

## Abstracts

**Andrea C. Bottani** (University of Bergamo, Italy) and **Riccardo Fedriga** (University of Bologna, Italy) - *Ockham, Plantinga and the Row of Ants*

For millennia, philosophers have discussed whether divine omniscience is compatible with human freedom – conceived of in a libertarian way – or not. If libertarianism is true, some actions are free and no action is free unless it is within the agent’s power to act otherwise. If God is omniscient, however, he completely knows how I will act in the future, which seems to entail that it is never within my power to act otherwise, provided I cannot change God’s past beliefs. Therefore, I am not free in the libertarian sense, or so it seems.

Ockham famously contrasted this conclusion. According to him, propositions about God’s past foreknowledge of future human actions are not strictly but only “by word” (*secundum vocem*) about the past. In Nelson Pike’s more recent terms, they describe “soft” rather than “hard” facts. Soft facts about the past fail to be “accidentally necessary”, so it is within our power to act in such a way that God would not have believed what in fact he does believe.

In “Ockham’s Way Out” Plantinga made efforts to clarify the point in the following terms. 1) Backtracking counterfactuals of the form “If X had refrained from doing Y at  $t^2$  then God would not have believed at  $t^1$  that X would do Y at  $t^2$ ” ( $t^1 < t^2$ ) are true. 2) For many actions Y and many agents X, it is within X’s power to refrain from doing Y.

Even in Plantinga’s version, Ockham’s way-out faces a number of problems. Among others, both the notion of accidental necessity and the concept of a hard fact stand in need of more precise definition; it is far from clear what it is for an action to be within one’s power; and the purported “way out” seems to presuppose eternalism, being ultimately unavailable for those who are sympathetic to some anti-eternalist conception of time (since the “softness” of divine foreknowledge precisely consists in its dependence on the future foreknown fact, which requires the reality of the future).

Our aim is to defend Ockham’s way-out by reinterpreting it in new terms. The key-notion of this reinterpretation is that of grounding, the fundamental assumption being that truth and knowledge are grounded in reality. A fact about the past is strongly hard just in case it is grounded *only* in the past and it is weakly hard just in case it is *ultimately* grounded in the past. (Accordingly, the present fact that at  $t^3$  God will know that at  $t^1$  Paul did Y is weakly hard, for it is ultimately grounded in Paul’s having did Y in the past by being directly grounded in a future divine knowledge of that action; but divine past foreknowledge is neither strongly nor weakly hard for it is grounded in future facts, so it is a soft fact). A fact about the past is accidentally necessary just in case it is strongly hard. Interpreted in modal terms, accidental necessity is a relation between worlds, while interpreted in terms of grounding it is an intraworld relation between actual facts – at any rate weaker than the traditional notion of accidental necessity. An action’s being within one’s power, however, remains a modal notion: Y is within X’s power at t just in case there is a world W such that X does Y in W, and the same strongly hard facts occur before t in W and in the actual world. We shall argue that, arranged that way, Ockham’s way-out is by and large more viable than in Plantinga’s modal version. Also, we shall argue that Ockham’s way-out is, in a sense, available for non-eternalists too.

**Paul Clavier** (École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France) - *The importance of being timeless*

In this paper we run through some of the arguments pro and contra God’s timelessness. One of the motives of denying timelessness to God is the constant worry of keeping the highest possible amount of analogy between our current concepts and the concepts involved in various versions of theism. This is too strong a requirement, for a definition of God could involve some predicates that do not make sense for us. And even if timelessness were an essential attribute of God (as probably

all his intrinsic properties are), a sufficient epistemic definition of God could obtain without specifying whether he is everlasting or timeless. In particular, we intend to show that God's timeless knowledge of every event has not the scandalous consequences in theodicy it is often associated with.

**Christopher Daly** (University of Manchester, UK) - *Persistent philosophical disagreement*

This paper addresses two issues. First, should the fact that there are people who are better philosophers than you but who disagree with you affect your degree of belief in your philosophical views? Second, why hasn't there been appreciable progress in philosophy? Explanations offered by Russell, MacBride and van Inwagen are considered and rejected. An alternative explanation is offered.

**Christian Kanzian** (University of Innsbruck, Austria) - *Temporal Relations as Epiphenomena*

The aim of my talk is a sketch of a theory of time. In application of this theory I will provide an outlook on the other central issues of our conference: God and time, infinity and time.

My perspective on the topic is ontological. That means that I am going to work out my theory about time in the context of a specific categorial frame. The core-thesis is that time or temporal relations are constituted by events and thus epiphenomena.

