

KENOTIC EFFLUENT PANAPOTHEISM

Volume I

Revised and Expanded Edition

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Preface to the Revised Edition

This revised and expanded edition of the original 2016 master's thesis preserves the thesis's argument, voice, and intellectual structure without alteration. It does not change what the thesis was trying to say. What it does is fill in the gaps the thesis itself identified in its Further Study section, integrate philosophical and scientific developments that bear directly on the thesis's central claims, and contextualize several arguments that were present in embryonic form but required further elaboration to reach their full logical force.

The original thesis established a cosmological foundation using Neo-Platonism, Lurianic Kabbalah, Hermeticism, and Process Theology to argue for a model of creation as kenotic self-limitation, the universe as created from the very being of God, and the physical world as a single unified field rather than a plurality of distinct substances. These claims have proven more philosophically robust than even the original thesis anticipated, and subsequent inquiry has revealed that they generate structural solutions to problems the thesis identified but did not fully resolve.

Original thesis material is reproduced without change. New or expanded material is woven in at the appropriate points in the argument so that the thesis reads as a unified whole rather than as a thesis with addenda appended to it.

Three categories of addition are made. First, the philosophical account of dimensional incommensurability — the precise structural reason why an unlimited God cannot act as a finite causal agent within the dimensional order — is developed explicitly where the original thesis pointed toward it without fully articulating it. Second, the consciousness section of the appendix is substantially expanded using the concept of dimensionally perpendicular ontology, with biological and neurological evidence. Third, the Critical Review section is significantly deepened to address the full range of classical theism's internal tensions that KEP is capable of resolving, and to situate KEP more precisely among its historical predecessors and challengers.

The first principle that crystallized in subsequent work — nothing can limit God but itself — is woven into the relevant sections not as a new thesis but as the compressed logical expression of what the original thesis was already arguing. It is the seed from which the argument grows rather than an addition to it.

Introduction

In these times of changing and evolving scientific discovery, philosophy and theology are at a critical juncture where they stand to lose all relevance if they are unable to keep up with the wealth of new knowledge and discoveries. Among the recent attempts in philosophy and theology to reconcile the relationship between science and these fields is Process Theology. Process Theology owes its origins to the 20th Century American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead and the philosophers and theologians he has influenced have developed a myriad of new theologies that all attempt to incorporate the new sciences, such as Quantum Physics, Emergent Biology, and Evolutionary Science. Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism is an attempt to build on these concepts and reintroduce older theologies to help facilitate the new emerging theologies.

Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism is based on three major principles. Kenosis means ‘self-emptying’ or ‘self-limitation’ and it is commonly used in theology to refer to God’s act of emptying itself either of its presence or will. In this model, Kenosis refers to a process of creative succession that is found in Neo-Platonist cosmology and Kabbalistic cosmology, primarily those of Plotinus and Isaac Luria respectively. Kenosis is a creative process of self-limitation where complete, perfect and absolute being limits itself in order to create finite beings and a finite physical universe.

Effluence refers to the process of creation found in these schools of thought, with a semantic distinction deliberately made from Emanation and Emergence, both of which are already associated with specific schools of thought. Emanationism refers to the natural process by which created things emanate from the Neo-Platonist One — a process seen as necessary rather than freely willed. Emergence has been adopted by Process Theologians to describe certain cosmologies. Effluence names the process by which the One creates the universe through successive stages of willing self-limitation, distinguishing this model from both Neo-Platonism and Process Theology while building upon them both.

Finally, Panapotheism is a term coined specifically for this model. The name means All-from-God, and it refers to a cosmology where the universe is created out of the very same substance of the source of creation. This model is not a Pantheism or a Monism, and it is not entirely a Panentheism as it differs from other Process Panentheisms. The closest theological terminology is ‘Creatio ex Deo’ — created from God in Latin — but even this phrase brings up certain metaphysical problems. Panapotheism is an attempt to explain a creation-from-God cosmology while maintaining certain ontological distinctions between God and that which is created from God’s own being.

A word on the governing logic of the model. In subsequent work it became clear that the entire argument of Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism can be compressed to a single proposition: nothing can limit God but itself. This is not a new claim added to the thesis — it is the logical form of what the thesis was already arguing, stated with maximum economy. If nothing external can limit God, then for anything genuinely other than God to exist, God must limit itself. The kenotic creative act is not a theological hypothesis — it is the logical consequence of what ‘unlimited’ and ‘genuinely

other' mean when held together. Every major claim of KEP follows from this proposition, and the thesis can be read as the extended explication of its consequences.

The thesis will proceed first through the intellectual predecessors of KEP — Neo-Platonism, Hermeticism, Philo of Alexandria, Lurianic Kabbalah, Classical Theism, and Process Theology — before presenting the full KEP model, its critical review, and an appendix on its implications for the scientific account of creation and emergent complexity.

Neo-Platonist Emanationism

Plato's Timaeus

In order to understand the cosmogony of Neo-Platonist Emanationism in general, we first must look at Plato's dialogue called the *Timaeus*. The *Timaeus* is Plato's only substantial treatise on cosmology and the origins of the universe and is considered to be one of his later pieces of work, coming after the great group of dialogues composed on the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*.

The cosmology proposed by Plato consists of three major principles: The Good, the Demiurge, and the World Soul. The Good is also referred to as the ultimate Form within the World of Forms — the concept that there exists an Intelligible Realm in which the source of all created things and their attributes can be understood as eternal principles. This world is a perfect absolute reality in which permanent and immutable principles exist in a state of perfection and goodness. For Plato, the World of Forms is a state of being where intelligible principles exist as universal immovable truths that form the prototypes for the images seen in the material realm.

