetric sense) the possibility of worlds wherein both (3) and (3*) are false.

I will discuss in the next section the idea that an agent-general SCL might be both degenerate and perfect, but for now it seems that we can provisionally say that (1) and (12*) are compossible only if (3) is imperfect. Since I find it plausible that (1) and (12*) are compossible, I am inclined to think that (3) is imperfect. And since the reasoning generalizes to any agent-general SCL, I am inclined to accept (14). To the extent that one shares my intuitions here, one already has a reason to accept (14). In the next two sections, I will present two lines of argument for (14). In the remainder of this section, I will discuss how contending for (14) instead of (4) affects the anti-Molinism argument sketched in section I; and then say a bit more about the perfect / imperfect distinction.

Let us assume (5), grant that there might be true agent-general SCLs, but, in accordance with (14), maintain that any such SCLs would be imperfect. If there existed no agent-singular SCLs prior to creation, then there would be no true imperfect agent-general SCLs, since the SCIs on which their truth would depend would not exist. This would not preclude the truth of agent-general SCLs in general, for it might be that posterior to creation certain SCIs come to exist and (non-vacuously) take truth-values, and thereby come to ground truth-values for agent-general SCLs. If, on the other hand, there existed true agent-singular

SCLs prior to creation, then the following two possibilities arise for pre-creation knowledge of agent-general SCLs. First, suppose that the ungrasped (1) and (12) are true and ground the grasped (3), and that God grasps (3)'s truth. The *probability* of such an agent-general *p*'s being true depends partly on the number of agent-singular SCLs *q*, *r*, *s*, etc. that need to *harmonize* in truth-value in the right way; which depends on the number of possible tokens of the relevant type in the relevant circumstance (the assumption that there are only two possible tokens of *F* in *C* was motivated solely by considerations of simplicity and brevity of exposition). Second, suppose that the ungrasped (1) and (13) are true and ground the grasped (3), and that God grasps (3)'s truth. There are complications for this way of generating truth for an agent-general *p* which there is no space to explore. Can God create two tokens of the relevant type in the relevant circumstance; and if so, can any relevant SCI of (13)'s form be true?

In contending for (14), I am in effect contending for the following view of the relationship between agent-singular and agent-general SCLs ("*Singularity*"). The class of perfect SCLs lies within that of agent-singular SCLs, and agent-general SCLs are imperfect, depending for their truth on certain agent-singular SCLs. The salient alternative view ("*Generality*") reverses the priority, maintaining that the class of perfect SCLs lies within that of agent-general SCLs, and that agent-singular SCLs are (to the extent that they exist) imperfect, depending for their truth on certain agent-general SCLs.

On *Singularity*, the imperfection of an agent-general SCL *p* consists in its truth-value's depending on the truth-value of more than one perfect SCI. Let us say that such an SCI is *complex*; and that a non-complex SCI is *simple*. I have discussed two ways in which *p* might be complex; depending on whether there are or are not true SCIs concerning what the identity of a token of a type would be. If there are not, then *p* would seem to be degenerate. On *Generality*, agent-singular SCLs need not be degenerate: it might be that CEM holds for (3), that a true (3) would ground (1), and that a true (3*) would ground (1*); such that CEM holds for (1). Further, agent-singular SCLs need not be complex on this view: (1) has a sufficient ground in (3). I submit that the imperfection of (1) on *Generality* consists in (1)'s antecedent's containing *counterfactually irrelevant* information.[18] We can represent (3) and (1) as follows:

[18] My use of 'counterfactually (ir)relevant' differs from Flint's (Flint, *Divine Providence*, p. 245).

(3) $S > U$
(1) $(S\&T) > U$;

where '>' stands for counterfactual implication, and '*T*' for the information in (1) concerning the identity of the token of the type comprehended in (1) and (3). *T* is counterfactually irrelevant to *U* in the sense that *T* is not entailed by *S* and its being conjoined to *S* does not even *possibly* make any difference as to whether *U* is counterfactually implied. We may say that an argument from (3) to (1) would be valid, given an additional premise to the effect that the state of affairs with which the antecedent is "strengthened" (*T*) is counterfactually irrelevant.[19] Let us say that an SCI is *pure* if its antecedent includes only counterfactually relevant states of affairs; and *impure* otherwise.

I have said that a true perfect SCI is *primitively* true, and that the counterfactual implying of such an SCI's antecedent consists *simply* in the SCI's truth. Insofar as a true imperfect SCI is true in virtue of something else, we may say that the counterfactual implying of such an SCI's antecedent consists in something more than the SCI's truth (such as the counterfactual implyings of the antecedents of certain perfect SCIs). Let us say that perfect SCI antecedents *strictly* counterfactually imply their consequents, and that imperfect SCI antecedents *loosely* do. We may elucidate the counterfactual irrelevance of *T* on *Generality* – and thereby the impurity of (1) – by saying that, strictly speaking, *S&T* does not counterfactually imply anything. Rather, *S&T* only counterfactually implies *U* in the sense that a proper part, *S*, counterfactually implies *U*. Just as (1)'s truth is parasitic on (3)'s, *S&T*'s (loose) counterfactual implying is parasitic on *S*'s. Now, on *Singularity*, (1) is pure (its consequent's being strictly counterfactually implied by *S&T*), the imperfection lying in (3) and its complexity; and we may elucidate this complexity in terms of (3)'s truth's being grounded in more than one "instance" of (strict) counterfactual implication – for example, the harmonizing implyings of *S&T* and (12)'s antecedent *S&T**.

Summing up, we have two views of the relationship between agent-singular and agent-general SCLs, the first of which I take to be equivalent with (14). On *Singularity*, perfect SCLs are agent-singular, and agent-general SCLs are complex, the truth of which depends on the

[19] Such an argument would also be valid given the premise that *T* is entailed by *S*. We may assume for the sake of discussion that an entailment of something relevant is intrinsically relevant.

truth of every SCI within a certain class (explaining why (3) might be degenerate); whereas on *Generality*, perfect SCLs are agent-general, and agent-singular SCLs are impure, containing counterfactually irrelevant information pertaining to the identity of the token of the type (explaining why (1) and (12) necessarily take the same truth-value). We may say that the imperfection of an impure SCI consists in its antecedent's containing *extraneous* information relative to its counterfactually implying its consequent, and that the imperfection of a degenerate SCI consists in its antecedent's not containing *enough* information to strictly counterfactually imply something or other.[20]

IV. THE PRIORITY OF THE SINGULAR (1/2)

I have submitted that *Singularity* is intuitively plausible. Consider any *x*, *y*, *C*, and free *A* such that CEM holds for *x* (*y*), *C*, and *A*. Why should it not be possible for it to be the case both that *x* would, and *y* would not, *A* in *C* – unless *x* and *y* are identical? It seems that the only possible agent *z* such that, necessarily, *x* would *A* in *C* just in case *z* would, is *x* itself. But were there a true, perfect agent-general SCL *p*, there would seemingly be some such *C*, *A*, and pair *x* and *y* (possible tokens of the type comprehended in *p*) for which this would not be possible. In this section, I will present an argument for *Singularity*, and in the next and final section, I will present another. The first turns on the idea that *Singularity*'s falsity implies that possible agents have a strange and implausible kind of *counterfactual power over* certain other possible agents. The second turns on a conception of the nature of counterfactual relevance on which the antecedents of agent-general SCLs are *not determinate enough in content* to strictly counterfactually imply anything.

Suppose that *Singularity* is false, that God knows, prior to creation, the perfect agent-general (3)

(3) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would freely *A*,

and that He creates two universes *u* and *u** (two spatiotemporally unconnected systems), actualizing Peter's being in *C* in *u* and Paul's

[20] The latter description would also hold for any complex agent-general SCL on *Singularity*; but it does not hold for complex SCIs as such. For example, suppose that (for some *S*, *T*, *U*) *S* counterfactually implies both *T* and *U*. It might be that "*S* > (*T*&*U*)" is complex. It depends on whether "*S* > (*T*&*U*)" depends on "*S* > *T*" and "*S* > *U*" (in which case it is complex) or vice versa.

being in *C* in *u**. We may suppose that *u* and *u** share qualitatively identical universe segments terminating respectively in Peter's and Paul's each being about to freely perform some action or other. It follows from the perfect (3)'s truth that Peter and Paul each freely *A*.

Now, were Peter to freely refrain from *A*'ing, (3) would not be true. He has "counterfactual power" over (3), the power to do something (refrain from *A*'ing) such that, were he to do it, (3) would not be true. But if (3) is perfect, then the relevant power constitutes a power to do something such that, were he to do it, (3*)

(3*) Were an exemplifier of *F* in *C*, it would not freely *A*

would be true; in which case Peter has the power to do something such that, were he to do it, either Paul would not be in *C* (as he in fact is) or Paul would not freely *A* (as he in fact does). For if CEM holds for (3), then every possible world includes the truth of either (3) or (3*) (exclusive), and there is no such world wherein one *F*-token in *C* does not freely *A* and another does. Further, if we assume that Peter does not have counterfactual power over whether Paul exists in *C* with full possession of the power over whether he *A*'s, then Peter's unexercised power to refrain from *A*'ing constitutes a power to do something such that, were he to do it, Paul would freely exercise his (in fact unexercised) power to refrain from *A*'ing. And everything I have said about Peter's power over Paul applies vice versa.

There seems to be no good reason to think that Peter has this kind of power over Paul, or vice versa (*a fortiori*, and vice versa). It seems utterly bizarre, and it seems far more plausible that Peter's power to do otherwise consists merely in a counterfactual power over (1). We can affirm this if we accept *Singularity* and suppose that (3) is imperfect; and more specifically, degenerate. For were the agent-singular (1) and (12) perfect and the agent-general (3) degenerate, Peter's unexercised power to refrain from *A*'ing would not imply any counterfactual power either over (12) or over the obtaining of any state of affairs involving Paul. Were Peter to freely refrain from *A*'ing, (3) would be false; and were Paul to freely *A* (as he in fact does), (3*) would be false. Because CEM fails for (3), it is possible that both are false, permitting Peter and Paul to have no counterfactual power of the described kind over each other.

Now, I have been assuming that CEM holds for perfect SCIs; that is, that being degenerate suffices for being imperfect (and more specifically, complex). However, might we suppose that (3) is primitively true, and

yet that it is not necessarily the case that either (3) or (3*) is true? We could then suppose that Peter's unexercised power to refrain from *A*'ing does not consist in a power to something implying (3)'s falsity and (3*)'s truth, but merely consists in a power to do something implying (3)'s falsity. And yet (3) is still perfect, contrary to *Singularity*.

In response to this objection, I insist that the link between being degenerate and being imperfect (such that the former suffices for the latter) is very plausible. First, rejecting this connection prohibits one from accepting the following natural view of the relationship between counterfactually relevant information and CEM. I find it natural to think that the reason for which CEM would fail for an SCI *p* lies in *p*'s antecedent's not containing enough counterfactually relevant information to strictly counterfactually imply anything. In this vein, we may suppose that, with respect to any instance of indeterministic activity, there is a certain *threshold* of contextual information (describing the circumstances in which the activity takes place) such that CEM fails for an SCI involving that activity the antecedent of which fails to meet it; and such that CEM "kicks in" for an SCI the antecedent of which meets it.[21] We can integrate our conception of counterfactual relevance with CEM by supposing that counterfactually relevant information is that enough of which suffices for there to be a determinate fact of the matter about what would contingently happen. Now, the antecedent of a perfect SCI has "enough" relevant information to counterfactually imply some state of affairs or other; where the import of 'enough' here is to indicate the satisfaction of a necessary condition for counterfactually implying something or other (otherwise the SCI would be imperfect). But on a view where (3) might be perfect and degenerate, having "enough" information is not sufficient for counterfactually implying anything. This makes it a matter of brute, contingent fact *whether* an antecedent with "enough" counterfactually relevant information counterfactually implies anything (over and above the contingency pertaining to *what* is counterfactually implied). But it seems implausible that it is primitive and contingent whether there is any fact of the matter about what would occur, were such an antecedent to obtain.[22]

[21] Cf. ibid., p. 47; Craig, "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'", p. 338; and Alexander R. Pruss, "Prophecy Without Middle Knowledge", *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007), 433-457, 433, 439.

[22] And it seems just as implausible that the threshold for what constitutes "enough" varies across possible worlds.

Second, denying this link between being degenerate and being imperfect gives rise to the following dilemma. With respect to an agent-general p which is allegedly both perfect and degenerate, we can either retain the idea that an agent-singular q and r concerning possible tokens of the type comprehended in p are asymmetrically dependent on p for their alethic status, or we can give this up too, supposing that p, q, and r are all perfect. On the first horn, p would imply and ground q and r, p^* would ground q^* and r^*, and the falsity of (p v p^*) would ground (q v r) (exclusive); without implying – much less grounding – which disjunct is true. On the second horn, it seems that the truth-values of p, q, and r would be overdetermined. Suppose p, q, and r are all primitively true. It seems that q and r are overdetermined, being true both "primitively" and "in virtue of" p.[23] Likewise, it seems that p is overdetermined, being true both "primitively" and "in virtue of" (q & r). I submit that the consequences of both horns are implausible. In the first case, we have the possibility of a perfect agent-general SCL's grounding the obtaining of an irreducibly disjunctive state of affairs concerning agent-singular SCLs, and in the second case, we have the appearance of symmetric overdetermination of SCL truth-values. We can avoid both consequences by supposing that CEM fails for the agent-general (3) *because* it is *imperfect*; or more specifically, because of the way in which it is imperfect, namely, being such that the truth-values of (3) and (3*) are grounded in the truth-values of certain agent-singular SCLs. Bringing in my first point in response to the objection, we should hold that an SCI is degenerate *because* it does *not* contain enough counterfactually relevant information to (strictly) counterfactually imply anything.

Here is another objection to the argument for *Singularity* from counterfactual power. I presupposed that the type F and circumstance C comprehended in (3) are such that the former is possibly exemplified in the latter by two tokens in the same possible world. However, perhaps there are perfect agent-general SCLs concerning types that can only be exemplified in the relevant circumstances by different agents in different possible worlds. Let us modify the scenario such that, instead of having two universes and two F-tokens in one possible world, we have two possible worlds with qualitatively identical universe segments; Peter

[23] This "in virtue of" predication need not be taken to be logically precluded by the supposed perfection of q and r, for we may suppose that being perfect does not (logically) preclude overdetermining "grounds".

being the relevant agent in one and Paul in the other (the nature of "*F*" and/or "*C*" now being such that an exemplifying of *F* in *C* precludes the co-existence of any diverse *F*-tokens in *C*). Now suppose that God actualizes a universe segment wherein Peter is in *C*. The truth of a perfect (3) implies that Peter freely *A*'s, and yet Peter has the unexercised power to do something such that, were he to do it, (3) would not be true. However, because no other *F*-tokens exist, Peter's unexercised power does not seem to consist in any kind of counterfactual power over states of affairs involving other *F*-tokens.

In response, I claim that a relevantly similar, implausible kind of counterfactual power is implied in this kind of case too. Suppose that Peter freely *A*'s in *C*, and that he is made privy to the facts that (3) is a perfect agent-general SCL and that he was a token of *F* in *C*. Following his action, Peter can rationally infer with certainty that (3) is true, and that any other possible *F*-token in *C would have* freely *A*'ed, were it to have been placed in *C* instead of him. For just as there is no possible world in which CEM holds for (3) wherein an *F*-token *x* in *C* freely *A*'s and a token *y* in *C* fails to, there is no possible world in which CEM holds for a perfect (3) wherein it is the case both that *x* freely *A*'s in *C* and it is false that *y would*. Now intuitively, Peter should not be able to rationally infer with certainty anything about what any other possible *F*-token in *C* would have done, and the reason is that it is implausible that he has the kind of counterfactual power the knowledge of which would undergird the inference. Such power is implied by the perfection of (3) and can be rejected if we accept *Singularity*. First, we could suppose that (3) is complex and degenerate, true if at all in virtue of (1) and (12). Second, we could suppose that (3) is complex, true if at all in virtue of (1) and (13). In either case, Peter should not infer (12) after freely *A*'ing; as his freely *A*'ing would be compossible with (12*).

In the "intra-world" case (where *F* is multiply exemplified in one world), Peter has counterfactual power over categorical facts involving other possible *F*-tokens; whereas in the "transworld" case (where *F* is multiply exemplified across worlds), Peter has counterfactual power over irreducibly subjunctive facts involving other possible *F*-tokens (and, relative to his retrospective reasoning, counterfactual facts). And I think the cases are relevantly similar: both kinds of counterfactual power are strange and implausible, and both are precluded by *Singularity*. One might be inclined to some stronger conclusions. First, one might think that it can be *shown* that the kinds of power I have described are

metaphysically impossible. Second, one might think that these kinds of power are *incoherent*, in the sense that the possession of libertarian freedom (or, the kind of agency necessary for moral responsibility, from an incompatibilist perspective) is logically inconsistent with the possession of these kinds of counterfactual power. But I am here insisting merely that it is far more plausible that *Singularity* is true than that any possible agents have the described kinds of power.

V. THE PRIORITY OF THE SINGULAR (2/2)[24]

Another line of thought in support of *Singularity* comes from the following considerations pertaining to the nature of counterfactual relevance. We know that, were there true SCIs, the information in their antecedents would not ground their consequents, in the robust sense of providing metaphysically sufficient conditions. And even were one inclined to think that an SCI's antecedent could explain the obtaining of its consequent, in spite of the non-necessitating connection from the former to the latter, it cannot be maintained that the role or function of the information in the antecedent of a perfect agent-*general* SCL would simply be to ground the consequent. For if an agent's exemplifying a general property can explain either its performing or its failing to perform an action, then presumably the conjunctive state of affairs of two agents' each exemplifying the property can explain the conjunctive state of affairs of one agent's performing and the other's failing to perform the action. And yet the truth of a perfect agent-general SCL would ground a uniformity in counterfactually implied action across its type's possible tokens. Hence, the function of the information in a perfect agent-general SCL could not be, in its entirety, that of providing even a non-necessitating ground for the proposition's truth; for the ramifications of such a truth would outstrip those of a non-necessitating explanation for a token occurrence of indeterministic activity.

So what exactly is the role or function of the information in an SCI antecedent? I suggest that it should be taken to be that of providing, not a *ground* for the consequent, but an *occasion* for it; that is, an occasion of indeterministic activity with respect to which it is primitively the

[24] See also Dean Zimmerman, "Yet Another Anti-Molinist Argument", pp. 33-94 in *Metaphysics and the Good*, ed. L. M. Jorensen and Samuel Newlands (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

case that the consequent would contingently obtain.[25] Now, occasions of activity, or circumstances of activity, are "modally fragile",[26] in the sense that even the slightest adjustment in non-relational properties changes the identity of the occasion. For example, if Peter leaps a puddle of water, we have one occasion of activity, and were one of the soles of one of Peter's sandals slightly thinner, we would have a different occasion of activity. And if Peter is wearing Fred the sandal when he jumps, we have one occasion, and were he wearing Todd the sandal instead, a qualitatively identical but numerically diverse sandal, we would have a different occasion. And if Peter leaps a puddle, we have one occasion of activity, and were a qualitatively identical Paul to leap a puddle instead, we would have a different one.

My second argument for *Singularity* has two premises:

(15) The subjects of (strict) counterfactual implication are states of affairs representing individual possible occasions of indeterministic activity.

(16) The antecedents of agent-general SCLs represent merely types of possible occasions of indeterministic activity.

(16) follows from the modal fragility of individual occasions of activity; and more specifically and saliently, from the fact that a token occasion of free action is individuated in part by the identity of the agent who acts. I find (16)'s falsity just as absurd as, for example, the idea that a set or proposition has its non-relational properties accidentally (as if, for example, the very proposition that is *that Socrates exists* can be *that Plato exists*). My acceptance of (15) is primarily based on intuition, on the intuitive plausibility of the view that (granting the basic Molinist picture) the role of counterfactually relevant information is to provide an individual occasion of indeterministic activity with respect to which something is counterfactually implied. However, perhaps I can inculcate similar intuitions in you, and I can rebut some objections to (15). But first, I will explain how this argument for *Singularity* supports a stronger conclusion.

In addition to distinguishing agent-singularity and agent-generality, we can distinguish *circumstance*-singularity and -generality. If an SCL

[25] Though such information might ground other kinds of consequents (and hence other kinds of conditionals, such as might- or would-probably-conditionals).

[26] I borrow 'modally fragile' from Karen Bennett, "Why the Exclusion Problem Seems Intractable, and How, Just Maybe, to Tract It", *Nous* 37 (2003), 471-497, nn. 7-8.

is agent-general, it is circumstance-general, because the identity of a token circumstance of action partly depends on that of the agent "in" it. However, if an SCL is circumstance-general, it may or may not be agent-general. It depends on the extent to which the identity of an agent depends on circumstances in which it exists. The argument from counterfactual power is an argument directly for the thesis that an SCL is perfect only if it is agent-singular, whereas the present argument from the nature of counterfactual relevance is an argument for the thesis that an SCL is perfect only if it is both agent- and circumstance-singular (i.e., involving an individual agent in an individual circumstance). Further, inasmuch as the present argument does not hang on considerations pertaining to libertarian freedom, it supports a conclusion pertaining to SCIs in general.[27]

When it comes to causally necessitated states of affairs, the circumstance of activity's identity *as such* is irrelevant to any (qualitative) fact about what happens, will happen, or would happen. For example, if certain events causally necessitate Peter's jumping over a puddle of water, we can adjust the circumstance without jeopardizing the outcome, provided that the adjustments are *causally* irrelevant to Peter's acting. For example, if we change the identity of one of Peter's sandals, Peter will still be causally necessitated to jump. Likewise, if we switch out Peter for a qualitatively identical Paul, the agent will still be causally necessitated to jump.[28] But we are dealing with SCIs, and counterfactually relevant factors do not ground consequent states of affairs in this way. So we should not assume that what is causally irrelevant in the case of something causally necessitated is counterfactually irrelevant in the case of something counterfactually implied.

Consider two (token) circumstances C and C^* in which Peter might find himself that are identical with respect to causally relevant factors, circumstances in which Peter would have the power both to A and to refrain from A'ing. Let us suppose that C and C^* are qualitatively identical and indiscernible to Peter, and let 'D' stand for a circumstance-type

[27] I do not mean to imply that the first argument could not be adapted in support of stronger conclusions. For example, we could replace Peter and Paul in u and u^* with atoms randomly suffering decay, and try to evoke intuitions to the effect that what happens with the two is independent.

[28] Hence, there appears to be no reason to doubt the truth of certain subjunctive conditionals with general antecedents which we may call 'subjunctive conditionals of *compatibilist* freedom'.

of which *C* and *C** are possible tokens. It is possible that *C* > *A* (i.e., that Peter would freely *A* in *C*), that *C* > ~*A* (i.e., that Peter would not freely *A* in *C*), that *C** > *A*, and that *C** > ~*A*. Why should it not be possible that both *C* > *A* and *C** > ~*A*? *C* and *C** are different (token) circumstances of action, after all. If you are inclined to agree that this is possible,[29] I think your intuitions (at least implicitly) favour the view that (15) is true and that SCIs the antecedents of which represent token circumstances are pure. If it is possible that *C* and *C** counterfactually imply different outcomes, then some differences between *C* and *C** are counterfactually relevant. Conversely, if you are inclined to think that an antecedent that represents merely a circumstance-type like *D* could (strictly) counterfactually imply anything, then I think you should have found it intuitive that, necessarily, *C* > *A* just in case *C** > *A*.

Let us suppose that the referents of '*C*' and '*C**' are separated by time, rather than by worlds; and that God places the apostle Philip in *D* (and thereby *C*), lets him act, places him in *D* again (and thereby *C**), lets him act, and so on (for example, God could be making him undergo his meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch[30] over and over). Because *D* comprehends all the causally relevant factors, we may suppose that, whenever Philip is in *D*, he neither remembers nor is otherwise affected by any prior *D*-tokens. Now, I find it eminently plausible, not merely that it is possible that Philip *A* in *C*, that he refrain in *C*, that he *A* in *C**, and that he refrain in *C**; but that it is possible that Philip both *A* in *C* and refrain in *C**. Conversely, I find it extremely implausible that Philip's *A*'ing in the first instantiation of *D* would "lock him in" such that, in every iteration, his power to refrain from *A*'ing would consist in a counterfactual power over what he did in the past.[31] If you agree, then you should agree that *C* and *C** possibly counterfactually imply different outcomes. Now, I see no relevant difference between a case where the token circumstances are separated by time and a case where they are "separated by worlds"; in virtue of which one should find it intuitive that *only* in the first kind of case are differences between the token circumstances counterfactually relevant. Unless you do, it seems to me that you should accept (15).

[29] Which Alexander Pruss would not be, it seems to me. See Pruss, "Prophecy Without Middle Knowledge", pp. 445-454.

[30] Acts 8:26-40.

[31] My thinking on this and related issues is significantly indebted to Flint (correspondence).

Letting '*C*' and '*C**' stand again for the incompossible token circumstances in which Peter might find himself, the above thought experiment involving diachronic circumstance iteration undermines any objection to the compossibility of $C > A$ and $C^* > \sim A$ that trades on any of the following principles:

(17) If $(S\&T) > U$ and there is no reason to think that the outcome would be different given $S\&T^*$, then $(S\&T^*) > U$

(18) If *T* is causally irrelevant to *U*, then *T* is counterfactually irrelevant to *U*

(19) If *T* is epistemically irrelevant to a belief that $(S\&T) > U$, then *T* is counterfactually irrelevant to *U*.

For if we consider the case of Philip and let '*T*' stand for some information pertaining to *which* token circumstance is currently underway, we have a very plausible counterexample to (17) through (19).

I have tried to elicit intuitions supporting (15), address some potential objections to (15), and place the burden of argumentation on one inclined to deny (15). I will conclude by addressing the intuition some might have that, granting $C > A$, $C^* > \sim A$ could not be (co-)true. First, even if $C > A$ and $C^* > \sim A$ are incompossible, (15)'s falsity does not follow. For suppose that $C > A$ becomes true in virtue of the obtaining of antecedent and consequent, and not in virtue of any perfect SCL $D > A$; and hence that the entailment of $C^* > A$ is mediated by something other than an instance of strict counterfactual implication (such as one's semantics for counterfactuals). Second, there are (defeasible) reasons to treat such an apparent intuition as untrustworthy. Firstly, one might fail to sufficiently consider the modal fragility of token circumstances and assume (perhaps tacitly) that the token circumstance of action (or even the token instance of acting) "persists" from *C* to *C**. Secondly, one might fail to sufficiently discriminate between intuitions about an agent's acting that are indeterminate with respect to whether it acts "freely" and those about its acting "freely", or intuitions about an agent's acting "freely" that are indeterminate with respect to specific theories of free agency and those about its acting "freely" in a libertarian sense, or a free agent and a free action, or a derivatively "free" action and a(n intrinsically) free one.

VI. CONCLUSION

Having granted that there might be facts of the matter about what agents would freely do in various circumstances, I distinguished perfect and imperfect subjunctive conditionals of libertarian freedom, only the former taking their truth-values primitively (sections II.–III.), and presented two arguments (trading on considerations pertaining to counterfactual power and counterfactual relevance respectively) for the thesis that perfect ones must be agent-singular; that is, about an individual as opposed to agent-type (IV.–V.). Further, I sketched how this thesis poses problems for any would-be Molinist who finds it implausible that God grasps possible creatures in their individuality prior to creation (I., III.).

FOLLY TO THE GREEKS: GOOD REASONS TO GIVE UP REASON

STEPHEN R. L. CLARK

University of Liverpool

Abstract. Good reasons to "give up reason" are (i) naturalistic reasons that downplay the likely effectiveness of human mentation - these lead to contradiction if naturalism itself is reckoned "really true"; (ii) there are pragmatic reasons to license and enjoy imaginative stories that conflict with principles elevated as "rational"; (iii) mystical reasons, which take account of the revolutionary aspects of certain "religious" disciplines, and throw doubt on what we "naturally" take for granted.

THESIS: RATIONAL RELIGION

On past occasions I've argued that both the content of commonsensical reasoning and the methods and axioms that we identify with "reason" or "scientific reason" are themselves accepted "on faith", though we may call it "intuition" or "intellect". I have also suggested that this faith is at least more "reasonable", or consistent, when couched in theistic terms. So far from theism being at odds with "science", science, both historically and logically, gives some support to theism: at least the apparent success of science is better explained, and more expectable, on a theistic account than on a naturalistic. The words that David Hume invented for Philo have a wider impact than is usually acknowledged: "what peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call 'thought' that we must thus make it the model of the whole universe?"[1] What indeed? Why should we suppose that the patterns we discern are ones that the

[1] David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), part 2.

whole universe obeys? We recognize that we have the sensory organs and modalities we do because these were the ones that helped our ancestors survive and procreate, and that other creatures, for equivalent reasons, sense things differently. Why should our intellectual gifts be any better fitted to an understanding of worlds and ages far away? What has been called the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics[2] is a sort of confirmation that we have the root of the matter in us, that our intellect is a spark of the universal reason, an image of the God on whom everything depends.[3] Or else, of course, we should rather abandon that conviction, and with it any confidence that mathematics is more than a sometimes useful fiction. The "success" of science can only be pragmatic, parochial, transient, and we have no reason to extrapolate the patterns that *we* happen to see here-now to a wider world. Nor can we reasonably suppose both that there are no universal binding obligations (that is, that there is no God) and also that there is a universal binding obligation to pursue "the truth". If atheistical naturalists are correct we cannot reasonably expect to discover truths beyond, at best, the parochial, nor do we have any obligation to try. Most creatures, as Plotinus pointed out, manage quite well without reasoning[4], and so do most people. Conversely, if we can and should pursue and prefer the truth, then a form of theism is, essentially, correct.

I don't wish to withdraw these claims. My belief is that we *can* rely on "reason", even though we should also acknowledge that it is often obscured by ignorance, stupidity, self-conceit, wishful thinking, malice and all other sorts of sin. The principal dogmas of mainstream Abrahamic theism provide a proper context for that cautious confidence. There is a single source for all things; this source is expressed in the Logos, and the Logos is, at least, *available* to us. This does not constitute a "proof" of those dogmas – I doubt if there are ever any final or conclusive or universally persuasive proofs of anything – but atheistical naturalists are

[2] Eugen Wigner, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences" in *Communications in Pure and Applied Mathematics*, 13 (1960), pp. 1-14.

[3] So also Benedict XVI (2009): 'the objective structure of the universe and the intellectual structure of the human being coincide; the subjective reason and the objectified reason in nature are identical. In the end it is "one" reason that links both and invites us to look to a unique creative Intelligence': URL = <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091126_fisichella-telescopio_en.html> (accessed 29th April 2011).

[4] Plotinus, *Ennead*, I.4 [46].2, pp. 31-43.

at least condemned to a more incoherent doctrine than are theists, as they must believe simultaneously that creatures like us are unlikely to be equipped to understand the cosmos, and that they themselves know enough to know that theism is mistaken.

Chesterton was almost right to say that "all sane men ... believe firmly and unalterably in a certain number of things which are unproved and unprovable". He listed them as follows:

> Every sane man believes that the world around him and the people in it are real, and not his own delusion or dream. No man starts burning London in the belief that his servant will soon wake him for breakfast. But that I, at any given moment, am not in a dream, is unproved and unprovable. That anything exists except myself is unproved and unprovable.
>
> All sane men believe that this world not only exists, but matters. Every man believes there is a sort of obligation on us to interest ourselves in this vision or panorama of life. He would think a man wrong who said, "I did not ask for this farce and it bores me. I am aware that an old lady is being murdered down-stairs, but I am going to sleep." That there is any such duty to improve the things we did not make is a thing unproved and unprovable.
>
> All sane men believe that there is such a thing as a self, or ego, which is continuous. There is no inch of my brain matter the same as it was ten years ago. But if I have saved a man in battle ten years ago, I am proud; if I have run away, I am ashamed. That there is such a paramount "I" is unproved and unprovable. But it is more than unproved and unprovable; it is definitely disputed by many metaphysicians.
>
> Lastly, most sane men believe, and all sane men in practice assume, that they have a power of choice and responsibility for action.[5]

Like Chesterton, I think that these fundamental principles – however I might also seek to qualify them – are necessary for our sanity and the civil peace, and that they are easier (psychologically and logically) for theists to maintain. In brief, "reason" and "faith" are compatible: there is nothing unreasonable about taking some things "on faith" (for we

[5] G.K. Chesterton, *Daily News*, June 22, 1907: a reference I owe to Martin Ward, and his collection of Chesterton texts: URL = <http://www.gkc.org.uk/gkc/> (accessed 29th April 2011). See also Edward Herbert, *De Veritate*, tr. M.H. Carré (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1937), p. 83: "Truth exists: the sole purpose of this proposition is to assert the existence of truth against imbeciles and sceptics."

must if we are ever to reason at all), and nothing amiss in principle with mainstream theistic doctrines (for they make it easier to believe in reason). But I shall now proceed to present what I take to be good reasons *not* to be ruled by reason.

But first I should explain more clearly what I take "reason" to be. Considered simply as a spark of the divine, "reason" must stand for our recognition of beauty, truth and holiness, whereby we also acknowledge our own dependence, failures, fallibility. Lovejoy's analysis is more abstract than Chesterton's, but just as valuable.

> The primary and most universal faith of man [is] his inexpugnable realism, his twofold belief that he is on the one hand in the midst of realities which are not himself nor mere obsequious shadows of himself, a world which transcends the narrow confines of his own transient being; and on the other hand that he can himself somehow read beyond those confines and bring those external existences within the compass of his own life yet without annulment of their transcendence.[6]

Richard Rorty's declaration that this faith is absurd[7] is no more coherent than any similarly Protagorean creed: obviously, Rorty wishes to say that Lovejoy was simply *wrong* to believe that there were truths we did not and do not engineer and yet can partly grasp, but he can only manage this rebuttal if indeed there are. But however silly Rorty's claim may be it does confirm my first assertion: those who won't believe in God may easily end up not believing in reason or the truth. What then stands in for "reason" in the older, higher sense? What guddle of capacities, beliefs and habits should we call "reasoning", if we are to start from a non-theistic position? What counts as "reason" if we put aside the older notion that it is a spark of the divine, a willed commitment to beauty, truth and goodness?

Commonsensically, people are judged "rational" when they set aside any personal, peculiar, subjective feelings about their situation, so as to think and act as they could advise just anyone to think and act. They are judged "rational" when they take account of the likely effects of what they do before responding carelessly in rage or lust or fear. They are "rational" if they manage not to contradict themselves too often, do not endorse any very novel thesis until there is "evidence" for it, and stand ready to abandon older certainties - when they think it right. "Rational" people distinguish dreams from waking, are suspicious of whatever sounds

[6] A. O. Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1930), p. 14.
[7] R. M. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 52n.

"too good to be true", and usually prefer to do and think only what has been done and thought before. "Rational" people are mildly suspicious of what gurus, self-styled experts, dictators and most politicians say, but also hesitate before accepting what is said by anonymous critics of the establishment. Sometimes these rough rules of thumb are elevated to more general principles, and begin to sound absurd. Clifford's Rule, for notorious example, that one should never believe anything without sufficient evidence, is both vague, self-refuting (since there is no unquestionable evidence for this strategy) and impractical, since we are doomed always to be acting on inadequate information.[8] Indeed it is difficult to see how we could ever get experimental or theoretical or even anecdotal "proof" of anything without accepting it as at least a working hypothesis long before there was "proof" – and such acceptance has its costs, which are only cheerfully endured by those who "believe", in advance of evidence, that the search will be worthwhile. Nor is it always sensible, or honourable, to disregard our personal feelings, and peculiar loyalties, when deciding who or what to believe. At any rate perennial sceptics and disloyal partners (quick to disbelieve their significant other's protests unless just anyone would "*have* to believe them now") are not well-regarded. Nor need they be less often deceived by life than are more trusting, loving agents.

Clifford's further conviction was that "we may go beyond experience by assuming that what we do not know is like what we do know; or, in other words, we may add to our experience on the assumption of a uniformity in nature." But this assumption is notoriously ill-formed. The problem is not only that it is itself ungrounded (and implausible), but that we cannot even identify *what* to extrapolate from our present experience. Nelson Goodman's "second problem of induction" was anticipated by Charles Babbage, one of the founding fathers of the computer age. In 1833, he tells us, he put together a small portion of the calculating engine he had devised, the Difference Engine, and started it.[9] It conscientiously progressed from 1 to 2 to 3 to every number up to

[8] See W.K. Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief' (1877), in *Lectures and Essays*, eds., L. Stephen & F. Pollock (Macmillan: London 1879), vol.2, pp. 163ff. Cf. William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897), p. 30: "if we believe that no bell tolls in us to let us know for certain when truth is in our grasp, then it seems a piece of idle fantasticality to preach so solemnly our duty of waiting for the bell."

[9] Charles Babbage, *The Ninth Bridgwater Treatise: a Fragment* (London, 1838; re-issued by Frank Cass: London, 1967), pp. 186ff. The treatise is so called not because

100,000,001. The obvious inference was that it would continue adding 1 to each succeeding number – yet the numbers that followed were 100,010,002; 100,030,003; 100,060,004; 100,100,005; 100,150, 006 "and so on" until the 2672nd term, when the rule seemed to change again (and yet again after 1430 terms, and again after 950, and so on)[10].

> Now it must be remarked, that the law that each number presented by the Engine is greater by unity than the preceding number, which law the observer had deduced from an induction of a hundred million instances, was not the true law that regulated its action; and that the occurrence of the number 100,010,002 at the 100,000,002d term was as necessary a consequence of the original adjustment, and might have been as fully foreknown at the commencement, as was the regular succession of any one of the intermediate numbers to its immediate antecedent. The same remark applies to the next apparent deviation from the new law, which was founded on an induction of 2761 terms, and to all the succeeding laws; with this limitation only that whilst their consecutive introduction at various definite intervals is a necessary consequence of the mechanical structure of the engine, our knowledge of analysis does not yet enable us to predict the periods at which the more distant laws will be introduced.[11]

A less alert investigator, of course, might simply have concluded that the engine was defective. The problem is that any engine, any predictive device, may have some similar "defect", even if this isn't manifest within our limited experience. We cannot know what is meant when we speak even of such simple things as acorns, cats or children, since we cannot know what even such things would be or will be under different conditions, nor what property it is that we are to extrapolate.

But though the principles of abstract reason (never to accept a contradiction; never to believe without "sufficient" evidence; always to discount one's own position, feelings and inchoate intuitions, while at the same time assuming that the world outside our experience is just like the world within, and so on) aren't helpful as absolute rules, we may continue commonsensically to think that we can tell the "rational" from the "irrational", the ignorant or insane. We cannot, practically speaking, live like "rationalists" of the stricter sort, but we may often find it wise to

---

Babbage had written eight earlier ones, but because it was an uncanonical addition to the eight Bridgwater Treatises composed by other leading 19th century thinkers.

[10] Ibid., pp. 34ff.

[11] Ibid., pp. 38f.

suspend judgement upon many things, or at least not leap too quickly to conclusions. Whether this caution will prevail, who knows?

This pragmatic, commonsensical approach to "reasoning" is compatible even with those "animistic" habits of mind that modern atheists despise: imagining ourselves into the life of stars, clouds, trees or engines may make it easier to live with them, and even easier to predict their actions. But we may still feel that "right reason" requires a commitment to a universal truth, and to disown error. That ascetic demand, to purge ourselves of error even when that error is very useful, has a theological origin. Thomas Sprat, in his history of the Royal Society, borrowed ideas from Athanasius to promote his "experimentalist" creed:

> The poets of old to make all things look more venerable than they were devised a thousand false Chimaeras; on every Field, River, Grove and Cave they bestowed a Fantasm of their own making: With these they amazed the world ... And in the modern Ages these Fantastical Forms were reviv'd and possessed Christendom. ... All which abuses if those acute Philosophers did not promote, yet they were never able to overcome; nay, not even so much as King Oberon and his invisible Army. But from the time in which the Real Philosophy has appear'd there is scarce any whisper remaining of such horrors ... The course of things goes quietly along, in its own true channel of Natural Causes and Effects. For this we are beholden to Experiments; which though they have not yet completed the discovery of the true world, yet they have already vanquished those wild inhabitants of the false world, that us'd to astonish the minds of men.[12]

To live as theists of this "rational" kind is to act on the assumption that there is a truth that we can partly learn (and should) by following an ascetic path, purging ourselves of idolatry. The obligation also requires

[12] Thomas Sprat, (*History of the Royal Society* 1702, p. 340) against fairies (cited by Basil Wiley, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1934), p. 213.) Sprat borrowed his imagery from See St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (written c. 318 AD), op.cit., ch. 8, para. 47: "In former times every place was full of the fraud of oracles, and the utterances of those at Delphi and Dodona and in Boeotia and Lycia and Libya and Egypt and those of the Kabiri and the Pythoness were considered marvellous by the minds of men. But now since Christ has been proclaimed everywhere, their madness too has ceased, and there is no one left among them to give oracles at all. Then, too, demons used to deceive men's minds by taking up their abode in springs or rivers or trees or stones and imposing upon simple people by their frauds. But now, since the Divine appearing of the Word, all this fantasy has ceased, for by the sign of the cross, if a man will but use it, he drives out their deceits."

us to cooperate with others: a truth that is only mine is not a truth worth having, and one that is also "ours" must be approached together. Some philosophical theists may end there, with a purely "rational religion", one that can be made plausible to "just anyone" willing to enquire into the grounds of scientific discovery. But "rational religion" is perhaps more vulnerable than its advocates desire. Once it is agreed that it is down to "us" to judge religious belief and practice, and to do so by appeal to presently commonsensical beliefs, the content of traditional belief may be gradually eroded, or made to sound less plausible. Does the minimal, rational theism I have so far defended do much more than agree that there is an intelligible world whose nature is also partly present in its parts? Each bit of the world, including our own mentality, embodies universal principles. If it were not so, it seems, there would be no world to understand, nor any living creature to understand it. What need of further ritual or elaborate story? What need of pious imagination? How does rational religion differ from an elementary, largely pragmatic, moralism about the importance of social exchanges and a less prejudicial outlook? Surely religion as ordinarily understood is more exciting, and more contestable?

ANTITHESIS: TRADITIONAL RELIGION

According to Emile Durkheim, most actual believers "feel that the real function of religion is not to make us think, to enrich our knowledge, nor to add to the conceptions which we owe to science others of another origin and another character, but rather, it is to make us act, to aid us to live". He also acknowledges that religion "is not merely a system of practices - but also a system of ideas whose object is to explain the world".[13] But the primary purpose of "religion", in its broadest sense, is rather to inspire than to explain.

> The believer who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who sees new truths of which the unbeliever is ignorant; he is a man who is stronger. He feels within him more force, either to endure the trials of existence, or to conquer them. It is as though he were raised above the miseries of the world, because he is raised above his condition as a mere man; he believes that he is saved from evil, under

[13] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology,* tr. J.W. Swain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915), p. 428.

> whatever form he may conceive this evil. The first article in every creed is the belief in salvation by faith.

To cultivate and maintain that faith we need the cult:

> Whoever has really practised a religion knows very well that it is the cult which gives rise to these impressions of joy, of interior peace, of serenity, of enthusiasm which are, for the believer, an experimental proof of his beliefs. The cult is not simply a system of signs by which the faith is outwardly translated; it is a collection of the means by which this is created and recreated periodically. Whether it consists in material acts or mental operations, it is always this which is efficacious.[14]

Faith is not credulity. It is the repeated invocation of a sustaining spirit through cultic practices, a spirit no less efficacious for being, perhaps, imaginary. The cultic practices themselves may have a natural origin: we don't need a religious education to find it natural to rouse, for example, a spirit of righteous anger by stomping up and down and shouting. Nor do we need romantic comedies to learn how to encourage ourselves and others to season our lusts with humour. But common practices and artistry play a role in channelling our spirits into particular forms, and may also offer doctrines to believe in, doctrines that may last longer than the first emotions. The doctrines flow from the rituals, and the rituals from the emotions, but doctrines then influence rituals, and rituals the emotions. The development of Christian doctrine in its early centuries was guided by the practice of the worshipping community: because Christians felt the figure of Jesus animated in their rituals they were compelled to conclude that Jesus must be the Word of God. He was present to them in the stories they exchanged, and in the breaking of bread together. The Councils that left us the strange doctrines, of Christ's two natures, and the divine Trinity, were not engaged in abstract theological reflection for its own sake (though doubtless some theologians were), but seeking to give a memorable account of the story they and other believers were enacting daily, weekly, and over the ceremonial year.

This is not the end of the story. The Christian religion (or any other serious creed) is not *only* a verbal counterpart of cultic practices, and these are not followed *only* to keep our spirits up. Tertullian was quite right to insist that there were good reasons actually to *believe* the doctrines, the more firmly because they were so odd that no-one would

[14] Durkheim, op.cit., pp. 416-17.

have propounded them unless there were: "natus est Dei Filius: non pudet quia pudendum est; et mortuus est Dei Filius: prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est; et sepultus resurrexit: certum est, quia impossibile".[15] There were many easier ways of preaching the Gospel: if the early Church settled on these particular doctrines it was at least not the easier option.

But nowadays it is better to start with the emotive, affective aspects of religion, if only to avoid laborious and pointless exchanges about the Spaghetti Monster. God isn't an entity like that, one that might or might not "exist", against a natural background. The question can also be addressed metaphysically, as it is by MacIntyre:

> To believe in God is not to believe that in addition to nature, about which atheists and theists can agree, there is something else, about which they disagree. It is rather that theists and atheists disagree about nature as well as about God. For theists believe that nature presents itself as radically incomplete, as requiring a ground beyond itself, if it is to be intelligible, and so their disagreement with atheists involves *everything*.[16]

This is clearly correct, but the first step is more easily taken through the emotive or ethical aspects of theism. "Believing in God" or at least the God of Abraham, whatever else it is, is a commitment to the possibility and eventual success of Justice. Believers bind themselves to a cause, and nourish their commitment by reciting and acting out the stories that give weight and sense to it – which is not simply to the present order of society, but to an hypothesized ideal: to do justice and love mercy. Marx was right at least in this: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."[17] The point of religion, or religion of the mainstream Abrahamic sort, is not to reconcile us to iniquity, but to remind us of an alternative. A belief in God's Omnipotence does not necessarily require that we believe that everything that now happens is His Will, but that His Will shall prevail, His Kingdom come. 'Magna est veritas, et praevalebit.'

---

[15] Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, 5.4, after Aristotle: see James Moffat, 'Aristotle and Tertullian' in *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1916), pp. 170-1, pointing to Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.23,22: there are some stories so improbable in themselves that no one would have invented them. See also Robert D. Sider, 'Credo quia Absurdum?', in *Classical World* 73 (1980), pp. 417-9.

[16] Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), p. 47.

[17] Karl Marx, 'Introduction' to *The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, ed. Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; 1st published 1843-4).

Believing in the Divine Trinity is believing in the possibility and hope of love, the community of the holy ones.

> May not Christians ... be allowed to believe the divinity of our Saviour, or that in Him God and man make one Person, and be verily persuaded thereof, so far as for such faith or belief to become a real principle of life and conduct? inasmuch as, by virtue of such persuasion, they submit to His government, believe His doctrine, and practise His precepts, although they form no abstract idea of the union between the divine and human nature; nor may be able to clear up the notion of *person* to the contentment of a minute philosopher.[18]

This interpretation of doctrine seems easier in "primitive" religions. Raising sceptical doubts about the actors who don ceremonial masks to impersonate or represent the many gods of popular Hindu religion, or Voodoo, or the Australian Dreamtime, looks much like the crasser forms of Christian missionary endeavour. It would be like telling Star Trek enthusiasts that there is no Federation, or that Vulcans and Earth-humans could not possibly interbreed. It is more easily assumed that even Star Trek enthusiasts know that very well, and that even "primitive polytheists" are aware that they are *acting*.

And why not? The very thing that makes us human is our imaginative capacity, our talent and our desire for imaginative fictions that can gather up our manifold experience, offer engaging characters and plots for ourselves to take on board, and unite into a single story people who might otherwise be enemies. Unlike other animals – or what we conceive to be true of other animals – we each live within at least two worlds: the world of ordinary sensibilia, and the world of imagination. Sometimes that imagined world so permeates the sensible that we see no difference. Sometimes we can convince ourselves that the imagined world is more real than the sensible. The epic of an expanding universe, dark matter, black holes and supernovas sprinkling the elements of life around the galaxies impresses us as "real", even though we mostly pay no attention at all to it. We may be the more easily persuaded that traditional religion teaches truth precisely because the gods it imagines are obviously present with us, in ordinary life as well as ritual. No one can seriously doubt the reality of Aphrodite, or Ares, or Apollo, whether they are gods or demons

[18] George Berkeley, *Alciphron* (Euphranor speaks), in *Works of George Berkeley*, eds., A.A. Luce & T.E. Jessop (Thomas Nelson: London, 1946-57), vol.3, p. 298.

or allegorical fictions. Poets and fantasists nowadays don't invent new gods, but they do invent characters and superheroes, which then become common stock for individual and collective fantasy. We know very well that Sherlock Holmes, James Bond and Wonder Woman "don't exist", any more than Santa Claus or Terry Pratchett's Death. But we also know that these characters are influential, and can be invoked to structure our personal motives. It is pointless, naïve, absurdly literal-minded, to complain about an author's inconsistencies, or creative attitude to history – unless the critic is cooperating in creating the imagined world, or unless she has her own commitments to a different theme than the author's. In either case the point would not be to insist that the created world is at odds with "reason", or is not "realistic". Artists, authors and the founders of religions are expanding our imaginative experience. Whether we are inspired to join them in their endeavour, or to denounce them in whatever terms we wish, is not a matter for *reason* to decide, but imagination and desire.

SYNTHESIS: RADICAL OR MYSTICAL RELIGION

Sociological analysis of "religion" has usually suggested that the rituals and stories serve to maintain the actual social order, and even that God or the gods are idealized versions of that order. "Really" we are all just worshipping our collective selves. There is probably some truth in this. The powerful will always seize on whatever story helps them to maintain their power, and suppress whatever story or ceremonial may remind us of alternatives. They may even adopt and reconstruct the very rites and creeds that once enabled a rebellion against an older order, and sincerely (or self-deceivingly) imagine that they themselves are the stuff of which rebels and martyrs are made. Modern Western atheism itself can be interpreted as just such a revolt against established gods – a revolt that has now been co-opted to secure the State against any thought of a rival. Modern atheists often sound much more like Inquisitors than Martyrs, and it is easy to suspect that they would indeed have been Inquisitors in an earlier age, self-assured in their own stories but fearful of the opposition. And of course – to spread the critical comments round – the early Christian Church, which was once deemed atheistical precisely because it would not acknowledge the established gods, learnt rather too well the mechanisms of control that had been used against it.

