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A STUDY INTO AND A COMPARISON OF THEISTIC FINITISM AND PANENTHEISM

By

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

Cincinnati

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Referee, Dr. Alvin J. Reines

For my wife

Marsha

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Digest

This study into and comparison of theistic finitism and panentheism commences with clear and complete definitions of these terms, an overview of the history of these theologies, and a discussion of the major issues with which they are concerned. Theistic finitism is defined as the view that the power of the omnibenevolent and omniscient God is limited by conditions which his will neither created nor approves. Panentheism is the notion that all things are in God without exhausting the infinity of the divine nature. The central issues involved in such a study include the problem of evil, the concepts of theodicy and cosmogony, and the notions of God's power and knowledge. In order to further illumine these points of contention, the insights of Maimonides and Gersonides (neither of whom ascribed to theistic finitism or panentheism) into the issues pertinent to this study are presented. Maimonides' affirmation that the omnipotence of God does not include the impossible, and Gersonides' discussion of omniscience help place these key themes of our study into sharp focus and provide a solid basis for a detailed analysis of theistic finitism and panentheism.

These theologies are then expounded through a comprehensive study of three of their eminent proponents: Edgar S. Brightman, Charles Hartshorne, and Martin Buber. In the case of each theologian, we have analyzed his epistemology, concept of God, demonstration of God's existence, and significant ramifications of the theology. Each chapter concludes

with a critique of the thinker.

Brightman, basing himself upon the method of radical empiricism and his philosophy of personalism advocates theistic finitism as a solution to the alleged problem of surd evil. We maintain that his empirical theology fails to meet his own standard of "coherence." Hartshorne, a rationalist, advocates a panentheism in which God is conceived as dipolar, both necessarily existent and contingently surrelative. It is argued that Hartshorne's modal version of the ontological argument succeeds, and that it may be defended against both Kantian and modern criticisms. In addition, Hartshorne holds that God's supreme power is not a monopolistic wielding of all the power there is, but an ideal influence over other, lesser powers. We conclude that the power of deity in panentheism is limited in comparison with theistic absolutism's notion of omnipotence. Martin Buber, who eschewed philosophical theology, may nevertheless be interpreted to have espoused many of the central theses of panentheism.

Included among the conclusions of this study are:
--Theistic finitism and panentheism are basically similar in their joint affirmation that the power of God is limited by conditions which he did not create. We hold, moreover, that panentheism may, with some modest qualification, be classified as one type of theistic finitism, the latter constituting the more general theological category.

--Hartshornian panentheism is correct in its criticism of empirically based theologies (such as Brightman's theistic finitism), arguing that God's existence is not a question of fact or observation (i.e. "a state of affairs") but rather of meaning or logic, viz., the "logic of perfection."

PREFACE

It is our purpose in this thesis to analyze and compare theistic finitism and panentheism in a systematic fashion through a critical study of their most eminent proponents. Such a study, it is hoped, will aid the reader in gaining an understanding of these theologies whose influence extends not only to Reform Judaism, but to the entire liberal religious world as well.[1] Accordingly, our critique will focus in on three of the "founders": Edgar S. Brightman (theistic finitism), Charles Hartshorne, and Martin Buber (panentheism). In the case of each thinker, his theology will be presented in the context of his basic philosophic stance, with special attention directed to his epistemology, concept of God, demonstration of God's existence, and significant ramifications of his theology. Each of these chapters will conclude with a critique of the thinker's God concept. In order to properly introduce these theologians, we offer two chapters. The first will give complete and clear definitions of theistic finitism and panentheism, offer historical surveys of these theologies, and delineate the major issues at stake. The second will examine the positions of Maimonides and Gersonides in the hope of further clarifying the nature of the issues with which theistic finitism and panentheism are concerned. The entire study will conclude with a summary comparison of these theologies, with special reference to the

specific theologians considered in this thesis.

It is my profound hope that this study will, in whatever small measure, contribute to the clarity of our theological discourse.

* * * * * * *

My special debt is to Dr. Alvin Reines, whose sagacious advice and clarity of thought have been a constant inspiration. As my advisor, he has willingly given of his time for discussion and clarification of the issues dealt with in this study. For his constant encouragement throughout this venture, I am deeply grateful.

Chapter I

Theistic Finitism and Panentheism: Definitions, Historical Surveys, and Major Issues

Our study commences with detailed definitions of theistic finitism and panentheism, brief histories of these theologies, and a discussion of the major issues to be dealt with in this thesis.

Definition of Theistic Finitism

A prerequisite for the proper understanding of theistic finitism is a thorough knowledge of theistic absolutism, and its attempts to deal adequately with the problem of evil. This is so, for theistic absolutism is the challenge to which theistic finitism is the response.

Theistic absolutism is the view that God is:

> ...a transcendent, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent person who is directly concerned with the individual and collective welfare of man. This concern of God's is supposedly expressed by a providence which guides and controls the affairs of man both through ordinary (natural) and extraordinary (miraculous) causation.1

The central point of divergence between theistic absolutism and theistic finitism occurs over the idea of the divine power. The theistic absolutist affirms the omnipotence of deity and posits that God faces no conditions within the divine experience which his omnibenevolent will did not create

or approve. It is also to be noted that the attribute of omnipotence is a necessary condition for the exercise of extraordinary or miraculous providence over man, which is intrinsic to theistic absolutism.

The theistic finitist, however, advocates quite a different view of the divine power:

> Theistic finitism is the opposing view, namely, that the will of God does face conditions within divine experience which that will neither created nor approves.[2]

In contrast to theistic finitism, theistic absolutism describes a deity who is absolutely complete, self-sufficient, and with a zero of potentiality-- an actus purus of eternal goodness, whose will faces no conditions which it did not create or approve. Basing itself upon the principle in deo nulla est potentialitas,[3] it would be impossible in theistic absolutism for the will of God to confront any conditions in which that will (being perfect) was not already perfectly and eternally fulfilled.

The contrast between theistic finitism and theistic absolutism is made particularly clear when we pause to reflect upon the profundity of theistic absolutism and its attempts to deal with the problem of evil. Indeed, it is only in an overview of this problem that the full crisis of theistic absolutism (in the opinion of the theistic finitist, at least) is revealed. Only in light of the challenge can

the response be understood.

To begin with, several categories of evil may be distinguished:

1. Moral evil: the evil originated by human beings.
2. Non-moral evil:
   a. Natural evil: disease, tornado, earthquake, and so on.
   b. Metaphysical evil: the finitude, contingency, and hence imperfection of all created things.

The challenge of evil to theistic absolutism, formulated as a dilemma, may be stated thusly: If God is all-powerful, he must be able to prevent evil. If he is all-good, he must want to prevent evil. But, evil exists. Therefore, God is either not all-powerful or not all-good.

The theistic absolutist responds to this challenge with a theodicy (theos, "God"; dike, "justice") - an attempt to reconcile the unlimited goodness of an all-powerful God with the reality of evil. The dominant motif of such theodicies is the attempt to demonstrate that all evil is ultimately expressible in terms of good. Of the two categories of evil delineated above, non-moral evil is generally ascribed to the will of God and declared to be ultimately good (inasmuch as it is the product of a will that is always good). As for moral evil, while no one claims that it is intrinsically good, it is held that its presence in the universe is justi-

fied because without the possibility of evil there would be no possibility of good will. This "free-will defense" claims that it is contradictory to suppose that God could create the wills of free beings without creating at the same time all the conditions of their willing.[4]

It will not be our purpose to analyze here all the arguments pro and con regarding the type of theodicy offered above.[5] The crucial factor for theistic absolutism is that in order for any theodicy it proposes to succeed, it must deny the existence of an evil that, no matter what type of operations are performed on it, is not expressible in terms of good. Such an evil, which is inherently and irreducibly evil and contains within itself no principle of development or improvement has been termed "the dysteleological surd."[6] Thus the dilemma of theistic absolutism may be reformulated: "If a dysteleological surd exists, then theistic absolutism is false."

The critic argues that the denial on the part of theistic absolutism that any evil is a surd entails several ramifications which are highly problematic. Theistic absolutism contends that it is only due to our ignorance (i.e., the incommensurability of human and divine knowledge) that we suppose a given evil to be a dysteleological surd; thus the argument that one must have faith that from the standpoint of the perfect divine knowledge, such an evil is actu-

ally a good. Yet, what this amounts to is an appeal to ignorance that involves a contradiction: if theistic absolutism affirms human ignorance, by what knowledge does it assert that evils are actually goods? Human ignorance must lead either to an agnosticism on the subject or to further investigation. Further investigation will always have to be based upon the evidence that is available, not on data of which we are totally ignorant.

Moreover, inasmuch as theistic absolutism posits that the omnipotent will of God confronts no conditions it did not create, surd evils rest in God. Since God, according to theistic absolutism, is omnibenevolent, the surd evils are actually goods. The critic responds that such a view renders good and evil indistinguishable, and with such a lack of ethical differentiation, the incentive for moral endeavor is destroyed. For the theistic finitist, the desire of theistic absolutism to show that no evil is a surd results not only in an appeal to ignorance which undermines the very epistemological base of theistic absolutism but also in a view of evil as ultimately good which is incoherent with experience and renders any ethics ludicrous.

Such then is the criticism waged by the theistic finitist against theistic absolutism. How does the theistic finitist seek to remedy this difficult situation?

Basically, theistic finitism attempts to solve this

difficulty in its God concept by shifting from absolute to finite power. But even here we must be careful in making snap judgements. Just what, for example, does "absolute power" mean in theistic absolutism? To be sure, omnipotence means that God can do anything that is logically conceivable. Thus miracles, which we might hold to be violations of "natural law" are certainly not ruled out on this view, for there is nothing that logically precludes their coherent conceivability. On the other hand, theistic absolutists are quick to point out that omnipotence does not mean the ability to do things which, according to the canons of logic, are inherently impossible and therefore inconceivable. As St. Thomas wrote, "Voluntas Dei non potest esse eorum quae secundum se sunt impossibilia".[7] Does this outlook constitute a limitation upon the will of God? The theistic absolutist would reply, "by no means," for in relation to impossibles that cannot be, there can be no will of God. Or, put differently, nothing in God is in relation to that which is not, nor can conceivably be, a thing. Thus, the "inability" of God to do the logically impossible reduces to the inability to do nothing!

Nor, claims the theistic absolutist, should any self-limitation on God's part be construed as a compromise of omnipotence:

> As to (divine self-limitation), it is clear

> that if God be in any sense a good will, he is a self-limited will. The will to be good, the will to create other free persons, and the will to entertain an eternal purpose of any specific kind are all instances of self-limitation. But such self-limitation is perfectly consistent with the principle of absolutism, for this is an expression of God's all-powerful will. A limitation would constitute God as finite only if it were not a product of his will.[8] (emphasis mine)

The issue of "limitation" in theistic absolutism aside, it is nonetheless true that theistic finitism proposes a far more radical surgery on the notion of divine power:

> A theistic finitist is one who holds that the eternal will of God faces given conditions which that will did not create, whether those conditions are ultimately within the personality of God or external to it. If those conditions are external to the divine personality, the position is a kind of dualism (or dualistic personalism); if they are all within (the) divine personality, then the position is a variety of idealistic personalism. All theistic finitists agree that there is something in the universe not created by God and not a result of voluntary divine self-limitation, which God finds as either obstacle or instrument to his will.[9] (emphasis mine)

This "something in the universe," this "given" of reality, is the crux of the matter. It is that aspect of reality which coherently accounts for surd evil; it is the only 'thing' against which the divine power is powerless. It is this severe limitation on God's power that captures the imagination of the theistic finitist.

To be sure, the definition of theistic finitism given

here merely clarifies the crisis in theistic absolutism and its proposed remedy in theistic finitism. Yet such a "remedy" involves a host of problems and raises significant questions, not the least of which is: what is the nature of the "given," and how do we account for it coherently? Accordingly, we shall offer in a latter chapter a detailed critique of E.S. Brightman, the eminent proponent of theistic finitism, in the hope that such a discussion will illuminate the many issues in this fascinating theology.

Historical Survey of Theistic Finitism

In order to attain a historical perspective on this issue, we offer the following brief survey of theistic finitism: Plato. Theistic finitists frequently refer to Plato as the father of their theology. Consider the following from the Republic:

> -And is he (God) not truly good? And must he not be represented as such?
> -Certainly.
> -And no good thing is hurtful?
> -No, indeed.
> -And that which is not hurtful hurts not?
> -Certainly not.
> -And that which hurts not does no evil?
> -No.
> -And can that which does no evil be a cause of evil?
> -Impossible.

> -And the good is advantageous?
>
> -Yes.
>
> -And therefore the cause of well-being?
>
> -Yes.
>
> -It follows therefore that the good is not the cause of all things, but of the good only?
>
> -Assuredly.
>
> -Then God, if he be good, is not the author of all things, as the many assert, but he is the cause of a few things only, and not of most things that occur to men. For few are the goods of human life, and many are the evils, and the good is to be attributed to God alone; of the evils the causes are to be sought elsewhere, and not in him.[10]

To be sure, the Platonic God is good (Laws X), and the description of the Form of the Good have led some to identify it with God. However, the representations of deity in the Phaedrus and Timaeus are personal, and the Good is viewed as external to God. God is the Demiourgos, the Artisan of the universe who organizes a cosmos out of the given chaotic matter of the "receptacle," ordering it such that, "so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil";[11] i.e., in the best possible way in accordance with the eternal forms (paradeigma). Plato is therefore an exponent of the idea of a finite God, and his view is a metaphysical dualism:

> Plato's---God is a will for good, not infinite but finite, limited on the one hand by rational principles of order and control (Philebus) and on the other by "discordant and disorderly motion" (Timaeus) which he finds in existence. All human life is an "undying battle," requiring "wondrous watchfulness," in which gods and daemons give us aid (Laws, 906a). God's will, in this battle, confronts limits of reason and limits set by the uncreated discordant and disorderly...aspects of being.[12]

Dualists and Gnostics. Marcion (85-159 A.D.) and Mani (215-276 A.D.) may also be classified as theistic finitists. They were both gnostics and dualists, viewing existence as a war between matter and spirit. Marcion concluded that the power for good in the world must be finite and posited that the God of the Hebrew Bible (like a Demiurge) forms the world out of satanic matter. This "given," outside of the loving God, limits his power to do the good. For Mani also:

> ...the main point is that God is not the creator of matter, but rather its enemy; the good God is limited by conditions external and abhorent to him. The human body is a prison for soul and light and is created by the devil. It is the task of God to free the soul from this prison.[13]

John Stuart Mill. (1806-1873) In Mill's Three Essays on Religion (posthumously published in 1874) we read:

> There is a large balance of probability in favor of creation by intelligence...(However) there is evidence against the omnipotence of the Designer...Therefore the author of the kosmos worked under limitations and was obliged to adapt himself to conditions independent of his will.[14]

Modern Directions. The modern period has witnessed the widespread growth of theistic finitist influences. A partial list would include: F.C.S. Schiller, F.H. Bradley, H.G. Wells, Henri Bergson, and W.P. Montague. That many thinkers generally classified as panentheists, such as Montague, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne, are also included among the standard lists of theistic finitists is not surprising, as the re-

mainder of this chapter will demonstrate.

Definition of Panentheism

Panentheism (Gr παν, all; ἐν, in; θεος, God) is the view that all things are in God without exhausting the infinity of the divine nature; i.e., all things are within the being of God, who yet is not merely the whole of actual things.

How might we understand this assertion? We may begin by explicating the substantive differences of panentheism from classical theism and pantheism. While this would only constitute an understanding by negation, it is a first step towards a positive comprehension of panentheism. Moreover, this procedure is justified by the fact that historically, the increased influence of panenthism in the modern world may be seen as part of a general theological reaction to the alleged deficiencies in both classical theism and pantheism.

An intellectually profitable model for our analysis is to view the entirety of metaphysical categories as polar opposites. Thus at one pole we have the category "absolute," and at the other pole the category "relative". The same may be done with all the other pairs, e.g.: being-becoming; actual-potential; spiritual-corporeal; simple-complex; cause-effect; necessary-contingent, and so on with all the categories of metaphysical inquiry. Given this model, we then can readily understand the meanings given to the term "God"

in classical theism and pantheism. Classical theism viewed these polar categories as invidious contraries and affirmed only the first of God, while viewing the world as defined by the latter category. Thus on this view God is cause alone and never effect. He is an actus purus totally without potentiality while the world is in fact constituted of potentiality (or "matter"). God is simple, while the world is complex. Above all, God is the exemplification par excellence of permanent necessary Being, while the world is contingent and given to change and becoming.

Interestingly, the very same attitude toward the categories as being invidious contraries was advocated in pantheism, with the exception that the remaining non-divine categories were dealt with in a different manner. In classical theism such categories as contingency, potentiality, and becoming were considered real enough, albeit as somehow "outside God, in no way constituative of his reality."[15] Pantheism, on the other hand, affirmed that the totality of actual being, just as it stands, is simply God. There is a total denial of the divine transcendence, as God is completely bound by actuality, and actuality is completely bound by God. In this type of pantheism, the classic example being the theology of Spinoza, neither God nor anything else has an identity distinguishable from that of other things--all is simply one and one is simply all. Yet, if "all is God,"

what are we to do with the common application to the "all" of such categories as complexity, contingency, potentiality, and becoming? Since God is conceived by their opposites (necessity, actuality, etc.) such categories as contingency, complexity, and becoming express either human ignorance or illusion. Thus common to many Vedantic systems is the notion of maya, signifying human illusion and the supposition that there is but one real, Brahman-atman, while the phenomenal world has no real existence.

This theological methodology of taking each pair of ultimate contraries and deciding in each case which member is good and therefore deserving of modifying the divine nature (while totally denying the contrasting term to deity) has been called by Hartshorne "the principle of monopolarity."[16] Hartshorne comments:

> ...Common to theism and pantheism is the doctrine of the invidious nature of categorical contrasts. One pole of each contrary is regarded as more excellent than the other, so that the supremely excellent being cannot be described by the other and inferior pole... This may be called the "monopolar" conception of deity--and the principle involved, that of "monopolarity".[17]

For the panentheist, the central dilemma in both classical theism and pantheism is the monopolaristic conception of deity. Not the least troublesome ramification of such a conception is summarized thus:

> Either there is something outside of deity, so that the total real is deity-and-something-else, a whole of which deity is merely one constituent; or else the allegedly inferior pole of each categorical contrast is an illusory conception. Theism takes one horn of the dilemma; pantheism, the other. The dilemma, however, is artificial; for it is produced by the assumption that the highest form of reality is to be indicated by separating or purifying one pole of the ultimate contrasts from the other pole.[18]

Panentheism seeks to correct this deficiency of monopolarity (entailing as it does the anomaly of God being merely a part of a greater whole) by basing itself upon a principle of polarity which holds that contraries may both be true without one excluding the other. Such a metaphysics has been called "dipolar."[19]

What might this mean? Certainly, such a shift constitutes a considerable break from classical, Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. For in the Aristotelian system, both contraries cannot be true, although both can be false. Or again, when a middle position is accepted as true, contraries become false (according to the law of opposition). Panentheists depart from this classical scheme and view one of a pair of contraries as always implying the possiblity of the other. This illustrates what Morris Cohen has spoken of as the law of polarity, viz., that ultimate contraries taken conceptually are correlative and mutually interdependent:

> Opposites such as immediacy and mediation, unity and plurality, the fixed and the flux, substance and function, ideal and real, ac-

> tual and possible, etc., like the north (positive) and south (negative) poles of a magnet, all involve each other when applied to any significant entity.[20]

There is, in such a "neo-classical" metaphysics, a remarkable economy, for principles that have been conceived as contraries are brought into harmony, while apparent incompatibility is reduced to contrast within unity. That all-embracing unity, for the panentheist, is God.

The law of polarity affirms that in the ordinary case, one member of each pair is inexorably entangled with the other member. Yet theological systems basing themselves on classical metaphysics have consistently posited a God concept that renders deity the great exception to this law. God was thought to illustrate the superior pole of basic conceptions in their "purity," free from all mixture with the contrasting conceptions.

