

On the non-existence of a personal, eternal God

With Gerry Binder

It is literally true, even if it sounds rather comical, that God has specially appointed me to this city, as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which because of its great size is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation of some stinging fly. It seems to me that God has attached me to this city to perform the office of such a fly, and all day long I never cease to settle here, there, and everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving every one of you.

— *Socrates / Kierkegaard*

Gerry's weblog is titled "[Diogenesian Discourses](#)". Since Diogenes is one of my favourite Godless-men, I hoped to find his atheistic spirit alive in Gerry's logs. The bold, unrelenting spiritual freedom of Diogenes is just too wild to fit into most people's lives, so I think it is really something that Gerry sports many Diogenes sayings on his weblog, and recommends we read [David Quinn's site](#) — a high quality thinker in my view.

Gerry's posts showed some character, though perhaps it is sheer confidence born of the anti-American social activist, of which there are great numbers. I liked Gerry's post on brain-washing, but wondered if he meant that the thinker shies away from the notion of absolute truths. I decided to ask, and the [following discussion](#) unfolded.

Instead of being a serious, reasonable discussion on the topic of the existence (or non-existence) of a personal, eternal God, however, this discussion degenerated rapidly into an exposition of the difference between the modern imperative that "you simply must have an opinion", and the individual responsibility for reasoning about everything in a thorough, precise manner.

Kelly Jones

Modern media/entertainment. TV, movies, etc. There are few programs which do not shape (often very subtly) the way we think. Ergo, brainwashing. But who's paying? The viewer, that's who.

But since it is also true to say that we choose the shit we watch, it must follow that we don't mind paying to be brainwashed.

Also, a lot of the stuff we choose, we choose because it fits nicely with how we are already brainwashed. Ergo, not only do we not mind paying to be brainwashed, we also don't mind paying to have our brainwashing reinforced.

But it's soon going to get even better than that. Soon your news will be filtered to give you only that stuff which reinforces the way you think. Your TV will offer you programming which contains only stuff which will reinforce the way you think. Your online world will automatically shape itself to reinforce the way you think.

Soon you will get the idea that you are in touch with the Absolute Truth when what's really happening is that your totally fucked mind is being mirrored back at you in a way that turns you into a mega-bigot.

Why am I telling you this? No idea...

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

Hi Gerry,

Interesting blog.

Further to the 'brainwashing' and 'greed' themes in your blog, what do you think about how being conscious helps one live efficiently ?

That is, do you think it's better to focus on changing outward behaviour, or on encouraging people to be conscious (rational)?

Kelly Jones

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly, the flip answer is "when I become conscious, I'll think about that."

But to try to answer your question, I'd say whacking them over the head till they become conscious is the way to go... :-)

I don't see the point though. Humanity is doomed to stuff itself, thanks largely to globalised capitalism and all that that brings with it.

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

I think that the immense wealth created by global capitalism puts humanity in a very interesting position, myself. We've enough wealth and maybe enough well-educated thoughtful individuals, to start undermining Moronism. Here's how:

All that wealth means that an unprecedented large number of individuals can go on the dole, and dedicate their lives to becoming as conscious and efficient as possible.

There's really no other way that so many people can give themselves 100% to the task. A "critical mass" of intelligent persons then have a huge effect on how society is run. And, being intelligent, they'd be able to replace very rapidly the working-moron classes. In turn, overpopulation problems could be easily fixed.

I think the internet is an excellent place to encourage thinking types to take such a life seriously.

I think this will take hundreds if not thousands of years....but it's better to start sooner than later!

Learning to live efficiently is important so as not to waste wealth. The more efficient we are, the more people can be supported on the dole to become Diogenesian discourses.

Here is an experiment in efficient living : <http://www.tipsa2z.com>

What do you think about these ideas?

Kelly Jones

∞

From Gerry:

Nice wind-up...

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

No, I'm serious. It's no scam.

You're interested in the philosophical life, I take it? With a name like Diogenes.

So, what do you propose a Diogenes would do in a badly messed up world?

