

Chapter 17

Hylotheism: A Theology of Pure Process

Alvin J. Reines

The “theological question,” the primary question confronting the person pursuing theology, is: “What existent—if any—shall I refer to by the term God?”¹ Preliminary to this exposition of hylotheism, my answer to the theological question, two observations are in order. The first describes the general approach I take to the theological inquiry, which is polydox;² the other sets forth the requirement of evidence in my response to the theological question.

I. The Polydox Approach to Theology

The polydox approach to theology can be summarized by three propositions.

- (1) The essential proposition is that every person possesses an ultimate moral right to determine for himself his³ answer to the theological question, namely, his God-view.⁴ Underlying this proposition is the judgment that no person possesses evidence for some particular God-view so convincing that all other persons find themselves compelled to assent to it. The ultimate reason for this, I believe, is that every answer to the theological question is given over an abyss, the void surrounding the human psyche that encloses it within its finity and separates it unalterably from certain knowledge. All theologies, consequently, are born of human subjectivity; no absolute objective standard exists by which to establish

that one rather than another of the answers to the theological question is irrefragably true.

- (2) Every person is a unique individual. This proposition, although not inherent in the essential logic of polydoxy, is in perfect accord with it. The primary basis for accepting this proposition is psychological and biological research, particularly the study of evolution.⁵ Rejected by this proposition is the view that all humans share an essence (as asserted by such thinkers as Aristotle and Maimonides), and owing to this common essence all human minds function alike, so that what appears to be true or real to one right-thinking person will so appear to all other right-thinking members of the human species.
- (3) Where fundamental theological disagreements exist, disputation between the disagreeing parties is futile. It makes no sense when theological differences are ultimate to contend over which answer to the theological question, or God-view, is the correct one. God-views are subjective expressions of a unique, individual consciousness; when they differ basically, there is no objective way to decide among or resolve them. One can only state one's reasons for accepting one God-view and rejecting others. In a polydoxy, unlike orthodoxies,⁶ there is no difficulty in accepting the diversity of God-views that result from this proposition, because every polydoxian affirms the ultimate moral right of all persons to hold the God-views they choose.

II. The Requirement of Evidence

Whether to require evidence as a condition for believing a God-view to be true and, if required, the kind of evidence necessary, are decisions each person makes for himself. Owing to my conception of the finity of the human mind, I believe these decisions are made subjectively and arbitrarily. I have chosen to require evidence as a condition for acceptance of a God-view. The kind of evidence I have decided upon is empirical evidence. In point of fact, the evidence I employ for verifying a God-view is no different from that which I require for establishing the reality of any extramental existent, or that required by the physical sciences to validate their theories. To my mind, there is no reason why verification of a God-view should enjoy privileged epistemological status.

By empirical evidence, I mean a *sensum* (plural: *sensa*).⁷ A *sensum*, as defined here,⁸ is a datum that appears to immediate awareness as

a presentation of one of the five senses. I accept no experiences other than *sensa* as sources of information regarding the existence of entities in the extramental world (among which is a real God), and no propositions other than those verified by *sensa* as true of the extramental world.⁹ All data other than *sensa* that appear to immediate awareness I take as sources of information regarding intramental entities that are reducible in their entirety to events within the psyche. Such an intramental datum is designated a *selfum* (plural: *selfa*).¹⁰ *Selfa* constitute the evidence upon which statements relating to one's intramental life are based. *Sensa* and *selfa* exist only as long as they are present to awareness. As such, they are the only actual entities that are experienced and will, therefore, be referred to as *being*. What is past is not being and does not exist. That which is termed the *past* exists only as a memory in a *selfum*.

I will use the expression *misinterpreted selfum* to refer to a *selfum* that, in my view, has mistakenly been understood as a datum providing information regarding extramental reality.¹¹ It goes without saying that my designation of an experience as a misinterpreted *selfum* is a subjective evaluation based upon the decision that only my *sensa* constitute evidence regarding the not-self. Thus my judgment that a person who claims to have seen an angel has in fact experienced a misinterpreted *selfum* is based upon my having no *sensum* relating to such an entity. Similarly, I believe to be a misinterpreted *selfum* the experience of those who profess a meta-*sensum* apprehension of a divine presence, because I hold that only *sensa* relate to extramental reality.¹² I do not believe that theological differences based upon disagreements over whether an experience is a misinterpreted *selfum* or truly related to extramental reality can be argued. It is true that one can present evidence against the consistency of an ostensible misinterpreted *selfum* with other experiences, but proof that the datum of some other person's immediate awareness is a misinterpreted *selfum* cannot be brought.

What is the basis for genuine belief in one God-view and for rejection of another? The only authentic response I know to this question is that the one God-view is considered true and the other false.¹³ Although this response would seem to be implicit in the foregoing discussion, I bring it up to underscore this principle: the fact that I am a Jew is in no way relevant to which God-view I accept as true. Authentic belief in a God-view is not created by the merely external circumstance that one happens to be born of parents who chance to be members of a particular religious community; authentic belief is not inherited. Genuine assent to a God-view comes from conviction born of a person's individual truth-process regardless of the

beliefs of others. The long theological history of the Jews bears out that this has indeed been the course taken by Jewish religious thinkers. One need only look to the diverse theologies of Ecclesiastes, Maimonides, Spinoza, and Buber to see that this is so.¹⁴ Hence, whether the God-views of Jews in the past or present agree with my theology is irrelevant to my belief; all that is germane is that the evidence for the theology creates within me the conviction of its truth. The corollary of this position is that all one has to do to convert me to his or her theology is to present evidence for it superior to that which exists for my own.

III. God, the Enduring Possibility of Being

We come then to hylotheism, the theology whose truth I find convincing. I find it convincing not only because the evidence for it justifies its acceptance, but equally important because of the subjective nature or lack of objective evidence for other God-views. Hylotheism is established by evidence that requires the minimum number of assumptions necessary for objective knowledge, the same assumptions in fact postulated by the physical sciences for scientific knowledge.¹⁵ Hylotheism should, accordingly, be chosen over other God-views by the application of Occam's razor, the philosophic and scientific principle that entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily. That is, the simplest of competing theories (those requiring the least number of assumptions) are to be preferred over those that are more complex (require more assumptions). Once gratuitous, superfluous assumptions are allowed into the theological enterprise, the principle that evidence is a necessary condition for acceptance of a God-view is lost. On what basis, then, will rational choices among God-views be possible? If a God-view is validated by assumptions without limit, then any and all God-views are established as true simply by assuming them to be true, no matter that not a shred of evidence can be brought to substantiate them.¹⁶

As understood by this hylotheist, the reason generally that theologians violate the principle of Occam's razor in their God-views is a need to predicate of the godhead the following three attributes that the application of Occam's razor to the theological evidence would deny: personhood, omniperfection, and the absolute power to overcome nothingness.¹⁷ Why do theologians personify, overstate the perfection of, and overvalue the power of the godhead to overcome nothingness? The answer is evident: confronted by the angst of finity, many humans find it unbearable to be alone in the universe without a personal, omniperfect deity who has absolute mastery over nothingness.¹⁸ The

question then arises: If no objective evidence exists for the omniperfection and overvaluing of deity, whence do such attributes arise? Their source, I believe, is unconscious projection of parental imagoes onto extramental reality.¹⁹ Those whose theologies personify and overvalue the godhead's power to prevail over nothingness project the parental imagoes in thinly-disguised fashion; those who eliminate personhood, but retain the deity's absolute mastery over nothingness, project parental imagoes in a more subtle way.

