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Am I divine?

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Abstract

On the one hand, arguably, I am neither this nor that. Arguably, neither is God this or that – so, am I God? Otherwise it seems that I must be *this* and God must be *that*. On the other hand, the being of the universe is not something of which I could plausibly be construed as the ultimate cause. That is God's creative act. Because I do not create the universe, I am not God. So I am God and I am not God. Here's a solution: God is One but also Three, I am but one.

Keywords

Panentheism, Idealism, Creation, Trinitarianism, Possible Worlds

1 Introduction

In recent philosophy the question of interest is not so much whether the *I* is divine but rather how it might be possible that the *I* is just a bundle of atoms, the identity of which does not involve anything over and above physical particles and physical laws. I argue against recent mainstream physicalist philosophical theology of mind and pursue an idealist and panentheistic line of thought.[1]

[1] For recent physicalist argument cf. Jaegwon Kim, 2005, *Physicalism, Or Something Near Enough*, Princeton University Press and David Papineau, 2002, *Thinking about Consciousness*, Oxford University Press. For an example of a physicalist theology of mind cf. Nancey Murphy, 2006, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* Cambridge University Press and Peter van Inwagen, 2007, "A Materialist Ontology of the Human Person", in *Persons: Human and Divine*, edited by Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman, Oxford University Press. According to Murphy, "we are our bodies – there is no additional metaphysical element such as a mind or soul or spirit. [. . .] This 'physicalist' position need not deny that we are intelligent, moral, and spiritual. We are, at our best, complex physical organisms, imbued with the legacy of thousands of years of culture, and, most importantly, blown by the Breath of God's Spirit; we are spirited bodies" (Murphy 2006: p. ix). Van Inwagen states his positions as follows: "I myself believe that we are material substances. I am therefore in one sense of the word a materialist. I am, as one might say, a local materialist. I oppose local to global materialism. A global materialist believes that everything (or every concrete thing) is material. I am not a global materialist, since I believe that God exists and that God is neither material nor abstract" (van Inwagen 2007: p. 206). For a general

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Far from being a composite physical particular in the universe, the *I* itself is not even part of the universe. On the contrary, the universe is internal to the *I*. That is, the being of the *I* includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in the *I*, while the *I's* being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.[2]

This conception of the *I* may reasonable be said to be a kind of philosophical idealism. There is strong connection between idealism in this sense and panentheism. Panentheism, according to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, is a thesis about God, that is, "the belief that the being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but that His being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe". – When the idealist speaks of the *I*, the panentheist speaks of God.[3]

Is it mere coincidence that God and the *I* can both be said to penetrate the universe but not be part of it? Could it really be that the *I* is God? Is the being of the universe internal to the *I* to be thought of in the same way in which the being of the universe is thought to be internal to God?

As if these questions were not daunting enough, there is further complication for Christian theology: God is One but also Three. We thus have to ask for the relation between God and the *I* twice. Firstly, we have to ask for the relation between the *I* and God insofar as He is One, and secondly we have to ask for the relation between the *I* and God insofar as He is One but Three.

I argue that in reference to the world, the *I* is indistinguishable from God insofar as He is One, and that the *I* is not God insofar as He is Three in One. Insofar as He is One but Three, however, the *I* nonetheless participates in the life of the Holy Trinity because the being of the universe internal to the *I* theologically speaking is the Birth of the Son in the soul. The thesis I argue for is therefore a panentheism which combines an idealistic thesis about the being of the universe with elements of a Logos Christology.

introduction into panentheistic thinking cf. John W. Cooper, 2006, *Panentheism. The other God of the Philosophers*, Baker Academic. For detailed discussions see the volume edited by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke, 2004, *In Whom we Live and Move and Have our Being. Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, Eerdmans Publishing Co.

[2] Even the parts of the universe of which the *I* is not aware of exist in the *I*. These parts are comparable to subconscious states which also exist in the *I* without the *I* being aware of them.

[3] From a systematic point of view one could hold either thesis and deny the other. One could be an idealist in the sense specified without supposing God to be at all, and one could be a panentheist in the sense specified while holding that the I is just one particular amongst others within the causal relations of the world.

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2 Possible Worlds

We have to be clear about the nature of the universe. As I deploy the term 'the universe', the universe is the actual world, and the actual world is one amongst infinitely many possible worlds.