It is nonetheless important for unbelievers and believers alike to recall the mainstream Abrahamic message:

> Follow a light that leaps and spins,
> Follow the fire unfurled!
> For riseth up against realm and rod,
> A thing forgotten, a thing downtrod,
> The last, lost giant, even God,
> Is risen against the world.[19]

Chesterton associated this aspect of religion specifically with the Christian tradition:

> That a good man may have his back to the wall is no more than we knew already; but that God could have his back to the wall is a boast for all insurgents for ever. Christianity is the only religion on earth that has felt that omnipotence made God incomplete. Christianity alone has felt that God, to be wholly God, must have been a rebel as well as a king. Alone of all creeds, Christianity has added courage to the virtues of the Creator. For the only courage worth calling courage must necessarily mean that the soul passes a breaking point - and does not break.[20]

Jewish tradition is not that far from the thought, supposing that God suffers along with His people and sustains them through that suffering. The strange Christian development of the theory rests on the idea that an invulnerable God can't suffer along with us unless He could somehow also suffer in His own person.[21] On the one hand, God cannot face destruction; on the other, yes, He can.

Neither the Abrahamic nor the Buddhist religious tradition can be satisfied simply with the social and mythological order we have inherited. Both include in their founding myths the idea that we should *leave* those orders, and cannot always rely on traditional authority. As Berkeley said:

> In our nonage while our minds are empty and unoccupied many notions easily find admittance, and as they grow with us and become familiar to our understandings we continue a fondness for them. ... But we would do well to consider that other men have imbibed early notions, that they as

---

[19] G.K. Chesterton, *Collected Poems* (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 268.

[20] G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2009; 1st published 1908), p. 206. Hindus, of course, have the story of Krishna to remind them that a god could live through the same catastrophes as harass us, and die by accident. But Krishna does not clearly submit Himself to human law, nor yet experience defeat.

[21] See Peter Geach, *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

> well as we have a country, friends, and persons whom they esteem. These are pleas which may be made for any opinion, and are consequently good pleas for none.[22]

At the same time, we have to make a start from somewhere, and tradition gives us that beginning: "if we were left, every one to his own experience, [we] could know little either of the earth itself or of those things the Almighty has placed thereon: so swift is our progress from the womb to the grave".[23] There is a further problem, about the ordering of our lives together.

> There must ... of necessity, in every State, be a certain system of salutary notions, a prevailing set of opinions, acquired either by private reason and reflection or taught and instilled by the general reason of the public, that is, by the law of the land. ... Nor will it be any objection to say that these are prejudices; inasmuch as they are therefore neither less useful nor less true, although their proofs may not be understood by all men. ... The mind of a young creature cannot remain empty; if you do not put into it that which is good, it will be sure to receive that which is bad. Do what you can, there will still be a bias from education; and if so, is it not better this bias should lie towards things laudable and useful to society? ... If you strip men of these their notions, or, if you will, prejudices, with regard to modesty, decency, justice, charity, and the like, you will soon find them so many monsters, utterly unfit for human society.[24]

If we can manage to believe that tradition at least contains a valuable starting point, we can also learn to correct it. If it is merely the product of chance variation and natural selection for reproductive advantage it seems difficult to see why we should trust it, or our individual reasonings, even so much. A merely naturalistic, "unbelieving", account of the world and human history can hardly avoid despair. "What beauty can be found in a moral system, formed, and governed by chance, fate or any other blind, unthinking principle?"[25] I do not mean that unbelievers must all, pejoratively, be infidels. On the contrary, I am arguing that we do

---

[22] Berkeley, 'Sermon on Religious Zeal' (1709-12), in *Works*, op.cit., vol. 7, p. 20. See also my 'Berkeley's Philosophy of Religion', in Kenneth Winckler ed., *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 369-404.

[23] Berkeley, 'Sermon on Immortality', in *Works* op.cit., vol. 7, p. 14.

[24] Berkeley, 'Discourse to Magistrates', in *Works* op.cit., vol. 6, pp. 203f

[25] Berkeley, *Alciphron* (Euphranor speaks), in *Works* op.cit., vol. 3, p. 128. See also E.O. Wilson on our moral feelings as a "hodge podge" of evolutionary adaptations, which we could some day reorganize, without any better goal than to keep our line alive: *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 196.

not depend for our happiness on *reason,* and even atheists who pride themselves on being "Bright" are as irrational as any. One of Buddha's sermons offered the image of an enormous mountain that was irreversibly advancing on us all. If this were so, he enquired, would we not be seeking some way to escape? And yet, there is exactly such a mountain coming: not merely our own individual deaths, but the deaths of everyone and everything we love, an absolute destruction of all we might achieve.[26] And yet we all ignore this fact in almost every moment of our lives together. Some modern transhumanists sketch out both near-future and far-future stories in which we and our craft-enhanced descendants remake the worlds. Some even acknowledge that they are offering a naturalized religion, a technological realization of the opium dream.[27] There can be no present proof that these futures would be either possible or desirable: they are commitments that go far beyond the evidence. The difference between the transhumanist and the older believer is the moral that they draw: the older believer, hoping to be caught up into the dance of immortal love, concluded that we must seek to act and imagine as that dance requires. In short, that we need to love one another, and see the god or the god-to-be in each of us. The transhumanist moral is rather that we must seize the present opportunity for physical and biological research, and keep the research grants coming![28]

One other response to the advancing mountain is simply to forget it. Our error, it may be said, is always to be living outside the present, in hope or fear or desperate depression. Thus an old story, first seen in the *Mahabharata*, is gradually turned into advice to "gather rosebuds while ye may":[29]

> A man travelling across a field ecountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger after him. Coming to a precipice, he caught hold of the root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above.

---

[26] As Bertrand Russell, rather pompously, reminded us in *Mysticism and Logic* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1918), p. 56. Logan Pearsall Smith mocked the rhetoric in *All Trivia* (London: Constable & Co., 1933), p. 81. See also my *From Athens to Jerusalem: the Love of Wisdom and the Love of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 12-13.

[27] See 'Deep Time: does it matter?' in George Ellis, ed., *The Far-Future Universe* (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 2002), pp. 177-95.

[28] See Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

[29] Robert Herrick, 'To the Virgins, to make much of time' (1648): Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250–1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 274 (that is, get laid before it is too late).

> Trembling, the man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black, little by little started to gnaw away the vine. The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. How sweet it tasted![30]

The original point of the story was rather to point out how easily we are distracted, and to suggest that we should regard all these dangers and delights – but especially the delights – as unimportant, and set ourselves to escape. Even the "presentist" moral is a lot more difficult to act upon than any simple injunction to eat, drink and be merry: we cannot afford to dull our senses and imagination if we are even to enjoy the moment. And the original moral is still stranger if there could really be no way out. The secular interpretation of the story, so to speak, is also very easy to mock:

> It's really impressive the way modern psycho-analysis has confirmed the insights of the New Testament. Where two or three are gathered together, you know. It is an indisputable fact that groups of people, huddled together as closely as possible, do feel warmer. That is the basis of Group Therapy. It is also known as the Kingdom of Heaven.[31]

Celia Green's sardonic comment is set in a dream-world where "sensible people" can think of nothing better to do than reconcile themselves and others to a frozen, barren landscape. Her response, in the dream, is simply to wake up!

Waking Up is indeed an important metaphor if we are ever to understand the life of faith.[32] Respectable philosophers in the past have agreed that this life, this world, is a dream and a delirium from which we should gladly wake.[33] Plotinus noted that such waking would most likely be disbelieved when we drop off to sleep again.[34] This world here-now

---

[30] Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Tuttle: Boston, 1957), p. 39; cf. *Mahabharata* Bk. 11, pp. 5-6; *The Lalitavistara Sūtra: The Voice of the Buddha, the Beauty of Compassion,* tr. Gwendolyn Bays (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1983). See Helen B. Holt/Karma Sangye Khandro, 'Honey or Nectar': URL = <http://www.khandro.net/nature_honey.htm> (accessed 28th April 2011) for a brief account of the story's transmutations.

[31] Celia Green, *The Human Evasion* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969), p. 124.

[32] I began examining it in 'Waking-up: a neglected model for the After-life': *Inquiry* 26 (1983), pp. 209ff, and have addressed the issue periodically since then, See especially *Understanding Faith: Religious Belief and its Place in Society* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2009), pp. 158-71.

[33] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 2.17.1.

[34] Plotinus, *Ennead* V.5 [32].11.

is not the real world. So Chesterton was perhaps not quite correct: it is not after all a *sure* mark of sanity to think we are awake already. He may still have been right to suggest that we should take the dream seriously. "Whether it's reality or a dream, doing what's right is what matters. If it's reality, then for the sake of reality; if it's a dream, then for the purpose of winning friends for when we awaken."[35] And perhaps it is easier to "do what's right" if we remember that material gains are fairy gold, that vanish on our waking.

But if this world and our experience of it are relatively dream-like, and real causes, real destinies, real effects are "outside over there", we cannot expect to discover this simply from the dream itself. Perhaps, by sounder standards, our dream experience is implausible or incoherent, but we don't have access to those standards: whatever the dream shows us we will take as "normal" – at least until we begin to wonder at what happens and its curious incongruities, its failure to be what something in us still demands. It is that strange feeling, not unlike what Joad called "the still, small voice that whispers 'fiddlesticks'"[36], that offers the first challenge to conventional reason, and to consensus reality.

> We … have dreamt the world. We have dreamt it as firm, mysterious, visible, ubiquitous in space and durable in time; but in its architecture we have allowed tenuous and eternal crevices of unreason which tell us it is false.[37]

Conversely, once one has concluded that this world is a dream there is nothing the unbeliever can do to prove one wrong! If one shouldn't believe anything without "sufficient" evidence it is not clear which belief it is from which we should withhold consent. A mere feeling or conviction is not proof of a kind that any court or council or laboratory team should countenance: but in that case, why should a mere feeling of "reality" – which neurophilosophers tell us is engendered in the brain, and could be engineered - be judged sufficient to exclude the possibility that we are dreaming, and that we might yet wake? That thought too, no doubt, can be induced – and maybe much "religious" ritual, much

---

[35] Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life's A Dream* (Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2004; 1st published as *La vida es sueño* in 1635), p. 137f (Sigismund speaks).

[36] G.E.M. Joad *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country* (London: Faber, 1946), p. 224. The remark is also attributed to W.K. Clifford: this is not impossible, but I have not located any context.

[37] J.L. Borges, 'Avatars of the Tortoise' in *Labyrinths* ed. D. A. Yates and J. E. Irby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 202-8.

religious art and architecture, is aimed, exactly, at inducing it. So Abbot Suger declared of the abbey church of St.Denis, in the twelfth century, that there he felt himself "dwelling in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of heaven, and that by the grace of God, [he could] be transported from this inferior to the higher world in an anagogical manner".[38] Of course we aren't all moved by the very same rituals, stories or places. The best that we can manage, probably, is a diversity of belief: let people follow whatever lights they see, even if some turn out to be merely marsh-lights (or the Puck).

> No one takes hold of the world immediately; between the two there imposes speech, the language of society, the inherited store of concepts and images. ... It is by the multiplication of ways of talking that we attain the plenitude of plenitudes.[39]

But we still need faith to carry on our own particular journey, and would feel easier in our minds if we could identify some generally plausible criterion for picking our direction, and some sketchy idea of what the world should be if our journey is to be a hopeful one. What signs might we encounter that would confirm our choice, or send us another way? If this world here-now is indeed a dream how shall we wake, and what will the waking world turn out to be?

> Our country from which we came is There, our Father is There. How shall we travel to it, where is our way of escape? We cannot get there on foot; for our feet only carry us everywhere in this world, from one country to another. You must not get ready a carriage, either, or a boat. Let all these things go, and do not look. Shut your eyes, and change to and wake another way of seeing, which everyone has but few use.[40]

Both rational and traditional religion are mainly concerned to help us live here-now, to give us the intellectual and emotional strength to carry on. We live with inconsistencies. Truth may indeed, as Boethius hoped, be "one, without a flaw"[41], but we have no immediate access to that

[38] E. Panofsky ed., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 65.

[39] A. Lacy, *Miguel de Unamuno: the Rhetoric of Existence* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967), p. 124, paraphrasing Unamuno.

[40] Plotinus, *Ennead* I.6 [1].8.

[41] Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*: *Medieval Latin Lyrics,* tr. Helen Waddell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952; 1st published 1929), p. 59.

single, singular truth. We are all, initially, polytheists, acknowledging many different and conflicting demands on our reason, time and energy, and merely hoping that the conflicts will not tear us quite apart. No single ideal that we conceive will reconcile the differences within us and between us: indeed, the more vociferous the advocates of some one way of seeing the more they engender conflict and reprisals – a lesson that some modern atheists would do well to learn. Chesterton's most eloquent argument for the primacy of the Catholic Church was that it had, he thought, managed to harness many different impulses and partial truths, allowing the lion, as it were, to lie down with the lamb without demanding that he not be a lion.[42] The best that most of us can manage is to serve our partial ideals, our partial truths, without denying that others have partial truths as well, or neglecting the truths we own – which is itself a working contradiction!

So does "religion" give us any clues to follow? The greatest, most seminal figures of our religious history are those who renounced "the world", whether by literally abandoning all their this-worldly concerns, what to eat or drink or wear, or at least by refusing any this-worldly honours. Even their disciples did almost as much. One of Plotinus's disciples, for example, the Roman Senator Rogatianus, "gave up all his property, dismissed all his servants, and resigned his rank. … He only ate every other day."[43] Renunciation, turning away from the temptations of the dream, was at least a preparation for the day when we wake up. For some, it may have been an actual awakening. It is unsurprising that any messages they then brought back to the dreamers seems "unreasonable". It is, after all, the dream that dictates to the rest of us what we consider reason.

> Plotinus recognized truths which we, whether we will or not, must call revelations, which are entirely strange to the modern consciousness and even excite the highest degree of indignation. And now the main point: when Plotinus had to decide between "revealed" and "natural" truths, he unhesitatingly took the side of the former: "that which appears most real to common consciousness has the least existence".[44]

---

[42] Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, op.cit., p. 148 after *Isaiah* 12.6.

[43] Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 7.32-40: *Plotinus*, tr. A.H. Armstrong, vol.1 (London: Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1966), p. 27.

[44] Lev Shestov, *In Job's Balances*, tr. Camilla Coventry and C.A. Macartney, ed. Bernard Martin (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), Pt. 3 'Plotinus's Ecstasies', after *Ennead*, V.5 [32].11: URL = <http://shestov.by.ru/ijb/jb_0.html>

Plato had said the same – that the prisoner released from his chains and brought up into the light would at first be dazzled, and would find his fellow prisoners wholly unbelieving of his revelation if he were to go back down into the cave.[45] Why should we believe him? Why should we not? If it is wrong, as rationalists hold, to believe what someone tells us, without the blessing of "reason", it must also be wrong to go on believing what we already do, without the blessing of "reason".So which prophet shall we follow? You and I here-now are unlikely ourselves to abandon property and rank and family to practise extreme austerities (or even minor ones). Religious traditions that demand that everyone renounce the world in just that way don't usually, it seems, survive! We can hope that there will be a place in the Kingdom for such householders and fairly honest citizens as do not take the unfamiliar road. But we may still also hope for some words from, as it were, the athletes of the spirit. Shall we read the Buddha's sermons, or the Desert Fathers? Shall we hope for our sense of self to be dissolved, and a subsequent unveiling of the Unborn and Indestructible without which, so the Buddha taught us, there could be no escape from Here?[46] Or shall we hope instead to recall our higher selves, and rejoin the dance of immortal love, as pagan Platonists like Plotinus hoped? Or follow the Incarnate Word, as Christians should? Or imagine a transhumanist utopia at the end of time (an event indefinitely delayed)?[47] How different in actual practice are the claims? The many different forms and recipes of consciously unreasonable religion may offer us too many choices: how can we sensibly choose, when the very criteria for choice are determined by the choice we shall have made? And if there is no *reasonable* choice, in that sense, must we not – logically – conclude that we must make *unreasonable* choices? We cannot avoid

[45] Plato, *Republic*, 7.514a-518b.

[46] "There is, monks, an unborn – unbecome – unmade – unfabricated. If there were not that unborn – unbecome – unmade – unfabricated, there would not be the case that emancipation from the born – become – made – fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn – unbecome – unmade – unfabricated, emancipation from the born – become – made – fabricated is discerned": *Khuddaka Nikaya* (Collection of Little Texts), Bk. 3 *Udana* (Exclamations) 8:3: 'Nibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding (3)', tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu *Access to Insight*, 8 July 2010, URL = <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.8.03.than.html> (accessed 29th April 2011).

[47] See Freeman J. Dyson, 'Time without End: Physics and Biology in an Open Universe': *Reviews of Modern Physics*, 51.3 (1979), reprinted in *Selected Papers of Freeman Dyson* (Providence, Rhode Island: American Mathematical Society, 1996), pp. 529-42; URL = <http://www.aleph.se/Trans/Global/Omega/dyson.txt> (accessed 29th April 2011).

the choice: whatever happens we will have walked a particular path through life, without any prior proof that ours is the one right way. Nor is anything gained by appealing to any supposedly infallible authority, whether papal or scientific: "of what use is an infallible guide without an infallible sign to know him by?"[48] We must end by hoping that "in every Humane Creature there is a ray of common sense, an original light of reason and nature which the worst and most bigoted education, although it may impair, can never quite extinguish".[49]

And so I end at my beginning: the light of reason, properly understood, must be our guide – but that light is neither to be equated with my own individual conviction[50] nor yet with consensus reality. Neither I nor We determine what is true, but the Truth, if we are not wholly to despair, must still be somehow in us. Our commitment must always be to the Truth itself, and not just to our best image of that Truth, although we cannot thus be committed to the Truth except by following our best image, while still being ready to be deprived of it. This is the final paradox of reason; that our goal, the Good, must lie beyond both intellect and being.[51] And Intellect is most itself "when it goes out of its mind 'drunk with the nectar'; then it falls in love, simplified into happiness by having its fill, and it is better for it to be drunk with a drunkenness like this than to be more respectably sober".[52] That Intellect is indistinguishable from Faith, and that Faith is God.[53]

[48] Berkeley, 'Letter to Sir John James', in *Works* op.cit., vol. 7, p. 148.

[49] Berkeley, 'Primary Visitation Charge', in *Works* op.cit., vol. 7, p. 163.

[50] That would then be "an inward conceited principle ... sufficient to dissolve any human fabric of polity or civil government": Berkeley, 'Discourse to Magistrates', in *Works* op.cit., vol. 6, p. 217.

[51] Plato, *Republic*, 6.509b.

[52] Plotinus, *Ennead*, VI.7 [38].35.

[53] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12.1072b28.

FAITH AS AN EPISTEMIC DISPOSITION

T. RYAN BYERLY

Baylor University

Abstract: This paper presents and defends a model of religious faith as an epistemic disposition. According to the model, religious faith is a disposition to take certain doxastic attitudes toward propositions of religious significance upon entertaining certain mental states. Three distinct advantages of the model are advanced. First, the model allows for religious faith to explain the presence and epistemic appropriateness of religious belief. Second, the model accommodates a variety of historically significant perspectives concerning the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt. And, finally, the model offers an appealing account of what unifies religious faith with other kinds of faith.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will explicate and defend a model of religious faith according to which religious faith is an example of what I call an epistemic disposition. In the first section, I explain what epistemic dispositions are and say how in very general terms religious faith might be understood as one of these dispositions. In sections two through four I highlight some of the central advantages of modelling religious faith in this way. Section two focuses on the present model's ability to accommodate the apparent explanatory priority of religious faith to religious belief. It shows how on the present model it could be that a person holds religious beliefs *because* she has religious faith, and how on the present model it could be that a person's holding of religious beliefs might be epistemically appropriate *because* of her religious faith. Section three focuses on the present model's ability to accommodate a variety of historically significant

perspectives concerning the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt. It is a boon of the present model that it does not rule out historically significant and opposing answers to questions about these relationships. Finally, I conclude the paper by reflecting on the relationship between religious faith modelled in the way proposed here and other kinds of faith. I show that the model of religious faith proposed here might be modified so as to yield attractive models of faith in other domains as well, thereby yielding an explanation of what unifies our talk of faith in these various areas.

I. EPISTEMIC DISPOSITIONS AND A GENERAL MODEL

Begin with the question of what an epistemic disposition is. To find an answer, we need to say something about dispositions in general, since epistemic dispositions are just one sub-class of dispositions in general. I won't offer an analysis of what a disposition is, however. For one thing, I'm sceptical that this is possible. Attempts to analyse dispositions are notoriously suspect.[1] But, for another, we don't need an analysis of dispositions here to find a way of distinguishing epistemic dispositions from other dispositions which aren't epistemic dispositions.

All we need, instead, is a handle on what Robert Audi (1994) calls "realization conditions" and "constitutive manifestations". To see what these two elements involve, consider the paradigm instance of fragility. When we ascribe the disposition of fragility to a glass, we are saying that there is something about the glass's nature which makes it likely under certain conditions that the glass will break. The realization conditions of the glass's fragility will be conditions involving a certain amount of pressure and the constitutive manifestations of the disposition will be behaviours involving shattering. Importantly, these realization conditions and constitutive manifestations are partially constitutive of the disposition of fragility. A disposition whose constitutive manifestations don't involve shattering or breaking in any way is just not the disposition of fragility. Dispositions, then, can be partially individuated by their realization conditions and constitutive manifestations.

And, indeed, we can individuate epistemic dispositions in just this way. What makes a disposition an epistemic disposition is that there are certain restrictions on its realization conditions and constitutive

[1] See the review of such attempts in (Fara 2006).

manifestations. The realization conditions of epistemic dispositions will be sets of mental states – sets of beliefs, experiences, emotions, and so on. The constitutive manifestations of epistemic dispositions will be doxastic attitudes like belief, disbelief, suspension of judgment, and perhaps other degreed attitudes if such there be.[2] Thus, epistemic dispositions will be dispositions in the presence of certain mental states to take certain doxastic attitudes.

I call them epistemic dispositions because they are dispositions having to do with the way we function as believers. Typically, the way that we navigate our experience of the world is by gathering evidence and responding to it in a way that makes sense from our perspective. Our gathering of evidence involves us coming to host mental states like beliefs, experiences and so on.[3] And, the way we respond to this evidence is by taking those attitudes that these mental states dispose us to take.

Some examples may help. One example of an epistemic disposition would be my disposition to believe I am seeing a black cat in the presence of my having visual experiences as of a black cat. There are a whole range of such visual experiences which might trigger – which might act as realization conditions for – this disposition. They are all experiences like those I would have were I to see a black cat of some kind. And, because I have the aforementioned disposition, when I have these kinds of experiences, I tend to believe I am seeing a black cat. If I want to know whether there's a black cat around, I'll gather evidence by looking around and then I'll respond to the evidence I gather by taking those attitudes my gathered evidence disposes me to take. Here's another example: I have a disposition, upon feeling horrified or disgusted by a situation, to believe that something has gone morally amiss. When contemplating a situation engenders these emotions in me, I tend to think that there is something morally wrong with the contemplated situation. If I want to know what to think about whether there is something wrong about a given scenario,

[2] I am thinking here of degrees of belief. For a brief overview of degrees of belief see the discussion of subjective probability in (Hajek 2009) or the various pieces in (Huber and Schmidt-Petri 2009).

[3] I do not intend here to make any substantive claim about the nature of evidence. It is perhaps easiest to think of evidence on my view as consisting in mental states, along the lines proposed in Conee and Feldman (2008). But, if someone prefers to think of evidence as consisting in propositions (like, e.g., [Williamson 2000]), I could distinguish between the evidence there is – which is a body of propositions – and those mental states whereby someone comes to possess that evidence – experiences, beliefs, and so on.

one way I can check is by seeing if I respond to the scenario with one of the aforementioned emotions and then following the emotion to the attitude toward which it leads me. A third example would be my disposition to believe a proposition q in the presence of believing a proposition p and a proposition if p then q. When I come to believe p and to believe if p then q, I tend to also come to believe q. Both this and the foregoing examples were examples of epistemic dispositions because they are all examples of dispositions whose realization conditions are sets of mental states and whose constitutive manifestations are doxastic attitudes.

Now my proposal here is that we understand religious faith as an epistemic disposition of this sort. Very generally, religious faith will be a disposition in the presence of certain mental states to take certain doxastic attitudes toward propositions with religiously significant content. I won't specify here which precise mental states must serve as the realization conditions of faith, which precise propositions with religiously significant content must be the propositions a person of faith is disposed take doxastic attitudes toward, or which doxastic attitudes the person of faith must be disposed to take toward these propositions. All I will say is that the doxastic attitudes which serve as the constitutive manifestations of faith will include what we typically refer to as "religious beliefs".[4] Thus, on the present general model, faith is a disposition to hold religious beliefs and perhaps other doxastic attitudes toward propositions of religious significance in the presence of certain mental states. Call this the *epistemic disposition* model. I will discuss options for filling in the details of this general model in section three. But, before doing so, I want to remark on the present model's ability to accommodate the explanatory priority of religious faith to religious belief.

II. THE EXPLANATORY PRIORITY OF RELIGIOUS FAITH TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF

It is not uncommon for people to talk as if religious faith explains something significant about religious belief. I'll discuss two cases here and show how the epistemic disposition model accommodates this idea at face value better than do alternative models.

[4] By calling them the attitudes we typically refer to as religious beliefs, I intend to leave it an open question whether they are beliefs or something else. When I talk of "religious belief" in the following section, it is to be understood in this same way – whatever attitude it is that we are talking about when we use appropriately the title "religious belief".

First, consider the following conversation:

A: B, why do you believe all this stuff about Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary? It's not like you think there is overwhelming evidence for all this, right? But you really do believe it nonetheless.

B: That's right, A. I don't believe because I think the evidence is overwhelming. I believe because I have faith. If you're going to believe, you'll have to have faith, too.

Here it sounds as if B is suggesting that the explanation for why he holds certain religious beliefs is that B has faith. Indeed, it may be that B is suggesting that religious faith provides a contrastive reason here. B believes, and A does not believe, because B has faith and A doesn't. Religious faith is brought forward as an explanation for the presence of religious belief.

Here's a second case:

A: Why *should* a person believe all those things you do? I'm not just asking why you do believe them, but why is believing those things the *appropriate* thing to do?

B: Here again, the answer is faith. A person who has faith should believe these things. Maybe someone who doesn't have faith shouldn't. But if you have faith, it is of course appropriate for you to believe.

This time religious faith is again invoked to explain something about religious belief. It is invoked to explain the epistemic appropriateness or justification of religious belief. Religious beliefs are ones the person of faith *should* have. They are ones it is appropriate for the person of faith to have. Religious faith is invoked to explain the positive normative epistemic status of religious belief.[5]

Neither of the above conversations is uncommon. It is a quite ordinary occurrence for people to appeal to the explanatory priority of faith to belief in this way. But if we take these claims at face value, then the model of faith proposed in the previous section has significant advantages over many other contemporary models. For, many contemporary models simply identify faith with religious belief or with some attitude which

[5] I'm not trying to insist on any particular epistemic property here. When I talk of "appropriateness" or "justification" or "what should be believed" I am simply thinking of the belief as having some positive normative status. Thus, B's claim is that faith explains the positive normative status (whatever it is) of religious belief.

stands in for religious belief.[6] But identifying these two will surely fail to make sense of the explanatory priority of one to the other.

To see this, suppose that we identify faith with religious belief. Then in the first conversation, what B is saying is that he believes the things he believes because he does. This is hardly an explanation. Rather, it sounds like a refusal to offer an explanation. Even worse, this view has B reporting a tautology to A: if A is going to believe, he will have to believe. It could be that this is what B is doing. But, surely understanding his speech in this way is not to take him at face value. At face value, B really does offer an explanation for why he believes, and he tells A something of significance when he tells A that if he is going to believe, he will have to have faith. Thus, identifying faith with religious belief will not allow us to take B's talk in the first case at face value.

Nor will it allow us to take B's talk in the second case at face value. If we identify faith and belief in the second case, then B is saying that the person who holds religious beliefs should hold those beliefs because she does. There are some epistemologists who have flirted with the idea that believing a proposition gives a person some reason to believe that proposition,[7] but it is surely a bit much to say that a person ought to believe something because she does! B seems to be claiming a more favourable epistemic status for religious belief that than which it might receive by simply being had. If we want to take B at face value, then we cannot identify faith with religious belief.

Models which identify religious faith with religious belief or with some stand-in for religious belief fail to treat these exchanges at face value, then.[8] But modelling faith as an epistemic disposition along the

[6] Swinburne (2005) discusses a model of faith where faith consists in beliefs in propositions with religiously significant content. He calls the model the "Thomist" model. An example of a model which takes faith as something short of belief is Alston's (1996) acceptance model.

[7] See for instance (McGrath 2007), who defends this view as the heart of "epistemic conservatism". Others have resisted McGrath's sort of conservatism, arguing for more limited varieties (see, e.g., [Foley 1983], [Kvanvig 1989], [Vahid 2004]).

[8] A similar point applies to Bishop's (2007) doxastic venture model of faith. For, on his view, religious faith is a commitment to employing certain believed religious propositions in one's practical reasoning, while recognizing that these propositions aren't adequately supported by one's evidence. But this view will not allow us to make sense of the explanatory priority of faith to religious belief. If anything, the order of explanation will go the other way around. Faith on this model won't be able to explain the presence or appropriateness of religious belief. It only explains why persons who already have

lines proposed in the previous section can make good sense of both exchanges. Indeed, it can explain how the claims about the explanatory priority of faith may be quite correct.

Take first the claim that religious faith explains the *presence* of religious belief. If we understand faith as an epistemic disposition, then this claim is quite easy to make sense of. Why do some persons hold religious beliefs while others do not? The answer is faith. Some persons are disposed to have these beliefs in the presence of certain mental states and others are not. When those who are disposed in this way host the requisite mental states, they tend to hold the religious beliefs in question. They hold them because of the way they are disposed. They hold them because of their faith. So, the present model can make sense of the claim that religious faith explains the presence of religious belief.

It can also make sense of the claim that religious faith explains the *appropriateness* of religious belief. To see this, we need to reflect briefly on how epistemic dispositions more generally contribute to the appropriateness of beliefs. The examples of section one are a helpful guide here. Recall the example of my disposition in the presence of visual experiences of black cats to believe I am seeing a black cat. How can this disposition contribute to the appropriateness of my beliefs? As a first pass, it seems that it can do so by being that by virtue of which my mental states incline me to believe that I'm seeing a black cat. For instance, imagine that I have this disposition and that I come to have an experience as of seeing a black cat. My experience then inclines me, by virtue of my disposition, to believe that I'm seeing a black cat. And nothing else prevents me from being so inclined. In such a case, it seems plausible that believing that I'm seeing a black cat is epistemically appropriate, and that my disposition has contributed to its appropriateness.

More generally, a thesis like the following seems quite attractive:

(D) If a subject S's mental states M incline S to take attitude A by virtue of a disposition D to take A in the presence of states like M, and none of S's other mental states prevent this inclination,[9] then it is appropriate for S to take attitude A.

---

religious beliefs deliberate and behave in a certain way. Thus, the epistemic disposition model discussed here has the same advantage over Bishop's doxastic venture model that it has over the Thomistic and acceptance models.

[9] I add this clause because of cases where one's evidence causes one to have a *prima facie*, but not an *ultima facie* inclination to take a certain attitude. In such cases, though

If thesis D or something much like it is true, then the epistemic disposition model of faith can explain quite well how religious faith could explain the appropriateness of religious belief. For, it could be that the religious believer comes to hold her beliefs when, by virtue of her faith, her mental states incline her to take these beliefs. That is, the religious believer has a disposition in the presence of certain mental states to hold certain religious beliefs (i.e., her faith), and when she comes to host these mental states they incline her toward these religious beliefs by virtue of this disposition. When this occurs, thesis D says that holding these religious beliefs is appropriate. And, part of the explanation for why they are appropriate is her faith – her disposition to hold them in the presence of those mental states which have so inclined her to these beliefs.

So, if thesis D or something much like it is true, then the epistemic disposition model of faith can explain how religious faith explains the appropriateness of religious belief. B's remark may be quite accurate: faith makes a difference to the appropriateness of religious belief. But, is D or something like it true? I cannot argue at great length here that it is. But let me offer a brief defence.

The primary reason I know of for accepting a thesis like D is its explanatory power. Specifically, thesis D offers a unified explanation of diverse but plausible cases where beliefs have positive normative epistemic status. I'll talk here about three such cases – cases involving natural and artificial signs, cases involving moral emotions, and cases involving intuition.

Start with cases involving natural and artificial signs. The distinction between natural and artificial signs goes back at least as far as Thomas Reid.[10] An artificial sign is a sign which signifies what it does in virtue of some tacit agreement among people, while a natural sign signifies what it does in some other way. For instance, the word "pigs" artificially signifies pigs, while smoke naturally signifies fire.

---

one is disposed to take the relevant attitude in the presence of some of her evidence, other evidence of hers prevents her from being so inclined in light of all of her evidence. For instance, when I look at the Mueller-Lyer lines, my experience gives me a *prima facie* inclination to believe that the lines are of different lengths. But, since I know better, it does not give me an *ultima facie* inclination to believe they are different lengths. My knowledge prevents me from being inclined in light of all of my evidence to believe the lines are of different length. Thus, I add this clause to D so that D will not imply that in this sort of case I am justified in believing that which I am only prima facie inclined to believe.

[10] See (Yaffe and Nichols 2009), who say the distinction goes back further.

These signs are thought by Reid and others to play an important role in determining what is appropriate for a person to believe. Consider some examples. It might, by virtue of my seeing smoke, become epistemically appropriate for me to believe that there is a fire. Or, it might, by virtue of my seeing the sentence "The democrats lost four seats in the house," become epistemically appropriate for me to believe that there is a sentence reporting that the democrats lost four seats in the house. Of course, this need not be so. It is equally possible that I have these experiences and that the aforementioned beliefs *not* be appropriate.

A thesis like D can help to explain the difference between those cases where my experiences make the corresponding beliefs appropriate and those cases where they do not. In those cases where my experience of smoke does make it appropriate for me to believe that there is a fire it is because my experience, by virtue of my disposition in the presence of like experiences to believe that there is a fire, inclines me to believe that there is a fire. In those cases where my experience of the sentence makes it appropriate for me to believe that there is a sentence reporting that the democrats lost four seats, it is because my experience, by virtue of my disposition in the presence of like experiences to believe that there is a sentence with such contents, has inclined me to believe that I just read a sentence with such contents. By contrast, where I have these experiences but the same attitudes are not appropriate, it may be because I do not have the relevant dispositions working in the same way.

D also helps to explain the epistemic appropriateness of believing certain moral claims on the basis of moral emotions. One way this may go is as follows. Suppose I consider the claim that torturing babies for fun is morally wrong. I reflect on the claim, I imagine scenarios involving this sort of harsh treatment, and I have a feeling of disgust or horror as a result. Further, I have a disposition when I have such experiences to believe that what I'm contemplating is morally wrong. So, as I contemplate the envisioned scenario and react with disgust or horror to it, this inclines me by virtue of my aforementioned disposition to believe that torturing babies for fun is morally wrong. In this way, thesis D can help to explain how certain moral beliefs might be epistemically appropriate as well. They are appropriate because some mental state like a moral emotion inclines the subject to these beliefs by virtue of a disposition she has in the presence of such emotions to take these attitudes.

Finally, thesis D also allows for a powerful explanation of the nature and justificatory power of intuition. Consider, for instance, the intuition

that the fact that I will teach class tomorrow doesn't explain why I have the evidence I currently do concerning my teaching tomorrow. For me, this intuition is very powerful. It is intuitively clear to me that what explains why I have the evidence I do about whether I will teach tomorrow is a body of present and past facts, rather than the fact that I will in fact teach tomorrow. Now, I might contemplate the proposition that my teaching tomorrow does explain why I have the evidence I currently do and in light of this intuition, come to disbelieve this proposition. And, plausibly, my doing so would be epistemically appropriate in light of the force of my intuition.

Thesis D can offer an explanation for why this is so. For, reports about intuitions are plausibly understood as reports about epistemic dispositions. My intuition that my teaching class tomorrow doesn't explain my current evidence is just a disposition to disbelieve that my teaching tomorrow does explain my current evidence upon considering the claim that it does. Or, perhaps, it is a disposition, upon considering this proposition in light of a grasp of certain conceptual connections, to disbelieve that the teaching explains the evidence. Thus, thesis D can explain how intuition can make beliefs epistemically appropriate since intuition is just one particularly forceful kind of disposition.[11]

Indeed, thesis D provides a *unified* account of these difficult-to-explain yet plausible cases of justification. Each of the foregoing types of cases – the cases involving natural and artificial signs, the cases involving moral emotions, and the cases involving intuition – is a plausible case of epistemically appropriate belief. Thesis D offers a unified explanation for why these attitudes are epistemically appropriate. These attitudes are appropriate because some mental state or states of the subjects incline them to take these attitudes by virtue of a disposition they have in the presence of such mental states to take these attitudes. In the case of natural and acquired signs, an experience does this; in the case of moral belief an emotion does this, and in the case of intuition a thought or episode of considering along with an adequate grasp of certain concepts does this. In all three cases, then, D provides a powerful explanation for how it is that the subjects have the epistemic properties we take them to have. Thus, thesis D has a great deal of explanatory power.[12]

[11] Similar accounts of intuition are offered by (Sosa 2007a) and (Swinburne 2001).

[12] Of course, in order to have a fully satisfying inference to the best explanation, I need to show that other available explanations of the same data are either not equally or more

This is not to say that there are no objections to D. The internalist might object to D on the basis that it allows dispositions of which the subject is unaware to contribute to what is epistemically appropriate to believe.[13] But there is an easy fix to D for this – just restrict the dispositions in D to ones of which the subject is aware. So long as a subject can be aware of her faith – which B's remarks above seem to make plausible – this modified version of D would still lend credence to the claim that religious faith could explain the epistemic appropriateness of religious belief. Another objection might be that D allows weird or even seemingly irrational dispositions to contribute to what is epistemically appropriate to believe. Again, we might modify D so that only reliable or virtuous dispositions can contribute to epistemic appropriateness.[14] If it can be defended that faith is a reliable or virtuous disposition – theses which persons of faith have found attractive[15] – then again this will make perfectly intelligible B's claim that religious faith explains the appropriateness of religious belief. Or, we might instead reply that these seemingly irrational dispositions contribute to epistemic appropriateness, but that there are more valuable epistemic properties beyond this appropriateness. For instance, it might be that when a person believes in accordance with the dispositions she has (whether virtuous or reliable or not), she fulfils her proper function; but, when a person believes in accordance with virtuous or reliable dispositions, she fulfils her proper function *with excellence*. Thus, even if faith weren't reliable or virtuous, it could contribute at least to epistemic appropriateness, as B insists.

So, there is good reason to believe that a thesis in the neighbourhood of thesis D is correct. And, given this result, the epistemic disposition model of faith not only accommodates the idea that faith might explain the presence of religious belief, but that faith might explain the

adequate. But pursuing this end would take us too far afield in this paper.

[13] One reason why the internalist might object in this way is that allowing dispositions of which one is unaware to contribute to epistemic appropriateness will conflict with the subject's perspective objection. This objection, originally discussed in (Bonjour 1980), is that accounts which allow beliefs the truth of which would be an accident from the subject's perspective to be appropriate must be wrong. If D allows dispositions of which one is unaware to contribute to epistemic appropriateness, then it will allow for attitudes whose truth would be an accident from the subject's perspective to be appropriate.

[14] If we make use of virtues, the account may resemble (Zagzebski 1996) or (Sosa 2007b). If we make use of reliability, the account may resemble (Goldman 1979).

[15] Aquinas, from whom I have derived much inspiration for the present model, is one famous defender of the claim that faith is a virtue – a theological virtue.

appropriateness of religious belief. Since other models of faith cannot do this, we have here a first attractive feature of the epistemic disposition model which favours it over other models.

III. FAITH AND EVIDENCE, FAITH AND VOLITION, AND FAITH AND DOUBT

In this section, I want to discuss a second attractive feature of the epistemic disposition model: it accommodates a variety of historically significant perspectives concerning the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt.

What I mean by this claim is the following. The general model of faith outlined above can be filled in so as to yield more narrow accounts of faith friendly toward a variety of different and opposing answers to significant questions about the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt. For example, if someone is attracted to the view that faith requires sufficient evidence and doesn't go beyond it, then she can fill in the general model above so as to yield an account of faith friendly toward that perspective. Or, on the other hand, if someone is attracted to the view that faith necessarily goes beyond the evidence, then she can fill in the general model above so as to yield an account of faith friendly toward this perspective. And similarly for questions about faith and volition and faith and doubt.

This is an attractive feature of the present general model, I contend. For, what we want is a model of religious faith which makes sense of the significant debates about these relationships which have endured through the centuries. If our general model of faith makes answering questions about these relationships easy, then there is a problem with our model. Thus, the fact that the general epistemic disposition model does not rule out historically significant perspectives about these relationships is another positive feature in favour of the model. Modelling faith in this way allows us to make sense of these significant debates. What has been going on in such debates is that we have been debating how to fill in the details of the general model of faith proposed here.

I take it, then, that if the present model does accommodate these various perspectives about faith, this is another positive feature in its favour. I will spend the rest of this section showing that the present model *does* accommodate these various perspectives.

Begin with the relationship between faith and evidence. As I briefly mentioned above, there are at least two historically significant and opposing positions concerning the relationship between faith and evidence. On the one hand are those who think of faith as reasonable. In the extreme, this view has it that the person of faith holds her religious beliefs on the basis of publicly available evidence which adequately supports those beliefs. On this view, the person of faith does not go beyond what her evidence supports in holding her religious beliefs. Someone impressed with natural theology may be inclined toward a position like this.[16] Opposing this view are accounts of faith according to which the person of faith goes significantly beyond reason in holding her religious beliefs. When she holds these beliefs, she doesn't do so on the basis of publicly available evidence which adequately supports those beliefs. Perhaps when she holds these beliefs, she isn't holding beliefs which her evidence *disconfirms*, but neither is she holding beliefs which her evidence confirms. By faith, she believes that which is not adequately supported by her evidence. [17]

The epistemic disposition model of faith can accommodate either of these perspectives about the relationship between faith and evidence. Someone who holds to the first perspective can narrow the realization conditions of faith so as to include only mental states whose content objectively confirms the propositions which the person is disposed by faith to believe. One way this may go is as follows. Many theistic arguments begin with some observation and argue that, given this observation, it is very likely or even necessary that some proposition of religious significance is true. The person of faith may be the one who is disposed, upon believing these observation claims, to believe the relevant propositions of religious significance. For instance, she may be disposed upon believing that everything with a beginning has a cause, to believe that God is the creator of the universe. The natural theologian would insist that when the person of faith here believes that God is the creator of the universe, she does so on the basis of evidence which objectively confirms that judgment – the observation that everything with a beginning has a cause. This will be so even if the person is ignorant

[16] See, e.g., (Swinburne 2005).

[17] This perspective is embraced to varying degrees by philosophers as diverse as Plantinga (2000) and Hick (1989). It is, of course, associated with the Kierkegaardian tradition as well – see (Evans 1985).

of the argument from the one claim to the other, that is, ignorant of the work of the natural theologian. Thus, by requiring that the realization conditions of faith objectively confirm the propositions which the person of faith is disposed by her faith to believe, someone attracted to this first perspective about the relationship between faith and evidence can specify the epistemic disposition model to accommodate her perspective.

On the other side, the person who believes that the person of faith goes beyond the evidence in holding her religious beliefs can also specify the epistemic disposition model to accommodate her perspective. She simply will not impose a requirement that the realization conditions of faith include only mental states whose content objectively confirms the propositions which the person of faith is disposed to believe. Indeed, if she wished, she could make these realization conditions rather all-inclusive. On this extreme version of the view, faith would be a disposition to believe propositions of religious significance pretty well no matter what mental states one finds oneself in. Here the person of faith is surely going quite beyond her evidence when she holds her religious beliefs.

Move to the second relationship – that between faith and volition. On one side of this issue are those who claim that holding religious beliefs by faith involves a significant volitional component. The person of faith takes a leap when she accepts her religious beliefs, and her leaping is very much up to her.[18] She makes a decision, by faith, to take on these commitments. On the other side are those who emphasize that faith is a gift infused in the religious believer by a source outside of herself, and that the person who believes by faith deserves no credit for believing as she does. On this view, believing by faith involves little if any volitional element. The person of faith simply finds herself being drawn to her religious beliefs and then believing them.[19]

Again, the epistemic disposition model can accommodate either of these perspectives. Take the view according to which believing by faith does involve a significant volitional element first. Someone attracted to this perspective might further specify the epistemic disposition model by making it clear that faith is a resistible disposition. It is like a disposition I recently discovered that I have concerning gelato. On a recent visit to Italy, I learned that I have a disposition upon seeing gelato for sale after

[18] Evans (1985) provides an example of this view, as of course does William James (1896).

[19] I am thinking here primarily of persons within the Calvinist or other theological determinist traditions.

eating dinner to buy some. But, I also learned that, thankfully, this is a resistible disposition. I don't have to cave in. Though seeing the gelato does incline me to buy some, I can exercise my executive decision-making power and say "no." Someone who thinks that believing by faith involves a significant volitional element may wish to say the same about faith. Faith is a disposition to believe propositions of religious significance. But it is a resistible disposition. The person who has faith can say "no". Or, she can take a leap and say "yes". Faith encourages the leap, and it may even be that everyone who has faith takes the leap, but faith doesn't determine the leap.[20]

On the other side, someone who wishes to maintain that believing by faith is *not* radically up to us may wish to maintain that faith is an irresistible disposition. It is like my disposition upon falling forward to stick out my hands in order to prevent falling flat on my face. I'm disposed to behave this way when I fall forward. And, since it happens as such a gut reaction of mine, I can't do anything to resist it – it has the status of a reflex. We might say the same about faith, maintaining that the person of faith is irresistibly disposed to believe. It's as if she has received a new nature and that believing is simply reflex-like for this new nature.

Consider finally the relationship between faith and doubt. According to some, the person of faith cannot have any doubts about her religious convictions. She believes them with absolute subjective certainty. Anything less than this would be less than a full religious commitment.[21] Others maintain that faith is not incompatible with doubt. The person of faith may say, "I believe. Help my unbelief." She may even go through extended periods of time where her religious convictions are rather faint before returning to a more confident belief.

Unsurprisingly, the epistemic disposition model may be developed so as to accommodate either of these perspectives as well. Someone who wishes to maintain that faith rules out doubt can specify that the attitudes toward propositions of religious significance which faith disposes one to take must be attitudes implying subjective certainty. Someone who is only disposed to hold religious convictions faintly, on this view, will not have faith. On the other side, someone who wishes to allow that faith and doubt are compatible can specify that the attitudes toward which faith

[20] For a recent defence of the idea that dispositions may explain and encourage behaviour without determining it in a sense that eliminates free choice, see (O'Connor 2009).

[21] Al-Ghazali (2001) and Tennant (1989) furnish examples of this perspective.

disposes someone needn't imply subjective certainty. Someone who is disposed to believe, even perhaps with a low degree of confidence, can still have faith on this picture.

This is a second feature which reflects well on the epistemic disposition model, then. This model can accommodate each of the above historically significant positions concerning the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt. The general model does not settle these important questions, and that is a positive feature of the model as a general model of how to understand religious faith. Since other models of faith do settle these questions, the present model is preferable to them insofar as they are offered as general models.

IV. RELIGIOUS FAITH AND OTHER TYPES OF FAITH

Thus far I have presented the epistemic disposition model of faith and shown that it has two significant advantages over other contemporary models of faith. There are other features of the epistemic disposition model which are surely worthy of investigation. For instance, it would be profitable to discuss how this model accommodates the idea that a person might grow in her faith, and how it accommodates the idea that persons can be saved in a religious sense through their faith. But I can only do so much here. I'll close by discussing one more feature of the present model – its implications concerning the relationship between religious faith and other types of faith.

We use the term "faith" in many contexts other than religious ones. We say, for instance, that a wife has "faith" in her husband's marital faithfulness to her. We say that a player has "faith" in his teammates. We say that we have "faith" in our abilities. We say that we have "faith" in some authority. It would be desirable for a model of faith to explain how these various uses might be unified. The present model of religious faith as an epistemic disposition, I believe, can very easily explain how these uses are unified, whereas other models fail at this.

The epistemic disposition model of religious faith has it that faith is an epistemic disposition to take certain attitudes toward propositions of religious significance. A very natural way to extend this model to other domains would be as follows. Faith in whatever domain D is an epistemic disposition to take certain attitudes toward propositions of significance in domain D. Thus, for instance, faith in one's teammate is an epistemic disposition to take certain attitudes toward propositions of significance

concerning team sports. Faith in one's abilities is an epistemic disposition to take certain attitudes toward propositions of significance concerning one's abilities. Faith in an authority is an epistemic disposition to take certain attitudes toward propositions concerning which this authority has testified. And so on. Faith, in whatever domain, is an epistemic disposition to take attitudes toward propositions of significance in that domain.

In this way, we can explain how our talk of faith in various domains is unified. And, further, it is clear upon reflection that the accounts of faith in these various domains yielded by extending the epistemic disposition model are quite attractive accounts of faith in those domains. I'll illustrate this by focusing on the merits of the epistemic disposition model as it is applied to faith in oneself and faith in authorities.

There has been a surge of interest in the way in which trust in oneself and in the testimony of others works in recent epistemology.[22] Much has been written concerning whether and when trusting oneself and trusting others is appropriate, and concerning how such trust might contribute to which attitudes are appropriate for one to take. It has become widely accepted that trusting oneself is an unavoidable rational requirement. And it has been argued that if trusting oneself is a rational requirement then so is trusting others, in the absence of defeaters. Interestingly, trust of these types is sometimes described using the language of faith.[23]

But while much has been said concerning whether and when trusting or having faith is appropriate and concerning how trusting might contribute to which attitudes are appropriate for a person to take, less has been said concerning the basic nature of trusting or having faith. And, regrettably, some recent and quick treatments of this topic are a it wanting. One common mistake is to treat faith or trust as a kind of meta-belief. Trust in oneself is treated as believing that one is a reliable believer, while trust in another is treated as believing that the other is a reliable testifier.[24] But this sort of account is surely wrong, because persons who don't yet have a concept of reliability can still trust. And, more sophisticated believers can trust even if they believe a person is

[22] See, e.g., (Fricker 1995), (Goldman 2001), (Foley 2001), and (Koenig and Harris 2007).

[23] This is especially so for Foley (2001).

