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Richard Miller

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Analytically inclined philosphers of religion have commonly assumed that 1) "God" must be defined before arguments for or against his existence can be evaluated 2) the history of religious beliefs is irrelevant to their justification. In this paper I apply the causal theory of reference to "God" and challenge both assumptions. If, as Freud supposes, "God" originates in the delusions of the mentally ill then it does not refer. On the other hand, if "God" originates in encounters with some Entity, no matter how vaguely conceived, then That is God.

This paper began several years ago with a simple idea. I had recently become convinced of the superiority of the views of Kripke, Donnellan and Putnam on reference to the descriptivist way in which it was traditionally conceived and I asked myself what significance this might have for the philosophy of religion. The standard analytic move of transforming the question "Does God exist?" into "Does 'God' refer? was an easy first step. From there I had only to apply the causal theory of reference to "God" and see what new insights developed.

The results have surprised me. This simple experiment has radically altered my views on the philosophy of religion. Assumptions which I never questioned I have abandoned; authors and arguments I took to be naive and irrelevant I now read seriously. I offer this paper in the hope that others will find the experiment as stimulating as I have found it. Not everyone will, certainly. Those who do not share the assumptions under which I formerly operated will find the theory less challenging. Also, those who have not been convinced by the causal theory of reference (CTR) will not be persuaded. I hope that there will be some interest in what I am trying to do, however, since the CTR is now widely, though not universally, accepted and has not yet, to my knowledge, been applied to the philosophy of religion.

A particularly clear example of the set of assumptions which CTR disturbs can be found in the Russell-Copleston BBC debate on the existence of God. Lord Russell and Father Copleston disagree about a great many things in that exchange, but it is on what they agree that I now wish to focus. I think that there are four mutually agreed assumptions which structure their dispute.[1] 1) Religion is philosophically interesting insofar as it consists of significant beliefs about reality. 2) The philosopher's job is to examine those beliefs in order to

determine whether or not they are rationally justified. 3) Existence claims are to be examined by moving them to the linguistic level. 4) Existence claims, now understood as reference claims, can be evaluated only after the meaning of key terms, *viz.*, "God," have been fixed by definition. Philosophy is in general understood as define-your-terms-and-deduce-the-consequences, and philosophy of religion becomes in large measure the definition of "God" as the omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, Creator of the world and the critical examination of the traditional arguments for His existence.

There have been other attempts to break out of the constraining set of assumptions which I describe above. Paul Tillich[2] and John Wisdom[3] independently but in parallel have tried to find a different language for philosophy of religion by rejecting the first assumption that I mentioned. Tillich, taking his inspiration from Heidegger, and Wisdom, taking his inspiration from Wittgenstein,[4] were concerned to give an analysis of religion which denied that it included beliefs in the normal sense at all. Hence the rational justification of these beliefs *via* the traditional arguments could be set aside. This sort of "enlightened" position that defends religion from rational criticism by denying that it says anything seems to be enjoying less favor than it once did. It is not my intention to provide a similarly "enlightened" reanalysis of religious language and belief. I still accept assumptions 1-3. The rejection of 4) is, as I will show, radical enough.

"Define your terms." To many philosophers this seems to be an innocent request. The need for definitions of key terms is not considered controversial. It ought to be. It is necessary to pin down a term so that one can tell to what it refers, but the way to do this is not necessarily by defining it.

The descriptivist theory of reference (DTR) holds that words refer to objects *via* some sort of description. The "description" could be a set of ideas in the speaker's mind, or a set of his beliefs, or, for those skeptical of such entities as minds, a set of behaviorally defined criteria of identification. Reference is, in descriptivist terms, a matter of matching or corresponding to or being picked out by the relevant description.

Reference can be either singular or general. A name or a description can refer singularly to individuals or generally to classes. "Egg-laying, hairy, warm-blooded, duck-billed animal which nurses its young" refers to platypuses because while they are not the only egg-layers they are the only beasts which fit the complete description. DTR would further explain the ability of speakers to use "platypus" to refer to the same class by interpreting "platypus" as an abbreviation for the description just mentioned.

DTR holds that in normal cases of singular reference if there is a referent it is that individual which uniquely fits the description. One can refer to Aristotle as "the student of Plato and the teacher of Alexander" or as "Aristotle." Names according to this theory are but disguised descriptions. Not all cases of singular

reference work out so well for DTR, and the theory must deal with hard cases as well. A description may be incomplete so that in fact many individuals fit the description though it is intended, and succeeds, in referring to one individual. "The student of Plato" can be used to refer to Aristotle though he was not the only such student. Worse yet, partially or even wholly false descriptions may refer. "The boy who chopped down his father's cherry tree and couldn't tell a lie" refers to Washington though false and many could not supply a true identifying description.