In order to make this thesis plausible I have to present a categorial frame, in which events have their proper place, and to make clear, how they can be the ontological basis of temporal relations. Then I have to speak about constitution. What does it mean that temporal relations are constituted by events? And finally, how the epiphenomenal status of temporal relations can be understood?

All this should be made explicit, before I try to give the before mentioned outlook on God and time, respectively infinity and time.

**Tomasz Kąkol** (University of Gdansk, Poland) - *In defense of presentism and extratemporal God*

Presentism (there are both the so-called time flow and the objective difference between past, present and future) is the stance defended by the minority among contemporary ontologists of time, whereas extratemporal God (well-known in the traditional rationalistic metaphysics) is often thought of as the opposite of "the living God": for philosophers since Aristotle (not to mention the common sense) held that change implied time (Aristotelians say that simply by definition), as a result of which extratemporality entailed unchangeability.

In my paper I try to defend presentism using two positive and two negative arguments: 1) presentist "now" is assumed in contemporary physics, arguments to the contrary notwithstanding; 2) it can explain many phenomena such as the systematic growth of signs of the past (in particular, our memory and knowledge), the permanent change of the temporal perspective, our concern towards the future and the asymmetry of biological growth), 3) the putative explanation of the intuition of time flow is ungrounded, the same goes for both the entropic theory of time and the causal theory of time; 4) presentism neither implies relative existence (when combined with special relativity) nor is subjected to the notorious "how fast does time flow" objection and the alleged rejection of the so-called principle of verifier.

Although I owe those arguments to Jerzy Gołosz (the most vigorous proponent of presentism in the contemporary Polish philosophy), the ontology of time I propose is more Ingardenian in spirit and more moderate: in particular, I disagree with Gołosz's theses that (1) presentism entails endurantism and that (2) the famous solutions of Einstein's field equations of gravitation with closed timelike curves does not entail that presentism contingently only applies to our world.

As regards God, we have mathematical model of the tenseless dynamics (Michal Heller) that not only answers the objection I mentioned but also makes sense of the traditional “dark” conception of *creatio continua*.

**Srecko Kovac** (University of Zagreb, Croatia) - *Concepts and time in religious discourse*

We show in a formalized way how the meaning and application of concepts during a religious discourse (for example, in a Biblical text) is being transformed from temporal to non-temporal, and how, due to this process, concepts become to be seen by participating agents as actually “incorporated” in God (“ens realissimum”, cf. also Kant’s “ideal of pure reason”).

A religious discourse is formally described as an epistemic interaction of agents (possibly in order to solve encountered contradictions), during which more and more complex functional interconnections of agents are being built. These interconnections are described by means of epistemic operations on agents (like operations on reasons in justification logic). The epistemic progress in a religious discourse itself will be presented as a linear timelike event.

**Zbigniew Król** (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland) - *Basic intuitions concerning the concept of infinity in mathematics from the historical and theological point of view*

The basic strategies of defining the concept of actual infinity in mathematics are analyzed in this paper together with the relevant historical, philosophical and theological context. Actual infinity arises in mathematics when the so-called “God’s point of view” is applied and analyzed. There are two main possibilities of the introduction of this concept in the modern set theory. The first is connected with the upward construction of an infinite set and the set containing an inductive set. The second defines an infinite set using non-well-founded sets. Some other ways to use the concept of infinity along with actually infinite objects are also presented.

**David Liggins** (University of Manchester, UK) – *Infinity and Generality*

In this talk, I explore how our expressive power can be enhanced by assuming the existence of infinitely many objects. I then discuss the implications of this for ontology.

**Jason Megill** (Bentley University, USA) – *Temporal Logic and the Existence of God*

I examine the possibility that an eternal being exists using temporal logic. Among other things, (i) I determine what temporal system must be true if an eternal being exists, and then (ii) I show how this information can be used to generate various arguments for and against the existence of an eternal being.

**Uwe Meixner** (University of Augsburg, Germany) – *No Life Without Time*

The paper will consider time-independent and time-dependent forms of existence. It will argue that life is a time-dependent form of existence. It will then consider what are the consequences of this for the idea of “eternal life” or the idea of the “timelessness” of God.

**Francesco Orilia** (Università di Macerata, Italy) - *The Moral Desirability of Presentism*

In a presentist world there are no past events and thus *a fortiori* no past painful events. Presentists have thus argued that relief is appropriate only from their point of view and have appealed to this claim to back up their ontology. There are well-known anti-presentists strategies to counter this move. Nevertheless, one can still argue that the rejection of past painful events that comes with presentism makes this doctrine morally superior to non-presentists world views. If so, at least under

certain conditions, and especially from a theistic perspective, there is a reason in favor of the truth of presentism.

