CONTENTS

On What There Is:
Theism, Platonism, *and* Explanation

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J. P. IS A METAPHYSICIAN. The word *is* used in the previous sentence is not the *is* of essential predication, nor the *is* of identity, nor the *is* of constitution. It is the *is* of accidental predication. J.P is not *essentially* a metaphysician—he could have been a chemist or a pastor or a Kansas City Royal's batboy. He is not identical to *The Metaphysician* (was that Plato? Aristotle? Husserl?). But thank God he freely chose, guided by God's sovereign hand, to become a metaphysician.

I (Paul) first got a sense of how important metaphysics (and philosophy in general) was to J. P. on September 11, 2001. Two weeks into my graduate studies at Talbot School of Theology, I woke up to the horror of America under attack by terrorists. Later that morning I had J. P.'s class on metaphysics. I wondered how much philosophy we would discuss that day, given the national emergency unfolding before our eyes. When class began, J. P. walked in and talked for a few minutes with us about what was happening in New York. But then without fanfare, J. P. said (loosely from memory), "Okay folks, we've got important things to do today, let's begin." At first I was a little shocked. I thought to myself, "Don't we have important things to talk about already—like terrorist attacks and people dying and what it all means?" The more I reflect on that day (we talked about the nature of identity, I still have my class notes), I have come to realize we *were* doing important things. Metaphysics *does* matter. It contributes to *shalom*—since

being rightly related to reality and living life well are good things in themselves and without engaging in substantive metaphysics they remain elusive. For over thirty years, J. P. has led the way in helping us all to think rightly about reality.

So, how ought we to think about reality so that we might be rightly related to it? *Metaphysics* is the branch of philosophy that takes up the challenge of thinking critically about our world. According to J. P., metaphysics is the "philosophical study of the nature of being or reality and the ultimate categories or kinds of things that are real."[1] In this chapter, we shall be concerned with understanding the world—the kinds of things there are and how they all fit together. We want to understand reality and think that J. P. Moreland is a good guide to help us in that project. Our plan of attack is as follows. First, we'll articulate a rough sketch of the world according to J. P. by stating three theses that build on each other and help ease us into the project. Next, we'll consider some worries about the overall picture thus erected and show how they can be set aside. Finally, we shall show how the resultant picture—a magical world full of God and man, abstract and concrete objects, souls and bodies, bare particulars and complex wholes—is an explanatorily powerful and satisfying view of reality.

ON WHAT THERE IS: THE WORLD

Thesis 1. Existence Is Univocal

We begin our investigation of the world with the question "What is there?" Of course, any answer to this question presupposes some theory of what it means "to be" or "to exist." J. P. argues that existence is univocal—there is one sense of the verb "to exist" and that sense is as follows:[2]

"x exists" = df. "x has some property F."

For example, Jones exists if and only if Jones has some property, say *being human*; the number three exists if and only if the number three has some property, say *being prime*. Alternatively, the unicorn, Pegasus, does not exist since there is no object that has the property *being a unicorn*. Nothing has that property and "*nothingness* is just that—nothing."[3] Still, our *concept* of Pegasus (a mental property) does exist since it (the concept of Pegasus) is a concept of something that would have the property of *being a one-horned flying horse* if it existed. An important corollary of J. P.'s definition of existence is there is a difference between a thing's nature and its existence. The vast difference between me and God does

not consist in our having vastly different sorts of *being* (or "reality" or "existence"); it consists rather in our having vastly different sorts of *natures*; the vast difference between an abstract object and a concrete object does not consist in their existing in difference senses (e.g., one is not more real than the other), rather it consists in having vastly different sorts of natures.[4] Armed with this theory of existence, we can again ask our ontological question, "What is there?"