Commit suicide? Complain about politicians? Not give a flying fuck and live in a remote shack?

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

If I could get enough of my shit together I would be a recluse living deep in the bush, but alas, I'm only a wannabe Diogenes and a card-carrying hypocrite, and thus I am constantly drawn to be near supermarkets...

Your website is interesting.

Your views on women are unfair and and inaccurate.

Please explain what you mean by a personal God and how you arrive at the certainty that there is none.

Furthermore, your claim to atheism is crap. You are a true believer in the belief that there is no God. You have no proof for this belief. All you have is your unfaltering faith in the impossibility of the existence of God.

You are a sham.

When you develop a bit of honesty, you will realise that you are in fact an agnostic.

Absolute truths can only be found in the banal. All other "absolute truths" are the result of some form of delusion or hypnosis. Get therapy.

I view "atheistic" Tasmanians in much the same way as you view women.

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

A lively response!

Glad you had a read of my website. For others interested, it's at [Natural Thinker](#) ... (Gerry's responding to my essay, titled "An atheist memoir

(my views on women".)) I'll leave your comments on my views on women until after we discuss your other concerns to your satisfaction.

In the essay, I answered your concerns:

- what I meant by a personal God: an eternal, all-creating agent that has a personality and relationships with persons.
- how I arrived at the certainty that a personal God is impossible: whatever is eternal is timeless, so it must be present in every moment, meaning it must be *every thing*. Being everything, it cannot be only one thing, like "personal".

Would you care to explain if this: "Absolute truths can only be found in the banal." is an absolute truth? Or is it only true in certain situations?

Are you happy with having a fairly long blog page? or should we continue this discussion elsewhere?

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly, I'll probably split the topics into new posts, but not for a couple of days. I'm having time out.

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

Ok, Gerry. Glad you've the spirit to put your values into practice, irt your dislike of brainwashed thinking.

Hope you have a good holiday.

For your interest, I've just started an internet forum for the local philosophy group run by UTAS. The forum is independent, not academic. Here it is:

<http://www.philosophecafe.yuku.com>

A new member is currently challenging my views on women as being destructive. He hasn't yet explained why.

So you'd certainly have support in numbers on the forum! Would you like to express your reasons for disagreement with my views on women, on the internet forum? And we could continue the atheist part of our

discussion here on your site.

The woman debate is an interesting and subtle one, so it'd be easier to discuss on an internet forum.

Catch you later,

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly, I'm back in the land of the semi-sane now, and I've decided that I'll debate these points with you here.

On the "personal God" thing, you said:

*Kelly: How I arrived at the certainty that a personal God is impossible: whatever is eternal is timeless, so it must be present in every moment, meaning it must be *every thing*. Being everything, it cannot be only one thing, like "personal".*

Huh? If it's "every thing" then that must include that it is a "personal God" thing, no? Also, who said that "only" is relevant here?

Gerry: Absolute truths can only be found in the banal.

Kelly: Is an absolute truth or is it only true in certain situations?

Name me anything you claim to be an absolute truth and I will either disprove it is absolute or expose its banality.

Your views on women are not worth debating as far as I'm concerned. Obviously you have serious unresolved issues about women. You should get therapy about that.

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

That's the spirit!

Kelly: How I arrived at the certainty that a personal God is impossible: whatever is eternal is timeless, so it must be

*present in every moment, meaning it must be *every thing*.
Being everything, it cannot be only one thing, like
"personal".*

*Gerry: Huh? If it's "every thing" then that must include that
it is a "personal God" thing, no?*

Everything *includes* delusions, but isn't itself that thing. Like a pie includes slices of pie but isn't itself a slice.

Gerry: Also, who said that "only" is relevant here?

The law of identity, $A=A$, on which logic is based.

A thing is finite, being short of everything. So everything (the Totality of things) is not-finite. So the Totality cannot be only one thing.

That would be a mistake of identity.

Gerry: Absolute truths can only be found in the banal.