In Plato's cosmogony, the Demiurge, or Craftsman, uses the Good as the model for which to order the universe. The *Timaeus* states: 'God therefore, wishing that all things should be good, and so far as possible nothing be imperfect, and finding the visible universe in a state not of rest but of inharmonious and disorderly motion, reduced it to order from disorder, as he judged that order was in every way better.' The Demiurge creates first a World-Soul that orders the world from pre-existing elements. This World-Soul acts as an intermediary between the finite and the infinite: 'From the indivisible, eternally unchanging Existence and the divisible, changing Existence of the physical world he mixed a third kind of Existence intermediate between them.'

Plato's *Timaeus* is the first real concrete declaration of a cosmology based in the principles of one-ness, where the universe is modeled after the one-ness of the Good and had its order and origin in the work of God the Demiurge. However, as will be argued, Plato's framework requires critical revision on one fundamental point: the Demiurge forms the universe from pre-existing chaos rather than creating the dimensional frame itself — a distinction that has profound consequences for the nature of divine omnipotence.

Neo-Platonism

Neo-Platonism is the resurrection of Platonic cosmogony and philosophy, primarily by the philosopher Plotinus (204–270 CE), and then later carried on by his successors Porphyry (233–309 CE), Iamblichus (245–325 CE) and Proclus (412–485 CE). Although these philosophers are called Neo-Platonists, Plotinus would consider himself a true student of Plato. Neo-Platonism is an attempt to clarify and understand Plato in a deep and metaphysical way that later Neo-Platonists, particularly Iamblichus, took into the realm of mystical experience. Neo-Platonism can also be seen as an attempt to reconcile Aristotelian Metaphysics with Platonist ideas.

The most fundamental metaphysical problem of Neo-Platonism is the reconciliation of the idea that the universe emerged from God who is ultimately an undifferentiated unity and one-ness, and yet there exists a reality of multiplicity in the sensible universe. How can 'the many' come from the 'One' and yet there not be a cosmic dualism between God and the universe? Neo-Platonists sought to explain a metaphysics that involved a universal God from whom all multiplicity emanated, and yet was inherently intertwined with it in such a way that there never becomes a true duality between the One and the Many.

Plotinus' Neo-Platonism

Plotinus' cosmogony rests on the principles of his three Divine Hypostases. The first is the One from which all emanates; the second is the Nous or Intellect (sometimes called Divine Reason); and the third is the Soul (which also includes the Soul of the All, or World Soul).

The One is the infinite, absolute perfection from which all else emanates. The One is not the Demiurge — it is something beyond description which does not act or have attributes other than the Good. It is pure undifferentiated Oneness. Within the One, no multiplicity exists and it is beyond all qualitative description or quantitative measurement. It is infinite, universal and absolute. From the One, flows the many.

The first emanation from the One is the Nous or Divine Mind. In order for there to be multiplicity the Mind emanates as a means for simplicity to yield multiplicity. The Divine Mind is a reflection of the One and acts as the mediating principle that creates the rest of the universe as a reflection of the perfection of the One. For Plotinus, the realm of Intelligible Forms is contained within the Intellect, not the One specifically. Because the One contains no differentiation or attributes, the concept of the Intellect is needed to create the beginning of intelligible concepts for the created universe to be mirrored after.

The third emanation is the Soul, which acts as Plato's World-Soul. The Soul handles ordering the universe and acts as a mediator between the immutable Intellect and the changing physical universe. The Soul also manifests in us as our intellectual souls and our animal and primal souls. Plotinus summarizes this cosmogony: 'We have seen elsewhere that the nature of the Good is simplex, primal; when we speak of the One and when we speak of the Good we must recognize an identical nature. Next to it follows Divine Mind, the Primal Thinker, and upon this follows Soul. Such is the Order of nature.'

Plotinus distinguishes the dual functionality of the Soul in this passage from the *Enneads*: 'The Soul's care for the universe takes two forms: there is the supervising of the entire system, brought to order by deedless command in a kingly presidency, and there is that over an individual, implying direct action, the hand to the task, one might say, in immediate contact.' The Soul of the All is thus the structural organization of the whole universe — its order both at this very moment and in temporal succession, as Pauliina Remes describes it.

There are also three aspects of the Soul in the *Enneads*. Plotinus uses Soul to speak of the third

emanation and the actualization of potentiality in the Intellectual Forms. He uses World-Soul or Soul of the All to define the presence of the Soul in the structure and ordering of the universe. And the third aspect — Nature — is an almost mechanistic and unconscious aspect that simply carries out the will of the Soul, shaping and forming the universe as the means by which the Soul orders the physical realm. As Plotinus describes it: 'It means that so-called Nature is soul, the child of a higher soul with a more powerful life; being at peace it possesses within itself a contemplation which is directed neither above nor below.'

Regarding Matter: for Plotinus, the physical universe is the farthest manifestation of reality from the One, and represents a near full privation of all being. However, he was clear that this does not make matter inherently evil — he argued vehemently against this Gnostic position. Matter retains the qualities of the Intellect and Soul in being non-atomistic and continuous, yet is the grounding principle in which qualitatively existing objects can have their individuality and attributes. His description of Matter as simplex and without quality is prophetically aligned with Quantum Field Theory's description of the quantum vacuum: the fundamental substrate is not atomistic or differentiated but is uniform, continuous, and underlies all particle interactions as their ontological ground.