The applicability of the law of polarity to the theological case is readily apparent. Upon analysis, so contends the panentheist, the so-called "superior pole" looses all meaning when it is divorced from its allegedly invidious contrary:

> It is at best problematic...whether "unity," for example, means anything, save as either a member or an integration of a plurality; whether "being" can conceivably be more of less than a factor in the becoming of experience and its objects, from which becoming we must have abstracted it; whether necessity is anything merely in its own terms

> rather than as a common element of all possibilities (that which would be absent in no possible case); whether activity and passivity are not likewise essentially correlative, passivity being the way in which an individual's activity takes account of, renders itself appropriate to, the activities of others; and whether actuality is not essentially the realization of potency and the ground of potentiality for further actualization, the implication being that an actuality so rich and complete that nothing further was possible would be a contradiction in terms.[21]

Panentheism seeks to apply the principle of dipolarity to God and thus make its theology consistent with a metaphysics based upon the law of polarity. Therefore, in the case of deity, both poles of each pair must be equally affirmed.

Accordingly, two main aspects are posited in the essence of God - to one of which the supreme case of a category, such as actuality applies, and to the other of which its contrasting category, e.g. potentiality, applies (again, only in a supreme fashion). According to this dipolar view of deity:

> God will, like other individuals, but as a supreme case or supercase, have an individual essence, and he will have accidents as well, so that what is "in him" need not, for all that, be in his essence. To have accidents, some accidents or other, will be a requirement of the essence, by virtue of the pole of contingency, relativity, passivity; but the particular accidents which God has will be strictly outside his essence. "Essence" here means "the individual in abstraction from all in him that is accidental, or without which he would still be himself."[22]

To begin to see what it means to apply both members of each pair in a categorically supreme fashion to God, we may

consider the ramifications of such a theology for the notions of divine dependence, perfection, and change. Concerning the application of both poles to God, Hartshorne comments:

> If there may be a cause of which all else is effect, why not an effect of which all else is cause, a unitary or integral resultant not just of some but of all the productive factors in reality? And, again, if we can speak of an actuality which includes or surpasses all actuality, why not also of a potentiality which embraces all potentiality? A power-to-become-actual which as such includes or surpasses all such powers.[23]

Indeed, if to be an effect of a given cause is in some sense to be dependent upon that cause, then one important aspect of panentheism is its surrelativistic view of deity, positing a real convertible relation of dependence between God and the world: not only is the world dependent upon God, but God is dependent upon the world. Apparently, panentheism will then involve a notion of causality that includes a convertible relation of dependence between cause and effect, so that a cause depends upon its effects and effects upon their cause.

Yet, if God is in some guise dependent on the world (which is within him), does this not constitute a limitation upon any omnipotence of deity? At any rate, the notions of dependence and omnipotence seem mutually exclusive. Or again, does the divine dependence here entail a denial of the free act in time of creation ex nihilo, and if so, might not the world in panentheism be construed as a given that deity con-

fronts as an aspect of himself and fashions as he interacts with it? Finally, what do these notions of the divine dependence, power, and creativity tell us about panentheism's proposed solution to the problem of evil? It is our hope in this study to detail and critically analyze the answers of the panentheist to these questions.

Or again, consider the notion of divine perfection in such a system. For classical theism, the notion of God's perfection meant (at least) that God was categorically supreme in such a fashion that no non-divine being could possibly excell him. So far as this goes, the panentheist has no quarrel with the classical theist. Yet, the panentheist raises the fascinating question: Could God be excelled by himself in another state? Panentheism shows us that there is an ambiguity in the concept "unsurpassable."[24] A thing may be surpassable by another, or it may surpass itself. Classical theism conceived of God as surpassable neither by another nor by himself, i.e. as simply unsurpassable. Panentheism, however, claims that God, while surely unsurpassable by any other, must himself be self-surpassing, for no other can rival him only if he continuously incorporates each new actualization into himself.[25] God's perfection therefore consists in his incomparable inclusion of any given state of the world--which means that his manner of self-surpassing is likewise incomparable.

Moreover, inasmuch as God includes all reality within his being, he knows it perfectly, for (according to the canons of neo-classicl metaphysics) the known is contained in the knower.[26] Thus omniscience in panentheism is a function of the divine all-inclusiveness. Yet, here too panentheism goes off in its novel way. Whereas the classical theist conceived of God as transcendent of time and knowing all future events as actualized in an "eternal now," the panentheist claims that God's omniscience consists not in knowing future potentialities as actualized (this is, he claims, ignorance!) but rather in perfectly knowing the actual as actual and the potential as potential. This makes sense on the dipolar view, for deity has a temporal as well as an eternal aspect; the former being the actual contingent states of deity (the world as it is now actualized and all its potentialities) and the latter consisting in the necessity of the divine existence per se, without specifying what the particular, temporal, contingent states of God are to be. Thus for the panentheist, the future is quite real for God, consisting only of infinite possibility (by definition infinite). Whatever potentials are actualized then determines what the next concrete contingent state of deity will be.

This entire view of God's temporal aspect and the nature of his omniscience comes to fruition in the panentheistic notion of God's perfection as "modal coincidence."[27] I.e.

since God's essence is defined by both members of the pairs, God's actuality is coincident with actuality as such and God's potentiality is coincident with potentiality as such (his exemplification of the pairs being the supremely excellent or super-case). Thus the divine omniscience knows the past perfectly, but knows the future only in terms of what it might conceivably be, i.e., as potentials that might be actualized. Thus, far from being the Thomistic actus purus, God as the conserver of all value in the universe is also eminently passive, i.e., eminently sensitive and relative to all. There is a divine life-history to which non-divine beings can make considerable contributions in terms of their actualization of potentialities in existence. Thus panentheism, unlike classical theism, posits that God is enriched by the world which he embraces and knows.

If God is enriched does he then change? And if so, is the idea of change compatible with that of the Supreme Being? The classical theist would charge that in such a system God does indeed change. (And here the panentheist would concur). But the classical theist would further claim that if a perfect being changes, it can only be a change for the worse, and thus be incompatible with perfection. But this charge, retorts the panentheist, merely begs the question of perfection. The classical notion of divine perfection as an absolutely unsurpassable maximum, claims the panentheist, is

meaningless in the same sense as "greatest possible number." For again, on the dipolar view, both actuality and potentiality must apply in a supreme fashion to God. The true clue for understanding precisely what is meant by the phrase "God changes" is found in the application to God of the pair necessity-contingency. The panentheist view requires the distinction between existential necessity (note the panentheist's interest in the ontological argument)[28] and actual contingency, two logical levels within God himself, the one abstract, the other concrete. Thus the panentheist claims:

> To admit change in God need not mean renouncing his perogative of existing necessarily....By categorically superior we mean such that no other can rival it, thus leaving open the door to self-excelling. Through such self-excelling, the most excellent being changes, not into a more excellent being, but into a more excellent state of the same being. God acquires, say, some new quality of enjoyment. He has not changed from "himself" into another person, another individual, any more than I do when I engage in a new conversation.[29]

In sum, the concept of God in panentheism is that of the supremely excellent being, who in embracing and knowing the world is the self-surpassing surpasser of all others.[30]

Historical Survey of Panentheism

The earliest use of the term panentheism has been traced back to Karl C. F. Krause (1781-1832). He seems to have coined the term in order to distinguish his theology from various

forms of pantheism and emanationism. Inasmuch, however, as the term came to be identified with those who hold to a dipolar view of God as including as well as transcending the world, it is often applied to earlier theologies with similar tendencies:

Plato. Some scholars[31] detect in Plato a quasi or proto panentheism which advocates the dipolarity of God. Yet even those who claim such a view for Plato contend that it is presented as an allegory or myth in the Timaeus. Whether the pure being of the forms and the supreme becoming or mobility (or "self-motion") of the soul are to be seen as an essential dualism in which case each member of the contrasts applies in a categorically supreme fashion, or whether one deity is to be regarded as embodying both members in dipolar fashion, is still subject to debate. Be this as it may, there are, albeit in esoteric form, hints that Plato did hold to a dipolar view of ultimate reality.

Ramanuja. (1017-1137) Although often classified as a classical pantheist, Ramanuja does show signs of panentheistic insights. He replaced the strict impersonalism of Hindu pantheism with a personalistic concept of Brahman as cause of all reality and held that the universe forms the body of Brahma.

F. Schelling (1775-1854) Schelling described the Absolute as the identity of all differences and contended that God can only be expressed in pairs, such as "eternity and time."[32] Schelling's God is in process of becoming, from which we ab-

stract any Being in deity. Though often obscure, he does advocate a dipolar view of reality. Nevertheless, Schelling appears to lapse into pantheism, claiming that God will simply "be" (thus denying the dipolar necessity for becoming) when the Absolute has fully revealed itself.[33]

Gustav Theodor Fechner. (1801-1887) Fechner, the father of experimental psychology and a panpsychist, has suffered from much neglect, even though his contributions to philosophical theology are profound. He held to a dipolar metaphysics and conceived of the universe as an organism imbued with a consciousness of itself, and being the body of God. For Fechner, God's perfection does not consist in a static completeness (an actus purus) but in unlimited progress. His is a model of worldly diversity unified within God. Of especial interest to panentheists is Fechner's retort that development in God does not entail defect in deity.[34]

A.N. Whitehead. (1861-1947) Whitehead's starting point was "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[35] Whitehead's metaphysics and theology therefore consistently employ the law of polarity. In Whitehead's system, God's creative life is an organic whole existing as an open possibility, such that deity is ever being enriched by the world which He embraces without changing his essential nature. This is accomplished through the dipolar view of God in which God has two poles of his essence. The first is termed

the "primordial aspect of God." It is the home of the eternal forms, infinite and unconditioned. However, unlike the God of classical theism, this is only the abstract essence of God and is not "eminent in actuality." It is, rather, "deficient in actuality."[36] The second aspect of God is called the "consequent." It is conditioned by the creative advance of the world, and thus temporal and concrete. Thus God is indeed the chief exemplification of the categories of the system, in that his actuality is the sympathetic union of all actualities and his potentiality is coincident with possibility as such. Becoming within God is then the process of creative advance from possibilities to determinate occasions or actualities.[37]

This survey brings us up to the 20th century. In recent generations, panentheism and its dipolar view of God has enjoyed a profound influence upon theologians. In latter chapters of this study we shall focus our attention upon two thinkers whose panentheism is expressed in diverse manners. The first will be Charles Hartshorne, who has done most to give panentheism logical clarity and metaphysically formal expression. The second is Martin Buber who, shunning the rigors of philosophical theology, is yet a significant phenomenologist of the religious life, given his panentheistic standpoint.

The Major Issues Involved

We recall that theistic finitism is built upon two

major stances: (1) The notion that the will of God faces conditions which he neither creates nor approves and (2) The belief that these conditions constitute a limitation on the divine power. We also noted that different theologies may be placed under this category, the major issue of differentiation being: Are these conditions external to God or something within his own eternal experience?

Given this definition of theistic finitism, it appears as though panentheism is in fact one type of theistic finitism. We pointed out that panentheism bases itself upon a dipolar metaphysics and affirms that the world is within God, without exhausting the infinity of the divine nature. At first glance, there seems to be a correlation between the "conditions" (or "given") of theistic finitism and the "world" as it functions in panentheism. However, we must stress the fact that the dipolar standpoint of panentheism would strictly exclude any dualism, affirming as it does that God is the 'all' of which the world is but a part. Theistic finitism, defined broadly as above, would however allow in its ranks dualistic theologies which posit the "given conditions" as wholly external to God. Thus: Panentheism is a type of theistic finitism, but not all theistic finitists are panentheists. We may then conclude that the major issues to be confronted and discussed in this study would be common to both theistic finitism and panentheism, viz.:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between
   a. God and the world (in panentheism)
   b. God and the "given conditions" (in theistic finitism)

   Does God in any sense 'create' the world/given, and if not, how do we coherently account for it?

2. What is the position in these theologies on the nature and extent of God's power? How does this stance bear on the theology's proposed solution to the problem of evil?

3. Can the charge of dualism be brought against any of these theologies?

4. What are the other major ramifications of each theology to be considered? (E.g., are miracles possible?; is there a notion of an after-life in these theologies?, etc.)

In pursuit of answers to these (and other) questions, we shall analyze and critique in this study the thought of three theologians: E.S. Brightman, Charles Hartshorne, and Martin Buber. In commenting upon these proponents of theistic finitism and panentheism our methodology shall be as follows: (A) His epistemology (inasmuch as the question of epistemology is logically prior to establishing a reality claim); (B) His concept of God; (C) His demonstration of the existence of God (so defined); (D) Significant ramifications of his theology

(where we shall focus our attention on the four questions noted above); (E) A critique of the theology, seeking to determine its internal consistency.

In our study of these thinkers, we shall also attempt to lay the ground work for determining the extent to which panentheism is a type of theistic finitism, and what sorts of theistic finitisms could not qualify as panentheism. What, if any, special contributions has panentheism to make to the quest of all theistic finitism--an intelligible concept of God and a consistent and coherent account of evil in the world?

Before, however, we engage in the analysis of these theologies, we will digress slightly to examine the insights of two monumental representatives of the Jewish mediaeval philosophic tradition (Maimonides and Gersonides) into the central issues relevant to our analysis of theistic finitism and panentheism. It is our expectation that these thinkers will further illumine the nature of the problems with which our study is concerned.

Chapter II

Maimonides and Gersonides

-Mediaeval Insights into the Issues-

The views held by Maimonides and Gersonides on the issues relating to theistic finitism and panentheism are of considerable interest to this study. It is not our contention that, technically speaking, Maimonides and Gersonides were theistic finitists. As we shall demonstrate, neither Maimonides nor Gersonides, appearances notwithstanding, qualify as theistic finitists according to the definition offered in Chapter I. Nevertheless, the issues pertinent to this study are thrown into sharp focus in these thinkers. These men are deeply concerned with the issue of the divine power, particularly as it relates to their cosmogonies, theodicies, and theories of providence and miracles. In the case of Gersonides, the discussion of omniscience is of great import and provides a fascinating contrast to the panentheistic view on this issue. An overview of their theologies will bring clarity to the issues and serve as examples of thought systems that seek to answer the challenges of theistic finitism without finding it necessary to posit a "given" (whether within or external to the divine experience) that deity neither created nor approves.

Maimonides

An overview of these aspects of Maimonides' theology requires a word of introduction. Maimonides presents the

student of mediaeval Jewish philosophy with a particular difficulty. I refer to his use of the esoteric mode of writing. This literary technique for diversified communication operates on (at least) two levels: the exoteric or apparent one and the esoteric or hidden one. For Maimonides, the esoteric teaching is intended for the select few, viz., the potential philosophers whom Maimonides is attempting to rescue from perplexity. The exoteric teaching, on the other hand, is intended for the masses who are not now, and in all probability never will become, masters of logic, physics and metaphysics. This does not mean that the exoteric teaching is not useful. In fact, it is essential that the common man hold to at least a minimum of rational beliefs (e.g. the incorporeality of God) even though he will possess such beliefs as opinion only, and never as knowledge. Moreover, though there are great differences between the two teachings, they do remain at least analogous to one another. Such rational beliefs are, however, appropriate solely for the legalistic study of the Law (תורה תלמודית). When, however, one pursues the science of the Law in accordance with the truth (תורה של האמת) nothing less than knowledge is involved--and knowledge (not opinion) is the subject matter of the esoteric teaching.

The basic reason for the use of the esoteric mode of writing by Maimonides is his belief that the philosopher (or

"perfect man") must be a moral being. He will respect the fact that not all persons have the capacity to understand the true beliefs of theology and that the masses base their lives on opinion. If presented with knowledge which they could not comprehend and which would only serve to destroy beliefs that curb their asocial behavior, society would be destroyed and the human animal unleashed in all his fury. Thus, precisely because the philosopher is moral will he by all means conceal the esoteric teaching from the masses.

As might well be imagined, a great deal of the most exciting scholarly work in Maimonides is the arduous process of determining precisely what was the esoteric teaching in the Moreh. This effort is rendered all the more difficult by the fact that Maimonides wanted to communicate as much of the truth as was possible even given the wide diversity of peoples' intellectual capacities. Thus we may find a third opinion on a given theological theme for those of intermediate intelligence.

It will not, however, be the purpose of this study to engage in this type of effort. We shall rather begin with what is claimed to be the esoteric (authentic) view held by Maimonides, leaving it to subsequent scholars to determine whether such is the concept he in fact held true.

Omnipotence. Inasmuch as the issue of the nature and extent of the divine power is central to our study, we do well to

begin with Maimonides' notion of omnipotence. Maimonides was among the first thinkers to clarify the exact meaning of omnipotence as a divine operative attribute. He claimed that omnipotence extends only to beings or things that have the inherent possibility of existence; i.e. that do not entail a contradiction. Thus God cannot make a square circle, since both notions cancel each other out. Such hypothetical things lie beyond God's power, not because God's power is limited, but because of the inherent limitation in the concept of the thing itself. As Maimonides states:

> The impossible has a stable nature, one whose stability is constant and is not made by a maker; it is impossible to change it in any way. Hence the power over the maker of the impossible is not attributed to the deity. This is a point about which none of the men of speculation differs in any way. And none but those who do not understand the intelligibles, is ignorant of this.[1]

> It has then become clear that, according to every opinion and school, there are impossible things whose existence cannot be admitted. Power to bring them about cannot be ascribed to the deity. The fact that He does not change them signifies neither inability nor deficiency of power on His part. Accordingly they are necessarily as they are and are not due to the act of an agent.[2]

The only remaining difficulty is to establish criteria for distinguishing between the possible and the impossible, with the result that only the former comes under the aegis of God's power. Concerning the "things" that are asserted to be impossible, we read:

> Thus, for example, the coming together of con-

> traries at the same instant and at the same place and the transmutation of substances, I mean the transmutation of a substance into an accident and of an accident into a substance, or the existence of a corporeal substance without there being an accident in it --all of these belong to the class of the impossible according to all men of speculation. Likewise that God should bring into existence someone like Himself, or should annihilate Himself, or should become a body, or should change--all of these things belong to the class of the impossible; and the power to do any of these things cannot be attributed to God.[3]

Since impossibles are not (nor can they ever be) real things or beings, their origin is in the imagination.[4] The intellect, on the other hand, is the arbiter of the real and the seat of knowledge. Moreover (though he hedges here) the intellect determines whether a given being is to be placed under the category of the possible or impossible:[5]

> This means that the possible is the logical and rational whereas the illogical and irrational, no matter how convincing a fantasy may be to the imagination, has no existence in reality.[6]

The determination of the "possible" in Maimonides' thought is of direct relevance to the entire issue of theistic finitism. It will be recalled that theistic finitism posits that deity is limited not only by the impossible (if we can use "limited" in that regard) but also by conditions concerning which he neither created nor approves. We must then evaluate the notions of "creation" and "approval" in Maimonides' theology to arrive at an honest evaluation.

Cosmogony. Maimonides maintains, contra Plato and Aristotle, that it is possible for God to create the universe out of nothing. Utilizing the tools of rational inquiry alone, there seems to be no compelling evidence (apart from some astronomical data) to favor creationism over eternalism. In the final analysis, Maimonides opts for a creationist view on the esoteric grounds that an eternalist belief does not bear even an analogous resemblance to the exoteric teaching of Scripture and would, consequently, falsify the entirety of Scripture.[7] Thus, the fact that Maimonides held to a creationist view would alone seem to exclude him from the camp of theistic finitism; for everything(impossibles are not "things") in the universe is ultimately caused by deity. This would seem to preclude deity's facing conditions concerning which he neither created nor approves.

