

U.S.C.
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PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Spring 2011, 4-5:15PM, MW
 Mudd Hall of Philosophy 105
 Prof. Dallas Willard

Course Description: This course is designed and conducted with the aim of assisting the student toward an understanding of the rational, or lack of rational, basis or standing of beliefs and practices fundamental to religion as a human activity. Such an understanding would constitute a philosophy of religion. It is religion as a human, historical actuality that provides a unified point of reference for all that we deal with, and hence the course is not just a grab-bag of metaphysical, epistemological and ethical issues.

Since religion is a universal human concern, one should expect that the various religious and anti-religious traditions or tendencies of the world might provide significant statements relevant to a philosophy of religion. The positions of Atheism, Agnosticism and Secular Humanism are considered at length. The conceptual substance of the course is most heavily dependent upon the History of Modern Western Philosophy, which is embedded in an essentially Judeo-Christian culture, and especially upon the great Rationalist and Empiricist thinkers of that period, such as Hume and Kant.

Formal Requirements of the Course:

1. Regular and on-time attendance at the lectures, ready to discuss in class the reading assignments of that day if called upon.
2. Careful notes on the lectures, available for inspection at the lecturer's request.
3. One mid-term exam and a final. Questions for these in-class exams are selected by the lecturer at exam time from a list of review questions distributed one week earlier.
4. A few précis (1-3 pages) on especially crucial texts or ideas covered. (What a précis is will be explained.)
5. The professor may require an interview/tutorial with individual students at any time.

Required Texts:

1. David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Hackett edition. Pb
2. James Kellenberger, Introduction to Philosophy of Religion, Pearson edition, Pb
3. Wm. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, Penguin Classics edition, Pb
4. Paul Kurtz, Humanist Manifesto (I & II), Prometheus. Pb
5. J. P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, eds., Does God Exist? Prometheus Pb
6. Anthony Flew, There is a God! Harper One edition

7. S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion, Norton Pb
 8. John Hick, Philosophy of Religion. 4th edition, Prentice-Hall, Pb
 10. A “Course Reader,” available from USC bookstore.

Schedule of topics and assignments: (Readings designated for each day)

I. INTRODUCTION:

Jan 10: Introduction to the course by discussion of:

- The role of religion in life. What is religion? The clear cases.
- The nature of rationality. Logic and life.
- Rationality, prudence and moral responsibility.
- Application to religious beliefs and practices.
- Religion and “World View.” The three currently common “World View” stories:
 Nirvana, Theistic, Naturalistic.

II. ORIGINS OF FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF GOD OR “THE ‘OTHER’ REALITY” IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND BRIEF ELABORATION OF THOSE CONCEPTS:

Jan 12: Some concepts of religion and of a religious life.

- The relation of religion to questions about God and personal existences beyond ‘normal’ human life. The unity of personality and the question of spiritual substance. The metaphysics of substance.

Reading: Kellenberger pp. 1-80, Hume, pp. 1-2, & Moreland 11-30
 John Locke on Substance and Spiritual substance. (Course reader pp 1ff);
 John Hick, Philosophy of Religion, Chapter One.

Jan. 17: Martin Luther King Day. **No classes.**

Jan 19: Problems of Religious language. Ways of *meaning* God.

Reading: Hick, chapters 7 and 8 and Kellenberger pp. 419-446

Jan 24: Continuing on problems of the *meaning* of ideas and talk about God or the transcendent.

Reading: Kellenberger 419-448, Wm. James, Ch. III, Moreland 197-201; John Hick, Chapter Five.

III. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF AT LEAST ONE GOD

Jan 26: Standard arguments for the Existence of God introduced. The most general forms of the arguments. The Cosmological and Teleological (‘Design’) arguments.

Reading: John Hick, Chapter Two; Hume, pp. 54-57; Kellenberger 81-92, 97-108; Moreland 145-148, 186-190, 229-230, 250-251, 273-275. (See lecture notes on Cosmological argument in Course Reader, pp. 9ff.)

Jan 31: “Design” or Teleological argument continued.

Reading: Paley, “The Watch and the Human Eye,” in Course Reader; Kellenberger 108-129; Hume pp.13-53. (See lecture notes on Hume and the “Design” argument in Course Reader, pp. 23ff.)

Feb 2: “Design” argument continued. The “Intelligent Design” controversy.

Reading: Hume pp. 49-57, 77-89; Shatz, 222-237, Moreland 208-213.

Feb 7: “Design” argument continued. Discussion of Hawking, *The Grand Design*.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MID-TERM HANDED OUT.

Reading: Hume 49-57, 77-89; Moreland 210-213; Flew, pp. 88-112.

Feb 9: Finish Discussing Hume. Begin Kant's assessment of theistic proofs.

Reading: Selections from Kant's 1st Critique (Course Reader, pp. 36ff),

Feb 14: Kant's critique of traditional arguments for God's existence. (Discuss questions about Mid-Term questions.)

Reading: Same as Feb. 9. But see lecture notes on Kant's criticisms in Course Reader, pp. 26ff

Feb 16: **Mid-term on previously distributed questions**

Feb 21: Kant's argument for God's existence from the reality of moral obligation. ‘Moral’ arguments in general. Relation to the ‘Divine Command’ analysis of ethical principles.

Reading: Selections, Kant's 2nd Critique (Course Reader, pp. 64ff); Kellenberger 129-135, 401-418.

Feb 23: University Holiday (“Presidents’ Day”)—**No classes.**

Feb 28: The Conversion of Atheist Antony Flew to Theism/Deism by the “design” argument updated to modern molecular biology.

Reading: Antony Flew, There is a God. Especially pp. 95-165. But try to scan the entire book. It's an easy and fascinating read.

IV. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Mar 2: Arguments for the non-existence of God. Atheism and Agnosticism. What would it be like to prove that no super-human personality exists in the universe? Is the reality of Evil inconsistent with the existence of God as traditionally conceived? Suppose a Genie (a jinni, as in "Alladin") existed. No all-good, all-powerful person. How big would something have to be to be *a* god? *The* God?

Reading: Bart Kosko, "The Future of God" (handout). Hume 58-76; Selections from Scriven, Smart, and Nagel. (all handouts); John Hick, Chapter 3; Kellenberger Chapter 6.

Mar 7: The argument from Evil against God's existence.

Reading: Hume, 57-76; Hick Chapter 4; Kellenberger Chap. 6 (continued).

V. RELIGIOUS 'EXPERIENCE' AND ITS INTERPRETATION: Wm. James's Classic Study, The Varieties of Religious Experience. Is the validity of religion and the reality of the 'Other World' certified by what religious experience 'does' for people?

*******During March 10 - Mar. 23 read James's book as thoroughly and with as much continuity as is possible. Follow study guide*******

Mar 9: The human condition and the role of religious experience

Reading: James, Lectures I-III & VII-IX

SPRING/EASTER BREAK, MARCH 14-19.

Mar 21: The role of religious experience in **justifying** religious belief and practice.

Reading: James, especially Lectures XIV & XV, 278-317

Mar 23: Continuation--Summary and Outline of a suggested pro-theistic structure of evidence.

Reading: James, especially Lecture XX & "Postscript"; Moreland 197-217; Trueblood, "The Evidential Value of Religious Experience," in Course Reader, pp. 117-122. Alston, "Perceiving God," In Kellenberger pp. 212-234

V. LESS SYSTEMATICALLY FUNDAMENTAL TOPICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

Mar 28: 'Secular Humanism' as a reasoned response to philosophical issues raised by religion.

Reading: Humanist Manifestos I and II & A Secular Humanist Declaration
Freud, The Future of an Illusion, and Rowe, "A Critique of Freud" (handout)

Mar 30: Irrationalism, Fideism and the Ethics of Belief: Dealing with Non-conclusive evidence, James, The 'Will to Believe' and Pascal's 'Wager' etc.

Reading: Kellenberger 136-151, 184-200.

Apr 4: Miracles: Is there a 'natural' order? Can it be disrupted? Has it been?

Reading: Kellenberger Chapter 7 (343-379); Moreland, 34-43, 64-72, 149-152, 190-192. Hume and C. S. Lewis in Course Reader 84-116

Apr 6: Continuation: Miracles and Science. The Ideas of **Revelation** and **Prayer** -- What might it be like for God to communicate with human beings. Every "world" religion presupposes 'revelation.' Moses, Paul the Apostle, Mohammad, Joseph Smith, Holy Books. Mysticism again. The idea of **Enlightenment**, and the Kantian and Post-Kantian elimination of the historical from "faith." Gotthold Lessing's "ugly ditch."—"Nothing can be demonstrated by means of historic truths."

Reading: Kellenberger Chapter 7 (continued); Newsweek, 1/6/1992, "Talking to God"; Polkinghorne, "A Scientist Looks at Prayer" (handout); C. S. Lewis, "Work and Prayer" (handout); review Wm. James, Lectures XVI & XVII, pp. 318-357; review Alston, "Perceiving God..."; Herman Daly, "Feynman's Unanswered Question," in Course Reader, pp. 130-135, and lecture notes pp. 173-175.

Apr 11: **Existence beyond death**, Immortality and the Idea of a Future Life.

Reading: Swinburne ("The Future of the Soul") and Audi ("Theism and the Mind-Body Problem") handouts; Hick, Chapters 10 & 11

Apr 13: Continuation on 'Immortality': Mental Substance?

Reading: H. H. Price, "The Idea of a Future Life," (handout); T. Penelhum, "Disembodied Existence," (handout); Hume, 91-97; Willard, "Intentionality and the Substance of the Self." Course Reader 156-171.

Apr 18: Continuation on 'Immortality': Empirical considerations? "Near Death" Experiences. "Mediums" or "channeling."

Reading: R. Moody, Selections from Life After Life (handout)

Apr 20: Can Ethics Function Without Religion? How and to what Extent? Ethics with and without God? (Religion not the same as God.)

Reading: Glenn Tinder, "Can We Be Good Without God?" (Course Reader, 123-129); Moreland, 97-133; Kellenberger Chapter 8.

Apr 25: "Pluralism": Could All (Some?) Religions Possibly Be Equal? "The same." In what respects?

Reading: Kellenberger 515-552 (Plantinga and Rahner) & 581-589; John Dewey, "Religion Versus the Religious," and John Hick, "Religious Pluralism and Salvation," both in Course Reader, pp. 136-149.

Apr 27: Conflicting Truth Claims of Religions. Review and Conclusion of the Course.

Reading: Continue readings from last time. John Hick, Chapter Nine. Kellenberger 601-611

May 2: Review for final, time and place to be arranged.

May 4: 4:30-6:30 Final Exam

BELIEF, RATIONALITY, & RESPONSIBILITY

You can be just as irrational in your disbeliefs as in your beliefs.
All that Clifford says about belief applies in precisely the same way for your beliefs.

We are as responsible for our disbeliefs as for our beliefs.

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One of the places where you see this is in airports.

If one has no belief about their gate of departure---

Or disbelieves that the departure is from Gate B 15 though it is--
They do not congratulate themselves on not being a fanatic or being taken in.

They know that their
lack of belief
or disbelief

has genuine consequences, and in this case consequences they very much wish to avoid.

They do not wander the gate areas saying, "Well, you know, I am an agnostic about the gate of my departure."

If they miss their plane, they do not explain their failure to make their next engagement by saying,

"Well, you know, I had no evidence one way or the other as to whether or not the plane was departing from Gate B 15. I was in an agnostic position."

This is because everyone knows that they have the responsibility of finding out where the gate is. In this case the consequences of not-believing are immediately upon you, and are apt to require much expense and effort to deal with. No one has the responsibility of hunting you down and arguing you into belief that the gate is B 15. Of course some others do have the responsibility of making the information reasonably accessible. But you have the responsibility of seeking it out, attending to it, and testing it out against reality. (Check with an attendant, read the monitor, go to the gate etc.)

Now in fact this applies to all beliefs, insofar as they are of any significance for human life.

Not just in the case of options that are, as William James would say, live, forced, and momentous.

We note that an option does not have to be 'live' to be momentous, and that in an important sense all options of belief are forced, in that the consequences of believing and not-believing are inevitable and often irreversible. (Not "forced" in James's sense.)

Some points to keep in mind about the Human Situation:

Hume's A Treatise of Human Nature (Bk I, Part IV, Sect. vii) 1739

"Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environ'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty."

Tom T. Hall on the meaning of life as:

Faster horses,
Younger women,
Older whiskey,
More money.

We need to recognize in discussing matters of rationality, being rational or irrational, etc. that the human capacity of **DENIAL** of consequences, and **refusal** to consider consequences, is fundamental to human freedom and how we handle it in the world as we know it. Choices often depend upon denial or refusal of what is the case and known to be.

Jacob Bronowski, The Ascent of Man, ch. 11, "Knowledge or Certainty." The ash pond at Auschwitz

"Into this pond were flushed the ashes of some four million people. And that was not done by gas. It was done by arrogance. It was done by dogma. It was done by ignorance. When people believe that they have absolute knowledge, with no test in reality, this is how they behave. This is what men do when they aspire to the knowledge of the gods." p. 374)

WHAT IS BELIEF?

BELIEF IS READINESS TO ACT AS IF SOMETHING
WERE THE CASE.

