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YEAR IN REVIEW

The Center is now in its fifth decade. For forty years and counting, our mission has been to promote research in philosophy of religion and philosophical theology or work that has important implications for these two disciplines. That mission continues. This year we are again hosting top scholars from around the world through our residential fellowship program. We are spearheading innovative research and cross-disciplinary collaboration through our large research initiatives. We also continue to engage the wider public with forums and new media.

After finishing two highly successful three-year interdisciplinary research initiatives in the summer of 2017—*The Experience Project* and *Hope & Optimism: Conceptual and Empirical Investigations*—the Center staff quickly turned our attention to two new exciting projects. In August, we began work on an animated video series showcasing the groundbreaking philosophical contributions of former Center Director, Alvin Plantinga, the recipient of the 2017 Templeton Prize for progress in religion. Plantinga is the latest in a long line of respected recipients, including Desmond Tutu and St. Teresa of Calcutta. These short, animated films creatively explore Plantinga's most influential ideas and arguments, ranging from the modal ontological argument to human freedom and divine foreknowledge. To view the videos, visit: **plantingavideos.com** (see the article on page 16 for further details).

Our other current grant project is a one-year planning grant—*Narrative Conceptions of the Self*—to investigate the state of research on narrative conceptions of the self in the cognitive and social sciences and the humanities. Through this one-year research endeavor, we aim to foster new interdisciplinary collaboration and develop a larger research initiative that, in turn, will generate more scientifically informed research on the self within philosophy and theology. In January, we convened an interdisciplinary workshop in Florida involving prominent experts on narrative conceptions of the self.

Back in November, we held the seventh annual Analytic Theology Lecture at the AAR and SBL. N.T. Wright, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrews School of Divinity, delivered his lecture titled "The Meanings of History: Event and Interpretation in the Bible and Theology" to a standing room only crowd. The continued enthusiasm for our annual Analytic Theology Lecture keeps our *Analytic Theology Project* (2010-2014) in the spotlight as it continues to shape the young and flourishing field of analytic theology.

Through our grant projects and annual fellowship program, we continue to bring top scholars from around the world to Notre Dame in order to collaborate and develop lifelong friendships. On most Fridays, fellows are joined by Notre Dame faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars to discuss works-in-progress. This year, we have already discussed a range of fascinating topics, including atheistic prayer, medieval views of space, fictionalism, God's goodness, religious disagreement, and (contradictory) Christology. The engaging conversations often continue over lunch on campus and over a pint at our weekly pub nights each Thursday held at local South Bend area venues. Our annual Logos Workshop in Philosophical Theology is now in its tenth year. After its travels across the Atlantic to the new Logos Institute at the University of St. Andrew's last year, Logos returned to Notre Dame this year from May 24-26. Our 2018 theme was *Race, Gender, Ability, and Class: Expanding Conversations in Analytic Theology*. Registration is required for the conference, but is open to anyone who would like to attend.

Our video archive continues to expand. Visit our website (**philreligion.nd.edu**; **hopeoptimism.org**) and follow us on Facebook to view exciting content in philosophy, theology, and the social sciences. This year we added a series of ten animated videos to celebrate Alvin Plantinga's 2017 Templeton Prize. Later this spring and summer we plan to release a series of videos on prominent Logos Workshop themes. Stay tuned!

Thanks to all who have made 2017-2018 another fabulous year at the Center! To learn more about our projects and events, visit: **philreligion.nd.edu**.

THEOLOGICAL AXIOMS AND THE BOUNDS OF LOGIC: CHRIST AS THE FUNDAMENTAL 'PROBLEM'

J.C. Beall

A truth-seeking discipline aims to record the truth of its target phenomenon. The record is a theory, where theories can be thought of in two steps: seed theory (a body of claims that are taken to be important basic truths), and 'completion' of said seed theory (adding all consequences of whatever's in the theory to the theory).

Example; Think about Euclidean geometry. This is a theory of geometrical structures, including parallel lines. There are two chief ingredients in the theory: its fundamental truths (viz., 'axioms'), and its consequence relation (or 'closure relation'). The first ingredient consists of statements that are taken to be bedrock truths about the topic — for example, 'parallel lines never meet'. The latter ingredient (viz., the

There are two ways to change a theory, each corresponding to the theory's two chief ingredients:

