Philosophy for Darker Times

An Approach to Simone Weil's Insights

By

Noel E. Boulting

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Having given his permission, this book is dedicated to Michael Krausz for the way he was able to give encouragement to an angry young man by suggesting how some of his papers should be put together in a book.

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In interpreting Simone Weil's writings, it is important to emphasize *how* they are approached. What are the presuppositions that an interpreter brings to her texts? That question is important because the interpreter's stance will determine how her many insights are to be understood. For most philosophers that stance will be determined by taking Ludwig Wittgenstein's late philosophy seriously. An alternative one is applied herein. Charles Hartshorne's writings introduced me to the importance of Charles Peirce's philosophy (explored in my earlier text *On Interpretive Activity* of 2006). Charles Hartshorne regarded himself as "60% Whiteheadian and 40% Peircian." I replied by saying "I am 40% Whiteheadian and 60% Peircian." It was Karl-Otto Apel who deepened my appreciation of Peirce's writings by emphasizing the importance of Peirce's semiotics. So in employing Peirce's semiotics, Simone Weil's many contributions can be cast through a different lens, one enabling the reader to see how those contributions are relevant to and significant for our contemporary condition.

I am deeply indebted to the assistance of Dan Dombrowski in encouraging me to have published in *Process Studies (PS)* my article 'The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy Debate Revisited: Hartshorne, Peirce, and Weil' Vol. 50, No. 1, 2021, pp. 88-106 which forms Chapter 1. In addition, I appreciate the efforts of John Perry, former *URAM* journal editor, along with the assistance of Tom Kretteck S. J, and Claudia of Toronto University Press, in allowing me to use my article published in that journal, namely 'Necessity, Transparency and Fragility in Simone Weil's Conception of Ultimate Reality and Meaning' URAM Vol. 22, No. 3 Sept. 1999, pp. 223-

46 employed in Chapter 2. Finally, due to the constant encouragement of Carl Raschke, senior editor of the *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory,* my paper entitled 'Scale Relative Ontology & Simone Weil's Spiritual Philosophy' was published in *Religious Theory: E-Supplement to the Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* Parts 1 & 2, May 11, 2021 to provide content for Chapter 3 as well as my 'Intentionalism and God's Fiction' *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* Issue 20.3, Fall, 2021, pp. 302-17 which is re-presented in Chapter 6. Chapters 4 and 5 were written with the specific aim of being included in a text focussing upon Simone Weil's insights.

INTRODUCTION

A methodological issue arises when considering Simone Weil's writings: how should an interpreter enter its subject matter. Consider a number of strategies: one might focus on her life, a biographical approach[1]; her stance might be compared to thinkers in her own time[2]; again, her ideas have been interpreted comparatively with a wider range of thinkers[3]; alternatively a more philosophical approach might be sustained[4]; in addition some special theological approach can be identified.[5] But it seems an almost impossible task to bring together these very diverse ways of interpreting her contribution to intellectual inquiry within a single text. Those two words – intellectual inquiry – are important because they indicate an additional difficulty besieging any interpreter: s/he may read her texts through the spectacles of a particular discipline in a world where the range of specialisms increases continually, whereas in Simone Weil's time insights from philosophical analysis, theological awareness, cultural studies, political considerations and educational alternatives enmeshed with each other in the creation of her writings. Perhaps that is why she remained outside the accepted institutional arrangements of her day just as Walter Benjamin did in her own time and earlier in the case of Charles Peirce, Spinoza, Hobbes and Socrates. Indeed only Jurgen Habermas in our time can be regard as forwarding an inter-disciplinary approach to intellectual inquiry, so that he becomes labelled as a sociologist!

In response to this methodological issue an attempt will be made to combine two different strategies in the present text. An attempt will be made to relate

[1] Developed in Jacques Cabaud's *Simone Weil: A Fellowship in Love* (London: Harvill Press 1964), Gabrella Fiori's *Simone Weil: An Intellectual Biography* (Athens, Georgia: Georgia UP 1989) or other biographies.

[2] As in Debora Nelson's *Tough Enough* (Chicago UP 2017) or in Sylvie Courtine-Dnamy's excellent *Three Women in Dark Times* (Ithaca:Cornell UP 2001)

[3] Consider T.A. Idinopulos & J.Z. Knopp's (eds.) very helpful text *Mysticism, Nihilism, Feminism* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Institute of Social Sciences and Arts 1984) or Rebecca Rozelle-Stone (ed.) *Simone Weil and Continental Philosophy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield 2017)

[4] Forwarded in the book edited by R.H. Bell *Simone Weil's Philosophy of Culture* where H.L. Finch's excellent "Simone Weil: Harbinger of a New Renaissance?" (Cambridge UP 1993) as Chapter 13 can be found, E. Jane Doering & Eric O. Springsted (eds.) *The Christian Platonism of Simone Weil* (Notre Dame Indiana: Notre Dame Univ. Press 2004) or Eric O. Springsted's *Simone Weil for the 21st. Century* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame UP 2021)

[5] Within Lisa McCullough's rich text *The Religious Philosophy of Simone Weil* (London: I.B. Tauris 2014) or Miklos Vetö's *The Religious Metaphysics of Simone Weil* (1971) SUNY, 1994

her insights to specific significant issues in our own time. Secondly, a much more difficult strategy entails holding in one's interpretative consciousness at least two thoughts at the same time which seem to oppose one another as having equal importance but within a different perspective for each. Such a claim makes sense of her emphasis upon dialectical thinking. Indeed her thinking has such depths that after forty years of examining them, an interpreter can still not be sure that s/he has employed that latter key – dialectical thinking – throughout past attempts to understand her stance.

Given this rationale, Chapter One focuses on two ways of interpreting Divine awareness. Incidentally, throughout the chapters of this book the term 'God' will be substituted where possible by the term 'the Divine', so as to avoid human projections such as a masculine or feminine label. Similarly, the term 'existence' will be restricted to temporal matters whereas the term 'exsistence' will be used in the contest of trying to understand eternality or Divinity itself. In addition, the term actuality will be distinguished from existence in the following manner. It is quite likely that I will still be in existence tomorrow I hope, but I am not able to predict what state of affairs, as an actuality, I will enjoy or endure, whether happy, miserable, depressed, optimistic or whatever. Through this very important distinction Charles Hartshorne hoped to be remembered for his employment of it throughout his many contributions. Accordingly Divine existence – exsistence – is manifested for him somehow, as an actuality.[6] From an analytical philosophic point of view, however, atheism, typically, holds pride of place in rejecting God-talk since a temporal standpoint accounts for all that there is. Indeed, Simone Weil is very sympathetic to such a stance since she treats atheism very seriously; she opposes religious talk which seeks to relieve a possible believer from facing the temporal, human condition by escapist impressions of a future life guaranteed elsewhere. Yet, like Charles Hartshorne and the present writer, she legitimizes the validity of Anselm's Second Proof with respect to the exsistence of the Good – as Plato first fashioned it – through the notion of Perfection. So, a human being is unable to redeem his or her condition through imaging something out of his or her consciousness. That claim is referred to and interpreted in diverse ways as it appears within the different chapters in the present text. Thereby, for her, philosophical activity must enable

[6] It could be argued that Simone Weil appeals to a similar distinction when she speaks of Character: "--- an invariant that supposes an identity throughout varied manifestations--- affirmed to take place in fact, but in ones that are simply possible, that might have taken place or that in certain cases could take place in the future." 'Notes on the Concept of Character' *Simone Weil: Late Philosophical Writings* E.O. Springsted & L.E. Schmidt (eds.) Indiana: Notre Dame UP 2015 pp. 97-102, p. 97 Again, in her Notebooks we read "*I* is hidden in my case (and in that of other people):" (N1 p.127-8)

an understanding of the world by not only confronting social reality in the way analytic philosopher propose but by being concerned with the nature of existence more broadly understood. She writes: "Rootedness lies in something other than the social." (GG p. 169)[7] This theme will be explored in Chapter Five.