Here lies the most important problem for Neo-Platonism: Plato believed the universe was ordered from pre-existing chaos, and the Neo-Platonists tended to argue that the universe had no beginning in time. We know from modern cosmology that the universe had a definite beginning — the Big Bang — approximately 13.8 billion years ago. This is not merely a scientific correction to an incidental claim. It is a foundational revision: if the universe has a temporal beginning, then the creative act is not the ordering of pre-existing chaos but the origination of the dimensional frame itself. This changes everything about how the creator's relationship to the creation must be understood.

Furthermore, the Neo-Platonist account of emanation as necessary overflow — the universe proceeding from the One as inevitably as light radiates from a flame — leaves no room for the freedom of the creative act. If the universe emanates necessarily, the Creator-creature distinction is compromised in exactly the way that will prove problematic in Spinoza's pantheism. What is needed is an account in which the creative act is both free and structurally necessary — and this is precisely what the kenotic account provides.

Hermeticism

Hermeticism grew out of the Hellenized Egyptian communities as a hybrid mix of Egyptian and Greek religious concepts of God, specifically the Greek God Hermes and the Egyptian God Thoth. Hermes Trismegistus emerged as a central figure. The main set of Hermetic writings that form the canon of contemporary Hermetic practice are the Corpus Hermeticum, the Emerald Tablet of Hermes, and the Kybalion. The main body of knowledge for contemporary Hermetic teaching comes from the Hermetic Golden Dawn which still has chapters all over the world.

The Hermetic cosmogony begins with a concept of God similar to Plotinus' vision of the One. For Hermeticism, the concept of God is called the All and sometimes referred to as the Good. God is seen much in the way Kabbalists see the Infinite Light of Eyn Sof — without division, without duality or plurality, a perfect ultimate one-ness that contains all of creation within itself. The Corpus Hermeticum describes this cosmogony: 'The Mind who is God, being androgyne and existing as life and light, by speaking gave birth to a second mind, a craftsman (Demiurge), who, as God of fire and spirit, crafted seven governors; they encompass the sensible world in circles, and their government is called fate.'

In this quote we see the heavy Greek Platonic influence. God being without division creates as a second a craftsman — the Demiurge found in Plato's Timaeus. But Hermeticism also introduces the concept of the Logos or Divine Reason into the cosmology. Divine Reason is something contained within the Mind of God. Hermeticism claims that humans were made in the likeness of God: 'Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child.' For Hermeticism the universe is created through a series of creations and creative principles: 'God therefore is the father of the cosmos; the cosmos is the son of God, and the things in the cosmos are made by the cosmos.'

The Corpus Hermeticum summarizes a clear cosmological progression: 'God, eternity, cosmos, time, becoming. God makes eternity; eternity makes the cosmos; the cosmos makes time; time makes becoming.' The physical world of Becoming is the last in a chain of creative processes all linked and contained within each other and all of them contained within the Mind of God. The differences in the energies of each creative process establish that the universe and God are of a different nature yet ultimately contained within the Mind of God.

Hermeticism offers two important advances on Plotinus: it explicitly frames creation as an act of the Mind of God, and it introduces the concept of the Logos as the creative mediating principle that will prove crucial to the full KEP model. However, Hermeticism suffers from the same problem as Neo-Platonism in describing the creation of successive principles in pre-eternity without adequately resolving the metaphysics of how an eternal God creates the principle of eternity itself.

The Hermetic principle of correspondence — As above, so below; as below, so above — is not merely a mystical slogan but an ontological claim that deserves philosophical grounding. If the structure of the cosmos and the structure of the human being are genuinely isomorphic, this is

because both are shaped by the same creative principle — the Logos — working through the same dimensional limitations. The macrocosm and microcosm reflect each other structurally because they are both products of the same kenotic creative act from the same unlimited divine ground. KEP provides the philosophical account of why this correspondence is structurally grounded rather than merely analogically asserted.

Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria lived in Hellenized Egypt amongst a society where the Jewish community composed half of the population of Alexandria. Philo synthesized the image of the Jewish God with Greek philosophy and developed a story of creation that involved principles from both Judaism and Neo-Platonism.

Philo's *On the Creation* claims that God created the universe from nothing, which is in contrast to the Platonic idea that God ordered the universe from chaos. However, Philo incorporates the concept of the Divine Mind and calls it Divine Reason, or the Logos — the image of the Logos that would later become fundamental to Christian theology used in the Book of John. Philo describes the Logos and creation: 'If the image be a part of the image, then manifestly so is the entire form, namely, the whole of this world perceptible by the external senses, which is a greater imitation of the divine image than the human form is. The archetypal seal, which we call that world which is perceptible only to the intellect, must itself be the archetypal model, the idea of ideas, the Reason of God.'

Philo reinforces this: 'And this divine reason perceptible only to the intellect, he calls the image of God. The incorporeal world was then already completed, having its seat in Divine Reason; and the world, perceptible by the external senses, was made as a model of it.' Philo sets the stage for Christianity to develop the concept of the Logos as the archetype of the Person of Christ in God.

Philo makes a crucial advance over both Plato and Plotinus by distinguishing the Logos from a separate hypostasis — for Philo, God's Divine Reason is a part of God Himself rather than a distinctive principle from God. There is no separate Intellect that proceeds from the One as a slightly less perfect reflection; the Logos is God's own self-expressive principle, which means creation is not a necessary overflow from a self-sufficient One but an act of divine self-communication.

