F-Duplicates and Trivialization: A Reply to Speaks

Tien-Chun Lo

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A REPLY TO SPEAKS

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In this paper, I will defend a strategy for employing perfect being theology that Jeff Speaks calls "restriction strategy." In Section I, I will outline what the restriction strategy is and explicate Speaks's objection to it. In Section II, I will propose a response to Speaks's objection. In Section III, the response will be refined to avoid objections. My contention will be that this refined version of perfect being theology avoids Speaks's objection, and therefore can help theists find what divine attributes God has.

Perfect being theologians attempt to answer the question of what divine attributes God has by investigating what properties a perfect being, or a greatest possible being, are supposed to have. There are various ways to articulate this line of thought, and each of them has its own strengths and weaknesses. In this paper, I will defend a strategy for employing perfect being theology which is called *the restriction strategy* by Speaks.[1] In Section I, I will outline what the restriction strategy is and explicate Speaks's objection to it. In Section II, I will propose a response to Speaks's objection. In Section III, the response will be refined to avoid objections. My contention will be that this refined version of perfect being theology avoids Speaks's objection, and therefore can help theists find what divine attributes God has.

1. The restriction strategy and Speaks's objection

Perfect being theology holds that God is the greatest possible being. Based on this ontological claim, perfect being theologians attempt to answer the question of what properties can be appropriately attributed to God. There are, broadly speaking, two main ways to approach it. First, a perfect being theologian may focus on God himself by asking whether God would be better were he to have a certain property than were he to lack it.[2] The idea

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[1]See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 24–28.
[2]See, for example, Leftow, *God and Necessity*, 7–12.

goes as follows. Suppose that *F* is a property such that God would be better were he *F* than were he not *F*. In other words, God would be worse than he could be if he were not *F*. However, since God is the greatest possible being, he cannot be worse. Therefore, God must be *F*. However, Speaks points out a serious problem with the foregoing procedure.[3] He objects that it conflicts with a basic assumption of perfect being theology. Recall our supposition that a non-*F* God, other things being equal, is worse than an *F* God. If so, then God would not be the greatest possible being were he not *F*. For if he were not *F*, he would be worse than some being, i.e., an *F* God. But a greatest possible being is, by definition, not worse than anything. Thus, if God is *F*, then God is necessarily *F*; Otherwise, he may fail to be the greatest possible being, which is contrary to the assumption of perfect being theology. Therefore, the foregoing procedure leads to not only the consequence that God is *F* but also the consequence that God is necessarily *F*. However, if God is necessarily *F*, then there will be no possible world in which God is not *F*. We are therefore not in a position to know whether an *F* God, other things being equal, will be worse than a non-*F* God. For the comparison here supposedly requires two possible worlds: the closest world in which God is *F*, and the closest world in which God is not *F*. Nonetheless, as noted above, there is no possible world as the latter. Thus, the perfect being theologian is unable to compare an *F* God with a non-*F* God. Speaks calls this problem "the problem of triviality."[4]

To avoid the problem of triviality, a perfect being theologian may turn to another kind of approach of perfect being theology: focus on properties themselves instead of God and find a procedure to figure out what properties are great-making properties, i.e., properties that a greatest possible being could not fail to have. Since the procedure, as we will see shortly, involves not only God but also other beings, the problem of triviality, which arises due to one's focus on God alone, will not apply.

The restriction strategy is an approach of this second sort. In other words, it provides a procedure by which we can judge whether a property is a great-making property or not. Before I explain this procedure, let me introduce some notations which will be used in this paper. First, I use the term "x_w" to mean *x* in the world *w*. Second, I use the sentence "$x_w > y_v$" to express the transworld comparative claim that *x* in *w* is better than *y* in *v*.[5] Third, let us call, following Speaks's usage, two entities x_w and y_v are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) one of them is *F*, (ii) the other is not *F*, and

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[3] See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 30–36.

[4] As mentioned above, the aim of this paper is to defend the restriction strategy of perfect being theology. Hence, I will not discuss the first approach further. For a defence for it, see Leftow, "Perfection and Possibility."

[5] See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 14–15. As Speaks notes, this requires possibilist quantification. I believe that perfect being theologians can avoid the possibilist commitment by quantifying over values of greatness which can be assigned to every possible being. However, for the sake of simplicity, I will work with possibilist quantification in the rest of this paper.