A spiritual perspective is sustained by Simone Weil, just as it is by Charles Peirce, Whitehead and Hartshorne through aesthetic awareness of Creation and perhaps through some artists' recreations. Given the undoing of the natural world through human domination and the artistic realm reduced to shock or entertainment, that aesthetic perspective – sustained through taking a holy stance towards the natural world – is undermined. Yet that perspective is so important in making the experience of a possible actuality to gain access to the Divine in the direct experiencing of Creation. Nonetheless it is here where the significance of the notion of that actuality of something precious, holy yet fragile – as we have learnt in regard to the natural world – can be accessed by individuals so that the significance of a spiritual dimension can be sustained in positing something transcending the human condition. But for her it is through awareness of the Divine by means of such firsthand experiencing which matters spiritually. In that sense her stance can be characterized as "--- the fundamental experience of the inner self which enters into immediate contact with God or the metaphysical Reality"[8] so that her position can best be cast as a spiritual mystic whilst at the same being "--- firmly committed to many basic Christian beliefs including the Incarnation, Passion, Crucifixion, Eucharist, Trinity, and Christology"[9] whilst downplaying the triumphalism associated with Christ's Resurrection. That triumphalism she associates with the deformation of Christianity through its Romanization: "The Jews and the Romans together crucified Christ. But they did even worse to him when Christianity became the religion of the Empire with the Old Testament as a sacred book." (FLN p. 303)[10] Yet in writing to a priest, she illustrated her dialectical stance by indicating the importance of the Church as serving an educational function: "The jurisdiction of the Church in matters of faith is good in so far as it imposes on the intelligence a certain discipline of

[7] GG p. 169 stands for Simone Weil *Gravity and Grace* (1952) London: Routledge 2002, page 169

[8] Gershom G. Scholem *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* London: Thames & Hudson 1955 p. 4

[9] M. Hamblin "Simone Weil's Theology of Evil, Love & the Self-Emptying of God" in *Mysticism, Nihilism, Feminism* pp. 39-56, p. 52

[10] FLN p. 303 stands for S. Weil *First and Last Notebooks* R. Rees (tr.) Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock 2015, page 303

the attention; ---." (GtoG p. 133)[11] Note throughout this introduction to her stance on the relation between philosophy and spiritual awareness the constant use of that dialectical approach: "Method of investigation: as soon as one has thought upon a certain matter, to discover in what sense the contrary is true." (N 1 p. 121)[12] So, for example, in regard to the Bible itself we have two contraries. On the one hand the Hebrew or Old Testament focuses on the natural world, where law is the significant issue whereas the Gospel's focus is upon the supernatural, Divine Love. So should one reject the former in relation to the latter?[13] The latter is forwarded in her writings since following Plato "--- the more perfect has more reality than the less perfect ---" yet for the human being temporal reality, existence on earth is what matters for the human subject. (N 2 p. 220)[14] So, in contrast to Plato's position:

> There are two objects for us to love. First, that which is worthy of love but which, in our sense of the word existence, does not exist. That is God. And second, that which exists, but in which there is nothing it is possible to love. That is necessity. We must love both." (FLN p. 324)

And both are at stake since only through an appropriate response to temporal, living "--- as the condition whereby we may know ourselves as being limited" can the world be cast as "--- God's language to us." (N 2 p. 480) So the significance of the temporal and the eternal as contraries has to be held in consciousness at the same time. Again two temporal contraries, as indicated earlier, are exhibited in her life since she accepted so many Christian tenets in sustaining her Spiritualism whilst keeping her distance from official religious Church doctrine. But it is to her life we now turn.

In considering her life in Chapter 2, a methodological question arises. Should a writer's contribution be judged by the kind of life s/he leads or through the work alone that such a writer has created? In the former case Simone Weil's self-dislike in being a woman and her anti-Jewish

[11] GtoG stands for S. Weil *Gateway to God* Glasgow: Collins, Fontana Bks. 1982 p. 133

[12] N 1 p. 121 stands for *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* Vol. 1 A. Wills (tr.) London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976, page 121

[13] Cf. J.Z. Knopp "The Carnal God: Simone Weil's Anti-Judiac Perspective" in *Mysticism, Nihilism, Feminism* pp. 115-38, p. 125

[14] N 2 p. 220 stands for *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* Vol, 2 A. Wills (tr.) London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976, page 220

sentiments would be emphasized.[15] That the importance of the writer's psychological development should be used to interpret his or her creations – a popular way of treating intellectuals from the past – not only risks a reductionist, psychologistic strategy – not taking their creations as significant achievements – but also risks committing Intentional Fallacy as that is explored in Chapter 6. To avoid such intellectual traps, attention is focussed upon Plato's Divided Line, the base of which lies in (i) images; (ii) the existence of common sense objects in the temporal world; (iii) knowledge of the third kind involving reasoning about the two previous dimensions leading towards seeking to grasp (iv) the incomprehensible. Casting her life through Plato's idea of a 'cognitive ascent' in this fashion renders a holistic interpretation to her mysticism as opposed to claiming that there were just "--- two periods of her life as a thinker" so that her concern "--- for questions of value and character"[16] issued in all four stages in her development, not to be confined to the final part of her existence.

One way of indicating a difference between her earlier and later philosophical perspective would be to claim that whereas in her earlier writings a 'craftsperson model' was adopted emphasizing the training of the will, her later stance emerged from that earlier one enabling her to be integrated experientially to something transcending her own existence, an awareness gained through manual labour.[17] But that consideration follows the first dimension of her philosophy (i) characterized by an examination of wild imaginative activity brought about by contingent necessities triggered within conditions of the social oppression she experienced within a factory. That second development (ii) is registered through an analysis of the common-sense beliefs a traditional labourer might enjoy as s/he faces the natural necessities suffered in the toils of agricultural work: "Necessity enters into contact with intelligence through knowledge of the second kind ---." The third dimension (iii) yields knowledge of the third kind – "It is always a question of rising above perspectives through the composition of perspectives, of placing oneself in the *third dimension*" (N 1 p.239) – where a person's use of reasoning can enable an appreciation of 'order behind necessity' as she puts it in *Gravity and Grace* (GG p. 136) exemplified in a

[15]Simone Weil's anti-semitism – "The Jews, that handful of uprooted people, have caused uprootedness of the whole terrestrial globe" (GG p. 162) – is not addressed within the present text. To do so would mean addressing the condition of the Jews in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century as set out in Anson Rabinbach's "Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern Jewish Messianism" *New German Critique*: Vo. 34, Winter 1985, pp. 178-124

[16] E.O. Springsted *Simone Weil for the Twenty-First Century"* p.7

[17] D. Allen "The Concept of Reading and the 'Book of Nature'" in *Simone Weil's Philosophy of Culture* R.H. Bell (ed.) Chapter 4 p. 110

skilled workman's activity or in that of the mathematician, poet or artist. The final and fourth dimension (iv), growing out of the third, leads to an insight into the incomprehensible, marking the limit to the use of reasoning, as was indicated in Chapter 1: 'That is why mysticism is the only source of virtue for humanity' (GG p. 110). But that can only occur through a passive sense of waiting where the subject's attention is directed, as Jacques Cabaud puts it, "--- into the void that underlies the *natural* objects of desires, and leads into the *supernatural* reality that underlies the emptiness of natural desire."[18] Now it might be said that this yearning for such a reality where the self is de-created, liberating the human subject from the idols of the cave,[19] always haunted her existence, but it was not until the later part of her life where this mystical dimension was fully developed.