THESIS 2. THERE IS A READY-MADE WORLD CONSISTING OF NATURAL CLASSES OF OBJECTS

One answer to this ontological question is of course "everything"—and we are in no need of philosophical or scientific investigation to convince us of the truth of this answer. Everything that is, exists. But this is at once too general and non-systematic to be informative—or to be considered a satisfactory answer to the ontological question. We try again. J. P. believes that reality is "cut at the joints"—there is a ready-made world and this world consists of natural groupings of objects.[5] Thus, an answer to the ontological question will be in terms of *ontological categories*—(nonempty) natural classes of objects that constitute the building blocks of the world. The concept of "natural class" is a bit vague but not so much so that it cannot be usefully employed. For our purposes, we shall consider a natural class of objects a group of things that exhibit (i) "sufficient internal unity" so as to constitute a real division among things; and (ii) whose membership comprises a really significant proportion of the things that there are.[6] Call the universal class—the class of all existent things—"object."[7]

The *primary ontological category* is the highest link in the great chain of non-arbitrary classification below the universal class. J. P. endorses what van Inwagen calls a *polycategorical ontology*: there are two categories—universal and particular—that are not subcategories of any other ontological category.[8] Universals are entities that can be exemplified (had, instantiated, possessed) by many things at the same time whereas a particular is defined contrastively as a non-universal.[9] J. P.'s primary ontological categories, universal and particular, could also be labeled correspondingly as "abstract object" and "concrete object" where an abstract object is a nonessentially spatio-temporal necessary being that is not a person and a concrete object is defined contrastively as nonabstract.[10]

A "secondary ontological category" or "tertiary ontological category" are natural subclasses of their higher-level class: "x is a natural subclass of y if x is

a subclass of y and x is a natural class."[11] J. P.'s secondary ontological categories consist of his ontological simples—objects that possess no intrinsic complexity. Subclasses under "universal" include "property," "relation," and "number." The subclass under "particular" is the Morelandian "bare particular." J. P.'s tertiary ontological categories consist of high-level complex objects, that is, objects that have other constituent objects from a secondary ontological category as metaphysical parts. Under the subclass "property," there is "potentiality," which grounds modal discourse (that is, talk about the possible and impossible) and "proposition," understood as a kind of structured mental property; under the subclass "bare particular," there is "state of affairs," "substance," and "ordered aggregate." This sketch of J. P.'s ontology can be seen in Figure 1 below.

THE CATEGORIES OF MORELAND'S WORLD

Object

Universal (abstract)　　　　　Particular (concrete)

Property　Relation　Number　　　　Bare Particular

Potentiality　Proposition　　　　SOFA　Substance　Ordered Aggregate
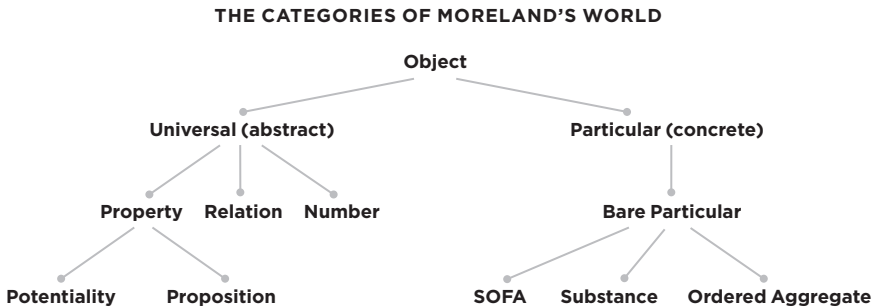
Figure 1

To believe, as J. P. does, in abstract objects is to endorse Platonism. For J. P., there are an actually infinite number of abstract objects.[12] A discussion of how members of the abstract world, the Platonic heaven, relate to members of the concrete world ("the universe") leads us to one of J. P.'s novel theses—ordinary objects have abstract objects non-spatially "in" them as constituents.[13]