**Francesco Orilia** (Università di Macerata , Italy) – *Moderate Presentism*

Typical presentism asserts that whatever exists is present. Moderate presentism more modestly claims that all events are present and thus acknowledges past and future times understood in a substantialist sense, and past objects understood, following Williamson, as “ex-concrete.” It is argued that moderate presentism retains the most valuable features of typical presentism, while having considerable advantages in dealing with its most prominent difficulties.

**Elisa Paganini** (University of Milan, Italy) - *McTaggart, Lewis and the Problem of Temporary Intrinsic*

McTaggart’s Paradox has been compared to Lewis’s problem of temporary intrinsic (see for example Craig (1998), Oaklander (1999) and Rettler (2012)). I will argue that the comparison is problematic for various reasons.

**Roger Pouivet** (University of Lorraine, France) - *Divine Timelessness and alleged God's Personhood*

According to Richard Swinburne, divine timelessness is a view incompatible with everything else that religious believers wanted to say about God: for example that God is good, loving, that he hears our prayers. This view is prevalent in the analytical philosophy of religion, in the works of Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, William Hasker, and those so-called “Open Theists“. I want to show that it could result from the wrong idea that God is a person. If one disputes that claim, as did recently Brian Davies, one of the fundamental arguments for the thesis of God in time, even if He is everlasting, disappears. In other words, the idea that God is not out of time is fundamentally linked to a misconception of the alleged personhood of God.

**Olivier Riaudel** (University of Louvain, Belgium) -- *Infinite of God and Its Distinction with the World, according to W. Pannenberg*

The object of this paper is to discuss the concept of infinite employed by Pannenberg in his work, and to ask if this concept allows to think a difference between the world and God, or if it includes a tendency to pantheism.

**Eleonore Stump** (Saint Louis University, USA) -- *The Openness of God: Eternity and Free Will*

The understanding of God’s mode of existence as eternal makes a significant difference to a variety of issues in contemporary philosophy of religion, including, for instance, the apparent incompatibility of divine omniscience with human freedom. But the concept has come under attack in current philosophical discussion as inefficacious to solve the philosophical puzzles for which it seems so promising. Although Boethius in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century thought that the concept could resolve the apparent incompatibility between divine foreknowledge and human free will, some contemporary philosophers, such as Al Plantinga, have argued that eternity gives no help with this problem. Other philosophers, such as William Hasker, have argued that whatever help the concept of eternity may give with that puzzle is more than vitiated by the religiously pernicious implications

of the concept for notions of God's providence and action in time. In this paper, I will examine and respond to these arguments against the doctrine of God's eternity.

**Alfredo Tomasetta** (University of Bergamo, Italy) - *Is Dualism Compatible with Classical Theism?*

Classical Theism, which has traditionally been accompanied by dualistic theses, is usually thought of as a very hospitable conceptual environment for dualism in the philosophy of mind. I argue that this point is largely mistaken: current dualistic theories of the mind are actually incompatible with Classical Theism.

**Kazimierz Trzęsicki** (University of Białystok, Poland) - *In what sense God is infinite?*

Aristotle was the first who introduced a clear distinction between two varieties of infinity. He distinguished potential infinities from what he called actual infinities. He maintained that actual infinities could not exist. Georg Cantor (1845–1918) questioned this belief. For him the potential infinity is a variable and as such it has sense only if a domain of its variability is determined. The domain of a variable in the sense of the potential infinite has to be actual infinite. Thus a potential infinite exists only if an actual infinite exists.

To say that A exists we have to have the concept of A. The same is true if we say, that A does not exist. Any statement about actual infinity has a sense only if we have a concept of actual infinity. Is it possible that the existence of an actual infinite is a necessary condition of the existence of a potential infinite, but we do not have a concept of actual infinity? Acquiring of the concept of an actual infinite is not possible on the data of finite experience. The only source of the concept of actual infinity could be something that is actually infinite. Actual infinity transcend our finite understanding. Thus if we have the concept of actual infinity, it is given to us by an infinite being. God is an infinite being.

Cantor distinguished infinity of infinities. Which infinity is the infinity of God? If we have the concept of infinity A, then the infinity has to be comprehend by God. This infinity should be over the infinity of A. God is absolutely infinite. In what sense we are able to acquire the infinity of God, if the infinity of God is not comparable with infinity of any set.

To say something of A we have to comprehend A. In the case of an absolute infinite being, all that we could know is negative. Humans could not have any positive knowledge about the absolute infinity. It is in accordance with Christian theology: *si comprehendis non est Deus* (it what is comprehend by you is not God, a maxiom of St. Augustine of Hippo). Any infinite class that is not absolutely infinite can be characterized as a set of things that has a certain property (members of the set are values of a function). Such a characterization is not possible in the case of the absolutely infinite class.