Hylotheism can be formulated in rather succinct fashion. It was stated earlier that the test I require a definition of God or God-view to meet is empirical verifiability.²⁰ If there are empirical consequences of the definition, then the proposition "God exists" will be true, and if there are not, the proposition will be meaningless or false. The definition I propose, the hylotheistic God-concept, is this: "God is the enduring possibility of being."²¹ By "being" is meant *selfa* or *sensa*. Inasmuch as being is analyzable without remainder into *selfa* and *sensa*, the existence of God is verified whenever *selfa* or *sensa* can both be experienced, and the existence of God is disproved when, under equivalent conditions of personal normalcy, *selfa* are experienced and *sensa* no longer are. God is disproved as the enduring possibility of being rather than as the enduring possibility of sense-experience alone because the person—that is, the continuing self-consciousness that is constructed out of the memory of a *selfum*—is evidently dependent upon the external world (*sensa* and the unobservables verified by *sensa*), and, from the annihilation of the external world, the inexorable annihilation of the person can be inferred.

Two classes of existence, each with its distinctive nature, can thus be distinguished: the possible and the actual. Possible existence suffers the defect that it lacks actuality. As possibility, it is not being—namely, it is neither a *selfum* nor a *sensum*. Yet, if the divine existence is to be lasting in duration, it can accomplish this only as possibility. For the actually existent, as verified by experience, is always limited; indeed, nothing unlimited can be imagined, let alone conceived. To be actual, therefore, is to be finite. While the finity of every actuality is present in all the spheres of its existence, it is temporal finity that provides the definitive boundary. The actual is finite in time because, as an actuality, its power of existence is finite and it is destined, therefore, as an individual, for annihilation. Being, thus, breeds nothingness; in fact, *nothing* has no meaning except in relation to being. Accordingly, if God is to be lasting in duration, the divine existence must forgo actuality for possibility. God, consequently, is

enduring in time, but possesses only possible existence, whereas being is finite in duration, but possesses actual existence.

Metaphorically speaking, existence as the act of overcoming nothingness is never fully successful in its effort and lays down conditions, therefore, on all that would possess it. As a consequence, nothingness is never entirely overcome. Actual existents (being) temporarily overcome nothingness at the cost of future and total annihilation. God overcomes nothingness by incorporating it into the divine existence; God is thereby emptied of actuality and must forever remain possibility. The godhead, so to speak, is a compromise between being and nothingness. The ground of being overcomes nothingness to exist as the enduring possibility of being, but, in this uneasy victory, defect is assimilated into the godhead.

The status of God's existence as the enduring possibility of being leads to a further consequence: God cannot exist without the world. God has no meaning without being; being cannot arise without God. God's existence is not absolute; the enduring possibility of being exists as a correlative of being. The world was not created by a God who arbitrarily willed it so; rather the world exists because the divine existence is unconditionally dependent upon it. Of creation *ex nihilo*, we have no evidence. In experience, God coexists with finites in a process of continuous interaction. In this process, as we are justified in concluding from the regular and orderly character of natural causal sequence, the possibility of future being is derived from present being. So to speak, the existence of God resides in every present moment of being and is realized in every future moment. In this sense: God is the ground of being and being is the ground of God.

A further consequence of God's nature as possibility is the relation that obtains between the godhead and humankind. In hylotheism, where the godhead is subject to the conditions exacted by existence, it is the nature of actual entities, by reason of the finity or encompassing boundary that is intrinsic to their existence, to be cut off from the ground of their being. To be actual is to be alone. To be finite is to be severed from the enduring.

As a consequence, the relation between the godhead and humankind is one of muted communication. There exists, accordingly, no infallible revelation or other certain knowledge, nor can there be such knowledge, because humankind, necessarily and substantially separated from the ground of being, has no sure relation to this ground. Equally, the omnipotent providence of theistic absolutism, with its messiahs and eschatologies of everlasting life, has no place in a world where the enduring exists only as possibility and every actual existent is

always finite. And yet, although the godhead can be the ground only of finite entities, humans are not powerless. The possibilities that constitute the godhead can be affected by humankind. Because the divine possibilities reside in actual existence, altering actual existents in the present correspondingly alters the nature of the possibilities of future being. Every ontal decision that helps resolve the conflict of finitude increases the possibility of meaningful being in the future;²² every social decision that decreases injustice and poverty increases the possibility of pleasurable being in the future; every scientific discovery becomes a possibility for betterment in the future. If humans shape the present to contain the possibilities of good, the godhead conserves the possibilities for future realization.

This relation of action and passion between humankind and the godhead can be construed figuratively as a covenant, an ethics of hypothetical necessity: "If the human person acts, then God reacts," and, "As the human person acts, so God reacts." The covenant of hylotheism between humankind and the godhead is analogous to the covenant between Israel and the god Yahveh as taught by the preexilic prophets.

In the words of the prophet Amos:

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live;
And the Lord, the God of hosts,
Will be with you, as ye say.
Hate the evil, and love the good,
And establish justice in the gate.²³

This covenant, in which the human person must do the good to receive the good, is to be sharply distinguished from covenants with deity in which a person is required to perform some act irrelevant to the good, ritualistic or otherwise, after which God miraculously produces the good.

IV. The Coherence of Hylotheism

A commonplace in our society is that various religious communities and even individuals claim ownership of the word *God* (or its equivalent). The word *God*, they declare, must be used in the sense they define it, any other meaning given to it is illicit. Generally, those who claim such ownership are theistic absolutists, although, paradoxically enough, there are those who reject theistic absolutism who nevertheless maintain vigorously that this is the only proper

meaning for the word God.²⁴ For whatever intriguing psychological reasons, the latter have a need to insist that the word God must mean that which they do not believe. Viewed from the perspective of the history of theology, however, any claim to ownership of the word God by some religious community or individual is absurd. The word God has been employed over the millennia in a rich variety of senses. In this respect, the word God behaves as does all language, changing or multiplying its meanings as the humans who use it change their understandings of the world and their attitudes toward it.²⁵ Still, it may help to clarify hylotheism if I describe briefly my use of the term. By "God" I mean the metaphysical cause or ground of being and/or the processes of being. The primary importance of the human search for an understanding of the ground of being is to acquire the knowledge necessary to attain soteria, that is, ultimate meaningful existence.²⁶ The fundamental problem that humans must resolve to achieve soteria is the conflict of finitude inherent in human existence, namely, the conflict between the individual's infinite conation and his awareness of finity. Failure to resolve the conflict of finitude results in asoteria, the utter annihilation of meaningful existence; partial failure to resolve the conflict produces dyssoteria, a borderland psychic state between soteria and asoteria.²⁷ Belief in one category of God-views provides for a resolution of the conflict of finitude by the decision that through God's grace, despite appearances, humans are ultimately infinite; another category of God-views requires the decision that humans are ineluctably finite. Theistic absolutism belongs to the former category; hylotheism and process theologies generally belong to the latter.²⁸

It is evident that hylotheism represents a God-view that gives no comfort to those whose psyches are dominated by infinite conation and require, therefore, assurance of personal infinite and invulnerable existence to attain soteria. Even for those who are capable of resigning themselves to finite existence and the consequent acceptance of the ultimate finality of death, hylotheism is an austere and demanding God-view. Why then should one accept it? For the reason given earlier for accepting any God-view: the conviction that it is true. The primary or direct evidence for the truth of hylotheism has already been presented; I now wish to offer corroborative evidence for its truth. The corroborative evidence consists in the coherence of hylotheism with the following five fundamental facts of existence: the existence of dysteleological surds; existence only through destruction; evolution; death; and the value-death of the universe. Additional fundamental

facts certainly could be enumerated; the ones I have chosen represent major instances of the "hard" facts that confront theology.

