BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BRUCE LANGTRY
University of Melbourne

Klaas Kraay (ed.), *God and the Multiverse: Scientific, Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2015. 247 pp.

This many-authored book consists of welcome attempts to explore ways in which the multiverse hypothesis bears on familiar questions in contemporary philosophy of religion, and generates new ones. The fine-tuning argument for the existence of God is not discussed. All the chapters are competent and interesting. Some of them are philosophically adventurous, while expressing appropriate modesty about the epistemic status of their conclusions.

The volume begins with a useful Introduction by the editor and two interesting chapters by philosophically literate physicists; the other authors are all philosophers. The first paper, Robert B. Mann's *Puzzled by Particularity* is a refreshing presentation of theoretical issues and options that are well-known from the literature on the fine-tuning argument, using the occasional unfamiliar and interesting example (such as the one concerning quantum mechanics, on page 30). In the second chapter, Don N. Page begins with quantum-mechanical considerations favouring the 'Everett multiverse.' He then argues that there is an even simpler explanation of how things are: the actual world is *the best possible world*, in virtue of its maximizing the net intrinsic value of conscious sentient experiences. This explanation sits within a larger hypothesis which includes the existence of a Creator who 'experiences enormous value' in his appreciation of the mathematical elegance of the universe, thereby offsetting the disvalue of the large amount of known suffering and unhappiness. Such a Creator, Page suggests, would be inclined to create the Everett multiverse.

The next three chapters develop or defend multiverse hypotheses involving God. Peter Forrest's Chapter 3 is *The Multiverse: Separate Worlds, Branching, or Hyperspace? And what Implications Are There for Theism?* This is a thought-provoking paper, abounding in arguments whose presentation is

often very condensed. Forrest sketches technical accounts of the structure of space-time, probability, and free agency and uses them as the basis for an innovative, speculative account of multiverse creation by God.

In Chapter 4, Jason L. Megill argues for 'a weak version of modal realism,' namely, the conclusion that there are multiple (i.e., at least two) possible worlds that contain entities that are concrete in the same way that the entities in the actual world are concrete. He infers that there is a multiverse, and briefly discusses the view (held by some other contributors to this book) that we live in the best of all possible multiverses. Readers strongly inclined to doubt one or more of Megill's premises may find the paper a stimulant to further thought about possible worlds.

Donald A. Turner's Chapter 5 is *Revisiting the Many-Universes Solution to the Problem of Evil*. Let a s*imple possible world* be a possible world in which there is just one universe. In 2003, Turner had argued that God ought to actualize whichever complex possible world contains universes corresponding to every simple possible world above some cut-off line -- e.g., having a favourable balance of good over evil. Turner now responds to objections offered elsewhere by Bradley Monton, Michael Almeida, and Klaas Kraay. Many of his replies succeed in disposing of the objections they address; the replies seem weakest on pp.121-122, when Turner is responding to Almeida's objection about God's lack of freedom, and on pp.123-124, when he is responding to Kraay's objection concerning the cut-off line.

The next three chapters raise objections either to the truth of multiverse hypotheses involving God, or else to arguments for their truth. In his detailed, well-argued Chapter 6, Michael Schrynemakers addresses Kraay's 2010 defense of the view that God would actualize the greatest possible world God could actualize given free creaturely choices and other undetermined events, and that this world would correspond to a multiverse instantiating all and only those candidate universes passing some objective threshold of value. Schrynemakers argues that Kraay's defence is largely unsuccessful. He then comments on the way multiverse hypotheses affect discussion of gratuitous evil: one must consider the multiverse-wide perspective in order to judge either that there could have been a better trade-off between global goods G and evils E, or else that instead of trade-off involving <G, E> it would have been better to have a trade-off between an alternative pair <G*, E*>.

In Chapter 7, *Best Worlds and Multiverses,* Michael Almeida assumes that, for some specific (but unspecified) positive number N, it is necessarily true that there is a possible world that includes every possible universe whose overall value is N or greater. He raises an interesting objection to the thesis (M2) that *it is necessary that God actualizes such a world*. It would, Almeida says, be the best possible world. He argues, however, that a contradiction can be derived from the conjunction of M2 with The*re is a best possible world*, and that it is M2 that we should reject. Some premises of his argument seem insecure; these include an implicit assumption about the relationship that holds in general between the moral status of agents' actions in a universe and the overall value of the universe.