IT IS THE SAME THING AS TRUST IN, OR
RELIANCE UPON SOMETHING.

SOMETIMES OUR BELIEFS EMERGE INTO
CONSCIOUSNESS AS A FEELABLE ATTITUDE
TOWARD WHAT IS REPRESENTED IN AN
ACCOMPANYING THOUGHT.

BUT BY NO MEANS ALWAYS!

HOWEVER, OUR BELIEFS NEVER FAIL TO
CONDITION OUR ACTIONS IN RELEVANT
CIRCUMSTANCES.

WE ALWAYS LIVE UP TO OUR BELIEFS,
AND CANNOT HELP IT.

THEY CONSTITUTE THE RAILS UPON WHICH
OUR LIVES RUN.

WHICH IS WHY THEY ARE SO NECESSARY TO
HUMAN SOLIDARITY AND WHY DIVERGENCE
OF BELIEF IS SO THREATENING

THEY CAN BE DISASTEROUS, IN TERMS OF CONSEQUENCES,
AND OFTEN ARE.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD BELIEFS AND BAD ONES

GOOD BELIEFS ARE BELIEFS THAT ARE:

TRUE-- REPRESENT OBJECTS AS THEY ARE,
NOT JUST AS THEY SEEM,
NOT AS THEY ARE NOT.

SUCH BELIEFS ARE GOOD BECAUSE THEY ENABLE
US TO COME TO TERMS WITH REALITY.

A FAIR DESCRIPTION OF REALITY IS:
WHAT YOU RUN INTO WHEN YOU ARE WRONG.
OR: WHAT YOU CAN SAFELY COUNT ON

ALSO: TRUTH SEEMS TO BE INTRINSICALLY
VALUABLE. PEOPLE SEEM TO PREFER TRUE
BELIEFS EVEN WHEN IT MAKES NO
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN PRACTICE.

TRUE BELIEFS ARE EVEN BETTER IF THEY ARE RATIONALLY SUPPORTED

THE MORAL REQUIREMENT TO BE RATIONAL

IF WE CANNOT HAVE TRUE BELIEFS, WE WANT THEM AT LEAST TO BE:

RATIONAL

THAT IS: ARRIVED AT OR HELD BY MEANS MOST LIKELY TO PRODUCE TRUE BELIEFS.

BECAUSE OF THE IMMENSE IMPORTANCE OF TRUE BELIEF FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING:

1. A PERSON WHO IS WILLINGLY NOT RATIONAL IN APPROACHING THEIR BELIEFS IS REGARDED AS IRRESPONSIBLE, AND THEREFORE IMMORAL.
2. A PERSON WHO PROFESSES WHAT THEY IN FACT DO NOT BELIEVE IS REGARDED AS IMMORAL (A 'HYPOCRITE')--BECAUSE THEY ARE MISLEADING OTHERS AS TO HOW THEY WILL ACT.

HERE WE UNDERSTAND FAITH TO BE BELIEF. 'FAITH' IS OFTEN UNDERSTOOD TODAY AS 'PROFESSION' OF SOMETHING YOU DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE, OR, AT BEST, SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IRRATIONALLY, WHICH AUTOMATICALLY MAKES IT IMMORAL.

W. K. CLIFFORD AND "THE ETHICS OF BELIEF"

3. A PERSON WHO IS WILLINGLY NOT RATIONAL IS EXTREMELY UNWISE, LACKING IN PRUDENCE AND IS A DANGER TO OTHERS.

RATIONAL PERSONS

ARE COMMITTED TO **AND**

EQUIPPED FOR:

HAVING THEIR BELIEFS FOUNDED ON

THE BEST POSSIBLE EVIDENCE.

AND SO, THEY CHARACTERISTICALLY

REASON SOUNDLY

CONSTANTLY SEEK FURTHER EVIDENCE

DO NOT TRY SIMPLY TO PROTECT THEIR VIEWS

AVOID FALLACIES AND CONTRADICTIONS.

IN SHORT,

THEY SERIOUSLY ENDEAVOR TO ARRIVE AT

AND HOLD ON TO THEIR BELIEFS BY MEANS

MOST LIKELY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR

BELIEFS ARE TRUE.

HOW TO BE A MORALLY RESPONSIBLE SCEPTIC!!!

ASSUME THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR YOUR UNBELIEF,

RECOGNIZING THAT UNBELIEF GOVERNS BEHAVIOR AND

ITS CONSEQUENCES,

IN PRECISELY THE SAME WAY BELIEF DOES.

THIS IS TO DEAL REALISTICALLY

WITH THE FAITH ELEMENT OF

UNBELIEF

A CURIOUS ASYMMETRY NOW WITH REGARD TO BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

TODAY, BELIEF MUST BE RATIONALLY JUSTIFIED,

UNBELIEF NEED NOT.

DOUBT IS AUTOMATICALLY ACCEPTED AS A MARK OF INTELLIGENCE,

BELIEF AS A MARK OF WEAKNESS OF MIND--

OR WORSE!

BUT EVERY POINT CLIFFORD MAKES AGAINST

IRRATIONAL BELIEF

APPLIES ALSO TO

IRRATIONAL UNBELIEF.

TO FAIL TO BELIEVE HAS EXACTLY THE SAME KINDS OF
CONSEQUENCES FOR HUMAN LIFE AS DOES BELIEF.

WM. JAMES' RESPONSE TO CLIFFORD

UNBELIEF ACCORDINGLY IS SUBJECT TO THE SAME MORAL
REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO TRUTH AND RATIONALITY AS BELIEF.

TO BE A MORALLY RESPONSIBLE SCEPTIC IN ANY AREA IS, THEN,

TO HAVE ASSUMED AND EXECUTED 'THE BURDEN OF PROOF'

FOR ONE'S DISBELIEFS.

UNBELIEF IS 'FAITH' IN THE MORALLY REPREHENSIBLE SENSE

WHEN THE BURDEN OF PROOF IS NOT DISCHARGED.

MUCH IF NOT MOST OF THE 'UNBELIEF' FOUND IN 'INTELLECTUAL'
CIRCLES TODAY IS MORALLY REPREHENSIBLE 'FAITH' POSING AS THE
'SCIENTIFIC WORLD VIEW' ETC.

THREE WAYS OF LACKING BELIEF THAT-X

X = MORE THAN ONE GUNMAN BEING INVOLVED IN
THE ASSASSINATION OF J.F.K.

I. BEING TOTALLY UNCONSCIOUS OF X.

II. HAVING NO OPINION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER,
PERHAPS AFTER MUCH THOUGHT.

III. BELIEVING THAT X IS NOT THE CASE.

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III IS JUST A CASE OF BELIEVING,
& SO MUST MEET ALL DEMANDS OF
RATIONALITY ON BELIEF.

I & II ALSO MAY BE MORALLY CULPABLE,
DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES

E.G.--WHEN AVAILABILITY OF
INFORMATION OR EVIDENCE IS
DISREGARDED OR NOT SOUGHT
WITH `DUE DILIGENCE`.

LACK OF BELIEF CAN BE JUST AS MORALLY

IRRESPONSIBLE AS BELIEF

THESE POINTS CONCERN ALL BELIEFS, BUT ESPECIALLY:

BELIEFS ON MATTERS OF `ULTIMATE CONCERN'

THAT IS: MATTERS INVOLVED WITH:

THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN.

THE BASIC NATURE OF REALITY.

{ -- IN THE USUAL DOMAIN OF RELIGION

{BUT TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT TO RELIGION

DAVID HUME'S STATEMENT--)

BELIEFS ABOUT:

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE `NATURAL' WORLD.
2. THE SOURCES OF HISTORICAL TRADITIONS.
3. THE NATURE OF MORAL REALITY AND STANDARDS.
4. THE POSSIBILITIES OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

I SHALL LOOK AT SOME OF THE ISSUES SURROUNDING THESE BELIEFS AND DO SO WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN RESPONSES.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE `NATURAL' WORLD

IF THE NATURAL WORLD IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT IT IS NOW UNDERSTOOD TO BE, THEN IT HAS TO "COME FROM" SOMETHING OTHER THAN ITSELF.

EVERY DEFINABLE SEGMENT OF IT IS DEPENDENT ON WHAT LIES `OUTSIDE' OF IT.

IF THERE IS A TOTALITY OF NATURAL REALITY, IT TOO MUST BE SO DEPENDENT.--- OR POSSIBLY THE TOTALITY ITSELF IS NOT `NATURAL'

QUESTION: IS THERE A RATIONAL, MORE RATIONAL, VIEW OF WHAT THAT `OUTSIDE' FACTOR MIGHT BE?

A COMPLETED, INFINITE, CAUSAL SEQUENCE CANNOT BE.

SO THE SOURCE MUST BE A SELF-SUSTAINING BEING.

POSSIBILITIES REGARDING THE SELF-SUSTAINING
SOURCE OF THE `NATURAL' WORLD

1. NOTHING IS NOT THE SOURCE: NOT SELF-SUSTAINING--
NOT CAUSAL. NOT ANYTHING!
2. EVOLUTION IS NOT. PRESUPPOSES NATURAL REALITY.
Consider: "Darwin in 1859 provided a credible
alternative to creation." (R. Binion, After
Christianity, 1986)
3. PERSONALITY OFFERS SOME HOPE:

AS WE EXPERIENCE SOME DEGREE OF
SELF-DETERMINATION IN OURSELVES.

AND A CORRESPONDING `NON-NATURAL' REALITY.

THESIS: REGARDING THIS FIRST QUESTION IT IS MOST
RATIONAL TO SUPPOSE THAT THE `NATURAL' WORLD
HAS ITS SOURCE IN A PERSON WHO IS
SUFFICIENT TO ITS BEING.

AT LEAST: AN ETERNALLY SELF-SUBSISTENT PERSON IS
NO MORE IMPROBABLE THAN A SELF-SUBSISTENT
EVENT EMERGING FROM NO CAUSE, OR THAN A
COMPLETED, INFINITE CAUSAL SERIES.

AS C. S. LEWIS POINTED OUT, "AN EGG WHICH CAME
FROM NO BIRD IS NO MORE `NATURAL' THAN A BIRD
WHICH HAD EXISTED FROM ALL ETERNITY." (God
in the Dock, p. 211)

**NOTE HOW THIS CHANGES THE CONTEXT OF ALL OUR
QUESTIONS:**

WE FIND OURSELVES IN A `HAUNTED' UNIVERSE.

WHAT IS `REASONABLE' TO BELIEVE IN RESPONSE
TO THE OTHER QUESTIONS IS EFFECTED
BY OUR ANSWER TO THE FIRST ONE.

THE BASIC CHRISTIAN STORY
AND THE CLAIMS OF EVIDENCE AND REASON:

I. THE REALITY OF

JESUS CHRIST

II. THE PRESENCE OF GOD'S

RULE IN HIM

III. THE REALITY OF HIS

RESURRECTION

IV. HIS CURRENT AVAILABILITY

TO ALL WHO WANT HIM

TO BE MAESTRO

**THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE WOULD USE REASON ARIGHT
AND BE MORALLY RESPONSIBLE SKEPTICS IF THEY WOULD
ASSUME THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR THEIR UNBELIEF.**

**IT IS NOT THE BUSINESS OF CHRISTIANS, NOR DOES ANYONE
HAVE A DUTY, TO FORCE EVIDENCE DOWN ANYONE ELSE'S
THROAT, THOUGH LOVE MIGHT CONSTRAIN ONE TO TRY TO
HELP OTHERS TO FIND THEIR WAY.**

ULTIMATE QUESTION: DO WE WANT TO KNOW?

THE RELATIVITY OF BELIEF

and

THE ABSOLUTENESS OF TRUTH

THE CURRENT CRISIS ABOUT TRUTH

YET:

I. EVERYONE KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL WHAT TRUTH IS:

"AGREEMENT" OF THOUGHT OR STATEMENT WITH WHAT
IT IS ABOUT.

II. WE LEARN EARLY, BY EXPERIENCE--

COMPARING OUR OWN THOUGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS,
AND THE STATEMENTS OF OTHERS, WITH WHAT WE FIND
TO BE THE CASE.

JUST WATCH A CHILD DO THIS COMPARISON!

WE CALL A LIE A MIS-REPRESENTATION OF FACTS.

III. **TRUTH** IS THAT PECULIAR RELATIONSHIP WHICH OBTAINS
BETWEEN A 'REPRESENTATION' AND WHAT IT IS ABOUT
WHEN WHAT IT IS ABOUT IS AS THE REPRESENTATION
INDICATES.

IV. TRUTH IS **ABSOLUTELY RUTHLESS AND UNRELENTING**.

ESPECIALLY, BELIEF AND TRUTH VARY INDEPENDENTLY.

YOU CAN DO NOTHING TO CHANGE A TRUTH IF YOU
CANNOT CHANGE THE FACT IT IS ABOUT.

AND: A BELIEF DOES NOT BECOME TRUE RATHER THAN FALSE IF
ONE PERSON RATHER THAN ANOTHER IS BELIEVING IT.
TRUTH IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

V. **BELIEF** IS A READINESS TO ACT AS IF SOMETHING WERE SO.

VI. BELIEF DOES VARY FROM PERSON TO PERSON.

AND SO DOES 'TRUE FOR ME', WHICH IS JUST BELIEF.

