

ABSTRACT

God, Contingent Entities, and the Afterlife

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In this thesis I attempt to provide an original argument for the continuance of each individual human person past physical death. I do this by describing the relationship between God and everything in the world that is not-God (“contingent entities”). I speak to how this applies to the different types of contingent entities God might choose to sustain over various time horizons. The argument states that, if a human being has immaterial properties, then it is likely that it will be sustained past physical death due to it having ends-in-itself. I conclude that human beings have immaterial properties, and therefore will be sustained past physical death.

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GOD, CONTINGENT ENTITIES, AND THE AFTERLIFE

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis is an attempt at tackling one of the big questions surrounding the human experience (“is there an afterlife?”) from reason. I believe that maintaining ongoing discussions about various questions surrounding the human experience is important for both the individuals who ask them, and the culture at large. Answering these questions in serious ways, in my opinion, gives backbone to the human experience in numerous ways: it allows one to understand the nature of their own existence, the world we live in, and how to live well while we are here. It is in this vein that my thesis is being written. I believe that Christianity is the most rational philosophical framework that someone can have about the world, and this work is a direct outpouring of that view. There are naturally many shortcomings to my thesis (because of current ability levels, and time constraints), but I seek to show—to a high degree of probability—that one can know the existence of the afterlife given theism.

I begin with a short literature review in Chapter 2, where I speak to some of the main thinkers on this topic. I then give what I believe to be an original argument proving the high probability of the afterlife. My argument tries to argue for the existence of the afterlife, for human beings, from the reality of a metaphysically autonomous, purposeful, and good being. I posit two fundamental axioms, which I believe are necessarily so, about the nature of the world: (a)

classical theism, i.e. that there is one metaphysically autonomous being, is true; and (b) the Principle of Sufficient Reason, i.e. that everything in the world has a reason for being so, is true. I believe that the main ideas of the overarching argument hold from these two points.

In Chapter 3, I define part of what it means for God to relate to everything that is not-God, which I call contingent entities. This is given through the “Thought Flowers” thought experiment, where I seek to discuss what it is like for a mind to create something. Then, in Chapter 4, I seek to discuss God’s relationship to different types of contingent entities in the world. This translates to how God might specifically relate to things with the sorts of properties human beings have. And in Chapter 5, I finalize the argument for providing some reasons for thinking that human beings have souls. (Throughout this thesis, I refer to “souls” as a blanket way of describing the immaterial properties that human beings can have.) Chapter Six concludes the thesis as a whole.

I believe that the bulk this thesis constitutes an original argument for the existence of the afterlife. I sought to do so in a mostly top-down way, as well as arguing from human nature for the existence of souls.

CHAPTER 2

Selected Thinkers and My Argument

Introduction

This chapter will help provide the context of my argument within the relevant literature. In this chapter, I will do two main things. First, I will survey the ideas of three main figures pertinent to my discussion. And second, I will be providing my argument; this will be explicated in greater detail within the following chapters. The following sections will explain the thoughts of Plato, Joseph Butler, and Richard Swinburne; and from the knowledge gained from their works, I hope to build a unique argument to help solve the issue of applying natural theology to questions of the afterlife. In section 2.1, I will discuss Plato's views of the afterlife; in section 2.2, I will talk about Joseph Butler's work; in section 2.3, I will consider Richard Swinburne's thoughts; section 2.4 will consider the various arguments and ideas in conjunction with one another, and then I will begin to formulate my own thoughts; and section 2.5 will formulate an argument for the existence of human afterlife rooted in the concept of God's necessity.

2.1 Plato and the Soul's Immortality

Plato's *Phaedo* gives several arguments concerning the immortality of the soul, which can be pertinent to the discussion at hand. The backdrop of Plato's arguments are in the midst of Socrates' trial—and ultimate sentencing to death—

where his detractors were claiming that he was corrupting the youth, and speaking improperly about the gods. Before Socrates was put to death, he supposedly gave many of his thoughts about the immortality of the soul: these are recounted within the various arguments in Plato's *Phaedo*. There are four main arguments that can be explicated from this work.

First, Socrates gives an argument from the cyclical nature of the soul. He says that, in the same way that because souls exist before they inhabit human beings, they must come from the underworld; and, those souls of people die go back to the underworld. He posits this because of two basic premises: First, "whatever has an opposite only comes to be only from its opposite."¹ And second, Socrates says there is a "perpetual reciprocity" in nature that keeps the balance of things in equilibrium; if this were not so, then things would cease to be.² Because the state of "living" and the state of "dead" are opposite states, then they are in this cycle of perpetual reciprocity. David Bostock, in his commentary on the *Phaedo*, formalizes the main premise for clarity: "If anything x comes to be P , and if being P has an opposite, then x comes to be P from being the opposite of P ."³ This allows Plato to make the argument that, because this ultimate reciprocity of life must continue for the equilibrium of the universe, then one can consider the soul to be immortal, and for humans to be perpetually kept alive. This is both because of the preexistence and continuance of the soul, and for the possibility of coming to life again via the maintenance of opposites.

¹ Plato, and Hugh, Tredennick, *The Last Days of Socrates* (London: Penguin, 1954), *Phaedo* 70e.

² *Ibid.*, 72b.

³ Bostock, David, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 51.

Second, Plato gives an argument from his theory of the recollection of Platonic forms and ideals. This theory, which is extrapolated more fully in the *Meno*, says that individuals have the ability to recollect pieces of knowledge.⁴ In this sense, nothing is ever truly learned, but rather remembered from a previous state in which the soul knew the forms.⁵ He tries to show this through this specific example what the true nature of equality is, and how seeing something that is out of line with this forces individuals to remember the true form.⁶ Because our souls must have been acquainted with things before we were born, then this is evidence for the preexistence of the soul, which, infers that the soul is immortal.⁷

Third, Socrates gives the argument from Affinity. In this argument, Plato seeks to liken the soul to the “divine,” whereas he likens the body to the “world,” and ultimately concluding that the soul is therefore immortal because of this likeness.⁸ From this, he says that because the soul is in the realm of the invisible—and the body the realm of the visible—then upon death, the soul will remain with the realm of the invisible and continue on after physical death.⁹ With this argument, as Bostock points out, Plato thinks, “the soul is not the *kind* of

⁴ Plato, and W. K. C. Guthrie, *Protagoras and Meno* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1956), *Meno* 82f.

⁵ Plato, and Hugh, Tredennick, *The Last Days of Socrates* (London: Penguin, 1954), *Phaedo* 73f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 74c-75b.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 76d.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 80a.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 80d.

thing that would be expected to dissolve at death.”¹⁰

Fourth, Socrates gives his fourth, and final, argument in the *Phaedo* from the soul’s indestructability. Bostock, summarizing Plato’s argument, says this: “the soul, as the cause of life, cannot be dead, and must therefore be deathless, and hence immortal.”¹¹ In his argument, Socrates says that something cannot continue to be itself without its fundamental property. For example, he says that fire cannot become snow without ceasing to have its most fundamental property—i.e., the property of being hot.¹² Because the soul will continue on past death, then it would impossible for there not to be life after death; and as Bostock says, for Plato, there would be “something very funny about the idea of a dead soul.”¹³ Because the soul contains the fundamental property of having life, then Socrates concludes that the soul is immortal.

