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BOOK SYMPOSIUM

Brian Leftow's *God and Necessity*

ARTICLES

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PRÉCIS OF

GOD AND NECESSITY

by

BRIAN LEFTOW

University of Oxford

The Western monotheisms teach that everything but God traces back in some way to God. Necessary truth and modal truth more generally raise a question for this: if there are entities whose existing or nature help make it true (say) that 2+2=4 or that water = H_2O, do even these trace back to God? In its medieval and rationalist heyday, theistic metaphysics mostly answered 'yes'. If everything traces back to God somehow, modal truth does. The dominant sort of theory – 'deity' theories – traced modal truth somehow to God's very nature, e.g. the content of the property <deity> or ideas He 'naturally' has.

I too ground logical, mathematical and some normative truths in God's nature. But when it comes to modal truth about the non-divine, 'secular' modal truth, I argue against deity theories and offer an alternative. The argument is partly from the alternative's relative advantages, and partly that deity theories yields incongruities. Consider, for instance, the claim that

(1) (it is untrue that water = H_2O) → God does not exist.

This is true simply because it has an impossible antecedent. It is true trivially, due to the semantics of conditionals, but only trivially. We are sure of this because the semantics suffices to explain its truth and its antecedent appears irrelevant to its consequent. (If water goes down, why should it take God with it?) But suppose that a deity theory is true. Then if God exists, His nature provides a truthmaker for <water = H_2O>.

So on a deity theory, if it is not true that water = H_2O, it must be that God does not exist. A truth-to-truthmaker connection provides a hidden link between (1)'s antecedent and consequent. (1) reflects a fact about the divine nature. So (1)'s truth is overdetermined. It is true for substantive as well as trivial reasons and (unintuitively) its antecedent *is* relevant to its consequent. All this is a strike against deity theories.

If God's nature in no way makes it the case that water = H_2O or that there is such a stuff-kind as <H_2O>, then a theist modal metaphysics must hold that God's creative thought is the ultimate root of secular modal truth. God has by nature only general creature-directed powers: e.g. to creatively think up creatures, make decisions concerning them, create and sustain them. God's nature does not explain that there is such a kind as <dog>. Nothing required Him to think up <dog>. Rather, coming up with it was sheer creativity. God simply dreamed up dogs, considered them, decided that they were good enough to permit to exist, and by so doing gave Himself a specific power to create dogs which had not been His by nature. All this takes place at once: no sooner does He think up dogs than He considers, decides, etc. God's thinking is so thoroughly the sole reason there is such a kind as <dog> that had God not thought up <dog>, it would not have been so much as impossible that dogs exist. There would have been no facts about dogs at all, not even that God had not thought them up, and so no modal facts about dogs. For if this were not so, <dog> would have some purchase in reality God's thought had not given it.

Nor does what God has *de facto* thought up exhaust His creativity. His creativity is not of a sort to be fully expressed by an array of possible creatures, creature-kinds, etc. So why isn't there such a further kind as <zog>? Not because He exhausted Himself before getting to it, and not because God's nature ruled it out. God's nature has no content about specific creaturely kinds at all. The only reason there isn't such a kind is that God *de facto* didn't think it up. In particular, God's nature did not explain His not thinking this up. It did not prevent His doing so. So – I say – it was in God to think up things He has not, then permit them to be possible. As He did not do so, it follows that it was in Him to make something possible which is not in fact possible, and so to bring about something which is in fact impossible. If we do not say something like this, His nature will wind up limiting or determining the contents of His thinking and permitting, and so we will have a deity theory after all.

As I see it, God thinks up creaturely attributes, and so if they have definitional essences, He thinks up their definitions. That is why they have the content they do: God accounts for definitional essential truths. God stipulates transworld identities, somewhat as authors stipulate trans-story identity for their characters, and that is the root of creatures' individual essences. God's powers to will to make His contribution to (what we speak of as) a worlds' actuality take over the role of possible worlds in modal semantics. On my account, the logic of absolute modality is S5, and I show that one can give it a Kripke-style semantics. Divine necessity falls out of all this, though not in the most obvious way.

If all this works out, it completes my case against deity theories: we can avoid the incongruities they generate at acceptable cost. Theistic Platonism is now popular in some quarters. If my theory works out, it undercuts theistic Platonism as deity theories did historically: God can take over the roles for which theist Platonists posit abstract entities. If theism alone can do these jobs, the Platonism in theistic Platonism is otiose. The like turns out true for theistic possibilism. So if my theory works, it becomes the best theistic competitor against other realist approaches to modality.

I think my view wins against realist theories that base the modal on creaturely powers rather than those of omnipotence. For it takes omnipotence to get the extension of the possible right. Creaturely powers aren't capable of everything we think should come out possible. Omnipotence is guaranteed to be. I argue for my view against Platonic theories of worlds, non-world Platonist modal ontologies and both Meinong's and Lewis' possibilism on grounds of economy: God does on the cheap what these other views do more expensively. All this provides one component of an argument for God's existence, for an entity can earn its place in the philosopher's toolbox by what we can do with it.

LEFTOW ON GOD AND NECESSITY

GRAHAM OPPY

Monash University

Time and cause both involve partial orders: there is the temporal partial order and there is the causal partial order. It is controversial how far these partial orders coincide. Questions arise about 'backwards causation', 'simultaneous causation', 'time without cause', and 'cause without time'. Leftow says: 'Anything that earlier has a property and later lacks it is *ipso facto* in time' (p. 177). I demur. We can discuss the causal order, and make perfectly good sense of 'earlier' and 'later' with respect to it, without worrying about exactly how causal order relates to temporal order. (Of course, the two orders do coincide – at least by and large – where we find ourselves; but it would be rash simply to assume that any local coincidence is replicated globally.) Moreover, we should avail ourselves of this option in the present context: for, while it is controversial whether, if God exists, God is temporal – or, at least, temporal subsequent to creation – it is not controversial whether, if God exists, God is causal.

When Leftow sets out the genesis of secular modal status as a sequence, I take it that he is setting out part of the causal order. In the causal order: (1) God exists wholly alone; and then (2) God thinks up states of affairs involving determinate non-deities; and then (3) God notes any good-making and bad-making features these states of affairs would have; and then (4) if these states of affairs would have good-making and bad-making features, God takes attitudes towards their obtaining; and then (5) God decides whether to prevent these states of affairs, either absolutely or conditionally; and then (6) God prevents states of affairs, and permits states of affairs, and also forms dispositions to prevent states of affairs and to permit states of affairs. *Thinking up*, and *noting*, and *taking attitudes towards*, and *deciding*, and *preventing* and *permitting* are all casual activities. Leftow says: 'in this context being earlier only means being presupposed by what follows' (p. 362). I demur. It's not just that the

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later states 'presuppose' the earlier ones; it is also the case that the later states come after the earlier ones in the causal order.

Despite his occasional propensity to talk about 'presuppositions' and the like, there is plenty of further evidence that Leftow really does mean to be talking about location in the causal order. Consider, for example, his endorsement of the claim that God is directly or indirectly the Source of all that is 'outside' God (GSA): for all x, if x is not God, or a part, or an aspect, or an attribute of God, then God makes the creating-*ex-nihilo* sort of causal contribution to x's existence as long as x exists (pp. 20 and 78). For any truth, the ontology of which is not supplied by God, or God's parts, or God's aspects, or God's attributes, *there is*, according to Leftow, ontology for which God *makes* the creating-*ex-nihilo* kind of *causal contribution*. Since, according to Leftow, neither God, nor God's parts, nor God's aspects, nor God's attributes provide the ontology of secular modal status, he is plainly committed to the claim that God makes the creating-*ex-nihilo* sort of causal contribution to the ontology of secular modal status, wherever there is secular modal status.

Consider, then, the global causal order – i.e. *our* global causal order, the one to which we all belong. As I see it, the most plausible metaphysical conjecture postulates a tight connection between causal powers, chance distributions, and possibilities. At any point in our global causal order, there is a chance distribution over possible outcomes generated by the causal powers in play at that point. Moreover, all possibilities are possible outcomes of the outworking of objective chance at some point in our global causal order – every possible global causal order shares an initial history with our global causal order, and diverges from it only as a result of the outworkings of objective chance. Further, there is a range of basic powers that are always in play: the same basic powers are in play at all points in our global causal order, and at all points in all possible alternatives to our global causal order. (For the purposes of this paper, I am simply agnostic on the question whether there are locally emergent – i.e., non-basic – causal powers; and I am also agnostic on the question whether there are – or could be – any non-trivial chance distributions.)

Even at this level of generality, Leftow's view about the global causal order is rather different from mine. Of course, where I think that our global causal order is an entirely *natural* causal order, Leftow thinks that our global causal order has an initial part that is entirely *supernatural* and some subsequent parts that are at least partly 'natural'. But Leftow

also rejects the tight connections that I see between causal powers, chance distributions, and possibilities. In particular, on his view, there is an initial part of the causal order in which there are no possibilities – but for those for which God, and God's parts, and God's aspects, and God's attributes provide ontology – but in which the exercise of divine causal power generates a whole range of possibilities. (Leftow does not discuss chance distributions, but I assume that Leftow would say the same for them: there is an initial part of the causal order in which there are no chance distributions – save for those for which God, and God's parts, and God's aspects, and God's attributes provide ontology – but in which the exercise of divine causal power generates a whole range of such chance distributions.)

I find it irresistible to suppose that whatever happens at 'downstream' points in the causal order is at least possible at 'upstream' points in the causal order: if something happens at some point in the causal order, then that thing was at least *possible* at all earlier points in the causal order. Leftow disagrees. Consider an early part of the causal order, at which God has not yet 'dreamed up' any secular modal statuses. According to Leftow, at that early point of the causal order, all of the secular things that subsequently appear in the causal order are not so much as possibilities: even though I sit here typing this paper, at sufficiently early points in the global causal order it was not so much as possible that I should (eventually) do so.

I.

Leftow has a special locution designed to facilitate talk about God's 'capacities' in that early part of the causal order in which God has not yet 'dreamed up' secular modal statuses. Leftow explains this special locution in a section of his book entitled 'What it is in God to do' (pp. 252-4). I think that it is worth paying close attention to what Leftow has to say in this section of his book.

The section begins with the observation that we sometimes make claims like this: 'I did not have it in me to disagree'. Leftow says that what one usually would mean by this claim is that one does not have the power or motivation to disagree: 'to have it in one to do something is usually to have the power and some motivation to do it' (p. 252). That doesn't sound quite right to me. I think that there is a range of cases in

which claims about what it is in one to do are claims about one's abilities; and I think that there is a range of cases in which claims about what it is in one to do are claims about one's motives; and I guess that that there is also a range of cases in which claims about what it is in one to do are claims about both ability and motivation. I might not have it in me to speak Finnish simply because I have never learned a word of the language; or I might not have it in me to speak Finnish because, while I have a good grasp of the language, I have come to hate the sound of it; or I might not have it in me to speak Finnish because, although I am keen on learning to speak Finnish, I lack the intellectual capacity to master a second language; and so forth.

Leftow claims that there are three kinds of contexts in which he will make 'non-standard' use of claims of the form 'God has it in him to do A'.

First, he will say that God has it in him to do A if God has the power to do A. Second, he will say that God has it in him to do A if, while God does not have the power to do A, the only reason that God does not have the power to do A is that God has denied himself the power to do A. Third, he will say that God has it in him to do A if, while God does not have the power to do A, and God has not yet decided whether it shall be possible for him to do A, 'God is such that if he will to be able to do A, then he will be able to do A, it will be possible that he does A, and it will be possible that he brings it about that he does A' (p. 253).

Leftow provides a 'definition of the locution in this technical sense' (p. 252) as follows: God has it in him to do A $=_{df}$. God is intrinsically such that (God wills to have the power to do A) $\supset$ (God has the power to do A). I think that, in this definition, the RHS is meant to be read like this: *God is intrinsically such that: ((God wills to have the power to do A)* $\supset$ *(God has the power to do A))*. Since the conditional here is a material conditional, the RHS is equivalent to the following: *God is intrinsically such that either God does not will to have the power to do A or God has the power to do A*.

Consider any action A. While it is not clear exactly what it means to say that God is *intrinsically such that* so-and-so, it seems that it should turn out to be the case that God is intrinsically omnipotent. But, given that God is intrinsically omnipotent, it seems that God is intrinsically such that, for any action A, either God does not will to have the power to do A, or God has the power to do A. Think about it this way. For any action A, either God has the power to do A, or God does not have the power to do A. If God does not have the power to do A, then, certainly,

as a consequence of his omnipotence, God does not will to have the power to do A. So, either God has the power to do A, or God does not will to have the power to do A. But, if it is true that, for any action A, God is intrinsically such that either God has the power to do A, or God does not will to have the power to do A, then, by Leftow's definition, it follows that, for any action A, God has it in him to do A.

In constructing this argument, there were no constraints on A. A could be an impossible action. A could be an immoral action. A could be an irrational action. So, it seems that it is a consequence of Leftow's definition that God has it in him to do impossible, and immoral, and irrational things.

Perhaps, though it seems unlikely, the RHS is actually meant to be read like this: *If God is intrinsically such that God wills to have the power to do A, then God has the power to do A*. But consider a case in which God does not have the power to do A. In that case, by the definition, it will be in God to do A just in case it is not the case that God is intrinsically such that God wills to have the power to do A. Assuming that it is not the case that God is intrinsically such that God wills to do impossible, and immoral, and irrational things, it again turns out that God has it in him to do impossible, and immoral, and irrational things.

I am pretty sure that Leftow does not mean for his 'technical sense' to allow that God has it in him to do impossible, and immoral, and irrational things. So I conclude that something has gone wrong with Leftow's definition. In understanding what he means by claims of the form 'God has it in him to do A', we shall need to fall back on his informal tripartite explanation of uses that he makes of expressions of this form. Since his first observation – that he will say that God has it in him to do A if God has the power to do A – simply conforms to the ordinary usage of expressions of the form 'x has it in him to do A', we need only consider his second and third observations.

In Leftow's second case, he observes that he will say that God has it in him to do A if, while God does not have the power to do A, the only reason that God does not have the power to do A is that God has denied himself the power to do A. Leftow illustrates the kind of case he has in mind with the following example:

> Suppose that God has the power to make items of just ten kinds. Then he does not have the power to make things of an eleventh kind. As I see it, the only reason he does not have it is that he has not thought

> up an eleventh kind and done certain other things consequent on that. By not doing so, he had denied himself the power to make things of an eleventh kind. This is the only reason he does not have it. So I also say that though there is no eleventh kind, God has it in him to make things of an eleventh kind. (p. 252)

I do not find this example helpful. Sure, in the case of human beings, there is a clear distinction between the possession of a power – ability, proficiency, capability, capacity – to do something, and the possession of a power to acquire the power to do something. It is one thing to have the capacity to converse in Finnish; it is quite another thing merely to have the capacity to learn to converse in Finnish. But, in the case of an omnipotent being, it is not clear that there is a similarly clear distinction. In particular, given that God is omnipotent, God has the power to make items of as many kinds as he so chooses. Even if he has thus far only made items of ten kinds, his omnipotence surely guarantees that he does have the power to think up more kinds of things and to make things of those kinds as well. (Setting these considerations aside, there is also a threat of paradox in the proposition that an omnipotent being has the *power* to deny itself *powers*. However, I shall not attempt to pursue this line of thought here.)

In Leftow's third case, he observes that he will say that God has it in him to do A if, while God does not have the power to do A, and God has not yet decided whether it shall be possible for him to do A, 'God is such that if he wills to be able to do A, then he will be able to do A, it will be possible that he does A, and it will be possible that he brings it about that he does A'. In particular, Leftow says that he has in mind a case in which God is considering whether to make it possible that p, but has not yet decided whether to make it possible that p.

Here, again, the case is not helpful. We are invited to consider a case in which God is deliberating about whether to make it possible that p. But how are we to conceive of the *deliberations* that God is supposed to be making when trying to decide whether to make it possible that p? If we imagine that we can represent the material of God's decision in a decision matrix, then it will look something like this:

	Outcome$_1$	...	**Outcome$_n$**
Make it possible that p	V_{11}	...	V_{1n}
Make it impossible that p	V_{21}	...	V_{2n}

But how are we to think about the outcome$_i$'s? What could these be? In the standard case of human decision theory, the outcome$_i$'s are required to be *possible* states of the world. But we are imagining a case in which there are no 'secular possibilities', i.e. no possibilities not fully determined by God's existence, parts, aspects and attributes. On its face, it is far from clear that we can make sense of the suggestion that God *decides* which secular things to make possible, since the very idea of rational decision presupposes that a choice is being made in the light of a range of *possible* ways that the world might be.

The conclusion that I wish to draw from this discussion is that the section titled 'What it is in God to do' does not succeed in explaining how instances of the locution 'It is in God to do A' are to be understood. When we come to later passages in the book, such as this one:

> Whereas Platonists, and so on, will say that God thought as he did because he had to, I say that he had to only because he did. I add that his nature did not constrain his thinking. Rather, it was *in* him to think otherwise. This does not imply that he could have. It implies only that he does not and could not have the power to do so only because he did not will to have it. (p. 496)

it is hard to escape the feeling that we have been led around a very small circle. Without an explanation of the locution that I have been discussing, there is no way of understanding what is being said here; but, in the end, the only explanation that we are offered of that locution seems to presuppose that we already understand what is being said in this kind of passage.

II.

Leftow defends a collection of controversial claims about necessity and dependence. In his view, real dependence – including causal dependence – is a 'modally flat' phenomenon: real dependence is 'being from', as instanced by effects 'being from' their causes. Moreover, in Leftow's view, there can be real dependence among necessary items: necessary states of affairs can 'come from', and so really depend upon, other (necessary) states of affairs. Furthermore, according to Leftow, there are cases of non-causal explanation that draw upon real dependences amongst necessary items, and there are cases of non-causal explanation that afford genuine explanations of necessary truths.

In my view, the most controversial of Leftow's claims about real dependence is his claim that real dependence – including causal dependence – is 'modally flat'. Leftow offers little by way of defence of this claim: he *says* that it might help explain the persuasiveness of transfer-based theories of physical causation, and that it has positive consequences for Frankfurt-style cases concerning alternative possibilities and freedom. Beyond this, he is most concerned to explain why causal claims often support counterfactuals even though counterfactual dependence is actually epiphenomenal.

Leftow also offers little by way of development of his theory of causation. He says that causes are producers, sources of a particular kind. He adds that if e causes e*, then e* depends upon e because e* comes from e, because e is its source. He adds that it is because causes are sources that causal claims often support counterfactuals:

> If the fire's burning causes the kettle's heating and the situation is simple – no failsafes, no redundant causation, and so on – then had the fire not burned, the kettle would not have heated up. This is because the heating came from the burning. If the heating came from the burning and the situation was simple, removing the burning would have removed the heating's source. Without the source, what came only from that source would not have come at all. (p. 508)

It is not clear that Leftow's theory of causation has any content at all. It is natural to think of sources and producers as kinds of causes. The OED gives us that *sources* are *originating causes*; and that *to produce* is *to bring into being or existence, or to give rise to, or to bring about, or to cause*. If that's right, then Leftow gets things backwards when he says that causes are kinds of sources. In any case, if the dictionary is to be trusted, telling us that causes are sources *at best* provides us with linguistic information about synonymy. Of course, it is true that, in simple situations, if you were to remove the cause, you would remove the effect; and it is also true that this observation provides the foundation for counterfactual analyses of causation. But these observations provide us with no reason at all for thinking that causal dependence is modally flat.

I take it that what really motivates Leftow's claim that dependence is 'modally flat' is the demands of his theory of the genesis of secular modality. If God is to be the source of secular modality, then there cannot be any secular counterfactual dependence 'supported by' that sourcing, because secular counterfactual dependence is inextricably bound up

with secular modality more generally. And, of course, his motivation for using instances of the locution 'God had it in him to do A' in connection with that 'sourcing' has a similar explanation: one alleged advantage of this locution is that it, too, is 'modally flat'.

Against Leftow, it seems to me that the global causal order is properly described with modally loaded vocabulary. There is a web of interconnected terms – cause, chance, power, possibility, law, counterfactual – that are proper tools to employ in the delineation of the (metaphysically) fundamental structure of reality. While I acknowledge that this is controversial, and while considerations of space have obliged me to omit arguments that I would give in defence of these claims, it seems to me to be plausible to suppose that there can be no real dependence between necessary existents, and that there is no genuine explanation of any necessities.

III.

In the *Preface*, Leftow says that he offers three things to hook atheists' attention: 'a chance to bash theists, (part of) a new sort of argument for God's existence, and what I hope is some decent metaphysics that is detachable from the theistic context' (p. vii). So far, I have considered some of the metaphysics, and cast doubt on the idea that it is detachable from the theistic context. I turn now to the new argument for the existence of God (in Chapter 23).

The broad idea behind the argument is to appeal to theoretical virtue in order to decide between competing worldviews. If one worldview is more theoretically virtuous than a second, then that is a compelling reason to prefer the first worldview to the second. In particular, if the first worldview scores better than the second on an appropriate weighting of simplicity (economy of ontological and ideological commitments), explanatory fit with data, explanatory scope, predictive power, theoretical unity, and so forth, then we should prefer the first worldview to the second. Leftow's hope is to develop an argument that shows that theism is superior to all rival worldviews.

I think that it is pretty clear that theism does not turn out to be theoretically superior to the kind of naturalistic worldview that I hinted at when sketching my conception of the global causal order. On the one hand, I claim, the naturalist has a more economical account of the global

causal order, at least equal explanatory scope, at least equal predictive power, at least equal theoretical unity, and at least parity on fit with every part of the data on a non-gerrymandered partitioning of the data. (I argue for this claim at length in Oppy (2013a), and elsewhere.) On the other hand, I claim, the naturalist has an equally economical account of what we might call 'the abstract order', and scores no worse than theist on all of the theoretical desiderata with respect to this domain. (I argue for this claim in my contribution to Gould (2014).) Moreover, I claim, it is obvious that, if the first two claims are correct, then, when we put the 'two orders' together, the naturalist has a more economical account that is at least equal in explanatory scope, predictive power, theoretical unity and fit with data on every part of the data on a non-gerrymandered partitioning of the data. So naturalism is more theoretically virtuous than theism.

Of course, my assessment of the comparative theoretical virtues of naturalism and theism is controversial. There are various ways in which it may have gone wrong. However, even allowing for the many ways in which it might have gone wrong, I think that it is pretty clear that the most that theists can hope for is a null verdict. On the one hand, it is certainly true that naturalism gives a more economical account of the global causal order than theism does; and it *may* also be true that there are some parts of the data – concerning, for example, good and evil, and divine hiddenness and divine disclosure – which fit better with naturalism than with theism. On the other hand, if there are also ways in which theism scores better than naturalism, then we are left with the algorithmically intractable problem of weighing the advantages and disadvantages against one another. As I see it, this is then a matter for judgement, and, most plausibly, for reasonably agreeing to disagree.

While Leftow announces initially that he is giving part of a much larger argument, he goes on to say that 'my current claim is merely that if we keep our attention on modal metaphysics, God looks like a better buy that Platonism' (p. 548). When we look at the discussion in the section 'Against Platonism' (pp. 546f.), we get (a) an argument that considerations about strangeness and surprisingness does not favour either theism over Platonist actualism, or Platonist actualism over theism; (b) an argument against taking considerations about evil to establish a very low prior epistemic probability for God; (c) an argument from the explanatory priority of the non-physical to the physical in modal matters; (d) an argument on grounds of ontological and ideological economy; and (e)

an argument concerning escape from Benacerraf's dilemma concerning modal knowledge. Of these, only (c)-(e) are arguments that support the claim that God is a better buy than Platonism.

In my view, the argument from the explanatory priority of the non-physical to the physical in modal matters is a non-starter. It isn't true that there could fail to be anything physical at all: on the contrary, in every world, the global causal order is a global physical order. Of course, I do not deny that people can have mistaken beliefs about what is possible: there are certainly people who believe that there could have failed to be anything physical. But those people are wrong; and we do not need to postulate more 'possibilities' in order to provide contents for the false beliefs that those people hold.

While this deserves more discussion that I can give it here, it seems to me to be pretty obvious that, insofar as we restrict our attention to properly modal matters, theism and Platonism tie on grounds of ontological and ideological economy. Leftow says that 'it would be hard to claim that an ontology of one solipsist with his thoughts is really less parsimonious than one of uncountable infinities of abstract substances' (p. 550); but it is *not* hard to say that an ontology of one solipsist with an uncountable infinity of distinct ideas is no more and no less parsimonious than an uncountable infinity of abstract substances. At the very least, if we're going to make assessments of relative parsimony, we should want to give a fair and equal characterisation of the views that are under assessment.

On independent grounds, I think that the Benacerraf dilemma for modal knowledge is pretty underwhelming. But, in any case, we have no better access to the postulated uncountable infinity of distinct ideas in the divine mind than we do to the postulated uncountable infinity of abstract substances. Leftow tells a just-so story about how we might come to have 'connections' to ideas in the divine mind via God's hardwiring us to form certain kinds of beliefs 'given suitable thought experiments' (p. 74), but we have overwhelming evidence – in the disagreements in judgements of professional philosophers who engage in thought experiments about abstract objects – that people do not actually have hardwiring of that kind. This same evidence also undercuts Leftow's suggestion that God's goodness guarantees that we have largely correct beliefs about modal ontology hardwired into us (p. 75): for those of us who care most about these matters diverge wildly in our modal intuitions.

While the argument against taking considerations about evil to establish a very low prior epistemic probability for God is strictly

irrelevant to the larger project (as I have described it), it is perhaps worth passing some comment on the things that Leftow says here. (The argument is irrelevant because 'prior probability' should just be cashed out in terms of economy of ontological and ideological commitments. Considerations about evil are data, and get drawn into the discussion when we examine goodness of explanatory fit with data.)
Leftow says:

> Purely deductive ('logical') versions of the problem of evil are widely conceded to be 'dead', killed off by Plantinga's free will defence. ... The debate has shifted to 'evidential' versions of the problem of evil, and my own view, which is not uncommon, is that these are pretty thoroughly on the ropes – what's called skeptical theism provides an effective counter. (p. 547)

Sure, if we are thinking about *arguments* from evil – whether 'logical' or 'evidential' – there is a range of considerations that might be thought to lead to effective responses to those arguments. But, if squaring theism with the data about evil involves the postulation of fallen angels, or an afterlife, or the existence of goods beyond our ken, or the like, then those are theoretical costs that further increase the advantage that naturalism has over theism in terms of economy of ontological and ideological commitments. Of course, it may be that the cost is offset elsewhere – in terms of better explanatory fit with data, or greater explanatory scope, or greater unity, or greater predictive power – but even if this is so, it does not gainsay the fact that there is theoretical cost involved. (See Oppy (2013b) for further elaboration of this point.)

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DIVINE CONTINGENCY

EINAR DUENGER BOHN

University of Oslo

Brian Leftow's *God and Necessity* is interesting, full of details, bold and ambitious. Roughly, the main question at hand is: assuming there is a God that is the source of all secular truths, i.e. all truths not involving God, as per some forms of theism, how should we understand secular *modal* truths of the form possibly p, impossibly p, and necessarily p? In particular, if p is metaphysically necessary, p just could not have been false, so how could God be the ultimate source of it? If p just could not have been false, it seems God had no choice but to comply with it, and as such he cannot really be its ultimate source.

Roughly, Leftow's solution goes as follows,[1] where the modality in 3-5, but not in 2, is the traditional metaphysical modality of secular truths:

(1) A perfect, personal God, having a limited deity, exists.[2]
(2) It's in God to Φ if, and only if, God allows himself to Φ.[3]
(3) Possibly Φ if, and only if, God allows himself to think Φ.[4]
(4) Impossibly Φ if, and only if, God disallows himself to think Φ (or simply, on the basis of 3: not possibly Φ).
(5) Necessarily Φ if, and only if, God disallows himself to think not Φ (or simply, on the basis of 3: not possibly not Φ).

[1] This is of course not the whole story! Due to space, I must here leave out too many details. But I hope to have captured what's needed for the more critical points to come.

[2] Limited in the sense of not determining all God does.

[3] Leftow's (2012: 252) official definition is this: God has it in him to do A $=_{df}$ God is intrinsically such that (if God wills to have the power to do A, then God has the power to do A). I have simplified this definition, but nothing here hinges on it.

[4] Perhaps more accurately: if, and only if, God allows himself and uses the power to think Φ; and correspondingly with impossibility and necessity in claims 4 and 5 below.

Leftow (2012: 494) accepts three and only three *brute* necessities: (i) that a perfect, personal God exists; (ii) that God has a limited deity;[5] and (iii) that God allows himself to think the thoughts he does and not some others. Leftow calls the latter *the Biggest Bang*, or simply *the Bang*.

I have argued against the perfect being theology behind (i) elsewhere (Bohn 2012); and I have nothing intelligent to say about (ii), but I will here, for the most part, simply assume (i)-(ii), and hence 1, and focus on (iii), and what it and issues surrounding it says about the success of Leftow's solution to the initial problem.

I.

First, note, as reflected in 2-5 and (i)-(iii), that Leftow's account is not an explanation of all metaphysical modality in terms of non-modality, but only a reduction of the metaphysical modality of secular truths to whatever kind of modality is involved in what it is in God to do and not to do; Leftow (2012: 352-353, 476) calls it *causal* modality. But it's not clear that's a good term for it, since it is not just our more or less ordinary notion of causal modality (cf. Leftow 2012: 352-353), but a causal modality in the sense of what it's in a perfect, personal God (with a limited deity) to do and not to do. At least it is not obvious to me, as it seems to be for Leftow (2012: e.g. 476), that our best analysis of more or less ordinary causation carries over to what it's in a perfect God to do and not to do. So, to keep that in mind, I'll henceforth call it *divine* modality. Leftow thus explains secular metaphysical modality in terms of divine modality:[6] what it's in God to do and not to do; and, in particular, what God allows/disallows himself to think. Divine modality, in turn, is brute.

Second, note that logical and mathematical truths are traditionally taken to be metaphysically necessary truths, but, according to Leftow (2012: 251), they are not secular truths, so they fall outside the domain of the present account, which is only concerned with secular truths.[7]

[5] (i) and (ii) thus jointly entail that claim 1 holds of brute necessity.

[6] By 'secular metaphysical modality' and 'secular metaphysical modal space' I henceforth simply mean the metaphysical modality of secular truths and the metaphysical modal space of secular truths, respectively.

[7] Leftow (2012:251) claims they are not secular truths because they involve unrestricted quantification, which brings God into their domain. I'm not sure I follow the

(Leftow (2012: 366-367) suggests locating the metaphysical necessity of logic and mathematics in the nature of God, but he leaves its defence for another time.)

Third, note that whatever God in fact allowed/disallowed himself to think, determines secular metaphysical modal space as per 3-5 above, but, for all that has been said, and in fact according to Leftow (2012: e.g. 252, 291, 368-373), it's nonetheless in God to have thought differently, and hence it's in God to have determined a different secular metaphysical modal space. In other words, God *divinely could* have thought up something that is in fact *metaphysically impossible*; but he just didn't, and therefore it is in fact metaphysically impossible. For example, Leftow (2012: 367) claims that Socrates not being a number is such a case. Leftow also seems to think it is in God to have made possible that something is red all over and blue all over at the same time. For he (2012: 253) claims: [it is in God to make it the case that p & it's in God to make it the case that q] iff [it's in God to make it the case that p & q]. Clearly, being perfectly powerful, it's in God to make it the case that a given billiard ball is red all over at time t and it's in God to make it the case that it is blue all over at t, so it immediately follows by Leftow's claim that it's in God to make it the case that the billiard ball is red all over and blue all over at t.

II.

I believe many questions arise at this point. For example, as said above, (i)-(iii) are brute necessities, but what kind of brute necessity is it?

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thoughts here because that seems to make *any* claim that implicitly or explicitly involve unrestricted quantification into a non-secular truth. So, for example, consider the claim: 'I have no favourite object.' This is implicitly committed to unrestricted quantification: it is committed to *nothing* being my favourite object, which means for *anything*, it is not my favourite object. But is that really a non-secular truth involving God? It seems to have nothing to do with God. The problem seems to generalize, even into essentialist claims, which *is* in the domain of Leftow's account. Consider the claim below: nothing can be red all over and blue all over at the same time. This too is implicitly committed to unrestricted quantification, and is therefore non-secular according to Leftow. Leftow might blame this on them being negative existentials without ontologies, but there is still a problem as to how to identify negative existentials, given the interdefinability of the quantifiers, as well as that all impossibilities are then ruled out of his account, given the interdefinability of the modal operators. Unfortunately, I cannot go further into this here.

According to Leftow's account, (i)-(iii) is true in all possible worlds,[8] and hence they are metaphysically necessary, but it's nonetheless in God to have determined a different secular modal space by simply having thought differently, so, in some sense or other, at least (iii) could be false: it's in him to have had other thoughts.[9] In other words, at least (iii) is metaphysically necessary, but divinely contingent; but then in what sense is it a brute necessity? To the extent it is a necessity, it is not brute (it's explained in terms of what God actually did), and to the extent it is brute, it is not a necessity (it's just what God actually did, but it's nonetheless in God to have done differently).[10]

However, the more interesting question at this point is this: is Leftow on the tracks towards solving the initial puzzle? That is, does Leftow give the beginnings of an explanation of secular modal truths, and in particular secular metaphysical necessities, in terms of God?

I think not. Traditionally understood, metaphysical modality is the widest modality there is. That is, metaphysical modal space includes *all* possibilities; none are left out. So, something is metaphysically necessary iff it *just couldn't* have failed to be the case; and it is metaphysically impossible iff it *just couldn't* have been the case; no matter what. Metaphysical modal space is thus absolute; and its absoluteness is why it is hard to explain its source. It's also why there is a puzzle to begin with for any theist who claims that God is the source of all truths. Metaphysical necessity and impossibility, even secular such truths, *just couldn't* have been different, so it seems God had no choice but to comply with it, and as such cannot be its source.

As we've seen, Leftow's attempt to solve the puzzle consists in explaining secular metaphysical modality in terms of divine modality, or what it's in God to do and not to do, as per 2-5 above; and he in turn takes such divine modality as primitive. But, as pointed out above, according to Leftow's account, it's divinely possible that secular metaphysical modal space could have been different, and in particular that secular metaphysical necessities could have been different, so, in what sense has

[8] Though be aware: Leftow (2012: e.g. 444) has a fictionalist attitude towards possible world-talk.

[9] Presumably, there is no sense in which God could have made (i) or (ii) false, but I think we should still ask: what kind of brute necessity is it? For example, why is it not in God to annihilate himself?

[10] Leftow might object that this worry equivocates on 'could'; an objection we'll get back to later.

Leftow explained the source of such truths, rather than simply denied their modal status of necessity in favour of brute divine contingency?

What we traditionally take to be secular metaphysical necessity is, as far as I can tell, for Leftow simply a brute divine contingency: it's in God to have thought differently, and hence, as per 2-5 above, it's in God to have determined a different secular metaphysical modal space. So, traditional secular metaphysical necessity is for Leftow explained in terms of brute divine contingency (whatever God happened to allow/disallow himself, though he could have allowed/disallowed himself differently); but that is not so much an explanation of traditional secular metaphysical *necessity* as it is a *denial* of its necessity. A traditionalist will simply see this as no secular metaphysical necessity at all, only brute divine contingency.

The argument is simple: a secular metaphysical necessity p *just could not* have been false; but, on Leftow's account, it's in God to have thought differently, and hence made p false; so God could, *in some sense or other*, have made p false; so, on Leftow's account, p is not a secular metaphysical necessity after all.

Leftow could deny premise 1, namely that a secular metaphysical necessity p just could not have been false, but then he is, as far as I can tell, again simply denying that it really is a metaphysical necessity after all.

Leftow might also object that 'metaphysical necessity' just means something like truth in all possible worlds;[11] and all possible worlds are determined by what God happened to allow/disallow himself to think; so, in that sense, what it's in God to do does in fact determine metaphysical necessity. This allows him (2012: 373) to coherently say: 'It is in God to have had other Bangs, but none are in fact possible.' Possibility is understood in terms of possible worlds, which are determined by the Bang; but what it's in God to do and not to do is not thus determined. This amounts to denying the last step of my argument, perhaps by accusing it of equivocation on 'could'.

But this amounts to denying our traditional way of cashing out secular metaphysical necessity in terms of possible worlds. Traditionally understood, that p is true in *all* possible worlds is just a way of saying that p *just cannot* be false, no matter what; there just are no possible ways for the world to be such that p is false. But on Leftow's account, there *is* a way for the world to be such that secular p is false, namely

[11] I say 'something like' because Leftow adopts a fictionalist attitude towards possible worlds-talk.

the way it would have been if God had just thought differently. So, it seems Leftow's secular metaphysical necessity is no real necessity, but rather a contingency under a different name. On Leftow's account, all possible worlds fail to capture all possibilities; but on a traditional way of cashing out metaphysical necessity that is exactly what all possible worlds are intended to capture.[12] So, on a traditional understanding of secular metaphysical necessity in terms of truth in all possible worlds, the last step of my argument is valid, not equivocating on 'could'.

Leftow might also object that God could not have made *any* secular metaphysical necessity p false, only some of them. For example, according to Leftow (2012: 334), it's not in God to have made it the case that a ≠ a, for some particular possible secular a.[13] But then, if *some* secular metaphysical necessities are brute, not due to God, Leftow's account is very *ad hoc*, not much of a principled explanation. At best, we only have an explanation of some, but only some of secular metaphysical modality in terms of divine modality, while some (other parts) of secular metaphysical modality is left brute (along with all other non-secular metaphysical necessities?). That is *ad hoc*, not much of a principled explanation; one is left wondering: why not just think all of it is brute then? Especially given what's argued above, namely that even the secular metaphysical necessities that are explained in terms of what God allowed/disallowed himself to think are really brute divine contingencies.

Leftow could complain, or rather insist, that I wrongly treat divine modality as a form of metaphysical modality. For example, he (2012: 253) says: 'One might wonder whether "it is in God to bring it about that" is a new sort of modal operator. If so, it is not a very exciting one.' Letting 'I' symbolize it, Leftow (2012: 253) goes on to say that 'If there are worlds, there are no I-worlds as a layer beyond possible worlds ... At no time in any possible world has anything *only* status I.'

This again assumes metaphysical necessity is equivalent with truth in all possible worlds, but restricts the set of all possible worlds to the Bang – a Bang it is in God to have done differently – and thus in turn restricts our notion of metaphysical necessity to a set of truths that it is in God to have made differently. But a traditionalist will, and should, simply

[12] After all, if all possible worlds don't capture all possibilities, they are inadequate for understanding metaphysical modality!

[13] Note that 'a = a' does not obviously involve unrestricted quantification ('a' is a constant), nor is it obviously a logical truth (it does not have the form of a tautology); so it's not obvious that it is a non-secular truth, according to Leftow's account.

deny this restriction of our notion of possible worlds, and thus in turn the restriction on our notion of metaphysical necessity. A possible *world* is just a way *total* reality could have been; if it is in God to have changed the truth-value of a secular proposition p, then p is not true in all the ways total reality could have been, which means p is not a metaphysical necessity. Calling a contingency a necessity doesn't make it so.

III.

I conclude that, though interesting and rewarding to study, as far as I can see, Leftow's account ultimately fails to explain secular metaphysical necessity in terms of what it is in God to do and not to do. Whether we use the phrase 'it is in God to have thought differently' or 'God could have thought differently' is of no matter: what he actually thought remains contingent, and so does whatever depends on what he actually thought. Calling a contingency a necessity doesn't make it so.[14]

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[14] Thanks to Jon Litland and Lina Tosterud.

NOT ENOUGH POWERS

PETER FORREST

University of New England

Abstract. In *God and Necessity* Brian Leftow provides an original explanation of kinds and essences in terms of freely chosen divine powers, which act as (substitutes for) possible worlds. Although I agree that kinds and essences are the result of God's free choice and am impressed by Leftow's scrupulous attention to detail, I shall argue that divine powers fail to do the work that they are meant to do. I shall argue this in three stages. First I provide an alternative explanation of absolute necessity using the good old analytic/synthetic distinction. Then I argue that if we need possible worlds or substitutes for possible worlds to consider counterfactual situations, there are not enough divine powers to provide these worlds (or substitutes). Finally I argue that kinds and essences are indeed dependent on God's choice but in a negative fashion, being the result of divine self-limitation.[1]

In *God and Necessity* Brian Leftow begins with a – to me – convincing case that there is a fundamental modality of absolute necessity, and then proposes an explanation of secular necessity. He does this by assuming that a secular necessity is an absolutely necessary secular truth.

By *absolute* necessity Leftow means the necessity relative to which other necessities are characterised. Suppose, for instance, that there are laws of nature that God, in performing miracles, can perhaps break. Let their conjunction be k. Then we may say a proposition p is physically necessary if not-((not-p) and k) is absolutely necessary. By a *secular* proposition, Leftow means one that is about non-divine concrete entities, those that theists would consider created. It would seem to follow that an explanation of the absolute necessity of secular truths is an explanation of secular necessity. I disagree. For Leftow's examples

[1] Many thanks to Einar Duenger Bøhn for his useful comments, especially on my assimilation of absolute non-contingency to analytic non-contingency.

of secular necessity, such as that water is H_2O, are absolutely necessary because water, hydrogen and oxygen are natural kinds. The explanatory work is done, I say, by the existence of these kinds, which is not a matter of absolute necessity. That is my first point of disagreement with Leftow, and the topic of Section One.

As part of his explanation of absolute necessity, Leftow offers us (substitutes for) absolutely possible worlds, namely the *world-powers* as he calls them. The idea is that God freely comes to have various powers and what God has the power to do is possible, hence, it is said, the powers explain the possibilities not vice versa. In Section One I provide an alternative explanation of absolute necessity, one that is neutral between theism and atheism.

In Section Two I shall argue that if we need possible worlds there are not enough divine powers to act as substitutes for them. That would be a problem even if there were no alternative account of absolute necessity, such as the one I provide in Section One. Finally, in Section Three, I shall sketch an alternative theory of how God brings about kinds and essences.

I. ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Near the beginning of the book Leftow provides a convincing case for there being a fundamental modality of necessity *no-matter-what* (pp. 30-38, my hyphens). I interpret this to mean that those truths that no human being can bracket off, that is suppose false, are absolutely necessary. Hence counterfactual conditionals with antecedents that are impossible-no-matter-what are trivial and usually taken to be vacuously true. To be sure we can reason about such situations, but only formally. For example, Euclid's famous proof that there is no largest prime number begins by inviting us to assume the contrary, multiply all the primes and add one. He then shows that this would be a new prime, which is absurd. In that, formal fashion, we can reason about the impossible-no-matter-what.[2] But we are unable to reason more generally about the counterfactual situation in which there is a largest prime. Or if we can it is only because we decide that all such counterfactuals are vacuously true. Likewise, we have no trouble assessing 'If a married bachelor

[2] In this paper I shall not argue over which, if any, mathematical truths are true no matter what. My opinion is that the Axiom of Choice is not such, but the existence of an infinity of natural numbers is.

gets married he is a husband', but we cannot assess the conditional, 'If a married bachelor gets married he does something wrong', except, perhaps, to say it is vacuously true.

We may contrast this with the case of physical necessity. We may coherently suppose that classical rather than quantum mechanics is true and indeed we do make that coherent supposition in many applications of physics.

This idea of what may coherently be supposed, or, equivalently I hope, has a negation that may be supposed false, explicates the traditional notion of an analytic truth, and I shall henceforth use the term 'analytic' for 'necessary no-matter-what'.[3] Now, the truth that there are thoughts and hence propositions is not itself analytic, nor need it be for the proposed characterization of the analytic to succeed. I mention this because Leftow criticizes the assimilation of absolute necessity to being analytic – an assimilation I do not quite make – partly on the grounds that it makes the necessity of necessary propositions depend on the existence of these propositions (pp. 483-60) which is not itself an analytic truth.

This point is made clearer by a consideration of possible worlds. Many of these contain no thoughts, but that does not stop us thinking about them. In that respect they do not differ from black holes. We can reason coherently about them even though they are uninhabitable.

So we should ask why absolute necessity is not just being analytic. The answer is because there are analytic truths of the form 'It is (absolutely) non-contingent that p', where p is not itself analytic. Ontological arguments of one sort or another might be taken to establish this for p = 'God exists'. In addition, there are Kripkean necessities of identity such as p = 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' or natural kind truths such as p = 'water is H_2O'. And there are essential truths such as 'Hesperus is in fact an inanimate material object, not a goddess'. These last two types of absolutely necessary truths are paradigms of secular necessities.

Therefore, I characterize absolute necessity as the narrowest necessity satisfying S5 modal logic that includes all analytic truths and that treats every truth as absolutely possible. Other less narrow necessities are then obtained by considering any set of absolutely possible worlds and any accessibility relation between them.

[3] I assume closure under a small number of rules whose truth-preserving character is itself analytic.

Secular propositions are those about concrete entities that do not presuppose theism. Leftow is offering us a theory of the absolute necessity of some secular propositions such as that water is H_2O. I say, however, that we do not need a theory of its necessity other than a theory of its truth since it is absolutely non-contingent. Moreover Leftow's explanation of necessity is based on the idea that we do not need to explain why there are no additional worlds so anything that is true at all the posited worlds, or their substitutes the divine powers, is necessarily true. But I fail to see how the mere lack of extra worlds explains anything unless we can explain that lack in turn, but according to Leftow it is just God's free decision and so not explained.

The Circularity Objection

To define absolute necessity in terms of analytic truths about absolute non-contingency would be circular, but that is not my intention. I have learnt from Leftow that we have this concept of absolute necessity and I then claim that the analytic/synthetic distinction enables us to explain truths about absolute necessity in terms of other truths that are not modalized. To any who would remind me of W. V. O. Quine's paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' my reply is brief, 'I am not an empiricist'.

A Dilemma for Leftow

I now propose a dilemma. Do we need possible worlds or even substitutes for possible worlds except, perhaps, to characterize necessity as truth at all possible worlds? If not then we may characterize absolute necessity as above and do without the possible worlds. But if we do need them for other purposes such as analyzing counterfactual conditionals then, we need all absolutely possible worlds not just some of them. For anything we may coherently suppose may be the antecedent of a non-vacuous counterfactual conditional.

II. AGAINST DIVINE POWERS AS WORLD-SUBSTITUTES

I now argue that there are not enough divine powers to act as world-substitutes. I do so by providing some objections to Leftow's theory. These objections have more weight in the context of the previous section, where an alternative account is provided of absolute necessity. They are still serious objections even if my reliance on the analytic/synthetic distinction is rejected. For they exhibit some unattractive features of

Leftow's account, ones which would be troublesome even if there were no better account available of absolute necessity.

Objection One A Version of the Modal Problem of Evil

Here is a version of the modal problem of evil, based on that of Theodore Guleserian.[4] It uses as a premise the possibility of a world that is at all times gratuitously evil, and so such that an all-powerful all-knowing God would have terminated before any given time, however far in the past.[5] Such a possibility is inconsistent with the existence of an essentially good, all-powerful, God. It follows from the premise that there is no essentially all powerful, all knowing and good God that exists necessarily.

Leftow rejects the premise, to which I shall return. I would reject the thesis that God is essentially good, holding instead that, like the blessed in Heaven, God is good because God has every reason to be good. But this might seem rather too radical for perfect being theologians, so I now provide an alternative way of resisting the modal argument from evil without denying the premise. I suggest that divine omnipotence is to be adjusted as follows. In place of omnipotence there is the perfection of being able to do anything you desire to do.[6] By itself that perfection does not give any powers at all, but combined with divine goodness it ensures very many powers, and acts as a substitute for omnipotence. Making this modification, it turns out that God has no power to create thoroughly evil worlds. This response, however, grants that there are possible worlds that God does not have the power to make actual.

My case for the possibility of such gratuitously evil worlds has two premises. The first premise is that there is a possible world w in which similar evils result from the free choice of creatures. The second premise is that whatever a creature can freely bring about, God could cause that creature to bring about in a way that is not free, and hence there is a world w* rather like w in which God does just that.[7]

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[4] See Theodore Guleserian, 'God and Possible Worlds: The Modal Problem of Evil', *Noûs,* 17 (1983), 221-238.

[5] Leftow points out (p. 120) that his theory is a way of rejecting such premises without being ad hoc. That does not affect the objection.

[6] Just as an omnipotent God lacks the power to cause a creature to act freely in a certain way, I assume the perfection that substitutes for omnipotence would not attribute to God such a power, even if God should desire to exercise it.

[7] Clearly, the phrase 'whatever a creature can freely bring about' must not be taken to refer to the creature as the agent or the creature's freedom.

To establish the first premise consider, for instance, a possible world w, in which there have always been inhabited planets on each of which there are humanoids with two by-God-intended first parents, whom we may as well call Adam and Eve. In this world, they always sin by freely eating the forbidden fruit, and the chemicals in the fruit make them sterile. I have it in for them, so I decree that it prevents them from even having sex. They die in some discomfort after leading futile sinful childless lives. Moreover there is no afterlife. I assume that God can create such a world with an infinity of Adams and Eves free to obey or disobey.

Rather than establish the second premise in full generality, it suffices to consider again the example of the possible worlds with an infinity of culpable Adams and Eves. God could create a world in which they do not act freely but are predestined to disobey, provided God decides to redeem the world by, among other things, ensuring an afterlife. So for any given time t, there is a possible world w*(t) exactly like the putative world w* up to t, and such that no good God would create. I now ask at what time does w* cease to be possible? The absence of any answer shows that w* is possible. Nor can this conclusion be resisted by supposing an omega moment after the end of ordinary time. For if that is coherent so is the corresponding modification of w in which various Adams and Eves go on making the wrong choices after the end of ordinary time.

I conclude that those who want to defend the essential perfection of a necessarily existing God should grant the suggested replacement for omnipotence and hence concede that w* is a world that is possible but God cannot bring about.