VII. THUS TRUTH HAS AN AUTHORITY THAT BELIEF DOES NOT.

YOU BELIEVE THAT P? SO WHAT?

P IS TRUE? THEN WATCH OUT.

"YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND
THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FLEE."

VIII. HOW HAS THE IDEA OF THE RELATIVITY OF TRUTH ARISEN?

1. TRUTH IS OFTEN NOT DIRECTLY INSPECTABLE, YET WE BELIEVE.
2. THE LOSS OF 'THOUGHT' TO EMPIRICISM AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF TRUTH TO 'LANGUAGE'
3. **LANGUAGE** OF COURSE IS RELATIVE.
RELATIVE TO CULTURE, HISTORY AND PERSON.
4. THE RISE OF 'SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE'.
'TRUTH' AS SOCIALLY ACCEPTED OR WARRANTED.

OF COURSE THE SOCIALLY ACCEPTED OR WARRANTED

IS FREQUENTLY FALSE --

"THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MULTITUDE TO DO EVIL." (Ex. 23:2)

IX. TRUTH WILL NOT SET YOU FREE.

THIS IS AN IDOL OF SECULARIZED HUMANITY.

BUT IT WILL BE TWISTED TO SUIT THE HUMAN WILL, AND

THE OUTCOME WILL BE MORE BONDAGE.

WE ARE NOT IN BONDAGE TO FALSEHOOD

BUT TO PASSIONS

X. WE CAN ONLY BE SET FREE BY GRACEFUL RELATIONSHIP,
REDEMPTIVE COMMUNITY, WHERE WE ARE ACCEPTED AS
WE ARE, BUT EMPOWERED TO BE WHO WE OUGHT.

Phil. 361, 1/19/2011

Make sure you have the 4 handouts from last (the first) week.

Any questions about the course outline or requirements? Grading?

You have a précis due at class on Jan. 26. The précis is on Kellenberger, pp. 426-429.

Discussion of what the précis is and does.

Review of main points covered in our first two sessions:

- (1). Philosophy of religion as inquiry into the rational or irrational status of the beliefs and practices of religion as a human reality.
 - Clarification of rationality.
 - The moral obligation to be rational, and why.
 - Some people treat irrationality ('faith') in religion as a good thing.
- (2). The two main presuppositions of religion in general. (See front page handout)
- (3). The two aspects of ordinary human experience that keep the presuppositions alive:
 - A. Human experience ('consciousness') as it presents itself to the individual and those sharing life with them is not a physical reality.
 - Description of it is not in physical vocabulary.
 - B. Everything physical "comes from" something else and is transitory.
- (4). Religion as a human practice is not an academic or intellectual product or enterprise. When "history" begins religion is already here. The condition of religion in the academy today. Failure of the "secularization" thesis.
- (5). Quick survey of some main religions to see if they embody the "two main presuppositions of religion in general." Kellenberger, pp. 5-80. See also Hick, pp. 1-14 ("Introduction" and Chapt. 1) on the widely assumed characteristics of the "other realm." Also, Moreland and Nielsen, Does God Exist, pp. 11-30, setting up the question about God.
- (6). God is thought of in Western religions as a **spiritual substance**. A substance is something that (i) unifies a peculiar set of qualities (properties and relations), (ii) endures through time and change, and (iii) receives and exercises causal influence. You are a substance, and so is this sheet of paper. On properties commonly thought to be unified in the Judaic-Christian God, see Hick Chapter One. These properties are usually treated as "the attributes" of God.
- (7). There is **nothing inherently impossible** in the idea of a spiritual substance: that is, a substance that is not a physical entity and not an object of ordinary sense perception. SEE JOHN LOCKE'S DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANCE AND SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE IN THE FIRST SELECTION IN THE COURSE READER. Such a substance may appear to human beings. Such appearances are "theophanies" in religions.

Phil. 361, 1/19/211

That concludes the review of what we did the first week of the course. Please make sure to work through it and get yourself up to speed. What I expect you to know.

Today and next time we will be focused upon the possibilities (or impossibilities) of speaking and thinking about God. Many have said that they are impossible, or only possible in some diminutive manner.

First, today, we walk through Hick, chapters 7 and 8, just to familiarize ourselves with some of the issues and options, and some of the terminology.

Especially, Hick's idea of Eschatological Verification. Pp. 103f

Meets the objection: Not "in principle" verifiable as a claim to meaningless of talk about God.

Then, if we have time, Hume and Flew in Kellenberger. (pp. 419-426)

Try to pick up on the proposal of an "invisible gardener." (424) and the alleged "death by a thousand qualifications." (425a)

Some practice in logic:

Last time a question was raised about the relationship between

2. "I do not know that God exists." and
3. "I do not know that God does not exist."

Do they say the same thing? When faced with a question like this, don't just stare at the sentences. Play with the truth conditions. Could you describe a situation where they would have different truth values? E.g. 2 is true and 3 is false. Negation ("not") messes with your mind, especially when there is more than one in a sentence. So try writing out truth conditions of the sentences.

Phil. 361: Philosophy of Religion

1. "NEWS"-- Be sure to pick up the revised course outline, now with all the assignments and topics worked out day by day.

We need to have an additional discussion section because of the size of the class. I suggest 6:30-7:30 PM Wed.

Brief discussion of grading.

Office hours.

Textbooks?

2. Review of first session: We spent most of our opening session discussing the idea of religion and how it involves belief and truth. We had just come up to the topic of the rationality of belief, as a value we look for even where we cannot be sure of truth.

Remember:

A Philosophy of Religion is an intellectual exploration of the general assumptions of religion as a human practice, with a view to determining their status as rational or irrational.

Religion involves two essential elements:

1. The belief in `another' realm than the `natural' world available to everyone through normal sense perception.
2. The idea that that `realm' has a claim on us and that we can make claims on it, together with appropriate behavioral responses (ritual). Thus there is no religion without forms of offering and prayer.

Wm. James opens Lecture III of Varieties with the statement:

"Were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto. This belief and this adjustment are the religious attitude in the soul." (p. 63) Not bad!

It is important to note that you could have God and no religion and religion and no God. Also, you could have 1 without 2. For example, the stuff of sub-particle physics might well qualify for 1. But few would regard quarks etc. as having a `claim' on them or be inclined to perform rituals to them. One could hardly have 2 without some form of 1, but the beliefs involved in 1 would not have to be true for 2 to function in human life.

Brief characterization of “religion”:

A Philosophy of Religion is an intellectual exploration of the general assumptions of religion as a human practice, with a view to determining their status as rational or irrational. On basic ideas of main world religions see Kellenberger pp. 5-80.

Religion involves two essential elements:

1. The belief in or commitment to ‘another’ realm than the ‘natural’ world available to everyone through normal sense perception.
2. The idea that that ‘realm’ has a claim on us and that we can make claims on it, together with appropriate behavioral responses (ritual). Thus there is no religion without forms of offering, ‘service,’ and prayer.

Wm. James opens Lecture III of Varieties with the statement:

"Were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto. This belief and this adjustment are the religious attitude in the soul." (p. 63) Not bad!

A familiar illustration of this would be Psalm 23 from the “Old Testament”:

“¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters. ³He restores my soul: he guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint me head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

It is important to note that you could have (some kind of) God and no religion and (some kind of) religion though no God existed. Also, you could have 1 (above) without 2. For example, the stuff of sub-particle physics might well qualify for 1. But few would regard quarks etc. as having a ‘claim’ on them or be inclined to perform rituals to them. One could hardly have 2 without some form of 1, but the beliefs involved in 1 would not have to be true for 2 to function in human life.

The clear cases of religion are not individual exercises, but historically developed social realities.

Phil. 361: Philosophy of Religion
Spring 2011

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MID-TERM EXAM

1. In trying to conceptualize what is essential to religion, explain and evaluate what Wm. James has to say about “the religious attitude in the soul” in the first paragraph (and following) of “Lecture III” of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the statement (“Religion involves two essential elements”) in the second handout for the course. You may wish also to refer to Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 1-4.
2. Why is it important (*Is it?*) that we hold true beliefs, or that we at least be rational in holding whatever beliefs we do? See first day’s handouts, and you may wish also to refer to Hick, Chap. 6. What do you think?
3. Consider the statement that “to fail to believe has exactly the same kinds of consequences for human life as does belief...and it (unbelief) accordingly is subject to the same moral requirements with respect to truth and rationality as belief.” (First day’s handout, p. 14) Explain why you do or do not accept this claim.
4. Explain John Locke’s understanding of substance (first pages in the course reader) and why he holds “*We have as clear a Notion of the Substance of Spirit, as we have of Body.*” (P. 3 of the reader. See also the second day’s handout on what “substance” is.) Do you agree or disagree with his claim. Give your reasons.
5. What are some main challenges to the very possibility of thinking and talking about God, and how might they be resolved—if you think they can be resolved. (Kellenberger, 419-431, 441-446, Hick, Chapters 7 & 8)
5. State and evaluate the argument discussed in class for the claim that the series of causes of this leaf falling here/now cannot be infinite.
6. Is there any strong reason against supposing that nothing existed and then the physical universe did? What do you think of C. S. Lewis’s statement that “An egg which came from no bird is no more ‘natural’ than a bird which had existed from all eternity?” (Moreland/ Nielsen, *Does God Exist*, p. 206)
7. Is “The causal closure of the physical” consistent with the origination of the universe “out of nothing”? Explain your view of this matter.

8. Explain how *analogy* functions in the argument to *design* (or the teleological argument). See Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, p. 15 (also p. 25), and Paley, p. 16 and following of the course reader, and the notes on pp. 24ff of the reader.
9. Does “Natural Selection,” *as held by Darwin*, have any bearing at all on the “design” or “teleological” argument for the existence of a god? Explain the main issues here. (See handout, Paley, etc.)

For the exam you will be given 3 of these questions, and you must write on 2. Open books (including the reader) but no lecture handouts or notes.

On “Natural Selection” and the Design or Teleological argument.

It is often said that Darwin’s theory shows that the Design argument is of no value. The underlying idea is that order in the universe is explained by Natural Selection.

It should be pointed out that Natural Selection *presupposes* a universe with a high degree of order and therefore does not account for it. It presupposes living organisms that are capable of procreation with variable results, in an environment that “selects” from the generations those that will survive and procreate.

The idea that *evolution* and *creation* are contraries is therefore ridiculous. **They are answers to different questions.** The question for Darwin and Natural Selection is how species of living beings originate from other species of living beings. The answer is “Natural Selection.” That makes perfectly good sense. But it is no answer at all to how an ordered universe came into being, creation or not. That is not its question. There might have been a highly ordered physical universe and no living beings, and hence no Natural Selection—nor its result, evolution.

Darwin’s book, *The Origin of Species*, does not (as its title might suggest) answer the question of how species of living beings came into existence. It does not try to answer the question of the origin of life. And if it did, for obvious reasons it could not do so in terms of Natural Selection. Natural Selection, once again, *presupposes* species of living beings.

This is a simple point, but it is one overlooked or studiously ignored by people pushing too hard for a universe in which secularism makes sense. Sometimes, it seems to me, this is obscured by an honest confusion of *development* with evolution. Natural selection and evolution do not explain how *the universe* develops. Development takes many forms.

Natural Selection and evolution are themselves diachronic structures or orders. As such, they require explanation, if order in general does. And they cannot be explained in terms of Natural Selection or evolution, for obvious reasons. The existence of Natural Selection and evolution might just be more grist for the design argument’s mill: evidence of a powerful and intelligent creator. Certainly the truth of Natural Selection is no reason *against* the existence of an intelligent creator.

“Evolution” is often treated as a self-subsistent force, like Hegel’s “Spirit”—a self-subsistent force necessitating “development” by an internal dynamic. (“Dialectic”?) This is pure superstition.

“Natural Selection” is a great idea for the range of application it was intended for. It does not and cannot constitute a Cosmology.

(You may wish to consult readings 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 in Shatz on these matters.)

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USC Spring 2008

MID-TERM EXAM

WRITE ON TWO OF THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS:

1. Consider the statement that “to fail to believe has exactly the same kinds of consequences for human life as does belief...and it (unbelief) accordingly is subject to the same moral requirements with respect to truth and rationality as belief.” (First day’s handout, p. 14, perhaps Shatz 429-433 & 483-492)
Explain why you do or do not accept this claim.
2. State and evaluate the argument discussed in class for the claim that the series of causes of this leaf falling here/now cannot be infinite.
3. Explain how *analogy* functions in the argument to *design* (or the teleological argument). See Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, p. 15 (also p. 25), and Paley, p. 16 and following of the course reader, and the notes on pp. 24ff of the reader.

You may, in the course of the exam, refer to any of the texts, including the course reader. You are not permitted to refer to anything else. No notes or handouts.

Suggestion: Carefully read your answer to see if you have fully answered the question. You should have plenty of time to do that.

Philosophy 361: Philosophy of Religion
Spring 2011

MID-TERM EXAM

Write on 3 of the following 4 questions.