These arguments, though, draw no direct correlations between the existence of the soul and the afterlife. He merely states various likenesses and draws comparisons between the soul and the divine world; he then claims entailments regarding the soul’s continuance. In this sense, Socrates’ arguments have no metaphysical anchoring, and draw no causal relation: he merely posits the world as a zero sum game, and inserts the soul into this equation. Socrates’ world then, appears to have a soul, but no reason that it will continue. Mere likeness does not draw certainty in properties; merely stating that something is

¹⁰ Bostock, David, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 117.

¹¹ Ibid., 178.

¹² Plato, and Hugh, Tredennick, *The Last Days of Socrates* (London: Penguin, 1954), *Phaedo* 103d.

¹³ Bostock, David, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 193.

the product of life without defining “life,” or showing why this is so does not entail indestructability. Throughout the *Phaedo*, it appears that Plato assumes the consequent on multiple accounts.

2.2 Joseph Butler and the Analogy of Religion

In Joseph Butler’s book, *The Analogy of Religion*, he discusses rationality of the Christian religion in the face of deistic opposition. In the first chapter, “Of a Future Life,” he gives an account, through reasoning from natural theology, on the continuance of human life past death. At the start of this chapter, he gives a summary of his argument:

[L]et us consider what the analogy of nature, and the several changes which we have undergone, and those which we may undergo without being destroyed, suggest, as to the effect which death may, or may not, have upon us; and whether it be not from thence probable, that we may survive this change, and exist in a future state of life and perception.¹⁴

Within this quote, one can see the scope of his argument in several points: (1) he points to the numerous changes the human body goes through, yet people still keep their identity through these changes; (2) he argues that death is merely another one of these changes; and (3), he concludes that human beings survive death, because their survival through the myriad of other changes. The following paragraphs will exposit this argument.

He begins his argument by discussing the outward reasons individuals

¹⁴ Butler, Joseph, *The Analogy of Religion* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1852), 81.

have for thinking whether there is life after death. To this end, Butler states that there is no “positive reason to think that death is the destruction” of the living person; but rather, Socrates suggests, there is a high probability concerning the opposite, i.e. that the individual continues past the destruction of the body.¹⁵ He says this because he distinguishes two ways to reason about the principles of something. First, one can argue from the “reason of the thing,” where someone considers the thing in itself. Or, one can reason by the “analogy of nature,” where someone points to other things like it in the world.¹⁶ He says that one cannot reason from the object of death itself that it is the end, because, there is no logical connection between there ceasing to be physical matter and the “destruction of living powers,” i.e. that the “same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again at all.”¹⁷ He makes the connection that, whenever someone goes to sleep, the objects that make someone to be a living person do not cease to exist whenever they are not acting. Butler believes death to be the same sort of thing.

Butler then devotes the majority of this part of his work to the reasoning from analogy for the object of death. He begins by positing the existence of an individual, indivisible, conscious being within each human person, which is distinct from the body; although he does not think this can be proved from “experimental observation.”¹⁸ He directly contrasts this with the divisibility, and

¹⁵ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷ Ibid., 83, see Footnote 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 86-87.

destruction of various portions of the body at various times. Butler states that, “men lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and even the greatest part of these bodies, and yet remain the same living agents.”¹⁹ With this connection, Butler shows the difference of the immaterial concept of persons, and the physical apparatus in which they inhabit; because one part can be broken down and not affect the others, this shows that the immaterial aspects appear makeup the true identity of the person.

He then uses this line of thinking of the divisible body, and applies it to the concept of a person’s physical death. Butler states that, if someone can lose many different parts of their body and remain the same person, then there is no reason that someone could not conclude that the complete destruction of the physical body. That is, if physical death can merely be thought of as the complete destruction of the various parts of the body that—via reasoning from analogy above—then physical properties are unnecessary for the fundamental aspect of the person (i.e., the soul) to function. If this is so, then why must the soul cease to continue to operate under this condition?²⁰ He concludes that there are two ways that humans exist—in a material and immaterial sense—and that each way operates under different “laws and its own peculiar enjoyments and sufferings.”²¹

Because of all of the former statements, among other things, Butler believes that the human person continues beyond the obstacle of physical death; or, at the very least, that there is no reason to think that death is the annihilation

¹⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁰ Ibid., 88-89.

²¹ Ibid., 93.

of the human person.²² But for Butler, the true object of certainty must be found in theological revelation itself: his argument merely intends to point someone in the direction of further study.

2.3 Richard Swinburne and the Soul

Richard Swinburne's thoughts on the afterlife—as explicated in this section—come from both his essay in *Thinking About Death*, and from his book *The Evolution of the Soul*. In brief, Swinburne does not think that there is a good argument for the soul's continuance in-itself beyond physical death via natural theology.²³ This is because, in his view, there is no way to show that the soul “survives ‘under its own steam’,” simply by reasoning about what it is like.²⁴ Going further, Swinburne states this: “the soul doesn't have a nature which has consequences for what will happen to it subsequent to the dissolution of its links to the body.”²⁵ In his line of thinking, Swinburne believes that there can be no correlation drawn merely between the existence of the soul, God, and death for the afterlife.

In *The Possibility of Life After Death*, Swinburne states that—in his view—the existence of the soul at least gives “something to happen to.”²⁶ In this sense, Swinburne's imagines a world in which all events cannot be explained by purely

²² Ibid., 96-98.

²³ Swinburne, Richard, *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 309.

²⁴ Swinburne, Richard. "Body and Soul." *Think* 2.05 (2003): 31.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Swinburne, Richard, "Life after Death," *Richard Swinburne's Life after Death* (Cambridge.edu: Web).

physical causes, and therefore must have meaning outside of itself. And, similar to Joseph Butler, he claims true certainty about the matter must be found in the object of religion and theology.

2.4 Conclusions on the Natural Theology of the Afterlife

Each of the arguments listed above seek to show something about the nature of the afterlife, reasoning from the object of the human person and how death immediately affects this person's continuance after physical death. Plato speaks to the dualistic nature of the soul, and how this points to an afterlife. Joseph Butler provides a dualistic framework of the human person, and says that a person's identity can be found through the divisibility of the physical person, compared to the indivisibility of the soul. And finally, Swinburne denies that there is a good argument for the natural theology of the afterlife altogether, saying that it cannot be reasoned about merely from the object of the soul; it must happen in relation to divine revelation or action (such as Christian theism) in his view.