It might be objected that God is not so niggardly as to create such worlds as w*(t), and so Premise (1) is not secure. If this is just a matter of raising the standard for being creation-worthy then I will adjust the example. Suppose for instance we allow a world in which the Adams and Eves live futile lives by our standards but, themselves having low standards, enjoy themselves immensely eating more and more of the forbidden fruit. I invite readers to consider a scenario in which these low standards are the consequences of their eating the forbidden fruit, because the chemicals in it damage their brains. Because they are by nature fitted for higher things, w* would still not be good enough to create if they were predestined.

In further support of my conclusion that divine perfection requires not omnipotence but rather the conjunction of divine goodness with being able to do anything you desire, I note that Leftow's account

trivialises divine omnipotence, because the possibilities are limited to the powers God chooses to have. So Leftow already has reason to replace traditional omnipotence by my proposed substitute when listing the divine perfections.

Objection Two: The 'It was in God to' modality

If God freely chose the divine powers, then in some sense God had the capacity to acquire different powers from the actual ones. So there might have been different world-powers and hence different secular possibilities. But, I say, whatever is possibly possible is possible, so it is possible for God to have had different powers, contrary to the use of divine powers as substitutes for secular possibilities.

Leftow anticipates something like this objection, acknowledging Thomas Flint and Michael Rea (p. 253, n.7). His response is that 'it was in God to' would not be an interesting modality. I disagree: to say that it was in God to acquire other powers implies it is consistent with the divine nature to acquire these powers and hence that it is possibly possible to acquire these powers.

Leftow claims, however, that prior to God's acquisition of various powers many modal propositions had truth value gaps. Leftow considers the example of a natural kind, zogs, which God could have but did not create. So he would say that the propositions that necessarily all zogs are perky and possibly all zogs are perky both have truth-value gaps, being neither true nor false. On the contrary I submit that given any type of possibility the modality of *its not being false that possibly* is also a type of possibility that is at least as broad. But absolute possibility is the broadest type, corresponding to the narrowest type of necessity. So bivalence must hold for the absolute possibility: it is either true that possibly p or true that not possibly p. Likewise for any type of possibility, possibly possibly is a type of possibility as least as broad. Hence for absolute possibility both 'Possibly possibly p' and '"Possibly p" has a truth-gap' imply 'Possibly p'.

I conclude that it being in God to have zoggenic powers is enough to ensure that zogs are possible, because either it is not true that zogs are impossible or it is possible that zogs are possible and in either case zogs are possible, if we are concerned with absolute possibility. From Leftow's assertion that it was in God to have chosen different powers it now follows that not all secular absolute possibilities correspond to divine powers.

I anticipate the objection that Leftow is not committed to absolute possibility being maximally broad. To that I have three replies. The first is that maximal breadth is implied by his case for absolute modality as that in terms of which other modalities are defined by restriction. The second is that my account of absolute necessity in terms of analytic truths implies that it is maximally broad. The third is that whatever the case for possible worlds it should apply to absolute possibility as I have characterised it. Assuming we need possible worlds or substitutes it follows that there are possible worlds in this broadest sense even if this is not what Leftow has in mind. Hence even if there are enough world-powers to act as substitutes for all Leftow-absolutely-possible worlds there are not enough for all worlds, because we also need Leftow-absolutely-impossible worlds or substitutes for them.

Objection Three: Additional Natural Kinds and Individual Essences

This objection is similar to the previous one, and as with the previous one Leftow anticipates something like it, considering a William Rowe inspired objection that whatever kinds and individual essences God brought about, God could have produced more. That would be a reductio ad absurdum of divine perfection (pp. 290-298). But it also shows there are possibilities in excess of the divine powers, contrary to Leftow's theory. He argues, however, that the lack of zoggenic power is not a genuine limitation on God's power because zog-production would not be a power God has by nature but one that it was in God to acquire.

My response to Leftow's case against zoggenic powers is that (1) God is in time and (2) if it is in God initially to come to have various powers then presumably it is still in God to have additional powers. If we knew more about God we might say that this presumption is overcome, but in the absence of that knowledge there is a high probability that it is in God to go on acquiring additional powers. Leftow has, however, an implicit objection to (2). He says that it is part of the divine nature to be powerful and that requires only that God come to have at least one world-power. So he would say that we *do* know enough about God to know that quite a limited range of powers would have been enough to satisfy the requirement that God be powerful. But this suffers from the same difficulty as the account of X's being omnipotent as X's having all powers consistent with X's nature. The difficulty is that a being, MacEar, whose nature restricts him to scratching his left ear, would

count as omnipotent.[8] Likewise Leftow's implicit rejoinder entails that God would count as a powerful being even if the only divine power was to create a world containing nothing more than a single creature with a momentary pleasant experience. Although we cannot create such a world, we can, I join with Leftow in believing, do something much more momentous, choose not to reject God's offer of friendship. So the power to produce the single momentary pleasurable experience is not enough. Nor will it help to require an infinity of divine powers, or even too many to form a set. For the power to create universes with N such momentary experiences for all cardinal numbers N, although impressive in one respect, does not do justice to what is 'in God'. We have no reason, then, to overcome the presumption that it is always in God to acquire additional powers.

As for (1), Leftow argues that it is absurd to think of God waiting and then creating new kinds by coming to have new powers. For, he says, whatever reason God had to produce new kinds, God would already have had that reason initially. One response might be that God has much to do and so the divine events themselves form a continuum with God arranging the order in some aesthetic way (hyper-music!). A less extravagant hypothesis is that every moment of divine time has a next moment. In that case, I say God is in ordinal not metric time, and it is not a question of time lapsing but of God's doing something the very next moment.

Ordinal Time

My third objection to Leftow's theory depends, therefore, on my preference for saying that God is in ordinal not metric time, over both strict divine eternity and God experiencing time as we do. Ordinal time is based on the B series relation; x is before y. I distinguish it from metric time based on the 'D series' relation: w is before x by more than y is before z. The latter is a topic in physics, which supports its unification with the spatial metric in space-time. The former is a topic in metaphysics, although physicists may have something to contribute. One important difference between divine time and our immersion in metric time is that the latter results in the passage of time, which can be explicated as the relation between the metric and the ordinal. Assuming that for

[8] I use this example because it is traditional, even though offensive. Apologies to those with the surname 'McEar' and to the severely disabled.

every moment of ordinal time there is a next moment, a *successor*, then we may consider the quantity of metric time that lapses between one moment of ordinal time and the next. This is the rate of passage of time, and is measured in seconds per next. The plausible doctrine that God is not passively swept along by time, as we are, supports either divine ordinal time or divine eternity. Likewise if God is distinct from, because the creator of, the whole physical world including space-time then God is not in metric time, but might well be in ordinal time.

Leftow's theory of absolute necessity is motivated by his adherence to the thesis that everything non-divine, not just concrete entities, depends on God. So ordinal time depends on God. I invite readers to share my intuition that ordinal time is necessarily unending so that when we talk of the end of time we are considering ordinal time after the end of metric time. Combining this intuition with the dependence of ordinal time on God, I reach the conclusion that ordinal time is not a creation and hence depends on God in some other way. The only plausible suggestion is that ordinal time depends on God because it is the divine nature to be in ordinal time, with each divine moment having a successor. This completes the third objection.

Leftow might suggest, by way of rejoinder, that the unending nature of ordinal time is just another secular necessity. But this is not a truth that holds just for our universe, like a law of nature. For time is unending, we intuit, even if the universe comes to an end.

III. AN ALTERNATIVE THEORY OF KINDS AND ESSENCES

Leftow's examples of secular necessities involve individual essences such as 'Spot is a dog' and natural kinds, such as 'Water is H_2O'. In Section One, I argued that the absolute necessity of these claims follows from non-modal truths together with analytic truths about absolute non-contingency. So all that is required is a theory of how God ensures there are these essences, not other ones, and these natural kinds, not others. I shall suppose, then, that God is aware of the plenitude of all absolute possibilities characterized in some way that does not yet involve natural kinds or individual essences. Then God acts as a sculptor, chipping away at the possibility-block, knowing the chips only as might-have-beens. The more God sculpts, the more determinate becomes the structure of the still possible, with natural kinds resulting. For example, suppose we

have various possible quantities: rest mass, charge, and so on. Initially there is a continuous variation of all these quantities, but by prohibiting any values near but not exactly equal to those of an electron, God brings into existence the natural kind, *electrons*. Likewise if we consider the continuum of possible dogs and their lives, there is no precise boundary between those that in hindsight we can call Spot-counterparts and Tops-counterparts. But by prohibiting all but a fairly narrow range of lives, Spot and Tops are left as distinct possible dogs, that is, individual essences.

The same procedure holds for whole universes, which have no clear separation from each other in the original plenitudinous block of absolute possibilities. Our universe is in there as a number of possible ways things might turn out but not yet separated from other ways that are no longer possible. To use an image of Leibniz', it is like a statue before it has been carved. It is there in the block but not distinct from the rest of the marble.

Another candidate for secular necessity is that possessed by laws of nature, to which I assimilate some of the more recherché mathematical axioms such as the Axiom of Choice and the Continuum Hypothesis. I also assimilate to the laws some truths known a priori as 'no surface can be uniformly red and green', which Leftow cites as an example of absolute necessity (p. 34). Leftow notes that we can explain the laws in terms of essences (p. 251). Thus we may say that it is essential to being our kind of universe that a certain regularity (that corresponding to the law) holds.[9] Given the above account of individual essences, this is a matter of God's clarifying the counterparts by excluding very many possible worlds in which universes rather like ours occur but the regularities do not hold. Clearly this gives room for God either to exclude all exceptions or to permit some exceptions to ensure scope for miracles later on. I prefer the former, but even on the latter, God, by excluding various possible universes, engages in a kenotic self-limitation prior to creation, so we may say that the divine powers are indeed the result of divine choice, but in a negative fashion.

Although not previously showing any enthusiasm for the above theory of laws, I have come to appreciate it. For the alternative realist (i.e. anti-Humean) theories seem to imply that the same laws as ours hold in all actual universes. Some such as the Dretske-Tooley-Armstrong theory

[9] See John Bigelow, Brian Ellis and Caroline Lierse, 'The World as One of a Kind: Natural Necessity and Laws of Nature', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 43 (1992), 371-388.

that laws are relations between universals seem to imply that they hold in all possible universes too.[10] (Evan Fales accepts this conclusion.[11]) But even though the details of divine motivation in creation are hard even to speculate about, it seems plausible to me that God would not be so niggardly as to create either just one universe or just a multiverse comprising many universes with the same fundamental laws.

The idea of God-the-sculptor carving away at a block of absolute possibility does not require any ontologically basic possible worlds. For the possible worlds may be thought of as constructs out of possibilities in much the way that a Whiteheadian theory treats points as constructs out of regions.[12] Thus the block of possibility is initially endowed just with a point-free topological structure. In addition we do not have to follow Leibniz in thinking of God as actualizing a pre-existing possible world. Instead we may take an act of creation to involve an assignment of cardinal numbers to regions in the possibility-block, with 'possible worlds' being arbitrary assignments, subject to the coherence principle that if region X is part of region Y, X cannot be assigned a greater cardinal than Y.

My proposal meets the objections I raised to Leftow's theory. The Modal Argument from Evil can be dealt with using the thesis that God sculpts the plenitudinous possibility-block. The possibilities that would make up a world of gratuitous evil are there, but prior to divine action they are not yet incorporated into a world distinct from other worlds. Either God has the power to carve it but never does, in which case God is omnipotent but not essentially good, or God lacks that power while nonetheless having the power to bring about whatever is desired. But in neither case does the existence of the possibility of the gratuitously evil world refute my theory.

The second objection to Leftow's theory clearly fails to apply to my proposal. For the range of absolute possibilities is wholly unconstrained

[10] See Fred Dretske, 'Laws of Nature', *Philosophy of Science*, 44 (1977), 248–68; Michael Tooley, 'The Nature of Laws', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 7 (1977), 667–98; and David Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[11] Evan Fales, 'Are Causal Laws Contingent?', in John Bacon, Keith Campbell & Lloyd Reinhardt (eds.), *Ontology, Causality and Mind: Essays in Honour of D.M. Armstrong* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[12] For some details see Peter Roeper, 'Region-Based Topology', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 26 (1997), 251-309. See also my *The Necessary Structure of the All-pervading Aether: Discrete or Continuous? Simple or Symmetric?* (Frankfurt: Ontos, 2012), p. 160, where I summarize the ultrafilter construction of points, discussed in greater detail in 'Mereotopology without Mereology', *Journal of Philosophical Logic,* 39 (2010), 229-254.

in reality and appears constrained to us, only because of the way we think.[13] So there is no need for further possibilities other than those God contemplates.

As for the last objection I may need to allow that the plenitude of absolute possibilities is neutral between the number of copies of each possibility. As a consequence, when God sculpts the range of possibilities, there is still a copy of the original plenitude that God could work on. So God has the power to create essences and natural kinds again and again. This would be an important qualification to the idea of divine self-limitation.

Finally I turn to Leftow's rejection of *Deity* theories of absolute necessity, namely those that assert the absolute necessity reflects God's nature. He complains that this makes God's existence depend on the truth-makers for necessary truths about creatures (p. 209). I note, therefore, that my proposed alternative to Leftow's theory is not open to this criticism. For the absolute necessities are dependent on (1) the analytic truths, and (2) the natural kinds and individual essences that God brings into being. That requires a realm of absolute possibilities for God to know, prior to carving it into discrete possible worlds. This possibility-block depends on God's nature, to be sure, but it is prior to the existence of individual essences, and can be considered a realm of mathematical possibilities. Leftow concedes that God's nature might determine all logic and pure mathematics (p. 154). I myself would restrict this to analytic truths, and such part of logic and mathematics that is synthetic would be assimilated by me to the realm of natural kinds and essences. But it seems that a deity theory of absolute possibilities prior to the carving into kinds and essences is acceptable. To those who would object that this has a pantheistic flavour with the possibility-block being the divine body, I agree but see no objection.

[13] The Kantian account of the synthetic a priori extends the range of such constraints. For this paper it suffices that analytic truths arise from. such constraints. I do not need to discuss what other truths there might be that are similarly the results of constraints on thought.

OMNIPOTENCE, EVIL AND WHAT'S IN GOD: REPLIES TO OPPY, BOHN AND FORREST

BRIAN LEFTOW

University of Oxford

My thanks to the symposiasts for their attention to my work. I reply to their points mostly in the order they make them, often without rehearsing their arguments: I assume that you have read them.

OPPY

Oppy had kind words for my book in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and I thank him for them; here he just steams ahead with all guns blazing.

Section one

Oppy reads the definition's RHS correctly.[1] Oppy's argument against my definition rests on the premise that

> O. if God is omnipotent, for any action A, either God does not will to have the power to do A, or God has the power to do A.

To get (O), Oppy reasons, 'If God does not have the power to do A, then ... as a consequence of his omnipotence, God does not will to have the power to do A.' Oppy thinks, that is, that if God is omnipotent, then if He wills to have a power, He gets it; if this is so, then if He does not have it, He must not have willed to have it. But omnipotence doesn't preclude irrational or ignorant willing. An irrational or ignorant omnipotent being might will to have the power to make a contradiction true. As I don't follow Descartes on omnipotence, I think there is no such power.

[1] Note, most basically, that this is a definition , in perfectly ordinary terms. Thus I am simply puzzled that Sam Cowling can say that my 'in God' talk is just 'unanalysed primitive concepts ... primitive ideology' (Review, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 91 (2013), 612).

So if it willed to have the power, it would not get it. Again, an irrational or ignorant omnipotent being could will to have the power to change the past. Plausibly there is no such power; again, if it willed to have the power, it would not get it. So *if* God could not try and fail to get a power, that would not be because non-Cartesian omnipotence[2] guarantees Him whatever He wills. It would be because His necessary omniscience and perfect rationality kept Him from trying to get what He could not get.

I emphasized the 'if' just above for a reason. Suppose that God the Father and God the Son are omnipotent, the Father wills to have a power, and the Son simultaneously wills that the Father lack that power. It is hard to say what would happen. It is not at all clear that the Father would get the power. We have before us three claims,

(1) There can be two divine omnipotent willers,
(2) Necessarily, if there are two divine omnipotent willers, they can simultaneously will contradictory things, and
(3) Necessarily, any such willer brings about whatever it wills to bring about,

which jointly imply the falsehood that contradictions are possibly true. Christians must accept (1): the Father and the Son are two divine omnipotent willers, even if both use God's will to do their willing.[3] And if we ignore (2) and (3), (1) seems true. G&N argues that the sort of deity Western theists ascribe to God is His individual essence. (As I parse it, the doctrine of the Trinity is compatible with this.[4]) But we easily conceive lesser divinities than God (e.g. Zeus). We can conceive some of them as omnipotent. This is reason to think that other omnipotent deities are possible, and so that the property of being a divine omnipotent willer is not an individual essence even if God's deity is. If we leave (2) and (3) aside – we are considering (1)'s initial *prima facie* plausibility *apart from* its connection to them, and so they can't yet count against (1) – seemingly an omnipotent Zeus and an omnipotent Odin could co-exist.[5] (2) and (3)

[2] From now on, understand 'non-Cartesian' to prefix all tokens of 'omnipotent' unless directed otherwise.

[3] In the Trinity, God's haecceity and all it endows Him with are shared among (somehow-) distinct subjects. Despite appearances, this is not a contradiction: see my 'A Latin Trinity', *Faith and Philosophy*, 21 (2004), 304-33.

[4] See again 'A Latin Trinity'.

[5] If God exists necessarily, as I think, then these would also have to co-exist with God, and He would have made them. I doubt that God would turn an omnipotent being with

aside, the bare, religiously neutral theism philosophers discuss does not rule against (1), as it is neutral with respect to the Trinity and the gods. In favour of (2), if the mere existence of one omnipotent willer kept another from being *able* to will certain things, the other would not be omnipotent after all. Its power to will would be limited; so then would what it could bring about. In fact, arguably the two would be impotent, unable even to will – neither able to will that P, for any P, since if it could, it would be possible that the other simultaneously will that not-P. So (1) seems to imply (2). If (1) is true and implies (2), (3) must go. The consensus medieval account of omnipotence found e.g. in Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham defines it strictly in terms of a range of possible effects; most contemporary accounts do too.[6] These definitions do not require (3), and as bare omnipotence doesn't bring perfect rationality or omniscience with it, we have no reason to believe (3) unless some definition of omnipotence which builds (3) in – there are a few[7] – is clearly superior to any which does not. This is not so, I believe, but showing it would take a paper of its own. Without (3), Oppy has no argument for (O).

(O) looks to be necessary if true. If that is so, plausibly (O) is false. Suppose that God promises little Johnny a pony for his birthday. As impeccable, He does not have the power to break promises without suitable reason, and it's hard to see how omnipotence and omniscience leave room for suitable reasons. So quite plausibly God cannot break a promise. God could demonstrate the firmness of His word to Johnny by saying 'I will now show you that even *I* can't find the power to break My word to you. I now attempt to have the power not to give you the pony. I say: "let there be this power in me." I'm trying. I'm trying. You know I'm trying if I say I am: I can't lie. Look! No power!' In this case God would be trying to do something He knows to be impossible, but His attempt would be rational because He would have a purpose other than achieving what He knows to be impossible.

Again, orthodox Christology gives reason to reject (O). For orthodoxy, Jesus was God the Son incarnate. Jesus could have pumped

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Zeus' character loose on the world; if God made an omnipotent Zeus, my guess is that He would implant in him a very different character than the one Greek myth ascribes to him, one with overwhelming urges toward virtue and co-operation with God.

[6] See my 'Omnipotence', in Thomas Flint and Michael Rea, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 167-98.

[7] See e.g. Kenneth Pearce and Alexander Pruss, 'Understanding Omnipotence', *Religious Studies*, 48 (2012), 403-14.

iron, trying and so willing to develop naturally in His human natural endowment the power to bench-press 300 lbs., and failed to gain the power. As omnipotent, God the Son already has the bench-press power in His divine natural endowment. But He at the least does not always have it in His human natural endowment – He did not have it there at birth. My claim is that the Son could have tried and failed to develop by purely natural, human means an instantiation of this power located in His human natural endowment. This would be the Son trying and failing to develop a power, since the endowment and effort would be His. You might counter: if the Son would fail, He is not omnipotent. There is a power He lacks, to develop by purely natural means the stated power in Jesus' human natural endowment. Well, perhaps not, because perhaps there is no such power. We each have both a human nature we share with others and a current individual makeup. Some things by absolute necessity are beyond the natural power of my current human makeup: no matter how I trained and tried, I could not get an unaided world-record bench-press on the earth's surface under normal conditions out of these muscles. The world record is within the reach of general human nature, but not of human nature instanced just this way in just these muscle fibres. What Jesus was trying to accomplish by pumping iron could well fall into this category: His muscles might not have had it in them to bench 300, and if they did not, there is no such thing as a power naturally to develop this power in them – no power for an omnipotent being to have. But if Jesus was acting only out of the knowledge available to a first-century Jew, save by occasional revelation from other divine Persons, He would not have this knowledge available for practical reasoning even though as divine and omniscient He in fact had it, and so could rationally pump iron in search of an impossible goal. So any who take orthodox Christology to be possibly true should reject (O). Any who take what I've said here to be at least not *a priori* false should also reject (O), because (O) would be *a priori* if true, and if (O) were *a priori* true, my stories about Jesus and God's promises would be *a priori* false.

These cases also tell further against (3). Oppy therefore has not shown that something is amiss with my definition. Turning to Oppy's argument about my second case, omnipotence does not elide the distinction between having power to acquire a power and having a power. For God could be omnipotent even if Prior was right about singular possibility. On Prior's view, before I existed, there were no singular possibilities for

precisely *me*.[8] There were just purely qualitative general possibilities for persons just like me qualitatively. If this was true, then before I existed, God did not have the power to promise *me* a pony. There was no such power, because there was no such content as being me to help constitute it. But God had the power to acquire this power, because He had the power to will to make someone just like me, and if I resulted, He would acquire that power. I reiterate that Prior's scenario is compatible with God's being omnipotent. If God is omnipotent, then at any time t He can bring about (let's say, to a first approximation) all states of affairs it is metaphysically possible to bring about at t. If the range of states of affairs available to bring about changes over time, as Prior thought, then a temporal God can be omnipotent at all times even if at some times, all He has is power to acquire powers later, not those powers themselves. Applying this to my views, even if God could add further kinds later, it would be one thing to have the power to think up an 11th kind (this contributes to the power to have a power), and another to have actually done so and given Himself the power to instance it. The distinction between the two remains clear. It is a function of that between not having done and having done a particular thing.

For Prior, by not creating, God affects the content of omnipotence. By not creating Schmian Leftow, God brings it about that omnipotence does not include power to promise Schmian anything. For me, God does the like at the level of kinds. By not thinking up an 11th kind, God settles it that omnipotence does not include power to make an 11th kind of thing. When it comes to such specific creature-regarding powers, God has by nature only the power to acquire powers, and the powers He acquires are due to something He does.

Oppy thinks that omnipotence guarantees God 'the power to think up more kinds of things and to make things of those kinds'. But it is one thing to be able to think kinds up, and another to be able to think more up later. The latter supposes that God is temporal. If God is atemporal, one shot is all He gets. Divine temporality is controversial, as Oppy notes. In any case omnipotence hardly guarantees it. And even if God is temporal, omnipotence hardly guarantees that there is not an S5 modal universe. If there is one, then there necessarily are just the possible kinds there are, and a necessarily omniscient God must always know that all and only these are possible, even if He is omnipotent.

[8] See e.g. A.N. Prior, 'Identifiable Individuals', *Review of Metaphysics*, 13 (1960), 684-96.

I argue that God has put in place an S5 modal universe, in which the possible is necessarily just what it is. If He has, He has denied Himself the power to acquire further powers. Powers defined relative to the S5-possible are the only ones there can be, and He is necessarily omnipotent only if He necessarily has all and only an omnipotent God's proper share of them.[9] Absent some spelling-out of a paradox, it seems open to an omnipotent being who sets the limit of the possible to will that the possible necessarily contain what it does. That it sets the limits of the possible does not entail that it might do otherwise. One can be causally responsible for what it is not possible that one avoid. Nor does its omnipotence entail that it could have set up possibility otherwise. There need not be a possible alternative to the content of an omnipotent being's will; if it wanted to leave creating up to chance, it could will 'let it be that either some universe now appears or none does'.[10] I think an omnipotent being can deny itself powers. It seems possible to cease to be omnipotent. (Why not? – Wouldn't a contingent, not necessarily eternal omnipotent being be able to kill itself?) If this is possible, there is a power to give up omnipotence. For if there is not, the only way a being could cease to be omnipotent is to have its omnipotence taken away against its will. Why should we believe *that*? An omnipotent being able to give up omnipotence can deny itself powers, as it can will not to be omnipotent.[11] A necessarily omnipotent being can deny itself powers if it is up to it what omnipotence contains: if Prior's God creates only ten humans, He denies Himself an eleventh power to bless a specific human, though He has the power to acquire it.

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[9] This share is not all of them. If possibly I exist, there is a power to bring it about that I initiate a certain action with libertarian freedom. I have this, I believe, but an omnipotent God cannot: if He brings it about that I initiate the action, I do not do it with that sort of freedom.

[10] For the disjunctive-volition approach to chance, see Peter van Inwagen, 'The Place of Chance in a World Sustained by God', in Thomas Morris, ed., *Divine and Human Action* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 211-35.

[11] If it is possible to give up omnipotence, some might think that nothing can be necessarily omnipotent, since a necessarily omnipotent being would lack this power. But I define omnipotence in terms of states of affairs to be brought about, not in terms of powers (see my 'Omnipotence'). Neither a contingently nor a necessarily omnipotent being can make something necessarily omnipotent cease to be omnipotent. Both can make something that can cease to be omnipotent do so. So with a state-of-affairs definition of omnipotence, something necessarily omnipotent ties something contingently so in this respect, and so there is no case that contingent omnipotence would be more powerful than necessary.

As to Oppy's argument about my third case, standard deliberation is over which possible states to make actual, and the divine case is over which modally indeterminate states to make possible. In each case, the decision concerns which states to (so to speak) raise to a higher ontological status. So far, they're exactly parallel. In the standard case, one decides by considering the values to be realized. So too in my divine case. There is value in having possibilities of a certain sort. That's why a ticket in a fair lottery to be drawn next week can be a genuine gift. In the standard case there are many possible outcomes of trying to realize a particular state of affairs, and one weighs the value of an attempt in terms of value to gain and probability of gaining it. In the divine case there is just one outcome for a particular attempt – that a certain amount of possibility-value is realized – and if God so acts, that outcome follows. The decision matrix is not radically different than ours. I suggest, then, that my special locution withstands Oppy's critique. I discuss the locution further below.

Section two

The member-set relation yields one kind of real dependence between necessary existents.[12] Take any necessary being A and its singleton. Both exist necessarily, but if {Socrates} depends on Socrates, {A} depends on A in the same way, and{A}'s existing depends on A's. Further, A's existing non-causally explains {A}'s, just as Socrates' existing explains {Socrates}'s. {A} is 'from' A just as {Socrates} is 'from' Socrates. Further, if Socrates is in this non-causal way the source of {Socrates}, *source* is a wider kind than *cause*, and my claim that causes are a kind of source stands.

Plausibly this real dependence is not intrinsically modal, and so 'modally flat'. Socrates' existing grounds {Socrates}'s. Plausibly, grounding is not modal. It seems a non-modal relation that grounds modal relations (e.g. necessary co-presence). Grounding has a converse: if Socrates grounds {Socrates}, {Socrates} is grounded by Socrates. If grounding is non-modal, so is its converse. Now if Socrates grounds {Socrates}, {Socrates} really depends on Socrates. I identify this dependence with grounding's converse: for {Socrates} really to depend on Socrates *just is* for it to be grounded by Socrates. This fits intuition – the real dependence is present *because* Socrates grounds {Socrates}, it is necessary because the

[12] If there are no sets, something parallel will hold for what does duty for them.

grounding is, and these things hold of the converse. Why not explicate that 'because' by identifying the dependence with being grounded? The identity is also economical. If the dependence is the being grounded and the latter is non-modal, the dependence is non-modal. If some real dependence is modally flat, this provides some reason – of simplicity or homogeneity – to seek a theory on which all is.[13]

I do not claim to offer a theory of causation. The most I try to do is indicate what *sort* of theory I would defend given space. I think I say enough to indicate that. Add to what Oppy cites a primitive causal relation of production (pp. 256-7, 508), or rather (given my nominalism) production facts irreducible to any other sort of fact. Then, modal flatness aside, the picture is a fairly standard anti-Humean one. Humeans don't allow primitive, irreducible causal facts. When speaking sober metaphysical truth, they do not say that causes literally produce or are sources of their effects. They speak instead of constant conjunction, counterfactual dependence, etc. I suggest things my posit would explain because this is a standard way to defend philosophical posits.

If causation is not modally flat, it is intrinsically modal. I can see just three broad sorts of modal proposal. Two are counterfactual and necessitation analyses. Both are analyses. If causation is primitive, it has no analysis. So both are ruled out. On the last sort of proposal,

C. causation is primitively (i.e. without analysis) a kind of necessitation.

If on (C) 'As cause Bs' asserts in sober metaphysical truth that As produce Bs in a certain set of worlds, (C) introduces production as distinct from and more basic than necessitation- as modally flat. If on (C) 'As cause Bs' asserts that A-type events lead to B-type in some set of worlds, (C) spreads a constant-conjunction analysis across worlds as well as times. If you substitute other conditions as constant across worlds, you spread a different sort of analysis across worlds as well as times. (C) then after all analyzes causation, and so primitivists about causation must reject (C). So a primitivist who held (C) would have to say that its necessitation has no 'worlds' analysis. This would give up the great advantage of a uniform treatment of modality in terms of worlds. More importantly, it would be open to a question: if what I mean by

[13] This requires me to say that counterfactual dependence as such is not in my sense real: it may be e.g. a sign of real dependence, but the real dependence it signals is something else. I find this plausible, but I cannot discuss it further here.

'modally flat' is not involving the sort of modality we use worlds to express, have you just granted that causation is modally flat? In short, belief in primitive causal facts, or that causation is a primitive relation of production, may really bring modal flatness with it. And there are many reasons independent of my theory to be a primitivist. One, for instance, is just a sort of induction from the failure of analyses to date.

Section three

Much of this section merely registers disagreement, and these disagreements deserve more discussion than I can give here. As to things I *can* discuss here, it is more parsimonious *of fundamental entities* to posit the solipsist and his thoughts than to posit infinities of abstract substances. In the one picture, only the solipsist is fundamental. In the other, infinities of abstracta are. It is a virtue in an ontology to posit less that is fundamental and explain more in terms of it, rather than posit more and explain less. It is also more parsimonious in another way: it eliminates more and higher-level ontological categories. The context in the paragraph Oppy discusses is an argument about what to add to an ontology of ordinary concreta to produce an adequate modal metaphysics: 'theists can do without abstracta ... They *add* not a highest level kind but a sub-kind: a deity is a kind of person. Of course, for every abstract world a Platonist might *add*, there will be something in God ...' (p. 550).[14] My main point is that the ontologies that result with these additions differ in parsimony. The last quoted sentence tells us, as Oppy insists, that adding theism and adding Platonism to ordinary concreta yield the same number of tokens. But the ordinary concreta + theism ontology lacks the kind *abstract entity* and all its sub-kinds. It has as many tokens as the ordinary concreta + Platonism ontology, but many fewer types, and that makes it more economical, as are other sorts of nominalism compared with other sorts of realism.[15]

[14] I have added the emphases on 'add'; they are not in the original text.

[15] There is more to be said here. I replace abstracta with divine mental events, and the Platonist could counter by arguing that I cannot give an adequate account of events without abstract resources, or by eliminating events. I cannot get into theories of events here. But as to the second move, events are a lower-level kind than *abstract entity* - they are a sub-kind of concrete entity. So dropping them is a lesser gain in parsimony. Further, it might prove hard to do without events without positing something else an event ontology can do without, e.g. substantival times. If that's the case, there might be no net gain in parsimony by eliminating events.

Oppy's point that philosophers' modal judgments disagree does not tell at all against my story about God and hardwiring. It is not part of that story that professional philosophers agree. It *is* part of that story that there is a causal route from necessary truths' truthmakers to whatever knowledge of the necessary we have, as cannot be the case on a Platonist account of such truthmakers. And the fact that professional philosophers disagree about philosophy does not entail that The Folk do not know non-philosophical necessary truths.[16] I do not say that God's goodness guarantees that we have largely correct beliefs about modal ontology hardwired into us. I say that

> General belief in God's goodness favors the claim that He would want us to have largely correct beliefs. If ... God ... contains or creates all modal ontology and wants us to have largely correct beliefs about the necessary, this is reason to take our methods of modal belief fixation as reliable and to think we can know necessary truths. (p. 75)[17]

Oppy might have derived the modal ontology claim by adding the premise that truths about modal ontology are necessary, but that God provides for largely correct modal beliefs doesn't entail that He provides for largely correct beliefs on any one modal subject. My story is viable if ordinary people tend in ordinary contexts to form mostly correct beliefs about which necessary propositions about ordinary, non-philosophical matters are true. I rather suspect that they do.[18]

As to Oppy's last words on evil, the most sceptical theism requires metaphysically, apart from God, is that possibly there are unknown goods aiming at which would justify God's permission of actual evils. The concept of an unknown good should be acceptable to the most austere naturalist, and few naturalists if any would claim that necessarily, all goods or even all kinds of goods are known. As far as I can see, then, adding sceptical theism to theism is an ontological and ideological free lunch; it does not disadvantage theism in a comparison with naturalism. Sceptical theism works for moral as well as natural evil if it works at

[16] *Pace* some prominent views on disagreement, it may not even entail that no professional philosophers have knowledge about the modal matters on which they disagree.

[17] This needs filling in, of course; I'm gesturing at an account of knowledge on which a proper causal route from a truthmaker to a reliable belief-forming mechanism (however reliability be cashed out) would help yield knowledge.

[18] This does not imply that they recognize the necessity of these propositions.

all, so if it works, theist responses to evil need carry no ontological or ideological cost at all. If the theist offers a free will defence, that requires no positing of anything actual: as Plantinga showed, the metaphysical possibility of the needed entities is enough.[19] The metaphysical possibility of an afterlife can be made naturalistically kosher save for God's involvement: just combine some materialist take on survival (e.g. van Inwagen's)[20] with full re-embodiment in appropriate but fully physical surroundings. Even angels could be forms of life strangely embodied: 'He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire' (Hebrews 1:7). Surely naturalists must allow the possibility of strange forms of life. So theists can assert the possibility of angels while not committing even to there possibly being more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in naturalist philosophy – save God. So theist responses to evil may have no cost naturalism does not itself pay – save God.[21]

BOHN AND FORREST

I thank Bohn for his kind words, but unfortunately much that he says is not quite right. *Contra* (2), I hold that it's in God to do things He does not let Himself do – e.g. think up the 11th kind, in the passage Oppy quotes. *Contra* (3)-(5), I hold that God lets Himself think of things He does not render possible – e.g. horrors too bad to permit in any circumstance (pp. 263, n. 19; 412). Further, I argue that the necessities Bohn mentions are *not* brute (pp. 494-6): Bohn even mentions the way I explain (iii) a bit further on. It's not true, moreover, that all facts about what it's in God to do are brute. It's in God to do whatever He has the power to do – see what Oppy cites above – but I give a detailed account of how He comes to have many of His powers. If this is explained, it is not brute.[22]

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[19] By cutting off the quotation where he did, Oppy might inadvertently have made it seem that I endorse the details of Plantinga's free will defence. The rest of the quoted passage makes clear that I do not. All I am endorsing *here* is his claim that a possibility suffices to defeat the 'logical' problem of evil.

[20] Peter van Inwagen, 'The Possibility of Resurrection', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 9 (1978), 114-121.

[21] One final small point: Oppy misreads my token of 'prior epistemic probability' (p. 547): his point would be apt if I were talking about ultimate priors, but what I meant there was simply the probability assigned prior to considering the new argument I offer.

[22] Further, while I argue that God is the source of all secular *modal* truth, I don't hold that He is the source of all secular truth or that 'God is the source of all truths'. Created free agents initiate their own actions, and so are the source of all secular truths these establish.

I do explain metaphysical in terms of causal modality. But I do not identify causal modality and what it's in God to do. Bohn quotes my definition of < God has it in Him to do A > in n. 3. It is one short sentence. It does not imply that God has the power to do A. It is in fact intended to cover cases in which God does not have it (p. 252). It does not mention powers or opportunities. My definition of causal possibility (pp. 352-3) takes almost a full page and is in terms of complex combinations of actually possessed powers and opportunities. The two notions are very different.

This mis-identification seems to lie beneath Bohn's main argument. Three things suggest this. Where Bohn writes 'to the extent it is brute, it is not a necessity ... it's ... in God to have done differently', n. 10 then adds 'Leftow might object that this worry equivocates on "could"'. 'Could' is nowhere in Bohn's text. It comes into understanding Bohn's text only if you explicate 'in God to have done' as 'could have done'. Further on, we get 'it's in God to have ... made p false; so God could ... have made p false' and '(iii) ... could be false (because) it's in Him to have had other thoughts'. I expressly disallow inference from 'in God to make it false' to 'God could have made it false' (e.g. p. 253) – but it might seem warranted if you identify what it's in God to do with what it's causally possible for Him to do.

As far as I can see, only this identification lets Bohn infer from God's having it in Him to do what He has made it metaphysically necessary that He not do, to the contingency of what would otherwise seem a metaphysical necessity. As I do not make the identification, his argument fails, at least so far. It needs substantive showing that 'in God' locutions express a sort of possibility, because if they do, they do so in spite of me: I do not mean them to.

I discuss this in one passage. Its key point is that its being in God to bring something about is

> necessarily equivalent to a disjunction of ordinary modalities, and if (it) does introduce a distinct modal status, a 'modal collapse' immediately negates this: its character as a distinct modal status collapses away. (p. 253)

'Collapse' is what iterated modal operators do in S5. In S5, '□□□P' and '□P' are distinct sentences, but do not express distinct modal statuses. Rather, the first is just another way to express the modal status the second expresses: iterated modal operators 'collapse' to the inmost

operator. Thus in S5, there are really just the modal statuses '_', '□' and '◇'.[23] Given S5, the text just quoted asserts that

IP ↔ (P v □P v ◇P v ¬◇P)[24]

and that 'IP' has no *modal* content not expressed by the RHS – the RHS expresses the same modal status as the LHS, just as in S5, '□□□P' expresses the same modal status as '□P'. Why use 'I', then? As I see it,

> What is left when (modal collapse) occurs is a point about God's endowments. It is in God to think up a kind He has not actually thought up. It is ... impossible that He do so ... but He is so endowed as to do it, and the only reason it is impossible is that He has not done so. Its impossibility is a result of His action rather than an external constraint upon it ... its bearing the status 'I' just indicates that its impossibility is a product of something God has done ... It notes a way ... His natural endowment runs beyond the realm of possibilities He has established. (p. 253)

If He is so endowed as to do it, the *only* full reason He did not do otherwise was His actual choice – His natural endowment does not explain the possible's running out where it does. What He has creatively thought up does not exhaust His nature in this respect. 'Explain' and 'exhaust' are not modal. Similarly, if ◇P or if it is not yet decided whether ◇P, 'I◇P' tells us that God is so endowed intrinsically as to bring it about that ◇P. Again, nothing modal there.

Oppy is not happy with my explaining the locution this way, and Bohn might say with exasperation, 'what can "it's in God to do it" or "He is so endowed as to do it" *mean*, if not that He might have done so?' So let us consider a move in the debate over determinism and free will. Kadri Vihvelin argues that given determinism, even if you choose to do A at t, you may still be able at t to choose otherwise. She bases this on the following analysis of abilities:

> S has the narrow ability at time t to do R (by) trying iff, for some intrinsic property B that S has at t, and for some time t' after t, if S had the

[23] See e.g. G.E. Hughes and M.J. Cresswell, *Modal Logic* (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 47, 49-50.

[24] 'Given S5' implies that what does duty for possible worlds in my scheme is in place. I distinguish three contexts in which one might use 'I', and in one of them, the world-substitutes are not yet in place. So in that context, this equivalence does not hold. Its RHS does not even have a determinate sense; there is nothing for the modal operators to quantify over.

> opportunity at t' to do R *and* S tried to do R while retaining ... B until ... t', then in a suitable proportion of these cases, S's trying to do R and ... having ... B would be an S-complete cause of S's doing R.[25]

Let us examine this. Narrow abilities are abilities we have even if we do not have the chance to exercise them: if you are manacled to a wall at t but your legs work, you have the narrow but not the all-things-considered ability to walk away at t. An S-complete cause is one complete with respect to S' havings of intrinsic properties. Vihvelin's thought is basically this: narrow abilities are clusters of intrinsic dispositions. Things have intrinsic dispositions due only to intrinsic bases. So if you have a narrow ability's basis at t, you have the narrow ability at t, even if the past and the laws of nature together manacle you, denying you the chance to use it at t. Lacking a chance doesn't entail lacking an ability you would have used had you had the chance. You have an intrinsic disposition just if you have its intrinsic base, whatever your opportunities. If external circumstances affected having the disposition, it wouldn't be intrinsic. Given opportunities, if you tried, you would manifest your disposition in a suitable proportion of cases, by successfully using it.

I find this account plausible. A disposition is at a first pass the *in re* correlate of a function from 'triggering' situations to final effects. In the case of a narrow ability – a particular sort of disposition – the triggering situation is having its base, having a chance to use it and trying to bring about what it brings about. You do not cease to have a disposition because you are not in a triggering situation – diamonds are hard even when not pressed – and lack of a chance suffices to not be in a trigger-situation. Thus Vihvelin's account is little more than an application of plausible general ideas about dispositions. The 'function' idea is only a first pass because there are complications of the sort Vihvelin's 'suitable proportion' gestures at. Presence in human bloodstreams triggers (we may suppose) a poison's disposition to poison. But sometimes, the victim is immune or has taken an antidote, and so though the disposition is triggered, it does not produce its final effect. Instead, it produces initial or very local progress toward the final effect, which overall conditions then stamp out.[26]

[25] Kadri Vihvelin, *Causes, Laws and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 187. In the original, the second occurrence of 't" is not primed, but this has to be a typo.

[26] If an antidote surrounded every molecule of the poison from the moment it hit the bloodstream, the disposition would not fire at all: it would produce nothing. We can handle such cases by complicating our description of trigger situations: these must include that the antidote is not so-positioned.

Now note a consequence of Vihvelin's story. On her account, you are narrow-able at t to do A even if it is not (given the past and natural law) metaphysically possible that you do A at t, provided that your intrinsic endowment at t and your choice would S-fully account for your doing A at another time if you were still so endowed. The modality here is indeed metaphysical. Though there are possible worlds in which you do A, there are none in which the past and laws are as they actually are and you do A; the past and the laws jointly entail that you do something else. You are able to do A just because of your intrinsic endowment, independent of whether it is metaphysically possible in your actual circumstances that you do A. If the laws and the past guarantee that you never try, 'if you tried, you would sometimes succeed' is a counterpossible, but a significant one.[27]

Suppose that Vihvelin is on the right track, and let's apply the definition to God. In His case we can simplify it. To begin, we can delete the 'suitable proportion' clause. Narrow abilities are intrinsic. If God is omnipotent, then if He tries to do what use of an intrinsic ability suffices to do,[28] He succeeds unless He runs up against logic, mathematics or another omnipotent will. But a God necessarily omniscient and necessarily perfectly rational cannot will contra-logically or -mathematically. Further, Christian theology has it that the Persons of the Trinity cannot will to oppose one another, and plausibly, if God is by necessity omniscient and perfectly rational, then if He created another omnipotent will, He would also assure that it could not contradict Him.[29] So if God tries to do what use of an intrinsic ability suffices to do, He succeeds: period.

We can also delete 'as a result of trying' – God cannot act unintentionally, and so can only act by trying. We can use my 'is intrinsically such that' as a verbal variation on 'has some intrinsic property B', etc. Here B is the intrinsic divine endowment, and so reference to retaining B later drops out: God has B eternally. We now have

[27] See G&N, pp. 221-2, with n. 13.

[28] This excludes goals attaining which requires free creatures' co-operation. If God sets out to do something He succeeds in doing only if we co-operate; God can try and fail, due to our not co-operating.

[29] Swinburne has a story about relations between the triune Persons that could be adapted to this: see his *The Christian God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 174-5.

> V. God has the narrow ability at time t to do R iff He is intrinsically such that for some time t' after t, if God had the opportunity at t' to do R and tried to do R, God's trying and being as He is intrinsically would be a God-complete cause of God's doing R.

This gives a legitimate sense of divine ability if Vihvelin's account is on target. But like Vihvelin's, it does not imply that God possibly tries at t or at t'. It provides a sense in which God is able to do otherwise even if it is not possible that He do so.

On my account of 'I', God has it in Him to do A just if He has a relevant narrow ability. We can see this by surveying 'I's three contexts of use. It is obvious where God has the power to do A (p. 252). Where I(God does A) and God does not have the power to do A, the only reason for this is His choice. His intrinsic endowment left it entirely up to Him whether to have this power, and He chose not to. It has not changed, though the circumstances have (it is now impossible that He do A). So if He had the opportunity to choose anew, it would again be entirely up to Him. (This is a counterpossible, but a significant one.) Thus if He so chose, His choice and His intrinsic endowment would be a God-complete cause of His having the power: (V)'s RHS applies. Finally, when I(God does A) and God is considering whether it is to be possible that He do A but has not yet decided (p. 252), then again, it is wholly up to Him, He has the opportunity, and so if He chooses to have the power, that plus His endowment will give Him the power: again, the RHS applies. In all three 'I' contexts, God has the narrow ability to have the intrinsic power to do A. In one, He has the power; in another, He is passing up or has passed up His chance to have it, but still has the narrow ability; in the last, He has the opportunity and the narrow ability.

If we let R be having an intrinsic power to do A, we can further simplify (V). In such cases God has the opportunity eternally – from all eternity, there is nothing to deny it to Him. Thus we need not conditionalize on opportunity, or mention times at which He has opportunities. So we get

> V*. God has the narrow ability at time t to have the intrinsic power to do A iff He is intrinsically such that if God tried at t to have this power, God's trying and being as He is intrinsically would be a God-complete cause of God's acquiring it.

Let's now compare (V*) with my definition of 'God has it in Him to do A' as quoted by Oppy. (V*)'s time-index is clearly doing no work; it is

inessential. Willing in my definition either is trying or is its first stage, which in this case would be infallibly followed by the rest. If God wills to have a power, it is His intrinsic endowment that makes the willing effective, and it does so by constituting with it a God-complete cause; so we can treat this aspect of (V*)'s RHS as an expansion of my *definiens*. (V*)'s RHS applies unproblematically to non-natural powers. The RHS of my *definiens* yields unproblematically that God has it in Him to do whatever He has the natural power to do. To get natural powers out of (V*)'s RHS, note that it is impossible that a necessarily omniscient, perfectly rational God try to cause Himself to have powers He already has. Given all this, the only substantial difference between (V*)'s RHS and my *definiens* is that (V*)'s conditional is counterfactual, not material.

Had I been content to speak from the standpoint of the modal realm God establishes, so that the requisites for counterfactual semantics were in place, I could have used a counterfactual in my definition. I could in fact treat a counterfactual version as an alternate account of what it is for God to have it in Him to do something, from that standpoint. Again, use of a counterfactual would be fine without the restriction to that standpoint if I gave a purely power-based counterfactual semantics, and defined 'in Him to do' by a counterfactual based on the natural powers God has explanatorily prior to His giving Himself non-natural powers. I am committed to a power-based semantics for counterfactuals, since I substitute divine powers for possible worlds. But G&N did not develop one – the book was long enough already! – and I wanted an account of God's 'ability beyond the possible' that would come out true from a standpoint explanatorily prior to the modal realm God establishes. So I went with a material rather than a counterfactual conditional. Still, given all this, I suggest that my account of what it is in God to do differs only inessentially from (V*). So if the Vivhelin account is broadly on the right track, provides a legitimate sense for being able to do otherwise, and yet does not entail that in one's actual circumstances one might do or might have done what one is able to do – if it is not *in this way* modal – then my account of 'in Him' locutions equally does not entail this and yet provides a legitimate sense of ability. It provides a species of divine ability in actual circumstances which does not entail a possibility in actual circumstances. This sort of account of ability, then, lets me say that God is able to – 'in some sense ... had the capacity to' (Forrest) – acquire different powers, without entailing that it is possible that He do so.

You may at this point be bursting to make the following objection: there is a large difference. Vivhelin's talk of ability is warranted partly by there being other possible worlds in which your circumstances differ, you therefore are able to exercise your ability, and you do. Vivhelin does not ascribe an ability it is not possible that you exercise. On my account, it is not possible that God's exercise His 'ability' to think up an 11th kind (though again, this was His doing). That God do otherwise in His actual circumstances is impossible, and in God's case (as I see it), no other circumstances are possible. But suppose that God had a puckish sense of humour, and assured that though it is not part of what it is to be human to be accompanied by a genie, in every possible world, every human had a personal genie with one function: when we ingest cyanide, the genie magically makes an antidote appear in our bloodstreams, so that no human is possibly poisoned by cyanide. Even so, cyanide would be poisonous for humans – why else the need for a genie? In this story, it is not possible that cyanide exercise its intrinsic power. It cannot get a chance to do so. Yet intuitively, the intrinsic power is still there regardless. That were there no genies, humans could die of cyanide poisoning is a *significant* counterpossible. So is the one about God, trying and an 11th kind.

