Purism

An Ontological Proof for the Impossibility of God

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Abstract

This article presents an ontological proof that God is impossible. I define an 'impossibility' as a condition which is inconceivable due to its a priori characteristics (e.g. a 'square circle'). Accordingly, said conditions will not ever become conceivable, as they could in instances of a posteriori inconceivability (e.g. the notion that someone could touch a star without being burned). As the basis of this argument, I refer to an a priori observation (Primus, 2019) regarding our inability to imagine inconsistency (difference) within any point of space. This observation renders the notion of absolute power to be inconceivable, a priori. I briefly discuss the moral implications of religious faith in the context of Purism: a moral rationalist paradigm. I conclude that whilst belief in God can be aesthetically expressed it should not be possessed as a material purpose, due to the illogicality of the latter category of belief and/or expression. With this article I provide conceptual delineation between harmless religious belief and expression—which, I argue, should be protected from persecution, as per any other artistic expression— and religious belief and expression which is materially harmful to society. Whilst I aim to protect religious freedom of expression on one hand, I duly aim to reduce instances of material faith in God(s) on the other. Finally, I aim to bring hope in the possibility for human salvation via technology—such that they should exist indefinitely as 'demi-gods,' defined by conditional, relative power over their environment.

Keywords

The content of Thomas J. Coleman III and Robert B. Arrowood's (2015) *Only we can save ourselves: An atheist's 'salvation'* betrays its title; by page 14, the authors concede that "God is not ruled out of the equation, He is only an option" (Coleman & Arrowood, p. 14). In this article I attempt to deny the conceptual possibility of God(s) through highlighting that their a priori characteristics are inconceivable. Consequentially, I will attempt to advance the notion that the materials of all beings—whether deity or human—are mortal and that only mortals can save themselves from death (through technological progression). I will present an ontological proof for the impossibility of deities with absolute properties—God(s)—by demonstrating that they would be inconsistent with the concept of an absolutely consistent fabric, 'space,' which conceivably must be the basis for physical reality. I have previously (Primus, 2019) highlighted our a priori inability to conceive that the nature of space is anything other than consistent, and thus deterministic. This a priori argument—that space can conceivably only possess a single attribute: *absolute* consistency—will be briefly revisited in this text. After describing our inability to consider that the fabric of space is anything other than absolutely consistent, I define God(s) in accordance with the conceived nature of most classical theistic Gods: entities which are capable of being and/or wielding power *absolutely*, such that their power cannot be reduced or attained by natural entities (e.g. humans). I argue that two absolute entities—i.e. God and space—are conceptually irreconcilable at any point of space and time. I further pre-empt a theist counter-argument that God's spirit and "Kingdom" could be ethereal by nature and transcend space and time.

Following my presentation of the ontological proof within, I introduce the nascent moral rationalist framework known as Purism (Primus, 2021). I use this framework to briefly discuss the moral impermissibility of material religious beliefs and expressions. Purism makes a vital distinction between 'material' beliefs and expressions—those which necessarily affect others—and 'formational' beliefs and expressions—those which need only subjectively affect others, if at all. Whilst I am attempting to remove all irrational belief with one hand, I am also striving, with equal force, to ensure that there will always be a place in our future for freedom of expression and belief, including belief in God(s). To reconcile these apparently contradicting aims, I introduce readers to the notion that it is specifically the purpose for which any belief is sought, not the nature of the belief itself, that determines whether it is morally acceptable or not from a moral rationalist perspective. Accordingly, I will offer that people holding and expressing religious beliefs for formational purposes—sought for the purpose(s) of *desire*—do so under the auspices of free expression, whereas those doing so for material purposes—acting for purposes of perceived *need*,

whose use of public resource necessarily and objectively affects others—are unjustified in possessing irrational belief, such as belief in God(s). This distinction is similar to the widely-regarded normative requirement for separation between 'church and State,' though it is slightly more nuanced, advocating a separation between irrationality (of all types, which includes material expressions of religion) and the entities we *need* (which includes both States and states: human actions, thoughts and beliefs, their bodily composition, infrastructures, tools, and any other institution or entity which is needed). The proper place for religious expression, I argue, is when it is *desired* (wanted) for the sake of being *desired*—sought as an end—and thus not sought under the belief that it is *needed*. This normative distinction is necessary in the wake of indiscriminate anti-religious campaigning by the so-called "New Atheism" movement, personified by authors such as Richard Dawkins (2008), Sam Harris (2005), and Christopher Hitchens (2007; Johnson, 2013). The popular works of these authors are specifically targeted, not to academics but to the lay general population (Johnson, 2013). It is within this group that we find those who are not necessarily expressing religion in a material capacity (e.g. as an academic, elected official, community leader, teacher, parent, or as an individual seeking to make the world a 'better place'), but whom are rather seeking religion for personal, aesthetic purposes (e.g. for the sake of enjoyment or for sentimental reasons). These beliefs and expressions must be protected and preserved, as per any artistic expression.