Philo's advance is decisive for KEP: if the Logos is not a secondary hypostasis but God's own creative self-expression, then the structural question becomes not 'how does the One generate the Intellect?' but 'what structural role does the Logos play in the divine creative act?' The answer KEP provides, via Iamblichan arithmology, is that the Logos is the second Monad — the principle of divine self-expression and relation — whose structural function within the Trinitarian architecture makes the Incarnation not merely fitting but structurally necessary. Philo points toward the Logos Christology of the Gospel of John; KEP provides the philosophical grounding for why the Logos that was in the beginning, through whom all things were made, is specifically the one who takes on created form.

Isaac Luria's Kabbalah

Lurianic Kabbalah is based on a cosmogony that uses archetypal symbolism to explain the origins of the universe, the structure of the universe, and the Divine Light it emanates from. Luria's work is described by his student Hayyim Vital in the famous Kabbalistic text called the Tree of Life (1592). For Isaac Luria, the universe is created as a series of emanations that emerge from the Infinite Being of God through a willful contraction and emptying of itself. The Divine Light then emanates as a series of levels of existence that form the layers of the created universe.

The process of emanation begins with the Infinite Light of God called Eyn Sof, or simply Limitless Light. Eyn Sof is the Infinite absolute being of God. It is undifferentiated oneness that exists without cause and exists in a perfect equilibrium without change or corruption. As Vital describes it: 'Before the emanations were emanated and the creations created, a most supreme, simple light filled the whole of existence. There was no vacant place, no aspect of empty space or void, but everything was filled with that simple, infinite light. It had no aspect of beginning or end, but was all one pure, completely uniform light, and that is what is called the light of the Infinite.'

Tzimtzum

The Tzimtzum is the willful contraction of God's Divine Light from within itself to create an empty space in order to create the universe within itself. This contraction happens within God's Infinite Being and is like a bubble forming in an infinitely large ocean. Unlike the Platonists who saw creation as restructuring of pre-existing chaos, and unlike Classical Theism which says God creates the universe from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), Luria's cosmogony holds that the universe is created within the Infinite Light of God's being through a willful contraction of its Light.

Vital summarizes the Tzimtzum: 'When it arose in His pure will to create worlds and to emit emanations, to bring out the perfection of His actions, His names, and His attributes — then the Infinite contracted itself at its midpoint, in the exact center of its light. And after He contracted that light and withdrew away from that mid-point to the sides surrounding it, it left a vacant space — an empty hollow void.' From this void God emits a single ray of its Divine Light that emanates and permeates the empty space as progressive succession of layers of reality that become more and more differentiated as they get farther from the Infinite One-ness.

The Tzimtzum is the most precise pre-modern articulation of the kenotic creative act. But Luria's account operates within a mythological-symbolic framework without providing the philosophical account of why the contraction is structurally necessary. KEP provides this account: if God is truly unlimited — having no dimensional determination, no location, no alongside — then for anything genuinely other than God to exist, God must limit itself. The unlimited leaves no alongside. The kenotic act is not arbitrary but structurally required by what omnipresence means when taken with full seriousness. Nothing can limit God but itself — and this means that for creation to exist, God must be its own limiting principle. It is worth marking, however, the precise sense in which KEP appropriates the Tzimtzum and the sense in which it departs from it. Luria casts the self-

limitation in the imagery of contraction and withdrawal — a vacating that leaves an empty void into which the Divine Light is then emitted. KEP retains the structural insight that creation requires divine self-limitation while reconceiving the mechanism of that self-limitation as effluent rather than subtractive: the kenotic act is not a withdrawal that empties a region but an outpouring that fills and dimensionally conditions the created order, constituting genuine otherness through dimensional structure rather than through the making-empty of a space. Where Luria's symbolism is subtractive, KEP's mechanism is effluent — which is precisely what distinguishes Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism from a simple restatement of the Lurianic doctrine.

The further Lurianic doctrine of *shevirat ha-kelim* — the breaking of the vessels — encodes the structural vulnerability of finite consciousness to privation. The divine light that fills the created vessels is too intense for the lower vessels to contain; they shatter, and the sparks of divine light fall into the material world mixed with broken shards. In KEP's terms, this symbolism encodes a precise ontological claim: the dimensional soul is constituted by the divine creative act and participates in the unlimited ground, but its finite structure makes possible the specific orientation-away-from-being that constitutes moral evil. The *tikkun olam* — the repair or restoration of the world — corresponds precisely to catharturgy: the progressive restoration of the scattered divine sparks to their source through the soul's active cathartic work within embodied life.

Adam Kadmon and the Supernal Triad

Eyn Sof creates within itself an archetypal model and reflection of itself that acts as a mediator between the Infinite and the finite emanations of the created universe. This archetypal model is called Adam Kadmon or Primordial Man. Adam Kadmon is the medium of emanation from which all the following stages of creation emerge — a reflection of the Divine Light, and reflected himself in the created worlds that follow.

Adam Kadmon is composed of ten Sephiroth or enumerations that compose a geometric design found at all stages of creation, much in the way a fractal pattern in chaos mathematics is a repeating geometric design that can be found throughout the pattern itself. Luria uses the imagery of the soul/body analogy to describe Adam Kadmon as the soul of the universe and the created universe as his body, and uses the further symbolism of clothing on the body to explain the multi-layered cosmos: 'The Infinite is the soul of the soul, from which was emanated a single Adam that includes all of the worlds. His body is the World of Emanation. His clothing consists of the three other worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action.'