THESIS 3. THE ONTOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF ORDINARY OBJECTS IS ASSAYED IN TERMS OF THE CONSTITUENT-WHOLE RELATION
Minimally, to exemplify a property is to possess or have a property. This much, most philosophers can agree on. Broadly speaking, two distinct styles of metaphysical explanation can be discerned for understanding property possession by ordinary concrete objects. Aristotle tells us that the items (intuitively) had or possessed by sensible particulars can be understood to exist either "separate from the

sensible things" or "present in them" (996ª15-16). More recently, van Inwagen[14] (following Nicholas Wolterstorff[15]) speaks of relational and constituent ontologies. Aristotle's and van Inwagen's distinction is meant, it seems, to mark out the same contrast. The expressions "in" and "separate" can be used to mark a variety of contrasts, but the operative contrast in these two distinct styles seems to be as follows: to be in a thing is to be a proper constituent of the thing, whereas to be separate is to exist apart from the thing. As Michael Loux points out, the force of "separate" here is parasitic on its opposition to "in."[16]

Both approaches tell us that substances exhibit whatever character they have in virtue of properties had by it. Thus, we find the following framework constraint in play for both metaphysical styles:

Principle for Character Grounding (PCG): Properties Explain the Character Things Have

God's being divine is partially explained by the property *being divine*; Socrates' being wise is partially explained by the property *being wise*. In some sense then, properties are explanatorily prior to the things that have them. PCG highlights what we shall call the primary role for Platonic properties, a role J. P. endorses: that of *making* or structuring reality.[17] As George Bealer observes, "[Properties] play a fundamental constitutive role in the structure of the world."[18]

So, both approaches endorse PCG. However, the two approaches differ in their account of how character exhibition is to be further analyzed. Those who endorse the constituent approach tell us that the familiar objects of our everyday experience exhibit their character in virtue of their constituent metaphysical and physical parts (where a metaphysical part is meant to range over properties that are in ordinary concrete objects). On the relational approach, by contrast, familiar concrete objects exhibit their character through objects that are not immanent in those substances. Rather, as Aristotle puts it, they exist "apart from the sensibles," and it is in virtue of standing in some non-mereological relation to those objects that the familiar concrete objects exhibit the character that they do.

J. P. is decidedly a constituent ontologist with respect to ordinary concrete objects. Consider the following sentence:

(1) Socrates is human.

According to J. P., (1) can be further analyzed as:

(2) *Being human* inheres in Socrates as a constituent.

and

(3) Socrates' bare particular exemplifies *being human*.

Sentences (2) and (3) are understood as follows: Socrates (a substance) has "rooted within" himself the property *being human* as a constituent. The property inheres in Socrates where "inherence" is understood as "a non-spatial, primitive relation that cannot be analyzed further."[19] Inherence, according to J. P. is further grounded in the exemplification relation (also understood as a primitive, non-spatial relation) expressed in (3). That is, the same property inheres in the substance Socrates (the whole) and is exemplified by the individuator (Socrates' bare particular), which is also a constituent of Socrates. Thus, properties *inhere* in substances and are *exemplified* by the substances' bare particular. Substances (such as Socrates) as well as other concrete objects that possess abstract objects as constituents are particulars and (thus) spatio-temporally located even though some of their constituent parts are not spatio-temporally located due to what J. P. calls the victory of particularity: "When a particular exemplifies a universal, the resulting state of affairs…is itself a particular."[20] Universals (abstract objects) are non-spatially "in" the concrete particulars that have them. Further, J. P. believes that we can be directly aware of the universal "in" the concrete object through a kind of perception called (following Husserl) eidetic intuition.[21] Much more can be said of course, but the above suffices to raise worries about the coherence and intelligibility of the world according to J. P., worries we shall next consider.

WORRIES ABOUT THE WORLD ACCORDING TO J. P.

One worry, advanced recently by Peter van Inwagen with much bewilderment is that the kind of Platonic constituent ontology advance by J. P. is literally meaningless—and (if not meaningless) queer besides. To say that something can be "in" another thing in a non-spatial sense does seem a bit queer, so let's call this first worry the *Queerness Worry*. Upon reflection, the notion of a non-spatial sense of "in" is not entirely opaque, however. Consider immaterial agents such as God or souls. It is plausible to endorse the claim that thoughts are in immaterial minds non-spatially. *Prima facie*, it is natural to think that thoughts must be in the substance that has them. And if the substance is immaterial, then they are in it non-