Before preceding to specifics within the discussion, I will emphasize three general points of the ontological argument. These three points aim to address recurring themes of initial resistance that I encountered during preliminary discussions of the article with peers of varying beliefs and disciplines.

Firstly, readers should note that the inconceivability of a notion—one's inability to imagine a particular concept—is a real and powerful force in the context of intellectual inquiry. Theists (see, for example, Jake Beardsley, 2019) implicitly acknowledge the power of this force when they recognize that even an omnipotent God cannot create what they cannot conceive (Beardsley uses the example of God being unable to create "square circles"). In other words, the inability to imagine (a 'square circle') has been viewed by theists as a universal metaphysical limitation which transcends even God's omnipotence. I have discussed the force of inconceivability in more detail elsewhere (Primus, 2019), though of relevance here is the caveat that the power of inconceivability is imposed as a passive force; it is only applicable for the duration and to the conceptual locale that one considers. I (Primus, 2019) use the analogy that inconceivability in the mind of one attempting to consider a notion is like a brick wall in the path of one attempting to run along a

path: for the force of the wall to take effect and block the person's advance, the person must (actively) run into it. The wall provides counter-resistance to the person attempting to move through it, though if a person avoids moving into the wall, it provides no direct force (it may indirectly 'force' them to change their path). Similarly, a person considering whether God is conceivable must consider the possibility of God deeply enough for the force to take effect; each time they consider the nature of space to the necessary degree of conceptual depth they will be forced to accept that they cannot also conceive of God. Alternatively, as per the runner who avoids the wall, so too may they avoid consideration of necessary conceptual depth. This is where theist debaters typically leave the discussion; they *want* to continue conceiving of the possibility of God and so they return to their superficial conception of God by disengaging from the argument. Similarly, readers will be able to avoid this force and continue believing that God is conceivable through disengagement.

Secondly, the inconceivability of God lies within the conception of God *in conjunction with the concurrent* conception of an absolutely consistent space. Both God and a consistent space can each be conceived in isolation, as is evidently the case when various manifestations of God are conceived on a daily basis. The inconceivability of God, therefore, does not suppose our inability to merely imagine the symbol of 'God,' nor does it suppose our inability to conceive (in isolation) that which the symbol of God represents: an entity of absolute power. Our ability to conceive of God, either as a creator separate from their creation or as an all-encompassing entity, whilst disregarding appropriate consideration of the properties of the conceivable external world—properties which are irreconcilable with God—allows us to superficially conceive that God is possible. The same phenomenon applies as observers conceptually sweep over Penrose's 'impossible triangle' (Penrose & Penrose, 1958). Depicted below in two dimensions, the shape can superficially be conceived to exist as a three-dimensional possibility if a person considering the shape traces their focus along each face, reaching each of its three vertices (A, B and C) in isolation (i.e. one in any moment). Vertices A, B and C can conceivably each exist as three dimensional objects when considered in isolation, just as God is conceivable in isolation; it is only when we consider each of the various components of Penrose's triangle together (e.g. each side and vertices A, B, C) that we cannot conceive of how it could be realized as a three dimensional object.

Thirdly, the apparent consistency within the material of our world—which, I argue, we are forced to conceive each and every time we consider the nature of our fundamental material with sufficient conceptual depth—is not inherently obvious. There are, after all, only a minute number of universal truths that we
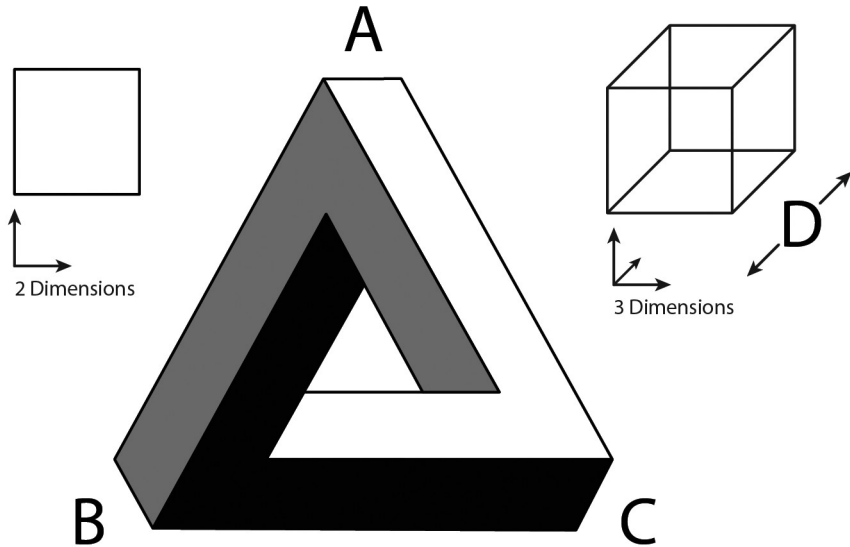
FIGURE 1   Depicts a Penrose triangle, with vertices labelled A, B, C; it is conceivable
            that each vertex could exist as a three-dimensional object in isolation from
            each other, though not when each is considered interacting with each other.
            Alternatively, each can be conceived to interact with each other in two-
            dimensions, though this interaction cannot be conceived in the context of a
            third dimension—D(epth).

can know for certain and—René Descartes aside—we typically do not spend a
lot of time, if any, considering them in the course of our daily life. The consis-
tency of space is one of these truths, though it is not immediately apparent. I
have been required to explain the concept of the inconceivability of inconsis-
tency within space a number of times to most peers engaging in this argument
before it became conceptually clear in their minds. I have tried to present the
argument as clearly as I can in a few varying ways, though readers may require a
number of read-throughs before they grasp the concept. I implore readers not
to 'run away from the wall'.