Looking at these arguments together, I believe that there is an open window that has not been considered when looking at reasoning about the afterlife. Plato and Butler agree that the human person is immaterial in nature, and point to this somehow relating to the afterlife; although Plato appears to think the existence of the soul is evidence enough in itself. Swinburne and Butler point to the necessity of revelation to show finality in regards to the afterlife—I think that this is not the case. I believe that the case can be made for the afterlife merely by reasoning from the characteristics of a metaphysically autonomous

being. On this point, I disagree with Swinburne who states there can be nothing drawn from the nature of the soul itself; I think it can, but must be combined with its metaphysical context. One can show the existence of the afterlife by reasoning from certain characteristics of God and the nature of the universe—from a mostly top-down perspective—and giving particular points about how God relates to the various things he has created. Then, showing the properties that different things have, why God would choose to sustain human beings. In this sense, one could develop a theory of how God relates to the world, and how this relationship might change over time for different things. I am proposing to take the sorts of things that most monotheistic individuals would posit—such as, there being one, individual, autonomous, purposeful, necessary being—and considering the possibility of the afterlife for human beings.

In the next section, I will give an argument in the same line of thinking described above. I will identify several points that are pertinent for my argument—such as sort of God that exists in this world, and that everything in the world exists for a purpose—but will follow this line of reasoning down to the particular points of things that exist in this world, i.e. specifically for the human person. I believe that it is possible, from some of these general assumptions, to come to a high degree of probability that God would sustain human beings beyond physical death.

2.5 An Argument from God's Necessity

The purpose of this essay is to show—without referencing to divine revelation—it is rational to believe in life beyond death for human beings. This

must be done through positing the existence of a necessary and independent being, and then working out the subsequent implications. Below is the argument in propositional form, which will be explicated in greater detail within the following chapters:

- (1) If God is a necessary being, and the only necessary being, then all things that are not-God (“contingent entities”) are necessarily dependent on God for their existence.
- (2) If a contingent entity is necessarily dependent on God, then God must continue to sustain the entity for it to exist.
- (3) It is in the metaphysical nature of creating a contingent entity that it is done in a purposeful way, i.e. embedded with ends or purposes.
- (4) Contingent entities in the world appear to be created with different ends and purposes
- (5) If God must continue to sustain contingent entities for them to exist, then he will continue to sustain them according to his purposes in creating them.
- (6) If human beings have transcendent properties (i.e., immaterial), then they would have ends that go beyond the physical world.
- (7) Human beings are entities that have immaterial properties.
- (8) Therefore, human beings have ends that go beyond the physical world.
- (9) Therefore, God must continue to sustain human beings beyond the physical world. See (5) and (8).

In the following chapters, I will set out to explain, support, and defend the propositions above. In Chapter 3, I will discuss propositions (1) through (3),

mainly focusing on the necessary nature of God, and what this means to the corresponding entities. Chapter 4 will discuss propositions (4) through (6), and will mostly be in regards to the ends and purposes of entities in the world. And lastly, Chapter 5 will discuss propositions (7) through (9), seeking to show that human beings are the sorts of entities that God would seek to sustain beyond the physical world.

CHAPTER 3

God and Contingent Entities

Introduction

This chapter will primarily discuss the necessary nature of God and the implications God's necessity has for all other entities in the world. I will be discussing propositions (1) through (3) laid out in the argument in Chapter 2, seeking to provide support and explanations:

- (1) If God is a necessary being, and the only necessary being, then all things that are not-God ("contingent entities") are necessarily dependent on God for their existence.
- (2) If a contingent entity is necessarily dependent on God, then God must continue to sustain the entity for it to exist.
- (3) It is in the metaphysical nature of creating a contingent entity that it is done in a purposeful way, i.e. embedded with ends or purposes.

I will assume that God has the properties generally thought about by the Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—as well as other theists who hold that God is a solely independent, necessary, and autonomous being. Necessary to my argument, as well, is the assumption that God is the only such necessary being in the world. I will also assume that something like the Principle

of Sufficient Reason (i.e., that every contingent fact in the world has a purposefulness or reason for existing) holds.¹

This section will seek to do several things: section 3.1 will give an explanation for what it means for God to be an independent and necessary being; section 3.2 will give a thought experiment on how all entities that are not-God are necessarily dependent on God, and how God might have created them; section 3.3 will explain how this shows that things God created must be somewhat independent of one another; and section 3.4 will show why each independent thing that is created by God must have been done in a purposeful way.

3.1 God as the Necessary, Independent, and Purposeful Being

Many individuals in the history of philosophy—such as Anselm, Al-Ghazali, Aquinas, Leibniz, and in recent years, Plantinga—have argued that God is a necessary and independent being. Each individual has perhaps arrived at this conclusion in different ways but, in a broad sense, all consider God to be completely metaphysically autonomous. In this brief explanation of what is meant by the term, I will seek to merely show that in all accounts of what it means to be a necessary being (i.e. God), one is left with a being that all other entities are necessarily dependent on in all aspects.² John Hick has previously defined what it would mean for something to be a necessary being into three different categories: (a) logical necessity, (b) causal necessity, and (c) factual

¹ See: Pruss, Alexander R, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason: A Reassessment* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006).

² Rowe, William L, *The Cosmological Argument* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1975), 169-170.

necessity.³ I believe that my argument holds if any of these three types of necessity hold true of God:

- (a) Logical necessity: This means that it is logically impossible for a necessary being to not exist. This would mean that the being exists in all possible worlds, and there could not be a world where such a being does not exist..
- (b) Causal necessity: This means that it is impossible for the necessary being to have any cause. The inverse of this would also hold true: it would be impossible for any entity to be independent of this necessary being. Everything would necessarily be contingent on the independent being.
- (c) Factual necessity: This means that all entities are contingent upon the necessary being, and while the necessary being is not contingent upon any outside entity.

In each of the three types of necessity listed in (a), (b), and (c), there is a sense in which everything that exists in this way is dependent on the necessary being in all respects for existence.

Additionally, I posit that God is the only such necessary being that exists in the world. This is within the same line of reasoning as my initial assumptions that God is metaphysically autonomous. This would mean that there cannot be another independent being which outside contingent entities can depend on: the only such being in consideration would be God.

³ Hick, John H, "Necessary Being," *Scottish Journal of Theology SJT* 14.04 (1961): 353.

Pertinent to this line of reasoning, lastly, is that the Principle of Sufficient Reason holds in this world. This, which is one of the fundamental assumptions of my current argument, means that for every fact x , there must be a reason for why x is the case. This will be directly applied to the argument at hand, and will be used in the sense that God is purposeful about the things that he creates. In this way, there are no unintelligible facts in the world, in the sense that there are no facts without meaning. This does not mean that human beings can epistemically know all of these facts, but from an ontological sense, there are no things void of purpose.⁴

3.2 Picturing God's Relation to the World: Thought Flowers

If God is a necessary being in the same way described above, then God is the only independent and necessary thing. This means that everything else in the world, necessarily, is contingently existent upon this necessary being. To understand this—and some of the implications—more fully, I believe it might be helpful to imagine how God might bring something into being, and how he might relate with that thing, in a thought experiment.