(iii) x_w and y_v are as similar as it is possible for two things which differ with respect to F-ness to be.[6] Given these, we can now state the greatness condition of the restriction strategy as follows:

[P3] $\Diamond \exists x Fx$ & $\forall x \forall y$ ((Fx_w & $\neg Fy_{w^*}$ & x_w and y_{w^*} are F-duplicates) $\rightarrow x_w > y_{w^*}$)[7]

[P3] specifies what it is for a property F to be a great-making property: (i) F is possibly instantiated by something, and (ii) for every pair of F-duplicates $<x_w, y_{w^*}>$ such that x_w is F and y_{w^*} is not F, x_w is greater than y_{w^*}.[8]

The following example may help us make better sense of [P3]. Consider the property of being wise. Now although some not-wise being, e.g., a (morally) good but not-wise person, is better than some wise (but morally bad) being, e.g., a supervillain, it does not mean that being wise is not a great-making property as [P3] does not require that everything wise is better than everything not-wise. Instead, when we discern whether being wise is a great-making property, our comparison is restricted to every pair of wisdom-duplicates, i.e., every two things alike except for the fact that one is wise but the other is not. That is, we compare a wise and good person with their wisdom-duplicate who is not-wise but good, a wise but bad person with their wisdom-duplicate who is not-wise and bad, and so on. Here whether a not-wise but good person is better than a wise but bad person has no bearing on whether being wise is a great-making property. As it is plausible that every wise being, including good and bad ones, is better than its wisdom-duplicate(s) which is not wise, the proponents of the restriction strategy can conclude that being wise is a great-making property according to [P3].[9]

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[6]See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 25–26. The biconditional here is merely an informal gloss. We will see in Section II how the notion of F-duplicates can be explicated more precisely.

[7]I follow Speaks's numbering in his book. See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 26.

[8](i) is indispensable in [P3]; otherwise, the property of knowing that $1 + 1 = 3$ will also be a great-making property because it, as an impossible property, trivially satisfies clause (ii) in [P3].

[9]Some might disagree as they might think that a foolish Nazi is better than a wise one. The reason behind this thought seems to be that a wise Nazi can bring about greater evils than a foolish Nazi. I do not find this reason compelling as it does not seem to me that the mere ability to bring about greater evils, which are not actually exercised, will make one worse than one's wisdom-duplicate(s). (Recall that we are considering two Nazis who differ with respect to their wisdom but not with respect to morality, that is, they are alike with respect to what evil actions they have done, what wicked intentions/desires they form, what moral characters they have, and so on). For consider two saints such that (i) they are equally good in terms of morality, but (ii) one is much wiser than the other to the extent that the former can bring about greater evils than the latter. It does not seem that the wiser saint is worse than the other one even though the wiser one has the ability to bring about greater evils which, of course, is not actually exercised. (For if the ability were exercised, then the wiser one would, contrary to the supposition, not be as morally good as the less wise one). That said, the foregoing reply does not solve a more general problem that an anonymous referee points out to me, i.e., that it may be the case that two properties are good on their own, but they fail to be so when taken together. I find that this problem of interaction is an interesting one which is certainly worth exploring. However, as the aim of this paper is to defend the restriction strategy from Speaks's objection, I am afraid that I am not able, due to the length and scope of this paper, to address the problem of interaction here.

We have seen how the restriction strategy helps theists find great-making properties, and therefore answers the question of what properties the greatest possible being, i.e., God, must have.[10] Now it is time to turn to Speaks's objection to the restriction strategy. Consider the following property: having a well-functioning circulatory system. Speaks argues that this property will be a great-making property if we take [P3] to be the greatness condition.[11] Recall that in order to know whether this property is a great-making property, the proponents of the restriction strategy need to compare two things alike except for the fact that one has a well-functioning circulatory system while the other lacks it. Now it is noteworthy that having a well-functioning circulatory system entails the property of having a circulatory system, the property of having a body, the property of being material, and so on.[12] Thus, when we compare two things alike except for the fact that one has a well-functioning circulatory system while the other lacks it, we are comparing a being which has a well-functioning circulatory system with another being which shares almost all its properties, including having a circulatory system, in common with the former being but *lacks* a well-functioning circulatory system. In other words, we are comparing a being which has a well-functioning circulatory system with a being which has a poorly-functioning circulatory system. Since every being with a well-functioning circulatory system is better than its having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicate(s), which only has a poorly-functioning circulatory system, the proponents of the restriction strategy have to say that according to [P3], having a well-functioning circulatory system is a great-making property. But surely, perfect being theologians do not want to say that God, arguably an immaterial being, has a well-functioning circulatory system. The property of having a well-functioning circulatory system is not the only property which poses challenge to the restriction strategy. As Speaks notes, the properties like being a perfectly functioning dishwasher and being a well-mixed martini also satisfy [P3] but are not plausible candidates to be divine attributes.