    I will now discuss what I (Primus, 2019) offer is the origin of our ability to
know certainty: our inability to conceive of difference within space. In other
words, I begin with the aspect of our world that we are forced to conceive when
we consider the material nature of our world with sufficient conceptual depth.
I will then demonstrate how attempts to reconcile this aspect with the notion
of God—an entity of absolute power—ultimately fail.

1   The Inconceivability of Difference At Points In Space (IDAPIS)

> Any degree of difference is conceivable across, yet inconceivable within, space.

In a recent article (Primus, 2019) I make an a priori observation that every point of space must unvaryingly be conceived as absolutely consistent. This observation can be otherwise known as the Inconceivability of Difference at Any Point In Space (which I abbreviate as 'IDAPIS'). This inconceivability will be summarily explained herein; however, I direct readers to my previous text (2019) for an expanded discussion.

For the purposes of this article I define inconsistency as simply "difference" (Primus, 2019, p. 8). This broad definition encapsulates all types of change (variation and/or limitation) across space or time. Consistency is therefore negatively defined as "the absence of any difference or change, across space or time" (Primus, 2019, p. 8). In sum, absolute uniformity of space across time is consistency, whilst any deviation from this absoluteness is considered inconsistency. I adopt de Laguna's definition of a point as "[a]n abstractive element in which no other abstractive element lies" (de Laguna, 1922, Def. XI, p. 454). By 'space' I refer to all types of spaces: physical and conceptual, of any ontological construction; I refer to the area of reality in its most radical inclusion. Finally, by use of the term 'space,' I am, by default, specifically referring to the nature of the fabric which is the basis for all these types of spaces, rather than the nature of the various forms and structures which conceivably must be created from said space.

A notable consequence of a consistent fabric of space is that difference at or *within* any individual point of space is inconceivable. In other words, a consistent space necessitates that each individual point of the infinite points both across and within itself (i.e. smaller points inside former points) are non-permitting of difference (i.e. variation or limitation). We do, of course, experience difference all around us in our daily life (e.g. the perception or conception that person A is different from their environment, B); these differences are the various forms and structures that I refer to above and the nature of these entities is, of course, not consistent. To simultaneously allow for these differences and an absolutely consistent space, I offer (Primus, 2019) that difference can conceivably occur *across* multiple points of space, but not *within* individual points of space. The terms *within* and *across* are emphasized because it should be further noted that they necessarily precede the terms *individual* and *multiple*, respectively. Here I emphasize that the conception of difference *across* space necessarily involves the conception of difference occurring at *mul-*

tiple (i.e. two or more) points of space; a difference, by definition, implies the involvement of at least two aspects (e.g. the one part that is unalike at least one other part). Alternatively, any attempts to conceive difference at points *within* (points of) space necessarily involves the imagination of *individual* (i.e. singular) points of space—the point at which two or more entities or differences are supposed to conceivably coincide (Primus, 2019). In other words, I argue that we can conceive that a point on the shirt of person A, whom is wearing a red shirt—point A—is different from a point on person B, whom is wearing a blue shirt—point B—and sitting *across* (space) from person A in a doctor's waiting room. However, if we sit person A and B next to each other and conceptually 'zoom *in*' to investigate the space *within* the space which separates point A and B, at no point can we conceive that there is an individual point which embodies both red and blue (or any type of difference). Readers will find it impossible to imagine that two entities—for example, the 'redness' of point A, and the 'non-redness' of C, the space that surrounds A—could coexist at a single point, without also being able to conceive two smaller points within said point: a point for each aspect of difference. Superficially, one might consider that person A and the surrounding space, C, are different from each other and are therefore two separate entities. If one more-deeply considers the space between A and C, however, it is impossible, with conceptual magnification, to imagine a point where both remain as separate entities (i.e. the single point which embodies the difference—both aspects—of A and C). If one imagines the surface of A and the space of C as two separate entities it means one can zoom-in further until one reaches a single point, which will either be conceived as a singular entity or still as two separate entities. The latter conception indicates that one has not zoomed-in far enough because it is still not the single point at which they meet. If one conceptually 'zooms-in' and continues to imagine person A as separate from space C—and thus one still considers them as two separate entities—this indicates that the considerer is actually imagining two points, not one point; I ask them to conceive *the* (singular) point where the shirt of person A meets the surrounding 'nothing' of C—it must be a single point (Primus, 2019).