A possible world is a maximally consistent co-exemplification of individual essences, and the actual world is the one and only exemplified maximally consistent co-exemplification of individual essences. An individual essence in turn is a maximal consistent modal determination of a particular, which means that particulars and their properties are the building bricks of possible worlds.

In more detail, the individual essence of a particular entails which properties the particular exemplifies in which possible worlds.[4] Because any particular either exemplifies a property in a possible world in which it exists or does not exemplify it in that world, particulars and the corresponding individual essences are infinitely finite or maximally determined. Applied to possible worlds this means that as a maximal consistent co-exemplification of individual essences a possible world is a maximally consistent infinitely finite way in which particulars can co-exist.

Let me give a brief example: the table in front of you exemplifies empirical properties. It has four legs, a certain brown colour, a certain weight et cetera.[5] It also exemplifies properties which are not

[4] Plantinga calls these properties which are constitutive of individual essences *world-indexed properties* where a property P is world-indexed, if "there is a world w and a property Q such that P is equivalent to the property *of having Q in w* or to its complement – the property of *not having Q in w*" (Alvin Plantinga, 2003, *Essays in the Metaphysics of Modality*, Oxford University Press, p. 69). The idea behind world-indexed properties is to enable us to account for the properties particulars exemplify in different possible worlds from a world-neutral point of view. Independently of which world is the actual world, we can specify which properties a particular would have exemplified if a certain possible world had been actual. For instance, that a particular p exemplifies the world-indexed property of being F in the possible world w means that if w had been actual, the particular would have exemplified F. If w is the actual world, then the particular exemplifies F and (trivially) also the world-indexed property of being *F-in-w*. World-indexed properties are structurally analogous to dispositions in terms of which we can specify how particulars would act or behave in certain counterfactual circumstances. Particulars are not identical with their individual essences, but exist in a possible world if and only if their individual essence is exemplified in that world. Particulars therefore exist essentially, although not necessarily. That a particular p does not exist in a maximal consistent exemplifiable modal determination of particulars means that *p's* individual essence is not exemplified in that maximal modal determination of particulars. Since it is not the case that any maximal consistent modal determination of particulars entails that *p's* individual essence is exemplified – because *p's* individual essence is not exemplified essentially – it is not necessarily true that p exists.

[5] When I speak of empirical properties I mean those properties which are exemplified within the natural order of the universe without a world-index. Not every actually exemplified property might be directly empirically available. Because we are dealing with the metaphysics of individual essences and not with epistemological matters, we can ignore this point, however.

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empirical. The table exemplifies properties like possibly being blue, possibly having only three legs, possibly being in another room et cetera. These properties, which I call modal properties, are like dispositions determining how the table behaves in other circumstances: the table would have been blue if another possible world had been actual. If we take all these properties taken together, the empirical and the modal properties, then we obtain the individual essence of the table, which is why the individual essence is a maximal consistent modal determination of the corresponding particular. We could not add any further exemplification of any property of the table without obtaining a contradiction in reference to the other properties the table exemplifies. Of course, the table is not the only existing particular. The chair you are sitting on is another particular the individual essence of which is exemplified and entails both the empirical and modal properties of the chair.

The individual essence of the table and the individual essence of the chair are absolutely harmonic in this sense: there is no possible world in which the table and the chair co-exist while any of the properties of the one contradicts any of the properties of the other. By way of generalisation we obtain that there are no co-existing individual essences which contradict each other in any way. Possible worlds as maximal consistent co-exemplifications of individual essences therefore are absolutely harmonic within themselves and, via the individual essences, also between one another. The one system of possible worlds is in itself a structured harmony of differences.

3 I and the World

According to my explanation of individual essences and possible worlds, we can now ask whether I-myself am part of the actual world.

In order for me to be a part of the actual world, there would have to be an exemplified individual essence which is mine: there would have to be a particular that I am. According to recent philosophy of mind, I am identical with the human being which is known by my name: I exist in a possible world if and only if the individual essence of the human being Benedikt Paul is exemplified in that world.