1. Consider the statement that “to fail to believe has exactly the same kinds of consequences for human life as does belief...and it (unbelief) accordingly is subject to the same moral requirements with respect to truth and rationality as belief.” Explain why you do or do not accept this claim.
2. Explain John Locke’s understanding of substance (first pages in the course reader), and why he holds “*We have as clear a Notion of the Substance of Spirit, as we have of Body.*” (P. 3 of the reader.) Do you agree or disagree with his claim. Give your reasons.
3. State and evaluate the argument discussed in class for the claim that the series of causes of this leaf falling here/now cannot be infinite.
4. Explain how *analogy* functions in the argument to *design* (or the “teleological” argument). See Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, p. 15 (also p. 25), and Paley, p. 16 and following of the course reader.

YOU MAY REFER TO ANY OF YOUR TEXTS DURING THE EXAM, AND TO ANY COPIES OF PRINTED MATERIAL IN THE READER OR HANDOUTS.

Kant's Critique of the Three Standard Arguments for the Existence of God

Kant, himself an unshakeable believer in the existence of God (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 856), sets up his theory of knowledge in such a way that neither the existence nor the non-existence of God can be proved from a theoretical point of view. Within the philosophy of religion he is best known for his *rejection* of the Ontological, the Cosmological, and the Teleological (or 'Design') arguments. As he sets up the issue, they would have to prove the existence of a *necessary* being, to meet the demands of 'Reason'. Neither the Cosmological nor the Teleological arguments can do that (as arguments from matters of fact, among other things), so the burden finally rests upon the Ontological argument, and it, for reasons given, fails on several counts. (B 625-630)

The ontological argument, loosely stated, is that to think of *God* is to think of something which exists, and which, otherwise, would not be God, but something less than God; so that to say that God does not exist is to say that *a being which exists does not exist*, a patent contradiction. The denial of God's existence would, thus, be absurdly false, while the assertion of it would be a simply tautology or necessary truth. In response to this line of thought Kant holds:---

(1). That while to reject an analytic judgment is indeed a contradiction, there is no contradiction in simply refusing to posit the subject of such a judgment. As he says: "...if the predicate of a judgment is rejected together with the subject, no internal contradiction can result, and...this holds no matter what the predicate may be." (Reader mid-page 348, and B 623)

(2). That "God exists" is either analytic (tautologous) or synthetic. But a]. If it is analytic, then it is no more informative than "This book is a book," whereas theologians and common people suppose "God exists" to be a very important piece of information. On the other hand b]. If it is synthetic, then its denial is not absurd or contradictory, as the ontological argument maintains. (Reader 349b, B 625)

(3). That it is absurd to inject existence into mere possibility. A merely possible being cannot contain existence, as it is alleged that existence is contained in the mere concept of God. Possible beings are no real or actual beings. (Reader 349, B 625)

(4). That *existence* (or *being*) is not a 'real' or *augmentive* predicate. (Reader 349d-351c, B 626-629) **a]**. A *real* predicate brings something to the subject not already contained among the determinations (*Die Bestimmungen*) connoted in the subject concept. **b]**. If existence were a real predicate then *either* every statement of the form *x exists* would be logically true or logically false, *or* we could never succeed in saying that such and such exists, for everything we tried to assert to exist would be transformed into something else by the ascription of this *new* determination. As Hume had said: "When you would any way vary the idea of a particular object, you can only encrease or diminish its force or vivacity. If you make any other change on it, it represents a different object or impression..." Kant supposes that the first of these alternatives is obviously false, and that the latter is also false, though not so obviously. (Reader 350-351, B. 628-629) Be sure to think out the comment about the hundred real dollars and the hundred possible dollars. (Reader mid-p. 350, B 627)

Now, having said all of this Kant goes right on to say that there is a very real difference, quite expressible in language and graspable by thought, between an object existing and notexisting: To exist is to be “connected with the content of experience as a whole...” And through this connection “...our thought...has obtained an additional possible perception.” (Reader 351c-d, B 629) Thus does Kant define existence in terms of connection with perception—possible perception. His peculiar form of Idealism is expressed in this definition.

The Cosmological and Teleological arguments for God’s existence are rejected by Kant mainly on the ground that causation and totality are concepts not applicable outside the domain of what is sense perceptible, and a Necessary Being as causal ground of the whole world is not sense perceptible, not can we grasp the reality of the world as a totality. Hence one cannot, in understanding, move from contingent events *in* the world to a cause *outside the world*. This point is discussed at length in the Reader, 352-367 (B 631-B 658), but especially the four points in the paragraph spanning 355-6 (B 637-638) and the second full paragraph on 366 (B 657). The sentencing spanning 370-371 (B 666) makes the central point.

After removing, to his own satisfaction, God, freedom, and immortality, from the possible domain of knowledge, for or against, Kant, in effect, restores it all on the basis of the moral life. (See mid-page 458-464 <B 835-847>) See also Reader p. 469 (B 857) Now follow out his clearer statement of his basic line of thought as spelled out in his *Critique of Pure Practical Reason*. See Reader for selections, and the guide to the main points in the line of thought on pp. 85-86.

Finally, see my criticisms of Kant’s criticisms of the standard arguments, on pp. 86-87.

Do not miss the point that Kant *zealously* defends the rationality of belief in the standard sort of Western God, on the basis of the reality of moral obligation as he understands it: as a power from an “other” world. For further development of this point see Kant’s later work, *Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason*. (I have attached the “Table of Contents” from one edition.) *Kant’s Moral Religion*, by Alan Wood, Cornell University Press, 1970, is a helpful secondary source.

Notes to guide study of Anthony Flew, *There Is A God*.

Much of the book is autobiographical in nature, of human interest, but with little bearing upon the issues of the existence of God. The autobiographical material is a useful and interesting window on the world of mid- and late-20th Century Anglo-American philosophy.

The theme of “following the argument” emerges, and it is Flew’s main claim about what led him through his philosophical journey. (See pages 22, 31ff, 75, 89, 155) What, exactly, does it mean to “follow the argument”? It means to spell out and confront the implications of claims made with respect to any issue or position under discussion. It means not to turn away from logical implications (or the lack thereof) with regard to any proposition under discussion. By extension it means to accept or believe whatever the weight of evidence indicates is true or most likely true.

This is important to emphasize in complicated discussions bearing on matters of great human interest where sides have been taken. In such situations there is a tendency to not give careful hearing to arguments advanced, on the suspicion that the “other side” is not arguing fairly, but is trying to defend their position at all costs and not be “open to reason.” Logical relations and weight of evidence should be conceded by all parties to be neutral ground, and a conscientious effort should be made by all to treat them as such. One should do nothing merely to save their own position. The aim is to find what is true.

Flew’s earlier, atheistic position stated. Pp. 49-51.

“The fervency of my atheist convictions.” Pp. 69.

Miethe’s cosmological counter argument. Pp. 70-71.

The surprise announcement of his “conversion.” Pp. 74-75.

The role of the refutation of the “monkey theorem” pp. 75d-78a.

His new position. P. 88b-c and 91c.

His summary reason. Pp. 88d-89a.

The three main issues. 88-89, 91d:

- (1) Laws of Nature.
- (2) Purpose-driven beings not from matter.
- (3) The existence of the physical world.

A “best explanation” kind of argument. P. 91c-d, and---

A new position (for Flew) on the classical arguments. Pp. 92-93.

No “personal experience of God” involved in his change. 93c-d.

Claims to appeal “to reason and not faith.” 93d.

Chapters 5 and 6 are a rehabilitation of the “design” argument. This is done in terms of the laws of nature or “symmetries” (p. 96) in nature. That is, how is it to be explained that there are laws of nature and that we have the ones we actually do have?

Flew’s statement of his new position on p. 95.

Flew invokes the testimony of many great scientists to the effect that such laws could only have come from a great mind. Pp. 96d-109c.

Summary statement. P. 112, and top 115.

Chapter 6 makes a special point about design: “The Anthropic Principle.” Statement p. 114d.

That the physical universe has been “fine-tuned” to bring forth life, and human life in particular! Cases in point: p. 116. The “multiverse” effort to avoid the Anthropic principle. Pp. 117c-118. The idea that with a billion billion universes it is not surprising, or something that needs to be explained, that our particular universe exists. There is nothing that requires explanation, therefore. Rejected by Davies, Swinburne, etc. This is not explanation. There is no evidence in support of a multiverse. It is mere speculation. And if a multiverse existed it would simply pose the same questions about law on its own. (pp. 118-121) And, we may add, about origin.

Chapter 7 deals with the question of the origin of life: of goal directed matter capable of reproducing its kind. (124-126b) Goal orientation is nowhere present in inanimate matter (bot. p. 124) and there is no acceptable account of what it is to be alive. (top 125) “Self-reproduction” similarly finds no place in non-living matter. (mid p.125-126) And it would have to be present before and evolutionary development.

An additional issue in originating life (DNA) from inorganic stuff is the “code” which transfers the “information” in the cell to amino acids, and finally assembling the amino acids into proteins. (bot. 126) The idea of a “code” is essentially semantic and not causal. “The very existence of a code” in living matter “is a mystery.” (p. 128a-b, top. 129) Quotations from scientists saying “we don’t know” the origin. (pp. 130-133)

Flew concludes: “The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such ‘end-directed, self-replicating’ life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind.” (p. 132)

Chapter 8 returns to the cosmological argument. Flew’s prior position on this argument. (pp. 134b-135) The scientific theory (Big Bang) now alters the situation. (136c) Two possible ways of escape for atheist: multiverse and no space-time boundaries. (137a-138)

Revision of Flew’s earlier position on cause. Hume could not be right about cause. (139b) and, now, where we get the meaning of “cause.” (139d) Conway’s and Swinburne’s rejection of Hume’s critique of Cosmological argument. (140-141a)

Laws by themselves explain no fact. “States of affairs,” initial conditions also needed. (141-142a)

The various “nothings” currently offered as source of universe are in fact “somethings,” as their descriptions show. (142-143) Swinburne’s summary statement, spanning pp. 144-145.

Chapter 9 goes back to old problems about “a person without a body.” (P. 148) Identification of such a person only requires engagement in intentional action. (150) Outcome: bottom page 153. Conway’s statement summarizing everything. (p. 153)

Chapter 10 states where Flew stands (p. 155) and his “openness” to personal contact with the great Mind. (p. 158)

Appendix A (161ff) is a criticism of recently popular “refutations” of religion, and of Christianity in particular, by Roy A. Varghese. The discussion of mind and self, on 173d-182, will be relevant to discussions of human survival of death, or “immortality,” to come later in the course.

Appendix B (185ff) is a defense, by N. T. Wright, of the real existence of Jesus Christ, and of his resurrection from the dead. A concession of Flew to the possibility of God’s intervention in human history.

TIGHT FORMULATION OF THE CLASSICAL ARGUMENT FROM EVIL

(1). If God is able to do anything He wishes and wills to prevent evil, he will prevent evil.

(2). If He wills to prevent evil, then there is no evil.

(3). There is evil.

So: (4) He does not will to prevent evil. (from 2 and 3)

So: (5). Either there is something which God wishes to do but cannot, or He does not wish to prevent evil. (from 4 and 1)

So: (6). If there is something God wishes to do but cannot do, then He is not all powerful; and if God does not wish to prevent evil, then He Himself is partly evil and not completely benevolent or good. (by the meanings of “all powerful” and “all good.”)

So: No all powerful and all good God exists. Ie., If there is a God, then that ‘God’ either is not all powerful, or is not wholly good. (Note: He could still be very powerful and *very* good.)

REVIEW OF COURSE THUS FAR:

1. Clarification of the nature of religion and of the task of a philosophy of religion--
Rationality and Moral Responsibility in human behavior.
2. Major lines of characterization of the 'other' reality
presupposed by religion as human practice.
3. Two major lines of argument concerning the existence and nature of the 'other' reality:
Cosmological and Teleological ('Design') arguments.
4. The critique of these arguments by Hume and Kant—its overall outcome, with special
attention to Kant's "Moral Argument." By no means do Hume and Kant rule out the
rationality of belief in God--contrary to a wide spread prejudice. Rather, in a carefully
qualified manner, they insist upon it.
5. The consistency of the actuality of evil with the existence of an all-good, all-powerful
God.
6. The logical irrelevance of the biological theory of evolution to the question of God's
existence. Cases of biological 'order, though often cited, are no necessary part of the
'design argument.
7. Various possible positions concerning belief and knowledge of God's existence or non-
existence. "Agnosticism" is in fact a highly elaborate philosophical position that is hard
to defend. Or else it is a simple confession of personal ignorance.
8. The role of "religious experiences" in religion, and the extent to which such
experiences might or might not justify or demonstrate the truth of beliefs about God or
the 'other' reality.

CONCERNING RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES WE NOTE:

{The page references to James, Varieties of Rel. Exp., are in the form xxx/yyy/zzz. The first (xxx) is to the Simon and Schuster edition, the second (yyy) is to the Mentor book edition, and the third (zzz) is to the Penguin edition. }

A. That all world historical religions, with a very few possible exceptions:

- (1) Arise from specific religious experiences--the well-known ones that make it into the movies (e.g. Moses and the burning bush)--of specific persons; and
- (2) Continue to be sustained by experiences in multitudes of individual practitioners--e.g. "enlightenment," the new birth, the prayer of union with God, etc. etc. (See Moreland, Does God Exist?, pp. 40ff & 60, 74 etc.)

THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT DOUBT ABOUT THE OCCURRENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES. THE ISSUE IS: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

B. That experiences, as understood in the phrase "religious experience," are not just any conscious state, but conscious states of a special type where something is:

- (1) Present to the mind with a marked degree of passivity,
- (2) Bearing a strong tendency to reorient or modify the total self,
- (3) Usually involving a significant degree of struggle or effort or cultivation prior to or concurrent with the experience.

C. That religious experiences are not the same as mystical experiences. There are religious experiences that are not mystical and mystical experiences that are not religious. (See James, Varieties, p. 299/319/379 etc. and Phillips, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 165-211) Of course there are mystical experiences that are religious and religious experiences that are mystical.

D. That the "British Empiricists" did not invent experience, but, if anything, ruined the concept by associating it with sensation alone, when it had, historically, to do merely with particular cases. Aristotle treats experience as a condition, posterior to sensation and memory, which is characterized by the ability to deal accurately with cases of the same kind, but not the ability to teach and theorize those cases. (See Metaphysics, Book I, ch. 1) This basic idea was preserved in English well into the 18th Century. (See Oxford English Dictionary on "empiric," "empirical," and "empiricism.")

E. That the details of actual cases of experience have to be attended to in some systematic and thorough way before the evidential value of "religious experience" for the philosophically interesting assumptions of religious practice and belief can be assessed. Such a careful approach is difficult because of 'knee-jerk' reactions, which either dismiss such experiences (or reports thereof) as obviously crazy or stupid, or swallow them whole with no effort at criticism. The seriously rational inquirer will, of course, not permit a simple assumption of God's existence or non-existence to govern their approach to such experiences, for that would be merely to beg the main question at issue in evaluating them. (See Part I, especially Chapter I, of H. N. Wieman, *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1926)

WILLIAM JAMES' VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: APPROACH AND RESULTS

1. The two issues: Description of experiences and their origins;
Assessment of their significance and `truth'.
 (see p. 23/25/3, 194/207/237, 292/316/369f, 398-402/424-427/515-519)

Medical materialism dismissed. (29-32/31-32/13-16, 33f/37/18-19)
2. The heart of religion and religious experience.
 (pp. 42/46/31, 44-45/48/33-34, 47-48/51-53/37-39, 54/58/47, 59/63/53-54)
 The religious feeling or sense of a `presence'.
 (62-63/67/58-60, 66/70/63, 73ff/78ff/71ff, 75/80/75f)
3. Instantaneous `Conversions' (pp. 160-198/171-212/189-243, 393-394/419/508)
 interpreted in terms of the subconscious dimensions (189-199/202-212/230-243) of the
 human self and the shifting of equilibrium in "idea systems" present in the conscious and
 subconscious self. (164-167/175-177/195-198)
 A concise outline of **the main points** of James' account.
 (195-199/208-212/237-243)
4. The "state of assurance" resulting from conversion. The characteristics of this state.
 (pp. 202-210/215-224/247-258)
5. The inner features of `saintliness'--the `fruit' of conversion (in all religions)--described.
 (220-222/234-236/272-273)
And: The practical consequences of these inner features stated.
 (p. 221/236/273-274)
6. The worth or value of this `fruit' in "merely human terms...without considering whether
 the God really exists who is supposed to inspire them..." (262/279/327-328)
 Judged to be of great positive value by James:
 "The saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare. The great
 saints are immediate successes; the smaller ones are at least heralds and harbingers, and
 they may be leavens also, of a better mundane order. Let us be saints, then, if we can,
 whether or not we succeed visibly and temporally." (297/316/376-377) But the question
"IS RELIGION TRUE?" still remains to be answered. (298/316/377-378)
7. The four marks of "mystical experience." (299-301/318-320/380-382)
 The question of truth raised with specific reference to mystical experiences. (299-
 336/318-357/379-429) The answer James gives is complicated, but is really in the
negative. (pp. 332-334/354ff/422-427)
 These experiences are authoritative for the individual who has them, but not for
 others. Nevertheless, "They break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic
 consciousness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone. They show it to be

only one kind of consciousness. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth, in which, so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely continue to have faith." (p. 331/353/422) But that is all.

8. Philosophy is now historically proven to be incapable of showing that the "other world" or "God" actually is real or "objectively true." (bottom 341/362/435-436, top 342/365/437-438, 350-351/371-372/448-450) What philosophy can do for religion. (355-356/377-378/455-456)

{Following out the "empirical side of religious experience, not the five "Other Characteristics" discussed by James in Lecture 19 (357ff/380ff/458ff), especially the case of prayer (361-371/384-395/463-477)

9. James' **CONCLUSIONS**:

A. Rejection of religion as a "mere survival" of a primitive and irrational condition. (384-386/413-415/495-498)

B. Why feeling is more fundamental in reality than science.

The analysis of experience---(pp.386-391/411-416/498-505)

This passage absolutely crucial to James' account!

C. A final reading of religious transformation.

(393-395/418-420/507-510)

D. James' hypothesis of the **more** and our union with what is beyond us.. (395ff/420ff/511ff)

Read carefully the ¶ beginning mid-page 396/422/512!

And the first ¶ beginning on 398/424/515.

THIS IS JAMES' CONCLUSION.

E. His argument is strictly in terms of effects or work done. See 399/424-425/515-516 and the statements about "reality" top p. 399/425/516. "God is real since he produces real effects." (400/425/517)

The requirements of a "real hypothesis." (400f/426/517-518)

The "new facts" of "the actual inflow of energy in the faith state." (401/427/518-519)

The distinction between crasser and more refined supernaturalism.

And "efficient causality." (403ff/428ff/520ff)

Where "the differences in fact which are due to God's existence come in." Carefully study bottom 405-406/430-431/523-524.

And what is not proven--Infinity, uniqueness, etc. (406-407/432/524-525)

Note that James' argument for the objective reality of the 'other' experienced in "religious experiences" is strictly one of causation. He does not argue for the veridicality of perception of God, or from that to God's existence. He doesn't even clearly raise such issues, though the chapter on Mysticism touches on some of them. By marked contrast consider Wm. P. Alston's treatment in his book, Perceiving God (Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 66, 143ff, 194-225, etc. Also the Martin/Wainwright/ King discussion in Phillips, pp. 195-211, and Moreland's statement in Does God Exist? pp. 85-86.

Critical appraisal of James' argument: James' argument depends on the three-fold distinction between

- A. The individual's conscious mind.
- B. Its 'margin' fading away into its subconscious part.
- C. A 'more' of the same quality as that subconscious part, but exterior to it.
(pp. 393-399/419, 421, 422, 424/508-516)
'C' is inferred as reality by James by the assumption that influences are coming into 'B', and even to 'A'.

"The further limits of our being plunge...into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely 'understandable' world....So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong. Yet the unseen region in question is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. But that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal." (pp. 399/424-425/515-516)

This is James' argument or "hypothesis."

It is, unfortunately, rather weak at best.

The problem is that, given a subconscious self, it is impossible to understand its dynamics well enough to be sure that beyond it there is a 'mental' or 'spiritual' source of incoming influences. Descartes, too, argued that there was something in his mind (namely, the idea of an infinite being) which was such that it had to be produced by something outside his mind (namely, the infinite being itself). It is hard enough to make that argument go--in fact, impossible. But when you add in the "subconscious mind" component it is even harder to get any significant objective standing for the alleged cause. Freud, as is well-known, locates the "incoming influence" of our ideals in the "super-ego," which he did not regard as a spiritual beyond, but possibly, even, a physiological "within." (See his An Outline of Psycho-Analysis, especially the very first section, for a readable statement of his view of the super-ego.) Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is another and very different view into the same alleged area of 'mind'. We do not mean to suggest that either Jung or Freud have it right. Only that it is far too huge a leap to conclude from the data cited by James that the 'incoming' influence must be from anything like a God.

It is not even clear that you can get "another" realm, such as Jung and, perhaps, Buddhism would accept. And, in any case, a lot of very bad stuff often appears to be streaming in from the subconscious. Is it from the same being which sends the good stuff? Or is the devil out there too? And what else? Maybe all of the above. Maybe!

It's just not clear what can be concluded from James' data. There are too many possibilities not ruled out. Perhaps James' way is to say that it is permissible to believe that it is God who is 'incoming' in religious experiences, though it is not necessary. (p. 336/357/429) But that is cold comfort to the philosophers if it is equally permissible to believe that it is not God on the line.

But suppose we cannot reasonably conclude that it is God who is causing the wonderfully flowering garden of religious experiences through which James has escorted us. Are we done with those experiences. **Hardly!**

TWO OTHER APPROACHES TO THE 'OBJECTIVE REALITY' OF 'RELIGIOUS' EXPERIENCES

I. By treating such experiences as acts of perception, and arguing over their veridicality.

People such as Kai Nielsen (Does God Exist? pp. 84f) and C. B. Martin (Phillips, Phil. of Rel., p. 195ff) take the negative side. Moreland (Does God Exist? pp. 85f) and Wainwright (Phillips, 199ff) take the positive.

There are two basic issues involved:

Are religious experiences of or about anything?
If they are, is it knowable?

On the first, a standard negative line has been that they are like a headache: a real experiential event or state, but not of or about anything, as a thought or statement might be. Of course if that is so they cannot then go on to constitute knowledge of an object. But this just seems descriptively false. The people who have religious experiences seem to be quite clear on what they are and are not of or about? Who is in a better position than they to know the descriptive character of their own experiences. Nielsen, Martin etc. are just being close-minded about this matter. (See Wainwright, Moreland, King)

But of course religious experiences could be about various sorts of things without those things existing or being known to exist. That is true of most kinds of experiences.

For a thorough response to this negative point, you may wish to study Alston's Experiencing God, chapters 5 and 6, where C. B. Martin, among others, is carefully discussed. Wainwright, as did Elton Trueblood long ago (chapter XII of his The Logic of Belief), argues simply that religious "experience is sufficiently similar to sense experience to create a presumption in favour of its cognitive validity." (Phillips, p. 199) As Trueblood said, we should employ "in the substantiation of religious belief, the same kind of empirical evidence which has long been used in support of scientific belief."

Crucial to **supporting** such a position are the following points:

1. Sense perception is never merely a matter of having or being aware of sensations. To see any physical object, an apple for example, it is never sufficient to have or see sensations of redness, roundness, smoothness, etc. This is something that may fairly be regarded as proven by the debate over the matter through history. Hume's statement was: "The senses...give us no notion of continued existence, because they cannot operate beyond the extent, in which they really do operate. They as little produce the opinion of a distinct existence, because they neither can offer it to the mind as represented, nor as original....We may, therefore, conclude with certainty, that the opinion of a continued and of a distinct existence never arises from the senses." (Treatise, Bk I, Part IV, Sect. ii) Instead of regarding this as a basis for saying that we do not see physical objects, it is more reasonable to regard it as a reductio ad absurdum of Empiricism's account of perceptual consciousness--which account is based on multiple misdescriptions and false assumptions in any case.

2. The actual components of a perception may be very unlike the object of the perception. For example, one can see a galaxy on the basis of a small, wavering point of light made available through a telescope. We can perceive a pig in the bushes by hearing certain grunting noises. In the biblical books of Job and Ezekiel, to change to the religious case, God is 'seen' on the basis of something like a cyclone or electrical storm or fireworks display. There is no reason whatsoever that God or the 'other' reality should not be perceptually present in experiences that have these or other phenomenological characters.

3. It is essential to the 'objectivity' of experiences that claim to be experiences of God or the 'other' realm (or of anything else!) that the object of the experience should be re-identifiable and intersubjectively re-identifiable. This is in fact standardly assumed by accounts of religious experiences. See for example the Old Testament book of Exodus for experiences of Jehovah, or the many accounts of 'enlightenment' in the Buddhist tradition.

4. Moreover, it must be possible to have a better or worse grasp or comprehension of the 'object' involved if there is to be any possibility of objectivity in any type of perceptual (or otherwise cognitive) experience. This also is standardly assumed in accounts of religious experience. One can "get it wrong" in such experiences, and the established traditions all provide elaborate accounts of the difference between correct and incorrect apprehensions of the object of religious experiences, just as is the case with scientific or common sense experiences of objects.

5. If religious experiences of certain types are to be regarded as veridical perceptions, and therefore of an existing object, they must be, to a significant extent, repeatable by following 'directions' that are generally understandable. The admonitions of Old Testament prophets such as Jeremiah--"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13) and "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (33:3)--must be reducible to fairly specific plans of action which are intersubjective and regularly lead to the 'perceptions' of God in question.

The fact that appropriate--and possibly very elaborate--conditions must be met before the perception can occur is not an argument against the veridicality of the perception. In the case of God-perception it may be that a condition is an intense desire

to see God and a long pursuit of him. In order to perceive the Grand Canyon I must travel, stand in certain places and open my eyes. I should have my glasses on, though you may not be similarly visually challenged. Individual differences must be accommodated in testing perceptions. But on the other hand there must come a point where no more conditions of 'seeing God' are to be added. What that point is may be the subject of lengthy inquiry and discussion, but it must be there if religious experiences are to be treated as objectively valid perceptions.

6. And finally, such 'perceptions' must, like all valid perceptions, increase our capacity to correctly anticipate or predict the future course of experience. For objective realities always tie in with other aspects of objective reality as yet unexperienced. These predictions may have to do with the future development of the experiencer or with features of external realities. What they are will depend upon the kind of experience or object in question. But they must be there.