[24] Linda Zagzebski presented a view like this at the 2011 International Philosophy of Religion Conference in Krakow, Poland, in preparation for her upcoming Oxford Wilde Lectures.

rather unreliable. In fact this isn't so uncommon. A person may know full well that an acquaintance has failed to make good on his promises in the past, but when he sincerely insists this one last time that he really will do what he says, she may trust him despite his unreliability. Some other model of trust in oneself and in others is therefore needed.

I propose that the models of these inspired by the epistemic disposition model of religious faith will do quite well. Rather than saying that faith or trust in another is a meta-belief about reliability, we should say that faith in another is an epistemic disposition to believe what the other testifies. Faith in oneself is similarly not a meta-belief about one's reliability, but a disposition to believe that to which one's faculties testify. The person who has faith in herself is disposed to believe that which seems right to her, whereas the person who has faith in another is disposed to believe that to which the other testifies. This faith may be more or less strong, depending upon the circumstances which serve as the realization conditions of the disposition. Unwavering trust in another would be a disposition to believe what the other says no matter what evidence one might possess to the contrary. We might have similar unwavering trust in certain of our faculties.

The epistemic disposition model of religious faith can therefore be extended to provide attractive accounts of faith in other domains. And there is a straightforward explanation of what unifies these diverse manifestations of faith. That the present model of religious faith yields such an explanation of the relationship between religious faith and other kinds of faith is just one more positive feature in its favour.

And it is a positive feature which other proposals fail to have. For, according to many contemporary models, what makes faith *faith* is simply its content – usually a religious content. Faith is conceived of as simply religious belief or perhaps religious knowledge.[25] But such models fail to explain the relationship between religious faith and other kinds of faith.[26] The present model does not fail to do this, but does it quite well. Thus, the present model is favourable to these.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I introduced and explained the epistemic disposition model of religious faith. I argued that this model has three attractive

[25] (Plantinga 2000) would provide an example of the latter model of faith.

[26] This objection to these models is pressed at length in (Bishop 2010).

features which favour it over competing models of religious faith. First, it accommodates the ideas that religious faith might explain the presence and appropriateness of religious belief. Second, it is amenable to a variety of historically significant perspectives concerning the relationships between faith and evidence, faith and volition, and faith and doubt. Finally, it yields an attractive explanation of the relationship between religious faith and other kinds of faith. For these reasons, I recommend the present model to anyone working on the concept of faith.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

al-Ghazâlî. 2001. *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: Al-Munquidh Min Al-Dalâl*, G. F. McLean, trans. (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy)

Alson, William. 1996. "Belief, acceptance, and religious faith", in J. Jordan and D. Howard-Snyder (eds.), *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today* (London: Rowman & Littlefield)

Audi, Robert. 1994. "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe", *Nous* 28

Bishop, John. 2010. "Faith", In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online at URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/faith/>

Bishop, John. 2007. *Believing by Faith: An Essay in the Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

Bonjour, Lawrence. 1980. "Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5

Conee, Earl and Feldman, Richard. 2008. "Evidence", In *Epistemology; New Essays*, ed. Quentin Smith (New York: Oxford University Press)

Evans, C. Stephen. 1985. *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking About Faith* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press)

Fara, Michael. 2006. "Dispositions", In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online at URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dispositions/>

Foley, Richard. 1983. "Epistemic Conservatism", *Philosophical Studies* 43

Foley, Richard. 2001. *Intellectual Trust in Oneself and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Fricker, Elizabeth. 1995. "Telling and Trusting: Reductionism and Anti-Reductionism in the Epistemology of Testimony", *Mind* 104 (414)

Goldman, Alvin. 1979. "What is Justified Belief?", Reprinted in *Epistemology: An Anthology*, ed. Ernest Sosa and Jaegwon Kim (Malden: Blackwell, 2000)

Goldman, Alvin. 2001. "Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust?", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXIII (1)

Hajek, Alan. 2009. "Interpretations of Probability", In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online at URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/probability-interpret/>

Hick, John. 1989. *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press)

Huber, Franz and Schmidt-Petri, Christoph eds. 2009. *Degrees of Belief* (New York: Springer) James, William, 1896/1956. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, and Human Immortality* (New York: Dover)

Koenig, M. A. and P. L. Harris. 2007. "The Basis of Epistemic Trust: Reliable Testimony or Reliable Sources?", *Episteme* 4(3)

Kvanvig, Jonathan. 1989. "Conservatism and its Virtues", *Synthese* 79

McGrath, Matthew. 2007. "Memory and Epistemic Conservatism", *Synthese* 157

O'Connor, Timothy. 2009. "Agent-Causal Power", in *Dispositions and Causes*, ed. Toby Handfield (New York: Oxford University Press)

Plantinga, Alvin. 2000. *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Sosa, Ernest 2007a. "Intuitions: their Nature and Epistemic Efficacy", *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 74, no.1

Sosa, Ernest. 2007b. *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*, Volume 1 (New York: Oxford University Press)

Swinburne, Richard. 2001. *Epistemic Justification* (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

Swinburne, Richard. 2005. *Faith and Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Tennant, F.R., 1943. *The Nature of Belief* (London: Centenary Press)

Vahid, Hamid. 2004. "Varieties of Epistemic Conservatism", *Synthese* 141

Williamson, Timothy. 2000. *Knowledge and its Limits* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Yaffe, Gideon and Nichols, Ryan. 2009. "Thomas Reid", in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online at URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reid/>

Zagzebski, Linda. 1996. *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

SOME METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF HEGEL'S THEOLOGY

PAUL REDDING

University of Sydney

Abstract. This paper examines Hegel's claim that philosophy "has no other object than God" as a claim about the essentiality of *the idea* of God to philosophy. On this *idealist* interpretation, even atheistic philosophies would presuppose rationally evaluable ideas of God, despite denials of the existence of anything corresponding to those ideas. This interpretation is then applied to Hegel's version of idealism in relation to those of two predecessors, Leibniz and Kant. Hegel criticizes the idea of the Christian God present within his predecessors in terms of his own heterodox reading of the Trinity in order to resolve a paradox affecting them – the "paradox of perspectivism".

Hegel makes claims about the relation of philosophy to religion that might raise concerns for those who want to locate his philosophy generally within the modern enlightenment tradition. For example, at the outset of his *Lectures on Aesthetics* he claims that philosophy "has no other object but God and so is essentially rational theology".[1] What might seem to placate worries here is that Hegel of course differentiates between the *forms* of religious and philosophical cognition in which such a content is presented: while religion grasps this content in the form of imagistic

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 101. Original German: G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanig Bänden*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1969), vol. 13, p. 139. (Hereafter given in parentheses by volume and page numbers.) Philosophy, along with art and religion, belongs to what he refers to as "Absolute Spirit", and these three realms having this same content – God – "differ only in the *forms* in which they bring home to consciousness their object, the Absolute." Ibid.

or figurative representations [*Vorstellungen*], philosophy grasps it within conceptual *thought*, an attitude which could seem to align him with that found within the German Enlightenment, for example, as in Lessing or Kant. However, it seems undeniable that, in comparison to Kant, for example, Hegel employs *forms of expression* for the presentation of his own *philosophical* thought that are redolent with the type of imagistic and figurative locutions supposedly at home in religion. Moreover, the actual imagery employed seems to refer to the type of trinitarian version of Christianity that can seem antithetical to those more deistic forms of Christian thought that lent themselves to the sort of "demythologization" characteristic of the enlightenment attitude to religious doctrine. Such factors as these make it easy to portray Hegel's philosophy as a *disguised* theology with a content from revealed religion, thus aligning him more to the spirit of the Counter-Enlightenment than the Enlightenment.

This may be an easy impression to get, but on examination it is, I suggest, a misleading one. Hegel's attitude to the relation of philosophy to religion may not be typical of the Enlightenment, but its *apparent* regressive features might be understood from another more favourable angle – that of an enlightened critique of the enlightenment attitude to religion. In order to consider this other possible way of understanding Hegel here, the claim about God being the content of all philosophy might be taken as signalling some purportedly irreducible role played for Hegel by the *idea* of God, not just in his own philosophy, but in *philosophy per se*, even in forms of philosophy that deny the *existence* of God. After all, a comprehensive philosophy that rules out the existence of God – forms of scientific materialism, for example – presumably must have conceptions of that whose existence is being denied. Moreover, we might think of those contexts in which secular philosophies seem to appeal to some quasi-theological idea in making some purportedly *non-theological* point, as when epistemologists frame questions about objective knowledge in terms of the "God's eye view". It is hardly surprising that, being an *idealist*, Hegel would be concerned with the adequacy or otherwise of such *ideas*, even when the they are not caught up with explicitly theological questions of God's *existence*.

It is the possibility of reading Hegel's thoughts on religion in this generally "meta-enlightened" way that I shall be concerned with in this paper. In its first part, I will quickly sketch in a case for the *prima facie* plausibility of such a claim, and then turn to the significance this claim might have for philosophy, were it to be established. The thought

here is that if philosophy *per se* presupposed some idea of God, then, presumably, different philosophical orientations might be compared in terms of the relative *adequacy* of those ideas in a way that swings free from questions of their commitment to the *existence* of God. I will then go on in the second part of the paper to give this thought more substance by comparing the ways different ideas of God function within three central figures of the modern idealist tradition, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel himself.

Of course, on the reading I'm suggesting, what is meant by "adequacy" here could only be a matter of adequacy in terms of the usual sorts of criteria employed in philosophy, such as that of conceptual coherence. From the viewpoint of philosophy itself, there presumably *could* be no place for a *right* conception of God coming from *outside* philosophical thought, say from the content of some particular religious creed or other. Of course one might still expect the *particular* ideas of God to be found in any individual's philosophy as having had their origin in particular religious or irreligious traditions. Hegel's idea of God indeed has features of the God of the particular confession within which he was raised, a form of Lutheran Protestantism that seems to have been characteristic of the Swabian regions of southern Germany. But this is hardly surprising: from where else would one expect them to have come? Hegel of course portrays his own religion *as* the "consummate" religion, but the question I'm interested in here is that of the philosophical entitlement Hegel may claim in endorsing the particular idea of God found in that religion.[2] It is in relation to *this* question that I will examine the use to which he puts his idea of God in attempting to resolve problems within the thought of his idealist predecessors, Leibniz and Kant.

Leibniz, a Catholic-leaning Lutheran, had devoted considerable energy to defending trinitarian Christianity against attacks coming from seventeenth-century Unitarians or "Socinians", who appealed to what is standardly taken to be a more progressive or rationalistic idea of God, a conception of God untroubled by the apparent contradiction

[2] We might think of this distinction as paralleling the familiar one in philosophy of science between considerations relevant to the "context of discovery" and those to the "context of justification". That the central idea of some theory, say, came to its discoverer in a dream, would by itself hardly warrant dismissing the theory as irrational. Typically, it is thought, it is how the scientist goes about establishing and justifying the theory that is crucial.

of the trinity doctrine.[3] I will suggest that we can understand Hegel's claim for the superiority of this trinitarian God when we see the way in which it can be used to address implicit problems within Leibniz's own metaphysics, problems that had been made explicit in the views of Kant. Ultimately, were it possible to make a case for Hegel's success here, his approach would, I will suggest, be of more than historical relevance. Not only can the problems in Leibniz and Kant addressed by Hegel be recognized within much contemporary philosophy, they can be seen to be bound up with similar ideas of God that Hegel wants to challenge and replace.[4]

I. PHILOSOPHY AND THE IDEA OF GOD

I think it can be said that throughout a large part of its history, much of what we take as belonging to Western "philosophy" has accepted as legitimate appeals to a monotheistically conceived god of one variety or another. Consider, for example, the role played by Plato's artificer in his *Timeaus*, or Aristotle's *prime mover* in his *Metaphysics*. As for medieval philosophy, the idea that it was drenched in theological assumptions is rarely if ever disputed, and relatively recently historians have turned to the theme of the persistence of this theological content into the early modern period.[5] Moreover, despite the increasing secularization of philosophy from the eighteenth century, it's still not difficult to find explicitly *theological* interpretations of central philosophical ideas well into our own time. To give just one example, the British philosopher Michael Dummett has stated that *as a Catholic* he is committed to the idea of an omniscient God and so to the existence of a world of things in themselves that would be the objects of the knowledge had by such a God. But as a *philosopher*, he notes, he is independently committed to the existence of things in themselves, and by inference to the existence

[3] On this Leibniz commitment to trinitarianism, see Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Gerald Parks, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[4] What I won't be doing will be to go on to address the further question of the *existence* of God for Hegel. My sole concern will be with establishing some of the consequences that the "the idea" of God will have for *an idealist* such as Hegel.

[5] See, for example, Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and The Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

of an omniscient God, without which, he thinks the notion of a world of things in themselves would be meaningless.[6]

The way in which Dummett conceives of getting to the existence of God from philosophical premises may not be common in contemporary analytic metaphysics, although even in this domain, claims for theism as a *philosophically acceptable* position seem to have made a very definite comeback over the past decades.[7] Beyond contexts in which such explicit theistic content is dealt with, however, it is not difficult to find ones in which *ideas* of God still continue to play important roles. Besides the ubiquitous "God's eye point of view" already mentioned, one might note the use of the notion of *omniscience* within the sorts of thought experiments that are commonly used in the defence or critique of metaphysical theories. As an example of this, we might take Frank Jackson's celebrated case of Mary, the fabulously talented neuroscientist who has grown up in an entirely black and white environment, and who consequently doesn't know *what it is like* to see colours such as the colour *red*.[8] In Jackson's thought experiment, Mary knows "everything there is to know about the physical nature of the world",[9] and yet she doesn't know *all* there is to know about colour and its perception. Before leaving her black and white environment, she has something to learn, the

[6] "No one who believes in God can dismiss [the notion of things in themselves], however: the way things are in themselves must be the way in which God apprehends them. … But can the notion be explained or defended at all without appeal to God's knowledge of the world, and hence by anyone who denies that God exists? In my opinion, it cannot: the price of denying that God exists is to relinquish the idea that there is such a thing as how reality is in itself." Michael Dummett, *The Nature and Future of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 44.

[7] Thus Quentin Smith, in "The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism", *Philo: A Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2001), pp. 195–215, has suggested that analytic philosophy has undergone the process of desecularization over the last three or four decades sparked off by the appearance of Alvin Plantinga's *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

[8] Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 127 (1982), pp. 127–136, and "What Mary Didn't Know", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 83, no. 5 (1986), pp. 291-295.

[9] Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know", p. 291. "She knows all the physical facts about us and our environment, in a wide sense of 'physical' which includes everything in completed physics, chemistry, and neurophysiology, and all there is to know about the causal and relational facts consequent upon all this, including of course functional roles." Ibid. In the earlier paper, Jackson says that she obtains "all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like 'red', 'blue', and so on". Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", p. 130.

phenomenal knowledge of what red, for example, *looks like*.[10] The story of Mary here functions within an argument challenging a metaphysical theory, here that of physicalism, and the idea of Mary's local *omniscience* – that is, omniscience about everything that bears on colour vision – is crucial. Were Mary's knowledge of the relevant part of the physical world limited, the argument would simply not work. "It seems just obvious", Jackson says of Mary, regarding her first colour experience, "that she will learn something about the world and our visual experience of it. But then it is inescapable that her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. Ergo there is more to have than that, and Physicalism is false".[11]

I don't want to engage with Jackson's story any further than to note the implicit appeal to *an idea of God* by way of an appeal to a standard *property* of God, that of the attribute of omniscience, even if this omniscience is limited to a particular realm – that of colour and colour vision. There is, after all, a qualitative difference between the hypothetical Mary and *actual* neuroscientists, who, while extremely knowledgeable, are hardly omniscient about the topic in question. Jackson's implicit appeal to this theological concept is not like Dummett's, of course. Dummett appeals to an *actual* God to make meaningful a conception of the world to which he is philosophically committed. For Jackson, godly omniscience is invoked as a mere *logical possibility*: all that is needed for his argument is the idea of a *logically* possible world containing the purportedly omniscient Mary. But I want nevertheless to take this example as instantiating the type of point Hegel makes. The logically possible omniscience Jackson appeals to is an attribute of a God *qua* object of a *rational* theology, and it is an idea, moreover, that has a long history. One finds it, for example, in both Galileo and Newton as an idealized model for the epistemic goal which makes the modern idea of the systematic growth of scientific knowledge intelligible.

One example hardly establishes a case, but hopefully what I have said might be enough to allow a general idea of how, on this interpretation, Hegel's claim that all philosophy is, or at least contains, a "rational theology" might be plausibly pursued, and with this I want to now turn

[10] Jackson's approach here links to, but has significant differences from, that found in Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?", *The Philosophical Review*, 83 (1974), pp. 435-50. See, Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", p. 131, footnote 10.

[11] Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", p. 130.

to a sketch of a role played by *the idea of God* in the respective approaches of first, Leibniz and Kant, and then, Hegel.

II. THEOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS IN PRE-HEGELIAN IDEALISM

The eighteenth-century European Enlightenment clearly represented a major challenge to the generally theistic flavour of much earlier philosophy. In Germany the enlightenment attitude to religion was generally to portray religion as presenting important truths, in particular moral truths, in some indirect, metaphorical or generally figurative way. Such an attitude is present in G. E. Lessing, for example, who, drawing on Leibniz's philosophy, had portrayed the revealed content of Christianity to be literally *false*, but as providing, as one commentator puts it, a "partial, perspectival adumbration of this ultimate truth" – that is, the truth presented philosophically in Leibniz's monadological metaphysics.[12] Humans as "limited gods" [*eingeschrängte Götter*], as Lessing portrayed them,[13] are versions of Leibniz's finite monads able to cognize from their particular "points of view" what God could grasp from an infinity of such points of view. But Lessing had added the dimension of an historical *education* for the human species, now portraying the Christian myth as containing some truth, but not a truth without qualification – rather, truth *in a form* appropriate for the species at a phase of their development, located at some "particular, historically determined point of view".[14] It is not difficult to see, however, the problem lurking for this approach to metaphysics – if metaphysical knowledge is conceived as *God's* knowledge, then how is it available to us finite knowers, and so how are we to access the standard against which religion is to be compared? Kant was famously to make this epistemic problem explicit. For him, we finite human cognizers are by necessity incapable of the type of knowledge of *things in themselves* that Leibniz's monadology was meant

[12] Henry Allison, *Lessing and the Enlightenment: His Philosophy of Religion and Its Relation to Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 133.

[13] In a set of notes seemingly written in 1752–3 and later published under the title, "The Christianity of Reason", G. E. Lessing, *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, translated and edited by H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 28.

[14] Allison, *Lessing and the Enlightenment*, p. 134. This historical development is the theme of Lessing's *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*. G. E. Lessing, "The Education of the Human Race", in *Philosophical and Theological Writings*.

to instantiate. But it is clear that while Leibniz had a problem with the idea of any telos of human knowledge, he nevertheless had a powerful account of the human capacity to move from *more* to *less* perspectival cognitions, an idea that was later to be found in Hegel as well as in many contemporary forms of philosophical thought. The tools for this were contained in Leibniz's particular interpretation of the concepts of "clear" and "distinct" ideas.

In one of Leibniz's favourite images from the Christian Platonist tradition, humans are "mirrors of God" such that each reflects the entire universe as known by God, *but in an imperfect way*. However, humans can perfect their imperfect representations in a process in which initially *clear but confused* ideas are rendered progressively *clear and distinct*. Leibniz's understanding of this notion radically departs from the approach of Descartes.[15] In a well-known passage from the *Discourse on Metaphysics* Leibniz states that "when I can recognize one thing among others without being able to say what its differences or properties consist in, my knowledge is *confused.* … But when I can explain the evidence I am using, the knowledge is *distinct*. An assayer's knowledge is like this; he can distinguish true from false gold by means of certain tests or marks which make up the definition of gold".[16] But even the assayer's clear and distinct knowledge of gold might be only *relatively* distinct because the component ideas entering into his *definition of* gold may themselves be confused. So, "distinct knowledge has different levels, because the notions which enter into the definition usually require definition themselves, and are known only confusedly".[17] There would thus seem to be a clear parallel between Leibniz's *assayer* and Jackson's neuroscientific *Mary* here. Mary is like the assayer, we may say, in that what *she* knows of colour goes *beyond* the clear but confused knowledge that the rest of us neuroscientific illiterates have when we *recognize* and so distinguish

[15] Leibniz thus frees the idea of clear and distinct ideas from the ambiguity it has in Descartes, replacing Descartes' modelling of the apprehension of a clear and distinct idea on the mind's phenomenological acquaintance with the particular contents of sensation. On this see, Graciela De Pierris, "A Fundamental Ambiguity in the Cartesian Theory of Ideas: Descartes and Leibniz on Intellectual Apprehension", *Manuscrito: Revista Internacional de Filosofia*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2007), pp. 383-422.

[16] G. W. Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics" in *Philosophical Texts*, trans. and ed. R. S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), § 24.

[17] Ibid.

particular colours, but can't *explain* their differences.[18] The twist in Jackson's story is that prior to leaving her black and white room, Mary had *only* clear and distinct ideas about colour; what she *lacked* when confined to her black and white world were clear and confused ones.

Leibniz is vague, however, as to the telos of this process of the perfectibility of human knowledge. In the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, he had defined an *adequate* idea as one in which "everything which enters into a definition or an item of distinct knowledge is known distinctly, right down to the primary notions",[19] and had defined *intuitive knowledge* as had when "my mind simultaneously and distinctly understands all the primary ingredients of a notion". However, he notes, "this is very rare: *most* human knowledge is only confused or *suppositive*".[20] In the later *Monadology*, however, the limitations of human knowledge are more strongly pressed: *only God* can have an *adequate or perfect* idea from which all confusion has been removed.[21] *We* can only achieve clear and distinct knowledge in discrete areas – islets of distinct ideas, as it were – within a sea of confusion. Moreover, God's complete knowledge of any part of the universe will in fact be an idea of the *whole* universe, as the transitions from confused to distinct ideas will contextualize the thing to be known in an ever-widening sphere of relations. It is in this sense that the substances I perceive confusedly in fact "express" the entire universe: "But since all things have a connection with others, either mediately or immediately, the consequence is that it is the nature of every substance to express the whole universe by its power of acting and being acted

[18] Robert Adams points out that while in the 1670s Leibniz seemed to believe knowledge of the phenomenal quality of colour could not be explained theoretically, by the mid 1680s he had come to treat colours as confused phenomena of the sense, regarding them as complex rather than simple qualities. Robert Merrihew Adams, "The Priority of the Perfect in the Philosophical Theology of the Continental Rationalists", in Michael Ayers (ed.), *Rationalism, Platonism and God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 110–111.

[19] Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics", § 24.

[20] Ibid., first emphasis added.

[21] "Because, in organizing the whole, God has regard to every part, and specifically to ever monad; and since a monad is representative in its nature, nothing could restrict it to representing only a part of things. But it is of course true that this representation of the details of the whole universe is confused, and can only be distinct with respect to a small part of things, namely those which are either closest or largest in relation to each monad. Otherwise every monad would be divine. … They all reach confusedly to infinity, to everything; but they are limited and differentiated by their level of distinct perception." G. W. Leibniz, Monadology, § 60, in *Philosophical Texts*, p. 276.

on, that is, by the series of its own immanent operations".[22] This brings into focus a further position on the continuum on which we find the distinction between *clear and confused* and *clear and distinct* cognitions. When I perceive some substance, say, this plant before me, in a clear but confused way, I am *in fact* grasping the universe itself, although not consciously. In Leibniz's epistemic taxonomy I am perceiving it in an *obscure* way.[23]

But this now establishes a tension within the idea of the relation of human to divine knowledge – that is, in relation to an *entirely distinct* idea of the world that God, as omniscient, represents – and so the idea of the very possibility of metaphysical knowledge itself. How *can we* be possibly entitled to the account presented in Leibniz's own monadology if we are somehow ultimately bound to our finite perspectives? If, as God's creatures, we are *necessarily* limited to confused ideas about substances and obscure ideas of the universe itself, how *are we* to know what the world might be like *for God*?[24] Unable to form a distinct *aperspectival* idea of the whole against which my view can be grasped as confused and *perspectival*, how can I be self-conscious of my own perspectivity? We might call this problem the *paradox* of "perspectivism".

Kant's response to this Leibnizian paradox was simple in that he replaced the vague *quantitative* difference between human and divine knowledge with a *qualitative* one between distinct *forms* of knowledge. Kant thus portrays God as a being capable of the *rational intuition* of

[22] G. W. Leibniz, "A Specimen of Discoveries About Marvellous Secrets", in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G. H. R. Parkinson, trans Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1973), p. 84.

[23] Leibniz had used the *obscure* cognitions in the 1684 publication "Mediations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas", in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), where he notes that "a notion which is not sufficient for recognizing the thing represented is *obscure*, as, for example, if whenever I remember some flower or animal I once saw, I cannot do so sufficiently well for me to recognize that flower or animal when presented and to distinguish it from other nearby flowers or animals". Ibid., pp. 23–4. The notion of obscure ideas is found in Ralph Cudworth, *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London: Richard Royston, 1678, facsimile reprint, Hildeschiem: Georg Olms Verlag, 1977), p. 160.

[24] Leibniz's later writings seem to admit of contradictory "corporeal" and "idealist" readings of the monadology – an ambiguity might be seen as reflecting this problem. For a defence of the traditional "idealist" reading of Leibniz see Robert Merrihew Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), and for a thorough-going critique, see Pauline Phemister, *Leibniz and the Natural World: Activity, Passivity and Corporeal Substances in Leibniz's Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

"things in themselves", while we humans have to rely on our being *causally* effected by worldly substances, the resulting sensations produced in us being somehow incorporated into *representational structures* to which we have contributed the *forms*. Without these representational forms contributed *by us*, we can have *no* knowledge at all; but the fact that *we* are the source of the *forms* of what is known means that what we know is never the world as it is "in itself". Leibniz had distinguished the knowledge of the world as phenomena, achievable in science, from the deeper level of metaphysical knowledge underlying and explaining the phenomena, but Kant now limits our theoretical knowledge to the former, understood as the systematically organized knowledge of appearances.

In short, Kant clarified what had been vague and ambiguous in Leibniz's approach, concerning the relation of human to divine knowledge. But the resulting *scepticism* over the status of metaphysical knowledge of things in themselves posed well-known problems for Kant. First, Leibniz's paradox of perspectivism seems to re-emerge, as is captured in Jacobi's famous quip about Kant's "things in themselves". Without this notion, claimed Jacobi, one cannot enter the system of Kant's transcendental idealism, but *with it* one could not remain within it.[25] Jacobi could thereby draw further consequences of this for the familiar Lessingian attitude to the relation of religious myth to philosophy. From Jacobi's point of view, by reducing them to appearances, Kant has denied us knowledge of even the most fundamental objects of experience. Realism about the everyday world is thus underpinned by a kind of *faith*. But if belief in the reality of even such everyday objects requires a kind of faith, why cannot this faith be extended to belief in *God*.[26] Once Lessing's construal of religion as a partial and perspectival *figurative* representation of the world in itself, which reflects the limitations of our spatial and temporal location in the world has been *deprived* of its philosophical contrast – a knowledge of things in themselves – what is there to prevent *it* from being simply accepted as the best we can achieve?[27]

[25] Thus Jacobi notes that "das ich ohne jene Voraussetzung in das System nicht hineinkommen, und mit jener Voraussetzung darinn nicht bleiben konnte". Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus. Ein Gespräch* (Breslau: G. Loewe, 1787), Beilage, p. 223.

[26] As is often pointed out, Jacobi could purport to employ Hume in this affirmation of a fundamentally fideistic outlook because the German word "Glaube" blends the meanings of both "belief" and "faith".

[27] There had been, after all, a long tradition within Christian theology of appeals to analogy and other figurative forms of thought in the attempt to characterize religious knowledge itself.

Kant's sceptical epistemology of metaphysical knowledge had opened a space within which overtly *counter-Enlightenment* dogmatic reassertions of religious dogma could return, but Kant could respond to this in a distinctive way by boldly relocating the metaphysical project *itself* within the domain of practical rather than theoretical reason, and treating religious content as a figurative presentation of this distinctly *moral* knowledge. Thus, for Kant, while it is impossible for us to determine our beliefs entirely rationally without any empirical input, it is nevertheless possible for each of us as finite rational beings to determine our *wills* in this way. We can know *how we ought to act* from reason, and can be motivated to act in such ways from reason, even though we can never be assured from some theoretical perspective of how it is we can do this. Distinctly moral knowledge of how to act is formulated in the linguistic form of the *imperative*, not that of the declarative, giving Kant an alternative to the idea of metaphysical knowledge as representation of the world. As a consequence, Kant could now reinterpret the generally Lessingian model of religious myth as an indirect form of knowledge, and as such as subordinate to conceptual knowledge, albeit conceived as practical rather than theoretical.[28] Kant was able, we might say, to square the Lessingian circle, *demythologizing* religion without the need to contrast it with a positive metaphysical content that literalizes its figurative claims. Hegel's thought, I suggest, started from a similar place, but rapidly veered in a different direction, allowing him more adequately to confront the paradox of perspectivism.

III. HEGEL ON "REPRESENTATION"

Like Kant, Hegel discusses religion as involving a type of symbolic presentation of truths that in philosophy are expressed purely conceptually. While the form of this content in religion is *Vorstellung*,

[28] Thus portraying religious representation as in a generally symbolic mode, Kant could portray Jesus as a type of moral "prototype" in whom we could recognize the morality of which we ourselves capable. That is, what we recognize in Jesus when we figuratively represent him as the "son of God" is a prototype that "is nowhere to be sought except in our reason". Immanuel Kant, "Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason", in *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 106. (Original German in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1900-), vol. 6, p. 64. Hereafter, pagination to the German original will be given in the form, 6:64.)

"representation", in philosophy it attains the form of *thought*. But while it might be thought that this distinction comes down to something like a distinction between "figurative" and "literal" truths, this is not the case. Representation is, Hegel says in the 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* "a consciousness of something that one has before oneself as something objective",[29] and in his discussion of *theoretical spirit* in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* from around the same time he notes that "the content of representation is given, it is something immediately found [*Vorgefundenes*]. … In representation there is a sensible, immediate givenness, and the element of freedom, namely, that this content is my representation. ... However I have not made the content. The content possesses an element of immediacy, givenness, of not being posited through my freedom".[30]

For Hegel, representation as such is not at all a cognitive mode that is *exclusive* to religious thought, it is simply the form that a cognitive content takes in everyday life, the prototype of which is the way in which some thinkable content is made present as sensible and immediate in *perception*, in which we understand some thinkable content as simply given and, as it were, forced upon us. It is this prototypically perceptual content that is captured in the "images" that Hegel thinks of as the *principle* mode of representational content and as "taken from immediate intuition".[31] For Hegel, I suggest, "representation" plays something of the same role as played in Leibniz by the idea of something known in a clear but confused way. *Religion* is representational because in it some *universal* content is made present for thought by, as it were, piggy-backing in a figurative or metaphorical way *on* this everyday type of representational vehicle. When some perceptual content is reproduced in images, Hegel says in

[29] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, One-Volume Edition, The Lectures of 1827, edited by Peter C. Hodgson, translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 144. Original German: G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen: Ausgesählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte,* ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983–5), vol. 3, p. 292. Hereafter given in the form V followed by volume and page number.

[30] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit*, 1827–8, translated with an introduction by Robert R. Williams, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 213. Original German, *Hegels Vorlesungen über die Geistes* 1827/8, ed. Franzo Hespe and Burkhard Tuschling (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1994), pp. 195–6, hereafter given in parentheses as "VG" followed by page number.

[31] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 1827, p. 145 (V3:293).

the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, "we are directly conscious that they are only images but that they have a significance distinct from that which the image as such primitively expresses – that the image is something symbolic or allegorical and that we have before us something twofold, first the immediate and then what is meant by it its inner meaning". "Thus", he goes on, "there are many forms in religion about which we know that they are only metaphors".[32]

Religion uses the vehicles of everyday representational contents in order to present its truths, and this very fact reveals that the distinction between the literal and the figurative is one made *within* the mode of representation. A photograph of a gleaming new car can represent that *particular* car, or more generally, the *model exemplified by that particular car*, or, figuratively, abstract entities like wealth or a lavish lifestyle. But it can express these more general meanings because in the first place it can represent *that car itself*: as Freud purportedly claimed, "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar".[33] In short, the distinction between literal and figurative is one that works *within* "representation", rather than *between* representation and thought. But if the philosophical conceptual reinscription of religious content cannot be thought of as the transition from figurative to literal meaning, how should it be conceived? The clue to this is to be found, I suggest, in the type of movement that Leibniz thinks of in terms of making clear and confused ideas clear and distinct.

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel says that thought "dissolves the form of the simple, in which the content is found in representation, in such a way that distinct determinations within this simple reality are grasped and exhibited so that it is known as something *inwardly manifold*".[34] This theme of thought's taking apart of the apparently simple givennesses of representation is similarly found in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit*. "I have a representation of something; this means that I do not yet know the object in its specificity. Definition requires that I state the species, the universal, and also state the determinacy, the essential determination. In so doing, I have gone beyond the form of representation to the determination of the concept."[35] Moving from a simple experience or representation of something to a form of thought

[32] Ibid., p. 145–6 (V3:293).
[33] This is, I believe, apocryphal.
[34] Ibid., p. 152 (V3:299).
[35] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit*, 1827–8, pp. 213–4 (VG:196).

involving its conceptual articulation in terms of a definition combining a universal and its relevant differentiae is just what Leibniz had thought of in terms of making a clear but confused idea clear and distinct. In more contemporary terms, it is what Jackson means by the transition from the perspectivally limited experiential knowledge of coloured things to a scientific understanding of them. Like Kant, Hegel thinks of perceptual experience as *implicitly* structured by concepts, and it is this implicit conceptuality of experience that is made explicit when I make a judgment on the basis of experience, and express this judgment in words. But this is to bring the perceptual content into the "space of reasons", that is, to give it a logical form that enables the judgment to be inserted into a chain of reasoning – an inference. However, this must involve a certain loss, since the singular terms that purportedly would pick out the phenomenal properties of whatever it is I'm perceiving have no place in such a *thinkable* content. When I *raise to thought* that which appears as *this*, *here*, *now*, I have left the perspectival singularity it has as experienced, behind. As with Leibniz, for Hegel the movement *from* representation *to* thought looks like a movement *towards* the type of knowledge that is traditionally attributed to God.[36] Kant had responded to the ambiguity of Leibniz on the relation of human to divine knowledge by drawing a boundary between these two possible forms of knowledge. Hegel's response, I suggest, is by way of a criticism of the implicit idea of God that Kant accepts in making this very demarcation.

IV. THE IDEA OF GOD IN KANT AND HEGEL

In the section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* on the "transcendental ideal" or "transcendental prototype",[37] Kant portrays the "idea of God" as generated from a type of inferential thinking whose form is captured by the disjunctive syllogism. In theoretical reason, "ideas", that is, concepts *regulating* inferential thought processes, are limited *to* this regulative

[36] For an account of the way in which Leibniz conceives of our knowledge of the mysteries of revealed religion as a form of clear but confused cognition see Marcelo Dascal, "Reason and the Mysteries of Faith: Leibniz on the Meaning of Religious Discourse" in *Leibniz: Language, Signs and Thought. A Collection of Essays* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1987), pp. 93-124.

[37] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Division two, Book II, Chapter III, section II.

function, and deprived of any knowledge-forming or *predicative* function. Under the influence of the transcendental illusion, however, these "ideas" are taken as representing some kind of supersensible thing. Here, the idea organizing the rational relations among all determinate objects captured by the disjunctive syllogism is taken as designating a "highest being" which provides the ground of all finite things. More specifically, the "ideal" of God results from the "realization", "hypostatization" and "personalization" of this properly *formal* set of relations holding among all completely conceptually determined objects.[38] It is easy to recognize various candidate gods in Kant's description. Simply *realizing* the idea, as in Kant's idea of the *omnitudo realitatis*, would result in something like Spinoza's absolute substance with its two attributes of thought and extension. Further *personalizing* the idea would now represent it in more anthropomorphic terms, as traditional personalistic forms of monotheism, and perhaps *hypostatizing* would result in something like the traditional Christian *trinitarian* conception of God, with its *multiple* "persons".[39] But for Kant such *sensibilized ideas* of God can play no epistemic role at all. As far as the trinitarian view of God goes, he points out later in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, when taken literally this doctrine "has *no practical relevance at all* … Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the Deity makes no difference".[40] It is only when we read a specifically *moral meaning* into this article of faith that it would contain an intelligible belief that "refers to our moral vocation". For example, in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, the trinity is seen as symbolizing the various relations within which an individual stands to the moral law which it simultaneously legislates and obeys,[41] and the same interpretative approach holds true of the associated doctrine of the incarnation. Were we to think of the Deity as "'dwelling incarnate' in a real human being and working as a second nature in him, then we can draw nothing practical from this mystery: since we cannot require ourselves to rival a God, we cannot take him as an example".[42] It is *only* by

[38] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A583/B611n.

[39] The Nicene Creed had settled on an account of the trinity as three "hypostases" in one "ousia".

[40] Immanuel Kant, "The Conflict of the Faculties", in *Religion and Rational Theology*, p. 264 (7:39).

[41] Immanuel Kant, "Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason", in *Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 166–7 (6:140–2).

[42] Kant, "The Conflict of the Faculties", in *Religion and Rational Theology*, p. 265 (7:39).

taking Jesus "as the Idea of Humanity in its full moral perfection, present in God from eternity and beloved by him",[43] rather than as an actual man who *is* God, that we could take his life as embodying moral examples we *could* follow.

Hegel likewise thinks of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation as employing figurative forms of thought, but for him the significance of this content so presented could not be more different, being *representational* presentations of important metaphysical truths no longer restricted to the realm of morals. Hegel is critical of the idea of reducing the significance of Jesus to the status of anything like a moral exemplar: rather, the significance of the doctrine of Jesus as the second person of the trinity resides in the fact that God necessarily assumes human form and, thereby, suffers and dies. "God has died, God is dead", Hegel famously declares in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* from 1831, and goes on "this is the most frightful of all thoughts". That the death of *a man* signifies God's death is, of course, a representation, and a more conceptual way of expressing this truth is to be found in Hegel's further expansion of the idea in the claim "that everything eternal and true *is not*, that negation itself is found in God".[44] Four years earlier, quoting the words "God himself is dead" from the Lutheran hymn of Johannes Rist, Hegel interprets these words as expressing "an awareness that the human, the finite, the fragile, the weak, the negative are themselves a moment of the divine, that they are within God himself, that finitude, negativity, otherness are not outside of God and do not, as otherness, hinder unity with God. Otherness, the negative, is known to be a moment of the divine nature itself. This involves the highest idea of spirit."[45]

On the logical issue of negation, Hegel's thought stands in stark contrast to that of Kant, who in his discussion of the idea of God in "The Transcendental Ideal" says that "all negations … are mere limitations of a greater and finally of the highest reality; hence they presuppose

[43] Ibid. That is, "present in God" *as* an idea. Kant thus gives to the trinity doctrine a singularly "immanent" meaning, without reference to creation.

[44] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. III, The Consummate Religion, edited by Peter C. Hodgson, translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 323n (17:291).

[45] Ibid., 326 (17:297).

it, and as regards their content they are merely derived from it."[46] As Henry Allison points out, with this claim Kant accepts the logical and ontological prioritization "of realities or positive predicates over negative ones".[47] We can appreciate this fact when we see how, if one simply "realizes" Kant's idea of God as the ground of all determinations, *without* further "hypostatizing" or "personalizing" it, one seems to find Spinoza's divine substance in which all determinations are negations of a single *positively* conceived substance. But Hegel criticizes this prioritizing of positive concepts over negative ones, as he criticizes, for example, the "affirmative principle" found in Plato in which the Idea is conceived "as only abstractly identical with itself", and praises Aristotle for making conspicuous "the moment of negativity, not as change, nor yet as nullity, but as difference or determination".[48]

This critique of the logical principle of abstract self-identity can be seen in Hegel's attraction to the portrayal of the Trinity in the writings of

[46] "Thus all the possibility of things … is regarded as derivative, and only that which includes all reality in it is regarded as original. For all negations (which are the sole predicates through which everything else is to be distinguished from the most real being) are mere limitations of a greater and finally of the highest reality; hence they presuppose it, and as regards their content they are merely derived from it." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A578/B606.

[47] Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, revised and expanded edition (Ann Arbor: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 399. The priority of "positive" over "negative" determinations in Kant is already signalled by his treatment of the categories of "reality" and "negation" from the "Transcendental Analytic". Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A80–3/B106–9.

[48] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* 3 volumes, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), vol. II, p. 140 (19.153). The position that Hegel describes in terms of the priority of the affirmative principle can be seen as the view that Laurence Horn describes as the "asymmetricalist" position on the relation of positive and negative statements, asymmetricalists regarding negative statements as "less primitive, less informative, less objective, less godly, and/or less valuable than their affirmative counterparts." Laurence R. Horn, *A Natural History of Negation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 3. Horn describes Plato, when speaking through the "stranger" of the *Sophist* as "introduc[ing] two of the recurring themes of our history: the view that negation can be eliminated by defining it away in terms of the (putatively) positive concept of otherness or difference, and the observation that negative statements are in some sense less valuable than affirmative ones, in being less specific or less informative." ibid, p. 1. Hegel's most obvious target when he attacks the concept of identity that goes with the "affirmative principle" would seem to be Leibniz. More recently, the principle of identity stressed by Frege, when understood *objectually* rather than *metalinguistically* – the principle that every *thing* is identical with itself – might be thought of as a more recent version.

the Christian mystic, Jacob Böhme.[49] While Hegel certainly considered Böhme's expression "barbaric" and in need of translation into conceptual form,[50] he nevertheless considered his account of the Trinity as capturing the basic shape of the "thought determinations" or categories of his own logic. Thus Böhme's exclusive idea, "the thought that permeates all his works – is that of perceiving the holy Trinity in everything, and recognizing everything as its revelation and manifestation, so that it is the universal principle in which and through which everything exists".[51]

In Böhme's triune deity, at least as Hegel portrays it, considered in abstraction the first person or "Father" is indeterminate and hidden, more akin to "the Neo-Platonic unity … without knowledge of itself and likewise unrecognized",[52] than a "person" with a personalistic will akin to the Old Testament God who had willed the material world into existence.[53] In contrast, the Son is the "I", "the word, the Separator, Revelation ... the source of all difference", and importantly "the will and implicit Being which are in the powers of all natural things".[54] Hegel stresses the Böhme's *anti-transcendent* identification of the Son with the "powers of all natural things" by referring to Böhme's "pantheism of the Trinity".[55] The divine is present in all things, but in particular human beings, as Böhme makes clear attacking deniers of the Trinity: "You say, there is but one Being in God, and that God has no Son. Open your eyes and consider your selves ... Behold the inward man, and then thou wilt see it most plainly and clearly ... this is the Son which is born in thee."[56] Böhme in this way represents the "Protestant principle" of "placing the intellectual world

[49] According to Hegel's nineteenth-century English translator, Elizabeth Haldane, for Hegel the "point of greatest interest in reading Böhme is the fact that he was able to discover that the conception of abstract identity then in vogue was valueless". Elizabeth S. Haldane, "Böhme and his Relation to Hegel", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 6, 2 (1897), p. 153.

[50] Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* vol. III, p. 210 (20:113).

[51] Ibid., p. 196 (20:98–9). "In such a way … all things have this divine Trinity in themselves, not as a Trinity pertaining to the ordinary conception but as the real Trinity of the absolute Idea. Everything that exists is, according to Boehme, this three-fold alone, and this three-fold is everything". Ibid.

[52] Ibid., p. 198 (20:101). In particular Hegel links Böhme's Father to Proclus' "one". Ibid. (20:100–1).

[53] We might then think of Böhme's One as akin to the universe as a whole when grasped as an "obscure" idea in Leibniz, that is, as that which is presupposed as the reality behind any clear and confused idea.

[54] As quoted by Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* Vol. III, p. 202 (20:105).

[55] Ibid., p. 170 (20:70).

[56] Ibid., p. 213 (20:115).

within one's own mind and heart, and of experiencing and knowing and feeling in one's own self-consciousness all that formerly was conceived as a Beyond".[57] Portraying the Son both as an I (*ich*) and as nothingness (*Nichts*) by the word play "Icht" – Böhme, says Hegel, had made explicit the "true negativity is the 'I'".[58] In line with this, Böhme calls the One or the Father "the Yes" and the Son "the No" and notes that this One "as the Yes ... would be unknowable in Himself ... without the No. The No is a counter-stroke of the Yes, or of the truth".[59] This is why any intelligence or willing ("the word" or "the logos") is associated with the Son and not the Father – that is, associated with the finite being who *dies*.[60]

All this, of course, must have consequences for the traditional idea of God as *omniscient*, as this idea is dependent on a picture of God that is simultaneously *personalistic* and *transcendent* – the imagined occupant of the philosopher's "God's eye view". Hegel's Neoplatonic–Böhmist reading of the Trinity has simply done away with the prototype of such a possible knower. Of course the finitude of all knowing signalled by the "death of God" does not do away entirely with the idea of *transcending* the finite conditions of knowing. As had Leibniz, Hegel thinks of the passage from immediate perceptual judgments to more mediated ones via the unpacking of implicit inferential relations within the semantic contents of concepts as a movement that transcends the conditions governing the former. But these movements can no longer be pictured as converging on some final "God's eye view" or "view from nowhere", the *positivity* of which one might appeal to in order to capture what is deficient in those finite modes of knowing.

To attempt to trace the full consequences of Hegel's move would take us well beyond the scope of a short paper, but we might start to grasp one consequence it might have by returning to the idea of *omniscience* as we have seen it implicit in Jackson's thought experiment involving Mary. The metaphysical dilemma generated by the story of Mary was that she, surely, learns *something* on leaving her black and white room: she learns what colours are *like*. But her knowledge had purportedly *been complete*, so surely, we want to say, her objective knowledge must not have been

[57] Ibid., p. 191 (20:94).

[58] Ibid., p. 206 (20:109).

[59] Ibid., p. 209 (20:112).

[60] Of course the "Holy Ghost" the third person of the trinity, represents the *union* of the Father and the Son, but this does not detract from the main point – Hegel's criticism of the construal of the God of classical monotheism as a type of large Cartesian *mind*.

all the knowledge there was to be *had*. But this produces a paradox, and the paradox, it would seem, comes from the Kantian conception of omniscience presupposed. It seemed as if Mary, like God the Father, could only extend and so "complete" her knowledge by *foregoing* knowledge – that is, by accepting the partial, limited and perspectival type of knowledge characteristic of humans into a body of already perfected knowledge. But this is incoherent – the God representing *that* epistemic telos must have been a false one, and should be replaced by a better one, a conception of a God who already contains negation and limitation within himself. And, of course, if we are, as in Leibniz's metaphor, "mirrors of God", Hegel's reconfigured idea of God must have consequences for our conception of ourselves and our own capacities.

Hegel's new idea of God – a God who *necessarily* comes into the world as a finite man with real but finite powers of self-transcendence – provides us with a new image in which we can recognize ourselves. In this new image, we see the movement characteristic of our *own* rationality, the movement from sensuous immediacy to the concept, but as *reversed* as in a mirror. That is, if our characteristic movement is to move *away from* sensuousness to the mediation of concepts, God's characteristic movement starts by going in the opposite direction: Like Mary leaving her black and white room, God moves "down" to us, as it were, mirroring our climbing the conceptual tree and "going up" to him. But the next phase of the trinitarian moving image, has Christ, the anthropomorphous God, *leaving* us to reunite with his father after death, so as to complete *him*. Consequently, if I am to think of myself as something like an inversion of this triune God, I should think of *my* characteristic movement as involving an essential moment of return to the *limited* sensuous existence from which I started. In short, I'm encouraged to give up the effectively *idolatrous* or perhaps *fetishistic* idea, that reason is going to liberate me completely from the finitude of human existence, including the finitude of my epistemic existence. Here, as elsewhere, for Hegel the *true religion* is the enemy of idolatry and false gods. But Hegel's doctrine of the death of God is not the familiar nihilism often associated with this *Vorstellung*. One's return to the finite, as in the mirror image of Christ's return to his father, does not leave the starting point untransformed. We should resist the lure that conceptual thought will take us to a place free of the limitations of our finite being: the God of *that* conception is dead. But, grasped in the right way, thought and

reason can, nevertheless, orient us within our finitude in ways that, by our capacity to conceptualize and reconceptualize our world, ourselves, and our goals, local limitations can be overcome, *false* gods dispelled, and our finite lives enriched. Something like this seems to be at the heart of the metaphysical consequences of Hegel's theology.

A REFORMED NATURAL THEOLOGY?

SEBASTIAN REHNMAN

University of Stavanger

Abstract: This paper aims to counter the recent opinion that there is a peculiar epistemology in the reformed Church which made it negative to natural theology. First it is shown that there was an early and unanimous adoption of natural theology as the culmination of physics and the beginning of metaphysics by sixteenth and seventeenth century philosophers of good standing in the reformed Church. Second it is argued that natural theology cannot be based on revelation, should not assume a peculiar analysis of knowledge and must not pass over demonstration.

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper admittedly contains some confusion. But recently a notion of an allegedly pessimistic natural theology based on (purportedly) revealed principles of the reformed Church has been circulating among philosophers.[1] This notion is confused, since if the principles of natural theology are supernatural, then either it is not natural theology or it is circular. There may be a natural theology by philosophers in the reformed Church, but not a natural theology based on the doctrines of the reformed Church. It is moreover confused to characterise such a natural theology as pessimistic in contrast to an allegedly optimistic mediaeval one. For thinkers such as Anselm, Aquinas, Scotus and Suarez did not maintain the sufficiency of natural theology for Christian faith. For

> *all* the important Catholic mediaeval thinkers held to the conviction that divine revelation is absolutely necessary for us to flourish as human

> beings and that, as far as ultimate metaphysical and moral questions are concerned, we remain in an utterly perilous state of ignorance without it.[2]

It is simply misleading to characterise natural theology in the reformed tradition in contrast with natural theology in the mediaeval tradition.