spatially. So, the notion of a non-spatial "in" doesn't seem problematic, or queer, for the theist, since God and His thoughts are already in the picture. Perhaps it is the idea of something being non-spatially "in" a material object that is behind the Queerness Worry. But here we arrive at a kind of trade-off with our objector. Recall that there are universals. Universals are multiply-instantiable—they can be had by more than one particular. But, if universals are spatially-located where their concrete particulars are, then one and the same object would be multiply located. But this possibility is (to say the least) highly counterintuitive. Rather, our everyday experience of spatial objects supports the following axiom, called the "axiom of localization" by Reinhardt Grossmann: "No entity whatsoever can exist at different places at once or at interrupted time intervals."[22] Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that universals are not spatially "in" the concrete objects that have them. If such considerations aren't helpful, one can simply follow J. P., who thinks that Platonism regarding properties requires a constituents approach to adequately solve the problem of individuation, and so too the notion of being "in" a substance non-spatially.[23] It is just a cost of an otherwise fruitful metaphysical theory. We conclude that the Queerness Worry isn't insurmountable and the benefits of adopting a non-spatial sense of "in" far outweigh any putative costs to the overall picture in terms of queerness.

The second worry about the overall picture thus erected has to do with the conjunction of theism with Platonism. According to traditional theism, God is the creator of all reality distinct from Himself. According to traditional Platonism, abstract objects exist independently, and thus as uncreated necessary beings. Traditional theism and traditional Platonism are obviously at odds with each other, and their conjunction leads to incoherency. Let's call this the *Incoherence Worry* regarding Platonic theism. Can the Incoherence Worry be avoided? One natural move is to bring the Platonic horde into the realm of God's creative activity: God is the creator of all abstract objects distinct from Himself. This is a move that many find initially attractive but ultimately unworkable because it simply relocates the incoherency. Here's how: If God is the creator of all abstract objects, then God is the creator of those abstract objects that He Himself has. But then God is the creator of His own nature (i.e., His properties such as *being all-powerful*, *being all-knowing, etc.*). But how can God create His own nature unless He already has a determinate nature (with all the requisite abilities and powers)?[24] And we are off on a vicious explanatory circle from which many think there can

be no escape. God pulls Himself up by His own bootstraps! We think that the so-called bootstrapping worry can be avoided for the Platonic theist.[25] Recall, as creator, God is the creator of all properties *distinct* from Himself, not all properties whatsoever. Thus, it is open to the theist to endorse the claim that God and God's properties exist *a se* and it is all other properties that are created by God. Thus, the Incoherency Worry can be set aside.[26] The Platonic Theist can have it all—an attractive theory of the mind-language-world nexus and a fully sovereign creator of all distinct reality, including those members of the Platonic horde that are not part of God (or God's mental life).[27]

THE EXPLANATORY POWER OF PLATONIC THEISM

J. P. is a Platonist regarding abstract objects, and a realist regarding universals. Nominalism, by way of contrast, holds that there are no abstract objects, only concrete objects. Further, such concrete objects are not multiply instantiable. There are no universals. There are brown dogs, but not the *abstract* property *being brown*, a *shareable* property that is possibly instantiated by dogs, men, and trees; there are tables and chairs with the same number of legs, but not *abstract shareable* numbers; and so on. Nominalism is not to be understood necessarily as the rejection of properties, relations, propositions, possible worlds, and so on. Rather, what is required of those who believe in such entities is that they think of them as particular (i.e., non-multiply instantiable) concrete objects.[28] In this last section, we turn to the rich explanatory power J. P.'s view of the world offers, over and against nominalism. We shall argue for the superiority of Platonic realism (hereafter "realism") over nominalism by highlighting phenomena within various academic disciplines—mathematics, biology, political science, literature, and theology—and showing how realism best explains the phenomena in question.