In speaking of the coherence of hylotheism with the fundamental facts of existence, I am employing the term *coherence* as defined by E. S. Brightman:

[A]ccording to the criterion of coherence, a proposition is to be treated as true if (1) it is self-consistent, (2) it is consistent with all the known facts of experience, (3) it is consistent with all other propositions held as true by the mind that is applying this criterion, (4) it establishes explanatory and interpretative relations between various parts of experience, (5) those relations include all known aspects of experience and all known problems about experience in its details and as a whole. It is to be noted that coherence is more than consistency; the latter is absence of contradiction, whereas the former requires the presence of the empirical relations mentioned under points (4) and (5); thus consistency is necessary to coherence, but consistency is not sufficient.²⁹

A distinction is to be drawn between Brightman's use of coherence and mine. For Brightman coherence is employed as the primary method of verification. My primary method is empirical verification, with coherence providing only ancillary evidence.

The coherence of hylotheism with the fundamental facts of existence enumerated above derives from three principles that are inherent in this God-view: the actuality principle; the equivalence principle; and the process-time principle.

- (1) **The actuality principle:** This principle explains why there is being or actual existence, namely, the universe. The history of philosophical and theological cosmology is replete with reasons for the existence of the universe. This is appropriate, because a cosmology would seem rather incomplete without offering an answer to the ancient question: Why existence, why not nothingness? The answer of hylotheism to this question is that the godhead, the enduring possibility of being, requires actual existence for its own existence. Inasmuch as possibilities reside in being, without being there would be no possibilities and the godhead would cease to exist. Being is thus an instrument of the godhead's existence. In sum, the actuality principle states that being

or the universe exists only because the godhead's existence requires it.

- (2) **The equivalence principle:** According to hylotheism, all actualities or instances of being are of equivalent worth to the godhead. This worth is that they enable the continuation of the divine existence, as described earlier. Any and every occurrence of being performs this function, so that to deity no actuality is of greater value than any other.
- (3) **The process-time principle:** More intriguing and certainly more fundamental to the Greek philosophers than the question of "Why being, why not nothingness?" was "Why becoming?"; that is, why does process or change occur? The answer necessitated by hylotheism is that the power of deity to prevail over nothingness is limited to the point where it is only capable of being the ground of being of actualities that survive ephemerally. Or, in other words, the kind of being for which the possibilities that constitute the enduring possibility of being are a potentiality is being limited in duration. Process, therefore, is the result of an impuissance of deity so great that eternally enduring, immutable being cannot be sustained. Without entering into a discussion of the various philosophers and theologians who hold that process is either an instrument of or coherent with divine perfection, the view of hylotheism is that process results from divine imperfection, the godhead's inability to attain an assured and lasting dominance over nonexistence. Moreover, it is evident that for hylotheism deity in its entirety is in continuous process. The possibilities that constitute the godhead are continually realized in being, and the possibilities that emerge from being are new.
 - a. Accordingly, hylotheism differs from the theologies that are generally referred to as *process theologies*. These are hybrids rather than pure process theologies. The reason is that they characterize deity as static or immutable in part and dynamic or mutable in part. This view contrasts with hylotheism, which is a pure process theology inasmuch as deity is conceived of as entirely and always becoming—the possibilities constituting the godhead are continually going out of existence and new possibilities are continually arising.

- b. Hylotheism also differs from those process philosophies that equate process with progress—that is, they conceive of the divine process as a cosmic becoming leading assuredly, albeit gradually, to universal betterment and the increase of human good. In hylotheism, process is not progress; process has no necessary relation to progress. Process occurs because it must, the existential need and impuissance of the godhead require it. Because process serves only deity's need, any direction that process takes accomplishes this service, with the result that human good or evil can result from it.
- c. Similarly, the existential need of deity requires time, the movement of present to future. As already observed, the possibilities that make up the godhead are transient. The godhead would therefore go out of existence if there were no time. The possibilities of a particular present perish, and only the emergence into existence of new possibilities gives duration to the godhead. In sum, the process-time principle is that process and time entail neither human progress nor regress; either may occur as the consequence of a process-time which is solely an instrument for satisfying the existential need of the finite godhead.

We proceed now to the fundamental facts of existence for which the foredescribed principles, in particular, and hylotheism, in general, provide an explanation that meets the test of coherence.

- (1) **The existence of dysteleological surds.** A dysteleological surd is defined as a kind of evil that by any reasonable standard from the human standpoint is inherently and irreducibly evil, containing within itself no principle of development or improvement. An evil that is a dysteleological surd serves in absolutely no sense as an instrumental good; it is not expressible in terms of good (as retribution or otherwise) no matter what operations are performed upon it.³⁰ The concept of the dysteleological surd is fundamental to theological inquiry. A theology stands or falls depending upon whether it can give a credible account for the occurrence of dysteleological surds.³¹ Instances of dysteleological surds can be enumerated without end, but two examples suffice to illustrate the concept: the Holocaust, and a child born with AIDS who lives a life of sickness and dies in infancy. As these

examples underscore, it is not the quantity of an evil that determines its nature as a dysteleological surd, but its quality: no purpose other than evil is served.

Hylotheism provides this explanation for dysteleological surds. The nature of the possibilities that constitute the godhead is determined ultimately by that which is necessary for the godhead to overcome nothingness and, thereby, exist as the ground of being or actualities. The nature of the actualities that exist is in turn determined by the possibilities of the ground of being from which they are realized. The possibilities required by the godhead to prevail over nothingness are of such a nature that actualities that are dysteleological surds arise from them. As the actuality principle states, the purpose of actual existence is to provide for the existential need of deity, and dysteleological surds as actualities serve this end. Thus, dysteleological surds exemplify the equivalence principle. No matter how dysteleological surds may horrify humans, the worth of an actual existent, dysteleological surd or otherwise, for deity is the same: it provides for the continued existence of the godhead. Figuratively described, prevailing over nothingness exacts from deity the price of dysteleological surds.

- (2) **Existence only through destruction.** Existence through destruction is clearly exemplified by the fact that all living beings, other than non-carnivorous plants, must kill other living beings in order to exist. It may well be argued that the fact of "existence only through destruction" extends even further to include non-carnivorous plants and inanimate objects. For it has been demonstrated by the natural sciences that non-carnivorous plants and inanimate systems from subatomic particles to galaxies must by incorporation destroy either the structures or the integrity (that is, the independent or pure condition) of other entities in order to exist. What is the reason for a poverty of existence so great that existence only through destruction of other entities is a pervasive characteristic of the universe? Certainly it should be understood as an evil—if not a dysteleological surd—that the universe is constructed this way.³² Given the principles of hylotheism, existence only through destruction by virtue of the poverty of existence flows inexorably. The quantity of possible existence is limited by the ability of the godhead to prevail over nothingness. Consequently, the quantity of

existence available to actualities is also limited with the result that, to exist, one actuality must take existence from another by destroying it.³³