The recent opinion can be traced to 1980. Then Alvin Plantinga made the historically outrageous claim that the 'attitude' of the reformed Church towards natural theology 'ranged from tepid endorsement, through indifference, to suspicion, hostility and outright accusation of blasphemy'.[3] He could do this only by ignoring authoritative confessions of faith as well as acknowledged works of natural theology written by members in good standing of the reformed Church from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century,[4] and by merely following the two modern theologians Herman Bavinck and Karl Barth, through whom he culled a few citations from John Calvin.[5] Plantinga's descriptions of natural theology in general and of Calvin in particular have been dismissed both historically and philosophically.[6] Still, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and several contributors to standard reference works continue to repeat the claim that the reformed tradition is negative towards natural theology.[7]

Thus there is a need to revisit the notion of natural theology in the reformed Church, and Michael Sudduth has recently attempted to do so in a monograph along both historical and philosophical lines.[8] The aim of the historical part is to rebut the misconception caused by Plantinga. Sudduth's historical survey shows that the reformed Church unanimously endorsed natural theology early on, but that objections to natural theology within the reformed Church arose in early twentieth century Dutch and Barthian neo-orthodoxy. He appears to identify two reasons for this opposition. First, these theologians objected to the 'Cartesian and Wolffian' view that natural theology provides the necessary basis for supernatural or revealed theology.[9] Second, they opposed natural theology because they adopted Hume's and Kant's epistemologies.[10] Sudduth concludes that 'the "Reformed objection" to natural theology, as characterized by' Plantinga and Wolterstorff, 'simply did not exist before they invented it.'[11] The aim of the philosophical part is next to provide a conceptual framework for the evaluation of objections as well as the clarification and defence of natural theology within the reformed Church. Sudduth distinguishes three objections: intuition is the only source of natural knowledge of God, all demonstrations about God are invalid,

and sin makes people unable to reason about God. These are all found to be overstatements. The focus of the book is then a 'set of conceptual distinctions'.[12] First Sudduth infers a distinction between two kinds of natural theology. The former arises 'spontaneously' in humans and not 'as the result of any conscious process of reasoning', while the latter is the result of 'philosophical argument'; the latter is grounded in and develops the former.[13] Second, two 'functions', 'models' or 'uses' of philosophical arguments about God are distinguished. One is internal and the other 'external to dogmatic', supernatural or revealed theology.[14] Third (and closely related) is the distinction between the project and function of philosophical arguments about God,[15] namely the difference between *that* there is natural theology and *what* natural theology is. Lastly, there is a distinction between model-specific objections and project objections to natural theology;[16] that is, between opposition to some model(s) of natural theology and to the entire project of natural theology.[17]

Unfortunately there are both historical and epistemological problems in this assessment. In the first and historical part of this paper I argue for the correct identification of natural theology in the reformed Church, namely as the early, unanimous and continuous commitment to natural theology at the end of physics and the beginning of metaphysics – apart from a negligible minority of neo-orthodox theologians who opposed it on the authority of Hume and Kant.[18] In the second and epistemological part I maintain the distinction between natural and supernatural theology, question the development of natural theology within the analysis of knowledge as justified true belief, and defend demonstrative natural theology.[19]

I. NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE REFORMED CHURCH HISTORICALLY REVISITED

One of the major problems with the recent opinion is that it is not historically informed. Although Sudduth's historical argument is better than most, there are several problems with it. The discussion about natural theology in the reformed Church will continue to be muddled unless these are solved. This section aims to clarify some of the historical issues.

First, Sudduth does not draw the right conclusion from the historical data. For not only does his historical survey actually show that it was only in the early twentieth century that a few neo-orthodox theologians

objected to natural theology, but that their objections were based on the authority of Hume and Kant rather than distinctively reformed doctrine.[20] Yet both the title and the overall argument of the book are formulated in terms of 'the reformed objection to natural theology'. Sudduth rightly defines 'reformed' in connection with the confessions codified by the synods of Dort and Westminster.[21] However, since these documents endorse natural theology and the modern authors he argues against deviate from reformed orthodoxy on this issue, they simply do not represent a 'reformed objection to natural theology'. Sudduth appears to acknowledge this to some extent. For not only does he write that the Humean and Kantian assumptions of the neo-orthodox theologians make it 'exceedingly difficult to regard the objections in question as *good* project objections', but that 'their distance from the Reformed orthodoxy makes them poor candidates for distinctly *Reformed* objections'.[22] Indeed, such objections are 'incompatible with Christian theism in general and the Reformed tradition in particular.'[23] Yet, the book is framed by such opposition, especially among Abraham Kuyper's and Herman Bavinck's American followers. If these relatively unknown theologians had had sufficient philosophical training and had presented philosophical arguments, they may have merited philosophical analysis. However, their objections are, in Sudduth's own words, 'the least impressive'.[24] Humean and Kantian assumptions could of course be refuted by philosophical criticism and the progress of natural science, but Sudduth is brief here.[25] These theologians appear merely to assume Hume's and Kant's authority for contextual reasons, while being badly informed of the philosophical rigour of their own tradition and the ancient tradition of natural theology.[26] Their opposition seems rather to call for a different line of explanation.[27] So, Sudduth should but did not conclude that the 'reformed objection to natural theology' is just a (philosophical) pseudo-issue.[28]

Second, Sudduth's historical argument does not deal with the right sources in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If we want to know about natural theology in the reformed Church or in general before the nineteenth century, it is to philosophical works and not to theological works that we should turn. For traditionally natural theology is a philosophical discipline, where 'natural' is synonymous with 'physical'.[29] At least since Aristotle the most foundational investigation of natural science concluded that (some) changing material things have immaterial causes: the First Cause and human intelligence. These arguments showed that the meaning of the term 'being' has to be extended to include both 'material

being' and 'immaterial being', and thus establish a science beyond physics, namely metaphysics. Metaphysics is then theology, because no science is complete until the principle of its subject is known and God is the cause of being and the goal of metaphysics.[30] This understanding of natural theology was from the beginning endorsed by members of good standing in the reformed Church. For instance, according to the influential Pietro Martire Vermigli, physics (or generic natural science) demonstrates that there are immaterial things and metaphysics therefore considers 'God and intelligence'.[31] In the words of Bartholomaeus Keckermann, 'thus our system of physics concludes that God is the author and sustainer of nature' and so metaphysics deals with God as 'the foundation and source of all substance'.[32] This is also the reason why Thomas Barlow's six *metaphysical* disputations concerning God are not so much devoted to his existence but to his attributes.[33] In short, according to Alsted, 'natural theology is judged to be a part of philosophy'.[34] Examples could be multiplied, but I trust that these sources suffice to illustrate that it is to works in physics and metaphysics that we have to turn in order to know about natural theology in the reformed Church.[35]

However, Sudduth attempts to discover the nature of natural theology in the reformed Church from commentaries on Romans 1 and Psalm 19 and dogmatic treatises.[36] Yet, he is aware that philosophical arguments are actually found elsewhere: 'These are often cast in a more rigorous form as logical demonstrations, resembling the argumentation of medieval scholasticism, and, for some arguments, ultimately the natural theology of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*'.[37] One reason for this mistaken identification appears to be his heavy dependence on the careful scholarship of John Platt and Richard Muller, which is theological in scope.[38] But the major reason seems to be the anachronistic interpretation of natural theology as a theological and not a philosophical discipline. It would seem that natural theology is not so conceived until the late eighteenth century. For then the name 'apologetics' is coined for a new discipline that is placed within the theological curriculum,[39] and the background to this would seem to be the Enlightenment worry about the reasonableness of faith in God.[40] Ironically this frames natural theology as the particular response to the Enlightenment that both the neo-orthodox theologians and Sudduth want to escape.

Third and last, Sudduth's inaccurate identification of sources and anachronistic view of natural theology unfortunately lead him into confusing the traditional and modern understandings of natural

theology in general[41] and the position of reformed orthodoxy with that of Descartes, Leibniz and Clarke in particular.[42] At least since Aristotle natural theology was 'a system of theology […] independent of dogmatic theology', but it plainly did not serve 'as its rational foundation'.[43] Aristotle did of course not acknowledge a divine revelation and those convinced of his conception of natural theology, such as Aquinas and philosophers within reformed orthodoxy, obviously did not suppose that it served as a rational foundation for revealed theology. Sometimes Sudduth concurs that the view of natural theology as the foundation of supernatural theology is found elsewhere. It 'came into prominence during the heyday of classical foundationalism, [and] typically construed theistic arguments as demonstrative arguments, especially where dogmatics came under the influence of Cartesian and Wolffian rationalism'.[44] Bypassing for now the issue of demonstration, it is nevertheless not clear where the subordination of supernatural theology to natural theology is to be located. Although (perhaps) implicit in Descartes[45] and Wolff,[46] the earliest instances may be Isaac Sigfrid and Daniel Wyttenbach; but they still fall short of Sudduth's 'pre-dogmatic model'.[47] Perhaps this rationalist account is just a straw man produced by early twentieth-century neo-orthodox theologians.

So, in this section I have argued that in the reformed Church natural theology was traditionally viewed as the culmination of physics and the founding of metaphysics. It was a distinctively philosophical business for its own sake and not an apologetical enterprise for the sake of theology. I have argued that Sudduth inaccurately identifies the sources of natural theology in the reformed Church and fails to draw the conclusion that the neo-orthodox objection against a modern view of natural theology does not merit philosophical analysis. If philosophers are not to carry on the pseudo-issue of 'reformed epistemology', they need to give heed to the historical sources.

II. NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE REFORMED CHURCH REVISITED EPISTEMOLOGICALLY

Another central issue in the discussion about natural theology in the reformed Church, is the thesis that faith in God can be reasonable without arguments. Sudduth develops an epistemological argument on that thesis in favour of a natural theology.[48] The aim is to develop 'the dogmatic function' or 'the dogmatic model' of natural theology 'as part

of the discourse of dogmatic theology', and to defend 'the normative status of this Reformed endorsement of natural theology'.[49] His 'primary goal' is to defend this within the reformed tradition and the 'second goal' is to 'clarify the nature of natural theology itself'.[50] Although sixteenth and seventeenth century philosophers of good standing in the reformed Church (as well as the late medieval thinkers they followed, especially Aquinas) were not as explicit and comprehensive as contemporary philosophers, it is possible and desirable to develop a position analogically extended with theirs. However, Sudduth's epistemological conception of natural theology is problematic and this section will show that it confuses natural and supernatural theology, presumes knowledge as justified true belief, and prejudges demonstration.

First, Sudduth confuses rather than clarifies natural theology. He recognizes that 'the dogmatic model of natural theology' may be circular; namely that 'Scripture would supply the actual premises of theistic arguments'.[51] He wants to 'avoid reducing natural theology to a series of biblical claims about natural revelation',[52] and attempts to show that his 'model' does not abolish the philosophical nature of natural theology. This is done by distinguishing between three ways in which it 'can depend on Scripture'. The Bible can (1) provide 'a *justification* for engaging' in natural theology;[53] (2) 'eliminate certain conclusions of natural theological reasoning'[54] and (3) inform '*what* the theistic evidence is, and perhaps also what truth about God is said to follow from the evidence'.[55] However, this attempt of preserving the distinction between philosophy and theology does not succeed. In the case of (1) it is not natural theology but simply revealed theology. For in this case 'Scripture testifies that there is evidence in the created order from which conclusions about the existence and nature of God may be inferred'.[56] It seems strange that we need revelation in order to engage in philosophy. Surely philosophical arguments stand or fall on their own, just as theology stands on its own given revelation, and Christians can take the existence of God on faith in that revelation. But perhaps if some Christians get confused (such as Barth, Bavinck and their followers) and do not understand that establishing whether the proposition 'God exists' is true is desirable in and of itself, then they may be helped by a revelation saying that it can be established apart from revelation. Yet, such an argument would be based on revelation and thus not be philosophical but theological. In the case of (2) Scripture does supply the actual premises against a philosophical argument and thus that counter-argument is not

philosophical. Besides, if the philosophical argument is sound and valid, no divine revelation can eliminate the conclusion; and if the argument is unsound and/or invalid, philosophy can itself eliminate the conclusion. In the case of (3) the evidence and the inference are accepted on the basis of revealed information. It is again 'a series of biblical claims about natural revelation' and this entire project is merely 'situated within the theological framework of the Christian faith'.[57] So this dogmatic model does not clarify but confuse natural theology with dogmatic theology.[58] The former section of this paper also shows that Sudduth does not develop and defend the traditional 'Reformed endorsement of natural theology.'

My second objection is that natural theology should not be developed within the tripartite analysis of knowledge as justified or warranted true belief. This is, according to Sudduth, a 'deeply entrenched view of knowledge in the western philosophical tradition' and the recent discussions of this 'framework' 'are directly relevant to the role of inference and natural theology β'.[59] Here it cannot be argued that that analysis is erroneous, but that it should not be presumed for natural theology. First, analysing knowledge as justified true belief appears to be the most recent empiricist attempt to overcome modern scepticism pasted onto Plato's *Theaetetus*. Not only is it of no more than a mid-twentieth-century origin,[60] but its interpretation of *Theaetetus* is mistaken,[61] and Gettier cases, generality problems, as well as the impasse between first person internalism and third person externalism (pertaining to ambiguities about 'ground', 'adequacy' and 'the basing relation') make it highly dubitable and a likely cul-de-sac.[62] Second, this analysis misconstrues our concept of knowledge.[63] For 'knowing' is used in diverse contexts with systematically diverse sensory, intellectual, actual, dispositional, intuitive, discursive, everyday, scientific, theoretical and practical meanings. In the context of the senses individual and concrete characteristics of things are known from neural signs, whereas in the context of the understanding universal and abstract characteristics are known from conventional signs, and so on. Thus owing to this ambiguity 'knowledge' cannot be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, but its usage in different contexts with systematically different meanings can only be described.[64] Likewise the notion of justification is erroneously assumed to be univocal, since only in some cases is justification appropriate, but even then it will vary in between those cases. It is inappropriate to ask for a justification of how I know my name, but it is occasionally appropriate to ask for the justification of the conjugation of the Latin verb 'docere' and the

extension of the term 'aluminium', although these justifications will be very different. Moreover, knowing does not entail believing or supposing or opining. For this entailment is commonly argued from cases where something was known but is not so any longer. For instance, I knew I put my shoes under the shelf, but then unbeknownst to me my wife moved them into the cellar. Under those circumstances I take, suppose or believe my shoes to be under the shelf, but I do not know it. Yet, the negative case of not-knowing but believing cannot be turned into the positive case of knowing therefore believing. For 'knowing therefore believing' does not follow from 'not-knowing but believing'. Besides, in many situations the 'difference between knowing and believing is that between being and not being fully confident; and the entailment view would mean, absurdly, that not being fully confident is compatible with being fully confident (that if a person is not fully confident he may be fully confident)'.[65] Lastly, the framework inherited from modern scepticism is needless, since the meaning of the words by which doubt is expressed cannot be doubted, some propositions are known by virtue of themselves, and the senses are self-correcting.[66]

Third, rejecting traditional realist and adopting modern sceptical epistemology,[67] the alternative natural theology Sudduth favours is Richard Swinburne's probabilistic argument from simplicity.[68] However, for all its admirable argumentative rigour, 'God' as a simpler explanation may be the best explanation only when there is no other evidence – such as a demonstrative syllogism (more on this in a moment). Nor does simplicity guarantee truth. For a complex explanation may be closer to the truth than a simple one, and an as yet unknown hypothesis may explain better than any of the known ones.[69] Even so, Swinburne's theology is an unlikely partner in Sudduth's project of defending and developing natural theology within the reformed tradition. For in contradiction to confessional reformed theology, Swinburne apparently defends anthropomorphism (univocity), tritheism, Pelagianism and Socinianism.[70]

Last, Sudduth's replacement of the traditional natural theology in the reformed Church in favour of 'an inductive, cumulative case for theism' is cursory.[71] Consider this argumentative sketch:

> Whatever is moved is moved by another.
> There cannot be an endless series of moved movers.
> There must be an unmoved mover.[72]

Much can be said about these deceptively simple sentences, but I will use them only to suggest that it is premature to 'turn away from Aristotelian-based arguments'.[73]

It is often heard, and Sudduth claims, that a demonstrative syllogism assumes that God is 'proven in a rationally compelling manner from various self-evident or epistemically certain truths'.[74] However, considerable difficulties face anyone who wishes to argue the existence of God philosophically and it would be silly to suppose that the mere statement of these three sentences will change anyone's mind or even life. Language is a social thing where the speaker has to use words of significance for the listener in order to convince him or her. These premises are not supposed to be self-evidently true in the sense of 'the denials of which are intrinsically absurd or contradictory'.[75] Rather it is supposed that these sentences only have significance for and can be judged true by a listener who has gone through the investigation into the fundamental concept of nature, namely change, and asks about the ultimate explanation of all change: what is it that gets gravity, electromagnetism, and weak and strong radioactivity going? So, the syllogism is a very condensed, if not truncated, expression of a vast analysis of our primary physical notions.[76]

Nor is it true that the premises are assumed to 'have strong epistemic credentials' in the sense that they are pretended to be indubitable, infallible or incorrigible by 'all rational cognizers'. [77] Rather they purport to depend on the difficult efforts of sensory experience in natural science. They are the outcome of abstractive (as opposed to enumerative) induction, namely what is (or can be) sensed is taken up in language by distinguishing the universal and abstract from the individual and concrete. Humans perform such a fundamental operation every day (e.g. 'All dogs bark'), and the premises above assume the inductive investigations terminating in the first principle about change. Unless we have this intellectual power to form universal expressions from sense experience, we could not explain why universals apply to individuals.[78]

Sudduth does not follow Hume in denying the first premise,[79] but some clarification of it is needed to avoid misunderstanding. The premise follows from the examination culminating in the definition of change as the actualisation of what is potentially *F* insofar as it is potentially *F*, and the demonstration of the subject of change as potentiality. This premise is stated in terms of the most well-known kind of change, namely change in location or change through space. We constantly sense something

moving and a denial of this would itself involve a move. The syllogism does not deny that a (typical) dog cannot wag its tail or leap, since in such self-motion one part is moving another. In it, as in everyday English, the verb 'move' (with its derivative 'mover') is used both transitively and intransitively. The legs of the dog are moved by its central nervous system, and when the central nervous system transitively moves the legs, that system is intransitively moving. In this way it is claimed that things in motion are caused to be in motion by another. Yet, the first premise is not merely an application of a principle of causality but one of modality. The process of change is the actualisation of what is potential insofar as it is potential. The process of change in the dog is the realisation of its capacity for leaping insofar as it has capacity for leaping. But potentiality cannot actualise itself. So, in order for change to take place, there has to be something actual that can cause something potentially *F* to be actually *F*.

It seems that Sudduth would not deny the second premise, but it may also be misinterpreted. It depends on investigations into actual and potential infinity, continuous and discrete quantity, and mathematical and physical division. A 'moved mover' is something that moves both intransitively and transitively. The premise contends that the series of what is moving both intransitively and transitively cannot be infinite. For moving intransitively and transitively are simultaneous. In leaping the legs of the dog and the central nervous system move at the same time, and the central nervous system and ions move at the same time, and so on. But every potential motion is initiated by something actual, since only something actual can cause something potentially *F* to be actually *F*. If whatever is intransitively moved also is transitively moved, then there is always something potential in the cause(s) of whatever is intransitively moved. So the second premise does not claim that no series of movers cannot stretch back infinitely in time, but that it cannot be infinite at one and the same time. There is no regression into an actual infinity in the series of causes operating here and now.

The argument concludes then that there must be an unmoved mover, namely something that ultimately actualises every potential motion here and now. An unmoved mover is what begins the motion of what is in motion without being in motion itself. It is something that moves transitively but not intransitively. It may be objected that this conclusion is very far from what is usually predicated 'God', but this misconstrues the argument. For this is not a why-demonstration but a that-demonstration;[80] it does not demonstrate *what* something is

but *that* something is. Motion is not the cause of the unmoved mover but the cause of our knowledge of the unmoved mover. It is granted that much further argumentation is needed, and this is what physics and metaphysics traditionally undertake. Physics proceeds and culminates with the conclusion that the unmoved mover is immaterial and thereby establishes a discipline beyond physics, namely metaphysics.[81] This latter discipline undertakes to further investigate the cause and end of being by the laborious attempt to develop a language with which to speak about God.[82] Then metaphysics is called 'theology'. Still, arrival at anything like the Christian doctrine of God is (arguably) impossible by philosophical argumentation.[83] This will only be disappointing on the assumption that there are or must be facile arguments for God.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have refuted the recent and erroneous opinion that there was a peculiar epistemology in the reformed Church which made it negative to natural theology. Regrettably I have also found Michael Sudduth's assessment of this issue faulty. First I argued that there was an early and unanimous adoption of natural theology as the culmination of physics and the foundation of metaphysics by sixteenth and seventeenth century philosophers of good standing in the reformed Church. Second I argued that natural theology cannot be based on revelation, should not assume a peculiar analysis of knowledge and must not pass over demonstrative natural theology.

I began this paper by conceding that its title was confused. However, perhaps the title may also suggest that the paper concerns a natural theology that has been subjected to reform; maybe freed of errors or abuses, and then restored to its previous form. Perhaps after all there is, can or should be a 'reformed' natural theology after modernity, namely a natural theology that is formed on the intelligibility of our most general physical concepts and explored in the abstruseness of our metaphysical notions. But that is matter for another occasion.[84]

1. For instance, "the Reformed tradition has taken a dim view of natural theology, and any sort of evidentialist apologetics." John Greco, 'Reformed Epistemology', *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Chad Meister and Paul Copan (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 630.

2. Alfred J. Freddoso, 'Ockham on Faith and Reason', *Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. Paul Vincent Spade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 330. Somewhat earlier Freddoso writes about the traditional view: 'as long as human reason is cut off from the illumination made available through the salvific action of Jesus Christ, it cannot perceive fully or definitely the metaphysical and moral truths that constitute the object of the classical for philosophical wisdom.' (p. 328)

3. Alvin Plantinga, 'The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 54 (1980), p. 49; Alvin Plantinga, 'Reason and Belief in God', *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), p. 63.

4. For reasons of space references will here be limited to a minimum. But, for example, Plantinga bypasses the ecclesiastical standards of the *Belgic Confession* (1561) art. II (for instance, in J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften in Authentieke Teksten met Inleiding en Tekstvergelijkingen*, 2 ed. (Amsterdam: Ton Bolland, 1976).) and the *Westminster Confession* (1646) ch. I.i. and *Larger Catechism* (1648) q. 2 (for instance, in S.W. Carruthers, ed., *The Westminster Confession of Faith: The Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions and a Critical Text* (Manchester: R. Aikman & Son, 1937), and in John R. Bower, ed., *The Larger Catechism: A Critical Text and Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010). Similarly he sidesteps standard works such as Philipp Melanchthon, *Initia doctrinae physicae*, Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halle: Schwetschke, 1846, 1549), pp. 200-06, Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Praecognitorum philosophicorum libri duo: naturam philosophiae explicantes et rationem eius tum docendae tum discendae monstrantes* (Hanover: Guilhelmus Antonius, 1612), pp. 86-124 with the appendix "Brevis et simplex consideratio controversiae hoc tempore à nonullis motae de pugna philosophiae & theologiae" pp. 81-200, Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Theologia naturalis: exhibens augustissimam naturæ scholam in quâ creaturæ Dei communi sermone ad omnes pariter docendos vtuntur* ([Frankfurt am Main?]: Antonius Hummius, 1615), Thomas Barlow, *Exercitationes aliquot metaphysicae de Deo*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Lichfield, 1658), Thomas Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient and Revealed Necessary to Man's Happiness in his Present State: A Rational Enquiry into the Principles of the Modern Deists* (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1714), and Thomas Chalmers, *On Natural Theology*, The Works of Thomas Chalmers, vol. 1-2 (Glasgow: William Collins, 1835). One could add the very early Lambert Daneau, *Physice Christiana, siue, Christiana de rerum creatarum origine et vsu, disputatio*, 2 ed. (Geneuæ: Petrus Santandreanus, 1579). I hesitate because of its mix of theology and philosophy, but it testifies to an optimistic view of philosophy. In the development of my argument below reference will be made to further philosophical sources.

5. Plantinga, 'The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology', pp. 49-53, 57-58, and Plantinga, 'Reason and Belief in God', pp. 64-73.

6. For example, John Beversluis, 'Reforming the "Reformed" Objection to Natural Theology', *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995), Hunter Brown, 'Alvin Plantinga and Natural Theology', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 91 (1991), Donald Hatcher,

'Plantinga and Reformed Epistemology: A Critique', *Philosophy and Theology* 86 (1986), Paul Helm, 'John Calvin, the sensus divinitatis, and the noetic effects of sin', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 43 (1998), Paul Helm, *Faith with Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 84-87, Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 265-76, Derek S. Jeffreys, 'How Reformed is Reformed Epistemology? Alvin Plantinga and Calvin's 'Sensus Divinitatis'', *Religious Studies* 33 (1997), Norman Kretzmann, 'Evidence against Anti-Evidentialism', *Our Knowledge of God: Essays on Natural and Philosophical Theology*, ed. K. J. Clark (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1992), Stephen Maitzen, 'God and Other Theoretical Entities', *Topoi* 14 (1995), Duncan Pritchard, 'Reforming Reformed Epistemology', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 43 (2003), Thomas A. Russman, 'Reformed Epistemology', *Thomistic Papers IV*, ed. Leonard A. Kennedy (Houston, TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1988), Stephen J. Wykstra, 'On Behalf of the Evidentialist – A Response to Wolterstorff', *Philosophy of Religion in the 21st Century*, eds. D. Z. Phillips and Timothy Tessin (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). I evaluated other metaphysical and epistemological arguments of Plantinga in Sebastian Rehnman, *Tänkesätt: Studier i Alvin Plantingas filosofi* (Skellefteå: Norma, 2004).

7. Alvin Plantinga, 'Reformed Epistemology', *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip L. Quinn, 2 ed. (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 674; Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'The Reformed Tradition', *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip L. Quinn, 2 ed. (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). In the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* see, for example, Peter Forrest "The Epistemology of Religion", sect. 7-8, Charles Talliaferro "Philosophy of Religion" 4.2, John Bishop "Faith" and Richard Amesbury "Fideism". In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* see, for example, Scott MacDonald "Natural Theology" sect. 2, and William Alston "History of Philosophy of Religion", sects. 1 and 8. Already in 1997 Jeffreys pointed out that 'many simply rehearse his [Plantinga's] discussion of Calvin superficially'. Jeffreys, 'How Reformed is Reformed Epistemology? Alvin Plantinga and Calvin's 'Sensus Divinitatis'', p. 419. For a more accurate overview of this tradition, see Daniel von Wachter, 'Protestant Theology', *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Chad Meister and Paul Copan (London: Routledge, 2007).

8. Michael Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

9. Ibid., cp. pp. 46-47, 49, 53, 101, 50, 77, 225.

10. Ibid., pp. 170-1, 203-09, 26.

11. Ibid., p. 45.

12. Ibid., p. 49.

13. Ibid., p. 4, cp. p. 51.

14. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 52-53.

15. Ibid., p. 223.

16. Ibid., p. 6.

17. Ibid., p. 223.

18. In this paper I use the terms 'neo-orthodox' and 'neo-orthodoxy' inclusive of both Abraham Kuyper and Karl Barth together with their followers. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (ed. John Bowker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)) describes the use of 'neo-orthodoxy' in the following way: 'A Protestant Christian reaction against 19th-cent. liberalism in theology. The reaction was not organized, and is particularly associated with K. Barth. Quintessentially, Neo-Orthodoxy rejected the

liberal belief that it is possible to argue from experience to God, or, more extremely, that theology is disguised anthropology.' Although Kuyperianism and Barthianism differ on other issues, they agree in their rejection of arguments to God and are thus in this paper both referred to as 'neo-orthodox'. Cp. also 'repristination theology' in Bengt Hägglund, *History of theology*, 3 ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), pp. 363-65.

[19.] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this paper are my own. Abbreviated quotations are indicated in two ways. When a citation is abbreviated within one and the same paragraph, this is indicated by '[...]'. When a citation is abbreviated over two or more paragraphs, this is indicated by '[---]'.

In this paper I also leave out a distinction that Sudduth emphasises. He distinguishes between 'natural theology α' and 'natural theology β', namely between 'natural theology as natural knowledge of God and natural theology as rational proofs or arguments' (Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 4). However, since it is mainly the second half of the distinction that is discussed in his book (apart from 'the immediacy claim') and this more narrow identification of natural theology has dominated the western philosophical tradition (as Sudduth concedes; cp. pp. 1 and 222), it suffices to use only the argumentative sense here.

[20.] There is, since Hume's lifetime, a tradition within the reformed Church of arguing against him. For instance, George Campbell, *A Dissertation on Miracles: Containing an Examination of the Principles Advanced by David Hume* (Edinburgh: Kincaid & Bell, 1762), and Thomas Chalmers, *On the Miraculous and Internal Evidences of the Christian Revelation*, The Works of Thomas Chalmers, vol. 3 (Glasgow: William Collins, 1842), pp. 70-146. This majority view contrasts sharply with that of neo-orthodoxy.

[21.] Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 2.

[22.] Ibid., p. 224, similarly p. 26.

[23.] Ibid., p. 205.

[24.] Ibid., p. 225.

[25.] Ibid., pp. 203-09. There is a historical irony in that the prominent philosophers Plantinga and Wolterstorff endorse Kuyper's and Bavinck's Kantian opposition to natural theology, while they themselves reject Kantianism: Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 9-30; Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Is it Possible and Desirable for Theologians to Recover from Kant?', *Modern Theology* 14 (1998).

[26.] On the twentieth century protestant misunderstanding of the tradition, see the sadly neglected Arvin Vos, *Aquinas, Calvin, and Contemporary Protestant Thought: A Critique of Protestant Views on the Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985).

[27.] There may be a sociological line of explanation. Cp. George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), and James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). But Paul Helm reminded me that there may be a deeper theological explanation. The neo-orthodox has a different doctrine of sin so that they deny the orthodox affirmation of natural theology and natural law. Cp. Abraham Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*, trans. J. Hendrik De Vries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), and Karl Barth, *Nein! Antwort an Emil Brunner*, Theologische Existenz heute (München: C. Kaiser, 1934).

[28.] Once Sudduth himself writes 'there is consensus in the Reformed tradition on the propriety of the project of developing theistic arguments' (Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* p. 4). Thus there is no *analysandum*. Moreover, there is (at least historically) no basis for his distinction between 'model-specific objections' and 'project objections' to natural theology (ibid. pp. 6, 54). For the issue is really only about objections to specific uses of natural theology and such objections are found in many traditions in and out of the Church (whether reformed or not).

Perhaps one may hope that 'Kuyperian epistemology' gains acceptance instead of 'reformed epistemology', since there appears to be no claim to a distinctive theory of knowledge in the reformed Church until Abraham Kuyper. See especially Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931, 1898), and Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*. Cp. 'Our most influential college teachers were all "Kuyperians"'. Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Reformed Epistemology', *Philosophy of Religion in the 21st Century*, eds. D. Z. Phillips and Timothy Tessin (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 41.

[29.] The name comes from Augustine who took it from Marcus Terentius Varro who seems to reflect a still earlier usage: 'there are three kinds of theology [...] the second physical, [...] may be called natural [... and] is that which philosophers use'. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Corpus christianorum, Series latina, vol. 47-48 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954-, 413-422) VI.v cp. VIII.i, and Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De natura deorum: liber I*, Cambridge Greek and Latin classics, ed. Andrew R. Dyck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 45), ch. i-ii. The term may have been introduced by a Greek Stoic philosopher according to C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in the history of natural theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1915), p. 69, and Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers: The Gifford Lectures 1936*, trans. Edward S. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 3-4.

[30.] For instance, Aristotle, *Physics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford Classical Text, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936) VII-VIII, Aristotle, *De anima: Edited with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford Classical Text, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), III, Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford Classical Text, ed. W. D. Ross, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 998b22-27, 1003a33-03b16, 28a29-30, 26a27-32, 64b1-14, and generally XII. 'Aristotle's identification of first philosophy with natural theology is continuous with the approach of his predecessors in the specific and crucial respect that the proof for the existence of God is the conclusion of reasoning within the science of nature. His further hypothesis that natural theology is identical with the science of being, distinct from the science of nature, bears the stamp of Parmenidean dissent from the Milesian tradition.' L.P. Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the Early History of Natural Theology* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 82, cp. p. 96.

[31.] Pietro Martire Vermigli, *In primum, secundum et initium tertii libri Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum commentarius*, ed. Guilio Santeranziano (Zürich: Froschauer, 1563), p. 3, cp. pp. 163, 224, 26, and Pietro Martire Vermigli, *Loci communes* (London: John Kyngston, 1576), p. 31. He may have acquired this view while studying under the Thomistic chair of metaphysics at the University of Padua. Cp. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, eds. Roberto Busa and Enrique Alarcón, 2 ed. (Taurini: Marietti, 1950, 1270-3) prooemium, lib. 3 l. 6 n. 6 (398), 6.1.27 (1170), 11.7.21 (2267), Thomas Aquinas, *In Aristotelis libros De sensu et sensato commentarium*, ed. Raimondo Spiazzi, 3 ed. (Taurini: Marietti, 1949, 1268-1270), p. l. 1 n. 1 and 4, Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boëthium*

De Trinitate, Opera omnia, vol. 50 (Rome/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Éditions Du Cerf, 1992, 1257-8), Pars 3 q. 5 a. 3 co. 5, and Aristotle, *Physics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* 194b15. Vermigli does not think that metaphysics can attain an account of the nature of God: Vermigli, *In primum, secundum et initium tertii libri Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum commentarius*, p. 82. For God as God is not an object of metaphysics, but only as the cause of being, since God is beyond the categories of being: cp. Ibid. pp. 224, 158, 156 and 137. Analogical predication about God is therefore treated here and there in this work; for example, pp. 142, 151-152, 156, 268-269. For an argument of the usefulness of physics in general and for the knowledge of God in particular, see Girolamo Zanchi, 'Prolegómena', *Aristotelous phusikēs akroaseōs ē peri archōn*, ed. Girolamo Zanchi (Strassburg: Vuendelinus Rihelius, 1553). For the general assumption by a philosopher in the reformed Church that metaphysics deals with God as the ultimate principle of everything and especially of created or separate minds, see for instance Rudolphus Goclenius, *Isagoge in peripateticorum et scholasticorum primam philosophiam, quae dici consuevit metaphysica* (Frankfurt: Zacharias Palthenius, 1598), praefatio.

[32.] Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Systema physicum*, 3 ed. (Hanover: Ioannes Stockelius, 1623), p. 828, and Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Scientiae metaphysicae compendiosum systema*, Opera omnia quae extant, vol. 1 (Geneva: 1614, 1609), p. 2015 respectively. Cp. Philipp Melanchthon, 'De physica', *Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, Corpus reformatorum (Halle: Schwetschke, 1843, 1542), XI.558r, Philipp Melanchthon, *Erotemata dialectices*, Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halle: Schwetschke, 1846, 1547), p. 682, Clemens Timpler, *Physicæ seu philosophiæ naturalis systema methodicum* (Hanover: Guilielm Antonius, 1605), Epistola dedicatoria 5-6 (my pagination), cap. I q. 5 pp. 14-15, cap. II. q 5-9 pp. 27-36, cap. XII q. 5 p. 171, Franco Burgersdijk, *Idea philosophiae naturalis: sive methodus definitorum & controversiarum physicarum* (Oxford: Henry Curteyne, 1641, 1631), pp. 27-30, Gilbertus Jacchaeus, *Institutiones physicae* (Schleusingae: Peter Schmid, 1635), pp. 71-73, and Johannes Maccovius, *Metaphysica theoretico-practica*, Opuscula philosophica omnia, ed. Nicolai Arnold (Amsterdam: Elzevir, 1660), pp. 4, 12-14. Compare also the physical basis of natural theology and the responses to the objection that 'natural theology is nothing else than metaphysics' in Alsted, *Theologia naturalis: exhibens augustissimam naturæ scholam in quâ creaturæ Dei communi sermone ad omnes pariter docendos vtuntur*, praefatio pp. 12-13 and pt I p. 8 respectively. For one succinct formulation of the physical argument that God is, see for instance Rudolphus Goclenius, *Scholae seu disuputationes physicae* (Marburg: Paul Egenolph, 1591), pp. 159-60.

[33.] Barlow, *Exercitationes aliquot metaphysicae de Deo*.

[34.] Alsted, *Theologia naturalis: exhibens augustissimam naturæ scholam in quâ creaturæ Dei communi sermone ad omnes pariter docendos vtuntur*, praefatio 13.

[35.] The priority of *physica* for natural theology in reformed orthodoxy can also be seen in the contention that demonstrations for the existence of God can only be from effects to cause (*a posteriori*) and not from cause to effect (*a priori*). For example, Barlow, *Exercitationes aliquot metaphysicae de Deo*, pp. 128-30, 37, 66-67, Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Metaphysica, tribus libris tractata* (Herborn: 1616), p. 87, and Johannes Maccovius, *Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae*, ed. Nicolai Arnold (Oxford: Roberti Blagrave, 1656, 1653), p. 169. The first thing humans understand is that they sense reality or something real. For 'there is nothing in the intellect that was not before in the senses'.

(Burgersdijk, *Idea philosophiae naturalis: sive methodus definitorum & controversiarum physicarum*, p. 94.) So, the proper object of human intelligence is what material things are, and they are therefore the kind of being that is the principal human analogate through which other kinds of being may be causally known. Thus the subject of metaphysics can only be described by reasoning from material effects to immaterial causes. This view is, by the way, another instance of Plantinga's discontinuity with the reformed tradition: Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 197-221.

This may also be the place to comment on Sudduth's material on intuition. Chapters 3-5 are all devoted to 'immediate knowledge of God'. Sudduth struggles to clarify what *cognitio Dei insita* signifies in sixteenth and seventeenth century reformed thought, but ends in claiming both that 'it is not inferential' and that it 'is spontaneously inferred' (p. 70; cp. pp. 97-99). Part of the problem seems to be that he conflates the traditional account that knowledge always begins from non-inferential sensory experience, with the modern view that there is knowledge independent of and logically prior to the senses. ('There is an important continuity, then, between [intuition in] the above nineteenth-century Calvinistic theologians and [*cognitio insita* in] the Reformed scholastics.' (p. 74)) Thus he can claim that 'intuition yields *a priori* beliefs' (p. 129), which obviously is incompatible with traditional epistemology. There occur, though, more correct formulations (pp. 4, 57). Henceforth I bypass this issue.

[36.] In the philosophical genre, Sudduth only refers twice to Alsted's *Theologia naturalis*, but seems not acquainted with this primary text but rather dependent on secondary literature.

[37.] Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 48, cp. p. 67.

[38.] John Platt, *Reformed Thought and Scholasticism: The Arguments for the Existence of God in Dutch theology, 1575-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), and Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), especially vols. 1 and 3. There are many references to sixteenth and seventeenth sources in Sudduth's first and third chapter, but they seem to be taken from Platt and Muller. He produces more original material on the nineteenth century.

[39.] Apologetics appears first to have been placed in the theological curriculum by Gottlieb Jakob Planck, *Einleitung in die theologische Wissenschaften*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Crusius, 1794), I.xiv, 27-363, II.93-489, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1811), pp. 14-19, 92. (For these names I am indebted to B.B. Warfield, 'Apologetics', *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, eds. Ethelbert D. Warfield, William Park Armstrong and Caspar Wistar Hodge, vol. 9 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932, 1908), p. 3 (although Plank's and Schleiermacher's works do not appear in the bibliography). Warfield's article was originally published in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, I.232-238.) Planck and Schleiermacher are concerned with the divine origin of the Christian religion and the Church, but not explicitly with arguments for God's existence. The invention of the theological discipline of apologetics does not however deny the obvious, namely that Christians have since antiquity defended their faith and that many works in reformed dogmatics contain arguments for the existence of God.

Here it may be worth digressing on arguments that God exists in works of seventeenth century reformed dogmatics. First, these are normally not demonstrative syllogisms but rhetorical syllogisms or enthymeme. For instance, Françesco Turrettini,

Institutio theologicae elencticae (Geneva: Samuel de Tournes, 1679-85), I.iii.7-8, III.i.5-21. Thus they are known to be incomplete (cp. Franco Burgersdijk, *Institutionum logicarum, libri duo* (London: Roger Daniels, 1651, 1637), p. 193). Second, the full title of such academic works often reveals a polemical aim, where '*elencticae*' in Turrettini's title comes from the Greek *elegkhos*, 'examination' or 'refutation'. These arguments serve 'only an interest in systematic completeness. [---] Their discussions of the proofs recognise fully that believers fundamentally and ultimately need no proof precisely because they are believers – but also that believers do need, mediately, as it were, tools and weapons for the spiritual arsenals. The proofs fill a need in a world where doubts arise and atheists abound.' Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, III.170, cp. p. 79. Third, the place of such arguments can be explained in terms of the educational system. The original audience of such works already had a thorough training in philosophy and particularly in arguments about God both in physics and metaphysics before they entered the study of theology. Cp. Joseph S. Freedman, 'Philosophy Instruction within the Intitutional Framework of Central European Schools and Universities during the Reformation Era', *History of Universities* 5 (1985), Joseph S. Freedman, 'Classifications of Philosophy, the Sciences, and the Arts in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe', *Modern Schoolman* 72 (1994). Such arguments thus simply rehearse that the statement 'God exists' is intelligible outside the context of revelation. These works likely also points to the (future) homiletical context of their readers by the use of rhetorical syllogisms.

40. Several historical studies have in different ways established that it was only during the so-called Enlightenment that natural theology began to be used primarily in order to justify individual acts of faith. For instance, Guy de Broglie, 'La vraie notion thomiste des praeambula fidei', *Gregorianum* 34 (1953), Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'The Migration of Theistic Arguments: From Natural Theology to Evidentialist Apologetics', *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment*, eds. Robert Audi and William J. Wainwright (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1986), Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 118-33, John Clayton, *Religions, Reasons and Gods: Essays in Cross-Cultural Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Anne M. Blackburn and Thomas D. Carroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 184-309. For a brief development and defence of the traditional (as opposed to the Enlightenment) conception of natural theology, see Sebastian Rehnman, 'Natural Theology and Epistemic Justification', *Heythrop Journal* 48 (2010).

41. Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, cp. pp. 150-52, probably following early twentieth century reformed theologians.

42. Ibid., p. 172.

43. Ibid., p. 53. By this phrase Sudduth appears to mean that 'reason plays a substantive and formative role in the dogmatic system, including the subtle implication that faith, or at least the reasonableness of faith, rests on the prior establishment by reason of Christian doctrine'. (p. 53; cp. p. 101) 'It is an autonomous system based solely on the resources on human reason and constituting a justificatory preface to the system of revealed theology.' (p. 150) The Aristotelian position does of course not entail that; nor has that tradition claimed demonstrative syllogisms 'under the influence of modern foundationalism'. Ibid. p. 172.

44. Ibid., p. 177.

[45.] In his 'Dedication' Descartes writes that one ought to begin with demonstrations of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul by philosophical rather than theological arguments, and then in the meditations he attempts to prove these from his ideas about God and consciousness: René Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, Œuvres de Descartes, eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, vol. 7 (Paris: Vrin, 1996, 1640).

[46.] Cp. Christian von Wolff, *Theologia naturalis, methodo scientifica pertractata. Pars Prior, integrum Systema complectens, qua existentia et attributa Dei a posteriori demonstrantur* (Frankfurt: Officina libraria Rengeriana, 1736), § 9. The position is not clear however.

[47.] Isaac Sigfrid and Daniel Wyttenbach, *Theses theologicæ præcipua Christianæ doctrinæ capita continentes* (Frankfurt: Hort, 1749), cp. i-iii with xiii-xvi. These disputations were held in 1747. In consideration of Sudduth's commendation of the work of Richard Swinburne (as will be seen below), it may be worth noting here the similarity between the accounts of Sigfrid/Wyttenbach and Richard Swinburne, *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. v-vi, 79-85.

[48.] Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* p. 145. 'The dogmatic model of natural theology β presupposes that natural theistic arguments are the product of human reason as it operates in the *regenerate* mind.' In other words, natural theology on the basis of faith.

[49.] Ibid., p. 5, cp. pp. 53, 99-101, 41-42, 55-64, 223, 26 (where the words 'function and 'model' are used for the same content). Usually Sudduth contrasts two 'models' of natural theology. His preferred model is internal to and the other is 'external to dogmatic', supernatural or revealed theology (pp. 4-5, 52-53). Once three 'functions' of natural theology are named: 'the dogmatic', 'the pre-dogmatic' and 'the apologetic'. But 'the apologetic function' appears to be reducible to, or part of, the 'dogmatic function of natural theology', since it signifies 'digressions within the dogmatic system designed to counter atheistic objections, or at any rate, designed to supply the Christian with such responses' (p. 53). Moreover, on p. 101 the two models are contrasted in terms of 'apologetics and the-predogmatic model'. Within Christian doctrine, apologetics is said to have a function to 'refute atheological objections' and remove 'important obstacles' to as well as to trigger 'theism' (pp. 141-142).

[50.] Ibid., p. 227.

[51.] Ibid., p. 155.

[52.] Ibid., p. 154.

[53.] Ibid., p. 155.

[54.] Ibid., p. 157.

[55.] Ibid., p. 159.

[56.] Ibid., p. 156.

[57.] Ibid., p. 223. Natural theology is 'driven by the same goals as dogmatic theology' (p. 227).

[58.] The primary source for Sudduth's dogmatic 'model' of natural theology may be what Wolterstorff describes as the neo-orthodox misunderstanding of the Augustinian motto *fides quaerens intellectum* 'to develop history, sociology, philosophy, political theory, and so forth, in the light of faith'. Another source may be Swinburne's Paleyian account. Cp.Wolterstorff, 'Reformed Epistemology', p. 42, Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 91-92, and Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. x.

[59] Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, pp. 82, 128. With the theological interests and assumptions of Sudduth one would expect him to be a bit hesitant to accommodate himself to the modern paradigm of reducing all kinds of assent to 'belief', since in his tradition to believe is only to assent to the extrinsic evidence of (human or divine) testimony. Cp. Carruthers, ed., *The Westminster Confession of Faith: The Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions and a Critical Text*, I.iv, x, VII. iii, XIV.ii. Faith is conceived as one of three kinds of assent expressible in statement and thus part of intellectual (as opposed to sensory) knowledge. Acts of assent are in turn specified either on account of the degree of assent or on account of the nature of the evidence. The powers of apprehension and reason assent on intrinsic evidence, whereas faith on extrinsic evidence. On this see John Owen, *The Reason of Faith*, The Works of John Owen, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 4, 24 vols. (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1855, 1677), pp. 82-84, with analysis in Sebastian Rehnman, 'Graced Response: John Owen on Faith and Reason', *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 53 (2011).

[60] As far as I know there is no trajectory of this threefold analysis of knowledge in the primary sources of ancient, medieval and early modern philosophy. From late Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages 'the issue was not how to define knowledge [...] but how to understand the cognitive operations that generate it'. Robert Pasnau, 'Human Nature', *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.S. McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 214, cp. John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150-1350): An Introduction*, 2 ed. (London/New York: Routledge, 1991). (I know that there is a later edition, but this one focused on knowledge.) According to Lloyd P. Gerson, this justified-true-belief-conception of knowledge arose 'in the seventeenth century amidst the philosophical analysis performed in support of the new science'. Lloyd P. Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 3. However, he does not refer to any sources and I do not know where, say, Descartes, Locke and Hume engage in this triple analysis. Compare Desmond M. Clarke, 'Descartes' Philosophy of Science and the Scientific Revolution', *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, Robert Fogelin, 'Hume's Scepticism', *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, eds. David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor, 2 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Robert McRae, 'The Theory of Knowledge', *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, ed. Nicholas Jolley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), and Linda L. McAlister, 'Brentano's Epistemology', *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, ed. Dale Jacquette (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Thus the following common assumption is false: 'The rough consensus about the definition of knowledge that had held for over 2000 years unravelled [in 1963].' Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), p. 5. They refer to Edmund Gettier, 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?', *Analysis* 23 (1963), but he wrote of attempts in 'recent years' and refers to Ayer and Chisholm. These are also the earliest appealed to by Robert Shope, *The Analysis of Knowing: A Decade of Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 6-7. Although Ayer does not use what has become the established terminology, he claims that there are 'necessary and sufficient conditions of knowing' and that what has later come to be termed 'justification' is 'the main concern of what is called the theory of knowledge'. A.J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1956), p. 35. In his highly

influential introduction to epistemology, Chisholm claims to have arrived at 'a partial solution to the problem [of *Theaetetus*]'. Roderick M. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 23.

61. Not only does Socrates reject Theaetetus's attempt to define 'knowledge' in terms of 'true belief with *logos*' (*Theaetetus*, 206c-210a9), but the dialogue ends without an (explicit) alternative account (unless it is the intellectual virtues of wisdom (145d-e) and understanding (210c)). Cp. 'So it is not clear that Socrates is advancing a standard analysis of knowing.' Shope, *The Analysis of Knowing: A Decade of Research*, p. 12, and Gerson, *Ancient Epistemology*, pp. 44-61.

62. This is my conclusion from the discussion in, say, Kihyeon Kim, 'Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (1993), Linda Zagzebski, 'The Inescapability of Gettier Problems', *Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994), Keith Allen Korcz, 'Recent Work on the Basing Relation', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1997), E. Conee and R. Feldman, 'The Generality Problem for Reliabilism', *Philosophical Studies* 89 (1998). Although it may be a bit of wishful thinking, 'it seems to be rapidly becoming a new orthodoxy that the whole enterprise from Descartes, Locke and Kant, and pursued by various nineteenth- and twentieth-century succession movements, was a mistake.' Charles Taylor, 'Overcoming Epistemology', *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, eds. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas A. McCarthy (Cambridge, Mass/London: MIT Press, 1987), p. 465.

63. 'Some will say that my talk about the concept of knowledge [Wissen] is irrelevant, since this concept as understood by philosophers, while indeed it does not agree with the concept as it is used in everyday speech, still is an important and interesting one, created by the kind of sublimation from the ordinary, rather uninteresting one. But the philosophical concept was derived from the ordinary one through all sorts of misunderstandings, and it strengthens these misunderstandings. It is in no way interesting, except as a warning.' Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, trans. G.G. Luckhardt and M.A.E. Aue, eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 289.

64. This would have to be further developed elsewhere on the basis of what I take to be the meaning of '*pros hen legómena*', 'analogia' and 'Familienähnlichkeit' in, say, Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, Oxford Classical Text, ed. I. Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 1096b26-31, Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary*, 1003a32-b16, 30a16-27, Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, n. 534-45, 1320-38, Rudolphus Goclenius, *Lexicon philosophicum* (Frankfurt: Mathias Becker, 1613), pp. 96-102, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical investigations*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), pp. 26-27, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, eds. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, 4 ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 1953), §§66-67, 164. A sadly neglected analysis is Oswald Hanfling, *Philosophy and Ordinary Language: The Bent and Genius of Our Tongue* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 94-110. That chapter was first published as a paper in 1985.

65. Hanfling, *Philosophy and Ordinary Language: The Bent and Genius of Our Tongue*, p. 104, cp. J. O. Urmson, 'Prichard and Knowledge', *Human Agency, Language, Duty and Value: Philosophical Essays in Honor of J. O. Urmson*, eds. Jonathan Dancy, J. M. E. Moravcsik and C. C. W. Taylor (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 12-20,

and G. E. M. Anscombe, 'Knowledge and Essence', *A Wittgenstein Symposium: Girona 1989*, ed. Josep-Maria Terricabras (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 31-32.