Speaks has explored various possible replies to this problem but found none of them satisfactory.[13] I think that Speaks's criticisms of these replies are fair. Therefore, I will not discuss them in this paper. Instead, I will

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[10]It is noteworthy that the fact that a property *F* satisfies [P3] plus the assumption that God is the greatest possible being does not (logically) entail that God has *F*. That is, [P3] does not satisfy Speaks's "[Entailment]" condition. See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 12. I do not take this to be a serious problem. However, those who find the satisfaction of [Entailment] indispensable could make an additional assumption that the greatest possible being must have all properties satisfying [P3] on the ground that having these properties are, borrowing Anselm's words, "better without qualification than" lacking them.

[11]See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 26–28.

[12]Let us say that a property *F* entails another property *G* if and only if necessarily for all *x*, if *x* is *F*, then *x* is *G*. For instance, having a well-functioning circulatory system entails having a circulatory system because every (possible) being with a well-functioning circulatory system must have a circulatory system.

[13]See Speaks, *The Greatest Possible Being*, 28–38.

propose a reply which Speaks did not consider before. Before introducing the reply, it will be instructive to have a closer look at the idea of *F*-duplicates.

2. Reply to Speaks's objection

Two things are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) one of them is *F*, (ii) the other is not *F*, and (iii) they are as similar as it is possible for two things which differ with respect to *F*-ness to be. As noted above, this gloss needs explaining as one may be unsure about what the phrase "as similar as it is possible for two things which differ with respect to *F*-ness" exactly means. Let us start with a simple but bad definition: two things are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) one of them is *F*, (ii) the other is not *F*, and (iii) they share all properties except *F* in common.[14] This naïve definition is a non-starter as it has the disastrous consequence that no two objects which share at least one property in common can be *F*-duplicates of each other. For instance, suppose that two things which are *F*-duplicates share another property *G* in common. Now since one of these two things is *F*, it has the conjunctive property *F&G*. According to the naïve definition, the other thing should also have *F&G* because (i) these two things share all properties except *F* in common, and (ii) *F&G* is a property distinct from *F*. However, if the other thing has *F&G*, it will also be *F* as it is impossible to instantiate a conjunctive property without instantiating its conjuncts. This is contrary to our supposition that these two things are *F*-duplicates as both of them are *F*. A better definition is therefore called for.

I now propose a definition of *F*-duplicates which draws on the notion of *trivializing* properties proposed by Rodriguez-Pereyra in a paper regarding the principle of identity of indiscernibles.[15] Roughly speaking, trivializing properties (with regard to numerical identity) are properties such that sharing them *may* make things numerically identical. For instance, the conjunctive property *being identical to a and being green* is a trivializing property because everything which has this conjunctive property must be numerically identical to a.

It is not hard to see why the notion of trivializing properties (with regard to numerical identity) is relevant in the present context. When the opponents of the principle of identity of indiscernibles say that it is possible that two distinct things are indiscernible, they do not mean that it is possible that two distinct things share all their properties in common as distinct things cannot share trivializing properties with regard to numerical identity; otherwise, they will turn out to be numerically identical.[16] Likewise, in order to judge whether two things are as similar as it is possible for two

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[14]I start with this definition because it can help us understand a notion, i.e., the notion of trivializing properties, which plays an important role in my reply to Speaks's objection.

[15]See Rodriguez-Pereyra, "How not to Trivialize the Identity of Indiscernibles."

[16]In other words, if one takes these properties into account, then the principle of identity of indiscernibles will be trivially true. This is why they are called "trivializing" properties.

things which differ with respect to *F*-ness to be, we have to leave aside trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness, e.g., the conjunctive property *F&G*. For sharing this sort of trivializing properties (with regard to *F*-ness) in common will make both of them *F*, which is contrary to the supposition that one is *F* while the other is not.

As Rodriguez-Pereyra only provides an account of trivializing properties with regard to numerical identity, I need to generalize the notion of trivializing properties to other properties, e.g., the trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness. Before defining trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness, let us firstly have a look at Rodriguez-Pereyra's definition of trivializing properties with regard to numerical identity.