*Kelly: Is an absolute truth or is it only true in certain
situations?*

*Gerry: Name me anything you claim to be an absolute truth
and I will either disprove it is absolute or expose its
banality.*

If this statement "Absolute truths can only be found in the banal" is true, and absolutely so, then it is also banal. So, what is banal?

If it is not absolutely true, then absolute truths can be found in other 'places' than the banal.

*Gerry: Name me anything you claim to be an absolute truth
and I will either disprove it is absolute or expose its
banality.*

Certainly, but first define banal.

Here are some absolute truths:

$A=A$

A thing is a part of the totality of all things.

1 + 1 = 2

Something is happening.

All things are causally created.

Gerry: Your views on women are not worth debating as far as I'm concerned. Obviously you have serious unresolved issues about women. You should get therapy about that.

What a cop-out, Gerry.

Most psychologists would agree with me that women make up the majority of their clients. The reason is that women rarely clarify their thoughts to prevent problems from arising, but are given to emotionalism, frivolousness, and relying on others for help.

Any husband or boyfriend or other male host could tell you that women are high-maintenance.

Kelly

∞

From Kelly:

I've put our discussion online in the following directory, to make it easier to read: [Letters](#). I'm sure Diogenes could answer more succinctly than I could, but I do my best! (I'll update the file after a goodly exchange.) Also, I'm shortly heading to north Queensland for a month. Will catch up I return.

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Nice obfuscations, Kelly, but...

If one of the pieces of the God-is-everything pie is the "Personal God" piece, then a personal God exists. Not "only" but "also". Ergo, there is, by your definition of God, an entity within that called "personal God". Ergo, a personal God exists. Ergo, you're wrong. Ergo, you cannot be an atheist.

Care to trot out a better argument for why you claim to be an atheist?

Your diatribe about women is a sweeping generalisation. REAL thinkers try to avoid sweeping generalisations. Ergo, you are not a real thinker.

So, to sum up: You are neither a thinker nor an atheist. Yet you have claimed to be both. Ergo, you are a sham.

Have a nice trip to NQ.

Gerry

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From Kelly:

Gerry: Have a nice trip to NQ.

Thanks, I haven't been up that far north in Australia before.

Gerry: If one of the pieces of the God-is-everything pie is the "Personal God" piece, then a personal God exists.

Be careful with the identities here. It looks like you're equating the not-finite with the finite by calling them both 'God'. And yes, a 'personal God' exists in the same way 'Zeus the Almighty' or 'Thor' exists - as an idea. But it's not a logical idea, since such personal Gods are usually defined as eternal.

Gerry: Ergo, there is, by your definition of God, an entity within that called "personal God". Ergo, a personal God exists.

Well, now it comes down to: is the idea of an eternal, personal God logical or not? I've already presented my reasoning to show why it isn't. So the delusion exists, certainly, but what it points to, isn't there.

Gerry: Your diatribe about women is a sweeping generalisation. REAL thinkers try to avoid sweeping generalisations.

Both these sentences are sweeping generalisations.

Generalisations are unavoidable. Everything the mind identifies is identified as something specific, and the identities used are *abstractions*. Like, 'a man stands at a gate' - but which gate, and which man, and how is he standing?

I abstract the fundamental principle about feminine psychology from the behaviours typically displayed by women, contrasted with those typically displayed by men - over human history.

I never say that all women must be irrational, frivolous, and incapable of solving problems. There are exceptions, and the way things are, is not set in stone. The majority of women are the way I say they are. I don't hate women, I really wish things were different. Really, it is Nature that is to blame, not women nor men.

There's probably internet cafes where I'm headed, so I can probably stay fairly up-to-date with our discussion.

Kelly

∞

From Kelly:

This may interest you, Gerry:

An interview with the author of "The Corporate Cult", Rich Zubaty: [click here for Rich Zubaty interview](#) . One of the most-diehard proponents of indymedia to be found anywhere, perhaps...

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

I never said I was a real thinker, ergo, I am permitted to make sweeping generalisations :-) (With the caveat that any sweeping generalisations I make are obviously fallacies of logic and therefore are not "the absolute truth".)