[66] On another occasion this would have to be developed along the lines of, say, Aristotle, *Physics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 193a5-8, Aristotle, *De anima: Edited with Introduction and Commentary*, 418a11-17, Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* Oxford Classical Text, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 72b19-23, 99b17-100b17, Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary*, 1005b11-12b31, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, Opera omnia (Romae: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1884, 1268-9), lib. 2 l. 1 n. 8 (148), Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima*, Opera omnia, vol. 45/1 (Paris: Vrin, 1984, 1268), lib. 2 l. 13 n. 2-3 (384-85), Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Posteriorum analyticorum*, Opera omnia, vol. 1*/1-2 (Paris: Vrin, 1989, 1269-72), lib. 1, lec. 7, lib. 2 lec. 20 (596-748), Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, lib. 4 l. 6-17, Keckermann, *Systema physicum*, pp. 321-30, 479-83, Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays, eds. Ronald E. Beanblossom and Keith Lehrer (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983, 1785), Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge, 1922), 6.51, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe, G. H. von Wright and Denis Paul, Corrected ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, 1969).

[67] For some historical reflections on how the history of natural theology reflects the shift from traditional realist to modern sceptical epistemology, see Webb, *Studies in the history of natural theology*, pp. 53-69.

[68] Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, pp. 210-19. Earlier (p. 194) it is claimed that some such project is also found in some nineteenth century reformed theologians.

[69] The criterion of simplicity cannot be dealt with adequately here, but that it is not as unquestionable as Sudduth suggests may be seen in the following works: Robert M. Burns, 'Richard Swinburne on Simplicity in Natural Science', *Heythrop Journal* 40 (1999), Adolf Grünbaum, 'A New Critique of Theological Interpretations of Physical Cosmology', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 51 (2000), Richard Swinburne, 'Reply to Grünbaum', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 51 (2000), Adolf Grünbaum, 'The Poverty of Theistic Cosmology', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 55 (2004), Richard Swinburne, 'Second Reply to Grünbaum', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 56 (2005), Adolf Grünbaum, 'Rejoinder to Richard Swinburne's 'Second Reply to Grünbaum'', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 56 (2005), Adolf Grünbaum, 'Is Simplicity Evidence of Truth?', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 45 (2008), Julia Göhner, Marie I. Kaiser and Christian Suhm, 'Is Simplicity an Adequate Criterion of Theory Choice?', Johannes Korbmacher, Sebastian Schmoranzer and Ansgar Seide, 'Simply False? Swinburne on Simplicity As Evidence of Truth', and Richard Swinburne, 'Reply to My Critics' (esp. pp. 189-96), all three in *Richard Swinburne: Christian Philosophy in a Modern World*, eds. Nicola Mossner, Sebastian Schmoranzer and Christian Weidemann (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2008).

[70] Compare, for instance, Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 51-87 ('analogy' in his sense), Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 170-91, and Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 137-62,

with Hieronymus Zanchius, *De natura Dei seu De divinis attributis* (Neustadt: Matthias Harnisius, 1590, 1577), I.vi.x, Ix.8, IV.ii, V.ii, and Turrettini, *Institutio theologicae elencticae* I.ix.6, III.i.1, III.iv.1, III.vi.1, IV.i.11, III.xvi.6, III.xxv, III.xvii, IV, IX, X, XIV.x-xv, XV-XVII. A similar comparison could be made with Plantinga's anthropomorphism, semipelagianism, and Nestorianism and/or Monophysitism: Alvin Plantinga, 'Against Naturalism', *Knowledge of God*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Michael Tooley, Great Debates in Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 2-4, Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, pp. 165-93, and Alvin Plantinga, 'On Heresy, Mind, and Truth', *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (1999), pp. 183-87.

71. Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 210. Earlier (p. 172) Sudduth contrasts traditional 'logical demonstrations' in favour of contemporary 'inductive arguments', and correctly notes that the orthodox would rebut the neo-orthodox claim 'by demonstrating the existence of God'. There is a similar short shrift to demonstration in Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 6, 13.

72. This syllogism aims to summarise the convoluted formulations in Aristotle, *Physics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 241b24-42a49, 54b17-58a27, and Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary*, 1071b3-73a13. Herein I have found the following works helpful: Hippocrates G. Apostle, *Aristotle's Physics: Translated with Commentaries and Glossary* (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1969), Aquinas, *Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 7 l. 1-2 (884-95), lib. 8 l. 7-11 (1021-68), Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, lib. 12 l. 5-7 (2488-535), Daniel W. Graham, *Aristotle Physics Book VIII: Translated with a Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), Robert Wardy, *The Chain of Change: A Study of Aristotle's Physics VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Leo Elders, *Aristotle's Theology: A Commentary on Book L of the Metaphysics* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), pp. 138-206.

A similar argument, in one of Aquinas's synopses, is of course nowadays often just analysed briefly and dismissed abruptly. The background is likely the influential but (arguably) tendentious discussion in Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways: St Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 6-33. For two good replies, see Lubor Velecky, *Aquinas' Five Arguments in the Summa theologiae 1a, 2, 3* (Kampen: Kok, 1994), pp. 68-95, and David Oderberg, 'Whatever Is Changing is Being Changed by Something Else: A Reappraisal of Premise One of the First Way', *Mind, Method, and Morality: Essays in Honour of Anthony Kenny*, eds. John Cottingham and P. M. S. Hacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

For an early instance of an implicit reliance on Aquinas's version in the reformed Church, see Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Heidelbergenses*, D. Francisci Junii opuscula theologica selecta, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: Wormser, 1882, 1592), p. 318 (theses 29-31).

73. Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 186.

74. Ibid., p. 101.

75. Ibid., p. 29. Later Sudduth gives the following examples of 'self-evident truths': '2 + 2 = 4, and all bachelors are unmarried males' (p. 83 n. 16).

76. Although Aristotle clearly was wrong on many astronomical, biological, chemical and mechanical issues, he was right that a generic analysis of the material world is needed for specific analyses of the same (*Physics*, esp. I.i.). For answers to general questions about

explanation, causality, change, time, place and chance (as well as the relation between the universal and the individual) are (more or less) implicit in particular questions about nature. Experiments suppose what matter, change, time, place and chance *are*. But the mathematical character of modern physical, chemical and biological experiments often attempts to bypass these generic questions. Thus a recent Nobel Laureate in physics writes about the myth of 'the idea of mastery of the universe through mathematics alone'. What is needed are 'larger conceptual issues, which are not [experimental] science but philosophy [of nature]'. Robert B. Laughlin, *A Different Universe: Reinventing Physics from the Bottom Down* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), pp. xv-xvi. For a similar non-reductionist view of natural science, see Franklin M. Harold, *The Way of the Cell: Molecules, Organisms, and the Order of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The modern experimental achievements arose of course against the astronomical, biological, chemical and mechanical inadequacies of the tradition and not against the generic account of nature.

77. 'Premises have strong epistemic credentials just if they are immune from doubt, error, or revision, or they are universally held by all rational cognizers who consider and understand the premises of the argument.' Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, p. 171. In this paragraph Sudduth is explicating his view of what a demonstrative argument is. This view also comes to expression elsewhere; for instance, pp. 83 and 172.

78. This will have to suffice for now in order to avoid misunderstanding. To pursue this further one may want to start with James D. Madden, 'Aristotle, Induction, and First Principles', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (2004), Anthony Kenny, 'Concepts, Brains, and Behaviour', *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 81 (2010), and David S. Oderberg, 'Concepts, Dualism, and the Human Intellect', *Psycho-Physical Dualism Today: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, eds. Alessandro Antonietti, Antonella Corradini and E. J. Lowe (Lanham, MD/Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2008).

79. Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, pp. 204-07.

80. Cp. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* I.xiii, and Aquinas, *Expositio libri Posteriorum analyticorum*, lib. 1 l. 23.

81. Cp. Aristotle, *Physics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, VIII.ix-x.

82. Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary*, XII.

83. On the classical reformed doctrine of God, see Sebastian Rehnman, 'The Doctrine of God', *Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy (16th and 17th Centuries)*, ed. Herman Selderhuis (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

84. I thank Profs. Paul Helm, Richard Muller, Daniel von Wachter, Dr. Per Landgren and my doctoral students Per Holmer, Jonatan Jäderberg and Stefan Lindholm for discussing an earlier version of this paper with me.

CAN GOD'S GOODNESS SAVE THE DIVINE COMMAND THEORY FROM EUTHYPHRO?

JEREMY KOONS

Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar

Abstract. Recent defenders of the divine command theory like Adams and Alston have confronted the Euthyphro dilemma by arguing that although God's commands make right actions right, God is morally perfect and hence would never issue unjust or immoral commandments. On their view, God's nature is the standard of moral goodness, and God's commands are the source of all obligation. I argue that this view of divine goodness fails because it strips God's nature of any features that would make His goodness intelligible. An adequate solution to the Euthyphro dilemma may require that God be constrained by a standard of goodness that is external to Himself – itself a problematic proposal for many theists.

The Euthyphro dilemma is often thought to present a fatal problem for the divine command theory (aka theological voluntarism). Are right acts commanded by God because they are right, or are they right because they are commanded by God? If the former, then there is a standard of right and wrong independent of God's commands; God's commands are not relevant in determining the content of morality. This option seems to compromise God's sovereignty in an important way. But the second horn of the dilemma presents seemingly insurmountable problems, as well. First, if God's commands make right actions right, and there is no standard of morality independent of God's commands, then that seems to make morality arbitrary. Thus, murder is not wrong because it harms someone unjustly, but merely because God forbids it; there is (it seems) no good connection between reason and the wrongness of murder. Furthermore, if God commanded us to torture an innocent child to death, then torturing an innocent child to death would (it seems) be

EUROPEAN JOURNAL FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 4/1 (SPRING 2012), PP. 177-195

morally obligatory. Most of us find these consequences absurd, and a sufficient reason for rejecting divine command theory.

Since the first horn of the dilemma represents moral obligations as being independent of God's commands, a divine command theorist must somehow tackle the second horn of the dilemma. A tempting strategy is to say that while torturing an innocent child to death would be obligatory if God commanded this, God would never command such a thing because such a command would be contrary to His good and loving nature. However, such a move seems incompatible with divine command theory: it suggests that God is bound by moral requirements (He cannot command torturing an innocent child to death because such a command would be immoral), whereas divine command theory claims that God is the source of all moral requirements.[1]

However, a number of divine command theorists have argued recently that this move is legitimate. These theorists argue that divine command theory is not a theory of all moral values; it is merely a theory of moral *obligation*.[2] We can still say that God is good, as long as we do not construe this goodness in terms of God doing what He ought to do. 'Oughts' (which apply to finite beings such as us humans) are in turn constituted by the commands of God. And since He is good, He would never command torturing an innocent child to death, and so the second horn of our Euthyphro dilemma is defused. Thus, Wierenga writes, "bringing about a foully unjust state of affairs [S]…is incompatible with being loving and just; so then is commanding someone else to bring S about. Accordingly, since these are essential features of God's character, they preclude his commanding that someone bring about S in any possible world."[3] Further, God's nature provides God with adequate reason to issue the particular commands He does, alleviating the arbitrariness worry about divine command theory: this move seems to restore the relation between moral reasons and God's commands.

I. WHAT IS GOD'S GOODNESS?

Wherein does God's goodness consist? Alston writes that God's goodness supervenes on His lovingness and other such traits.[4] A natural question

[1] For a particularly lucid statement of this objection, see Hooker (2001).

[2] See, for example, Wierenga (1989), Adams (1999), Alston (2002), and Quinn (2006).

[3] Wierenga (1989), p. 221.

[4] Alston (2002).

arises as to the relation between the traits that God manifests *qua* supremely good being and His goodness: are qualities like being merciful and loving traits of God because they are good, or are they good because they are traits of God? Simply put: why is it good to be loving? Is being loving independently good, apart from its being one of God's traits? Or is it good merely because God is loving? This is not simply another iteration of the Euthyphro problem – is God loving because being loving is good or is being loving good because God is loving? – because the horns of this dilemma have somewhat different outcomes. In the original Euthyphro dilemma, the worry about the second horn of the dilemma was that if right acts were right because God commanded them, then that made morality arbitrary – torture for fun is immoral, but God did not have a good (i.e., moral) reason for forbidding such torture, and there would have been nothing immoral about his commanding torture for fun. But the divine command theorist is not saying that the relation between the goodness of being loving and the fact of God's lovingness is so arbitrary as that: it is not the *mere* fact of God's being loving that makes it good to be loving. Rather, it is the fact that God is loving, *combined* with the fact that God is supremely good that makes being loving good. As Alston puts the point,

> We can think of God himself, the individual being, as the supreme standard of goodness…Lovingness is good (a good-making feature, that on which goodness is supervenient) not because of the Platonic existence of a general principle or fact to the effect that lovingness is good, but because God, the supreme standard of goodness, is loving. Goodness supervenes on every feature of God, not because some general principles are true but just because they are features of God.[5]

So God is good (indeed, He is the supreme standard of goodness), and *that* is why His being loving makes being loving good. So it seems initially that the second option involves no arbitrariness: being loving is good because it is a trait of God, who is supremely good. (We will revisit this initial conclusion later, though.)

Notice, however, the order of explanation here. God is not good because He is loving. That would imply a standard of goodness independent of God, which divine command theorists like Alston and Adams must deny. They claim that God is the standard of goodness, that

[5] Alston (2002), pp. 291-2.

whatever properties (such as being loving) God has are good in virtue of God's essential goodness. Thus, God's goodness must be logically prior to the goodness of God's mercy, justice, lovingness, and so on. Indeed, Adams speculates that in a possible world with no God, nothing would be excellent or good, not even character traits we normally consider good (like being loving). Adams writes,

> If there is a God that satisfies [the] conditions imposed by our concepts [of the Good], we might say, then excellence is the property of faithfully imaging such a God…In worlds where no such God exists, nothing would have that property, and therefore nothing would be excellent. But beings like us in such a world might have a concept subjectively indistinguishable from our concept of excellence, and there might be an objective property that corresponded to it well enough, and in a sufficiently salient way, to be the property signified by it, though it would not be the property that we in fact signify by 'excellent'.[6]

Wainwright notes that an apparent consequence of Adams's theory is that if there is a possible world where there is no God, and no plausible alternative candidate for the role of the Supreme Good, then assuming that "Adams's account of the semantics of 'good' is more or less correct, then the term 'good' doesn't pick out a real property in those worlds; the concept of good will be as empty in those worlds as the concept of phlogiston is in ours".[7] In those worlds, being (e.g.) loving is not good. God's goodness is logically prior to the goodness of such traits, and their goodness depends on and is parasitic on the prior goodness of God.[8]

II. IS THIS VIEW OF GOD'S GOODNESS COHERENT?

Does this picture of God's goodness make any sense?[9] (Alston will be our primary interlocutor since he, more than others, has grappled with the problematic implications of this conception of God's goodness.)

[6] Adams (1999), p. 46.

[7] Wainwright (2005), p. 95.

[8] Of the authors under discussion, Alston alone disputes this; but I will argue below that Alston endorses incompatible theses about the relation between God's goodness and the goodness of traits like mercy and justice.

[9] This view of God's goodness has had its critics; see, in particular, Morriston (2001) and (2009) and Kowalski (2010). I will be approaching the issue from a somewhat different direction than these authors, trying to tease out whether the conception of God's goodness proposed by Adams, Alston, and their allies is metaphysically coherent.

Certainly, it seems to reverse the intuitive order of explanation between something's goodness and the other properties it exemplifies. As Wes Morriston writes in a penetrating critique of Alston's view,

> Is God good because He has these good-making properties? Or are they good-making because God has them? The first alternative seems, intuitively, to be the right one. Why should it make any difference to the good-makingness of compassion, say, if there is (or isn't) a supremely compassionate God?[10]

This is puzzling, but there is a deeper problem confronting the Adams/Alston account. Adams and Alston claim that God is good, but given the above order of explanation, they are debarred from pointing to any feature in virtue of which God is good. (Alston denies this, but I will argue that he cannot do so coherently; we will return to this point later.) Rather, those features themselves are good in virtue of belonging to God (who is good). Then what does it mean to say that God is good? It doesn't mean that He is just, or loving – His goodness is prior to the goodness of these features. Alston and Adams must say this, else admit that there is a standard of goodness independent of God. So the property of goodness, as it applies to God, is undifferentiated, a 'featureless property'. As Kowalski summarizes the problem,

> How should we understand God, a particular concrete being, serving as the standard of goodness? In virtue of what does God so serve? In order to avoid grounding God's goodness, as the Platonist would, in truths that do not depend on God, it seems that God must somehow serve as the supreme standard of goodness *apart* from the properties He in fact possesses. It thus seems that God, *qua* bare particular, serves as the ultimate standard for moral goodness.[11]

The problem is this: actions and agents instantiate morally thin properties (rightness, goodness, etc.) in virtue of the morally thick properties these actions and agents instantiate. An action is not good *simpliciter*; it is good *because* it represents an act of charity, or a repaying of a debt, or something else. It is good in virtue of something else. Similar comments apply to the goodness of agents. The benefit of moving to the level of the descriptively thin is that it can be silent as to what this 'something else' is – as Elstein and Hurka write, "The mark of a thin

[10] Morriston (2009), p. 253.

[11] Kowalski (forthcoming), p. 5.

concept like 'right' is that it says nothing about what other properties an item falling under it has"[12] – but let us not take this silence to be metaphysical. We cannot use these thin concepts without remembering that at bottom they are paper currency whose value depends on a reserve of thick virtues.

III. ALSTON'S PARTICULARISM

Alston has addressed the worry that this strategy of making God the standard of moral goodness renders God's goodness unintelligible. Alston writes:

> Note that on this view we are not debarred from saying what is supremely good about God. God is not good, qua bare particular or undifferentiated thisness. God is good by virtue of being loving, just, merciful and so on.[13]

Does this answer the objection? It is unclear. For mark how the passage continues:

> Where this view differs from its alternative is in the answer to the question, 'By virtue of what are these features of God good-making features?' The answer given by this view is: 'By virtue of being features of God.'[14]

So Alston is explicit here that these features are only good *because* God possesses them. As Alston writes earlier in his essay,

> Lovingness is good (is a good-making feature, that on which goodness is supervenient) not because of the Platonic existence of a general principle or fact to the effect that lovingness is good, but because God, the supreme standard of goodness, is loving. Goodness supervenes on every feature of God, not because some general principles are true *but just because they are features of God*.[15]

So we have a puzzle. The first passage indicates that God is good because of these good-making traits (such as lovingness, mercy, and so on). But the second and third quotes reverse the order of explanation: they say not that God is good because He possesses these traits, but that these traits are good-making because God possesses them. What is the correct order of explanation? Can Alston have it both ways? I will argue that he

[12] Elstein and Hurka (2009), p. 516.
[13] Alston (2002), p. 292.
[14] Alston (2002), p. 292.
[15] Alston (2002), pp. 291-2, emphasis added.

cannot; Alston's particularism requires that God's goodness be logically prior to the goodness of the moral virtues. And we will see that this view is incoherent; it makes God's goodness unintelligible.

Alston distinguishes between

> (a) 'Platonic' predicates, the criterion for the application of which is a general 'essence' or 'Idea' that can be specified in purely general terms, and (b) 'particularist' predicates, the criterion for the application of which makes essential reference to one or more individuals.[16]

Alston suggests 'triangle' as a good paradigm of the former kind. Alston's theory of the good is particularist: a particular individual (God) is the standard of goodness. Alston suggests an illuminating analogy:

> A sub-type closer to our present concern is the much-discussed 'meter'. Let's say that what makes a certain length a meter is its equality to a standard meter stick kept in Paris. What makes this table a meter in length is not its conformity to a Platonic essence but its conformity to a concretely existing individual. Similarly, on my present suggestion, what most ultimately makes an act of love a good thing is not its conformity to some general principle but its conformity to, or imitation of, God, who is both the ultimate source of the existence of things and the supreme standard by which they are to be assessed.[17]

To imagine the Paris meter bar as a particularist paradigm, we shall have to re-imagine its history to some extent. (And in the above quote, Alston seems to realize that treating the Paris meter bar as a genuine particularist example requires some fictionalization.) In real history, there was already a definition of the meter, and the meter bar was made in accordance with this definition. Thus, the meter bar was produced with the intention that it be precisely 1 meter long. Thus, real history causes the meter bar to diverge from Alston's model of God, because the meter bar isn't really a particularist model: it violates the requirement of the particularist model that the paradigm *be* the standard, instead of conforming to an external standard.

Let us suppose, then, that the meter bar really does match Alston's particularist model. Let us suppose that there was no external standard of metric length prior to the creation of the meter bar, and that the meter bar really did establish, for the first time ever, the length of the meter,

[16] Alston (2002), p. 292.
[17] Alston (2002), p. 292.

and that the length of the meter was determined only by reference to this particular entity, the meter bar. Now this model fits Alston's particularism: it is truly accurate to say that anything that is (or approximates) a meter is so *purely* in virtue of resembling the meter bar, and not in virtue of matching any pre-existing standard independent of the meter bar. It is a genuine particularist model, on our retelling of history. (And I think that something like this retelling is what Alston intends when he prefaces his discussion of the Paris meter bar with the phrase "Let's say that…".)

Now consider an object – say, a piece of wood. This piece of wood has a particular length, L. Suppose this length, L, is the same length as that of the Paris meter bar. Thus, L is 1 meter. Which of the following claims is true?

(1) This particular length, L, is 1 meter because the Paris meter bar has this particular length.

(2) The Paris meter bar is 1 meter because it is this particular length, L.

If the Paris meter bar is a genuine particularist standard, (1) is true and (2) is false. As Alston writes, "What makes a certain length a meter is its equality to a standard meter stick kept in Paris."[18] (2) must be rejected for multiple reasons, not the least because it smacks of the Platonism rejected by Alston – "What makes this table a meter in length is not its conformity to a Platonic essence but its conformity to a concretely existing individual."[19] But more importantly, (2) reverses the order of explanation – the measurement of the meter bar isn't fixed by comparison with some abstract length, or by comparison with some external standard. Rather, the meter bar is the standard which determines the unit of measure for L and other lengths. That is how a particularist model works. So understanding the Paris meter bar as a particularist example, (1) is true and (2) is false.

But understanding particularist examples like the Paris meter bar sheds light on Alston's particularist model of goodness. For sentences precisely parallel to (1) and (2) can also be constructed with respect to God, goodness, and the virtues:

(3) These particular virtues (lovingness, mercy, etc.) are good because God possesses these particular virtues.

(4) God is good because God possesses these particular virtues (lovingness, mercy, etc.)

[18] Alston (2002), p. 292.

[19] Alston (2002), p. 292.

(3) and (4) are precisely parallel in structure to (1) and (2)[20]; and with the particularist example of the Paris meter bar, (1) is true and (2) is false. (2) is false because with particularism, the order of explanation goes in a particular direction: from the exemplar toward the traits the exemplar is established to exemplify. The order of explanation does not reverse; if it does, you are not a particularist. This strongly suggests that if we construe God as a particularist paradigm, as Alston intends, we should likewise find (3) to be true and (4) to be false.

The Paris meter bar example reveals something about particularism. With particularism, the order of explanation goes one way: it goes from the exemplar to the specific traits it possesses, conferring some status on them. The meter bar confers meter-hood on its specific length; that is its job as the particularist model of the meter. The order of explanation does not reverse: meter-ness, as a Platonic entity or independently-defined length, does not define the meter bar as being a meter long. Similarly, God defines the virtues as good, by being the particularist model of goodness. The virtues do not confer goodness on God, any more than a meter length confers meter-hood on the meter bar.

Let us apply this lesson to the theory endorsed by Alston, Adams, Craig and company. We have seen that it is the function of particularist exemplars to have a particular logical priority, a particular order of explanation. The meter bar exists to confer 'meter-hood' on particular lengths. Lengths do not confer meter-hood on the meter bar; that would reverse the order of explanation and violate particularism by implying a standard prior to the meter bar for judging lengths. Similarly, if God is to serve as a particularist exemplar, He must confer goodness on the virtues. The virtues cannot confer goodness on him, cannot explain wherein God's goodness consists. For to say that God is good because

[20] We can show that 1 and 3 have exactly the same structure: *A* is *B* because *C* has the same *A* (with the implication that the explanation is provided by the fact that *C* is *B*). Substituting terms for variables A, B and C, 1 becomes:

This length is *1 meter* because the *meter bar* has *this length* (and the *meter bar* is *1 meter*).

3 becomes:

Virtues (like kindness) are *good* because *God* has the same *virtues* (and *God* is *good*).

The parallel structure of 2 and 4 can also be shown: *C* is *B* because it has *A* (with the implication that the explanation is provided by the fact that *A* is *B*). Again, substituting for variables, 2 becomes:

The *meter bar* is *1 meter* because it is *this length* (and *this length* is *1 meter*)

4 becomes:

God is *good* because he has *virtues* like kindness (and the *virtues* are themselves *good*).

he possesses these virtues, or that God's goodness supervenes on these virtues, is to reject particularism in favour of some theory that locates the source of moral value outside of God. Wes Morriston has recognized this point:

> Is God good because He has these good-making properties?...If this is the right way to look at the matter, then moral goodness supervenes directly on the good-making properties, and it makes not the slightest difference to their good-makingness who has them. A person is morally good to the degree that she possesses these properties. That goes for God as much as for anyone else. But then we are right back in the box we were trying to get out of. God is subject to an independent standard of goodness…[21]

Alston cannot consistently maintain that "God is good by virtue of being loving, just, merciful and so on"[22] and be a particularist. If he wants to be a particularist, the order of explanation can only go in one direction: the character traits like being loving, just and merciful are virtues – are good – just because they are possessed by God.

There are other ways of seeing how on Alston's view, God's goodness must be logically prior to the goodness of the particular moral virtues. That this is so can be seen by looking at another objection to Alston's account raised by Morriston. Morriston writes,

> Alston's point…is that explanation must come to an end somewhere. Whatever our ultimate standard is – whether it is an individual paradigm or a general principle of the sort favored by Platonists – that is as far as we can go. If Alston cannot say what makes goodness supervene on *God's* characteristics, neither can the Platonist say what makes it supervene on a bunch of properties. In either case, it just does supervene, and that is all there is to say. But even if this is right, we can still ask which stopping point is preferable. If we have to stop somewhere, why not stop with the special combination of love and justice that make up God's moral character? Why go further and insist that goodness supervenes on these characteristics only because they are characteristics of the particular individual who is God? From the point of view of moral theory, it is hard to see any real advantage in doing this; it complicates things considerably, and the theological window-dressing seems quite superfluous.[23]

[21] Morriston (2009), p. 253.
[22] Alston (2002), p. 292.
[23] Morriston (2001), p. 132.

Of course, Adams' and Alston's answer to Morriston's hypothetical question ("Why not stop with the special combination of love and justice…?") must be that if these were not characteristics of God, they wouldn't be virtues – they wouldn't be good. Recall our discussion of Adams' theory of the semantics of 'good' – for Adams, in a world without God, there might be traits such as lovingness and justice, but they wouldn't be *good*, per se. As Wainwright commented, assuming that "Adams's account of the semantics of 'good' is more or less correct, then the term 'good' doesn't pick out a real property in those worlds; the concept of good will be as empty in those worlds as the concept of phlogiston is in ours."[24] Alston, as we have seen, seems to make a similar claim, writing,

> Lovingness is good (is a good-making feature, that on which goodness is supervenient) not because of the Platonic existence of a general principle or fact to the effect that lovingness is good, but because God, the supreme standard of goodness, is loving. Goodness supervenes on every feature of God, not because some general principles are true *but just because they are features of God*.[25]

Notice the crucial phrases: 'because … just because…'. The clear implication is that the virtues are virtues – are *good* – just because there is a God who exemplifies these traits. These traits have no independent power to impart goodness on something. If there were no God, and someone were loving, merciful, and so forth, then that person (on the Adams/Alston view) would not be *good*. Thus, God's goodness is logically prior to the goodness of these traits – these traits are not intrinsically good (for without God, they are not good). God is good, and in virtue of God's possession of these traits, they too are good. We see, then, that God cannot be good in virtue of these traits, because God's goodness must be logically prior to the goodness of these traits. So with this in mind, let us recall Alston's quote, cited earlier:

> Note that on this view we are not debarred from saying what is supremely good about God. God is not good, *qua* bare particular or undifferentiated thisness. God is good by virtue of being loving, just, merciful and so on.[26]

This cannot be right. God cannot be good by virtue of possessing these traits, because these traits don't have the power to confer goodness upon God. God's goodness is logically prior to the goodness of these traits,

[24] Wainwright (2005), p. 95.
[25] Alston (2002), pp. 291-2, emphasis added.
[26] Alston (2002), p. 292.

so logically speaking God's goodness comes first, and then comes the goodness of these traits. You cannot explain God's goodness in terms of His being "loving, just, merciful, and so on," because the goodness of these traits is logically subsequent to God's goodness, and is to be explained in terms of the latter property.

IV. THE INCOHERENCE OF ALSTON'S VIEW

I conclude that God's goodness cannot be explained in terms of the goodness of the concrete virtues. We cannot say that God is good because He is loving, merciful, just and so on. Again, this violates our normal understanding of thin moral concepts: agents are not good simpliciter, but are good because they embody thick moral concepts, like lovingness and justice. But the particularism defended by Alston prevents him from explaining God's goodness in this way, and saddles him with a notion of divine goodness that is empty of content.

How can Alston reply? Perhaps one can argue that we can say something about even such a stripped down property: we can say (with Aquinas) that "the essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable".[27] The problem is that God's goodness, understood in the minimalist way outlined above, is a total blank, stripped of any feature that would make intelligible why it is desirable or worthy of pursuit.

The essential problem in the Adams/Alston view can be brought into sharp relief by discussing another objection addressed by Alston. Speaking for his opponent, Alston writes, "Isn't it arbitrary to take some particular individual, even the supreme individual, as the standard of goodness, regardless of whether this individual conforms to general principles of goodness or not?"[28] In response to this objection, Alston writes,

> An answer to the question, 'What is good about?' will, sooner or later, cite certain good-making characteristics. We can then ask why we should suppose that good supervenes on those characteristics. In answer either a general principle or an individual paradigm is cited. But whichever it is, that is the end of the line…On both views something is taken to be ultimate, behind which we cannot go, in the sense of finding some explanation of the fact that it is constitutive of goodness.[29]

---

[27] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia.5.1. Quoted in Wierenga (1989), p. 202. As Wierenga notes, though, Aquinas is not talking specifically about moral goodness here.

[28] Alston (2002), p. 293.

[29] Alston (200), p. 293.

There are a few comments that need to be made at this point. First, Alston is making a familiar point about explanatory regress, and solving it in a familiar way: eventually, you reach a stopping point in the regress of explanations, and some principle or exemplar must be taken as ultimate. While this may, in some instances, be an acceptable move, it is not acceptable in all cases. One's stopping point must be intelligible as a stopping point. For example, when Aristotle conducts his familiar inquiry into the ultimate *telos* of all human action, the stopping point he finds – *eudaimonia*, happiness, or flourishing – is intelligible as a stopping point for such an inquiry. It has features that make sense of it as a goal of human striving. But, as we have already seen, God is not morally good in virtue of any of the familiar characteristics (such as being just or loving). God's moral goodness is utterly blank, without any features that make it intelligible as a stopping place in an inquiry into the ultimate foundation of goodness. Since Alston and Adams make God's goodness prior to any of God's concrete moral virtues, the person of God is not intelligible as a stopping place in the quest for the ultimate source of good. God's supposed goodness, as I said above, is a complete blank, lacking any features whatsoever that would make it intuitively appealing why the object in question should be regarded as the ultimate exemplar of moral goodness.[30]

Alston writes that it is 'self-evident' that God is the ultimate exemplar of moral goodness, and a legitimate stopping place:

> I would invite one who finds the invocation of God as the supreme standard arbitrary, to explain why it is more arbitrary than the invocation of a supreme general principle. Perhaps it is because it seems self-evident to him that the principle is true. But it seems self-evident to some that God is the supreme standard. And just as my opponent will explain the lack of self-evidence to some people of this general principle by saying that they have not considered it sufficiently, in an impartial frame of mind or whatever, so the theistic particularist will maintain that those who don't acknowledge God as the supreme standard are insufficiently acquainted with God, or have not sufficiently considered the matter.[31]

In our regress of justification, we ultimately encounter some principle or exemplar, and the truth of this principle (or the exemplariness of this

[30] We have seen above, in the second lengthy quote by Morriston, how he criticizes Alston's choice of stopping places in the regress of explanations.

[31] Alston (2002), p. 293.

exemplar) is self-evident or known via intuition. Once again, our question must be, 'Is this plausible?' Alston implies that one who is sufficiently acquainted with God and who has given the matter adequate, impartial thought will come to see (with justification or warrant) that God is the standard of moral perfection. But we can now see why this is wrong. For when one imagines acquaintance with God, and contemplation of the divine, one naturally imagines contemplating God given his attributes – such as being perfectly loving, just, merciful, and so forth. And of course someone who contemplated God as so presented might well come to believe in God's moral perfection. But Alston must claim that God is the standard of moral perfection independently of his possession of these characteristics. He is not morally perfect because he possesses these characteristics; these characteristics are features of moral perfection only because they are possessed by God. Thus, what Alston should exhort us to do is this: imagine God, stripped of every moral perfection – His lovingness, His justice, His caring. Now is it *self-evident* that God *as so conceived* is morally perfect, the ultimate standard of good? Intuition is not a magical power; it needs something to work with. If intuition is a genuine mental power (and presumably, if it is, it is the power of forming non-inferential beliefs in response to some stimulus or mental input), then intuition requires inputs to generate an output. When Alston tells us that God's moral perfection is self-evident, he is imagining God's moral virtues as cognitive inputs, in which case we should expect as an output the belief "God is the standard of goodness". But the question must be reconceived: 'Does it make sense to say of God, independent of these virtues, that He is good?' I have argued this is not coherent; it is certainly not self-evident that God so conceived is the ultimate standard of moral perfection.

Anyhow, this discussion of self-evidence may mislead us: the problem we are dealing with is metaphysical, not epistemological. Alston presents the regress problem almost as an epistemological problem: how do we identify the ultimate source of good? If we have some knowledge of what traits (such as being loving and just) are good, then (plausibly) we need only find the being who exemplifies these traits to the maximal degree to find the exemplar of the good. But the problem we are grappling with is metaphysical, not epistemological: we are not (merely) trying to identify the source of good; we are trying to explain how it confers goodness on all things. So we cannot help ourselves to these virtuous traits (even if we know they are virtuous), because our problem is to explain *how* they are

virtuous, not merely to identify *which* being is most virtuous. We must consider the source of these traits' goodness (God), and ask, "How is it that this being confers goodness on these traits?" Alston, Adams, Craig and others answer, "In virtue of being supremely good." But once we confine ourselves to a strictly metaphysical investigation, we see that this statement is meaningless, because we are debarred from appealing to any features of God which might make His goodness coherent, or explain why His goodness is worthy of admiration or capable of conferring praiseworthiness on the traits (such as lovingness and justice) that He possesses.

I said when we began our discussion of the regress of explanations that a few comments were in order. Here is another: we must distinguish between explanations-why and explanations-what. Even if explanations-why come to an end, and no further reasons can be given at this point, it does not follow that at this point there can be no further explanation-what. For we should still be able to explain what something is even if we can give no further explanation for why it is the way that it is. For example: suppose (contrary to fact) that the electron's negative charge were simply a brute fact, and that no explanation could be given for why electrons have a negative charge. This would be an example of running to the end of explanations for why things are the way they are. But we could still give an explanation of what a negative charge is: how it interacts with positively-charged items (like protons), what the strength of its electrical charge is, and so forth. So even if we can say nothing about why the electron has this charge, we can say quite a lot about what this charge is.

To deny this with respect to God's goodness is to conflate the two types of explanation, explanations why and explanations what. (This confusion is, I think, a natural consequence of confusing the epistemological and the metaphysical.) The particularist says, in explaining why certain things are good, that at some point these why-explanations run out when we arrive at the exemplar of God's character. But this does not entail the absence of any what-explanations, and we should still be able to say what God's moral goodness consists in. But the particularist has debarred us from doing this: since God's goodness is prior to any feature we could cite in an explanation (what) of God's goodness, we cannot say what God's goodness is. It is, again, a featureless property. The particularist is not just saying that there is an end to why-explanations; she is saying that no what-explanation can be given either. And that is simply not plausible, since this makes God's goodness completely unintelligible.

One might argue that one can give some sort of what-explanation about God's goodness. If Adams *et al* cannot explain God's goodness in terms of concrete virtues (such as lovingness, mercy and justice), perhaps they can attempt to explain this goodness without reference to these virtues. That is, instead of giving the explanation in terms of morally thick virtues (such as mercy, justice, kindness, etc.), they can give the explanation at the more abstract level of morally thin virtues (such as 'morally good'). As the description in question couldn't make reference to the specific thick virtues, this description would of necessity have to be somewhat general in nature. But it might nevertheless be a satisfactory what-explanation. Can you say anything substantive about the morally thin virtues that doesn't rely, even implicitly, on the morally thick virtues?

Perhaps one could say that God's goodness consisted of God always doing what was right. This won't work, though, as theological voluntarists have specifically bifurcated their moral theory to respond to the original Euthyphro problem for divine command theory: there is a theory of the good for God, and a theory of obligation for finite beings like humans. More importantly, though, good must be definable antecedent to right (since it is God's goodness that gives God reason to issue the particular commands that He does). Thus, on this view, good is logically prior to the right, and so it must be possible to give a definition of 'good' that makes no reference to rightness, obligation, or other cognate notions.

One cannot say that God's goodness consists in that He always does the good, for not only is that definition circular, but it uses a predicate (good) that we are already complaining is undefined.

Consider again Aquinas' suggestion: "the essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable."[32] However, as Scanlon[33] and Quinn[34] have argued, something is desirable not because you desire it, but because it has features that render it desirable – that is, in some way *good*. Now, there is a clear risk of circularity here – "the essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way good" – so to render our formulation non-circular, we must specify the precise ways in which God is good: we must specify the features of God that render Him desirable, good. But if there were specific features of God, in virtue of

[32] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia.5.1. Quoted in Wierenga (1989), p. 202.

[33] See Scanlon 1998, particularly pp. 43ff.

[34] Quinn (1993), chapter 12.

which He was good, then we would be thrown back on the first horn of our dilemma: God is good *in virtue of* certain features (and hence there is a standard of goodness independent of God).

Indeed, the whole problem of trying to move the explanations-what up to the level of thin virtues must fail. As I have repeatedly emphasized, agents instantiate morally thin properties (such as goodness) in virtue of the morally thick properties these agents instantiate. Alston's particularism cannot countenance this fact, and so must fail as a supplement to the divine command theory.

In a last-ditch move, one might cite authors (like G.E. Moore) who have argued that the Good is unanalyzable. But even if Moore was right, he merely meant that one could not *analytically* reduce the Good to other non-normative or non-moral concepts. So, when Moore argued that the Good was unanalyzable, he simply meant that it was not definitionally reducible; he didn't mean that it was inexplicable. So the divine command theorist will find no comfort coming from that quarter.

Thus, Alston must commit to one or the other horn of the dilemma. His particularism commits him to the second horn of the dilemma. In short, Alston must answer the question, "Why is being loving good?" by saying, "Traits (like being loving) are good-making because God has them, and God is good." But on Alston's particularism, when we say "God is good", we haven't said anything, because Alston's particularism prevents him from giving any concrete articulation of what goodness is. Unfortunately, on the particularist theory, we have no more (or less) reason to declare God essentially good than to declare Him essentially fnord or bxtzs; for by calling God 'good' we haven't really said anything at all.

CONCLUSION

Adams writes that "the part played by God in my account of the nature of the good is similar to the Form of the Beautiful or the Good in Plato's *Symposium* and *Republic*. God is the supreme Good, and the goodness of other things consists in a sort of resemblance to God."[35] In a similar vein, Alston writes, "I want to suggest…that we can think of God himself, the individual being, as the supreme standard of goodness. God plays the role in evaluation that is more usually assigned, by objectivists about

[35] Adams (1999), p. 7.

value, to Platonic Ideas or principles."[36] But as we have seen, since Adams and Alston are forced to make the goodness of God logically prior to any of the traits that might plausibly constitute God's goodness, it is not at all clear what is meant by the claim that God is the standard of goodness, for the simple reason that it is not clear what is meant by the claim that God is good. To make any sense of the claim that God is good, the traits constitutive of goodness (such as being loving) must be good prior to God's goodness: it must be the case that God is good because he is loving, and not the case that being loving is good because God is loving. But this requires a repudiation of the particularism that is at the heart of views like Adams' and Alston's. This would also require a standard of moral goodness that is independent of God's nature. One could make it dependent on God's will or commandments or decisions, but of course that throws us back in the original arbitrariness problem. Thus, it seems as though an adequate solution to the Euthyphro problem requires that God be constrained by standards of moral goodness that are external to Himself.[37] Perhaps this creates problems for divine sovereignty and the like, but that is separate problem.[38]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Merrihew. 1999. *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Alston, William P. 2002. "What Euthyphro Should Have Said", in William Laine Craig (ed.), *Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide* (Rutgers University Press), pp. 283-298

Elstein, Daniel Y. and Thomas Hurka. 2009. "From Thick to Thin: Two Moral Reduction Plans", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39:4 (December)

Hooker, Brad. 2001. "Cudworth and Quinn", *Analysis* 64:1, pp. 333-335

Kowalski, Dean A. *forthcoming*. "Remembering Alston's 'Evaluative Particularism'", *Religious Studies*

[36] Alston (2002), p. 291.

[37] An alternate solution to the Euthyphro problem is proposed in Chapter 2 of Stump (2003). This solution requires embracing some potentially contentious notions, such as that of divine simplicity and the Thomistic idea that being is identical to goodness. To address these issues is unfortunately beyond the scope of the current essay.

[38] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for the *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* for very helpful feedback on an earlier draft.

Morriston, Wes. 2001. "Must There Be a Standard of Moral Goodness Apart from God?", *Philosophia Christi*, Series 2, 3:1, pp. 127-138 – 2009. "What if God Commanded Something Terrible?", *Religious Studies* 45:3, pp. 249-267

Quinn, Philip L. 2006. "Theological Voluntarism", in David Copp (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 63-90

Quinn, Warren S. 1993. *Morality and Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Scanlon, T.M. 1998. *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)

Stump, Eleonore. 2003. *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge)

Wainwright, William J. 2005. *Religion and Morality* (Aldershot: Ashgate)

Wierenga, Edward R. 1989. *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press)

TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN THEISM AND TRUTHMAKER MAXIMALISM

TIMOTHY PAWL

University of St. Thomas

Abstract. I argue that Traditional Christian Theism is inconsistent with the conjunction of Truthmaker Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism, the thesis that all truths have truthmakers. Though this original formulation requires extensive revision, the gist of the argument is as follows. Suppose for *reductio* Traditional Christian Theism and the sort of Truthmaker Theory that embraces Truthmaker Maximalism are both true. By Traditional Christian Theism, there is a world in which God, and only God, exists. There are no animals in such a world. Thus, it is true in such a world *that there are no zebras*. *That there are no zebras* must have a truthmaker, given Truthmaker Maximalism. God is the only existing object in such a world, and so God must be the truthmaker for this truth, given that it has a truthmaker. But truthmakers necessitate the truths they make true. So, for any world, at any time at which God exists, God makes *that there are no zebras* true. According to Traditional Christian Theism, God exists in our world. In our world, then, it is true: there are no zebras. But there are zebras. Contradiction! Thus, the conjunction of Traditional Christian Theism with Truthmaker Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism is inconsistent.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper I argue that Traditional Christian Theism is inconsistent with the thesis that all truths have truthmakers; that is, that Traditional Christian Theism is inconsistent with Truthmaker Maximalism. I will focus primarily on Traditional Christian Theism, since it is the type of theism with which I am most familiar. Later, however, I will provide

EUROPEAN JOURNAL FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 4/1 (SPRING 2012), PP. 197-218

some evidence to think that traditional versions of the other Abrahamic faiths are also inconsistent with Truthmaker Maximalism.

According to Traditional Christian Theism, God is the author of all that exists – all besides God, that is. Nothing exists without originating from God as its source. Furthermore, Traditional Christian Theism also affirms that God was under no compulsion to create; the divine might have created nothing at all. Creation, Traditional Christianity teaches, is a gratuitous act. These two claims together support this following third claim: that God might have existed without anything else. Put in another, though misleading, way, there is a possible world in which God, and only God, exists. (This claim is misleading precisely because it seems that a successful checklist of things existing in a world in which God exists would include at least two things: God, the world.)

According to Truthmaker Theory, truthmakers must *necessitate* the truth of the propositions they make true.[1] That is, if an object, T, is a truthmaker for a proposition, *p*, then in any world, at any time at which T exists, *p* must be true.[2] If David Armstrong is a truthmaker for the truth, *that David Armstrong exists*, then, in any world, at any time at which David Armstrong exists, the proposition *that David Armstrong exists* is true. Furthermore, some adherents to Truthmaker Theory affirm Truthmaker Maximalism. In fact, there are those, friend and foe of Truthmaker Theory alike, who argue that a proponent of Truthmaker Theory *should* affirm Truthmaker Maximalism as well.[3]

In this paper I will argue that Traditional Christian Theism is inconsistent with the sort of Truthmaker Theory that embraces Truthmaker Maximalism. Though the fine-tuning of the argument will take some work, the gist of the argument goes as follows. Suppose Traditional Christian Theism and the sort of Truthmaker Theory that embraces Truthmaker Maximalism are both true. By Traditional

[1] Merricks claims, rightly, that "necessitarianism is now truthmaker orthodoxy". Trenton Merricks, *Truth and Ontology* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009), pp. 5-8; David Malet Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 5-6.

[2] In this paper, I will treat things that exist atemporally (possible examples include God and abstracta) as existing at all times for the purposes of necessitation.

[3] An example of a friend of Truthmaker Theory providing such arguments is Ross Cameron. See Ross P Cameron, "How to Be a Truthmaker Maximalist", *Noûs* 42, no. 3 (2008), 412-415.; an example of a foe is Trenton Merricks, who provides no fewer than four arguments that truthmaker theorists ought to be Truthmaker Maximalists. See Merricks, *Truth and Ontology*, pp. 23-27.

Christian Theism, there is a world in which God, and only God, exists.[4] There are no animals in such a world. For instance, there are no zebras in such a world. Thus, it is true in such a world *that there are no zebras*. *That there are no zebras* must have a truthmaker, given Truthmaker Maximalism. God is the only existing object in such a world, and so God must be the truthmaker for this truth, given that it has a truthmaker.[5] But truthmakers necessitate the truths they make true. So, for any world, at any time at which God exists, God makes *that there are no zebras* true. According to Traditional Christian Theism, God exists in our world. In our world, then, it is true: there are no zebras. But there are zebras. Contradiction! Thus, the conjunction of Traditional Christian Theism with Truthmaker Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism is inconsistent. In the remainder of this paper, I will present the argument with more detail and consider objections to it.

II. THE ARGUMENT IN DETAIL

In this section I will argue that the conjunction of five theses – two from Traditional Christian Theism, two theses of a standard Truthmaker Theory, and one obvious empirical observation – together entail a contradiction. It is not my goal here to argue for the truth of these five theses. In the following section I will give some reason to think that the two theses I present from Traditional Christian Theism deserve the title (whether honorific or not) of being part of Traditional Christian Theism. Whether or not they, or the other three theses, are true is irrelevant to whether they are, jointly, inconsistent. Likewise, my choice of empirical observation – that there are zebras – is not important. If this paper is dug out from beneath the rubble in a post-apocalyptic, post-equestrian future, that reader may change the empirical observation to *that there is*

[4] Worlds containing only one being are sometimes called 'lonely worlds,' since it is assumed that such a being would be lonely. Given Traditional Christian Theism, though, this is a misnomer. For, given the traditional view of the Godhead, combined with a common principle concerning when one has company and when one has a crowd, such a world is positively crowded with persons.

[5] For another truthmaker argument from lonely entities that aims at a different conclusion, see David Malet Armstrong, "Truthmakers for Negative Truths and for Truths of Mere Possibility", in *Metaphysics and Truthmakers*, ed. Jean-Maurice Monnoyer (Ontos Verlag, 2007), pp. 99-104. For a critical discussion of that argument, see Timothy Pawl, "The Possibility Principle and the Truthmakers for Modal Truths", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88, no. 3 (2010), 417-428.

rubble with my permission (and, also, my sympathies). The five jointly inconsistent theses are as follows:

The *Universal Creation Thesis*:	Necessarily, for any thing that exists that is not identical with God, God created that thing.
The *Possible Non-Creation Thesis*:	Necessarily, it is possible that God create nothing.
Truthmaker Necessitation:	Necessarily, if T makes *p* true, then, in any world, at any time at which T exists, *p* is true.
Truthmaker Maximalism:	Necessarily, every truth has a truthmaker.
The *Zebrine Thesis*:	In our actual world, at this time, zebras exist.

Consider the following argument, which I will call The Original Argument:

1. Suppose that the conjunction of the Universal Creation Thesis, the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, Truthmaker Necessitation, Truthmaker Maximalism and the Zebrine Thesis is true. (For reductio.)
2. There is a possible world at which only God exists; call it 'W'. (From the Universal Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis.)
3. At W, it is true *that there are no zebras*. (From 2.)
4. There is a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras* at W. (From Truthmaker Maximalism.)
5. God is the truthmaker for *that there are no zebras* at W. (From 2, 4.)
6. God necessitates the truth of *that there are no zebras*. (From Truthmaker Necessitation, 5.)
7. At any world, at any time at which God exists, it is true *that there are no zebras.* (From Truthmaker Necessitation, 6.)
8. It is true in the actual world, right now, *that there are no zebras*. (From, 7 and the assumption that God exists.)
9. Contradiction! (From the Zebrine Thesis, 8.)
10. The conjunction of the Universal Creation Thesis, the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, Truthmaker Necessitation, Truthmaker Maximalism and the Zebrine Thesis is false. (1-9)

Premise 2 is true, given the Universal Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis. For, given the Universal Creation Thesis, the only possible way for something besides God to exist is for God to create it. So, in any world, if there exists a thing that is not God, that thing is created by God. Given the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, there is a world in

which God does not create anything. In that world, then, nothing besides God exists. And so, given those two claims, there is a world where God and only God exists.

The step from Premise 2 to Premise 3 requires justification, since it seems to reify something or other that has a truth-value. But God is not something that has a truth-value. (Being the Way, the Truth, and the Life requires a truth-value in the same way it requires a way-value.) And so Premise 3 seems to require that there exist something that is not God. But such a claim contradicts Premise 2. This is a good point; I leave discussion of it until the next section of the paper, where I discuss objections to the argument.