- (3) **Evolution.** This is the theory that the various species of flora and fauna have their origin only in other pre-existing species and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations. The theological problem evolution poses is most evident in respect of the human species. The question is: Why has humankind (*Homo sapiens*) come into existence through evolution, inasmuch as the evidence is patent that this mode of origination is the primary cause of most, if not all, basic and pervasive human problems? It is difficult to conceive of traits that are base and destructive in the nature of human beings that do not result from the fact of their having evolved from non-rational ancestors, which, lacking reason, were forced to rely for survival on predatory aggression, ruthless competitiveness, domination over other members of their species, selfish territoriality, indiscriminate and unrestrained sexuality, and other impulses that in humans produce persistent and fundamental problems, personal and social. In my view, the most profound and destructive problem bequeathed to humans by evolution is the intra-psychic conflicts we suffer between reason, on the one hand, and desires and emotions inherited from non-rational ancestors, on the other. Such intra-psychic conflicts for the most part remain unresolved by human beings and result in widespread dyssotheria or asoteria. For the sake of argument, let us hypothesize that a rational craftsman or demiurge had the task of creating *de novo* a being endowed with reason. Would the demiurge have built into his rational creature's structure the instinctual desires and emotions that are necessary for the survival of a non-rational creature, but that are not only unnecessary for the survival of the rational creature but also destructive to its existence and to the quality of its life? The hylotheistic understanding of human emergence through evolution, no matter how flawed the process and product, is that all possibilities of the godhead, as stated earlier, reside in actualities, and, we may add, only in actualities that are qualified for them, that is, can contain them as potentialities. Actualities, therefore, determine and limit the kind of possibilities that can exist. That is to say, the possibilities that constitute the

enduring possibility of being overcome nothingness, but these possibilities are determined not only by the conditions required to prevail over nonexistence but also by the actualities in which they must reside. Consequently, *Homo sapiens* possesses primitive and rationally unnecessary desires and emotions because the only kind of actuality in which the possibility for a rational actuality could reside was one that required primitive instincts to survive owing to the conditions of its evolution—and so backward to the beginning of the universe.

- (4) **Death.** The ultimate cause of death is set forth by the process-time principle already discussed, which explains that the only actualities for which the possibility of existence is present in the godhead are those that are finite in duration. Death, therefore, human and otherwise, is fully coherent with hylotheism, which entails as inherent in the godhead a profound impuissance in supporting being. When deity is believed to possess the assured power to overcome nothingness there is a manifest incoherence between the power of eternality in deity and the finity of humans and all other entities for whose reality there is credible evidence. The question is: Why is there a God who can prevail over nothingness at will, while humans and all other actualities are destined for death? The traditional theological answers given to this question have been extravagantly convoluted and often deplorable. Take the answer widespread in religions of the Western world derived from the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Humans undergo death because Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden by disobeying the god Yahveh's commandment not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Among the punishments for this sin imposed by Yahveh was that Adam and Eve, who before their disobedience had been immortal, must now undergo death and, in addition, their descendants would as well be programmed for death. Certainly such a theological explanation of the reason for death is unfortunate, adding to the anguish and pain of illness and impending death a burden of sin and guilt for which perishing is the penalty. In hylotheism, the reason for death is the finity of God, not the sinfulness of humans.

An additional observation provides further insight into the implications of hylotheism for human death. From the stand-

point of hylotheism, humans can be viewed as undergoing two kinds of death: death-in-life and death-of-life. Because the actual existence of a human in its entirety consists of a single selfum or sensum,³⁴ and each endures only instants in time, humans are continually going out of existence or perishing. This form of perishing is called death-in-life—for new selfa emerge linked by memory to the selfa and sensa that have perished. Death, as ordinarily understood, is the cessation of a perished selfum and sensum series that can be linked together by a presently existing selfum recollecting the series. This is death-of-life. The importance of the concept of death-in-life is that it provides an explanation and validation for a recurrent ontal angst or fear of seeming nothingness that many persons experience throughout their lives.³⁵ Present on the fringes of consciousness in every selfum or sensum experience is awareness of its imminent death.

- (5) **Value-death of the universe.** "The value-death of the universe" means that the universe (the totality of actualities) ceases to be or contain anything that can reasonably be considered of worth. The value-death of the universe does not require its annihilation, although annihilation, of course, entails value-death. Philosophical theologies (as distinguished from theologies based on supernaturalism), which I consider process theologies to be, cannot disregard scientific theories and the evidence upon which these theories are based. Scientific cosmological theories, although they may differ on points not germane to this discussion, generally agree that at some time in the future the universe will undergo value-death. There are at present several cosmological theories that have proponents in the scientific community. Three of them bear mentioning here: the open universe theory; the closed universe theory; and the no-boundary universe theory. Each predicts the value-death of the universe.
- a. *The open universe theory.* This theory, which is substantiated by the evidence presently known, predominates among scientists. The theory states that the universe began at a big-bang singularity. The universe is expanding and will continue to do so indefinitely, and at an infinite time in the future it will approach zero density. The stars and all other cosmic entities will radiate away their energy.

The end will be universal darkness at a temperature of approximately three degrees above absolute zero. Clearly, there would be nothing of worth in existence at this time; it is a state of value-death of the universe.³⁶

- b. *The closed universe theory.* This theory agrees with the open universe theory that the universe began at a big-bang singularity. It disagrees, however, that the universe will expand to a point of universal darkness. Rather, at a certain point, the universe will stop expanding and begin a collapse that will end at a big-crunch singularity. Nothing of worth could exist in such a state and the value-death of the universe will have occurred.³⁷ The point is to be emphasized that no human knowledge is possible regarding a singularity or what might take place after a big-crunch singularity. Postulating that something of value will arise from or after the big-crunch singularity is pure fantasy and unacceptable to philosophical theology. Moreover, evidence for the closed universe theory does not at present exist.
- c. *No-boundary universe theory.* This theory has been proposed by Stephen Hawking, and is admitted to be inadequate by its author. It is, however, of interest. The theory is best presented in Hawking's own words:

On the other hand, the quantum theory of gravity has opened up a new possibility, in which there would be no boundary to space-time and so there would be no need to specify the behavior at the boundary. There would be no edge of space-time at which one would have to appeal to God or some new law to set the boundary conditions for space-time. One could say: "The boundary condition of the universe is that it has no boundary." The universe would be completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself. It would neither be created nor destroyed. It would just BE.³⁸

I include the no-boundary universe theory to point out that, even though it requires no big-crunch singularity, which certainly brings the value-death of the universe, it still entails value-death. (One should bear in mind that the no-boundary universe theory is at this time not theoretically satisfactory, besides being devoid of observational

verification. For, according to the no-boundary universe theory, the universe expands and contracts. Value-death takes place at some point in both the contracting and expansion phases. Hawking writes:

Conditions in the contracting phase would not be suitable for the existence of intelligent beings. . . . The inflation in the early stages of the universe, which the no boundary proposal predicts, means that the universe must be expanding at very close to the critical rate at which it would just avoid recollapse, and so will not recollapse for a very long time. By then all the stars will have burned out and the protons and neutrons in them will probably have decayed into light particles and radiation. The universe would be in a state of almost complete disorder.³⁹

The coherence of the value-death of the universe with hylotheism is evident when it is related to the three principles inherent in hylotheism enumerated earlier: the actuality principle; the equivalence principle; and the process-time principle. According to the actuality principle, the universe exists not for its own sake, but because the existence of deity requires it. Moreover, according to the equivalence principle, no matter what the condition of the universe, it serves deity's need for existence since any actualities will do. From these two principles, it follows that a universe that has undergone value-death is equal in divine worth to a universe that is rich in value. The universe does not exist to fulfill some ideal and esteemed purpose of its own. It possesses no ultimate and intrinsic value. Its sole function is to be an instrument of the godhead's existence.