Imagine that former President Bush and President Obama are sitting in the White House together, discussing the many important earthly problems that Presidents have to deal with. Obama turns to Bush and asks, “How did you deal with having the properly basic workout equipment needed when traveling, doing extremely important President things?” That is when Bush turns to Obama and

⁴ See: Melamed, Yitzhak and Lin, Martin, "Principle of Sufficient Reason", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/sufficient-reason/>>.

lets him know about these things called “Thought Flowers,” which grow on the planet Mars: things that, upon consumption, allow an individual to think anything into existence from nothing. There are several things that can be said about the process, and the conditions and requirements for a thing to create something.

Thought Flowers allow anyone to create anything out of nothing by thinking it into existence. Because, in the example of Bush, he would be creating workout equipment for himself by using Thought Flowers, the equipment would be existentially dependent on him. In this case, Bush is the entirely independent being, which every variable or property surrounding and concerning the workout equipment—down to its very existence—would be necessarily dependent on Bush: the sole independent being in the existential equation.

Bush’s creation of workout equipment for usage via Thought Flowers also entails two things about his role in doing so, among other things. These two things are mentioned due to their pertinence of the discussion. These all relate to the fact that the equipment is entirely contingent upon his creation of it, and he must have thought it into existence after eating the Thought Flowers. First, in order to create the workout equipment, he must have an exhaustive idea as to what it will be like—every aspect of its properties and characteristics. This means that there is nothing about the piece of equipment that Bush did not have some role in, because every aspect about it is necessarily contingent upon Bush’s creation of it. For there to be any aspect of the equipment that is somehow independent of Bush would be to betray the nature of his role as the independent

being in the equation of its creation and sustenance; this would be *de facto* impossible by definition.

This means that, for the conversation relating to this essay, there is purposefulness embedded into the nature of bringing something into existence by means of Thought Flowers. Each property or characteristic about a thing would have to be willed into existence, which therefore means that any property of a thing could have easily not have been instantiated. Because of possibility of created things to not be the case—perhaps the size of the workout equipment, for Bush—then this means what is actually created must have the affirmation of purposefulness by the creator. One could easily imagine Obama, creating his set of workout equipment, in a different way than Bush: perhaps Bush's equipment has an elephant painted on it (for his Republican pride), whereas Obama has a donkey (for the Democrats). Each individual's creation of aspects about a thing would directly relate to their ends and purposes for creating it and, in effect, qualifies its existence as purposeful in some way. Something cannot go against the Principle of Sufficient Reason in such a world of purposeful creators.

Second, the things brought into existence by the Thought Flowers, such as the workout equipment, must be sustained by the creator for them to continue existing. This is because—by its nature—the creator's thoughts about the thing created brought it into existence, and the condition of the creator willing a thing's existence is materially equivalent to the thing existing. In this way, something would not exist if it were not willed to be so by the person who created it—this must continue indefinitely if the things should continue to exist because, as mentioned above, it would betray the independent nature of the creator if the

thing could somehow exist apart from the independent being in the equation. For something that was created by Thought Flowers to be released from the independent being of the creator, and somehow become entirely independent in its own right, would be impossible and *prima facie* contradictory to the nature of its existence.

One could perhaps imagine someone being born in the year 1993. This person will always have the property of “being born in the year 1993,” and therefore cannot remove this from the set of attributes that they contain. This is analogous, but imperfectly, to the way that an independent being must relate to anything it creates—the creation cannot ever somehow be separated from the fact that it was created, and is metaphysically wholly contingent on this fact.

Lastly, one could then imagine two alternative scenarios to the ones listed above: First, one could imagine someone discovering the existence of Thought Flowers and not creating anything at all. He simply did not have any desire to create anything, and saw no need to do so. In this world (where the holder of the Thought Flower is an independent being), the independent being saw it fit to remain by himself. Second, one could imagine a world where, after President Bush saw no need for his created workout equipment, he decided to make it cease to exist. This would occur by his stopping to sustain it, because he ceased wanting it, and had no obligation to continue it existing.

There will be more stated to the contents surrounding this thought experiment in the paragraphs to come, but I believe what is already stated is highly relevant to the task of the project as a whole. It is illustrative of how an independent and necessary being creates and sustains things. Just as with

Thought Flowers, everything that has the property of being not-God must be entirely dependent on God for its existing, and for all other properties that it has.

3.3 The Relative Independence of Entities Created by God

Following from the different types of necessity listed in 3.1 and extrapolated in 3.2, all entities in the world are contingent upon the necessary being for existence. If the necessary being is the only thing in the world that everything is contingent upon, then it follows that at least some contingent things are independent of one another. In a view that is similar to Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of logical atomism, it follows that certain objects or propositions in the world can be considered to be separate entities of one another. The only consistent property among things that exist is its connection with God.

Just as in the Thought Flower experiment, it would seem to follow, then, that there are different categories of things God has created. Each of these different categories of things are all independent of one another in some sense, but are not independent from the necessary being. For example, rocks are different from human beings, and horses are different from dogs: it seems that these things can be defined, analyzed, and considered as different entities, and can be parts of larger wholes or divided into subsidiary properties.

One must consider the restriction or expansion involved within determining the relevant entities. Each entity in the world, for example, could be considered to be within the strata of a larger entity. Each entity that might be considered a horse could also be in the category of "horses," and so on. This can also work in the opposing direction. Each thing that is a horse might be broken

down into smaller entities of the properties of naturally having four legs, or teeth, or eyes, etc. Each of these things would all be somewhat independent of one another—at least in a factual sense—but would all larger entities or smaller properties maintain the characteristic of being dependent on God. Relating it to the Thought Flowers thought experiment, President Bush would have needed to both imagine the finished product of how the properties fit together to make the workout equipment, and the respective exhaustive properties within it.

3.4 The Purposefulness Embedded in God's Creation

If each contingent entity can be considered in terms of relevant quantifiers, then it is perhaps possible to deduce—if the Principle of Sufficient Reason holds—that each contingent entity was created with purposeful action on the part of God. Relating to my thought experiment of the Thought Flowers, God must do something similar to imagining every aspect of an entity before creating it. Because each thing could easily have been otherwise, because of preferences or choices—similar to Obama and Bush choosing different facets to go on their pieces of workout equipment—then there appears to be an imbedded exactitude of preferred instantiation in each entity.

The propositions (2) and (3)—from the initial Chapter 2 argument—therefore come to fruition if the previous paragraphs hold. Because each entity, regardless of quantifier, must have been created in a purposeful way, then this means God created all entities (and all aspect of every entity) in a purposeful way. This means two things: (a) it is in the metaphysical nature of each contingent entity that it was created in a purposeful way. Therefore, this means that each

thing can be considered to have a purpose as a contingent entity in the world. (However, this does not mean that human beings may be entitled to be epistemically able to know these ends.) And (b), because existence can be considered a property that each contingent entity must contain in relationship to the necessary being, then this must have an embedded purpose-value for each relevant entity.

Synthesizing these points together, there is therefore an embedded purpose, not only in God's creating something but also, in God sustaining an entity in regards to the characteristic of its existence. This can perhaps be visualized by one of the examples in the Thought Flowers case. God must decide to continue sustaining something, just as President Bush might choose to sustain or retire his created workout equipment. Because an entity is entirely contingent upon the necessary being for its existence, then one could deduce that it could easily be otherwise for God to cease something's existence.