1. Change the fundamental truths (the axioms).
2. Use a different consequence relation for the theory.
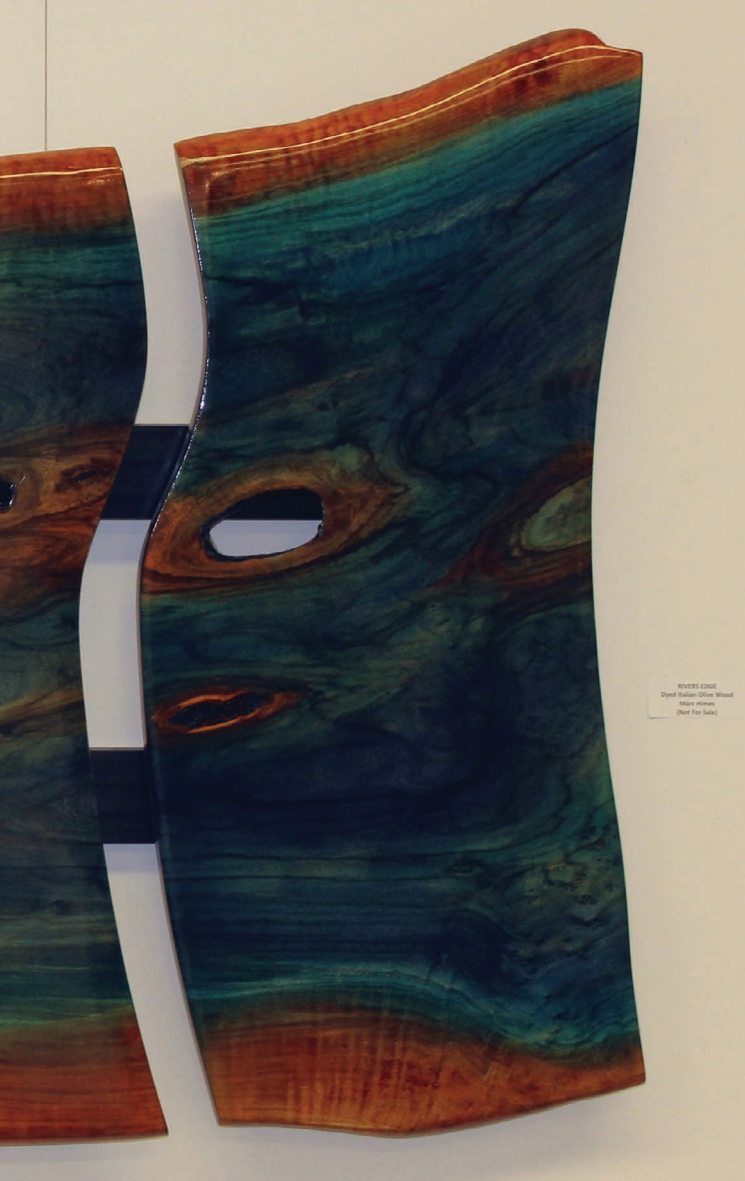
physics. The epistemology of each discipline differs from the others in various ways but the aim is the same: namely, to record the truth of the target phenomenon as completely as possible.

One common — indeed, orthodox or standard — theology takes Chalcedonian principles to be fundamental (axiomatic) truths:

3. Christ is human.
4. Christ is divine.
5. Christ is mutable.
6. Christ is immutable.

Startling as they are, these claims — these axioms — are not the result of sloppy thinking; they're the result of sincere, critical, careful reflection on the role of Christ in the Christian worldview — the overall, systematic account of the world.

Another common theology is similarly Chalcedonian but rejects that (5) and (6) are axiomatic, treating them instead as derived truths or consequences of the foundational truths (3) and (4). On this approach, (5) is a consequence of (3), and (6) is a consequence of (4). But the resulting theology still contains (3)–(6); they just get there in different steps.

For present purposes the difference between taking only (3) and (4) to be axiomatic from taking (3)–(6) to be axiomatic is not pressing. What is pressing is whether the given theory — the given theology — is true.

In Richard Cross' now-standard terminology the fundamental (philosophical) problem confronting the given theory is that it's flat-out absurd (and thereby incoherent on any definition of that term). There are at least two grades of apparent absurdity in the theory:

A. The theory is logically absurd, demanding 'possibilities' that logic rules out.
B. The theory is theologically absurd, demanding 'possibilities' that theology rules out.

Along the first grade the theory demands the truth of logical contradictions. How so? Enter the fundamental-problem argument. A consequence of (6) is

7. Christ is not mutable.

In turn, on standard logical theory, a logical consequence of (5) and (7) is their logical conjunction:

8. Christ is mutable and Christ is not mutable.

consequence relation) is a relation that churns out the consequences of what's in the theory; it takes statements from the theory and delivers whatever follows from those statements — for example, 'if two lines intersect they are not parallel' is a consequence of (i.e., it follows from) 'parallel lines never intersect'.

There are two ways to change a theory, each corresponding to the theory's two chief ingredients:

1. Change the fundamental truths (the axioms).
2. Use a different consequence relation for the theory.

The first way is popular in the case of applied geometry, especially in physics. In the face of actual physical space, Euclidean geometry seems not to be true — despite its strong intuitive appeal. Einstein's famous theories in physics invoke non-Euclidean geometries that reject the Euclidean principle (the axiom) that parallel lines never meet. On the other hand, Einstein's theories leave the consequence relation to be as it is in Euclidean geometry (except that it now applies to different axioms).

Systematic theology is a truth-seeking discipline, just like

> The fundamental problem is the apparent absurdity of standard (Chalcedon-constrained) Christian theology.

But there is no possibility recognized by standard logic in which (8) is true. Hence, any theory — a fortiori, any theology — that contains (8) cannot possibly be true; and hence should be rejected.

The second grade of absurdity (the B-level grade) piggybacks on the first. Any theology according to which both of the following claims are true is not only unorthodox and non-standard but is beyond what counts as theologically possible:

9.   Christ is not human.
10. Christ is not divine.

But the given theory, backed by standard logic, contains both (9) and (10), since each of them — and, for that matter, every sentence in the language of the theory — is a logical consequence of (8), which, as above, is a consequence of the theory.

The fundamental problem is the apparent absurdity of standard (Chalcedon-constrained) Christian theology. The apparent absurdity arises from the apparent consequences of theology's fundamental truths concerning the 2-natured Christ.

> Christ is as the fundamental problem paints: namely, a contradictory being, where a being is contradictory if and only if (henceforth 'iff') some logical contradiction (i.e., some conjunction of a sentence and its logical negation) is true of the given being.

Contrary to some Kierkegaardian tendencies — which seem not to see theology as a truth-seeking discipline — the uniqueness of Christ shouldn't preclude a coherent theology. The fundamental problem presses theologians to present a coherent — indeed, the true — systematic theology, the true theory of Christ and theological reality in general.