That the universe should at some point in time undergo value-death is, based on the process-time principle, a reasonable expectation, albeit not a necessary conclusion. Process, it states, is not progress; process results from a divine impuissance so limiting that the godhead cannot be the ground of lasting, unchanging being. That the process should therefore result at some future time in the value-death of the universe flows naturally from the very reason process occurs. In reality, has not the impuissance of the godhead already resulted in a universe that is for the most part value-dead? So far as present knowledge of the universe reveals, whatever in existence can reasonably be considered valuable is to be found on or in association with the planet earth. Nothing that is known about the remainder of the universe reveals anything of value. What intrinsic good is possessed by the myriad of clusters that populate space? Is there value in these lifeless aggregations of super-galaxies, galaxies, and stars? Is there any purpose

they serve unless, as hylotheism maintains, they are necessary for the existence of the godhead?

V. Critique of Christian Process Theologies

Hylotheism, to be sure, is a process theology. Still it differs from other systems of process theology. In the critique of various other process theologies that follows, I have one primary purpose in mind, to show why I accept hylotheism and reject the other theologies. It is not my intention to enter into a theological disputation because, as I stated at the outset when discussing the polydox approach to theology, I consider theological disputation to be ultimately futile.

My critique begins with questioning the objectivity of Christian process philosophy. As I have stated, the fact that I am a Jew plays no part in my decision about the truth of a God-view. I believe that an analysis of my presentation of hylotheism will bear this out, especially because no Jew (or to my knowledge, anyone else) has ever put forth this concept of God.

Do Christian process theologians behave in the same way? Are their Christological beliefs based entirely on evidence or on some form of Christian presupposition or beginning point? I am not sure. David Griffin, for example, makes statements such as these:

All [a Christian theologian's] reflection must be rooted in a distinctively Christian perspective.

...every conceptualized understanding of reality is based upon some nonrational starting point. This starting point can be termed a "vision of reality."

The vision of reality common to a tradition can be called its "faith."

The one whom we call a theologian is more consciously aware of his indebtedness to his tradition for his own faith perspective. And because of this he will give explicit attention to those events which are central to his community's perspective.

Accordingly, . . . the Christian revelatory content is understood as the Christian vision of reality. . . . The theologian, in beginning with revelation, is not subjecting his thought to some heteronomous authority, but is simply reflecting upon reality in terms of the way he himself sees reality.⁴⁰

Three questions come to mind here. First, have Christian process theologians chosen the process philosophy of A. N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne as their natural, rational *weltanschauung* because their Christian "vision of reality" is metaphorically congenial with it, rather than on the basis of its inherent truth? Second, if process philosophy were to be proved wrong or lacking adequate evidence, is the Christian "vision of reality" proved false? (In other words, is there justification for Christian process theologians believing in Christianity, other than the truth of process philosophy, and, if so, what would this justification be, and what would the *concrete* beliefs of this Christianity be?) Third, if a person accepts the process philosophy of Whitehead and Hartshorne, does that person still have to accept Jesus Christ as God's decisive revelation, or as revelation at all, in order to attain the highest stage of religious belief and salvation?

The answer to the question whether Christian process theologians are biased in their philosophical thinking by beginning with a Christological perspective may be arguable, but it certainly does seem to be the case that process theologians and philosophers begin with an unwarranted, and, in this writer's opinion, incorrect assumption regarding the nature of religion. I will cite two examples of this, one from David Ray Griffin, the other from Hartshorne.

Griffin's notion of religion comes as an explanation of a passage from Whitehead:

The assumption behind Whitehead's statement, and basic to the present essay, is that man is a religious being in the sense that he wants to be in harmony with the ultimately real, self-existent, eternal, sacred—that which is divine. . . . It is because of this feature of man's nature that his emotions, attitudes, intentions, and actions will, in the long run, be brought into line with his deepest beliefs about deity.⁴¹

The assumption that the human person is a "religious being" as defined by Griffin clearly serves his theological viewpoint. If it is the case that all humans have an inherent and fundamental need to be in harmony with a deity (which from the description fits particularly well with the kind Griffin adheres to), then without belief in and harmonizing with such a deity humans cannot attain soteria. But is this in fact the case? Why should the assumption be made that humans are inherently "religious beings" in Griffin's sense when we can query or observe them with respect to their needs and desires?

In my own experience, I have found a considerable number of persons, including myself, who have no inherent desire to be in harmony with a deity, and certainly no inherent need for belief in and harmonizing with a deity in order to attain soteria. If they do believe in a deity, they do so because there is convincing evidence that compels assent to its existence.

Hartshorne presents a view of religion that makes all persons need a personal God, in this case, panentheistic, for their very sanity:

Only man, among this earth's inhabitants, is a "religious animal." This suggests that consciousness, in the sense requiring language . . . , is part of the definition of worship. To worship is to do something consciously. To do what? That which all sentient individuals must do, at least unconsciously, so far as they are sane and not in at least a mild neurosis or psychosis [sic]. Worship is the *integrating* of all one's thoughts and purposes, all valuations and meanings, all perceptions and conceptions. . . . [T]he conscious wholeness of the individual is correlative to an inclusive wholeness in the world of which the individual is aware, and this wholeness is deity. . . . God is the wholeness of the world, correlative to the wholeness of every sound individual dealing with the world.⁴²

The objection to Hartshorne's view of the religious nature of the human person is simply stated. He declares that humans who do not worship a panentheistic deity are neither integrated, sound, nor sane without presenting an iota of evidence for this assertion. Yet such an assertion is open to verification by observation. One need simply explore the matter for oneself or study humans by means of the social or psychological sciences. Based upon my own experience, and upon the evidence of qualified observers, I must conclude that Hartshorne's assertion is false. There are clearly many persons, nonpanentheists and nontheists, who are integrated, sound, and sane. Accordingly, the view that the human race needs panentheism or theism for sanity or soteria must be firmly rejected.

We come now to the God-concept of nonhylotheistic process theology, panentheism. To state very briefly the attributes of God according to Hartshorne's view of panentheism, I will quote this summary he provides. God, he says, is:

E Eternal—in some . . . aspects of his reality devoid of change, whether as birth, death, increase, or decrease

T Temporal—in some . . . aspects capable of change, at least in the form of increase of some kind
C Conscious, self-aware
K Knowing the world or universe, omniscient
W World-inclusive, having all things as constituents⁴³

As I stated earlier, I require empirical evidence to accept the extramental existence of any not-self entity, including God. Hartshorne argues with great firmness that there cannot be empirical proof for the existence of an entity corresponding to his God-concept.⁴⁴ It being the case that there is no empirical proof for panentheism, I reject it summarily along with the many other concepts of God that have been proposed but for which there is no empirical evidence.

