

“The Dysfunctional Father”: An Examination of the Causes of Tendency to Atheism from the Viewpoint of John J. Pasquini

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Abstract

Interdisciplinary studies and the increased level of interaction among various disciplines of humanities have found a special status in the recent studies. The “reasons for the tendency to atheism” is also a topic that can be studied from different psychological, sociological, and theological stances. The article at hand shows how and why the non-philosophical causes such as emotional, mental, and educational damages along with cultural and intellectual conditions of society – which are usually led by its open-minded class – affect the tendency toward atheism. In other words, this article aims at disclosing the degree to which the intervention of non-philosophical factors can affect the adoption of atheistic worldviews. Using the theory of “dysfunctional father” proposed by Vitz, Pasquini has examined the role of psychological and social factors in the tendency to atheism.

Keywords: Atheism, Dysfunctional father, John J. Pasquini, Paul C. Vitz, Materialism.

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A Critical Analysis of Spinoza's Exposition of Ontological Argument

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Abstract

God for Spinoza is the essence that is the unique absolute truth of the existence. To prove the existence of God, Spinoza relies upon the ontological argument and argues that in order to verify the concrete existence of God, it is enough to imagine His essence. In the 11th question of his book on ethics, Spinoza provides four expositions of the ontological argument and proves God. His four expositions explain the implication of God's existence from the imagination of His essence, the necessity of existence, the ability and power of God for existence as well as bestowing existence onto creatures that stem from lack of any obstacle for his existence. As a result, He can be considered as the most complete powerful existence and the necessary infinite. In sum, all his arguments root in the same vivid and distinct Kantian imagination of God which asserts that His existence can be verified through the imagination of His essence. In fact, his arguments are either reconstruction of previous arguments or the exact repetition of them with minor differences, even though offered as separate propositions.

Keywords: God, Necessity, Power, Perfection, Imagination, Existence.

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Assessing the Verifiability of Religious Propositions Based on Classic Foundationalism

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, one of the main discussions of the philosophy of religion is the verifiability of religious propositions. This discussion regards the possibility of proving religious propositions based on rational foundations so as to satisfy the human's truth-seeker essence. Some challengers are rationalists who seemingly intend to wipe out the faith under the guise of the value of reason, with others being fideists who deem religion to be beyond the level and position of reason, and still others being positivists who set empiricity as the criterion for the meaningfulness of a proposition. On the contrary, some scholars adopt the common-good concerns, classic foundationalism, or reformed epistemology as the basis of their epistemic views to prove religious propositions. Ascertaining the particular sense is a valuable possession, and all foregoing groups argue for the possibility or impossibility of attaining it, and consequently, claim for the verifiability or non-verifiability of religious propositions. Out of the abovementioned methods, the proponents of foundationalism or the classic method claim they offer this ultimate end. The study at hand examines the claims of each of these stances and the criticisms against them, and tries to show that the realization of such an epistemology in a priori religious propositions is not only possible, but also realistic and already fulfilled.

Keywords: Verifiability, A priori and posteriori knowledge, Classic foundationalism, Reformed epistemology.

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The Relationship between Soul and Body and Its Effect on Eternity from the Viewpoint of Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas

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Abstract

Though the question of eternity of soul in the philosophies of Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas is treated differently, the two viewpoints have some comment points. In his creative completion of Aristotle's exposition of psychology, Avicenna introduced the "perfection" condition into the definition of soul to replace the word "form" so as to make him able to talk about the incorporeity of soul. Also, in the explication of the relationship between soul and body, he insisted on the governing role of soul rather than essential and substantial union of the two. Thomas Aquinas adopted Avicenna's eternity of soul theory and asserted that the soul is a form for body in order to make the resulting outcome a compromise between the Aristotelian and Avicennan viewpoints. However, he did not set forth a clear theory that can show the essential yet breakable relationship between soul and body in his explanation of the quality of the relationship between the eternal soul and the mortal body.

Keywords: Eternity, Relationship between soul and body, Avicenna, Thomas Aquinas.