Opposed to that dimension is Scientism to which Simone Weil refers in a 1942 Review article. In it she criticizes a book by Louis de Broglie where she distinguishes two kinds of scientism defining them through three nineteenth century figures and their successors alongside a second kind; the scientism of her day. But no definition is given save for the denial of "--- what is authentically spiritual." Indeed one advocate of scientism proposed that every church in France "--- might be replaced by a miniature Palace of Discovery" (SNLG p. 65)[20] But she may not have been unhappy to endorse scientism's definition as identifying knowledge solely "with science".[21] And within her own time she recognized that the Catholic Church was "--- too much permeated by the very atmosphere" they might have desired to undo, given the strength of the scientistic spirit in "--- the age in which one lives." (SNLG p. 65) That spirit has further intensified in our own time as some intellectuals have sought to legitimize that spirit, so reducing the arts or cultural artefacts to either mere entertainment or propaganda, since they cannot ever satisfy the scientific canon in regard to truth acquisition.

Simone Weil's response to that scientistic spirit provides the subject matter for Chapter 3. Paradoxically, however, in the very book which renders the strongest case for Scientism – James Ladyman's & Don Ross's (et. al) *Every Thing Must Go* (ETMG from now on)[22] – there appears a suggestion by Don

[18] J. Cabaud *Simone Weil: A Fellowship of Love* London: Harvill Press, 1964 p. 288

[19] Cf. G. Fiori *Simone Weil: An Intellectual Biography* Athens, Georgia: Georgia UP 1989, p. 41

[20] SNLG p. 65 stands for S. Weil *Science, Necessity and the Love of God* Oxford UP 1968 page 65

[21] J. Habermas *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968) p.4 J. Shapiro, London: Heinemann 1972; for an analysis of Scientism and its consequences see N. E. Boulting "To Be Scientistic or to Advocate Scientism: That is the Question" *Sociology Study* July-Aug. 2020, Vol. 10, No. 4, Serial No. 40, pp. 173-183

[22] J. Ladyman & D. Ross (et. al.) *Every Thing Must Go Oxford* UP 2010

Ross which can be developed to counteract the claims of Scientism itself: Scale Relative Ontology (SRO)[23]: how we "track the world" depends upon the cognitive scale used to measure it.(ETMG p. 199) SRO's Perspectivalism implies that "--- one's ontological characterization of *one and the same particular* may vary depending on the sorts of questions one is attempting to answer."[24] Elsewhere three such scales have been identified[25]: i) the contemplative, cosmic or, better, the cosmogonic dimension exercised for example in Von Schelling's speculations; ii) priority ascribed to the 'common sense' or everyday dimension concerned with 'middle sized objects' articulated, for example in Hegel's philosophy; iii) the theoretical or scientific stance interpreting reality through the micro-level, adopted by Ladyman and Ross, following Peirce's early footsteps, in their *Every Thing Must Go*. These three measuring perspectives can then be considered in view of Simone Weil's treatment of her historically grounded categories: Greek Science, Classical Science and Twentieth Century Science. Given a comparison between these three dimensions in each case, implications for her spiritual philosophy can be explored.

In Chapter Four, the notion of Scale Relative Ontology is used more widely in grasping a sense of the meaning of the term 'Nothing'. In opposition to Materialism, Spiritualism appeals to what does not exist physically; hence the idea of 'no thing' so easily equated with nothing. But the latter can only refer to the former – 'no thing' – if three quite distinct senses of nothing are distinguished: negation; a human everyday sense; an absolutist sense. Each of these three senses generates corresponding conceptions of mysticism through which a spiritualist stance can be interpreted since different senses of Spiritualism emerge from considering different kinds of Mysticism. That latter claim opposes Gershom Scholem's claim that there is no "--- phenomenon or experience which has no particular relation to other religious phenomena."[26] The first conception of mysticism arises through

[23] Don Ross admitted he invented the phrase SRO at the *Real Patterns Workshop* 6/10/2018, Bristol University

[24] A. Chakravartty *A Metaphysics for Scientific Realism* (2007) Cambridge UP 2010 p. 84 though his remark applies to what will be called the micro-level: "Some objects are countable (proteins, cells) but other "objects" are merely quantifiable (quantities of plasma, light), and thus qualify more loosely." p.83. Cohering collections of properties may be characterized "--- in different ways (for example, electrons-as-particles versus electrons-as-excitations)---." (p. 84)

[25] N.E. Boulting "'Scale Relative Ontology' and Scientism" *Philosophica* No. 45, 2015, pp. 99-118

[26] Gershom Scholem *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1941) London: Thames & Hudson 1955 p. 6

the nothing of negation where "--- *not* means *other than*---" (CP 6.217)[27] at the quantum level, characterized not by nothing but by 'no thing'. Here, in scientific inquiry, Niels Bohr's quantum problem rears its ugly head, where mathematical expressions – enabling calculation – substitute for ordinary discourse: 'Everything we call real is made of things we cannot call real.' Alternatives to his stance are illustrated in Appendix I. The second conception – an everyday weaker, more limited sense of nothing – can be cast as "--- what is incapable of illustration and fulfilment *for us*---" given the temporal epoch we inhabit.[28] Here, our language use seems to fall short of what requires expression emerging in talk about 'presences', spectres or the ineffable. Finally, the absolutist sense can be characterized as "--- what is intrinsically and absolutely incapable of illustration and fulfilment".[29] A sense of wonder in regard to creation or decreation in the light of this cosmogonic sense generates the traditional conception of mysticism to provide a more secure grounding for a spiritualist outlook. It is to be interpreted through Divine experiencing where a sense of aesthetic mysticism finds its home – "Like affliction, beauty compels us to ask: Why? Why is this thing beautiful?"[30] – before providing a spiritual response through her aesthetic theism.

Some writers have cast Simone Weil's writings as in accord with the claims of Natural Theology. Louis Dupré, after hooking that doctrine to her idea of decreation – examined in the next chapter – narrates her theology in this way because of the clear Platonic separation of Being from non-being, the latter constituting what human beings have to bear.[31] He is supported in this endeavour by Patterson and Schmidt who see her writings as negating the temporal realm in Platonic fashion and its "--- deceptions that assault us both from within and from without."[32] Again Madeline Hamblin refers to Simone Weil's "negative theodicy"[33] in the context of dealing with the evil problem. But Negative Theology is to be distinguished from Apophaticism which Chapter Five seeks to demonstrate. The former focuses on a cognitive

[27] CP 6.217 stands for C.S. Peirce *The Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce* Vols. 1-8 ed. by C. Hartshorne et. al., Harvard UP 1931-58; 6 is the Vol. no. & 217 for the para. not the page number.