Forrest insists that unwanted possibility nonetheless lurks. God freely chose some of His powers. He had it in Him to do otherwise (p. 461). So (writes Forrest) there might have been different secular possibilities. Thus these are possibly possible. As whatever is possibly possible is possible, then, it is possible for God to have had different powers, 'contrary to the use of divine powers as substitutes for secular possibilities'. I don't see why this would be contrary. It's not a case where we have or could have a secular possibility but not a divine power, as it's not a *secular* possibility (it is a possibility for God), and I don't claim that divine powers provide all ontology for all possibilities about God (p. 436). Further, what licenses the move from 'otherwise is in Him' to 'might have been otherwise'? Not my definition of the first, nor the three contexts in which I use it, nor what I use it to express in those contexts (see above). The 'in God to do' locution is there to let me talk non-modally about points in a story of how we get secular modal status which are prior to its conclusion, at which we finally get secular modality, and about consequences of what occurs at these points (pp. 252-3). Consider Forrest's (old?) view, on which possible

worlds are rich properties entire universes can exemplify.[30] Why is each such world possible? Presumably, just as what it is to be a dog makes it possible that there be dogs, the property's intrinsic content makes it so. A definition of a world-property would state that content: we might say being W =df. being such that only P, Q, R ... are the case. My talk of what is in God is at the same explanatory level as this definition, that of non-modal facts lying beneath and explaining modal status. Claiming that it just has to be modal is like claiming that '=df.' just has to be.

Forrest argues further that if it is in God to have other powers, this is consistent with the divine nature, hence possibly possible, hence possible. G&N avoided speaking in this context of consistency or compatibility with the divine nature,[31] or of the divine nature permitting or not preventing, precisely to avoid the modal freight of these terms. What I do permit in this vicinity are such non-modal claims as that if it is in God to have other powers, that God has His nature plus other powers is not a contradiction, not contra-logical and not contra-mathematical. Impossibilities that are not contradictory, contra-logical, etc., are not news.

Now to some smaller points from Bohn. Bohn writes,

> that p is true in *all* possible worlds is just a way of saying that ... there just are no possible ways for the world to be such that p is false. But on Leftow's account, there *is* a way for the world to be such that secular p is false, namely the way it would have been if God had just thought differently.

It's one thing for there to be a way for the world to be, another for there to be a *possible* way for the world to be. Impossible ways for the world to be are not problematic – any impossible proposition expresses one. Again, Bohn finds it odd that I say that it's not in God to make it the case that a≠a. But that a≠a would violate the reflexivity of identity, which I take to be a truth of logic, and I hold that it is not in God to violate logic: again, I am no Cartesian. Nor is this necessity brute. I ground it on God's nature, and I argue that the necessity that God have that is not brute. I simply do not see how Bohn gets from the text he cites the view that for me, it is in God to have Socrates be a number. And I answer n. 9's question about divine suicide at pp. 441-2 and 182-3.

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[30] Peter Forrest, 'Ways Worlds Could Be', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1986), 15-24.

[31] Speaking this way is the only slip in Sam Cowling's account of my views: *op. cit.*, p. 611. Unfortunately he makes it the basis for a criticism at p. 612.

On two points, however, Bohn has caught me out. He's right that (contrary to p. 253) its being in God to bring it about that P and its being in God to bring it about that Q do not entail that it is in Him to bring it about that P and Q. Again, I had suggested that pure logic and mathematics are non-secular because their universal quantifiers are unrestricted and so range over God. Bohn (n. 7) notes that many other truths also involve such quantifiers, some of them secular. He's right. It still seems to me that logic and mathematics are not secular, but I need a different account of why.[32] One relevant intuition is this: logical and mathematical truths really are about absolutely everything. It is integral to their content that their quantifiers are absolutely unrestricted. Because they really are about *everything*, they really do provide information *inter alia* about God, if He exists, and so really are non-secular. But consider

RB. nothing can be red and blue all over at once.

It is not integral to (RB)'s content that its quantifier be unrestricted. (RB) is really just about colours, or coloured things. Intuitively, nothing would be lost if we tacitly restricted the domain of 'nothing' to possibly coloured things – which would exclude God. But something would be lost if we restricted the quantifier domains in logic or mathematics. Informally and as a first pass, then, we might seek a fix along these lines: a universally quantified truth is non-secular just if absolute generality is integral to its content.[33]

FORREST

I thank Forrest for his kind words, and for adding 'zoggenic' to my vocabulary. In sec. 1, I comment only on two things.

One is Forrest's failure to see 'how the mere lack of extra worlds explains anything unless we can explain that lack in turn'.[34] Lack of

[32] 'Need' might be a bit strong. I use the notion of the secular only to pick out a class of propositions excluding logic, mathematics and claims about God, about which I offer a theory. I *could* simply stipulate that the theory does not cover logic, mathematics and claims about God.

[33] If (as some argue) the notion of absolute generality is in some way incoherent, one could re-do this in terms of whatever substitute philosophers of logic offer.

[34] Also a very small point: by a secular proposition I *mean* (*pace* Forrest) one that is not in the right way about God, His distinctive attributes, etc. (pp. 248ff.). If there were abstracta, there would be secular truths about them; it's only because I am a nominalist that Forrest's description is (at least extensionally) correct. Forrest's second

extra worlds gives us the closure condition we need to have a necessity: necessarily P just if P in W1, W2 ... , and W1, W2 ... are all the worlds, i.e. there are no others. Whether further explained or not, what helps a proposition satisfy the conditions for being necessary contributes to a truthmaking sort of explanation of its being necessary. Forrest continues, 'but according to Leftow it is just God's free decision and so not explained'. First, if the decision causes the lack, the decision explains the lack, even if the decision itself is unexplained. Further, a decision's being free hardly entails that it is not explained. Reasons explain some free decisions. They do so even if they incline without determining (probabilistic explanation explains, and explanation that P does not require explanation that P rather than not P). I suspect that some decisions can be free even if so completely explained by reasons that they could not have been decided otherwise.

The other is Forrest's dilemma about possible worlds. Forrest does not consider the option that in whatever sense there are possibilities, there are possible worlds, whether we need them or not. That is actually my view (p. 38). Possibilities are part of reality, in some sense, and they have a natural maximum size, world-sized. Given that we have worlds, it's prudent to make use of them – e.g. in giving an account of necessary truths – rather than expand our ideology by adding analyticity. I wish

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description also mischaracterizes the concept. I do not say that secular propositions 'do not presuppose theism'. I do not say this because non-secular propositions do not presuppose theism either. A non-secular sentence provides information about God *if it is true* (pp. 248-9). Thus 'God exists' is non-secular whether or not God exists. But 'God exists' does not presuppose theism. No sentence presupposes itself, intuitively. And this case falls out of at least two classic approaches to presupposition (there are many accounts of presupposition, and Forrest does not say which he favours). On a Strawson-style account, P presupposes Q iff <P is true> and <P is false> both imply Q. Clearly this needs reworking to deal with necessary truths, but leaving aside paradoxes of implication (which would yield that everything presupposes all necessary truths), if it is false that God exists, it does not follow that God exists. Maybe the Strawson notion is *supposed* to yield that everything presupposes all necessary truths. In that case, on Forrest's claim, I'd be holding that all propositions are non-secular. But I do not mean to hold that. On Stalnaker's approach, a sentence 'Q' pragmatically presupposes that P just if a speaker would normally expect people uttering 'Q' in discussion to have in common an assumption that P. Logic and mathematics are non-secular, but no-one involved in discussing these would expect theism to figure among the common assumptions people discussing these would usually share. It is just not relevant to or needed for these; even if all people were theists, a Stalnaker-style account should not yield the result that logic and mathematics presuppose theism.

I had space adequately to discuss Forrest's modal ideas. Here I can only raise one matter. Forrest writes, 'those truths that no human being can ... suppose false, are absolutely necessary'. Either this is because our powers determine that this is necessary, or it is a remarkable coincidence. If the first is so, trouble ensues. It seems contingent what supposing-false powers actual humans actually have. It seems quite possible that other humans have been a bit better at it. If so, then if for Forrest actual abilities to suppose false determine the limits of the necessary, it turns out contingent what is necessary – which violates the S5 Forrest wants to build into this modality. I suppose Forrest could say that actually, our powers set the limits, but had there been others with different powers they would not have done it – but that would seem implausible. What Forrest needs is that the necessary be what no *possible* human can suppose false. But this is just another way to say that the necessary is that which necessarily, no human supposes false. The explication involves the *explicandum*: not good. Yet if it is just coincidence – good luck – that our supposing powers get the limits of possibility right, this seems to endanger our modal knowledge.

Turning to sec. 2, Forrest's replacement for omnipotence[35] faces a McDesire objection: imagine someone who can only desire to do one thing, and is able to do it. This person would have the perfection of will Forrest describes, yet be able to do just one thing. This makes the replacement on its own an inadequate substitute for omnipotence. Things don't improve much if we add divine goodness; a good being is not guaranteed to be able to want much. Forrest must add a clause: not just goodness, but (say) ability to desire all that is good. Either way, though omnipotence should be what gives God His range of action, Forrest's replacement does not do this.

The second premise of Forrest's argument for evil possible worlds is that whatever a creature can bring about freely, God could cause it to bring about unfreely. This seems false. I can freely bring it about that I initiate an action. God cannot cause me to bring that about; if He causes me to act, He initiates the action, not I. If I am ultimately responsible for any act of a certain sort that I do, and A is an act of that sort, then by

[35] Forrest's n. 6 threatens to contradict the claim that God has this perfection: God could wish fervently to have the ability to make everyone freely accept Him, but n. 6 tells us that even if He did, He wouldn't get it. But perhaps what Forrest means to do here is to indicate that there will have to be complicating clauses to give a full account of this perfection, as there are in many accounts of omnipotence.

doing A, I bring it about that I am ultimately responsible for doing A. God can't cause me to bring that about; if He causes me to act, He gets ultimate responsibility.[36]

Forrest does not say what redeeming a predestinarian Adam/Eve world involves. If it goes as far as making each evil turn out to be a necessary condition of a good great enough to justify it, a perfect God might well be able to cause such a world. Either God redeems each evil in this way or it is not a world God could justifiably cause: God could not justifiably cause even one evil that despite His best efforts would have to remain pointless, save perhaps when some evil is needed to execute a particular good purpose but there is no precise minimum amount needed. Now a morally perfect God's deciding from all eternity to cause a predestinarian Adam/Eve world is part of such a world. So if God could not justifiably cause such a world, the first-pass answer to when w* ceases to be possible is 'from all eternity'. But more carefully, if from all eternity, at any time, w* is already not possible, w* never was possible. So either w* is not possible or it is a world God can bring about. Either way, we do not have an evil possible world beyond God's power to effect.

It's not clear just what Forrest packs into the charge of trivializing omnipotence.[37] On one parsing, it would be that standard definitions of omnipotence become trivial, something like 'God is omnipotent =df. God has the power to do whatever God gives Himself the power to do'. My own account of omnipotence includes more than a clause about range of action.[38] So even if this were the consequence for a range-of-action clause, it wouldn't follow that the whole definition had become trivial. But God gives Himself the power to do A just if He has it in Him to do so and on balance wants to, so I'd prefer to see the consequence as something like 'God is omnipotent only if God has the power to do whatever He both has it in Himself and all-things-considered desires to give Himself the power to do'. That doesn't seem vacuous, and leaves us able to add to our definition of omnipotence a clause which specifies the range of what God has desired to give Himself power to do. In any case, Aquinas considered a similar objection, and I can adapt his reply:

[36] Perhaps Forrest's n. 7 is intended to exclude this sort of thing - but reading it that way would be a bit stretched. A more natural reading would take it as asserting e.g. that I cannot freely bring it about that if I do any actions of a certain sort, I am ultimately responsible for doing them.

[37] I discuss one trivialization charge at pp. 132-4.

[38] See again my 'Omnipotence'.

even if in fact, the range of the absolutely possible just is the range of certain divine powers, one can *define* absolute possibility in other terms, or treat it as primitive. Either way, it would then be non-trivial to define omnipotence in terms of (roughly) being able to bring about every absolutely possible state of affairs. The other parsing of the trivialization charge would be that it lets a being with too small a range of power count as omnipotent. But this just doesn't follow. It's compatible with the claim that God chooses the precise range of omnipotence that His nature constrain Him to choose a range large enough not to violate our intuitions about (roughly) how much an omnipotent being ought to be able to do.

Forrest takes me to assert truth-value gaps for modal propositions. What I wrote is this:

> there is no such property as being a zog ... (So) it is not possible or impossible that something be a zog, i.e., have a property which neither is possible nor is impossible because it does not exist to bear either modality. As I see it, if God does not think up elephants, being an elephant no more names a property than *being a zog* now does. There are then no facts about elephants – not even that God has not thought them up. (p. 151)

If no facts, no propositions about them either, since that there are propositions about them would be a fact about them. On Prior's view, I think, before I existed, there was no singular proposition for 'possibly Brian exists' to express.[39] So there was no singular proposition with a truth-value gap. Once I existed, there was a singular proposition and it was true. Similarly, as there is no kind <zog>, I think there are no zog-propositions, and so no gappy ones. 'Possibly all zogs are perky' does not express a proposition. It is just a sentence containing a letter-string without determinate meaning. If we use 'zog' as a placeholder for 'member of a natural kind God has not conceived,' then it expresses a proposition, which has a truth-value.

Turning to Forrest's third objection, the ordinal-time hypothesis, however intriguing, doesn't deal with my divine waiting point. Even if God's time involves nexts, the next moment is later than this one. So if God does not do something at this moment, He waits till the next – and all the same questions about divine waiting apply. As to his (2), I do not make the move Forrest ascribes to me 'implicitly' – in fact, *per* what's

[39] See Christopher Menzel, 'The True Modal Logic', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 20 (1991), 331-74 (esp. p. 341).

above, I suggest that God's nature guarantees that the range of power that winds up constituting omnipotence will not be small (however we parse 'small' (p. 133)). But nor do I see that his rejoinder deals with that move: how could the fact that a small range of power, or a large range of the wrong kind, is inadequate for God tell against the claim that He gives Himself a very large range of the right kind and then says 'no more than this'? *Per* what we've seen, if it were in God to have additional powers, that would not entail that He could. Perhaps Forrest just takes this to follow, but it does not. Further, if it is in God to give Himself powers, it is also in Him not to give Himself further powers, as any given set of powers doesn't contain further powers. So it is also in Him to deny Himself further powers. One way to do so would be to deny Himself the power to acquire them. As to whether He would give or deny Himself this power, why think there is a *presumption* either way? We can hardly *presume* that God wouldn't get the powers to have right the first time; theists at all sympathetic to divine perfection will think that we ought to presume He would; if He did, He would have no use for the power to add more powers – but we can hardly presume either way when it comes to whether God would be tidy enough to want not to have a particular power He knows He would never use. I think the best Forrest can really claim is that at the level of presumption we might be agnostic about a power to add further powers.

COSMIC GRATITUDE

ROBERT C. ROBERTS

Baylor University

Abstract. Classically, gratitude is a tri-polar construal, logically ordering a benefactor, a benefice, and a beneficiary in a favour-giving-receiving situation. Grammatically, the poles are distinguished and bound together by the prepositions 'to' and 'for'; so I call this classic concept 'to-for' gratitude. Classic religious gratitude follows this schema, with God as the benefactor. Such gratitude, when felt, is a religious experience, and a reliable readiness or 'habit' of such construal is a religious virtue. However, atheists have sometimes felt an urge or need for an analogous experience and virtue of gratitude, and theists sometimes feel intellectual discomfort with classical theistic gratitude on consideration of the misfortunes that characterize our life along with its blessings. In response, another conception of religious gratitude has been attempted, a construal that lacks the to-for structure. This paper probes the significance of the benefactor for gratitude, both secular and religious, and, with Søren Kierkegaard's help, some features of the theology of classical religious gratitude that dissolve the problem of misfortunes.

I. CLASSICAL GRATITUDE TO PEOPLE

The vast majority of discussions of gratitude in psychology and philosophy, both historical and contemporary, suppose that to be grateful is to acknowledge gladly the receipt of some benefit, favour, or gift, and the good will or benevolent intention of the giver of the benefit towards the recipient. The abstract structure of gratitude so conceived is

A is grateful to B for C. I call such tri-polar gratitude 'to-for' gratitude. A's acknowledgment of B as the intentional source of C is not just verbal behaviour, but a glad or happy state of mind. The recipient is glad about two things: the benefit that he or she has received, and the benevolent attitude of the giver in giving it. Thus, in one sense of the word, gratitude is a happy *attitude* about a benevolent *attitude*. Another sense of the word derives from this one. We may also speak of a grateful *person*, meaning that the individual is reliably disposed to take this attitude toward benefits as received from benefactors. Most people, though not all (Aristotle 1980: 4.3; Morgan, Gulliford & Kristjánsson 2014), have thought of this disposition as a human excellence or virtue. The most thorough extant ancient account of gratitude, both as a virtue and as an emotion, is that of the Stoic Seneca (4 BCE–65 CE), in his *De Beneficiis* (*On Benefits*).

In Seneca's discussion, gratitude (*gratia*) is above all an attitude toward a benefactor, somebody who has done us a favour. The favour may be any of a wide variety of things – shelter, protection from harm, defence of our reputation, a listening ear, a gift or loan of money, instruction about something, rescue from danger, diversion from a bad choice, supportive presence in a time of distress, etc. (for the variety of possibilities, see *de Ben*. 1.5.1, 2.34.5, 2.35.3, 3.9.2). The material 'benefit' is really but a symbol of good will:

> If I have saved a man's children from shipwreck or a fire and restored them to him, and afterwards they were snatched from him either by sickness or some injustice of fortune, yet, even when they are no more, the benefit that was manifested in their persons endures. All those things, therefore, which falsely assume the name of benefits, are but the services through which a friendly will reveals itself ... what counts is, not what is done or what is given, but the spirit of the action, because a benefit consists, not in what is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer. (1.5.4–5, 1.6.1)

The agency of the benefactor is thus more important than its product. The overriding salience of the benefactor in the mind of the grateful person is due to his or her sensitivity to the benevolent attitude with which the giver bestowed the benefit. The benefit plays a definite role, but according to Seneca, in the mind of the truly grateful person its role is chiefly that of indicating the graciousness of the benefactor's mind toward the beneficiary. The grateful response is a heartfelt appreciative (joyful, benevolent) recognition of the graciousness of the benefactor (1.15.4).

Seneca is sternly critical of a mercenary attitude on the part of either the benefactor (as making his favour leverage for advantage or power or pleasure or glory (4.11.1)) or the beneficiary (as grasping the benefit in disregard of the benefactor (4.20.3)). The generosity-gratitude exchange as Seneca describes it is above all a meeting of the *minds* of two human beings – a mutual recognition of positive regard often utilizing a 'material' benefit as medium and symbol. The ideal giver uses the bestowed benefit to show his regard for the beneficiary, and the beneficiary uses a token benefit – a word of thanks, a smile, warmth of demeanour, or a return benefit – to show his positive regard for the benefactor's positive regard.

The worldview or ethics to which Seneca's conception of gratitude belongs stands in subtle contrast with that of Thomas Hobbes, who also accords gratitude the status of a virtue. Hobbes comments,

> As justice dependeth on antecedent covenant; so does gratitude depend on antecedent grace; that is to say, antecedent free gift; and is the fourth law of nature ... : that a man which receiveth benefit from another of mere grace endeavour that he which giveth it have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will. For no man giveth but with intention of good to himself, because gift is voluntary; and of all voluntary acts, the object is to every man his own good; of which if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of benevolence or trust, nor consequently of mutual help ... (*Leviathan*, Part I, chapter 15, p. 230)

Bernard Gert (2010: 95) says this passage shows that Hobbesian gratitude isn't merely a device for extracting future benefits from benefactors. But to my ear it leaves the question of the beneficiary's deeper motive open, and the egoism suggested by 'no man giveth but with intention of good to himself' seems to say that in the exchange both benefactor and beneficiary are primarily looking out for their own advantage. The accent in Hobbesian gratitude is on the benefit, to which the benefactor plays the secondary or derivative role of supplier. Whether or not Hobbes had this in mind, it provides an instructive contrast with Seneca's view, which makes human fellowship, friendship, and love the primary value in the generosity-gratitude exchange. To exaggerate a tiny bit, the benefice plays more the role of a pawn in the essentially interpersonal or spiritual communion of souls.

II. CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving is a central practice of the Christian life, and it follows the schema of to-for gratitude. A classic expression is the prayer of General Thanksgiving in the *Book of Common Prayer*:

> Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen*.

By this prayer, worshipers express and communicate to God our recognition of his 'goodness and lovingkindness'. We then enumerate, in a general way, the tokens of God's generosity: our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; and the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ. Then we petition God to strengthen and purify our gratitude, so that we may live our lives in happy appreciation and glad communion with God. Gratitude is a kind of love, and this prayer is a device for maintaining and deepening our love for God. Thanksgiving is a practice of love.

III. ANOTHER KIND OF RELIGIOUS GRATITUDE?

Christians and other theists are not the only people who are inclined to feel gratitude for things not plausibly attributable to human agency. Atheists too sometimes feel this impulse. Robert Solomon thinks that a person who feels grateful for his life as such 'is a better person and a happier one' than someone who lacks such gratitude, and empirical research on the question seems to bear him out (Emmons 2013). 'But one of the questions that has always intrigued me about such cosmic gratitude, and it certainly bothered Nietzsche as well, is *to whom* should one feel this gratitude?' Solomon says that 'being grateful "to the

universe" is a limp way out of this quandary' (Solomon 2004: viii). The limpness obviously derives from the fact that the universe seems not to be an intentional agent, and gratitude attributes benevolent agency to the source of one's blessings.

Solomon chides Albert Camus for commending, by way of his hero Meursault (*The Stranger*), that one open one's heart to 'the benign indifference of the universe'. He seems to suppose that Camus is representing Meursault's emotion as gratitude, though that is implausible and the text doesn't say it. It seems to me that if one is expecting to be guillotined before an approving crowd in the next few hours, one might feel hemmed in by hostile forces, and thus might experience some *relief* or even *joy* by construing the universe as indifferent (agents can be indifferent to this or that, but non-agents are *necessarily* 'indifferent'). This relief will be a member of the class of 'transcendent' or 'cosmic' emotions. The indifference of the universe could strike one as benign by comparison with all the hostile human beings in one's recent and expected experience – see the 'howls of execration' that Meursault anticipates from the crowd who will gleefully watch his execution. Throughout the novel, Meursault has remarked that nothing matters, nothing is really important; so his descent into terror in face of the guillotine represents an inconsistency in his worldview, which he now corrects by reverting to his characteristic construal of the universe as indifferent. But if Meursault's transcendent relief is not gratitude, then Camus isn't even trying to supply an answer to Solomon's question about 'to whom'.

Nietzsche, by contrast, does seem to be addressing the question of the *to whom* with his ungrammatical question, 'How could I fail to be grateful to my whole life?' (Nietzsche 1967: 221) He seems to answer *to whom*? By saying, 'To myself', or 'to my whole life' (if these are different). This is perhaps an improvement over 'to the universe', inasmuch as Nietzsche is an intentional agent, somebody who can will the good for him(self). Apparently, Seneca had an interlocutor who thought like Nietzsche, and offers him a short tutorial in the logical grammar of interpersonal transaction words:

> 'One ought', you say, 'to bestow benefit on oneself; therefore one ought also to return gratitude to oneself'. [But] ... the man who gives to himself is not generous, nor is he who pardons himself merciful, nor he who is touched by his own misfortunes compassionate. For generosity, mercy,

> and compassion contribute to others .... If a man says that he has sold something to himself, will he not be thought mad? For selling means alienation, the transferring of one's property and one's right in it to another. Yet, just as is the case in selling, giving implies the relinquishment of something, the surrendering of something that you have held to the possession of another. ... unless there are two persons, there can be no giving ... (*De Beneficiis* 5.9–10)

So we can't owe our whole life to ourselves.

Solomon himself proposes a way to be grateful for our life without being grateful to either God or the universe. He says, ' ... opening one's heart to the universe is not so much personifying the universe as opening one's heart, that is, expanding one's perspective' (2004: ix). He seems to be saying that we can be grateful for our whole life if 1) we think about our *whole* life, not just its particularities, while also 2) reflecting about how much of the good in our life we owe to parents, friends, teachers, and the like. If we make a habit of doing these two things, in alternation or in conjunction, then we will learn not to insist on being the primary authors of our life, and will acquire the habit of acknowledging, generously and realistically, how much we owe to others. This generalized attitude of grateful indebtedness can count, Solomon thinks, as gratitude for our whole life. We will be cognizant, of course, that we don't owe our life as a whole to any one of those human agents that we acknowledge, nor even to all of them collectively. Human agency cannot account for our whole life. Yet we do owe some aspects of it to diverse human agents, some of whom, at least, will probably have helped us from motives of benevolence. This solution seems to depend on confusing the various *aspects* of our life that we do owe to others with our *whole* life, which we cannot owe to other human beings. This is not what Solomon calls 'cosmic gratitude', but a broadened gratitude to people.

George Nakhnikian tells of a cosmic gratitude he experienced when his eighteen-month old daughter had a close encounter with death. He was chatting with friends in his home while their children played together, when he suddenly realized that he didn't know where the baby was. In a mild panic he found the porch's screen door ajar, and a neighbour approaching him with the child in her arms. The neighbour had found her standing in the middle of the street looking at the housetops.

> A car driven by elderly people had come to a stop just in front of her. Apparently they were waiting for her to get out of the way. In the

> meantime, another car, driven by some impatient youngsters, had come up behind the first car. The youngsters could not see the baby, so they impatiently zoomed around the first car. The baby stood still while this was going on. If she had taken two steps in the wrong direction at a certain moment, she would have been killed instantly.
>
> I took the child in my arms. She was calm and happy, her usual self. She had no idea of what had happened. I thanked our neighbor for her kindness. But what I felt at that moment was a vast thankfulness which I could not appropriately express to any human being. ... Had I retained the religion of my fathers, I should have thanked God in my heart, I should have gone to the nearest Armenian church to light a candle before the image of a saint, and I should have given the priest some money for the poor. (Nakhnikian 1961: 161)

Nakhnikian frankly attests to a certain frustration, one noted as well in the testimonies of Solomon and Nietzsche. The frustration arises from a strong sense that the emotion he feels has the to-for structure, combined with an equally strong resistance to following the 'to' with the only agent that qualifies for the role, namely God. Nakhnikian thinks his experience is a universal human susceptibility, not a vestige of his Christian upbringing. Like those who cope by thanking the universe, or themselves, or all the people that have contributed to their life, Nakhnikian finds some comfort in the finite:

> Ever since the day I have recalled, I have felt a special tenderness for my child. When I see her sitting at the family table at mealtime, or when she comes home from school, I often reach over to stroke her hair, as if to say, 'Thank you for being here.' Also, what I am doing now, telling the story, is a way of externalizing what I feel. (Nakhnikian 1961: 162)

Nakhnikian is admirably honest in his tone of resignation that none of his 'externalizing' strategies is completely satisfying.

The continuing frustration of deflecting the 'to whom' of to-for cosmic gratitude onto unsatisfactory objects may lie behind Brother David Steindl-Rast's program as outlined in his essay, 'Gratitude as Thankfulness and as Gratefulness' (in Emmons and McCullough 2004). Brother David proposes to distinguish two different kinds of gratitude: *thankfulness*, which is 'personal', and *gratefulness*, which is 'transpersonal'.

> When we thank, we think – namely, in terms of giver, gift, and receiver. This is necessary for personal gratitude, but transpersonal gratitude – though cognitive – lies deeper than thinking and precedes it. When it is

> an integral element of the experience of universal wholeness, gratitude does not yet distinguish between giver, gift, and receiver. (Steindl-Rast 2004: 286)

It is hard to know what difference Brother David is seeing between cognition and thinking. If we take Nakhnikian's experience as an example, it would seem that, even though he describes the emotion as 'cosmic', it involves thinking. For example, he reckons with the danger that his daughter has just been in, as well as her safety, and both thoughts are essential to his cosmic emotion. In fact, her safety is the 'gift' for which he is grateful, and the danger of being run over is what she is safe from. (That these thoughts condition his feeling of gratitude is consistent with the feeling arising 'spontaneously' (notwithstanding Steindl-Rast 2004: 285).) Nakhnikian is also aware that no finite agent is a good candidate for thanking. Another example of cosmic gratitude that he mentions follows on the thought of 'the sheer brute contingency of [one's] ever having been born' (Nakhnikian 1961: 159). Here the 'gift' is life – the fact that, despite the odds against it, one *was* born. One feels grateful for one's life – again, with the awareness that no person 'within the world', so to speak, is the proper benefactor.

Moreover, when Brother David comes to describe (cosmic) gratefulness more definitely, he seems to forsake his thesis that it 'does not yet distinguish between giver, gift, and receiver' (Steindl-Rast 2004: 286). He says that gratitude is a heightened appreciation, or 'celebration', that 'differs from all other celebrations by its *object*, that is, undeserved kindness' (Steindl-Rast 2004: 283, my italics). Brother David thinks this will be true of all gratitude, whether personal or cosmic. The undeserved kindnesses that persons do for us, and that deserve our *thankfulness*, are of many different kinds. The undeserved kindness that the cosmos does us, and that deserves our *gratefulness*, is 'undeserved admittance into a state of mutual belonging' (Steindl-Rast 2004: 284). That is, in feeling cosmic gratefulness, we 'celebrate' our inclusion in being. It is as though the universe welcomes us into a state of mutual belonging: in its kindness, the universe enfolds us, presents itself to us as 'kin' (Steindl-Rast 2004: 284), to us who don't deserve such welcome. It belongs to us and we belong to it. To me, this kindness of the universe sounds very much like a personification of it. The universe is construed as a kind of benevolent giver, whose gift is itself, like a mother who 'gives herself' to her child, so that she belongs to the child and the child belongs to her. So

the to-for structure is preserved, after all: gratefulness is *to* the cosmos *for* its kind and welcoming inclusiveness. We are reminded of Robert Solomon's comment that 'being grateful "to the universe" is a limp way out of this quandary' (Solomon 2004: viii). No doubt, it's to avoid this criticism that Brother David insists, in effect, that gratefulness does not, like thankfulness, have the to-for structure. 'Only thankfulness ... typically has as its object an intentional agent beyond the self' (Steindl-Rast 2004: 286). But his insistence that it does not take a personal agent as 'object' conflicts with his description of transcendent gratitude in such person-suggestive words as 'undeserved kindness' and 'kinship' and 'belonging'. I suspect that if one tried to do completely without personifying concepts, the description would fail plausibly to describe a kind of *gratitude*.

IV. COSMIC EMOTIONS OTHER THAN GRATITUDE

Many cosmic emotions have come to the attention of philosophers and theologians, and some of them differ strikingly from the gratitude on which Solomon, Nakhnikian, and Brother David focus. The various species of transcendent emotion are distinguished by the patterns of thought that give rise to them and internally determine the specific character of each. Let's return for a moment to Nakhnikian's thought of 'the sheer brute contingency of [your] ever having been born' (Nakhnikian 1961: 159), which he says might generate a feeling of cosmic gratitude for your life. But it seems that, to yield *gratitude*, the thought of sheer contingency needs to be combined with the thought of your life as something like an undeserved kindness, to borrow from Brother David. It won't yield gratitude if you don't think of your life as something good for yourself. If you hate your life, the thought of your radical contingency might yield cosmic anger about your colossally bad luck!

In a lecture at the Center of Theological Inquiry (Princeton, New Jersey), March 13, 2014, Doug Ottati reported explaining to his son Albert how each of a very long string of extremely unlikely coincidences had to occur for Albert's dad to meet Albert's mom (Ottati 2014). Albert then remarked, 'Well, if you hadn't met Mom, then I guess somebody else would have been my dad.' In this response, Albert is expressing a sentiment that is very natural for human beings, the gut feeling that I *have* to be, that my existence is a non-negotiable *given*. Albert had a very

solid sense of the necessity of his being, a sense that Doug's explanation was designed to undermine. When Albert does finally come clearly and forcefully to see the nearly infinite improbability of his ever having existed, the feeling generated by this insight, against the background of Albert's sense of his own necessity, is likely to be an anxious sense of cosmic unsupportedness, a feeling that is quite the opposite of cosmic gratitude.

A similar feeling that seems to be an antithesis of Brother David's 'gratefulness' is one that Martin Heidegger describes as feeling anxiously 'uncanny' (*unheimlich* – not at home, *nicht-zuhause*) (see Heidegger 1962: 231–3; and Roberts 1977: 254–5 for discussion). Heidegger, like other 'existentialists', is highly sensitive to the fact that human consciousness 'projects' into the future, into a potentially wide-open 'world' of possibilities. But he also stresses that human beings are typically 'fallen' into closed physical, social, and ideological niches of their own and others' making, in which they comfortably and inauthentically live in 'oblivion' of their true nature as beings radically open to possibility. This artificially closed world has the homey character *heimlichkeit*, comfortable and complacent identity-giving familiarity. But on occasion, a person's true nature as open possibility makes itself obtrusively manifest, and his familiar world of commonplaces and conveniences and habits and predictabilities fails him and ceases to be 'home' for him. This anxious sense of out-thereness, this feeling of uncanniness, of not belonging to one's world, is in some ways the polar opposite of Brother David's feeling of the undeserved welcoming kinship of the universe. The two cosmic feelings are as different from one another as anxiety and gratitude in ordinary intra-world experience. Just as cosmic 'gratitude' can be experienced as a connection to God, anxious cosmic uncanniness can be experienced as a yearning for God, though Heidegger seems to warn against interpreting his own analysis in this way (Heidegger 1962: 233; Roberts 1977: 255, note 14).

Ludwig Wittgenstein mentions two other transcendent emotions in his famous 'Lecture on Ethics'. One is a kind of wonder or awe, and the other is a sense of security.

> I believe the best way of describing [this experience] is to say that when I have it I wonder at the existence of the world. And I am then inclined to use such phrases as 'how extraordinary that anything should exist' or 'how extraordinary that the world should exist'. I will mention another

> experience straight away which I also know and which others of you might be acquainted with: it is, what one might call, the experience of feeling absolutely safe. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens'. (Wittgenstein 1965: 8)

When we wonder at something extraordinary, like a Turner landscape or Bach's B minor Mass, we focus our attention on it and implicitly compare it with other things that have been created by some process that we think we understand; and we are dumbfounded that the extraordinary thing was created – say, by a human mind and skill. But in the case of the transcendent wonder that Wittgenstein describes, we think of the whole of reality as an artefact, and are struck dumbfounded by the fact of its being in existence at all. When we feel safe in an ordinary way, say from being mugged in an upper class suburb, we think of harm from a certain quarter, say from marauding drug addicts on the streets, and note that here in the suburbs there's little or no danger from *that* quarter. Similarly, when we feel absolutely safe – safe from *any possible* harm – we survey the harms that might befall us, such as disease, starvation, death, calumny, torture, loss of family and friends, etc., and, adopting a perspective outside the world, so to speak, feel that even if all such 'harms' should befall us at once, we would still be fine.

Some of the transcendent or cosmic emotions generate, by their inner logic, little or no motive to posit a transcendent or divine agent. Cosmic wonder, for example, or the feeling of absolute safety, Heidegger's anxious feeling of being 'not at home' in the world, or Meursault's feeling that the universe's utter indifference to him is benign, do not in themselves suggest an agent who created the world, or who is calling one home or keeping one safe, or who has good will towards oneself; though it is true that theists may connect such feelings with the doctrines of creation or providence or grace (see Wittgenstein's comments, 1965: 9). But the philosophical discussions of transcendent gratitude that we have considered do seem to have in common that they motivate a search for some*body* to *whom* the gratitude is to be directed. Solomon ends up directing his 'expanded perspective' gratitude to teachers, friends, family, and other human beings. Nakhnikian thinks nostalgically of the forsaken God of his fathers, and ends by (irrationally) thanking his daughter for 'being there'. Nietzsche, again irrationally, thanks himself or his whole life. And Brother David ends up construing the universe as offering

'undeserved kindness', as being like hospitable 'kin' with whom (which?) we can enter into a 'mutual belonging'. The explanation of this difference is near at hand. Gratitude has the to-for structure. Other emotion types in the neighbourhood of gratitude do not have it, for example, Meursault's cosmic relief that the universe, being indifferent to him, is not like the crowds eagerly waiting to see the knife slice through his neck, or the simple joy at the existence of the world that Brother David sometimes takes to be gratitude (see Steindl-Rast 1984).

Bob Solomon, Brother David, Nietzsche, and George Nakhnikian all feel a theistic temptation stemming from their feelings of cosmic gratitude, and propose devices for escaping it. I have argued that their escape routes are dead-ends as long as the feeling they experience is *gratitude* rather than, say, relief or joy. The reason, I have argued, is that gratitude has the to-for structure. But atheists are not the only ones to have trouble with cosmic gratitude. If theists take what they perceive as the blessings in their lives to be favours expressing the benevolence of God towards them, warranting them to love God in return and to express this love in worship and thanksgiving and benevolent actions toward God's creatures, especially their fellow human beings – are they not, in logical consistency, committed to being hostile towards God on account of what they perceive as the troubles, disasters, adversities, trials, and tragedies in their lives? I turn now to Søren Kierkegaard's treatment of religious gratitude, which quite directly addresses this question.

V. TO-FOR COSMIC GRATITUDE

Kierkegaard explores the peculiar features of a frankly theistic cosmic gratitude that has the to-for structure. In ordinary human-human gratitude, we usually take ourselves to be pretty good judges of the value of whatever holds the place of benefit in our tri-polar construal, and our judgment of that value influences our sense of our benefactor's benevolence. Very roughly speaking, the more wonderful the benefit, the more wonderful do we judge the benevolence; the less wonderful the 'benefit', the less wonderful the benevolence, all the way down to downright malevolence. (We don't generally attribute benevolence to people who give us a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.) *Very* roughly speaking, I say: even with human benefactors, we soon realize that their motives are mixed and their calculations of our good are fallible. Their

benevolence may be mixed with other motives for the good they do us, perhaps even with envy or some other kind of malevolence; their calculations are fallible, so we may be genuinely benefited by their efforts to hurt us, and the good they intend for us by their favours may misfire, even tragically. Or they may be so much wiser than we that the genuine good they do us may look to us like evil; and then it may be proper, despite appearances, to infer the goodness of the benefit from the benefactor's wise benevolence. Nevertheless, on the whole we consider ourselves pretty good judges of the quality of benefits that come to us from one another, and if we are virtuously grateful people, on the model commended to us by Seneca, we will value the giver above the gift, and so will generously tend to put the best construction on the giver's motives.

With God, the connection between what appears to us to be a benefit or a calamity and the intention of its agent is less naturally transparent, to put the point mildly. In a footnote from the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Johannes Climacus quotes a 'religious' person who seems not to have noted this point:

> After many errors I finally learned to keep close to God, and since that time He has not left me in the lurch; my business flourishes, my projects have success, I am now happily married, and my children are well and strong, etc. (Kierkegaard 1941: 399)

The pattern of thought this person expresses is not really religious, says Climacus, but 'aesthetic': the goods he lists are to him (given his character) unambiguously and even ultimately good, and their reversal would be to him unambiguously bad. But to the really religious person this would not be so. Climacus continues:

> ... even if it pleases him to say that he thanks God for all these blessings, the question is how he thanks Him, whether he does it directly, or whether he first executes the movement of incertitude which is the mark of the God-relationship. Just as little as a man has the right in the midst of misfortune to say to God directly that it is misfortune, since he has to suspend his understanding in the movement of incertitude, so little dare he directly take all these things as evidence of the God-relationship. (Kierkegaard 1941: 399)

Climacus is saying that it's fine to thank God for these mundane blessings, as long as one's thanks are firmly subject to a proviso: *were these blessings taken from me, my gratitude to you, O God, would continue*

unabated – not unchanged, perhaps, but unabated. This is, I think, what the prayer of General Thanksgiving of the *Book of Common Prayer* has in mind when it reads, 'We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but *above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory*.' That is, thanks for the God-relationship is *always* proper, takes precedence over thanks for the blessings of this life, and persists through the thick and the thin of the latter blessings. It persists, that is, in the person whose cosmic gratitude is a Christian *virtue*, a firm and stable trait of character marked by the wisdom of the proviso.

A little later in the same footnote, Climacus comments on a case in which the religious gratitude is not a trait of character, but is subject to the ups and downs of the blessings of this life:

> Thus the great actor Sydelmann (as I see from his biography by Rotschel) on the evening of his triumph in the Opera House, where he was crowned with a laurel wreath amid applause lasting several minutes, when he came home, passionately gave thanks to God. With the same passion with which he gave thanks he would have rebelled against God if he had been hissed off the stage. Had he given thanks religiously, and hence given thanks to God, the Berlin public and the laurel wreath and the applause lasting several minutes would have become ambiguous in the dialectical uncertainty of the religious. (Kierkegaard 1941: 399)

I'm not sure how Climacus knows the final counterfactual (perhaps it's clear from the biography), but the 'ambiguity' of which Climacus speaks would be Sydelmann's *appreciation* of the ambiguity of the value of his theatrical success, in the light of the supreme value of his relationship with God. And this appreciation would be a function of the order of Sydelmann's cares: that his care for his friendship with God swamped and qualified his concern for theatrical successes so that he could forfeit the latter without despair.

Kierkegaard does not mean the religious relativizing of the concern for this life's blessings to reduce it to Stoic indifference: 'Is not that one who prides himself on not being able to sorrow in the day of sorrow put to shame by not being able to rejoice in the day of gladness?' (Kierkegaard 1943: 14). In an edifying discourse on Job from 1843 he refers to Job's losses with words like 'the terrible', 'horror', and 'distress', and does not deny that Job suffers terribly, even though Job is a paradigm for him

of religious gratitude as a character trait. Kierkegaard introduces the discourse in the opening section by reflecting on the role that Job plays or can play in the life of subsequent generations. He acts as a beacon of comfort whose place is 'the outpost of humanity'. He is a comfort to serious people,

> ... as one who witnesses that the terror is endured, the horror experienced, the battle of despair waged, to the honour of God, to his own salvation, to the profit and happiness of others. Job walks by the side of the race and guarantees it its happiness, combats the apprehensive dream that some horror may suddenly befall a man and have the power to destroy his soul as its certain prey. (Kierkegaard 1943: 9)

Some people don't like to be reminded of Job, because his case calls them to be honest about the fragility of their 'happiness'. Kierkegaard uses several terms of character-defect to describe such people. They are 'thoughtless' (1943: 9), or 'selfish' (1943: 9), or 'defiant' (1943: 9), or 'effeminate' (1943: 10). For example,

> Only the defiant could wish that Job had not existed, so that he might absolutely free his soul from the last vestiges of love which still remained in the plaintive shriek of despair; so that he might not complain, aye, even curse life; so that there might be no consonance of faith and confidence and humility in his speech; so that in his defiance he might stifle the shriek so that it might not even seem as if there were anyone whom it defied. (Kierkegaard 1943: 10)

Kierkegaard here describes someone who is so bitter about his loss that he doesn't want to hear any word of comfort, refuses to allow even the love that his shriek of despair presupposes (you can't even be desperate without caring positively about *something*). This person is so defiant that he shies even from admitting to himself that there is anyone to defy (like a poorly attached child who is so angry about his mother's absence that he refuses to acknowledge her when she reappears).

The discourse is a meditation on the words that Job spoke on finding out that his herds of oxen, asses, and camels had been stolen by marauders, his servants killed, and all his sons and daughters had perished when a tornado struck the house in which they were eating and drinking together (Job 1:13–19): 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

In the first interpretive section of the discourse, Kierkegaard comments on the fact that, when lamenting what the Lord had taken away, Job mentions first what the Lord *gave* him. That is, in the midst of comprehensive disaster, Job first 'counts his blessings', and only then expresses the sadness of his loss. Then he worships God, acknowledging God as the source of all that he has (had), reaffirming his allegiance to God, and worshiping (honouring) him.

> At the moment when the Lord took everything, [Job] did not say first, 'The Lord took', but he said first, 'The Lord gave'. The word is short, but in its brevity it perfectly expresses what it wishes to indicate, that Job's soul is not crushed down in silent submission to sorrow, but that his heart first expanded in gratitude; that the loss of everything first made him thankful to the Lord that He had given him all the blessings that He now took from him. ... [The blessing] was not become less beautiful to him because it was taken away, nor more beautiful, but still beautiful as before, beautiful because the Lord gave it, and what now might seem more beautiful to him, was not the gift but the goodness of God. (Kierkegaard 1943: 15)

Thus Job's religious gratitude is above all a personal relationship, with primary stress on the goodness of the benefactor, and treats the benefits as indicative of the benefactor's benevolence.

Kierkegaard then describes three alternative scenarios, in which what might have seemed like religious gratitude turns out, in the face of loss, to have been a mere counterfeit and no real virtue. All three are marked by subordination of the appreciation of the giver to the apparent value of the gift in times past, now that the blessing has been withdrawn. In the first scenario, the subject's memory of blessings past made the loss seem even bitterer, 'and his ingratitude punished him by painting it as more desirable than it had previously been' (Kierkegaard 1943: 17). In the second, the subject is tortured with regret that he did not more fully appreciate the benefits when he had them, and with a forlorn desire that 'he might only regain the glory for a short time so that he might satiate himself with happiness, and thereby learn to disregard the pain!' (Kierkegaard 1943: 17). In the third kind of case, of which Kierkegaard briefly describes several variants, the subject refuses to understand that he has lost the benefit, or denies that the benefit was really all that great anyway, or assures himself that the terrors of life are not really so hard to bear (Kierkegaard 1943: 18). By contrast, Job

> ... confessed that the blessing of the Lord had been merciful to him, he returned thanks for it; therefore it did not remain in his mind as a torturing memory. He confessed that the Lord had blessed richly and beyond all measure his undertakings; he had been thankful for this, and therefore the memory did not become to him a consuming unrest. He did not conceal from himself that everything had been taken from him; therefore the Lord, who took it, remained in his upright soul. He did not avoid the thought that it was lost; therefore his soul rested quietly until the explanation of the Lord again came to him, and found his heart like the good earth well cultivated in patience. (Kierkegaard 1943: 19)

Next, Kierkegaard points out that Job frankly attributes the withdrawal of his blessings to the Lord's agency. Of course he knows that Sabeans stole his asses and oxen and killed his servants, lightning destroyed the sheep and their shepherds, Chaldeans raided the camels and killed their keepers, and a violent wind overturned the house in which his children were making merry, burying them in the ruins. But he goes simply to the point: 'the Lord has taken away.' Again, Kierkegaard contrasts Job's gratitude with the theological reflections of less hardy minds, who try to exonerate the Lord by driving a wedge between his agency and that of the Sabeans, the lightning, the Chaldeans, and the tornado (1943: 20–21). The verse following Job's speech comments, 'In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong' (Job 1:22). The fault of the less hardy minds is that they insist on using their own standards of good and evil to judge the case, failing to apply 'the dialectical uncertainty of the religious' and to have faith that 'in everything God works for good with those who love him' (Romans 8:28).

> Job ... did not retard his soul and extinguish his spirit in reflections or explanations which only engender and nourish doubt ... In the same instant that everything was taken from him he knew that it was the Lord who had taken it, and therefore in his loss he remained in understanding with the Lord; in his loss, he preserved his confidence in the Lord; he looked upon the Lord and therefore he did not see despair. (Kierkegaard 1943: 21–22)

Because Job has the requisite humility and faith, he has no need to exonerate God. Job is steadfast in his allegiance to God and his belief in God's goodness, regardless of the strangeness of God's goodness to Job's own preconception of what is good for Job. Unlike the actor Sydelmann, Job does not judge God's goodness by Job's preconception of what is

good for himself, but 'suspend[ing] his understanding in the movement of incertitude' realizes that God's ways are not his ways, and generously gives God 'the benefit of a doubt'. In this steady grateful adherence to God he finds comfort in his sorrow and happiness in the midst of a devastated life.

CONCLUSION

Gratitude, as an emotion distinct from other 'positive' emotions such as joy and relief, has the to-for structure: *A* is grateful *to B for C*. It is thus a tri-polar construal: A beneficiary construes *himself* as beholden to a *benefactor* for a *benefit*. This conception seems to be widespread common sense, despite the fact that in casual discourse people sometimes say they are grateful when they are only glad, that is, when no benefactor is plausibly denoted. The significance of this observation is deepened when we consider that some of the profoundest thinkers about gratitude (e.g. Seneca and Kierkegaard) think that the virtue of gratitude involves a conceptual subordination of the benefit to the benefactor, making gratitude a species of interpersonal love.

The to-for structure carries over to cosmic gratitude, where the natural candidate for benefactor is God. I've presented some evidence that even people who are decidedly unfriendly to the concept of God tend to presuppose the to-for structure in descriptions of their experiences of cosmic gratitude (gratitude for things that cannot be plausibly attributed to human agency). But those who are friendly to the concept of God also sometimes feel uncomfortable thanking God for blessings, because they feel that doing so commits them to being angry with God for misfortunes. In answer to this discomfort, I have outlined Kierkegaard's conception of religious gratitude as a virtue, as a kind of love for God that steadfastly gives priority to the relationship with the Benefactor by subjecting all good and bad fortune to the 'dialectical uncertainty of the religious' – a kind of humble scepticism about the value of every benefit and detriment, in the light of God's unchanging goodness.

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KANT ON RELIGIOUS FEELING – AN EXTRAPOLATION

BIRGIT RECKI

Universität Hamburg

Abstract. The religious feeling considered in this paper is the feeling of awe that can be construed in the extrapolation of the feeling of respect for the law. The latter itself can be better understood in analogy to the feeling of the sublime. Hence the thesis of my interpretation and extrapolation is: a characterization of the religious feeling in Kant's critiques of reason and their analyses of feelings is possible. It has to be understood in analogy to the feeling of respect for the law and thus to the feeling of the sublime. The religious feeling would, as certain formulations suggest, refer to awe of the inconceivable size of God. The religious feeling of awe would also be a feeling caused by reason – an instance of a judgement-based feeling. The respective judgement is a reflexive judgement, an achievement of the reflecting faculty of judgement. The religious feeling would resemble Schleiermacher's 'plain feeling of dependence', but given the analogy with the dialectics of the sublime, it would also include the complementary component of self-elevation.