As a human being Benedikt Paul is a particular psycho-physical unit, where I leave it open whether this unit ultimately is a purely physical one or is constituted by material and immaterial substances. For the argument to come this is simply irrelevant.[6]

[6] On physicalist premises the idea is that I myself am identical to a particular human body or to a particular human brain such that I am a purely physical particular. According to reductive physicalism I exemplify only physical properties, and according to non-reductive

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If I myself should happen to be Benedikt Paul in the actual world, then it is necessarily true that I am Benedikt Paul because there is no contingent identity among particulars.[7] If I myself am necessarily identical with Benedikt, then there is no possible world such that that human being Benedikt exists in this world but I myself do not.

Metaphysically speaking, such a world, however, is clearly possible, and we can reconstruct it beginning with an empty space of possibility. Take all the natural laws to be found in the actual world, copy and paste them in the empty space of possiblity, then take all the world's physical material and any immaterial substances if there be such, and distribute them in exactly the same way as they are distributed in the actual world. The same relations obtain. Once everything to be found in the actual world is copied and pasted into the formerly empty space of possbility, you seal it. This gives you the exact history of the actual world. In fact, because the same particulars and properties exist in the actual and the constructed world, we have created a duplicate *simpliciter* of the actual world.

If it is true that I myself am Benedikt Paul, then, because Benedikt is part of the duplicate simpliciter, it has to be true that I myself exist in the case that the duplicate is in fact the actual world.[8] But it is not settled whether I myself exist in the duplicate world or not because *it does not entail a contradiction that I myself have no being whatsoever in the duplicate world*. In the duplicate world, there is the human being Benedikt with his entire psycho-physical life, and, because the existence of a psycho-physical life entails that there is someone who is the subject of those mental states, there is some mind's I which is Benedikt's in that world, but it is not of necessity myself who is playing this role. The duplicate simpliciter could be actual while I am not related to that world in any way. Therefore, I am not identical with the human being Benedikt Paul.[9]

physicalism my being a physical particular does not preclude the exemplification of genuine mental properties which for the physicalist in turn at least globally supervene on the physical properties to be found in the actual world. On dualist premises I myself am constituted of a material and an immaterial component such that the immaterial part is the exemplifier of my mental and the material part the exemplifier of the physical properties of the composite human being Benedikt. Both accounts differ only as regards the ontic interpretation of the human psycho-physical unit. But, on both accounts, the psycho-physical unit exists within the world ontologically, i.e. it exemplifies existence as in the case of the table.

[7] Cf. E. J. Lowe, 2002, *A Survey of Metaphyics*, Oxford University Press, pp. 84–86, for an argument to this extent. Although there is no contingent identity among particulars, our reference to particulars and properties is contingent. If another world had been actual, we might have referred to another particular with a name we now counterfactually use rigidly to refer to something else.

[8] That is, in the case that the actual world is replaced by the duplicate world such that what in fact is the actual world is no longer actual.

[9] Swinburne argues for a similar conclusion in a slightly different context. According to Swinburne, a world W2 is conceivable "in which for each substance in W1 there is

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The argument entails more than the conclusion that I am not identical with Benedikt. Although he would be the best candidate to identify myself with either way, the argument entails that there is no particular whatsoever in any possible world with which I could be identified. *For any particular which one might suggest, that particular could have existed while I had no being at all*. On our understanding of the universe which is a maximal consistent combination of particulars and their properties that is to say that I am not a part of the universe at all. I could be part of the universe if and only if I were a particular the individual essence of which is exemplified.[10]

We have to deal with two questions: the first one is how I am related to the universe, and the second one is what I really am if not anything in the world.

As regards the relation between myself and the actual world the following obtains: I am not a part of the actual world, but there is a certain human being with which I am intimately related: unsurprisingly it is the human being Benedikt Paul.

The relation I myself have to Benedikt is different from any relation we find within the world. It is different because the relations which hold in the actual world are relations among distinct particulars and/or properties.[11] Since the *I* is not a particular or a property in the world, it cannot be related as a particular is related to a distinct particular or as a property is related to a distinct property. In other words, because the *I* is not identical with any particular in the world, the relation between the *I* and Benedikt also precludes distinction between them.