This is not to say that I have not examined proofs of various kinds that Hartshorne has put forth for panentheism, and I would find them unconvincing even if I were not committed to empirical verifiability as the test of truth. Permit me to present an example of what I mean by examining one proof Hartshorne gives, and which he apparently considers fundamental, because he says it "sums up all the others." I quote:

The first is what I call the religious or "global" proof (because in a fashion it sums up all the others). It is not the usual argument from religious experience taken as a mere fact. It is an argument from the rational necessity of religious experience and of God as its adequate referent. If an individual must have integrity in order to exist as an individual, and if the conscious form of integrity is worship, then while an individual may live by unconscious integrity, or may to some extent lack integrity, he cannot consciously and rationally choose to do either of these. Hence there is something irrational in choosing not to believe in God. There seems no other way than the theistic⁴⁵ to conceive the objective correlate of personal integrity.⁴⁶

The defect in this purported proof has to do with a point made earlier. This is that the proposition that human individuals can attain personality integration (what Hartshorne apparently means by "integrity") only through belief in a panentheistic deity is observationally false. There are many nonpanentheists who are integrated personalities. (I will not address the question whether authentic personality integration can ever be achieved through belief in panentheism or any extramental entity. My view is that it cannot.) Accord-

ingly, since one of the premises of this proof that Hartshorne offers is false, the proof is refuted.

So far as Whitehead's concept of God (as distinguished from Hartshorne's) is concerned, I can find no proof for it that he offers. For this reason, I see no alternative but to reject it. Yet inasmuch as one of his notions with respect to deity plays a basic role generally in nonhylotheistic process theology, I should like to comment upon it. This is the idea that God is incarnate in the human person (and indeed in the world).

The explanation of incarnation is to be found in Whitehead's view that all entities or actual occasions are constituted of prehensions of past entities and other actual occasions. Reduced to simple terms, this means that every entity is made up of every other entity with which it enters into relation. Nothing is a substance—namely, that which exists in and through itself, or, in other words, nothing is alone. Every entity, according to Whitehead, has a relation with God; therefore, every entity consists in part of God. Thus God is incarnate in the world and in the human person. Whitehead's concept of incarnation is related to his view that it is not the case that the extramental world is apprehended only through the five senses (or *sensa*). There are other ways through which the extramental world can be apprehended, such as prehension, the nature of which Whitehead leaves unacceptably vague.

Although Whitehead offers no proof for his concepts of God, incarnation, and prehension, I am of the opinion that he based these concepts on experiences he had. These experiences, however, I believe were *selfa* experiences, and his theological concepts were misinterpreted *selfa*. To my understanding, a deity who is prehended and incarnate is a product of the unconscious that comes to consciousness in a disguised and misleading form. More serious than this theological error, however, is that the notion that humans are constituted of God and other entities reveals, I believe, a faulty phenomenology of the human person and conceals a cold, harsh truth. This is that every person is a finite being bounded by the limits of his existence within which he is alone. Experientially, this is evident. Each person's cancer is his own; each person's schizophrenia is his own; and each person dies his own death, alone.

Certainly, among the least satisfactory areas of nonhylotheistic process theology is the casuistic and unsatisfactory way in which it deals with the problem of evil. The following statements by Hartshorne may be employed as a basis for analyzing the difficulty:

But any evil is also in some degree a misfortune, and in my opinion the theological "problem of evil" is quite misconceived if it is seen as that of justifying particular evils. Evils are to be avoided where possible; where not, to be mitigated or utilized for good in whatever way possible—but never, for heaven's sake never, to be metaphysically justified. . . . Thus not even the nastiest or most conceivable unhelpful evil could have anything to do with the nonexistence of God. Risk of evil and opportunity for good are two aspects of just one thing, multiple freedom; and that one thing is also the ground of all meaning and all existence. This is the sole but sufficient reason for evil as such and in general, while as for particular evils, by definition they have no ultimate reason. They are nonrational.

For creationist or neoclassical metaphysics deity must be the supreme or unsurpassable form of creative freedom. But "supreme" or unsurpassable form cannot be the only possible form. In creationist metaphysics, all concrete reality is in principle creative. But then what happens is never, as it stands, simply attributable to "the" creator, but only to deity *and* the creatures together. Reality is always in part self-created, *causa sui*, creativity being in this philosophy the supreme transcendental. All creatures have creativity above zero, all are creators.⁴⁷

We can disregard Hartshorne's interdiction against justifying evil metaphysically inasmuch as he promptly proceeds to do just that. We can also grant for argument's sake the rather fanciful notion that entities such as atoms, molecules, and viruses possess creative freedom. Let us proceed to the substantive point. This is that evil is the result of deity not being the only entity in the universe that possesses freedom, indeed, creative freedom; all entities possess creative freedom. Accordingly, evil is the result of "multiple freedom," all the different entities in the universe exercising creative freedom. (We can also disregard Hartshorne's contradictory statement that particular evils have no reason after he had already said they do, namely, that they are the result of some entity's exercising its creative freedom.) Consequently, poliomyelitis is to be attributed to the poliovirus exercising its freedom, and the Holocaust, to Adolf Hitler exercising his freedom.

But is this an adequate explanation of evil according to the attributes of the panentheistic God as set forth by nonhylotheistic process theology? Panentheism maintains that deity is the unsur-

passable. This means, among other things, that deity is unsurpassable in love, knowledge, and power (albeit not omnipotent). Now, can we not all agree that if there were a human person who loved humankind, and possessed the requisite knowledge and power, that person would put an end to poliomyelitis by producing a means for immunization, and would prevent the Holocaust by keeping Hitler from committing his atrocities? In fact, is not this precisely what happened? People of an altruistic will, when they possessed the knowledge and power, did produce a vaccine to prevent poliomyelitis and did stop Hitler from continuing with the Holocaust. Now, if humans with their quite limited and defective capacities for love, knowledge, and power were able to prevent poliomyelitis and bring an end to Hitler's atrocities, why did not the unsurpassable deity of panentheism do this before the evils occurred? Why must we wait for human persons using natural powers and procedures to cure the ills of the world when there is an unsurpassable panentheistic deity in existence? Moreover, it is no answer to say that such entities as the polio virus and Hitler are producing their evil by the exercise of their freedom, for reasonable and humane human persons possessed of a loving will can agree that there are entities so destructive that they should not be permitted to put into effect their freedom, because their use of freedom produces only abysmal evil. I see no explanation in panentheism for the deity unsurpassable in love, knowledge, and power not having rid the world of evils with which even very limited humans have done away.⁴⁸

Before proceeding to a discussion of a distinctly Christological use of process theology, I wish to raise one more difficulty that I find with it. This objection is based upon what I see to be the *weltanschauung* implied by contemporary cosmology. I will begin with excerpts from Hartshorne and Griffin that express the general process theology view:

Though we do not forever continue to serve God, our temporary service is everlasting in a sense which I find deeply satisfying: whatever enters the treasury of divine life is at once where moths cannot corrupt and thieves cannot break through nor steal. And we can in this life be aware of ourselves as already immortal elements in deity, and so by Love we participate now in our immortality. The triumph over death as our triumph is now, not in a magical future. But apart from God is not the triumph with death?

Rationality as such requires that there be an aim which it is rational to pursue in spite of the mortality of nondivine indi-

viduals and species of individuals. But only deity provides a clear meaning for immortality. And only an all-loving Deity whom all may love can provide nondivine individuals, even though vicariously, with permanent achievement for their effort.⁴⁹

God's aim is for the entities in the world constantly to experience greater value. The prerequisite for greater value is greater complexity, for as a greater variety of data can be synthesized into a harmonious unity, a greater intensity of feeling is possible. A few of the most important thresholds in the ascending complexity of finite existence were life, the psyche, and consciousness. These novel possibilities were able to emerge out of an extremely complex ordering of molecules; and a psyche, especially one with consciousness, could only emerge out of an extremely complex order among the living cells. Hence the fact that the direction of the evolutionary process is toward ever-increasing complexity is illuminated by the idea that God's aim is toward higher types of values being experienced by his creatures.⁵⁰

Thus the panentheistic deity—if one can accept with joy the finality of one's own death—provides us with an optimistic view of the direction of the universe and its future. But is this in truth the direction of the universe? Because science is employed by process theology as a basis for its claims, it is to science that we must turn to see the direction in which the universe is actually moving. Briefly stated, the direction of the universe is toward the complete annihilation of everything reasonable humankind holds valuable. The following quotation epitomizes my earlier discussion of the view of contemporary scientific cosmology.