The Kether-Chokmah-Binah supernal triad at the top of the Tree of Life — the three uppermost Sephiroth — maps with remarkable precision onto KEP's Trinitarian account. It is essential to understand what this mapping claims and what it does not. The three hypostatic modes of the Monad — Father/Kether, Son-Logos/Chokmah, and Holy Spirit/Binah — are not generated from each other by any process, whether internal to God or initiated by the creative act. They are the co-eternal forms of the single divine essence, existing simultaneously and timelessly in the mind of God prior to and independent of any creative act whatsoever. The Father is the unbegotten

unlimited ground; the Son-Logos is the eternal expressive mode of that ground; the Holy Spirit is the eternal actualizing and returning mode. These are not three moments in a divine self-unfolding. They are what God eternally is. Adam Kadmon — the ten Sephiroth as the archetypal form of the created order — is likewise an eternal form within the divine mind: the pattern of ten Monads existing as pure potentiality in God prior to any creative act. The Sephirothic structure is not itself a product of Tzimtzum. It is the eternal blueprint according to which creation will be made, present in the divine mind as pure potentiality before the kenotic act establishes the dimensional order. It is only with the Tzimtzum — the kenotic creative act — that these eternal forms within the divine mind begin to operate as kenotic succession within the dimensional order. Once the creative act is undertaken, we can and should speak of the supernal triad functioning in kenotic succession: the Logos communicating the eternal forms through Adam Kadmon and the four worlds to Matter, the Spirit actualizing and returning. The kenotic succession within creation is the temporal and dimensional expression of what was always already present in the divine mind as eternal form. Creation does not add new content to God; it actualizes, through the freely chosen kenotic act, what was eternally there as potentiality. The Iamblichan arithmological framework establishes the structural character of these eternal modes: three points define a plane; the three co-eternal hypostatic forms constitute the first complete structural determination of the unlimited ground, the eternal template from which the created order proceeds.

Classical Theism

St. Augustine's City of God

In this thesis, a parallel is drawn between the Neo-Platonist and Hermetic concept of the Mind of God (Nous or Intellect) and the Christian concept of the Logos that was incarnated as the Son of God, Jesus Christ. It is St. Augustine who first recognizes this parallel. Augustine makes clear that although there are differences between Platonism and Christianity, the Platonists are the closest in spirit to the theology of Christianity: 'Whoever they may have been, we rank such thinkers above all others and acknowledge them as representing the closest approximation to our Christian position.'

Augustine makes the identification of the Platonist Nous with the Christian Logos explicitly: 'You Platonists have, at any rate, so lofty a conception of the intellectual soul that you assert that it is capable of becoming consubstantial with the Mind of the Father, which is, on your admission the Son of God.' He also notes the parallel between the Holy Spirit and the Platonist Soul: 'You assert the Father, and His Son whom you call the Intellect or Mind of the Father; you also speak of a being who is between the two, and we imagine that you are referring to the Holy Spirit.'

This becomes the central disconnect between Christianity and Neo-Platonism. Augustine's objection to Monistic cosmology is that if God is the Soul of the World, then everything including what one treads underfoot would be a part of God. This objection is based on an Aristotelian substance-pluralist framework — the assumption that if the universe participates in God's being, the individual substances of the universe are parts of God. It is the specific contention of this thesis that this objection dissolves when the Aristotelian substance-pluralism framework is replaced by a quantum field-theoretic monism.

Augustine's objection is worth taking seriously because it remains the strongest theological objection to any creation-from-God model. The response is not that Augustine is wrong but that his objection applies to a different kind of monism — one that would identify creatures with God rather than recognizing creatures as genuine participations in divine being that are nonetheless genuinely other than God. The dimensional incommensurability argument provides the philosophical account of this distinction: the unlimited divine ground and the dimensional created order belong to categorically incommensurable ontological registers. The creature participates in divine being but is not divine being — just as an excitation of a quantum field participates in the field without being identical to it. God is not the worm any more than the electromagnetic field is the electron.

Perfection and Immutability

Classical Theism is primarily based on the works of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. The first and most essential assertion is of God's perfection. Aquinas explains: 'Now that God is the

first principle, not material, but in the order of efficient cause, which must be perfect. For just as matter, as such, is merely potential, an agent, as such, is in the state of actuality. Hence, the active first principle must need be most actual, and therefore most perfect.’

Aquinas further establishes the connection between perfection and immutability: ‘The idea of eternity follows immutability, as the idea of time follows movement. Hence, as God is supremely immutable, it supremely belongs to Him to be eternal. Nor is He eternal only; but He is His own eternity; whereas, no other being is its own duration, as no other is its own being.’

However, in an effort to reinforce the perfect unchanging image of God, Aquinas creates an inherent contradiction: ‘But since God is infinite, comprehending in Himself all the plenitude of perfection of all Being, He cannot acquire anything new, nor extend Himself to anything whereto He was not extended previously. Hence movement in no way belongs to Him.’ But if God extends everywhere and there exists a temporal existence somehow separate from God, God cannot be infinite and all-encompassing. By trying to reinforce God’s perfection, Aquinas ends up negating God’s absoluteness.

This contradiction is precisely the pressure point that KEP resolves — not by weakening God’s perfection or infinity but by providing the structural account of how infinite being relates to finite being without the infinite being limited by the finite. The unlimited divine ground is not limited by the existence of the dimensional order because the dimensional order proceeds from the divine kenotic act. The relationship is not between two substances that would limit each other but between the unlimited and its own self-limitation. God is not extended somewhere He wasn’t extended before in creating the universe — God established the dimensional order as a specific act of self-limitation from unlimited omnipresence, not as an extension of existing into new territory. This dissolves Aquinas’s contradiction while preserving both divine infinity and the genuine existence of the created order.