A thing must be logical in order for it to exist? Really, Kelly? You say that women are not logical, yet they exist.

I would argue that just because you can find no logical reason for a thing's existence, that this does not mean that the thing therefore cannot exist. All it means is that you have not yet found a logical reason, that's all. In fact, it's your reasoning that's illogical.

You have not satisfactorily argued that a personal God cannot possibly exist.

Keep trying Kelly...

But be warned... In the very unlikely event that you can provide irrefutable proof of the non-existence of a personal God, you STILL need to prove that no god/gods WHATSOEVER exist if you want to call yourself an atheist.

Good luck... :-)

Oh, and you're dead wrong about women... You're a misogynist as well as a sophist...

Gerry

∞

From Jez:

Kelly: By 'Woman', I mean a psychological entity, rather than a biological organism

Kelly, a theme throughout your essay is the artificial chasm between human genetic responses to our environment (love, sex, maths, Boolean logic, philosophy, etc.) and the intellectual interpretations we construct around those responses (purely cultural).

The "intellectual" part of our being holds no sway with our "instinctive" culture, despite our best efforts to define our species as sapient. Our baser animal instincts have been refined over 400 million years, our muted intelligence is a trivial work in progress by comparison and, at it's primitive best, is no match for hunger, war, greed, sex or fear. The almost universal trend toward various superstitions is where the two collide -- that hazy fractal boundary where old genetic hard-wiring and the new CPU "wetware" get on like XP Pro on a 486. Theists are the result of conflict between natural curiosity and a protosentient need to justify our newly acquired ignorance. Atheists are about the need to refute our primitive ancestry and embrace a true Human enlightenment. IMHO, for that to happen before we all die in a religious war will require an evolutionary "miracle".

Basically, intelligence is incompatible with our genetic ancestry, the evolution necessary will require, at least, 4-5 million more years of pampered idleness, sheltered from the rough and tumble whilst subjected to severe artificial culling. (That's how long it took to get from Plains Ape to Politician.) In the Darwinian scheme there is absolutely no advantage in the excessive intelligence we seek when a semi-skilled Barbarian hoard could stomp us at any time.

Homer Sap's brain hasn't changed over the last 170,000 years, our wetware stopped evolving when we became smart enough to be super-adaptive. We are not getting smarter, we've simply adapted ourselves into a corner and have decided to build the world's biggest computer to do the "mundane" stuff.

An atheist does not seek to worship "Intellect". I am merely the fool who holds views that Believers have to disprove, not simply ignore. I do not worship humans. I live in a treehouse. It is my considered opinion that "God" is a poorly thought out conceit -- another draft worth dodging.

Jez

"Calling Atheism a religion is like calling bald a hair color" -- Don Hirschberg

∞

From Kelly:

G'day Gerry,

I dropped into Katoomba on my way north, as I used to go for walks in the area, when I lived in Sydney. The local newspaper was sitting there on the table at the frilly, pinked Mountain Memories cafe, with a letter from one of the locals about life, the universe, everything (and politics/economics) responding to Gerry Binder. I'm guessing that's you.

There aren't many who put their necks on the line philosophically-speaking (especially in Australia, land of the Levellers), so I'm glad you're as bold locally as you are online.

Back to the discussion.

Again, it would be fantastic if you'd consider putting this discussion into an online forum, such as the one I set up at Philosoph-e Cafe - as it'd be much easier for others to read.

Gerry: If one of the pieces of the God-is-everything pie is the "Personal God" piece, then a personal God exists.

Kelly: Be careful with the identities here. It looks like you're equating the not-finite with the finite by calling them both "God". And yes, a 'personal God' exists in the same way 'Zeus the Almighty' or 'Thor' exists - as an idea. But it's not a logical idea, since such personal Gods are usually defined as eternal.

Gerry: Ergo, there is, by your definition of God, an entity within that called "personal God". Ergo, a personal God exists.