II. By treating such experiences as personal interactions involving communications between persons.

When I am in the presence of another human being, I usually am neither just being 'causally influenced' by them nor just having a veridical perception of them. I am interacting with them by communications. That is why "not speaking to someone," even though you may be causally influencing them and objectively perceiving them, is a form of disdain, punishment or "putting them in their place." The 'objective validity' of religious experience may therefore consist in the reality of such communications between persons. The reality in this case is a certain interaction of wills. If it occurs then there is 'another' involved in the relevant religious experiences. What is called prayer is often thought to involve such interactions of will--though widely varying views of prayer may be held. "Prayer" and "offering" are, as we have earlier noted, universal forms of religious practice, at least in all of the 'world' religions.

R. A. Torrey, a influential religious leader in Southern California during the early 20th Century and a founder of what is today called Biola University, never took a salary during his years of Christian ministry, but simply lived on what people gave him. When asked why he believed in God he replied: "If you went up to a window three times a day, year after year, and asked for food and food was handed out to you, would you believe that there was someone who heard you and responded?" See also the cases and discussion in James' Varieties, pp. 362-369/386-390/466-474. James notes there that "The genuineness of religion is thus indissolubly bound up with the question whether the prayerful consciousness be or be not deceitful" (362/386/466), though the "prayerful life" is often led in "a less sturdy beggar-like fashion." (367/390/472) But he never seems to realize that what is going on here is not just causation. A personal interaction of communication and communion has its own hold on objective reality. The interaction may be larger than "asking and receiving." It can take, and apparently has often in history taken, the form of communications, often at the initiative of God and for the purposes of consolation and instruction of the receiver.

There is one special case that deserves mention. That is the case of prophecy or foretelling of events. To be able accurately to foretell humanly unforeseeable events on

the basis of religious experiences of 'communication' certainly provides impressive evidence that something 'beyond the natural' is involved. Whether the events in question were actually the ones foretold, whether the events were truly humanly unforeseeable, etc. are questions that have to be dealt with in every case. But given adequate treatment, repeated cases of correct prophecy certainly would strongly influence a rational person to accept the theistic 'hypothesis' or something like it.

WHAT THEN IS TO BE SAID OF THE BEARING OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES ON THE OBJECTIVE REALITY OF THE 'OTHER' REALM AND INTERACTIONS THEREWITH?

Such experiences may or may not involve a reality beyond the natural, which may or may not be something like what is traditionally thought of as a God. They have to be approached on a case by case basis and scrutinized in terms of standards that have emerged through historical refinement. If there are no such standards, then there is no objectivity to religious experience. But pretty clearly there are some such standards, and we are left with the question of what particular cases of human religious experience may yield when those standards are scrupulously applied. We will return to these matters later when we examine the issues of revelation, prayer, and miracles.

Phil. 361

Notes on **miracles**

Why is miracle an issue in the philosophy of religion?

Because it is universally assumed in religion as a human activity that in some way the `other' essential to religion has effects in our life in `this' world, the sense-perceptible world of space/time/causality. It is assumed that we, as devotees, are not entirely at the mercy of `this' world.

Historically, by far most of world religions have miracle stories involved in their foundation and perpetuation. As C. S. Lewis points out (p. 213), a supernaturalist metaphysics alone does not strictly imply the occurrence of miracles (though the converse implication does hold). But of course a metaphysics is not by itself a religion.

The point of reference from which any discussion of miracles must proceed is that of an established invariable order within a certain domain of things and events. Let us call the relevant domain of events "nature," which may or may not be taken as sense-perceptible things events with their invisible but yet physical components. Usually, today, it is so taken.

Thus we might suppose there to be a definite and invariable pattern of events which will always be followed so long as only the forces within "nature" are determinative.

The question then is: Are there forces not cited in a complete description of "nature" on her own, and can those forces be brought to bear on natural things and processes in such a way as to produce events that nature would not produce on her own?

A parallel type of question might be: If only physical processes existed, would there be Boeing 747s? Can we account for the emergence of airplanes and computers and birthday cakes given only the entities and processes expressed in the truths of physics? Or are there other types of entities and processes (intellectual, volitional) that can be brought to bear on physical process to produce the airplanes, etc.?

Now **what is a miracle**?

John Locke, in his A Discourse on Miracles, defines a miracle as "a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine." This, however, is quite unsatisfactory, because it makes a miracle totally subjective. On this definition there are certainly many miracles, but who cares.

More helpfully David Hume defines a miracle as "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." (p. 525n of his essay.) C. S. Lewis says: "I use the word Miracle to mean an interference with Nature by supernatural power." (p. 208) Let us accept these definitions,

which are close to identical, and inquire whether miracles are possible and how they might be known to have occurred.

Hume's very subtle and carefully guarded Essay contains two main conclusions. In Part I he lays down the premise that the evidence for the occurrence of a miracle must consist entirely in the testimony of human beings. That granted, he then concludes that in order for one to rationally concede the occurrence of a miracle he would have to be assured that the probability of the testimony being false is less than the probability of the event in question being a miracle, i.e. of nature continuing her accustomed course. If the event is the raising to life of a dead man, the likelihood of the testimony being false must be less than the likelihood of the man staying dead. Now the likelihood of the man staying dead must be very high, given the regularity with which dead men stay dead. On the other hand, testimony is often found to be false. (Read spanning 520-521 & 524-525)

Hume says: "There must, therefore, be an uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as an uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle." (p. 525) But of course how do we know that there is a uniform experience in the sense of an exceptionless regularity with reference to the events which are presented as miracles, e.g. resurrection? If by "uniform experience" we only mean we have never seen an exception, what does that prove--though of course we have to go on our experience in making a judgment? But how could we claim anything more about the regularity in question? To presume it must be exceptionless is surely to beg the question against miracle, as Lewis points out. (p. 300) So all Hume can justifiably claim here is that if the evidence for a miracle rests on testimony, then I can only accept an event as a miracle if the probability of the testimony being true is greater than the probability of nature keeping to its accustomed course.

Part II of Hume's essay attacks the possibility, allowed in Part I, "that the falsehood of that testimony would be a real prodigy." (p. 526) See the following pages for details. His conclusion in this Part is "that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any system of religion.

"I beg the limitations here made may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own, that otherwise there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony, though perhaps it will be impossible to find any such in all the records of history." (pp. 540-541)

Causation and Miracles

Universality of Causation: Every event has a cause.

Uniformity of Causation: For every kind of event, the cause of any event of that kind is the same in kind for every event of that kind. Otherwise: There is no variation in the kind of event that causes events of a certain kind. (Obviously this requires careful specification of the "kinds" in question, for we frequently say things like "People die of many causes.")

Three common uses of "cause":

1. Necessary condition--A is necessary condition of B if B cannot occur without the presence of A. Breaking eggs is a necessary condition for an omelette.

2. Sufficient condition--A is a sufficient condition of B if, given A, B occurs. (A stronger version: "B must occur.") It is quite difficult to isolate sufficient conditions, and possibly there is no sufficient condition for an event other than the entire prior and present condition of the universe. If A is necessary condition of B, however, then not-A is a sufficient condition of not-B. "No breaking eggs, no omelette."

3. The last component of a sufficient condition--the "trigger." You're walking down the darkened aisle of a theater and someone puts out their foot and trips you. Then one says that they caused you to fall.

In ordinary discussions we usually have in mind #3 when we speak of cause. What caused the house to explode? Someone lit a cigarette in an area filled with gas etc.

Three ways of thinking about a miracle:

1. A higher power directly modifies conditions preceding and concurrent with M.

2. A higher power just inserts M whole at a certain point in the causal sequence.
Suspends the whole sequence and starts it up again after M and including M as a causal factor from there on.

3. A higher power modifies things higher up in the system of laws of reality:
possibly at the highest level, say that of quarks, strings or whatever.

So: for example, the match was struck in a gas filled room and it didn't explode.
The usual laws of chemical combination were suspended by "quark modification."

MATERIALISM AND PERSONALITY

OR:

WHAT PHYSICS CAN'T DO

I need to enter two preliminary clarifications:

One is that in speaking of what physics can't do I am by no means intending to criticise physics, which as a field of knowledge contains no claims whatsoever about what it can or cannot do. In this respect it resembles most fields of knowledge, which rarely make claims about themselves. What physics can or cannot do is no part of the knowledge content of physics--though it might be part of the knowledge content of some field of knowledge. I presume this is clear to all who have paid much attention to what is taught in physics books, courses etc., but if in doubt about it you might just try to utilize any generally recognized principles and techniques of physics to establish some truth about physics. You may quickly begin to suspect that your enterprise is somehow misguided, possibly because physics itself gives little evidence of being physical.

Various philosophers make claims about what physics can and cannot do, but then it is their business--following a long tradition, at least--to make more or less direct claims about everything. But whatever they may think they are doing, we can be sure that they are not doing physics when they make their claims, for just consider the kinds of clarifications, definitions and arguments they use in their discussions and see if a single one of them shows up in any systematic presentation of what physicists themselves regard as specific to their own field. And if they are doing physics, why aren't physicists--at least some physicists--doing the same thing. Well, no doubt they will come up with an explanation of their behavior.

David Lewis, a well known advocate of the existence of a huge number of worlds that are only possible, advocates THE THESIS OF THE EXPLANATORY ADEQUACY OF PHYSICS. This, he says reassuringly, is "the plausible hypothesis that there is some unified body of scientific theories, of the sort we now accept, which together provide a true and exhaustive account of all physical phenomena (i.e. all phenomena describable in physical terms). (See his "An Argument for the Identity Theory" in Jour. of Philosophy, 1966, p. 17) By "describable in physical terms" he certainly means to include what we ordinarily call mental phenomena, for that is to point of this and other papers of his. I am not sure that he allows there to be any phenomena which is not in some extended sense "describable in physical terms." But if we just stick to the ones involving some element of the mental, one wonders how he could hold THE EXPLANATORY ADEQUACY OF PHYSICS to be plausible when there exists so many things, events, facts, distinctions, relations, etc. for which there not only is no explanation to be drawn from physics, but not even the beginnings of an idea of how such an explanation would be begun. For example, a single human action, the great events of

history, artistic creativity with all of its products, and, not least, science itself. Try utilizing principles of physics to deduce or explain Kepler's discovery of the laws of planetary motion, for example, or Gödel's discovery of the incompleteness of arithmetic.

Notes for a talk before BIOLA Philosophy Group, Nov. 22, 1994
by: Dallas Willard

ON THE TEXTURE AND SUBSTANCE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Philosophy 361: Philosophy of Religion
Spring 1996

QUESTIONS FOR THE FINAL EXAM

1. Explain Kant's objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do not effect the "First Cause" argument as presented in class? Take sides.
2. In "The Canon of Pure Reason" (p. 469 of the handout) Kant says: "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." Note that on 232-233 he concedes that even theoretical reason is compelled to admit that the objects God, freedom and immortality exist, though, because they are not intuited (231-232), they still cannot be fitted into the theoretical understanding of the sense-perceptible world. Explain his proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, as laid out on pp. 216-229 of the Critique of Pure Practical Reason (handout) Is there anything wrong with that proof? What?
3. In the light of Phillips pp. 195-274 & 285-287, the Nielsen and Parsons contributions to the Moreland book (Does God Exist?, especially pp. 48ff, 64ff, 69ff, 177ff and 272-280), and our class discussions, outline the essential points in what you take to be the strongest case against the existence of God or of a non-theistic "other world." Indicate whether evolution plays a significant role in this 'case' and, if so, how. Briefly indicate what you take to be its weakest point in the 'case'.
4. Explain and evaluate Wm. James's interpretation of the philosophical significance of 'religious experience.' State your own position on this matter. Just clearly state it.
5. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is a miracle?
6. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)
7. Compare and contrast the views of Glenn Tinder and Sigmund Freud on the relationship between "civilization" or being socially decent and religion.
8. Spell out the elements of intellectual culture that led up to "God's Funeral," as those elements are stated on the top half of p. 180 of God's Funeral. What do you make of Wilson's explanation of what "religion goes on," on page 336ff (see also p. 14)

PRELIMINARY LIST OF QUESTIONS TO REVIEW FOR THE FINAL EXAM

1. Explain Kant's objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do not effect the "First Cause" argument as presented in class? Take sides.
2. In "The Canon of Pure Reason" (p. 469 of the handout) Kant says: "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." Note that on 232-233 he concedes that even theoretical reason is compelled to admit that the objects God, freedom and immortality exist, though, because they are not intuited (231-232), they still cannot be fitted into the theoretical understanding of the sense-perceptible world. Explain his proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, as laid out on pp. 216-229 of the Critique of Pure Practical Reason (Reader) Is there anything wrong with that proof? What?
3. In the light of our readings concerning evil and the seeming lack of evidence for God, the Nielsen and Parsons contributions to the Moreland book (Does God Exist?, especially pp. 48ff, 64ff, 69ff, 177ff and 272-280), and our class discussions, outline the essential points in what you take to be the strongest case against the existence of God or of a non-theistic "other world." Indicate whether evolution plays a significant role in this 'case' and, if so, how. Briefly indicate what you take to be the weakest point in the 'case'.
4. Explain and evaluate Wm. James's interpretation of the philosophical significance of 'religious experience.' State your own position on this matter. Just clearly state it.
5. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is a miracle? Could you?
6. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)
7. Compare and contrast the views of Glenn Tinder and Sigmund Freud on the relationship between "civilization," or being socially decent, and religion.
8. Explain Pascal's "Wager" and how it differs from Wm. James' position that we have a right to believe without adequate evidence under certain conditions (specify them). Which position (Pascal's/James') do you regard as most reasonable, and why?