In the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), Kant already has a concept of moral feelings. Much later, in the *Metaphysics of Moral*'s 'Doctrine of Virtue' (1797), he subsumes them under the heading of an 'aesthetics of morality'.[1] At this point, Kant has discarded feelings as the principle of morality and, at the same time, systematically construed *the* moral feeling – a remarkable feat in more than one respect. The moral feeling is, according to Kant, necessary as

[1] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten* (Tugendlehre), AA Vol. VI (henceforth: MM), p. 406. In English: *The Metaphysical Elements of Ethics* (Doctrine of Virtue), trans. by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott. See Birgit Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten. Die Affinität von ästhetischem Gefühl und praktischer Vernunft bei Kant* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001). Translator's note: Unless indicated otherwise, translations are my own. Page numbers refer to the German edition.

an 'incentive' ('Triebfeder') for acting in accordance with rational insights, and it has to measure up against the criteria of a critical transcendental philosophy. This feeling is respect for the law, which is caused by reason and is the only feeling that may play any role in a morality based on pure reason.[2] In the *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant also offers a theory of aesthetic feelings: in aesthetic judgements, the subject articulates 'the feeling which [it] has of itself' in the face of the beautiful[3] that arises from the free play of reflection between imagination and intellect.[4] It also articulates a 'disposition of the soul'[5] that arises in the 'conflict' between imagination and intellect when facing the sublime: 'a feeling of our possessing a pure and self-sufficient reason'.[6]

It does not seem as if Kant had any concept, or even a theory, of religious feelings. The work where one might suspect to find such a theory – *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1973) – shows an author who makes every attempt at exposing the meaning and importance of faith as an epistemic attitude for morality, and the rationally reconstructable function of Christian faith. Kant wants to employ the contents of faith only with regard to this function. Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries* can be understood as the continuation of his critical ethics by other means. This corresponds with his characterization in the theological speculation of the *third critique*: 'Religion [...] i.e. morals in reference to God as legislator' (CJ § 89). Moral philosophy is continued *by other means*, i.e. by expanding the concept of morality by the hitherto undiscussed dimension of institutional support (a church) and orientation based on tradition (revelation). In the analyses of *Religion within the Boundaries*, feelings play no central role. When Kant addresses feelings here, they concern the discussion of enthusiastic superstition or insanity[7] (REL, p. 194), or the discussion of an intuitive understanding

[2] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, (1788), AA Vol. V (henceforth: CpR): Von den Triebfedern der reinen praktischen Vernunft. In English: *Critique of Practical Reason: Of the Motives of Pure Practical Reason*, trans. by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), AA Vol. V (henceforth: CJ), §1. In English: *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith.

[4] CJ, § 216ff.

[5] CJ, § 25.

[6] CJ, § 27.

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (1793), AA Vol. VI (henceforth: REL), pp. 174f. In English: *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. by George Di Giovanni.

of the Bible (REL, pp. 113f.). In both cases, Kant rejects any relevance of feelings. There is no mention of religious feelings in an emphatic understanding and affirmative evaluation.

However, could it not easily be otherwise? We may note that, after the analyses of moral and aesthetic feelings – where Kant insists that they are caused by reflection – the Kantian critique of reason does have the potential for a conceptual characterization of a religious feeling. The question is merely where it can be found and how it is to be construed.

I.

'1) What can I know? 2) What ought I to do? 3) What may I hope?', Kant asks in his 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the 1800 *Logic*, he repeats these three questions and emphasizes that they determine the extent of the greater question: '4) What is the human being?' One could rightly say that the three questions constitute the systematic layout of the Kantian critique of reason: a critique of cognition, a critique of (moral) action, and a critique of speculative reflection about the state of the world as the totality of cognition and action. Kant puts it slightly differently. Although this does not mean that my assignment of the three questions to the three critiques (*Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason, Critique of Judgement*) needs to be suspended, we should present his own explanation: 'The first question is answered by metaphysics, the second by morals, the third by religion and the fourth by anthropology.'[8] Concerning the question of Kant's concept of religious feeling, the following is particularly interesting: the question *what may I hope* is answered by *religion*. In the critique of reason's architecture, religion marks the place of hope as a speculative reflection about the state of the world in which the subject may feel at home. However, this does not mean that the answer to this question could only be expected from *Religion within the Boundaries*, because this is not the first of Kant's works addressing the issue of religion. After all, religion is also a topic of the *first critique* when Kant is discussing the rational justification of belief. The doctrine of the highest good developed in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and its continuation in positing two necessary objects of belief – God and the immortality of the soul – lead Kant to expose

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Logik* (1800), AA Bd. IX, p. 25. In English: *Logic* (London: Longmans Green, 1885), trans. by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott.

what he calls a practical rational faith.[9] The systematic aim of the *third critique* is not solely to guarantee the metaphysical frame for this practical rational faith by speculating about a purposeful nature. It also ends with an appeal in the trial against proofs of God – the ethico-theological proof for God.[10]

Would it not be obvious to locate *the feeling* in hope, which has been presented as the domain of religion? The concept of this feeling would be Kant's contribution to a theory of religious feelings – especially since he presents a theory of feelings in the first book of the *Critique of Judgement*. However, this assumption is problematic in two respects. First, Kant is explicitly and extensively addressing feelings there but only aesthetic feelings. The feeling of beauty is described as disinterested delight, pleasure at the free play of reflection, a pleasure of reflection that has become independent. One can see an indirect answer to the question *what may I hope* in it, but not the feeling of hope itself. 'Beautiful things show that the human being fits into the world'[11] – this early reflection can also be understood as the programme of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. Hope is – not exclusively, but also – due to this indication that we fit into the world. But the feeling of beauty that provides this hope is not itself the feeling of hope. Neither is it a feeling called hope, nor is hope as an epistemic-practical attitude somehow topical in this feeling. The relationship between aesthetic feeling and hope is indirect: the aesthetic feeling contributes to strengthening trust in the world. The latter might contain the answer to the question of hope – it is an indication of what hope is directed at.

Second, it does not seem as if hope would count as a feeling at all for Kant. There are formulations like the following in the *Critique of Judgement*, where Kant talks about 'affections of hope, fear, joy, wrath, scorn'.[12] But the ordering of these feelings already shows that this is a conventional list from the perspective of the history of philosophy. The sentence has to be understood as a trace of the Stoic teachings to which Kant sometimes reacts in his work. Nor can hope be a candidate for the religious feeling, because affections and feelings are not the same for Kant. *Affection is a raptus that completely captures the mood*, Kant already

[9] See CpR.

[10] CJ, §§ 88-91.

[11] '[...] and that their intuition matches with the laws of intuition.' Immanuel Kant, Refl. 1820a, Akademie-Ausgabe Vol. XVI, p. 127.

[12] CJ, § 54.

noted in the 70s in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.[13] It does not have to do anything with the meaningfulness of feelings. No doubt a feeling is also a mood, but a mood that can be seen as a 'mental representation of a subjective state' (Roderich Barth).[14]

Kant mostly uses the term hope so that it could also be replaced by 'positive expectation', 'confident attitude' or 'a claim that is intuitively regarded as justified' or – as I would suggest – *speculative reflection*. With the analyses of reflective judgement in the *third critique* in mind, one can profitably reformulate the question 'What may I hope?' into 'What may I believe?' Then we can regard the *ideas* that constitute practical rational faith as the objects of hope, and we can arrive at the conception that hope may be accompanied by a feeling, and that it can articulate itself in a feeling, but that it is something different from a feeling. The *speculative* talk about more happiness,[15] the 'hope for a future life',[16] the 'hope of participating some day in happiness'[17] supports this interpretation just as much as the pragmatic talk about the 'hope [...] of achieving anything useful',[18] or hope to succeed.[19] 'For wherever quarrelling is permissible, there must be a hope of mutual reconciliation',[20] Kant writes, for instance, and thus characterizes a potentially emotionless estimation. Belief is an epistemic attitude for Kant: *subjectively taking something to be true*.[21] Likewise, hope is an epistemic-practical attitude that *can* be connected with a feeling. A manner of speaking such as 'This gives me a feeling of hope' is possible, according to this conception, but has to be understood as *genitivus objectivus*: as a feeling that belongs to hope like an attribute or element, and not as *genitivus subjectivus*: as a feeling that would be hope.

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[13] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798), AA Vol. VII, p. 253.

[14] Kant subsumes stirrings as distinct as affections and feelings under the greater concept of 'motion' as the inner movements of our mood. Cf. *Anthropologie*, p. 232.

[15] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781/1787), AA III (henceforth: CPR), p. 424. In English: *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by J.M.D. Meiklejohn.

[16] CPR, p. 488; p. 492.

[17] CPR, p. 130.

[18] CPR, p. 548.

[19] CPR, p. 163.

[20] CJ, § 56.

[21] 'I had therefore to remove knowledge, in order to make room for belief' (CpR, p. 19). Whereas, according to Kant, I can only realize – i.e. know – what I can empirically prove, he also writes: 'I can think whatever I please, provided only I do not contradict myself.' (CpR, p. 17). For belief as a form of thinking the rule of freedom from contradictions applies, but not the restriction by the empiricism criterion.

Now we cannot deny that the already mentioned 'hope for a future life',[22] the 'hope of participating some day in happiness'[23] belong to the motifs of religious belief. It is not by mere coincidence that these quotes are taken from the context of the doctrine of the highest good and the related doctrine of postulates. Here it is certainly true that these expectations go along with emotional stirrings. But for the reasons already mentioned, it would be problematic to understand them as 'the religious feeling'.

II.

Once again, and despite the cautious results so far: on the basis of Kant's critique of reason, one could easily talk about a religious feeling. There is an extensively analysed feeling caused by reason that is active in the centre of our rational self-conception. One would have to extrapolate from this feeling, I think, when wondering about the conception of religious feeling in Kant's philosophy. I am referring to the moral feeling of respect for the law that I mentioned in the beginning. Kant has fought hard to solve the problem of the motivation for acting in accordance with the moral law and the corresponding duty. In the *Moral Mrongovius* from 1770 he writes:

> When I judge by reason that the action is morally good, much is still missing for me to undertake the action that I have so judged. But if this judgement moves me so that I undertake the action, then it is the moral feeling. Nobody can and will accept that the intellect can have a moving capacity, surely the intellect can judge, how this judgement could motivate so that it turns into an incentive, the will to undertake an action, to understand this is the philosopher's stone.[24]

The 'breakthrough of 1769' is not long ago at this point. One can clearly see that Kant is still directly influenced by Hume's conception of reason as a passive capacity. In the context of his own, early conception of reason, he is looking for a feeling that alone could motivate the practical implementation of knowledge or insights. In the first critical work on morals from 1785, this still has not changed:

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[22] CPR, pp. 488, 492.
[23] CpR, p. 130.
[24] Immanuel Kant, *Moral Mrongovius*, AA Vol. 27/II, p. 1428.

> In order for a sensibly affected rational being to will that which reason alone prescribes, the 'ought', there obviously must belong to it a faculty of reason to *instil* a *feeling of pleasure* or satisfaction in the fulfilment of duty, hence a causality of reason to determine sensibility in accordance with its principles.[25]

After the conceptual overcoming of moral sensualism – which Kant had seriously considered until the mid-1760s in his search for the principle of morals, while being unsatisfied with the cognitivism of rationalistic German enlightenment ethics – he still sees a systematic role for feeling in morality that is systematically restricted, but also systematically validated. Feeling cannot constitute the foundation of morality, but it must be the motivation for acting upon what reason considers as a good action. Kant does not employ feelings as the justification of morality, but as moral motivation. His intransigence to only accept an 'incentive' for moral actions that stems from reason alone, without any empirical elements, now becomes more resolute while acknowledging the necessity of an emotional embedding of morals, and Kant also maintains it in his future work. He wants to solve the problem of motivation by postulating a *feeling* that moves us towards acting. The point is not solely to identify a feeling that might provide moral motivation. It also has to be a feeling that can be shown to be an effect of reason: *a feeling self-effected by reason* (GMM, p. 401) is the term that Kant will coin for it. Due to his methodological insistence that there must not be any heteronomous influences in the operation of reason, Kant, in his analysis of the incentive for pure practical reason, makes huge efforts to show how we should understand this feeling.

In the description of this feeling as the incentive of pure practical reason, it is first characterized on a purely formal level. This is supposed to strengthen the feeling's a priori character and adds the mechanical model of pressure and counterpressure through the picture of 'removing the counterpoise' to the characterization. Kant first formally claims that the moral law has a 'negative effect' on the senses: 'For all inclination and every sensible impulse is founded on feeling, and the negative effect produced on feeling (by the check on the inclinations) is itself

[25] Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785), AA Vol. IV (henceforth; GMM), p. 460. In English: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. by Allen W. Wood.

feeling.'[26] These effects of the moral law are due to its aim of bringing all inclinations under a generalizable maxim. By this restriction of potential determinants that could impede the influence of the moral law on the maxims of action, the path is also cleared for this influence:

> For by the fact that the conception of the moral law deprives self-love of its influence, and self-conceit of its illusion, it lessens the obstacle to pure practical reason and produces the conception of the superiority of its objective law to the impulses of the sensibility; and thus, by removing the counterpoise, it gives relatively greater weight to the law in the judgement of reason (in the case of a will affected by the aforesaid impulses). (CpR, pp. 75f.)

'Thus', i.e. with regard to such a dialectics of reason's pure self-reference, Kant can determine respect for the law as an element in our awareness of the moral law – even as a necessary element: it is 'morality itself, subjectively considered as a motive' (CpR, p. 76).

This is supposed to illustrate the feeling's character of being caused by pure reason, i.e. being free from heteronomous elements. These elementary stipulations form the intelligible structure of the theory. If this was all, however, we would find it difficult that we are in fact talking about a *feeling* here. But on a different, a second, level, Kant also attempts to show the effects of the feeling. Being aware of the moral law, 'our pathologically affected self', through which 'our nature as sensible beings' makes its demands 'as if it constituted our entire self' (CpR, p. 74), is restrained. The permissive attitude towards our inclinations in self-love is restricted 'to the condition of agreement with this law' (CpR, p. 73). Self-conceit is 'indefinitely check[ed]' (CpR, p. 74). By restricting our inclinations, the moral law causes a feeling of 'unpleasantness' (CpR, p. 75) and 'pain' (CpR, p. 74), hence a strong 'impression of displeasure' (CpR, p. 78). It *humbles* us 'in our self-consciousness' (CpR, p. 74), which at the same time quasi automatically causes – by a law of acknowledging what is stronger – a feeling of respect for the cause of the humiliation. This respect is also a 'positive feeling' as the 'humiliation on the sensible side, is an elevation of the moral, i.e., practical, esteem for the law itself on the intellectual side'. The self in its supersensible existence – as a free person – partakes in this elevation (CpR, p. 79).

[26] CpR, pp. 72f.

The *mortification of our self-love* (CpR, p. 74) corresponds to an *elevation of our self-esteem* due to the promotion of pure rational activity, i.e. admitting the law into the maxims. In the feeling of respect, the law restricts the pathologically affected self and sets the actual, rational self free.

The considerations at the end of Book I help us understand this feeling caused by reason and its affinity with religious consciousness: in the *Critical Analytic of Pure Practical Reason*, Kant reflects on the justification of the perspective from which the subject 'in the conscience of his supersensible existence' (CpR, p. 98) claims the 'transcendental freedom' of his actions (CpR, pp. 96f.). Here the reference to a guilty conscience due to actions the subject should rather have refrained from doing takes the role of a persuasive argument: a guilty conscience *ex negativo* indicates the existence of an awareness of responsibility for one's actions and thus freedom. In his description of 'that wonderful faculty in us which we call conscience' that is articulated in 'repentance for a long past action' as a 'painful feeling produced by the moral sentiment' (CpR, p. 98), Kant presents the form of respect for the law in a retrospective judgement. In the *Groundwork*, Kant had already mentioned 'self-contempt and inner abhorrence' (GMM, p. 426) in the face of a bad action as a modification of respect in case of a deviation. So if we find it hard to imagine what respect for the law is supposed to be, the guilty conscience – due to its reflection on possible and 'long past' actions – provides an illustration from everyday life. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes that 'pain' from 'remorse of conscience' is – in analogy to the feeling of respect – 'moral' in origin, but its effect is 'physical' (MM, p. 394). This constitutes a paraphrase of what he calls a feeling caused by reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.[27]

In my larger work on Kant,[28] I have tried to explain the inner structure of this moral feeling, the only legitimate incentive of pure practical reason, by the retrospective use of the analysis of the feeling of the sublime. In the feeling of the sublime, as analyzed in the *Critique of Judgement*, no pure pleasure is experienced as in the feeling of the beautiful. It is rather

[27] In *Religion within the Boundaries*, he will then write: 'Hence conscience might also be defined as follows: it is the moral faculty of judgment, passing judgment upon itself; only this definition would stand in great need of a prior elucidation of the concepts contained in it.' (REL, p. 186)

[28] Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten*, see footnote 1.

a mixed feeling. Unlike beauty, the sublime is not accommodating for the imagination. It is overwhelming for the imagination and by the way – due to the interplay of the free schematizing of aesthetic reflection – for the intellect. The object is too big for us to represent it in an act of intuition (the mathematically-sublime), or it is too menacing and violent for us to bear it in quiet contemplation (the dynamically-sublime). Kant describes the feeling of the sublime as the classic case of a *fascination*, being torn between two poles, as a mutual attraction and rejection. In terms of our faculties, Kant analyzes this dynamics of contradictions as the failure of imagination and intellect, a tremor that is compensated by a counter-move of our mood. This is done by reason, as the capacity to draw conclusions, the capacity to provide totality in thinking, 'filling in', so to say. In contrast to the reference to beauty, no playful reflection between imagination and intellect arises here, but an agonal reflection between imagination and reason that relates the unsolved impression to its totalizing ideas. Facing something of enormous size – like the starry sky – the subject relates the idea provided by imagination to the idea of infinite size. Facing an enormous superiority that shows the subject its own physical frailty – like the ocean in the grip of a thunderstorm – the subject relates to the idea of supersensible freedom. In this way, we are torn between awe and joy, between consternation and self-assurance, because in the face of an abysmal challenge for imagination, we become aware of 'a power of resistance of quite another kind' (CJ, p. 261), as Kant writes. About this resistance in realizing the supersensible aspect of our determination, which is caused by a threat and terror, Kant says: we have 'a *feeling* of our possessing a pure and self-sufficient reason'.[29] This passage provides one of the formulations where feeling is described as a propositional attitude ('... *that p*'). It thereby shows that the feeling described this way also has an epistemic function. Due to a sense impression, and in aesthetic distance, the subject experiences a dynamics of *pleasure by displeasure* that results from an elevation by humiliation. In experiencing the sublime, the subject is filled with an 'intellectual feeling' (CJ, p. 192). Its formal shape as a variant of the aesthetically reflecting judgement influenced by rational ideas sheds new light on the analysis of the moral feeling of respect. The effect of imagining an object on the subject having this experience can be described by 'a rapidly changing attraction and rejection' in the feeling of the sublime. Analogously,

[29] CJ, B 98, my emphasis.

in the feeling of respect for the law, it is the simultaneous humiliation and elevation in the face of the moral law's sublimity.[30]

IV.

There is an often quoted formulation that describes this closeness between an aesthetically describable experience of the sublime and the effect of the moral law. It also contains a clear hint at a religious feeling:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. [...] The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality [...]. (CpR, pp. 161f.)

Two aspects are important in the present discussion: first, in the dialectic of a mood between annihilation (*the former view annihilates, as it were, my importance*) and elevation (*the second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth*), the feeling of the sublime is laid out. Two years later, Kant will analyze it in the *Critique of Judgement*.[31] Second, Kant talks about admiration and *awe* here. When it is mentioned for the second time – 'But though admiration and respect may excite to inquiry [...]' – we associate it with the moral feeling of respect for the law that is analyzed in the chapter on motives. And we thus realize a new connotation in the notion of respect. Respect and awe are hardly the same. Awe is more than respect. Awe seems to designate the dimension of 'morals in reference to God' as the creator, legislator and judge.

This fits with a characterization that can already be found in the *Groundwork*, where the chapter on motivation from the *Critique of Practical Reason* is anticipated, albeit in shorter form: 'Authentically, respect is the representation of a worth that infringes on my self-love.

[30] See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant´s 'Critique of Judgement'* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[31] It is also noteworthy that the starry sky is the only example for the 'mathematically-sublime', the feeling of inconceivable size.

Thus it is something that is considered as an object neither of inclination nor of fear, even though it has something analogical to both at the same time.'[32] Neither inclination nor fear, although analogical to both: *awe* – for an object of thought that makes me feel the simultaneous humiliation and elevation of my self by its sublimity. Hence we can think of the religious feeling in Kant as the feeling of respect for the 'author of the world', whose causality is 'consistent with the moral law' (CJ, § 87). It would be the feeling of respect for God as the creator, legislator and judge of the world. Given the overwhelming size of its object, the feeling would take the shape of awe.

This result is confirmed and expanded in the analytic of the sublime in the *third critique*, where Kant explicitly discusses 'reverence for the sublime' (CJ, p. 264). In this specification of the doctrine of the sublime, the concept and theory of the religious feeling are also instances of the Copernican Revolution – i.e. of the methodological turn towards the subject of cognition, of thinking and experiencing, that characterizes Kant's transcendental idealism. In his aesthetic-ethical debut from 1764, Kant still stated: 'Sublime properties cause *high regard*.'[33] In the *third critique*, he specifies this characterisation by not only explaining the aesthetic feeling by the concept of respect (CJ, p. 257), but by also calling it *awe* in comparison to fear of God (CJ, p. 260) and religious humility (CJ, p. 264). After addressing natural phenomena, under the concept of the mathematically-sublime, that convey the idea of infinite size to the experiencing subject,[34] beginning with § 28, Kant moves on to a variant of the sublime headed by the concept of the dynamic-sublime. This form of the sublime is found in the idea of a simply superior might: 'Bold, overhanging, and as it were threatening, rocks; clouds piled up in the sky, moving with lightning flashes and thunder peals; volcanoes in all their violence of destruction; hurricanes with their track of devastation; the boundless ocean in a state of tumult; the lofty waterfall of a mighty river, and such like; these exhibit our faculty of resistance as insignificantly small in comparison with their might. But the sight of them is the more

[32] GMM, p. 401, note.

[33] Immanuel Kant, 'Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen' (1764), Akademie-Ausgabe Vol. II, p. 211 (Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime), my emphasis.

[34] The example for this is the starry sky Kant talked about in the conclusion of the *second critique:* 'If we call the sight of the starry heaven sublime [...]' (CJ, p. 270)

attractive, the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in security.' (CJ § 28, p. 261)

Provided only that we are in security: this conditional is decisive for aesthetic reflection. Only the potentially destructive might that is primarily a natural object of fear is a candidate for the aesthetic feeling and judgement. But the aesthetic judgement and feeling are only possible in the face of this might if the subject is unaffected by this object's actual effects. Only when the terror is suspended while seeing the terrible can an aesthetic attitude towards the object arise. Concerning the exquisite objects of this aesthetic experience, the 'mountain peaks rearing themselves to heaven, deep chasms and streams raging therein, deep-shadowed solitudes that dispose one to melancholy meditations', etc., Kant in order to phenomenologically approach the feeling of the sublime also talks of astonishment that borders on terror, dread and *holy awe* (CJ, p. 269).

A side-product of the thought developed here is that it also provides a basis for an *aesthetics of the religious*. Given the character and size of the issue, it is not just coincidence that Kant talks about God when explaining the possibility of a terror suspended in distance:

> *Thus* the virtuous man fears God without being afraid of Him; because to wish to resist Him and His commandments, he thinks is a case as to which *he* need not be anxious. But in every such case that he thinks as not impossible, he cognises Him as fearful. (CJ, pp. 260f., my emphasis)

The analogy has its limits (in the formal characterization of integrating fear and terror into the distance-requirement), since the fear of God is not an *aesthetic* feeling. But it is remarkable that, according to Kant, the aesthetic feeling of the sublime and the awe of God can be explained by reference to each other. Even the point of the 'subreption' (CJ, p. 257) that Kant develops in the analysis of the dynamic-sublime (the fact that the experiencing subject's own sublimity over the destructive superiority of nature is enjoyed in relishing awe,[35] due to 'a kind of self-preservation', CJ, p. 261), has its correspondence in religious feeling. Kant uses the example of forces of nature – which are presented as the expression of divine anger and sublimity – to show that the mood of 'subjection,

[35] Kant talks about 'respect for our own destination, which by a certain subreption we attribute to an Object of nature (conversion of respect for the Idea of humanity in our own subject into respect for the Object)' here (CJ, p. 257).

abasement, and a feeling of complete powerlessness' only seems to be the appropriate attitude in approaching the godhead. It is not true that 'prostration, adoration with bent head, with contrite, anxious demeanour and voice, seems to be the only fitting behaviour in presence of the Godhead' (CJ, p. 263).

Just as the enlightenment thinker will insist in his *Religion within the Boundaries* that the only reasonable form of fear of God and worship is a moral conduct of life,[36] he already derives a similar use for the religious feeling from the analysis of the sublime: the mood that is 'far from being necessarily bound up with the Idea of the *sublimity* of a religion and its object' needs to be discarded.

> The man who is actually afraid, because he finds reasons for fear in himself, whilst conscious by his culpable disposition of offending against a Might whose will is irresistible and at the same time just, is not in the frame of mind for admiring the divine greatness. For this a mood of calm contemplation and a quite free judgement are needed. Only if he is conscious of an upright disposition pleasing to God do those operations of might serve to awaken in him the Idea of the sublimity of this Being, for then he recognises in himself a sublimity of disposition conformable to His will; and thus he is raised above the fear of such operations of nature, which he no longer regards as outbursts of His wrath. (CJ, pp. 263f.)

Against the background of the correspondence between God's sublimity and the sublimity of practical rational belief, which justifies the counterpart sublimity of the rational human being, Kant dares to understand 'even humility, [as] a stern judgement upon his own self' and at the same time as a 'sublime state of mind consisting in a voluntary subjection of himself to the pain of remorse, in order that its causes may be gradually removed'. (CJ, p. 264) This explication of the religious attitude as an element of practical self-awareness can also help us understand that, according to Kant, in moral consciousness ('he could do this because he ought to') the human being realizes 'a depth of divine dispositions' that 'make him feel a holy awe given the size and sublimity of his true determination'.[37] The brief sketch of religious feeling in the *third critique* – where this is not at all the main subject – already leads into the centre of Kant's critique of reason: the awe of God implies awe of

[36] Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

[37] Immanuel Kant, 'Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis', Akademie-Ausgabe, Vol. VIII, pp. 287f.

one's own destination by 'dispositions' that allow us to fulfil the claim of reason which culminates in the idea of God.

The religious feeling we were looking for would thus be the feeling of awe that can be construed in the extrapolation of the feeling of respect for the law. The latter itself can be better understood in analogy to the feeling of the sublime.

Hence the thesis of my interpretation and extrapolation is: a characterization of the religious feeling in Kant's critiques of reason and their analyses of feelings is possible. It has to be understood in analogy to the feeling of respect for the law and thus to the feeling of the sublime. The religious feeling would, as certain formulations suggest, refer to awe of the inconceivable size of God.[38] The religious feeling of awe would also be a feeling caused by reason – an instance of a *judgement-based feeling*. The respective judgement is a reflexive judgement, an achievement of the reflecting faculty of judgement. The religious feeling would obviously resemble Schleiermacher's 'plain feeling of dependence', but given the analogy with the dialectics of the sublime, it would also include the complementary component of self-elevation.

In the 'Analytic of the Sublime', Kant establishes an explicit connection between the concept of the sublime and the religious feeling:

> Perhaps there is no sublimer passage in the Jewish Law than the command, Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything [...]. This command alone can explain the enthusiasm that the Jewish people in their moral period felt for their religion, when they compared themselves with other peoples. (CJ, p. 27)

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[38] Compared to the mathematically-sublime, everything else seems small. The dynamically-sublime is the impression of something that is plainly powerful. Both would be integrated in this concept of the supreme being.

THE RATIONALITY OF HUMILITY

RODERICH BARTH

Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen

Abstract. In this paper I explore humility as a paradigm, with reference to recent debates over the morality and rationality of emotions, and to the relation between religion and emotion. In Ancient Greek ethics, humility did not yet play a role; with the rise of Christianity, however, it becomes one of the cardinal virtues – only to disappear again with the onset of modernity. Against a culture-pessimistic interpretation of this development, this article begins by characterising the relation between virtue and emotion, before reconstructing the inner rationality of humility and showing how it can be traced through several transformations to a modern ethics of responsibility. Against this background, possible manifestations of the humble attitude in the present are made plausible.

I. THE DEBATE ABOUT THE MORALITY OF FEELINGS

Recently, the debate about emotions has grown to such an extent that an overview has become difficult. It covers not only different areas of philosophy, but also neuro-, social and cultural sciences.[1] However, the so-called *emotional turn* already took place in the last two decades of the 20th century. Since the turn of the millennium, the number of publications about the topic has also significantly increased in continental Europe. Predecessors of this debate in the Anglo-Saxon language area reach back even further. Those beginnings – such as Anthony Kenny's 1963

[1] The publication database of the Freie Universität Berlin's interdisciplinary research cluster 'Languages of Emotion' provides a good overview, available at: <http://www.loe.fu-berlin.de/zentrum/publikationen/datenbank/index.html> [accessed 19/07/2014].

study *Action, Emotion and Will*[2] – and the further course of the debate show that moral questions are a central motif for the re-evaluation of emotions. But the new approach to emotions was not supposed to merely be a revival of traditional views within sentimentalism, such as Adam Smith's and David Hume's moral sense philosophy. The point is rather nothing less than a 'fundamentally new approach to construing normative-ethical theories'.[3]

The reason why a simple return to the classics of sentimentalism has been impossible, even for analytical philosophers, is the long shadow of Kant's ethics. The fact is often overlooked, although it was critical for the formation of his practical philosophy, that Kant himself had sympathies for sentimentalism in the time prior to his critiques. Intense consideration of Francis Hutcheson's moral sense led him to the well thought-out belief that objective and universal norms could never be justified by reference to moral feelings.[4] Only after this discussion did Kant uncompromisingly turn towards justifying ethics by pure and practical reason. According to this tradition, norms or the ethical quality of actions can only be justified by reference to distinctly rational *reasons*.[5] Of course, Kant's conception of reason was often modified and expanded in modernity. Nevertheless, modern ethical discourse is determined by the rational justification of good reasons. Theological contributions to current socio-political questions also rarely refer directly to their religious traditions, but rather defend those rational arguments whose conformity with those traditions one hopes to show.

The reference to justifying reasons, however, notoriously leaves a problem unanswered: knowing the good reasons for a certain choice of action does not at all mean that – to use Kant's terminology – this knowledge could also determine our will. In modern ethics this is also called the problem of motivation in deontology. How can justifying reasons also, as factual motives, determine a possible action's agent?

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[2] Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994) (Reprint of the 1963 Edition).

[3] Sabine A. Döring, 'Die Moralität der Gefühle. Eine Art Einleitung', in *Die Moralität der Gefühle*, ed. by Döring / Verena Mayer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 15–35 (p. 15).

[4] Cf. Dieter Henrich, 'Hutcheson und Kant', in *Kant-Studien*, 49 (1957/58), 49–69.

[5] For the classical debate about the status of reasons, cf. Donald Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons and Causes', in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 60 (1963), 685–700; Georg Henrik von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1971).

This problem has not only led to an often anti-Kantian renaissance of virtue ethics,[6] but also to a renewed interest in the emotions. The precise advantage of classical sentimentalism, with its justification of moral actions, was that it also provided a veritable motivation to act. However, if this advantage is to be saved against rationalistic objections of Kantian provenance, a new conception of emotions is necessary. The basic thesis of recent theories of emotions is therefore: emotions are not the irrational awareness of subjective states – as many classical theories of emotions have suggested, that are now subsumed under the label *theories of feelings*. Instead, emotions have their own form of rationality. The latter is characterized by intentionality and representationality. Emotions are not only directed towards objects, but they also represent or evaluate them in a certain way.

According to this roughly cognitivist conception, emotions are comparable to perceptions or evaluations. Consequently, the recent debate about emotions also leaves room for discussing the epistemic status and the meaning of values.[7] The advantage with respect to the aforementioned moral dilemma is that we can now attribute a form of rationality or intelligence to motivational emotions – even an emotionally caused weakness of will. This basically means that, given a certain object or situation, emotions can be appropriate or inappropriate. If we could also state criteria for appropriateness, emotional evaluations could indeed be acknowledged as rational reasons for actions. In this sense, emotions would be good reasons and, at the same time, strong motives.

In the re-evaluation of the role of emotions in human life that took place in neuro sciences, philosophy and cultural studies, one area has been mostly neglected. Since the question whether there are qualitatively specific religious feelings at all is controversial, this area can be described more carefully as follows: it concerns the relationship between religion and feelings. It should be uncontroversial that we can refer to religion here, since religion is a centuries-old culture of feelings and expressions that are reflected in the doctrine of affections and social teaching. In what follows, I therefore want to investigate this relationship by means of the example of humility. In a first step, I will justify why humility seems to me to be a suitable example.

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[6] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

[7] Cf. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. by Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 475–613.

II. THE VARIED HISTORY OF HUMILITY

For this purpose, I want to employ a narrative that can often be encountered in relation to the concept of humility, although historical research is, with good reasons, working on polishing some of its edges. According to this well-known narrative, humility marks an important break in the history of Western ethics. In a slight exaggeration, we might say that humility is still unknown in Greek ethics. In antiquity, the lexemes *tapeinos/ tapeinophrosune* that were then continued, by mediation of the Latin *humilis/humilitas*, as the English term *humility*, were used as *negative* predicates. However, with the rapid rise of Christianity in the ancient world, humility quickly became the epitome of morality.[8] Humility cannot be found next to justice, bravery, moderation and wisdom in pre-Christian catalogues of virtues. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, he warns us that our verbal expressions should be clear, but by no means *tapeinos*, i.e. ignoble or commonplace.[9] With Origen, by contrast, humility has already risen to be one of the cardinal virtues. It is even praised as the fundamental virtue from which all other virtues stem. Parallel to this development of humility into a cardinal virtue, it also turns, as it were, into the epitome of the Christian conduct of life. The focal point for this is the monastic form of life, the class of the perfected ones, in whose growing regulation humility is structured into steps of inner and outer self-humiliating asceticism – from a submissive poise to the absolute obedience towards even obvious caprice of the superior. In this epoch, Augustine summed up his deep theology of humility and, at the same time, reshaped it into a theology of grace.[10]

If we follow this narrative, we have to talk about a radical transvaluation of values with respect to the impact of Christianity on the ancient world. Bad style and a despised low moral and social rank turned

[8] Cf. a classic and a more recent study about the topic: Albrecht Dihle, 'Demut', in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*, ed. by Theodor Klauser, vol. III (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1957), pp. 735–778; Ekkehard Mühlenberg, *Altchristliche Lebensführung zwischen Bibel und Tugendlehre. Ethik bei den griechischen Philosophen und den frühen Christen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

[9] Aristotle, *The Poetics*, transl. by W. Hamilton Fyfe (Cambridge Mass.: Havard University Press, 1965), pp. 84–85 (1458a.22). For the catalogue of classical ancient virtues, cf. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. by H. Rachkham (Cambridge Mass.: Havard University Press, 1968), Book II– V.

[10] Cf. A. Dihle, loc.cit. (note 8), pp. 755–773.

into a moral ideal that even exceeded the aristocratic virtues of bravery and wisdom. A schematizing exaggeration of this kind will, however, not survive historical criticism – for the reason alone that this development took place under the conditions of a great cultural synthesis in which the self-understanding of the Jewish-Christian tradition was shaped in the medium of Greek thinking and the society of late antiquity. If we take this into account, we can also find many historical continuities besides the discontinuity that I have just described. From a systemic perspective, however, I have decided to ignore those details. One reason for this is that there is another important aspect concerning this great historical development, and it is at least as astonishing as the boom of humility in the Christian West. Given the significance of humility for the identity of a Christian culture it is hard to imagine that Christian ethics could also do without the concept of humility. But this is exactly what happened. A look at the ethical theories of German Protestantism can illustrate this surprising fact. Wolfgang Trillhaas, Martin Honecker, Trutz Rendtorff, Eilert Herms, Dietz Lange or, more recently, Wilfried Härle – humility can usually not even be found in the index of their works, and there is no systematically relevant role for humility.[11] How can this be explained?

I think there are two main reasons. The first was already hinted at in the denominational characterization of this fact – catholic moral doctrine is much less obvious in this respect. First, one can see an after-effect of Luther's highly ambivalent relationship towards humility here, it seems. The notion of humility can originally be found in the context of his new concept of faith, which developed out of late medieval penitential theology. Humility represents the religious self-realization of the sinner. But as the epitome of the monastic form of life, it is increasingly affected by this criticism of legalism. In his Magnificat interpretation, Luther castigates the virtue – which exhibits itself in gestures and prepares for

[11] Wolfgang Trillhaas, *Ethik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970); Martin Honecker, *Einführung in die Theologische Ethik. Grundlagen und Grundbegriffe* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1990); Trutz Rendtorff, *Ethik. Grundelemente, Methodologie und Konkretionen einer ethischen Theologie*, 2 volumes (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990/91); Eilert Herms, *Gesellschaft gestalten. Beiträge zur evangelischen Sozialethik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991); Dietz Lange, *Ethik in evangelischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Wilfried Härle, *Ethik* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011). Also in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, ed. by John Corrigan (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), humility plays no role. A recent exception is Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Michigan / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 78–93.

receiving grace – as a 'wrong', 'made' humility, even as a 'secret pride'. Its contrast is the true humility of Mary, which is no ascetic self-humiliation, but an inner 'inclination towards lesser things', as Luther puts it. With his criticism of humility, Luther thus represents a radical aggravation of an ethical-religious dialectic of the Christian cardinal virtue. I will come back to this later. Due to his criticism of virtues, Luther returns to the literal use of language and does not translate that the Lord has seen the humility of his maiden, but: 'he has seen the nothingness of his maiden'.[12]

Of course, Luther's ambivalent relationship with humility was not the sole reason for the complete end of this tradition. It was probably decisive that humility increasingly became synonymous with a menial attitude and blind obedience towards authorities. Humility thus became incompatible with the self-understanding of modern human beings. A well-known proof for this transvaluation can be found in David Hume. In his A Treatise on Human Nature, he argues that, against the tradition of the 'schools and pulpit', one should consider humility not as a virtue, but as a vice.[13] The result of this development is then confirmed by, e.g., Paul Tillich, who, in his *Systematic Theology*, almost casually states that there is an opposition between the humility and the dignity and freedom of human beings.[14] Nobody has contributed more to humility's loss of prestige and the thorough alienation towards the former prime Christian virtue than Friedrich Nietzsche. He turned an unease that had been accumulating for a long time into a provocative aggravation with a vigorous effect. For his biting criticism of Christianity, the 'dangerous and defamatory ideal' of humility is paradigmatic: Christianity has turned 'timid baseness' into virtuous humility by 'lies'. For Nietzsche, it is almost the epitome of an ethics of resentment and 'herd morality' by which Christianity has suppressed the self-affirmation and self-enhancement of life for far too long.[15]

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[12] *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7 (Weimar 1897), p. 559: 'er hat angeshen die nichtickeyt seyner magt'.

[13] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Sect. VII.

[14] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 288.

[15] Cf., e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. by Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 27. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1885–1887. Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 12, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin/New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag / De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 108ff.

III. RATIONALIZING HUMILITY

For now, this sketch of the history of the concept has to suffice as a background for systematic considerations. I will address some detailed aspects of the problem later. This varied history of the rapid rise of humility in antiquity and its loss of prestige in modernity could suggest regarding it as a prime example of the often mourned 'loss of virtue'.[16] For the 'malaise of modernity' is mostly due to a 'self'[17] that is entirely thrown back to itself and hence – as one could extend the schema – to a self that lacks the object of any humility, because it lacks any religious-metaphysical frame of reference. In what follows, I would like to resist that temptation and suggest a different interpretation of the state of affairs. In this, I can at least partially follow Dietrich Rössler. In contrast to the so-called mainstream, he has at least reflected on the fate of humility, to be more precise: in the context of a discussion of the thesis about the 'loss of virtue'.[18] Rössler convincingly shows that the claim of such a decline cannot be proven historically, and it also contradicts the innermost nature of morality. Morality is necessarily bound to the changing historical-cultural conditions. So it is almost ethically demanded that certain virtues vanish over the course of time, and new virtues develop. Of course, a third possibility is conceivable and can also be observed, i.e. that virtues survive various epochs, but their inner meanings change. Rössler does not think that humility is a virtue of this type, but regards it as bound to the conditions of life in the middle ages and not compatible with modernity. This is exactly the point where I would like to object and develop a different interpretation. For this purpose, I will address the question of the 'rationality of emotion' that has been discussed in the more recent debate, and present a slightly different view.

Given the historical background, it is recommendable for a further characterization of humility to start with the question of the relationship between virtue and emotion.[19] According to the Aristotelian tradition, virtues are basic attitudes that are developed by education and habituation

[16] Alasdair MacIntyre, loc.cit. (note 6).

[17] Cf. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Havard University Press, 1989), and *The Malaise of Modernity* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi Press 1992).

[18] Dietrich Rössler, *Akzeptierte Abhängigkeit. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Ethik*, ed. by F. Voigt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 16–35.

[19] Cf. Verena Mayer, 'Tugend und Gefühl', in Sabine Döring / Mayer (eds.), *Die Moralität der Gefühle* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 125–149.

and that dispose us in a certain way. Virtues can indeed have an emotional basis, or, as Aristotle says: refer to the *pathe*, the passions, even though this is not necessary. One example would be the dianoetic virtue of wisdom. If feelings are involved, however, virtue requires a certain distance towards the passions – not necessarily in the sense of the stoic ideal of emotionlessness (*apatheia*), but in the sense of an integration of basic emotions through reason. In accordance with the current philosophical interest, Aristotle does attribute a necessary function to emotions, seen as part of our capacity to aspire, for our motivation to act. At the same time, attitudes or dispositions are no simple emotions like fear, joy or anger, but also necessarily contain cognitive and conative aspects besides the emotive factors. If we understand humility, in a virtue ethical sense, as a basic attitude or disposition of this kind, it is not so much a simple emotion, but rather a certain attitude towards emotions.

Primarily in cultural sciences, but also philosophy, it has been pointed out that complex emotions, but even more so emotional dispositions, are not anthropological constants. They are rather determined by cultural factors. Verbalizations, symbols, narrative patterns and social forms of behaviour already determine the way we emotionally interpret certain experiences. This applies even more to the attitudes that are then acquired.[20] So if we want to identify the alleged rationality of such attitudes, we should first take the formative cultural patterns and interpretations into account. Humility is a particularly good piece of evidence for cultural relativity – and not only because of its varied history leading up to its vanishing in the present, but especially in its historical beginnings.

Wilhelm Hermann, the last protestant ethicist who was seriously interested in humility, has most notably defended the view that we can only understand the original sense of the humble attitude if we look at Jesus' humility.[21] Jesus as the paragon of humility – humility as *imitatio Christi* – this is in fact a motif that is a common thread in the confusing multitude of Western theology of humility. With reference to early Christianity, the New Testament Scholar Ulrich Luz already talked about

[20] Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). Cf. also Goldie's premise of the narrative structure of the emotions: Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 4ff.

[21] Wilhelm Herrmann, 'Art. Demut', in *Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1898), pp. 571–576; cf. Herrmann, *Ethik,* 5th edition, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1913), pp. 224–230.

an 'ethical Christology or Christological ethics' in his commentary to the classical section in Matt. 11:29.[22] The person of Jesus – prefigured by motifs from Jewish tradition – is hence the cultural framework in which the sense of the humble attitude becomes intensified. The self-surrender to the divine will and thus – according to the double commandment of love – to the neighbour, culminating in the humiliating crucifixion, is understood as the expression of highest, divine dignity. In the personal unity of this contrast lies the original rationality of humility. Notably Augustine has contributed to its final conceptualization: 'Do you wish to lay hold of the loftiness of God? First catch hold of God's lowliness.'[23] The logic of humility results in the interpretation of the concrete figure of Jesus. At the same time, a feature can be seen in the inner dialectics of loftiness and lowliness that will not only be continued in the tradition of humility, but will count as a feature of religious feelings and attitudes in general.[24]

When the eschatological expectations of Early Christianity are left behind and the challenge of a Christian conduct of life within the ancient world arises, humility becomes subject to a *second* wave of rationalisation. Roughly speaking, from the Early Christian roots an understanding of humility in terms of penitential theology develops first. Here humility entirely becomes a matter of religious self-assessment and is understood as contriteness in the face of one's own sinfulness and lack of rights against God and the neighbour. At the same time, the outer practice of self-humiliating asceticism arises, which attains a methodological

[22] This refers to: '... learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' Cf. Ulrich Lutz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (EKK I/2) (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger Verlgag/ Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), p. 224.

[23] Augustinus, 'Sermo 117', in Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi, Opera Omnia, tom. 5 (PL 38 / Migne) (Paris 1861), pp. 661–671 (p. 671): 'Vis capere celsitudinem Dei? Cape prius humilitatem Dei.'

[24] Cf., e.g., Howard Wettstein, 'Awe and the Religious Life: A Naturalistic Perspective', in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, XXI (1997), 257–280 (pp. 260ff.). Wettstein explicitly uses the term *humility* and talks about a 'duality – humbled yet elevated [...] duality that seems very close to the bone of the religious orientation encouraged by so much of Jewish religious life (p. 261). Cf. also, e.g., Georg Simmel, *Gesammelte Schriften zur Religionssozioloige*, ed. by H. J. Helle (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989), pp. 38, 40, 53, 55 et al. For Rudolf Otto's theory of religious feelings, for which this structure will also be systematically relevant, cf. Roderich Barth, 'Religion und Gefühl. Schleiermacher, Otto und die aktuelle Emotionsdebatte', in *Religion und Gefühl. Praktisch-theologische Perspektiven einer Theorie der Emotionen*, ed. by L. Charbonnier, M. Mader and B. Weyel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), pp. 15–48.

character in monastic rules. In the debate about this penitential theology that can, for example, already be seen in Celsus, a transformation takes place that acknowledges humility in the doctrine of virtues of Greek thinking. For this development, which comprises a distinction between right and wrong forms of humility, the contrast with pride is decisive. Classical Greek literature could already explain the tragic complications of life by a hubris against the gods.[25] Greek ethics also knew virtues such as modesty, unpretentiousness or the Aristotelian concept of *mesotes*. But still the aristocratic ethics of the ancient world regarded megalopsychia – which can be translated as magnanimity or pride – as one of its finest virtues.[26] This conceptual field is the background for the further rationalisation and establishment of humility. Now it is simply equated with Socratic modesty or even stoic apathy and thus separated from the pure resignation into one's sinfulness. Subsequently, humility rises to a religiously re-interpreted megalopsychia or mangnanimitas, in the sense of striving for the truly good and becoming God-like. By contrast, pride turns into a feeling of self-worth that is merely based on social status and ethical achievements and hence the fundamental vice of the *superbia*. It even becomes the epitome of sin. From now on, pride and humility form a contrast. The latter, as the basic virtue, has to justify the moral-religious quality of any behaviour. Augustine merges the virtue ethical and penitential theological interpretation into a theology of grace and deepens it. His concise formulation of this transvaluation of the logic of passions is: 'There is [...] something in humility which [...] exalts the heart, and something in pride which debases it.'[27]

This second, although many-voiced and heterogeneous, rationalisation of humility obviously means a significant change from the original notion of a humble attitude that was personified in Jesus. The understanding of humility as an attitude of realizing oneself and one's sins was presupposed in all of these conceptions. It is not compatible with the humility of Jesus, even if the monastic self-humiliation tries to return to the worldlessness of Early Christianity – in contrast to a virtue ethical arrangement with the world. The ideal of Christ's humility becomes a saving deed of God that is unachievable for human beings,

[25] Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté 2. Finitude et culpabilité* (livre II. La symbolique du mal) (Paris: Aubier 1988), p. 355–373.

[26] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (loc. Cit. Note 19), Book IV (1123a34–1125a35).

[27] Augustine, *City of God* (De civitate dei), Book 11–22, transl. by Philip Schaff.

but it facilitates the elevation of the humble person. At the same time, the quote from Augustine also shows that humility in its opposition to pride should not exclusively be understood as a feeling of suppression, but rather as an alternative, i.e. a religiously mediated form of self-respect. The recurring dialectic of loftiness and lowliness indicates an at least formal continuity to the interpretation of Jesus' humility.

A *third* rationalisation of the conception of humility takes place in modern ethics. This specifically modern interpretation of humility is related to the question: what could be the reason for human self-respect? And it is separated from the theology of mercy, although not necessarily from a religious context. Since the beginnings of this debate, the moral use of human freedom has been identified as the justification of pride and self-respect in a positive sense. The value and dignity of a human being are due to her ability to responsibly determine herself. This is a broad consensus within modern ethics. By now, Christian ethics beyond denominational borders has mostly agreed with this consensus. But the modern conceptions of human dignity are accompanied by the insight that this is primarily a *determination* of human beings, and the factual realization of freedom can merely approximate it. The use of freedom by finite individuals in their particular contexts is factually lagging behind its ideal and is hence deeply ambiguous. For this reason, quite different modern ethicists have been led from the opposition of pride and humility to the description of the concrete conscious shape of responsible freedom. At the same time, they distinguish – in the sense of the criticism of humility from Celsus to Luther – between a virtuous and a vicious or bootlicking humility. For instance, Descartes' *generosité*, Kant's respect for the moral law or Hartmann's moral pride explicitly include a virtuous or moral humility.[28] Humility, correctly understood, therefore does not at all contradict the modern awareness of freedom, but is rather reconstructed as its necessary prerequisite.

[28] René Descartes, *Les Passions de L'ame*, art. 149–159; Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*; Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1962), p. 477: 'True pride and true humility apparently belong together out of necessity, they demand each other, can only exist in synthesis.' Even David Hume, loc. Cit. (note 13), who does not reformulate a positive concept of humility, maintains the dialectic of loftiness and lowliness in the mixed feeling of respect/contempt. However, humility exclusively means the aspect of suppression for him. He also maintains the distinction between a positive and a problematic form of pride. For Kant's feeling of respect/awe, cf. Birgit Recki, 'Kant on Religious Feeling', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3(2014), pp. 85-99.