Kelly: Well, now it comes down to: is the idea of an eternal, personal God logical or not? I've already presented my reasoning to show why it isn't. So the delusion exists, certainly, but what it points to, isn't there.

Gerry: A thing must be logical in order for it to exist? Really, Kelly? You say that women are not logical, yet they exist.

Just as Zeus exists as an illogical idea, so does God exist as an illogical

idea. Here are some other examples: A not-cat cat. The sound of one hand clapping. A finite thing that is not short of anything. They're logical impossibilities, so they don't exist.

However, things that are incapable of thinking logically are not thereby logical impossibilities. There's nothing logically impossible about a thing that cannot think logically. It would only be a problem if woman is logical *by definition*.

Gerry: I would argue that just because you can find no logical reason for a thing's existence, that this does not mean that the thing therefore cannot exist. All it means is that you have not yet found a logical reason, that's all. In fact, it's your reasoning that's illogical.

What I'm really pointing to is the definition itself: some finite thing ('personal God') that is timeless ('eternal'). If you can find a logical reason to show that 'personal' doesn't entail finitude, then please show it to us.

Gerry: You have not satisfactorily argued that a personal God cannot possibly exist.

I have. If you think 'personal' means 'not bounded by anything', then feel free to show how.

Gerry: But be warned... In the very unlikely event that you can provide irrefutable proof of the non-existence of a personal God, you STILL need to prove that no god/gods WHATSOEVER exist if you want to call yourself an atheist.

If anything is defined as eternal, immortal, timeless, unchanging, permanent, and so forth, then it would be illogical to say that such a thing is finite. If "God/god" means something with personal traits, then immediately there is a logical impossibility. It is just like saying, "Clapping is a sound made by two hands sharply struck together. This is the sound of one hand clapping, made by one hand sharply striking nothing else."

Gerry: Oh, and you're dead wrong about women... You're a misogynist as well as a sophist...

Name-calling is not an effective method of refuting an argument. You

will need to present your reasoning.

The average woman (biological female) doesn't use lines of reasoning as much, nor as successfully, as the average man.

You can see it in the way that the average man is far more interested in the mechanics of things, in causes and consequences, in operating efficiently, and in keeping a goal in mind over time. Most men would see no point in going shopping all day, without having a shopping list. Most men would see no point in having a wardrobe full of clothes they might only wear once. Most men would see no point in having an hour-long shower every day where the body isn't significantly cleaner by the end of it.

Most men would not regard other men as being the full quid if they didn't have a basic understanding of gravity and physics, chemistry, electronics, small engines, and the like. Most men would be able to reverse-park a car fairly quickly and simply. Most men would be able to read a map or use a GPS. Most men would not see the point in having an hour-long conversation prior to going out for the evening, simply to discuss one's hairstyle, makeup, and clothing. Most men, if truth be told, would not go to church unless the wife was upset by him not going.

There really is a significant sexual difference in the use of the intellect.

Kelly

∞

From Kelly:

Hip: In the Darwinian scheme there is absolutely no advantage in the excessive intelligence we seek when a semi-skilled Barbarian hoard could stomp us at any time.

I'm interested in promoting wisdom of the Infinite.

Being not-finite, the Infinite has no end nor beginning.

So, even if my body and consciousness are stomped out, the Infinite continues.

Sure, a moron is not capable of understanding the Infinite. That is why I think it's intelligent of me to encourage as many people as possible to think. It's a far quicker method than passing on my genes.

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly, had you let me know you were passing through, we might have had coffee. Yes that was a reference to one of the letters I wrote in the local paper. I am just as hard on believers-in-God as I am on believers-in-noGod.

Re: Philosoph-e Cafe. I'll pass on the offer. I'll do my ranting here thanks.

I think you have totally misunderstood the subject called Logic.

Logic does not say that a thing cannot exist if there is no logical explanation for its existence. Logic merely argues that if you have no logically valid explanation for the existence of something, then you have no logically valid explanation for its existence. That's all it says. It is pure sophistry to spin that into a claim that a thing cannot exist if there is no logical explanation for its existence.