We do not know for sure whether the universe is open or closed. . . . If the universe [is open and] expands forever, the stars, one by one will collapse into white dwarfs, neutron stars, and black holes (or some other form of superdense state). The white dwarfs will cool into black dwarfs. The pulsars will radiate away their energy, and run down. The end will be universal darkness.

If, as many would prefer on philosophical grounds, the universe stops expanding and collapses, perhaps to rebound into a new universe as part of a cycle without beginning or end, the prospects for anyone alive at the time of collapse are no more appealing.⁵¹

Thus the direction of the universe is toward extinction of everything that reasonable human beings hold valuable: either in an eternal lifeless cold and darkness (as the evidence now indicates), or in the annihilation of a big-crunch singularity that is followed by a new beginning, a senseless cycle in which whatever is valuable is always doomed to ultimate and inevitable destruction. I find the optimistic view of God and the universe set forth by process theology to be incoherent with the destiny of the universe as presently conceived by scientific cosmology. Where do we see "permanent achievement" for human effort; where do we see God's aim "toward higher types of values being experienced by his creatures"?

I should like to repeat my earlier statement as we approach the subject of a Christological process theology. This is that I present my views of other theological positions not to criticize them, but to explain why I do not accept them. The critical question in process Christianity appears not to be whether Jesus is God, but whether Jesus is God's supreme or decisive revelation. Because process Christianity is dependent upon the truth of process theology generally, and I have already explained why I reject this view philosophically, it follows that I reject the notion that Jesus is God's supreme revelation, or a revelation of God at all. Nevertheless, I should like to touch upon some difficulties I find inherent in the concept of revelation as process Christians seem to conceive it.

Primarily, I do not understand how process Christologists can call Jesus God's supreme or decisive revelation when they apparently have invented on their own what they believe about God and Jesus inasmuch as their beliefs about either do not appear in the New Testament. Plainly, process Christologists reject both the inerrancy of the New Testament and the truth of the theology in it that they take to represent Jesus' beliefs. I confess I cannot express the point better than Griffin himself does:

A fourth difficulty involves bringing "Jesus" and "truth" together. For if Jesus is to be appropriately received as the decisive revelation about God, then he must somehow be understandable as having expressed the basic truth about God. But we have become increasingly aware of the tremendous gulf separating us from the first century, and of the fact that Jesus himself shared first-century conceptions that we must consider mythological and false. The attempt to pick out those sayings which are less obviously objectionable as constituting the real "kernel" of his message will not work, for Jesus' message as a whole presupposed

a mythological view of reality. How then can we see him as expressing the basic truth about reality?⁵²

Griffin's answer, to say the least, is unconvincing. His explanation is that there are two parts to revelation, the subjective and the objective. The subjective part is that an event constitutes a revelation only if a person receives it as revelation. Admittedly, such subjective reception is unacceptable for convincing any critical thinker that it is a revelation from God, inasmuch as we have innumerable conflicting claims of subjective revelation ranging from the prophets of the major religions to psychotics in institutions. Consequently, according to process Christology, there must be an objective part to revelation. This apparently means that Jesus was God's supreme act of self-expression, and is therefore properly taken as revelation by someone who experiences Jesus' revelation subjectively as God's decisive revelation. But what did God express through Jesus that constituted God's supreme act of self-expression? I can only conclude that it was process theology. But what makes the objective part objective? Clearly enough it cannot be the New Testament, for the New Testament cannot provide evidence of an objective revelation for three reasons. One is that, according to process theology, the New Testament is not inerrant, so that we have no way of knowing what is true in it and what is not. Another is that Jesus' own theology in the New Testament is dismissed as mythological. The third is that process theology appears nowhere in the New Testament. Accordingly, where does the supposedly objective part of the revelation come from? Does it not come from the process theologian's subjective metaphysical speculation? Consequently, taking Jesus as God's supreme and decisive revelation would seem to be entirely subjective revelation after all.

I must emphasize my belief that the process Christologists have not taken sufficiently seriously the consequences of denying the inerrancy of the New Testament. How else can we explain these lines of Griffin:

In summary, then, the Christian belief that Jesus is God's decisive revelation can be understood to be a real possibility in terms of the following conceptualization. Partly because of the content of the divine aims given to Jesus during his active ministry, and partly because of Jesus' conformance to these aims, the vision of reality expressed through his sayings and actions is the supreme expression of God's character, purpose, and mode of agency, and is therefore appropriately apprehended as the decisive

revelation of the same. The finality of this expression is due to the fact that at least at decisive moments Jesus identified himself with the divine aims for him, so that he provided no hindrance to the expression of the divine Logos other than that which is inherent in human nature as such.⁵³

Now once the New Testament is declared fallible, and explicitly stated to contain errors, how in truth can we say anything in it is true? On what basis can one speak of "divine aims given to Jesus," of "sayings and actions" of Jesus, of Jesus at "decisive moments" identifying himself with divine aims? Indeed, on what basis can we say Jesus ever existed at all; if one part (and for process Christologists there are actually many parts) of the New Testament is said to be false, by what evidence do we say any part is true?

VI. Epilogue

The essential concept of all process theologies is that substantial change takes place in the godhead either in whole or in part. I believe that this is a profound truth and of great significance for humankind. For to the degree that the godhead changes, so does the nature of human beings change, bringing into existence new conditions and requirements for the attainment of soteria. Process theology thus has a vital message for humankind, and my hope is that process theologians through dialogue among themselves and with other theologians will disseminate its truths far and wide.

Notes

1. Or by its equivalents: "godhead"; "deity"; "ground of being"; and the like.
2. See A. J. Reines, *Polydoxy: Explorations in a Philosophy of Liberal Religion* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1987), 14–29.
3. Unfortunately, there is no singular pronoun in English for persons that does not have a sexual gender. I regret this.
4. A God-view also includes the view of a person who states that he knows of no existent to which he refers by the term "God."
5. R. Lewin, *Human Evolution: An Illustrated Introduction* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1984), 4–10.

6. In orthodox religions, such as Orthodox Judaism and Roman Catholicism, only one God-view is permissible; other God-views are considered heretical.
7. *Sensum* and *sensa* are also commonly referred to as *sense-datum* and *sense-data*.
8. The term *sensum* has more than one meaning among philosophers.
9. Without entering into the complications of the point, the existence of extramental entities can be established directly by *sensa*, or, in the case of unobservables (subject to strict rules), indirectly by *sensa*.
10. "Selfum" and "selfa" are also referred to as "self-datum" and "self-data."
11. Misinterpreted *selfa* include phenomena commonly referred to as illusions, delusions, and hallucinations.
12. A meta-*sensum* apprehension is an apprehension ostensibly relating to extramental reality attained by means of a datum present to awareness that is not experienced as coming through the senses.
13. There are, of course, other responses to this question, but I do not consider them authentic. An example of an unauthentic response is belief in a God-view not because one is convinced it is true, but because one finds it comforting or thinks it to be required in order to be loyal to one's religious community.
14. In the long theological history of the Jews, as the intellectual, political, economic, and social conditions under which they lived changed, new Jewish theologies have been created to meet the demands of the new knowledge that the changed conditions produced or made available. The fundamental reason for this theological dynamism is the function of the name "Jew" as an ontal symbol, see A. J. Reines, *Polydoxy*, 166–68, and 52n.53.
15. An assumption is a statement or proposition accepted as true without evidence. An example of an assumption is the validity of memory. The reason the validity of memory must be assumed is that it cannot be proved without employing memory, and without memory, there can be no knowledge.
16. A tragic consequence of allowing any and all God-views to be validated by assumptions alone is that some God-views urge their adherents to persecute or murder those who believe other than they do.
17. The third attribute can be understood as included in the second.
18. I claim no originality for this analysis; Maimonides, Spinoza, and Freud, among countless others, have given it.
19. Freud is the one who most convincingly presented this view. See, *The Future of an Illusion*, Vol. XXI of *The Standard Edition of the Complete*

Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, 17–19 and elsewhere (London: Hogarth Press & Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961).