At first consideration this observation may appear as an equivocation which exploits the definition of a point as the smallest conceived entity at any moment. But this is rather a demonstration of our inability to imagine discrete differences when we conceptually 'zoom in' to the space which separates two different, discretely perceived or conceived entities. The necessary conclusion is that expressions of difference, as per space itself, can only *conceivably* exist continuously, across multiple points, rather than discretely, at or within individual points (whether or not they behave as such in physical reality is beyond

the scope of this argument and indeed epistemological insight more generally; the force of this argument deals with the (*in*)*conceivability* of inconsistency within space). In other words, given appropriate consideration, we are forced to imagine the existence of a (singular) continuity. Another way of considering the necessary continuity of space—whether embodying difference or not— is to attempt to conceive that space could be limited in its nature rather than infinite. A limited space, which does not extend infinitely within each point of itself and indefinitely in each direction, would require the conception of a difference at the point where space ends and something-other-than-space begins.[1]

Perhaps the most important implication of a consistent space is the requirement that all differences must be conceived to exist conditionally—not absolutely—as temporary properties (e.g. velocity, mass, direction, force). That is, if any point of the fabric of space itself cannot be conceived to embody difference, then the differences we observe must manifest themselves as fluid states (motions) of space (Primus, 2019). It is conceivably the absolute consistency of space which enables these properties to exist as relatively simplistic, passive structures (e.g. sub-atomic materials, atoms, molecules). It is the relative consistency of these passive materials which could plausibly allow for more complex and active entities to exist (e.g. cells, animals, humans, governments). In addition to the physical structures of reality, the consistency of all conceptual structures (e.g. laws of physics, truth, logic) might also be derived from the consistent nature of simple materials, and ultimately, the IDAPIS (Primus, 2019). In other words, the consistency of space conceivably provides predictability, reliability and stability within both the physical structures of reality, and the conceptual structures conceived or perceived within the minds of those observing reality. The conditional nature of all entities other than space—each conceivably existing as properties of space in motion rather than as absolutely existing properties—is noteworthy for the purposes of this article. If only space can be absolute, then each of these subsequent structures are mortal in nature; they owe their existence to natural, mortal processes; they can be created and destroyed.

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1 Beyond being unable to imagine this point of difference—and noting that any space could be conceived to embody anything (with the exception of difference at a point), including nothing—readers should also find it impossible to conceive of the something-other-than-anything-or-nothing which would extend beyond the limits of space.

2   Impossibility

> If one can conceive it, it is not impossible.

I define impossibility as *a priori inconceivability*. That is, the notion of impossibility describes a condition which cannot be conceived on the basis that such would necessitate the conception of inconsistency—the presence of difference (i.e. variance and/or limitation)—within (a point or points of) space. I emphasize that it is the a priori nature of this inconceivability which renders it as a true impossibility, never to become conceivable across time and space. A square circle is impossible because such a notion will always be inconceivable. This notion of impossibility is independent from empirical (a posteriori) consideration. An impossible condition will not suddenly become possible to an observer who becomes 'more knowledgeable'; if it is a true impossibility, one cannot subsequently 'discover' how a previously thought-to-be-impossible condition is or was actually possible. For example, if I were to impose the axiom that mathematics must be limited to directly (literally) describing quantities of points of physical space and their relationships, we can have certainty that 'x,' in the equation '$1+1 = x$,' equals '2'. It is impossible, because it is inconceivable a priori, that 'x' could suddenly, at a future point in time or a distant point in space, equal '3' (or any other number). We know this a priori because the equation '$1+1 = 3$ (or any other solution other than 2)' would require the conception of difference within points of space. That is, at some point we would need to imagine that two or more points of space are also, at the same moment, individual points of space (or vice-versa—that individual points of space are also, at the same moment, two or more points of space—depending on the solution and which side of the equation we consider). Similarly, the Penrose triangle (Penrose & Penrose, 1958) is considered impossible rather than merely improbable because it is inconceivable, a priori, that it could ever be realized in three-dimensional Euclidean space. For the triangle to be realized in three dimensions, some of its points would need to permit difference within themselves (i.e. at various points along its frame, individual points would also concurrently need to be considered as two or more points, or two or more points of the triangle would need to be concurrently considered as individual points). If one has the cognitive faculties to understand the necessary conception of consistency within space, one has the faculties to understand the enduring (i.e. unconditional) nature of impossibility.

By contrast, we can conceive that no a posteriori conditions should be deemed to be universally inconceivable, whether across time or space. There are too many philosophers to list here—though perhaps most famously, Plato,

in his *Allegory of the Cave*—who have highlighted the largely veiled nature of the empirical world, which we appear to each view through our personal prisms. A posteriori conditions that would require an unusual change of space in an unusual period of time, such as a reindeer materializing in front of the reader, or a human touching the sun without being burned, may appear highly 'implausible,' 'impractical,' or 'improbable'; they may even be temporally or locally inconceivable (i.e. inconceivable to a person at a particular time or space), but we can conceive that they are not universally inconceivable. We know this because we can conceive, a priori, that any amount of change (difference) is possible *across* (though not *within*) any amount of space, in any amount of time. This aligns with the well-known mantra 'anything is possible' that exists within contemporary popular culture (the correct mantra is perhaps 'anything is possible *across* space, though only purity (consistency) is possible *within* space'). Accordingly, ruling-out all a posteriori events from the realm of impossibility merely requires the cognitive faculties to realize that any nature of conception which involves the perception or conception of difference *across* (i.e. between two or more points of) space and time is possible. I offer that events which are of an infinitesimally small probability and yet which can conceivably be conceived should not be deemed impossible, and rather that the term is reserved for a priori inconceivability.