Sophisticated descriptivists try to handle the problems of incomplete and inaccurate descriptive phrases and of the inability of speakers to supply complete and accurate descriptive equivalents of names by making reference depend on implied open-ended sets of descriptions which may not be fully conscious to language users. When using a name or an incomplete or inaccurate descriptive phrase the speaker may be alleged to "have in mind" some description which is sufficient to pick out the intended referent and only the intended referent. In the case of our first President a speaker might, if challenged on the historical inaccuracy of the cherry tree myth, claim to have meant "the President commonly purported to have chopped down his father's cherry tree."

Descriptivists explain the function of referential expressions as implicit or explicit descriptions. The variations in the way DTR handles cases which do not readily fit such a pattern have necessarily been excluded from this brief account, but I hope the general outline of this common theory has been made sufficiently clear.

The causal theory of reference (CTR) on the other hand holds that words refer to objects *via* their causal-historical connections with those objects. The necessary causal-historical connections are understood differently and some what vaguely by different proponents of CTR. The two early developers of the theory have recently disputed as to whether the theory should be expressed in semantic or in pragmatic terms.[6] Counter-attacks on CTR have come from descriptivists and a new rival to both CTR and DTR has appeared in the work of Colin McGinn.[7] Into the details of this lively and current debate among philosophers of language I do not intend to allow myself to be drawn in this paper. Any attempt to defend CTR from its critics would distract me from the task at hand, *viz.*, the application of CTR to the reference of "God."

The theory as I will employ it is largely Keith Donnellan's though, as indicated, an elaborate exposition or defense will not be attempted. This version of CTR states that there is one way, not the only way, in which words can be used to pick out things in which the causal-historical relations of referents and language-users are paramount. The basic cases of reference are the direct references of a language user to some referent, typically physically present in his immediate environment. The conditions under which direct reference takes place seem

intuitive, but it is difficult to state exactly what they are. (The problem will appear in another form later in this exposition when I will have occasion to describe "blocks.") Both names and descriptions can be used to directly refer to objects, but examples using names in direct reference are perhaps clearer. Suppose an explorer untrained in biology discovers curious beaver-like creatures which he tags with the name "platypus." The name sticks and can be used to successfully refer to platypuses though the explorer may know very little about them and be far from able to supply a unique identifying description. Indeed, for a long time no one may be able to supply such a description. Informally we all know how such tagging takes place and generally agree on what cases are and are not direct references even if we cannot describe necessary and sufficient conditions for this to take place.

Donnellan has also pointed out how descriptive phrases can be used in the same way. Direct reference is not limited to those words which are grammatically names. A description may be used referentially (non-descriptively) as the name of something which does not fit the description. Donnellan gives interesting examples of this. A speaker can use some descriptive phrase referentially in a question ("Who is the man drinking the martini?" refers in fact to a man drinking mineral water out of a martini glass.); an assertion ("Smith's murderer is insane." can refer to the prisoner in the courtroom who is acting so oddly even if he is innocent.); or command ("Bring me the book on the table." can be a request for the book beside the table.) Instead of postulating implicit identifying descriptions which neither speakers nor listeners may be able to supply without prompting the CTR denies that any expressed or implied true description need be present in anyone's mind for reference to succeed.[8]

Direct references, clear in particular cases though vague in the abstract, make possible remote references. Chains of remote reference may be built up from the anchor of a direct reference. Defenders of CTR hold that "George Washington" can still be used referentially though, obviously, George Washington is no longer present. When I refer to him now the fact that I have referred to him and not to Thomas Paine is due to the causal-historical chain leading from some direct references to George, and not to Thomas, *via* a chain of uses of the name, written and oral, culminating in my own case. I have many true beliefs about George Washington, not to mention the false ones, and so did other language users in the chain, but these true beliefs are neither necessary nor sufficient to make my use of "George Washington" refer to the famous Virginia farmer. My four year old daughter, for example, was told the cherry tree fable by her nursery school teacher and this represents the sum total of her "knowledge" of George Washington. Despite this, she can refer to George Washington because her use is traceable to her teacher's which is part of a chain which originates in a fabled but not imaginary George Washington.