9. Explain the conception of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion upon which this course has been based, and briefly describe the major topics discussed under it? Which topics do you think might be eliminated, which added?

10. Consider Lewis's statement: "An egg which came from no bird is no more 'natural' than a bird which has existed from eternity," that is, never did not exist. (See Moreland and Nielsen, Does God Exist? p. 206) Would a self-existent and "godless" universe be inherently less puzzling and mysterious than a universe created by God? Why or why not?

A few one-paragraph-answer questions:

11. People today often comment on "the work of Darwin, whose inexorable exposure of the process of natural selection removed the need to posit a First Cause as the origin of Life on Earth." What do you think of that and why?

12. Is a willingly irrational person immoral? Why or why not?

13. Freud's "solution" to the stresses imposed by civilization. Will it work, do you think?

14. The most recalcitrant features of alleged Near Death Experiences for the one who does not believe in "survival."

Just explain.

15. How the cosmological argument, if sound, guarantees the possibility of miracles.

16. Fideism.

17. Prayer and the "butterfly effect." (Polkinghorne)

18. The relationship between the existence of God and the survival of human personality beyond death.

19. Spiritual substance. Locke. Why important for this course?

20. Secular Humanism.

Remember to think. The test will be 2 hours in length. Open book--you will have recourse to any printed material, including copies of printed material handed out, but not my handouts of summaries, etc.

QUESTIONS TO REVIEW FOR THE FINAL EXAM

1. Briefly explain Kant's main objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360 in Reader) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do not effect the "First Cause" argument *as presented in class*? Take sides.
2. In "The Canon of Pure Reason" (p. 469 of the handout) Kant says: "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." Note that on 232-233 he concedes that even theoretical reason is compelled to admit that the objects God, freedom and immortality exist, though, because they are not intuited (231-232), they still cannot be fitted into the theoretical understanding of the sense-perceptible world. Explain his proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, as laid out on pp. 216-229 of the Critique of Pure Practical Reason (Reader) Is there anything wrong with that proof? What?
3. In the light of our readings concerning evil and the seeming lack of evidence for God, the Nielsen and Parsons contributions to the Moreland book (Does God Exist?, especially pp. 48ff, 64ff, 69ff, 177ff and 272-280), and our class discussions, outline the essential points in what you take to be the strongest case against the existence of God or of a non-theistic "other world." Indicate whether evolution plays a significant role in this 'case' and, if so, how. Briefly indicate what you take to be the weakest point in the 'case'.
4. Explain and evaluate Wm. James's interpretation of the philosophical significance of 'religious experience.' State your own position on this matter. Just clearly state it.
5. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is a miracle? Could you?
6. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)
7. Compare and contrast the views of Glenn Tinder and Sigmund Freud on the relationship between "civilization," or being socially decent, and religion.
8. Explain Pascal's "Wager" and how it differs from Wm. James' position that we have a right to believe without adequate evidence under certain conditions (specify them). Which position (Pascal's/James') do you regard as most reasonable, and why?

9. Explain the conception of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion upon which this course has been based, and briefly describe the major topics discussed under it? Which topics do you think might be eliminated, which added?

10. Consider Lewis's statement: "An egg which came from no bird is no more 'natural' than a bird which has existed from eternity," that is, never did not exist. (See Moreland and Nielsen, Does God Exist? p. 206) Would a self-existent and "godless" universe be inherently less puzzling and mysterious than a universe created by God? Why or why not?

A few one-paragraph-answer questions:

11. People today often comment on "the work of Darwin, whose inexorable exposure of the process of natural selection removed the need to posit a First Cause as the origin of Life on Earth." What do you think of that and why?

12. Is a willingly irrational person immoral? Why or why not?

13. Freud's "solution" to the stresses imposed by civilization. Will it work, do you think?

14. The most recalcitrant features of alleged Near Death Experiences for the one who does not believe in "survival." Just explain.

15. How the cosmological argument, if sound, guarantees the possibility of miracles.

16. Fideism.

17. Prayer and the "butterfly effect." (Polkinghorne)

18. The relationship between the existence of God and the survival of human personality beyond death.

19. Spiritual substance. Locke. Why important for this course?

20. Secular Humanism.

21. The difference between atheism and agnosticism.

22. "A crasser and a more refined supernaturalism." (James' "Postscript" in *Varieties...*) What is the difference?

23. Exactly why did Antony Flew become a theist? The basic argument.

24. Feynman's unanswered question. (Reader, near end)

25. Hick's view of "salvation" and pluralism. (Course Reader <near end> & Kellenberger 552ff)

Remember to think. The test will be 2 hours in length. Open book—you will have recourse to any printed material, including copies of *printed* material handed out, but not my outlines or summaries, etc.

The exam is from 4:30-6:30 on May 4 (Weds) in MHP 105

Phil. 361: Philosophy of Religion
Spring 2002

D. Willard

FINAL EXAM

I. Respond to 3 of the following 5 questions, clearly indicating which questions you are responding to:

1. Explain Kant's objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do not effect the "First Cause" argument as presented in class? Take sides.

2. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is a miracle? Could we?

3. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)

4. Spell out the elements of intellectual culture that led up to "God's Funeral," as those elements are stated on the top half of p. 180 of God's Funeral. What do you make of Wilson's explanation of why "religion goes on," on page 336ff (see also p. 14)

5. Explain the conception of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion upon which this course has been based, and describe the major topics discussed under it? Which topics do you think might well be eliminated, which added?

II. Respond (one paragraph) to three of the following 5 issues:

6. By the pictures of Huxley and Darwin in the middle of the Wilson book we read of "the work of Darwin, whose inexorable exposure of the process of natural selection removed the need to posit a First Cause as the origin of Life on Earth." What do you think of that and why?

7. The most recalcitrant features of alleged Near Death Experiences for the one who does not believe in "survival."
Just explain.

8. The relationship between the existence of God and the survival of human personality beyond death.

9. Spiritual substance. Locke. Why important for this course?

10. Secular Humanism.

Remember to think and to show your thinking. The test will be 2 hours in length. Open book--you will have recourse to any printed material, including copies of printed material handed out, but not my summaries, etc

PRELIMINARY LIST OF QUESTIONS TO REVIEW FOR THE FINAL EXAM

1. Explain Kant's objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360 of the Reader) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do not affect the "First Cause" argument as presented by Willard? Take sides.
2. In "The Canon of Pure Reason" (p. 469 of the Reader) Kant says: "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." Note that on 232-233 of "Pure Practical Reason" (Reader) he concedes that even theoretical reason is compelled to admit that the objects God, freedom and immortality exist, though, because they are not intuited (231-232), they still cannot be fitted into the theoretical understanding of the sense-perceptible world. Explain his proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, as laid out on pp. 216-229 of the Critique of Pure Practical Reason (Reader) Is there anything wrong with that proof? What?
3. Outline the essential points in what you take to be the strongest case against the existence of God or of a non-theistic "other world." Indicate whether evolution plays a significant role in this 'case' and, if so, how. Briefly indicate what you take to be the weakest point in the 'case'
4. Explain and evaluate Wm. James's interpretation of the philosophical significance of 'religious experience.' State your own position on this matter. Just clearly state it.
5. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is in fact a miracle? Could we?
6. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)
7. Compare and contrast the views of Glenn Tinder (Reader) and Sigmund Freud on the relationship between "civilization," or being socially decent, and religion.
8. Explain Pascal's "Wager" and how it differs from Wm. James' position that we have a right to believe without adequate evidence under certain conditions (specify them). Which position (Pascal's/James') do you regard as most reasonable, and why?

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10. Consider Lewis's statement: "An egg which came from no bird is no more 'natural' than a bird which has existed from eternity," that is, never did not exist. (See Moreland and Nielsen, Does God Exist? p. 206) Would a self-existent and "godless" universe be inherently less puzzling and mysterious than a universe created by God? Why or why not?

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11. People today often comment on "the work of Darwin, whose inexorable exposure of the process of natural selection removed the need to posit a First Cause as the origin of Life on Earth." What do you think of that and why?

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15. How the cosmological argument, if sound, guarantees the possibility of miracles.

16. Fideism.

17. Prayer and the "butterfly effect." (Polkinghorne)

18. The relationship between the existence of God and the survival of human personality beyond death. (Evil?)

19. Spiritual substance. Locke. Why important for this course?

20. Secular Humanism.

21. The difference between atheism and agnosticism.

22. The difference between knowing and believing.

23. "A crasser and a more refined supernaturalism." (James' "Postscript") What is the difference?

24. Exactly why did Antony Flew become a theist? The basic argument.

Remember to think. The test will be 2 hours in length. Open book--you will have recourse to any printed material, including copies of printed material handed out, but not my handouts of summaries, etc. or any other notes.

THE FIRST CAUSE ARGUMENT REVISITED:

We have worked through the “cause” argument in great detail earlier, but honest questions remain.

Consider the following two propositions.

1. There was nothing and then the physical universe existed.
2. The physical universe originated from something else which is quite unlike it and, of course, existed prior to it.

In a cool and solitary moment, and given what we are pretty sure we know about physical events and things, is 1 more plausible than 2? Or are they equally plausible? Or is 2 more plausible than 1?

Questions of this sort, like moral questions--questions as to what one ought to do in a concrete situation where one must act and then be forever right or wrong, good or evil--are questions which rational beings must answer in foro interno, in the ‘internal forum’ of the mind, as they consider only what is at issue in the content of the statements or alternatives before them. That is the peculiar burden that thinking beings have to bear. It might be described as giving an intellectually honest response, and is a genuine aspect of the morals of the mind or intellectual virtue.

It is, no doubt, very hard to do, especially with our past hanging on us and others chattering around us and watching us to see whether or not we are going to arrive at the ‘right’ conclusion or decision. Also, being intellectually honest is often identified with the conclusion we reach and not with how we reach it. This is unfortunate, and it is the part of a philosopher to keep such things in mind and resist them, and to be more concerned with whether we ourselves are successfully resisting them than with whether others are. Our object as intellectually responsible persons is solely that we should come to the logically correct conclusion or decision. Forget about everything else. What conclusions others may reach or what may be respectable in our profession or culture (the ‘best professional opinion’ no doubt) is irrelevant, as is what young Professor Firebrain, or Dr. Smellfungus, or the distinguished author Dryasdust, a grey eminence in the field, may think.

Now I have already had my say on the choice between 1 and 2, and that can be reviewed by returning to the notes provided on the Cosmological Argument. The main point I tried to make was that there is nothing in reason or experience to lend any credence to 1--nothing, at least, other than a shrugging ‘Why not?’ with an eye to alternatives that seem, for whatever reason, more dreadful. By contrast, we do have a great deal of experience and theoretical understanding of the origination of physical things and events, such as comets, cougars, socks and cherry pies--though, to be sure, not

of the physical universal as a whole. Such experience and understanding as we have seems to me, on the whole, decisively to tip the balance of reason against 1 and in favor of 2. But many issues of detail have to be explored, and it is in the end the lonely individual standing in that internal forum, trying not to do what they will be ashamed of in their own regard, that must cast the fateful ballot.

But it might be useful to add a few afterthoughts on Hume's position with regard to 1 and 2--though, in fact, we have already said a great deal about that too. Hume is generally supposed, around philosophy departments, to be supportive of 1. In fact the situation is quite to the contrary.

On Hume's view of belief formation it turns out it would be simply impossible for anyone to believe 1--and of course it would then also be impossible to believe it RATIONALLY. (No doubt one could still say: "Why not?") On Hume's analysis, as is well known, belief originates through repetition of the experience (the 'impressions') of the relevant sequence. (See Treatise, Book I, Part III, Sections viii-xvi.) In this case it would have to be, strictly speaking, the experience of there being nothing and then of the physical universe existing. Obviously no one has ever experienced this once, much less the several times that would be required to originate belief in it on Hume's analysis. If we lighten up a bit and ask simply about physical things or events (not the whole physical universe), it is still true that no one has every experienced any such thing or event originating 'from nothing'.

Another way of putting it is to say that, for Hume, someone's actually believing 1 would be a miracle. The natural laws of belief formation, as Hume presents them, would have to be broken. Taking a bounce off of J. L. Mackie, we could call this "the miracle of atheism."

But secondly, on Hume's view there is no problem drawn from experience with 2, and a great deal to support its plausibility. First of all, it is well known that, on Hume's view, there need be no resemblance between cause and effect. The cause can be totally dissimilar from the effect. In the famous footnote at the end of An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding Hume remarks: "That impious maxim of the ancient philosophy, *Ex nihilo, nihil fit*, by which the creation of matter was excluded, ceases to be a maxim, according to this [Hume's] philosophy. Not only the will of the supreme Being may create matter; but, for aught we know a priori, the will of any other being might create, or any other cause, that the most whimsical imagination can assign."

