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Frank B. Dilley

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The implicit argument can be reconstructed as follows:

Rational inquiry is possible only if there are a priori criteria for ascribing intrinsic probabilities.

Rational inquiry is possible

Therefore,

There are such criteria.

This argument would be a good one if both its premises were acceptable, but what reason do we have for accepting the first premise? Many philosophers will think that there are clear alternatives. One that comes to mind is that contingent propositions have no a priori or intrinsic probability. Rather, their epistemic status is entirely a function of contingent features of the knower and her environment. For example, the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs is a function of contingent features of the perceiver and of the perceptual situation. Likewise, there are no (or few) necessary or a priori relations of support between contingent propositions. Rather, evidence relations are a function of contingent features of the reasoner, together with contingent facts about what is a reliable indication of what. On this view, there would be "correct criteria of inductive inference," but these would be tied to contingent features of human cognition and of the actual world, as opposed to a priori facts about intrinsic probabilities. Given the current popularity of such a view, one would like to see Swinburne say more about it.

In summary, Swinburne has provided us with a clearly written, well-developed version of a Bayesian approach to epistemology. The book explores many issues that are relevant to such an approach, while spending less time with others that would typically get more attention in an introduction to epistemology. Accordingly, readers who want to learn more about Bayesianism in epistemology, or who want to explore relevant issues more deeply, will be well served by this book. Those who come to the book with doubts about that approach, or about Swinburne's version of it, might be less satisfied.

The Impossibility of God, edited by Michael Martin and Ricki Monnier. Prometheus Books, 2003. Pp. 438. \$32.00.

FRANK B. DILLEY, University of Delaware (Emeritus)

This is a remarkable collection of articles. Some atheists have argued that the concept of God is meaningless, and others have argued that God's existence is improbable, but the editors of this collection say that they have gathered articles which argue that the existence of God is logically impossible, impossible in the same sense in which round squares are impossible. The editors helpfully introduce each section of the book, providing a summary of the central thesis of each individual paper, but

do not provide an index which would have been helpful in locating theists whose works the authors of the articles are criticizing. The editors are Michael Martin, an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy from Boston University, and Ricki Monnier (Ph.D in mathematical logic), who is the Director of "The Disproof Atheism Society" founded in 1994. Discussions among members of this society gave rise to this collection, according to the editors. All of the works have been written since 1948, except for the appendix written by Baron D'Holbach in 1770.

The God being attacked varies slightly from article to article but the concepts are all versions of classical Christian theism — God as the perfect being or as the being most worthy of worship, or as the being than which nothing greater can be conceived (p. 17). Theodore Drange (p. 185) provides a helpful list of twelve attributes that he is using in his contribution, and his list seems to apply generally throughout the collection: God is perfect; immutable; transcendent; nonphysical; omniscient; omnipresent; personal; free; all-loving; all-just; all-merciful; and the creator of the universe. Among other possible attributes he also lists omnipotence. Several of the authors acknowledge that their arguments are directed against the classical doctrine of God and do not apply to some of the other variations that many theists now favor.

The editors group the articles in this collection under five headings, definitional disproofs (difficulties in the definition of God), deductive evil disproofs (arguments that there is a *logical* conflict between God and the existence of evil), doctrinal disproofs (inconsistency between attributes of God and particular religious doctrines), multiple attributes disproofs (inconsistency between two attributes, mostly devoted to conflicts between immutability/eternality and omniscience, benevolence and agency/creation) and single attribute disproofs (based on inconsistency within one attribute, mostly concerning omnipotence or omniscience).

Readers of this journal are aware that many *contemporary* theists, past and present, challenge the consistency of the particular set of attributes in classical Christian theistic conception of God — many have challenged whether immutability can be affirmed alongside personal qualities such as loving and knowing, or whether omniscience can include future free actions, or whether omnipotence is consistent with creaturely power and freedom, and some define creation differently from the classical doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Many of *these* theists would say that a God who is perfect, or the being most worthy of worship, even that a being than which nothing greater can be conceived has a revised set of concepts than the "inconsistent" one attacked in this collection. It should be pointed out that with one or two exceptions and several attacks on Alvin Plantinga's version of the free-will defense, the authors of these chapters are not engaged in dialogue with Plantinga, John Hick, Alston, Hasker, Wainwright, Swinburne etc. or process theists.