[28] J.N. Findlay "Some Reflections on Necessary Existence" *Process and Divinity: The Hartshorne Festschrift* W.L. Reese & E. Freeman, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Pub. Co. 1964 pp. 515-527, p. 523

[29] J.N. Findlay "Some Reflections on Necessary Existence" p. 523

[30] S. Weil *Gateway to God* (1952) Glasgow: Collins 1982 p. 101

[31] L. Dupré "Simone Weil and Platonism" *The Christian Platonism of Simone Weil* E.J. Doering & E.O. Springsted (eds.) Indiana: Notre Dame UP 2004, pp. 9-22, p. 15

[32] P. Patterson & L.E. Schmidt "The Christian Materialism of Simone Weil" *The Christian Platonism of Simone Weil* p.77-93, p. 83

[33] M. Hamblin "Simone Weil's Theology of Evil, Love & the Self Emptying of God" p. 43

claim concerning Divine unknowability as Bruce Millem attempts to clarify[34] whereas the latter is concerned with lived, experiential awarenesses relating to Divine manifestations. The purely conceptual approach explicated in Negative Theology can become embedded within Apophaticism by employing Simone Weil's insights. In this way arguments for Divine exsistence can be articulated since the experiential case for mysticism and the limitless desire arguments can be distinguished from the cognitive appeal rendered through metaphysics and all three separated from a corollary; the self-decreation argument. By relating these arguments together a case for Apophatic Theology can transcend the case for Negative Theology.

Earlier, reference was made to the way Simone Weil's writings might be interpreted in the way she lived her life. But to claim that the meaning of what she created should be determined by, or at least identified with psychological states as expressed through her intentions risks Intentionalism. Anti-Intentionalism forwards the notion that the meaning of what is created is realized within what is created. The actuality, then, of what can be experienced should provide a key to understanding the meaning of exsistence itself. But here there are three possibilities or domains, as she articulates them in a 1942 letter to Father Perrin: the *ontological* "which is absolutely independent of us", the *epistemological*, the natural realm "recognized by the intelligence and imagination" and the *phenomenological* where human beings can "experience the compulsion" of Divine pressure through sheer attentiveness.[35]

The ontological can be explicated through claims made by Luria – the Jewish mystic – and Von Schelling – arguably the founder of ecological philosophy[36] – in establishing her claim on behalf of what "--- is absolutely independent of us", namely the Creator, Divine intentions and subsequently with what is Decreated. Such a stance opposes Creationism – separating completely exsistence from existence – or Pantheism – identifying somehow exsistence with existence. But that Decreation thesis not only initiates the problem of evil – an issue explored elsewhere[37] – but raises the issue of distinguishing affliction from human suffering:

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[34] B. Millem "Four Theories of Negative Theology" *Heythrop Jrnl.* XVIII, pp. 187-204

[35] S.Weil "Letter 1: Hesitations Concerning Baptism" *Waiting on God* Glasgow: Collins Fount pbk. 1983, pp. 13-20, pp. 13-14

[36] A. Braeckman "Whitehead \and German Idealism" *Process Studies* 14 (1985) pp. 265-86; cf. A.N. Whitehead *Science and the Modern World* London: The Macmillan Co. 1925, Chapter V "The Romantic Reaction"

[37] M. Hamblin "Simone Weil's Theology of Evil, Love & the Self-Emptying of God" in *Mysticism, Nihilism, Feminism* pp. 39-56

> "Christianity is not concerned with suffering and grief, for they are sensations, psychological states, in which a perverse indulgence is always possible; its concern is with something quite different which is affliction. Affliction is not a psychological state; it is a pulverization of the soul by mechanical brutality of circumstances." (SNLG pp. 192-3; GtoG p.96) So, "Human life is *impossible*. But affliction alone causes this to be felt." (N 1 p. 311)

The epistemological is manifested in her advocacy of Platonism and her serious concern with atheism alongside an advocacy of her experimental ontological proof. Here Plato's allegory of the cave is crucial where the natural and the supernatural are constituted by different senses of order,[38] whilst the inspiration for her ontological proof lies in her claim that the fact that a human being "--- can pass into a state of aesthetic contemplation before a spectacle of nature as before a Greek statue is a proof of God." (N 1 p. 241)

The phenomenological can be accessed by applying an insight from Sartre's existentialism, the Frankfurt school of philosophy and the German Literary tradition to illustrate her concern for the significance of human experience. But that experience must "--- make *the spiritual* the air which we breathe, not as a substitute set of 'objects' to be *controlled*, but as the 'gifts' of an open, freer, and wider intellect."[39] Yet within our secular society, the concerns of such a spirituality are reduced to an obsession with psychologism, the attempt to reduce all human achievements to scientific or psychological explanations so that only human beings and their attempts to control others in addition to their environment incites scientism, economism and the domination of consumerism. Given, then, an explication of these three domains – the phenomenological, the ontological and the epistemic – which and how far, can any of them best provide the strongest illumination in dealing with our original question: how can creation be cast as God's fiction?

Hannah Arendt made references to Simone Weil's writings. Moreover there are good grounds for thinking her work was much inspired by those writings. The second appendix enables a comparison of the philosophical approach to reality by these two thinkers, so as to emphasize again the importance of Simone Weil's writings to those living in a world subject to disorder as set out in Arendt's 1958 text *The Human Condition*. What

[38] J. Van Herik "Looking, Eating and Waiting in Simone Weil" *Mysticism, Nihilism, Feminism* pp. 57-90, p. 73

[39] H.L. Finch "Simone Weil: Harbinger of a new Renaissance? *Simone Weil's Philosophy of Culture* pp. 295-309, p.301

emerges from this comparison is that Arendt grounds her philosophy in secular terms as opposed to Simone Weil's stance, inspired as it is by more spiritual considerations. But this difference between them, despite Arendt's appreciation of Simone Weil's insights, lies in the question as to the grounding of rationality itself. This provides the subject matter for Appendix III.

In Appendix III, then, different conceptions of rationality are explored where Simone Weil's advocacy of a Substantive sense of rationality – the stumbling block to an appreciation of her philosophy – is contrasted with opposing conceptions deriving from a Procedural sense. This distinction between them with respect to the grounding of rationality can be considered to have been raised by Springsted's admiration for Michael Sandel's contrast between two forms of appraisal: establishing what we acknowledge, namely that "--- there are things that should not be given a price" and its alternative, market value. But who are the "we" Springsted refers to here and is it not the case that we *ought* to acknowledge such things – fairness, concern for other human beings and so on – "--- that gives them their true value in our lives" rather than asserting them to be held as an unsupported *factual* claim?[40] His solution is to claim that the difference between reference to "--- the moral basis of social and national life" and "--- the language of the market place" is to be settled not by an appeal to Simone Weil's ontological stance embedded within a Substantive sense of rationality which would imply taking her mysticism seriously. Rather Springsted appeals to a Constitutive Sense through acknowledging a debt to all sorts of institutions and relations" that he claims "--- shape us and put us in touch with God and neighbour in meaningful ways"[41] – ignoring Bonhoeffer's claim that social developments have occurred without recourse to any religious dimension[42] – so that he can oppose a narrow sense of individualism inspired by an adherence to a Procedural sense of rationality which has yielded so much benefit to mankind through scientific and technological advancement. This dispute concerning rationality is passed over in a dogmatic silence.