In the paragraph of the text to which this footnote belongs Hume says: "The existence, therefore, of any being can only be proved by arguments from its cause or its effect; and these arguments are founded entirely on experience. If we reason a priori, anything may appear able to produce anything. The falling of a pebble may, for aught we know, extinguish the sun; or the wish of a man control the planets in their orbits. It is only experience, which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another."

But does, for Hume, 'experience' lend any support--provide any 'sequences of impressions'--that would lead to belief in 2? The answer seems to be an appropriately qualified "yes," and for this we refer back to the passages in Hume cited in the notes on the 'design' or 'teleological' argument. Of course, in parallel with our comment on 1, no one has even once experienced the 'sequence of impressions' corresponding to an origination of the physical universe from something quite unlike it, possibly mind-like in character. But, unlike the situation with 1, everyone does have 'impressions' of originitive sequences involving physical objects and events, and in many cases (cherry pies?) the relevant causation involves elements (thoughts, desires, choices) that are--pace, for the moment, all you materialists--quite unlike anything understandable in current terms as "physical."

In conclusion, it seems pretty clear that Hume himself would not favor 1 over 2, but precisely the contrary. Current thought seems to make far too much of his point that "there is no absurdity" in the supposition of 1--or, more generally, in the supposition that some physical event might occur without a cause. That is, his view that the proposition 1 is not a contradiction. That is, again, that what is stated in 1 is logically possible. No one knew better than Hume that a proposition's not being contradictory was no evidence whatsoever for its truth. That P could possibly be true, or that it is 'logically possible', is nothing in support of it's being true. A logically consistent proposition can still be utterly incredible and utterly false. And that, I take it--for reasons given--is Hume's position on 1.

What, then, are we to make of people who say that 1 can be believed, even rationally believed? People are to be met with who profess to believe 1 and to be rational in believing it. It is not easy to say what is going on here. Of course Hume's theory of belief may be mistaken. In fact, I think it is. So far as I can tell, given his theory of belief, it would be impossible to have any beliefs at all concerning what he calls "relations of ideas" or necessary truths and falsehoods, such as might be found in logic and mathematics. They do not involve 'impressions', so far as I can tell—and certainly they do not for Hume, for they are relations of (precisely) "ideas," and hence cannot involve the required experiential sequences which, being repeated, generate belief. That would seem to me to be a sufficient reductio ad absurdum of his account of belief. For we do believe things like $2 + 2 = 4$. But maybe not. In any case this matter would require a long discussion.

Hume aside, however, we know that people do not always actually believe what they say they believe. That is a frequent occurrence in religious belief, and there is no reason to suppose that it could not happen with anti-religious beliefs and in life generally. It is often said that "There are no atheists in foxholes," and yet others go on to deny the there are any atheists at all. (Of course rejecting the "First Cause" argument is not the same things as being an atheist.) Various important drives and cost/benefits strongly influence what we say we believe or could rationally believe. Even our sincere profession of a belief does not necessarily mean that we actually do have the belief professed. I do not want to be left in the position of denying that people who say they believe 1 do not believe it. But I also do not think that everyone who sincerely professes

to believe 1 actually does. I only comment on this because we are so apt to be confused and bothered in philosophy about what people say they do or do not (or can or cannot rationally) believe. The main point to be noticed is that all of this is totally irrelevant to what we should or should not believe. Of course today not everyone agrees with that either. But agreement or disagreement about the truth of a proposition has nothing essentially to do with whether or not it is actually true, nor with whether or not it *can* be known to be true, or actually *is* known to be true by some people.

Comments on Alvin Plantinga, “A Defense of Religious Exclusivism.”

What is exclusivism: “The exclusivist holds that the tenets or some of the tenets of one religion—Christianity, let’s say—are in fact true; he adds, naturally enough, that any propositions, including other religious beliefs, that are <logically> incompatible with those tenets are false.” (Shatz 533d) The truth of any proposition excludes the truth any other proposition logically incompatible with it: *Sue’s dress is red* excludes the truth of *Sue’s dress is white* and the truth of *Sue’s dress is not red*. Comparably, *There is one God* excludes the truth of *There are many Gods* and the truth of *There is no God*.

The only way one could not be an exclusivist with respect to religious beliefs would be to *have no religious beliefs* or to have *only* religious beliefs that are *not contrary or contradictory to other religious beliefs*. Thus not being exclusivist (that is, being pluralistic) seems simple to those who hold no religious beliefs, and it is. But to those who hold religious beliefs of the ordinary sort, not being exclusivist is impossible—though of course they can continue to insist that they are not exclusivist, which can only mean that they do not *want* to be exclusivist. “Exclusion” of one belief by another is a logical matter and has nothing to do with what one wants.

Plantinga considers two objections to exclusivism: That it is a moral vice, or that it is irrational or unjustified. He considers moral objections to exclusivism on pp. 534c-538b, and “epistemic” objections to exclusivism on pp. 538b-539d.

Take the epistemic objections first. The idea here is that what one believes in matters of religion depend upon when and where and to whom you are born. (538c) But (1) It does not follow that a particular persons beliefs are not true, or that one ought not to accept them, or that the process of belief formation that shaped one is unreliable—though it very well could be unreliable. (2) The same point, if valid, would apply to the Pluralist’s views. If they had been brought up among the Inca’s or among Japanese of the 10th Century A.D., they would have not be Pluralists. The process of belief formation would certainly not have brought them to be Pluralists as we now understand it. Should they abandon Pluralism because of that? (538d-539a) Of course differences of cultures and their religions can and should make one carefully consider their own beliefs, but that might even lead to firmer knowledge that their own beliefs are true, as well as possibly to an abandonment of their beliefs.

Well, what about the moral objections. Is one who thinks their religious beliefs are true arrogant and egotistical. Certainly just believing what one believes does not mean that one is arrogant or egotistical. (535c-d) If someone thinks they are right about any type of subject matter, they should not doubt have a certain humility about it and not go around telling people they are wrong—unless some danger is impending. (You believe the building you and others are in is on fire, for example.) Further, the Pluralist cannot help but be tarred with his own brush. He believes that Exclusivists are wrong. Does that, just in and of itself, make him arrogant and egotistical? Of course not. (536a-b) And further still, to dissent from the proposition I now believe and disbelieve it has all the same problems of arrogance and egotism if believing does. (537a-c) And if one tries to

abstain from believing or disbelieving, that will be only because he believes it right to do so, and thus inherits whatever problems of egotism and arrogance there may be.

Plantinga concludes: Most people may be intellectually arrogant and egotistical some of the time, “But am I really arrogant and egotistic just by virtue of believing that I know others don’t believe, where I can’t show them that I am right?” (spanning 537-538)

In any case, no one can choose to believe or disbelieve whatever they please. Belief is not that kind of thing. All one can do is carefully consider the evidence and be as humble and considerate as possible with reference to other people’s beliefs. But just believing what you believe doesn’t mean you are arrogant or unintelligent.

Pluralism as a political ideal is spelled out by the Bill of Rights. That, of course, should be observed. But freedom of thought includes the right to think that others are wrong in their beliefs. No one has a right to not have others think that they are wrong. The pluralist has a right to think that those who disagree with them are wrong.

Philosophy 361: Philosophy of Religion
 Spring Semester 2011
 Instructor, D. Willard

FINAL EXAM
 (May 4, 4:30 PM)

I. Write on 3 of the following 5 questions (approximately 30 minutes each):

1. Briefly explain Kant's objections to the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God. (pp. 352-360 of the Reader) Are there significant reasons for thinking that these objections do *not* affect the "First Cause" argument *as presented in class by Willard*? Take sides.
2. In the light of our readings concerning evil and the seeming lack of evidence for God, & the Nielsen and Parsons contributions to the Moreland book (Does God Exist?, especially pp. 48ff, 64ff, 69ff, 177ff and 272-280.) (You *may* also wish to refer to the handouts from Scriven, Smart, and Nagel. You don't have to.), and in the light of our class discussions, **outline the essential points in what you take to be the strongest case against the existence of God or of a non-theistic "other world."** Indicate whether evolution plays a significant role in this 'case' and, if so, how. Briefly indicate what you take to be the weakest point in the 'case'.
3. Why is miracle so central to a philosophy of religion, and how does miracle differ from and/or resemble religious "experience"? Is there any good reason to suppose miracles are impossible? Explain. How could we know of any given event that it is in fact a miracle? Could we?
4. Is it possible that one's life continues well beyond the point of death as physically measured? Why or why not? Is it actual? Why or why not? (Of course if it is impossible it is not actual, and if it is actual it is possible. That might give you a clue as to how to set up your answer.)
5. Explain the conception of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion upon which this course has been based, and briefly describe the major topics discussed under it? Which topics do you think might be eliminated, which added?

II. Write on 3 of the following 5 questions (approximately 10 minutes each):

1. People today often comment on "the work of Darwin, whose inexorable exposure of the process of natural selection removed the need to posit a First Cause as the origin of Life on Earth." What do you think of that and why? Briefly.
2. The most recalcitrant features of alleged Near Death Experiences for the one who does not believe in "survival." Just explain.
3. Spiritual substance. Locke etc.? Why important for this course?
4. Prayer and the "butterfly effect."
5. Exactly why (according to him) did Flew become a theist. The basic points.

You may refer to your reader and to any of the texts, as well as any handouts that are copies of something printed. Nothing else. On your honor. Remember Kant: You are to be worthy of happiness.

TURN IN YOUR TINDER PRECIS WITH YOUR TEST!!!!

Bertrand Russell's Dismissal of "The First-cause Argument":

In his book, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (pp. 6-7, attached), Russell explains why he does not take what he calls the "first cause argument" seriously. I want to point out a few things about his reasoning, with special regard to the version of the Cosmological argument presented in class.

(1). He points out "in the first place, cause is not quite what it used to be." Cause is of course a philosophical topic about which there have been centuries of comment. However, no one except possibly some positivists (e.g. Ernst Mach or Comte) has suggested that we simply drop the concept, possibly in favor of a mere "if...then" or function. Russell himself did not do that, and the attribution of causality to things and events in the world we live in seems indispensable. (You may want to recall Antony Flew's recovery of causation from Hume in *There Is a God*, pp. 57-64 & 139.)

(2). Russell says that reading Mill's *Autobiography* led him to give up the First Cause argument, because that argument led to the unanswerable question, "Who made God?" "If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause." But the Cosmological argument need not claim that everything has a cause, and, of course, it had better not. The argument in its best formulation (mind, no doubt) makes no claim about "everything," but only about the *physical* universe and physical things or events. Since there is no reason to think that "God" came into existence, he has no need of a cause.

(3). Russell says that "If there can be anything without a cause, it may just as well be the world as God." But that is true only if God is *the same kind of thing* as the physical world. God as commonly understood is not a physical entity. That is why the "elephant and tortoise" story is irrelevant.

(4). Russell says "There is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause." Well why not find some physical thing or event that did so, for a start. Otherwise the suggestion that the physical world could have come into being without a cause is a mere logical possibility—which is no argument for actuality—and an *ad hoc* one at that, introduced merely to save a theory, with no evidence in its own right.

(5). His final point is that there is no reason why the physical universe should not have always existed. "There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all." In other words. "Why not?" But "Why not?" is not a reason for anything, nor for the eternity of the physical universe ("matter"). Moreover, there seems to be a why not. There seems now to be some reason drawn from Physics to the effect that there was an origin of the physical universe. Moreover, there is a problem with the completion of an infinite series of causes up to the current state of the universe.

Admittedly, there is no end to the quibbles, some more worthy of attention than others, when it comes to this argument. But one ought to think more carefully than Russell does here, and especially when many are apt to take you as an "authority," which is certainly true in Russell's case.

Notes on Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*:

Freud explains how religion was historically necessary to sustain Civilization, but is now known to be without rational foundation. It will become unnecessary for “civilization” as science (psychoanalysis in particular) continues to progress. The “illusion” is religion and its future is to cease to be necessary and no longer exist.

Main points:

What “civilization” is. Pp. 6c-7a, 12a, 19. Must be protected from the individual. 7a.

The destructive human realities. “Instincts.” 6d-7a, 8b, 9b-c.

Coercion absolutely necessary for “civilization.” 9b-d

“Frustration” and instinctual wishes: incest, cannibalism and blood lust. 12d-13

The psychological structure of “super ego.” 13d-14

But its limited range and the many instinctual claims uncontrolled. 14c-d.

Ideals and artistic creation (15d-17c)—and religious ideas, “the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization.” 17d

What the religious ideas do. 22a and 23-24a

The role of the Father. 21b.

The need that gives rise to them. Last 2 lines on 26 and top 27

The infantile origins of God. Top 28 & 30c-d

“Roast pig” theorizing! Its basic structure.

The teachings of religions are not rationally grounded. 33a-35b

So what is the *force* back of those doctrines?

They are illusions: errors adopted for the sake of *wish fulfillment*. 38a-40a

Religious doctrines compared to scientific work. 40b-c

The failure of religion to guide civilization. 47c & 48c-d

Religious belief weakens the intellect 60d, and we can “grow up” and do without the “consolutions” of religious delusion. 62c-63

The hoped for outcome of dropping religion. 63b-d

Science is no illusion. 70, 71d