What *about* the definitional inconsistencies claimed in this collection? This first section contains five chapters, two by J. N. Findlay, and one each by John Pollock, Douglas Walton and James Rachels. The Findlay disproof is based on the ontological argument and on Kant's view that existence is not a predicate. Such a God, a necessarily existing God, is a

contradiction in terms. John Pollock offers a similar line of argument. Findlay admits (p. 28) that his argument would not bother anyone who did not claim that God's existence had to be necessary or who has some other notion of necessity in mind or who does not agree with the Ontological Argument

Walton's claim is that God cannot exist because to say of God that God is virtuous depends upon God's being virtuous "in our sense" and that virtue in our sense requires such things as courage in the face of pain and suffering, but God cannot ever be at risk. He does admit that the classical tradition has never claimed that God is virtuous in "exactly the same sense of the term" that applies to humans (p. 42), and asks for further definition of divine virtue.

Rachels argues that a God worthy of worship cannot demand "unrestricted" devotion because that would mean renouncing our moral autonomy, which makes God unworthy of worship after all. He is apparently supposing, as many do, that God does command things that go against our moral autonomy. However, many would argue that because God is good, no command of God violates that autonomy.

The second section is defined completely in terms of the "logical" problem of evil and conducted largely in the terms posed by Mackie in 1955. There is no discussion whatsoever of the usual theistic rejoinder that since God might have good reasons (known or unknown to us) for allowing evil and therefore that the logical conflict can be resolved and the debate shifted to the "evidential" problem of evil. There is some discussion directed at Plantinga's version of the free-will defense, but no discussion of other free-will defenses, such as that of John Hick, which this reviewer has always regarded as much more attractive. Plantingians may want to defend his defense, but it never seemed to this reviewer that the most telling of the objections to Plantinga's defense is that it is *logically* defective. My own objections have been moral ones.

The third section offers several types of claimed inconsistency, and I will mention three of them. Richard Schoenic claims that it would be inconsistent to claim that God is good when God is unfair in allowing those who achieve the level of moral accountability to go to heaven or hell while denying that possibility to those who do not reach the level of moral accountability and are left in limbo, unable to achieve heaven. Raymond Bradley's moral argument for atheism claims that God is not moral because God is displayed in the Bible as doing evil things. Christine Overall provides two contributions based on claims that being the doctrine of miracles is in conflict with the claim that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent.

As I have mentioned earlier, many contemporary theists have independently conceded some of the points raised by authors here in the fourth and fifth sections of this collection. Theodore Drange provides brief summaries of many of the conflicts which atheists have claimed to be embodied in the classical set of the qualities attributed to God. Mostly the issues are between immutability and creation/loving/interaction with creatures, and whether omniscience needs to be redefined in terms of creaturely freedom. Readers are familiar with the arguments raised

here, and many have gone on to develop a different set of concepts which seem to them to be consistent. This reviewer has nothing to add on these particular issues, but will comment on some of the more novel arguments raised by David Blumenfield, by Lawrence Resnick, by Tomis Kapitan and Matt McCormick, and by J. I. Cowan, and Patrick Grim.

Blumenfield's logical objection is that since an omnipotent being cannot know fear, frustration or despair, God cannot be omniscient, which assumes, of course, that such qualities as facing fear or despair would be consistent with a perfect being. Resnick claims that God cannot be a perfect creator because to say that creating this world is perfect implies that there were some alternative choices that God could have made, but since God is perfect there are no alternatives. Kapitan (and McCormick) offer claims that agency is incompatible with omniscience. The reason? Appealing to the "principle of least effort" (p. 285 and elsewhere), Kapitan argues that to be motivated to do something, an agent has to intend to do something to make something better than would otherwise have happened, but an omniscient being already knows what will happen, and thus lacks motivation for acting. On my quick reading, he may have left out the possibility that God knows that what will happen will do so *because* God acted in this way. John Stuart Mill responded to the accusation that determination leads to fatalism, hence robs agents of any reason for acting, in this way — what will happen will happen because of what the agent did.