First, let us consider issues within the discipline of mathematics. Note the sentence "2+2=4." How should the numerals 2 and 4 be understood ontologically? What are the + and = functions to be identified with? What grounds the necessity of the truth of the sentence "2+2=4"? For the realist, mathematical objects (e.g., numbers, sets, functions) truly exist and can be multiply instantiated in (say) the many young minds of an elementary math class. Furthermore, numbers can stand in relations to one another, and these relations are universals. Hence there is an ontological grounding for the objectivity of mathematical theories. However, for the nominalist, there are only numerals (individual markings on

a page) and thus mathematical "truths" do not exist per se, to be discovered, but rather are "useful fictions" developed by a community of individuals. In this case mathematics actually is sociology—the study of how social groupings come to use various symbols in ways meaningful to them. Yet our intuitions incline us to say, for example, that the Pythagorean Theorem was discovered, not invented. The rich explanatory power of realism supports this intuition.

The same is true in the field of biology. Realism grounds the objectivity of the biological taxonomy in the fixed natures possessed by members of a natural kind. Of course, the nominalist has offered other groundings for the taxonomy (according to genotypic or phenotypic similarities), but all such attempts to date appear to fail.[29] Furthermore, realism better explains what we observe in the development of biological organisms. While all cells in an organism's body are the same, they are "directed" to play different functions in the context of the whole organism. Some become blood vessels, others fingernails, and still others brain neurons. The realist has a ready explanation: there is a nature that is "in" the particular and is directing the parts in certain ways to fully realize its telos as a member of that species (for instance, to be a fully mature human, dog, or gazelle). The nominalist counters by arguing that DNA performs this function. However, this merely pushes the problem back one step. DNA is composed of an ordering of specific instances of nucleotide types (A, C, G, and T types). It is the relation between these types that makes DNA what it is. Yet these relations appear to be universals, in which case the nominalist can't appeal to them in offering an explanation. At best, on nominalism, such relations resemble each other, but the nominalist is left without an explanation for why such resemblance relations obtain. Realism has a nice answer: resemblance reduces to identity—the relations that ground DNA are universal relations. Again, realism is explanatorily superior to nominalism in explaining the reality of the natural kinds found in nature as well as their teleological function.[30]

Next, consider political science, which is concerned with the proper ordering and governance of civil society. A central notion in the American Experiment is that of "inalienable human rights." But what are these, and how are they grounded? The realist is able to answer that each person is intrinsically equal and valuable due to a shared human nature—the universal *humanness* shared by all particular humans regardless of ethnicity, class, religion or any other demarcation. On the basis of this objective, shared nature, the State is required to treat

all citizens as equals. This not only forms the basis of America's commitment to equality, but grounds our moral outrage at human right abuses in other countries as well, such as is currently the case in Darfur. But the nominalist has no such grounding. With the rejection of a shared nature comes an inability to ground universal, equal rights based on anything shared by all members of the State (or world). All that is left is to define social identity and therefore value in terms of some other unifier: ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Ultimately, society is divided along these lines, with each community seeking to raise its status and obtain value and thereby freedoms and protections in virtue of these defining characteristics. Yet, without the common ground afforded by realism, the result is civic unrest and "power plays" among the various identity groups. Again, realism provides a better way, providing a sure grounding to provide for the common good—the good for all in virtue of being human—rather than promote what is good for one group at the expense of what is good for another group.

Many of the same points made above apply to issues in the fields of literature and biblical studies. For the realist there is meaning in the text due to the existence of multiply instantiable propositions, and by study of the text we can come to have those propositions in our minds, and thus the meaning in the text, which was also the meaning (the same propositions) in the mind of the author. For the nominalist, this is not possible given her metaphysic. Thus, she can only bring her meaning to the text. As Derrida said, "The absence of a transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of significations infinitely."[31] In the words of Nietzsche, "There are no facts, only interpretations."[32] From this follows the "Hermeneutic of Suspicion" and deconstructionism that has come to define postmodern literary studies as of late. Again, the implications for the study of literature, including the Bible, are far-reaching.