a substance which has the same properties as it and conversely (and any physical matter underlying the properties is the same in both worlds), but where a person S who exists in W1 does not exist in W2. The person who lives in W2 the life (physical and mental) which S lives in W1 is not S. And surely this world could be different solely in the respect that the person who lived my life was not me. For it is not entailed by the full description of the world in its physical aspects and in respect of which bundles of mental properties are instantiated in the same substance that I, picked out as the actual object of certain mental properties, have the same substance the particular physical or mental properties which I do and am connected with the body with which I am connected" (Richard Swinburne, 2007, "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism", in *Persons: Human and Divine*, edited by Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman, Oxford University Press, p. 164). Cf. also Stephen Priest who is more explicit on the matter: "I might not have been that psycho-physical human being born in a certain place at a certain time in England who authored this note. That very psycho-physical human being might well have existed, but it could have been someone else. It is an extra fact about that individual that I am that individual." (Stephen Priest, 1999, "Aquinas's Claim 'Anima mea non est ego'", in *The Heythrop Journal,* Vol. 40 (2), p. 210.

[10] Priest reaches the same conclusion with a different argument. His argument is in terms of facts: "If all the facts are empirical facts or modal facts or metaphysical facts and if being me is a fact but not an empirical fact nor a modal fact then being me is a metaphysical fact. Being me is a fact. It follows in a fairly precise sense that *I am out of this world*." (Stephen Priest, 2000, *The Subject in Question*, Routledge, p. 152).

[11] We can ignore the identity relations obtaining in the world because we already showed that the I itself is not identical to any particular in the world.

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I would have to be a particular in the world in order to be distinct from Benedikt.

The relation I myself have to Benedikt is thus different from relations of distinction and identity. It can only be one of saturation or penetration or some such relation: although I myself am not reducible to the being of Benedikt, I myself penetrate or saturate the psycho-physical life of him such that *his* pain hurts *me*, that *his* wishes are *my* wishes, *his* intentions *my* intentions. Since Benedikt's psycho-physical life is one part of the exemplified maximal consistent co-exemplification of individual essences in the organon of possible worlds without which the actual world would be a different world his life cannot be separated from the rest of that world: Benedikt's psycho-physical life is embedded in the universe not only spatially through his body which is one part of a spatial nexus and thus stands in spatial relations with everything in the universe, but also through his mental life which enables him to perceive and to know the world surrounding him. It follows that my being not only saturates the psycho-physical life of Benedikt, but also the whole world in which this life has its being.

A necessary condition for me to be able to saturate the being of the universe in this way is that the universe's being is internal to myself. If the being of the universe were not within the *I*, then the *I* could not have any relation to the universe at all. We can see this by way of excluding the other available options: the I itself does not stand outside the universe as one particular stands outside another particular and it is neither identical with anything in the universe nor with the universe as a whole. Nevertheless it saturates the being of the universe from an all embracing-outside: the being of the I literally encloses the being of the universe.

For the moment, let us ignore the I's relation to the universe and see what we can say about myself then. To do so we bracket any relation I have to the actual world via my saturation of a particular psycho-physical life. That is, we empty the I itself of the world and everything in it; we withdraw what is distinguished in itself – the world – from what is neither distinct from nor identical with anything in the world – the I itself.[12] That which stays when the world and the I's saturation of the world is bracketed is the I which could

[12] It is interesting that this state of the I in which it is empty of the created world has, historically, served to support prima facie different metaphysical conclusions. It seems that for the Buddhist something like this state of the emptiness of mind shows the ultimate non-existence of the I as such. According to Christian speculation, this state is the *unio mystika*, or the cloud of unknowing in which the I and God meet under a veil of darkness. Cf. Meister Eckhart: "And you must know that to be empty of all created things is to be full of God, and to be full of created things is to be empty of God" (Meister Eckhart, 1981, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, edited by Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn, Pauline Press, p. 288). From a systematic point of view, I suspect

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saturate the being of the universe. Because this potential saturation of the world via a psycho-physical life is what in fact makes a certain psycho-physical life *my* life, we may conclude that the I itself thus understood is precisely the subjectivity which could enclose the being of the world.[13]

Insofar as it is pure subjectivity (and not a particular) the I itself is neither this nor that.[14] In order to be this or that, something has to have an inner principle of individuation which makes it this rather than that in reference to a higher category. Something can be this kind of thing if and only if there is that kind of thing which it is not. There is no this without a that. The table is not the chair because the table has its inner principle of individuation, an individual essence, which makes it not the chair in reference to the category of particulars.