3   God(s) and Demi-gods

> Power can be demonstrated; its absoluteness cannot.

For the purposes of this article, I define a God using the minimum characteristics as shared by the Gods of classical theism (for examples, see Smith, 1958). A God is *an entity capable of exerting power*—the degree of which being irrelevant to its classification as a God—*whose power exists absolutely*—i.e. intrinsically, as a nature which is unable to be reduced (e.g. degraded or destroyed), or (re)created/replicated, except perhaps by its own arbitration. Accordingly, I offer that there are two essential components to a God. The first is that they must be capable of deliberately and independently exerting power, irrespective of their degrees of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, or benevolence. This power must influence worldly states in some capacity, whether at the beginning of time, as the first cause, or throughout time. The second aspect of a God is perhaps the most crucial as it separates God(s) from other entities which wield power (e.g. humans): a God's power exists supernaturally as an unconditional phenomenon. Their power cannot be attained, nullified or reduced

in any capacity, except by its own choosing.[2] Therefore, neither the degree of omnipotence nor omnipresence of such power is relevant to this proof, nor is the nature of how God 'is,' whether of spirit or other non-corporeal nature. Rather, the distinguishing feature of a God is that their power, however and wherever, affects the world as an arbitrating (non-instrumental) nature and cannot be reduced or attained by mortals, due to its absoluteness.

The above two minimum requirements of a God should be intuitively accepted by classical theists on the basis that they are characteristic of each of their (classical) Gods. Ultimate power alone is insufficient: if a God's power were absolute in magnitude (i.e. the most powerful entity that one could conceive) and yet this power could be attained or reduced by mortals, then such "God" is more accurately a powerful mortal. Similarly, absolute (intrinsic, unconditional) existence alone is inadequate: a God must possess the ability to actively exert power. For this reason, Spinoza's (1677) passive and deterministic, pantheistic "God" does not 'qualify' as a God according to the definition herein. Although absolute (irreducible, intrinsic) in its nature, Spinoza's "God" is not a God because it cannot deliberately and independently exert power itself. Rather, it is conceived as the (passive) instrument by which (all) power is exerted.

To clearly distinguish conditional states of power from absolute states of power I offer that conditionally powerful entities, whether they be human or theistic, may be called 'demi-gods,' or even simply abbreviated as 'gods' (with a lowercase 'g'). (Demi-)god-like status is a conditional state, defined by one's mortal ability to wield (relative) power over other mortal entities and/or one's environment. For example, beings whose material bodies allow them to potentially live forever and which can manipulate their environment in accordance with their intent would be said to possess a bodily material which is god-like compared to contemporary humans. However, irrespective of their relative power, demi-gods are always reducible; they can be destroyed, surpassed and superseded; their power is not absolute. The conditional, non-absolute power of a demi-god or god can be contrasted to the absolute power of a God.

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2 A God which diminishes itself such that it no longer independently exerts power, and/or whose power is no longer wielded absolutely (i.e. it is reducible through factors beyond the will of the God) would no longer be a God.

4   The Impossibility of God(s)

> If you ever stand before "God," ask them not how they will convince you
> that their power is absolute; ask them how they will convince themselves.

Gods are impossible (inconceivable, a priori) for the reason that the *absolute* attribute of space—consistency: we must conceive of space as *absolutely* consistent, and thus omnipresent, across and within itself and time—is conceptually irreconcilable with the *absolute* attribute(s) of God(s). Two or more *absolute* entities would require the conception of a difference at the point(s) where they would interact; this is an inconceivability, as earlier demonstrated.[3] As Spinoza (1677) realized, there can be only one absolute entity. It must be absolutely consistent (Primus, 2019) and, by extension, absolutely passive and determinable (Spinoza, 1677).[4] Consistency is the only conceivable fundamental property of space and its material entities (Primus, 2019)—even if our contemporary a posteriori observation and knowledge cannot yet predict and fully understand many of the conditional properties of these entities (e.g. as per the apparent indeterminability of sub-atomic, human, and government bodies). Accordingly, the concepts of "God" and "consistent space" are conceptually irreconcilable in the same manner that a 'square' and a 'circle' are conceptually irreconcilable when considered interacting with each other as a 'square circle'.