It is not always the case that a single direct reference anchors the chain. The original direct reference may not be traceable to a single individual. In normal cases remote references are grounded in multiple direct references which may even be widely separated in time. For example, remote references to Jerusalem are grounded in direct references to that city in the present and stretching back into antiquity.

Neither direct nor remote references fail due to mistaken beliefs about the referent so long as appropriate causal-historical conditions hold. Reference fails according to CTR only when the investigation of the causal ancestry of the name of description's use leads to what Donnellan calls a "block." He defines a block as "events that preclude any referent's being identified."[9] As far as I know no one has been able to supply necessary and sufficient conditions which would enable us to clearly distinguish histories which constitute blocks from those which do not but are merely defective or unusual in other ways. This weakness has not prevented the theory from making converts, myself among them, though I confess that I would feel more comfortable if the theory were more precise on this point. Donnellan is untroubled by the charge that the theory is vague at this crucial point and proceeds to clarify by examples. If a history ends in a fiction told as a reality, or an egregious misperception as in a trick of light being taken for a person or a scholar's assumption that a collection of fragments had a common author when it does not then these referential chains end in blocks. The point is that it is not merely that some speaker has made a serious mistake in identifying the referent but that he has used the name or description in a context in which there is no plausible candidate for referent.

Donnellan formulates the following rule for negative existence statements.

> (R) If N is a proper name that has been used in predicative statements with the intention to refer to some individual, then 'N does not exist' is true if and only if the history of those uses ends in a block.[10]

As I will show this rule establishes the philosophical relevance of the history of religion to the existence of God. In the next section I will explain how the application of CTR to religious language has important consequences for the philosophy of religion.

II

A subject of such enduring interest as religion has naturally developed a long and complex tradition of philosophical reflection. The part of that tradition which had always seemed to me the most deserving of attention was that of natural theology, by which I mean the philosophical examination of arguments for and against traditional religious beliefs especially the existence of God. Key terms

were defined and arguments carefully expounded, criticized and restated. On the other hand there existed another vigorous strand of philosophical reflection on religion which I felt justified in ignoring. The work of Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud represents a continuous tradition, which can be labeled "critique,"[11] that I felt could be dismissed as not really philosophical. These thinkers investigated or speculated about the origins of religion in general and of Christianity in particular. They took their work to be, and many intellectuals both within and outside of philosophy agreed, a convincing refutation of the rationality of religious belief. I took this claim to be naive and when one of my students echoed some version of critique I was dismissive.

Such speculations, I held, could have psychological interest but they have no bearing on whether or not it is rational to believe that God exists. Hans Küng, a noted Catholic theologian who has devoted great attention to the tradition of critique, is similarly dismissive of the claim that critique has such relevance.

> It does not follow—as some theologians have mistakenly concluded— from man's profound desire for God and eternal life, that God exists and eternal life and happiness are real. But some atheists, too, are mistaken in thinking that what follows is the nonexistence of God and the unreality of eternal life....
>
> Here, then, again, as earlier with Feuerbach and Marx, we have reached the crux of the problem, which is not at all difficult to understand and in the face of which any kind of projection theory, opium theory or illusion theory momentarily loses its suggestive power. *Perhaps* this being of our longings and dreams does *actually* exist....
>
> It should be observed that Freud has not in fact destroyed or refuted religious ideas in principle, and neither atheists nor theologians should ever read this into his critique of religion. For, by its very nature, psychological interpretation alone cannot penetrate to the absolutely final or first reality: on this point it must remain neutral in principle.[12]

To accept this belief in the metaphysical neutrality of critique leads to some unfortunate consequences. On the one hand some will be inclined to accept the truth of these psychological or historical accounts too readily since they wrongly believe that their truth makes no difference. This may result in dubious claims slipping by unchallenged. On the other hand it can lead to a failure to make the claims inherent in the theory clear. A general laxness prevails when the participants do not know what questions to ask or are not convinced that anything of moment is at stake.

CTR changes all this. Applying Donnellan's Rule R to "God" we have the following principle.

(G) If "God" is a proper name that has been used in predicative statements

with the intention to refer to some individual then "God does not exist"
is true if and only if the history of those uses ends in a block.