CHAPTER 4

God's Relationship to Different Contingent Entities

Introduction

This chapter will primarily discuss God's relationship to the many different contingent entities in the world, and their properties and characteristics. This will build upon the propositions—(1) through (3)—that were discussed in the previous chapter. I will be building off of the argument in which God, who is the only independent necessary being, must be connected to the properties of each contingent entity's existence. As well, I will now assume the main conclusions from Chapter 3: First, the Principle of Sufficient Reason holds in this world, and that each contingent entity was created with particular ends or purposes. And second, for each contingent entity to continue existing, God must actively sustain it. In this chapter, I will advance these propositions (4) through (6), as set out in the argument at the end of Chapter 2:

- (4) Contingent entities in the world appear to be created with different ends and purposes
- (5) If God must continue to sustain contingent entities, then he will continue to sustain them according to his purposes in creating them.
- (6) If human beings have immaterial properties (i.e., souls), then they would have ends that go beyond the physical world.

The following sections will discuss several things to flesh out these propositions: section 4.1 will develop a *telos*-informed framework to begin speaking about entities in the world with different ends and purposes; section 4.2 will discuss why, in the physical world which human beings can observe and inhabit, different categories of entities in the world might have been created by God for different purposes; section 4.3 will discuss why God might choose to sustain—or not sustain—some categories of entities for different spans of time, and across different planes of being; and 4.4 will make the case that categories of entities which have immaterial properties are the sorts of things God will sustain past the existence of the physical world.

4.1 Contingent Entities and Their Telos

I believe that using something like a basic *telos*-focused approach can be helpful for understanding the nature of contingent entities in the world. This is because the various contingent entities, as explicated and illustrated in previous paragraphs, must have been created in a purposeful way (given that the Principle of Sufficient reason holds). As well, each thing in the world could easily have not been the case, making it appear that there were many inherent instantiations of choices employed for each property of every entity in the world. However, no definitions of “purposefulness” or “ends” have yet been given in this essay: this brief section will seek to create a working framework of the definitions when understanding the creation of an embedded *telos* (τέλος).

Drawing upon the deep Aristotelian tradition of speaking about a thing’s *telos*, ascribing a proper function to something in order to achieve its *eudaimonia*

(εὐδαιμονία) in the world, I will seek to apply this to entities in the world.¹ The “proper function” of a thing can be thought to be the actions it may perform to fulfill the reason it was created; its “eudaimonia” is the entity’s fulfillment of its end. This can perhaps be illustrated by referencing to the Thought Flowers thought experiment in Chapter 3. Concerning the workout equipment created by President Bush, there is an embedded reason for it existing: for the purpose of President Bush working out on it. Its proper function would be related to the ability of the workout equipment to be good at what it was made for, i.e. to facilitate the ability for George Bush to be able to workout in a way that he desires. Therefore, the proper function of this workout equipment would be the workout equipment being used in the way that it was intended: George Bush working out in a way that pleases him. Applying this to God creating something in a purposeful way—using the framework of basic *telos* approach—then, given the Principle of Sufficient Reason, things done for a reason must have proper functions and ultimate ends: that is, there must be a specific purpose embedded in the expected actions and ultimate ends for each entity in the world.

I will describe a world in which explaining things via a *telos*—because things were created with various purposes, and not at random—arrives at truth. (I believe that this is a direct deduction from positing independent identities of entities, and the purposeful creation of each entity.) This means, essentially, that there are two characteristics that can be noted about each entity’s purpose in the

¹ One place where Aristotle defines functions, ends, and purposes: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), Book 1.

world: (1) there was a specific purpose in creating an entity, and (2) each entity can perhaps have different purposes in the world.

4.2 The Different Purposes of Entities

This section will discuss two main questions: (1) how can one begin to discuss the different sorts of purposes that various contingent entities might have? And (2), what sorts of things can be discerned about the different purposes of various entities via the properties they contain? These two questions, I think, can be answered by the different potential functions of entities, and how they might achieve their ordained end. I believe that there are many different sorts of purposes that can be ascribed to contingent entities—e.g., pleasure, utility, and fellowship, among others—and that all entities must fit into having an ultimate purpose in some way given the Principle of Sufficient Reason. I do not claim to have an exhaustive account of what these purposes might be, but will merely seek to explain three of these potential reasons for God’s creation of something; and, in doing so, I will seek to show that the purposes for these things can be ascertained by looking at the properties within the contingent entity.

One might consider expanding the thought experiment of the Thought Flowers above. One could imagine President Bush in two separate scenarios—needing to create a corresponding entity to fit each desire he has in each scenario—to show the point of the different purposes of various entities. There will then be a third scenario with a different sort of agent creating something. In the first situation, President Bush decides that he is extremely hungry for something tasting like Blue Bell ice cream. The environment that he is currently

in does not allow him to attain any normal ice cream, because his wife, Laura, is forcing him to maintain a diet: so he only is able to get the Weight Watchers brand. Unsatisfied with the version with lesser flavor, he decides to put his Thought Flowers to good use and create some ice cream. After creating the ice cream, he eats it, and then makes it cease to exist. (Let us posit that—in terms of him creating and eating ice cream—once he decides it to make the ice cream cease to exist, he does not intake the calories!) This allows Bush to attain both ends that he wanted: (a) get the best tasting ice cream he wants, and (b) stay on his diet to make Laura happy! For the purposes of this example, I consider this to be a creation of pleasure (and wife-pleasing). The ice cream, upon ingesting it, achieved the ends that President Bush desired out of it: he wanted a tasty ice cream treat, and got it upon eating it. This contingent entity in relation to President Bush, then, was created with the function to taste like Blue Bell ice cream, and satisfied its end by being a tasty treat to him. One might think of a contingent entity like this one—whose sole purpose was created for the immediate pleasure of the creator—to have a specific purpose that can be tangibly fulfilled within the setting it was created for. In this sense, because the desire was contained within the specific setting of President Bush's diet constrictions, his Laura's desires for him to be on a diet, and his desire for better-tasting ice cream. This sort of purpose for creation, then, appears to have a setting-specific function or use, i.e. its purpose can only be intelligible within the setting described above, and is not needed afterwards.

In the second setting, one could again imagine President Bush's desire to get a good workout in on the road. This time, though, instead of the entire

workout equipment set, he only needs one set of dumbbell weights: this is because he is trying to impress Laura by developing enormous biceps like her idol, Arnold Schwarzenegger. This desire for this dumbbell set is purely out of utility: he wants to impress Laura by developing enormous biceps like Arnold (and perhaps by showing that the diet she has him on is indeed working), and will cease to use the dumbbells once he does. So, after several arduous months of working on his biceps, he finally gets to the point where he feels comfortable showing Laura. (He has been wearing long sleeve shirts to conceal his project.) After she is impressed, he ceases to need the dumbbells that he created, because they fulfilled the setting-specific desire of wanting to get enormous biceps. The proper function of these dumbbells was to make President Bush's biceps huge, and the dumbbells fulfilled their ultimate end by doing so. In this purely utilitarian need by Bush for the dumbbells was constrained to this achievable end and goal, and—once it was reached—ceased to be needed.