Let me sum up the three stages of rationalisation again: in the interpretation of the person of Jesus, the notion of devotion to the divine will and fellow beings which makes us forget our care for our own lives, gains a dignified sense. In a varied further development, humility is turned into the self-assessment of the sinner and contrasted with pride as the true, i.e. religiously justified, form of self-respect. This understanding of humility is continued by the modern discourse about freedom and integrated as factual aspects into the awareness of human autonomy as moral humility. It is interesting from the perspective of the history of culture that a structural complementarity can be seen between ethical-religious ideas of biblical religion and the basic insights of modern ethics of reason, across several steps of transformations and interpretations. This exposition of the basic logic(s) of humility, however, leaves the question of a contemporary form of humility open.

IV. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HUMBLE ATTITUDE

In the clarification of the relationship between virtue and feeling, I have called humility an inner attitude. As dispositions for certain ways of behaving, such basic attitudes are usually unconscious or, at most, only partially conscious. They only emerge from their latency in contexts and situations and actualize their innate tendencies in individual experiences and actions. As singular interpretations, such concretisations are of course structurally distinct from the underlying reservoir of senses and are necessarily a restriction of the possibilities contained within. Inner attitudes are, vice versa, the result of deposits of a multitude of cognitive, affective and conative implementations of the biographical history of one's education. If the reconstruction of the inner rationality of the humble attitude I have presented in the preceding section is correct, two features can be identified as necessary requirements. First, a relation to unconditionality is essential to this attitude. This can be seen in its reformulation in the context of modern models of moral self-determination. In terms of the example chosen above: Descartes talks about the similarity of freedom to God, Kant about the sublimity of the moral law and Hartmann about the perfection of the moral ideal and the inexorability of its demands. The dimension of unconditionality is thus relocated into human morality and does not necessarily require a religious explication. At the same time, this dimension of sense shows

a basic affinity and openness towards religious interpretations, as it can be seen ideally in Jesus' devotion to the divine will or in the religious-ethical orientation by Christ's perfect humility.

The second feature of the humble attitude is a unity in tension that results from this relation to unconditionality. It can be seen in the dialectics of loftiness and lowliness, the polarity of sin and mercy, the inner ambiguity of pride and suppression or the difference between determination and facticity. Formally, this feature could be summed up as the contrasting harmony of participation and withdrawal or immanence and transcendence. The humble attitude is, as it were, fixed in this dynamic opposition. If we now assume that an inner attitude that possesses these features can also be habitualized in the present – also since not only traditional religious, but modern interpretative schemata are available for this – this assumption can be made plausible by presenting potential manifestations of the humble attitude.

I previously noted that virtues usually refer to our emotional life or can even be regarded as specific attitudes or dispositions towards emotions. The ideal of a, to a great extent, independence from the passions represented by stoic calmness is an extreme and well-known case. Not least because it was regarded as a basic attitude, this ideal was – as we have seen – identified with the humble attitude in Christian antiquity. Robert C. Roberts has recently suggested an interpretation of this kind.[29] It seems to me, however, that this interpretation does not do justice to the inner tension of humility. If we are looking for the structural parallels with the inner unity in tension, a possible emotional expression of humility could rather be the positive, not at all humble feeling of gratitude. Just like the self-relativization in the face of something higher – in which it also participates – is typical for humility, gratitude contains knowledge about the incommensurability in relation to the gift it responds to.[30] With gratitude, I also refer to something that is, in a sense, unattainable for me and thus limiting me. But it is also bestowed upon me and elevates me.

[29] Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions* (see above, note 11), p. 88: 'Humility is not itself an emotion [...]. But humility is an emotion-disposition – primarily a negative one, a disposition *not* to feel the emotions associated with caring a lot about one's status. [...] it is the absence of a spiritually cannibalistic appetite. Humility is cannibal-anorexia, as we might say.'

[30] Cf. Georg Simmel, 'Soziologie', in *Simmel, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 11, ed. by O. Ramstedt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), pp. 661–670, especially pp. 667f.

The systematic distinction between the level of the inner attitude on the one hand and the episodic single feelings on the other hand also allows for understanding the humble attitude as an integral that comprises negative emotional aspects, but is not exhausted by them. Even the negative sense of the concept of humility, i.e. lowliness, even humiliation, can be integrated this way without spoiling the positive overall sense. Such feelings of distress or being in over one's head can arise given a great responsibility whose dimension points to the possibility of not being able to cope. A positive experience such as success can also trigger a feeling of humility understood this way – a, as it were, curbed enthusiasm given the knowledge that this success was not only due to my own achievement, but that it also entails the failure of others. And of course such feelings arise in the context of the awareness of one's guilt, i.e. if the structural dimension of this guilt is taken into account and exceeds the capacity of our personal responsibility. In religious self-assessment, the principal dimension of such feelings is reflected and they can turn, *sub specie aeternitatis*, into feelings of one's own worthlessness or voidness. If the humble attitude was restricted to such negative aspects, it could indeed be accused of leading to resignation. However, as, e.g., Max Scheler has pointed out in his phenomenology of humility, such experiences are in fact compatible with natural pride. Hence they are distinct from menial servitude.[31] And also from a religious point of view, the native aspects are countered by a positive *telos*, i.e. being accepted by the heavenly father. Roberts characterizes humility, understood in a Christian sense, as a 'transcendent form of self-confidence'. Transcendence is meant here as the overcoming of mundane value standards.[32]

However, the humble attitude can never wholly manifest itself in episodic single feelings. As the epitome of a totality of the ideas and emotions synthesized in it, this pre-conscious attitude can, if at all, only be represented in emotional consciousness as moods. These forms of emotional life are considered to be a marginal case by most cognitivistically oriented research on the emotions, and are explored by Heidegger and others after him in the 20th century. They are characterized by their intentional indeterminacy and can comprise single experiences that are individualized by their intentions or accompany them with their

[31] Max Scheler, 'Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend (1913)', in *Scheler, Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1995), pp. 13–31 (pp. 17ff.).

[32] Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions* (see above note 11), p. 81.

specific undertone.[33] The German word for humility, *Demut,* suggests that humility is not only a pre-conscious attitude or an episodic single feeling, but can also manifest itself as a mood. If we try to describe the mood of humility phenomenally, one can distinguish it from exalted pride by describing it as a lowered mood with a trace of sincerity that might stem from having overcome a sadness. But at the same time, it should not be confused with a rueful-frightened timidity.

The fact that a positive description is difficult could have a reason that makes me come back to Luther's critique of humility.[34] One of his basic claims is that true humility does not know that it is humble or – as he says metaphorically – that it cannot see itself. For if it were directed at an awareness of itself – and this is Luther's clever argument – a performative self-contradiction would arise: In the moment of its self-assertion, humility would no longer be selfless devotion. If we continue this thought, the adequate manifestation of a humble attitude that is oriented at the perfect humility of Christ or simply moral autonomy would not so much be the emotional tensions accompanying it or a contemplative mood, but rather an engagement with, or losing oneself in, concrete responsibility. Only in this sense would humility also be an ethical and not just a religious attitude. It still necessarily implies a relation to oneself, but such that its expressions are not a self-feeling. It would be, in Harnack's profound formulation, an inner attitude that 'has found its centre outside of itself'.[35]

We must not forget one final expression of humility. Feelings and attitudes are usually bound to a correlative bodily behaviour – this is a consensus in almost all theories of emotions. Regardless of how this correlation is described, facial expressions and gestures reveal a counterpart to inner life. Humility also has its correlating gestures, although they are not safe from false attitudes and strategic abuse. One example of an appropriate gesture of humility, perhaps especially due to its unconventionality, would be chancellor Willy Brand's Warsaw Genuflection. At the time, it was highly controversial in Germany, but it has become entrenched in our collective memory. Recently, Navid

[33] Cf. the classic essay by Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995). For the newer debate, see, e.g., Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (see above note 19), pp. 141–160.

[34] See above, note 12.

[35] Adolf von Harnack, '"Sanftmut, Huld und Demut" in der alten Kirche', in *Festgabe für Julius Kaftan zu seinem 70. Geburtstage* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), pp. 113–129 (p. 123).

Kermani in his speech at the celebration of the German Basic Law's 65th anniversary mentioned the strange paradox that a state regained its dignity by an act of humility.[36] The fact that this comment was made by a critic of the theology of the Cross has a particular secular payoff given the origin of the humility tradition.

V. CONCLUSION

The recent debate about the morality of emotions has managed to free emotions and consequently attitudes towards emotions like humility from the ghetto of irrational and therefore ethically questionable states. This correction allows for an adequate description of the personal identity of moral agents. Taking the connection between religion and emotion into account directs our attention towards complex emotions and attitudes, their layered and hermeneutic character and their shapeability by cultural symbols and institutions. The rationality of the emotional is also more appreciated in this broader sense than would be possible in the distinction between reasons and causes.

There is not necessarily a contradiction between humility and the modern human self-understanding – which might be regarded as the reason why humility has disappeared from modern ethical theories and debates. Following reformatory traditions, but also modern discourse about freedom, it can rather be shown that humility in the sense of an inner attitude can be regarded as the virtue-ethical basis of a culture of responsibility. For it is the ideal of an inner attitude that not only affectively internalizes the transgression of particular interests, but also the ambiguities connected with it. This conception of humility is not intended as a religious solution to the so-called problem of motivation, but as a non-resignating way of dealing with its facticity. From a culture-hermeneutical view, the ethical practice of free, democratic societies can – against all cultural pessimism – be seen as an expression of true humility. It is a humility that, following Luther's conception, does not become a talking point, but is manifested in the concrete living out of individual and institutional responsibility. As a distance towards one's own positionality, it also embodies the ability to make political compromises and also to accept them.

[36] Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2014/-/280688> [accessed 19/07/2014].

WHAT MAY I HOPE? WHY IT CAN BE RATIONAL TO RELY ON ONE'S HOPE

SABINE DÖRING

Universität Tübingen

Abstract. In hoping, what is important to us seems possible, which makes our life appear meaningful and motivates us to do everything within our reach to bring about the things that we hope for. I argue that it can be rational to rely on one's hope: hope can deceive us, but it can also represent things correctly to us. I start with Philip Pettit's view that hope is a cognitive resolve. I reject this view and suggest instead that hope is an emotion: hope is a felt evaluation for which we can define a corresponding character trait which in its turn qualifies as a virtue if it is felt whenever its correctness conditions are satisfied. For religious hope in particular it follows from my analysis that, if I believe, I may hope.

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite what might be suggested by the title, this talk is not about Kant and not even primarily about the philosophy of religion. In this paper, when I talk about hope, I do not mean a concept which is already religiously or politically charged. My concern is, first of all, with hopes that shape our everyday life, such as the hope that VFB Stuttgart defeated 1. FC Nürnberg on Thursday; or the hope that the faculty meeting tomorrow will be finished before my son's kindergarten closes; or the hope that the international community will get a handle on climate change; or simply the hope that the weather will be nice at the weekend. A characteristic of hope is that bringing about what one hopes for is to a certain extent, if not completely, beyond one's power. In this regard the secular hope that VFB Stuttgart defeated 1. FC Nürnberg on Thursday does not differ from religious hope. I will generally assume that the difference between

religious and secular hope is simply a matter of their having different objects. Starting from this assumption, I believe that understanding what hope is and what role it plays in our life requires an analysis of a range of quite different hopes.

My focus will be on the question of whether it may sometimes be *rational* for us to rely on our hope. I shall answer this question in the affirmative and shall even claim that hope is a virtue of human beings as *Rational Animals*. I say 'even' because, traditionally, hope is suspected of being *self-deceptive*. A prime example is Friedrich Nietzsche who, referring to Hesiod's Pandora-myth, dismisses hope as 'the worst of all evils, because it protracts the torments of man' by blinding him to the fact of living in a world of hardship, disease, and suffering (Nietzsche 1996: fragm. 71). The aim of my talk is to refute a Nietzschean view: although hope does sometimes deceive us, it can also be appropriate and fulfils an indispensable function for our life.

Showing this demands, of course, an explanation of what hope is. Providing such an explanation is made difficult by the fact that hope, and secular hope in particular, has hitherto been largely ignored by philosophers. One of the rare exceptions is Philip Pettit. I will take his 2004 article *Hope and Its Place in Mind* as my starting point here, chiefly because Pettit deals therein with precisely the rationality of hoping (Pettit 2004).[1]

II. HOPE AS A COGNITIVE RESOLVE

Pettit begins with the attempt to find a core meaning in the term 'hope', the 'lowest common denominator that is present across the different usages possible' (p. 154). This analysis leads him to equate hope with a suitable a suitable belief-desire pair: the belief that a certain state of affairs may or may not obtain, where one desires that it does obtain (pp. 153-54). Hope thus appears to be an *intentional* mental state that involves two components: a *cognitive* belief and a *conative* desire.

The belief assigns a certain subjective probability to the desired state of affairs which must be neither 0 nor 1. Hoping that something happens is inconsistent with believing for certain that it will not happen; it is equally inconsistent with believing for certain that it will. For example, it would be inconsistent for me to hope that I will spend my holidays at the Great

[1] Unless otherwise specified, all page references within this article refer to Pettit 2004.

Barrier Reef when I know that I cannot afford the trip; for in that case I am aware that a trip to Australia is mere wishful thinking and therefore has a probability of occurrence of 0. Conversely, Pettit's so-called 'core analysis' also excludes the possibility of hoping for something to happen to which I assign a probability of occurrence of 1. When I have booked a trip to the Great Barrier Reef and am confident that I will make the trip, I do not feel hope but pleasant anticipation. And in order to be able to assert consistently 'I hope that VFB Stuttgart defeated 1. FC Nürnberg on Thursday', I must not yet know that they won 6:0.

To summarise: according to Pettit, hope consists basically of two components. *First*, a person who hopes that *p* must assign a probability to *p* which is greater than 0 and less than 1. *Secondly*, the person must desire that *p* obtains.

Now, Pettit dismisses this core analysis as too 'superficial' to capture hope in a 'substantial' sense. 'Substantial' hope, Pettit says, cannot be reduced to combinations of beliefs and desires but is a *sui generis* mental state which to have 'we might describe as cognitive resolve' (p. 159). This idea is modelled on Michael Bratman's influential 'belief-desire-intention model' (Bratman 1987). According to Bratman, the standard model of the explanation of action, the 'belief-desire model', is unable to account for the phenomenon of planning and for the intra- and interpersonal coordination of action which planning allows. As the name 'belief-desire-*intention* model' already indicates, Bratman claims that this phenomenon can only be explained by bringing in intentions as a further class of mental states, in addition to beliefs and desires. Intentions are differentiated from desires via their functional role and rationality conditions, and yet they are, like desires, classified as pro-attitudes. By a 'pro-attitude' philosophers typically mean an attitude of wanting that the world be such that p is true, where *p* stands for some yet to be realised state of affairs. Pro-attitudes thus provide ends for action, and this is why they are regarded as motivationally efficacious. As opposed to cognitive beliefs, which are said to represent the world as being such that their propositional content *p* is true, pro-attitudes are defined as conative states (see Smith 1994). Pro-attitudes, some philosophers have argued, aim at changing the world in such a way that it fits them, whereas beliefs, conversely, aim at fitting the world. On Bratman's account, the crucial difference between ordinary pro-attitudes – desires – and intentions is that the latter are distinctive states of *commitment* to future action. Unlike a desire, Bratman says, an agent's intention, such as the

intention to stick to a diet, constrains his future action by committing him to certain other intentions and actions, such as cutting out desserts or not buying sweets. According to Bratman, intentions thereby prevent us from being mere playthings of unpredictably coming and going desires. Instead, they enable us to control our actions, so as to coordinate those actions over time and with other agents. I am using first person plural pronouns here since Bratman considers the capacity for planning to be distinctive of human agents. In particular, planning is claimed to be 'pragmatically rational', which means that it optimises our utility (in the sense of satisfying our well-understood preferences). This claim is empirically supported by psychological studies showing that the capacity for impulse control (or deferred gratification) is a reliable indicator of social and professional success (Mischel et al. 1988).

So much for Bratman's model. This serves as Pettit's guide, but it is not something I want to criticize here. My concern is rather with Pettit's attempt to transfer this model to hope. Pettit introduces hope as a 'cognitive counterpart of planning' (p. 159). This is to say, hope commits its subject to certain *beliefs*, just as Bratman's intentions commit their agents to certain *actions*. Bratman therefore understands intention as *practical* resolve. Analogously, Pettit construes hope as *cognitive* resolve, namely as resolve to believe that the desired state of affairs is going to obtain or has at least a very good chance of obtaining (p. 158). Like planning, hoping is claimed to be pragmatically rational, that is, utility-optimising. This is so by Pettit's lights because hope enables us to escape the danger of losing heart and throwing in the towel when we assign a relatively low probability to a desired state of affairs. Because of hope, so the story goes, even at this low level of confidence we nonetheless act as if the desired state of affairs is going to obtain, thereby making every effort within our power to bring it about rather than becoming demoralised and losing self-efficacy. In a nutshell, Pettit's 'substantial' hope consists in a 'cognitive strategy' of the following kind: the hoping person desires that a certain state of affairs p obtains but assigns such a low probability of occurrence to p that she is in danger of losing heart and her capacity to exercise agency effectively. Thanks to hope this danger is averted, as the person resolves upon taking the occurrence of p as certain or at least as highly probable (almost certain). This cognitive resolve makes her psychically stable and enables her to engage actively in increasing p's probability of occurrence.

What Pettit has in mind here is, for example, a cancer patient with bad prognosis. On Pettit's account, the patient's hoping saves him from becoming the victim of an ebb and flow of evidence for or against the possibility of his surviving, thereby enabling him to avoid the dangers of resorting to depression and self-pity. Instead, the patient decides to act as if it were certain or at least highly probable that he will survive, which according to Pettit means that the patient does everything within his reach to bring it about that he survives, thus actively improving his chance of survival. In another example, Pettit mentions those inmates of the Nazi concentration camps who managed to survive: 'substantial' hope, Pettit says, kept them from suicide or from just giving in (p. 159).

As can be seen from these examples, Pettit understands 'substantial' not just in the theoretical sense that hope cannot be reduced to an ordinary belief in combination with a desire or pro-attitude. Just as Bratman's intentions are conative pro-attitudes but no ordinary desires, Pettit's 'substantial' hope is a cognitive state, and yet no ordinary belief. 'Substantial' is obviously meant to refer throughout to 'deep' and 'pathetic' hopes, of which it is characteristic that the hoped-for thing is of *vital importance* to the subject. Secular hopes like my hope that the weather will be nice at the weekend, or that VFB Stuttgart defeated 1. FC Nürnberg on Thursday, are thus not captured by Pettit's analysis. Although I might well be seriously engaged in hoping for these things, normally, if I assign a low probability to their occurrence, there is no danger of me becoming demoralised and losing my capacity to exercise agency effectively.

Even if we grant that it is legitimate to conceive of substantial hope as a specific and specifiable kind of hope, it is easy to find examples which show that this kind of hope is not pragmatically rational. One counterexample is provided by Pettit himself, when he draws a parallel between substantial hope and precaution. Like hope, precaution is understood as a cognitive strategy. The difference between hope and precaution is that the precautious person does not desire that a certain state of affairs p obtains, but *fears* that p obtains, whilst again assigning a low probability of occurrence to p. According to Pettit, precaution then amounts to acting nonetheless as if p is going to obtain, which is to make provisions for p's being the case, by which the person is supposed to decrease p's probability of occurrence and so to optimise her utility. Pettit's example is a client who fears that he will run into debts by renovating his house, as the renovation costs might be higher than

budgeted for in advance by the craftsmen; although the client trusts the craftsmen's calculation, he resolves upon acting as if the renovation is becoming more expensive and thus decreases the possibility that he will run into debts.

Now, a person who fears that she will run into debts could equally be described as a person who *desires* that she will *not* run into debts. Let us, for the sake of argument, further assume that this person assigns a low probability to not running into debts – or that she assigns a high probability to running into debts. On Pettit's view, this person would have to hope substantially in order to preserve self-efficacy. However, she clearly would not optimise her utility, were she acting as if it were certain that she will not run into debts.

Such counterexamples are legion. They exemplify a maxim expressed by the proverb 'Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst', which also guides our reasonable handling of unlikely but disastrous events, such as an air crash or a nuclear MCA (maximum credible accident). Pettit breaks with this maxim: on his account, the hoping person thinks and acts on the conviction that the best certainly does come about, rather than preparing for the worst and protecting themselves against it. Yet on closer examination not even Pettit's *own* examples sustain this analysis. By undergoing treatments which possibly have harmful secondary effects and may even be themselves life-threatening, the seriously ill patient with a bad prognosis does not act as if the best will come about. In full accordance with the cited maxim, he rather seeks to avert the worst – his death – by all the means available to him. Similarly, the inmates of the Nazi concentration camps fought for their survival: why should they have done so, had they taken it for granted that they would come through the Nazi horrors? It is therefore highly doubtful that it could ever be pragmatically rational (utility optimising) to adopt the cognitive strategy which Pettit identifies with substantial hope.

III. HOPE AS A FELT EVALUATION

Setting aside any reservations one may have about the precise details of Pettit's account, the key question is whether hope is a cognitive strategy in Pettit's sense. I don't share this view. From an epistemological point of view, it makes hope subject to Nietzsche's objection that hope is self-deception. Against this Pettit insists that substantial hope does

not come down to self-deception but is 'make-believe' and as such 'at least evidentially not irrational': epistemic reasons are claimed to be outweighed by pragmatic ones in this case (p. 162). But we are not offered an argument for this claim and, in any case, we have just seen that it is *not* pragmatically rational to go for so-called 'substantial' hope.

Those in grip of the standard belief-desire model may be inclined to object that the correct cognitive strategy consists in taking the occurrence of what one hopes for, *p*, as *possible* rather than certain. This cognitive resolve seems to evade the counterexamples just mentioned and also seems compatible with the probability of occurrence assigned to *p* – provided that this is neither 0 nor 1, which possibility is excluded for *conceptual* reasons, according to Pettit. I present four arguments against this 'repair proposal':

(1) Hope cannot be understood *purely strategically*. Let us first consider the special case of religious hope: if a person hoped for purely strategic reasons, she would be like a person who came to believe in God because of Blaise Pascal's famous wager. Starting from the assumption that we are incapable of knowing whether God exists or not, Pascal (1910: sect. III) offers a decision-theoretical argument to the effect that we have reason to believe in God. Provided that the probability of God's existence is greater than zero, and provided further that going to heaven is infinitely much better than burning in hell, the expected utility of believing in God is higher than that of not believing in him. The expected gain of believing in God in the event that he exists outweighs the negligible costs of believing in God in the event that he does not exist; hence, believing in God is the dominant strategy. Even if we accepted this argument and thought it psychologically possible to make ourselves believe in God by virtue of a pragmatic decision, this belief would seem to be held for reasons which are *of the wrong kind*. Analogously, my reasons to hope for future redemption in God's kingdom would be of the wrong kind if I decided to hope for this simply because it would optimise my expected utility. The same applies to secular hope. Just imagine a bridegroom who hopes for the success of his marriage only in order to maximise his well-understood self interest. Whatever Nobel Prize winner Gary S. Becker might say here, in this case, the bridegroom's hope appears to us to rest on reasons of the wrong kind.

(2) Pascal's reasons are of the wrong kind because they are *practical* instead of *epistemic* reasons: they are reasons *to bring it about* that we believe in God, but not reasons to *believe* in God (see Skorupski 2007).

In the same way, Pettit's reasons are reasons to bring it about that we hope, but not reasons to hope. Yet what could reasons *to hope* be?
(3) Reasons to hope stem from a *value* assigned to what one hopes for, which a purely strategic analysis of hope cannot but fail to capture. In hoping for future redemption in God's kingdom or for the success of his marriage, the subject ascribes a certain value to the object of his hope *as such* which cannot be reduced to the satisfaction of subjective preferences. The question of whether it is 'worthwhile' to hope is ambiguous: it does not merely ask whether it *pays off* for the subject to hope; it also asks whether what one hopes for *merits* that hope. Be it religious or secular hope, to hope for something is to see that thing as valuable in a way that goes beyond the standard of the theory of rational choice, and this is precisely why the examples just mentioned appear so absurd. Hope fits this diagnosis in that it conceptually implies an evaluation of its object as *good* in a certain sense. If someone claimed to hope that *p* while at the same time denying that there is anything good about *p*, we would be conceptually excluded from understanding. As a consequence, we may assess hope, or rather the evaluation implied by it, for correctness or appropriateness, and reasons to hope (as opposed to reasons to bring it about that one hopes) are reasons in favour of this evaluation. (Let us be clear that Pettit cannot smuggle in this evaluation via the desire part of his model, since his desires are *conative* states and must not be transformed into their opposite, *cognitive* states.)
(4) Finally, a purely strategic analysis also misses the *phenomenal* aspect of hope, the 'what-it-is-like' to hope. Sometimes hope is joyful, sometimes it is anxious; in any case it is always inspired by a *feeling of confidence* of a certain degree. By contrast, both beliefs and desires lack phenomenality under the standard interpretation (Smith 1987).

Like many authors before me, I am here claiming that, first and foremost, hope is an *emotion*. As such, hope is no evaluative belief (or value judgement) but a *felt evaluation* for which we can define a corresponding *character trait* which in its turn can be associated with a *virtue*. In a way this leads us back to David Hume when he says: 'A propensity to hope and joy is real riches, one to fear and sorrow real poverty' (Hume 1964a: 220). 'In a way' because Hume does not seem to think of emotions as cognitive states, that is, as representational evaluations which are therefore subject to correctness conditions. Let us, for the sake of argument, nonetheless ascribe this currently predominant view of emotion to him, for then an analysis of hope along the lines of

Hume's does show what a Pettit-style analysis attempts to but cannot show: that hope presents what is valuable as possible, thereby motivating us to make every effort within our power to bring it about.

Let us start with the relation between emotion and virtue. For any emotion we can define a corresponding character trait, namely the disposition to readily have that emotion. Jealousy is shown by jealous people, though people who do not have a jealous character can on occasion experience jealousy. Hope is shown by confident people, among others. And confidence is associated with the virtue of *asserting itself* at the right times, though this may not be traditionally considered a virtue. Character links to virtue links to emotion.

Primarily, hope is an emotion: a felt evaluation whose felt aspect necessarily involves feelings of confidence of a certain degree. Now, to feel confidence in hoping means seeing what one hopes for as being possible. Clearly, this kind of seeing something as possible essentially differs from the assignment of subjective probability. A similar view is to be found in Hume's *Treatise*. Like Pettit, Hume notes that hope need not bow to probability. Sometimes we continue to hope for something even when we believe, and know, that the occurrence probability of that thing is almost 0. 'Hope dies last', so the proverb says. For an example, we need look no further than Pettit's cancer patient who holds on to his hope of survival, despite his gloomy prognosis. Alternatively, take the parents who, against all odds, never give up the hope that their abducted child will return safely, and who collapse only upon being confronted with their child's corpse. Pettit has it that, in such cases, the hoping person's desire that *p* causes her to resolve upon making herself believe that *p* is going to obtain, *because of p's vital importance*. Hume agrees that 'the smallness of probability is compensated by the greatness of the [*good*]' here (Hume 1964b: 220). But Hume's hoping person does not in any way decide to ignore actual probability for putatively good pragmatic reasons. Rather, this person's hope persists even though she believes, and even knows, that the occurrence of the 'good' is very unlikely. In other words, Hume allows for the possibility that a state of affairs *p* may *seem possible* to us even if we *assign a low probability* of occurrence to *p*, provided that we *value p* via hope as a particularly important good.

On Hume's account, this is possible precisely because, being an emotion, hope does not involve a *belief* about *p*'s probability of occurrence. Provided that hope nonetheless has a representational content, that is, evaluates its object as good, it may instead be understood

as a perception-like *seeming* (see Bealer 1998). As such, hope does not quantify this good as *probable* on a scale from 0 to 1 but presents it as *possible*, *insofar as we feel confident* that this good will be brought about. It speaks in favour of this view that there are many cases of hoping in which the subject would appear odd, if not neurotic, if he engaged in probability calculations: think again of the bridegroom who hopes for the success of his marriage...

Let us now turn to the question of how hope can make other states and actions rational. So far, hope has been introduced as an emotion which relates to a virtue. As an emotion, hope has been described as a felt evaluation which is not or does not involve a belief but resembles a *perception*. The analogy is instructive, since perceptual illusions like the famous Müller-Lyer illusion illustrate that perceptions may persist in spite of the subject's better judgment, without the subject being irrational. In perceiving the two Müller-Lyer lines, we cannot rid ourselves of seeing these lines as being of different lengths even when careful study has convinced us that they are the same length. But still, as long as the illusion is recognised as such and does not influence our thought and action, we are not irrational. In the same way, hope can rationally persist when we know that it deceives us. The cancer patient with a bad prognosis or the parents of the abducted child are not irrational *simply because they hope*. People are not irrational if they cannot help hoping even against better knowledge. They would be irrational only if they guided their thought and action as if it were certain that that the things for which they hoped would come about – which is precisely what Pettit claims.

However, when does hope deceive us, and when is it rational to rely on one's hope? I have argued that hope presents a not yet realised state of affairs as good and at the same time as possible, insofar as the subject feels confident to a certain degree that the state of affairs will be brought about. Accordingly, hope can deceive us in three different respects: (a) it can present as good what is in fact bad or evil; (b) it can present as possible what is actually impossible; (c) it can do both at once. In everyday language we say that, under these conditions, hope is *inappropriate*. The hope that my enemy will suffer a hard fate is inappropriate, and so is the hope that I will spend my holidays at the Great Barrier Reef when I obviously cannot afford the trip. However, depending on value and probability, hope can also be appropriate. In that case, it is *rational* for the subject to rely on their hope; in that case, we *may* hope in the sense that we are warranted in grounding our thought and action on our hope.

Technically speaking, the appropriateness of hope is the *correctness of its representational content*. Similarly to a perception, hope represents the world as being a certain way: it represents a certain not yet realised states of affairs as a possible good. Therefore, hope is subject to correctness conditions which are meant to ensure that its representational content *is* correct: just as a perception of red is supposed to represent red things only, hope is supposed to represent as possible goods what really are possible goods. If a person relies on her hope – that is, takes her emotion's representational content at face value – she is rational to the extent that her emotion's correctness conditions are satisfied – or rather, to the extent that the correctness conditions of her emotion's representational content are satisfied. As a character trait corresponding to the emotion, hope qualifies as a virtue if it is felt whenever its correctness conditions are satisfied.

For the present, let me explain just one correctness condition to which we do submit hope in our everyday practice. We demand that, at least to a certain extent, the feeling of confidence involved in hope be consistent with actual probability. Although the possibility of what is hoped for envisaged in virtue of confidence is essentially different from probability, we dismiss hope as inappropriate when we assign to its object a probability of occurrence of 0 or near to 0, depending also on the size of the value involved. Conversely, we have seen that if *p*'s probability of occurrence equals 1 or is very high, we often regard pleasant anticipation rather than hope as the appropriate emotion. Although the felt possibility implied by hope must not be misinterpreted as cold-bloodedly calculated probability, we transform felt possibility into probability by determining *threshold values* above or below which we find hope inappropriate. This is to *operationalise* hope in terms of the aim of assessing its accordance with actual probability. The cancer patient's hope for recovery or the parents' hope for the safe return of their missing child may represent a good however great, but if the occurrence probability of the thing hoped for falls below a certain threshold value, we treat the hopes of these persons like the perception of the Müller-Lyer lines, *as a mere illusion*.

Once again, this is not to say that the cancer patient or the parents are irrational when they cannot give up their hopes in the face of actual probability. Like the perception of the two lines of the Müller-Lyer illusion, their hopes may be *irrefutable*, even though sadness, despair or resignation would be appropriate instead of hope. This does not itself

make these persons irrational, for the rationality of a person depends on that she relies on her hope only if this emotion's correctness conditions are satisfied. As a character trait, hope is a virtue if it is readily felt under these conditions. Then we are justified in seeing the possibility of the future bringing good things, and this kind of seeing – 'affective perception' as I have called it elsewhere – is to a large extent independent of the probability assigned to those things.

The latter is crucial to hope as a virtue, and in particular to hope as a virtue of the *Rational Animal*. From what I have said so far it follows, first, that hope plays a crucial role in recognising valuable projects or chances and distinguishing them from projects or chances that are not valuable. One's unexpected state of hoping for something may for the first time lead one to judge that the thing is valuable. Secondly, hope allows for the possibility of hoping 'for the best' even in the face of low probability, and does so without forcing us to deceive ourselves or to engage in make-believe. To hope is to see the possibility of the future bringing good things, and this way of seeing is legitimate over a wide range of probability. Be it religious or secular, it is characteristic of hope that bringing its object about lies to a certain extent, if not completely, beyond our power. In hoping we are confident, which gives us stability in the ebb and flow of evidence for or against the likelihood of the occurrence of what we hope for. So what is important to us seems possible, which makes our life appear meaningful and motivates us to do everything within our reach to bring about the things about that we hope for. This is, I suppose, an evolutionary advantage of hoping, and it makes hope indispensable for long-term tasks or projects. By presenting the success of these tasks or projects as both valuable and possible, hope enables us to stay patient and to not become weak, as is exemplified by the hope of Abraham in *The Epistle to the Romans* (Rom.: 4-5). Nevertheless, hope must not make us blind to the true prospects of success.

It follows from the analysis suggested here that, for *religious hope* in particular, the rationality of hope requires that one at least does not rule out the occurrence of what one hopes for in order for this emotion to be rational. Religious hope necessarily requires *faith*, a faith, though, which has nothing to do with the calculation of probability and which in any case is significantly different from *knowledge* in the philosophical sense of true and justified belief: we cannot know that God exists; but conversely we cannot know that God does *not* exist. Therefore, the possibility of his existence and recurrence cannot rationally be excluded, and thus,

if I believe in God, it is not irrational to hope. *If I believe, I may hope*. Finally, to quote Kant : 'Ich musste also das Wissen aufheben, um zum Glauben Platz zu bekommen' (KrV, B XXX) . In addition to this we may say: 'und um hoffen zu dürfen'.

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THE FEELING OF RELIGIOUS LONGING AND PASSIONATE RATIONALITY

RUTH REBECCA TIETJEN

University of Tübingen

Abstract. What is the feeling of religious longing and how, if at all, can religious longing justify religious beliefs? Starting with an analogy between religious longing and basic physical needs and an analogy between religious longing and musical longing, I argue that the feeling of religious longing is characterized by four features: (1) its generality, (2) its indeterminate transcendent object which by its nature is not capable of empirical verification or falsification, (3) its mode of being infinitely interested in passion and (4) its ambiguity with regard to our own power and powerlessness. Religious longing can neither epistemically nor pragmatically justify religious beliefs. If we want to account for the rationality of religious beliefs motivated by religious longing, we have to consider passionate rationality as a third kind of rationality. We wholeheartedly take as true what we experience as a condition of the possibility of (an understandable, meaningful) life.

Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans:

> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is

> seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.[1]

In this passage, Apostle Paul describes a state of longing in which we shall find ourselves; a state of anxious longing and eagerly waiting. He describes it as a state in which not only we as people shall find ourselves, but together with us the whole of creation. In the state of faith, this feeling of longing is at the same time a state of belief. 'What kind of state is this anxious longing?', we ask ourselves; we, who do not groan (or at most about our work); we, who believe ourselves not to be anxious (or at least not *in this way*) and not to hope for the kingdom of God; we, who do not hear the groaning of nature, but at most its indifferent silence.

The state described here is obviously a kind of feeling (understood in a broad sense). It is a feeling which on the one hand is directed to our present state, and on the other hand points beyond this present state. We experience our current state as painful, and, at the same time, anticipate the possibility of release from our pain. We experience that what we could be is not exhausted by what we are. This possible state of being that we anticipate is not a neutral possibility, but the object of our longing and hope, and our anticipation is not a cognitive state additional to our feeling, but itself part of it. The painful state in which we are is not simply a state in which we find ourselves through no fault of our own; it is a state for which we partly bear responsibility. But at the same time, and this is crucial for the feeling of religious longing, we experience this state as something from which we cannot free ourselves without help from the outside. What we are longing for is partly beyond our own power, so our feeling of longing is at the same time a feeling of being dependent on something other than ourselves.

For an illustration of this phenomenon, consider the mundane example of experiencing oneself as falling short of one's own potential. I often sit at my desk and want to work, but am unable to concentrate. When this state lasts the whole day, I feel frustrated in the evening because I have not achieved what I wanted to achieve, should have

[1] *New American Standard Bible*, Rom. 8:18–27.

achieved and, most importantly, could have achieved. But what was the reason for my failure? It was my lack of concentration. I blame myself for it. 'If only I had concentrated', I think. At the same time I know that my ability to concentrate on my work is not completely in my own hands. Of course, I can go to sleep early, exercise and keep distractions out of my way. But this does not give me a guarantee. So, I can do nothing further than adjust the conditions of my work in a manner which is likely to enable my concentration, and, in addition to this, hope for the next day. If my hope is fulfilled and I even get into a flow of work, I feel much better in the evening due to what I achieved that day. But still, this feeling is accompanied by a vague sense of gratitude for the fact that my thinking went better that day. In other words, I have the experience that the conditions of my own mental productivity, the exhaustion of my intellectual potential, do not entirely lie in my own hands.

Let us now return to the religious sphere, in which infinitely more is at stake than our professional success or our philosophical productivity. As a preliminary result, we can conclude that the state of religious longing described by Paul points us toward a potential which lies in ourselves as well as in the Creation, but is not exhausted. We experience the exhaustion of this potential as something which lies partly within and partly beyond our own power.[2]

Paul describes the state of longing from the perspective of someone who is already *in the state of faith*. In the state of faith, our longing is not merely longing, but at the same time confidence. The believer dares to believe that what he is longing for is or will become real. But the feeling of religious longing can also be the starting point of faith. In this case, our longing is transformed into the belief that what we are longing for will be, and to some extent already is, real. This, at first sight, is an outrageous idea: to believe certain facts to be true, because one desires these facts to be true, is wishful thinking, and therefore, according to common opinion, the epitome of irrationality. According to this common point of view, the desire present in the feeling of religious longing might indeed be capable of motivating, but never of justifying religious belief.

The aim of my essay is to vindicate the transition from religious longing to religious belief as an instance of 'passionate rationality'.

[2] Interestingly, not only the fulfilment of our longing but also our experience of longing itself may be regarded as an ambiguous phenomenon. It is partly responsive and we are partly responsible for it.

For this purpose, we should first characterize the feeling of religious longing. In the first paragraph I approach the feeling of religious longing via two analogies. This approach is founded on the fact that I – contrary to Paul – do not only focus on religious longing felt by people who are not (yet) in a state of faith, but also explore it from the perspective of someone who does not know the feeling (or at least believes herself not to know it) from her own experience. The first analogy compares religious longing with a physical need. It is prominently developed by Søren A. Kierkegaard and has recently been employed by Robert C. Roberts. The second analogy compares religious longing with the feeling of musical longing. In the current debate, Mark Wynn makes use of this analogy. In the second paragraph, I abstract a general characterization of the phenomenon of religious longing from these two analogies. I thereby assume the plausibility of the two analogies. Out of this characterization I extract the concept of religious feeling which must be assumed if religious longing is to be understood as a religious feeling, that is, firstly, as a feeling and, secondly, as religious. I thereby take for granted that religious longing is to be understood as a religious feeling. Based on this analysis, I finally turn to the transition from religious longing to religious belief. I argue that the contemporary debate about the justifying force of emotions does not help us to vindicate the epistemic or pragmatic rationality of this transition. But the phenomenon of religious belief motivated by religious longing opens up a new perspective on the role of feelings in the context of rationality. This perspective is captured in the concept of passionate rationality.

I. TWO ANALOGIES

What is religious longing felt by someone who is not (yet) in a state of faith and therefore does not have religious beliefs? We start with two analogies:

First analogy: Our religious longing is comparable to a basic physical need. A basic physical need is a need whose fulfilment is crucial for our physical well-being and flourishing. The concept of a basic need is therefore a genuine normative concept. According to the analogy, the relationship with God is a spiritual need, which manifests itself in spiritual illness if it remains unfulfilled, in the same way as unfulfilled physical needs express themselves in physical illness. This analogy is

prominently developed by Søren A. Kierkegaard in 'The Sickness Unto Death', published under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus.[3] According to Anti-Climacus, the sickness unto death is the spiritual illness which occurs if a person lacks a relationship (or the right kind of relationship) with God, if his relationship with God and therefore with himself, or conversely, his relationship with himself and therefore with God, is disturbed. Just like physical illness, mental illness occurs in degrees, depending on the degree to which our need is unfulfilled. At one end of the scale is death. The spiritual illness is a sickness unto death not because it finally leads to physical death, but because it leads to spiritual death, a death we suffer while alive and which for precisely that reason is so painful. The sickness unto death is despair and this is, in its most extreme variant, hopelessness. We lack any hope for salvation, so we feel something like an unsatisfiable desire; we feel that what we long for will, and must, remain forever out of our reach; we feel that there indeed is nothing more than our painful current state. Or perhaps we should rather say it is the state in which even our feeling of longing has become silent. At the other end of the scale is faith. As faith is not merely a state, but also an act, we cannot simply rest in a state of faith, but have to perform it. Just like faith, despair has a responsive as well as an active dimension.

Anti-Climacus' approach consists of three steps: the starting point is a description of the phenomenon of despair. In the second step, this phenomenon of despair is interpreted as a deficiency. In the last step, the conditions of mental health are extracted from this deficiency. Michael Theunissen has coined the concept of methodological negativism for this approach: the starting point is not an assumed normative standard of spiritual health, on the basis of which sickness is judged as an anomaly. On the contrary, the conditions of spiritual flourishing are inferred *ex negativo* from its failure.[4] In particular, faith is defined 'only *through* the analysis of its negation'.[5]

An analogous three-step development translated into practical terms can be found in the lives of those who encounter religious faith through the feeling of religious longing. William James describes developments of this kind in his lectures 'The Diversity of Religious Experience'. He gives a prominent role to Leo Tolstoy, who describes his own spiritual

[3] See Kierkegaard (1980).
[4] See Theunissen (1981: 487).
[5] Theunissen (1981: 489).

development in his autobiographical report 'A Confession'.[6] Tolstoy grew up in an Orthodox Christian home and environment, but apostasy from faith took place quickly. The pursuit of physical, mental and moral perfection is replaced by the pursuit of becoming richer, more famous and more important than others. He succeeds in achieving these aims and lives a successful life as an author. Like his colleagues, he believes in progress and, above all, in contributing to this progress by being a writer and therefore a teacher of mankind. But he becomes more and more aware that he himself does not know what to teach and which kind of life to live. The moments of doubt become more and more frequent and culminate in a serious crisis of life:

> At first I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, as though I did not know what to do or how to live; and I felt lost and became dejected. But this passed and I went on living as before. Then these moments of perplexity began to recur oftener and oftener, and always in the same form. They were always expressed by the questions: What is it for? What does it lead to?[7]

This is the first step: the despair has a purely negative character. It expresses itself in the feeling of senselessness, and maybe also in the feelings of anxiety, nausea or boredom. In the second step, a feeling of religious longing emerges, a search for something, a vague hope for help:

> During that whole year, when I was asking myself almost every moment whether I should not end matters with a noose or a bullet – all that time, together with the course of thought and observation about which I have spoken, my heart was oppressed with a painful feeling, which I can only describe as a search for God.
>
> I say that that search for God was not reasoning, but a feeling, because that search proceeded not from the course of my thoughts – it was even directly contrary to them – but proceeded from the heart. It was a feeling of fear, orphanage, isolation in a strange land, and a hope of help from someone.[8]

In the more advanced form of this stage, Tolstoy's suffering is interrupted by brief moments of joy, in which he dares to believe and trust in God. In the next moment, however, he calls into question his own confidence,

[6] See James (2002), esp. lectures VI–VIII, Tolstoy (1940).
[7] Tolstoy (1940: 15).
[8] Tolstoy (1940: 62).

destroys it through his reason and again is gripped by despair. Not until the third step is the final transition or leap from the feeling of longing to the state of religious faith performed:

> But then I turned my gaze upon myself, on what went on within me, and I remembered all those cessations of life and reanimations that recurred within me hundreds of times. I remembered that I only lived at those times when I believed in God. As it was before, so it was now; I need only be aware of God to live; I need only forget Him, or disbelieve Him, and I died.
>
> What is this animation and dying? I do not live when I lose belief in the existence of God. I should long ago have killed myself had I not had a dim hope of finding Him. I live, really live, only when I feel Him and seek Him. 'What more do you seek?' exclaimed a voice within me. 'This is He. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life.'
>
> 'Live seeking God, and then you will not live without God.' And more than ever before, all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me.[9]

Second analogy: our religious longing is analogous to our musical longing for the harmonious resolution of a chord. We hear a dominant seventh chord and expect its resolution in the tonic; we hear a sequence of chords and expect that this sequence will be resolved harmoniously; we feel the rise of tension and expect that this tension will be dissolved. This 'expectation' is not a cognitive state, which is added on to our perception of the chord, or of the sequence of chords or of the tension. Rather, we already transcend the tension in the moment of perception. The 'anxious longing of the creature' about which Paul speaks or the 'veil of melancholy' which according to Schelling 'is spread over the whole of nature'[10] can therefore be compared to a musical tension which is waiting for its resolution. Just as the state of musical tension points at a state of musical resolution, our feeling of religious longing points at a state of resolution of this longing.

[9] Tolstoy (1940: 64f.).

[10] Schelling (2001: 399).

II. THE FEELING OF RELIGIOUS LONGING

Which picture of religious longing emerges out of these two analogies? Which conception of religious feelings has to be assumed if religious longing is to be understood as a religious feeling, thus, firstly, as a feeling and, secondly, as religious? In the following, I abstract five features of religious longing from the two analogies introduced in the first paragraph. I hereby take the plausibility of the two analogies for granted. I neither aim at overruling all possible objections to the analogies, nor at defending against the alternative strategy of abandoning the analogies altogether.

First: different people may need different amounts of food, and there may be differences in the length of time before hunger asserts itself if one does not get any food. However, at some point, a feeling of hunger emerges. In the course of time, this feeling becomes more and more intense and gnawing and finally affects our physical and mental abilities. In the case of the alleged need for a relationship with God, things seem to be different: there are people who neither understand themselves as believers nor as unhappy. Their basic need for a relationship with God does not seem to be satisfied, but still they do not feel any religious longing. How can we account for this phenomenon, if we want to adhere to the idea that religious longing is the expression of a basic human need?

If we take the need for food as our paradigm, basic needs seem to have two characteristics: firstly, if a basic need is unfulfilled, it expresses itself as a feeling which is specific to the need in question. Secondly, the person having the feeling is conscious of his own feeling. The first strategy to take account of the described phenomenon is to give up the first condition. The lack of a relationship with God therefore does not necessarily express itself in a feeling. The absence of the feeling corresponding to the need is interpreted as a sign of spiritual immaturity.[11] This case is comparable to the lack of sexual desire in children, which is regarded as a sign of their physical immaturity. We can also compare the lack of a feeling of religious longing to the case of someone who does not feel a need for education because he grew up in circumstances which did not allow him to develop such a need. So, though at first it seems one should give up the claim that something is a basic need rather than alleging this need despite many people not being aware of having such a need, on a second look adherents of a basic need theory of religious longing can in fact

[11] Cf. Roberts (2007: 36).

refer to various other cases in which we proceed analogously without raising concerns of an analogous kind.

The second strategy consists in giving up the second condition. According to this approach, religious longing is a feeling which the person who feels it is not necessarily conscious of. This may mean either that the one who feels it is not reflectively conscious of his own feeling or that he is mistaken about the nature or content of his feeling.[12] In both cases we usually take it to be necessary, first, that we can at least potentially become reflectively conscious of our own feeling, and second, that from the external perspective we cannot only give good reasons for assuming the presence of the feeling but also for the lack of (reflective) consciousness of it. Roberts pursues a mixed strategy. On the one hand, he argues that 'the natural need for God may be contingent on maturation'.[13] On the other hand he states that not 'each of us can, upon consulting the contents of our minds, find in ourselves a desire to praise God, or an emotion of despair that is obviously a frustrated state of our God-libido. Even if we are aware of wanting *something* that is not among the objects of our finite life, we may not know that we want God'.[14] Both strategies adhere to the view that a basic need is a need whose fulfilment is crucial for our flourishing.

The feeling of musical longing is also a feeling which people experience in various degrees. The degree to which we feel musical longing depends, among other factors, on our musical socialization, that is, our familiarity with the specific piece of music as well as with the particular musical tradition, and on our musical aptitudes. Just as there are unmusical people, the lack of religious longing and therefore of other religious feelings might be an expression of 'religious unmusicality'. This expression goes back to a letter of Max Weber's, who characterizes himself as 'absolutely unmusical in religious matters'.[15] He states that he neither has 'the need nor the ability to erect any religious edifies' in himself and characterizes his own lack of religious musicality as a form of 'crippledness'. Religious

[12] For the distinction between reflective and unreflective consciousness, cf. Goldie (2000: 62ff.).

[13] Roberts (2007: 36).

[14] Roberts (2007: 35f.).

[15] Weber (1994: 65). The concept of religious unmusicality has been prominently picked up by Jürgen Habermas in his speech 'Faith and Knowledge'. Cf. Habermas (2001: 30). The idea is already expressed by Schleiermacher in his speeches 'On Religion'. Cf. Schleiermacher (2001: 134).

musicality is therefore not simply described as an ability that one can have or lack, but as an ability which is part of human nature. Though we can conceive of a translation of the feeling of musical tension into the purely theoretical terms of music theory, we have the intuition that in this process of translation something important would be lost. This intuition is captured by contemporary emotion theories which hold emotions to be an indispensable way of understanding.[16]

Thus, the absence of a conscious feeling of religious longing does not necessarily indicate that the need for a relationship with God is not a basic need. It can also be interpreted as an expression of spiritual immaturity or as a sign of a lack or failure of reflective consciousness of one's own feeling.