The antecedent is unquestionably true. Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud
can all be interpreted as arguing that this history of uses of the proper name
"God" ends in a block. Of course none had CTR in mind when he wrote but I
think that without much reconstruction one can see each as claiming this.
Depending on the version of critique in question the history leads us back to
man's projection of his own nature on the world as a whole or to the jealousy
and cowardice of the masses, or to the illusions of satisfaction concocted out of
the frustration of human needs in oppressive economic conditions, or to unre-
solved Oedipal anxieties and/or infantile experiences of contentment. Although
the notion of a block is not analyzed into necessary and sufficient conditions it
seems plain that if all the referential chains of "God" 's uses terminated in the
egregious misidentification of some internal state of the speaker then no referent
has been identified. If a strong enough version of critique were true "God" would
not refer. Pace Küng, critique is not metaphysically neutral.

One obvious objection must surely be faced.[13] Is it not possible, though this
admittedly goes against our expectations of how God would choose to reveal
Himself, that God planned for the human race to formulate an idea of Him in,
for example, the way Freud describes? In creating the world according to Divine
plan does not God become part of the causal history of "God" even if the
immediate causes are just as critique hypothesizes. If all events are part of God's
plan then natural causes such as Oedipal conflicts could be used as instruments
of the Divinity to reveal Himself. Does not this possibility show that Freud's
hypothesis is compatible with "God" referring and that no account of naturalistic
causes of religious experience or belief constitutes a block?

I answer by admitting that there could exist a Being with some or even all of
the attributes commonly ascribed to God to have planned that humans should
evolve, develop Oedipal feelings and resolve them in many instances by coming
to believe in God, speaking of God and passing on this language and these
beliefs to others. I deny that this possibility shows the metaphysical neutrality
of critique. If there were a Being who matched our beliefs in God so fortuitously
it would not be God. Donnellan is perfectly correct when he says that, in a
parallel case, if parents made up the Santa Claus legend and told it to children
as fact that constitutes a block even if there does happen to be a jolly old elf
who delivers presents on Christmas Eve. this elf is not Santa. Indeed, there is
no Santa Claus.

But does the Divine Being's choice of Oedipal conflicts as the natural means
of bringing about belief in Himself not constitute a crucial difference? Unlike
the elf the Divine Being would play a part in the chain of causes leading up to

the word's use even though the role is very indirect. Not every causal relation between an object and a word's use will suffice to establish reference and it seems clear that in such a case reference could not be grounded in such a circuitous causal history. One must bear in mind that on the assumption of the creation of the world according to this being's plan it would bear exactly the same causal relation to "Santa Claus," "Paul Bunyon," "unicorn," and all other words without another claimant for the role of referent. Intuitions differ about whether Donnellan's elf is Santa or not but no one would want to maintain that this divine being was also a unicorn. God knew from creation and intended to bring about by natural means uses of all fictitious terms but He is not all fictitious beings. Likewise if a divine being were to bring about use of "God" in a way similar to the way mythical uses arise then I do not see why "God" would not also fail to refer.

Another objection is that, as I have admitted, CTR is not the whole story on reference. It is more plausible to hold that it is only one, though the most common and important, mechanism of reference. The failure of "God" to refer in virtue of its causal-historical relations to God, if that is what critique establishes, does not show that "God" does not refer. If "God" were typically used attributively as an abbreviation for "whatever or whoever is the omnipotent, omniscient Creator etc." then my conclusions would have to be revised. I will admit that "God" is often used this way by philosophers but I suspect that only philosophers use "God" this way and that they only do so acting in that capacity. I have no objection to those who take words in common usage and employ them in different ways for specialized uses provided this serves some purpose. I am not sure what purpose is served by discussing the existence of the god of the philosophers. The concern of most common people, and I include myself in that category, is rather with the existence of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If I am correct "God" is used referentially and not attributively outside of specialized philosophical contexts in this culture.

III

It is a commonplace that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the three great historical religions. They are also the most important in world culture at present both in terms of numbers of adherents and of vitality. But by saying that they are the historical religions we do not say that they are the most important historical religious forces, we say that the religions are themselves historical. Traditional Judaism, Christianity and Islam describe God interacting with human communities and revealing Himself to them from time to time. He reveals His name to humans but He cannot communicate His nature to them as this is beyond human comprehension. "God," "Yahweh," "Allah," are names of a Being

encountered by certain actual historical individuals; Moses, Abraham, Paul, Mohammed. "God," and similar names are used referentially to pick out the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not attributively to pick out whatever or whoever is omnipotent, etc.