The third situation is bound by a sense of entity-focused creation. Getting away from the character of President Bush in the Thought Flower example, one could imagine a different sort of individual getting ahold of the Thought Flowers: a parent who has been unable to a child organically with his/her spouse. In this situation, the parents desired to have a child, and decided to use the Thought Flowers to do so. In this situation, the parents are not creating the child for either utility or pleasure, but for a sort of intimate fellowship in accordance with the deepest desires bound to human nature. They have no plans of needing the children for utilitarian purposes—they are not needing them for labor on a farm, or other work-related means, and in this example have all of their basic physical

and psychological needs met—so there can be no ulterior motive (i.e., “needing” something) possibly attributed to this desire. In this sense, they are completely sufficient independently of having any child, and this is solely out of their deep longing for doing so, springing out of their natural goodness and desire. After creating this child via the Thought Flowers, it functions in entirely the same way as an organically formed one: it is a real, functioning human being, in every way. The function of this entity, then, is ultimately to live a good life in accordance with what it means to be a human being. There is something transcendent about the function and end of this entity, because there is no utilitarian purpose for which it was created: it was merely created out of the desire and goodness from the creator, and could have easily been otherwise. In this way, the entity was created—in a sense—for the good of the entity itself: not because of anything the creator needed.

Contrasting the first two created entities with the last, there seems to be a distinct break in the types of purposes that something can be created for: in the first sense (regarding the first two purposes for creating an entity), there is a selfish utilitarianism inseparably infused with the reason for creating it; in the second sense (regarding the third purpose for creating an entity), there is a sort of entity-focused altruism embedded in its creation, with ends that appear to be transcendent outside of the entity’s current state; i.e., ends that are not created to be used to fulfill a need of the creator. Using this thought experiment to draw out different potential purposes of created entities, I believe that the different conclusions can be drawn about the expected duration of God sustaining an

entity. This rests on the assumption that certain characteristics about an entity's function and end can be drawn about through looking at its properties.

4.3 Time Horizons for Contingent Entities

Using the framework established in the previous section, I believe there can be some possible conclusions drawn about the potential time horizons that God might choose to sustain potential entities for various amounts of time. I believe that—in order to be consistent with the goodness of the independent, necessary being—God will sustain something in accordance with the purpose it was created; this means that God cannot go against his instantiated metaphysical—i.e., the nature in which it was created—promise upon creating something with certain functions and ends. God will not go against his nature in how he holds together the fabric of an entity—the various properties, characteristics, and purposes. If it holds that God is fully responsible for the sustenance of each and every entity in the world, then it subsequently holds that he will maintain its “identity of purpose” (i.e., the identity he ascribed to it upon inception) for each individual entity in the world. This means that God will not remove his commitment to its embedded purposefulness. It is conceivable that God has created things with different ultimate purposes, which may be fulfilled at different times; therefore, some entities might be sustained for x amount of time, while others might be sustained for $x + 1$, and others might be sustained for eternity, and so on.

Although the exhaustive ultimate purpose of things in the world are unknowable due to their *a priori* nature unless revealed (i.e., it can only be

known in the mind of God, unless explicitly revealed, because of the nature of creating a thing), I believe that certain things can be discerned about entities' purposes through the various individual properties and characteristics they contain. For example, although someone cannot exhaustively know all of the purposes and properties that is embedded within President Bush's creation, they can still know individual properties *a posteriori* about them: these allow for inferences to be drawn about the ultimate nature of each entity. Drawing upon the many sources and variables to discern this knowledge, the truth can be drawn. (E.g., Although someone might not know President Bush is trying to impress his wife by working out his biceps, one can still draw the inference by his continual focus on one muscle group, intentional hiding it from his wife until completion, etc.) With each contingent entity in the world, I believe there is the potential to know certain properties, given the context of the world surrounding that entity, about contingent entities. One can discern certain facts about various things in the world (regarding their purposes) with a high degree of probability that something is the case from their properties.

The time horizon of the function and purpose of a thing can be discerned to a high degree of probability if both of these things hold true for an entity: (a) it has certain properties that can be known *a posteriori*, and (b) those properties appear to be created to fulfill the end of their proper function within the context of a certain setting. For example, if someone were to see a hammer, they would know *a posteriori* that it has the potential to be used as a means to hit something: its handle allows someone to place a firm grasp, and its head is shaped in such a way that is conducive for striking something. But, if one were to see this hammer

in a strange context—such as someone using it to scoop ice cream, or laying in the middle of the desert—then they would quickly see (I hope) that its proper function must be fulfilled in a different context. From this, I believe that someone could infer that its proper function would be fulfilled in the act of striking something, its true context, as opposed to scooping ice cream. The culmination of this argument will take place in the next section: I will build upon these statements to make the argument that, if something has immaterial properties—such as a soul—then it is the sort of thing that will be sustained indefinitely by God, or at least will be sustained beyond the physical world.

4.4 Sustenance of Immaterial Properties

This section will solely consider what would be the case if human beings do have souls (i.e., immaterial properties); the next chapter will consider the question of whether human beings do in fact have souls or not. If human beings have immaterial properties, then I believe one can infer with a high degree of probability that there are certain ends that cannot be fulfilled solely in the current physical world. Because of this, it appears to me that human beings are not the sorts of entities that can be categorized as utilitarian or for pleasure, but are the sort of things that were created to be ends-in-themselves. I believe that this is because it would satisfy the two conditions: (1) if human beings have souls, then they have individual agency, i.e., free will; and (2), if human beings have souls, then they have properties that can go beyond the physical world. This means their personhood does not cease upon eventual physical death.

On the first point—that human beings would have individual agency, it appears to be in the second category of purposes listed the third example in the thought experiment above. If everything is created with an embedded purpose—human beings can be thought to have been created with an embedded purpose of being self-acting agents—then it would seem arbitrary to make human beings cease to exist upon physical death; this would be because they are the type of entity that was created in an altruistic sort of way, i.e. for the entity itself. If human beings were created without an expected utilitarian or pleasure-fulfilling end, and were created merely out of God’s goodness and desire to do so, then it would go against God’s nature to make human beings cease to exist arbitrarily. Because it would be against God’s nature to go against the purpose for which he created it, it would be absurd for God to make humans cease to exist, due to their being ends-in-themselves.

On the second point, if human beings have souls, then it appears that their ultimate ends and function go past merely the physical world. In this sense, because human beings have properties that would not cease to have meaning upon physical death, then it would seem that there is an environment (albeit non-physical) in which one could see the human identity flourishing. Because there are certain properties that can flourish in another environment, then I believe it would be arbitrary for God to make this property arbitrarily cease to fulfill its function. Because the property of having an immaterial transcendent soul can perhaps flourish in an immaterial environment, then I think it would be arbitrary for God to prematurely make this category of entities cease to exist. If this is in fact the case, then I believe there is a high degree of probability that—if there is a

soul—that God would choose to maintain the human identity beyond the physical grave.