Yet the issue is not so easily resolved. We must first specify precisely what Maimonides intended in his cosmogony. Reines has contended, quite convincingly, that Maimonides affirmed two different cosmogonies. The first of these

> emphasizes that the fundamental constituents of the universe were created by God directly, through His special will. These include the heavens, consisting of the Intelligences and spheres, and the first matter out of which the sublunar world is generated.[8]

This first cosmogony belongs to the exoteric teaching, intended for the masses, and supportive of the claim that God

can bring about any nonnatural event conceivable or imaginable:

> The logic being that God, having created all existence and the laws of nature out of nothingness, has nothing external to himself to prevent absolute control over his own creation.[9]

Yet this is not Maimonides' true belief. That is to be found only in the second or esoteric cosmogony, subtly inserted by Maimonides in II, 11 :

> The whole creation is divided into three parts: (1) the pure Intelligences; (2) the bodies of the spheres endowed with permanent forms...; (3) the transient earthly beings... A thing perfect in a certain way is either perfect only in itself, without being able to communicate that perfection to another being, or it is so perfect that it is capable of imparting perfection to another being... In the same manner the creative act of deity in giving existence to the pure Intelligences endows the first of them with the power of giving existence to another, and so on, down to the Active Intellect, the last of the Intelligences. Besides producing other Intelligences, each Intelligence gives existence to one of the spheres, from the highest down to the lowest, which is the sphere of the moon. After the latter follows the body subject to generation and corruption, that is, first matter and what is composed of it.[10]

We have here a cosmogony contradicting the exoteric teaching. In this second cosmogony, deity creates directly only the first Intelligence. Through successive emanations the remaining Intelligences and spheres are produced, resulting in the creation of first matter and the sublunar world. Moreover, such a cosmogony entails a ramification that bears di-

rectly on the issue of theistic finitism. On the esoteric cosmogony, the entire universe is governed by the laws of nature. The contention here is that the only nonnatural event that has ever occured is the creation by the special will of God of the first Intelligence, the rest of the universe coming into being through a natural and orderly sequence of subsequent emanations. No nonnatural event has since occured. Thus a "miracle" on this view is merely an anomaly of nature, predictable by one possessing a sufficient knowledge of natural causality, such as a prophet.[11] The upshot of this cosmogony is that Maimonides' notion of creation differs in but one respect from the eternalists:

> The Aristotelians claim God is subject to the laws of nature, whereas Maimonides maintains that God is free, limited only by His own essence and the impossible. Both the Aristotelians and Maimonides agree the universe is entirely subject to the laws of nature. Represented this way, Maimonides' system is integrated and coherent. There is no logical difficulty in maintaining that God, out of His freedom and in accordance with His wisdom, willed to create a universe that is subject to the laws of nature.[12]

So much for the requirement of theistic finitism that deity face conditions which he did not create. Clearly, on Maimonides' view, God freely created a universe of nature and there exists no being, things or conditions that are not dependent upon the ultimate causal power of deity when he created the first Intelligence.

Nevertheless, two vital queries of the theistic finitist remain to be answered: (1) Can we say that, on Maimonides' view, deity is limited by the laws of nature? (2) Whether they limit him or not, does deity in any manner disapprove of the laws of nature? The answer to both these questions is "no, with explanation." It is important to note that in the discussion of omnipotence among the philosophers, some actions are called impossible for God even though they themselves can exist; however, they cannot co-exist with God's other decrees. Such an analysis is relevant to our discussion of the relation of God's power to the laws of nature. Thus, to be sure, if deity willed to intervene miraculously into the laws of nature, he could do so by virtue of his omnipotence. However, the Maimonidean deity never wills to act in the universe outside nature.[13] In fact, such an action is impossible for deity, inasmuch as it is logically imcompatible (i.e. cannot co-exist with) the fact that deity wills only the most excellent action.[14] As the creation of the universe of nature is the most excellent action of deity, it is impossible that God (who is limited only by his own essence and the impossible) act against his own plan. As Reines points out, the universe is the best action of which the divine perfection is capable; the natural universe is the best of all possible worlds: [15]

> Similarly, no obstacle intervenes between Him and the exceedingly excellent action He wishes

> to accomplish, and nothing can hinder it.... You will find this notion frequently repeated by the Sages when they interpret the verse, "He hath made everything beautiful in its time." Such is the belief of the multitude of the men of knowledge in our Law, and this was explicitly stated by our prophets, namely, that the actions of nature to the slightest details are wisely regulated and connected to one another, all of them causes and effects, none of them is futile, frivolous, or vain, being acts of perfect wisdom ..It is upon this opinion that the whole of the Torah of Moses our Master is founded. It begins with it, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good;" and it concludes with it, "The Rock, His work is perfect..."[16]

Surely, deity having freely created the most excellent universe of nature and thus never willing to interrupt its natural course, we cannot conclude that he is "limited" here in the sense that the theistic finitist proposes. In the case of Maimonides, deity both creates and approves of the laws of nature, the violation of which is impossible given the excellence and perfection of the divine action.

What is all so fascinating about this for our purposes is that Maimonides finally arrives at a position quite similar to many a theistic finitist without ascribing to the central premises of theistic finitism. In our study of theistic finitism, we will see that the conditions (or "given") that deity confronts consist (in many cases) of the very factors that comprise the Maimonidean universe: the inviolable laws of reason and nature. Nevertheless, we may not classify Maimonides as a theistic finitist, for unlike them, he posits

that God both creates and approves of this best possible world. For theistic finitism, God neither creates nor approves of these conditions which remain the source of surd evil.

Theodicy and Providence. It will be recalled that the theistic finitist claims that there is a dilemma in classical theism, which may be formulated: If a dysteleological surd exists, then classical theism in false. Accordingly, the classical theist must deny the existence of any evil that, no matter what types of operations are performed on it, is not expressible in terms of good. The dominant motif in such theodicies, as is borne out in Maimonides' case, is the attempt to demonstrate that what we perceive as evil (or the cause of evil) is ultimately good.

To begin to understand Maimonides' concept of theodicy, we must take cognizance of his theory of evil. He adopts the Aristotelian notion of privation as a negation not requiring an agent.[17] Contra the Mutakallimun, Maimonides holds evil to be a privation, possessing no real existence outside of existing things, and any evil in an existing thing must either be the privation of that thing or the privation of a beneficial condition of that thing. Thus at the outset Maimonides makes it clear that inasmuch as evil is a privation, one cannot ascribe evil to God or say that God has a primary intention of producing evil.

If we allow that evil requires no agent, how then can we account for it? We do so, says Maimonides, by realizing that there is an aspect of reality which is of necessity always a concomitant of privation and therefore the source of all corruption and evil.[18] We are speaking here of matter, which for Maimonides is that without which

> ...individual human beings would not exist. Form provides man with his essence, which determines the species to which he belongs, but essence alone does not produce concrete, individual existents. This is the function of matter, the principle of individuation. Matter, however, has a nature which imparts two basic characteristics to men: transcience and body. Transcience is the result of the instability of matter. Although matter always exists together with some form, its union with the form it has does not satisfy and fulfill its potentiality for receiving other forms. It remains in a state of privation with respect to other forms. To satisfy its potentiality for receiving other forms, matter must rid itself of the form it has. Matter, therefore, is in a continuous state of instability seeking to shed the form it has for new forms of which it is deprived...As a result of matter casting off the form it has, the individual that is constituted of that particular combination of matter and form perishes. Individual men, therefore, owing to the matter which is necessary to give them their particular existences, inevitably must die by reason of the very matter that gives them life. Similarly, the body men require given them by matter produces various ills. Three major categories of human defects, physical, moral, and intellectual, can be attributed to the body.[19]

In particular, matter is the source of the imagination, a corporeal faculty in the human psyche that gives rise to moral evil and produces fantasies which function as a "strong

veil preventing the apprehension of that which is separate from matter."[20] This aspect of the material composition of the individual looms large in Maimonides' concept of providence.

Yet, if matter is the source of all evil, and if God created matter, is not deity then responsible for evil? The negative answer to this question forms the crux of Maimonides' theodicy. The ultimate issue here is: If matter is the source of evil, why did God create it? This is to be answered with reference to two principles which provide a rational ground for deity's creating the universe. Reines comments:

> A. The principle of supreme perfection is based on the notion that an entity that is perfect in a certain way can either possess that perfection to a degree that is limited to itself, or it can provide another entity with the perfection as well. The greater the ability of a being to bestow its perfection upon others, the greater is the degree to which it possesses that perfection. Supreme perfection is the ability to impart perfection to others in the highest degree possible.
>
> B. The principle of supreme goodness is based on the proposition that existence per se is good. Accordingly, the greater the number and diversity of existents there are, the more there is that is good. Accordingly, the supreme good is to bring into existence the greatest number and variety of existents that is possible.[21]

Basing himself upon these principles, Maimonides will argue that the creation of matter, despite its entailment of evil, is ultimately good. Reines continues his explication of Maimonides:

> The purpose of God in creating the universe was not for the sake of the universe, but to satisfy certain rational principles inherent in his own nature...By virtue of the principle of supreme perfection, God brought the universe into existence...By reason of the principle of supreme goodness, God produced all the existence he could, and then, in imparting his perfection to the Intelligences and the spheres, he gave them from his goodness the desire to produce all the numbers and varieties of existents they could. It is for this reason that matter was created. Following the notion that existence per se is good, and that every being that can exist, therefore, should exist, matter was brought into existence. For matter, as a kind of existence, is itself therefore good, and in addition, it is only through matter that the entire sublunar world of beings can attain existence.[22]

In essence, Maimonides' theodicy consists in the affirmation that this is the best of all possible worlds and matter, though entailing evil, is a necessary aspect of this world. As was our observation with respect to the universe of nature being the most excellent work of deity, so too in Maimonides' theodicy the essential task "is to vindicate the justice and goodness of nature."[23]

With this notion of theodicy understood, we may now turn to Maimonides' concept of providence. Maimonides rejects the rabbinic Jewish notion of providence as God's supernatural rewarding and punishing of individuals on the basis of the performance of divine commandments. He posits instead (in the esoteric teaching, of course) the notion that one who exists in the providential state has a life that is subject to an intelligible order, and is not given to chance. This

is the soterial state. One attains to such a level only through the actualization of the intellect through the study of science and metaphysics. This is the only way in which man transcends his material constitution. Maimonides, in his analysis of the story of Job, points out that happiness does indeed follow goodness and misery wickedness. Job suffered because (although a moral man and a follower of the commandments) he was in fact wicked, not having actualized his intellect. He suffered because he did not understand that the losses he incured were merely changes in matter. Had his intellect been actualized, he would have understood that these losses were simply the process of matter casting off one form for another, and that matter is actually a good in this best of all possible worlds. That is, the actualization of Job's intellect would not have altered in the least the series of events that occured to him and his family; but it would have meant that Job would not have experienced these events as evils. He would have been happy and fulfilled (as indeed happened at the end of the story) endowed with full scientific knowledge, moral wisdom, and a heightened state of being ("ontological providence") in which he would realize that events are judged evil only by the imagination. As Reines comments:

> Ontological providence...does not produce happiness by seeking to control events outside of man, but by acting to give him a psychic structure that cannot be made unhappy by the outside

> events that occur. Hence no form of scientific or ethical providence may be able to keep a person from losing his family and possessions to an earthquake or war, but ontological providence will prevent his suffering from these happenings.[24]

Thus is Maimonides able to present a theodicy and view of providence in which dysteleological surds are denied and all evil is ultimately, in view of the necessity of matter, a good in this best of all possible worlds--this universe of nature. Moreover, the goodness and justice of God are vindicated, for the good man (i.e. who has actualized his intellect) will know happiness and the wicked man the suffering of the asoterial state.

Given this denial of ultimate, irreducible evil in the universe, Maimonides is certainly excluded from the camp of theistic finitism. Yet it is to be again noted that, despite his differences from theistic finitism, Maimonides shares with it a deity who, in some guise, does not supernaturally overcome (the human experience of) suffering. The attainment of the providential or soterial state is accomplished through human effort alone, and receives no miraculous aide. Of course, Maimonides would argue that this constitutes no "limitation" on deity, based upon the impossibility of God's violating the universe of nature which is his most excellent work. Similarly in theistic finitism, God does not supernaturally overcome the human experience of suffering. But there the similarity with the Maimonidan deity ends, for theistic

finitism posits both that (1) The fact that God does not violate the laws of nature is a definite limitation on the divine power, and (2) There is an irreducible element of evil (or, as the panentheists prefer to say, "tragedy") in reality, neither created nor approved by deity, that cannot ultimately be considered good. Thus despite the similarity of appearances, theistic finitism (including panentheism) affirms notions that Maimonides would categorically deny.

Gersonides

Gersonides' insights into creation and omniscience are of particular relevance to our study, and help us to clarify the nature of the problems with which we are concerned.

Cosmogony. Among the bold contributions of Gersonides to Jewish philosphy is his novel theory of creation. Unlike Maimonides who held that eternalism could not be positively falsified, Gersonides advanced a number of arguments designed to show that the world is not eternal *a parte ante* but that it is eternal *a parte post*. He states, for example, a teleological argument against eternalism: Everything produced by a final cause, ordained to a certain end, and serving as a substratum for accidents, cannot exist eternally. As the world fulfills all these conditions it cannot therefore be eternal.[25] Moreover, the same conclusion may be drawn from the fact that, were the world eternal, the sciences would be more advanced than they are.[26] Finally, Gersonides cites the

traditional polemic against eternalism that it is based on the faulty premise that the laws governing all operations within the world apply equally to the beginning of the world.[27]

Maimonides had also held that eternalism illegitimately transferred laws governing the world to the beginning of the world as a whole. As we remarked above, the creation of the first Intelligence ex nihilo is the one and only nonnatural event in Maimonides' system, whereas all subsequent generation will be premised on the basis of ex nihilo nihil fit. Even though Gersonides held to the uniqueness of creation, he took a more moderate view than Maimonides, contending that even creation cannot contravene the impossible, for nothing can be created out of nothing. Consequently, both eternalism and creation ex nihilo are subject to his criticism.

Gersonides, therefore, proposes his own alternative cosmogony affirming on the one hand that the world had an origin in time, and on the other hand that "it came not ex nihilo in the absolute sense of the word nihil, but developed from an eternal formless matter, which God endowed with form."[28] The underlying assumption here is that matter cannot be derived from God. In fact, matter cannot possibly have come into being, for every becoming must be preceded by the possibility of becoming, as well as its substratum, which is matter. Considering the fact that God is the highest principle of form, the deity can have produced only the entire

world of forms: "The creation of the world by God is not a creatio ex nihilo, but presupposes a pre-existent matter upon which he exercised his creative act."[29]

The crucial question relevant to our study of theistic finitism is to determine to what extent, if any, does Gersonides' notion of an eternally pre-existent matter constitute a limitation on the divine power. We should at first think that any entity co-eternal with God would constitute a rival of sorts for deity. In fact, it was with this issue that the proponents of creation ex nihilo were so deeply concerned. Their interest was in maintaining the ontological dependence of the world upon God, and thus had to deny the existence of any other being co-eternal with him, or any world identical with God. Their claim was that any doctrine other than creation ex nihilo results in a dualism that limits deity's power. Interestingly enough, Gersonides responds to these charges with the affirmation that his cosmogony doesn't in the least limit God. The prime matter to which Gersonides refers is unique in that it is the only example of matter existing without form. To the objection that such a notion of formless matter is nonsensical, Gersonides responds that the impossibility of such a notion applies only to the actual existents in nature.[30] Thus "formless matter" is pure potentiality, totally lacking being, since all being derives from form. Guttmann points out that

> Matter does not contain any determinate disposition, but is perfectly indifferent, has the possibility of becoming as such, and hence in no way constrains the divine creativity.[31]

Furthermore, the mere eternalism of prime matter does not qualify it as a rival god:

> Eternity as such does not constitute divinity. If all the world were eternal, God would still be God because he controls everything and is the author of the order obtaining in the world. In general it is the qualitative essence that makes the divine character of God, his wisdom and power as the source of goodness and right order in nature. The eternal matter of which we are speaking is the opposite of all this. As God is the extreme of perfection so is matter the extreme of imperfection and defect. As God is the source of good, so is matter the source of evil. How then can anyone suppose for a moment that an eternal formless matter can in any way be identified with a divine being?[32]

Thus prime matter is neither a deity nor a limit on the divine power. Even more important for the issue of theistic finitism is the fact that in Gersonides' system, although matter is the source of evil, it is endowed with form by the perfect deity and thus becomes part of this "best possible world"--a world in which there exists no dysteleological surd.

It is interesting to note that even though Gersonides offers an alternative to creation <u>ex nihilo</u>, he totally nonessentializes prime matter such that it does not in the least constitute a limitation upon the divine power. In this light, it is significant to point out that Gersonides' cosmogony is less "Platonic" than some have imagined.[33] Gersonides' cos-

mogony poses no limits on deity; Plato's clearly does:

> In the Timaeus Plato seeks an account of the generation of the space-time world that is "inferior to none in liklihood" (Timaeus 29d). A Good but not omnipotent Demiurge desired that all should be "so far as possible, like unto himself" (29d). He was limited by the fact that he must deal with two other kinds of being: the Receptacle and the Forms. The Receptacle is the "mother" of all becoming, a kind of "moulding-stuff" of everything "invisible and unshaped, all receptive." It could never be a cosmos unless "in some most baffling way"(51b), it could partake of Forms or Ideas. Plato's Demiurge, keeping his gaze fixed on "these co-eternal Forms" (29a), "persuades" the inchoate Receptacle to take on as much form as possible (48a). The world thus generated is "planned" as "a movable image" (37d) of the perfect Forms.[34]

Omniscience. There is an aspect of Gersonides' theory of God's knowledge which will relate to our treatment of panentheism. Gersonides is quite a maverick in his views, departing considerably from the classical outlook. According to both Maimonides and Aquinas, God knows our future acts, even though they are free, because he knows events, not through their conditions in earlier events, but directly, in themselves. This assumes that events to us future are yet in themselves real and determinate, or that time is analogous to a circle (at the center of which is God who is equally near to every point of time) and not to an endless line whose points are added to it from moment to moment and form no completed total. Thus the traditional notion of perfect knowledge was that all things, including events (from our per-

spective) yet to be actualized, are known as determinate in every detail.

Gersonides departs from this view and advances the notion that God does not know matter or particulars:

> (It is) not that His knowledge is imperfect, but that the formal, rational order of things alone is worth knowing or fully real. Also, man's will being free, and acts he might, in future perform or not perform being thus indeterminate, the divine or true knowledge, which sees things as they are, will see these acts only as indeterminate or possible. This second argument implies that past and present events, being determinately particular, must by divine knowledge be known as such, but Gersonides overlooks this because (equally with Maimonides, the chief object of his polemic) he believes God to be immutable and devoid of contingency, whereas, he argues, only what is in some way contingent and changing can know the contingent and changing. The premise is that an object of knowledge "substantializes" the knowing (were the object not actual, the knowing of it as actual would be potential only). This Maimonides had conceded of human knowing, and he had conceded further that if the contingent objects of God's knowing are similarly required for the actuality of his knowledge of them (as actual), then part of God's actuality must be contingent. Maimonides avoided this conclusion by denying any and all analogy between humanly conceivable and divine "knowledge" (or other attributes). Gersonides points to the theological havoc wrought by this denial, and proposes instead the denial that God know contingent objects, except in their non-contingent, providential, immaterial elements or aspects. This denial, held to be none, of omniscience is a heroic effort to save the purely absolutistic conception of God ...while avoiding the paradox of a knowing which is necessary through and through although what it knows exists to be known (as existent) only contingently. It did not occur to Gersonides--or to other mediaeval

> thinkers--that if God's knowing is really analogous--with whatever sublime differences--to man's it may, like man's, though in radically superior fashion, involve elements of contingency and change.[35]

We see, therefore, that Gersonides' thoughts on omniscience, once freed from their monopolaristic prejudices, could adapt well to the panentheistic notion of admitting a contingent aspect in God.

It was, however, to be many centuries before philosophical theology could free itself from the dominance of classical, absolutist views. Indeed, it was not until the twentieth century that theistic finitism and panentheism were truly able to come into intellectual fruition. Having then raised the central issues in our study and having clarified them through a discussion of their function in the systems of Maimonides and Gersonides, we may now turn to a detailed study of theistic finitism and panentheism in the twentieth century theologies of Brightman, Hartshorne, and Buber.

Chapter III
The Theistic Finitism of
Edgar Sheffield Brightman

The contributing factors to E.S. Brightman's theology are several and diversified, yet all indicative of a philosopher who is deeply influenced by the pervasive trends of the twentieth century. Not only in terms of his empirical thrust, his discontentment with supernaturalism, and his all-consuming struggle with surd evil, but also in his desire to construct a believable theological system appropriate to a humanity that languishes from asoterial existence and longs for a coherent account of intrinsic value in what is called a universe of fact.

Although one might suppose that the challenges of this century would call for radical surgery on traditional theology, the first impression one receives of Brightman is that his notion of deity is not all that revolutionary (especially when compared to thinkers such as Weiman, Alexander, Tillich, and R. B. Cattell). It seeks not to upset the totality of the theistic tradition. Rather, an evolutionary approach is sought such that a modification of theism will both properly account for the pervasive surd evils which (he claims) infest reality and also satisfy the demands of his epistemology for claiming a reality referent for the term "God."

Recalling the methodology for this study outlined in Chapter I, our approach to Brightman will follow this order: (A) Epistemology; (B) Concept of God; (C) Demonstration of the existence of God; (D) Significant ramifications of his theology; (E) Critique of the theology.