What to do? Readers of this magazine are familiar with suggested ways of maintaining at least the axioms (3) and (4) while avoiding the apparent contradiction of (5) and (7). Each such suggestion ultimately reduces to the two avenues pursued in geometry and physics: namely, (1) and (2). And just like in geometry and physics, theologians have tended towards (1) over (2), mainly by suggesting alternative axioms — either reducing the number of axioms or reinterpreting

them (which, in effect, is to change them). One recent path rejects at least statement (6), holding that it is not a consequence of (4) and is otherwise not motivated. Another recent direction maintains the Chalcedonian quartet (3)–(6) but rejects that (7) is a consequence of (6). And there are well-worked variations of these paths.

What is mildly surprising is that perhaps the most flat-footed response to the problem has received no serious attention. By my lights, the most flat-footed response to the problem is to maintain the Chalcedonian axioms but change the theory along avenue (2): recognize a different consequence relation for the theory. On this response, Christ is as the fundamental problem paints: namely, a contradictory being, where a being is contradictory if and only if (henceforth 'iff') some logical contradiction (i.e., some conjunction of a sentence and its logical negation) is true of the given being. In Christ's case contradiction (8), like other fundamental-problem contradictions, is true of him.

But hold on! How is this even a response to the fundamental problem, let alone the most flat-footed response? After all, the standard account of logic still tells us that both (9) and (10) are logical consequences of any theory according to which (8) is true. But the conjunction of (9) and (10) is held herein to be theologically absurd — if not worse. It's of little help to accept a logically contradictory theology if the price is theologically absurd — involving the falsehood of both Christ's humanity and Christ's divinity. It looks as if the target response to the fundamental problem is neither flat-footed nor a viable response.

> On this view, theologians and philosophers have gone in the wrong direction in response to the apparent contradiction of Christ.

Looks are misleading. The target response is flat-footed by embracing the core axioms (3)–(6) and also the consequences (7)–(8). Theological — likewise logical — absurdity is avoided by invoking an alternative account of logical consequence whereby neither (9) nor (10) follows from (8). Such an account of logical consequence is one whereby there are logical possibilities that go beyond the standardly recognized space. On the standard account, every possibility recognized by logic is both 'exhaustive' and 'exclusive' with respect to (henceforth 'wrt') every sentence, where a possibility is exhaustive wrt a sentence iff either the sentence or its (logical) negation is true there, and a possibility is exclusive wrt a sentence iff not both the sentence and its negation are true there. If, as I believe, logic recognizes possibilities in which a sentence and its negation can both be true then logic will recognize counterexamples to the alleged entailment from (8) to

(9) — and, generally, from an arbitrary contradiction to an arbitrary sentence.

Christ is the fundamental contradiction at the core of Christianity.

This is not the place to spell out the details of the target non-standard account of logic. What is important is that invoking such an account of logic in the face of the Christianity's core contradiction — who is Christ — is a very natural response to the fundamental problem. As years and years of sincere, critical, careful reflection continue to record, Christ's role appears to demand that Christ exemplify contradictory properties — mutable, immutable, and so on. In its rich history systematic theology has bumped against the apparent contradiction while trying to find a route around it. But there is another way: namely, accept it.

On this view, theologians and philosophers have gone in the wrong direction in response to the apparent contradiction of Christ. They see the contradiction of Christ; they conclude — from reflection on the standard space of logical possibilities — that Christ can't be contradictory; so, they construct some non-contradictory account. But the contradiction persists.

Chalcedon paints a contradictory picture. Why? My view: the only way of playing the role of Christ — in the atonement, in the incarnation, in the core of the gospel — is to exemplify contradictory properties. How is this done? The councils paint a vivid answer: Christ exemplifies contradictory properties by exemplifying two contradictory natures, where natures are contradictory iff their joint instantiation entails a contradiction. Christ is Divine without diminishment; Christ is Human without diminishment. Christ is the fundamental contradiction at the core of Christianity.

Some readers will be bemused, incredulous or, worse, exasperated by such a suggestion. Is this mere babbling, mere illogical gibberish? Is this the retreat from reason into a say-whatever-one-wants approach to theology?

The answer is a firm No — No, No, and No. To begin, there are many theology-independent reasons to think that logical consequence is weaker than the standard theory of logic says. The standard account arose from reflection on the consequence relation for standard mathematics — which is but one phenomenon, a fairly special one. But reality involves more than mathematical phenomena; and theories of some such phenomena (e.g., properties, paradoxes, non-epistemic indeterminacy) appear to demand an account whereby logic is weaker than the

standard account claims. Inasmuch as logic is universal (applying to all theories if any) the standard account of logic needs to be rejected as too strong in the face of such theology-independent phenomena. Moreover, the jolting idea of true contradictory theories — as I propose any true Christian theology to be — is neither new nor very radical; there are many very clear models of contradictory theories, ones involving objects that exemplify contradictory properties. Such models are abstract, mathematical structures; but they are clear and sufficiently illuminating. (I skip details of the models here but see my paper 'Christ — A Contradiction' for a brief sketch.) Such models do not sufficiently explain the metaphysical question of exactly how Christ instantiates contradictory properties; but that question — the truth about how the contradiction is actualized — may turn out to be the ineffable aspect of the hypostatic union invoked in standard Christology. (I am not saying that it is, but it might be.) These are open questions for any viable contradictory Christian theology. What is clear is that these are serious questions to be explored, and that there is absolutely no flight from reason involved in such questions.

We shouldn't run from the truth even if it's contradictory.

Of course, one would be right that embracing a contradictory Christian theology is to embrace a theory that fiercely flies in the face of standard thinking. But that's no knock against the truth of such a theory. After all, to embrace the existence of a GodMan — in the standard understanding of 'God' and 'Human', and the standard consequences involved therein — is to embrace a theory that flies in the face of standard thinking. But that's OK. Conforming to standard opinion has never been the aim of serious theology.

Theology is and always will be a truth-seeking discipline. We shouldn't run from the truth even if it's contradictory. The job is to present the truth — the contradiction — in a clear, rationally justifiable framework. My work aims to do just that.