Given that it is true *that there are no zebras* at W, and given Truthmaker Maximalism, something or other at W must make this claim true. Thus, Premise 4 is true. Since, given Premise 2, God alone exists at W, there is one and but one contender for the role of being the truthmaker for the claim *that there are no zebras*. That thing is God. And since, by Premise 4, there is a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*, God is the truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*, as Premise 5 claims. Since Truthmakers necessitate the truths they make true, and God is the truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*, Premise 6 has it right: God necessitates the truth *that there are no zebras*.

But since God necessitates the truth *that there are no zebras*, any world and time where God exists is a world and time at which it is true *that there are no zebras*, as Premise 7 asserts. But then Premise 8 follows, since the Traditional Theist claims that God exists here and now – here and now it is true *that there are no zebras*.[6] This premise, Premise 8, contradicts the empirical truth that there are, in fact, zebras in the here and now. Thus, a contradiction has been derived. The initial set of propositions is inconsistent. A Traditional Christian Theist cannot consistently affirm both Truthmaker Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism.

In the following section I will consider objections to the Original Argument.

III. OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

In this section I will discuss objections to the Original Argument. I see two main sorts of objections to an argument of this sort. One can object

[6] Recall that I am assuming that anything that exists atemporally in a world necessitates the truths that it makes true at all times in that world.

in some way to the starting assumption for *reductio*, or one can object in some way to the inferences from those assumptions. Concerning the objections to the initial assumption, I will consider the following objections: that I have not aptly construed Traditional Christian Theism, that I can not accommodate the denials some contemporary Christian philosophers have made of the Universal Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, and that I have not aptly construed the necessitation requirement for truthmaker theories.

One objection to the Original Argument is that it misfires; even if it were sound, the Universal Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis are not parts of Traditional Christian Theism. And so, while it might show an inconsistency in believing those five theses, that particular conjunction of five theses does not include an apt portrayal of Traditional Christian Theism. In response I will give evidence for the claim that both theses are included in Traditional Christian Theism, as well as evidence to think that they might well be included in traditional versions of the other Abrahamic religions.

The Universal Creation Thesis at least appears to be affirmed by Traditional Christian Theism. For instance, very many Christian creeds claim that God is the author of all things. The Church Fathers at the first Ecumenical Council, the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), profess that the Father is all powerful and "maker of all things both seen and unseen".[7] Likewise, the Nicene Fathers also profess that it was through the Son that "all things came to be, both those in heaven and those in earth".[8] The same is asserted at other Ecumenical Councils of the Christian Church, including the First Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), and the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451).[9] The Universal Creation Thesis has been taught as a dogmatic truth by some Christian groups. Ludwig Ott claims, for instance, that it is a *De Fide* truth of the Catholic Faith that "All that exists outside God was, in its whole substance, produced out of nothing by God".[10] Finally, paragons of

[7] Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 2 Volume Set* (Georgetown University Press, 1990), p. 5.

[8] Ibid.

[9] See Ibid., pp. 24, 64, and 84 respectively.

[10] Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Tan Books and Publishers, 2009), p. 79.

Traditional Christian Theism, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, affirm it in no unclear terms.[11]

Traditional versions of the other two Abrahamic Faiths seem to me to affirm The Universal Creation Thesis as well. For instance, the Quran teaches that "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs" and it also characterizes God as "He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and who has not taken a son and has not had a partner in dominion and has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination".[12] With respect to Judaism, in his Mishneh Torah (Basic Principles of the Torah), Maimonides states that:

> The basic principle of all basic principles and the pillar of all sciences is to realize that there is a First Being who brought every existing thing into being. All existing things, whether celestial, terrestrial, or belonging to an intermediate class, exist only through his true existence. If it could be supposed that He did not exist, it would follow that nothing else could possibly exist (1:1-2).[13]

Likewise, the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, too, has some lofty credentials as far as Traditional Christian Theism is concerned. The First Vatican Council (A.D. 1869-1870), affirming a common and long held view within the Christian tradition, taught that:

> If anyone does not confess that the world and all things which are contained in it, both spiritual and material, were produced, according to their whole substance, out of nothing by God; or holds that God did not create by his will free from all necessity, but [says instead that God created] as necessarily as he necessarily loves himself… let him be anathema.[14]

The Church Fathers at Vatican 1 are claiming that it is free for God whether or not to perform a creative act at all, and not merely what sort

---

[11] See Thomas Aquinas, *On The Power of God (Quæstiones disputatæ de potentia Dei)*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1932), question 3, article 5.

[12] The first quotation is from 39:62, the second from 25:2. Both translations are from the Sahih International Translation.

[13] Isadore Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader*, First Edition. (Behrman House, Inc., 1972), p. 43.

[14] The First Vatican Council, Session 3, the Canons on God the Creator of All Things, Canon 5, quoted from Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 2 Volume Set*, p. 810.

of creative act to perform. There was no necessity in his creating at all. Again, Ludwig Ott claims the following to be a dogmatic proposition for Catholics: "God created the world free from exterior compulsion and inner necessity.[15] We find exemplars of Traditional Christian Theism affirming this proposition as well.[16]

Turning again to Judaism, Maimonides writes, immediately following the previous quotation from his Mishneh Torah:

> If, however, it were supposed that all other beings were non-existent, He alone would still exist. Their non-existence would not involve His non-existence. For all beings are in need of Him; but He, blessed be He, is not in need of them, nor any one of them (1:3).[17]

In fact, Maimonides puts both the Universal Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis together in his *Guide for the Perplexed*, 2.13, when he writes:

> …the opinion of all who believe in the Law of Moses our Master, peace be on him, is that the world as a whole – I mean to say, every existent other than God, may He be exalted – was brought into existence by God after having been purely and absolutely nonexistent, and that God, may He be exalted, had existed alone, and nothing else – neither an angel nor a sphere nor what subsists within the sphere. Afterwards, through His will and His volition, He brought into existence out of nothing all the beings as they are, time itself being one of the created things…[18]

Here Maimonides claims that God creates every other thing that exists, that he does so after existing alone in the world, and that this creation is due to God's volition and will (and not, presumably, due to compulsion).

It seems to me, then, that there is a good case to be made that Traditional Christian Theism affirms these two theses, and that Traditional Judaism does as well.[19]

---

[15] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 83.

[16] Aquinas writes "I answer that without any doubt we must hold that God by the decree of his will and by no natural necessity brought creatures into being". He goes on to provide four arguments for this claim. See Aquinas, *On The Power of God (Quæstiones disputatæ de potentia Dei)*, question 3, article 15.

[17] Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader*, pp. 43-44.

[18] As quoted in Sarah Pessin, "The Influence of Islamic Thought on Maimonides", sec. 2. Cosmos, Creation, Emanation, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimonides-islamic/#CosCreEma>, accessed Aug 30, 2011.

[19] A Muslim colleague of mine in a Theology Department whose specialty is Islamic theology informs me that Islam also affirms both of these theses, but I have not been

A second objection stems from the fact that religiously inclined philosophers of religion deny these claims. Whatever their proud pedigree might be, both of these theses have been denied in print by a philosopher in the last decade. This denial is surely no reason to think the argument is faulty. However, all things being equal, it would be better to employ premises acceptable to more rather than fewer religiously inclined philosophers of religion.

For instance, Peter van Inwagen denies the Universal Creation Thesis. He believes that there are abstracta (for instance, propositions, properties and numbers), and that God is not the creator of abstracta, owing to the fact that abstracta are not the sort of thing that can fall under a causal relation, and creation is a causal relation.[20] Van Inwagen reads the propositions from the Ecumenical Councils cited earlier as tacitly restricted to creatable things. Since abstracta are not creatable, the Church Fathers did not have them in mind.[21]

Norman Kretzmann denies the Possible Non-Creation Thesis. He concludes a discussion of whether God must create with the following line: "As I see it, then, God's will is necessitated as regards *whether* to create, but fully free as regards *what* to create."[22] In the following I will consider whether I can accommodate these two denials.

I can accommodate van Inwagen by weakening the Universal Creation Thesis. To do so, I can claim that God is the author of all *contingent* beings, leaving it unstated whether there are other necessary beings and

---

able to find as explicit an endorsement for them from Islam as I have from the other two Abrahamic faiths.

[20] Peter van Inwagen, "God and Other Uncreated Things", in *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, ed. Kevin Timpe (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 3-20, for a summary of his position and reasoning, see the final two paragraphs on p. 20.

[21] To be fair to van Inwagen, there is some corroborating evidence for this sort of reading from some sources of Traditional Christian Theism. For instance, the Fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) says God is "one principle of all things, creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal; who by his almighty power at the beginning of time created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, that is to say angelic and earthly…" This quotation seems to gloss 'invisible and visible' as meaning 'spiritual and corporeal,' then gloss 'spiritual and corporeal' as meaning 'angelic and earthly.' Since abstracta, if there are such things, are neither angelic nor earthly, it seems that affirming that God did not create abstracta might not go afoul of the affirmation that God created all visible and invisible things.

[22] Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), p. 225.

whether God created them if there are some. Call this new thesis the *Contingent Creation Thesis*:

> The *Contingent Creation Thesis*: Necessarily, for any thing that is contingent, God created that thing.[23]

All those who affirm the Universal Creation Thesis will grant the Contingent Creation Thesis, since it is straightforwardly logically entailed by the Universal Creation Thesis. Furthermore, those who do not grant the Universal Creation Thesis for the sorts of reasons van Inwagen gives can, nevertheless, grant the Contingent Creation Thesis. So the modification loses no adherents and gains additional adherents.

The move to the Contingent Creation Thesis has other worries, though. For one, it saves the argument from this objection by providing a response that, if affirmed, falsifies the second premise. That is because if abstracta such as the proposition *that there are zebras* exist in W, it is false that God and God alone exists in W, as Premise 2 states. So Premise 2 must be reworded for those who resort to the Contingent Creation Thesis. The rewording is not harmful to the thrust of the argument, though. Rather than say that W contains God and God alone, we must say, instead, in the revised version of Premise 2, that at W only God and other necessary beings (if there are such things) exist. Similar amendments are required for Premises 5-7 as well. One might worry that these amendments render the argument unsound.

One might worry here that allowing other necessary beings besides God into the picture might allow for other truthmakers besides God, and so ruin the argument. The argument would be ruined since the inference from Premise 4 to Premise 5 would be invalid. It would be invalid

[23] This statement of the Contingent Creation Thesis entails that God is not contingent, since, were God contingent, he would have to create himself by this thesis, and it is impossible for a thing to create itself. While I believe it to be part of Traditional Christian Theism that God is not contingent, I will note that some contemporary Christian philosophers think that God is logically contingent. Richard Swinburne, for instance, gives two arguments that God is contingent. First, because it is conceivable that there be a complex physical universe but not God, and conceivability is some guide to possibility; second, because that which is logically necessary cannot explain that which is logically contingent, and so God couldn't explain the existence of the universe, were God necessary. See Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2004), p. 148. Also see Richard Swinburne, *Is God Necessary*, Closer To Truth, URL = <http://www.closertotruth.com/video-profile/Is-God-Necessary-Richard-Swinburne-/249>, accessed August 24, 2011.

because, were there really other entities besides God in the world, then we would not be able to infer that God is the truthmaker for *that there are no zebras* from the claim that something or other is the truthmaker.

My reply to this objection is twofold: (i) allowing the possibility of other logically necessary beings besides God does allow for the possibility of other potential truthmakers, but (ii) this poses no problem for the forthcoming considered form of the argument. Additional necessary entities pose no problem for the considered form of the argument because, given Truthmaker Necessitation, no necessary being can be a truthmaker for a contingent truth.

To see that, given Truthmaker Necessitation, no necessary being can be a truthmaker for a contingent truth, suppose, for *reductio*, that it is possible for some necessary being, call it N, to be a truthmaker for some contingent truth, call it *C*. Since N is a truthmaker for *C*, in any world, at any time at which N exists, *C* will be true (given Truthmaker Necessitation). But N exists in all worlds at all times, and so *C* must be true in all worlds at all times. *C*, though, is contingent. So, in at least one world, at at least one time, *C* is false. So, in at least one world, at at least one time, C is both true and false. But that is impossible. Thus, to conclude the *reductio*, it is not possible for a necessary being to be a truthmaker for a contingent truth. An exactly parallel argument can be run showing that any *grouping* of necessary beings cannot be a truthmaker for a contingent truth. This leads to a conclusion worthy of italics: *If Truthmaker Necessitation is true, then no necessary being can be a truthmaker for a contingent truth*.

No matter how many other necessary entities we add to the world, then, none of them, either singularly or grouped, will be a truthmaker for a contingent truth. And since *that there are no zebras* is a contingent truth (it is true in W, but false in our world), it does not matter whether we start with a world containing one being – God – or a world containing an infinite number of beings, given that all the beings in question are necessary. While the language of some premises will have to be changed (for instance, Premise 2 will have to say that there is a world with only necessary things, rather than only God), this change will still allow the derivation of the inconsistency between Traditional Christian Theism and Truthmaker Theory conjoined with Truthmaker Maximalism. Given that it does all the work I need it to do and it is weaker than the more robust Universal Creation Thesis, in the forthcoming, considered argument, I will use the Contingent Creation Thesis.

Whether or not I am able to accommodate Kretzmann's views on the Possible Non-Creation Thesis depends upon how radical God's freedom is. Kretzmann claims that God is 'fully free' to create whatever he chooses. Either this full freedom allows for the creation of a single contingent entity, say, just a single electron (and its contingent constituents, for instance, that thing's tropes, if there are such things), or it does not. What follows is a proof by cases.

Suppose one thinks that God's full freedom is radical freedom to create a single contingent entity (again, and its contingent constituents, if there are such things). The following seems possible. Prior to creation, God peruses all the feasible possible worlds. His gaze alights on the possible world that would be actualized, were this creation which we inhabit created. Call that possible world W1. Within W1 he focuses on one particular entity that would exist simultaneously with your reading of this paper, were W1 actualized, say, electron E. He decrees, "let there be a creation which contains all and only one contingent entity (and its contingent constituents, if such there be): E." Such a creation comes into existence. In such a creation, it is true *that there are no zebras*. But neither the necessary inhabitants of that world nor E make it true *that there are no zebras*. I've already presented the argument for why the necessary inhabitants do not make the contingent truth, *that there are no zebras*, true. E doesn't make it true either.

Suppose, for *reductio*, that it were possible that E make it true *that there are no zebras*. Given Truthmaker Necessitation, in any world, at any time E exists, it is true *that there are no zebras*. However, E exists in the actual world now. And so it is now true *that there are no zebras*. But there are zebras now. And so we have reached a contradiction. In the world I am envisioning, the world containing only necessary beings and E, neither the necessary beings nor the lone contingent thing is a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*. And so that truth has no truthmaker. But this contradicts Truthmaker Maximalism. So if Kretzmann takes God to be fully free in this radical sense (call this the *Radical Freedom Thesis*), then I could run the argument from God's radical freedom without reference to the Possible Non-Creation Thesis. Even if the Possible Non-Creation Thesis were false, if it is possible that God creates all and only E (plus, for the last time, any contingent constituents of E), then the Radical Freedom Thesis and the Contingent Creation Thesis together preclude the conjunction of Truthmaker Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism.

Suppose, for the other case, that God's freedom is not radical in this sense. Then I might not be able to accommodate Kretzmann. For it might be that while God is free to choose between possible creations, each possible creation might include something that is a truthmaker for negative existentials. For instance, perhaps God must create some totality state of affairs or other, though he is free to pick which one he creates. In such a case, that totality state of affairs could be the truthmaker for negative existentials, and so there could be a truthmaker for each negative existential in such a world.[24] Or perhaps God must create some world or other, even if that world is vacant. (God can build the warehouse but fill it with no wares.) In such a case, the world could be the truthmaker for negative existentials, and so there could be a truthmaker for each negative existential in such a world.[25] In either case, there would be a truthmaker for negative existentials, call it The Solution. In this, our actual world, The Solution could not exist now, seeing as we have zebras in our world now, and the existence of The Solution precludes the truth of the proposition *that there are zebras*. And so, Premise 8 would lack justification, and the contradiction reached at Premise 9 would as well. In short, given that God is free to create whatever he wants, so long as it includes a Solution, my argument fails.

Thus, depending on the extent of God's full freedom, I may or may not be able to accommodate Kretzmann's claim. The freer God is, the better chance I have at accommodation. Radical freedom, as I have called it, allows for an argument parallel to my own to show that Traditional Christian Theism and the sort of Truthmaker Theory that embraces Truthmaker Maximalism are inconsistent. Less radical freedoms must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

A final objection to the initial assumption for *reductio* is that I have mischaracterized the necessitation that truthmaker theories require. I have claimed that if T makes *p* true, then, in any world, at any time at which T exists, *p* is true. This objector claims that, rather than Truthmaker Necessitation, I should have instead used:

> *Conditional Necessitation*: Necessarily, if T makes *p* true, then, in any world, at any time at which T exists *and p exists*, *p* is true.

---

[24] This is Armstrong's view of truthmakers for negative truths. See Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, chap. 5-6, especially Section 6.2.

[25] This is Cameron's view of truthmakers for negative truths. See Cameron, "How to Be a Truthmaker Maximalist", pp. 413-417.

If I use Conditional Necessitation in my argument, rather than Truthmaker Necessitation, the argument fails. It fails because the step from Premise 2 to Premise 3 assumes that there is something there to be true or false, namely, the proposition *that there are no zebras*. But, this does not follow from Premise 2. From Premise 2 it follows that there are no zebras in that world, but it does not follow that there is a proposition, *that there are no zebras*, that has a truth-value. Likewise, Premise 7 is false as well, since there could be worlds where God exists but the proposition *that there are no zebras* does not, and so does not have a truth-value.[26]

In what follows, I will argue that one can start with the assumption of Conditional Necessitation rather than Truthmaker Necessitation and still derive the inconsistency between Traditional Christian Theism and Truthmaker Maximalism. Consider a proof by cases. Either propositions exist necessarily or they do not.

If they exist necessarily, then Conditional Necessitation will collapse back into Truthmaker Necessitation.[27] Conditional Necessitation collapses back into Truthmaker Necessitation in such a case because the added conjunct in Conditional Necessitation, that the proposition in question exist, will be satisfied in every world. So in no world will Conditional Necessitation and Truthmaker Necessitation disagree. And so the move to Conditional Necessitation rather than Truthmaker Necessitation will not do any work for the objector, if propositions are necessary entities.

If propositions do not exist necessarily, then they are created by God, by the Contingent Creation Thesis. Consider a world where God creates all and only the proposition *that there are no zebras*. In such a world, both *that there are no zebras* and God exist. *That there are no zebras* is true. Given Truthmaker Maximalism, it must have a truthmaker. I have argued that God, since he is necessary, cannot be a truthmaker for this contingent truth. But the proposition cannot make itself true, either. For one thing, no truthmaker for p can coexist with a truthmaker for $\sim p$. But the proposition *that there are no zebras* can coexist with a zebra, and a zebra is a truthmaker for *that it is not the case that there are no zebras*. (Witness our own world where both *that there are no zebras* and at least one zebra coexist.) And so *that there are no zebras* is not a truthmaker for itself. Furthermore any proposition at all could coexist with a zebra. So

[26] My thanks to Jonathan D. Jacobs for pressing me on this point.

[27] Merricks makes this point as well; see Merricks, *Truth and Ontology*, pp. 10-11.

even if God created every possible proposition in the world in question, there still wouldn't be a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras* in such a world. So, there is no viable candidate truthmaker for *that there are no zebras* in the world in question. And so we have here a counterexample to Truthmaker Maximalism.

Thus, whether truthbearers are necessary or whether they are contingent, the move to Conditional Necessitation does not alleviate the inconsistency between Traditional Christian Theism and the sort of Truthmaker Theory that affirms Truthmaker Maximalism.

This concludes the objections to the assumption made for *reductio*. The remaining objections are objections to the inferences made in the argument.

I referred to this first objection in the previous section's discussion of Premise 3. One might object: If there is a world where only God exists, as Premise 2 has it, then in that world, there would be no thoughts, statements, propositions, or anything else that can be true or false. So there is no thought, statement, or proposition, *that there are no zebras* in such a world. And so there wouldn't be such a thought, statement, or proposition to be true in such a world. And so it is *not* true that, at the God-only world, *that there are no zebras* is true. That is, on this objection, Premise 3 is false.

The move to the Contingent Creation Thesis protects against this objection. It does so because the proponent of my argument could allow the existence of non-contingent propositions in that world (as van Inwagen would). If propositions are necessary abstracta, then the proposition *that there are no zebras* exists in that world (and every other world) to be true or false.

The proponent of the Universal Creation Thesis will need another response to this objection, since she will deny that propositions necessarily coexist with God. But then the proponent of the Universal Creation Thesis will already realize that she needs an idiosyncratic account of truth and knowing, since, given that God knows *anything at all* in a world where God doesn't create, God's knowing truth does not require the existence of some thing, a truth, that is known. Given that in the God-only world God knows, for example, *that God exists*, such knowing is nothing at all, or nothing other than God. The proponent of the Universal Creation Thesis is encouraged to provide her own favourite

response to the question of how at least some of God's contingent knowledge does not require the existence of any other entities.[28]

Another response to this objection stems from the proof by cases I gave to show that Conditional Necessitation leads to the inconsistency between Traditional Christian Theism and Truthmaker Maximalism. For that proof by cases did not make use of a God-only world. Rather, it began with a world where God and the proposition *that there are no zebras* both exist and still concluded that, in such a world, *that there are no zebras* would lack a truthmaker.

Another objection might go as follows: suppose that it is true that there could be a world in which only God and other non-created objects exist. The previous objection argued there would not be any truth in the world postulated for Premise 2 of the Original Argument, owing to the lack of things to be true in that world. That objection was answered in one way by retreating to the weaker Contingent Creation Thesis, since such a thesis allows there to be uncreated propositions that can be true or false in W. But there is still a worry in the neighbourhood. Even if a world filled with only non-created, necessary beings is one where there are things that can have truth-values (e.g., propositions), such a world would lack their being true. That is, such a world would lack whatever ontological story we tell to explain how it is that propositions are true. For instance, in such a world, there would be no contingent property instantiations. But if truth is a property, and *that there are no zebras* instantiates the property of truth contingently, then *that there are no zebras* could not be true if there were no contingent entities. Similar reasoning shows that if the ontological explanation for what it is for a proposition to be true includes a contingent thing of any sort (an event, a property exemplification, a trope, a real relation, a state of affairs, etc.), then no contingent proposition would be true in W. And so Premise 3 is false: it is not true at W *that there are no zebras*. The contradiction does not follow; the argument is unsound; the inconsistency is not shown.

This objection depends upon a theory of truth that is inconsistent with the conjunction of the Contingent Creation Thesis, the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, and the claim that God knows his own actions

[28] For an example of a response see Thomas Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth (in three volumes)*, trans. Robert Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1954), question 2; question 3, article 2. See also Thomas D Sullivan, "Omniscience, Immutability, and the Divine Mode of Knowing", *Faith and Philosophy* (1991), pp. 21-35.

(or lack thereof).[29] For, since his actions are contingent (he might not have created, given the Possible Non-Creation Thesis), God's knowing his own actions entails God's knowing a contingent truth, even if he creates nothing. In such a world, he knows he did not create, though he could have. And so, in such a world, contrary to the objection at hand, there are contingent truths. So this objection to the Original Argument begins with an assumption that renders at least one of the theological presuppositions of Traditional Christian Theism false. As such, it is not an argument against the claims of inconsistency I've made against the conjunction of Traditional Theism and Maximalist Truthmaker Theory.

A third objection to the inferences in the Original Argument is that, while God is the truthmaker in W for the truth *that there are no zebras*, it isn't God all by himself that is the truthmaker. Rather it is some way that God is that is the truthmaker. God isn't that way in our world. (How could he be, with all these zebras running around?) So Premise 7 is false; it isn't true that at any world where God exists, it is true *that there are no zebras*.

To this objection, I reply that it either denies Conditional Necessitation or it denies the Possible Non-Creation Thesis. For Conditional Necessitation requires that there be a thing that, whenever or wherever it coexists with the relevant proposition, makes the proposition in question true. By its mere existence it makes the proposition true, and it couldn't do otherwise. Now, in this case, the case where only necessary things exist and it is something special about God, and not God all by himself, that makes it true *that there are no zebras*, what is the way that God is that the objector puts forward as the truthmaker for that truth? It cannot be all and only God by himself. For it if were all and only God, then it would be true in this world *that there are no zebras*, owing to the fact that God and the relevant proposition both exist in this world and Conditional Necessitation is true. So the truthmaker has to be God and something else. But what is the something else? If it were a necessary something else, then the same problem arises: God and that necessary something else coexist in this world, along with the proposition in question, and so it is true in this world *that there are no zebras* (again, given Conditional Necessitation). So it must be God and something contingent – perhaps the

[29] Traditional Theists typically claim something much stronger; that God is essentially omniscient. All I need for my purposes in this paragraph, though, is that in each world he knows at least one contingent thing. For simplicity's sake, in the forthcoming argument I will refer to God's actions rather than his actions or lack thereof.

contingent way that God is. But then the objector has denied the truth of the Possible Non-Creation Thesis. The objector is saying that at the world where God creates nothing, and so nothing contingent exists, there is this contingent thing, a way that God is. Denying one or more conjuncts of a conjunction assumed for *reductio* is not a particularly impressive form of response to a *reductio*. (I say: "assume for the sake of argument that these five theses are true"; the objector responds: "no.") Thus, this objection either relies on a denial of Conditional Necessitation by allowing the very same thing (God) to make a proposition true in one world where that proposition exists but not make it true in another world in which it exists, or it relies on a denial of the Possible Non-Creation Thesis.

A final objection goes as follows: for any world, there might be no truths about entities or types of entities that do not exist in that world. Consider the claim that Alvin Plantinga calls 'Existentialism': "quidditative properties and singular propositions are ontologically dependent upon the individuals they involve."[30] If Existentialism were true, there would be no propositions about zebras in a zebra-less world, since such propositions ontologically depend upon the things they involve – zebras – and there are no such things. And so, in W, it will not be true *that there are no zebras*.[31] Furthermore, if Existentialism were true, there could be no world at which God creates all and only the proposition *that there are no zebras*, since there could not be such a proposition without a zebra. Thus, if Existentialism were true, the Original Argument's third premise would be false, since the proposition *that there are no zebras* would not be true in that world. And, in addition, my argument that one could start from Conditional Necessitation and show that Traditional Christian Theism is inconsistent with Truthmaker Maximalism is also unsound, since that argument required that God and *that there are no zebras* coexist in a world without zebras. Thus, were Existentialism true, my arguments for the inconsistency of Traditional Christian Theism and Truthmaker Maximalism would be unsound.

In response to this objection, I respond with a proof by cases. Either God knows by knowing propositions, or he knows in a *sui generis* way that does not require propositions but still requires truthmakers, or finally, he knows in a *sui generis* way that neither requires propositions nor truthmakers. I argue that the first two cases entail that Traditional

[30] Alvin Plantinga, "On Existentialism," *Philosophical Studies* 44, no. 1 (1983), 3.

[31] I thank Jonathan D. Jacobs for pressing this point.

Christian Theism and Truthmaker Maximalism are inconsistent, and the final case must be developed more to show that my argument is unsound.

Consider the first case. If God knows as we know, by knowing propositions, then Existentialism is inconsistent with Traditional Christian Theism. According to Traditional Christian Theism, God is not ignorant about the scope of God's own power. And God has the same creative power in all worlds. (God is no wimpier in W than he is in W*.) But, if Existentialism were true and God knows by knowing propositions, God would be ignorant, in at least some worlds, of the full extent of his creative power. For, in some worlds, there are no zebras. And in those worlds, there will be no truths about zebras. So it will not be true, in those worlds, *that God can make zebras*. Knowledge requires truth, though. So, in those worlds, given that God knows by knowing propositions, God cannot know that he can make zebras. And the same goes for any other sort of thing. In a world where God does not make anything, God won't even know *that God can create creatures*, since, in such a world, there are no creatures, and so no truths involving creatures.

Traditional theists will deny that God is ignorant of the limits of his creative powers, and will also deny that it is possible that God be wholly ignorant of the scope of his creative powers. And so, given that God knows by knowing propositions, Traditional Theists will have reason to deny Existentialism, the claim that there are no truths about entities in worlds without those entities.[32]

Consider the second case. Suppose that God knows in a *sui generis* way that does not require propositions but still requires truthmakers. Given Truthmaker Maximalism, there will still need to be something that makes God's belief that there are no zebras true (though the truthmaker will be making something besides a *proposition* true in this case). Given the Possible Non-Creation Thesis, there will still be a world where only necessary beings exist, and so there will be nothing fit to make the contingent truth that no zebras exist true in that world. Thus, if God knows in a way that doesn't involve propositions, but still requires truthmakers, then Existentialism does not render my argument unsound. Even if there were no propositions about zebras in a world without zebras, God would still know in his *sui generis* way of knowing

[32] For a defence of a sort of Theistic Existentialism, see Mark Ian Thomas Robson, *Ontology and Providence in Creation: Taking ex nihilo Seriously* (Continuum, 2008), pp. 72, 130.

both that he could make zebras, and also that there are no zebras. And since, on assumption here, God's knowledge requires truthmakers, there would still have to be a truthmaker for this (non-propositional) truth.

Consider the third case. If God knows in a way that doesn't involve propositions and also doesn't require truthmakers, then I am less sure what to say. We would need to hear more about this sort of knowledge before we could assess whether it is coherent, and also whether it renders my argument unsound. Thus, I conclude that both the first cases leave my argument untouched, and this third case lacks sufficient detail to offer an actual threat to my argument.

This concludes the objections to the Original Argument. In the next, and final, section of this paper, I will present my considered argument, taking the objections I have raised in this section into account.

IV. THE CONSIDERED ARGUMENT

With the objections answered, and with insights gleaned from the answering, I can now give my considered form of the argument.

Suppose the Contingent Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis are both true, as well as Conditional Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism. Either truthbearers exist necessarily or they exist contingently.

If truthbearers exist necessarily, then Conditional Necessitation collapses back into Truthmaker Necessitation, and the argument runs as follows. No necessary entity can be a truthmaker for a contingent truth. But there is a world where no contingent entities exist (by the Contingent Creation Thesis and the Possible Non-Creation Thesis). In such a world, it is true *that there are no zebras*, and this is a contingent truth. So nothing in that world can be a truthmaker for that truth (since everything that exists in that world is a necessary entity). So that truth, in that world, lacks a truthmaker. And so Truthmaker Maximalism is false, given the supposition made for *reductio*, along with the claim that truthbearers are necessary entities.

Suppose, then, that truthbearers are contingent entities. Consider a world where God makes truthbearers, but nothing else. In that world, *that there are no zebras* exists. Furthermore, it is true. It has a truthmaker, given Truthmaker Maximalism. What is that truthmaker? Either something necessary or something contingent. No necessary being can

be the truthmaker, since then *that there are no zebras* would be true in all worlds in which it and that necessary being exist (given Conditional Necessitation). But that proposition and the necessary being (whatever it is) both exist in our world, so *that there are no zebras* would be true in our world. But, by the Zebrine Thesis, it is not true in our world *that there are no zebras*. So something contingent has to be the truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*. But the only contingent things in that world are propositions. No proposition is a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*, though. For, it is possible for any proposition to coexist with a zebra. But it is impossible for a zebra to coexist with a truthmaker for *that there are no zebras*. And so none of the necessary nor contingent denizens of that world is a truthmaker for the proposition *that there are no zebras*. Thus, *that there are no zebras* lacks a truthmaker in that world. But this violates Truthmaker Maximalism. And so Truthmaker Maximalism is false, given the supposition made for *reductio*, along with the claim that truthbearers are contingent entities.

So, whether truthbearers are contingent or necessary, in a world that includes only God and propositions (and other necessary beings, if there are such things), the proposition *that there are no zebras*, while true, lacks a truthmaker. And so we've reached a contradiction. Whether or not truthbearers are contingent entities, Truthmaker Maximalism is false, given Traditional Christian Theism and Conditional Necessitation. And so our starting conjunctive assumption must be false. Traditional Christian theism is not consistent with Conditional Necessitation and Truthmaker Maximalism.[33]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aquinas, Thomas. *On The Power of God (Quæstiones disputatæ de potentia Dei)*, translated by English Dominican Fathers (Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1932)

Aquinas, Thomas. *The Disputed Questions on Truth (in three volumes)*, translated by Robert Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1954)

Armstrong, David Malet. *Truth and Truthmakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

[33] I thank W. Matthews Grant, Jonathan D. Jacobs, Faith Glavey Pawl, Alexander Pruss, Bradley Rettler, Michael Rota, and Alexander Skiles for helpful discussions concerning this paper. I thank Aaron Segal for his help in tracking down the citations I give from Maimonides in the early part of this paper, and for helping me understand (to the extent that I do) Jewish views on the questions raised in this paper.

Armstrong, David Malet. "Truthmakers for Negative Truths and for Truths of Mere Possibility", in *Metaphysics and Truthmakers*, edited by Jean-Maurice Monnoyer, pp. 99-104 (Ontos Verlag, 2007)

Cameron, Ross P. "How to Be a Truthmaker Maximalist", *Noûs* 42, no. 3 (2008), 410-421

Van Inwagen, Peter. "God and Other Uncreated Things", in *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, edited by Kevin Timpe, pp. 3-20 (New York: Routledge, 2009)

Kretzmann, Norman. *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles I* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002)

Merricks, Trenton. *Truth and Ontology* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009)

Ott, Ludwig. *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Tan Books and Publishers, 2009)

Pawl, Timothy. "The Possibility Principle and the Truthmakers for Modal Truths", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88, no. 3 (2010), 417-428

Pessin, Sarah. "The Influence of Islamic Thought on Maimonides", URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimonides-islamic/#CosCreEma>.

Plantinga, Alvin. "On Existentialism", *Philosophical Studies* 44, no. 1 (1983), 1-20.

Robson, Mark Ian Thomas. *Ontology and Providence in Creation: Taking ex nihilo Seriously* (Continuum, 2008)

Sullivan, Thomas D. "Omniscience, Immutability, and the Divine Mode of Knowing", *Faith and Philosophy* (1991), pp. 21-35

Swinburne, Richard. Is God Necessary. Closer To Truth, URL = <http://www.closertotruth.com/video-profile/Is-God-Necessary-Richard-Swinburne-/249>.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Existence of God*. 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2004)

Tanner, Norman P. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 2 Volume Set* (Georgetown University Press, 1990)

Twersky, Isadore. *A Maimonides Reader*. First Edition (Behrman House, Inc., 1972)

RECONSIDERING THE NECESSARY BEINGS OF AQUINAS'S THIRD WAY

GREGORY J. ROBSON

Duke University

Abstract. Surprisingly few articles have focused on Aquinas's particular conception of necessary beings in the Third Way, and many scholars have espoused inaccurate or incomplete views of that conception. My aim in this paper is both to offer a corrective to some of those views and, more importantly, to provide compelling answers to the following two questions about the necessary beings of the Third Way. First, how exactly does Aquinas conceive of these necessary beings? Second, what does Aquinas seek to accomplish (and what *does* he accomplish) in the third stage of the Third Way? In answering these questions, I challenge prominent contemporary understandings of the necessary beings of the Third Way.

INTRODUCTION

In the sizeable literature on Aquinas's Third Way,[1] much attention has been paid to certain features of the argument, such as its alleged quantifier fallacy.[2] There has also been discussion of Aquinas's general conception of

[1] Perhaps the best bibliography of both historical and contemporary discussion can be found in Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 597-616. For illuminating contemporary discussion, see: "Aquinas's Third Way" (Davies, pp. 450-466); *The Five Ways* (Kenny, pp. 46-69); *Approaches to God* (Maritain, pp. 43-49); *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations* (Martin, pp. 155-170); and *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Wippel, pp. 462-469).

[2] See, e.g.: Brian Shanley, *The Thomist Tradition*, p. 184; C. F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations*, p. 161.

necessary beings.[3] Yet surprisingly few articles have focused on Aquinas's particular conception of necessary beings in the Third Way, and many scholars have espoused inaccurate or incomplete views of that conception.[4] My aim in this paper is both to offer a corrective to some of those views and, more importantly, to provide compelling answers to the following two questions about the necessary beings of the Third Way.[5] First, how exactly does Aquinas conceive of these necessary beings? Second, what does Aquinas seek to accomplish (and what *does* he accomplish) in the third stage of the Third Way? Scholars have offered various answers to the first question; I will attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff. Concerning the second question, too, there are various views circulating in the scholarship. I will defend the view that, if Aquinas fails to prove that the uncaused, necessary being arrived at in the Third Way is, in fact, God (in the sense of a proper name), this failure is of trivial importance when understood in the context of his overall project in the *Prima Pars*. In answering both questions, I will challenge prominent contemporary understandings of the necessary beings of the Third Way.

Section I of this paper presents the text of the Third Way, unpacks its argument, and situates that argument in the broader context of Aquinas's relevant views. Section II homes in on Aquinas's nuanced conception of necessary beings, teasing out relevant distinctions, depicting the conception diagrammatically, and countering selected misinterpretations of it. (Note that I use "god" and "God" interchangeably in Sections I and II; Section III is where I tease out and highlight the importance of that distinction.) Section III addresses one of the most salient criticisms of the third stage of the Third Way, namely, the claim that Aquinas has not successfully demonstrated the existence of God (note the proper name

[3] See: Brown, "St. Thomas's Doctrine of Necessary Being".

[4] In fact, Brown's is the closest approximation I have come across to such an article. Yet, as noted above, his article focuses on Aquinas's general conception of necessary beings, rather than primarily on necessary beings vis-à-vis the Third Way. As to scholars holding inaccurate or incomplete views of the Third Way, this fact will be highlighted throughout the paper.

[5] Aquinas also offers a proof of God's existence in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* that is similar to the better known proof of the Third Way (see: SCG I, c. 15): "Every necessary being, however, either has the cause of its necessity in an outside source or, if it does not, it is necessary through itself. But one cannot proceed to infinity among necessary beings the cause of whose necessity lies in an outside source. We must therefore posit a first necessary being, which is necessary through itself." For illuminating discussion of SCG I, c. 15, see: Wippel, pp. 435-440.

"God"). It then suggests that this criticism overlooks both Aquinas's aims in the Third Way and the role that the Third Way plays in part of a broader line of argument in the *Prima Pars*.[6]

I. THE THIRD WAY: TEXT AND CONTEXT

The Third Way is found in q. 2 of the *Prima Pars*, where Aquinas asks whether the proposition "God exists" is self-evident; whether God's existence is demonstrable; and whether God actually exists. Aquinas argues that the proposition "God exists" is not self-evident to us (i.e., not *per se notum*).[7] Knowledge of God's existence must be acquired, specifically via *a posteriori* demonstration through God's effects. (An *a priori* demonstration of God's existence is not possible, says Aquinas, since we cannot know God's essence prior to knowing God's existence.) Accordingly, Aquinas undertakes an *a posteriori* demonstration of God's existence in the Third Way.[8]

The Third Way is a causal argument that posits the existence of an uncaused, necessary being in order to account for: (1) the existence of possible (we may say "contingent") beings that are readily observable in the world; and (2) the metaphysically necessary facts that the world cannot exclusively consist of contingent beings, nor include infinitely many necessary beings whose necessity owes to some other being. To get some purchase on the Third Way, it is useful to go directly to ST I, q. 2, art. 3, where Aquinas writes:

> The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore,

[6] I am grateful to Marilyn McCord Adams for her generous feedback on an earlier version of this paper.

[7] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, art. 1. Aquinas rejects views at each extreme: one, that God's existence is self-evident to us; the other, that one should be agnostic about God's existence. Aquinas also notes, in SCG I, cc. 10-12, that God cannot be self-evident to us, since we do not know what God's essence is (see: Wippel, pp. 386, 389). Though we can know God, we cannot know God essentially.

[8] According to Aquinas, demonstration is possible either through the cause of the thing to be demonstrated (*a priori* demonstration) or through its effect (*a posteriori* demonstration). Later in the paper, I indicate why the Third Way is a demonstration *quia*.

> if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence – which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.[9]

The Third Way is a three-staged argument. In the first stage, Aquinas argues that it is not possible for beings that can be and not be always to exist. In the second stage, he seeks to demonstrate that some necessary being must exist. It is clear from the first two stages that Aquinas is offering a cosmological argument. We start with a relatively straightforward observation about the world and then move towards the conclusion that a necessary being must exist. The straightforward observation is that we find in nature things that are generated and corrupted. From his Aristotelian perspective, Aquinas believes that all material things are hylomorphic composites that can, by their nature, exist at one point in time and not exist at another. Such things – i.e., possibles[10] or contingent beings – are produced into being and naturally tend to cease existing at some point.[11] For it is in the nature of contingent beings to cease existing, and the failure of some contingent being C to cease existing would be contrary, not only to C's nature, but also to the causal system in which

[9] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, art. 3. The brevity of the Third Way and the need to pay careful attention to the text make it worthwhile to include this passage in whole.

[10] Wippel tells us that a possible being is, for Aquinas, one "which comes into existence by generation" (Wippel, p. 465).

[11] Intellectual historians might wish to note the striking similarities between Aquinas's Third Way and Maimonides's argument in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, where Maimonides argues for the claim that some "existent things…are subject to generation and corruption whereas others are not" (Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, II.1). Davies discusses this point in "Aquinas's Third Way" (p. 454), where he writes: "It is as sure as anything that Aquinas knew of this [Maimonides's] argument." See also: Rubio, *Aquinas and Maimonides on the Possibility of the Knowledge of God*, pp. 227-244.

C is embedded.[12] These generable and corruptible beings include, for example, "you, me, my parrot" and "the roses in my garden".[13]

Can all existent beings be contingent beings? And can the existence of every contingent being owe entirely to the existence of some other contingent being? Aquinas argues that the separate existences of generable and corruptible beings must ultimately owe to a necessary (i.e., ungenerable, incorruptible) being. If they did not, we would be left with an accidentally ordered series of contingent beings, none of whose members would have a nature capable of explaining the series.[14] Aquinas goes on to argue that there could be nothing in existence now if all beings are mere possibles.[15] But there clearly are things in existence now. Thus, on Aquinas's explanatory model it cannot be the case that all beings are contingent beings; rather, there must exist at least one non-contingent or necessary being.[16]

What, if anything, can we know about the number of necessary beings that can exist? In the third stage of the Third Way, Aquinas argues that there cannot exist infinitely many necessary beings that are caused by other necessary beings. Although he recognizes that there could be more than one "necessary thing", Aquinas argues that there must be a beginning to (what I call) this *chain of necessary beings*.[17] In addition, beyond just arriving at a single, ungenerable, incorruptible being, a satisfactory account of the existence of necessary beings must also determine whether the necessity of any given necessary being is itself caused or uncaused. "Every necessary thing", Aquinas tells us, "either has its necessity caused by another, or not".[18] If it is caused, then that fact just

[12] I thank Marilyn McCord Adams for suggesting this point.

[13] Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 453. Any plant and animal serves as a good example; I cite Davies's sample list because of its interesting diversity.

[14] Aquinas discusses this point further in ST I, q. 46, art. 2.

[15] This part of Aquinas's argument, which some scholars claim commits a quantifier fallacy, cannot be addressed at length in this paper. Numerous scholars (e.g., Davies, Kenny, Martin, Maritain, Wippel) have offered illuminating accounts of it.

[16] This part of Aquinas's argument bears an interesting resemblance to the cosmological argument advanced by Scotus. Scotus argues for the existence of an externally unproducible and independently productive nature that produces other, externally producible natures. The externally unproducible being that Scotus discusses shortly after the end of Aquinas's life is, I think, interestingly similar to Aquinas's uncaused, necessary being, whose necessity owes to itself rather than to any other being.

[17] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, art. 3.

[18] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, art. 3.

raises the same question about the being that caused it – is *that* being necessary through itself? Or is it necessary through another being?

Aquinas's next move is pivotal. He claims that the causal series of beings (the necessity of each of which does not owe to the being's own nature) cannot be infinitely long (Aquinas cites an argument from the Second Way[19] in support of this claim). Peter Geach nicely summarizes Aquinas's conclusion: "there must be a thing which not only is 'necessary' or imperishable, but is so underivatively or in its own right."[20] This "thing" in which the chain of necessary beings must terminate is an uncaused, necessary being that is necessary through itself, and that (for reasons discussed in Section III) we can understand under the nominal definition "god".[21] Constituting the absolute starting point of the chain of necessary beings, this is an immaterial rather than hylomorphic being (so it is unlike all contingent beings) that not only has its necessity entirely of its own accord, but also causes the necessary nature of all other necessary beings (the being is therefore unlike all other beings, be they necessary or contingent).

Building on the above understanding of the Third Way, Section II will address Aquinas's conception of necessary beings in the Third Way. Section III will then discuss the connection between the strongly necessary being established in the Third Way and the being that people refer to by its proper name as "God".

---

[19] "[I]t is impossible", he explains there, "to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes" (ST I, q. 2, art. 2). Aquinas's argument for the impossibility of so doing runs thus: Causes following an order have one first cause, one or many intermediate causes, and one last cause. (Incidentally, if there can be a three-cause order, why can't there be a two-cause order, i.e., one without an intermediate cause?) There must be a first cause lest there not be the effects which we presently observe. Yet the existence of a backwardly infinite trail of causes would entail no first cause. It would therefore also entail no effects (which effects may be themselves further causes). Since we readily observe such effects, the chain of necessary beings must be finite.

For an interesting counterargument to this move in the Second Way, see: J.L. Mackie, "The Regress of Causes" in *The Miracle of Theism*, p. 90. Mackie argues that Aquinas "has simply begged the question against an infinite regress of causes".

[20] Peter Geach, commentary on Aquinas from *Three Philosophers*, Eds. G.E.M. Anscombe and P.T. Geach (Oxford, 1961). Reprinted in Burrill, *The Cosmological Arguments: A Spectrum of Opinion*, p. 67.

[21] Some scholars, such as Martin De Nys, refer to the causes of necessity in the Third Way as "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" causes. What I have called the strongly necessary being is the only one whose necessity is "intrinsic". See: De Nys, pp. 100-102.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE NECESSARY BEINGS OF THE THIRD WAY

It is no easy task to understand the concept of necessity vis-à-vis the necessary beings of the Third Way. Even highly respected scholars have misunderstood it at times. Frederick Copleston, for example, thought that Aquinas believed that "there can be but one necessary being".[22] Addressing the number of necessary beings that Aquinas has in mind in the Third Way is a good step towards developing a comprehensive understanding of how he conceives of such beings. We may first note that Copleston's claim overlooks the strong support in Aquinas's writings for his belief in the existence of many necessary beings. As Patterson Brown observes, Aquinas notes elsewhere in the *Summa Theologica* both that "there are many necessary things in existence",[23] and that "heavenly bodies, with their movements and dispositions, are necessary beings".[24] These are virtually incontestable examples of Aquinas explicitly acknowledging the existence of necessary beings other than God. As to the first claim, so long as we can understand its "things" as "beings," this claim plainly contradicts Copleston's view. As to the second claim, it clearly presupposes that Aquinas conceives of God as one of many existent necessary beings such as heavenly bodies. "Aquinas *never*", Brian Davies avers, "speaks of God as being the only necessary being".[25]

Aquinas's pluralistic view of necessary beings owes partly to his Aristotelian sense of the word "necessary" in "necessary beings", to mean "ungenerable and incorruptible". As Peter Geach tells us, Aquinas held that contrary to contingent beings, necessary beings

> have no inherent ability to stop existing – *potentia ad non esse*; for they have no matter in their make-up that could assume a different form, or split up into many pieces, or (as people have sometimes fancied) be merged in a larger whole.[26]

Brown nuances Geach's description:

> Thomas followed Aristotle in holding that a necessary being could not begin or cease existing by any "natural" process allowed by Aristotelian

[22] See Copleston, *A History of Philosophy,* p. 363. This quotation comes from Brown, p. 78. It is of course possible that Copleston did not actually hold this view, but it is hard to refute Brown's straightforward interpretation of Copleston.

[23] Brown, p. 79, quoting ST I, q. 44 art. 1.

[24] Brown, p. 79, quoting ST I, q. 115, art. 6.

[25] Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 452. Emphasis original.

[26] Geach, in: Burrill, p. 67. Emphasis removed for reader convenience.

> physics; but Aquinas added that such beings can come into existence via creation *ex nihilo*, as well as pass out of existence via total annihilation.[27]

As Aquinas makes clear later in the *Prima Pars*, God can, for example, create and annihilate human souls and angels.[28]

It makes sense that Aquinas would arrive at an account of necessary beings by following Aristotle but with the amendment that such beings can come to exist via creation, and cease to exist via annihilation. In espousing a doctrine of supernatural annihilation and creation, Aquinas rejects Aristotle's view, discussed in *De Caelo* and *De Generatione et Corruptione*, that each of these is metaphysically impossible.[29] Yet, as is his wont, Aquinas upholds an important part of Aristotle's position: He conceives of necessary beings as unable to undergo substantial change.[30]

But is it true that necessary beings cannot, under any circumstances, cease existing? One might argue (call this argument "A") that they cannot cease existing by (1) citing Aquinas's claim ("C") that God permanently preserves in existence all necessary beings; and (2) arguing that, since God ensures that necessary beings will not cease existing, it is impossible for them to cease existing.[31] Is there a plausible reply to this argument?

---

[27] Brown, p. 82.

[28] Aquinas writes about the creation of angels in ST I, q. 61, art. 1 (The Production of the Angels in the Order of Natural Being): "I answer that, It must be affirmed that angels and everything existing, except God, were made by God. God alone is His own existence; while in everything else the essence differs from the existence, as was shown above (Question 3, Article 4). From this it is clear that God alone exists of His own essence: while all other things have their existence by participation. Now whatever exists by participation is caused by what exists essentially; as everything ignited is caused by fire. Consequently the angels, of necessity, were made by God."

Further, Aquinas writes in ST I, q. 61, art. 4: "… spiritual creatures were so *created* as to bear some relationship to the corporeal creature, and to rule over every corporeal creature. … Hence it was fitting for the angels to be *created* in the highest corporeal place, as presiding over all corporeal nature."

[29] In *De Caelo*, see bk. I, ch. 11; in *De Generatione et Corruptione*, see bk. II, ch. 11. This point comes from Brown, p. 83.

[30] But it is not the case that no necessary beings can undergo accidental change (see: Brown, p. 85).

In addition, whereas contingent beings can be generated or corrupted, necessary beings, says Brown, "cannot undergo any essential change" (Brown, p. 82; I have removed his italics from this passage). The former are not subsisting beings, but the latter are.