When we consider the case of the I as pure subjectivity, there is no inner principle of individuation which makes it this rather than that in reference to a higher category. If there were, then the I as subjectivity would become hypostatised and thus one object amongst others in the harmonic system of possible worlds. This is impossible. Because it is neither this nor that, and because it encloses the being of the universe from an all-embracing outside, the being of the I itself in reference to the being of the universe is properly referred to as *esse indistinctum*. That is to say, the I itself as *esse indistinctum* in reference to the world is one and encloses the absolute harmony of the distinctions of the world within.[15]

that the disagreement about this state of the I itself is due to a mutual misunderstanding of the others understanding of being.

[13] Can we specify further the nature of subjectivity? Although this is not the place to elaborate further on the I as subjectivity, let me just clarify a small point: while it may be tempting to ask "What is subjectivity?", this is only prima facie a legitimate question because questions of the kind "What is x?" are questions asking for the individual essences of x. To ask "What is subjectivity?" therefore presupposes that subjectivity is a particular with an individual essence. Because subjectivity is not a particular, we cannot ask "What is subjectivity?".

[14] In different terms, Meister Eckhart is concerned with much the same point in his German Sermons: "I have sometimes said that there is a power in the spirit that alone is free. Sometimes I have said that it is a guard of the spirit; sometimes I have said that it is a light of the spirit; sometimes I have said that it is a spark. But now I say that it is neither this nor that, and yet it is a something that is higher above this and that than heaven is above the earth. And therefore I now give it finer names than I have ever given it before, and yet whatever fine names, whatever words we use, they are telling lies, and it is far above them. It is free of all names, it is bare of all forms, wholly empty and free, as God in himself is empty and free. It is so utterly one and simply, as God is one and simple, that man cannot in any way look into it" (Meister Eckhart, 1981, p. 180).

[15] Does this entail solipsism? If what I really am is without an inner principle of individuation which would make it this rather than that in reference to a higher category, then how could what you really are be different from what I really am? One might argue that for us to be different would entail that there is a higher category under which both of us fall such that in reference to the higher category I am what you are not and *vice versa*, and one might suggest that this is the category of I's or souls. What could distinguish us

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4 God and the World

In recent decades interest in arguments for and against the existence of God has risen like a Phoenix from the ashes. Recently available logical calculi, so it seems, enable a better understanding of classical ways to argue for or against the existence of God.

Within the calculi of predicate logic, sentential logic, modal predicate logic, and sometimes temporal logic philosophers argue for and against the conclusion that there is at least one x such that x is God or for and against the conclusion that there is only one x such that x is y, and that y is what we call God.[16]

The apparently simplest logical proof for the existence of God within first-order predicate logic has a single premise: God is God. Because God is identical to Himself, it follows that there is at least one x such that x is God. Since to exist is to be the value of a bound variable, we obtain that God exists.

The problem with this putative proof is its generality. Relying on the self-identity of entities we can prove the existence of anything we wish to. For instance, because Pegasus is Pegasus we obtain that there is at least one x such that x is Pegasus.

In order to exclude proofs like this from the list of relevant arguments for or against the existence of God, it is helpful to distinguish between two kinds of existential quantifiers, that is, between two interpretations of what we mean when we say "There is. . ." or "There exists. . .". On the one hand, we have the objectual existential quantifier, and on the other there is the substitutional existential quantifier.

The objectual existential quantifier is the quantifier of classical predicate logic. On this interpretation, a sentence like "There is an x which is F" or "There is an x which is identical with x" is true if and only if there is an object which really is F or which really is identical to itself.[17] On the substitutional interpretation, the same kind of sentence is true independent of whether there really is an object which is F. The only thing that matters on this interpretation of the quantifier

considered as subjectivity? One might suggest that it is a different kind of me-ness which is the inner principle of individuation in reference to the higher category of subjectivity. However, as argued in the text, this would entail that the I itself as subjectivity is an object, which is impossible. So, solipsism after all? Not necessarily. That the I itself is not this or that in reference to a higher category does not entail that there is only one I but only that the relations amongst different souls are not like the relations among particulars which fall under a higher category. My intuition, which I hope to argue for in the future, is that different I's are distinct in some sense through indistinction.

[16] Cf. Jordan Howard Sobel, 2004, *Logic and Theism. Arguments for and Against Beliefs in God*, Cambridge University Press, for a thoughtful study which argues that from a logical point of view none of the proofs for the existence of God is sound.