You have consistently failed to present a logically valid argument for the non-existence of God. All you have presented so far is a pile of steaming hot sophistry which is offensive to my olfactory senses.

Were I to use your spurious methods of "logic", I could likewise argue that your illogical arguments for the non-existence of God are sufficient evidence to claim that therefore God exists. But I would not use such used-car salesman style of "debating".

You keep asserting that an eternal, immortal, timeless, unchanging, permanent, etc, god cannot also incorporate a component of it which functions as a personal god, but I fail to detect any logically valid argument for your assertion. Care to enlighten me? I'm pretty stupid, so you'll have to walk me through your argument very slowly and clearly. If it makes sense, I promise I'll try really really hard to see it...

By the way, the term "logical impossibility" is a bullshit term. Logic has nothing to say about the possibility or impossibility of anything.

Logic is merely a system of validating or invalidating a given argument/assertion.

If an assertion is invalid logically, this does not mean that it cannot be so, it just means that the reasons given were not sufficiently valid.

e.g. If, five thousand years ago, a village idiot had proclaimed that the world was round because a bee told him it was, it could be argued (using your "logic") that therefore the world cannot possibly be round.

When I say you're a misogynist and a sophist, I'm not name-calling, I'm giving you the benefit of my incisive analytical skills.

You make wild, absolute statements without providing one ounce of logically valid argument to back them up. What else am I to do?

I won't even begin to deconstruct your last three paragraphs. Pure sophistry, old chap.

Gerry

∞

From Gerry:

Hip, Hirschberg's quip is cute, but that does not bestow upon it any automatic veracity.

If by "religion" we mean "a system of belief about the nature and existence of a god or gods", then atheism is a religion, despite Hirschberg's cute quip. You can quote me on that.

∞

From Jez (Hip):

I don't believe in little green men from Mars, either. Does this make me a Jewish?

∞

From Gerry:

oh god, here we go again...

"I don't believe.." is such a cute little escape clause, isn't it?

But what do you actually mean?

Usually, when someone says "I don't believe..." it means either that they are uncertain about the truth of something, or that they are certain of the untruth of something.

Given the topic du jour, Hip, are you uncertain about the existence of god/gods (agnostic), or are you certain about the non-existence of god/gods?

If the latter, then I would have to enquire as to what proof or evidence you have which supports such a position of certainty.

Or is it just a belief you have there, Hip?

∞

From Kelly:

Gerry,

I'll be catching a flight home from Sydney on 29 May. Would you like

to have coffee in Katoomba a few days before then? I'm near the Daintree at present.

Gerry: I am just as hard on believers-in-God as I am on believers-in-noGod.

The difference, as I see it, comes down to the use of reason. It's not just about belief.

For example, I believe it is safer to cross a busy road at the traffic lights, when it's showing me a green walk signal. I am using past experiences as reason to support the belief.

In our discussion, I'm using reasoning rather than empirical evidence, to support my belief.

Gerry: Re: Philosph-e Cafe. I'll pass on the offer. I'll do my ranting here thanks.

As you wish. Seriously though, this conversation is not just for us. If you wish others to really think about what you express, then how you present those words is really important. This blog is a good way, but it is not easy to follow a long philosophical dialogue in a blog comments page, for reasons such as the narrow column and much scrolling.

Gerry: I think you have totally misunderstood the subject called Logic. Logic does not say that a thing cannot exist if there is no logical explanation for it's existence.

That is not my argument, but an invention of your own. I am trying to point to identity, not to explanations.

Logic is based on the law of identity ($A=A$, a thing is what it is).

A cup defined as something that holds water, cannot then be defined as something that does not hold water. That is illogical, because it contradicts its identity.

Similarly, a thing defined as finite cannot then be defined as not-finite.

Gerry: Logic merely argues that if you have no logically valid explanation for the existence of something, then you have no logically valid explanation for its existence.

That's true. But it isn't relevant to my point. Which is, something defined as having a certain kind of existence cannot then be defined as not having that kind of existence.