CHAPTER 5

The Completeness of Physics and the Soul

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will do two main things. First, I will provide an argument as to why it is likely that humans have immaterial properties, and therefore souls. I will examine certain elements surrounding the mind-body problem, and the scope of causal relations in physics. And second, I will conclude this thesis by speaking to the immediate conclusions of my argument. In thinking about whether or not it is rational to posit the existence of the soul in human beings, I will speak to a particular claim about the nature of physics and the physical world, i.e. whether the completeness of physics holds. I will discuss the history of the completeness of physics, hoping to shed light on why the prevailing view in regards to the nature of physics is false. And, because of this falsity, I will show that human beings have immaterial properties. From this, I will discuss whether physics can exhaustively explain all of the causes and facts in the world; if it cannot, then there is evidence for the existence of things outside the realm of physical causation. I will also seek to show why the human person is one of these things, which is therefore proof of having immaterial properties. This chapter will build upon the propositions (1) through (6) that were explicated in the previous chapters, and conclude with propositions (7) through (9) as given in Chapter 2:

(7) Human beings are entities that have immaterial properties.

(8) Therefore, human beings have ends that go beyond the physical world.

(9) Therefore, God must continue to sustain human beings beyond the physical world. See (5) and (8).

This chapter will be split up into several sections: section 5.1 will give a brief history of the completeness of physics; section 5.2 will argue against the causal closure of the physical by discussing the argument from reason, and the knowledge argument; section 5.3 will discuss the effects of the argument from reason and the knowledge argument on the causal closure of the physical and human beings; and section 5.4 will discuss the entailments that follow the overarching argument of my thesis.

5.1 A Brief History of the Completeness of Physics

The completeness of physics is foundational for materialistic claims. This, as discussed above, is that all facts in the world can be explained via physical causes. In David Papineau's *Thinking about Consciousness*, he provides a basis for this claim. In his book, Papineau asserts two things about the causal closure of the physical (i.e., all effects have physical causes): first, the completeness of physics is not explicitly in philosophical arguments because philosophers have come to assume it. And second, materialism necessarily follows from this claim. In this section, I will give a brief history of the completeness of physics, focusing in particular on the mind-body problem, and the various arguments for physicalism in philosophy of mind that presuppose this claim.

Modern science has been filled with issues surrounding the causal closure of the physical. From René Descartes and G.W. Leibniz, to the twentieth century,

the completeness of physics has been building upon the embedded claim of the lack of transcendence in the world. With the emergence of Enlightenment thought, which switched the physical paradigm from Aristotelian physics to a more exact and mechanistic one, science now bases itself solely off of the fundamentals of physical causation. This is where Papineau claims that everything can be explained in materialistic terms. While the Aristotelian view of the universe allowed for a certain level of mysticism in regards to the physical world, the Enlightenment thinkers slowly wiped away all that is transcendent; they turned the accepted framework of the world into something similar to the clockwork of pulleys and levers. In this brief history of key figures, the slow progression into a world of purely physical causes can be seen.

Descartes, laying out his own mechanics of the universe, posited a mechanistic universe while maintaining the transcendent.¹ By explaining how energy might be conserved in the world, he was able to posit mind-body interactions. Descartes said that energy is conserved through what he called “quantity of motion.”² Through this concept, he was able to maintain non-physical causes by defining speed as non-directional. According to Papineau, this meant that he “create[d] room for non-physical causes...to alter the *direction* body’s motion without violating [his] conservation principle.”³

However, when looking at Leibniz—who was examining Descartes’ views—

¹ For an overview of Descartes’ physics: Slowik, Edward, "Descartes' Physics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/descartes-physics/>>.

² Descartes, René, *Meditations* (New York: Liberal Arts, 1951), Meditation V.

³ Papineau, David, *Thinking about Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 235.

one can see he pointed out several errors, and improved upon his physics. Adding kinetic energy and momentum, he expanded upon Descartes' limited view of motion, and Leibniz came to the conclusion that there was no room for the mind influencing the body.⁴ This led to his famous argument for the divine pre-established harmony of the soul. This was the claim that the body and soul could not interact, but were merely set up to mirror each other's actions perfectly.⁵

After Leibniz's development of the pre-established harmony, Papineau speculates as to why materialism was not accepted shortly afterwards. He infers that it was largely due to Newtonian physics, which "quickly eclipsed" Leibniz's view of energy conservation.⁶ Newton's account of physics allowed for direct mind-body interactions.⁷ In a roundabout fashion, it took the physical sciences nearly two centuries to pick up where Leibniz left off. And, in Papineau's view, modern physics finally culminated—where he believes it should have been initially—in the twentieth century: it gave an account of the universe that was completely physical. Papineau says this about the development of the causal closure of the physical:

[The] completeness [of physics] was reached only in the middle of the twentieth century. In earlier centuries there was no compelling reason to believe that all physical effects are due to physical causes, and few

⁴ Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Discourse on Metaphysics* (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester UP, 1953).

⁵ For an overview of Leibniz's view of the mind: Kulstad, Mark and Carlin, Laurence, "Leibniz's Philosophy of Mind", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/leibniz-mind/>>.

⁶ Papineau, David, *Thinking about Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 237.

⁷ For the source of his thinking on physics: Newton, Isaac, *Principia* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1995).

scientists did believe this. But by the 1950s the combination of the physiological evidence with the argument from fundamental forces left little room for doubt about the doctrine.⁸

Even with this statement of assurance, he says that there is no “knockdown argument” for the causal closure of the physical.⁹ But how might someone attempt to give an argument for it?

Papineau subsequently gives his own argument for materialism based on this claim. He gives three premises. First, he states that all “conscious mental occurrences have physical effects.”¹⁰ This makes mental properties the antecedent in physical causation. Certain things must align for a physical act to occur. Second, he says, “[a]ll physical effects are fully caused by purely *physical* prior histories.”¹¹ This asserts that a physical effect happens if and only if something physical causes it. Papineau makes the connection that, if there is a physical effect, it necessarily is caused by something physical. This move allows him to equate mental conscious properties with physical ones. And third, he says physical effects are not ever “overdetermined,” i.e. something like Leibniz’s pre-established harmony could perhaps be true.¹² If his argument holds, then materialism is true. In the next section, I will provide an objection to the completeness of physics as described above, as well as giving the argument from

⁸ Papineau, David, *Thinking about Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 255.

⁹ Ibid., 256.

¹⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 32.

¹² Ibid.

knowledge.

5.2 The Arguments from Reason and Knowledge

Some philosophers believe that the causal closure of the physical is self-defeating. In the subsequent arguments, I will try to show why not all properties and events in the mind can be explained by physical causes; this would show the completeness of physics to be false. This claim can be shown from two ways of looking at the problem: (a) via the argument from reason, and (b) through the knowledge argument. First, I will look at the argument from reason. This argument seeks to show that beliefs, given that materialism and the completeness of physics hold, are not capable of being held by reasons. This is because beliefs would not be the product of reason, but physical properties. Todd Buras' essay *On The Failures of Naturalism* gives an exposition of this argument.