Jeremy Gwiazda, in his chapter *On Multiverses and Infinite Numbers,* relies on Abraham Robinson's nonstandard model of the reals in which infinite numbers behave much more like finite numbers than does any case of Cantor's infinite. Gwiazda infers that if there are infinitely many universes, there is some infinite natural number of universes. This view bears on the role of simplicity in fine-tuning arguments for theism. Gwiazda argues that set-ups involving an infinite number of entities are not, other things being equal, simpler or less in need of explanation than those involving an infinite number of entities. (If there are M universes, and M is an infinite integer, then why are there M rather than M+1 not M+1 universes? If M is even, why is there an even number of them?) The one-universe view has greater prior probability than one postulating a larger specific number of universes, whether the number is finite or infinite. Provided that theism can be shown to be very simple, Gwiazda's view on infinite numbers favours theism over rival hypotheses involving a multiverse the multiverse, other things being equal.

The volume now shifts its focus to pantheist positions involving a multiverse. In Chapter 8, Yujin Nagasawa explores the thesis the God is identical with the totality of all universes. He concentrates on a specific version which postulates a multiverse consisting of all metaphysically possible universes: they are all actual, though causally and spatiotemporally isolated from one another. The resulting pantheist doctrine affirms that God is the being than which none greater can be thought -- where greatness is to be understood not in terms of degree of great-making properties such as power but in terms of the scope of what the entity includes as part of its own being. Since the

multiverse contains all possible forms of knowledge, power and benevolence, God is 'in at least one sense' omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent. Similarly, the doctrine mimics various other features of traditional theism, though it excludes God's being an agent with free will. Nagasawa points that the foregoing pantheist position implies that there is much more widespread evil, and evil of much greater intensity, than is entailed by traditional theism. So he considers whether pantheists could adopt a different version of multiverse pantheism, one which says that God is the multiverse comprising all and only those universes that are worthy of creation and sustenance. He responds that this alternative version has its own major problems.

John Leslie, in his boldly speculative paper *God and Many Universes*, begins with a lucid account of the scientific case for a great many universes, and discusses how many universes, and what kinds of universe, a theistic God would be likely to create. In the main part of the paper, Leslie expounds and discusses a doctrine advanced in his book *Infinite Minds* (OUP 2001), namely that reality a cosmos consists entirely of infinitely many infinite minds, whose thought patterns include (but are not confined to) the patterns of actual universes that never exist any actual universe anywhere else. Why would any such infinite array of infinite minds exist? Leslie answers that it may be a necessary truth that (N) *the ethical need for some unbeatably good situation is creatively powerful and sufficient to explain the situation's existence*. He does not in this chapter argue directly either for the truth of N or the existence of the infinite array of infinite minds.

God and the Multiverse ends with two chapters on the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, as it might be adapted with a multiverse in mind. In Chapter 11, Robin Collins begins by stating a proposition (V) *There are many other races of vulnerable embodied conscious agents (VECAs) that are causally isolated (pre-mortem) from humans and from each other*, and arguing that it is probable relative to V that there are many races of 'fallen' VECAs. Given this lemma, and also the premise that God the Son became incarnate in our world (i.e., on Earth), Collins then offers a probabilistic argument in favour of the hypothesis God the Son becomes incarnate in most races of fallen VECAs. The paper then surveys some major accounts of the metaphysics of Christ's incarnation with respect to whether they are compatible with multiple incarnations. Col-

lins argues that most of them are, though the kenotic view runs into serious difficulties.

In the final chapter, Timothy O'Connor and Philip Woodward start with a philosophical-cum-theological reason for supposing that there is a multiverse: God's resolving to create a multiverse would enable God to eliminate or reduce arbitrariness in his more specific creative choices. O'Connor and Woodward maintain that if God has created a multiverse then it would be almost certainly be one containing many different species of 'divine image-bearing' creatures. If he has done so, they argue, one would expect non-human incarnations. They sketch their own distinctive metaphysics of God's human incarnation, and explain how one individual divine person can be simultaneously located on different planets, in virtue of having more than one body. Nevertheless, they have Christian theological doubts about multiple incarnations.

J. AARON SIMMONS
Furman University

Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Revelation*. Trans. by Stephen E. Lewis. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016. xviii + 137 pp.

How would (specifically religious) revelation be possible? This question presents something of a limit test for contemporary phenomenology. If revelation is given, *as such*, then under what conditions could such givenness occur? Moreover, if such conditions could be specified, then would that challenge the very status of the revelation *as revelation*? Jean-Luc Marion takes up these difficult questions in his 2014 Gifford Lectures, published by Oxford University Press as *Givenness and Revelation*. After a helpful foreword by Ramona Fotiade and David Jasper, which does a nice job of situating the present work in relation to Marion's overall phenomenological methodology and his theological orientation, Marion begins the introduction by admitting that the book itself should rightly be approached with some surprise. Regarding the very title of the text, Marion admits:

> At first glance, nothing seems to join an apparently old and steadfastly theological notion together with a philosophical concept drawn from the most