Rodriguez-Pereyra's definition goes as follows:

> [D5] *F* is a trivializing property (with regard to numerical identity) iff differing with respect to *F* may consist in differing with respect to some property about numerical identity.[17]

For instance, consider the conjunctive property *being green and being identical to a*. Since differing with respect to a conjunctive property just consists in differing with respect to (at least) one of the conjuncts, two things can differ with respect to this conjunctive property only if either they differ with respect to being green or they differ with respect to being identical to *a* (or both). Now suppose that two distinct green things differ with respect to this conjunctive property, namely that one has this conjunctive property but the other does not. As both of them are green, their difference with respect to the conjunctive property can only consist in their difference with respect to the other conjunct, i.e., *being identical to a*. Therefore, the conjunctive property *being green and being identical to a* is a trivializing property with regard to numerical identity because differing with respect to it *may* consist in differing with respect to some property about numerical identity, i.e., being identical to *a*. Now let us consider another example: the disjunctive property *being green or being identical to a*. Suppose that two things, say *x* and *y*, differ with respect to this property, or more specifically, that *x* has this property and *y* lacks it. Since this property is a disjunctive property, *y*, which lacks this property, must lack both disjuncts. On the other hand, there are three ways for *x* to *have* this disjunctive property: (i) by being green but not being identical to *a*, (ii) by being identical to *a* but not being green, and (iii) by being green and being identical to *a*. In the second case, since both *x* and *y* are not green, they do not differ with respect to *being green*. Thus, their difference can only consist in their difference with respect to the other disjunct, i.e., *being identical to a*. Therefore, the disjunctive property *being green or being identical to a* is a trivializing

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[17]I follow Rodriguez-Pereyra's numbering in his paper. See Rodriguez-Pereyra, "How not to Trivialize the Identity of Indiscernibles," 219. I slightly reformulate his definition so that the phrases in [D5] agree with my usage in this paper.

property because differing with respect to it may consist in differing with respect to *being identical to a* (when *x* and *y* are both green).

Given the notion of trivializing properties with regard to numerical identity, we can generalize it to all other properties. Let us define trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness as follows:

> [D6] *G* is a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness iff differing with respect to *G*-ness may consist in differing with respect to *F*-ness.

Given [D6], the conjunctive property *F&G* is a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness as differing with respect to this conjunctive property may consist in differing with respect to *F*-ness. Suppose that two things which are *G* differ with respect to this conjunctive property. As both of them are *G*, one is *F* while the other is not. In other words, in this case, their difference with respect to the conjunctive property consists in their difference with respect to *F*-ness. As a result, the notion of trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness helps explain why we should not take the conjunctive property *F&G* into account when we judge whether two things are *F*-duplicates.

Now let me add several points about [D6] in order to avoid potential misunderstandings. First, [D6] (and [D5] as well) draw on an explanatory relation which is antisymmetric. The following example may illustrate this point. As noted above, the conjunctive property *F&G* is a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness. However, *F* itself is not a trivializing property with regard to the conjunctive property *F&G*. For differing with respect to *F*-ness *never* consists in differing with respect to the conjunctive property *F&G*. Two things differ with respect to a conjunctive property *because* they differ with respect to (at least) one of its conjunct, but not vice versa. It is not the case that two things differ with respect to a certain property, say *F*, because they differ with respect to a conjunctive property of which *F* is a conjunct. Second, the explanatory relation in question is a hyperintensional one which should not be construed in a purely modal way.[18] For instance, some might think that if a property entails another property, then the former will be a trivializing property with regard to the latter. To see why this modal construal is mistaken, let us suppose that a theist holds that necessarily, every creature has the property of having an existence that depends on God. Then the property of being a philosopher entails the property of having an existence that depends on God. However, it does not follow that the property of being a philosopher is a trivializing property with regard to the property of having an existence that depends on God. For consider two objects, say Socrates and Homer, differ with respect to the property of being a philosopher. It is surely not because they differ with respect to the property of having an existence that depends on God, (as they, on the present supposition, share this property).

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[18]Though this does not deny that modal talks can sometimes be used to discern whether such a relation holds, as we have seen above.

Also, no object, whether a philosopher or not, can exist without having the property of having an existence that depends on God. Thus, it can never be the case that differing with respect to the property of being a philosopher consists in differing with respect to the property of having an existence that depends on God, as no pair of (created) objects can differ with respect to the latter property. For the same token, the property of being a philosopher is not a trivializing property with regard to properties like *existence* and *self-identity*, even though they are entailed by the property of being a philosopher.

We have seen that some properties, namely trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness like the conjunctive property *F&G*, are irrelevant when we compare a pair of *F*-duplicates. If one does not rule out these irrelevant properties, then the notion of *F*-duplicates will run into difficulties. Nonetheless, trivializing properties are not the only irrelevant properties. For instance, consider the property of having charge. This property is not a trivializing property with regard to the property of having mass, as differing with respect to the property of having charge surely does not consist in differing with respect to the property of having mass. However, when we judge whether two objects are having-mass-duplicates of each other, the property of having charge should be ruled out as well. For sharing the property of having charge will entail that both of them have mass (given the plausible assumption that all charged objects have mass). In order to rule out this sort of irrelevant properties, we need to leave aside not only (i) all trivializing properties with regard to the property of having mass but also (ii) all properties *entailing* the property of having mass, e.g., the property of having charge, and all trivializing properties with regard to them.