[17] In more detail, according to the objectual interpretation of the existential quantifier, a well ordered formula of the form $\exists x\ Fx$ or $\exists x\ x = x$ is true if and only if there is an object in the universe of discourse which satisfies the open sentence Fx or $x = x$.

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is that we obtain a true sentence by way of substituting for x.[18] For instance, according to the objectual interpretation of the existential quantifier, it is true that there is at least one x which is a winged horse if and only if there is at least one object in the universe of discourse – whether we can name it or not – which satisfies the open sentence "__is a winged horse". On the substitutional interpretation, the same formula is true regardless of whether there is a winged horse or not. It is true if and only if we obtain a true statement by substituting for x as in the sentence "Pegasus is a winged horse".[19] We can therefore hold that it is true that God is God, and that Pegasus is Pegasus without any ontological commitment. We just have to point out that the quantifier in these cases is the substitutional and not the objectual one.

The relevant interpretation of the existential quantifier in reference to arguments for and against the existence of God is the objectual one. As they stand, the arguments are concerned with the question of whether there is a particular object with certain properties, and not with the question of whether there is a true substitution instance of the open sentence "__is God". However, there is a severe pitfall: on the objectual interpretation of the quantifier, arguments for and against the existence of God are inevitably hypostatising, by which I mean that they presuppose that God is one particular amongst others. This consequence is inevitable because the truth-conditions for statements involving the objectual quantifier necessitate a well-defined universe of discourse consisting of well-defined objects.[20]

For God to be a particular he would have to have an individual essence and qua his individual essence, he would have to be infinitely finite, determined in all ways.

Can God thus conceived be the ultimate cause of everything? Of course, this depends on what is meant by the ultimate cause. Arguably, the ultimate cause of everything is the ultimate cause of everything *being* and being *what it is*, which means that, separated from its ultimate cause, the effect could not be and could not be

[18] In more detail, on the substitutional interpretation of the quantifier, a well ordered formula of the form $\exists x\ Fx$ or $\exists x\ x = x$ is true if and only if there is a true substitution instance of it – regardless of whether the term substituted for x has denotation.

[19] Cf. Marcus: "On a substitutional semantics of [a] first-order language, a domain of objects is not specified. Variables do not range over objects. They are place markers for substituends. Satisfaction relative to objects is not defined." (Ruth Barcan Marcus, 1993, *Modalities. Philosophical Essays*, Oxford University Press, p. 119).

[20] For many philosophers and theologians there is no problem in this. They argue that God is one thing amongst others existing in possible worlds and who exemplifies properties which no other particular does. He exists necessarily, he is omniscient, omnipotent and morally perfect, just to name a few of his properties. Particularly within the tradition of the analytic philosophy of religon we find philosophers and theologians applying the means of formal logic to God. For them, God is one object amongst others with some rather unique properties.

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what it is. If effects had being separated from their ultimate cause, then they could be separated from that by means of which they are. However, nothing can be separated from that by means of which it is. And if effects had their being what they are separated from their ultimate cause, then effects could be what they are separated from that by means of which they are what they are. However, again, nothing is what it is separated from that by means of which it is what it is. Because nothing is *causa sui* in reference to its being, or to its being what it is, nothing can both be and be what it is separated from its ultimate cause.

In reference to the actual world the ultimate cause is the ultimate cause for the actual world being and being what it is, namely an infinitely finite way in which particulars can co-exist. Because the actual world is only one world amongst others and is connected with any possible world via those individual essences which are constitutive of possible worlds, what the actual world is, is not to be thought of separated from what all other possible worlds are. Consequently, the ultimate cause of the actual world being what it is at the same time is the ultimate cause of the infinitely finite ways in which particulars can co-exist. The whole harmonic system of possible worlds therefore is, and is what it is, in virtue of its ultimate cause.