Second: religious longing was introduced as a state in which we experience our present state as painful. But the analogy to musical longing suggests that the feeling of longing can also be enjoyed. Good music does not simply instantly fulfil all our longings, but rather plays with them.[17] Other kinds of longing have similar characteristics, for example the feeling of being in love with someone. This feeling also involves an experience of both tension and longing for fulfilment. You feel this incredible attraction between yourself and someone else. When you look at each other your eyes rest on each other for just one moment too long. If they do not, it is not because the tension vanished, but because you resist your longing. Touches which in other contexts would be experienced as random or merely friendly create a tension which almost threatens to tear you apart. Although the feeling of tension in this case is also experienced as something aiming at resolution, it is not simply experienced as something to be overcome, but itself as something we take pleasure in. Exactly herein consists the attraction of prolonging the state of being in love as we do in the game of flirting. We can change between approach and withdrawal so often that the feeling of tension becomes nearly unbearable. This is only possible if the difference and distance between oneself and the other is maintained.

So, is it possible to analogously enjoy one's religious longing? In his pseudonymous work 'Either/Or', Kierkegaard describes exactly this phenomenon. The pleasure the aesthete A takes in his own despair is expressed in his aphorisms:

[16] E.g. cf. Goldie (2000: 59–62, 72–83); Wynn (2005: 98–102).
[17] See Madell (1996: 75).

> In addition to my other numerous acquaintances, I have one more intimate confidant – my depression. In the midst of my joy, in the midst of my work, he beckons to me, calls me aside, even though physically I remain on the spot. My depression is the most trustful mistress I have known – no wonder, then, that I return the love.
> I say of my sorrow what the Englishman says of his house: My sorrow *is my castle*. Many people look upon having sorrow as one of life's conveniences.[18]

Thus, the aesthete A takes pleasure in his own desperate existence and Johannes, the seducer, exhausts the pleasure of erotic tension by not primarily enjoying the fulfilment of his longing, but rather the *possibility* of its fulfilment and his own aesthetic play with this possibility.

Taking the plausibility of the analogies as a given, our analysis therefore leads to a second result: the painful state of religious longing can at least partly be experienced as pleasurable. We therefore have to admit that we cannot only be mistaken about our own state and its specific content, but also about its quality. At the same time it is important to be aware that taking pleasure in one's own longing always means maintaining a gap between oneself and one's longing.

Third: the feeling of religious longing has been described as a feeling that both represents the current state as deficient and points to our deliverance from suffering. So religious longing seems to be an intentional feeling. Currently, theories of emotions are a prominent kind of intentionality-focussed theories of feelings. In these theories, emotions are taken to be affective states which are directed towards a particular object. The emotion represents this object in a certain way. Either the intentional mode or the intentional content of the emotion is taken to involve an emotion-specific evaluation. Variants of these theories include judgement theories, perceptual theories and attitudinal theories of emotions. But religious longing is directed neither towards a particular object within the world, nor beyond the world. Rather, we feel that something is wrong with the life we are living or the world in which we find ourselves. What is wrong is not simply that this or that desire we have is unfulfilled. Something is wrong with our life in general, with our understanding and our project of life. So, what we learn is that what we usually take for granted – our conception of life and our basic interests, concerns, and ideas about what is valuable and worth striving

[18] Kierkegaard (1987: 20, 21).

for – is not right and cannot satisfy us. The generality of the object of religious longing is also mirrored by the fact that religious longing can grip us anywhere and anytime. Though certain circumstances like a deadly disease or the death of a loved one can stimulate the feeling of religious longing, it is not tied to any particular situation, because it concerns the way we find ourselves in the world.

Analogously, the object of religious longing is indeterminate. We are longing for something but this something does not have a specific content. So, the feeling of religious longing is more like hearing the Tristan chord than hearing a dominant seventh chord: we feel *that* but not *how* the Tristan chord is to be resolved. We feel repulsed by our current being and at the same time attracted by what there might be beyond this current being. Religious longing is characterized by the fact that it cannot be fulfilled within our finite life. What we are longing for is something that transcends ourselves and the sensual world; we long for taking part in this something and for having a relationship with it. Thus, the object of our longing is, in the first place, determined in a purely negative manner; it is a 'border concept'.

Philosophical as well as religious traditions give us important insights into how we can specify the content of religious longing. We can distinguish between the quest for an ultimate explanation and the quest for an ultimate good. Both of these questions are questions which, according to Kant, human reason 'cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer, as they transcend every faculty of the mind'.[19] Kant calls these questions 'needs of reason' and therefore places them in the domain of reason, though, remarkably, at the same time he classifies them as needs. Furthermore, we can distinguish between monotheistic and pantheistic traditions, which give the transcendent the shape of a counterpart (God) or of an encompassing structure (the Divine), respectively. The transcendent is the placeholder which guarantees what we are longing for. The Christian God, for example, answers our quest for an ultimate explanation as well as our quest for an ultimate good. Roberts, who argues from the point of view of Christian tradition, further characterizes our religious longing by naming three aspects it involves: the need for something completely trustworthy, the need to be loved unconditionally and the need for an absolute meaning.[20]

[19] Kant (1987: A VII).

We can conclude that religious longing is an intentional feeling not directed towards a particular object, but towards the way we find ourselves in the world. What we are longing for is something beyond the reach of our senses as well as of our reason. It is something transcendent whose form and content in the first place remains undetermined. Actually, says Paul, we know not what we should pray for, and we do not know how to pray. But he who searches the heart knows what the mind of the spirit is directed to.

Fourth: the comparison of religious longing with a basic need suggests that religious longing is a striving rather than an emotion. Accordingly, Roberts does not conceptualize religious longing as an emotion, but as a passion. Emotions are, according to him, concern-based construals.[21] Religious longing is not a construal, but a concern of a specific kind, a passion:

> A passion is a concern that can give a person's life a center, can integrate and focus the personality and give a person 'character'. A passion then is a kind of concern, but not every concern is a passion. [...] I use it [the word 'passion'] to refer neither to emotions nor to a general spiritedness of personality, but to a person's long-term, *characteristic* interests, concerns and preoccupations. [...] A passion in this sense is a concern that defines one's psychological identity.[22]

Likewise, Madell characterizes the feeling of musical longing as a desire:

> As I have already claimed, music expresses emotion when it evokes emotion in such a way that the listener comes to identify with the course of the music, hears it from the inside, or has a first-person perspective on it. What leads to identification is the evocation of certain *desires*: the desire for the resolution of the discord, for example, or the desire that the pleasurable experience occasioned by its resolution may continue.[23]

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[20] See Roberts (2007: 37).

[21] See Roberts (2003).

[22] Roberts (2007: 17). Cf. Tillich (1957: 1): 'Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern. Man, like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his very existence, such as food and shelter. But man, in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns – cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group. If it claims ultimacy it demands the total surrender of him who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfilment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name.'

[23] See Madell (1996: 75).

Thus, the feeling of religious longing is a state tending away from something and at the same time tending towards something else.

Fifth: Roberts and Madell do not just elaborate a theory of longing, but also specify the relation between the feeling of longing and other kinds of feelings: Roberts characterizes concerns as dispositions to a variety of emotions, and argues that having a concern of a specific kind is necessary for experiencing religious emotions.[24] Madell distinguishes an internal and an external perspective on music: the internal perspective presupposes an interest in the development of the music; the external perspective lacks such an interest. Only emotions based on an internal perspective on music are genuine musical emotions.[25] What qualifies emotions as musical is their reference to a musical interest, their dependency on the feeling of musical longing. Genuine musical emotions have to be distinguished from emotions which are elicited by music, but are based on an external perspective on it. An example of an emotion of this kind is boredom which is evoked by a piece of music, but does not represent a musical quality. At the same time, it is at least theoretically conceivable to feel genuine musical boredom, for example, if a piece of music always meets our musical expectations immediately. The classification of a phenomenon of boredom as an instance of musical boredom is not to be confused with classifying it as *purely* musical boredom, and therefore not *real* boredom.[26] Rather, by labelling the feeling as a musical feeling we specify the particular domain to which the interest which is crucial for our emotion belongs.

Applying this to religious feelings entails that religious longing is a precondition of having religious emotions. These emotions represent whether and how our longing is fulfilled. If we take the plausibility of the analogy to musical feelings as a given, we can, furthermore, conclude that the dependency on religious longing (or another kind of religious concern) is what qualifies an emotion as religious.

The phenomenon of religious longing thus offers five challenges to a philosophical theory of feelings: firstly, the possibility of feelings that are not recognized as such by the person who feels them; secondly, the possibility of negative feelings which are at least partly experienced as pleasurable; thirdly the possibility of feelings which are not directed

[24] See Roberts (2007: 12).
[25] See Madell (1996: 73).
[26] See Madell (1996: 81).

towards individual objects, but towards our being in the world as a whole; fourthly, the possibility of feelings that partly represent our current state as being in a certain way, but at the same time involve a kind of striving pointing beyond this current state; and fifthly, the possibility of feelings being necessary conditions of other kinds of feelings.

But in virtue of what is religious longing itself classified as religious? It is classified as religious in virtue of what it is about, what it is directed at and how it is. Musical longing is an interest we may or may not take in the course of music. The same is true for being in love with a particular person. On the contrary, religious longing is not an interest we can have or lack. What our longing is about is the good life. Being concerned with the good life is part of what makes us what we are. Musical and sexual longing are kinds of longing which can be fulfilled within our finite world. We can specify the conditions under which our longing would be fulfilled and determine the extent to which these conditions are already met. Religious longing, in contrast, is a longing for something that transcends the sensual world. Its content is specified in a purely negative manner. There are no evidential criteria for the fulfilment of our longing. Musical and sexual longing are finite kinds of longing: we take an interest in the object of our longing, but if our longing remains unfulfilled, life still seems possible to us. In contrast, religious longing consists in being infinitely interested in passion. If it remains unfulfilled, it is not simply the case that a special interest of ours remains unsatisfied. What is at stake is not simply the meaning of life or explanation of the world, but the very possibility of meaning and explanation altogether. As I argued above, what we are longing for is characterized by partly being within and partly beyond our own power.

III. THE TRANSITION FROM RELIGIOUS LONGING TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF

What is the relation between the transition from religious longing to religious belief and (theories of) rationality?

First of all, it is important to note that the transition from religious longing to religious belief cannot be justified by reference to a cognitive theory of religious longing. 'Cognitive' is here to be understood in the broad sense. A cognitive state of mind has a representational content and therefore is subject to conditions of appropriateness, of correctness

or even of truth. In his book 'Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding', Mark Wynn applies several theoretical approaches to the modern philosophy of emotion to the field of religion. He aims at vindicating what he calls a 'soft rationalism' of religious belief.[27] Soft rationalism is a position which, according to Wynn, differs from 'fideism' by giving relevance to evidence and argument, and from 'hard rationalism' by taking into account the possibility that affective experiences might also bear cognitive significance. The 'personal, affectively toned experiences' Wynn focuses on in his defence of soft rationalism are emotions, and thus evaluative representational states of mind. One of the approaches Wynn tries to apply is Madell's theory of musical emotions. He introduces Madell as a representative of a theory of feeling which takes feelings to be 'themselves kinds of thought or understanding'.[28] This is surprising, as Wynn refers to a quote of Madell in which he explicitly classifies the feeling of religious longing as a desire:

> hearing the dominant seventh evokes a desire, and sometimes something akin to a longing, for its resolution. That is a state of consciousness directed to an intentional object; it is also an affective state of consciousness. It is *not* an entertaining of an evaluation which (magically) leads to certain bodily disturbances. One may, if one is so disposed, regard the desire for the tonic resolution as ground for the evaluation that such a resolution would be 'a good thing', but it would be a total distortion to suppose that the desire, or the longing, *is* an evaluation, one which inexplicably leads to certain physical effects. It is a mode of 'feeling towards' its intentional object.[29]

Madell here criticizes an add-on theory of longing which conceptualizes musical longing as an evaluation plus an affective reaction caused by this evaluation. But his alternative account does not consist in taking musical longing to be an affective state which represents something, but in taking it to be an affective state which tends towards something.[30] It is misleading

[27] Wynn (2005: ix).

[28] Wynn (2005: 90).

[29] Madell (1996: 78). Cf. also p. 72: 'I have described our experience as the arousal of tension and a desire for relaxation, for its resolution on the tonic chord. What is evoked is a state of consciousness which is not merely one of affect, but which is also intentional: a desire, affective in itself, for a specific object.'

[30] Madell takes the concept of 'feeling towards' from a paper of D.W. Hamlyn's about 'The Phenomena of Love and Hate', published in 1978. It differs significantly from Goldie's concept of 'feeling towards'. Cf. Goldie (2000: 19).

of him to refer to musical longing as well as to musical joy, triumph, disappointment and sadness as emotions.[31] We should differentiate between the musical longing for harmonious resolution and emotions which have a representational content which is relative to the feeling of musical longing. According to Madell the musical emotions of joy and triumph mirror the fulfilment of our longing, whereas the emotions of disappointment and sadness mirror the lack of fulfilment. These emotions are felt only by someone who takes an internal perspective on music. This internal perspective is characterized by taking an interest in the development of the music and the harmonious resolution of musical tensions. Madell leaves it open whether this feeling of longing should itself be understood in cognitive terms.

Wynn claims that 'in the case of musical appreciation, feeling is able to take us beyond a certain sensory input so as to pick out a reality that has yet to be fully revealed in sensory terms; and analogously, in the case of God, feeling is able to take us beyond a certain doxastic input, so as to relate us to a reality that has yet to be fully understood in doxastic terms'.[32] But even if one concedes that religious longing is a cognitive state, it cannot justify religious beliefs – at least not those religious beliefs we are interested in: even if religious longing is appropriate in the sense that the current state is indeed painful and that what one longs for is indeed valuable, this does not justify the transition from religious longing to the religious belief that what one longs for is or will become real. Someone who anticipates the resolution of a dominant seventh chord into the tonic might be justified in perceiving the dominant seventh chord as a state of tension and in anticipating its resolution into the tonic as a harmonious and therefore valuable course for the music to take – but this does not justify his belief that such a resolution actually will take place. So what is misleading in Wynn's statement is his talk about 'reality'. In the state of longing we do not feel what is or will become real, but what should be or should become real. The dictum that the heart, which tends towards something, sometimes leads us better than reason, which represents something, is at the same time provocative and interesting for exactly the reason that feeling is not just another representational faculty.

But why exactly is the transition from religious longing to religious belief provocative? It is provocative because it is an instance of wishful

[31] Cf. Madell (1996: 73).

[32] Wynn (2005: 146).

thinking. Wishful thinking consists in believing a fact to be true because one desires it to be true. The transition from religious longing to religious faith is an act which we are responsible for, not a mere event that happens to us. However, it seems to be questionable whether it is at all conceptually possible – and if so, whether it is psychologically possible – to believe something because one wishes it to be true. According to common opinion, believing is a receptive capacity which we can at most influence indirectly. At this point a conceptual specification of the concept of religious belief will be helpful: religious belief consists in taking a proposition to be true, not in holding it to be true.[33] Holding a proposition to be true is a mental state; taking a proposition to be true is a mental act which consists in taking a proposition as a true premise in one's (practical) reasoning. Thus, the basic provocation of religious belief more precisely consists in the decision to take to be true a proposition which one desires to be true, though one knows that one is not justified in doing so by one's total available evidence.[34] If one assumes that taking a proposition to be true comes in degrees, the believer *fully* commits himself to take the proposition to be true. He wholeheartedly chooses to live under the idea of God or the Divine.

While it seems to be questionable whether we can ever be pragmatically justified in holding a proposition to be true, pragmatic justifications for taking something to be true seem to be less problematic. Therefore, at first sight it seems to be possible that the decision to take to be true what one longs to be true should be pragmatically justified. Pragmatic justifications are justifications for *taking* (or holding) something to be true, rather than for taking (or holding) something to be *true*.[35] They rely on a value which is either inherent in the attitude itself or is realized by it (or is likely to be). Tolstoy states that his decision to live under the idea of God despite his knowledge that he is not epistemically justified in so doing brings the gruelling fluctuation between confidence and desperation to an end.

[33] For this distinction cf. Bishop (2007: 33–35).

[34] Bishop argues from the perspective of a 'reflective believer' who questions the admissibility of his religious beliefs. He vindicates the stronger claim that under certain circumstances it is admissible to take *and hold* a proposition to be true though one knows that its truth is not supported by one's total available evidence. Cf. Bishop (2007: 5f.).

[35] The distinctions between taking and holding something to be true and between epistemic and pragmatic justifications are two different distinctions: taking and holding something to be true are attitudes towards propositions; epistemic and pragmatic justification deal with the legitimacy of having a certain attitude of belief towards a proposition.

He feels better because he believes in God. The pragmatic justification may also depend on the truth of what one believes. This for example is the case if the 'reward' is handed out by God himself or allotted only after death. Pascal famously argues that we should believe in God because the infinite reward we will gain *if* God exists outweighs the possible losses and gains of any other option we have.

Tolstoy's and Pascal's arguments are contestable. It is, for example, contentious whether Pascal's premises are valid and whether Tolstoy's decision ultimately ends his longing and suffering. As I have argued, the feeling of religious longing continues in the state of faith in a modified form. One can question whether pragmatic considerations can in the case in question – or indeed, ever – justify one in taking something to be true despite the lack of sufficient evidence. But the crucial point is another: the phenomenon we are dealing with, the transition from religious longing to religious belief, is not motivated by pragmatic considerations of the kind described. One does not decide to believe because oneself, or someone or something else, will be better off if one does so. Tolstoy says, 'I need only be aware of God to live; I need only forget Him, or disbelieve Him, and I died.' Tolstoy's interest expressed in the feeling of religious longing is existential, or, as James says, 'momentous'.[36] Tolstoy decides to believe because otherwise life does not seem possible to him. Thus, the choice does not present itself as a choice between a better and a worse outcome, but as a choice between the possibility and the impossibility of life. Above, I referred to specifications of the phenomenon of religious longing which interpret it as a longing for both meaning and understanding. Assuming that this is so, we can specify that what is at stake in the choice is the meaningfulness and understandability of life as such, that is the *possibility* of meaning and understanding.

The argument now resembles a transcendental, rather than a pragmatic argument. What is at stake is not the realisation of a value, but the condition of possibility of a value. Transcendental arguments take a phenomenon as a given and identify the conditions which have to be met for that phenomenon to be possible. In the case at hand, the transcendent reality appears to be a condition of the possibility for life, meaning and understanding. We decide to live under the idea of God or the Divine, because otherwise no good life seems possible to us. Ordinary transcendental arguments are considerations of 'pure reason'.

[36] James (1896: 329).

In contrast, the transition from religious longing to religious belief is a passionate movement: in the feeling of religious longing one *experiences* that no life is possible in the finite world. This experience motivates the decision to believe in a transcendent reality. This decision itself is performed passionately. One wholeheartedly commits oneself to belief in the transcendent reality. One earnestly takes it to be true in all areas of life with the maximum degree of confidence.

This distinguishes faith-commitments from other cases in which something is taken to be true without sufficient evidence, which include the hypothetical attitude of a scientist, the experimental attitude of a modern lifestylist, and the ironic attitude of a postmodern aesthete. Though the scientist may be highly interested in the truth of his hypothesis, his interest is not usually existential. His academic career and the life of other people may be at stake, but not the possibility of life as such. Furthermore, he does not commit himself to the truth of his hypothesis wholeheartedly. The relevancy of his hypothesis may be restricted to a certain area; he may take it to be true with less than full commitment and he may do so without being emotionally involved at all. In contrast to scientific hypotheses, religious belief is – by its very nature – incapable of empirical falsification, because the object of religious longing is transcendent.[37] Someone who tries out different lifestyles in an experimental manner lacks the infinite interest of feeling as well as the decisiveness of decision which characterize the transition from religious longing to religious belief. The modern lifestylist may well be motivated by pragmatic considerations. He chooses the religion which makes him feel best. If the expected result does not take place he turns to another religion. Likewise, postmodern aesthetes maintain the gap between who they are and what they take to be true. Carrying out the leap of faith on the basis of a feeling of religious longing is to abolish this gap.

We can conclude that the transition from religious longing to religious belief is neither epistemically justified by the representational content of the feeling of longing nor pragmatically justified by some kind of value which is realised by taking to be true what one longs for (given that one wants to adhere to an internalist theory of justification). Rather, one decides to wholeheartedly take as true what one experiences in the feeling of longing as a condition of the possibility of (an understandable,

[37] Cf. James (1896: 334); Bishop (2007: chapter 4).

meaningful) life. The transition from religious longing to religious belief is characterized by its object (the transcendent), its motive (existential interest) and its mode (earnestness). The feeling of religious longing fulfils the role of rationalizing our practical commitment to a belief which by its nature cannot be justified on the basis of evidence. The concept of passionate rationality captures the idea that under certain restricted conditions we are justified in taking as true what we passionately long to be true.[38]

CONCLUSION

Religious longing as a motivation for religious faith opens up an interesting perspective on theories of feelings, theories of religious feelings and theories of rationality. Following Roberts, we can classify religious longing as a passion. We experience our current being as a state of tension by which we are repulsed, and at the same time we anticipate the possible resolution of this tension to which we are attracted. Religious longing is characterized by (1) its generality, (2) its indeterminate transcendent object which by its nature is not capable of empirical verification or falsification, (3) its mode of being infinitely interested in passion and (4) its ambiguity with regard to our own power and powerlessness. Theories of feeling have to account for these kinds of passionate feelings. The passionate feeling of religious longing and the religious belief motivated by this feeling furthermore enables other kinds of religious feelings. If we conceive of the transition from religious longing to religious belief as a paradigmatic instance of 'passionate rationality' we have a starting point for rethinking the relation between feelings and rationality. As emotions, they epistemically justify beliefs by means of their representational content. As feelings, they pragmatically justify beliefs by means of their hedonic character. As passions, they passionately justify commitments to the truth of something by means of expressing an existential interest.

[38] These conditions of course need further specification and discussion which cannot be given in this article. Especially, it is of great importance to account for possible moral restrictions. See Bishop (2007).

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INTENTIONAL EMOTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD

EVA-MARIA DÜRINGER

University of Tübingen

Abstract. Some recent theories of emotion propose that emotions are perceptions of value laden situations and thus provide us with epistemic access to values. In this paper I take up Mark Wynn's application of this theory to religious experience and try to argue that his McDowell-inspired account of intentional emotions leads to limitations for the justificatory force of religious experiences and to difficult questions about the metaphysical status of the object of religious experiences: if emotions and religious experiences are largely similar, then, just as emotions, religious experiences cannot justify beliefs about the existence of objects, but merely beliefs about certain qualities they might have. Also, if emotions and religious experiences are largely similar, then, just as the objects of emotions, the object of religious experience turns out to be essentially mind-dependent.

For a long time emotions seemed to have a rather bad reputation, at least where the acquisition of knowledge was concerned. It seemed to be a truth universally acknowledged that if you wanted to understand a certain subject matter properly, you should look at it when you are calm and level headed, and not when you are under the influence of an emotional disturbance. In the last thirty or forty years this negative picture of emotions has changed to an extent. Whilst it seems still true that, when you want to acquire knowledge in the natural sciences, for example, you are more likely to succeed when you are calm and collected than when you are in the middle of an anger episode, emotions are no longer thought to be without any epistemic merit at all. On the contrary, when you want to acquire knowledge about whether a certain act is cruel or kind, whether a certain person is amiable or abominable, and whether a certain piece of art is beautiful or repulsive, emotions are not

only helpful but indispensible. How can that be? One thought is to say that emotions are like perceptions. Just as perceptions represent objects as having certain primary or secondary qualities, emotions represent objects as having certain evaluative properties. And just as perceptions that represent objects as having a certain quality justify beliefs about objects as having certain qualities, emotions that represent objects as having certain evaluative qualities justify beliefs about objects as having certain evaluative qualities, too.

Mark Wynn has recently taken this theory of emotions and applied it to religious experiences. If I understand him correctly, his idea is that religious experiences can be understood as being on a par with emotions. Just as emotions are not mere blind sensations, but intentional mental states that tell us something about the world around us, religious experiences are not blind sensations of a mysterious character, but rather intentional mental states that tell us something about God. In this paper I want to try to retrace Wynn's thoughts and examine if, and if yes, how, an application of current positions in the philosophy of emotions to the phenomena of religious experiences can indeed be fruitful.

I. WYNN'S IDEA

In this section I want to present Wynn's position as developed in the first chapter of his book *Religious Experience and Religious Understanding* (2005). I should say right away that Wynn's claims are much more modest than the positions I will go on to look into and criticise. At the very outset Wynn writes that

> I am not trying to provide a comprehensive treatment of the epistemic significance of theistic experience, but just to consider how certain standard objections to such experience may be seen in a new light given a reconceived account of the nature of emotions. (2005: 3)

In the following I will look at Wynn's description and refutation of said objections, before I will leave Wynn's footsteps to see in the next couple of sections what such a new treatment of the epistemic significance of theistic experience may look like and which problems it might encounter.

Perhaps, before discussing objections to theistic experiences and how they may be presented in a new light, one should ask what such experiences actually look like. This is a difficult question, as we are talking here about an experience that not all of us have had and that

we thus cannot take to be generally familiar. I take it that what Wynn has in mind is an emotional encounter with God, an 'affectively toned' experience of God's presence (e.g., Wynn 2005: 5, 28). One of the few examples of religious experiences that Wynn gives is a description of John Henry Newman's account of an experience of God in hearing the voice of one's conscience (Wynn 2005: 18). Interestingly, Wynn claims along with Newman that in hearing the voice of conscience, we have an experience of God, not of something else that is pointing to God, even though this experience is mediated. How are we to understand this? I think the idea may be this: in experiencing a pang of guilt, say, we experience God directly, even though God's presence is mediated by the pang of guilt. Thus, even though our experience of God's presence, or his voice, is clothed within emotions, it is by the mediation of these emotions that God himself can be felt. The natural next question is why one should believe that some emotions are indeed mediators of God's presence, rather than just mere subjective sensations that come and go without mediating anything. This, in fact, is the objection that Wynn mentions in the quote at the beginning of this section. Even though it may be true that when we are in religious environments like churches, or when we pray, or when we think about what God's reaction to our actions may be, we experience a whole range of emotions, it is not clear why we should think that these emotions have a mediating function. They may as well be blind sensations, mere feelings that overcome us, just as spontaneous chills and aches. I will call this the blindness objection.

It is at this point that Wynn turns to recent discussions in the philosophy of emotions, or, more precisely, the philosophy of values. Within the philosophy of values we also find a version of the blindness objection. Value experiences, one might think, are not genuine experiences of something that exists in the world, but mere blind emotional sensations. When I experience a certain action as cruel, then my mixture of disgust and anger is not an experience of a genuine value property of cruelty that the act somehow possesses, but rather a blind sensation, which I in turn project onto the value-free reality in which the act takes place. This position, which takes it that what happens in value experience is not the recognition of some real value property, but the projection of a sensation onto a value-free reality, is called Projectivism. Put negatively, Projectivism is a version of the blindness objection: value experiences are not intentional mental states that can correctly represent the world as being a certain way, but mere sensations that we project onto

a value-free world. Wynn's strategy to counter the blindness objection against religious experience is to look for a refutation of the blindness objection against value experience, which he finds in the work of John McDowell. The following is a summary of McDowell's argument against Projectivism as reconstructed by Wynn (2005: 3-6):

(1) Projectivism presumes that all value experiences can be disentangled into value-free external elicitors and purely subjective affective sensations.
(2) Such a disentanglement is not always possible.
(3) Hence, Projectivism is false.

The first premise looks uncontroversial, at least if we add that the disentanglement must be possible in principle, even if it is difficult in fact. The second premise requires an explanation. Why is it that value experiences cannot always, at least in principle, be disentangled into value-free elicitors and subjective experiences? One argument that McDowell puts forward and that Wynn discusses is that if such a disentanglement was always possible, then it would also be possible for someone who does not share our value experiences at all, who perhaps lacks emotional dispositions altogether, to master the use of our value concepts and apply them competently. This would be odd. If we imagine a Mr. Spock type character, that is a creature without any affectivity at all, to come and live amongst us, master our evaluative language and call an instance of wanton violence against an animal cruel, then even though his application of the concept 'cruel' would be right in a respect, we probably still would not credit him with having a proper understanding of what 'cruel' means. If he does not, and cannot, feel angry, disgusted, and pity when he sees an animal being beaten, then he cannot really see the cruelty of the act. Even if he knew the whole range of non-evaluative properties to which we reacted with this mixture of anger, disgust and pity, and he knew that we reacted that way and in turn projected our reactions onto the non-evaluative properties in question, we would still not credit him with an understanding of the meaning of cruelty. If this intuition is along the right lines, then we must conclude that our emotions are not mere blind reactions that we project back onto a value-free world, but that they are states that enable us to see something that is there, something that a person without emotions cannot see. Otherwise Mr. Spock, knowing all there is to know about the extensions of value experiences and the workings of human affectivity, but without

experiencing emotions himself, should have a proper understanding of values. He does not, hence Projectivism is wrong.

The intuition pushed here is similar to the one Peter Goldie means to trigger with his thought experiment of ice-cold Irene. In an analogy to Frank Jackson's Mary, the colour scientist in a black and white world, Goldie wants us to imagine icy-cool ice scientist Irene, a woman who knows all there is to know about ice, who also knows that people often have fear reactions towards icy surfaces, but who has never felt fear herself in her life. One day, she slips on an icy pond and suddenly begins to fear ice herself. As Goldie puts it,

> Before, she knew that the ice was dangerous, for she knew that it merited fear, but, because she now is able to think in a new way of fear, she now understands in a new way what it is for the ice to be dangerous. (Goldie 2002: 245)

Similarly, we may imagine Mr. Spock as suddenly feeling anger, disgust and pity when seeing a dog being mistreated. Now, we want to say, he knows more than he did before. He suddenly is able to grasp what it means that the act is cruel, the value of cruelty is properly presented to him – something that was not the case from the perspective of all his theoretical knowledge before.

Is the intuition that is pushed by McDowell's thought experiment of a non-emotional user of value concepts and Goldie's icy-cool Irene one that is strong enough to support premise two in the argument against Projectivism? In order to assess this, I think it is useful to introduce yet another analogy. There are certain emotional experiences and associated values that we can talk about competently, without ever having had the experience ourselves. Think of a person whose partner has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. We can try to imagine the horrible prospect of losing someone dear to us, how hard it must be to try to make his or her remaining time as cheerful as possible without letting ourselves be overcome by sadness and grief, but we will not really know the true meaning of such an event unless we are in this situation ourselves. Nevertheless, we use the concepts referring to such unexperienced horrors accurately. Undoubtedly we learn something and possibly begin using these concepts properly when we face the described situation ourselves. The question, however, is, whether this really means that a disentanglement between experience and elicitor is impossible, or whether it means something else. I think it means something else.

When you suddenly enter a situation that, up until then, you just observed from the third person perspective, then you learn what it is like to have a particular experience – be this the experience of seeing something red, feeling fear, or the horror of a prospective loss. Within a Projectivist picture, you are suddenly the one doing the projecting, rather than just the one observing others projecting whatever it is that they are experiencing. Your experience does not reveal something that you could not see before. But you know now that which is being projected. Before, you could point to the usual elicitors and the characteristic behaviours, observable from the third person perspective, that would make up a particular value. You could say, this is a situation in which someone knows that someone who is close to him will die soon, he is very shaken by this, this must be a most horrible situation – but you did not know what it meant. Now that you are in this situation, in which the observable characteristics are much the same, you know what it means – because you are the one who is shaken and who projects all his sadness onto the situation at hand. The brute intuition that the person who has a particular value experience knows more than the person who is just able to apply the value concept accurately without ever having had the relevant value experience is thus easily accommodated by the Projectivist.

McDowell's argument is, however, not so easily refuted. The thought behind premise two is not merely that, were a complete disentanglement possible, then people like Mr. Spock would be potential competent users of value concepts, but that, were a complete disentanglement possible, then we should expect more or less clearly defined groups of non-evaluative properties that make up the appropriate elicitors of particular value experience. For example, we should expect a clearly defined group of natural properties, such as causing a creature harm in order to produce pleasure in the bystanders and taking pleasure in watching such acts, as the appropriate elicitors of emotional reactions which, projected onto such acts and dispositions, make up the concept 'cruel'. If it was not possible to produce such a clearly defined group of natural properties as the appropriate elicitors of an emotional reaction, then the application of a value concept would become random. I could call anything that causes me to have a particular emotional reaction cruel and would not, could not, ever be wrong. And such a complete subjectivism and relativism simply does not accurately describe our practise of using value concepts. We do argue about whether things are cruel, whether they are

kind or whether they are funny rather than accepting just any odd value ascription as making sense.

How does this relate to McDowell's argument? The main thought behind premise two, it seems, is that a disentanglement of a value experience into value-free elicitors and subjective responses is impossible because there is not always a clearly defined group of value-free elicitors for each value experience. The example McDowell relies on is that of funniness. A lot of things seem to be rightly called funny, even though they do not seem to have a relevant class of non-evaluative properties in common. If we do not assume that they share the property of 'being funny', then our concept application would be random and unlike ordinary concept application. Thus, we should take it that that which the concept 'funny' refers to is the property of being funny, rather than just any odd natural property that happens to make us laugh.

Is this a more plausible support for premise two? One worry is that it might be too dependent on the example of funniness. If we take concepts like 'cruel' and 'kind', then the elicitor groups appear much less diverse. 'Cruel', it could be said, refers to the natural properties of causing a creature harm for no good reason; and 'kind', it could be said, refers to the natural properties of helping, soothing and supporting others without expecting anything in return. In other words, perhaps disentanglement is possible for a large number of value experiences, and where it is not possible, as in the case of finding something funny, the value concept does indeed not refer to anything in particular, but consists in a mere subjective reaction to whatever it happens to be that causes it. Another worry is that, even though it might be impossible to find a clearly defined group of non-evaluative properties that appropriately elicit value responses, this does not mean that such value responses cannot be inappropriate. The Projectivist, I take it, can claim that what makes a value response appropriate is whether or not it is appropriately embedded in, or consistent with, our other value responses. I can thus be criticised for applying the concept 'funny' to a joke that is mainly about racist behaviour. If I object strongly to racist behaviour, then treating an instance of it as harmless would be inappropriate.

I do not want to pursue arguments against McDowell's and Wynn's attacks against Projectivism any further, but rather at this point conclude the following: based on his portrayal of McDowell's arguments against Projectivism in chapter one of *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding*, Wynn wants to claim that religious emotional experiences

do not have to be conceived of as blind sensations, but can be viewed as intentional mental states that reveal something about the world to us. I hope to have shed some doubt over McDowell's arguments against Projectivism, but I do not think that they are the main worry about Wynn's attempt to use McDowell's arguments in order to show how religious experiences can be experiences of God. In the following I want to try to show that, even if we assume that McDowell is right with his criticism of Projectivism, his view of what values and value experiences are seems, when applied to religious experiences, more damaging than constructive.

II. MCDOWELL'S THEORY OF VALUE

Wynn wants to make plausible the idea that religious emotional experiences are possibly experiences of God. All he shows, however, is that Projectivism as a rival account of value experiences, that is as blind sensations, is not very good. I tried to show in the last section that perhaps Projectivism is not as bad a theory as McDowell and Wynn make it look, but let us leave that aside. What does a more positive picture look like? If not in a Projectivist way, how exactly are we to understand value experiences? I want to draw a brief sketch of how McDowell does understand them and then show why this understanding might not be as conducive to Wynn's goal as he seems to think it is.

McDowell (1998) develops his theory of values in response to J.L. Mackie's (1977) arguments against the objectivity of values. His main aim is to show that Mackie works with a wrong notion of objectivity. With a right understanding of objectivity, so McDowell argues, values can be thought of as objective after all. It is his development of the right sort of objectivity, and here mainly his claim that values should be understood as on a par with secondary, and not primary, qualities, that has led to the picture of emotions as intentional mental states that have the function to provide access to the evaluative, which Wynn wants to make use of. I think, therefore, that a good understanding of McDowell's value theory should be the starting point for assessing Wynn's thought that religious emotions may be an epistemic access to God.

McDowell agrees with Mackie that we do not think of values as being there in the world in the same way as we think of atoms and molecules as being there in the world, or as we think of densities, shapes and sizes

as being there in the world – that is, as existing independently from the way we think and feel about them. Mackie argues that if values did exist in the world mind-independently, they would be 'utterly different from everything else in the universe' (Mackie 1977: 38), for they would at the same time be there, whether or not humans are or ever have been around, and demanding a particular type of action from us, as soon as we happen to perceive them. It is this combination of independent existence and intrinsic demandingness that Mackie finds odd. McDowell finds it odd, too, but criticizes Mackie for having set the standards of objectivity for values unfairly high. This odd combination would only be required if values were supposed to be objective in the same way as primary qualities are. But values are not supposed to be objective in this way, but rather, or so McDowell argues, in the same way as secondary qualities are. In contrast to primary qualities, secondary qualities are not mind-independent. We do not think of them as playing an explanatory role in a scientific picture of the world, a picture that makes no reference to how we think and feel about the world. Instead, we acknowledge that qualities such as being of a certain colour, having a particular smell, tasting, sounding or feeling a certain way are all mind-dependent. Take the quality of being sour as an example. To be sour an object does not only need to have a certain chemical make-up, it also needs to taste sour. Even though an object could be sour and not ever be tasted by anyone, it is still true that what makes it sour is that it would taste sour to someone like us under suitable circumstances.

How does an analogy to secondary qualities help to save the objectivity of values? After all, as we have just seen, secondary qualities are essentially mind-dependent, that is, essentially consist of dispositions to cause certain mental states. Does this not play into Mackie's hands and show that values are subjective? It does not, and the reason is that secondary qualities are not simply projected by us onto the world in a way that every projection is permissible. Secondary quality ascriptions can be true or false, which means that secondary qualities must be more than mere figments of the brain: in order to have a false secondary quality ascription, it must be possible for a perception of a secondary quality to be inaccurate. Some perceptions thus are mere figments of the brain, whereas others get something right. McDowell puts his point this way:

> two notions that we must insist on keeping separate: first, the possible veridicality of experience (the objectivity of its object, in the second

> of the two senses I distinguished), in respect of which primary and secondary qualities are on all fours; and, second, the not essentially phenomenal character of some properties that experiences represent objects as having (their objectivity in the first sense), which marks off the primary perceptible qualities from the secondary ones. (McDowell 1998: 139)

The two senses of objectivity that McDowell distinguishes here are these: experiences, such as perceptions, are experiences of objects. If these experiences are such that they are either accurate or mistaken, that is, if experiences are assessable in these terms, then the object of the experience cannot be wholly determined by the experience itself. This is the second sense of objective that McDowell talks about. Both primary and secondary qualities are objective in this sense, because experiences of both of them are assessable in terms of truth and falsehood, or accuracy and inaccuracy. The first sense of objectivity McDowell talks about refers to the way in which we have to think of qualities: primary qualities we think of as not essentially phenomenal, which means as not having as a necessary ingredient a property that is in some way mind-dependent. When we experience an object as having a certain shape, then in order to think of the object as having this shape, we do not need to think of how the object appears to us. The opposite is true, however, of secondary qualities. When we experience an object as having a certain colour, then in order to think of the object as having this colour, we must think of how the object appears to us – namely as looking red, blue, yellow or whatever the colour in question is. To sum up: both secondary and primary qualities are objective in the sense that experiences of them can be accurate or inaccurate, whereas primary qualities are also objective in the sense that they are not essentially phenomenal, and secondary qualities are subjective in the sense that they are essentially phenomenal.

Values, McDowell goes on to argue, are analogous to secondary qualities. They also are objective in that experiences of them can be accurate or inaccurate, and they are also subjective in that they are essentially phenomenal. Take the property of being admirable as an example. When we admire something, our admiration can be accurate or it can be mistaken, depending on whether the object is question really is admirable or not. In this sense, the evaluative property of being admirable is objective. Whether an object really is admirable or not is determined by whether or not it is, or would be, admired by

suitable people under suitable circumstances. In this sense the property of being admirable is subjective – it is essentially phenomenal in that it has a disposition to cause a certain mental state, that is, admiration, as an essential ingredient.

In order to reconnect all this with Wynn's idea that certain emotional religious experiences may be experiences of God, let us see what it means for the nature of emotions. McDowell himself does not seem to be too interested in this question, but on the back of his theory of values other philosophers have developed a picture of emotions as analogous to perceptions of secondary qualities (e.g. Deonna 2006, Döring 2007). It is easy to see why McDowell's theory of values lends itself nicely to such a theory of emotions. McDowell gives us a way in which to understand the concept and metaphysics of values by referring to the concept and metaphysics of secondary qualities. If we want to understand the epistemology of values, it seems natural to look at the epistemology of secondary qualities and see if we can find useful comparisons. There we see that perceptions of secondary qualities, such as seeing a red apple, hearing a loud bang, smelling a flowery perfume, or tasting a sweet cake, are our epistemic access to them. In other words, not only do perceptions of secondary qualities play a crucial role in the metaphysical make up of secondary qualities, they are also the way in which we get to know about them. For an apple to be red is for it to look red under suitable circumstances to a suitable observer, and knowing that an apple is red takes our perceiving it to be red. The same thing may now be said about values: not only do emotions about evaluative properties play a crucial role in the metaphysical make-up of evaluative properties, but knowing that an act is admirable takes our admiration for the act.

We have come then from telling a metaphysical story about values to telling an epistemological story about values; a story that involves that emotions serve as epistemic access to a mind-dependent world of values.

III. A PROBLEM FOR WYNN'S IDEA

The thought that Wynn wants to make plausible is that religious emotions are not, at least not in all cases, blind sensations, but intentional mental states that can serve as epistemic vehicles. He wants to do this by showing that ordinary emotions are epistemic vehicles to ordinary values, which he does by referring to McDowell's work. In the first section I introduced

McDowell's arguments against Projectivism, which are the ones that Wynn actually uses. They end, however, in a negative picture: we might, if we accept them, believe that emotions are not blind sensations, but we are in the dark as to what they actually are. In order to provide a positive picture, I introduced in section two McDowell's value theory, which lends itself to a perceptual theory of emotions. I take it, but cannot be certain, that this is something close to what Wynn has in mind for a positive picture of emotions.

In this section I want to show that, if a perceptual theory of emotions on the back of McDowell's value theory is what Wynn has in mind, then he runs into difficulties. In order to do this, I will first try to spell out the analogy between ordinary emotions and religious emotions on this picture, and then show that it is far from clear how we are to understand the intentional object of a religious emotion.

Ordinary emotions, on the perceptual theory, are intentional mental states that ascribe evaluative properties to objects. Fear, for example, is about a dangerous animal; anger is about an offensive remark; and gratitude is about a helpful or kind act. The intentional content has two main ingredients: a particular object, which is the object in the world at which the emotion is directed (e.g. the animal, the remark, or the act) and a formal object, which is the evaluative property that is ascribed to the particular object (e.g. the property of being dangerous, offensive or helpful). Perceptual theories of emotions take it that emotions begin with a non-emotional cognitive state, such as a perception of an object, or a belief about a state of affairs. I see a tiger, for example, or believe that this remark was intended to hurt me, or believe that this act was performed with the intention to get me where I want to get. This so called cognitive base of an emotion (see e.g. Deonna and Teroni 2012: 5) is then followed by the actual emotion: we ascribe to the particular object given in the cognitive base an evaluative property. The evaluative property, or formal object of an emotion, also serves as a standard of appropriateness for emotions. Fear is only appropriate if the object in question is really dangerous; anger is only appropriate if the remark in question is really offensive; and gratitude is only appropriate if the action in question is really helpful.

With this theory of ordinary emotions in place, we can ask with Wynn what religious emotions may look like. Religious gratitude and consolation are presumably experiences of God as helping us in difficult situations. Religious fear is presumably an experience of God as

potentially punishing our wrong-doings. Religious hope is presumably an experience of God as potentially giving us a good life after death. What is striking is that in all these emotional experiences, God figures as the particular object of an emotion. This is a problem for Wynn, because particular objects are not given to us by the emotion itself, but by the cognitive bases of emotions – perceptions, beliefs, imaginations, hallucinations, illusions and so on. If this is correct, and I indeed do not know of any emotion theory that has it that the particular object is given by the emotion, then this means that knowledge of God cannot be attained via emotions, but must be attained by some other cognitive means. Put differently: perceptual theories of emotions take it that emotions are means to gaining knowledge about values, but not means to gaining knowledge about the existence of the objects who possess these values.

Even though standard perceptual theories do not hold that emotions are means to gaining knowledge about the existence of particular objects, could one not perhaps stretch the theory so as to make room for this? Take the example of your waking up in the middle of the night in a state of terrifying fear. At first you don't know what it is that you are so afraid of, but then you get up and begin to search your house for intruders. You eventually find out that there indeed had been someone in the house, but that he has already left, having taken various valuables with him. Could we in this case not say that your fear was a means to gain knowledge about an object that was threatening you? Could we not say that it was a hint that set you on the trail of the burglar? Wynn might have something like this in mind with his example of John Henry Newman's description of an experience of a bad conscience, which I described in section one. Wynn's interpretation of this example is that, when we experience such a pang of guilt, we experience God directly, although mediated through this pang of guilt. It is not clear how exactly God is meant to enter into this experience, as the particular objects of guilt are our own actions, and the formal object is the evaluative property of wrongness: when I feel guilty about having lied to someone, I feel guilty about my wrong action. So where does God come in? Perhaps Wynn takes it that what we actually experience, namely guilt about a wrong-doing of ours, has a flipside: deference to someone. Even though God might not immediately enter into the content of our emotional experience, it is him at whom our deference is directed.

Given that instances of emotional experiences in which the particular object is at first unknown, that is, emotional experiences that do not seem to be preceded by a cognitive base, do occur, are we not justified in concluding that emotions can be ways of getting to know about the existence of objects? I do not think so.Take the burglar example again: you could say that it was your fear that made you aware of the burglar, but the more plausible explanation of the example would be that you unconsciously perceived a noise that triggered your fear response. Your means of knowing that there's a burglar in your house is not your sudden fear, but your unconsciously experienced perception of a noise, confirmed by a search of the house that made it clear that someone had been in and taken things away. Perhaps it would still be correct to say that it was your fear that in some way hinted to you that something was wrong, but if there were no means independent of emotions to find out whether or not a supposed object of an emotion exists, then we would not rely on our emotion as evidence for the existence of that object. Instead, we would say that we were afraid, but that our fear turned out to be inappropriate, because no dangerous object could be made out.

Or could perhaps another reference to the analogy between perceptions of secondary qualities and emotions as perceptions of evaluative properties give fresh support to the idea that emotions can be evidence for the existence of primary objects? After all, perceptions of the secondary qualities of objects have the power to convince us that the object that possesses them really exists. When we think that there might be a cat in the house, and then smell a cat smell and hear a miaow somewhere, then these perceptions of secondary qualities add to the evidence that the cat really exists. Might not a sudden fear of cats do the same? I do not think that many of us would answer this question affirmatively. If someone says 'I knew that the cat was there because I smelt it', this does make sense. The speaker's belief seems indeed prima facie justified by his olfactory perception. But if someone says 'I knew that the cat was there because I was suddenly afraid of it', then we would question the speaker's justification. Why is that? Possibly the main difference between the two cases has to do with the function of the mental states in question. Perceptions of all kinds have the function to inform us of what is there, whereas emotions of all kinds do not have that function. Instead, it is their function, or so the perceptual theorist generally has it, to inform us of the evaluative properties of objects (see e.g. Prinz 2004: 66). So when we are experiencing an emotion, we are

not in the business of finding out what there is, but whether that which is there is in some way good for us or not. Thus, when we fear God, or feel deference or gratitude towards him, then we do not thereby become convinced that he exists. If these feelings hit you out of the blue, and you are someone who does not already believe in God's existence, then you will not by having these emotions become convinced that God exists. Either you must acknowledge that you have believed in God's existence all along, without having been aware of it, or you must conclude that your emotions are inappropriate. But to begin to believe that God exists on the basis of sudden fear of him would be unjustified.

Let us assume, then, that emotions provide in the first place information about evaluative properties, but not about the existence of the objects to whom the properties belong. What this means for Wynn is that the idea that emotions provide us with knowledge about the existence of God seems hard to maintain. At least if religious emotions worked in a way that is similar to ordinary emotions, then a perception of or a belief about God should serve as the cognitive base to which emotions like gratitude or fear are reactions. It would then, however, be this perception or this belief that served as the main provider of knowledge about God's existence, rather than the reactive emotion. Does this mean that Wynn's idea should be given up? Not necessarily. Wynn sometimes expresses himself in a way that lends itself to an interpretation of religious emotions that is not on a par with ordinary emotions as conceived of by perceptual theorists. Consider the following two quotes: 'perhaps theistic experience can be understood (in some cases anyway) as a kind of affectively toned sensitivity to values that "make up" Gods reality?' (Wynn 2005: 5) and 'we should think of the source of religious experience as a set of value-indexed qualities, and not some set of properties which can be adequately characterized in quantitative (or in general, in non-normative) terms' (Wynn 2005: 21). Wynn seems to endorse the fact here that if emotions get us in touch with anything, then it will be with values. Nevertheless, he seems to deny that in order to ascribe values, we must have a cognitive base that provides us with the object to whom the values are ascribed. Instead, he seems to think it possible that the object can be thought of as 'made up of values', as a 'set of value-indexed qualities'. What could this mean?