Now I suggest that Speaks's objection arises for some similar reason: Some irrelevant properties, e.g., having a circulatory system and having a body, are taken in account when one judges whether two objects are having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates. The underlying thought here is that when we are discerning whether having a well-functioning circulatory system is, other things being equal, better than lacking it, it is not enough to only compare some being which has a well-functioning circulatory system with another being which has a poorly-functioning circulatory system. Rather, we are more interested in the question of whether some being which has a well-functioning circulatory system, say a human, would also be better than some being, e.g., an immaterial angel, which is similar to that human enough, say having the same beliefs and desires, but has no circulatory system at all. Thus, when we compare having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates, the irrelevant properties like having a circulatory system should be ruled out too. In the previous passages, I have listed two kinds of irrelevant properties, i.e., (i) trivializing properties with regard to *F*-ness and (ii) trivializing properties with regard to any property entailing *F*-ness, which should not be taken into account in the context of

F-duplicates.[19] Now in order to rule out another kind of irrelevant properties discussed in this passage, we have to leave aside all properties *entailed by F*-ness (and trivializing properties with regard to them). As noted above, the property of having a circulatory system is a property entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system. According to the foregoing line of thought, the property of having a circulatory system, the property of having a body, and so on should not be taken into account when one judges whether two objects are having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates.

The foregoing considerations lead to the following definition of *F*-duplicates:

> [F1] Two things are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) one is *F*, (ii) the other is not *F*, and (iii) for every property *G*, if (a) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness, and (b) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to any property entailing or entailed by *F*-ness, then both of them are *G*.[20]

This definition helps us filter out the three kinds of irrelevant properties mentioned above. Now let us reconsider Speaks's objection according to which the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system satisfies [P3], and therefore is a great-making property. For this objection to work, it has to be the case that for every pair of having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates, the being with a well-functioning circulatory system is better than the other being which has no well-functioning circulatory system. However, the latter being may be, as noted above, an immaterial angel who is better, or at least not worse, than the former one when other things are equal. If so, then having a well-functioning circulatory system will not satisfy the greatness condition [P3]. In other words, the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system is *not* a great-making property, i.e., a property which the greatest possible being must have. This is exactly what perfect being theologians expect.

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[19]I assume, for the sake of simplicity, that every property is a trivializing property with regard to itself. Therefore, "properties entailing *F*-ness and trivializing properties with regard to them" can be shortened to "trivializing properties with regard to any property entailing *F*-ness." The assumption is not substantive. It is easy to rephrase my definition of *F*-duplicates without it.

[20]It is noteworthy that this notion of *F*-duplicates, thus defined, will lack a formal property which one might be tempted to attribute to it. One might think that if (i) *x* and *y* are *F*-duplicates, and (ii) *y* and *z* are *F*-duplicates, then *x* and *z* will be duplicates simpliciter, i.e., things exactly alike (qualitatively). The thought behind this is that if *x* and *y* only differs in whether they are *F*, and *y* and *z* only differs in whether they are *F*, then *x* and *z* will not be able to differ with respect to any property, including *F*-ness. Nevertheless, according to [F1], the formal property does not hold because *F*-duplicates may differ in whether they have some properties other than *F*-ness like properties entailed by *F*-ness. For instance, a healthy human may have two having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates one of which is an unhealthy human who has a poorly-functioning circulatory system and the other of which is an immaterial angel who has no circulatory system at all. The latter two are both the healthy human's having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates, but surely are not duplicates of each other.

Thus, Speaks's objection to the restriction strategy is undermined provided that the notion of *F*-duplicates is understood in terms of [F1].

Now one might object to the foregoing reply by arguing that an immaterial angel can never be a having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system duplicate of a (material) human.[21] Consider any property which only material beings can have, say the property of having brown hair. Further suppose that one of a pair of having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicates has the property of having brown hair. According to [F1], this property should be shared by the pair in question, as it seems to be neither a trivializing property with regard to the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system nor a trivializing property with regard to any property entailing or entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system. However, an immaterial angel, by definition, cannot have the property of having brown hair. Thus, the immaterial angel cannot be a having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicate of a human with brown hair. The idea can be generalized to all other properties which only material beings can have. As every material human has at least one of these properties, say having certain height, no human with a well-functioning circulatory system can be a having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-duplicate of any immaterial angel.