MEDIEVAL VIEWS OF SPACE AND TIME

Jeffrey E. Brower

During the Middle Ages (roughly, 400–1400 CE), philosophers devoted a great deal of energy to discussing questions about the nature of space and time. Part of what makes their discussions interesting is the extent to which they are informed by theological commitments. Nowadays, it is standard to assume that only bodies can be located in space and that all concrete (as opposed to abstract) objects must be located in time. But certain theological commitments led medieval philosophers to reject both assumptions. Indeed, commitment to the doctrine of divine omnipresence typically led them to insist that God is spatially located everywhere, even though he is an incorporeal substance or spirit. And commitment to the doctrine of divine immutability typically led them to insist that God exists wholly outside of time, even though he is a concrete object.

Despite the interest of medieval views of space and time, they are notoriously difficult to understand. Part of the difficulty owes to the broadly Aristotelian framework within which such views were developed. This framework, although once taken for granted, is now unfamiliar and there is considerable scholarly debate regarding how best to understand medieval appropriations of it. Moreover, even when commentators agree about the proper interpretation of medieval views of space and time, it is often difficult to relate them to more familiar positions in current debates. Indeed, because medieval views do not fit neatly into standard contemporary categories for thinking about either space or time, it remains unclear to what extent they are even addressing the problems of most concern to philosophers today.

My project for this academic year (2017–2018) at Notre Dame's Center for Philosophy of Religon is to develop a theoretical model for understanding medieval views about space and time—one that not only does justice to the framework within which these views were formulated, as well as their distinctive theological motivations, but also allows us to situate them relative to standard contemporary debates. The project is divided into two parts: the first is

> My project for this academic year is to develop a theoretical model for understanding medieval views about space and time…[that] allows us to situate them relative to standard contemporary debates.

designed to clarify medieval views about space and spatial relations, whereas the second is designed to clarify medieval views of time and temporal relations. Instead of developing my model in an abstract or general way, I proceed in each part by focusing on the views of three well known and influential medieval philosophers—namely, Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham.

> Nowadays, it is standard to conceive of space in terms of regions and of spatial location in terms of a relation that bodies bear to regions.

The first part of my project is nearly complete. And as the portion of the model that I have developed in connection with this part is intended to show, medieval views of space and spatial location provide an interesting contrast to those of most contemporary philosophers. Nowadays, it is standard to conceive of space in terms of regions and of spatial location in terms of a relation that bodies bear to regions. Most contemporary philosophers are dualists about regions and bodies—that is to say, they think of regions and bodies as two distinct and irreducible types of substance or substance-like object. For the same reason, such philosophers typically think of spatial location in terms of a primitive relation that holds between wholly distinct objects—often referred to as occupation. Thus, they think of bodies as possessing spatial location in virtue of occupying regions. Despite the dominance of dualism about regions and bodies, however, there are a growing number of monists—that is to say, philosophers who think of both regions and bodies in terms of a single irreducible
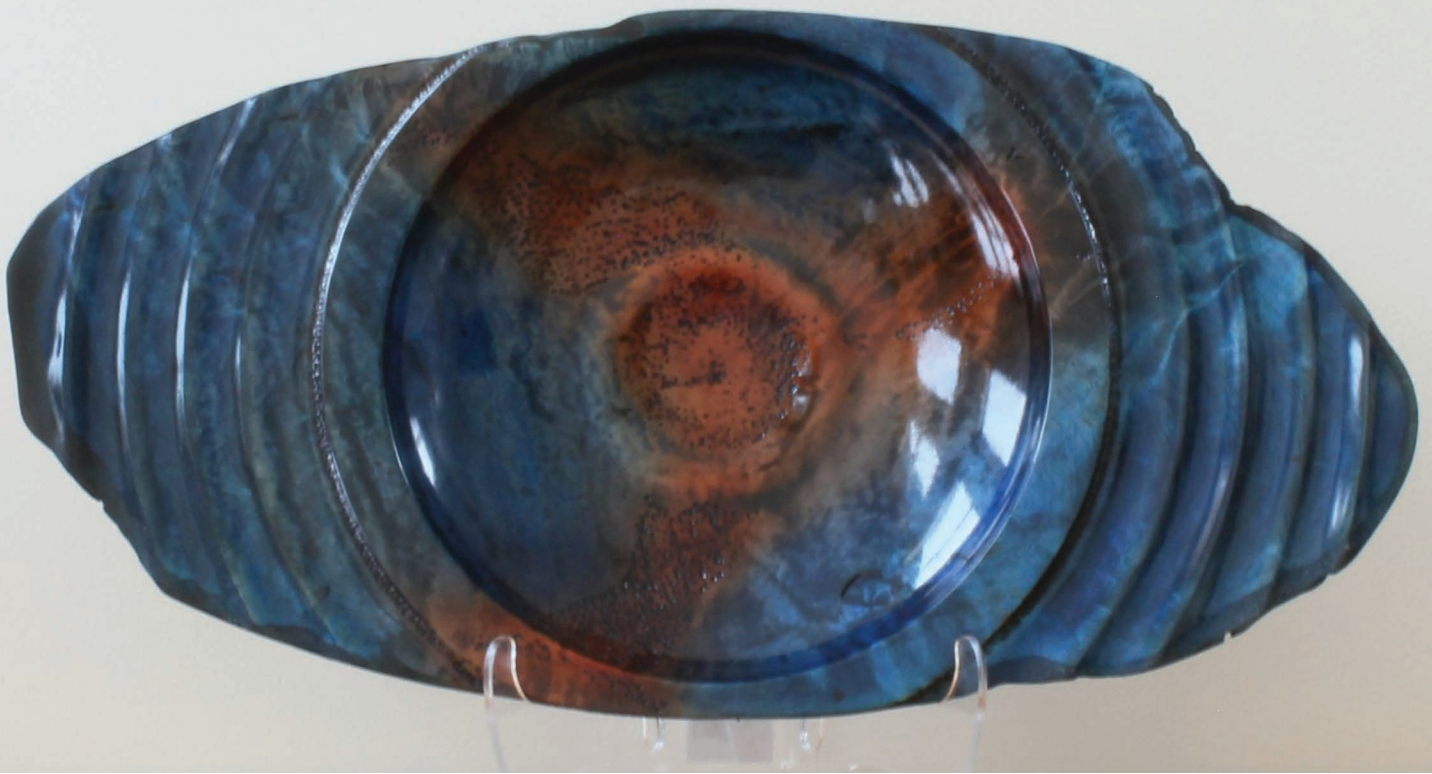
type of substance. Among such philosophers, moreover, it is not uncommon to think of bodies as identical to regions, and hence to analyze spatial location of bodies in terms of the familiar relation of identity.