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[40] Most philosophers are aware of the dangers of Naturalistic Fallacy, seeking to establish value claims out of facts. Normative fallacy, is much less recognized, particularly by those in the analytic tradition. It reverses Naturalistic Fallacy. (T.D. Campbell "The Normative Fallacy" *Philos. Quart.* 20 (81) (1970) pp. 368-77) Assertions about what is the case are thought to follow from beliefs about what ought to be so. For example an account concerning the importance of institutional procedures as settling what counts as an acceptable scientific claim is no doubt true as a narrative about how science ought to proceed, but it is a factual matter as to whether that narrative accounts for what actually happens within scientific activity itself, as expressed in the investigations of Bruno Latour. (Cf. B. Latour (et. al.) *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (1979) Princeton UP 2nd. Ed. 1986)

[41] E.O. Springsted *Simone Weil for the Twenty-First Century* pp. 134 & 143

[42] "--- everything gets along without God." D. Bonhoeffer *Letters & Papers from Prison* London: SCM Press, 1979, p. 326

Appendix III thereby completes the book by indicating how a Negative, Qualitative sense of rationality, which might be derived from Simone Weil's Substantive sense – emptied of its religious considerations – along with her own stance, opposes its two alternatives: a Procedural and a Constitutive sense.

Each chapter in this text can be read individually in its own context. Alternatively each chapter can be interpreted as developing ideas arising out of the previous chapter. This means repetition of some of Simone Weil's central concerns, for example decreation, her experimental ontological proof, different ways in which mysticism is to be understood. But such a repetition presents the advantage of seeing those central concerns under different cognitive perspectives.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GOD OF RELIGION AND THE GOD OF PHILOSOPHY DEBATE REVISITED

A debate in Process Thinking can be used to initiate an examination of Simone Weil's intellectual inquiries. In some of her notes written in 1941, she distinguished what she called character from its manifestation: "Character: an invariant that supposes an identity throughout varied manifestations."[43] So consider that claim in regard to my grandson. He is quite likely to be existing tomorrow, but I cannot predict what state he will exhibit, whether his manifestations will include anger, sadness, or happiness or some other actuality. Now it was Charles Hartshorne who hoped to be remembered for his distinction between actuality and existence, in my grandson's case between his manifestations and the existence of his character. But can such a distinction be applied in the case of the divine? During the *Conference in Honour of Charles Hartshorne* on the morning of Tuesday, November 3rd, 1981, Richard Milton Martin, in his "On the Language of Theology," asked "how can we legitimately pass from the statement that God exists to one that says he is actualized?"[44] What is about to be argued initially uses Hartshorne's distinction to elucidate the relationship between religious practice and philosophical activity as he sought to do so regarding the relationship between the God of religion and the God of philosophy. I hope to make a contribution to the contemporary interest in this relationship herein.[45]

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[43] S. Weil "Notes on the Concept of Character" *Simone Weil: Late Philosophical Writings* E.O. Springsted & L.E. Schmidt, Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press 2015, pp. 97-102, p. 97 "The set of manifestations that we try to put together by means of varying factors differs according to the people who are thinking about the character of such and such a person." (p. 98)

[44] R.M. Martin "On the Language of Theology" pp. 43-66, p.56 and Hartshorne's reply "Response to Martine" pp. 66-77, p. 75 *Existence and Actuality* J.B. Cobb (et.al.) (eds.) Chicago UP 1984

[45] Cf. "The Philosophical Turn Towards Religion Conference, *"Engaging the Contemporary,* University of Malta (Valetta Campus), November 7-8, 2019.

Hartshorne, however, may not have approved of the way his famous distinction might be extended. Moreover, he appears not to have had knowledge of Simone Weil's writings whilst different ways of grasping a sense of the divine remain obscure. One is the possibility of divine experience for a specific individual, divine *actuality*, whilst the phrase divine *reality* can be applied to the beliefs, rituals, and activities constituting a particular religious community through its traditional development. Whereas for Simone Weil the former is treated enthusiastically, reservations are articulated in relation to the latter. Again, divine *existence* can be grasped in one of two ways. Divine *necessary existence* might be established through logical argument, which Whitehead thought impossible, whereas Hartshorne, through his use of Anselm's second version of the ontological argument, regarding that logical argument as valid. A second way sidesteps logical considerations in favour of an emphasis upon intuitive understanding and meditation in establishing a *mystically experienced* divinity as that is expressed in Simone Weil's writings. The advantage presented by elucidating these four dimensions takes us beyond the stale arguments concerning the "two concepts",[46] namely the God worshipped by believers and one subject to argument by philosophers. These four can be cast as *Divine Actuality, Divine Reality, Divine Necessary Existence,* and *Mystically Experienced Divinity*. These four dimensions can be explored so as to consider different ways in which they may relate to each other.

What will be argued in this present chapter was inspired originally by attempts Hartshorne made to deal with the question regarding the relation between the God of religion and of philosophy. The first occurs in *A Natural Theology for Our Time*, the second in his Royal Institute of Philosophy address published later.[47] In his first attempt he raised the question of what philosophers might mean by the term "God." His suggestion was to characterize God as "the One who is Worshipped".[48] And that One is the object of what is referred to by Tillich as 'the object of ultimate concern'.[49] For Simone Weil, that concern is to be identified with what Plato referred to as 'the Good' or, for Hartshorne, Perfection capable of self-surpassing itself necessary to sustain the whole range of value claims to which a

[46] R. Attfield "The God of Religion & the God of Philosophy" *Religious Studies* Vol. 9 Issue 1, March 1973, pp. 1-9, p. 1

[47] C. Hartshorne "Philosophical & Religious Uses of God" *A Natural Theology for Our Time* La Salle Ill: Open Crt. 1967 pp. 1-28; "The God of Religion & the God of Philosophy" *Royal Institute Lectures Vol 2 1967-8: Talk of God* London: Macmillan 1969 pp. 152-67

[48] C. Hartshorne *A Natural Theology for our Time* p. 3

[49] C. Hartshorne *Creative Synthesis & Philosophic Method* La Salle, Illinois: Open Crt. 1970 p. 148

human subject can be devoted through worship: "Worship requires the unqualified exaltation of its object beyond all possible rivalry ---."[50] Yet because of Hartshorne's concern to answer the question "In what kind of philosophy is the religious idea of God most at home?"[51] a clear distinction between the God of religion and that of philosophy was not fully clarified. Moreover, "Religious experience is fully compatible with there being no God"[52], as Whitehead put it originally.[53] Thereby such experience might not serve as an independent source of information about what that entity, if the Divine exists, is. In his second attempt Hartshorne speaks of philosophy's effort being "to find logical forms or patterns appropriate to express the intuitive idea" of God. He thereby arrives at his conclusion: "The God of religion is personal, the philosophical absolute is impersonal; the two are not identical."[54] This distinction is important because the former refers to Divine Actuality cast for an individual, the latter to Divine *Existence* – cast as an abstraction – whilst the latter is actualized somehow experientially. But once we consider the former relative to other believers, we have Divine *Reality*. All three distinctions must be separated from what is accessed in a revelatory manner: *Mystically Experienced Divinity*. The point of this chapter, then, is to develop conclusions from Hartshorne's original insights as much as it is to revise them in order to throw light on Simone Weil's contribution to this issue. Let us now distinguish these four dimensions, beginning with divine actuality.