I predict that opponents of this argument will attempt to counter that "God" may not embody any state and rather that their spirit influences the world through trans-corporeal, ethereal means. I reply that either God's power has some metaphysical effect—as a creator in the beginning and/or as an arbiter throughout time—or it is not power and they are not, by definition, a God (as per Spinoza's, 1677, pantheistic "God," for example). That is, if a "God" can somehow—wherever, however—affect the conceivably necessarily consistent fabric within our material world, theists must attempt to conceive the point(s) between it and the "ethereal" effects of God's intervention. Similarly, for the reason that we cannot conceive of where or how the space of our world could end and something-other-than-space could begin, we cannot conceive of how an

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3   Spinoza (1677) notes that two infinite substances would be impossible because they would be "absurd," yet does not offer a reason for the absurdity. I agree with Spinoza's observation and offer (Primus, 2019) that the IDAPIS is the underlying basis for Spinoza's notion of 'absurdity'.

4   Though both are deterministic and passive in their nature, Spinoza's (1677) pantheistic "God" is said to possess "infinite attributes" and extend beyond the material world, whereas Purist space (Primus, 2019) is purely materialistic in nature and necessarily possesses but a single attribute: consistency.

ethereal God or their Kingdom (e.g. 'Heaven') could exist separate to (within or outside) this world. Rather, we can only conceive that the consistency of space must permeate through all of physical reality, be it of heaven or earth. Accordingly, if theists should attempt to use the shrouded nature of the ethereal as an explanation for the inconceivability of God they are hampering their own efforts to conceive of how "Gods" and their "Kingdoms" could exist in conjunction with our world. That is, the blurring or omission of a vertex of the Penrose triangle hinders, rather than enhances, one's ability to conceive of all three in existence at once. Of course, those intellectually brave theists, such as Beardsely (2019), who do dare to concretely imagine Heaven, are still defeated by the limitation of inconceivability. They cannot conceive of how a square circle could exist, either within or external to Heaven, and likewise they cannot conceive of how Heaven could exist within or external to this world. But at least they possess the courage to 'walk towards the wall'.

5   The Moral Implications of Material Religious Faith

> That which is needed, should be logical in nature; that which need not be logical should be as one desires.

Purism is a nascent moral rationalist paradigm, which asserts a priori definitions of beings (personhood) and morality (Primus, 2021). I argue that to logically determine the moral value—or, in some instances, the absence of moral value—of any state (e.g. a belief or expression) we must foremost distinguish between whether a state is sought as an end (final form), or sought as a means to an end. States sought as ends or forms, I will term 'formational' states. The residual states—those which are non-formational in nature—have potential to serve as a means of realizing formational states; I will term these 'material' states. Conveniently, formational states and material states can be respectively viewed to satisfy the notions of *desire* (want) and *need*. That is, forms—each an end in themselves—are beliefs and expressions that people *want* to possess for the sake of possessing—for no higher purpose. These states can be contrasted to the (material) beliefs and expressions that an individual or a collective believes they *need* to possess, whereby said perceived *need* results from the will to attain some other, higher purpose(s). For example, a person who enjoys the way that religion makes them feel (e.g. inspired and uplifted)—i.e. they *want* to feel this way for the sake of feeling so—would be *formationally* expressing their religion (as an art form). These feelings— if they are truly sought out of desire, rather than perceived need—do not serve

as a means to (a) higher purpose(s). By contrast, another, who believes that their religion should be adhered to or promulgated for the purpose of making the world a better place—noting the perceived *need* to achieve an outcome, whereby religion in this instance is sought to serve as a means of achieving their higher purpose (bettering of the world)—would be considered to possess a *material* religious purpose. Material beliefs and expressions, therefore, are not limited to those acting in an official capacity (e.g. government officials); they are present within any entity, private or public, which possesses beliefs and strives to take corresponding action for any purpose of perceived need. Scientists, politicians, policy makers, police officers, parents, and private citizens, each working towards their respective purposes in a capacity which is *needed*, possess material beliefs and make material expressions relating to these roles.

It is logical (I argue; Primus, 2021) that material and formational states each have different moral properties due to the distinct and irreducible natures for which they are respectively sought. Material states, sought for their ability to serve as a means to an end and existing as a finite resource in any moment, have a (moral) requirement to be rational in nature. By 'rational,' I mean these states (e.g. beliefs and their resulting expressions) should invoke the selection of means which are probably the most efficient of all considered means, in terms of their ability to bring about the realization of sought (individual or collective) purposes. If a politician holds the purpose of ensuring the equitable and efficient delivery of healthcare to their constituents, yet their material beliefs and resulting expression (e.g. policy) prevent this, then said beliefs and expression can be considered morally wrong on the basis that they are less-than-wholly-rational (i.e. probably not the most efficient means of achieving their purpose); these states should be changed (improved) for the betterment of the constituents, who suffer as a result of their inefficient nature. A consequence of the need for material states to not only exist, but to exist while operating within specific parameters of efficiency, is the requirement for them to earnestly pursue clearly defined, literal purposes. In turn, the purpose of any material state should be treated seriously and interpreted literally by material observers, even if the nature of its means would appear otherwise.[5] For example, the beliefs expressed within this article are of a material nature and serve

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5   That is to say that the *means* employed by rational materials will not necessarily be serious or literal in nature; they may embody parody or be figurative or vague in composition if these methods are deemed to probably be the most efficient means of achieving their purpose. However, the underlying or overarching *purpose* of any rational material state—whether expressed literally or figuratively, explicitly or implicitly—should be treated seriously and interpreted literally by material observers.

a material purpose (i.e. to make the world a better place) on the basis that I believe that I *need* to possess these beliefs and communicate them to the world. Accordingly, these expressions (e.g. the above prescription that material and formational states are to be treated differently for moral purposes) should be clearly articulated, serious and literal in their purpose, if not also in the means of their execution.