Gerry: You have consistently failed to present a logically valid argument for the non-existence of God.

No, that's not true. The consistently simple points that I have been presenting you, aren't making sense to you.

Gerry: You keep asserting that an eternal, immortal, timeless, unchanging, permanent, etc, god cannot also incorporate a component of it which functions as a personal god, but I fail to detect any logically valid argument for your assertion. Care to enlighten me? I'm pretty stupid, so you'll have to walk me through your argument very slowly and clearly. If it makes sense, I promise I'll try really really hard to see it...

Okay. Let's look at the meaning of these words:

- eternal: no beginning or end, not time-dependent, endless.
- immortal: cannot die, no end (and supposedly, no beginning in time).
- timeless: as for eternal.
- unchanging: not dependent on anything else that could cause it to change.
- permanent: as for eternal, immortal and unchanging.

These words all point to a 'thing' that cannot be dependent on something else, such as time, space, location, and the like.

Now, only a finite thing is dependent on something else, because only a finite thing is short of something.

A finite thing is, by definition, something relative to something else.

So, the conclusion we have to come to, is that a 'thing' that is not dependent on anything else, nor relative to anything else, must therefore be not-finite.

The not-finite cannot be defined as having some finite qualities, such as "personal". A personal thing is short of a non-personal thing. Being personal, it is relative; it is finite.

The not-finite is not bounded in this way.

Gerry: By the way, the term "logical impossibility" is a bullshit term. Logic has nothing to say about the possibility or impossibility of anything.

Let's take your example above: that logic tells us that having no logical explanation for a thing tells us only that, and no more.

Given that that statement is itself, and not other, there is no logical possibility that it is other. It would be logically impossible to be other than what it is.

Do you agree?

Gerry: Logic is merely a system of validating or invalidating a given argument/assertion.

It's even simpler. Logic tells us that a thing is itself, and absolutely and certainly never anything else.

Logic itself asserts.

Gerry: If an assertion is invalid logically, this does not mean that it cannot be so, it just means that the reasons given were not sufficiently valid.

There is no way to make valid the assertion that a thing is not itself. There is no way ever to make this illogical statement true.

Gerry: e.g. If, five thousand years ago, a village idiot had proclaimed that the world was round because a bee told him it was, it could be argued (using your "logic") that therefore the world cannot possibly be round.

I don't see how this statement has anything to do with an internally contradictory identity.

If 'world' is defined as round (to use the simple analogy), then it cannot then be defined as not-round. Obviously, the Earth is now known to be round given empirical evidence. But if we were to say that the totality of all things is not-finite, then we couldn't use empirical evidence as proof.

Gerry: When I say you're a misogynist and a sophist, I'm not name-calling, I'm giving you the benefit of my incisive analytical skills. You make wild, absolute statements without providing one ounce of logically valid argument to back them up. What else am I to do?

I think name-calling is not a valid way to reason. It's better to read statements as carefully as one can, and ask for clarification if unsure of their meaning.

It just saves time and effort.

Gerry: I won't even begin to deconstruct your last three paragraphs. Pure sophistry, old chap.

I won't belabour my point about having an easier format to read.

Gerry: If by "religion" we mean "a system of belief about the nature and existence of a god or gods", then atheism is a religion, despite Hirschberg's cute quip. You can quote me on that.

This doesn't distinguish between philosophical beliefs that can be backed up by reasoning, and others that cannot.

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly. About god: You're all over the shop, quibbling, red herringing, straw manning and god knows what else. Let's cut to the chase. You have produced nothing which stands up as evidence or proof for the non-existence of god. Your "personal god" tack was just a sad old straw man. I didn't define god as "personal" or otherwise. You did. And then your "reasoning" had such huge logical holes in it, I could drive a B-Double through them, but any attempt to highlight this meets with denial and apparent non-comprehension.

I don't have the patience for this kind of crap.

And I find your attitude towards women highly offensive.

I'm done arguing with you.

Go amuse yourself with someone else.