On the model that I'm developing, medievals such as Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham are best thought of as monists about regions and bodies, but dualists about regions and incorporeal substances. That is to say, such philosophers think of both bodies and spirits, such as God and the angels, as being located at substantival regions, but whereas they think of bodies as being identical to such regions, they think of spirits as occupying them.

> Medievals such as Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham are best thought of as monists about regions and bodies, but dualists about regions and incorporeal substances.

What is more, there was a lively debate among medieval philosophers about the proper understanding of the relation of occupation that spirits bear to regions. Some, such as Aquinas, insisted that spirits occupy regions in virtue of acting on them, and hence that occupation can be analyzed in terms of such activity. But many other philosophers, including Scotus and Ockham, resisted this conclusion, insisting instead that that spiritual occupation must be understood as a primitive relation, one that can hold between spirits and regions even when they are not acting at all.

The second part of my project is still in its early stages. But I hope by the end of the academic year to make significant progress in extending my model to include medieval views about time and temporal relations as well.

> In some ways, medieval views on this topic are harder to understand than they are on space and spatial relations... part of the explanation, as I also hope to show, is that medieval views about time and temporal relations are most like a type of contemporary view that remains unfamiliar— namely, fragmentalism.

In some ways, medieval views on this topic are harder to understand than they are on space and spatial relations. Part of the explanation is that this topic is closely connected to medieval views about motion, which are themselves puzzling. But part of the explanation, as I also hope to show, is that medieval views about time and temporal relations are most like a type of contemporary view that remains unfamiliar—namely, fragmentalism. According to this view, which was introduced into the contemporary literature in 2005 by Kit Fine, reality is not a metaphysically unified place but one constituted by incompatible facts across fragments. Although fragmentalism is now beginning to receive significant attention, my model is intended to show that the same type of view enjoyed some prominence in the history of philosophy.

NON-INFLATIONARY REALISM ABOUT MORALITY: LANGUAGE, METAPHYSICS, AND TRUTH

Annette Bryson

Are any of our moral claims correct—and objectively so? We often assume that they can be and that some are, but many philosophers have raised questions about these assumptions. It's arguable that some of these difficulties have more to do with particular ways in which objectivity and truth in ethics have been understood. Some interesting new developments in moral theory may enable us to evade these difficulties by giving us a new perspective on what objectivity and truth might amount to. And it's possible that a theistic perspective might help to clarify what these new developments amount to.

> Are any of our moral claims correct—and objectively so?

Many philosophers take the following for granted: realist metaethical accounts (*i.e.*, realist accounts of the status of our moral thought, discourse, and practice and the assumptions that underlie them) presuppose that our moral claims and judgments are about something, and they are thus accountable to that which they are about—perhaps a reality that transcends them or properties and relations between and among properties that they pick out. Realism presupposes that we can investigate the nature of moral reality or moral properties. Realist accounts thus, not surprisingly, tend to include some positive metaphysical theses about morality. Realists also make certain assumptions about our moral language. They maintain that our moral claims can be true or false and that, when appropriately accountable to how things stand morally, they are true. And they assume that at least some moral claims are, in fact, true.

> Realism presupposes that we can investigate the nature of moral reality or moral properties.

While these assumptions are often taken to be among the strengths of realist approaches to ethics, with defenders claiming they best capture our ordinary moral practice, they are also often supposed to account for many of the relevant costs of moral realism. One worry is that the sort of reality or the sorts of properties required for realism to be plausible simply could not exist. Another is that it is not clear enough just what moral entities or properties might be like in order for us to conclude that they do or do not exist. Yet others include that it is unclear how we might come to be aware of them or how we might explain their connection to motivation. (When we judge that something is, say, morally wrong, these judgments come with a certain motivating force.)

> One worry is that the sort of reality or the sorts of properties required for realism to be plausible simply could not exist.

One response to these worries is to reject realism. Some non-realists maintain that we could never gain epistemic access to moral truths. Some maintain that though moral claims purport to be about the way things really are, none of these claims actually is true. Perhaps they're all false. And perhaps this is because moral reality does not or that moral properties do not, after all, exist. Some non-realists maintain that moral claims and thoughts can be *treated* as true but that they are so only in a (putatively) *useful* fiction. Or perhaps the fiction is that they're capable of being true or false in the first place. One approach that focuses specifically on moral language and that is often assumed to be a paradigm case of non-realism about ethics is expressivism. Expressivism is roughly the view that the meanings of moral sentences are explained in terms of the state of mind such sentences express. According to one version of expressivism, when we utter the sentence "Slavery is wrong," we are simply expressing anti-slavery attitudes, saying, for instance something like "Slavery:

boo!" According to such expressivists, our moral claims are not capable of being true or false. We don't even intend them to be so.

Expressivism is roughly the view that the meanings of moral sentences are explained in terms of the state of mind such sentences express.