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The Centrality of Plato's Symbolic System in his Ontological Perception of Creatures' Relationship with God

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Abstract

Although Plato has not used the word symbol in his philosophical discussions, we might grasp the meaning of symbol in his philosophical thinking via a careful examination of his works based on the premise that a symbol refers to a symbolized phenomenon as well as his stance toward art and its epistemic effect. As the core of Plato's epistemological theories, the theory of idea plays a key role in the conceptualization of symbol, in a way that the relationship between symbol and the symbolized phenomenon comes to be based on the relationship between the shadow or image and the origin and the benefitting of the shadow from the origin. The careful examination of the meaning of benefitting leads to the idea of form, which is the basis of the relationship between the symbol and the symbolized. Therefore, the analysis of the meaning of symbol in Plato's works supports the suggestion that the hierarchy of the world of beings, too, is governed by symbolic relationships, as phenomena are the symbols of ideas and ideas are the symbols of the principle of good – the God in Plato's philosophical system. The study at hand adopts the analytical-descriptive approach to explore Plato's works in order to explicate the status of God in the world of being and the nature of creatures' relationship with him based on the symbolic system. The findings reveal that God is the principle of unity that never comes to be the symbol of anything, and knowing and describing his essence is only possible through knowing the symbols.

Keywords: Symbol, Idea, God, Principle of good, Plato.

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An Investigation of the Existential Self-Alienation through a Qur'ānic Approach

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Abstract

With the decline of Church authority, the appearance of doubts about and the rejection of beliefs originating from Church theology, and even the rejection of the existence of God as the unique life-giver and organizer of human life, the Western thinkers set out to redesign human truth and identity through distancing themselves from suprahuman guidance and relying on humanistic foundations. In this path, human self-alienation was seriously taken into account, especially by existentialist philosophers. However, the complicated, unfathomable depth of human truth prevented the vigorous self-foundational thoughts from pursuing appropriate and sublime purposes of the human, and once more revealed the importance and necessity of the human's need to take refuge in the divine knowledge. The article at hand adopts an analytical-citation analysis method to first show the unfinished efforts of existential thinkers in unraveling the mystery of human self-alienation and then, using the qur'ānic teachings, try to find the answer to its main question on the real self of the human and the instances of his self-alienation, and provide the qur'ānic solutions such as invocation, imploration, prayer, and repentance to stay away from that self-alienation.

Keywords: Self-alienation, Existentialism, Human truth, Noble Qur'ān.

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A Phenomenological Analysis of the Relationship between Human and God in Zoroastrianism

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Abstract

One of the important issues in the domain of religious studies is the determination of the nature and quality of the relationship between human and God, particularly because in many religions, the ultimate human salvation has been conditioned to the establishment of a sound relationship with God. Zoroastrianism – with its specific approach to God, system of being, ontological status of human, and ethics – has adopted a complex view in this regard and has addressed various aspects of the relationship between human and God. The study at hand aims at the investigation and analysis of the relationship between human and Ahura Mazda based on Avesta and Middle Persian texts in order to clarify the nature and qualities of this relationship. To this end, this study has adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and library research method. With regard to the findings of the study, it might be asserted that in Zoroastrian teachings, the main type of relationship between God and human is the ontological/existential one. It is within such a relationship that human should strengthen its epistemic ties with God, completely follow worshipping God and live based on the true rules of religion – i.e. Zoroastrian religiosity – so as to be able to connect with God in a way that is verified by Aša (the true and divine system of being), put an end to the evil spirit, and attain the otherworldly salvation. Consequently, it can be said that in Zoroastrian teachings – as represented in the Avesta and Middle Persian texts – the legislative and salvation-oriented/eschatological relationship between human and God is meaningful only under the ontological/existential relationship.

Keywords: Ahura Mazda, Human, Evil spirit, Phenomenology, God.

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An Investigation of the Divine Command Theory from the Viewpoint of William J. Wainwright

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Abstract

Religion and ethics have been considered for long as the two key elements of human life, and the relationship between the two has always been a controversial issue. Consequently, the main question of the article at hand revolves around this key point, and we aim at investigating Wainwright's viewpoint in this regard. Accordingly, Wainwright's viewpoint about Kant's ethical theory in general and Kant's opinion about self-authority in particular are expressed and examined. Then, Wainwright's evaluation of the reasons for and against the divine command theory is explicated. The findings demonstrate that from Wainwright's viewpoint, the criticisms against the divine command theory can be answered and there are numerous reasons to defend this theory. At the end, through a comparison of the divine command theory with other existing theories on the relationship between religion and ethical issues, Wainwright concludes that despite its shortcomings, the divine command theory is currently the best theory for the explanation of the ethical issues. In sum, it seems that the divine command theory enjoys more objectivity than other ethical theories.

Keywords: Wainwright, Religion, Ethics, Kant, Divine command theory.

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