In reply, I deny that the property of having brown hair, the property of being 180 cm tall, and so on are not trivializing properties with regard to any property entailing or entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system. Let us firstly note that the property of being material is a property entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system. For nothing with a well-functioning circulatory system can fail to be material. Now I argue that the property of having brown hair and the like are trivializing properties with regard to the property of being material, as differing with respect to them *may* consist in differing with respect to the property of being material. Just consider an abstract object, say number 2, which does not have brown hair and a material human who has brown hair. It seems plausible that the number 2 lacks the property of having brown hair *because* it lacks the property of being material, rather than the other way around. If so, then their difference with respect to the property of having brown hair consists in their difference with respect to the property of being material. Hence, the property of having brown hair is a trivializing property with regard to a property entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system, i.e., the property of being material. Likewise, all other properties which only material objects can have should be ruled out by [F1] as well. For an object, for example the abstract object number 2, may lack them simply because it is not material. Being material is a prerequisite for having any of these properties. Number 2 lacks them because it does not meet the prerequisite.

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[21]I thank an anonymous referee for raising this worry.

Now the opponents might wonder whether this reply might be over-kill. For example, they might wonder whether the property of having a belief *B* and the property of having a desire *D* might also be ruled out by [F1] when we consider having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-du-plicates. My answer is no. For differing with respect to the property of having *B* and the property of having *D* does not consist in differing with respect to the property of being material, as they are *not* properties which only material beings can have. Recall that on theism, God as well as imma-terial angels can also have beliefs and desires. However, the opponents might object that although differing with respect to the property of having *B* (sometimes) does not consist in differing with respect to the property of being material, it does not mean that it never does. For instance, con-sider the number 2 and a material human again. The latter has some belief *B* while the former lacks it. One might think that their difference with respect to the property of having *B* also consists in their difference with respect to the property of being material. However, this is incorrect for a point made above: That the notion of trivialization draws on an explan-atory relation. Number 2's lack of materiality does not explain its lack of beliefs and desires.[22] Instead, its lack of beliefs and desires is explained, for example, by its lack of consciousness, or the like. However, the property of being conscious is not a property entailed by the property of having a well-functioning circulatory system.[23] Therefore, properties about beliefs and desires will not be ruled out by [F1]. An immaterial angel and a mate-rial human who are having-a-well-functioning-circulatory-system-dupli-cates of each other can still share their beliefs and desires, among others.

This section presents my reply to Speaks's objection. In the following section, I will turn to some putative objections.[24]

3. Objections

Consider two objects, say *a* and *b*, which are wisdom-duplicates. Suppose that *a* is wise, and *b* is not. Then we may turn to the first objections con-cerning *haecceities*. Let us, for the sake of exposition, assume that *a* has a (non-qualitative) haecceity, that is, a property which can be instantiated only by *a* and nothing else. Now according to [D6], *a*'s haecceity is not a trivializing property with regard to wisdom as it is not the case that differ-ing with respect to this property may consist in differing with respect to wisdom.[25] Since *a*'s haecceity is neither a trivializing property with regard to wisdom nor a trivializing property with regard to any property entail-ing or entailed by wisdom (as not every wise being is *a*, and *a* could have

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[22]Compare the case that number 2's lack of materiality explains its lack of brown hair, as the former is a prerequisite for the latter.

[23]For instance, a human in a deep coma may still have a well-functioning circulatory system.

[24]I thank an anonymous referee for raising the following counterexamples.

[25]As haecceities, on the present supposition, are non-qualitative, and wisdom is qualita-tive, the non-qualitative difference with respect to *a*'s haecceity arguably has nothing to do with the qualitative difference with respect to wisdom.

failed to be wise,) *a* and *b* should share this property, namely *a*'s haecceity, in common according to [F1]. However, if *b* also has this property, then *b* cannot be a wisdom-duplicate of *a* because *b* will be numerically identical to *a*. The result can be generated to all other sorts of *F*-duplicates. Thus, if haecceities exist, then no object, or at least no object which has a haecceity, can have any *F*-duplicate. As the notion of *F*-duplicates plays a crucial role in [P3], this poses a problem to the restriction strategy.

The foregoing objection concerning haecceities is not hard to avoid. These properties are obviously irrelevant when we judge whether two objects are *F*-duplicates. For haecceities are themselves value-irrelevant, as a being's greatness likely supervenes on its non-haecceitistic features.[26] Therefore, we can stipulate them out without loss. How can we do it? Recall that haecceities are also trivializing properties with regard to *numerical identity* as differing with respect to them, by definition, is just differing with respect to numerical identity. Thus, we may avoid the first objection by adopting the following definition of *F*-duplicates:

> [F2] Two things are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) one is *F*, (ii) the other is not *F*, and (iii) for every property *G*, if (a) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness, (b) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to any property entailing or entailed by *F*-ness, and (c) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to numerical identity, then both of them are *G*.