[31] Quinn gives a reasonable view of such preservation/conservation: "In short, God immediately conserves beings of nature by supplying existence and mediately conserves natural species by secondary or equivocal causes" (Quinn, "A Few Reflections on 'The Third Way': *Encore*", p. 84).

Here is one possible counterargument:

Premise 1: Whether something (e.g., a necessary being) *can* cease to exist is a question of metaphysical possibility.

Premise 2: Any successful argument holding that a necessary being can or cannot cease to exist must address the metaphysical possibility of it so doing.

Premise 3: Descriptive claims about what God actually does do not address metaphysical possibility.[32]

Premise 4: Claim (C) above is a descriptive claim about what God actually does.

Subsidiary Conclusion: By Premise 3, (C) does not address metaphysical possibility.

Subsidiary Conclusion: By Premise 2 and the Subsidiary Conclusion above, (C) is not germane to the question whether necessary beings can cease to exist.

Premise 5: Argument (A) (see paragraph above) depends essentially on (C), and any claim on which an argument depends essentially must be relevant to the argument's conclusion if the argument is to successfully prove that conclusion.

Main Conclusion:[33] Therefore, (A) cannot successfully prove that necessary beings cannot cease to exist.

In summary, the fact that God preserves necessary beings in existence does not mean that it is metaphysically necessary that God continue to do so. Rather, since it is metaphysically possible for God to annihilate necessary beings, we may conclude with Brown that necessary beings *cannot* accurately be defined as "beings that cannot not-exist".[34] All necessary beings are ungenerable, incorruptible beings. And since it is metaphysically possible for all necessary beings except God to be created or annihilated, it is possible for all such beings to begin existing or cease existing.

---

[32] That is, they do not address metaphysical possibility so long as God does not make one cease to exist.

[33] The main conclusion and rest of the argument could, of course, be worked out in smaller steps as desired.

[34] It also bears note that no non-God necessary being has always existed – that is, if "always" is understood as somehow going back "before" creation *ex nihilo*. This is a complex topic that cannot, however, be pursued in this paper in further depth.

Now, as argued above, Aquinas thinks that it is not superfluous, but explanatorily necessary, to posit the existence of an uncaused necessary being that can cause the necessity of other necessary beings. An important implication of this finding for our understanding of necessary beings is this: that it helps us to arrive at the essentially ordered, causal series "God…other necessary beings". Comprising this series are what I call *weakly necessary beings*,[35] on one hand, and the *strongly necessary being*, on the other. Weakly necessary beings are weakly necessary because they depend for their necessity on the strongly necessary being. The only strongly necessary being in the series – God – not only creates weakly necessary beings, but also preserves in existence both these beings and their causal and other powers. We can also say that Aquinas conceives of God as a *per se* cause of weakly necessary beings, on the Aristotelian view that a *per se* cause of a given effect is such just in case it produces that effect by its own power.

Thus we have it that God is the initial, crucial, and uncaused link in the chain of necessary beings. (We shall leave for Section III the question of whether this being is "God" or "god".) Every weakly necessary being is part of the subsequent chain of ungenerable, incorruptible beings.[36] And, unlike God's existence, the existence of every such being owes to a necessary being other than itself.

The following diagram (see next page) captures two key distinctions in the Third Way: that between necessary and contingent/possible beings, and that between strongly necessary beings and weakly necessary beings.

Having understood Aquinas's conception of necessary beings in the Third Way, we are now equipped to consider three intuitively plausible but ultimately misguided interpretations of it. First, one might suppose that Aquinas is arguing for the existence of a strongly necessary being which is significant mainly because it can, and does, keep contingent beings in existence. Such a supposition is unfounded, however. "The Third Way appeals to the necessary", writes Joseph Bobik, "as to something which can account for the *beginning to be* of the possibles".[37] It is true that Aquinas thinks that God preserves all beings in existence; however, his

[35] These beings may be alternatively referred to as derivatively necessary beings.

[36] In this chain of necessary beings there need not be efficient causal dependence of the lower beings on the higher beings.

[37] Joseph Bobik, "XIV. Further Reflections on the First Part of the Third Way," p. 171.

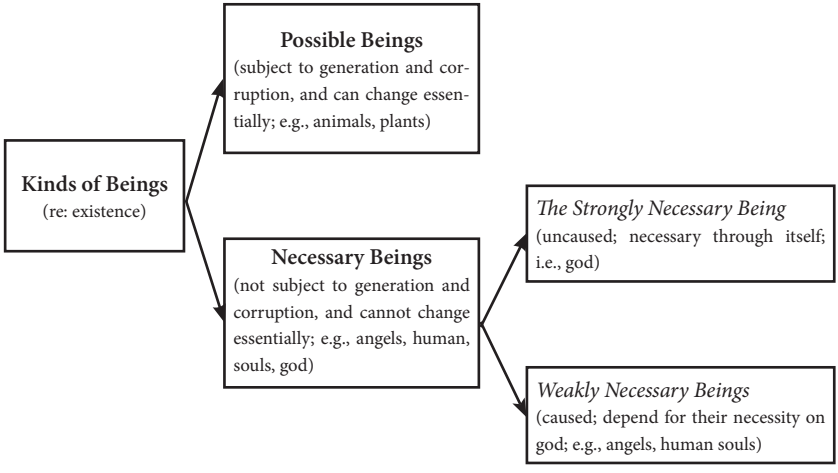

Figure 1. Possible and necessary beings as understood by Thomas Aquinas in the Third Way.

argument to this effect is to be found, not in the Third Way itself, but in a subsequent question of the *Prima Pars* (ST I, q. 104, art. 3).[38]

Second, one might suppose that, in the Third Way, Aquinas has in mind a special metaphysical connection between weakly necessary beings and the will of the strongly necessary being that is responsible for their necessity. But this supposition, too, would be unfounded. Aquinas knew that Avicenna and Averroes believed the first cause is not metaphysically free, but rather acts by natural necessity. Since Aquinas has not yet (as of this question in the *Summa*) ruled out the possibility of a naturally necessary first cause, any reference in the Third Way to God *willing* an outcome vis-à-vis other beings, be they necessary or contingent, is misplaced.

The third interpretive question about Aquinas's conception of necessary beings in the Third Way has generated a good deal of scholarly controversy: Does Aquinas have in mind logically necessary beings, or really necessary beings? Various well-respected philosophers claim that Aquinas envisions the Third Way as an argument that is primarily about

[38] In ST I, q. 104, art. 3, Aquinas writes: "that God gives existence to a creature depends on His will; nor does He preserve things in existence otherwise than by continually pouring out existence into them." Notably, in SCG I, c. 15, Aquinas relies upon this line of argument about God preserving all beings in existence, rendering the argument of SCG I, c. 15 importantly different from that of the Third Way.

logical necessity.[39] C. B. Martin states plainly that the Third Way "suggests that God's existence is logically necessary".[40] Ronald Hepburn argues that the Third Way holds that "the proposition 'God exists' is necessary" such that "it would be contradictory to deny God's existence".[41] And J. J. C. Smart writes that, "by 'a necessary being' … [Aquinas's] cosmological argument means 'a *logically* necessary being … whose non-existence is inconceivable in the sort of way that a triangle's having four sides is inconceivable'".[42]

Contra Hepburn, Martin, and Smart, I will offer a two-fold argument to defend the claim that the Third Way is primarily about real necessity rather than logical necessity. First, as Geach writes, Aquinas was concerned in the Third Way with "the plain *fact* that some things are perishable" and generable.[43] Aquinas's argument proceeds from observations about reality to a claim about reality (specifically, a claim about whether certain kinds of beings really do exist). Instead of taking logical axioms as its starting point, the Third Way starts with a real-world observation about the existence of generable, corruptible beings such as plants and animals, and then goes on to draw conclusions about their existence in terms of metaphysical rather than logical possibility.

Second, Aquinas rejects the notion that one can prove the existence of God simply by claiming that the proposition "God does not exist" is (logically) self-contradictory. Aquinas takes the proposition "God does not exist" to be false, but this is not based purely on logical analysis. Rather, he holds that we do not start with a concept of God that would enable us to see that God exists by God's nature. Aquinas thinks that God exists by God's essence (a complex argument which cannot be explored in detail herein), which he considers to be a metaphysical claim

[39] Geach notes in Burrill, pp. 65-66, that some philosophical theologians also make this argument. Although he does not name any, he does anonymously quote one such theologian.

[40] C. B. Martin, *Religious Belief*, pp. 151-152.

[41] Ronald Hepburn, *Christianity and Paradox*, p. 171.

[42] J. J. C. Smart, "The Existence of God" in Flew & MacIntyre (eds.), *New Essays in Philosophy Theology*, pp. 35-9. In his piece "St. Thomas on Necessary Being", pp. 76-77, Brown quotes at length each of the three authors above. With gratitude to Brown, I have excerpted the key points therein for my analysis in this and the next paragraph. I agree with Brown that Aquinas is not arguing in the Third Way that God is logically necessary. In this section, I draw on and try to add to his illuminating argument for that conclusion.

[43] Geach, in Burrill, p. 66. Emphasis added.

about reality, not a claim that is provable in a purely logical way.[44] But he does not, for example, subscribe to Anselm's famous argument from *Proslogion II* according to which the proposition "God does not exist" is self-contradictory because one cannot think the concept "God" without also thinking "existence".

Furthermore, Davies tells us that Aquinas "does not think that 'God does not exist' can be proved to be contradictory apart from the supposition that God, in fact, exists".[45] But why would Aquinas feel the need to bring that *metaphysical* supposition into the argument if it can be shown via logical analysis alone that God must exist? These considerations suggest that he does not think a purely logical proof of God's existence is possible, whether in general or in the Third Way. The two foregoing arguments, along with an important third point – that Aquinas thinks it is metaphysically possible (and therefore not logically impossible) for God to create and annihilate necessary beings other than God – suggest that Aquinas conceives of the necessity of the necessary beings in the Third Way, along with the (im)possibility of their ceasing to exist, primarily in metaphysical terms.

III. HAS AQUINAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE STRONGLY NECESSARY BEING IS GOD?

The final section of this paper considers a key further question that has received much attention in the literature: Has Aquinas successfully demonstrated that the strongly necessary being of the Third Way is, in fact, God? One's answer to this question depends on one's conception both of the argument of the Third Way and how it relates to subsequent argumentation in the *Prima Pars*. Davies contends that in the Third Way, Aquinas "is assuming *nothing* about the divine nature".[46] Aquinas is instead "simply taking it for granted that the word 'God' can be agreed to signify 'something which must be, owing this to nothing outside itself'".[47] So far, so good. But Davies then makes a curious move to support his

[44] Aquinas's arguments that God exists by His essence, says Davies (see "Aquinas's Third Way"), is what enables him to argue in ST Ia, 2, 1 and SCG I, 10 that "God does not exist" is a self-contradictory proposition.

[45] Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 464, footnote 7.

[46] Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 463. Davies is here quoting Aquinas from *Aquinas: Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. Timothy McDermott (Oxford and New York, 1993), p. 201.

[47] Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 463, quoting Aquinas.

conclusion that the Third Way constitutes "a good defence of the claim that God exists".[48] He implies that this conclusion follows in part at least from his claim that most theists would agree that "God" signifies what we have called a strongly necessary being.[49] This part of Davies's otherwise illuminating account seems misguided. It may indeed be the case that many theists consider God (G) to be the strongly necessary being (N) of the Third Way. But for Aquinas's argument to prove God's existence, it must show, not that G is N, but that N is G. My aim here is not to criticize Davies; rather, I mention Davies's claim as a lead-in to the central question of this section: Has Aquinas successfully proven in the Third Way that N is G?

This question is one that many scholars are keenly aware must be addressed by those considering whether the Third Way is a successful argument all things considered. Some scholars, such as Jordan Sobel, reject the notion that Aquinas has given adequate justification for identifying N with G. In his 2004 book *Logic and Theism*, Sobel critiques part of the third stage of the Third Way:

> With an anti-infinite-regress premise in hand, Aquinas infers correctly that there is "some being" (ST I q2, a3 p. 23) that has its necessity of itself and not (somehow) from another necessary being, but, as in the Second Way, [in the Third Way] Aquinas mistakes the proposition he has reached for the conclusion that there is some one such being, that there is exactly one such being.[50]

In this section, I will argue that criticisms like Sobel's trade on a misunderstanding of Aquinas's goals in the Third Way as well as his broader project in the *Prima Pars.* For reasons to be discussed, Aquinas was not concerned with demonstrating the oneness of God until later in the *Prima Pars*.

In what follows, I wish to make the case that Aquinas has not meaningfully failed in the Third Way to prove that the strongly necessary being therein is God. To that end, I will pursue a strategy suggested by John Wippel in *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*: I will see

[48] "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 450. I have used a quotation from early in Davies's article because the language there is better suited than his similar language elsewhere to supporting the point just noted.

[49] See Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way", p. 463.

[50] Sobel, *Logical and Theism: Arguments For and Against Beliefs in God*, p. 196. Emphasis removed.

whether one can establish the existence of one and only one strongly necessary being by "adopting Aquinas's procedure in q. 11" of the *Summa Theologica*.[51] This strategy will play a key role as part of the general plan in the final section of this paper. First, I will describe Aquinas's program in the Five Ways, paying special attention to an interpretive dispute about the word "Deus" therein. Second, I will argue that Aquinas knows he must provide additional argumentation beyond that of the Third Way if he is to show that N is G (i.e., "God" with the usually understood attributes), a claim which I contend makes perfect sense given Aquinas's reliance on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and his agenda in the Third Way. Finally, I will argue that Aquinas's project in the Third Way does not fail in the way that commentators like Sobel often claim: Aquinas undertakes a demonstration *quia*, the success or failure of which should be judged on the basis of his particular understanding of the Third Way vis-à-vis the *Prima Pars*.

In the Five Ways, Aquinas sets out to identify five features of the world that demand explanation, to posit a transcendental explainer for each, and then to suppose that the "god" which he infers as the ultimate explainer of each is, in fact, the same being in all five cases.[52] Importantly, successfully identifying the being that people *call* "god" with God (i.e., the one and only God) depends on bridging the gap between the common noun "god" and the proper noun "God" (i.e., "God" understood as a unique appellation, signifying more than N alone signifies). This is a task that Aquinas undertakes subsequently in his discussion of God's attributes (e.g., simplicity, goodness, immutability) in the *Prima Pars*.

Now to say that something is necessary, itself uncaused, and causes others, certainly seems tantamount to describing a being that is divine in

[51] Wippel, p. 468. Wippel mentions, but does not pursue, this strategy toward the end of his chapter on the Third Way.

[52] Each feature is discussed in one of the Five Ways, which can be summarized thus. The First Way holds that a First Cause of motion is traceable from the present, observable existence of movement. The Second Way argues for the existence of a god based on the principle that efficient causes cannot extend infinitely into the past. The Third Way, as previously noted, emphasizes contingency and necessity and holds that an uncaused, necessary being (god), whose necessity owes entirely to itself, must be the cause not only of all other necessary beings but also of all of the readily observable contingent beings. The Fourth Way argues that the fact that beings have various degrees of goodness, truth, and so on, means that there must be some being which is the maximum in each relevant genus, and we call this being God. The Fifth Way holds that there must exist an intelligent being – god – that is directing natural things to their ends.

nature. If we call such a being N, the reader can easily accept the claim that N can be called god (or, we might say, "a god"). This claim is true even if nothing more than N-ness (i.e., having the character of a strongly necessary being) is assumed, as yet, as an attribute of this divine being. In what follows, I will use the lower-case term "god" (or "a god") to denote the divine being arrived at in the Third Way, and the upper-case term "God" to denote God as commonly understood. Finally, we might consider "God" in this sense as akin to an N*: a strongly necessary being that also has the attribute of oneness.

Much of the disagreement about the third stage of the Third Way derives from interpretive confusion surrounding Aquinas's use of the word "Deus". Some of this confusion owes to the absence in Latin of both definite and indefinite articles. Without these articles, one sometimes cannot be sure of the kind of being to which a given author is referring. (For example, is it: (a) a god; (b) god in the abstract; (c) the god; or (d) God under a proper name?) A good example of esteemed philosophers putting forward a contestable account of "Deus" is that of McInerny and O'Callaghan, who imply that Aquinas does not use "Deus" in any of the Five Ways, but instead uses "deus".[53] This claim is not verified, however, by my consultation of important modern editions of the *Summa Theologica*, including the Leonine Edition, which use "Deus".[54] Without becoming enmeshed in a thorny debate over capitalization in early versions of the Latin *Summa Theologica*, we can still make use of McInerny and O'Callaghan's point that the word I have stipulated as the lowercase "god" (however the corresponding Latin word appears) is intended as a "common noun having five different nominal definitions".[55] It also seems appropriate to translate "Deus" (or "deus"—again, however the word appears) in the Third Way as *"god" meant in a quite general sense*. It would then mean something like "divinely natured being" (in the abstract) or, with the indefinite article, "a divinely natured being". The proposed sense of "Deus" signifies that this being's uniqueness has not

[53] McInerny and O'Callaghan, p. 26. In this section I draw gratefully on McInerny and O'Callaghan's account of the Five Ways in "St. Thomas Aquinas", pp. 26-27 (Section 10.1).

[54] And even if some versions of the *Summa Theologica* use "deus" in the Third Way, many Latin works during and even after Aquinas's lifetime – e.g., the 1480 edition of the *Glossa Ordinaria* – do not consistently capitalize "deus" when the word is used in the middle of sentences and obviously refers to the Christian God (i.e., using "deus" where we would use "Deus").

[55] McInerny and O'Callaghan, p. 26.

yet been established, nor has there yet been argument for its possession of attributes besides those of N.

The second piece of the puzzle concerning whether Aquinas succeeds in the Third Way regards Aquinas's reliance on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. McInerny and O'Callaghan nicely summarize how the *Posterior Analytics* influenced the way in which Aquinas thought an argument must run if it is to proceed from (1) proving the existence of a god (i.e., the uncaused, necessary being of the Third Way) to (2) demonstrating the existence of God. They write:

> [I]n terms of the *Posterior Analytics* one cannot demonstrate the existence of anything under a proper name. One can point at Socrates, and say 'see, Socrates is alive'. One cannot do that with God. In addition, one cannot give a formal argument for Socrates [sic] existence using 'Socrates'. One can only demonstrate in the relevant sense using common nouns, since such nouns are the only ones that have definitions, either nominal or essential. So strictly speaking it is true that Aquinas doesn't think one can demonstrate the existence of God in the Five Ways. But he doesn't claim that one can. He recognizes the difference between 'God' used as a proper noun, and 'god' used as a common noun.[56]

This passage suggests that, if Aquinas does not prove the existence of God (as a proper name) in the Third Way, this should not be understood as reflecting poorly on the strength of his argument therein.

The preceding conclusion holds in large part because of Aquinas's epistemology and, specifically, how it constrains his efforts to prove God's existence. Since one cannot undertake a demonstration *propter quid* without knowledge of God's essence, but Aquinas rejects the notion that we can know God's essence, it makes sense that Aquinas instead carries out a demonstration *quia*.[57] Aquinas arrives in the Third Way at knowledge of the existence of a lowercase-g god by using a nominal definition and relying on knowledge of that being's effects. Included among these effects is the existence of generable, corruptible beings. Yet neither the individual nor the collective existence of such

[56] McInerny and O'Callaghan, pp. 26-27.

[57] Christopher Shields nicely summarizes Aristotle's understanding of a demonstration and the relation of it to science (in Aristotle's oeuvre, see: *APo* 71b33–72a5, *Phys.* 184a16–23, *EN* 1095b2–4): "The currency of science is *demonstration* (*apodeixis*), where a demonstration is a deduction with premises revealing the causal structures of the world, set forth so as to capture what is necessary and to reveal what is better known and more intelligible by nature" (Shields, "Aristotle," p. 13).

beings is explicable in terms of any single member of, or group within, the set of all generable, corruptible beings. With further argument as described earlier in this paper, Aquinas eventually arrives at the existence of a strongly necessary being. This way of arguing is, of course, far different from that of starting with an essential definition of "God" and then deriving attributes of God from knowledge of God's essence. Since Aquinas thought it was impossible to carry out a *propter quid* demonstration of God's existence, he had to arrive at a capital-G God via other means. So Aquinas sought to prove god's existence in a somewhat minimal sense in the Third Way, and then to fill out that proof subsequently in the *Prima Pars*.

A key place where Aquinas fills out his argument from the Third Way is in ST I, q. 11, art. 3, where he argues that there exists one and only one strongly necessary being. I will conclude this section by discussing the crucial way in which this argument helps Aquinas get from "god" to "God"; i.e., from N to G. The following comment by Wippel makes clear that there is a real need for such a discussion: "Additional reflection", he concedes, would be required "to show that there is only one first and totally uncaused necessary being if we are to justify the claim that this being is God".[58] Importantly, the oneness of God is surely one of the principal attributes commonly assumed in discussions about capital-G God.

In ST I, q. 11, art. 3, Aquinas puts forward three arguments for the conclusion that God is one. First, God is His own nature and therefore is not many, different natures. Second, if there were many gods, it would be impossible for each of them to possess all perfections. Support for this second claim comes from two noteworthy metaphysical views that Aquinas holds. First, there can be no distinction of form among many gods. Second, if there existed many gods, they would lack the material needed for them to be distinguished via material individuation, since they are not hylomorphic composites after all. Thus, there can be only one god. Aquinas's third argument for the conclusion that capital-G God must be one holds that God is the first, perfect, *per se* cause to which all other beings are ordered, since "things that are diverse do not harmonize in the same order, unless they are ordered thereto by one".[59] Aquinas twice states his main conclusion in art. 3: "Impossible is it … that many

[58] Wippel, p. 468.

[59] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1, q. 11, art. 3.

Gods should exist." (Incidentally, the argumentation in q. 11 also reveals why there cannot be two "chains" of necessary being, each of which goes back to a different uncaused, necessary being.)

Aquinas is aware that the existence of a given necessary being does not entail the existence of God with all of God's attributes. Consequently, Aquinas not only defends the ascription of oneness to the necessary being, but also takes this being to be the transcendental explainer of each of the features of the world that are discussed in the Five Ways. We might say that Aquinas's argument in ST I, q. 11, art. 3 crucially "upgrades" his proof of the existence of a god in the Third Way to a proof of the existence of God in the *Prima Pars*. For, "once the utter uniqueness of a god has been shown", write McInerny and O'Callaghan, "one can begin to use 'God' as a proper name to refer to that utterly unique being".[60] This important claim can be unpacked as follows. If one can formulate both a strong argument "A" for the existence of "a god", and a strong argument "B" for the uniqueness of any god, then one can, by combining A and B, plausibly demonstrate the existence of a being that may be appropriately called "God".[61] Of course, Aquinas's "God" has many philosophically discussable attributes beyond just utter uniqueness (e.g., simplicity, goodness, immutability); the nature of these attributes is fleshed out in other questions of the *Summa Theologica*. Yet, once it has been shown that oneness attaches to the "divinely natured being" (in the abstract) or "a divinely natured being" (what I have called "god" or "a god"), then the link from N to G has been made.

Now there is a reason why the title of this section is the following ambiguous question: Has Aquinas successfully demonstrated that the strongly necessary being is God? The ambiguity lies in the fact that any answer to this question depends on what one means by "success" vis-à-vis Aquinas's argument in the Third Way. From one perspective, it is clear that

[60] McInerny and O'Callaghan, p. 27. Though Aquinas sometimes treats the word "God" as a common noun, it bears emphasis that McInerny and O'Callaghan's discussion accords with Peter Geach's analysis in "Form and Existence". Geach notes that when Aquinas uses "God" in certain contexts (e.g., in phrases such as "the wisdom of God"), the word "has the force of a definite description" that "can significantly take the place of a proper name". See Geach, "Form and Existence", p. 122, in *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays* (ed. Brian Davies).

[61] This claim depends on whether there is ample reason to consider an utterly unique, strongly necessary being "God". Duly addressing that consideration would require another paper in itself.

Aquinas does not "succeed" at such a demonstration in the Third Way. After all, he arrives at N, not G. And yet, it was not Aquinas's intention in the Third Way to advance a freestanding argument for God's existence. In general, any fair standard by which to judge the success (or failure) of the Third Way must account for Aquinas's own conception of the relationship between the Third Way and his subsequent argumentation in the *Prima Pars*. A key implication of this fact is that any claim that the Third Way fails because it does not prove that N is G is finally not very meaningful.[62] The conclusion of this section, then, is that the Third Way should be viewed as part and parcel of a far broader argument for the existence of the one, unique God. This argument seems plausible enough given the preceding analysis, or at least more plausible than it is often considered to be.

CONCLUSION

Aquinas's Third Way begins with a straightforward observation about the world, namely, that certain beings are possible or (we may say) contingent. The conclusion at which it ultimately arrives is that there must exist a necessary being whose necessity owes to that being itself rather than to some other being. After presenting the text and the context of the Third Way, I argued for a particular understanding of Aquinas's conception of necessary beings vis-à-vis the Third Way. I argued that, contra the views of scholars like Copleston, Aquinas believes that there exists a plurality of necessary beings. These beings are necessary, moreover, because they are ungenerable and incorruptible, not because they cannot cease to exist unaffected, say, by God's operations. I also proposed the terms "weakly necessary beings" (e.g., human souls, angels) and "strongly necessary being" (i.e., God), which respectively correspond to whether a given necessary being is caused or uncaused. Furthermore, against the views of scholars like Martin, Hepburn, and Smart, I argued that Aquinas conceives of the Third Way as dealing with really necessary beings, not logically necessary ones. After all, Aquinas posits the existence of a strongly necessary being to account for the apparent (real, not logical) fact that the world can neither consist entirely of contingent beings, nor

[62] There are of course legitimate reasons to question the plausibility of the Third Way, as there are for just about any complex argument.

contain infinitely many necessary beings whose necessity is "caused by another".[63]

In Section III, I argued that it is not particularly meaningful (though not false strictly speaking), to charge Aquinas with failing to prove the existence of capital-G God in the Third Way. The way in which Aquinas relies on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* strongly suggests that he conceives of the Third Way as dependent on additional argumentation such as that found in ST I, q. 11, art. 3. Brown puts this point nicely when he suggests "that St. Thomas was, in the last two sentences of the Third Way, tacitly presupposing his own proof regarding uniqueness".[64]

This paper was written with two related aims in mind. The first was to produce a focused analysis of the conception of necessary beings upon which Aquinas relies in the Third Way. The second was to emphasize why Aquinas's identification of the strongly necessary being with God requires argumentation beyond that found in the Third Way, and to indicate the import of that fact for how one should judge the success or failure of the Third Way. If the analysis in this paper is basically accurate, my hope is that this paper will help clear up some of the existing analytic and interpretive confusion surrounding the necessary beings of Aquinas's Third Way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Diogenes, and Eric O. Springsted. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (second ed.), (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007)

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles.* Dominican Fathers (Leonine Edition), 1924. Available at: URL = <http://www.archive.org/stream/summacontragenti01thomuoft/summacontragenti01thomuoft_djvu.txt> (Accessed 9 June 2011)

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2008. Available at: URL = <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1002.htm> (Accessed 8 May 2011)

Aristotle. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2. Ed. Jonathan Barnes. Bollingen Series. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Bobik, Joseph. "XIV. Further Reflections on the First Part of the Third Way", *Philosophical Studies* XIV (1972), 166-174

[63] Aquinas, ST I, q. 2, art. 3.

[64] Brown, p. 89.

Boundas, Constantin, ed. *Columbia Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophies*, (New York: Edinburgh University Press, 2007)

Brown, Patterson. "St. Thomas's Doctrine of Necessary Being", *The Philosophical Review*, 73, no. 1 (Jan. 1964), 76-90.

Burrill, Donald R., ed. *The Cosmological Arguments: A Spectrum of Opinion*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1967)

Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, (London: Doubleday, 1959)

Davidson, Matthew. "God and Other Necessary Beings", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 29 April 2005. Available at: URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/god-necessary-being/> (Accessed 4 May 2011)

Davies, Brian. "Aquinas's Third Way", *New Blackfriars*, 968, no. 82 (Oct. 2001), 450-468

Davies, Brian, ed. *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006)

De Nys, Martin J. "If Everything Can Not-Be, There Would be Nothing: Another Look at the Third Way", *The Review of Metaphysic*

s, 56, no. 1 (Sept. 2002), 99-122

Flew, Antony, and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds. *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, (New York, 1955)

Hepburn, Richard. *Christianity and Paradox*, (London: Humanities Press, 1958)

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978)

Kelly, Thomas A. F. "Ex Possibili et Necessario: A Re-examination of Aquinas's Third Way", *The Thomist* 61 (1997). Available at: URL = <http://www.thomist.org/journal/1997/971AKell.htm> (Accessed 20 May 2011)

Kenny, Anthony. *The Five Ways*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969)

Mackie, J. L. "The Regress of Causes" in *The Miracle of Theism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Maritain, Jacques. *Approaches to God*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954)

Martin, C. B. *Religious Belief*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1959)

Martin, C. F. J. *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

Mautner, Thomas. "Aquinas's Third Way", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 6, no. 4 (Oct. 1969), 298-304

Maydole, Robert E. "Aquinas' Third Way Modalized", *Philosophy of Religion*. Available at: URL = <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Reli/ReliMayd.htm> (Accessed 20 May 2011)

McInerny, Ralph, and John O'Callaghan. "Saint Thomas Aquinas", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* 30 September 2009. Available at: URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/> (Accessed 15 May 2011)

Min, Anselm K. *Paths to the Triune God*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005)

Pasnau, Robert, and Christopher Shields. *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004)

Plantinga, Alvin. *God and Other Minds*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967)

Quinn, John M. "A Few Reflections on 'The Third Way': *Encore*", *Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, 46, no. 1 (Jan. 1982), 75-91

Reichenbach, Bruce. "Cosmological Argument", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. September 11, 2008. Available at: URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/> (Accessed 12 May 2011)

Rubio, Mercedes. *Aquinas and Maimonides on the Possibility of the Knowledge of God*, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2006)

Shanley, Brian J. *The Thomist Tradition*, (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002)

Shields, Christopher. "Aristotle", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. September 25, 2008. Available at: URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle/> (Accessed 21 July 2011)

Smart, J. J. C. and J. J. Haldane. *Atheism and Theism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)

Sobel, Jordan H. *Logic and Theism: Arguments For and Against Beliefs in God*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Ward, Keith. *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God: Doubting Dawkins*, (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008)

Wippel, John F. *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000)

GOD AND THE ARGUMENT FROM CONSCIOUSNESS: A RESPONSE TO LIM

J. P. MORELAND

Biola University

Recently, Daniel Lim has published a thoughtful critique of one form of my argument for the existence of God from consciousness (hereafter, AC).1 After stating his presentation of the relevant contours of my argument, I shall present the main components of his critique, followed by my response. Since one purpose of my publications of AC has been to foster discussion about a neglected argument for God's existence, I am thankful to Lim for his interesting article and the chance to further the discussion.

LIM'S PRESENTATION OF MY DEDUCTIVE VERSION OF AC

Lim claims that my presentation of AC is essentially a God-of-the-gaps argument and offers this version of it:

(1) Genuinely non-physical mental states exist.
(2) There is an explanation for the existence of mental states.
(3) Personal explanation is different from natural scientific explanation.
(4) The explanation for the existence of mental states is either a personal or natural scientific explanation.
(5) The explanation is not a natural scientific one.

[1] Daniel Lim, "Zombies, Epiphenomenalism, and Personal Explanation: A Tension in Moreland's Argument from Consciousness", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3/2 (Autumn, 2011), 439-450.

(6) Therefore, the explanation is a personal one.
(7) If the explanation is personal, then it is theistic.
(8) Therefore, the explanation is theistic.

Lim focuses on four reasons I have offered for (5), and spends the entirety of his subsequent critique on an alleged tension between (b) and (c) below. Those reasons are (a) the uniformity of nature, (b) the contingency of the mind-body correlation, (c) the rejection of epiphenomenalism based on causal closure, and (d) the inadequacy of evolutionary explanations.

LIM'S CRITIQUE OF AC

Lim claims that the contingency of the mental/physical connection (which he calls "Contingency" with a capital "C") is crucial for my argument because it makes room for a personal explanation of that connection. Further and in general, contingency is required for a personal explanation since the offering of a theistic personal explanation seems to presuppose the contingency of the phenomenon to be explained. Applied to Contingency, in this way the explanans (God's free choice to make the connection the way it is) comports well with the explanandum (Contingency). Thus, Contingency is a necessary condition for a successful AC.

In addition, according to Lim, the falsity of epiphenomenalism, given a robust version of naturalism, is important for my defence of premise (5) of AC (the explanation of the existence of mental entities is not a natural scientific one). Briefly, Lim says my argument is that naturalism implies the causal closure of the physical, closure implies epiphenomenalism for irreducible mental states, epiphenomenalism is false, so naturalism is false. Thus, there is no naturalistic explanation for irreducible mental states.

At this point in his critique, Lim claims that there is now a tension in my defence of AC: My rejection of epiphenomenalism is at odds with my commitment to Contingency because Contingency entails epiphenomenalism as as expressed in C4:

C4: Contingency → Epiphenomenalism

Now, *prima facie*, C4 seems implausible. Indeed, numerous thinkers in the history of philosophy, not to mention most laypeople throughout the world, both now and throughout history, have accepted Contingency and a denial of epiphenomenalism. So C4 needs a pretty robust defence

and Lim seeks to provide one. First, he invites us to consider the "standard" ways of characterizing zombies (e.g., something physically identical to me but bereft of mental states) in a world physically identical to the actual world. In such a world, my zombie twin is physically, functionally and behaviourally identical to me in the actual world. Let PW_Z and $PW_@$ stand for a zombie world and the actual world, respectively. The only difference between these worlds is that metal states obtain in the latter and not the former. But, then, it becomes clear, says Lim, that the presence or absence of mental states makes no causal contribution to $PW_@$, and this is why C4 is true. So in my version of AC, either I accept Contingency or I reject it. If I reject it, there is no need for a personal theistic explanation of the correlations, and if I accept it, I must accept an implausible view which, in fact, I reject, viz., epiphenomenalism.

However, Lim suggests I have a way out and that would be to reject C4. Epiphenomenalism can be avoided if the zombie world PW_Z is missing something the actual world $PW_@$ has, namely, the laws of nature (which are different in the two worlds). Mental states could be causally efficacious in $PW_@$ as long as PW_Z is a counter-nomological world, i.e., one with different laws of nature. This solution is available if we accept Categoricalism (all properties are categorical, i.e., they don't confer any causal powers/dispositions on their bearers), and depict the laws of nature as metaphysically contingent relations among categorical properties such that these laws contingently confer causality "from the outside" on their relata.[2] Thus, in $PW_@$ there are contingent mental/physical causal laws that vouchsafe the causal efficacy of the mental that do not obtain in PW_Z.

As an illustration, Lim invites us to suppose that in $PW_@$, my mental states and brain states together bring about my shouting "ouch" (i.e., (M&P) → E). Now, E won't obtain in PW_Z because M is absent. But then, PW_Z does not satisfy the "standard" analysis of zombies embedded in a physically indistinguishable world. To get such a world, we need $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$ in which the laws of nature differ from those in $PW_@$. In $PW_@$, there is a law such as (M&P) → E. But in $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$, there is a different law that guarantees that P alone brings about E. In this case we have contingency with respect to two physically indistinguishable worlds $PW_@$ and $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$, and mental efficacy is preserved in $PW_@$.

[2] For a helpful discussion of Categoricalism and Dispositional Essentialism, see Alexander Bird, "Laws and Essences", *Ratio* 18 (2005), 437-461.

Unfortunately, this is not a satisfactory way out for the defender of AC, and Lim presents two main arguments against it. First, he claims that it is unclear that we can preserve the physical identity of some brain state P from $PW_{@}$ to $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$ because some strong version of Dispositional Essentialism is superior to Categoricalism regarding properties and their identity conditions, the former can and the latter cannot adequately ground P's physical identity between the two worlds, yet it is the inferior Categoricalism that funds this way out for the defender of AC. Let us characterize Strong Dispositional Essentialism (SDE) in this way:

> SDE: Some properties are essentially dispositional, those dispositions ground and are metaphysically necessarily connected to the laws into which those properties figure, and two properties Q and R are identical if and only if, necessarily, Q and R share all and only the same dispositions.

According to SDE, laws of nature are not contingently related to properties. Rather, a law of nature involving a property Q is grounded in and metaphysically necessarily related to Q's dispositions such that Q cannot exist in two possible worlds in association with two different related laws of nature. So brain state P that essentially instantiates some property Q does not preserve its identity between $PW_{@}$ and $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$.[3]

Second, Lim claims that $PW_{Z\text{-}LAW}$ is a red herring in any case, and it is not really relevant to the problem of epiphenomenalism. Why? Because if PW_{Z} is really possible, a world identical to $PW_{@}$ in every way, this alone establishes epiphenomenalism.

In sum, I have presented a precis of Lim's critique of my version of AC, especially my defence of premise (5). I now turn to the task of providing a reply to Lim.

MY REPLY TO LIM'S CRITIQUE

In this section, I shall present two initial responses to Lim, followed by a reply to his main contention about Contingency and epiphenomenalism.

[3] Lim also raises an epistemological worry, namely, if physical properties and their instantiations can exist throughout a range of possible worlds with various causal profiles for those properties and instantiations, not only would this be unparsimonious, but it would generate vast ranges of empirically equivalent possible worlds with radically different underlying property-ontologies. Now besides the fact that opponents of realism in science would be happy with this latter result, I shall not interact with this criticism further because, as we shall see below, I am not a Categoricalist.

God-of-the-Gaps and Necessitation

Lim claims that my version of AC is a God-of-the-gaps argument, but he is simply wrong in this.[4] A gaps argument is one in which a scientific explanation of some phenomenon is possible in principle, but not yet provided, and into that explanatory gap a rival theistic explanation is proffered. But my defence of premise (5) of AC, especially (b) contingency, (c), epiphenomenalism, and (d) the inadequacy of evolutionary explanations, provide in-principle objections to the very possibility of scientific explanation. Whether successful or not, they seek to place a limit on scientific explanation regarding the existence of mental entities, to claim that they must, therefore, be taken as brute facts or explained theistically, and to provide grounds for preferring a theistic explanation. Thus, my argument is not a gaps-type presentation. This is not a minor point. In the current intellectual climate, there is widespread loathing for gaps arguments, and it would be damaging to AC if one were to think, erroneously, that it is a gaps argument.

Second, Lim's claim that a defender of AC needs Contingency (the contingency of the mental/physical connection) is mistaken. Put briefly, the defender of AC needs contingency but not Contingency. The existence of the mental must, in some way or another, be a contingent fact, but its emergence from the physical need not be. Consider the following possibility. Suppose that mental states emergently supervened upon relevant brains states with metaphysical necessity. In this case, Contingency would be violated. However, a defender of AC could ask why those contingent subvenient brain states obtained as opposed to alternative states. If the relevant brain states were the result of a causal chain of events leading back to the Big Bang, the AC advocate could ask why this chain as opposed to an alternative one obtained in the actual world. And a personal theistic explanation would be available (e.g., the properties of consciousness are exemplified by the fundamental being in theism; thus, they exist and are available for subsequent exemplification in the history of the cosmos; good persons – divine or otherwise – love to

[4] Elsewhere, I have evaluated God-of-the-gaps arguments in the context of debates about whether or not methodological naturalism is a necessary condition for the practice of science. See J. P. Moreland, "Theistic Science and Methodological Naturalism" in *The Creation Hypothesis*, edited by J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), pp. 41-66.

bring other persons into existence and have relationships with them, so God would have a good reason to being about those subvenient states).

Now, I accept Contingency so this way out is not one I can embrace. But I do embrace the contingency of physical states that are causally relevant for the appearance of mental states, so in my case, both sorts of AC are available. And in any case, an AC advocate who denied Contingency could still advance an AC type argument as we have seen, and this fact is sufficient to defeat Lim's argument. Still, since I accept Contingency, I have to face the tension between it and epiphenomenalism which I reject. And it is to this issue we now turn.

Contingency and Epiphenomenalism: Problems with C4

I have two basic responses to Lim' employment of C4 (Contingency → Epiphenomenalism) to expose a tension in my arguments for AC's premise (5). The first one is epistemological. As I mentioned earlier, the vast majority of people throughout history have accepted Contingency and denied epiphenomenalism, including a very impressive number of philosophers down through the ages. Belief in some sort of disembodied life after death is ubiquitous, people have no problem with the (metaphysical) possibility of Near Death experiences, zombies frequently populate science fiction writing, and when presented with an explanation of inverted qualia thought experiments, lay people clearly believe they could, indeed, happen. And almost no one accepts epiphenomenalism. If there is any place where the intuitions of folk ontology should count, and I and many others think they should, this is it.

But the same thing cannot be said for the highly abstract debates about identity conditions for properties, the proper analysis of laws of nature, how the two relate to one another, and so forth. One could take oneself to have a principled, justified position on these topics, but one's underlying intuitions would be far weaker than those of folk ontology supporting Contingency and a denial of epiphenomenalism. Given this epistemic disparity, it seems to me that one could be justified in accepting Contingency and denying epiphenomenalism without having *any* reply to C4. Or one could reject C4 by opting for, say, a Humean regularity view of laws, or Armstrong's nomic necessitation view, precisely because they preserve these folk ontological intuitions, even if, considered in themselves, one preferred Strong Dispositional Essentialism to these

alternatives.[5] It seems to me that this is the epistemology of the situation, and Lim does not take it into account. Thus, Lim's statement "that AC in its present form cannot be used to persuade naturalistic dualists" (p. 449) is unwarranted and premature.

So much for my epistemological observation. My second reply to Lim takes as a starting point his concession that epiphenomenalism can be avoided as long as the zombie world PW_Z is in some relevant way different from the actual world $PW_@$. In a related comment Timothy O'Connor has observed that if an emergent property is depicted in such a way as to be contingently linked to the base properties causing it to emerge, then apart from an appeal to God's contingent choice that things be so, and to God's stable intention that they continue to be so, there will be no explanation for the link itself or its constancy.[6] Lim's mistake is his suggestion that a Categoricalist depiction of contingent laws of nature is the only way out. But this is mistaken. There is an alternative for an AC advocate that rejects Categoricalism, embraces a mitigated form of Dispositional Essentialism, and provides the resources to defeat C4. Let me explain.

Consider this form of Mitigated Dispositional Essentialism (MDE):

> MDE: Some properties, e.g., P, are essentially dispositional in that they have dispositions, e.g., D_1-D_N, and these dispositions, along with the intrinsic categorical nature of, e.g., P, together provide the identity conditions for P. In addition, properties like P can have accidental dispositions D_O-D_S that are not essential to P.

Among other things, MDE entails that not all the dispositions of a given property are essential to its identity. Thus, a property – or a state essentially characterized by a property – can retain its identity though accidental change. Given MDE, my response to Lim amounts to the claim that the difference between $PW_@$ and PW_Z resides in a difference in accidental dispositions. MDE provides a way for properties and their associated states to retain identity across possible worlds. And by providing an account in which the actual and a zombie world are duplicates physically but not duplicates *simpliciter*, MDE provides the resources for defeating C4 while granting the existence of PW_Z. Thus,

[5] For a recent metaphysical analysis of options on these matters, see E. J. Lowe, *The Four-Category Ontology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 121-173.

[6] Timothy O'Connor, *Persons and Causes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 70-71.

MDE preserves Contingency and a rejection of epiphemonenalism, and at the same time provides answers to Lim's two criticisms. Now consider the following two scenarios:

Scenario One: Let us set aside the "standard" account of zombies as expressed in PW_Z, in favour of a "non-standard account expressed in PW_{NSZ} (a non-standard zombie world). Such a world is bereft of mental states and their causal effects (e.g., there is no shouting of "ouch"). Such a world seems possible, and it is all a defender of AC needs. After all, the point of zombies in AC is to illustrate the contingency of the existence of the mental, and that is captured in PW_{NSZ}. Now suppose that in the actual world, there is a disposition of a subvenient base physical property that, when triggered, actualizes the mental property. What are we to say about this disposition in PW_{NSZ}? It seems that there are two ways to go. First, one can say that in the actual world, this disposition was an accidental property superadded and sustained by God, but is missing in PW_{NSZ}. Since this disposition plays no role in physical theory nor is it strictly a physical disposition capable of complete description in ideal physical terms (it's description involves reference to a mental entity), then the non-standard world is physically identical to the actual world, but absent the relevant metaphysical (non-physical) disposition. Or one can say that in PW_{NSZ}, the disposition to produce a mental state is present, but that God has superadded and sustains an overriding blocking disposition. Either way, Contingency and a rejection of epiphenomenalism are preserved, PW_{NSZ} is in place, and the relevant property identities are retained across the two worlds.

Scenario Two: Here we adopt the "standard" account of zombies and consider PW_Z in which the brain state P causes E (a shouting of "ouch"). In the actual world, there is a set of non-physical, contingent dispositions that are relevant to the existence of the mental and its causal powers that are absent in the zombie world. What are those dispositions? I'm not sure, and I am not sure a detailed account of them is required for my argument. But I can speculate. Suppose in $PW_@$ there are six dispositions absent from PW_Z:[7] the mental disposition MD that, when actualized, gives rise to M, a disposition of MD that gives MD the potential to receive causal power from the subvenient base, a disposition of that

[7] In a related project with very different aims, Colin McGinn postulates three dispositional properties and not six. See his *The Mysterious Flame: Conscious Minds in a Material World* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

subvenient base to interact with MD's disposition to broker the causal activity that actualizes MD, a disposition of M to act causally on matter (e.g., to produce the bodily motions involved in shouting "ouch"), the various bodily dispositions to receive mental causal activity, and an overriding/blocking disposition that prevents B from causing E without M's involvement. In this scenario, we have Contingency, a rejection of epiphenomenalism, and an intact PW_Z.

Lim could reject my two scenarios on the grounds that their associated zombie worlds are not adequate. In one place, Lim describes the adequacy relationship between two worlds relevant to our topic as "being identical in every way" (p. 448), and my two zombie worlds fail this criterion when compared to the actual world. But this characterization substantially begs the question against the defender of AC. More importantly, it is equivocal to what Lim says elsewhere when he describes the adequacy relationship as requiring the two relevant worlds to be physically identical, including physical events. This, I take it, is Lim's actual view. If I am right about this, then my two zombie worlds satisfy this adequacy condition compared to the actual world, and my scenarios defeat Lim's critique.

In summary, I am grateful to Lim for his thoughtful critique of my argument for God from the existence of irreducible, uneliminable mental states. But, as I have tried to show, I do not believe his critique succeeds.[8]

[8] Lim concludes his critique by claiming that a solution relevantly similar to mine requires a rejection of closure, but since the purpose of AC is to persuade naturalistic property dualists, and since rejecting closure is unavailable to the naturalist, it would be dialectically useless to undermine C4 by rejecting closure. But Lim's remarks misconstrue the use of closure in defence of (5), viz., as a *reductio* against property dualist naturalists. The argument is that, given the most plausible version of naturalism, a natural scientific explanation of consciousness would entail closure, closure entails epiphenomenalism, epiphenomenalism is false, and so is closure and a natural scientific explanation of consciousness. If the falsity of C4 entails a denial of epiphenomenalism, so much the better for my defence of (5).

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

JOSHUA FARRIS
University of Bristol

Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro. *A Brief History of the Soul*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

In an age where naturalistic views of the world and physicalist views of persons conceal the notion of the soul, Taliaferro and Goetz offer a comprehensive defense of the soul as substance. Both show that the concept of a soul comes from a rich tradition of thought, is enjoying a present resurgence and has a promising future. Systematically, the authors discuss a range of views concerning personhood. Carefully and critically Taliaferro and Goetz move from Plato in Ancient times through the Continental thought up to present contemporary literature on souls. While it is historical it is not simply a commentary of views but it is intimately tied to present-day problems and insights as seen in cognitive science, philosophy of mind and philosophical theology, which Taliaferro and Goetz persuasively argue. Clearly, the book is a efense more specifically of substance dualism (3-4). This is the notion that fundamentally there are two kinds of things in reference to human persons.

The structure includes Ancient Greek thought, Medieval Christian thought, Continental thought, Modern thought, contemporary problems raised against the soul and future considerations and projects concerning the soul. First, Taliaferro and Goetz consider the two most prominent figures in the history of thought on the Soul, namely Plato and Aristotle in Greek thought. Second, the authors work through the Medieval Christian views of Augustine and Aquinas by linking their theological construction to the philosophical perspectives of both Plato and Aristotle. Third, the authors consider the thought of Descartes,

Malebranche and Leibniz in the chapter on Continental thought. Fourth, in Modern thought of the 18th century the authors consider the dialectic oscillating around the concerns raised by Descartes and mechanistic philosophy. The primary thinkers considering these issues include: Locke, Butler, Reid, Hume and Kant. Fifth, Taliaferro and Goetz consider historical and contemporary objections against the soul such as the problem of soul-body interaction, the problem of science, neural dependence, personal identity and evolution. Finally, Taliaferro and Goetz consider the prospects of the soul as a metaphysical concept and its ramifications for other concerns.

Taliaferro and Goetz offer a historical survey of the soul for the purposes of contemporary constructive development against materialist objections and against materialist biases toward reductive explanations of persons (4). Human persons, broadly speaking, are composed of two substancess5 both an immaterial substance/mind or soul, and a material substance – body/brain. The soul and mind are often used interchangeably throughout the book although this is not an exact portrayal of some variations of substance dualism that hold the mind to be a faculty of the soul, namely the hylomorphism of thinkers like Aristotle and Thomas. Nonetheless, substance dualism is broadly the position that is being surveyed and defended here. The most obvious evidences in favor of substance dualism offered include the fundamental and distinct nature of physical and non-physical things (1-3) and the common-sense view of persons (3). Taliaferro and Goetz argue that the natures of physical things and non-physical things are clearly distinct. Souls are essentially characterized and defined by subjectivity, phenomenological experience, first-person knowledge, internal knowledge and teleological causal explanation (see especially chapter 6). Whereas physical things, for which we are less clear, are essentially characterized or defined by mechanistic process, energy transfer (chapter 6), third-person knowledge (187-190), relational and extrinsic properties (see chapter 4, 147-149, 206), and complex systematic arrangement of particles (194-197). The authors support these assumptions and the distinction between the substances when commenting on Papineau's view of the mental and non-mental: "In short, according to Papineau we cannot say for sure what it is to be physical, but we can be sure about what it is not: it is not something that is ultimately mental in nature. Instead, it is something that is ultimately nonmentally identifiable (207)." In agreement with Armstrong on the nature of the physical, Taliaferro and Goetz argue: "any final appeal

to mental entities such as purposes would count as a falsification of naturalism (207)." Thus, arguably, there are two distinct kinds of things hence substance dualism.