Divine Actuality

Religion can be understood in Whitehead's words as "what the individual does with his own solitariness," and if life "is an internal fact for its own sake, before it is an external fact relating to others"[55] then we must begin with God's actuality, "*how*, or in *just what states*" God's "exemplification has, up to now, occurred"[56] for an individual. This stance is well illustrated in Peirce's 1908 article "A Neglected Argument for God's Reality." His case is

[50] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* La Salle, Illinois: Open Crt. 1965, p. 26

[51] C. Hartshorne *A Natural Theology for our Time* p.25

[52] R. Attfield "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy" p. 3

[53] "There is no agreement as to the definition of religion in its most general sense, including true and false religions" A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* (1926) New York: Meridian Bks. 1972 p. 14.

[54] C. Hartshorne "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy" p. 166

[55] A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* pp. 16 &15

[56] C. Hartshorne "Response to Martin" *Existence and Actuality* J.B. Cobb & F. I. Gamwell (eds.) Chicago UP 1984 pp. 66-77 p.75

secured through a "nest of three arguments" (Peirce 6.486).[57] The first arises out of Musement—his Humble Argument—discovered through aesthetic considerations arising from solitary contemplation, a stance sustained in Simone Weil's approach to Divine experiencing. For Peirce, this dimension yields "the Hypothesis that God is Real" (Peirce 6.486). The second of the nest—labelled his Neglected Argument, though at other times that label covers all three arguments—focuses upon the possibility that the first, his Humble Argument, will appeal to every human heart "ravished by the beauty and adorability of the Idea" of God's Reality (CP 6.487). Finally, the third argument indicates the sheer effectiveness of the Idea since it will exert "a commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers" (Peirce 6.480) as a result of each believer "earnestly loving and adoring his strictly hypothetical God" (CP 6.467).

Controversy surrounds Peirce's Neglected Argument.[58] Attention will be paid, however, to his Humble Argument, where aesthetic experiencing is related to cognitive speculations arising from wonder in response to human temporality within nature (CP 6.458). He does not advocate the production of a logical argument for Divine Existence, at least as far as his "Humble Argument" (CP 6.486) is concerned, as he put it to William James in 1905. Rather, his focus is upon a kind of an "aesthetic theism"[59], though with reservations. So, given that his Humble Argument relates to a thinking process initiating "a definite belief," it is *not* to be regarded as akin to traditional arguments for God's existence, since they are forwarded on "deliberately formulated premises." Secondly, any conclusion attained must not be seen "as a proposition of metaphysical theology" (CP 6.456-457). Yet, a reader inspired by the prospect of a reworked "aesthetic theism" and enthusiastic in regard to exploring Simone Weil's stance might draw attention to the focus of his "Musement"; the beauties associated with flowers, butterflies, "forms of trees, the composition of sunsets" (Peirce 6.462), and so on, despite his reservations. Attention upon such experiential features rendered impressionistically through a life of feeling, pass "into attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into a

[57] CP 6.458 stands for C.S. Peirce *The Collected papers of Charles S. Peirce* Vols. 1-8 ed. by C. Hartshorne et. al., Harvard UP 1931-58 where 6 stands for the Vol. number & 458 for the par. not the page number.

[58] Consider as examples: B.L. Clarke "Peirce's Neglected Argument" *Trans. of the C.S. Peirce Soc.*13 (1977) pp. 277-87; R.M. Martin "On the Logic of Idealism & Peirce's Neglected Argument" *Ideal Studies* Vol. 9 Jan. 1979, p. 22-32; D. Rohatyn "Resurrecting Peirce's "Neglected Argument" for God" *Trans. of the C.S. Peirce Soc.* 18, Winter 1981, pp. 66-74

[59] D.H. Orange "Peirce's Conception of God – A Developmental Study" *Peirce Studies No. 2* Institute for Studies in Pragmaticism, Texas Tech. University (Sept. 10th. 1984) p. 74

lively give and take of communion between self and self" (CP 6.459). This stance initiates *Divine Actuality*, as referred to herein, since it concerns the individual, whereas it is in his second argument where that awareness is cast as *Divine Reality* through its appeal to every human heart. For the aesthetic contemplator, however, "Musement" appears to involve no purpose," save that of casting aside all serious purposes" (CP 6.458).

Two Difficulties for a Conception of Divine Actuality

Two difficulties arise here. Peirce sees one immediately: "One who sits down with the purpose of becoming convinced of the truth of religion is plainly not inquiring in scientific singleness of heart, and must always suspect himself of reasoning unfairly" (CP 6.458). He does not see a second one: rather than initiating a complete openness to experience itself, his "Musement" initiates mental representations carried a *priori* to an individual's experience. Here is his response to the first difficulty: "But let religious meditation be allowed to grow up spontaneously out of Pure Play without any breach of continuity, and the Muser will retain the perfect candour proper to Musement" (CP 6.458). The second difficulty arises when he encourages us to enter "your skiff of Musement" to allow "the breath of heaven to swell your sail," sustained by open eyes "awake to what is about or within you." But the skiff is located upon "the lake of thought" realized by an inner mediation (CP 6.461), rather than placed on water in Wordsworth's "The Prelude." Thereby we can see that for him we do not have a direct appeal to an intuitive insight, even if his approach might be described as initially intuitively based, since he then appeals to human thought in these matters in his second argument. So, despite the mysterious origins of such an insight within his Humble Argument, Peirce is more concerned with revelatory, cognitive speculations arising from that sense of intuition which was the basis of his Humble Argument. In that case he can't be cast so obviously as an aesthetic mystic as Simone Weil might be.

Divine Reality

Peirce hopes then that the Play of Musement will sooner or later lead to the Idea of God, which, for an individual, "by developing a deep sense of the adorability of that Idea, will produce a Truly religious Belief in His Reality and His nearness." It is not an unreasonable way of meditating since "it naturally results in the most intense and living determination (*Bestimmung*) of the soul toward shaping the Muser's whole conduct into conformity with

the hypothesis that God is Real and very near" (CP 6.486). He transforms this argument, however, from what I have called *Divine Actuality* into *Divine Reality* by claiming this Humble Argument, since it "is the natural fruit of free meditation, "will appeal to everyone so committed to opening their heart." This claim concerning the sustaining of a community's belief system is forwarded by his assertion that there is "a latent tendency toward belief in God" cast as "a fundamental ingredient of the soul" (CP 6.487). Notice, that Peirce is arguing for *Divine Reality* not a necessary Exsistent in the way Simone Weil makes use of her experimental ontological proof.

The validity of Peirce's claims will not be examined in detail herein, nor his third step where he argues that once his case for establishing both divine possibility aesthetically through his Humble Argument for the individual, and divine *reality* at the social level, it is possible to see "its commanding influence over the whole conduct of life of its believers" (CP 6.490). Securing these three stages in his Neglected Argument, conceived as a whole, emphasizes what is significant to believe so as to influence human action even if what is important in religion is cognitively non-assessable and without theological import. As Whitehead was to put it: "Your character is developed according to your faith"[60] So if religion were "but proved" it "would be a good outweighing all others" (CP 6.457). So faith can be sustained socially through religious rituals and worship, upheld through communal support. However, this *Divine Reality*, the God of religion, may be cast differently via the several denominations within a religious tradition, as well as by each tradition in itself.