Since haecceities are trivializing properties with regard to numerical identity, they will not, according to [F2], be taken into account when one compares a pair of *F*-duplicates.

Now let us turn to the second and third objections. Again, let us assume that *a* and *b* are wisdom-duplicates, *a* is wise, and *b* is not. Furthermore, suppose that *a* is (exactly) located at the region *R*. Then *a* has the property of *being located at R*. Now given [D6], the property of being located at *R* does not seem to be a trivializing property with regard to wisdom as differing with respect to one's location does not seem to consist in differing with respect to wisdom (or any property entailing or entailed by wisdom). Also, this locative property is by no means a trivializing property with regard to numerical identity. Thus, according to [F2], *a* and *b* should share this property, i.e., the property of being located at *R*, in common. However, this leads to the consequence that some objects, i.e., these two wisdom-duplicates, interpenetrate in the sense that they are distinct but share the same (exact) location. In fact, this result can be generalized to all *F*-duplicates, if they have locations, as follows: For every *x* and *y*, if (i) *x* and *y* are *F*-duplicates, and (ii) both *x* and *y* have locations, then *x* and *y* are (exactly) located at the same region. Whether interpenetration is possible is a controversial issue which I cannot and will not pursue in this paper. Nevertheless, I agree that this will be a notable cost if my reply to Speaks's objection relies upon the possibility of interpenetration.

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[26]I thank the editor of this journal for suggesting this compelling reply to me.

Before I tackle the second objection concerning locations, let me present the third objection because the response which I am going to give shortly applies to both of them. Consider two omnipotence-duplicates *c* and *d* where *c* is omnipotent, and *d* is not. Suppose that *d* has a volition to open a specific copy of Speaks's *The Greatest Possible Being*. Now the property of having a volition to open that copy seems neither a trivializing property with regard to omnipotence nor a trivializing property with regard to any property entailing or entailed by omnipotence. Also, the property of having this volition is not a trivializing property with regard to numerical identity as others may also have the same volition. Thus, according to [F2], *c* and *d* also share the property of having this volition. However, since *c* is an omnipotent being, and given the plausible assumption that an omnipotent being's volitions are perfectly efficacious,[27] the opening of the copy is causally overdetermined by *c*'s and *d*'s volitions.[28] Again, this leads to the commitment to some sort of, arguably massive, overdetermination which is not quite palatable. If one does not think that this sort of overdetermination is possible, then one has to conclude that there are no omnipotence-duplicates. Nevertheless, if there are no omnipotence-duplicates, then perfect being theologians will not be able to show that God is omnipotent according to [P3]. This seems another notable cost for my reply.

My response to the second and third objections is that [F2], as a matter of fact, does not generate the unpalatable consequences mentioned above. To see why, recall that [P3] is formulated, as noted above, in terms of the possibilist language.[29] Accordingly, the quantificational phrase "two things" in [F2] should also be read in the possibilist way. That is, [F2] should be understood as follows:

[F3] For every x_w, and every y_v, x_w and y_v are *F*-duplicates if and only if (i) x_w is *F*, (ii) y_v is not *F*, and (iii) for every property *G*, if (a) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to *F*-ness, (b) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to any property entailing or entailed by *F*-ness, and (c) *G* is not a trivializing property with regard to numerical identity, then both x_w and y_v are *G*.

Given [F3], not only intra-world objects but also inter-world objects are allowed to be *F*-duplicates. Now one may note that the foregoing unpalatable consequences takes place only if the quantification is restricted to objects within the same world. However, there is no problem at all if Mary$_w$, i.e., Mary in the world *w*, is located at *R*, and Susan$_v$, i.e., Susan in the world *v*, is also located at *R* provided that *w* and *v* are distinct worlds. No interpenetration occurs here. Likewise, if there is something which is

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[27]See Pearce and Pruss, "Understanding Omnipotence."

[28]Or the opening of the copy is caused only by the omnipotent being's volition, but not by *d*'s own volition. This leads to some sort of occasionalism, which is as implausible as, if not more than, overdetermination.

[29]For what we are interested here in is the greatest *possible* being, i.e., the greatest being among all possible beings, rather than the greatest *actual* being, i.e., the greatest being among all actual beings.

an omnipotence-duplicate of me in another possible world, the same volitions shared by us will not causally overdetermine my actions (which are caused by my actual volitions) as the volitions of my omnipotence-duplicate, which exists in another world, do not cause my actions in the actual world. No overdetermination occurs here. Therefore, two inter-world objects may have the same location and volitions. If so, then we can utilize the notion of *F*-duplicates without accepting controversial theses like (the possibility of) interpenetration and massive overdetermination.