If God himself were infinitely finite, then for any property *F*, either God would exemplify *F* or not. Suppose then that as a particular God were *non-F* and that some particular in some possible world were *F*. In this case, God could not be the ultimate cause of everything because F-ness would be excluded from him. That is to say, the particular which in this case has the property of being *F* could not be what it is, *F*, through God. Since we assume that the particular is *F*, there would have to be another cause for its being *F* which was distinct from God. Therefore, God could not be the ultimate cause of everything. Yet, because God is the ultimate cause, God is not a particular.[21]

We obtain the following consequences: firstly, because being the ultimate cause of everything is nothing which could fall under any

[21] In other words, it's all about the proper understanding of divine causation. The likely response to this kind of neoplatonic argument among those who favour the object view of God is as follows: human beings can both cause things to be *F* and to be non-F regardless of whether they themselves are *F* or *non-F*. God, in a similar way, can cause things to be *F* or *non-F* regardless whether he Himself is *F* or *non-F*. However, this is not a good counterargument because it is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the ultimate cause. The ultimate cause is that in and through which things have their very being and their thisness. Human beings only act on previous matter which is already potentially *F* or *non-F* and do not ultimately cause *F-ness* or *non-F-ness* to be a potential to be found in the things. A second point concerns proofs for and against the existence of God. If God really is the ultimate cause of everything, then there can be no proof for the existence of God as anything which could be used to prove his existence already presupposes it.

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higher category of which there is a plurality, the ultimate cause is neither this nor that. Because the ultimate cause is no particular, there is nothing in the universe with which it could be identified, and because the harmonic system of possible worlds is not *causa sui*, it cannot be identified with the universe as such. Further, as the ultimate cause of the system of possible worlds, God has to have every difference to be found in any possible world folded in Himself in a way that is beyond contradiction. Because of this in turn, there is nothing God is distinct from while at the same time He is not identical with anything in the world or the system of possible worlds as a whole. As the ultimate cause God therefore is *esse indistinctum* in reference to the world, distinct from the realm of distinction through indistinction.[22] Secondly, the universe or any of its inhabitants cannot have being separated from its ultimate cause since separation between an effect and its ultimate cause is annihilation of the effect. That is to say, God cannot set the being of the universe outside Himself, otherwise it is nothing. In terms of creation, although from an ontic point of view the universe is created *ex nihilo*, from an ontological point of view it cannot be created *ex nihilo*: the being of the universe is the being of its ultimate cause because there is but one being.[23]

The following picture puzzle emerges: insofar as God is the ultimate cause of everything being and being what it is He is distinct from the world through indistinction but insofar as the being of the universe is not to be distinguished from the being of God, the being of the universe is wholly within God. That is to say, if we consider God to be the ultimate cause, then He is distinct from the universe, and if we consider the being of the universe as the being of the ultimate cause, then there is only one divine being which in itself is distinguished from itself through indistinction.

[22] Denys Turner observes that this point was also seen by Meister Eckhart, Thomas Aquinas and Pseudo-Dionysius: "For it is by virtue of the divine nature's excluding every possible specification – that is to say, by virtue of excluding every differentia whatever – that God's nature is such as to exclude all exclusion; hence, God stands in no relation of any kind of exclusion with anything whatever. God, as Eckhart says, is distinct in this exactly, that God alone is 'indistinct' – not, as Thomas observes, by virtue of an 'indistinctness' which is an excess of indeterminacy taken to the point of absolute generalised vacuousness, but by an excess of determinacy, taken to the point of absolutely total plenitude: 'There is no kind of thing', the pseudo-Denys says, 'which God is not', or, as Thomas himself put it, God is 'virtually' everything that there is, containing, as it were, every differentia as the cause of them all, but such that 'what are diverse and exclusive in themselves pre-exist in God as one, without detriment to his simplicity'." (Denys Turner, 2004, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, Cambridge University Press, p. 189.)

[23] This is the essential advantage of panentheism over pantheism and theistic transcendentalism: whereas the problem of pantheism is that it identifies the finite and the infinite in a way which is not adequate to either, the problem of transcendental theism is much worse: often, transcendental theism is not able to understand the problem which obtains where it is assumed that *here* is the finite world and *there* is an infinite being.

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5 God and I and the Double Inwardness of Creation

Neither God nor the I itself can be said to be part of the universe whilst the universe can be said to be internal to both, God and the I. The universe is internal to the I insofar as the I saturates the being of the universe with its subjectivity, and the universe is internal to God insofar as there is but one divine being. In reference to the being of the world, both, the I itself and God can be said to be esse indistinctum – to be neither this or that – even though both are said to be One for different reasons.[24] Because there is no higher category under which both God and the I itself thus considered fall – as again that would prevent God's being the ultimate cause – neither can be this or that *in reference to the other*. Insofar as neither is either this or that in reference to the being of the world, the I itself and God cannot be distinguished.