Perhaps, however, the ontological and epistemic problems I've noted are not after all problems for moral *realism*. Perhaps they are problems, instead, for a particular *construal* of moral realism. Consider the views of such non-naturalists as Ronald Dworkin, T. M. Scanlon, Matthew Kramer, Hilary Putnam, Thomas Nagel, and Derek Parfit. These advocates of what I call "non-inflationary realism" maintain that we can do justice to objectivity and truth in ethics (they are thus "realists") without incurring what are arguably the substantial costs associated with doing so. Though otherwise quite distinct in their methods, non-inflationary moral realists are all prepared to embrace objectivity and truth in ethics without assuming that doing so involves any metaphysical worries, indeed, no positive metaphysical commitments. They thus reject what they take to be the "inflated" ontology of traditional realists.

Perhaps, however, the ontological and epistemic problems I've noted are not after all problems for moral realism.

There is a good deal of disagreement about what should be said about non-inflationary realist accounts. Even defenders of these accounts themselves disagree, not only about their own commitments but also about exactly what is wrong with more traditional versions of moral realism. They also disagree about what to say about expressivism. What's interesting about this is that just as non-inflationary moral realism reflects the fact that non-naturalistic moral realism has evolved, so too expressivism has also evolved. Some expressivists agree that moral claims *can* be objectively true—though they also, like adherents of non-inflationary moral realism, deny that this possibility depends on metaphysical commitments to moral properties or a moral reality. Like the non-inflationary non-naturalists, they even maintain that our moral thoughts can be characterized as be-liefs, that we can have moral knowledge, that there are substantive moral *facts*, and that moral facts are irreducibly moral and best understood as *non-natural*.

The convergence in particular between some sophisticated versions of quasi-realist expressivism and some versions of non-naturalistic non-inflationary moral realism is so great that it is not easy to isolate just what is at issue between

them. This convergence leads Parfit, for instance, to wonder if there is any significant disagreement between him and the quasi-realist expressivist Allan Gibbard.

One way we might gain insight into what finally is at issue between and among participants in this debate is by focusing on the notion of truth assumed by each of them.

One way we might gain insight into what finally is at issue between and among participants in this debate is by focusing on the notion of truth assumed by each of them. Gibbard, Dworkin, Scanlon, and Parfit, for instance, all maintain that they have articulated an understanding of moral truth as transcending the beliefs and attitudes of individual moral agents. Gibbard accepts, however, and Dworkin seems to presuppose a minimalist or deflationist approach to truth. By contrast, Parfit and Scanlon insist that there's something to truth that goes beyond what we can get from a minimalist approach. Some of what they say implies that what they take to be missing is related to the sense that our beliefs are accountable to something that transcends them. There may be an interesting intersection with the philosophy of religion here if it turns out that a theistic conception of truth, notably, an epistemic conception which identifies truth with what God knows, proves more hospitable to one family of views than the other. And if it does, it seems more likely that it would prove hospitable to Parfit's, say, over Gibbard's. There are reasons to think that a theistic perspective offers a particularly useful clarificatory heuristic that can be used to make sense of the subtle differences between quasi-realist expressivism and other variants of non-inflationary realism.

Investigating what remains at issue between and among various participants in this debate offers insight not only into the nature of the non-inflationary realist project but also into how it can be moved forward. Doing so, I believe, is a means to the end of gaining insight into our own thought and talk about what we have (moral) reason to do.
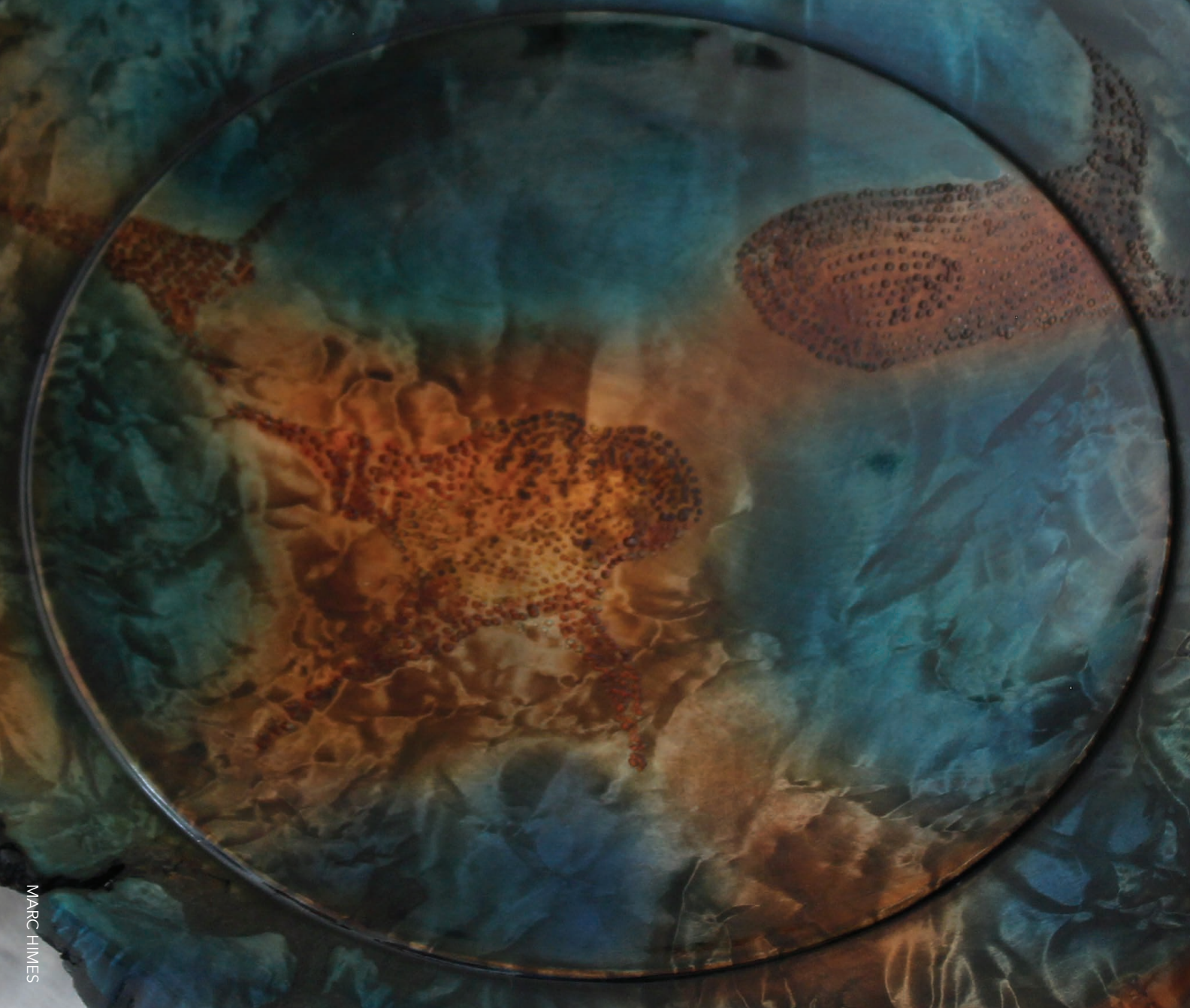
BEING AND FREEDOM