The fourth objection is about origin essentialism, i.e., the view that objects could not have had a radically different origin. Suppose that origin essentialism is true for conscious beings. More specifically, let us suppose that I, as a human being, could not have originated from a different sperm and egg. In other words, I necessarily have the property of originating from the sperm s and egg e where s and e are the actual sperm and egg from which I originated. Then consider the property of being a knower. It is quite plausible that the property of originating from s and e is not a trivializing property with regard to the property of being a knower as differing with respect to the former does not seem to consist in differing with respect to the latter. Also, differing with respect to the property of originating from s and e does not seem to consist in differing with respect to my numerical identity. For it seems that on origin essentialism, differing with respect to my numerical identity consists in differing with respect to the property of originating from s and e, not the other way around. Thus, according to [F3], my being-a-knower-duplicate and I share the property of originating from s and e. If so, then my being-a-knower-duplicate and I will have the same origin. One might then object that because nobody but I can have this origin, my being-a-knower-duplicate, who lacks the property of being a knower, must be me. As it is impossible that I both have and lack the property of being a knower, it is impossible that I have any being-a-knower-duplicate, which is supposed to lack of the property of being a knower. Since the result applies to any other conscious being, nothing can be a knower-duplicate of anything else.

I have two responses here. First, although no one can both have and lack the property of being a knower in the same world, it does not follow that no one can have this property in one world and lack it in another. For instance, Mary may have this property in the actual world while lacking this property in a distinct world w. Or put in the possibilist language, $\text{Mary}_@$ has this property while Mary_w does not. If this may be the case, then $\text{Mary}_@$ may be a being-a-knower-duplicate of Mary_w. For similar reasons, other conscious beings (in a world) may also be their own being-a-knower-duplicates (in another world). Therefore, it is not the case that there can be no being-a-knower-duplicates. Second, although the property of originating from s and e is a property such that necessarily, if I exist, then I have it, it does not follow that it is a property such that necessarily, if some x has it, then x is me. For I might have had an identical twin (whom I actually do not have). If I have had one, then my twin and I would have shared the same origin, i.e., the same sperm and egg, as this is part of the definition of identical

twins. Thus, it is possible that there are two conscious beings which have the same property about origin. Now if my (possible) twin knows nothing, and I know something, then I may be a being-a-knower-duplicate of my twin. This again shows that origin essentialism poses no challenge to [F3].

Let us turn to the fifth and final objection. Consider a pair of omniscience-duplicates. Suppose that the omniscient one of this pair has various de se beliefs. Now the properties of having these de se beliefs are not trivializing properties with regard to omniscience as differing with respect to de se beliefs does not consist in differing with respect to omniscience. For instance, let us assume, for the sake of exposition, that the three Persons of Trinity are all omniscient. Here, it is the Father who has the de se belief that I am the Father, though the other two Persons do not have this de se belief. If having a de se belief is not a trivializing property with regard to omniscience, then, as the objection goes, nothing can be an omniscience-duplicate of anything else because the omniscient being has different de se beliefs from everything else.

I also have two responses to this case. First, as noted above, *F*-duplicates may be inter-world objects. It may be the case that an angel in w, say f_w, and the same angel in v, say f_v, share all beliefs, including de se ones, in common, though f_w is omniscient while f_v is not. For instance, suppose that (i) one shared de se belief is that I co-exist with Socrates, and (ii) Socrates only exists in w. Let us also assume that omniscient beings are infallible in the sense that they have no false belief. Since Socrates does not exist in v, f_v has a false belief, i.e., the de se belief that I co-exist with Socrates. Thus, f_v is not omniscient, though it shares all beliefs with an omniscient being in another world, i.e., f_w. In the foregoing scenario, f_w and f_v can be omniscience-duplicates as they can share all their beliefs, including de se beliefs, in common. Second, it is unclear, even in the intra-world cases, why an omniscient being must have different de se beliefs from everything else. Recall C. S. Lewis's famous trilemma: Jesus is either bad, or mad, or God. A lunatic can have de se beliefs which God, who is a genuinely omniscient being, has. And part of the reason why we deem a person a lunatic is that he has some (false) beliefs about himself like the belief that I am God. If so, then an omniscient being can have an omniscience-duplicate which has the very same beliefs even in the same world.

In this section, I have considered five objections. I have argued that none of them is fatal to my reply to Speaks's objection. Therefore, I suggest that perfect being theologians can adopt this refined restriction strategy as a method to find what properties God has.[30]

Oriel College, University of Oxford

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