Lastly, these views have important implications in theology. For example, a central doctrine of orthodox Christianity is the humanity of Jesus. Philippians 2:7 states that Jesus "made himself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" and Romans 1:3 reads: "regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendent of David." Yet how is this to be understood? The realist has a ready explanation: Jesus truly took on something real—*humanness*—the very same nature all other humans possess. His sharing this nature, a property multiply-exemplified in all individual persons, is what made Him truly, deeply and fully human. This not only makes better sense of biblical teaching

and creedal summaries, but grounds how Jesus is able to fully sympathize with us—He, too, is fully human, exactly like we are, and therefore experienced human life exactly like we do. The humanity of Christ is much harder for the nominalist to explain while remaining theologically orthodox. A nominalist could argue that the human Jesus is not important, but rather what is important is the "Christ of Faith," as liberal theology holds. Or the nominalist could argue that Jesus was not truly human at all, but only "appeared" human, as the Gnostics argued. But these alternatives depart from clear biblical teaching and the historic creeds of the Faith. At best, the nominalist could argue that Jesus had His own unique property "humaness$_1$," which is adequately similar to the individual "humanesses" all other humans have ("humaness$_2$," humaness$_3$," etc.) to make Him human. But this merely postpones the problem, for how then are all of these individual humanneses related to one another in nontrivial ways? And therefore again, how did Christ truly share in our humanity? By our lights, the realist answer seems to be the best explanation of these facts about Jesus.[33]

Much more could be said, but we believe this suffices to show the implications of adopting a realist or nominalist metaphysic in relationship to a wide range of academic disciplines. It is our opinion that the Platonic realism J. P. espouses is vastly superior to nominalism in both its internal integrity as well as its efficacy in making sense of a number of important issues in more than a few disciplines. For these reasons, we embrace and promote this realist ontology as well.

Notes

1. William Lane Craig & J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 173.

2. J. P. Moreland, *Universals* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 134–39.

3. Ibid., 139.

4. See also Peter van Inwagen, "Being, Existence, and Ontological Questions," *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, eds. David Chalmers, David Manley & Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 477.

5. Moreland, *Universals*, 32–33.

6. See Peter van Inwagen, "What is an ontological category?" *Metaphysics: Aristotelian, Scholastic, Analytic*, eds. Daniel Novotny, Lukas Novak, Prokop Sousedik & David Svoboda (Heusenstamm: Ontos Verlag, 2012), 15–17.

7. We do not think (nor would J. P.) that the universal class is a natural class, nor do we think it is an ontological category. Rather, the universal class is the sum of all existent things whatsoever and the primary ontological categories will be the highest natural class(es) which is (are) a subset of the universal class.

8. A *monocategorial ontology*, on the other hand, is an ontology that implies that there is only one primary ontological category—the universal class. See Peter van Inwagen, "Relational vs. Constituent Ontologies," *Philosophical Perspectives* 25 (2011): 389.

9. See Craig & Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 184.

10. J. P. Moreland, "A Response to a Platonistic and to a Set-theoretic Objection to the Kalam Cosmological Argument," *Religious Studies* 39 (2003), 376.

11. Van Inwagen, "What is an ontological category?" 19.

12. Moreland, "A Response to a Platonistic and to a Set-theoretic Objection to the Kalam Cosmological Argument," 374.

13. As a Platonist, J. P. follows Reinhardt Grossmann in making a distinction between "the world" and "the universe." The universe is, "the totality of matter and energy in existence… one giant spatio-temporal whole." See Grossmann, *The Existence of the World* (London: Routledge, 1992), 8. Still, there are things that are not part of the universe in this sense: they are not spatio-temporal parts. Hence, there are things that exist which are not part of the universe, rather they belong to the world. The world is what we have called the universal class—every existent, whether it belongs to the universe, belongs to the world. See also Craig & Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 183–85.

14. Peter van Inwagen, "Relational vs. Constituent Ontologies," *Philosophical Perspectives* 25 (2011): 389–405.

15. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Bergman's Constituent Ontology," *Nous* 4 (1970): 109–34; and "Divine Simplicity," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 531–52.

16. Michael Loux, "Aristotle's Constituent Ontology," *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* Vol. 2, ed. Dean Zimmerman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 207.

17. J. P. Moreland, "Exemplification and Constituent Realism: A Clarification and Modest Defense," *Axiomathes*, 23.2 (June 2013): 247–59.