A. Epistemology

Brightman asserts that "all human understanding begins, continues and ends in experience."[1] Essentially, Brightman holds to an epistemological dualism. This is the doctrine that the object and the idea of it are two separate elements. Consequently, "Brightman believes that we experience only our own mentality; all the rest is inferred."[2] The espousal of epistemological dualism in Brightman's philosophy expresses itself in a distinction between what he terms "the shining present" (the "situation-experienced" or immediate experience) and the "illuminating absent" (the "situation-believed-in" or referent).[3] Immediate experience is the inescapable starting point, but experience always refers beyond itself (self-transcendence). Consequently, he emphasizes that all primary data are present experiences and advocates a radically empirical method, viz., a method which considers whatever is, at any time, present in consciousness (contra logical positivism's restriction of experience to sense-experience). Thus not only sense experience, but intuition, correspondence and pragmatism are also counted among the basic building

blocks of human knowledge:

> The method may be labelled "radical empiricism," using James' phrase, for it will assume no source of information about the real, other than the experience of conscious persons. The word "experience"...refers not to some one aspect of consciousness, such as sense-experience, and not to some inferred entity, such as atom, but to the immediate, ongoing activities and data in consciousness. Thus the method may be called personalistic method because it uses the data of personal consciousness (there being no other data available) and is guided by the purposes and ideals of personal consciousness. The term "personalistic" is used not to anticipate any outcome of the use of the method, but to insist on the duty of the metaphysician to include all the data provided by personal consciousness.[4]

A central contention in this radically empirical approach is that the ground for all belief must be found in present experience. Moreover, as we remarked, such experience always refers beyond itself. As such knowledge involves reference, it must always be hypothetical and tentative. If a theory contradicts the facts of experience and the facts stubbornly resist change, so much the worse for the theory:

> Knowledge thus gained is always probable, in the sense of being incompletely demonstrated. This is true because knowledge, by definition, consists of tested assertions, and complete testing can never be achieved. No hypothesis can be completely proved without complete experience and experience is never complete. Our knowledge, our tested hypotheses, may be highly "reliable" and "warrented". Often we know enough to be justified in giving lifelong commitment to a person or a cause. But knowledge is a venture into the unknown and is based on incomplete evidence. Its proof

> must remain incomplete and problematic, even if there are no known negative instances.[5]

Though some might find this departure from certainty to be the root of a destructive skepticism, Brightman found in his "metaphysical method as experimental"[6] the foundation of a healthy probabilism that held the principle of coherence as an adequate test of reference (or criterion of truth).

The principle of empirical coherence, as a criterion for verification, consists of five factors, all of which individually are necessary, but not sufficient conditions of coherency:[7]

1. Consistency: It is evident that the hypothesis must be consistent (i.e. not entail logical contradiciton) with itself and with all the known facts of experience.

2. System: The hypothesis must not merely lack formal contradiction with the known facts in the universe. It must also establish explanatory and interpretive relations between various parts of experience:

> The command of the mind to systematize is the command to seek for and discover interrelations: interrelations of parts and wholes; universal relations (laws) and particular relations (such as purposes); necessary relations and contingent or free relations: synthetic wholes and organic wholes. A system is a complex of thought which takes into account the parts and the wholes explicit and implicit in all interrelations.[8]

3. Inclusiveness: This factor illustrates Brightman's rejection of Logical Positivism: "To restrict empiricism to

necessary logical tautologies and sensory data is not to be truly empirical."[9] The emphasis here is that the hypothesis must provide an adequate perspective on all the data and facta of experience.

4. Synoptic: The hypothesis must be synoptic. It must, as an inference from our fragmentary experience, attempt to reveal the nature of the whole. To the charge that such guesses about the whole that are revealed in an experience are often incredible, Brightman responds:

> Such guesses must always be checked by all the tests of sound method. But without the creation of such guesses, the mind would be helplessly confined to the tautology: "present experience is present experience." Well-tested guesses in science lead to laws. Well-tested guessing in religion leads to a commitment called faith. But all response to reality - whether intellectual or practical - requires synoptic hypotheses. Every experience is either part of, or effect of, or sign of a larger whole. The thinker is one whose creative imagination can discern a "vision" - a hypothesis about the whole - and then test it rigorously. As has been well said: He who refuses to make any sort of hypothesis, whose intellectual conscience forbids him to believe aught except the given, can never understand.[10]

5. Verification: The hypothesis must be verified by the maximum amount of evidential fact as can be experienced. Accordingly it must meet not only the test of having a predictive value regarding sense-data, but must as well accord with the demands of intuition and pragmatism.

These factors jointly render a hypothesis empirically

coherent. When Brightman advocates empirical coherence as the criterion of truth, he is advancing the notion that a hypothesis can be accepted as true only if it allows us to be faithful to what we find within experience and at the same time helps us to understand the relations between all our experiences without residual problems. However, inasmuch as our experience is constantly growing, the application of coherence cannot arrive at fixed and static results. Accordingly, knowledge based upon this evidence is fallible. Thus, this ideal of empirical coherence is beyond the actual reach of man. Nevertheless, it functions as a guide for him as he seeks to determine what reality references are justified. In light of the basic human inability to comprehend perfectly, as well as the fact that experience and information change and grow, Brightman's espousal of empirical coherence as the criterion of truth may be stated: A hypothesis is to be accepted as true if, in the light of it more than any other hypothesis, the actual data of experience and the problems arising from them can be explained. An empirical hypothesis is intended always to resolve some problem arising in experience, and it is accepted if it, better than any other hypothesis, clarifies the relationship between all the data relevant to the problem.[11]

When reasoning is empirically coherent, it is more than logical (but never illogical), for now reasoning is attempting

to discover a hypothesis which shows how the relationship between experiences may be most clearly conceived.

A metaphysics or theology that has empirical coherence as its criterion of truth will always attempt the most inclusive organization of all the data available, viz. all that is present in consciousness. The philosopher will be free to offer a synoptic hypothesis, but he will always be required to show that this hypothesis actually accounts better than any other hypothesis for the content of experience. Until another hypothesis be found that is more coherent with all experience and knowledge, he will accept his current hypothesis and base his life upon it.[12]

B. God Concept

Brightman's concept of God is best explicated in relation to his personalism, theory of value (axiology), and his view of the problem of evil.

Personalism. Brightman ranks as the leading American advocate of personalism. Although various trends are grouped under this school, in general the view known as "personal idealism" is intended (to be distinguished from "absolutistic personalism," the view that reality is one absolute mind or person, and from "panpsychistic idealism," the notion that all of reality is constituted by psychic qualities or consciousness so graded in perceptive quality and purposive organization as to explain inorganic, organic, and human phenomena). By

"personal idealism" is meant an idealistic philosophy in which all reality is personal. Unlike absolutistic personalism, it is pluralistic: reality is a society of persons. For personalism, person-hood is the ontological ultimate, and sole (or dominant) metaphysical reality. Brightman defines person as "a complex unity of consciousness, which identifies itself with its past self in memory, determines itself by it's freedom, is purposive and value-seeking, private yet communicating, and potentially rational."[13] Maintaining that "everything that exists (or subsists) is in, of, or for a mind on some level," Brightman defined personalism as "the hypothesis that all being - both every shining present and every genuinely illuminating absent - is either a personal experient (a complex unity of consciousness) or some phase or aspect of one or more such experients."[14]

Personalism is also important for Brightman's God concept because of its corollary principle of temporalism. He asserts that if we take person-hood seriously as the basic explanatory model of reality, than not only is God a person, but we must accept the temporality of God. This means that time is an irreducible aspect of God's experience. In this regard Brightman is reacting against the classical view in which additive change cannot be attributed to God. For Brightman, inherent in the notion of persons as centers of value-seeking and purpose is the contention that the life of

value consists in the temporal, inexhaustable, never-ending actualization of ideals. Time and person are inextricably bound up. Time is the concrete inclusive category: eternity is an abstraction therefrom. Thus God is eternal-temporal:

> The God of religion, from everlasting to everlasting, is a temporal being. Indeed, it may be said that all reality, all experience, whether human or divine, is a temporally moving present. Nothing real is nunc stans. Activity, change, duration, are the essence of the real. The real endures; the real changes; the real grows. God is the real, or at least the most significant part of the real. Is there then nothing eternal? In answer it must be said that nothing real is timeless, in the sense of being out of all time, atemporal. Eternity is a function of time, not time of eternity. With Heraclitus we may assert that all things change except the logos of change. That there is constant change is the testimony both of experience and of science. That the changes in experience conform to law is the testimony of rational thought. Reason finds evidence of eternal form which the changes never violate. Religious faith would add that in this form are included certain moral and ideal principles, which are valid at all times. Moreover, a careful analysis of experience shows that it's changes imply a reality in which the formal principles of reason and morality have to contend against obstacles, which constitute what Tranoff calls a cosmic drag. Thus, for the temporalist there may well be both an eternal form and an eternal content in the temporal God. These are what I have elsewhere called "The Given". There is an eternal Wisdom and an eternal Cross. Each is an enduring aspect of the unbegun and unending process which is reality. But the name of God does not apply exclusively to the eternally given factors in this process. God is not an abstraction, but a concrete living reality...God is not a timeless being; he is an ever enduring creator.[15]

Axiology. Values occupy a central place in Brightman's philosophy of religion. In brief, the personal, eternal-temporal

God is the source and conserver of value:

> Whatever else may or may not be said about God, religion at every stage has been worship, together with striving toward what was believed to be the source and the guarantee of the highest value.[16]

That deity is axiogenetic (that which developes or produces value) follows from his nature as a conscious, purposing, omnitemporal (not timeless) conscious person.

Evil and The Given: The Finite God. Brightman's most significant departure from theistic absolutism is in his analysis of the problem of evil. In brief, the problem relates to non-moral evil with specific reference to the alledged presence of dysteleolgical surds. The crisis with a dysteleological surd is that inasmuch as it contains within itself no principle of development or improvement, it cannot have any relation to value. As deity is conceived as the source of axiogenesis, we must then inquire "whence evil?". (More specifically, we refer only to non-moral evil, assuming for the moment with Brightman that the free-will defense is adequate to account for moral evil).

Brightman seeks to account for the pervasive surd evils which infest reality by positing that God's power is not infinite. He goes beyond the mediaeval notion of God's not being able to do the impossible to the stronger position that God's power is limited by realities concerning

which he did not create nor approves. Brightman is then a theistic finitist. To these realities he gives the name "The Given":

> The Given consists of the eternal, uncreated laws of reason and also of equally eternal and uncreated processess of nonrational consciousness which exhibit all the ultimate qualities of sense objects (qualia), disorderly impulses and desires, such experiences as pain and suffering, the forms of space and time, and whatever in God is the source of surd evil. The common characteristic of all that is "given" (in the technical sense) is, first, that it is eternal within the experience of God and hence had no other origin than God's eternal being; and, secondly, that it is not a product of will or created activity. For the Given to be in consciousness at all means that it must be process; but unwilled, nonvoluntary consciousness is distinguishable from voluntary consciousness, both in God and in man.[17]

It is to be stressed that on Brightman's view there is a distinction made between the nature and will of God. This contrasts radically with the view of Maimonides, who held that the nature and will of God are absolutely one without any division or conflict whatsoever. On Brightman's view, however, there is a portion of the divine nature, viz. The Given, which is not only not ratified by the divine will, but even is unwilled and disapproved of as it stands. For example, in so far as God's struggle with The Given in his nature is the ground of human insanity, one cannot say that God approves of such an aspect of his nature. Nevertheless, God may be said to "ratify" his personality as a whole, with-

out his omnibenevolent will approving certain uncreated parts of it; for his nature as a whole is the progressive control of The Given, not ratification of it. God's will struggles with The Given in his nature, conserving as much value in all situations as is possible.

Furthermore, we note that The Given is within the divine consciousness and not external to it:

> The Given must be within the divine consciousness and not external to it; for otherwise it does not explain why God has so much genuine difficulty in expressing his ideal purposes, combined with so much control and achievement. If The Given is external to God, then either he created it or he did not. If he created it, one needs something within the divine nature to explain why he should create that sort of thing. If he did not create it, the presence of two ultimate powers in the universe - God and The Given - raises the problem of their interrelation and engenders many of the difficulties to which other forms of dualism are subject.[18]

Inasmuch as The Given is a limitation within the divine nature, it is "the source of an eternal problem and task for God."[19] Brightman's notion is that because The Given is part of the divine nature, all that God can do is to make an "increasingly better conquest of it without ever wholly eliminating it. The divine perfection, then, is an infinite series of perfectings. Perfection means perfectibility."[20] Thus God is not only finite in power but also destined to tragedy; for he contains a flaw in his nature about which he can do nothing. The Given is uncreated even as his nature is un-

created.

In Brightman's system, God (the ultimate locus of value) creates other persons (other loci of value) in an act of love. Yet if such persons must endure surd evils, can we call this the act of a benevolent deity? Brightman responds:

> A wise finite God could not possibly judge the evils (inherent in creation) to be justifiable. He judges them to be unjustifiable as well as unavoidable; yet in spite of the dross of creation, he creates because gold may be obtained. To create evils unnecessarily would be monstrous. The creation of persons whose lives must contain unjustifiable evils is nevertheless justified if redemption is possible. Unless the creator is also a redeemer, as Irenaeus held, our doom is sealed. But the fact that evil must enter into any possible creation does not mean that the act of creation is evil. Creation means only that God is responsible for exercising redemptive love; it does not mean that he is either responsible for or acquiescent in the evils which his will does not create but finds.[21]

It is instructive to compare the status of created persons in this system with the non-sentient universe. The latter, as we have seen, is The Given which God comprehends within himself (and which limits his power). Yet "all" is not "within God." Brightman holds that in order to provide for a categorical assertion of their individuality and freedom, non-divine, sentient persons (who as centers of value must be free) must be apart from God. Thus, while much is within God, there is much that is not. Accordingly, Hartshorne and Reese label his system a "limited Panentheism."[22] Interestingly enough, Brightman does display several dipolar

insights, such as his view of deity as eternal-temporal. Moreover, Brightman displays particular similarity to panentheism in his notion of God's knowledge. As he wrote:

> A God whose foreknowledge is absolute may enjoy Calvinistic sovereignty, he may issue eternal decrees which will eternally be fulfilled, he may embody the laws of mechanism, but he must forego a world of free beings who are morally self-determining. On the other hand, a God whose purpose it is to develop a society of free persons must forego some knowledge and some power if he is to attain his purpose.[23]

The Resultant God Concept. Having laid the groundwork, we are now in a position to understand Brightman's God concept:

> God is a conscious Person of perfect good will. He is the source of all value and so is worthy of worship and devotion. He is the creator of all other persons and gives them the power of free choice. Therefore his purpose controls the outcome of the universe. His purpose and his nature must be inferred from the way in which experience reveals them, namely, as being gradually attained through effort, difficulty, and suffering. Hence there is in God's very nature something which makes the effort and pain of life necessary. There is within him, in addition to his reason and his active creative will, a passive element which enters into every one of his conscious states, as sensation, instinct, and impulse enter into ours, and constitutes a problem for him. This element we call The Given. The evils of life and the delays in the attainment of value, in so far as they come from God and not from human freedom, are thus due to his nature, yet not wholly to his deliberate choice. His will and reason acting on The Given produce the world and achieve value in it.[24]
>
> God's finiteness thus does not mean that he began or will end; nor does it mean he is limited by anything external to himself (except finite wills). Strictly we should speak of a God whose

will is finite rather than a finite God; for even the finite God is absolute in the sense of being the ultimate source of all creation.

God's will, then, is in a definite sense finite. But we have called him "finite-infinite." Although the power of his will is limited by the Given, arguments for the objectivity of ideals give ground for the postulate that his will for goodness and love is unlimited; likewise he is infinite in time and space, by his unbegun and unending duration and by his inclusion of all Nature within his experience. Such a God must also be unlimited in his knowledge of all that is, although human freedom and the nature of the Given probably limit his knowledge of the precise details of the future.

The further predicate of "Controller of the Given" needs explanation. God's will is eternally seeking new forms of embodiment of the good. God may be compared to a creative artist eternally painting new pictures, composing new dramas and new symphonies. In this process, God, finding the Given as an inevitable ingredient, seeks to impose ever new combinations of given rational form on the given nonrational content. Thus the Given is, on the one hand, God's instrument for the expression of the aesthetic and moral purposes and, on the other, an obstacle to their complete and perfect expression. God's control of the Given means that he never allows the Given to run wild, that he always subjects it to law and uses it, as far as possible, as an instrument for realizing the ideal good. Yet the divine control does not mean complete determination; for in some situations the Given with its purposeless processes constitutes so great an obstacle to divine willing that the utmost endeavors of God lead to a blind alley and temporary defeat. At this point, God's control means that no defeat or frustration is final, that the will of God, partially thwarted by obstacles in the chaotic Given, finds new avenues of advance and forever moves on in the cosmic creation of new values.[25]

C. Demonstration of God's Existence

Brightman's claim, in accordance with his epistemology, is that his God hypothesis is empirically coherent and that we therefore may conclude that "God exists" is true. His demonstration of the existence of God (as defined above) rests on three claims:

1. Such a God concept offers a coherent explanation of surd evil. Obviously, if the power of God is finite, but his will for good infinite, such benevolence may never totally control the Given, source of all surd evil.

2. Such a God concept is empirically adequate and coherent, viz. it accounts for the structure of all experience as activity, rational form, and brute fact. Our experience of activity is evidence for the cosmic will of God; our experience of form is evidence for the uncreated eternal laws of reason; and our experience of brute fact is evidence for God's uncreated non-rational content (The Given).

3. Given our experience of reality, four options are possible:

   a) God is benevolent and omnipotent
   b) God is malevolent and finite in power
   c) God is benevolent and finite in power
   d) God is malevolent and omnipotent

Brightman argues that(a) (theistic absolutism) is eliminated on the ground of its failure to account for surd evil;(d) is also excluded for we clearly experience the good. Now, of the remaining alternatives, Brightman opts for(c) (theistic finitism). His argument against (b) is that "only the power of the good is adorable...if there is a power for evil, it cannot be the will of God."[26]

D. Major Ramifications

It is clear from our discussion that the Given is an inexorable aspect of God's nature, which he neither created nor approves. This claim has a radical effect on the divine power, limiting it to a never complete control over the Given, the source of surd evil. The theistic absolutist notion of omnipotence claims that God is all-powerful, for he is the independent and self-sufficient ground of the being of the world, and therefore not limited by anything which does not proceed from his own will. Brightman's view is that God is limited by an aspect of his nature, The Given, which does not proceed from his will in the first place, whatever attitude his will may take toward it. Essentially, all coherent views of the whole of reality must seek to account for both the existence of God and surd evil. Theistic absolutism puts them together by ascribing natural evil to the will of the omnipotent God; theistic finitism does so by ascribing surd evil

to the uncreated, unapproved nature of the finite One.

So much for theistic finitism's response to the problem of evil. We might also note that Brightman claims this theology may not be called dualistic. Even though he asserted that The Given was in God's nature, some found in this divine inner struggle shades of Manichaeism. Brightman retorts:

> My view is a denial of dualism, and an assertion that the unity of divine personality contains complex experience which is controlled, although not originated by God's creative will. Why describe a view as Manichaean merely because it asserts that God did not actually create his own being, but finds within himself elements which call for action? Yet I will grant that if I had to choose between a dualism of God and Satan and a monism which ascribes everything that is, without exception, to the will of God, I should prefer the dualism. Fortunately I do not have to make the choice.[27]

As concerns other significant ramifications of Brightman's theology, we may note in particular his notion of immortality. Briefly stated, his argument runs as follows: If there is a God-a supreme, creative, cosmic person - then there is an infinitely good Being committed to the eternal conservation of values. Value resides in persons. Therefore, God will provide for the immortality of a given person on the condition that there is a genuine potentiality for spiritual development present in such a person. This "conditional immortality" is based on the "crucial argument of the goodness of God."[28]

Finally, we must point out that since the Given includes

the inviolable laws of reason and nature, deity would be unable to violate them in acts of miraculous providence.

E. Critique

Baldly stated, our critique of Brightman reduces to the criticism that his God concept by no means satisfies the demands of coherence and at best is consistent. Brightman's methodology is to offer a God concept which not only does not contradict experience, but coherently explains it. However, he at best achieves consistency. Now, from the fact that x and y do not contradict each other, one may not then claim that x accounts for y; much less that x entails y. Yet this is precisely what Brightman does. For example, let us consider his discussion of evolution as evidence for theistic finitism. He states:

> If that aspect of evolution which is called the survival of the fit points to a mechanical and accidental aspect of reality, the fact that there are any organisms at all that are fit to survive points to a purposive and creative power at work in evolution...The hypothesis which these facts force on us is that of a finite God. Let us suppose a creative and rational will at work within limitations not of its own making. Then the world of life as we see it is what would be expected if the hypothesis is true: it appears to be the work of a spirit in difficulties...The elan vital rushes on. Such is the argument from evolution for belief in a finite God. It is the hypothesis which best "saves the appearances" of the good-and-evil of evolution.[29]

Evolution merely states an empirical hypothesis, subject to

verification or disverification by biological and anatomical evidence. The assertion that "a purposive and creative power" is the force underlying all this evolutionary development is not entailed by the empirical evidence.