There are two noteworthy arguments in support of substance dualism that are argued for throughout: first-person consciousness and the unity-of-consciousness. The first-person consciousness argument is an argument that has rich historical precedence, but is still widely used today in contemporary literature. The argument shows distinctions of mental things with physical things and physical processes. The authors describe first-person consciousness as self-awareness or the perspective from introspection (i.e. looking inward) when discussing Plato's view of the self and knowledge (15; see especially Plato's Phaedo). Next, the author's discuss it in the context of Augustine's view of the self, which foreshadows Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum.* According to Augustine on the basis of first-person knowledge we know that we are simple in nature, one, aware of the self and its distinction from the body (34-36; see for example *Confessions,* VIII.4.9; *On Free Choice of the Will,* II.3). Next, the authors discuss Descartes' view on pages 83-88. On pages 155-156, Taliaferro and Goetz offer an argument from first-person consciousness that this kind of knowledge has greater certainty than scientific knowledge, or in the least is presupposed with scientific knowledge. Second, the authors make use of the unity of consciousness argument as an apologetic for the soul's existence, which too has a rich history and is commonly referred to in contemporary literature. This is the argument that suggests that physical things are unable to account for the unity of awareness because it is the kind of thing that is not a set of externally related neurons, but one unified thing that binds together all the aspects of the neural system (18). The author's justify the fact of its being a historical argument with Plato (17-18), Aristotle (23-24), Descartes (85-87), and Kant (126-127). It is also widely used today in the philosophy of mind, mind-brain correlations and consciousness studies (18 and 156).

In the process of making a defense for substance dualism the reader will notice a clear bias, which will prove positive or negative depending on the reader's presuppositions. The authors move beyond substance dualism to arguing for a 'pure' or 'strict' dualism against a 'compound' or 'complex' dualism. Pure dualism is the notion that I am strictly identified with my soul substance, which is keeping with a broadly Cartesian account of persons. The support for this claim is seen in their movement toward making a case for a simple soul, the survival of the

person (3-4), Person-body dualism (see 190-192), Personal Identity as a simple enduring continuant in the spirit of Chisholm (see 199) and the fact that we are non-physical like God (see 176). Finally, this is demonstrated in their explicit and specific defense of dualism in the Plato-Augustine-Descartes tradition (see especially 155 and 213-214). The benefits of this approach are clear, but it is not without difficulty. Those inclined to a more metaphysically holistic view of the mind-body might find themselves longing for further exploration and development of a more explicit compound dualism, hylomorphism or emergent dualism. Consequently, this is one potential downfall.

The highlights of this historical survey on the soul are numerous. I will consider three here. The first highlight is a defense of substance dualism utilizing 'integrative' dualism. Second, Taliaferro and Goetz exemplify a constructive method of doing philosophy and theology by drawing from historical sources. Third, Taliaferro and Goetz contribute to the discussion by providing a foundation and suggesting further areas of exploration.

One very significant and interesting issue is the notion of "integrative" dualism and realism. 'Integrative' is a term used in reference to dualism by Taliaferro in his book *Consciousness and the Mind of God.* It is a view that ties together the notions of duality and unity. Although there are two substances at work with a person, at least while embodied, there is a functional unity at work as well. So the physicalist's insight that a person is one functioning unit or system, which seems confirmed by the empirical sciences, is coherently accounted for in integrative dualism. This notion in itself is not foreign to the notion of the soul throughout history, but it is codified more succinctly by Taliaferro and Goetz due to the pressing concerns and pressure from contemporary physicalists (this I believe is a helpful pressure). A gem that expresses the beauty of an integrative dualism is seen in their discussions of cognition and perception. Goetz and Taliaferro offer a view that is mid-way between direct realism and representational realism known as 'integrative realism,' which corresponds quite well to their integrative view of dualism. The authors put forth this solution as a response to an objection to substance dualism by Jaegwon Kim (144-146). Kim objects that it is incoherent for a soul and body to occupy the same space, for which, Taliaferro and Goetz respond by offering their solution of 'integrative realism'. They argue there is nothing on the face of it controversial or contradictory about a soul (as a simple) occupying the same space as a body if in fact

the soul is spatial in some sense. Noting the problems and insights in both direct realism and representational realism they offer a mediating view that is an analogue for solving the 'joint occupancy dilemma.' They define integrative realism as such: "when you see us coming to greet you, you do not have a representation of us and then have to infer that you see us, but rather we appear to you through your sensory modalities. In veridical (reliable) experiences, there is an integration and proper functioning of organs and sensations such that, when you have the visual, auditory, and tactile sense of our greeting you by name and of our shaking your hand, these constitute the reality of what is taking place… Under these circumstances, we are truly interacting physically and mentally (145)."

A second highlight is the use of a constructive method as stated in the introduction (4). When reflecting on this I am reminded of the great late medieval philosopher-historian Etienne Gilson. In his work *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* he exemplifies a constructive method for doing philosophy by drawing from the resources in history to adequately address the present dialectical situation. This is similar to the approach taken by Taliaferro and Goetz. By offering a comprehensive survey from history the authors are able to address the issues and solutions from the past, connect the same issues from the past with the present and offer perspective on how to move forward. First-person arguments and the unity of consciousness argument are prime examples of historical resources that provide evidence for the distinctions in matter and non-matter appropriated in the past yet alive in the present dialectic between dualism and physicalism.

Approaching the notion of soul in this way will have two effects. First, it is a counter influence to the overwhelming pressure from the ethos and pathos found in scientism and physicalism. The influence is due in part to its substantive nature that is presented in a readable and approachable manner. Second, it may have an impact on the academic disciplines centering on philosophy of mind/personal identity, philosophical theology and ontology. I say this because it is comprehensive in its historical scope and it demonstrates the pervasive nature of studies on the soul throughout history not only as a theological concept, but also as a philosophical concept. Goetz and Taliaferro nicely supply the groundwork for this, thus raising the awareness of some of the issues still in need of hard theoretical and/or empirical work. Specifically what comes to mind is the notion of a simple soul yet with a complex of

properties. It is uncertain how a simple soul could in fact have a complex of properties without also having parts. Other issues include the notion of a soul and cognition, the notion that a soul is a complete substance and the notion of physical energy in physics and the role of the soul's relation to it in causation. These and many other issues are deserving of further exploration, clarification and justification.

A third highlight overlaps with the previous highlight concerning a constructive method. The authors carry the contemporary discussion forward in chapter 8. Taliaferro and Goetz predict that the soul will illuminate four areas of study: worldview studies, the nature of the physical, cultural studies and values. One specific example relates values to the soul by considering '*qualia*'. Taliaferro and Goetz raise concerns for physicalism in accounting for values and '*qualia*' by arguing that even physicalists see these as incompatible with strong forms of physicalism. The implication is that the soul offers a better way forward, thus warranting careful study.

There are two theological issues concerning the soul, not directly intimated by Taliaferro and Goetz, that are deserving of further attention in relation to mind-on-brain dependence and evolutionary thought. The first issue is how to make sense of the origin of souls if in fact souls seem to depend on properly functioning brains and are organically linked to other physical organisms in the evolutionary process. Second is the potential problem the mind on brain dependence and evolution pose for the idea of natural immortality. Natural immortality may have been a laughable issue in the past century, but if a simple soul substance is viable option in the philosophy of mind then natural immortality is still a *viable option*. It could offer some help in accounting for other theological conundrums like the notion of the image of God, disembodied existence and a coherent and plausible account of the resurrection. Immortality is still a topic worth discussing in contemporary times, which is motivated by historical precedence in the likes of Plato, Augustine and Calvin to name a few.

The reader may find some of the solutions to objections raised against substance dualism incomplete. Take for example the objection from evolution (see 200-201). In it the authors raise the objection but only consider one facet of the problem, namely the possibility of animal souls. Taliaferro and Goetz affirm the likelihood of animal souls, but do not consider other related problems. Other problems include the intuitive qualitative distinction between man and beast with the seeming unity of

physical organisms, and the compatibility of soul-creation with evolution. It might have been helpful to see a story addressing these issues that are seemingly in tension. But, given the brevity of length here the topic of evolution and substance dualism may require treatment elsewhere.

A Brief History of the Soul is a helpful contribution to philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, and for philosophy in general. Courses in the philosophy of mind/personal identity, seminars on the soul, and theological anthropology would be wise to interact with this work due to its historical focus, clarity and insight. Taliaferro and Goetz demonstrate the viability and persistence of the soul concept in philosophy, as something the physicalist should consider more seriously.

BENJAMIN MATHESON
University of Birmingham

Tim Mawson. *Free Will: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Continuum, 2011.

Tim Mawson's latest contribution to philosophy is a valiant effort to provide an introductory textbook that is accessible to those unfamiliar with academic philosophy. The book shows promise in places, but there are some issues that hinder it achieving its goals. Firstly, a major area in the contemporary free will debate does not receive as adequate a hearing as would be expected in a book of this sort. The unfortunate consequence skews the imagine of the current debate by making the position that Mawson is defending appear to be on much stronger footing than it actually seems to be. Secondly, there are many editorial decisions that do not give the feel or appearance of an introductory textbook. Finally, there is one prominent issue with the overall argument of the book.

Before discussing these issues, it will be useful to provide an overview of Mawson's position. Mawson defends a type of source incompatibilism that is very similar to Robert Kane's (1996) account, except that Mawson replaces the event-causal element present in Kane's account with a type of agent-causation. Source incompatibilism is the view that a person is morally responsible for an action or decision as long as they are the ultimate author (or source) of that action or decision. Mawson, like Kane, argues that to be the ultimate author of one's actions, these actions must have their source in a 'self-forming' action. A self-forming action requires alternative possibilities. Mawson differs from Kane in that he requires agent-causation for self-forming actions, whilst Kane requires event-causation that is cashed out in terms of quantum indeterminacies occurring in the brain. Kane's view is often plagued by objections relating to the problem of luck or arbitrariness, because it does not seem to be up to the agent, in a relevant sense, what the outcome of their decision is, despite the fact they have some alternative possibility.

Mawson starts his defence by exploring every day intuitions and assumptions about free will and moral responsibility. This part of the book is impressive in its use of appropriate examples and engaging prose. The five intuitions that Mawson uses to underpin his defence of source incompatibilism are: 1) 'Sometimes I could do something other than what I actually do'; (2) 'Sometimes I'm morally responsible for what I do'; (3) If I couldn't do other than what I actually do, then I wouldn't be

morally responsible for what I do'; (4) 'If I wasn't the ultimate author of my actions, then I wouldn't be morally responsible for them'; and (5) 'To the extent that I did not will an action under the morally salient description, I am not fully morally responsible for it.' (52) Intuitions (3) and (4) are the most important. (3) corresponds to the principle of alternative possibilities, and (4) corresponds to the source incompatibilist view that an agent must have significant influence of their actions and decisions.

A problem arises in Mawson's discussion of the principle of alternative possibilities. There has been much discussion ever since Harry Frankfurt's (1969) groundbreaking paper in which he provides an apparent counter-example to the principle of alternative possibilities (PAP). PAP is the notion that when persons are held morally responsible it is because they 'could have done otherwise' and when they are not it is because they could not have done otherwise. PAP covers many of the intuitions that Mawson uses to underpin his account, and a particular difficulty stems from Frankfurt-style cases. It is worrisome that much of the debate regarding Frankfurt cases has been omitted. Of course, in a book of this type it is not expected that every aspect of a debate is going to be covered. However, the way Mawson structures his argument relies on the strength and plausibility of this intuition, so it is problematic when an issue which directly relates to this is not given the full hearing it deserves. Frankfurt cases are set up in such a way that an agent no longer has alternative possibilities yet intuitively is still morally responsible. Mawson's reply is that the agent would still have some alternative, i.e. they could still have done otherwise, because it must be that the agent will show some sign of doing otherwise in order to allow the intervener to force the agent to do as they will. Mawson counters John Fischer's (1994) claim that such a 'flicker of freedom' would not be robust enough an alternative possibility to ground moral responsibility by saying that even this alternative is enough to change the outcome from one of responsibility to non-responsibility for the agent in the example. Mawson, however, does not consider Fischer's other point that it is what happens in the *actual sequence* of events that relates to moral responsibility. In the alternative scenario the agent would have lacked moral responsibility, but in the actual scenario they would still have moral responsibility whilst lacking robust alternative possibilities. Even in a textbook style book such as this there should really be a greater discussion of what is one of the two liveliest debates in contemporary free will literature (the other being the debate over manipulation arguments against compatibilism).

PAP leads to another issue with Mawson's overall argument. As mentioned earlier, much of his defence of source incompatibilism relies on its intuitive plausibility. Source incompatibilists are not required to defend PAP because they admit that agents can be morally responsible for actions that are determined to a certain extent, as long as those actions have an indeterministic source. Mawson describes the situation as holding the person morally responsible for the earlier action, i.e. the self-forming action, rather the actions that result from the self-forming action. Although this might be true in some cases, such as Mawson's case of the drunk student (we hold the student responsible for getting drunk rather than the acts committed whilst drunk), it is not clear that this is how the social practice of moral responsibility works. It seems that normally when a person is held morally responsible, it is for the actions in question, rather than the formation of their character. Some might even argue that persons have little to no control over the formation of their characters. Even so, describing the situation as holding the person morally responsible for the actions that stem from the self-forming action seems like an equally good explanation of what is occurring in this sort of explanation. The worry that arises with this part of the argument is that PAP says that an agent is morally responsible if they 'could have done otherwise'. Mawson, following Kane (1996), sees PAP being entailed in the ultimate authorship, i.e. ultimate authorship requires alternative possibilities at moments in a person's life that will contribute towards shaping their character in order to be 'self-forming' actions. The worry arises in what appears to be sort of 'sleight of hand' as support for PAP is transferred onto the source incompatibilist view: a morally responsible agent must be the ultimate author of his or her actions. Although both positions are similar, they are not the same. Ultimate authorship requires that agents 'could have done otherwise at key moments in life', whilst PAP only requires that agents 'could have done otherwise'. A closer look at PAP is likely to reveal that the strength of PAP relies on the idea that a morally responsible agent 'could have done other for *every* action and decision'. There is no room to defend this view here, but it is worth noting that many other source incompatibilists do not require PAP for their views. For example, Derk Pereboom (2001) actually argues in favour of Frankfurt-style counter-examples against PAP. Although it is matter for further investigation whether or not intuitive support for ultimate authorship is equal to that of PAP, at the very least this issue needs to be confronted.

Much of the rest of the book covers standard ground in defence of source incompatibilism. As 'self-forming' actions play an important role in his account, Mawson spends a lot of time defending their coherence, whilst modifying Kane's concept by substituting the event-causal process that Kane is an advocate of with a form of agent-causation. On Mawson's view, agent-causation can provide the required alternative possibilities that make self-forming actions self-forming. Mawson strays from the standard defence of source incompatibilism when he invokes 'souls' as a way of explaining how agent-causation might be possible. This is an interesting way to handle the difficult the issue of agent-causation, if empirically questionable. Souls would provide a way of explaining this, but many would also complain that this sounds like simply explaining one mystery with another mystery.

The other issues are weighted towards what appear to be editorial decisions. One initial problem is the length of the chapters. Many of those unfamiliar with academic philosophy, and even many who are familiar with it, are going to be anxious at the length of each chapter. This worry is offset initially as there many subsections dividing the separate issues discussed under the topic of each chapter. Unfortunately, these subsections are neither numbered nor named. This creates great difficult when navigating through the text, especially when an issue has been raised in a specific chapter and the reader wishes to return to the section in which it was discussed. This is likely to provide difficult for those who are inexperienced in reading philosophy and who have not been conditioned into writing notes whilst they read.

A final worry regards further reading. It has become commonplace in textbooks of this sort to include sections which detail the works of others that the reader is free to explore if they are interested in a particular debate or argument. Sadly, this book lacks clearly set out sections that discuss further reading. Mawson does helpfully provide some examples of further reading, but these are in the endnotes, and many who are new to reading academic texts may not bother checking the endnotes. Providing a brief discussion on further reading allows the reader to avoid what can initially seem a daunting task of finding other areas of literature that discuss what they are interested in. Books and articles mentioned in further reading also have the benefit of being recommended by the author of the book they are currently reading.

Mawson does well to provide an introductory text that is accessible to those unfamiliar with academic philosophy. Mawson's array of

examples is novel and is described in such a way that it avoids the difficulty that might occur to those unfamiliar with many of the strange thought experiments that philosophers employ. However, the lack of further discussion on the issue of Frankfurt-style counter-examples is worrisome. This could have been countered to some degree by providing a section that detailed further reading, particularly one which pointed out the philosophers in favour of both positions. It is unfortunate that much of the intuitive support that Mawson gathered stemmed from PAP, because this required a much fuller discussion of Frankfurt-style counter-examples. These issues could have been avoided, but sadly were not, and this results in the book failing to achieve its full potential.

AKU VISALA
Oxford University

Olli-Pekka Vainio. *Beyond Fideism: Negotiable Religious Identities.* Ashgate, 2010.

Fideism is a commonly used term in philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, and most people think that they know what they are referring to by it. The basic idea seems to be that in order to qualify as a fideist, one must believe that religious propositions are not believed on the basis of reasons, or some other type of evidence, but because of something else, perhaps trust or some sort of inchoate experience. In these contexts, fideism is normally used as a blunt instrument, as it were, to silence the opposition. But what does it really mean to be a fideist? Were Tertullian and Kierkegaard, for instance, really fideists, as ften claimed? In his latest study, *Beyond Fideism: Negotiable Religious Identities*, Olli-Pekka Vainio attempts to answer these questions. *Beyond Fideism* (henceforth BF), however, is not simply about fideism. For Vainio, the question of fideism is a question about theological method and the relationship of reason and faith therein. This leads him to analyse different ways in which contemporary (and sometimes self-consciously postmodern) theologians understand theology. Finally, BF develops a novel way to understand religious rationality and religious identity. Current discussions and debates have their roots in the postliberal or post-foundationalist turn in theological method in 1980s. BF can best be seen as a part of this ongoing debate about faith and reason in theology.

BF consists of four, somewhat independent, parts. The first part is a historical look into Christian thinkers usually taken to be prototypes of fideism. Vainio examines such diverse theologians and philosophers as St. Paul, Tertullian, Blaise Pascal and Alvin Plantinga. What Vainio aims to do here is to show that how the thinkers view faith and reason is much more complicated than ordinarily assumed. In Vainio's view, if fideism means that faith goes beyond what reason can prove, then most Christian theologians and philosophers from Aquinas to Plantinga are fideists. If, on the other hand, fideism means that one must believe religious propositions against the deliverances of reason or without any evidence, then no one is really a fideist. Even with Kierkegaard and Tertullian, religious faith is an attitude grounded in some kind of reasons or evidence.

First of all, Vainio points out how philosophically loaded and historically contingent the notions of "knowledge", "reason" and "faith" are. These concepts change from one historical period to another and we must be sensitive to this. In the Biblical parlance, faith is an attitude akin to faithfulness to a message or a person, not an attitude that is adopted without good evidence. Similarly, although both Tertullian and Pascal were sceptical of the ability of reason to obtain religious truths, they did not think that reason and faith were in opposition. According to Vainio, Tertullian was well versed in logic and philosophy of his day and constantly used publicly accessible arguments and natural theology against his Christian and non-Christian opponents. Tertullian was critical of certain secular philosophies of his day, but not of reason *per se*. This point of view was also shared by Pascal, who was sceptical of reason's ability to obtain truths about God. The point that Pascal wanted to make with his Wager arguments, Vainio argues, was not that one should believe in God because of the practical benefits of believing, but that no inquiry should be a matter of reason only. Both Christians and non-Christians supplement reason with passion and experience. This is something that contemporary "fideists" such as Plantinga and his *Reformed Epistemology* also emphasise: the idea that all justified beliefs must be grounded in incorrigible basic beliefs makes most beliefs, not just religious beliefs, irrational. We must be more lenient in what we allow into the foundation of our belief-structure. Consciously accessible reasons and evidence come in when we assess the defeaters and counter-evidence for our basic beliefs.

BF basically argues that fideism comes in degrees. *Conformist fideism* is a sceptical position according to which, since there are no reasonable criteria for assessing evidence or reasons, people should just believe what others believe. This, again, is a position not seen in Christian philosophical and theological traditions. Thinkers such as Plantinga, Pascal and Tertullian represent a view that Vainio calls *communicative fideism*. Communicative fideists think that (1) religious beliefs and religious language can and should be understandable "from the outside", (2) that the Christian world-view can reasonably engage with other world-views and (3) that truth can be understood in terms of correspondence. According to communicative fideism the act of faith needs to rationally warranted, although the object of faith itself is beyond the reach of reason. In this sense, reason can be used to clarify the object of faith and support the act of faith.

In the second part, Vainio examines the postliberal turn in theological method and the epistemological developments that led to it. This section is quite brief and is meant to provide a general introduction to the philosophical critique of *classical foundationalism* in epistemology and to the development of postliberal theological method from its inception in the early 1980s until today. Vainio traces the postliberal turn in theology to the downfall of classical foundationalism, according to which all beliefs (in order to be justified) need to be grounded in basic beliefs that are somehow incorrigible or infallible. Both *postfoundationalism* and *antifoundationalism* reject this basic claim and argue that we do not have incorrigible or infallible basic beliefs. Instead, we should take our basic beliefs as fallible and situated in a specific context. From the rejection of classical foundationalism, it follows that there is no universal foundation for knowledge, but instead knowing (theological knowing too) takes place in a specific cultural and historical context. In philosophy, this development led (in conjunction with other factors) to the emergence of *communitarianism* and *pragmatism*. Many theologians allied themselves with these developments and opened a new space for theological and religious rationality that was not subjected to some sort of universal or infallible "reason". George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984) became a catalyst for these developments as Lindbeck argued that theological doctrines can be understood as second-order discourse, that is, rules of first-order religious language in a religious community. Many other theologians, such as Stanley Hauerwas and Hans Frei, were also inspired by these developments.

The third part provides an overview of contemporary, post *Lindbeckian*, theological methods from the point of view of how reason and faith are understood in them. Vainio aims to develop a more analytically sophisticated description of contemporary theological methods than the standard descriptions of Hans Frei (*Types of Christian Theology*, 1992) and Robert Greer (*Mapping Postmodernism: A Survey of Christian Options*, 2003). Vainio distinguishes four different poles of gravity towards which theological methods tend to gravitate: Traditionalism, Descriptionism, Revisionism and Correlationism. What all these models of theological method share is a commitment to the idea that there are no neutral and universal criteria for rationality. In such a postmodern context, different theological methods provide different solutions regarding the goals, function and philosophical assumptions undergirding theology.

In *Traditionalism*, the goal is to preserve the identity of church and Christian tradition. Traditionalists, such as Robert Jenson, David Bentley Hart and Bruce Marshall, situate themselves in the tradition of Karl Barth and support a kind of moderate foundationalism: the Christian tradition needs no outside justification. Although natural theology is somewhat frowned upon, philosophy is used ad hoc to clarify theology and explain the content of the Christian message to outsiders. Diametrically opposite to Traditionalism, there is the more pragmatically oriented *Revisionism*, which privileges political, moral and other types of goals over the preservation of tradition. Although the Traditionalist rejects the idea that there is universal reason, she still understands truth by way of correspondence and holds onto some kind of metaphysical (or internal) realism. Revisionist theologies, among which Vainio includes feminist theologies (e.g., Mary Daly and Grace Jantzen), deconstructionist theologies (e.g., Gordon Kauffman, Don Cupitt) and many others, usually abandon truth as correspondence and metaphysical realism. Reality is something for us to deconstruct and reconstruct according to our goals.

Revisionism is close to another pole of gravity that Vainio calls *Descriptivism*. The Descriptivist seeks to distance herself from theological debates and describe religious and theological use of language from a kind of disinterested or neutral position. The philosopher D. Z. Phillips is the paradigmatic case here. Inspired by Wittgenstein, Phillips sees the meaning of all language grounded in the form of life in which its users live. The realism/anti-realism debate that goes on in philosophical theology is fundamentally flawed because we cannot really compare languages across different forms of life.

This leaves one more pole of gravity, *Correlationism*. Theologians, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, Alister McGrath and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, prioritise the Christian tradition, but aim to build bridges between traditions and different forms of rationality. Van Huyssteen, for instance, talks about postfoundationalist or *transversal* rationality that identifies a common core in the ways in which we acquire knowledge in different domains. Correlationists tend to be more optimistic towards natural theology than Traditionalists or Revisionists, and usually hold onto ontological realism and truth as correspondence. Since most writers in this camp have sympathies towards a specifically *critical realist* understanding of theology (ontological realism and fallibilism), they have found it easy to engage with the sciences from a theological point

of view. Especially McGrath and van Huyssteen have done pioneering work in this area. The goal here is not to justify the Christian message from the outside, but instead engage in a conversation that shows to the non-Christian how the Christian message "resonates" (a term coined by McGrath) with non-Christian worldviews and rationalities.

Finally, the fourth section of BF is where Vainio does most of his constructive heavy lifting. Here he presents a model of religious rationality and identity. According to Vainio, an acceptable theory of religious rationality should allow for at least the following possibilities: religious language and worldview can be intellectually understandable "from the outside", religious traditions can be open to conversation and can engage in a non-violent dialogue with other traditions and allow the growth of wisdom and new insights that can shape the tradition from the inside.

Vainio argues that religious rationality should be connected with what he calls *negotiable identities*. By negotiability, Vainio means an open-ended process of theological reflection and deliberation that is based on the core identity and beliefs of the community. The core identity of the Christian community, he claims, is based on the Christ-event, that is, the event in which God became a man in history. Since this is a historical event, the identity of a contemporary Christian is always a mediated identity that is based on the canonical witness of Biblical authors and the Christian tradition which has been intertwined with philosophies and worldviews of different times. Christian beliefs, therefore, have their grounding in the experiences and historical contingencies of the Christian tradition. This is the reason why they cannot be given a simple synchronic justification in terms of, e.g., a complete system of natural theology. Although Vainio's model is fallibilistic (included in the idea of negotiability), there is room for strong identities. Religious commitment is not disinterested in the same way as most scientific commitments, for instance, are. Most of the time, taking a disinterested view or remaining agnostic is not a live option. Being a fallibilist does not mean that one should only hold beliefs tentatively, but instead it means that you are open to the possibility of defeating evidence. Finally, negotiable identity necessarily involves personal growth in the virtues of humility and courage.

BF succeeds in covering an enormous amount of debate and discussions in theology in a relatively short space (only 184 pages). It still has its problems, however. One problem is that BF is somewhat fragmented. The first part does not fit in well with the rest. In the first

part, the focus is on how faith and reason have been understood and what subtypes of fideism there are. In the other parts, Vainio seldom mentions fideism and mostly talks about theological method in a broader sense, not just in terms of the relationship between faith and reason. At least the first and second chapter of the book could have simply been published as separate, although relatively long, journal articles. The second problem of BF is its generality. Especially in his discussions of different theological methods, Vainio seldom engages in a close scrutiny of the views of particular theologians and philosophers. Perhaps this is not necessary for categorisation, but it leaves the reader, who is not familiar with these theologians and philosophers, in a position in which it is difficult to assess whether Vainio's categorisations are accurate. However, a close reading of all the writers Vainio discusses would have produced a much bigger and more cumbersome book. Vainio also omits certain important traditions from his analysis completely. I understand that his aim is to discuss postmodern and postliberal developments in the context of Protestant theology, but contemporary *Thomism* and its many variants might have been discussed more extensively as they present a somewhat different kind of solution to the problems of postmodern theology. Further, Vainio does indeed mention hard (and soft) rationalism and their adherents in philosophy of religion and philosophical theology (e.g., Richard Swinburne), but BF does not really deal with how they criticise contemporary theology and seek to remedy its problems in any detail. A look into these arguments would have made the book's treatment of the philosophical theology of the last decade more balanced.

Despite the problems that have to do with generality and fragmentation, Vainio succeeds in providing the reader with a road map that introduces the reader to a great number of recent discussions and debates concerning theological method in a concise way. Given the philosophical lucidity of Vainio's analysis, his book will be very useful to philosophers who seek to understand the contemporary theological scene.

JEAN-BAPTISTE GUILLON
Université de Nantes

Denis Moreau, *Les voies du salut : un essai philosophique* [The Ways of Salvation : A Philosophical Essay]. Bayard, 2010.

Les voies du salut (The Ways of Salvation) is Moreau's second book-long contribution to philosophy of religion, following *Foi en Dieu et raison. Théodicées* (Faith in God and Reason. Theodicies). While *Foi en Dieu* dealt with restricted elements of religious belief and was intended for a popular audience, *Les Voies du Salut* turns to a more ambitious agenda, arguing at a professional level the philosophical justifiability of the core Christian doctrine: Jesus' victory over Death. Happily, those higher standards changed none of Moreau's writing characteristics: a good-natured tone which makes the reading always pleasant, a constant commitment to argumentative clarity and, more substantially, an intention to prove the possibility of a rational treatment of religious belief. In the French context, those characteristics are exceptional enough to make this publication a most welcome event, one likely to foster dispassionate discussions between philosophers of various backgrounds.

The book as a whole takes the form of a *pragmatic argument* addressed to non-believers for the conclusion that the Christian faith is justified. Here is the reasoning in rough outline.

In part I ("On Belief"), Moreau, drawing mainly on William James, defends the legitimacy of *pragmatic reasons* to believe about matters that lay beyond truth-directed evidence and when what we choose to believe has huge consequences. Part II ("On Death") argues that the issue of what happens after death is precisely of this sort, and that it is therefore legitimate to enquire into the expected benefits and losses associated with the various options. Moreau, discussing Heidegger, argues that the default or natural belief on that matter is that death is the end of life, "the possibility of the absolute impossibility", and that this is a bad thing for us. Moreau doesn't really try to answer philosophical arguments to the effect that death *isn't* a bad thing, for what matters for his purposes is the actual *causal effects* of the belief; and Moreau brings forth substantial evidence that, for all philosophical arguments can do, it is an ineliminable anthropological constant that death as the end of life produces a reaction of *fear*. Part III ("On Faults") further enquires into the causal consequences of our natural belief about death. The core idea,

borrowed from Lucretius, is that the fear of death is somehow responsible for all the evil actions we perform. Moreau tries to substantiate this intuition by showing how various faults (greed, gluttony, lust, pride, etc.) could psychologically derive from the fear of death.

In these preliminary parts, Moreau does not pretend to have advanced many new ideas. What is new, though, is to bring them together and confront us with the following situation: the natural belief about death is one that should be accepted or rejected on pragmatic reasons according to its consequences, and on the face of it, its consequences are terrible. Indeed, this belief is arguably the real cause of all humanity's problems. That's why part IV ("On Liberation") sets out on a quest for a better belief about death – one that entails that there will be a life after death, that this life will really be *my individual* life, and will also be (most probably) happy. Moreau finally argues that the Christian creed – that Jesus has vanquished Death by rising from the dead – satisfies all those criteria and is therefore very likely to set us free from the fear of death, the source of all evils. Thus, we have good pragmatic reasons to accept that Jesus is risen.

In a concluding part, Moreau confronts his general theory with those of other philosophers (Epicurus, Heidegger, Nietzsche). The confrontation with Pascal's wager is probably the most relevant to understand an original feature of Moreau's pragmatic approach. Pascal wagers *this life* (worldly pleasures) for benefits expected in the *after life* (heaven). But the benefits that motivate Moreau's "wager" (the end of one's evil actions) are all in this life itself – "in Immanence" – quite independent of whether or not the kingdom eventually "will be added unto you".

Before I come to an evaluation of the main argument, I should warn the reader about two ways in which this reconstruction may misrepresent Moreau's work.

First, Moreau's book is similar to Descartes' *Meditations* in that it proposes for the reader a *progressive* path of considerations to be assumed *in the first person singular*. Reading the argument in an impersonal attitude ('death is feared' instead of '*I* fear death'), or reaching conclusions before following every step of the meditation, is contrary to Moreau's demands. This is a request a review could hardly comply with, I'm afraid.

Second, though the main argument is apologetic in nature and mainly addressed to non-believers, the book is also of crucial interest to Christian philosophers of religion, for it hinges on an original analysis

of the notion of Salvation. Indeed, I think Moreau's project is best understood as the elaboration of a Core Intuition:

> (CI) The Christian Faith somehow suppresses the fear of death, thereby suppressing some important incentive to sin.

into a Theological Hypothesis:

> (TH) The causal process described in (CI) might just *be* what Christian Theology calls Salvation.

and finally into a hypothesis about the Epistemology of Faith:

> (EF) The desirable causal effects described in (CI) might constitute the pragmatic *reason* that justifies us in accepting the Christian creed.

(EF) is of course what gives the basis for the apologetic argument presented above. But a Christian philosopher of religion may still find in Moreau's book a lot to agree with *even if* he isn't convinced by (EF) and by the corresponding apologetic project. That's why I shall comment on the Core Intuition and the Theological Hypothesis before I turn to an appraisal of the apologetic argument itself.

The Core Intuition is thought-provoking and it is definitely an important asset of Moreau's book to bring attention to an effect of faith that is often neglected despite its presence in traditional writings, e.g. in Aquinas's commentary on *Hebrews*, 2, 15:

> "If a man overcomes this fear [of death], he overcomes all fears; and when fear is overcome, all disordered love of the world is overcome. Thus Christ by His death broke this bondage, because He removed the fear of death." (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, transl. by Fabian R. Larcher, O.P., E-text accessed at URL = <http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SSHebrews.htm>, 4/10/2011; revised by myself).

Moreau thereby makes room for very interesting discussions about the details of this intuition: Does faith suppress the psychological passion of fear or only its sin-inducing power? Does the removal happen instantaneously when accepting faith or progressively? Is such a process accorded to some Christians as one among other ways to prevent sins, or is it an essential feature in every Christian's Salvation? Moreau's quite defensible view on all this is that, though the removal is a *long-term process*, one *never fully accomplished* in this life, the *fear itself* tends towards removal in *every* Christian's life as an *essential* way of Salvation. Moreau notes that this model could in principle be combined with a satisfaction

model, in order to generate an overall theory of Salvation, as Aquinas arguably does, but he also tentatively advances the hypothesis that this sin-removing process by itself might just *be* what we call 'Salvation'.

This new and challenging *Theological Hypothesis* is compared by Moreau to three other Theories of Salvation: Satisfaction, Liberation and Deification. The theory is best presented in reference to three questions that any theory of Salvation should answer: *from what*, *by what,* and *how* are we saved? I briefly discuss Moreau's answers.

From our proneness to sin. Obviously, God saves us from humanity's big predicament. But what *is* this predicament? Moreau accepts the Lucretian answer to this question: our big problem is that we spoil our lives by our sins, as a consequence of our fear of death. Remove our proneness to sin and all will be fine. Moreau is silent on another predicament of humanity: alienation from God. Solving this predicament is just what traditional theology calls reconciliation / atonement / expiation (all translations of the Hebrew '*kippur*'). I suppose what Moreau implicitly suggests is a *transparent theory of atonement*: nothing needs to be done for reconciliation proper; as soon as our proneness to perform *new* sins is cured, God in His mercy will automatically, as it were, also forgive us any *past* sins. Moreau's eschewing any properly atoning part in Christ's action seems to be apologetically motivated by the consideration that the very notions of expiation and sacrifice "have become somehow unintelligible for a large part of the contemporary audience" (p. 209). But this move also faces difficulties: since the fear-removal will never be fully accomplished, we will never be able to offer God the expiation of a sinless heart. Some other heart than ours seems needed for that. Furthermore, there is powerful scriptural evidence (e.g. the *Epistle to the Hebrews*) that some properly reconciliatory action, whether necessary or not, was *actually* performed by Christ.

By the belief that Jesus is risen. The focus on Resurrection is also apologetically motivated by the contemporary reluctance to give Jesus' *Passion* any intrinsic role. Furthermore, the focus on the power of *belief* gives a strong meaning to 'Salvation by Faith'. Maybe too strong though, if we notice that the sin-removing role is played here by the *belief-that* (or 'unformed faith'), while no crucial role is acknowledged for the *belief-in*, or personal relationship with Jesus. Those considerations might explain why the Eucharist, as a commemoration of the amount of love displayed by Christ in His *Passion*, and as a way to allow a loving *union* with Him, doesn't find its place in Moreau's picture of sin-removal.

Through psychological causation. Another apologetic motivation for Moreau's model is its relying on no other mechanism than natural causation. A drawback is that it is famously difficult to conceive of *backward* causation. This obviously raises a problem for people living before Christ. For sure, many theories leave it unclear how exactly those people could be saved by Christ, but Moreau's theory makes it clear that they couldn't.

For all those reasons, I do not think that the Core Intuition, though persuasive as a model of something *involved* in Salvation, can convincingly be extended into a self-sufficient Theory of what Salvation *is*. It is not completely clear whether this threatens Moreau's original understanding of his model, but it does undermine the aforementioned apologetic motivations to restrict ourselves to it.

Can the Core Intuition be used to devise an *Apologetic Argument*? That is: can we be justified in accepting that Jesus is risen *for the expected benefit* of getting rid of the fear of death, and of the sins this fear produces?

My main worry about a non truth-directed strategy against the fear of death was best expressed by C.S. Lewis:

> In religion, as in war and everything else, comfort is the one thing you cannot get by looking for it. If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end: if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth (*Mere Christianity*, San Francisco: Harper, 2001, p. 32).

In particular, if our reason to believe in a life after death consists in our intention to avoid *future sins*, then a man at the point of death apparently has very little reason to accept this belief. So it seems that this strategy gives the smallest comfort against death when we would need it most.

Furthermore, if I were really comparing the various belief options as alternative "anti-sin pills", I'd want to check *empirically* what efficiency they have had in suppressing sins, instead of relying on psychological speculations such as those given in part III. This should lead Moreau to the more traditional – and famously tricky – issue of the moral superiority of Christians. But Moreau himself, in the only sentence in which he considers what experience shows in that matter, expresses great scepticism (cf. p. 307).

To conclude: though I remain sceptical about its apologetic aspect and its capacity to constitute a self-standing Theory of Salvation, Moreau's book brings original and penetrating insights into one way God can cure our proneness to sin.

VERONIKA WEGENER
University of Augsburg

Heinrich Heine. *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany and Other Writings*. Ed. by Terry Pinkard, transl. by Howard Pollack-Milgate. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) is one of the most significant German poets of the 19th century. That some of his prose texts and poems are now presented within the series *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* is as astonishing as it is noteworthy: the series aims at extending the range and variety of texts in the history of philosophy that have been translated into English – and Heine, though best known for his lyrics and despite his essay *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, is a less well-known author within the philosophical discourse.

Heine is an author of a transition epoch: He is not only a witness of the altered conditions of literature at the "end of […] the 'Goethean Period of Art'", as he states in *The Romantic School* (p. 136). He also witnesses the multi-faceted socio-cultural transformations at the beginning of the secularisation, comments on the democratic movement in Europe after the French Revolution and – at last – is a witness of the fundamental crisis of classical theism in the making of European modernity. Heine's writings presented in this volume appear almost paradigmatic for the discourse of modernity. Within the context of Enlightenment, German Idealism and Late Romanticism they evince Heine's subjectively biased and yet astute interpretation of religion and philosophy in Western Europe, his stressing of the social and political impact of certain philosophical ideas. The edited texts also reveal Heine's lifelong struggle with God and his very distinct approach to the philosophical-theological question of the divine, which seems to shift from a pantheistic one in his early writings to a rather theistic one in his texts of the 1850s. This selection of prose and lyrics by Heine is thus of interest to scholars of both philosophy and theology who research German philosophy of religion around 1800.

Besides the complete essay *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1835) the volume contains several others of Heine's writings, namely an excerpt from a letter to Moses Moser (1823), poems from *The Songbook* (1827) and *New Poems* (1844), a passage from *Lucca, the City* (1831), parts of the *Introduction to "Kahldorf on the Nobility in Letters to Count M. von Moltke"* (1831), the first two out of three books

from *The Romantic School* (1835), a fragment of the uncompleted work *Letters about Germany* (1844) and abridged versions of the *Afterword* to *Romanzero* (1851) and the *Confessions* (1854).

The selection of texts starts with Heine's *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, a witty, ironical, vivid overview of church history and the manifold philosophical concepts of God (e.g. those of the Manicheans and the Gnostics, R. Descartes, B. de Spinoza, G.W. Leibniz, I. Kant, J.G. Fichte, F.W.J. Schelling, G.W.F. Hegel), which serve as antecedents or opponents for Heine's very own God-talk in the early 1830s. One of Heine's main purpose is to express "in a popularly understandable manner" the "social importance" (p. 9) of the big questions within the history of (German) theology and philosophy in order to enable the German public to emancipate both from religious as well as from political paternalism. Within that line, Heine's treatment of church history entails a harsh critique of the theistic concept of God as a transcendent creator: his interpretation of religion and philosophy leads to the "death announcement" of the Judaeo-Christian God, who was "executed" by Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (pp. 76-78, 86), and to the promulgation of pantheism as the "clandestine religion of Germany" (p. 59).

Step by step Heine guides the reader to his radical pantheistic rethinking of the classical God-world relationship: the pure transcendental, highly spiritualistic concept of God in the Judaeo-Christian tradition comes along with a strict demarcation between God and world and hence with a denial of the pleasure of the flesh (pp. 12-13 a.o.). In contrast to this, Heine sketches a talk of God that does not exclude the material desires of man. Opposing the spiritualistic primate of the spirit he demands "to rehabilitate matter, to reinstate it in its dignity, to recognize its moral worth and give it religious consecration, to reconcile it with spirit" (p. 56). Heine uses the resources of Spinoza, Schelling and Hegel to negotiate the God-world-difference, and rather stress the immanence of God, his manifesting in nature and his self-revealing in mankind (p. 57). It is this pantheistic thinking of the divine, that finally serves as the philosophical foundation for the revolutionary overcoming of the Germans' religious and socio-political immaturity, given that "the consciousness of one's own divinity will inspire one to express it" (p. 58).

Following *On the History of Religion and Philosophy*, the short excerpt from one of Heine's letters to Moses Moser and the two poems from *The Songbook* (*Return home, No. 35* and *North sea: second cycle, No. 9*) are

characterized by many intertextual associations. All three texts from the 1820s/early 1830s allude with subtle irony to Hegel's philosophy.

The passage quoted from *Lucca, the City* in *Travel Pictures*, Part IV broadens the frame of reference: The satirical conversation of the narrator with an old lizard – the "hieroglyph-skinned Naturphilosoph" (p. 127) – is dedicated to the concept of Hegel's and Schelling's philosophy of identity as well as to man's relation to nature. What becomes central in Heine's *History of Religion and Philosophy* a few years later – the topoi of the "divinity of human being" and the revolutionary fight for the "divine rights of the human" (p. 58) – is in a way anticipated as the old lizard's philosophical secret. This secret is: "Everything strives forward, and, in the end, a great advancement of nature will occur. Stones will become plants, plants will become animals, animals will become people, and people will become Gods." (p. 127)

The writings of the 1820s gathered in this volume reflect Heine's keen observations of the philosophical discussions in Germany and their socio-political importance starting more than a decade before he began with his work on his *History of Religion and Philosophy*. Within this setting, Heine's introduction to *Kahldorf on the Nobility in Letters to Count M. von Moltke* is an impressive example for his reception of the French Revolution of 1789 and the July Revolution of 1830, and sheds more light on his revolutionary political request for the German people. In the introduction Heine words his groundbreaking thought, which he deepens in *On the History of Religion and Philosophy*: German philosophy (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) has broken with past traditions and present institutions "in the realm of thought", "just as the French in the realm of society" – and because the "great circle" of German philosophy is "successfully completed", "it is natural that we [i.e. the Germans; V.W.] now go over to politics" (p. 131).

In the succeeding two books of *The Romantic School* (1835) Heine chattily presents a sophisticated overview of German romanticism and reveals its hidden restorative tendencies as they echo in the romantic aesthetics and religiosity. The concept of spiritualism/sensualism thereby serves in a similar way as it did in *History of Religion and Philosophy* as a model for the historical and systematic reconstruction of the main topics and leading figures in Germany's literary scene around 1800 (such as G.E. Lessing, J.W. Goethe, F. Schiller, the Schlegel brothers, L. Tieck, Novalis a.o.). For Heine, the romantic school is "nothing other than a reawakening of the poetic spirit of the Middle Ages" (p. 137),

that had emerged out of the ongoing conflict between spirit and matter. Beside all the achievements of the Schlegel brothers (aesthetic criticism, translation work) Heine claims that their school "lacks the solid ground of a philosophy, a philosophical system" (p. 147). Furthermore he accuses German romanticism in general of being faint, impotent in theory, feudal and Catholic: Fr. Schlegel – as well as many other romanticists – fled towards the end of his life "into the shaky ruins of the Catholic Church" (p. 166) and Schelling, who had a great personal influence on the romantic school and whose philosophy of nature animated poets to see that nature was "much more full of meaning" (p. 190), got caught "in the snares of Catholic propaganda" and "betrayed philosophy to the Catholic religion." (pp. 187-188)

Although the larger part of this work is dedicated to German literature in general and romanticism in particular, the God-question is more or less constantly present. As in his other works from this decade, Heine agitates for a sensualistic worldview and refers to Spinoza, to Schelling's philosophy of nature, to Hegel and the Saint-Simonians, while presenting his very own idea of a "Dieu-progrès" as he calls it in one of his fragmentary drafts to the *Romantic School* (DHA 8/I. 467): "His [i.e. God's; V.W.] life is this constant manifestation; God is in movement, in action, in time; his holy breath blows through the leaves of history, the latter is the true book of God." (p. 157) With that Heine's history of the romantic school is an iridescent mixture of art and science, literature and literary criticism, integrating political and religious matters into the academic history of literature. It is medium for both: criticism of religion and criticism of politics. This critique anticipates the central ideas of his *History of Religion and Philosophy*, deepens these ideas or points to his other writings.

The following two texts – the first poem from *New Poems. Poems of Time* and the very short passage quoted from the fragmentary work *Letters about Germany* – both document Heine's relation to Hegel and to his philosophy. Hegel is pictured in the *Letters* as the "maestro" of the now so popular atheistic "music"; Heine himself is pictured as Hegel's disciple, who "was standing behind the maestro when he composed it" and of whom Hegel "was quite fond of" (p. 197).

The fragmentary *Letters about Germany* can be viewed as a precursor to the *Confessions* – the quoted passage appears there – although Heine's appraisal of Hegel's philosophy and the young Hegelian atheism changes radically in the late 1840s.

Heine's late writings translated in this volume form a network of intertextual self-references, which revolve once again around the "great question of God" (p. 5). In the mid-1840s Heine's ideal of a "democracy of gods" (p. 58), which he had proclaimed earlier, becomes fragile. The events of 1848 – the simultaneous failure of the bourgeois revolutions in Europe and the rapid deterioration of Heine's poor health – raise in a paradigmatic way the question about the meaning of history and with that impose the challenge of the pantheistic theology of divine immanence. The experience of helplessness, pain, historical contingency and human finitude that is connected with both the political and the personal catastrophe, becomes a leitmotif in the works of Heine's final years. Amongst others, these writings entail a fundamental critique of the teleological thinking of Hegelian provenience and a questioning of the Hegelian theorem of the self-revelation of the divine in history and humanity.

The religious vocabulary Heine uses changes at the latest with the July Revolution of 1848. In the *Afterword* to *Romanzero* (1851), in the *Preface to the second edition* of *On the History of Religion and Philosophy* (1852) and in the *Confessions* (1854) – all of them texts which oscillate between fiction and factuality – he retracts in one way or the other the groundbreaking thought of the *History of Religion and Philosophy*. The Germans have not "outgrown deism" (p. 59), but deism "is most alive" and neither has "God's existence itself […] been ended by the critique of reason" nor was deism at all killed by the "spider web of Berlin dialectics" (pp. 5-6). The texts of the agony sample the idea of a personal and transcendental God, who reveals himself in the bible and to whom the dying poet – at least as a fictional figure – returns home. Heine's confession to theism, yet, is full of tension, constantly broken, withdrawn, alienated or abandoned by irony and scepticism, humour and satire ("On my way, I found the God of the pantheists, but could not make use of him. This poor dreamy being, interwoven and intermingled with the world, imprisoned in it, as it were, just gapes at you; it is without will and powerless. To have a will, one must be a person; and to manifest a will, one must have one's elbows free. If you seek a God who can help you – and that is the whole point – you have to accept his personality, his transcendence, and his holy attributes, his infinite goodness, his omniscience, infinite justice, etc." (p. 199)). However, the writings of the 1850s can be read as testimonies for Heine's struggle with the pantheistic and theistic concepts of God. In his Parisian "grave of mattresses" (p. 198) his texts paradigmatically

put into words the scepticism of the enlightened intellectual, who is torn between philosophical truths of reason and Judeo-Christian truths of faith – without giving a final answer.

Besides offering a fresh and elegant new translation of Heine's writings by Howard Pollack-Milgate, the volume contains a sound introduction by Terry Pinkard, who outlines Heine's relation to Hegel, E. Gans and F. Nietzsche. The volume also includes a chronology of Heine's life and work, a short list with further readings and a comprehensive index. The text is lightly annotated and the translation follows the historical-critical Düsseldorfer Heine-Ausgabe (DHA) and for some letter excerpts the Heinrich Heine Säkularausgabe (HSA). Especially as both sources are now available online at the Heinrich-Heine-Portal (URL = <http://www.heine-portal.de/>) it would have been convenient to quote from these editions in Pinkard's introduction as well, and to exactly refer with each translated text to the corresponding original in these editions, thus providing the reader with the necessary bibliographical information.

The merit of this publication is to present a colourful collection of Heine's texts to the English-speaking world, which do not stand for his poetic work, but focus on his rethinking of German philosophy. Yet the text selection, especially of the poems and of those texts, which are published only as text fragments, leave a mark of being somehow arbitrary: one misses for example a hint to the criticism of religion in *Lucca, the City*, and it is also not indicated that the *Confessions* end with an accusation of God following the biblical book of Job. Regrettably, those parts from the *Letters about Germany*, in which Heine deals with Feuerbach's critique of religion and which could have shed some light on Heine's relation to K. Marx's philosophical thinking and to the young Hegelian in general, are not included in this volume. It also would have been very interesting to publish some of the draft manuscripts to the *History of Religion and Philosophy* and the *Romantic School*, which reveal that Heine seems to be strongly influenced by Schelling and Spinoza.

By all means, this volume encourages discussing Heine's reception of German Idealism as well as the impact of his interpretation on the discourse of philosophy of religion in the second half of the 19th century. After all, several topics and basic ideas in his writings point to Feuerbach, Marx and Nietzsche.