The Intensional Problem

More, however, can be said in regard to distinguishing *Divine Reality* from *Divine Actuality*, the former cast in terms of "ritual, emotion, belief and rationalization"[61] arising within the temporal life of human beings. Here the approach of Peirce and Hartshorne is deficient. When it comes to how the divine is to be characterized within a given culture, it is not satisfactory to claim that "human terms must acquire their meanings through human experience" or that our basic "ideas derive somehow from direct experience or intuition, life as concretely lived."[62] A child might think that a bachelor

[60] A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* p. 15

[61] A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* p. 18

[62] C. Hartshorne "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy" *Royal Institute Lectures Vol. 2* p. 154; *A Natural Theology for our Time* p. 12

was particularly fastidious, fussy, or pernickety, rather than being an unmarried man, or unaware experientially that Manchester is north of Bath Spa in the UK, or that the world is round, not flat. Many ideas are not derived from direct individual experience, but are carried intensionally in the language into which s/he is initiated. And by the intensional is meant what is publicly expressed and thereby cultural, rule-governed.[63] So the child is initiated into accepted traditions embedded within institutions, given practices or customs. Thereby "the perceptual world of the child is influenced at every point by traces of the older generation" with which the child may or may not take issue. Children are surrounded increasingly by artefacts "imposed" on the child "as cult implements"[64]: an electric guitar, a keyboard with automated music, not to speak of other technical devices.

Can a human experience, however, really transcend these intensional features that inform his or her consciousness, or is it rather the case that with an increasingly technologically developed society, there is really no room for first-hand experiencing upon which a sense of *Divine Actuality* relies, thereby leading to a sense of *Divine Reality*, since so much of what was Divinely created has become recreated through human activity? Is such a possible mode of experiencing immune to decay or must it be transformed in some way? It would require further work to explain why Peirce's possible "aesthetic theism,"grounded as it is by cognitive speculation, is vulnerable to this charge, whereas a deeper sense of the aesthetic may transcend such difficulties.[65]

Consider, now, a much more serious difficulty: can a sense of the temporal lead to that of the eternal? Whitehead put it this way: "Any proof which commences with the consideration of the character of the actual world cannot rise above the actuality of this world." A case might be made for a divine *reality* regarded as an imminent presence "but not a God wholly

[63] Joseph Margolis defines the intensional as mind-dependent social constructs: "It designates any form or structure of meaning, significance, sense, symbolic or semiotic or rhetorical or similar function or role assigned to a suitable vehicle (a sentence or semaphore signal or artwork or action or custom or text – or thoughts, if thoughts may be singled out)." *Interpretation Radical But Not Unruly: The New Puzzle of the Arts and History* Berkeley: California UP 1995, pp. 13 & 48.

[64] W. Benjamin "Toys and Play" *Selected Writings Vol. 2 1927-1934* R. Livingstone (et. al.) (trs.) Camb. Mass.: Belknap Press, Harvard UP 1999 pp. 117-21, p. 118

[65] Cf. N.E. Boulting "Grounding the Notion of Ecological Responsibility" *Religious Experience and Ecological Responsibility* D.A. Crosby & C.D. Hardwick, New York: Peter Lang, 1996, pp. 119-42, sec. IV; "Edward Bullough's Aesthetics & Aestheticism: Features of Reality To Be Experienced" *URAM*, vol. 13, no. 3, September 1990, pp.55–85

transcendent."[66] With reference to "the character of the actual world" only "the factors disclosed in the world as experienced" can be discovered. In other words, an imminent God may be discovered "but not a God wholly transcendent."[67] Given the intensional elements in human consciousness such that "persisting sentiments, partly in the form of national traditions," serving to "mould each new generation"[68] constitute a given populace, it is not clear that such a sense of *Divine Reality* could be regarded as a true religious stance, unless grounded via a valid form of *Divine Existence*, as opposed to being merely a vehicle for ideological purposes. So, even if a sense of *Divine Necessary Existence* is required to ground a conception of *Divine Reality* or *Actuality*, the reverse does not follow necessarily, whether *Divine Existence* is to be established rationally or in some other way. Otherwise, without a conception of *Divine Necessary Existence*, any sense of *Divine Actuality* or *Reality* "so understood" would be "intellectually unfounded",[69] given what has been argued so far. Nonetheless Whitehead's stance can be confirmed within our presuppositions: *Divine Necessary Existence* understood conceptually "is prior to the physical," while, from our temporal perspective, the physical is prior to the conceptual. So it "is as true to say" that *Divine Actuality* or *Reality* transcends *Divine Necessary Existence* as it is true to say that the latter transcends that of *Divine Actuality* or *Reality*.[70] And by *Divine Necessary Existence* is meant what can be actualized somehow; "--- but that the actual how is never capturable in a concept."[71]

Divine Necessary Existence: Exsistence

So far, *Divine Actuality*, grasped by an individual, has been distinguished from *Divine Reality* realized through a social context, even if, following Peirce's move from his first Humble Argument to that of his second, that *Divine Reality* emerges from the former, grounding religious experience and authority through some social dimension. Now the issue of *Divine Necessary*

[66] A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* p. 69; "How can there be valid inference from a mere temporal fact to truth about eternal things? C. Hartshorne " *A Natural Theology for Our Time* pp. 3-4

[67] A.N. Whitehead *Religion in the Making* p. 69

[68] R.B. Cattell *Psychology and the Religious Quest* New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1938 pp. 63-5

[69] R. Attfield "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy" p. 4

[70] A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality (1929): Corrected Edition"* D.R. Griffin & D.W. Sherburne (eds.) New York: The Free Press (Collier Macmillan) 1979 p. 348

[71] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* p.84

Existence requires articulation, justified independently of any religious faith. Here Hartshorne sought to establish *Divine Necessary Existence* by emphasizing the modal version of Anselm's ontological argument: there necessarily exists an entity "than which nothing greater can be conceived."[72] So those claiming that God is a delusion rather than an illusion[73] need to consider this version of his argument seriously:

1) It is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist;
2) This is greater than one which can be conceived not to exist;
3) Now if this being can be conceived not to exist, it cannot be that "than which nothing greater can be conceived," for this being is one whose non-existence is impossible;
4) There is a Being "than which nothing greater can be conceived" and in order to be this Being, this Being cannot be conceived not to exist.

Divine Existence might be established in this way, with "greater" cast as "more perfect",[74] rendering the God of philosophy. *Divine necessary existence* may thereby be established by intellectual argument providing potential grounds for a sense of the **eternal**, which may relate to human temporality, whereas the two previous forms of access began with a sense of the temporal moving towards something transcendent. *Divine necessary existence* is thereby rendered as an abstract absolute. "The chief contribution of the ontological argument is to make explicit the logical status of the theistic question, its transcendence of observational falsification." Hartshorne here refers to Aristotle: "With eternal things, to be possible and to be are the same."[75] Just as possibility and infinity belong together to characterize *Divine necessary existence*, so actuality and finitude belong together[76] in characterizing *Divine Actuality* and/or *Divine Reality*. Put like that, however, *Divine Existence*, a philosophical conception of

[72] "What good, therefore, does the supreme Good lack, through which every good is?" St. Anselm *Proslogium, Monologium, An Appendix in Behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo* S.N. Deanne (tr.) (1903) La Salle, Ill: Open Crt. Pub. Co.. 1945 pp. 8 & 11

[73] An illusion does not tie to truth or falsity but with respect to a wish or need. A delusion refers to what can be shown to be false, for example that the earth is flat. cf. "Freud: Psychological Skepticism" *Philosophers Speak of God* C. Hartshorne & W.L. Reese Chicago UP 1953 pp. 468-485 p. 470