Kristopher McDaniel

During my year at the Center for the Philosophy of Religion, I pursued questions in metaphysics related to the nature of being and questions in the history of philosophy related to theism and the possibility of libertarian freedom.

For some philosophers, nothing could be simpler or less interesting than being.

Let me briefly mention the topics in metaphysics first.

For some philosophers, nothing could be simpler or less interesting than *being*. According to these philosophers, there is only one mode of being, and everything that there is has it. According to these philosophers, one thing can't have more being than another thing; on their view, even if it made sense to say that being is a quantity, everything would have the same amount of it. On their view, to be is to exist and to exist is just to be identical with something, and there aren't ways or degrees of being something.

Much of my recent work in metaphysics has challenged these claims about being. Recently, this has culminated in a

book titled *The Fragmentation of Being* (Oxford University Press). Here are three lines of thought that I plan on pursuing.

> I plan on focusing on whether being has an essence, and whether we can understand modes of being or degrees of being in terms of facts about the essence of being.

First, in my previous work, I linked modes of being and degrees of being with modes of quantification and fundamentality. But another promising link is between essence and being. Specifically, I plan on focusing on whether being has an essence, and whether we can understand modes of being or degrees of being in terms of facts about the essence of being.

Second, I am curious about whether there is a kind of metaphysical intrinsic value correlated or identical with a kind of being. Some medieval philosophers defended the view that being and a kind of goodness are at root identical, and so everything that there is, is in some way good. In some recent work, I have articulated ways of understanding metaphysical fundamentality in terms of either normative or evaluative properties. I would like to see how these ways of understanding metaphysical fundamentality mesh with my work on modes of being and degrees of being.

Third, I am curious about how questions about modes of being and degrees of being are developed and answered in non-western contexts. Specifically, I have been thinking about the distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth that is drawn by philosophers of the early Abhidharma Buddhist schools. I suspect that one good interpretation of this distinction between conventional and ultimate truth appeals to a corresponding distinction between two modes of being: conventional and ultimate existence. I'd like to explore this further while at the center.

> I suspect that one good interpretation of this distinction between conventional and ultimate truth appeals to a corresponding distinction between two modes of being: conventional and ultimate existence.

I also have two projects in the history of philosophy I hope to pursue while at the Center. One of the projects is on the Absolute Idealism of Mary Whiton Calkins. Calkins was an important figure in late 19th century and early 20th

MARC HIMES

century philosophy. She defended a dissertation thesis under Josiah Royce and William James, who both taught at Harvard, but the institutionalized sexism at Harvard prevented her from receiving the degree she deserved, despite strong advocacy for her from her committee. During her professional career, she authored forty articles on psychology and philosophy, primarily dealing with metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, the history of philosophy, and ethics. She also authored many books, including *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy*, which was used as a popular textbook on the history of metaphysics that was reprinted five times from 1907 (the date of its initial publication) to 1927. She was the first woman president of the American Philosophical Association, and one of the few people to be elected president of both that APA and its sister, the American Psychological Association, after the two associations became two separate academic societies.

Calkins defended the view that there is an infinite person who includes everything else that exists as either a part or a mode and who is more metaphysically fundamental than these parts or modes. Is this metaphysics consistent with the view that sometimes finite persons act with libertarian freedom, that is, there is some action done by a finite person such that no facts wholly external to that person wholly ground that the person performs the action? Calkins wants to say yes, but it is not clear that she can. I want to figure out the which answer is correct. And given the recent resurgence of interests in monism, idealism, and related views, this question isn't purely of antiquarian interest.

The second project in the history of philosophy also is about libertarian freedom and its role in Kant's philosophy of religion. Kant's transcendental theology is built on three fundamental claims: there is a God, the soul is immortal, and the human will is free. On Kant's view, these three fundamental claims are ones that are reasonable for us to believe because we have *practical* reasons for believing them and we have no theoretical reason for rejecting them. However, were there to be a theoretical reason for rejecting these three claims, their status as reasonable to believe would be in serious doubt. Specifically, I want to explore whether Kant's conjecture that God intellectually intuits everything is consistent with creatures enjoying libertarian freedom.