However, there is reason to suppose that the I itself is not God. The reason why the I itself and God are said to be indistinguishable concerns their respective indistinguishability with reference to the differences of the world, while the reason for distinguishing God and the I itself concerns a difference in their indifference with reference to the being of the world: God is the ultimate cause of everything, while the I itself, although in a sense it encloses the being of the universe, is not the ultimate cause of what it encloses. That is, God as the ultimate cause causes the universe to exist within Himself and within the I, which henceforth I call soul.

How can we understand this double inwardness of the universe? Because the universe cannot exist separate from its ultimate cause, the universe's being within the soul cannot be an inwardness of the universe within the soul outside God. It has to be within the soul inside God. However, as we saw above, insofar as God is the ultimate cause of the universe to be and to be what it is He is distinct from the universe through His indistinction. The universe therefore cannot be internal to the soul inside God insofar as He is the ultimate cause of the universe since in this case the universe and God are distinguished through the indistinction of God thus understood. Instead, the universe's being within the soul has to be within the one divine being insofar as it is within itself distinguished from itself as being esse indistinctum. That is to say, the universe has to be within the soul as the being of the universe is within the divine being. The universe's being in the soul therefore is a participation

[24] The being of the I is esse indistinctum insofar as the I itself is the subjectivity which encapsulates the being of the universe in an act of saturation, while the being of God is esse indistinctum insofar as God is the ultimate cause of the organon of possible worlds being and being what they are.

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in the one divine being which in itself is distinguished from itself through indistinction.

For Christian Theology, God is Three in One. He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Because it is a fact about the divine being, i.e. that God is One but Three, it is not a fact *solely* about the divine Being, but also about the double inwardness of the universe. Insofar as the universe's being within the soul is a participation in the being of God, it is a participation in the being of God insofar as He is One but Three.[25]

The Son is the Logos which in my terms means that the Son is the one idea which in itself is the absolutely harmonic structure of difference. That is to say, the Logos is the maximal idea of possible worlds in and through which everything is what it is. Applied to the double inwardness of the universe, we obtain the following: insofar as God as the ultimate cause is different from the universe through indistinction, God is the Father who is distinct from the Son, whilst both share in the divine being.[26] Insofar as the universe's being within the soul is a participation in the being of God as He is within Himself distinguished from Himself, the universe's being in the soul is in theological terms the Father's giving birth to the Son in the soul. Because God as the Father eternally gives birth to the Son, the Father is the ultimate cause of the universe and eternally differentiates Himself from the Son in the unity of the one divine being. Although the Father eternally gives birth to the Son in the unity of the one divine being, the Son is not born into the soul of necessity. Instead, it is an act of God's love to share the divine being.

6 Am I Divine?

Let me end by sketching an answer to the question of whether the I itself is divine. For the I itself to be divine it would have to be indistinguishable from the divine being, and indeed, we saw that with reference to the difference of the world, the I as subjectivity

[25] In what follows I ignore the Holy Spirit and concentrate on the Son. Just a quick word: the Holy Spirit is that which enables intersubjectivity between otherwise indistinguishable souls; it is that element which brings in a threefold inwardness of the universe.

[26] It seems to me that Meister Eckhart had quite a similar thought on the matter: "So when someone once asked me why God had not created the world earlier, I answered that he could not because he did not exist. He did not exist before the world did. Furthermore, how could he have created earlier when he had already created the world in the very now in which he was God? It is false to picture God as if he were waiting around for some future moment in which to create the world. In the one and the same time in which he was God and in which he begot his coeternal Son as God equal to himself in all things, he also created the world. 'God speaks once and for all' (Jb. 22:14)" (Meister Eckhart, 1981, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, edited by Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn, Pauline Press, p. 85)

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is indistinguishable from God as the ultimate cause of everything because neither is this or that with reference to the other. Therefore, insofar as it is pure subjectivity which encloses the being of the universe, the I is divine. However, we also saw that the I is distinguishable from God insofar as the I is not the ultimate cause of the existence of the universe. The I encloses the being of the universe but it does not cause the universe to exist. Nevertheless, the universe's inwardness in the soul is a participation in the one divine being which in itself is distinguished from it as *esse indistinctum*. That is, ultimately, the I itself is not divine because it is only One and not One but Three.[27]

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