All that the statement, "there are organisms that are fit to survive" entails is that there are given actualities whose present ability to survive allows for the increased possibility for their survival in the future. That is the only empirical consequence of evolution. Evolution simply states that in a cosmos of finite resources, those actualities possessing greater ability to survive have the greater possibility for future being. Talk of a "creative power" (while perhaps not contradicting the evidence) neither derives from experience nor does it entail the empirical consequences of evolution.

Moreover, one might add that it would (utilizing Brightman's methodology) be equally valid to claim that evolution points to a malevolent deity of limited power (recalling the second of the options offered above). This would account for the great death toll that natural selection involves. That the fit survive would be due to the fact that they alone are capable of withstanding the limited power of the deity who wishes to annihilate all non-divine beings! Would not this option be equally consistent with our experience of evolution? It certainly could "account for the facts." Brightman's sole

reason for claiming God is good and finite in power rather than malevolent is that "if there is a power for evil, it cannot be the will of God."[30] Yet is this the proper method of empirical inquiry - to allow the fiat of a definition to influence our analysis of experience? The point is: Brightman's notion about the will of God being good may well be true, but its veracity cannot be derived from his epistemological stance. In fact, neither of the options given above to account for the facts of evolution satisfy the demands of a strict empiricism.

Another case of Brightman's allowing a prior definition to influence his theology is in his notion of the immortality of persons. Brightman rests his case on the "crucial argument of God's goodness." From where does he derive this? Solely from his definition of what deity must be. Furthermore, the critic is pressed to ask Brightman where the Given enters here; certainly our experience points to the annihilation of finites. It would seem that this system would explain this as the example par excellence of the inability of deity to conquer the Given. Yet Brightman allows an apriori definition to influence the demands of his own empiricism.

One is also perplexed about the meaning Brightman ascribes to the term, "The Given." Though Brightman tells us The Given is uncreated, we do not understand why there must be a source of surd evil in the first place. That is to say,

the existence of The Given is stated as a fiat to account for surd evil, not as an explanation as to why there should be surd evils to begin with.

This is the core problem. Brightman's empirical treatment can only devise a hypothesis to account for the facts. It cannot tell us why such facts are ever exemplified in reality in the first place. Our query concerning the "why" of God and evil goes unanswered in Brightman's system. It has been suggested that Brightman's difficulty "lies in his tendency to treat empirically or pragmatically what is in essence a question of conceptual order."[31] Of course, what is metaphysically true will necessarily be exemplified in reality and be experienced by us. Nevertheless, to arrive at metaphysical verities concerning God and evil, we may have to take a different epistemological approach than Brightman's version of empiricism. In pursuit of this goal, we turn to a study of Charles Hartshorne.

Chapter IV
The Panentheism of Charles Hartshorne

Even a cursory glance at the writings of Charles Hartshorne indicates that his philosophical posture goes against the tide of the twentieth century. Reacting to the breakdown of nineteenth century metaphysics, philosophy for the most part in the English speaking world has been dominated by antimetaphysical tendencies. The analytic tradition, as it expressed itself in logical positivism called into question not only the truth claims of religious language (or any variety of metaphysical propositions) but even its very meaning. At the same time, metaphysics received little support from theologians, particularly as Barthian fideism and related forms of neo-orthodoxy stressed God's transcendence and the radical inability of metaphysical speculation to approach the God of revelation.

Despite these tendencies, Hartshorne emerged preeminent among the Americans who still pursue the philosophical enterprise in the grand style of systematic metaphysical description and construction. His goal as a philosopher is to offer a long-range and systematic description of the whole range of experience. In this regard, Hartshorne stands in the same tradition with Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel, and Whitehead.

Indeed, the deeper one probes into Hartshorne's thought, the more he becomes aware of the impressive power of a metaphysical system to offer a coherent view of reality in which various concepts are profoundly interrelated in a unified world view. Yet one also quickly realizes that Hartshorne is no slavish heir to classical metaphysics. In fact, his departures from previous views are so significant that he calls his system "neo-classical metaphysics." Despite such considerable divergence from classical views, Hartshorne is adamant in his refusal to give up the entire metaphysical enterprise. We refer here to matters that are to be clarified on the metaphysical level, i.e. "the level not of facts but of principles so general that they are presupposed or expressed even by the bare notion of 'fact' itself, any fact no matter what."[1] Of course, a demonstration of the coherency and veracity of Hartshorne's entire system would take us far afield from the specific purpose of this study. We would have to expound and critique, among other themes, Hartshorne's theories of panpsychism, indeterminism, and aesthetics. We shall, however, concentrate only upon his theology (called "neo-classical theism," inasmuch as it is part and parcel of neo-classical metaphysics). Inevitably, other elements of his system will be discussed, but only as they specifically relate to his God concept.

A. Epistemology

Hartshorne is a committed rationalist. Nevertheless, his decision "to trust reason to the end"[2] does not in the least entail a scorn for empiricism. Rationalism is simply the epistemological approach appropriate for metaphysical inquiry. This arena of inquiry, as Whitehead wrote:

> ...is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. Thus the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, in respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate. Here 'applicable' means that some items of experience are thus interpretable, and 'adequate' means that there are no items incapable of such interpretation.[3]

Accordingly, Hartshorne defines metaphysics as "the search for necessary and categorical truth" and describes metaphysical truths as those which no experience can contradict and which any experience must illustrate.[4]

"Reason" for Hartshorne, taken in a broad or general sense, is either a tracing of the consequences of ideas, that is, deduction (as in mathematics) or it is an attempt to estimate the truth of ideas by the honest weighing of evidence, the most accurate attainable estimation of pros and cons. This "weighing of evidence" itself has two levels: (1) the inductive procedure of empirical science and (2) the reason-

ing that is at work in the construction of metaphysical systems.[5] The metaphysician, in exploring "the strictly univeral features of existential possibility, those which cannot be unexemplified,"[6] attempts to describe the categories applicable to all possible worlds. This calls for a nonempirical method. Yet Hartshorne points out that such a method has often been misconstrued and in particular by classical metaphysics. Hartshorne emphasizes that metaphysics does not begin with truths that are seen to be indubitable and from these deduces implications that are equally clear and certain. Self-evidence is the goal of the inquiry, sought by bringing out the meaning of tentative descriptions of the metaphysically ultimate categories of reality. On this proper metaphysical method Hartshorne comments:

> What is this method? Here we find another apparent ground for the mistrust of metaphysics. All reasoning is supposed to be either inductive or merely deductive. If it is deductive, then either it derives consequences from indubitable premises, or its results are purely hypothetical. But these are not exhaustive divisions. Metaphysics is not a deduction of consequences either from axioms dogmatically proclaimed true nor yet from mere arbitrary postulates or hypotheses. It is an attempt to describe the most general aspects of experience, to abstract from all that is special in our awareness, and to report as clearly and accurately upon the residuum. In this process deduction from defined premises plays a role, but not the role of expanding the implications of axioms. The great historical error was to suppose that some metaphysical propositions have only to be announced to be seen true, and hence all their implications must be beyond questioning.

> The true role of deduction in metaphysics is not to bring out the content of the initially certain, but to bring out the meaning of tentative descriptions of the metaphysically ultimate in experience so that we shall be better able to judge if they do genuinely describe this ultimate. Axioms are not accepted as self-evident, then used to elicit consequences that must not be doubted. They are rather set up as questions whose full meanings only deduction of the consequences of possible answers can tell us...Thus self-evidence or axiomatic status is the goal of the inquiry, not its starting point. Metaphysical deduction justifies its premises by the descriptive adequacy of its conclusions; it does not prove the conclusions by assuming the premises.[7]

Hartshorne does provide for the testing of the process of metaphysical abstraction by an assessment of the descriptive adequacy of its resultant truths for other experiences than those from which the truths were originally abstracted. To be sure, the human person is inevitably limited in his power to abstract from his experience with sufficient generality for his conclusions to be universally valid. Accordingly, final certainty in metaphysics cannot be achieved by man. Nevertheless, Hartshorne does maintain that men's minds and the objective, real universe are interfused in a pattern and that "the ultimate natures of things lie together in a harmony which excludes mere arbitrariness." (Whitehead).[8] Moreover, the denial of the claim that the microcosm of any particular human experience is an instantiation of a metaphysical category (and thus resembles the macrocosmic universe) would entail the conclusion that the universe is incorrigibly unknow-

able to man. This would not only incapacitate metaphysics, but would ultimately destroy the scientific enterprise itself.

Hartshorne's ultimate task is to arrive at metaphysical statements which are necessary because they can never fail of exemplification in the facts. As a rationalist, Hartshorne starts with analytic concepts and procedes to demonstrate the logical necessity of metaphysical statements. Whereas an empiricist's hypothesis can be falsified by empirical inadequacy, Hartshorne's metaphysics can be falsified only by showing a contradiction in it. Conversly, Hartshorne's test for truth involves only logical consistency. Tests of empirical adequacy are relevant only to the scientific enterprise, which investigates which among possible facts happen to be actual. Metaphysicians, on the other hand, investigate which among verbally possible formulations of factuality (or "fact-as-such") are genuine, conceivable, and coherent:

> The scientist asks, what ideas will fit and explain the facts? The philosopher asks, what ideas will explain the ideas that fit the facts, and in addition, will explain the ideas which do not fit the facts? The philosopher is seeking principles so general, so basic, that they are no longer special cases to be explained by more general principles, but are themselves the most general of ideas, true not only of the actual world but of any conceivable one. Since there is nothing beyond them, nothing more fundamental, those ideas must, taken together, be self-explanatory.

> They form a system which sets forth the ultimate what? how? and why?....Because this system (if only we can find it) is completely general, it can deal with values as well as facts, with God as well as man.[9]

Given this overview of Hartshorne's epistemology and approach to the metaphysical enterprise, we may now turn to the specifically theological aspects of neo-classical metaphysics.

B. God Concept

Hartshorne's doctrine of God comprises the zenith of his metaphysical system; theology is truly here the "queen of the sciences." This theology, (variously called "neo-classical theism," "dipolar theism," "surrelativism," and "panentheism") is the ultimate expression of his neo-classical metaphysics. Without detailing the various Hartshornian notions that are explicated in this system (e.g. pansychism, indeterminism, etc.) we may simply note that such a metaphysics seeks to apply as a strict rule the law of dipolarity that we discussed in Chapter I. Accordingly, the key to Hartshorne's concept of God lies in his dipolar distinction between God's existence and his actuality. As he states, "'existence' is merely a relation of exemplification which actuality...has to essence."[10] That an essence exists merely means that the essence is actualized in any one of a limited number of potentially actual forms. The divine individual, as an actual individual, will also have a host of other quali-

ties which are completely unspecifiable in terms of its essence. The importance of this distinction is that it allows us to combine necessary and contingent elements in the concept of God and so to preserve the uniqueness and worshipfulness of God without denying reciprocity, becoming, and change in him. Thus God's existence can be regarded as uniquely supreme since only in the case of God is existence necessary (in the sense that it is impossible for God not to exist) while his actuality is, as with other entities, contingent because it partly depends upon factors independent of God and partly upon choices which God himself makes between alternatives open to him.

While deity's concrete aspect is conceived of in the contingent mode, the abstract existence of God (or the unsurpassable, perfect, and worshipful being) can be conceived of only in the mode of necessity. Simply put, were God to exist contingently, he would be surpassable because inferior to one who cannot fail to exist. Thus contingency of God's existence is incompatible with the concept of God. This necessitarian view of God's existence rules out both empirical theism: "God's existence is logically possible and in fact true" (or: the doctrine that God exists but might not) and empirical atheism: "God's existence is logically possible but in fact false" (or: the doctrine that God does not but might exist). The choices then reduce to God's existence being

either necessary (neoclassical theism) or logically impossible or meaningless (positivism). In other words, God's existence, while it must be noncontingent, may be either positively or negatively noncontingent. The real issue is then between a priori theism and positivism, the former affirming, the latter denying, the meaningfulness of theism. The question of God's existence, therefore, is not one of fact or observation but of meaning or logic.

The vital question then becomes: how can we conceive of the unsurpassable or "perfection" such that it is logically consistent and meaningful? For classical theism, the divine perfection consisted in the unincreasable maximum of goodness, such that no possibilities remained for deity to realize. Hartshorne charges that the mistake of classical theology (he cites Anselm in particular) had been to regard God's perfection as a wholly static state, an absolute which cannot change, in which all possible values are actualized. Hartshorne rejects this view of perfection primarily because it assumes that the maximum value can be a fixed static absolute. He suggests that "the greatest possible value" may make no more sense than "the greatest possible number," which is at best problematic.[11] One consideration in this regard is that given values, were they actual, would make the realization of others impossible, since any actual state of affairs must be definitely 'this', not 'that', or else 'that', and not 'this'. Joint realization of all values is therefore im-

possible. There are, quite simply, incompatible goods.[12] To this the classical theist will reply that God's perfection consists in the unincreasable maximum of goodness, that if any possibility remained for him to realize he would be incomplete and thus imperfect. To this Hartshorne responds that possibility is in principle inexhaustible.[13]

Yet the notion of God's perfection must be free of contradiction if we are to ever prove that "perfection exists." Consequently, Hartshorne is quite concerned to offer an intelligible notion of divine perfection. Briefly put, when God is defined as "unsurpassable," what is meant is that God cannot be surpassed by anything other than himself; not that he cannot continually surpass himself in the sense of continuously adding to his own perfection. Consequently, we seem driven to the conclusion that no final state of maximum perfection is possible. God's perfection must be a dynamic and continuously growing one. In any given instant, God's attributes must be categoric instances that incomparably surpass those of all other beings; but God will perpetually surpass himself in every future instant as his successive states actualize more and more possibilities. Accordingly, Hartshorne speaks of the relative perfection of God as a perfection that can never be fully maximized. There will be no end to the creative process or to the dynamic ongoing life of God:

> The infinity of possibilities in God's nature is inexhaustible in actuality by divine power, or any conceivable power. For each creative synthesis furnishes materials for a novel and richer synthesis.[14]

This discussion of Hartshorne's notion of divine perfection is but one example of how the dipolar view functions in neo-classical theism. We saw that while God's existence is necessary, his concrete actuality (i.e. the character taken by that existence at any moment) is contingent. He is, therefore, continuously in process of becoming, surpassing not only all others but also the previous states of the divine self. The upshot of all this is that God is conceived of by Hartshorne as a radically unique individual in the most eminent sense. Therefore, he is different in principle from all other beings by virtue of being superior to them. Applying the rule of dipolarity, his unique excellence means that he far surpasses every other reality in every aspect of both poles of his nature. Hence, every category that applies either to God's existence or his actuality applies as the supreme instance or the "supercase" of that category.[15] God's being and becoming; his independence and relativity, are all unique and supreme cases of categoric excellence. Hartshorne sums up his view of God's perfection in terms of "dual transcendence": God is always unsurpassable by all others but is surpassable by himself in latter states.[16]

In light of this notion of divine perfection, we can

readily understand the divine attributes in neo-classical theism. Consider the notion of God's omniscience. In terms of his knowledge, God is always unsurpassable by others for he knows all that there is to be known without any error (no one can know more than this) but is nevertheless surpassable by himself in latter states. For consider: The content of his knowledge at $time_2$ will surpass the content of his knowledge at $time_1$ if things have become actualized between $time_1$ and $time_2$. I.e., at $time_2$ he will know all that he knew at $time_1$ plus all that has come to be actual since $time_1$. This means that the perfection of God's knowledge on the dipolar view should be conceived as (1) unchangeably perfect in that it belongs to the perfection of his abstract existence to know always whatever may be knowable and as (2) developingly (and, in this sense, changingly) perfect in that it belongs to the perfection of his concrete actuality that he will actually know what things actually are knowable. Moreover, God's perfection entails that he knows all that there is to be known exactly as it is. Thus, God, in order to have perfect knowledge, must grow in actual knowledge as each new event occurs and so becomes knowable as having occured. This implies that reality is not static but in process and that time is real for God. Thus, even for God the future is not completely determined. Yet, true to dipolarism, God is of course also eternal in the sense that his abstract existence is without beginning and never will come to an end.[17] We should also

point out that Hartshorne's dipolar notion of omniscience helps resolve the troublesome supposition in classical theism that God has necessary knowledge of contingent truth. He argues that some of God's properties must be contingent if there are any contingent events or truths in the world. He reasons that if God's knowledge that I exist is necessary knowledge, then my existence must be a necessity in God; but surely my existence is contingent existence, and, therefore, God's knowledge of my existence must be contingent also.[18]

This analysis of the divine knowledge leads to an interesting conclusion for Hartshorne. If God is sympathetically aware of whatever exists, he is then influenced by all the actualities which he knows. That God is contingent or dependent on the objects of his knowledge follows from the fact that, had these things been different in any way, God would correspondingly have been different. Such cognition, since it means participation in the concrete life of things, is also perfect love. Far from being impassible, God is supremely sensitive and relative to all. As God's perfection is his "modal coincidence"--the notion that God's actuality is coextensive with all actuality and his potentiality with all possibility--he includes all unfailingly such that a greater <u>than himself</u> is inconceivable. Since the state of the world changes every moment, the contingent, actual states of the modally coincident God also change each moment in response to

the changes in the world. Thus God is not only the cause (or "necessary condition") of the world (or any world), but is also supreme effect, constantly being enriched by every new actuality.

Hartshorne is thus a panentheist. To claim that deity's perfection consists in the fact that all actualities are actual in God, and that all potentialities are potential in him is in fact to claim: "He is the Whole in every categorical sense, all actuality in one individual actuality, and all possibility in one individual possibility."[19] Hartshorne thus differs from classical theism by asserting that all the world is entirely within the being of God instead of outside him. Yet, unlike pantheism, he insists that the creatures which are all in God nevertheless have a measure of genuine freedom, independence, and even capacity for evil. Moreover, in distinction from pantheism, Harshornian panentheism also asserts that, besides the totality of ordinary causes and effects, God as the inclusive whole may act as a distinct causal agent upon the parts which constitute him and the universe.[20] Furthermore, panentheism includes the notion that God's abstract essence or eternal existence is logically independent of, and hence distinguishable from, every particular world.[21]

The basis for the panentheistic notion that everything must exist in God rests upon the Hartshornian axiom that the known is contained in the knower. Divine knowledge, being

fully adequate, has knowledge of all that exists. But to include relations within oneself must mean to include the terms of the relations. Therefore, all that exists must exist within God, since God's knowledge of everything exists within himself:

> ...To know a thing is to include it. Our human knowledge may seem indeed not to include its objects; thus we know the mountain, although it is apparently wholly without us, etc. (However) most of our awareness of the almost infinite complexity of objects is subconscious intuitive feeling without clarity as to detail...But in the clearest case of direct and certain knowing, (e.g.) when we know a color, a sensory quality, it is likewise clear that this quality becomes a determination of our own actuality, our own experience. In the divine instance we must suppose absent those features of vagueness, indirectness, and uncertainty which in us are responsible for the sense that the object is outside us; we must suppose explicit direct consciousness of the object in its fulness. Hence to think that the world which God knows is entirely outside his knowing and indeed even less constitutive of his actuality than what we know is of ours (and this is implied by the classical theistic notion of God as absolutely unaffected by the world) is the opposite of logical.[22]

These notions of God's supreme relativity and the inclusion of the world in God have profound ramifications for the panentheistic notion of omnipotence. Hartshorne contends that the classical theistic idea of omnipotence is that of a monopolistic concentration of power: the wielding, by one agent, of all the power there is or could be. This implies that

all other beings are powerless. But, if "being is power," then power over being is power over power, and the ideal or perfect agent will enjoy the optimal concentration of efficacy which is compatible with there being other efficacious agents. Hartshorne readily allows that God may be supremely powerful. Yet, in a world of creatures, it does seem plain that he cannot literally have all the power:[23] "Omnipotence is influence (and susceptibility to influence) ideal in quality, degree, and scope, so that all beings are subject to its optimal (not absolute) control."[24]

We can best understand what God does with his power when we consider the relationship between God and the world in panentheism. For Hartshorne, God is the world's mind (or "soul"). Thus God has direct access to all parts of the world through immediate social relations. The universe is then a besouled organism. Moreover, the concrete divine personality is partially new each moment, with each new, enriched divine self preserving its preceding states perfectly in its memory.[25] As the world's soul, God infallibly preserves each successive event in his perpetual memory, and in this sense renders it immortal.[26] God is thus the conserver of all value. As concerns God's power vis-a-vis the world, this is simply a function of the supreme relativity of God. God's power is essentially an influence whose effectiveness is dependent on the creatures' awareness of God's feelings

and desires each moment:

> God orders the universe, according to panentheism, by taking into his own life all the currents of feeling in existence. He is the most irresistible of influences precisely because he is himself the most open to influence....In this vision of a deity who is not a supreme autocrat, but a universal agent of "persuasion," whose "power is the worship he inspires" (Whitehead), that is, flows from the intrinsic appeal of his infinitely sensitive and tolerant relativity, by which all things are kept moving in orderly togetherness, we may find help in facing our task of today, the task of contributing to the democratic self-ordering of a world whose members not even the supreme orderer reduces to mere subjects with the sole function of obedience.[27]

In panentheism, God and the world imply each other at the fundamental metaphysical level: "Apart from God not only would this world not be conceivable, but no world, and no state of reality, or even of unreality, could be understood."[28] Conversely, one cannot conceive of God without conceiving of a world. This is equivalent to saying: at no time did the category of God's concrete actuality fail of exemplification. Creation ex nihilo is rejected, to be replaced by the notion that God and man (or, for that matter, all non-divine being) are co-creators (though God is the eminent creator) who in every moment participate in the universal creativity of self and others (including God in every new concrete state). The everlasting creative advance of God and the world literally had no beginning and will have no end.[29]

In sum: God for Hartshorne is the Supreme Person,

whose nature is irreducibly dipolar and who exemplifies both members of all categorical contrasts in eminent fashion; who is the supremely relative lover and mind of the universe; who is eternal-temporal Consciousness, knowing and including the world;[30] who as the modally coincident self-surpassing surpasser of all others is the perfect being alone worthy of total worship and devotion.