In looking at Buras' essay, there are several things that can be used to discern the truth of the completeness of physics. First, he clarifies what it means to say, "everything is physical."¹³ The standard claim of physicalism, he says, has become the token-identity thesis: "everything that instantiates any property at all instantiates physical properties."¹⁴ This means that if there is a mental state *x*, it necessarily must be made up of physical properties—a direct consequent of the causal closure of physics. Second, he explains what it means to hold a "reason-based belief."¹⁵ Speaking about the properties that cause one to hold a belief, he

¹³ Buras, T. "On the Failures of Naturalism." *Review & Expositor* 111.3 (2014): 268.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

suggests that these are “clearly non-mechanistic—indeed, personal.”¹⁶ But if one holds both of these things to be true, he would accept contradiction. Therefore, one of the propositions must be denied. Faithful physicalists, then, must deny the latter claim.

Buras points out what this means for the materialist. If all beliefs are physical, this creates a problem for the materialist concerning his own beliefs. All beliefs must be, in some way, a physical event.¹⁷ Therefore, when one arrives at a belief, it must happen solely through a physical cause. Would this allow for a rational process in discerning truth-values? If beliefs were purely held through physical causes, then this would not be so. Pointing this out, Buras references William Hasker, who quipped that—given physicalism—“no one ever accepts a belief because it is supported by good reasons.”¹⁸ A belief would therefore only be held, given physicalism, because some physical cause instantiated it to be so.

Drawing out the *reductio ad absurdum* even further, Buras applies this to naturalism itself. If one could find physicalism to be true on the basis of reasons, it would be false; if it were held solely on the basis of physical events, it would not be known to be true. He then concludes with this statement: “Naturalism is either false or unreasonable.”¹⁹ The argument from reason shows an interesting bind in the causal closure of the physical—it’s self-referentially false.

¹⁶ Ibid., 269.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 268.

¹⁹ Ibid., 270.

Second, I will now give a brief exposition of the knowledge argument. Frank Jackson, in his article *What Mary Didn't Know*, articulates this view.²⁰ The argument from reason sought to show that all thoughts could not be explained via physical causes, and Jackson seeks to illustrate that there are non-physical facts via his famous illustration of Mary's room. I will paraphrase the argument here. He tells us to imagine a scientist, Mary, who is an expert in neurophysiology. She knows everything about how the human mind interacts with the outside world—including how all things about how colors interact with the human mind—and can know all things concerning the way the human brain interacts with its surroundings; there is one catch about her knowledge, though: Mary has never been exposed to true colors herself. In this sense, she has never actually seen a color, or the many ways that color interacts with the phenomenal human experience; she only knows how viewing colors interacts with the neurophysiology of the brain, exhaustively. Her entire existence has been in the setting of a black and white backdrop.

The argument goes, then, if physicalism is true—and she in fact knows all there is to know about the physical properties—then she could not learn anything new about colors, if she were to see them. What if, then, Mary is thrown out of her black and white setting, and into a field of flowers or the Museum of Modern Art? Would she learn anything new in the wide range of colors she would see? It would appear that she would—there is a certain sense in which the phenomenal

²⁰ Jackson, Frank, "What Mary Didn't Know," *The Journal of Philosophy* 83.5 (1986): 291.

experience of a property x is different than knowing about property x .²¹ This, which is called qualia, undermines the argument for physicalism, because it cannot explain why Mary would learn something new in regard to the experience of colors.²² Therefore, just as the argument from reason shows, not all instantiations of properties in the mind can have purely physical properties.

I do not have the space to fully defend each of the arguments above, but if these arguments hold, one can see how physicalism falls short in explaining the full range of the human experience. If one or both of these two arguments remain true, then the completeness of physics falls short in explaining the nature of the universe, and the existence of immaterial properties and the soul must be posited as an explanation.

5.3 \square *Physics, Humans, and Immaterial Properties*

If these arguments hold, then the causal closure of the physical is false. Additionally, one must refer back to Papineau's claim that there is no "knockdown" positive explanation for the causal closure of the physical. If physicalism holds, then mental states are completely reducible to physical properties—and therefore, as shown by the argument from reason and the argument from knowledge, false.

On the basis of the two components in mind-body relations examined in this chapter—which were certainly not exhaustive—I conclude that explaining a

²¹ Ibid., 293.

²² For a full definition of qualia: Tye, Michael, "Qualia", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/qualia/>.

world via the existence of immaterial properties remains true. On the basis of these arguments, the existence of immaterial properties appears to explain the nature of the world in a more succinct, and accurate, manner.

Physicalism, then, cannot accurately explain the full range of human experiences, and cannot explain why individuals can hold real reasons for their beliefs, or have phenomenal knowledge of things. These arguments, then, show that there are certain things in the world that cannot be explained through instantiated physical causes for every property. And, when applied to human beings, it shows that there are immaterial properties within the human being.

5.4 Entailments

Building off of the expositions given throughout Chapters 3, 4, and now 5, I can draw some entailments for the broader argument at hand. If all of the premises hold, then I believe that there is a high degree of probability concerning the existence of the afterlife for human beings given theism. This is because, if in fact human beings have immaterial properties—as illustrated through the arguments from reason and knowledge—then that means human beings are in the category of contingent entities that will be sustained by God beyond the physical world.

As explained in Chapters 3 and 4, every contingent entity in the world must have a purpose for its existence (due to the Principle of Sufficient Reason). Because each contingent entity is necessarily dependent on God for its existence, then God is responsible for the sustenance of each thing in the world. Because everything in the world has a purpose—and things appear to have different

purposes—God, who ultimately created everything for different purposes, will naturally sustain things in accordance with the reasons for which he created them. I then gave a framework as to how certain ends and purposes about things can be known *a posteriori*, and say that if human beings have immaterial properties, then this shows them to be the sort of entity that will be sustained beyond the existence of the physical world (and physical death).

In this chapter, I gave an argument showing why the completeness of physics cannot explain the world exhaustively, and why certain elements surrounding the human experience show this view to be false. Therefore, because the completeness of physics is false, and cannot explain the human being, I conclude that human beings do in fact have immaterial properties. Therefore, human beings (via Chapter 4) must have ends that go beyond the physical world. And, therefore, because human beings have ends and purposes that go beyond the physical world, and God sustains things in accordance with the purpose he created them for, then God will sustain human beings beyond the physical world. Therefore, it would appear that there is a high probability that human beings will live beyond the physical world, and one can have knowledge of “life after death,” via the means of natural theology.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This thesis sought to show the existence of the afterlife from several of God's characteristics. I believe that this end is achieved through giving a picture of how God relates to the world, and then applying this directly to the different sorts of things God relates to and might create. The point is poignantly made, I think, by showing that human beings are non-utilitarian, making them the sorts of beings that are ends-in-themselves. Because I believe God will continue to sustain something in regards to the purpose for which he created a thing, it would be arbitrary for him to make them cease to exist. Therefore, I believe—given my argument holds—one can have a high degree of probability in regards to the continuance of human life past physical death.

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