[74] Cf. C. Hartshorne *The Logic of Perfection* La Salle, Ill.: Open Court 1975

[75] C. Hartshorne "Response to Smith" *Existence and Actuality* pp. 109-112, p. 112

[76] C. Hartshorne *A Natural Theology for our Time* p.21

the Divine alone, "is too scanty for worship"[77] This is because the God of philosophy, *Divine existence*, interpreted as a necessary yet abstract aspect of the Divine, fails to include "the actual world and is not relative to it".[78] Such a characterization follows from what is meant by the term "eternity": a total absence of temporal relations and qualifying relations. This idea of eternity, what lies beyond the temporal, derives from Plato, as opposed to Aristotle's endless time or everlastingness.[79]

Problems for the Conception of Divine Existence

One problem has already been characterized. Hartshorne refers to it as "the Findlay paradoxes or dilemma." On the one hand, no merely contingent being is worth worship, while, on the other, "that a mere abstraction like 'all worshipful' could necessitate a concrete actuality is a logical absurdity".[80] So we have four possibilities for *Divine existence*: contingent non-existence, contingent existence, necessary existence (Hartshorne's and Anselm's stance), and necessary non-existence. Findlay, while granting the possibility of the necessity of divine *existence*, took the last option since, in the case of a given concept or some character, we have only an account of "what sort of thing it would be *if* it existed." Thereby it does not provide us with anything that can be said about the existence of that sort of necessary entity. Given the logical possibility of perfection, how does that provide grounds for divine *existence* cast as something to be worshipped?[81] Moreover, the second version of Anselm's argument can establish not only the possibility of a necessary *Divine Existence*, but also the idea of its logical impossibility, so that the postulate of theism must be seen as invalid logically, since the idea of such a necessary existent is absurd. So even if a contingently base empirical atheism "is ruled out on logical grounds",[82] we still have two possibilities: necessary existence or necessary non-existence.

This is an interesting result since it might be endorsed by Simone Weil; on the one hand the Divine exsists from an eternal standpoint yet, at the temporal level, non-existence has to be regarded as an option, implying that Divine

[77] R. Attfield "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy" p.4

[78] C. Hartshorne *A Natural Theology for our Time* p. 27

[79] H. A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of Spinoza* Vol 1, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1934 p.358ff.

[80] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* La Salle, Ill.: Open Court 1965 p.37

[81] J.N. Findlay "Reflections on Necessary Existence" *Process and Divinity* W.L. Reese & E. Freeman (eds.) La Salle, Ill: Open Court 1964, pp. 515-27, p. 521

[82] C. Hartshorne *The Logic of Perfection* p. 114

non-exsistence is a possibility. So, it could be said that we have two thoughts in opposition to each other, which for her meant holding onto both of them; hence her serious consideration of atheism. Findlay's case for the non-existent option arises from the fact that for common parlance, the word "existence" is applied basically to individuals or abstractions "thought of as quasi-individuals".[83] As for the term "necessity," in ordinary propositional language it is tied simply to our use of words, language's arbitrary conventions, unless we are referring to what factually has occurred and cannot be changed or to the validity of some metaphysical thesis such as determinism or fatalism. So to speak of *Divine existence* or exsistence as necessary could only be regarded as valid "if we had made up our minds to speak theistically" in advance of speculation, as it were, "*whatever the empirical circumstances turn out to be*".[84] Otherwise it is to assume merely that certain phrases such as "inconceivable as non-existent" or "greatest conceivable" can themselves be thought of as consistently conceivable.[85] What thereby lacks rational content, since it undoes or goes beyond the basic categories or our thinking, must be illogical on the basis of those categories.

Let us consider again the issue triggering this inquiry: how can an abstraction cast as *Divine existence* imply anything concrete or actual? We are left with the conclusion that God's existence – exsistence – is not itself an actuality and is as abstract as the concept from which it is deduced through the intellect. It may make no difference to the lives we lead, except that our awareness of the possibility of it making a difference could make a difference to us. It is this standpoint that Findlay might be regarded as developing, but for the moment let us remain with Hartshorne's response to this line of argument. What makes the significant difference is just what Anselm's argument fails to provide: God's particular actuality. Hence the rationale for Hartshorne's position: a distinction between the abstractness of the necessity for *Divine existence* and the contingent nature of *Divine Actuality*[86] for the individual or *Reality* cast socially, a distinction presupposed within this chapter. In regard to the charge that we have too scanty a notion of *Divine necessary exsistence* available for worship, it is his conception of the contingent nature of either *Divine Actuality* or *Reality* that is presupposed for spiritual or religious purposes.

[83] J.N. Findlay "Reflections on Necessary Existence" p. 518

[84] J. N. Findlay "Can God's Existence be Disproved?" (1948) *Language, Mind and Value* New York: Routledge 2017, pp. 96 -105, p. 102

[85] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* p.301

[86] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* p.259

As to the use of ordinary language, it is true that talk about Divine *existence* cannot be captured within our usual categories of thought. Rather, it must be seen as an exception to the rules governing them: "Deity must itself be a sort of category, and the supreme category".[87] Indeed, our categories of thought may not be as expansive as our categories of possible experience. And, in this latter context, some words of Bernard Loomer may not be inappropriate. First of all, it may be a mistake to regard the notion of the categories exercised in our thinking as somehow limited since even philosophic categories "are designative of abstractions because philosophy does not consist of an exhaustive inventory of all realized structures." Exemplified in the most all-embracing and general aspects of experience, they "are 'necessary' in the sense that no experience is possible without their exemplification or ingression because all experiences testify to their presence".[88] But now we face the issue as to whether the exceptional category *Divine necessary existence*, if that is how it is to be regarded, is required. Hartshorne's response is to claim that this question requires at least two responses since two categories are required: the contingent nature of *Divine actuality* or *reality* and *Divine necessary existence*. To reject both implies rejecting theism as such, not just the second version of Anselm's argument. That is why he presents his dual aspect of divinity: while the essence or individuality of *Divine existence* "must be thought of as necessary, how the essence is actualized in actual states of experience" would have to be regarded as contingent since the non-abstract or actual must be contingent.[89]

Nonetheless, say the *Divine* exists necessarily, why is it legitimate, as Milton Martin asked originally, to say that divinity is actualized? Whitehead's reply would be in terms of claiming that *Divine* power "--- is the worship He inspires."[90] More formally stated, the reply must be that existence "--- is merely being *somehow*, or *in something*, actualized, concretely instantiated"[91] just as the existence of the present writer is actualized somehow – in this case in dealing with Hartshorne's reply – though that present writer is not a necessary existent; his existence happens to be contingent.

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[87] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* p.77

[88] B.N. Loomer "Whitehead's Method of Empirical Analysis" *Process Theology* E.H. Cousins (ed.) New York: Newman Press 1971, pp. 67-82, p. 68

[89] C. Hartshorne *Anselm's Discovery* pp. 77 & 68

[90] "That religion is strong when in its ritual and its modes of thought evokes an apprehension of the commanding vision." A.N. Whitehead *Science and the Modern World* pp. 268-9

[91] C. Hartshorne "A Reply to My Critics" *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* L.E. Hahn (ed.) La Salle, Illinois: Open Crt. 1991, pp. 569-731, p.717