C. Demonstration of God's Existence

As the existence of God is not a question of fact or observation but of meaning and logic, the ontological argument has a special appeal for Hartshorne. In fact, it is Hartshorne who is to be credited with re-opening the entire issue of the ontological argument in modern philosophy (despite the protests of those who believed Kant and Hume had long ago demonstrated its failure).

Hartshorne has called our attention to the fact that there are not one, but two versions of the ontological argument in the writings of St. Anselm. The first of these arguments, in Proslogion II, begins with the notion of God as "a being than which nothing greater can be conceived."[31] To be sure, this idea of God is an object of thought and thus exists in our minds (in intellectu). Anselm's claim is that such a being also exists in extra-mental reality (in re).

He argues that it must so exist in re, for otherwise we would be able to conceive of a being that is greater than "a being than which nothing greater can be conceived." But this, of course, is absurd. Therefore, God exists in re.

Kant held that this argument fails because it makes existence a predicate:

> "Being" is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgement. The proposition, "God is omnipotent," contains two concepts, each of which has its object-God and omnipotence. The small word "is" adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate in its relation to the subject. If, now, we take the subject (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence), and say "God is," or "There is a God," we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates...The attempt to establish the existence of a supreme being by means of the famous ontological argument...is therefore merely so much labour and effort lost.[32]

In his rejection of the assumption that existence is a real predicate, Kant means that:

> If it were a real, and not merely a grammatical, predicate, it would be able to form part of the definition of God, and it could then be an analytic truth that God exists. But existential propositions (propositions asserting existence) are always synthetic, always true or false as a matter of fact rather than as a matter of definition. Whether any specified kind of thing exists can be determined only by the tests of experience. The function of "is" or "exists" is not to add to the content of a concept but to posit an object answering to a concept.[33]

Hartshorne's response to this Kantian line of criticism is to point out that it is not an unexceptional rule that existence is not a predicate. While Hartshorne agrees that Kant's criticism is effective against this first version of the argument, it fails to work against the stronger second version. Here, not mere existence, but necessary existence is taken as a predicate. To be sure, if the existence as well as the nonexistence of a being are alike conceivable, then the concept of that being will not provide a basis for inferring its existence. As Kant established, existence cannot be a deducible predicate of the being. Thus, from the concept of a table alone, I cannot determine whether one exists. But this applies only to beings whose mode of existence is contingent (such as tables and islands). Accordingly, Kant's rule will be widespread precisely because contingency of existence is generally the case.[34] However, if the concept of a being, rather than permitting the alternative of its existing or not existing, instead excludes the possibility of its not existing, then necessity of existence is a deducible predicate of the being.[35] The conception of a being whose nonexistence is impossible is then an exception to the alleged universal truth that existence is never a predicate.

This, in Hartshorne's view, was "Anselm's Discovery," which may be expressed as: "to exist without conceivable alternative of not existing is better than to exist with such

alternative."[36] Although Anselm himself never used an expression such as "necessary existence," Hartshorne refers us to Proslogion III where this notion is communicated. There it is written that "God cannot be conceived not to exist.--God is that, than which nothing greater can be conceived.--That which can be conceived not to exist is not God."[37] The argument can now be stated: If God is conceived as "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," he must be conceived as being incapable of not existing, for to be incapable of not existing is greater than to be capable of either existing or of not existing; but that which is incapable of not existing must exist; therefore, God necessarily exists.[38]

Since "necessary existence" is a predicate in this argument, Hartshorne terms this type of ontological argument "the modal proof" for God's existence. Hartshorne formalizes his version as follows:[39]

1. $q \longrightarrow Nq$	"Anselm's Principle": perfection could not exist contingently
2. $Nq \vee \sim Nq$	Excluded middle
3. $\sim Nq \rightarrow N \sim Nq$	Form of Becker's Postulate: modal status is always necessary
4. $Nq \vee N \sim Nq$	Inference from (2,3)
5. $N \sim Nq \rightarrow N \sim q$	Inference from (1); the necessary falsity of the consequent implies that of the antecedent (Modal form of *modus tollens*)
6. $Nq \vee N \sim q$	Inference from (4,5)

7. $\sim N \sim q$	Intuitive postulate (or conclusion from other theistic arguments): perfection is not impossible
8. Nq	Inference from (6,7)
9. $Nq \rightarrow q$	Modal axiom
10. q	Inference from (8,9)

In this formalization:

'q' for '$(\exists x)Px$' There is a perfect being, or perfection exists.

'N' for 'it is necessary (logically true) that'

'$\sim$' for 'it is not true that'

'$\vee$' for 'or'

'$p \rightarrow q$' for 'p strictly implies q'

Hick summarizes this formalization:

> This argument starts from the premise that the concept of God as eternal, self-existent being is such that the question whether God exists cannot be a contingent question but must be one of logical necessity or impossibility. A being who exists, but of whom it is conceivable that he might not have existed, would be less than God, for only a being whose existence is necessary rather than contingent can be that than which nothing greater is conceivable. But if such a necessary being does not exist, it must be a necessary rather than a contingent fact that he does not exist. Thus God's existence is either logically necessary or logically impossible. However, it has not been shown to be impossible--that is, the concept of such a being has not been shown to be self-contradictory--and therefore we must conclude that God necessarily exists.[40]

The crux of the matter revolves around whether we can show that the notion of "necessary existence" is not self-

contradictory. Hartshorne contends that Anselm's notion of the divine perfection involved a being wholly necessary and bereft of possibility. Accordingly, contingency of existence was then eliminated as being incompatible with God's perfection. Anselm's mistake, according to Hartshorne, was to conclude that necessity in God applied not only to his existence but to all aspects of the divine reality. Thus the classical notion of God's perfection as the unincreasable maximum of goodness: that if any possibility remained for him to realize he would be incomplete and thus imperfect. As we pointed out in the previous section, this makes God's perfection a fixed absolute and involves it in a host of difficulties.

Hartshorne's notion of God's perfection as modal coincidence not only corrects these deficiencies but also lends significant meaning to the notion of necessary existence. For consider: God would not be modally infinite (in principle all inclusive) were he capable of non-existence, for in order to include all unfailingly he must exist and exist unconditionally. The necessary existence of God is best understood as itself necessary, for it is the categorical complement of God's concrete contingency; and God is the exemplification <u>par excellence</u> of the categories. God's existence is necessary in the sense that it is omnitolerant of all other real or potential realities, none of which can prevent him

from existing. That is, the existence of God is compatible with all real possibilities; whatever happens, he will continue to exist.[41]

God's necessary existence refers only to his abstract pole, for the necessary in Hartshornian metaphysics is merely the common denominator of all possible states of reality. This common denominator is God's abstract existence per se. However, because of God's concrete pole, he will always be somehow actualized. In other words: the 'how' of divine actualization is a contingently different fact each moment, but the fact that God is actualized is an eternally necessary abstract truth.[42] As the common factor of all possibilities, God in this system is the ground of all possiblity. Every possibility is a realization of the divine potentiality, and every actualized possiblity is an enrichment of God's concrete actuality. The necessary existence of God means that through each of his concrete, actual states God remains unsurpassable by another. The necessarily existent God never fails of exemplification in some divine concretion or another.

This last point is vital, for it tells us that the ontological argument can only demonstrate that the necessary existence of God is demonstrable a priori. We must remember that it tells us nothing as to the content of the divine concretions, each in themselves instances of the divine perfection or unsurpassability by another. It is, therefore, not

surprising that Barth and others have argued that assent to the validity of the argument alone need not entail a "conversion" experience. As Norman Malcolm wrote:

> I can imagine an atheist going through the argument, becoming convinced of its validity, acutely defending it against objections, yet remaining an atheist. The only effect it could have on the fool of the Psalm would be that he stopped saying in his heart, "There is no God," because he would now realize that this is something he cannot meaningfully say or think. It is hardly to be expected that a demonstrative argument should, in addition, produce in him a living faith.[43]

Perhaps Malcolm is a bit extreme here. Yet, whatever we ultimately decide concerning the role of philosophical proofs in the religious enterprise, surely Hartshorne's version of the onotological argument lends to the panentheist, if not the impact of a "religious experience," at least that rational infrastructure with which he can deepen the understanding of his faith.

D. Ramifications

--We have seen that in panentheism God and the world are mutually interdependent such that the eternity of the world is a function of the eternity of God. Interestingly enough, the world in panentheism does in a sense limit God's power-if by "limit" we understand that, inasmuch as there are any other beings, God cannot have all the power there is. The creatures in this system are genuinely free to produce

evil as well as good. Moreover, Hartshorne affirms an irreducible element of chance and tragedy in reality, given his espousal of the (partial) self-determination of all events and the reality of the future as indeterminate:

> According to neoclassical theism, all creatures, and not just the creator, must be in some degree creative or partly free; hence in the cosmic interplay of innumerable acts of freedom there are bound to be aspects of disorder and partial randomness or chance....Not only must the creatures derive concrete details from other creatures, but God himself must be qualified by creaturely choices. To know what the creatures decide to do is to be Himself in his cognitive state decided by these decisions. God can know what we freely decide only because we do so decide. Thus our contingency becomes also his. Our freedom is in a measure, in Buber's words, "divine destiny". There is chance and tragedy even for God. This is part of what creaturely freedom means.[44]

Hartshorne's God is limited by a world whose constituent beings are centers of power and freedom, and whose decisions necessarily add an element of chance to reality. This is the source of evil, and results in an essential meliorism. God is the cosmic sufferer, who experiences not only the joys of the world but its inevitable tragedy as well. Nor is he "blissful," at least not in the absolute sense intended by classical theism. Surely, his perfect knowledge prevents this. God knows, as it were, the profound truth of Kohelet: "The more knowledge, the more pain." Chance, freedom, and the impossibility of the joint realization of all values lend an inevitable note of tragedy to existence.

--In response to the charge of dualism, it seems as though panentheism has no problem here. To begin with, since the totality of the universe is within the being of God, there is no problem (as exists in classical theism!) of "God and something else." Moreover, the panentheist can respond forcefully to the charge that the ascription of a plurality of attributes, properties, aspects, or even "poles" to the divine nature is tantamount to polytheism:

> This is a confusion of logical levels. A mere property is not a deity in any reasonable sense. Only if the several properties would conflict with each other, or interact as agent and patient, or require a higher will to compose their differences, or something of that sort, does the question of polytheism (or dualism) arise. Monotheism means that all wills are ordered by the will of one supreme individual, that all truth is known by a supreme knower.[45]

Furthermore, it must be recalled that the panentheist notion of God's "dual transcendence" posits God's unsurpassibility by any other and thus assures God of radical superiority over all beings.

--Finally, we make mention of Hartshorne's fascinating notion of immortality.[46] He rejects both the notions of resurrection and the immortality of the soul. The idea of social immortality, i.e. being remembered by posterity, also is deemed inadequate; unless, as Hartshorne states, God as the divine survivor of all deaths is included among one's posterity. Death is real. Death is final. Yet what we

have been in life is everlastingly preserved in the perfect divine memory:

> In short, our adequate immortality can only be God's omniscience of us. He to whom all hearts are open remains evermore open to any heart that ever has been apparent to Him. What we once were to Him, less than that we never can be, for otherwise He Himself as knowing us would lose something of His own reality; and this loss of something that has been must be final, since, if deity cannot furnish the abiding reality of events, there is, as we have seen, no other way, intelligible to us at least, in which it can be furnished. Now the meaning of omniscience is a knowledge which is coextensive with reality, which can be taken as the measure of reality. Hence, if we can never be less than we have been to God, we can in reality never be less than we have been. Omniscience and the indestructability of every reality are correlative aspects of one truth. Death cannot mean the destruction, or even the fading, of the book of one's life; it can mean only the fixing of its concluding page. Death writes "The End" upon the last page, but nothing further happens to the book, by way of either addition or subtraction.[47]

Death, therefore, is not destruction. It is rather the setting of a definitive limit, not the obliteration of what is limited. True immortality is "everlasting fame before God;"[48] the knowledge that all the goodness, value, and novelty of our life enriches the divine life. Though definitely limited, our lives that have been lived are indestructible:

> To live everlastingly, as God does, can scarcely be our privilege; but we may earn everlasting places as lives well lived within the one life that not only evermore will have been lived, but evermore and inexhaustibly will be lived in ever new ways.[49]

E. Critique

That Hartshorne's system is deeply coherent and consistent; that it is true to its epistemological stance; that it provides a competent theology and religious outlook for the modern person--all these points have been duly noted by many others. I only wish here to address myself to two issues relating to the ontological argument:

1. I believe that Hartshorne's version of the ontological argument is valid. There is, however, a criticism of the modal argument which is interesting even though, upon analysis, it fails. John Hick criticizes Hartshorne for confusing two notions of necessary being.[50] The first is logical necessity, which applies only to propositions. A proposition is logically necessary if it is true in virtue of the meanings of the terms composing it. The second is ontological necessity, referring to a being who cannot fail to exist. Hick charges that Hartshorne confuses these notions and wrongly deduces from the idea of God's ontological necessity that his existence is logically necessary. The choice then comes down to: God's existence is logically necessary or impossible (cf. step #6 in the argument). Dismissing the latter, Hartshorne concludes, "God exists." Hick charges that it does not follow from the notion of God's ontological necessity that his existence is logically necessary. All that follows, he claims, is that <u>if</u> such a being exists, his ex-

istence is ontologically necessary, and that if no such being exists, it is impossible for one to exist. This is not a new criticism of the argument. Another proponent of the second version of the ontological argument, Norman Malcolm, offers a response to this criticism. Simply put, it is a challenge to those who claim, "If such a being exists, his existence is ontologically necessary" to make sense out of the antecedent clause. As it is particularly forceful in its defense of the modal version, we do well to quote at length:

> I think that Caterus, Kant, and numerous other philosophers have been mistaken in supposing that the proposition "God is a necessary being" (or "God necessarily exists") is equivalent to the conditional proposition "If God exists then He necessarily exists." For how do they want the antecedent clause, "If God exists," to be understood? Clearly they want it to imply that it is possible that God does not exist. The whole point of Kant's analysis is to try to show that it is possible to "reject the subject." Let us make this implication explicit in the conditional proposition, so that it reads: "If God exists (and it is possible that He does not) then He necessarily exists." But now it is apparent, I think, that these philosophers have arrived at a self-contradictory position. I do not mean that this conditional proposition, taken alone, is self-contradictory. Their position is self-contradictory in the following way. On the one hand, they agree that the proposition "God necessarily exists" is an a priori truth; Kant implies that it is "absolutely necessary," and Caterus says that God's existence is implied by His very name. On the other hand, they think that it is correct to analyse this proposition in such a way that it will entail the proposition "It is possible that God does not exist." But so far from its being the case that the proposition "God necessarily exists"

> entails the proposition "It is possible that God does not exist," it is rather the case that they are <u>incompatible</u> with one another! Can anything be clearer than that the conjunction "God necessarily exists but it is possible that He does not exist" is self-contradictory? Is it not just as plainly self-contradictory as the conjunction "A square necessarily has four sides but it is possible for a square not to have four sides"? In short, this familiar criticism of the ontological argument is self-contradictory, because it accepts <u>both</u> of two incompatible propositions.
>
> One conclusion we may draw from our examination of this criticism is that (contrary to Kant) there is a lack of symmetry, in an important respect, between the proposition "A triangle has three angles" and "God has necessary existence," although both are a priori. The former can be expressed in the conditional assertion "If a triangle exists (and it is possible that none does) it has three angles." The latter cannot be expressed in the corresponding conditional assertion without contradiction.[51]

In other words, logical necessity does not entail ontological necessity. That "a triangle has three angles" is logically necessary does not entail the necessity that any triangle exist. On the other hand, ontological necessity <u>does</u> entail logical necessity of existence. Thus "God's existence is ontologically necessary" entails "It is logically necessary that God exists". To yield this as a conditional would, as Malcolm establishes, create an absurd antecedent clause. Ontological necessity is the broader category and is inclusive of logical necessity. They do not, therefore, conflict in the manner proposed by Hick nor can God's necessary existence ever be a contingent affair.

2. Hartshorne has some interesting contributions to make concerning the nature and role of philosophical proofs for the existence of God. In a significant chapter entitled "Why There cannot be Empirical Proofs", Hartshorne emphasizes that the mere abstract existence of God is not a "state of affairs" that makes any recognizable difference in the world.[52] God's existence is not a fact among other facts, but rather the principle of possibility of all facts. Since God's existence is conceived of as necessary, i.e. he exists whatever else happens to exist, God's being is "an absolutely inexplicable brute fact."[53] It is simply the case, true of reality, just as an a priori truth is true of the system that embodies it. Thus, if God's existence is compatible with all possible states of affairs, it follows that there can be no empirical proofs. God's existence is either necessary or impossible. Nor does the fact that all demonstrations for God's existence must be a priori mean that the ontological argument is the only valid form of proof. Hartshorne contends that the cosmological and teleological arguments can be reworked as non-empirical demonstrations of God's abstract existence.[54]

In all this we must not forget that an a priori proof can demonstrate only the abstract, necessary existence of God. To overemphasize this pole of God would be to fall prey to the monopolar prejudice. There is as yet the other pole

of the divine reality, viz., God's dependent, related, concrete, and contingent actuality. The actuality of God, related to the actuality of all the universe at a given moment, is the supreme fact. Accordingly, it is known only by direct, empirical observation; by man's "encounter" with reality.[55] However, inasmuch as the concrete actuality of God includes the entire universe, to comprehend God would mean to comprehend all that there is:

> To "explain God" would mean explaining absolutely everything. Our knowledge of God is infinitesimal. Nevertheless it is, I am persuaded, the only adequate organizing principle of our life and thought.[56]

Hartshorne contends that although we can know little of God, we can maximize our knowledge through direct encounter with our world. Our study of Hartshorne, however, has focused primarily on his concern with establishing the necessity of God's existence (his abstract pole). It behooves us then, in our quest for a total view of panentheism, to turn to a study of Martin Buber, the preeminent philosopher of encounter, for an understanding of this path to knowledge of God's other pole: his concrete actuality.