PLANTINGA ANIMATED

Joshua Seachris

In April 2017, Alvin Plantinga, former Center Director and John A. O'Brien Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, received the Templeton Prize for progress in religion. In winning, he joins a distinguished group of 46 other Prize recipients, including inaugural award winner St. Teresa of Calcutta (1973), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1983), and philosopher Charles Taylor (2007). The Templeton Prize each year honors a living person who has made an exceptional contribution affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.

Alvin Plantinga received the Templeton Prize for progress in philosophy of religion.

In the words of one philosopher who nominated Plantinga for the prize:

> "Alvin Plantinga's intellectual discoveries have initiated novel inquiry into spiritual dimensions. His precise and carefully developed insights have opened up intellectual-spiritual space. In the 1950s there was not a single published defense of religious belief by a prominent philosopher; by the 1990s there were literally hundreds of books and articles… defending and developing the spiritual dimension. The difference between 1950 and 1990 is, quite simply,

Plantinga made groundbreaking contributions to several areas of philosophy, including modal metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, and the science-religion dialogue

Alvin Plantinga."

In his long and storied career, Plantinga made groundbreaking contributions to several areas of philosophy, including modal metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, and the science-religion dialogue. Through his encouragement and example, he also inspired

Plantinga's ideas are too important to remain in the ivory tower.

an entire generation of young philosophers to devote their time and talent to articulating a vibrant and compelling Christian philosophy.

In order to celebrate the ideas and arguments that Plantinga rigorously articulated over his career and to bring them to a wider audience, the Center collaborated with the Canadian animation studios Hand on a Whiteboard and Hello Adventure to produce a series of ten videos to commemorate his achievements. Both studios have years of experience bringing big ideas to life on screen through carefully realized worlds and engaging characters.

In this series, one joins Alvin Plantinga himself—in cartoon form—alongside a diverse cast of memorable characters who, together, lead the viewer on a captivating tour of Plantinga's most enduring ideas. Films explore a range of topics, including human freedom and divine foreknowledge, the problem of evil, and knowledge of God.

We hope this series will encourage viewers to delve deeper into Plantinga's groundbreaking philosophical work. His ideas are too important to remain in the lecture hall or on the journal page. We are excited to bring them to life on the screen.

To learn more about Alvin Plantinga and to view films in the series, visit: **plantingavideos.com**.
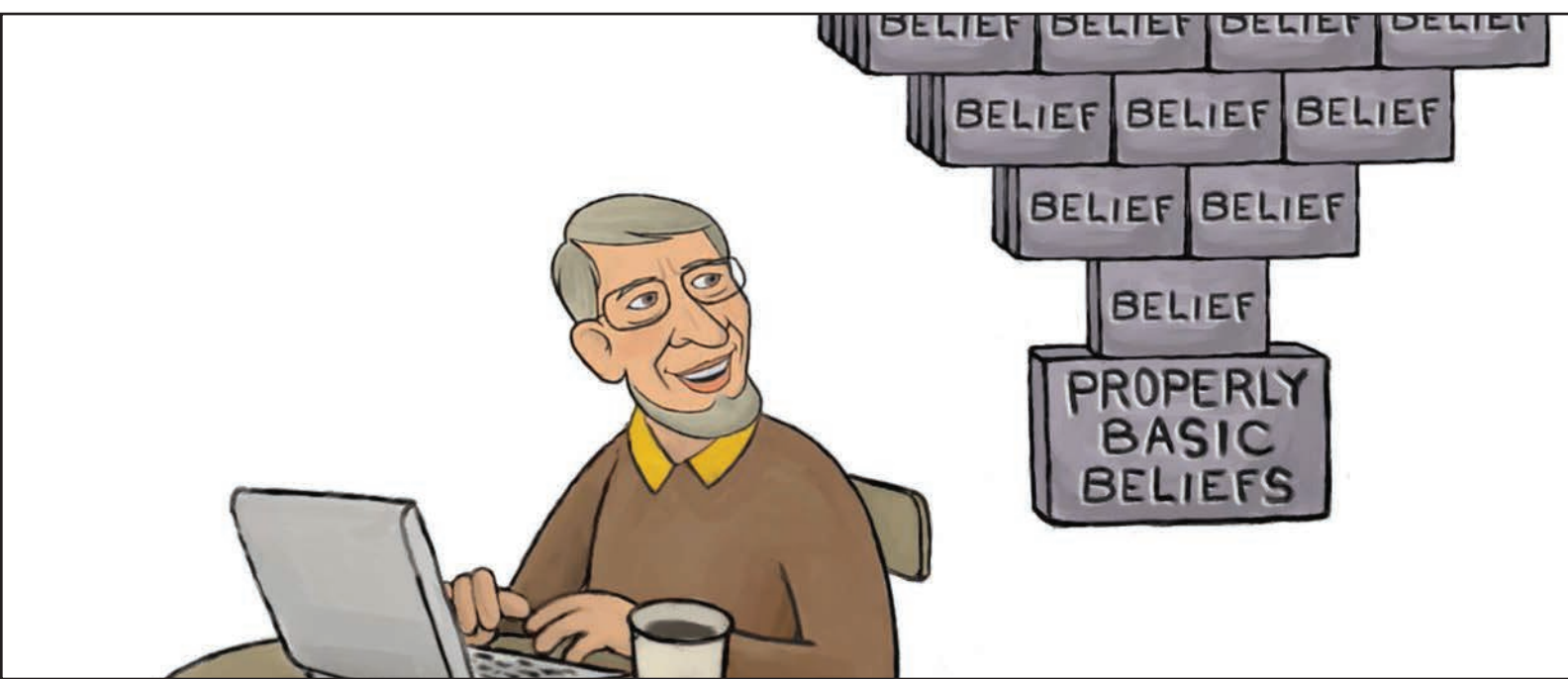
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