First of all we should note that, if Wynn is right, then religious emotions seem to be different from ordinary emotions. Ordinary emotions ascribe value properties to objects previously given in

a cognitive base, whereas religious emotions in some way sense values, which are in turn not ascribed as properties to some object, but which make up an object. To put the same point differently: ordinary emotions are reactions to objects that we believe exist, or that we see, imagine, or hallucinate. The properties that emotions ascribe to the objects are not properties that are essential to the object. A tiger is still a tiger, even if it is not dangerous. Ordinary emotions thus do not inform us about essential properties, but non-essential aspects of objects that might be important to us. In contrast to this, religious emotions would, on this new reading, not be reactions to believed, perceived, imagined or hallucinated objects, but rather first encounters with God's essential properties. God would, on this reading, be an entity composed of various values such as helpfulness, awe-inspiringness, kindness, and so on. If we read 'make up' as necessary, even though possibly not sufficient, conditions for God's existence, then God would be these values. A weaker reading, such as for a example a reading that sees God as a being that possesses these properties, but that sees them as neither sufficient nor necessary for God's existence, might be more plausible, but would have to give up the idea that emotions are an epistemic access to God's existence. For if the evaluative properties are not essential, then all we have encountered is a set of evaluative properties, and we are back to the dealing with cases of emotions without particular objects. As I tried to show earlier, such emotions are generally seen as inappropriate, rather than as epistemic hints to hitherto unknown objects.

Does it make sense to say that the evaluative properties we encounter in religious emotions are essential properties of God? I think it might make sense, but I also think that we would have to take consequences on board that I am not sure Wynn and like-minded people would like to take on board. If we go back to McDowell's analogy between values and secondary qualities, we will see that he describes secondary qualities, and hence by analogy also values, as essentially phenomenal, even though possibly veridical. What it means for a quality to be essentially phenomenal is for it to consist essentially in a disposition to cause certain mental states. Colours are like that, as well as smells, noises, and sounds. It makes sense to say that values are like that too. For something to be admirable, it has to be such as to evoke admiration in the right circumstances, for something to be pitiful, it has to be such as to evoke pity in the right circumstances, and for something to be kind, it has to be such as to evoke gratitude in the right circumstances. Let's now go

one step further with the analogy: for something to be God, it has to be such as to evoke awe, fear, gratitude, etc., in the right circumstances. This follows directly from saying that God has values as essential properties and applying McDowell's theory of values. But what we are saying here is nothing else than that God is essentially mind-dependent, just as colours, smells, and the property of being admirable. It takes reference to us, or creatures like us, for these properties to come into existence. It is not the case that it merely takes sensory apparatuses like ours, or emotional sensibilities like ours, to get these properties in view. That is, the phenomenality of secondary qualities is not a mere epistemological matter, so that we can say that these properties are there independently of us, and we can think of them as being there independently of us, but it takes certain sensibilities to become aware of them. No, the thesis is metaphysical: without reference to these certain sensibilities these properties would not be there. And to say this about God's essential properties is to say that in order to give a full account of the kind of being that God is, we need to make reference to these sensibilities. God is essentially mind-dependent.

Maybe it is possible to maintain such a position. If we say that response-dependent qualities such as awe-inspiringness, kindness and fearsomeness are necessary, but not sufficient essential qualities of God, then perhaps we could still believe that God also possesses response-independent qualities such as being omniscient and omnipotent. Such beliefs about God's response-independent properties, however, could not be justified by reference to religious emotions. The bigger problem though seems to be this: is it possible to maintain a belief about God as the creator of the universe, including creatures like us, if we must think of God as a being that, without a reference to sensibilities like ours, would not exist? Can he have created our sensibilities, if it takes a reference to our sensibilities for him to exist?

To come to a conclusion, let me summarise the following points as the main ones I would like to make regarding Wynn's thought on religious emotions as possible epistemic accesses to God: first, Wynn's reliance on McDowell's arguments against Projectivism is possibly too strong and results in a merely negative picture of religious experiences – they are not necessary blind experiences, but if they are not blind, what exactly are they? I tried to fill in this picture by drawing further on McDowell's work, in particular his analogy between values and secondary qualities. The general idea that emerged was that emotions are perception-like

states, and that their content can be fruitfully compared to the content of perceptions of secondary qualities. I think there are two main problems when one tries, as Wynn does, to interpret religious experiences on the lines of ordinary emotions as seen by perceptual theorists. One is that ordinary emotions do not justify beliefs about the existence of their particular objects. Thus, we cannot claim by comparison that religious experiences can justify beliefs about the existence of God. Second, if we take the evaluative properties that an emotion ascribes to an object as essential properties of that object – as Wynn seems to suggest, but as perceptual theorists would deny – we end up with a picture of God as, at least partly, essentially mind-dependent.

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CONSOLATION – AN UNRECOGNIZED EMOTION

EVA WEBER-GUSKAR

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Abstract. Although consolation is one of the classic religious subjects it plays no role in the current debate about religious emotions. One reason for this neglect could be that this debate is mostly based on classical emotions such as joy and fear, love and hope, and that consolation is not understood as an emotion. This paper tries to show that consolation in fact can and should be seen as an emotion. After naming and refuting some reasons that speak against taking consolation to be an emotion, I will explain how consolation can be positively conceptualized as an emotion within a recent theory of emotions. It will be decisive to see that the experience of consolation can be understood not only hedonistically-qualitatively, but also intentionally. This structural conception allows for a differentiated description of various types of consolation as an emotion, also, in the tradition of William James, of a secular as well as a religious form of consolation.

Consolation is one of the classic religious subjects. In Christianity in particular, consolation is regarded as a central experience that is available to the believer through her faith. Consolation is familiar from the Holy Scripture, where God is also identified as the great consoler. One psalm, for instance, says: 'My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.'[1] [2] This fits with a perspective wherein all human life is regarded as in need of consolation

[1] Psalm 73.26.

[2] Or in a letter of Paul's to the Thessalonians: 'Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.' 2 Thessalonians 2.16.

and God, as the Other of everything mundane, as a source of consolation. Christians are also familiar with consolation from Christian practice, in which it is important to provide consolation out of charity, and one can rely on being consolidated by one's neighbour or parish in times of need. Pastoral care, i.e. being there for someone else who is in need, is a much-discussed area of theology.

Given this briefly sketched central role of consolation in religion, it is surprising that it plays no role in the lively debate about religious feelings and emotions.[3] Shouldn't consolation be an example *par excellence* in this area? Is it not, besides reverence, one of the particularly striking examples of emotional religious experiences? Does its double meaning not show that its role is particularly relevant: as a concrete experience of consolation that someone can offer us in cases of smaller and greater suffering; and as an aspect of the way of life that belief facilitates – i.e. living with the consolation that God provides, given the flawed human existence that everybody somehow experiences as painful?

When wondering why consolation has been neglected in the current debate despite its obvious significance, the following suspicion might arise: consolation is ignored in the debate about religious feelings, because this debate is mostly based on classical emotions such as joy and fear, love and hope. Consolation is not understood as a classical emotion. At the same time, nobody has understood it as a religious feeling *sui generis* before, in the way that, for instance, Otto took the numinous to be a religious feeling, or Schleiermacher the principal dependency. The reason might be that consolation is understood as a very general phenomenon that is not specifically religious in the same way as the emotional experiences just mentioned are thought to be.

Regardless of what the exact reasons for ignoring consolation might have been, I think that due to its significance, it is an important task to establish consolation as a subject in the debate about religious feelings. Consolation should be introduced to this debate as an emotion that should be investigated in its specifically religious characteristics. One could also address it as a fundamental experience that might help explain what constitutes religious experience and life.

[3] There is no individual publication about the topic, and the keyword 'consolation' can also not be found in any overviews. See, e.g., J. Corrigan, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). In the following I take 'feeling' as the broad term that includes all experiences that are felt and emotion as a special kind of those, as will be explained later on.

I am mostly interested in the first type of investigation. In the tradition of William James, I assume that many emotions can have a secular as well as a religious form.[4] I will not consider the question of whether there are specifically religious emotional experiences that have no secular counterpart in this article.

If consolation is to be introduced into the debate about religious feelings, the first and obvious task is to clarify whether consolation can be taken to be an emotion in a secular understanding at all – prior to discussing its specifically religious characteristics. There is hardly any material available about this question in the relevant disciplines. The philosophy of emotions has neglected the phenomenon, as too have theoretical theology and the neighbouring sciences such as psychology and sociology. Hence I will make this the question of my text: is consolation an emotion?

If you look at recent publications from research about emotions, you will find as little there as on a list of passions from the history of philosophy.[5] Traditional examples of emotions are joy and sorrow, anger and jealousy, envy and fear. Consolation is never addressed on its own. It is, at least, mentioned in connection with emotions, because consolation is doubtlessly related to sorrow, which is a classical emotion. But can consolation itself be understood as an emotion, despite the impression given by a perusal of the relevant literature?

I would like to answer this question affirmatively: yes, consolation can be taken to be an emotion. Consolation is an emotional phenomenon, and a certain aspect of it was simply ignored in most debates about emotions. I want to describe this aspect here and show why we can – and should – consider consolation as an emotion due to this aspect.

The structure of my paper is as follows: I will first name the reasons that speak against taking consolation to be an emotion and show how these reasons can be refuted. I will then explain how consolation can be positively conceptualized as an emotion within a recent theory of

[4] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1985), p. 31.

[5] C. Newmark, *Pathos - Affekt - Gefühl. Philosophische Theorien der Emotionen zwischen Aristoteles und Kant* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2008), pp. 225 ff. For a recent 'list of emotions' see, e.g., the table of contents for C. Demmerling, and H. Landweer, *Philosophie der Gefühle. Von Achtung bis Zorn* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007). Nothing can be found either in Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions. An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

emotions. It will be decisive to see that the experience of consolation can be understood not only hedonistically-qualitatively, but also intentionally. In consolation, one finds something or someone consoling. This structural conception allows for a differentiated description of various types of consolation as an emotion. I will also explain why we can talk about secular as well as religious consolation.

I. WHY CONSOLATION IS ALLEGEDLY NOT AN EMOTION

1.1. Reasons against consolation as an emotion

I will name three reasons that speak against taking consolation to be an emotion. I have already mentioned the first one in the introduction: consolation is not even considered to be an emotion in any of the common theories of emotions. This is at least made clear in compilations of emotions from Aristotle to Kant.[6] In contemporary literature, consolation can also neither be found in indices nor chapter headings, and only very seldom *en passant* in chapters about mourning or similar subjects.[7] This is true for the philosophical literature as well as – as far as I can see – psychology and neurosciences that have started to intensively investigate feelings since the renaissance of the theory of emotions at the end of the 20th century.[8]

Only in theology, especially in Christian theology, can one find many publications about consolation – but not, as previously mentioned, in theoretical debates about religious feelings; rather in the area of practical theology. This is why one might put forward a second reason against

[6] See footnote 1. The situation in the time 'between Kant and Kenny' is a bit more unclear, Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963). In the 19th century, with the differentiation of the sciences, research on emotions was increasingly a subject for psychology. Nietzsche and Freud discussed consolation in their respective critiques of religion without being explicitly interested in the phenomenon as an emotion. In the phenomenology of the early 20th century, consolation is not mentioned.

[7] One of the few places in recent monographs on philosophical research about emotions where consolation is mentioned – although not discussed as an emotion in itself – is the analysis of Gustav Mahler's Rückert-Lieder in Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 281 ff.

[8] One example are the popular books by the neurologist Antonio Damasio. Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* (New York: Harcourt, 2003); Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1994).

taking consolation to be an emotion. On closer inspection, these are either texts that are meant to be directly consoling themselves, such as psalms (and their explanations) and songs. Or they are texts about pastoral care. These texts are about consolation, but primarily about how to console someone, and not about what consolation is and specifically not about the question whether consolation is an emotion or not. In this respect, they resemble the few texts from the history of philosophy where consolation is a topic: consoling writings from antiquity such as the ones by Seneca and Boethius. In this sense, consolation can also be found today in a scientific disciple that might be surprising at first: in nursing theory.[9] On closer inspection, it is of course easy to see why: nursing is an activity where offering consolation plays a huge role. So in these disciplines, consolation takes place, but not as a feeling that one would experience. Consolation is understood as consoling here, it is about offering consolation, about an attitude.[10]

Now one could say that we simply have to distinguish between two perspectives on consolation. On the one hand, we can talk about consolation in the sense of 'offering consolation' or causing consolation. On the other hand, we can talk about consolation in the sense of 'receiving consolation' or actually feeling consolation, so we can talk about a feeling here. Is the state into which a consoling person moves a suffering person, a feeling or, to be more precise, an emotion?[11] It is not that simple. Given this scenario, one could put forward a third reason against my thesis. The consolation that one receives, one could say, means the end of mourning or similar irksome emotions such as desperation, misfortune, pain. Finding consolation thus would mean that the mourning disappears. Or maybe the mourning does not even have to disappear, and forgetting or repressing it suffices. In any case, consolation here means, it seems, the absence of (certain) emotions rather than the presence of an emotion. One could even go further and say that it is in fact the absence of many or even all emotions. Consolation could be the intermediate state or phase between mourning and new joy about something else. Being

[9] See, e.g., F. Gilje, and A.-G. Talseth, 'Mediating Consolation with Suicidal Patients', *Nursing Ethics*, 14:4 (2007), 546-557.

[10] In medical ethics, the notion of consolation can also be found, but in the sense of offering consolation. Going back to antiquity, it is then understood as a virtue. See W. T. Reich, 'From ancient consolation and negative care to modern empathy and the neurosciences', *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 33 (2012), 25-32 (pp. 26f.).

[11] I will explain the difference between feelings and emotions below.

consoled in this sense would be a sigh of relief. A neutral state in which one does not really feel anything at all. Any considerations that merely regard consolation as the end of mourning and other similar emotions point at least indirectly in this direction.[12]

These are the reasons that speak against taking consolation to be an emotion. They confirm a tradition in which it is also not considered as an emotion. But these arguments do not seem very strong to me. I will now show how to reply to them.

1.2. Why the counter-reasons are not convincing

The reply to the first reason is simple: referring to tradition is not enough. Just because everyone has always thought so does not mean that they were right. The first of them might not have looked hard enough, and many followed, got used to it or found no cause to question the assumption.

If we do question the assumption, however, there is a good reason for also considering the interpretation of consolation as a consoling activity as misguided, just as neglecting the description of the state that is the aim of consoling is a mistake. This view is at least too limited and obscures the view on an interesting phenomenon. I want to go further here and claim that we cannot really understand what it means to console unless we clarify what happens with the person who receives consolation. Consoling does not tell us what consolation is. We have to understand what consolation is in order to understand what it means to offer consolation – and how to best do that.

I will later show how exactly consolation is to be understood as an emotion (and not just as a certain non-emotional state). For now, I would merely like to point out that the concept of consolation is no exception concerning the fact that it can be both offered and experienced. One can bring joy and also feel joy. One difference might be that one can bring joy in many different ways, but this is more similar to causing it, whereas this is not the case with consoling. When offering consolation, the action itself is more specific and more closely connected with the consolation that is its aim. Hence it is more important for consolation that there is a consoling person. For other emotions, an engaged person is less necessary as a cause. A sunny morning is sufficient for joy. However, even in consolation one might not depend entirely on another person.

[12] One example is Nussbaum's interpretation of the Rückert-Lieder. See footnote 3.

Even here, the weather or a musical work might play a role. I will come back to this point. For now, I just wanted to show that the complementary structure of giving and receiving also applies to classical emotions. So the fact that consolation has, in most cases, only been discussed in the sense of offering consolation is no reason for insisting that consolation can only be an action and not a feeling.

Now to the third point. How is the state that consoling aims to bring about, how is the consolation that someone who is desperate seeks, to be understood? Is it a non-emotional, neutral state as suggested above? Is it the state 'after' mourning, desperation and the like? Does finding consolation, finishing mourning, or leaving it behind, mean that one has escaped the grasp of emotion? That does not seem plausible to me. I will explain this with the analysis of a rather general example. I will then substantiate my thesis with the basis of a theory of emotions.[13]

Imagine a classical situation where consolation is needed. Someone loses someone who is close to her, for instance in a car accident. She is desperate, angry at the guilty driver or at fate, and, most of all, very sad about her loss. After the worst few days that she mostly spends in shock, she is in need of consolation. How is this wish for consolation to be understood? There are at least two possibilities. Does this person want to overcome her mourning? Does she want the mourning to simply stop so she can be happy again, like before? Or does she want to be able to deal with the mourning, i.e. with her loss – which means, does she want to change the state of suffering, but not simply get rid of it? The second answer seems right to me. Mourning contains an appreciation of what was lost, or in this example, of who died. Simply getting rid of the mourning would then mean to somehow deny the appreciation. This is surely something the mourning person (at least usually) does not want to do. Hence the wish for consolation should not be directly understood as the wish for the mourning to end. It is rather plausible to understand the desire for consolation as the desire for an altered emotional state, and not for the end of negative emotions. If we think this is an understandable desire, then consolation has to be seen as an emotional state on its own. Someone who is desiring consolation wants to feel consolation.

[13] The main thought of the following arguments about consolation as an emotion I have already presented – in a shorter version - in Eva Weber-Guskar, 'Religious Emotions as Experiences of Transcendency? The Example of Consolation', in *Theologie der Gefühle*, eds. R. Barth and C. Zarnow (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming).

Some might find this view unconvincing and argue that consolation is an emotionally neutral state by presenting a different example. If a child hurts his knee while playing, the child runs to his father crying, because he wants to be consoled. This is easily done by the father by putting a band-aid on the wound, saying a few nice words and offering a chocolate. The child stops crying and runs back to the other children in order to continue playing. Here, one might think, being consoled indeed means getting rid of pain and being happy again.

However, strictly speaking, a case like this needs to be described differently. In this case, too, finding consolation does not simply mean getting rid of the pain. The pain in the child's knee might last all afternoon and only stop in the evening. Long before that, he has already played with the others again. The attention and friendly words of the father, the fact that he hugged the child, enabled the child to bear the pain and to find it not terrible enough to stop him from playing. Consolation consists in not completely erasing negative emotions in this case, too, but in changing them in a way so one can deal with them.

It does not matter that in one case, with the adult, the pain is mental and in the other case physical. Not only does the child's knee hurt, he is also shocked by the constraint in playing that the pain imposes, he is sad that he can no longer run like before. The physical pain is, as it were, accompanied by mental pain. The pain is lessened by making it clear to the child: you can still play, you just cannot run like before and not as easily.

Even if one is not convinced by this example, one could just regard it as a different variant of consoling and come back to the first example and show that there is at least also a variant of consoling that leads to consolation in the sense suggested by me: to an emotional state on its own. If you suddenly lose your partner in a car accident, it is just impossible to simply get over his death and to be as happy as before. This is not only because of what one wants – as I said above – but because of what is possible for a person in her emotional integrity. The exact consequences of such a denial of appreciation would be worth an investigation. But I would even go further in cases of dramatic losses and the attempt to get rid of the corresponding mourning: not only is the question how people want to express their appreciation for someone or something who was lost at stake here, but also their ability to evaluate or to be aware of what is valuable (and to what extent) to them. For this quick dissolution of mourning would mean to suddenly erase a very important point of

orientation in one's personal value-landscape. It is possible, however, even after such strokes of fate, to organize oneself anew inside, to be a person who can continue to live with the loss.[14] And this means to find consolation. Consolation is not the dissolution of mourning, but a change of the emotional surroundings of mourning and hence an emotion on its own (which only depends on mourning or a misfortune).[15]

These are the arguments against the first reasons why consolation should not be considered as an emotion. Now I want to explain in more detail why consolation can be described as a type of emotion, based on a theory of emotions.

II. CONSOLATION AS AN EMOTION

2.1. Emotions as a type of feeling

In order to show more precisely why consolation is an emotion, a very brief explanation of what emotions are is required – beyond the evidence that a simple comparison with the examples of joy, anger, etc., might provide.

By emotion, I mean – drawing on a well-known stance in contemporary philosophical discussion – a certain type of intentional state, namely, a state whose reference to the world is affective. Emotions exhibit a qualitative experiential dimension.[16] This dimension is what distinguishes emotions from other intentional states such as beliefs and desires. They differ from other affective states by their specific type of intentionality beyond the affective dimension. Bodily sensations, such as an itch, are restricted to the limits of the body. Moods like melancholia

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[14] E.g., the theologian Langenhorst also writes in this sense: 'Offering consolation, that is enabling (encouraging, accompanying, facilitating or stimulating) the mourning person to take further steps with better hope towards the future her way through life *with* her mourning – be it in lament, rebellion or acceptance.' G. Langenhorst, *Trösten lernen? Profil, Geschichte und Praxis von Trost als diakonischer Lehr- und Lernprozeß* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2000), p. 18.

[15] This new constellation might, in the end, also lead to completely overcoming mourning, but first it facilitates a life with a certain variant of mourning.

[16] An overview of the recent research in this field is, e.g.,: Sabine Döring, 'Einleitung', in Sabine Döring, ed., *Philosophie der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), pp. 12-65. And: Peter Goldie, ed., *Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). My own approach can be found in Eva Weber-Guskar, *Die Klarheit der Gefühle. Was es heißt, Emotionen zu verstehen* (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), especially Chapter 1.

or euphoria are less precise concerning their reference to the world. If you are sad, you can point out the reason or at least a trigger. If you are melancholic, everything appears in a dim light, and you do not know why exactly. The core definition of emotions should then be: emotions are qualitatively experienced attitudes in which we (kind of) perceive something in the world as, in a certain way, valuable for us. If I am sad, this means that I understand something in the world, in an irksome feeling, as – in some way – bad for me. To be more precise: I mostly understand it as a loss, as something that takes something important out of my life. Something presses me to the ground, makes my life difficult. Getting up is already difficult, and maybe every step is difficult throughout the whole day.

These formulations, starting from the aspect of intentionality, must not be misunderstood concerning the question of whether emotions can only be taken seriously as epistemological categories. In some respects, emotions are often compared with perceptions, but are not equated with them. It is part of an emotion to be affected by something and to stand in a relationship to something other in the world. We could say: they are moments of a way of being involved in the world.[17] Being involved in the world goes far beyond propositional perception.

Besides this core definition, there are further aspects belonging to the explanation of emotions. I want to mention two more: firstly, very often, emotions contain motivations to act – or are at least connected to them. In the case of mourning, this would be to withdraw from the world, or at least from a happy party. Secondly, emotions are most often shown in a bodily expression. We all know what a sad face looks like. This is not only one of the facial expressions that are universally recognized, as Ekman has shown.[18] It seems to be a gestalt psychological form that we think we recognize in other beings, even in unconscious beings, or at least we read it into them. Think of sad dog eyes or the droopy twigs of a weeping willow.

If we take these features to be basic for an emotion, is the state into which the consoling person puts a suffering person then to be described

[17] The formulations about feelings or 'feeling involved in something' can also be found, as a quote by Agnes Heller and then further developed in H. Steinfath, *Orientierung am Guten: praktisches Überlegen und die Konstitution von Personen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p. 117.

[18] See, e.g., P. Ekman, *Gefühle lesen. Wie Sie Emotionen erkennen und richtig interpretieren* (Heidelberg: Spektrum, 2004).

as an emotion? With the help of the three main features that I mentioned I will show that this can indeed be done.

2.2 Consolation as a specific type of emotion

Phenomenality

By contrasting the state of being consoled with the state of being relieved and its phenomenal dimension, we can illustrate that consolation has a phenomenality. Consolation and relief resemble each other by having a similar situation as their precondition – namely mourning, desperation, pain or another misfortune and a movement away from it. But apart from this circumstance, consolation and relief differ. Relief is felt as a complete relaxation, a feeling of being liberated and, literally, being light – like 'taking a load of one's mind'. It occurs and is appropriate if you learn, for instance, that the child that you thought was badly hurt in the bus accident was the only child who survived unharmed. Consolation, however, is felt as ceasing pressure and similar sensations, but only as a relaxation up to a certain point. It is not a complete relaxation. The feeling can be associated with a warm, dark place, where one can feel at home – but not with a bright place that is part of the joy that can follow after a complete relief. Consolation is, as the example illustrates, not the end of mourning and misfortune, but a change of these dark feelings.

Motivation to act

Someone who has found consolation usually exhibits certain motivations to act. They differ from those of someone who is (still) mourning and those who have completely finished mourning. We can find many explanations of this in, for example, Seneca. In a long letter, the stoic philosopher gives recommendations to a mother, Marcia, who is mourning over the death of her son.[19] This seems to be a behaviour that fits with consolation as an altered form of mourning. If you are deeply in mourning, you probably do not want to let go of the thought of the person, but in a problematic sense, namely not completely accepting her death. For instance, you might not want her room to be touched or used by anyone. You stick to rituals you had together, but that no longer make any sense now. The other extreme would be to completely leave the

[19] Seneca, 'Trostschrift an Marcia', in *Vom glückseligen Leben*, H. Schmidt (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1956), pp. 119-158.

mourning behind and to not care at all what happens to the room and the rituals. In such a case, finding consolation means to be able to honour and keep memories, but to still continue one's life in a new way. This could be manifested by keeping the furniture in the room, but letting someone who needs it, use it. You can only do this (without emotional distortions) if the mourning has changed, if you have found consolation, i.e. a way to regard the world as still worth living, despite the loss.

Intentionality

In the sense of the above mentioned core definition, the intentionality of consolation can be formulated as follows: feeling consolation means to experience something in a pleasant way that lowers one's pain, and hence to experience it as valuable for one's life and well-being. We can also illustrate the triad of reference to the world in individual aspects as it has become common since Bennett Helm.[20] We can talk about an object of consolation, which is who or what is consoling; a formal object, which is the object's property to lessen the pain; and a focus, which is one's own pain or misfortune. While the formal object – as the *definiens* of the type of emotion – is always the same, focus and object of consolation can differ. Based on these two variables, I will now outline the varieties in which consolation can take place.

III. VARIETIES OF CONSOLATION

3.1. Concrete misfortune or suffering from the whole world

We can, in principle, distinguish between two different possibilities concerning the *focus* of consolation. It is either about a concrete, personal misfortune, usually a certain event (or several, as with Job in the bible; a prime example of dealing with unbearable suffering). Or it is about a more abstract, existential misfortune – suffering from the world, from how it is, from human life as such, of which suffering, ignorance and transience are part. These two meanings can also be found in the few canonical texts on consolation in ancient philosophy.[21] For the first case,

[20] See, e.g., B. Helm, 'Felt Evaluations. A Theory of Pleasures and Pains', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 39, (2002), 13-30 (p. 15).

[21] For one of the few philosophical treatments of consolation in modernity, especially existential consolation, see: Paul Ricoeur, 'On Consolation', in *The Religious Significance of Atheism*, Alasdair MacIntyre and Paul Ricoeur, eds. (New York: Columbia University

the writings on consolation by Seneca are exemplary.[22] Boethius' piece about consolation is an example for the second case.[23] It also begins with a concrete misfortune – the situation of being accused of conspiracy, being incarcerated and sentenced to death – but his thoughts expand to the situation of human beings in the world in general. Both variants can also be found in theology.[24] Traditionally, religion is interested in providing humans with consolation about their existence in general. Currently, the subject of consolation increasingly centres around individual misfortune, although only in the sub-discipline of practical theology or its branch of pastoral care.[25] In what follows, I will talk about varieties of consolation, depending on their intentionality, in the first sense, i.e. concerning concrete misfortune.

3.2 Of fellow human beings, art or God

The object of consolation, i.e. what a suffering person in her emotion takes to be an alleviating influence, can be manifold. How, with the help of who or what, can she find consolation?

A first thought is: with the help of someone else. When we are sad or desperate we often wish for someone on our side and call for someone, if possible. We want to talk about our suffering, to share it, we do not want to be alone (I will say more about this consoling and being consoled between two persons below).

We can also find consolation in other, not directly human experiences. Art can also offer consolation. I mean art in a passive as well as active sense here, i.e. as the reception and exercise of art. In general, both can

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Press, 1969), pp. 81-98. The idea of consolation as something dialogical can also be found there (p. 90).

[22] See Seneca, 'Trostschrift an Marcia', pp. 119-158. Other, less well-known ancient writers are also mentioned in H.-T. Johann, *Trauer und Trost. Eine quellen- und strukturanalytische Untersuchung der philosophischen Trostschriften über den Tod* (Munich: Fink, 1968).

[23] Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae - Trost der Philosophie. Lateinisch- deutsch* (Düsseldorf et al.: Artemis und Winkler, 1998).

[24] Two theological studies offer an overview and some interesting analyses: T. Weyhofen, *Trost: Modelle des religiösen und philosophischen Trostes und ihre Beurteilung durch die Religionskritik* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983); G. Langenhorst, *Trösten lernen? Profil, Geschichte und Praxis von Trost als diakonischer Lehr- und Lernprozeß* (Ostfildern, Schwabenverlag, 2000).

[25] See, e.g., S. Rolf, *Vom Sinn zum Trost: Überlegungen zur Seelsorge im Horizont einer relationalen Ontologie* (Münster: Lit, 2003).

be called engaging with art. This thought, although familiar as a roughly understood topos (as one can see, for example, in interpretations of music)[26] could be explained with a theory of art that understands art as a process of self-understanding.[27] Engaging with art would then mean engaging with oneself, which would mean, in mourning, addressing this mourning or, more generally, addressing oneself as a being capable of suffering and mourning.

These first two intentional areas of consolation show that the analogy with perception in the theory of emotions must not be understood too narrowly, as I previously warned. To experience something as consoling does not so much mean to realize it as being consoling, but rather that this sets a process into motion in oneself. This process is the transformation of mourning in which finding consolation consists. Finding consolation by the help of another person has much to do with really meeting the other person. Finding consolation in art either has something to do with becoming aware of oneself in the new situation, and gradually restructuring oneself, or it has something to do with a practice, such as playing the piano. If you pay less attention to the content of the music, but rather see music as an engagement with forms, one can see the move here to saying that certain ordered activities can provide consolation. How? One thought is that one has 'fallen out of the world' or that one has, more poetically speaking, 'become lost for the world', as expressed in the famous Mahler song based on the Rückert poems. Besides practicing art, maintaining rituals therefore also belongs to this type of consoling activities.

This insight also contains a link to religious consolation. Religion provides many consoling rituals, such as prayer, the rosary, mass, singing, etc. Even dividing the year into bank holidays can, as a great rhythm, contribute to consolation.[28] But consolation can also be experienced by

[26] Franz Schubert's Streichquintett in C-Dur, D 956, for instance, counts as a prime example of a work about mourning and consolation. Mourning and consolation are exemplarily represented in this musical work. The sounds of consolation are not entirely different from those of mourning, but resonate in them.

[27] Contemporary proponents of this view are, e.g., G. Bertram, . 'Was die Kunst der Philosophie zu denken gibt', *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 34:1 (2009), 79-98. And D.M. Feige, *Kunst als Selbstverständigung* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2012).

[28] For the meaning of 'rhythm' as a religious experience, cf. H. Wettstein, *The Significance of Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 45f.

the concrete contents of faith.[29] The most prominent example is belief in life after death. Generally, the belief in a benevolent God surely also plays a central role here. Of course, then one has to face the theodicy question. Why does God permit suffering to happen? Someone who has an answer to this can find consolation in God. It would be a further question to wonder if, from this religious perspective, any consolation is, in the end, given by God, but manifested differently (in a concrete person or in art (see below)). This question, however, is not central for the basic idea of consolation.

A classic topos about what can provide consolation is, fourth, philosophizing. This is at least the ancient conception of philosophy and best-known from the formulations of the late ancient philosopher Boethius.[30] Of course we have to keep his conception of philosophy in mind. For him, philosophy is not only thinking about questions, not only wanting to understand and realize. Primarily, philosophy means thinking about what is a good life and trying to live accordingly. Boethius' view is also strongly influenced by religious ideas. With philosophy as a process of thinking and realization, we allegedly not only arrive at just any insights, but at a specific one: the world is basically fine and created out of God's eternal council. So Boethius' idea of philosophy as consolation can, in the end, be understood as a variant of religious consolation. In this case, not due to rituals, but due to a specific content of belief, i.e. that the world is basically, if we properly look at it and understand it, well-designed by God.

At precisely this point, a critique of religion can turn into a critique of consolation, as in Nietzsche's writings in particular.[31] If you do not agree with the belief in a world well-designed by God (the best of all possible worlds, as Leibniz wrote), then a consolation that is based on

[29] For various forms of religious consolation, see T. Weyhofen, *Trost: Modelle des religiösen und philosophischen Trostes und ihre Beurteilung durch die Religionskritik* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983), pp. 249f.

[30] Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*. For the following summary of the main thoughts of Boethius' works, I refer to T. Weyhofen, *Trost: Modelle des religiösen und philosophischen Trostes und ihre Beurteilung durch die Religionskritik*, pp. 124 ff.

[31] 'We have every right to call Christianity in particular a large treasure-trove of the most ingenious means of consolation, so much to refresh, soothe and narcotize is piled up inside it.' Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 69.

such a belief must be wrong.[32] The question about the truth of matters of faith is one thing and should be treated with care. It is another thing whether the emotion of consolation can be criticized. I will only address this question, because it belongs to the general explanation of consolation (whereas the first point only concerns religious consolation).

Following from what I have said so far, consolation would have to be criticized just like any other emotion. Emotions are not true or false, but appropriate or inappropriate, and can only be criticized in this respect. An emotion can be inappropriate because it is based on beliefs that are simply false. An example would be being consoled by the thought that there is an afterlife, when in fact there is no such thing. By now, of course, Christian ideas are not necessarily taken that literally. But that is a topic in itself. A secular deception would be if you feel consoled after a conversation with someone and later learn that this person has made fun of you and your mourning. He only pretended what he said in order to get his share of the inheritance.

It is more difficult to decide whether an emotional reaction to a state of affairs that was correctly understood is appropriate or not. There are individual differences, of course. People do not all perceive the same thing as consoling. The presence of the best friend might be consoling for some people, but not for others. But since one would immediately find this to be obviously consoling, someone who feels differently has to explain why. Besides the general rules for which emotion we find appropriate in which situations, there are always individual rules that stem from the individual character and story of life. Perhaps the connection to the best friend is so strong that her presence increases the mourning, because the sensation is, as it were, doubled by the friend's sympathy. This person rather needs a stranger. One person can also find a musical work consoling, whereas someone else thinks that this music is kitsch and regards consolation based on the music as inappropriate.

[32] A classic criticism of religion can also be found in Sigmund Freud. Similarly to Nietzsche, he criticized religion for its promise of consolation: 'I disagree with you when you conclude that man cannot go without the consolation of religious illusion, that he could not bear the burden of life, the gruesome reality. Indeed, not the man who you have infused with the sweet – or bitter-sweet – poison from his childhood on. But the other one, who grew up sober? Maybe he who is not suffering from the neurosis also does not need an intoxication in order to numb it.' (Translation M.W.) Sigmund Freud, 'Die Zukunft einer Illusion', in *Studienausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1927), IX, pp. 137-189 (p. 182).

In this case, the character and history of the mourning person, her experience with music and her associations will also matter. The criterion for appropriateness is coherence within the person herself. This idea can be explained in more detail by drawing on Bennet Helm and his thesis of a structured pattern that connects the emotions, if they refer to the same focus. If you love someone, you are happy when he feels good, and you are mourning if you lose him, for example. The emotions are connected in a structured pattern, since it would be incomprehensible if someone – without any further explanation – would be happy about seeing a beloved person again, but not mourn at all over his loss.[33] This pattern and its rules provide a reference point for considering a specific emotion – in the context of a person's other emotions – to be appropriate or inappropriate. If you find the musical piece consoling you cannot find it scary or trivial the next day, all else being equal, without your emotion becoming incomprehensible or open to criticism.

This clarification about the criticizability of emotions is important here, because it allows us to contour the difference between consolation in the original sense and different ways of dealing with negative emotions. Consolation, as I have described it, as an emotion, needs to be distinguished from the results of being distracted or being 'on the rebound'. (Especially in German both phenomena are easily mixed up because 'Vertröstung' seems to be the same as 'Trost'.) The latter both mean to ignore the suffering, to replace the loss by something else or to not regard it as severe. To distract someone often means to postpone something to a later point of time. But this already implies that there is no real hope that this will ever be fulfilled. One is on the rebound and knows that one has lost already. Some people try to be on the rebound over a loss by quickly replacing a partner with a new one, or just by getting drunk and washing the worries away. But all of these are ways of not taking a suffering or mourning seriously, of not dealing with it and not integrating it into a life that needs to be reorganized. In the end, they are a form of denying suffering, a self-deception. This is precisely how consolation, as I describe it here, is not to be understood. They are phenomena from the same area – engaging with mourning – but not the same phenomena.

[33] Helm has argued for this in several places, e.g. B.W. Helm, 'Emotions as Evaluative Feelings', *Emotion Review*, 1:3 (2009), 248-255 (pp. 251f.).

All of the transformations mentioned so far (and possibly more varieties of it) would have to be fleshed out in more detail, which would be a project on its own. In this paper, which sheds new light on a research topic, I only wanted to provide at least a certain overview to show how consolation can be understood as an emotion.

To conclude, I want to talk a little more about the variant of consolation that was mentioned first, in order to elaborate my thesis of consolation as an emotion a bit further. How can people offer consolation to each other? Which emotional constitution exactly is the aim here?

3.3 What methods of consoling tell us about consolation

We have to distinguish between at least three methods. They might not (maybe never) occur in their pure form, but as a mixture: listening, buoying, presence or being there for someone.[34]

The method of listening is the easiest to explain and also to practically learn. You listen carefully to what the suffering is of someone who is looking for consolation. Talking can already be partly relieving. At least it opens the space for two people to engage with each other such that consolation can be given and received.

But what are the right words that could follow? Especially with severe misfortunes, many close people are very afraid of not finding the right words and so rather say nothing. But it is more important, says someone who is affected by this situation, to try it.[35] If you say something, there are various possibilities. Although it depends on the individual in question, some work better than others. The ones that work can, again, inform us about the appropriateness of my thesis that consolation is an emotion,

[34] The following considerations have to be understood as an independent, more general phenomenological analysis, based on the reports by people who are affected by suffering as well as the consoling side that can be found in texts on pastoral care and others. There is very little empirical-scientific material on this. A small study from nursing theory is helpful. F. Gilje and A.-G. Talseth, 'Mediating Consolation with Suicidal Patients', *Nursing Ethics*, 14:4 (2007), 546-557. It describes how consolation arises between two people. One thing that is emphasized, among others, is listening and being present. Also mentioned is a dialogue and opening of two sides, so that you, as it were, meet in consolation. In this study, 10 of 18 consoling persons were priests.

[35] This is, for instance, what the author Max Dorner, who is suffering from multiple sclerosis, says in a feature of Bayerischer Rundfunk. Available at: <http://www.br.de/radio/bayern2/sendungen/land-und-leute/troesten-und-getroestetwerden-dorner-108.html> [accessed 29/08/2014].

which means a change of mourning – an emotion that builds upon mourning.

What does not help *at all* in this sense is talking about a replacement – as if a true loss could simply be replaced (this might be possible with small misfortunes, but not with major ones where consolation, in an emphatic sense, is required). *Not very* helpful is relativizing, i.e. saying that things are not too bad. *What helps* is: first and foremost, to acknowledge the misfortune as what it is. Then one can point out how life can be continued despite or with this loss, or whatever kind of misfortune has happened. No concrete suggestions are immediately needed. Saying that others have suffered the same can also help, because it shows that you are not the only one who has to deal with such a difficult situation. Subsequently, it is important to (re-)direct the focus on the good things the suffering person still has in her life – not in order to counterbalance the misfortune, but to show what her future life, her concerns, her reason to live, to act and to feel joy, can be based on, despite the misfortune. Consolation does not require a negation or overcoming of loss, but a different adjustment of oneself. An adjustment in which the misfortune is no longer determining one's emotional state, but only one element among several important aspects of life.

Of course it is unbelievably difficult when the most important thing in life has vanished – when a simple shifting of life's focus is not possible, and there is a gap. The only thing that helps now is building up a new perspective from scratch. For this task, it might be important to have someone else. Someone else can (despite the initial empathy in which the perspective of the misfortune is adopted) help to widen the perspective or to 'lift the eyes', as it says in the famous consolation psalm 121,[36] beyond the perspective that one had before and that has meant everything until now. It might be helpful that another person shows us that there are also other ways of being in the world. For ourselves, this means in such a situation: that there is a new way of being in the world, despite the loss. This does not mean adopting the perspective of someone else, but finding one for ourselves. In other (equally metaphorical) words this means that one has to find a new emotional home.[37]

[36] 'I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.'

[37] The notion of 'being at home' for the description of consolation is central for the study mentioned above by Gilje and Talseth.

If this idea is so particularly important for consolation, i.e. the capacity to look beyond the borders of one's own 'world' that is constituted by the emotional dispositions, which, again, are attached to a (or a few) focal point(s) that determine the direction of the whole – then we can also understand why it is not so decisive, as stated before, what is being said. It is important that another person is with you, i.e. primarily is present, a fellow human being, as mentioned under the third point of the 'method'. By being present, someone 'means' more than 'saying': you are not alone, you can find a way to live in the world again, despite the misfortune, because others are also able to do it in their own way (of course, not every way is possible for just anyone – and is surely also not the only way).

In this explanation of consolation, which simply starts with interpersonal consoling, we can see that secular and religious consolation are not as different as we might think at first sight. It is obviously decisive for the consolation that consists in being consoled by another person that there is something 'beyond our self'. On a small scale, this is another person. On a bigger scale, this is maybe the transcendent: something that is beyond our visible and perceptible world. At least this fits with Levinas, who calls the Other the transcendent.[38] This could be a bridge between a religious and a secular understanding of consolation. In the emotion of consolation, I experience the presence of another existence as alleviating my suffering. This experience is the process of transforming suffering and mourning into an emotional state that frees my life from the stagnation caused by the experience of suffering, and it provides new movement for my life. What this 'other existence' is can be interpreted differently. One obvious possibility would be another person, a fellow human being, the neighbour.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown in the three steps that consolation can indeed be understood as an emotion. The objections mentioned at the start could be refuted, the phenomenon could be reconstructed after the model of a philosophical theory of emotions, and the varieties of consolation could

[38] This would have to be shown in more detail in his writings: Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini. Essai sur l'exteritorité* (The Hague, 1961); Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague, 1974).

be secularly and religiously described in their similarities and differences, providing us with an insightful account. Only if we regard consolation not just as the end of something – i.e. of mourning, desperation and the like – but as a genuine state in itself, can we describe the phenomenon in detail and compare it with different varieties, based on the analysis of the types of reference that occur in it. I hope to have provided an impulse for how consolation can be accounted for in the debate about religious feelings and further examined with interesting results.

EMOTIONS, MUSIC, AND LOGOS

PETRI JÄRVELÄINEN

Jyväskylä University

Abstract. The article introduces a cognitive and componential view of religious emotions. General emotions are claimed to consist of at least two compounds, the cognitive compound and the affective compound. Religious emotions are typically general emotions which are characterized by three specific conditions: they involve a thought of God or godlike, they are significant for a person feeling them and their meaning is derived from religious practices. The article discusses the notion of spiritual emotions in Ancient theology and compares the idea of it with emotions in music. By referring to the notion of mental language, it is argued that some religious emotions are like emotions in music and as such they can be interpreted as tones of Logos.

In what follows, I first sketch out the general view on emotions as componential and cognitive mental phenomena. I then shift the focus onto specific properties of religious emotions. At the end of this article I make a suggestion that what Ancient theologians called spiritual emotions can be interpreted as tones of Logos. According to the notion of spiritual emotions, there are emotions which cannot be uttered in natural language. They are based on new senses and new kinds of supernatural cognitive contents. According to the idea of music put forward by Peter Kivy in his *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*, there are emotions which are not only caused by music but which are in music. By using Kivy's idea I shall discuss the relation between emotions, music, and Logos.

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I. EMOTIONS AS COGNITIVE AND COMPONENTIAL PHENOMENA

> *Good morning, on July 7*
>
> Though still in bed, my thoughts go out to you, my Immortal Beloved, now and then joyfully, then sadly, waiting to learn whether or not fate will hear us – I can live only wholly with you or not at all – Yes, I am resolved to wander so long away from you until I can fly to your arms and say that I am really at home with you, and can send my soul enwrapped in you into the land of spirits – Yes, unhappily it must be so – You will be the more contained since you know my fidelity to you. No one else can ever possess my heart – never – never – Oh God, why must one be parted from one whom one so loves. And yet my life in V is now a wretched life – Your love makes me at once the happiest and the unhappiest of men – At my age I need a steady, quiet life – can that be so in our connection? My angel, I have just been told that the mailcoach goes every day – therefore I must close at once so that you may receive the letter at once – Be calm, only by a clam consideration of our existence can we achieve our purpose to live together – Be calm – love me – today – yesterday – what tearful longings for you – you – you – my life – my all – farewell. Oh continue to love me – never misjudge the most faithful heart of your beloved.
>
> ever thine
> ever mine
> ever ours[1]

This is a letter written by Ludwig van Beethoven to his immortal and 'unknown beloved'. The identification of Beethoven's beloved has long been an open issue to some extent. An interesting though controversial account concerning this matter has been given by Maynard Solomon in his Beethoven biography. According to Solomon, the letter is addressed to Antonie Brentano.[2] If so, one encounters here a pretty nice historical curiosity. The founder of modern psychology, Franz Brentano seems to belong to the younger generation of the same family with Beethoven's unknown beloved. In general introductions such as the *Stanford Encyclopedy of Philosophy*, he is meant to be a nephew of the poet Clement Brentano, who was a brother of Franz, Antonie's husband.[3]

[1] Cited from <http://www.all-about-beethoven.com/immortalbeloved.html> [accessed 30/08/2014].

[2] Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer Trade Books, 2001).

[3] For the Brentano family and its relations to Beethoven see also Denis Matthews, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

As is well known, Franz Brentano's notion of intentionality is a basic concept of both psychology and philosophy of mind. Intentionality distinguishes human minds from machines which are just functional. According to the notion of intentionality, the human mind is directed to inner objects, called intentional objects, as believing, wishing and imagining. Intentional objects for their part are mental construals which typically involve some correlate in the extramental world.

For instance, when writing a letter to Antonie Brentano, Beethoven's loving mind was directed to its inner object that was the image of Antonie Brentano as the object of love. Such an inner object had its correlate, the real and living Antonie Brentano. But the question arises which kind of correspondence there was between an inner and an outer object of love. Was the inner object just a pure copy of the outer object? Well, if you prefer, for instance, some kind of Augustinian theory of sense perception, you can rely on the fact that forms of entities transfer to mind as such as they are. But if you are willing to take the Kantian position, you of course argue that there is no pure mind. The mind is doing something with perceptions as forming them. For this reason the unknown beloved remains unknown even when knowing her name.

The contemporary discussion on emotions in philosophy of mind has strongly paid attention to the intentional character of emotions. For some theories, for instance those put forward by Robert Solomon and Martha Nussbaum, the intentional object of emotions is so crucial to them that it is almost sufficient to characterise emotions by referring to their intentional aspects. For Solomon and Nussbaum, emotions are judgments. For Solomon emotions are existential judgments that magically change the world. The world is different from the point of view of love and from that of hate, for instance. For Solomon emotions are our personal attitudes to the world. For Nussbaum emotions are judgments of value.[4] Following Nussbaum's own example: when it was reported to her that her mother was dead, it was grief that made such a state of matters significant and valuable for her.[5]

Judgment theories of emotions in modern discussion have historical predecessors. The Stoic philosophers thought that emotions are judgments of some particular aspect of the world as good or bad. As

[4] Robert Solomon, *The Passions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

[5] Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

such they are all false. The wise Stoic is not tied to particular aspects of the world but he or she is rather tied to the world as a whole. In order to be a cosmopolitan person, the wise Stoic ought to get rid of emotions. Such a view was regarded as inhuman even in Ancient times.[6] There is, however, a certain wit in the Stoic view. Let us imagine that a world is just a huge supermarket. All kind of sellers are all the time suggesting to you to buy something. A wise person says 'no, thank you, I am concentrating on world peace, women's rights, ecological matters and so on, I have got bigger things on my mind'. According to my reading, that was exactly what the Stoics argued. For them emotions are suggestions which are leading the mind to nonsense. When getting rid of such matters, the mind is able to face things that are significant for human life. Moreover, even Stoics had the idea of passionate life with their notion of a new kind of intellectual emotions called *eupatheiai*.

I personally believe that even though the judgment theory of emotions is an elucidating one, it is not the whole story of emotions. First, there appear to be emotions that do not involve judgments. A person may have, for instance, a weak feeling that something positive is at hand. He or she does not know what it is and one is not sure whether there is reason to believe or not to believe so. One is feeling *something*, however. He or she has a guessing experience rather than judgment. It is one aspect of judgments that they involve an assent. Many emotions do not involve it. Furthermore, when characterising emotions, there are also other aspects of them to take into an account. Such a strategy is adopted to theories of emotions called componential theories. The early representative of componential theories was that put forward by Aristotle. In contemporary discussion, William Lyons, Ronald de Sousa, Patricia Greenspan and Peter Goldie have advocated theories which are componential and which emphasise the affective character of emotions more than the judgment theory.[7]

[6] For the Stoic theory, see Richard Sorabji, 'Chrysippos – Posidonius – Seneca: A High Level Debate on Emotions', in Juha Sihvola & Troels Endgberg-Pedersen (eds.), *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy* (The New Synthese Historical Library, 46) (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 149-169.

[7] William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotions* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987); Patricia Greenspan, *Emotions & Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* (New York: Routledge, 1988); Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

For Aristotle, emotions involve an evaluation stating that something positive or negative is at hand in a relevant way to a person. The former gives rise to a pleasant or unpleasant feeling that is associated usually with bodily changes. These together cause some suggestion to behave in a certain way.[8] In modern discussion for instance William Lyons suggests that typical emotions are constituted by several components such as perception, belief, evaluation, desire, behavioural suggestion, physiological changes and their registrations. For his causal-evaluative theory, in order to be deemed as an emotion, a mental phenomenon has to involve self-regarding evaluation that causes abnormal physiological changes.[9]

My own view is as follows. I call the generic condition of emotions the idea that all emotions involve both a cognitive component and an affective component.[10] Love is sometimes regarded as a mood rather than an emotion. But let us consider shortly what Ludwig van Beethoven felt when loving Antonie Brentano. Components of such a feeling are at least: first, the external object of love, Antonie Brentano, secondly, the perception of Antoine which gives rise to thirdly, the inner object or intentional object of Antonie as interpreted in a certain way, fourthly, the self-regarding evaluation of Antonie which involves some cognitive attitude that Antoine is fascinating just for Ludwig. These four aspects give rise to the affective components. Beethoven felt bodily changes but he also felt some mental changes. It was his soul that was full of love. To be aware of such changes, both bodily and mental, is to feel. The term feeling is on the one hand synonymous to the term 'emotion' as well as it seems to me that the German 'Gefûhl' is not synonymous with but correlates to 'Gemûtsbewegungen' in a certain use. In ancient discussion it was noted that *affectus*, *passio*, *perturbatio* and so on refer to the same.[11] The term feeling refers on the one hand to the same mental phenomenon with the term emotion but it on the other hand refers to one crucial component of emotions. Feelings are unanalysable qualia, unpleasant or pleasant states of consciousness by virtue of which one is aware of one's state.