Formational (desired) states, by contrast and in their capacity as sought ends, logically possess no requirement to exist in a rational state, nor exist within any particular parameters or nature, nor even exist at all (Primus, 2021). By definition, (a belief or expression of) desire cannot be *needed* as a means of achieving other purpose(s).[6] Rather, these expressions and beliefs are (subjectively) sought for their arbitrary properties in and of themselves. For this reason, formational beliefs or expressions cannot be judged on their efficiency (or probable efficiency) of achieving other, higher purpose(s) in the way that material states can (and should) be evaluated. A corresponding implication which accompanies the absence of responsibility for formational states to exist within particular parameters, is the absence of moral value within each of their states. Formational prescriptions, for example, are not morally binding; they each exist for the arbitrary reasons that they are personally sought for—rather than to invoke material change in the world—and so they should not be interpreted literally (e.g. as instruction to be enacted or pursued) by material observers. For example, one may follow a God's commandments for formational purposes if they *desire* to, noting that formational prescriptions *need* not be obeyed, and that those who do are no more or less moral than those who do not; the formational adoption of religious commandments, like all formational expressions, is amoral.

It is my personal experience that some contemporaries find the concept of desire without moral value to be counter intuitive. Firstly, the protected status of desire—that any desire is nether morally good nor bad, right nor wrong—is not to be dismissed lightly (however it cannot be defended here; see Primus, 2021). A summary of this argument is that any desire is, by definition, sought as an end, and logically we can conceive of nothing more valuable than states which are sought as ends (Primus, 2021). Those who seek to limit or vary any particular desire (e.g. by branding it to be 'morally unacceptable') should provide a logical reason to do so, lest they be arbitrarily denying the realization of

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6 I define a desire as a state which is sought for arbitrary, if any, purpose(s). If an entity is needed it will (implicitly or explicitly) be sought for the logical purpose that it is sought to serve (Primus, 2021).

states which are of the greatest conceivable value to a person or people. Secondly, we can appreciate the intrinsic and ultimate value of desire whilst also appreciating the inherent challenges posed by empirical conditions (i.e. the harsh and uncaring nature of physical reality), by stating that any desire should *ideally* be realized without limitation or variance to its form. The clause 'ideally' recognizes that the *realization* of individual and societal desires may need to be temporarily restricted (limited or varied) for logical reasons, and that no formational belief or expression should be *universally* prohibited (across space and time). The first conceivable logical reason for limiting or varying the realization of any desire is if there is a lack of material resource (e.g. if theists and atheists both desired to hold a convention in a particular amphitheatre at the same time and there was insufficient space to physically or safely facilitate both conventions at once). The second and, I argue, final conceivable logical reason that the realization of a desire might be temporarily limited or varied is due to a lack of mutual desire by those who would be affected by its (full or partial) realization (e.g. if there was sufficient space in the amphitheatre and it was desired by one group that a joint convention would occur and yet this desire was not reciprocated by the other group).

The aforementioned Purist prescription, combined with the ontological argument presented herein, produces a moral purpose upon this article: to reduce and prevent the occurrence of *material* beliefs and expressions of religious faith whilst protecting the right to *formational* religious freedom. I therefore aim to reduce instances and expressions of material faith in God with this ontological proof, for any action or inaction which is executed in accordance with material belief in God is irrational, and thus immoral, according to the moral rationalist framework applied herein (Primus, 2021). For example, the belief that salvation may come via God may be harmful to the future of all beings who seek immortality if it is held by material (e.g. human or government) bodies. It is conceivable that humans acting in a material capacity who believe that eternal life may be granted by an external, theistic agent (i.e. a God), may be less inclined to support the pursuit of eternal life through technological progression of earthly materials, compared to those who are certain that the manipulation of earthly materials is the *only* conceivable means of achieving immortality. This assertion applies to the highest levels of government, to political leaders and their policies, through to individuals and their voting, lobbying and donations, to researchers, parents attempting to raise their children to be good citizens, and to individuals trying to make the world better.