The eight internal tensions that Classical Theism generates through its own commitments — divine simplicity versus Trinitarian distinction, divine impassibility versus genuine relationship with creation, divine omnipotence versus the Problem of Evil, divine foreknowledge versus libertarian free will, divine transcendence versus the communication of grace, the contingency of the Incarnation, divine eternity versus genuine temporal engagement, and divine providence versus specific gratuitous suffering — are all generated by precisely this structural inadequacy: Classical Theism’s Aristotelian philosophical grammar was calibrated to a substance-pluralist world and cannot fully articulate the God-world relationship in the terms that God’s genuine infinity requires. KEP does not abandon Classical Theism’s genuine achievements — ipsum esse subsistens, asymmetric Creator-creature dependence, privatio boni, Nicene Trinitarianism, Chalcedonian Christology — but provides them with the philosophical framework their full development requires.

Whitehead's Process Theology

Process Theology owes its origin to the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. The theology of Process Philosophy was later expanded on and developed by scholars like Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and Philip Clayton. Whitehead explains his doctrine of God's nature in an attempt to clarify and correct some of the inconsistencies found in Classical Theism and Christian Theology. As we have just seen, the inconsistencies of Thomistic theology can be found when trying to reconcile the concept of God being absolute and yet unchanging — how can God be unchanging and absolute and yet there exists a universe that exists separate from God that is changing and temporal?

Whitehead answers this question by introducing the doctrine of Di-Polar Theism. God has two natures. One is immutable, unchanging and incorruptible — the primordial nature of God. The primordial nature is transcendent and possesses the qualities Classical Theism would place on God. The consequent nature of God is both changing and receptive to the physical universe. Whitehead explains: 'the nature of God is di-polar. He has a primordial nature and a consequent nature. The consequent nature of God is conscious; and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom. The primordial nature is conceptual; the consequent nature is the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts.'

Whitehead takes a very Platonist position on the constitution of higher levels of reality: 'The temporal world and its formative elements constitute for us the all-inclusive universe. The formative elements are: 1. The creativity whereby the actual world has its character of temporal passage to novelty; 2. The realm of ideal entities, or forms, which are in themselves not actual, but are such that they are exemplified in everything that is actual; 3. The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God.'

For Whitehead, God's primordial nature contains within itself both the ability to create and the ability to conceptualize all possible actualized realities, called actual occasions. God's knowledge is not an objective knowledge of external objects, but a subjective conceptualization of all possible manifestations of real objects, and it is through making actual God's ideas that God creates in the universe.

However, Whitehead takes the position that God is not only limited in Perfection but also in Absoluteness, by placing it ontologically in relationship to the universe as a distinct substance: 'There is no entity, not even God, which requires nothing but itself in order to exist.' Not only does Whitehead take the position that God is dependent upon the universe to exist, he claims that this relationship is one of distinct substances in a dependent relationship.

Whitehead's Process Theology does several things correctly that Classical Theism did not. It correctly identifies that a truly infinite God cannot be unchanged by its relationship with creation. It correctly develops a non-interventionist account of divine action. It correctly insists on the

science-theology interface. And it correctly addresses the impassibility-relationship tension by reconceiving divine power as persuasive rather than coercive. These are genuine advances. But Process Theology pays three unacceptable philosophical prices. First, it abandons *creatio ex nihilo* — or more precisely, *creatio ex deo* — making God ontologically dependent on the universe, which permanently compromises divine aseity. Second, it permanently diminishes divine power, producing what Sontag and Roth would later identify as a God whose moral excellence may be impeccable but who is arguably not worthy of worship if it essentially cannot prevent atrocities. Third, it generates a Christology inadequate to the Chalcedonian definition. KEP's resolution is structurally superior at every point: divine non-intervention is a consequence of what creation is, not of what God essentially is or is not capable of — which preserves omnipotence at the unlimited level while explaining the specific form of divine action within the dimensional order.

Charles Hartshorne's Panentheism and Types of Panentheisms

Charles Hartshorne expanded on Whitehead's assault on Classical Theism by underlining six major errors he found in Classical Theism in his work *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*. The first two are the most important for our discussion: the concept of God's Perfection is flawed because it implies a state of immutability that in turn negates God's absoluteness; and Classical Theism's doctrine of omnipotence negates the possibility of free will.

For Hartshorne, it was important to preserve the supremacy and infinite nature of God's primordial nature while distinguishing surrelativism from strict pantheism: 'Is surrelativism a pantheistic doctrine? Not if this means a doctrine which denies the personality of deity; nor yet if it means that deity is identical with a mere collection of entities, as such, even the cosmic collection.' Hartshorne clarifies: 'Traditional Theism or Deism makes God solely independent or non-inclusive. There are logically three views: (1) God is merely the cosmos, inseparable from the sum of dependent things; (2) he is both this system and something independent of it; (3) he is not the system, but is in all aspects independent. The second view is panentheism.'

Hartshorne uses the Mind/Body analogy from Neo-Platonism and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta to describe the relationship of God to the universe. The mind/body analogy suggests that the God/universe relationship is similar to the idea that the mind inhabits and is intertwined with the physical body, with the mind capable of existing without the body after death. For Hartshorne, the universe is similar to God's body — God is the World-Soul of the universe.