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[8] For Aristotle's theory, see Simo Knuuttila & Juha Sihvola, 'How the Philosophical Analysis of Emotions was Introduced' in Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen, *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, pp. 1-19.

[9] William Lyons, *Emotion*, p. 58.

[10] Petri Järveläinen, *A Study on Religious Emotions* (Luther Agricola Gesellschaft, 47) (Helsinki: Luther Agricola Society, 2000).

[11] Augustine, *De civ. Dei* IX. 4

It was claimed above that Beethoven felt love in his soul. One could point out that such an argument involves just a kind of medieval commitment. There is no soul as well as there is not water but a chemical phenomenon. As is well known, there are various views of the soul. Moreover, there is not any common view accepted by all. This is one problem associated with the theory of emotions. Since there is no clear view of what mind is, it is not easy to characterise its movements such as emotions. I myself am influenced by the so called Cartesian framework even though I don't believe that the soul is a distinct substance of its own. But if I have to answer my opinion to John Searle's Chinese room, I would say that a person in the room cannot understand the Chinese language.[12] Let us suppose that you are in a room with boxes and a book containing rules. From the window of the right wall someone is putting things into the room and you are arranging them into boxes following the rules in a book you have. Then you are outputting these boxes from the window of the left wall. People behind that can understand the Chinese language and it appears that the book you had was a grammar of that language. By the help of the book you had arranged boxes in such a manner that produced Chinese sentences. Did you understand that language if you produced it correctly? I think that no. Many people would say yes, however.

Saying 'no' means that you are operating within the Cartesian framework. You are finding understanding and corresponding mental phenomena as black boxes which cannot be explained precisely by material terms. I believe that Spinoza made a nice correction to Descartes' theory. Mind and body refer to the same from a different point of view. But I think that we are not able to explain mental phenomena purely by referring to bodily phenomena. Perhaps mental phenomena are emergent macro properties raised in our brains. Anyway, it makes sense to think like Ludwig Wittgenstein: I feel various emotions but if my skull is opened, who knows whether there are brains or not at all.

II. RELIGIOUS EMOTIONS AS SPECIFIC TYPES OF EMOTIONS

Let us proceed to deal with religious emotions. What is the difference if the unknown beloved in Beethoven's letter is not Antonie Brentano but

[12] John Searle, *Minds, Brains and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

God? Is there something different in affective level of an emotion? Does a person feel differently if he or she loves God instead of human being? Are religious joy, sorrow and hope different from general joy, sorrow, and hope?

Let us suppose that typical religious emotions do not involve special affective qualities. Typical religious emotions as feelings are not different from other feelings. Historically, that kind of view has been advocated by authors from Augustine via medieval discussion to William James. According to Augustine, believers feel natural joy when love of God is present, natural hope when it is hidden, natural sorrow when it is disturbed and natural fear when it is in danger.[13] Furthermore, in medieval discussion it was pointed out that if there are two monks who love God, it may be that one is taken to heaven and another put to hell depending on whether their love is caused by the Holy Spirit or not. But one is not able to evaluate the supernatural causation on the affective basis. Loving God caused by a person's own wishful thinking is not a different feeling from loving God caused by the Holy Spirit.[14]

However, to my mind it makes sense to label typical religious emotions as specific type of emotions. As emotions they fulfil what I called the generic condition of emotions. They involve cognitive aspects and affective aspects. As a specific type of emotions they have to fulfil three conditions. First, they have to involve some thought, image, judgment, or idea of God or godlike implicitly or explicitly. Secondly, the cognitive component has to be personally significant for a person feeling the emotion. Thirdly, in order to be deemed a religious emotion, the cognitive component and the personal significance have to derive their meaning from religious practises. For one can feel emotions towards religious objects in such a manner that his or her emotion is not religious. If a person goes to a church and admires statues and paintings there, he or she may say 'how beautiful are the gods here'. So, there is an emotion towards religious objects. But such an emotion do not involve any religious meaning. I do not share here the argument of a Swedish atheistic professor of philosophy who played the violin in the chapel orchestra. When asked why an atheist is so eager to play church music, he answered: even I have my right to religious feelings. A person

[13] Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, XIV.

[14] Artur Mikael Landgraf, *Die Gnadenlehre. Band II* (Dogmengesichte der Frûhscholastik. Ersten Teil) (Regensburg: Verlang Friedrich Pustet, 1953), pp. 61-63.

may feel emotions towards religious contents without feeling religiously. I believe a person has to take such emotions religiously if they are to be regarded as religious emotions.[15]

Taken for granted that religious emotions as felt experiential phenomena do not differ from other emotions, it is their cognitive content taken after the religious fashion that makes them specifically religious. Their cognitive content is associated with the notion of God or godlike, something transcendent that one finds holy. The notion of God is, however, an inner or intentional object of a religious emotion. Usually believers hold that such a notion refers to its correlate in the extramental world. But at least to some extend the extramental or outer object of religious emotions, God, remains as an unknown beloved, as *Deus absconditus*.

As such religious emotions are cognitive. But, are they rational? Are there good philosophical reasons to feel them? Do they involve some epistemological value as it seems to have been argued by English speaking contemporary philosophers such as Swinburne, Plantinga, Alston and some others? Concerning proofs of God, religious emotions may involve some kind of supporting power for argumentation. One could say that because such a large amount of people are feeling them, it could make sense to take religion and its views seriously. It seems to me, however, that religious emotions do not provide any direct and testified knowledge. They are rather interiorisations of what is believed either on the basis or not on the basis of rational argumentation. Moreover, I find pretty speculative both views put forward by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Rudolf Otto according to which all people have kind of religious sense or feeling. There are people who do not feel religious emotions. There are even Christian traditions such as that advocated by Karl Barth according to which it is spiritually misleading to feel religiously.

A person who is an atheist could say to a believer that his or her religious emotion is of course cognitive thanks to its intentional object. According to atheistic point of view there is not, however, any extramental real correlate of the inner object of an emotion. Let us imagine that a person is listening to worship on the radio. While listening to it he or she begins to feel feelings toward God as profound as those Beethoven felt toward his unknown beloved. He or she could point out that it was God who raised those emotions in one's soul. What kind of rational

[15] Petri Järveläinen, *A Study on Religious Emotions*, pp. 45-70.

argument could a person give to an opponent who argues that those feelings came from drinking too much coffee throughout the worship? Coffee activated the brain of the worship listener and produced a strong mood. Such a mood gave rise to particular emotions. They adopted the notion of God as their intentional object.

The problem here concerns the rational justification of religious emotions. If one cannot explain their cause, the door is open to any kind of counter arguments against them. As an explanation, God is as strong as drinking too much coffee.

Such a problem seems to be one basis for the discussion of emotions in ancient theological thinking. Above all in Alexandrian theology, natural emotions, even natural religious emotions, were not highly valued. Influenced by a Stoic theory of emotions, both Origen and Clement of Alexandria thought that natural emotions such as fear belong to an early and preparatory stage of Christian life. Advanced Christians have reached a state of apathy which means that they are detached from natural emotions. In a state of apathy they are given new kinds of experiences, spiritual emotions that are only metaphorically similar to natural emotions.[16]

In 'On the First Principles', Origen maintains that there are two kind of senses. The first group of senses involves senses that are mortal and human. The second group of senses are immortal and intellectual. They are divine or spiritual senses (*theia aisthesis*). The spiritual senses signify a new kind of ability to apprehend divine matters. The divinised soul, having spiritual senses, is able to have an immediate relation to God.[17]

More careful study should be done on this theme, but it seems to me that Origen's notion of spiritual sense is a historical root of some modern ideas of religion as a natural property of a human being. Even though the theory of *homo religiosus* holds that religion is something natural for people whereas Origen thought that it was something supernatural, the common idea is that there is some kind of specific religious ability of mind in the human constitution that makes religious attitudes possible. From such a point of view, it is not only the cognitive content of religious emotions that specifies them as religious. Moreover, there has to be some specific property of consciousness that is able to direct the mind

[16] For Origen's and Clemens' views, see Petri Järveläinen, *A Study on Religious Emotions*, pp. 72-84.

[17] Origen, *De Princ* I. 1.9 (ANF 4, p. 245)

toward religious objects in a correct way. For Ancient theologians such as Origen, both the cognitive part of a spiritual emotion and the affective part of it are supernatural. Spiritual people have, so to say, a new kind of supplementary part or vehicle in their brains. According to this view, the Holy Spirit influences both the new kind of cognitive content and also the ability of the mind to apprehend them. One version of this line of thinking is Martin Luther's notion of faith as *fiducia*. Fiducia is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In his early explanation of Paul's letter to Galatians, Luther says that fiducia is *affectus certus*, a certain feeling or emotion, of the religious truth that Christ is the Redemptor of a person feeling such faith. If asked the justification of religious emotions within such a tradition, it is the emotion of faith that justifies feeling religiously.[18]

I find this to be a rather circular view elucidating in the context of the philosophy of religion. In contemporary Anglo-American philosophy of religion, the rational justification of religious belief and epistemological questions have been quite dominating issues. If the justification of religious matters lies in the emotions, it is hard to find them to be particularly strong arguments within the discussion of rational argumentation. If emotions are taken seriously, it is not easy to regard religion itself as an argumentative form of life. If God can be apprehended by emotions and furthermore religious convictions and interiorisations are tied to emotions, rational argumentation for or against religion appears to be problematic. Rational argumentation is problematic since its notion of religion is problematic. Perhaps religion is not a particularly argumentative form of life at all.

Adopting the view of religion as a non-argumentative form of life leads to the view called fideism. There are different types of fideism. In my mind, religious attitudes are based on emotions. In order to make use of the idea put forward by Eva-Maria Dûhringer and Ruth Tietjen, I think that religious attitudes are emotion-based judgments which give rise to judgment-based emotions.[19] For this reason the term judgment in religious content is associated with a different significance than that of rational judgment. If a person feels that there is a God, he or she is experientially committed to the judgment-like utterance

[18] Martin Luther, WA II, in *Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius 1519* (D Martin Luther's Werke 2) (Weimar: Herman Böhlau, 1884), p. 458.

[19] Eva-Maria Dühringer & Ruth Tietjken, Presentation in the seminary Religiöse Gefühle in Tübingen, 2013.

'there is a God', but it is based on an emotion and not on the genuine rational justification of judgment. Religious attitudes are emotional judgments. They are not based on rational calculation or evidence given by methodologically justified research but on emotion. Religious people are feeling that religious matters are true or at least significant for them. Usually religious attitudes are not born in such a manner that a person first calculates in his or her mind whether religious sentences are true or not. Rather, religious attitudes are born experientially. To hold such a fideistic view does not necessarily involve a view according to which religious attitudes are totally autonomous attitudes. To put the idea in Wittgensteinian terms, a religious language game is its own and it does not make shifts in the game of rational argumentation. It, however, has some relation to it. If the game of rational argumentation proves that there is no possible world in which religious emotions make sense, such a proof could be very problematic from the point of view of religious faith. Religious faith in its mainstream forms supposes that religious sentences refer to something real.

III. SPIRITUAL EMOTIONS AS TONES OF LOGOS

One problem associated with spiritual emotions in ancient theology is that, according to advocators of this view, spiritual emotions are only analogous to natural, general emotions. Moreover, they cannot be uttered in natural language. The question arises, are they a kind of private language in the Wittgensteinian sense? To be sure, Origen and others did not think so. For them spiritual emotions belong to the new language used by Logos and they can be felt by virtue of new senses.

In order to make use of that kind of idea, I am now willing to sketch out rather personal and speculative idea on religious emotions.

Let us take seriously the idea that there are religious or spiritual emotions that are not expressible in language. Furthermore, let us take seriously the idea that there are religious emotions which are different from every other kind of emotion. Language here means linguistic and propositional language such as German, English, and Finnish, and the common rules of them.

Ancient theologians pointed out that there are also other kind of languages besides linguistic languages. In modern thinking from William of Ockham to Jerry Fodor, some authors have suggested that besides

linguistic languages there is something called the mental language.[20] Moreover, it is commonly argued that there is universal language called music. All people have mental language and all people understand the language of music but they cannot translate their content to linguistic languages.

In explaining Aristotle's notion of spoken language as a symbol of mental effects, Boethius pointed out that there are three types of languages: written, spoken, and mental languages. The idea put forward by Boethius was adopted by medieval discussion. On the basis of it, William of Ockham employed the theory of language of thought. For Ockham, the language of thought was not to express silently in mind utterances of spoken language. It was the presupposition of natural language rather. According to Ockham's view, there are pronomines, predicates and objects in the language of thought. But it consists of moods and mental states also.[21] It seems to me that he meant something like this. If one says 'Beethoven wrote a letter', the meaning is different than if someone says the same proposition like this: 'Beethoven wrote a letter?' The change of meaning here is explained by virtue of properties in the language of thought.

In medieval discussion it was supposed that angels are using the language of thought when they are sending messages to each other. The special issue concerned the question of how to express the syntax of the language of thought. Far later, Gottlob Frege tried to write the syntax of such a language by logical symbols. The most well-known advocate of the theory of the mental language in contemporary philosophy is Jerry Fodor. He supposes that learning natural languages is based on the fact that we have language already, before learning one's mother language. Language skills are based on an internal code that consists of symbols and mental processes within symbols. Fodor does not seem to believe that such a code can be opened.[22]

I find Ockham's notion that moods are included in mental language interesting. Moods are usually regarded as properties of experiences associated with music. Could one think that music is part of mental language? Moreover, music is of interest in this respect because it

[20] For mental language, see E. J. Ashworth, 'Mental language and the unity of propositions: a semantic problem discussed by early Sixteenth Century logicians', *Franciscan Studies*, 41 (1981), 61-96.

[21] William of Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V, pp. 8-10.

[22] Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1975).

is possible to open its code as notation. As a matter of fact, Boethius claimed that analogously with language, there is played, listened and inner, mental music. Music is organised voice. It is formed by kinds of propositions, so called *phares*. It is interesting here that even though musical propositions seem to say something, they can be expressed only by playing or singing. They can be written by musical notation, and every composer knows how to write for instance melancholic or joyful music.

In the history of philosophy, the great debate has been concerned with the relation of music and emotions.[23] Usually all suppose that music has something to do with emotions. The mode system in ancient times was meant to express emotions. The affect theory that was adopted for instance by Johan Sebastian Bach had a similar target. According to the affect theory of music, music influences bodily senses which are registered by the soul. Many philosophers have, however, insisted that music does not cause emotions. Such a view was adopted by the Stoics who thought that musical effects are associated with bodily sensations and do not form any of the judgments crucial for emotions. It seems that such a view was adopted also by Immanuel Kant. In modern discussion, some have argued that music does not cause emotions since it does not involve cognitive propositions as intentional objects for emotions. I find such a view wrong. I think that musical structure or the syntax of music correlates with propositions and affects a listener.

Ludwig van Beethoven was one of those first to argue that music does not belong to the lower sensational area of the human constitution but it is even more exact tool to apprehend reality than sciences. That kind of view was employed by Schopenhauer too. In contemporary discussion, Peter Kivy had advocated a philosophical theory of music according to which it reveals something new of reality. For Kivy, music is an intellectual phenomenon including emotions. In his *An Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*, Kivy points out that the emotionality of music reminds us of when one claims that yellow is a joyful colour. When claiming so, yellowness is supposed to involve joy as one of its qualities. Emotions in music are raised, however, as emergent phenomena of music from its complex forms. They may have some evolutionary basis. Because music seems to involve a lot of emotions which do not have any correlate among other emotions, it cannot be reduced to some evolutionary forms,

[23] I am following here Peter Kivy, *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

however. Emotions and moods in music are learnt by just listening to music. Perhaps major and minor are reflecting general joy and sadness but what is the reference of A major or d minor? For Kivy, they have their peculiar or own mood or emotion. In order to understand it, one must listen to A major or d minor. For this reason, music, for Kivy, is a black box. There is no outer explanatory tool to understand it.[24] People who cannot feel musical emotions cannot understand what they are just as, according to ancient theologians, people who don't feel spiritual emotions cannot understand what they are.

One path of thinking is to say that the emotion of A major is just in brains and at the same time it is something that is in the physical reality of voices. For instance, Boethius thought that inner music is cosmic music at the same time: what is in mind is something that is in the structure of the world.

Let us return to the philosophy of religion. Augustine says in his *De Trinitate* that the heart is speaking words in no-language.[25] Correspondingly, Origen tells us in his commentary for Songs of the Songs that the soul has to sing first all six songs full of light and joy in order to reach the Song of the Songs.[26] These remarks remind us of the mystery of music. If cosmic music really is both in mind and in the structure of the world as Boethius argued, in Christian religious context it belongs to logos. Logos is namely the structure of the world by which God has created the world. If so, Logos is not speaking just German, English and Finnish. Logos is not only the linguistic structure of the world but something more. From this point of view Logos is also image and tone. And if so, religious emotions are tied to the tones of Logos.

[24] Peter Kivy, *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*, pp. 32-45.

[25] Augustine, *De Trin*. XV, 10-11.

[26] Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 55-58.

TWO ARGUMENTS AGAINST SOME CRITICS OF RELIGION BASED ON FEELING AND EMOTION FOLLOWING WILLIAM JAMES

KATJA THÖRNER

Abstract. In this paper I will show that you can distinguish two main types of argumentation in respect to feeling and emotions in the philosophy of religion of William James, which point to two different kind of criticism of religion. Especially in his early works, James argues that you may lawfully adopt religious beliefs on the basis of passional grounds. This argumentation points to a type of criticism of religion, which denies that beliefs based on such emotional grounds may be justified. In his famous study *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James defines religious experience as an experience of inner conversion, where the individual gets in touch with a higher self. The philosophical interpretation of religious experience points not at least to a type of criticism of religion in the tradition of Ludwig Feuerbach, which is known as the theory of projection.

INTRODUCTION

The question of whether emotion or feeling plays a decisive role in the formation of religious beliefs is connected closely to a kind of criticism of religion, which was famously framed by Ludwig Feuerbach in his work 'The Essence of Christianity' (1841) and has gone down as the 'theory of projection' in the history of criticism of religion. The basic idea is that all speech of God is basically anthropology, for the properties, which are attributed to God or Gods by humans, are nothing else than human attributes projected to a higher being or higher beings. It is, or they are, considered as higher beings because human beings attribute to it/them

only the most sublime and noble properties. In this way human beings are creating ideal images of themselves, and as they are conscious of their own imperfectness they consider themselves to stand in an infinite distance to their God/Gods. Facing the Gods they have installed themselves, human beings, according to Feuerbach, regard themselves to be limited tiny creatures. Criticism of religion in this respect means to enlighten mankind about this inner process and to remind them of their own nobility and magnitude – of the divine in themselves. 'Rather, every being is in and by itself infinite – has its God, its highest conceivable being, in itself.' (*The Essence of Christianity*, p. 7.[1] Hereafter '*EoCh*'.) In the introduction of *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach emphasizes the high importance of the faculty of feeling in religion. Feeling is called 'the organ of the divine' and 'the noblest, the most excellent, i.e., the divine, in man' (*EoCh*, p. 9). Without mentioning his name Feuerbach appeals in this passage to Schleiermacher and his definition of religion as 'feeling or intuition of the Universe' in his work 'On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers'.[2] But at the same time he criticizes the idea that feeling is the organ of perception, which enables us to recognize the infinite divine nature of God. In this theory of religion feeling is not only the subjective part of the process of recognizing God, it 'is declared to be itself the absolute, the divine' (*EoCh*, p. 10). Only in the reflection can you separate feeling from his object. In reflection, the object is defined and also limited. For God is unlimited, the only definition of God following the antecedents steps could be that 'God is pure, unlimited, free Feeling. Every other God, whom thou supposest, is a God thrust upon thy feeling from without' (*EoCh*, p. 10). In this mystic moment of immediate experience 'feeling is atheistic' from 'the point of view of the orthodox form of belief, which is decisive as to the manner in which religion relates itself to an external object' (*EoCh*, p. 10). Feeling in immediate presence 'denies an objective God – it is its own God' (*EoCh*, p. 10).[3]

[1] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, translated from the Second German Edition by Marian Evans (London: John Chapmann, 1854).

[2] 'Ihr Wesen ist weder Denken noch Handeln, sondern Anschauung und Gefühl.' Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), in ibid., Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Bd. I/2: Schriften aus der Berliner Zeit 1769-1799, hg. v. Günter Meckenstock (Berlin/New York: Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 1984), p. 213.

[3] A similar approach to that of Feuerbach's, inspired by Humanism and the idea of emancipation, in this respect nowadays is pursued by the representatives of the so-called

If atheistic feeling is his own God, theistic feeling could be defined as a feeling in which the difference between God and self is preserved. The epistemological question arising there is: Is it possible to hold on to the distinction between God and self in the moment of immediate and unlimited feeling? Or is it only in reflection that you separate feeling as the subject part of experience and God as his object with the result that God only could appear as limited, for always in some respect defined as object?

As I'll show in the second chapter of this paper, James develops in his study *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) a concept of religious experience which is based on an immediate feeling of the presence of a higher self. But although it reminds in this respect of the assertions in the introduction of Feuerbach's 'Essence of Christianity', James' conception isn't atheistic at all. Whereas James also considers the mystical point of immediate feeling as one but not the only significant aspect of religious experience, he avoids the atheistic, by construing religious experience not in correspondence to sense-perception but to the experience to be confronted to a person as another self. In this perception of the other as a self, the difference between myself and the other is always present without considering the other as an object. The cosmological and theological consequences of this conception of religious experience, or more precisely the experience of God as a higher self, are developed by James in his later work *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909). James infers that if we consider God as a person, which is able to communicate with finite persons like us, we have to think of God as finite too, for his power is limited by the free will of human beings. So the concept of religious experience as the experience of a higher self not only avoids the coincidence of God and the subject of religious experience, but also the coincidence of subjectivity and God in an idealistic way considered as the 'Weltgeist' (world spirit) or some related concepts. The latter at least is important to prevent, in some moral and humanistic respect: James shares with Feuerbach the intuition that it is inhuman to think of God as the Absolute in the meaning of a perfect, almighty and eternal being in contrast to human beings as determined, imperfect and sinful.

But even if it is possible to establish a compelling epistemological model of religious experience, respectively of the experience of

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New-Atheists like Richard Dawkins, the French philosopher Michel Onfray or the British philosopher Christopher Hitchens.

communicating with a higher self, named God, it is another question if this conception could be a reason to believe in God.

The question of whether feeling in the sense of an immediate experience of God may function as a foundation of religious belief in fact obviously couldn't be denied, at least if you think of the rise of Pentecostals all over the world. Perhaps the special appeal of this kind of religion, where immediate and high emotional experiences are considered as a special witness of the truth of the belief, is due to the fact that traditional definition of the object of religious experience, in short the attributes of God, have lost their cognitive reasonableness and intelligibility. Or to say it in the words of Feuerbach: 'But the object of feeling is become a matter of indifference, only because when once feeling has been pronounced to be the subjective essence of religion only, it in fact is also the objective essence of religion, though it may not be declared, at least directly, to be such.' (*EoCh*, p. 9)

But philosophers do not ask if in fact people come to religious beliefs on the basis on high emotional experiences, but if it is reasonable to think of beliefs as being true if they are accompanied by intense feelings or emotional longings. It may be comprehensible that people become believers on such reasons. But to warrant religious beliefs in reference to the intensity of emotional experience, the overwhelming feeling of God's presence or an inner need to belief is not an easy business, especially in a rationalistic tradition of thinking.

A more sophisticated kind of rationalistic criticism of religion differentiates between religious beliefs which are based on pure feeling alone and such beliefs, which go along with special feelings, but are also intellectually understandable. A contemporary representative of the latter point of view is Franz von Kutschera. In his book *Was vom Christentum bleibt* (What remains of Christianity), he argues for a 'mature Christianity', which refuses emotions like 'to comfort mourning' or 'share happiness' as honest motives for believing,[4] if they function as the main motif of religious belief. A sober and mature Christianity which breaks loose from mythological ideas, which are able to produce immediately high emotions and deep feelings, presumably will stay for a long time in the future of mankind, because it fits the modern mature person who always scrutinizes his own experiences and like to justify their beliefs to themselves. Also, other contemporary critics of religion like the German

[4] Franz von Kutschera, *Was vom Christentum bleibt* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2008), p. 142.

philosophers Herbert Schnädelbach and Ernst Tugendhat consider the ideal of intellectual integrity as the crucial point, which keeps them away from religious belief. For them there is no possibility to believe without losing intellectual integrity. And to give other impulses a higher priority than reasoning in the case of religious belief is considered to be an obstacle to the ideal of intellectual integrity. The idea behind this conviction is that beliefs based on feelings and emotions are just illusions. To hold them to be true would be self-deluding. And the intellectual single-minded thinker never could delude himself.

In contrast to such a kind of criticism of religion, or more precisely abstinence of beliefs based on emotional longings or immediate feelings, I will present in the first part of this paper the pragmatic version of justifying religious beliefs, as it is developed by William James in his famous paper of the year 1896 'The Will to Believe'. I will adduce some passages from the *Principles of Psychology* (1890) and some early papers on popular philosophy. In these articles, originating before his famous study *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James construes religious belief also as an adherence to a conviction based on emotional affinity. Especially his article 'The Will to Believe' appeals to rigid rationalists of this time, like W. E. Clifford, who argues that a belief which is based on emotional grounds may in principle never held to be true. Against this position James argues that it is rather irrational to deny religious beliefs for being based on emotional grounds or for the reason that (some) human beings have the affinity to believe in God, a higher power or some similar things.

In the second part of the paper I will outline the cognitive aspect of religious feeling in James' conception of religion. This model involves the idea of transcendental experience, which on the one hand is construed as a kind of experience of transcendence which is rooted on the consciousness of self. In this respect it can be seen in the tradition of Schleiermacher. On the other hand he opens up the immanent consequences in the concept of religious experience, which are implied in an idealistic tradition of philosophy to a realistic interpretation on the basis of his conception of 'radical empiricism'. In respect to the first part of the paper, it will be asked whether the realistic interpretation of feeling in religious experience may refute the suspicion of being deluded or to have succumbed to an illusion by religious experience.

I. THE JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The article 'The Will to Believe' (1896) was written by James in his own words as an 'essay in justification of faith, a defense of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters'.[5] In this text the acceptance of religious beliefs is defined as a decision in case of a 'genuine option'. It is characterized by the following features:

At first it is defined as a living option. This topic limits the circle of the people which could possibly be convinced by the following argumentation. The intended audience is called by James the 'the saving remnant', that means in biblical terms those who are capable of returning to God (see Isaiah 10:22). In the words of Max Weber, it may also be possible to speak of religious musical people (religiös musikalisch), who have the volition and are capable not only of adopting religious beliefs, but of making them their own. Secondly a genuine option is characterized as an unavoidable or forced option, that means there is only the option to be religious or to be non-religious and it is not possible to avoid this decision in one's lifetime – to be an agnostic would be the same as to be a non-religious, because faith wouldn't be a defining element of one's life. Thirdly a genuine option is held to be seen as a momentous option because it is the only way to reach a most valuable good – not only after, but still in one's lifetime.

The thesis James defends in 'The Will to Believe' is that in cases in which we have to make a genuine option and we are not able to make it on intellectual grounds, we are not only rationally justified to make the decision on passional grounds, but we have to decide on these reasons – just because in such cases there is no other option.

> The thesis I defend is, briefly stated, this: Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds. (*WB*, p. 20)

This quote shows that James' thesis includes another, fourth defining feature of a 'genuine option' in respect of religious beliefs: it is not possible to get convinced of their truth or untruth on intellectual grounds. That shows that James starts his argumentation on the basis introduced by Kant

[5] William James, 'The Will to Believe', in: *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, The Works of William James*, vol. 6 (MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 13-33 (p. 13). (Hereafter WB)

in philosophy of religion: The existence of God cannot be demonstrated on intellectual grounds.

When we are confronted with a genuine option, it is always justified, James argues further, to hold that assumption to be true, of which we wish it would be true. Or to say it the other way around: There is no reason to choose the more unpleasant 'truth', only to avoid the risk of getting deluded by our own wishing and longings. The argument here is that religious beliefs mustn't have to been considered as theoretical assumptions or explanations (not even as metaphysical assumptions), but as beliefs which will serve as a foundation for living or the grounding of our attitudes toward our whole life.

> Our faculties of belief were not primarily given us to make orthodoxies and heresies withal; they were given us to live by.[6]

Religious beliefs in the first way shouldn't, following James, serve to prove the truth of some doctrines about the existence or attributes of God and in so doing, condemn opposite ones, instead they have the function of giving orientation in central topics of life. To be justified in adopting some religious assumptions and to deny other ones under this respect doesn't contradict our self-conception as matured rational thinking persons, to take these assumptions to be the foundation of living and our attitude towards central topics of life, if we think this to be a good or even the best option for ourselves. To this extent James' position is an example of a modern tolerant subjective kind of understanding religion, which intends to allow everyone his individualistic pursuit of happiness, in religion also. The only limitation is to be tolerant against other beliefs.

But the main point in regard of the proponents, who deny the legitimacy of religious beliefs, is the assertion stated in addition by James in his early works in philosophy of religion, that it is more appropriate for the human mind to believe – and in a special broader sense of rationality – is even more rational to believe in God as not to do so. This broader concept of rationality includes the fact that the emotional and passional nature is an irreducible dimension of human rationality. The argumentation for this assertion lies in a special idea about the nature of beliefs, and the function they have in human life.

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[6] William James, 'Is Life Worth Living?', in: *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, pp. 34-56 (pp. 51f.).

II. SENTIMENT OF RATIONALITY

For James – as in the tradition of pragmatism at all – beliefs are not to be understood as sentences which we categorize as true and false, but which have in the first way the function of giving orientation to our acting, feeling and thinking. The larger the set of firm belief, the more solid is the ground we walk on. For we all seek to have a maximum of firmness of a largest as possible set of beliefs; every individual has, in the words of James, the inclination to dogmatize like a pope. But, to take the metaphor further, the biggest counterpart of the pope, or more precisely of firm beliefs, is empirical evidence. Experiences which are opposed to some of our beliefs force us constantly to revise, or at least to correct, our view of reality. The more fundamental the experiences are, the more extensive are the consequences to the whole set of beliefs, and the higher the feeling of insecurity. The opposite state of mind, when the maximum of stability and firmness in accordance with our experiences is reached, which most people strive for, because it is the only state in which mind finds peace, James will name later on in his study *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 'faith-state', a concept introduced by the psychologist H. Leuba. In an earlier paper he speaks of a sentiment or feeling of rationality. In this paper, titled 'The Sentiment of Rationality' (1879), James defends the thesis that a sentiment of rationality may only be reached if we hold the following assumptions to be true: that there is a God, that this God is the substance of all existent being, and that the essence of all existence is construed in such a way that the world may come to a good ending. Without the idea of God as the origin and essence of all existence we were always confronted with 'blighting breath of ultimate Why?',[7] what will never come to a solution entails that mind will never come to rest. Moreover we are, following James, creatures which have as acting beings a teleological orientation on ethical and moral norms and the final idea of the Good in itself. Each 'world-view' which is opposed to that deep inclination (defeatism or fatalism, for example) transforms life into an irrational scenery, so the 'sentiment of rationality' will never come up, if we life on a 'world-view' like this. By reference to the early papers it is possible to give a more precise idea of James' conception of religious belief: Religious beliefs can be described

[7] William James, 'The Sentiment of Rationality', in: *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, pp. 57-89 (p. 64).

as comprising a world view that entails the assumption of a great being which shares with human being the profound moral intuitions and cares about these intuitions. It is held to be the basis of all and fulfils the desire to have an answer to the question of the wherefrom and whereto of individual life and also the world as a whole.

From the standpoint of the criticism of religion, it could be argued that James wrongfully assumes in this conception that the searching for answers to these questions is an anthropological constant, for a lot of people don't care about them. They are pleased to live a good and decent life in the mortal world, and are not interested or even worried of what will come to pass at the end of days. I think this objection is a fundamental one, particularly if you think of the rising number of non-religious persons in most European countries. But even if you reply that these questions are always raised by reasoning itself, it is questionable if it is possible to satisfy this intellectual longing by deciding to believe in God.

Both objections couldn't be defeated on the basis of 'The Will to Believe'. James' achievements in 'The Will to Believe' and other early papers on the philosophy of religion are only directed at the laggards who think it to be intellectual dishonest to adopt religious beliefs based on emotional longings and therefore forbid themselves such belief. The aim of James' argumentation here is a therapeutic one: The psychologist James states that to ban religious beliefs out of life for rigid intellectual reason may cause a type of melancholy or 'Weltschmerz', which may, in the worst cast, drive someone into suicide.

In an apologetic respect, James refutes the claim that it is necessarily irrational to have religious beliefs. For always when we are confronted with a religious question in life we are confronted with a 'genuine option', which can only be decided on the basis of our volitional and emotional nature. Even the atheist or the ascetic in religious affairs, the agnostic, has to make his decision on the same grounds. For James it is obvious that the former will never be a lucky person, and because we all have the intention to get happy in some respect, the inner life of the disbeliever and the agnostic is going in a wrong direction, which in some cases will end up in religious disease. In the words of Wittgenstein, it would be possible to summarize James' pragmatic approach to that point as follows: 'Believe in! It doesn't hurt.' ('Glaube Du! Es schadet dir nicht.')[8]

[8] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen. Eine Auswahl aus dem Nachlass* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 33.

Or in a more therapeutic version: 'Don't ban religious faith out of your life. That might hurt you.'

III. THE TRANSITION FROM 'ASSENT' TO 'CONSENT'

Concerning the question of whether there is a cognitive aspect of religious feeling, it is interesting to ask why some people, who can follow the argumentation up to that point, adopt religious beliefs, whereas others couldn't believe although they do not think it would be dishonest to do so. Or to put it the other way around, the question is: When does affective inclination have the power to overcome all scruples and generate stable religious beliefs and hence a stable state of mind (faith-state)?

In his work *The Principles of Psychology* (1890, hereafter *PP*) James differentiate between to 'assent to a claim' and to 'consent to a claim'. You may assent to religious beliefs without consenting to them. The transition from 'assent' to 'consent', according James, is mostly obscure. James' assumption in the *PP* is that 'nature' sometimes works for us and produces instantaneous conversions for us, so within a moment we are highly convinced of something which until recently was remote to us.

> Nature sometimes, and indeed not very infrequently, produces instantaneous conversions for us. She suddenly puts us in an active connection with objects of which she had till then left us cold. (*PP*, p. 948)[9]

It also is possible, following James in this chapter of the *PP*, to arbitrarily decide to adopt an opinion and to treat it like a true claim by letting it determine our feeling, acting and thinking. In this case too, nature will do her work for us by creating such a close connection between the object of the opinion and our habit that it will become a solid belief.

> [...] we need only in cold blood ACT as if the thing in question were real, and keep acting as if it were real, and it infallibly ends by growing into such a connection with our life that it will become real. It will become so knit with habit and emotion that our interests in it will be those which characterize belief. (*PP*, pp. 948f.)

The latter type of the transition describes the 'genuine option' as demonstrated above, the first type of transition from 'assent' to 'consent' – the conversion – is central to James' studies in the *Varieties of Religious*

[9] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, The Works of William James vol. 8 (Cambridge, MA/ London, Harvard University Press, 1981).

Experience. Religious experience there will be defined in one respect as the inner process of the consent to religious beliefs or more precisely the consent to the claim that there is a 'higher Self' we can get in personal touch with.

IV. THE COGNITIVE MEANING OF FEELING IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: A REALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSCENDENCE

Stream of Thought

The basic structure of the argumentation laid down in the study *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (*VRE*), which compared to the mass of individual experiences of conversion mostly falls into the background, is also presented in the *Principles of Psychology*. In chapter nine of this major work, James introduces the concept of 'stream of thought' as a starting point for studying the manifold acts of thinking without the criterial distinction between the objective world and subjective perception. In this conception everything which can be an 'object' of the 'stream of thought' is real, or to say it in a different way: everything thought of is real. The meaning of 'thought' in this chapter is more like that of consciousness than that of intellectual capabilities like understanding or reasoning. 'Thought' always refers to something beyond, something thought or to say it in the words of Edmund Husserl the 'intentional object' or 'noema'. So every intentional object is a real object of the 'stream of thought', and what cannot be an object of the 'stream of thought' couldn't be real if it would just be beyond thinking.

On the basis of this concept of reality, it is obvious that beliefs which are in the centre of our acting, thinking and feeling, are also real in a major level. To a certain degree we are able to control which beliefs come in the centre of our life. For example we can train ourselves to ban some worries or fears out of the centre, and so to minimize the influence upon us by focusing on more positive options. If these positive ideas have the power to motivate us to realize them, our ideas will become real in a literal sense. Naturally it is not possible to realize all the things we try to and normally we are able to evaluate what is possible to do and what will be prospectively in vain. So we usually don't follow ideas which are totally odd, only because we would like to have them be true.

But I think James is also right when he notes that human beings as a rule tend to be exuberant when they are engaged to try to fulfil their deepest wishes. James even thinks that the struggle to realize those ideals that we consider to be highest goods is a profound and deeply inner impulse of a human being, and the lack of it would be worse than receiving a lot of setbacks. James then speaks of the 'strong mood', which is an essential part of happiness.

The more we are convinced of the worthy and goodness of our ideals the more they are present in our thinking, acting and feelings. Religious beliefs are, according to James, a kind of maximum case of an idea of goodness or an idea of ideal reality, which maybe could become real, but only with enormous exertion. But the ideal seems be to so highly worthwhile that it has the power to stay in the centre of a human's acting, feeling and thinking, even it seems that only wonders could make them real. In his later work (*A Pluralistic Universe*, 1909) James develops the idea of God as 'Great Companion', who assists and helps mankind to fulfil this great and superhuman assignment to realize the Good. But in contrast to Feuerbach, James' concept entails a finite God and not an absolute superhuman God. It's our helper and *primus inter pares*, but even he is powerless without the good will of mankind. In this respect James criticizes, like Feuerbach, the idealistic idea of God as the Absolute, but instead of denying the existence of God, he denies that we must think of him to be the Absolute.

Conversion – Religious Experience – Theism

But up to that point we are still on the level of autosuggestion. Religious faith thus seems to be nothing but a strong belief in something, which may be true or may just be an illusion. Even if there are good practical reasons to have such convictions, like to lead a happy life, particularly religious people would say that their faith involves something more. They do not only think that their faith fits to their way of life, but that it is grounded in a real assumption of the world, in particular, of the origin and the final destination of the world and all being therein. This 'more' even denotes the point where James left the basis of his early papers on popular philosophy and *The Principles of Psychology* when he comes on to his conclusions of the *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Religious experience is there described as the experience of a total inner breakdown of effort of will. In this moment of volitional failure

and mental breakdown a moment of reality suddenly appears, which opens up the range of reality in a significant way. It is not the experience of something more in the visible world, but of a new aspect of reality itself which previously seems to have been inaccessible. This experience distinguishes the believer in some religious doctrines from a true believer.

Religious experience, following James' description in the *VRE* takes place in two stages: First the individual feels that there is something fundamentally wrong with itself and the world surrounding it. This feeling may be expressed in a consciousness of guilt or in a – considered from an out-standing perspective – one-sided look at the evil things in the world, like crime and misfortune. The individual at this stage still has the deep desire to believe that there is some balance between good and evil, and all evil things will come to a happy ending, but confronted with his one-sided experience of the world or/and himself, he can't. This deep point of suffering at the end makes him feel divided within himself. He wants to believe in the good, but he can't, because he and the world surrounding him is not good. This *circulus vitiosus* may lead into a deep despair, where everything becomes meaningless and the desire to die increases. Just in the deepest moment of suffering an unexpected turn of the inner life of the person takes place: The positive and life-affirming powers suddenly come to prevail and the individual gets more and more convinced that the true nature of reality is good.

The psychological model of explanation of this inner process, which James is providing in the *VRE*, is based on the theory of the subconscious. Following this explanation in the first state, the state of deep suffering, all the positive powers have been suppressed by the permanent impression of evil, so that at the end they were split off in the 'subliminal self' so they couldn't have any influence over the thinking, feeling or acting of the individual. This dissociation of a whole section of human being, which inhibits all positive sight of life, all feeling of joy or other positive feelings and paralyzes in the end all motivation of constructive acting, is called by James the 'divided self'. One way to get in contact with that subconscious region of the self is to get focused on the idea of Good, for in this way the so to speak synapses or the hidden region of the self will be activated. This type of religious conversion was described by James in 'The Will to Believe'. Another way to get in contact with hidden regions is to block the negative forces; an outer stimulus has the power to overwhelm them, or otherwise the negative mental forces wear down so that the positive

powers hidden yet in the subconscious suddenly gain influence on the individual.

From the subjective point of view, the experience of conversion is often described by the individual – given the cultural and intellectual context – as an encounter with another, higher person, called God. The individual, who describes his experience in religious terms, would say that it was God himself who, as the paragon of the Good, releases him. To this point of view the experience of the encounter with God causes the conversion and in that way redeemed the individual of his inner sickness. The psychological explanation does not contradict that religious point of view. But this 'over-belief', as James calls it, transcends the boundaries of science for it supposes with God an 'entity' which by definition cannot be an object of scientific explanation. Science simply stops there. But from a philosophical point of view, according to James, we 'have no excuse calling the unseen or mystical world unreal' (*VRE*, p. 406), when we have to take into account that this world produces effects in the natural world.

From a philosophical point of view it is also necessary to take into account that these causes are real, because they are a moment of experience for many individuals, who ordinarily are not under suspicion to confuse reality with their dreams or hopes. The main reason to take into account the literal truth of the experience of getting in contact with a higher personal entity, in James's thinking, lies in his theory of reality, which was even developed within the boundaries of psychology as a natural science. In *VRE* James gives a sketch of his philosophical theory of 'pure experience', which he developed in his later works and couldn't be presented in this paper in its whole range. But it will suffice to take a look at the *VRE*. In chapter XX, 'Conclusions', James defines the experience as 'the place' where the reality of the world is given to us as a 'full fact'.

> A conscious field *plus* its object as felt or thought of *plus* an attitude towards the object *plus* the sense of a self to whom the attitude belongs – such a concrete bit of personal experience may be a small bit, but it is a solid bit as long as it lasts; not hollow, not a mere abstract element of experience, such as the 'object' is when taken all alone. It is a *full* fact, even though it be an insignificant fact; it is of the *kind* to which all realities whatsoever must belong; the motor currents of the world run through the like of it; it is on the line connecting real events with real events. (*VRE*, p. 393)

If it is true that reality in the fullest sense 'happens' in concrete experience, it is clear that we cannot separate the existence of God from the experience of God. It is not possible to prove first that there is a God above, and then believe in it. Religious experience as the unit of the feeling of getting in contact with God plus the specific attitude to God plus the sense of being a self are connected, but different even from God is the '*fons et origo*' of all religion. That there is no proof of the existence of God above the fact that there are individuals who have a feeling of its being present isn't an argument against his existence at all. Moreover it is a crucial fact which philosophy has to take into account, if it claims to elaborate an idea of reality as a whole.

In the postscript to 'The Varieties of Religious Experience', James honours this philosophical assumption when he presents a draft of a type of philosophical world-view, which takes account of the fact that human beings have religious experiences and there is no reason not to take them to be true. This world-view has to be a supernatural one, because religious beliefs involve concepts that transcend the world of natural science. Religions indeed appeal to a special kind of reality of a personal nature.

So religion is more than a 'rosy view' of the world. It postulates facts ('postulator of new facts', *VRE*, p. 406.) that transcend the boundaries of the natural world as it is described in natural science. Different to his earlier works, where he justifies religious beliefs on the basis of pragmatic reason, in *VRE* – and also in other later works like *The Pluralistic Universe* – James argues on an epistemological basis. The analysis and philosophical interpretation of religious experience ends up in a critique of scientific materialism, which claims to include the whole range of reality. Scientific materialism neglects the subjective part of each experience and as a result it presents the objective part as an abstract idea of reality, which is present to us in our experience. But to understand religious experience, you have to be more 'radically empirical' than science and develop a concept of world as a whole which makes it possible to consider religious experiences to be true.

> [...] the total expression of human experience, as I view it objectively, invincibly urges me beyond the narrow 'scientific' bounds. (*VRE*, p. 408)

In this respect religions and theologies present a more refined world-view than science does, because they emphasize also the inner subjective part of experience. What often is considered to be a 'anachronism, a case

of "survival", an atavistic relapse into a mode of thought which humanity in its more enlightened examples has outgrown' by the critics of religion, from a really humanistic point of view could be seen to be a merit of religion: The assumption that there is a God above allows space for the assumption that the divine meets the individual 'on the basis of his personal concerns' (*VRE*, p. 387).

CONCLUSION

Especially in his later work, James construes religious experience in a dedicated realistic way. In my opinion this is necessary, if one likes to base religious beliefs on feelings or emotions on the one hand and to avoid judging these beliefs as illusions on the other hand. For religious beliefs can't be prooved in a scientific manner, you need a concept of reality which transcends the world of science. In science there is one moment which is in itself by definition not part of this world and that is the mental moment of experience wherein all science is founded. If you accept this origin, the field of reality will open up wide and there is no more reason to think of the experience of a higher self or God to be unreal, if a wide range of individuals all over the world and thousands of years had these experiences.

Maybe some critics of religion and atheists are quite aware of the consequences which a true theism would entail. The assumption of a supernatural personal God can't be seen as further supplement to or behind the natural world, moreover it would change the whole naturalistic world-view as such.

But the realistic interpretation of theism is not the only way to speak of religion as being true. There is also a culturalistic view, which is for example preferred by Franz von Kutschera. He eliminates all supernatural elements, which Kutschera calls 'mythological', from religion or more precisely from Christianity. From this point of view religious experience isn't to be seen as an experience which transcends the natural world. Under these premises feelings and emotions are nothing but epiphenomenons which may accompany religious belief, but will disappear in that stage of religiousness which Kutschera calls a 'matured faith'. But if this kind of religious faith would have the power to fashion a whole life is a question which is raised by Kutschera himself at the end of his book: 'A [second] obstacle to the mature Christianity may be that

religious faith has to be based deeply in the region of feeling and passion to be able to form a person's life in all respects. Human beings are not only reasonable beings, the faculties of passion and will are important in the same way. But maturity is only an intellectual ideal. A mature faith is not able to address the feelings and longings of human being, not shape their experiences, not comfort mourning and not share their happiness ... Mythological religions with their legends and holy rituals immediately appeal to the realm of feeling and passion. Their interpretation of the world and history are comprehensible through experience. This basis of immediate is lost in the stage of maturity.'[10] And this is the reason why James is voting for the 'anachronistic' type of religion.

But Kutschera also emphasizes that the 'ideal of maturity' didn't aim for the 'right of way to reason'. The aim is to have the individual freedom to handle his feelings and emotions, which presupposes to reflect them.

But it is also possible to interpret James' achievements in 'The Will to Believe' from that point of view. Religious beliefs could be understood as a possibility for which there is no obvious reason. For they are not proven to be false; you have the free choice to adopt them or not. If one chooses to believe because he considered faith to be the best option for living, or on the basis of personal subjective experiences, he might do that. And in most cases, even in a time and environment where it is not natural or even obligatory to belief in God, he probably made this choice on the basis of some reflection, so that the idea of mature Christianity does not, from my point of view, contradict the acceptance of some mythological elements in it, which are able to appeal to our inner life of passion and deep concerns.

The instantaneous type of conversion James put in the centre of his study on the varieties of religion maybe isn't that typical as he – growing up in a time and a region of the world where awakening-movements had

[10] Loose translation by the author of this paper. 'Ein zweiter Einwand gegen ein mündiges Christentum lautet: Religiöser Glaube muss auch im Gefühl verankert sein, wenn er sein ganzes Leben bestimmen. Der Mensch ist kein reines Verstandeswesen, Fühlen und Wollen sind ebenso wichtig wie Denken. Mündigkeit ist jedoch ein bloß intellektuelles Ideal. Ein mündiger Glaube kann die Menschen nicht in ihrem Fühlen und Streben ansprechen, ihr Erleben nicht prägen, sie in ihrer Trauer nicht trösten und in ihrer Freude nicht begleiten ... Mythische Religionen sprechen das Gefühl mit ihren Bildern, Legenden und heiligen Handlungen unmittelbar an. Ihre Deutungen von Welt und Geschichte lassen sich im Erleben nachvollziehen. Diese Gefühlsunmittelbarkeit geht mit dem Schritt in die Mündigkeit verloren.' (Franz von Kutschera, *Was vom Christentum bleibt*, p.142.)

their origin – thought it to be. And maybe the idea of adopting religious beliefs by a cold blooded act isn't a realistic case of becoming religious. However I think some general characteristics of the process of adopting religious beliefs are given in his studies: First: It is necessary to think of religious claims as assumptions or hypotheses that might be true even if not in a literal sense, or in the words of William James, they have to be considered as living options. Second: If you are convinced that it is always wrong to believe in something which has the power to touch your heart, you never will come to be religious believer for it seems to me that religious beliefs always are linked with a special taste which makes you feel more placid. Third: The confrontation with typical religious questions like that of the existence of God, of life after death, of evil and retributive justice will always worry human beings. Maybe not every person reaches a faith-state or maybe a faith-state isn't such a stable state of mind, as one may think when reading the examples given by James. But to face up to these questions, even if one comes to atheistic answers at the end, is an honest and matured form of using your intellectual capacities.

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