By contrast, according to the aforementioned moral framework, any individual ideally has the right to believe and express whatever they *desire*. The

worship of any deity which is born out of *want*, rather than perceived *need*, will always be protected as a right from the moral rationalist perspective of Purism (Primus, 2021). Such expressions of religious belief are, by their definition, aesthetic in purpose and should be treated as such by material observers. I call upon all active material entities (e.g. humans and government bodies), and especially those within the New Atheist movement, to recognize this distinction; pledge to protect the sanctity of formational religious belief and expression with the same dedication afforded to any other beliefs and expressions of a formational nature.[7]

6   Conclusion

In this article I have attempted to deny the conceptual possibility of God(s)—to 'rule them out of the equation'—through highlighting that an entity whose power exists absolutely is inconceivable when considered in conjunction with the consideration of the absolute nature of space. When we consider the nature of space with sufficient conceptual depth we are forced to conceive of its nature as absolutely consistent and, by logical necessity, omnipresent. We cannot conceive of difference *within* individual points of space, yet we can so conceive that difference exists *across* multiple points of space—the states of difference that we know empirically. The reason that we should believe that there is no God is the same reason that we should believe that space extends infinitely

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[7] Of course, by use of the terms 'protection' and 'sanctity,' I am referring to protection and sanctuary from arbitrary material interference: the moral right for all formational states to exist for the duration and in the nature that they are desired. This moral right is limited to protecting formational states from irrational material expressions and beliefs, noting that material states have an inherent requirement (duty) to be rational in nature and that their expressions (e.g. prescriptions) are morally binding (i.e. they should be interpreted literally and treated seriously by material observers). For example, it would be morally impermissible for someone to possess the material belief (i.e. believe that it is needed) that *all* religion—including formational religious beliefs and expressions—should be prohibited (e.g. outlawed); one cannot, by definition, conceive of a rational or logical reason to universally limit a belief or expression that is desired (sought as an end). However, this moral right does not "protect" religious beliefs and expressions—whether formational or material in nature—against parody or denigration from those who *desire* to do so (i.e. "attacks" of a formational nature). It would be morally permissible for someone to believe or express that all religion should be prohibited, providing that such a statement exists as a formational nature (i.e. as the desire, rather than a perceived need, for such an outcome). Notably, as per the prescription within formational religious beliefs and expressions (e.g. commandments from God), the prescription within any formational parody or denigration is not morally binding (i.e. it should not be treated seriously or interpreted literally by material observers).

beyond any point of itself in every direction; it is the same reason that we cannot conceive of a square circle, or a Penrose triangle in three dimensions. If any of these conditions—God(s); a limited (non-absolute) space; a square circle; or a three dimensional Penrose triangle—were possible, their conception would each necessitate a difference (i.e. > 1) within individual (i.e. 1) points of space (i.e. > 1 = 1). The basis of our inability to conceive any of these events is our inability to conceive of inconsistency within space.

The moral implications of irrational religious belief were briefly discussed through the moral rationalist lens of Purism. Humans can believe in God(s) if they *desire*. However, those same humans, while thinking and acting for a purpose that they (or society) believe(s) they *need* to serve, as politicians, scientists, teachers, parents, government officials and private citizens seeking to act responsibly in any moment—those charged with rationally creating and implementing policy, raising and educating the future generations of humanity and generally improving the world to be a better place—must not.

I aim for this article to bring about two outcomes. Firstly, I seek to protect the sanctity of religious belief and expression, providing it is of a formational (aesthetic) nature. The 'New Atheist' movement—if their primary purpose is to make the world a better place (possessing a purpose of *need*)—must recognize the distinction between formational and material religious beliefs and expressions. Rational atheists must campaign against material religious beliefs on the basis of their inherent irrationality, whilst championing the moral right for any religious belief or expression which is born of desire to *ideally* be realized. Atheists and theists alike should be striving towards a society where all types of formational expressions can be realized unless there are logical, conditional (temporal or spatial) reasons preventing their peaceful realization (e.g. a lack of material resources, or a lack of mutual desire).

Secondly, I envision that this article might deter some material belief in (passive) faith-based salvation amongst those few theists brave enough to fully consider the conceivability of God, and who hold the need for truth above their need to believe in God. Some theists may continue to materially possess the less-than-rational (i.e. highly improbable) belief that human salvation will occur through demi-gods of non-human origin; and whilst this is an improvement on the (wholly) irrational belief that salvation will occur through absolute deities (Gods)—which are demonstrated to be inconceivable in this text—the passive nature of faith is unacceptable as a way forward to human immortality. It is not the purpose of this article to create division between secular and theist communities, nor is it to provide condescension towards the latter. The underlying message of this article is one of hope. I hope that elected officials, community leaders, parents, and individuals seeking to make the world a better

place will be inspired by the realization that, at best, any God of any religion can only be conceived as a very powerful 'demi-god,' defined by their relative state of power; a condition that humans can potentially obtain or even supersede. I hope that this may promote more-widespread support for mortals gaining eternal life through their most rational means: becoming forever more 'god-like' through active, technological progression of their materials (i.e. bodies, tools, infrastructure). The conclusion we must draw from the IDAPIS is that not only is there the possibility for all humans and their materials to become demi-gods through the technological manipulation of their materials, but more soberingly, that this is the only conceivable method for eternal life and salvation. The notion that God(s) can save us from death or bestow "divine goods" upon us in an afterlife to compensate for the horrific nature of this world, is not merely improbable—it is impossible.

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