To grasp this point is to see that the objection that CTR with its naturalistic motivations is inevitably biased against religion in favor of critique is incorrect. CTR is the implicit theory of both critique and of the historical religions which it attacks. This also tends to explain why non-philosophers are inclined to see more relevance in critique than in, for example, the ontological argument. Unlike philosophers blinded by a descriptive theory of reference they see the historical validity of religion as essential rather than incidental.

CTR shows critique to be a philosophically sophisticated challenge to the self-understanding of the historical religions. It attacks these religions on their own ground. It denies the truth of what they have always considered essential. Beginning with textual criticism, applying serious objective standards to the Bible as a literary-historical document, the extent of the mythical and poetic nature of the text was revealed. The human authors, understandably enough, did not write history in the modern style with respect for modern standards of accuracy. Their purposes were simply different from those of modern historians. The validity of much of the textual criticism is apparent to all but the most doctrinaire conservatives. Radical critique simply took this one step further in speculating that the story of God's interaction with man is entirely a creature of fantasy.

There is a tendency on the part of those who still identify with one of these religious traditions to accept critique in whole or in part. Indeed to reject it as completely false, to say that neurotic impulses and/or wishful thinking have absolutely no part in anyone's religious beliefs is a rather desperate response. I hope that in the previous section I have shown how the extreme liberal reaction to accept critique completely and so interpret all the miraculous and revelatory parts of the history as having naturalistic causes and still accept the tradition is problematic. The consequence of such a view, whether intended or not, is that God does not exist.

These considerations have forced me, and I hope will force others, to face the question: Is there a version of critique which is at once plausible and powerful enough to refute the reference claims of the historical religions? I would answer that at present there is not. The suggestion which I made earlier that critique describes the history of religious language, in the Judeo-Christian tradition at least, as originating in a block is complicated by the fact that "God" is multiply grounded in direct references. The Judeo-Christian understanding of history is that God has repeatedly encountered man, in the prophets of the Old Testament and beyond. Others would add that God directly encounters many anonymous

men and women in their daily lives in the present as well as in the past. This complicates matters for critique. If the causal chain leading back from present uses converged on just one or at most a few cases, as in the case of the scholar mistakenly concluding that a heap of fragments from diverse sources all had a common author whom he proceeds to call Homer, it would be far easier to show that the history ended in a block. If the reference claim rests exclusively on the story of Moses then the debunking of that tale would be sufficient to refute it.

A version of critique which would be strong enough to deny the reference of "God" would have to be very strong indeed. It would have to show that all the ostensible direct references to "God" were radically defective. Existing versions of critique have a power and plausibility that should not be underrated. Clearly, projection, delusion and plain wishful thinking are elements of the religious life of many. Significantly, there have been numerous instances of bizarre and pathological behavior among those who have claimed direct contact with the Deity. It would be foolish to deny critique its element of truth but the prospects for a complete debunking of religion along these lines are dim.

Any economic or sociological critique which traces religious experience back to specific historical conditions in a society at a particular point in its development, as in Marx and Nietzsche, will fail to account for all direct reference claims. No such theory that I could forsee would be adequate to explain Ezekiel, Paul, and Francis of Assisi in terms of common cultural forces acting on all three.

Freud's critique is the most serious challenge. Read with sympathy it is more psychological than historical.[14] His theories would trace the origins of religious experience and belief to very basic human experiences; feelings of warmth, closeness and oneness with a human mother and/or feelings of guilt, love, aggression and fear of a human father. A psychological theory of this type might be in a better position to explain how religious experience could arise in a wide variety of cultures as long as humans are born of woman and have mixed feelings about their fathers. A Freudian theory could more easily explain the (nearly?) universal existence of religion in human culture.

While in the long run Freudianism of all the versions of critique offers the stiffest challenge, at present it falls far short of blocking the reference claims of religion. The problem is that while some very common and basic experiences can be noted as likely causes of religious experience and belief these are plainly not sufficient causal conditions and we do not even know what sufficient psychological causes of religious beliefs would be like. Obviously not all humans with these common experiences turn out the same. Religious experience is unlikely to have uniform psychic causes because religious experience is itself extremely diverse. The religious man is not a simple character type like "the miser," or "the magnanimous man" who could in principle be explained in a unilinear way. At times through loss of perspective it may appear as if all those

who claim direct experience of God are cut from the same cloth; if, for example, one were to focus exclusively on a small religious community for a short period of time like mid-17th Century Puritans in Massachusetts. But a glance at such works as William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* quickly puts this delusion to rest. I am no more sanguine that we will find factors common to the personalities of Ezekiel, Paul and Francis of Assisi than that we should discover common factors in their economies.