18. George Bealer, "A Theory of Concepts and Concept Possession," *Philosophical Issues* 9 (1998), 268.

19. J. P. Moreland, "Exemplification and Constituent Realism: A Clarification and Modest Defense," 250.

20. Ibid., 251.

21. Ibid., 253–55

22. Reinhardt Grossmann, *The Existence of the World: An Introduction to Ontology*, 13.

23. After a lengthy argument against Wolterstorff and Armstrong, J. P. states: "If one accepts a realist construal of properties, then one must also embrace some type of individuator that is not a normal property (e.g., an impure property) or is not a property at all, or else the position collapses into moderate nominalism [as J. P. claims Wolterstorff's and Armstrong's accounts do]," *Universals*, 94–95. See also the essay in this volume by Timothy Pickavance.

24. There are other problems here as well, namely, it strains intuition to think that God or anyone else could be responsible for the nature He has, still some have argued thusly. See Thomas Morris and Christopher Menzel, "Absolute Creation," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1986): 353–62.

25. We think the most rigorous formulation of the bootstrapping worry can be found in Bergmann and Brower's, "A Theistic Argument against Platonism (and in Support of Truthmakers and Divine Simplicity," *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* Vol. 2, ed. Dean Zimmerman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 223–57. Other incompatibility arguments can be found in William Lane Craig and Paul Copan, *Creation Out Of Nothing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 167–95; Matthew Davidson, "A Demonstration Against Theistic Activism," *Religious Studies* 35 (1999): 277–90; Scott Davison, "Could Abstract Objects Depend Upon God?," *Religious Studies* 27 (1991): 485–97; and Brian Leftow, "Is God An Abstract Object?," *Nous* 24 (1990): 581–98.

26. Granted, there are other issues that would need to be addressed, e.g., two important questions that remain are (1) Can God (or anyone else) create abstract objects? And (2) Is the notion of eternal causation possible and consistent with biblical orthodoxy? We think the answer to both questions is "yes." For more, see Paul Gould and Richard Davis, "Modified Theistic Activism," *Beyond the Control of God? Six Views on the Problem of God and Abstract Objects*, ed. Paul Gould (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, forthcoming).

27. We think it is plausible to hold that some abstracta are to be located within God or God's mind (such as numbers, propositions, and concepts) and others are best kept in Plato's heaven (namely, properties and relations not essentially possessed by God). For more on this, see ibid.

28. See Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, "Nominalism in Metaphysics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2011 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/nominalism-metaphysics/> for more on the realism/nominalism and abstract/concrete distinctions and their relation. As Rodriguez-Pereyra points out, one can be a nominalist in one sense (the denial of abstract objects) and still endorse universals, as the Aristotelian realist does.

29. See Stan W. Wallace, "In Defense of Biological Essentialism: A Reply to Sober et al.," *Philosophia Christi*, 4:1 (2002): 29–43.

30. For more see Richard J. Connell, *Substance and Modern Science* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) and Etienne Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution* (original English edition: Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

31. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 280.

32. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, tr. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1968), 267.

33. We do not think this is the last word on the matter, however. Possibly, there are versions of nominalism that allow for common natures, even if not universal natures. To work out such a view, one would first have to distinguish different types of sameness, so that a nature such as *humanness* can be said to be *common to*, even if not identical for, all members of the same natural kind, and perhaps also to distinguish different types of individuals, say those capable of sharing a common nature and those which are not. It has recently been suggested that this was in fact Aquinas's view—a *via media* between Platonic realism and more austere versions of nominalism. See Jeff Brower, "Aquinas on the Problem of Universals," unpublished manuscript. For reasons stated above, we suspect that such moves, in the end, are more costly than Platonic realism. For on this view, the relation *being intrinsically the same* explains

human natures being similar, as well as (say) dog natures being similar, horse natures being similar, and so on. The relation *being intrinsically the same* is either a universal or it is not. If the relation is a universal, then there is no payoff in terms of ontological economy for such a nominalism. If it is not, it seems natural to think the relation is a brute fact, in which case it is more costly than realism in terms of explanatory power. For more on this see the essay in this volume by Rob Garcia.