David Griffin's Process Panentheism

Griffin uses the mind/body analogy in describing his panentheistic theology. In Griffin's panentheism, the universe is created within the being of God but has an element of independence from God, creating a reciprocal relationship. He describes panentheism: 'According to process panentheism, God is essentially the soul of the universe, God's relation to it belongs to the divine essence. This does not mean, however, that our particular universe exists necessarily.' Griffin fully rejects *creatio ex nihilo*: 'Process theology rejects the notion of *creatio ex nihilo*, if that means creation out of absolute nothingness. Process theology affirms instead a doctrine of creation out of chaos.'

Philip Clayton's Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism

Clayton tries to bridge the gap between transcendence and monism while maintaining a more monistic concept than Griffin. He describes kenosis as the action of creation where God's infinite being empties itself to create the finite temporal world: 'According to the doctrine of kenotic creation, creation itself is a kenotic, relational act. God freely limited God's infinite power in order to allow for the existence of non-divine agents.'

Clayton is also responsible for bringing Kenosis to the Process dialogue more fully, drawing on Bracken's Trinitarian field theory: 'Bracken begins by postulating that God has existed eternally as a Trinitarian field of forces, as tri-personal identity. Each aspect of God is personal, and together they constitute a single unbounded field of activity. Open panentheists add that at some point God freely chose to share the divine life, creating finite centers of activity within the space of the divine being.'

Clayton's kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism is the closest predecessor to KEP in the Process tradition. The crucial difference lies in what the kenosis is of. For Clayton and most Process theologians, kenosis is primarily kenosis of divine power — God limits its omnipotence to allow for creaturely freedom. For KEP, kenosis is ontological rather than volitional: the kenotic act establishes the dimensional frame itself, and God's non-intervention within the dimensional order is not a chosen limitation of power but a structural consequence of what creation is. This distinction preserves omnipotence at the unlimited level — God does not lack power; the unlimited ground of all being possesses infinitely greater power than any finite causal agent — while explaining the specific form of divine engagement with the created order. The Incarnation, on KEP's account, is not a compensatory mechanism for a weakened God but the only structurally available mode of direct divine engagement with the dimensional order: the unlimited enters what it created through the second kenotic act.

Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism

The Governing Principle

Before proceeding through the philosophical predecessors as the original thesis does, it is worth stating the governing principle of the entire model in its compressed logical form. Nothing can limit God but itself. This single proposition, taken seriously, generates the entire KEP architecture. If nothing external can limit God, then for anything genuinely other than God to exist, God must be the source of its own limitation. The kenotic creative act is not mythological narrative — it is the only logically coherent account of how genuine otherness can exist given what it means for God to be unlimited. The unlimited leaves no alongside; the only available making-room is self-generated. Creation is therefore kenotic by structural necessity, not by theological hypothesis.

Neo-Platonism as Foundation

Neo-Platonism provides us with a structural cosmological framework on which to base the following argument. Neo-Platonism offered philosophy with a metaphysical cosmology that attempted to answer the problem of how the One can interact and interrelate with the Many — how the physical universe with its seemingly infinite multiplicity can be united and grounded in the singular simple principle of the One.

The One is the metaphysical principle devoid of qualities, enumeration, and dualities — the ultimate source of all created being. From the One flows the Intellect, containing all potential divisions and relationships in the universe and the Intellectual Forms. From the Intellect flows the Soul, which actualizes potentiality in the physical universe in the images of the Intellectual Forms. From the Soul of the All flows Nature — the unconscious forces that shape and communicate form directly to Matter. And from Nature flows Matter — the farthest from the One and therefore the most limited in terms of being.

This cosmology offers the first structure that can provide a complete description of the physical universe and answers the basic problem of how multiplicity can interact and be united as one whole through progressively self-limiting emanations. However, Neo-Platonism suffers from one very serious flaw: it held that the universe itself had no beginning in time. We know from modern cosmology that the universe had a definite beginning. This causes many enigmatic problems — if the emanations are eternal, how can there be a progressive succession from the One? A successful model requires Neo-Platonism's structural framework while incorporating the fact of creation as a genuine beginning of the dimensional order itself.

Hermeticism, Philo, and Lurianic Kabbalah as Correctives

Hermeticism offers the Platonic cosmological hierarchy and addresses the problem of where the universe itself came from. Creation happens within the Mind of God as an intellectual act, and from the Mind of God we have a successive hierarchy of created principles leading finally to the created universe itself. Hermeticism also introduces the Logos as Divine Reason contained within the Mind of God — the creative mediating principle that KEP will later ground in Iamblichan arithmology.

Philo of Alexandria further clarifies this by establishing that God's Divine Reason is not a separate hypostasis from God but a part of God Himself. This is critical: it means creation is not a necessary overflow from a self-sufficient One but an act of divine self-communication through the Logos. The universe and man are modeled after God and formed through the archetypal image of the Logos.

Lurianic Kabbalah offers the first concept of Kenosis, incorporating Platonist concepts of Form and emanation with Judaic concepts of willful creation. It was important to Luria to show that God was infinite and simplistic, without division or enumeration. God prior to creation had no other to be reflected in — a simple unified state of Being. The Kabbalists realized that if God was then to create a universe, it would have to undergo a state of self-limitation in order to allow for something other than pure unity and being to exist. This is the Tzimtzum — the first instance of a solid doctrine of kenosis in terms of creation and cosmology.