Gerry

∞

From Kelly:

Hi Gerry,

I am sorry that you are highly offended by my views on women. I don't wish to alienate people unnecessarily.

Perhaps it is best if I respond to your last objection: (succinctly)

Gerry: You have produced nothing which stands up as evidence or proof for the non-existence of god.

That's right, I haven't.

God *can* mean something that isn't personal.

But, usually God means something very personal to most people.

That's what I'm trying to destroy - that belief in the personal PLUS Infinite God.

God could well mean cause and effect - all the creative processes in the Universe. In this sense of the word God, I'm very willing to accept that God does exist.

But this isn't a personal sort of thing.

Kelly

∞

From Gerry:

Kelly, I didn't say I was offended. I said I found (judged) your attitude to be highly offensive. Do try to pay attention, old chap.

And you keep spinning this bullshit that an "infinite" god cannot ALSO ***INCLUDE*** a creature of itself called, for want of a better term, a "personal" god. And your rhetoric "supporting" your argument is crock of steaming hot sophistry. I know you know enough about Logic to admit the bullshit in your own argument, so I take it that your refusal to do so is down to your bigotry.

On THIS blog, about THIS topic, we're done, Kelly. If you want to continue it, take it to your own website and see if you can find a sparring partner there.

And I meant it when I said you should seek therapy...

Gerry

∞

From Gerry: [The following was posted as a weblog entry, three weeks after his last reply].

yes, but...

Sorry to bore you about god.

But it's important.

There is or isn't a god.

If it's purely a matter of belief (and let's remember that I distinguish absolutely between believing and knowing), then I'm happy to let it rest with the believer as long as the believer does not claim to know.

It's when the believer claims to know that I get a bit twitchy...

And of course, as readers of this blog know only too well, it's atheists who claim to know that there is no god who get on my goat most. If only they were happy admit that they merely BELIEVE that there is no god I could leave them alone.

But no, the disingenuous little creeps have to claim to KNOW, whilst failing to offer any acceptable* proof for their certainty. That's what gets me - their denial that they too are mere believers... Believers in the non-existence of god.

What's wrong with leaving it at that? The answer is obvious: If they admitted they too are acting on faith alone, their very grounds for attacking and discrediting their opposite numbers would evaporate...

Yes, make no mistake about it, atheists are as fundamentalist and bigoted about their beliefs as the believers they so like to invalidate.

Is anyone still reading this? I doubt it, but I feel a lot better now... :-)

But how long will my bliss last?

Gerry

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

My post-script:

Gerry: But no, the disingenuous little creeps have to claim to KNOW, whilst failing to offer any acceptable proof for their certainty. That's what gets me - their denial that they too are

mere believers... Believers in the non-existence of god.

Assuming that Gerry's log above was about our discussion, I did admit the possibility of the existence of God, if defined as the Infinite. I'll clarify why this is valid: because 'God' popularly carries connotations of Almighty Creator, and Eternal. So, I can happily accept that the Infinite, being the body of cause and effect, is Almighty, Eternal, and the Creator of all things.

What I refute in this discussion with Gerry, and which he finds an "unacceptable proof" is the existence of an Almighty and Eternal Creator that *itself* also has personal relationships, of the emotional kind. That sort of God is literally a logical impossibility - the definition is internally illogical. This is the whole crux of the problem, and something Gerry was unwilling to confront. Why is this an invalid definition of God, you may ask? The answer is: the Infinite (meaning, Everything, all causes) cannot itself have emotional relationships, because then there would be the problem of *not-emotional relationships* being left out of Everything - thus, incapable of existing. That's a problem, because there is no sense or meaning in 'emotional relationships' without 'non-emotional relationships'.

Possibly Gerry thinks it is unreasonable to assert that the Infinite cannot possibly include a *finite* God which has emotional relationships. That is quite possible, I agree - it's then a scientific hypothesis. But in this case, what is meant by 'God' cannot be Eternal, nor Almighty. Yet that is exactly what deluded humans wish to believe *is possible*. But this is an outright lie.

Kelly Jones

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