Grim presents four arguments claiming that omniscience is self-contradictory — the one offered elsewhere by Kretzmann and Kenny that God cannot know indexicals (can know only *that* I know, not *as* I know), the second is the divine liar problem (God does not believe that this statement is true. If the statement is true and God does not believe it, then God cannot be said to know all truths. If it is false, then the statement must be true, hence God believes a falsehood), the third and fourth are based on Boolean and Cantorean arguments. Readers whose knowledge extends to such issues can work out replies on their own.

Martin and Monnier are to be commended for providing this collection of logical disproofs of God, gathered from sources not always easily accessible to many readers, and in a relatively inexpensive edition. The introductions and statements of key theses are well done and helpful. Rachels observes (p. 57) that his argument will probably not persuade anyone to abandon belief in God because arguments rarely do. It should be added that if compelling arguments do not cause anyone to abandon belief in God it is unlikely that arguments which are not compelling will have that effect. Whether or not readers of this journal think that the arguments presented in this collection actually apply to the classical set of divine attributes or to their own particular conceptions of God, they should welcome the collection of these 33 articles — written by 23 people, published originally in 16 journals and 5 books, with one piece written specifically for this collection. Many of the articles are familiar, but most probably are not because, as the editors say, philosophy of religion collections do not often include writings by atheists, except in cases of discussions of the problem of evil. Also few of these articles appeared in

journals dedicated to philosophy of religion, none from this journal....

The book jacket proclaims that the collection presents "a diverse collection of arguments for the stunning conclusion that God does not exist," but what it presents would in no way stun readers who have kept up with theistic philosophy of religion during the period that these essays were written. Recent theism is less preoccupied with defending classical definitions and are more preoccupied with probability arguments, the evidential argument from evil, religious pluralism vs inclusivism or exclusivism, debates over whether beliefs in atheism can themselves be rationally justified, debates over the adequacy of materialist accounts of consciousness, whether religious experience can be taken as cognitive, whether it is rational to accept religious views as basic, and so on. Some of the authors whose contributions have been collected in this volume have also written arguments against the improbability of revised versions of theism. I would hope that the editors would follow up with a collection of articles addressed to these other issues.

Mystical Experience of God: A Philosophical Inquiry, by Jerome Gellman. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. ix and 148. Price \$84.95 (hardback); \$24.95 (paperback).

KAI-MAN KWAN, Hong Kong Baptist University

The Argument from Religious/Mystical Experience for the existence of God (hereafter ARE) has been reformulated rigorously by analytic philosophers like Richard Swinburne, Keith Yandell and William Alston in the past few decades. Since then it has attracted a lot of critical discussions among professional philosophers. Jerome Gellman, a professor in the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, has emerged as one of the ablest contemporary defenders of this argument. In his first book on religious experience, *Experience of God and the Rationality of Theistic Belief*, Gellman defends the strong rationality of trusting the validity of experiences of God, and responds to many objections. Gellman now thinks that the strong ARE, which concludes that we should be taking mystical experiences of God as evidence for their validity until shown otherwise, is vulnerable to criticism because it depends on a controversial thesis, strong-foundationalism. So Gellman reformulates the ARE in weak-foundationalist terms.

This book has six chapters. After introducing the issue in chapter one, Gellman spells out the outline of his revised ARE in chapter two. Strong foundationalism maintains that a sensory belief is *sufficiently* justified by the relevant sensory experience independent of any confirming beliefs or evidence. For Gellman, this position seems to be too strong. In contrast, weak foundationalism, while still maintaining that a belief is justified *somewhat* by the relevant sensory experience, the latter's evidential support on its own is not sufficient. It requires support by other experiences. For example, my present impression that I see a tree gives me ini-