Chapter V

The Panentheism of Martin Buber

Any attempt to systematize the theology of Martin Buber is fraught with difficulties. Buber himself eschewed systematic theology, arguing that he who would compartmentalize God as an idea in a philosophical system does not truly love God:

> For the idea of God, that masterpiece of man's construction, is only the image of images, the most lofty of all the images by which man imagines the imageless God. It is essentially repugnant to man to recognize this fact, and remain satisfied. For when man learns to love God, he senses an actuality which rises above the idea. Even if he makes the philosopher's great effort to sustain the object of his love as an object of his philosophic thought, the love itself bears witness to the existence of the Beloved.[1]

Buber views the effort to fashion an idea of deity through ratiocination as the attempt by man to possess God by making him into a thing.[2] In fact, Buber goes so far as to claim that he who rationally reflects upon the content of his religious experience, or even so much as "searches for God" never comes to the truth of the matter:

> ...in such a reflexion, he is no longer confronted by a Thou, he can do nothing but establish an It..God in the realm of things, believe that he knows of God as of an It, and so speak about Him. Just as the "self"- seeking man, instead of directly living something or other, or perception or an affection, reflects about his perspective or reflective I, and thereby misses the truth of the event, so the man who seeks God....instead of allowing the

> gift to work itself out reflects about the Giver--and misses both.[3]

Indeed, the lasting impression of Buber's thought is that while we may enter into relation with God, we must neither talk about God or reflect upon our encounter with him. God is the Person "that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."[4]

Buber's protest against taking an ideational approach to the divine - human encounter notwithstanding, the fact is he does engage in a limited amount of abstract and theoretical theologizing. It is the contention of this study that Buber may (despite his disregard for such a procedure) be classified as a panentheist. We refer here solely to his core theological position. As we shall see in our discussion of his approach to the problem of evil, Buber is by no means consistent in applying the ramifications of such a theology to the various issues confronted in a complete philosophy of religion.

In focusing in on Buber's theology in a systematic fashion, we also hope to counter a procedure which one finds particularly in neo-orthodox theological circles. We refer to the frequent use of Buber's theology of encounter as a support for theologies that strongly resemble theistic absolutism. This phenomenon is not difficult to explain, seeing as Buber himself sometimes gives the impression of being a traditional theist. Nevertheless, such a procedure is mistaken. A crit-

ical analysis clearly reveals that Buber is in no guise a theistic absolutist, but a panentheist. We hope that our critique of Buber will help prevent any further misleading conclusions about his thought or his relation to theistic absolutism.

A. Epistemology

Buber posits that there are two ways of knowing. The first way or "I-It" knowing defines a relationship between subject and object where the former knows the latter by experiencing it in some way. One way of expressing this is that I-It knowing involves knowledge of the phenomenal world. Accordingly, it is expressed in the language of transitive verbs having some thing for their object:[5]

> I perceive something. I am sensible of something. I imagine something. I will something. I feel something...This and the like together establish the realm of It.[6]

Thus, for example, we may know a great deal about a tree. In fact, we may know the complete catalogue of phenomenal knowledge that is humanly possible to know about a particular tree: its height, color, botanical classification, environmental effect, etc. Still, Buber would insist, we don't know the tree itself. In order to know "the tree itself,"[7] one must enter into relation with it with one's entire being. This "encounter," which is reciprocal and in which neither party

(which can include the world of nature and spiritual beings, as well as human beings)[8] looses its individual identity, is termed "I-Thou" knowing. In this type of relationship, Buber eliminates the traditional epistemological categories of subject and object. There is no longer the issue, "how does the subject know the object?," but only the affirmation, indubitably verified by this ineffable relationship, that the encounter (or "dialogue" or "meeting") takes place between the I and the Thou:

> Buber emphasizes that an I-Thou relationship takes place between people. Buber tries to transcend the subject-object dichotomy by affirming the ontologically prior reality of the "between," the reality of the meeting itself. Consider, for example, two people in a real dialogue. To Buber, something is happening not only to the two participants but between them. It is an organic process whereby the "whole," the interaction and the synergy created thereby, is more than the sum of its parts.[9]

The question then arises: if, in the I-Thou encounter, there is no phenomenal knowledge gained about an object (for there are no longer any subjects or objects per se, but only the encounter between them), what then becomes known? Buber answers this for us in his description of an I-Thou encounter with a tree: "I encounter no soul or dryad of the tree, but the tree itself."[10] This calls to mind Kant's notion of a "thing-in-itself" or "noumenon." Unlike Kant, however, Buber seems to be saying that human knowledge is not limited to a spatio-temporal manifold in which space and time are simply forms of the human mode of perception. Kant asserted that while some

other type of mind, e.g. one not limited to knowledge based on senuous awareness, might know things in themselves, we obviously cannot. Buber, however, asserts that the I-Thou relationship grants such knowledge to its participants. Moreover, the knowledge gained in the I-Thou encounter in highly significant, for it has a profound effect upon the participants. The upshot of genuine dialogue is that "each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them."[11]

The I-Thou relationship is differentiated from all other relationships by eight major characteristics:[12] (1) It involves a person's whole being and undivided attention. (2) It is exclusive: one is totally grasped by the encounter. (3) It is direct, free of deception and totally spontaneous. (4) It is effortless: though one contributes to the encounter, an act of will is not involved. The truth is that one responds to the Thou which meets one through grace. (5) It takes place only in the present. (6) It takes place <u>between</u> the participants. (7) It is reciprocal or mutual. (8) It does not involve the absorption of the I into the Thou. <u>Contra</u> any notions of "mystical union," the I achieves true realization of being: "I become through my relation to the Thou: as I become I, I say Thou."[13]

Buber emphasizes that no human being can survive in a constant state of I-Thou encounters. The world of It, of spatio-

temporal, phenomenal, scientific, and economic knowledge is necessary for human life. Buber would stress, however, that a world without any I-Thou encounters would be a world of amoral fact, totally devoid of value and love. Thus the world of It becomes evil only if it prevents the interpenetration of the Thou:

> According to Buber, every I-Thou encounter on the human plane is evanescent and ephemeral--"Every Thou in our world must become an It." Every "Thou" in our human world is temporary because it is the nature of the human mind to convert experiences into objects of reflection. Man cannot live forever in the dimension of immediate experience. He is destined always to transform immediacy into reflection. And it is Buber's point that man is, in a sense, condemned to transform immediacy into reflection: "Without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man." Man cannot live without "It" because of his insatiable need to control; but a man who is incapable of a pure, direct, immediate encounter with another is not a man.[14]

Clearly then, the I-Thou relationship is of supreme value in Buber's system. It is, then, of little wonder that the attempt to ground this notion of Thou in eternity forms the basis of Buber's doctrine of God.

B. God Concept

According to Buber, every particular I-Thou relation is a key to the knowledge of reality; the "thing-in-itself." That is why Buber wrote: "All real living is meeting."[15] That is, reality is knowable through the I-Thou encounter.

Moreover, the real is discovered not in the participants but in what is happening between them. And what has always been "between" them is the Thou that by its nature cannot become It; the "Eternal Thou," whose presence is manifest whenever we have an I-Thou relationship:

> The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou. Through this mediation of the Thou of all beings fulfilment, and non-fulfilment, of relations comes to them: the inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It.[16]

The universe is in reality constituted of personhood (or "Thou-ness"). It is only when, due to our human shortcomings, we experience the world as It, that we fail to see the ultimate personal quality of the universe. God for Buber is simply the eternal personhood of the universe. That this is what is intended by his notion of the Eternal Thou is borne out by his remarks in the Postscript to the Second Edition of I and Thou where he voices his basic agreement with Spinoza's concept of God. Buber does differ, however, in that he would add the notion of personhood as an attribute of deity:

> The concept of personal being is indeed completely incapable of declaring what God's essential being is, but it is both permitted and necessary to say that God is also a Person. If as an exception I wished to translate what is meant by this into philosophical language, that of Spinoza, I should have to say that of God's infinitely many attributes we men do not know two, as Spinoza thinks,

> but three: to spiritual being (in which is to be found the source of what we call spirit) and to natural being (which presents itself in what is known to us as nature) would be added the attribute of personal being. From this attribute would stem my and all men's being as person, as from those other attributes would stem my and all men's being as spirit and being as nature. And only this third attribute of personal being would be given to us to be known direct in its quality as an attribute.[17]

It is this attribute of personhood that makes Buber's theology a panentheism rather than a pantheism. As a person, God is encountered at all times as a Thou, yet like all I-Thou relationships, even the one with the Eternal Thou is mutual and reciprocal; the participants retain their individual identities. This means that the world and God are not statically identified (as in pantheism) but that, as panentheism teaches, the world is in God:

> To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a man to reach God; but he who sees the world in Him stands in His presence. "Here world, there God" is the language of It; "God in the world" is another language of It; but to eliminate or leave behind nothing at all, to include the whole world in the Thou, to give the world its due and it's truth, to include nothing beside God but everything in him--this is full and complete relation.[18]

> I know nothing of a "world" and a "life in the world" that might separate a man from God. What is thus described is actually life with an alienated world of It, which experiences and uses. He who truly goes out to meet the world goes out also to God. Concentration and outgoing are necessary, both in truth, at once the one and the other, which is the One. God comprises, but is not, the universe. So, too, God comprises, but is not, my Self. [19]

Moreover, God as Person is eternally in a state of becoming and enrichment as he derives value from the world. Non-divine beings achieve soteria when they realize they are contributing to the becoming of God. To affirm, as Buber does, that our freedom is in a measure the "divine destiny" is to admit a contingent pole in God:

> You know always in your heart that you need God more than everything; but do you not know too that God needs you--in the fullness of His eternity needs you? How would man be, how would you be, if God did not need him, did not need you? You need God in order to be--and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life. In instruction and in poems men are at pains to say more, and they say too much--what turgid and presumptuous talk that is about the "God who becomes"; but we know unshakably in our hearts that there is a becoming of the God that is. The world is not divine sport, it is divine destiny. There is divine meaning in the life of the world, of man, of human persons, of you and of me.[20]

This is, indeed, Buber's great contribution to panentheistic thought:

> When we encounter God, we encounter the world as contributory to the life of God, which is social, receptive, very far from "impassible," or exclusive of finite things. To find God, we do not leave the world or deny its reality; we "hallow" it; we see it as integral to the actuality of him who is Thou for each of us and who alone is individually the same Thou for all....As Buber says we participate with him (God) in the creation, not just of the world, but of something in God himself--for there is no world, save in God. It is too seldom considered that, if we do less than decide something as to God himself, we decide nothing at all. God's appreciation measures reality.[21]

C. Demonstration of the Existence of God

We have seen that, despite Buber's polemic against philosophical theology, he does espouse a doctrine of God which contains the central theses of panentheism. Unfortunately, in his enthusiasm for the concrete, relative, contingent pole of God, Buber almost totally ignores deity's abstract and necessary existence. Buber's error was to confuse the failure of classical philosophical theology to erect a meaningful and compelling system with all such attempts. Consequently, Buber's concern with the concrete, encountered Thou led to his utter disdain for the "God of the Philosophers" who is always an It, an idea packaged and categorized for man's use. Accordingly, human proofs can never lead to the Eternal Thou:

> Actually there is no such thing as seeking God, for there is nothing in which He could not be found. How foolish and hopeless would be the man who turned aside from the course of his life in order to seek God; even though he won all the wisdom of solitude and all the power of concentrated being he would miss God....Every relational event is a stage that affords him a glimpse into the consummating event....It is a finding without seeking, a discovering of the primal, or origin. His sense of Thou, which cannot be satiated till he finds the endless Thou, had the Thou present to it from the beginning; the presence had only to become wholly real to him in the reality of the hallowed life of the world...God cannot be inferred in anything--in nature, say, as its author, or in history as its master, or in the subject as the self that is thought in it. Something else is not "given" and God then elicited from it; but God is the Being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly, over against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed.[22]

Buber remains consistent with his central epistemological premise, "As I become I, I say Thou," viz., that our belief in the reality of the external world comes only from our relation to other selves.[23] Accordingly, the reality of God (i.e. as existent in extra-mental reality) is known only by an I-Thou encounter. God's existence is an indubitable datum for the I in this encounter. Any talk of "inferring" God's existence from the encounter would already be to enter the world of It. Moreover, a person who has such an encounter cannot tell you about it, for this too is to enter the world of It: a world of language and reflection. There can be no objective standards for determining what in fact is being encountered. One must simply encounter the Eternal Thou oneself. Encountering God and knowing the reality of God's existence are one and the same act.

D. Ramifications

--As we pointed out, God and all non-divine beings in Buber's system are co-partners in an eternal creative process. In this process, God is not simply independent cause and the world dependent effect. Rather, God is the ground of a personal universe and all relationships in it. The supreme relationship is that of God to all the entities in the cosmic community. Non-divine beings, which are in God, encounter God when they encounter the world as contributory to the on-going

life of God. Thus Buber's phrase that "he who truly goes out to meet the world goes out also to God."[24]

--When we attempt to discern Buber's position on the nature and extent of God's power and its bearing on the problem of evil, we become involved in a host of difficulties. To begin with, Buber's general approach to the problem of evil has been to focus in on moral evil. Thus, in Friedman's definitive study of Buber, one finds that almost all of the discussions of evil center around the human problem of the dominance of the world of It to the exclusion of Thou.[25] Yet, as we noted in Chapter I, the problem of moral evil need not pose a serious stumbling-block given the free-will defense. The crucial test is rather that of non-moral evil: the natural evils that seem so purposeless, that comprise the apparent dysteleological surds of our existence. One searches in vain in Buber for a thorough analysis of the problem of natural evil or a coherent theodicy. True, Buber does propose his notion of the "Eclipse of God," but it is so infused with ambiguity as to be useless for our purposes. To begin with, he writes of how it is difficult to still believe in the God who allowed Auschwitz to happen.[26] The assumption, it seems, is that God could have done something but in fact did nothing. But this is contradicted by two other versions of the eclipse of God. Buber first tells us that the eclipse refers to what takes place between God and man, in the same way that during a solar eclipse, something occurs between the sun and our eyes, not in the sun

itself. All we can say is that the eclipse of God is representative of the "historic hour through which the world is passing."[27] But as we read on, Buber suggests another view of the eclipse, viz., that God is always present as the Eternal Thou, but that it is we who are not always present and who do not open the channels leading to God. Why? Because we have let the world of It become dominant such that it "shuts off from us the light of Heaven."[28] Yet, no matter which view is taken of the eclipse, the problem of evil is not coherently resolved. If the eclipse is simply between God and us, who is to blame for it? To this we receive no answer. On the second view, if the eclipse is our fault, we can at best account for moral evil. The issue of natural evil is left unanswered.

I believe there is but one solution to these incoherent and contradictory statements of Buber. His theology, as we have analyzed it, is a panentheism that does not allow for the supernatural exercise of providence over man. Thus, despite such rhapsodic phrases about the God who "allowed" Auschwitz, Buber's God couldn't have done anything in the first place. Thus, any eclipse of God must refer solely to our alienating God from our lives and allowing the dominance of the world of It. As we explained, this accounts only for moral evil. The evil of grave theological import, natural evil, is ultimately ignored by Buber.

Unfortunately, Buber's incoherency on this issue has led many to wrongly interpret him in classical theistic terms. In truth, however, the Eternal Thou never interrupts the natural order of the world of It. One cannot help but remark that had Buber been more aware of his panentheism, he might have worked out a theory of divine power limited by the world which God includes within himself. Like Hartshorne, he might have arrived at the position that free, creative, non-divine events (be they people, falling rocks, or cancer cells) as existents are necessarily powerful to some degree and thus necessarily limit the divine power. Yet none of this approach (or any other coherent explanation) is to be found in Buber. It seems that his disdain for systematic philosophy finally backfired and prevented the full maturation and coherent development of his theology.

--Buber's system seems quite able to defend itself against dualism. His God comprises all reality and includes the world within him. As the unity of all the diversity in existence, there is nothing outside the reality of God.

--Nothing in Buber's doctrine of God allows for the exercise of supernatural providence over man, or the possibility of miracles. Moreover, there is not even the attempt (as we saw in Brightman and Hartshorne) to offer a doctrine of immortality consistent with his God concept. Finally, a "revelation" for Buber is merely the fallible report of inspired

men who are reacting to an encounter with the Eternal Thou. As language or dialogue does not enter into the divine-human encounter, there can be no verbal or literal revelations.

E. Critique

Our analysis of Buber reveals that his theology is weak and ambiguous precisely at those points (e.g. the problem of evil) where a systematic approach would be most helpful. Perhaps we are justified in calling Buber an "unintentional panentheist," i.e. he arrived at these views not as the end-product of a large-scale system, but rather in his search for a description of what he considered the authentic religious life. However, because he judged classical theology so harshly, he wrongly concluded that all systematic theology and abstract thought would only impede rather than aid in the discovery of God. Yet eventually even Buber arrives at the point (in the problem of evil) where he must either draw upon the resources of a structured, systematic view of ultimate reality or engage in rhapsodic, but incoherent and confused speech. Buber, fearing the supposed pitfalls of systematizing and grand style metaphysics, unfortunately chose the latter. To Buber, systematic metaphysics always involved the attempt to turn the Eternal Thou into an It. Hartshorne forcefully rebuts this position:

> Buber is not seeking a formal metaphysics and doubtless would distrust any such doctine. For it turns God into an It or Object. Yet the contention that God can only be Thou, never It, calls perhaps for some qualification. Every abstraction is an It: if there is process in God, one may abstract what is common to every possible stage of this process. This will be the essence of God but not God as actual, now or at any other moment. It will not be Thou, if that means, as it seems to in Buber, the other term of the dual relation of which I am one term. For the act of abstraction spoken of is precisely that of excluding from the term referred to any such concrete relation with its concrete terms. However, in another sense, even the essence of God is Thou, in that only the one individual, God, has such an essence. Still, if the abstraction is permissible--and once becoming and receptivity in God are granted, it seems impossible to forbid it--then in spite of what Barth, Brunner, and Buber seem to say, theoretical dealing with deity, as well as personal "encounter" with him, must be possible. True, the theoretical theologian himself is also a man in encounter with God, but his doctrine deals not with the God whom he encounters but with an abstract individuality in the encountered one.[29]

Despite Buber's drawbacks, the panentheist can discover in his writings a superb analysis of the concrete, contingent pole of God. Buber provides for us an eloquent description of man encountering the world as contributory to the "divine destiny," He teaches that each actualization of value contributes to the on-going life of God. As contributory to the enrichment of God, our status as co-creators extends not merely to each new state of the world, but to each new concrete actualization of the eternally self-surpassing God. Indeed, Buber's most important contribution to panentheism is his notion of man as co-creator in relationship with God, for it is

only in this role, teaches Buber, that both man's grave responsibility and source of ultimate nobility are to be found.

Chapter VI

Concluding Remarks

Our analysis of the theologies of Brightman, Hartshorne, and Buber points to an essential similarity obtaining between theistic finitism and panentheism. To be more specific, panentheism reveals itself as one type of theistic finitism, the latter constituting the more general theological category. However, even this specification calls for some qualification.

It will be recalled that theistic finitism, in an effort to propound a theology coherent with the problem of evil, posits that the power of the omnibenevolent and omniscient deity is limited by conditions which he neither created nor approves. So defined, it is clear that theistic finitism would include both dualistic systems, in which the "conditions" are external to the divine experience, as well as Brightman's theology, which asserts that the Given as the source of dysteleological surds is within that experience. To what extent may we place panentheism under the category of theistic finitism?

Panentheists often point out that the existence of non-divine creatures entails the result that deity cannot simply have all the power there is to be had. Interestingly enough, however, many panentheists are reluctant to conclude from

this that the power of God is limited. Of course, whether one holds God's power to be finite depends upon one's notion of omnipotence. Thus, even for a classical theist such as St. Thomas, the inability of God to do the logically impossible does not constitute a limitation on his power; thus God remains all-powerful in his system. Panentheists generally hold omnipotence to be the greatest possible power compatible with the divine perfection. So defined, the panentheist will claim that the greatest possible power cannot be absolute or monopolistic, arguing that deity's perfect power consists rather in his eminent influence over all non-divine being which is composed of basically free (i.e. only partially determined) unit events. We are not arguing here that the panentheist is mistaken in his notion of omnipotence as "greatest possible power." We only wish to point out that, whatever definition of omnipotence one accepts, the range of power possibilities in panentheism is considerably lower than that obtaining in theistic absolutism. (The panentheist might object to the use of the word "lower," arguing that the power possibilities ascribed to deity in theistic absolutism form no real standard and constitute nothing but a blind worship of imagined power that is, upon analysis, wholly incompatible with the idea of deity's perfection and worshipfulness. We hasten to respond that we intend nothing derogatory to deity's perfection by our use of "lower," using it purely for purposes of comparison with theistic absolutism. The re-

sult may well be, as panentheism would argue, that this "lower" range of power possibilities is in fact descriptive of the divine perfection as the divine relativity, i.e., God's power as surrelative influence over the free creatures.) The panentheist's version of the set, "power possibilities for deity" excludes such factors as the power of exercising extraordinary providence over non-divine beings, the power of miraculously suspending the observed regularities of the natural order ("natural law"), the power of granting an immortal future life (i.e. continued existence) to the dead,[1] and the power to verbally communicate an infallible revelation to man. We therefore conclude that the power possibilities of deity in panentheism are limited in comparison with the possibilities to be found in theistic absolutism.