Let me make my final position on this issue plain. In principle critique could refute reference claims for "God." In practice it falls far short of doing so chiefly due to the unacknowledged variety of persons claiming to ground such reference claims. Successful critique would have to recognize the diversity of religious experience and provide separate and sufficient naturalistic explanations of the most important types. This is a bigger job than Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, or Freud attempted. But critique fails not because it can be philosophically proven to be metaphysically irrelevant. Its weaknesses are factual and theoretical and could be remedied by some broader, more sophisticated future critique.

IV

I would like to conclude this paper by briefly mentioning what I consider a more positive contribution of CTR to the philosophy of religion. While CTR increases the seriousness of critique's challenge it diminishes another. One of the greatest difficulties facing the rational defender of religious belief is the embarrassing multiplicity of faiths. No matter how cogently one justifies one's belief the objection threatens that there are, after all, so many different religions and only one at most could possibly be true.

The accusation goes back at least as far as Epicurus and was used with masterful grace by Hume in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. The multiplicity of religious belief is used as an argument against all. If the reasons used to support one religion can be used, mutatis mutandis, to support contradictory religious traditions just as well then such reasons cannot be used to rationally support any. Reasons, whether moral experience, religious experience, miracles, the order of the natural world or revelation, which support both Zeus and Yahweh support neither. Skillfully used this argument can make any option other than atheism seem ethnocentric at best and bigoted at worst. My feeling is that such an argument, regardless of how much we suspect its cogency, is very persuasive.

One response to the embarrassment is to limit the claims of natural theology to the defense of a minimal set of beliefs compatible with all major religions. The tactic is to avoid such divide-and-conquer gambits by finding a defensible lowest common denominator of man's religious belief. The reason I have trouble accepting a lowest common denominator is that I can see none that would strike

most people as both true and meaningful. It is at this point that CTR comes to our aid. CTR allows us to dispose of the embarrassment of a God of the Hebrews, God of the Arabs, God of the Hindus etc. These could all be different names for the same Being *even if there is no significant overlap in belief about His nature*.

Despite wide and deep differences of belief about the nature of "Yahweh," "Allah," "Brahma," or even such impersonally conceived entities as "Tao," and "Nirvana," they may all be different names for a Being, variously and dimly understood by different cultures, who has interacted with human communities throughout history. I do not find it implausible that there have been genuine Divine-human encounters with diverse human cultures. If that is in fact true then we could agree that all men address the same God no matter how differently they conceive Him. Nor do we have to as a consequence minimize or ignore the importance of the differences. They remain significant and imminently discussible even if they do not determine reference. Many can find unity in a common object of worship within diversity of conception and practice.

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NOTES

1. Bertrand Russell and F. C. Copleston, "The Existence of God," in *Philosophy of Religion*, ed. John Hick (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 282-301.

2. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

3. John Wisdom, "Gods," *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society,* (1944-5).

4. It no longer seems odd to find Wittgensteineans and Heideggereans not only talking about the same issue but saying essentially the same thing since the publication of Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

5. Readers who are unfamiliar with the causal theory of reference would profit from Stephan Swartz' introduction to *Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) upon which my brief descriptions in this paper are largely based.

6. Kripke's criticism of Donnellan occurs in "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* II, (1977). Donnellan's position is found in "Reference and Definite Description," and "Speaking of Nothing" both in Swartz, op. cit. and in "The Contingent A Priori and Rigid Designators," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* II, (1977). He answers Kripke's objections in "Speaker's References, Description and Anaphora," in *Syntax and Semantics*, ed. Cole (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

7. Colin McGinn not only develops a competing theory in "The Mechanism of Reference," *Synthese*, 49, 1981, but also summarizes the major criticisms of CTR adding some of his own.

8. All these examples are from "Reference and Definite Descriptions."

9. "Speaking of Nothing," p. 237.

10. "Speaking of Nothing," p. 239. Donnellan adds minor qualifications omitted here.

11. All these figures are discussed at length in Hans Küng's *Does God Exist?*, trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

12. Kung, pp. 301-2.

13. I am endebted to the editor for bringing this objection, which I now see as obvious, to my attention.

14. My understanding of Freud has been sharpened by W. P. Alston's "Psychoanalytic Theory and Theistic Belief," in *Faith and the Philosophers*, ed. John Hick, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964).