20. It is of interest to note that empirical verification is the test of truth required by the Pentateuch and the Bible generally.

21. The term *hylotheism* in rare and obsolete usage has been employed to refer to the doctrine that God and the material universe are one. In this usage, the prefix *hilo* (from the Greek *hyle*) means matter understood as “corporeality” or “extension.” The primary meaning of *hyle* in Aristotle (who coined its philosophic meaning) is “potentiality” or “possibility of being.” It is by reason of this meaning that I have given the name “hylotheism” to the concept of God as the “enduring possibility of being.”

The concept of the ground of being, or godhead, as consisting of the possibility of being is consistent with quantum theory. John Wheeler, for example, states:

Quantum phenomena are neither waves nor particles but are intrinsically undefined until the moment they are measured. In a sense, the British philosopher Bishop Berkeley was right when he asserted two centuries ago that “to be is to be perceived” (*Scientific American* [July 1992], 97).

Stated in hylotheistic terms: Before being sensed, quanta exist in a state of possibility; only after perception do they become actual entities or being. Hence, in hylotheism, quanta prior to being sensed are part of the enduring possibility of being or deity; upon observation they become being, and because all being is finite, so quanta upon attaining actuality are destined for death.

22. For a discussion of “ontal decision” see A. J. Reines, *Polydoxy*, 63–66. It should be borne in mind, however, that, owing to the limitations of the godhead, the possibilities for meaningful being are always limited.

23. Amos 5:14–15.

24. Freud’s earlier pronouncements on the word “God” are a notable example; later he used the term “God” himself. See my “Freud’s Concepts of Reality and God,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* LXXI (1990), 254.

25. For example, the term *atom* literally means “indivisible,” and this was its original technical meaning as used by the philosophers Leucippus and Democritus. Scientists have since divided or split what they call the atom, but nevertheless have retained the name.

26. See A. J. Reines, *Polydoxy*, 63, for further explanation of the term *soteria*.

27. *Ibid.*, 61–63.

28. Not that all process theologians deny a personal afterlife; E. S. Brightman, for one, argues that there is individual immortality. See, *A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940), 400–04.

29. *Ibid.*, 128.

30. I have somewhat modified E. S. Brightman’s definition of a dysteleological surd, but the language is almost entirely his (*ibid.*, 245–46).

31. For example, the concept of theistic absolutism, which predicates of deity the attributes (among others) of omniscience, omnipotence, omnibenevolence, and providence is contradicted by the occurrence of dysteleological surds and would for this reason be rejected.

32. Animal rights groups and many vegetarians display great sensitivity on this point.

33. I consider the notion of a theistic or panentheistic God with surplus existence to dispense to be incoherent with the fact of existence only through destruction.

34. Actual existence or being consists only of a selfum and/or a sensum, which exists in a momentary present.

35. Ontal angst is to be distinguished from fear or anxiety that appears causeless to consciousness but, in fact, has causes repressed in the unconscious. The latter can be effectively dealt with by psychoanalysis, whereas ontal angst cannot. Ontal angst is overcome only by an ontal decision that resolves the conflict of finitude.

36. Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

37. Owen Gingerich, *Cosmology + 1* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1977), 16ff. For an excellent summary of the present status of scientific cosmology, see C. S. Powell, “The Golden Age of Cosmology,” *Scientific American*, July 1992: 17–22. Powell discusses the significant new evidence for the big-bang theory of the origin of the universe. He also examines the search for “dark matter” which must exist if the closed universe theory is to be substantiated. To this date, evidence of dark matter has not been discovered. Hylotheism is consistent with either the open or closed cosmological theories. In both theories, the universe and the godhead are in continuous process, as hylotheism maintains. The only difference between the two theories so far as hylotheism is concerned is this: If the open universe theory—which present evidence substantiates—is correct, and all that this universe will come to is a state of darkness at approximately three degrees above absolute zero, the impuissance of deity, namely, the enduring possibility of being, might conceivably be considered greater than if the universe exists in a continuing process of proceeding from big bang to big crunch and back

again. For such repeated expansion (or inflation) and contraction could be deemed a more positive process than the onetime movement of the universe from big bang to eternal darkness. I do not see much difference between the two theories so far as one's being a more positive process than the other is concerned. In the case of the open universe theory, value-death comes to the universe once; in the case of the closed universe theory (conjecturing that future universes produced will be like the present one), value-death will occur repeatedly for all eternity. In both the open and closed theories of the universe, the fundamental impuissance of deity as conceived by hylotheism is the same: the inability of the godhead to maintain a stable universe in which values fashioned in the past and those to be created in the future are preserved in a process of progress. Value-death comes to everything.

38. Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 136.

39. *Ibid.*, 151.

40. David R. Griffin, *A Process Christology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), 153ff.

41. *Ibid.*, 16–17. For my part, I do not believe that Whitehead meant the passage in the way Griffin interprets it.

42. Charles Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (La Salle: Open Court, 1967), 4–6.

43. Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 16.

44. Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology*, 66–67.

45. I.e., panentheistic. Hartshorne at times refers to panentheism as theism. Theism, however, does not in normative usage refer to a deity who is world-inclusive.

46. Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology*, 45–46.

47. *Ibid.*, 80–82; see also 58–59.

48. Indeed, if humans can do away with evils that deity cannot, does this not mean that humans exercising their freedom surpass the deity in this regard? If so, deity is not the unsurpassable in all ways.

49. Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology*, 56.

50. David R. Griffin, *op. cit.*, 185. Process theologians and philosophers, notably Samuel Alexander and A. N. Whitehead, as well as philosophic systems such as absolute idealism and dialectical materialism, have assumed without further analysis the equation of complexification with higher value. I believe this equation to be an error. The prime example of complexification

is the human person. The question is: Did the evolutionary process produce higher value in the universe by the emergence of the human person? The answer, of course, is determined by the criterion employed to measure higher value. The criterion I use is: that which furthers the well-being of the earth (which includes its atmosphere) and all life on earth. By this criterion, the emergence of humankind through the evolutionary process has been the greatest and most calamitous disvalue produced in earth's history. No species has destroyed more of the earth, more of the earth's species of living creatures, more members of its own species, and has suffered, apparently, more anguish, particularly from inherent defects and conflicts of its psychic structure. Complexification does not mean higher value, just as process does not mean progress.

51. Walter Sullivan, *Black Holes* (New York: Warner Books, 1983), 267–68.

52. David R. Griffin, *A Process Christology*, 227.

53. *Ibid.*, 231–32.