As we have explained, these limitations are all traceable to the existence of the world as a factor within the divine experience. This brings us to the second phase of our inquiry: does God create the conditions which limit him? We saw, for example, that in the theistic finitism of Brightman, the Given, consisting of the eternal laws of reason and equally eternal processes of nonrational consciousness, is uncreated.[2] Similarly, in panentheism, the world is not created ex nihilo; rather, God and a world imply each other at the most basic metaphysical level (though which particular world there is remains a contingent fact) such that the eternity of

the world is a function of the eternity of God. This does not mean that the world or God are static. On the contrary, both are in an eternal process of creating each other in new concrete, contingent states. All that is affirmed is that the abstract existence of both God and a world is necessary, such that the statement, "God and no world" is a contradiction for the panentheist. Clearly then, panentheism asserts that the conditions which limit God's power are uncreated.

Yet, do these conditions also fail of the divine approval? Here it seems we finally have a distinction between theistic finitism and panentheism. We saw in Brightman's system that God does not approve of the Given within Him, it constituting a constant source of frustration for his omnibenevolent will. The picture that emerges of God in this theology is that of an omnibenevolent deity who struggles with his Given to derive and conserve whatever value may be gotten from all existence. The clear implication is that, if it were up to God, he would destroy the surds of existence for ever. But because his power is limited he cannot, and must in a very real sense suffer with sorrow for every inevitable, unpreventable surd evil that infests reality.

It is clear that much of this Brightmanian view is echoed in panentheism. We find for example that Hartshorne is constantly emphasizing that there is chance and tragedy for God, he being limited by the free decisions of the creatures and

the indeterminate nature of the future. God's inclusion of the world in panentheism, it will be recalled, is a function of the divine omniscience. Thus, for God to know of suffering is to know it perfectly. Yet, to truly know suffering is to experience it, and in the divine case, to experience it with the maximum of empathy. Thus God literally suffers in our sorrows and rejoices in our joys.

Whereas in Brightman, we saw that deity would destroy the Given if he only could, Hartshorne portrays the world as entailing a certain amount of inevitable evil, but never worthy of destruction, even if deity were able to do so. This is due to the nature of the Hartshornian theodicy. The "risk of evil and the opportunity for good," claims Hartshorne, are merely "two aspects of just one thing, multiple freedom; and that one thing is also the ground of all meaning and all existence." This is, he writes, "the sole, but sufficient, reason for evil as such and in general."[3] Thus the destruction of the source of all evil would mean the destruction of freedom; and any world, Hartshorne teaches, is constituted of free events whose existence makes chance and tragedy necessary concomitants of reality. Accordingly, for panentheism, God could not totally disapprove of the conditions that ultimately give rise to evil, for this would entail the equal disapproval of the conditions that give rise to good. Brightman, on the other hand, could posit deity's total disapproval for the Given (i.e., the nonsentient universe), for it alone is the source of surd

evil and is within God. The sentient universe (conscious beings) whose individuality and freedom are the sources of value and good, are apart from God. Thus God could disapprove of the Given without negating the possibility for good.[4] Hartshorne's God, however, could not offer such an unconditional disapproval. Nevertheless, this much can be said: Deity approves of freedom per se, as the necessary and sufficient condition of meaningful existence (soteria). His disapproval of evil as a concomitant of freedom is unconditional, and he experiences it as a tragic event in his life. Thus, the attitude of disapproval held by theistic finitism towards the conditions of evil is tranferred by panentheism to one (and only one) inevitable concomitant of those conditions. Granted this modest qualification, panentheism may indeed be classified as one type of theistic finitism. We see, moreover, that theistic finitism, as a general theological category can, with little qualification, embrace theologies ranging from dualism (where the Given, as well as sentient beings, are external to deity) to Brightman (where the Given is within God, but sentient beings are external to him) to Hartshornian panentheism (where, all the universe being sentient, is totally within God).

The fact that both Brightman's and Hartshorne's theology explicitly posit the source of evil within God raises a ques-

tion apropos to both these systems: Does this inclusion call into question the worshipfulness of deity? We hold that the answer is "by no means." For consider: God's inclusion of the conditions of evil is a function of his omniscience. As we pointed out, to know suffering or joy perfectly, i.e. "knowledge by immediate and direct experience" and not merely "knowledge about" is to experience such emotions with perfect empathy; the perfection of empathy being directly dependent upon the complete knowledge of the other's feelings. In the case of joy or sorrow, we are referring to a positive quality. Evil, however, as the mediaevals were wont to declare, is not a quality but the absence of one or a privation. Hartshorne comments:

> And if the perfect pools the actual, it must contain suffering. But whereas suffering is a positive quality, not the mere absence of one, moral evil, like ignorance, is a non-quality--namely a (wilful) not-taking-account of the interests of others. It is non-interest in interests. True, it is deliberate, but the evil is not in the deliberateness, but in the deliberate non-interest The being which is perfect in knowledge can no more be uninterested in, than it can be ignorant of, any real interest....Thus the traditional theory of the negativity of evil is applicable to evils of ignorance and neglect, but not to suffering; for it is precisely positive knowledge of and attention to the sufferings of others that compels, and indeed consists in, sympathetic suffering of our own.[5]

Thus it is that both Brightman's and Hartshorne's systems can maintain the inclusion of the sources of evil within God without compromising the worshipfulness of deity.

Brightman, Hartshorne, and Buber all share in a common effort to establish the rationality of belief in a personal God, i.e. a conscious individual who enjoys social (personal) relations. In the case of God, these personal relations extend to all members of the cosmic community (surrelativism). Brightman's philosophy of personalism, Hartshorne's contention that the logic of the divine perfection entails that deity be eminently sensitive and relative or Supreme Person (whereas we are persons in a merely derivative sense) as well as Buber's affirmation in his I-Thou philosophy that God is "also a person" have all contributed to restoring the concept of a personal God to philosophical respectability.

These similarities of Brightman and Hartshorne notwithstanding, it bears pointing out the one great area of divergence between these two theologies. We are referring, of course, to the epistemologies upon which they are based. It was our concern in the analysis of Brightman to point to some of the deficiencies of his version of empirical theism. Hartshorne's contention, however, is far bolder. He proposes that all forms of empirical theism (or atheism) are destined to failure, the real issue being that between neo-classical theism and positivism. It is the view of the present writer that Hartshorne is justified in this assertion.

The contention of the empirical theist is that the existence of God is an empirically verifiable fact of the real

world. Hartshorne points out, however, that no empirical theism to date has conceived of the divine existence in the "sharp sense" of empiricism. By this Hartshorne means (after the formulation of Popper):

> ...that is empirical in the distinctive sense which some conceivable experience would falsify. It is not enough that experience can illustrate or confirm a proposition; if it is to be usefully called empirical, experience must conceivably be able to disconfirm it. But what advocate of 'empirical arguments' for theism (Tennant? Brightman?) has told us how experience might conceivably show that God did not exist?[6]

Hartshorne's position is to insist that the logic of perfection demands that the abstract existence of God is necessary such that no contingent fact could possibly disconfirm it. This is, in fact, the logic underlying Hartshorne's version of the modal-ontological argument. By "necessary existence" is intended an existence which is omnitolerant of all facts, such that the divine existence is no mere "state of affairs." The divine existence is no mere fact among other facts, but the possibility of any fact whatsoever.

Hartshorne's analysis is particularly helpful when we encounter such empirical inquiries as: Is there a state of affairs (e.g. a dysteleological surd, or an absurd world) that would disconfirm the existence of God? Hartshorne replies:

> To ask, as the empirical theist or atheist does, "Is the world such that it must have been, or could have been, divinely created?" implies two kinds of possible worlds, the one kind requiring (or at least

> permitting?) a Creator, and the other not. What would distinguish the two kinds? Is it the proportion of good to evil? But at what point in the continuum between more and less evil would a possible world abruptly become compatible with being divinely created? Or is it a question of greater and greater probability of such createdness? Does any of this make sense? I am not joking, for I seriously believe that the empiricist program is at this point nonsensical.
>
> We are told by an English writer that it is a question of whether there by any 'utterly senseless' or 'unredeemed' evil. What would such a thing be like? I declare in all earnestness I have no idea. Any evil has some value from some perspective, for even to know it exists is to make it contributory to a good, knowledge itself being a good. But any evil is also in some degree a misfortune, and in my opinion the theological 'problem of evil' is quite misconstrued 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...The justification of evil is not that it is really good or partly good or necessary to good, but that the creaturely freedom from which evils spring, with probability in particular cases and inevitablility in the general case, is also an essential aspect of all goods, so that the price of a guaranteed absence of evil would be the equally guaranteed absence of good. Thus not even the nastiest or most conceivably 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.[7]

Hartshorne deals also with what he calls the empiricist's "last stand,"[8] viz., the claim that the existence of any world at all is what proves the existence of God, so that "no world at all" would be a state of affairs disconfirming his existence. Hartshorne replies that this would reduce to "there is nothing," which is meaningless.[9] The empiricist might

retort that deity's modal coincidence, including the fact that his potentiality is coincident with possibility itself, implies that the "possibility of nothing" expresses a condition which God could realize. Again, Hartshorne responds:

> But universal nonexistence, including his own, he logically could not be or have. It follows that the possibility of 'nothing worldly', if indeed it be a possibility, cannot imply the possibility of divine nonexistence, but only of God existing in solitude. In that case, it is silly to argue, 'Deity exists because there is a creature'. For either God is incapable of sheer idleness, of not creating, in which case it is no contingent fact that there is something creaturely but an a priori necessity; or, if he is capable of sheer idleness, then he can and would exist even were there not anything worldly.[10]

In all this, the impossibility of God's nonexistence ultimately follows from the divine perfection. For consider: if the nonexistence of God is a conceivable alternative, then there is something which conceivably might have been, but which God could not possibly have known. For no individual can know of its nonexistence. Clearly, such an alternative is incompatible with the divine perfection. As Hartshorne concludes, "his existence depends upon no empirical fact."[11]

A final note. Professor Hartshorne has long argued that many panentheistic notions are reflected in the scriptures of the great religions. His contention has been that the God truly deemed worthy of worship by the intuitive religious consciousness, though often limited by literalistic Biblicism

and ancient thought, often has far more in common with panentheism than with the "official theology" of an absolute first cause totally unaffected by the world. He is by no means suggesting that Akiba and Jesus were panentheists, but he does point to an essential thrust in that direction, given the limitations of their cultural context.

It is this present writer's opinion that Rabbi Bernard Martin is correct in his affirmation: "Hartshorne's panentheism provides rich resources for the Jewish theologian struggling to give a rational account of the God of biblical and Hebraic faith."[12] Professor Hartshorne himself has speculated that panentheism offers a profitable model for an analysis of the theology of Jewish mysticism.[13] A similar claim might be made for the theology of the classical midrash.[14] This is an area well deserving the critical attention of scholars, and bears the promise of yielding considerable insight into various Jewish systems.[15]

Notes to Preface

1. Cf. Levi Olan, "New Resources for a Liberal Faith," and Bernard Martin, "Reform Jewish Theology Today," Contemporary Reform Jewish Thought ed. Bernard Martin (Chicago: Quadrangle Books , 1968), pp. 21-38, 190-193.

Notes to Chapter I

1. A.J. Reines, "God and Jewish Theology, "Contemporary Reform Jewish Thought, p. 62.

2. E. S. Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 282.

3. "In God there is no potentiality," cf. Summa Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, ch. 21; Quoted in ibid., p. 285.

4. I. Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, trans. Greene and Hudson (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1934), p. 133.

5. Cf. Brightman, pp. 260-272 for an overview.

6. Ibid., p. 285.

7. "There can be no will of God regarding those things which are inherently impossible," cf. Summa Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, ch. 84; Quoted in ibid., p. 285. Cf. Maimonides' statement, Infra., p. 36.

8. Brightman, pp. 286-87.

9. Ibid., p. 313.

10. The Dialogues of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowett (5 Vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1892), Republic, Par. 379.

11. Ibid., Timaeus, 30.

12. Brightman, p. 288.

13. Ibid., p. 292.

14. Quoted in ibid., p. 295.

15. Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, eds. Philosophers Speak of God (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 2.

16. Ibid., p. 3.

17. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

18. Ibid., p. 2.

19. Ibid.

20. Morris Cohen, Reason and Nature (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 165.

21. Hartshorne and Reese, p. 7.

22. Ibid., p. 4.

23. Ibid., p. 5.

24. Charles Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1941), pp. 6-8.

25. Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 20.

26. Cf. infra., p. 91 f.

27. Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neo-Classical Metaphysics (LaSalle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), Chapter II.

28. Cf. Hartshorne's version of the ontological argument, infra., pp. 95-102.

29. Hartshorne and Reese, p. 10.

30. Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, pp. 64-65.

31. E. g. Cornford and Whitehead.

32. F. Schelling, The Ages of the World, trans. F. de Wolfe Bolman, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. 96-99.

33. Ibid.

34. G.T. Fechner, Zend-Avesta (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1922), p. 241.

35. A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 521-522.

36. Ibid.

37. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Macmillan Co, 1933), pp. 356-57.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, trans. S. Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), III, 15. (Hereafter as Guide).

2. Ibid., p. 461.

3. Ibid., p. 460.

4. Ibid., p. 459.

5. Alvin J. Reines, "Maimonides' Concept of Miracles," Hebrew Union College Annual, XLV,1974, p. 259. Guide, I, 73.

6. Ibid., p. 259.

7. Ibid., p. 284-85.

8. Ibid., p. 269-70.

9. Ibid., p. 258.

10. Ibid., p. 270-71, quoting Guide II, 11.

11. Ibid., p. 268-69.

12. Ibid., p. 278.

13. Ibid., p. 279.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Guide III, 25: quoted in ibid., p. 279.

17. Cf. Guide III, 10.

18. Cf. ibid.

19. Alvin J. Reines, "Maimonides' Concepts of Providence and Theodicy," Hebrew Union College Annual, XLIII, 1972, p. 183.

20. Guide, III, 9.

21. Reines, "Providence and Theodicy," p. 200.

22. Ibid., p. 201.

23. Ibid., p. 206.

24. Ibid., p. 194.

25. Isaac Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 354.

26. Ibid.

27. Julius Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism (New York: Schocken, 1973) p. 241.

28. Husik, p. 352-53.

29. Guttmann, p. 242.

30. Husik, p. 356.

31. Guttmann, p. 242.

32. Husik, p. 356.

33. Ibid., p. 353.

34. Peter Bertocci, "Creation in Religion," Dictionary of the History of Ideas, (1973), I, p. 571.

35. Charles Hartshorne, "Gerson, Levi Ben (Gersonides)," An Encyclopedia of Religion, (1945), pp. 297-98.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Brightman, p. 1.

2. Hartshorne and Reese, p. 358.

3. E. S. Brightman, Person and Reality (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958), pp. 34 ff.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

5. Ibid., p. 25.

6. Ibid., p. 24.

7. Ibid., pp. 28 ff.

8. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

9. Ibid., p. 29.

10. Ibid., p. 30.

11. Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 122 ff.: "What Is the Criterion of Religious Truth."

12. Cf. Ibid.

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15. E. S. Brightman, "A Temporalist View of God," The Journal of Religion, 12(1932), pp. 545-546.

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18. E. S. Brightman, The Problem of God (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930) p. 182.

19. Ibid., p. 183.

20. Ibid.

21. Brightman, Person and Reality, pp. 340-341.

22. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 358 ff.

23. Brightman, Problem of God, p. 102.

24. Ibid., p. 113.

25. Brightman, Person and Reality, p. 342.

26. Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, p. 319.

27. E. S. Brightman, "The Given and it's Critics," Religion In Life, I (1932), p. 142.

28. Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 400-410.

29. Ibid., pp. 317-318.

30. Ibid., p. 319.

31. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, p. 364.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. viii.

3. Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 4.

4. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. 285.

5. Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion (Glencoe, Il.: The Free Press, 1953), p. 163.

6. Charles Hartshorne, "Metaphysical Statements as Non-restrictive and Existential," The Review of Metaphysics 12(Sept., 1958), p. 37.

7. Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 175.

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14. Charles Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," The Review of Metaphysics, 21 (1967), p. 285.

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18. Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 116-117.

19. Hartshorne, A Natural Theology, pp. 20-21.

20. Charles Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism Second Reprint (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1964) p. 347.

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23. Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 89.

24. Charles Hartshorne, "Omnipotence," An Encyclopedia of Religion,(1945), p. 545.

25. Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, p. 13.

26. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 245-63.

27. Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. xvii.

28. Hartshorne, A Natural Theology, p. 53.

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30. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, p. 17.

31. Alvin Plantinga (ed.), The Ontological Argument: From St. Anselm to Contemporary Philosophers, (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965), p. 4.

32. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, tr. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 629-30.

33. John Hick, "Ontological Argument for the Existence of God," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1st ed., V, p.540.

34. Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, p. 33.

35. Charles Hartshorne, "The Formal Validity and Real Significance of the Ontological Argument," The Philosophical Review, 53, no. 3 (May, 1944), pp. 233-34.

36. Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, p. 88.

37. Plantinga, ed., The Ontological Argument, pp. 4-5.

38. Cf. ibid. and "Reply to Gaunilo," ibid., pp. 13 ff.

39. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 50-51.

40. Hick, "Ontological Argument," p. 540.

41. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 74 ff.

42. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

43. Plantinga, ed., The Ontological Argument, p. 159.

44. Hartshorne, A Natural Theology, pp. 92, 123.

45. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, p. 116.

46. Cf. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, pp. 245-263.

47. Ibid., pp. 252-53.

48. Ibid., p. 262.

49. Ibid.

50. John Hick, Arguments for the Existence of God (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), pp. 93-97.

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54. Hartshorne, A Natural Theology, pp. 49-50.

55. Ibid., p. 131.

56. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, p. xiv.

Notes to Chapter V

1. Martin Buber, "The Love of God and the Idea of Deity," Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 65.

2. Martin Buber, I and Thou (Second Edition), trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958) pp. 112-13.

3. Ibid., pp. 115-16.

4. Ibid., p. 81.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 8.

8. Ibid., p. 101.

9. William E. Kaufman, Contemporary Jewish Philosophies (New York: Reconstructionist Press and Behrman House, 1976), p. 66.

10. Buber, I and Thou, p. 8.

11. Maurice Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1955), p. 87.

12. After Kaufman, Contemporary Jewish Philosophies, pp. 65-66.

13. Buber, I and Thou, p. 11.

14. Kaufman, Contemporary Jewish Philosophies, p. 68.

15. Buber, I and Thou, p. 11.

16. Ibid., p. 75.

17. Ibid., p. 135

18. Ibid., p. 79.

19. Ibid., p. 95.

20. Ibid., p. 82.

21. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 302-303.

22. Buber, I and Thou, pp. 80-81.

23. Friedman, Martin Buber, p. 164.

24. Buber, I and Thou, p. 95.

25. Cf. Friedman, Martin Buber, pp. 11-15; 101-160.

26. Martin Buber, On Judaism (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), p. 224.

27. Martin Buber, Eclipse of God (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1952), p. 23.

28. Ibid., p. 129.

29. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, p. 306.

Notes to Chapter VI

1. To be distinguished from Hartshorne's own theory of immortality, cf. supra, p. 104 f.

2. Cf. supra, p. 66.

3. Hartshorne, Natural Theology, p. 81.

4. One possible criticism of Brightman would be to pose the challenge that the Given is often also a source of good. Certainly, the "uncreated laws of reason," a main aspect of the Given, may be utilized for good. I feel that Brightman does not fully consider the relation of the Given to axiogenesis (the production of value).

5. Charles Hartshorne, "perfect, perfection," An Encyclopedia of Religion, (1945), p. 573.

6. Hartshorne, Natural Theology, p. 67.

7. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

8. Ibid., p. 83.

9. Ibid., p. 84.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Martin, Reform Jewish Thought, p. 193.

13. Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 163-164.

14. Cf. Nahum N. Glatzer (ed.), Hammer on the Rock: a Midrash Reader (New York: Schocken, 1962), p. 104, "Divine Presence in Exile."

15. Martin, Reform Jewish Thought, pp. 190-193. For a contrasting view see Harold M. Schulweis, "Charles Hartshorne and the Defenders of Heschel," Judaism, Vol. 24, Winter 1975, 58-62.

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