Process Theology as Partial Advance

Process Theology, particularly in Whitehead's form, does a brilliant job of incorporating Platonic concepts of potentiality and actuality in his definition of how things come to exist in the physical universe. God creates from conceptual principles or ideas contained within its infinite being and actualizes these potentialities as actual occasions in the physical universe. However, Process Theology suffers from critical flaws: it attempts to address Classical Theism's inconsistencies by suggesting further limitations on God, making God not only limited in its infinity by being a relational substance to the universe but limited in its Perfection by being mutually dependent on its relationship to substances in the universe in order to exist.

The Kenotic Act of Creation: The Three Hypostases

If we follow the argument laid out through the preceding traditions, the source of the physical universe is what Plotinus called the One and what Isaac Luria called Eyn Sof. Luria points out that in order for the One — which is pure undifferentiated being — to create a universe in relationship to itself, it must first limit itself. Eyn Sof infinitely fills all being and there is nothing, and no register not occupied by Eyn Sof. Therefore Eyn Sof must undergo a self-limitation in order for a universe to be constituted within itself. On the Lurianic telling this self-limitation is figured as an

emptying that opens a void; on KEP's telling it is figured as an effluent outpouring that fills and dimensionally conditions — the same structural requirement of self-limitation, reconceived as a giving-forth that constitutes the dimensional order rather than a withdrawal that vacates a region within it.

This first act of limitation is the kenotic creative act. Following Plotinus' concept of successive emanations that become progressively limited and less perfect the farther they emanate from their source in the One, we then come to the next act of self-limitation: what Plotinus calls the Intellect and Luria calls Adam Kadmon. The Intellect is the reflection of the One in a comprehensive structure — a limited reflection of the perfection of the One. Whitehead calls this concept the ideas of God; Plotinus calls it the Intellectual Forms — the prototype structures that are not yet created and exist in pure infinite potentiality.

From this emanation comes the next aspect of self-limitation — the Soul. Plotinus refers to the Soul as that which actualizes potentiality in the physical universe in the images of the Intellectual Forms. The Soul becomes the World Soul as it creates the physical universe in the images of the Intellect. The World Soul is then limited into rational forces of nature, which in turn form and shape matter into the forms found in the Intellect. As the analogy of light becoming dimmer the farther it gets from its source, so does the Being of the One self-limit progressively until it reaches the state of elementary mass particles, which is a near absolute privation of Being itself.

This progression within the created order maps onto the Iamblichan Trinitarian arithmetic — but the mapping must be understood with a critical precision. The Trinitarian structure — Father/Kether as the Monad, Son-Logos/Chokmah as the second hypostatic mode, Holy Spirit/Binah as the third — is not itself generated by the kenotic succession we have just described. The three co-eternal hypostatic modes of the single divine essence exist prior to creation as eternal forms within the mind of God, not as products of the creative act. What the kenotic succession within creation expresses is the temporal and dimensional actualization of those eternal forms: the Logos who was eternally the expressive mode of the Father now operates within the dimensional order as the communicating principle of form; the Spirit who was eternally the actualizing mode now operates within the created order as the principle of return and completion. The three Monads share one esse — one kind and one instance of being — differentiated not by substance but by their eternal hypostatic modes within the divine essence. The Father is the unbegotten ground; the Son is the Father's own being in the mode of being-expressed; the Spirit is the Father's being in the mode of being-retained. These modes are not relational facts generated by Monadic interaction. They are constitutive of what the one divine esse eternally is. Once the Tzimtzum establishes the dimensional order, these eternal modes function as the successive structural principles of kenotic creation — the same eternal forms now operating as temporal succession within the created order. This is KEP's structural account of how one substance, three persons is possible: not three instances of the same kind of being, but one being existing simultaneously in three irreducibly distinct and co-eternal hypostatic modes, whose eternal character becomes expressed as temporal succession in the act of creation.

Panapotheistic Pneumatology

Kenosis as an act of creation needs a distinct concept of Spirit and matter in order for this to make sense. Like Clayton, it is asserted that a substantial distinction between spirit and matter, mind and body, and God and the universe is erroneous. Science is pushing further and further past Cartesian dualism concerning mind and body, and it is necessary for theology to understand that a Vitalistic approach to spirit and matter is not only flawed but unnecessary.

In this model, Soul is the will of God and God's ability to limit itself from pure infinite potentiality into a specific thread of actualized reality. The Soul of God enters the register opened by its self-limitation as pure creative energy. This would be closest to Hartshorne's and Griffin's Process Panentheism, where God is seen as the soul of the universe and the universe as the body of God. Soul creates actualized reality from the infinite potentiality of the Logos, and the three hypostases together form the creative principles of the universe itself.

The Big Bang offers the physical narrative of this cosmology. According to current cosmology, approximately 13.8 billion years ago, the universe was in a state of infinitely hot, infinitely dense singularity. The creative energy expands and as it does it cools and becomes less energetic. Between 10^{-43} and 10^{-10} seconds after the Big Bang, the energy cools enough so that the four forces of nature become distinguishable and quarks and bosons become distinguishable. At one millisecond into the expansion, quarks begin to form protons and neutrons; at three minutes, basic nuclei form; at approximately 380,000 years, atoms form as protons and electrons bond to form hydrogen and helium. Fast forward millions of years and gravitational attraction begins to form stars, and from these stars the more complex elements emerge.

The important point is that the universe begins as pure creative energy. The physical universe was not created in its entirety at the moment of creation — as this creative energy undergoes a limiting process and cools and dissipates as it expands, potential forms become actualized as physical reality. Physical reality is not created by simply manifesting physical objects; all physical reality unfolds from pure simple undifferentiated creative energy. Therefore, Kenosis is the actual means of creation.

God's Soul enters the created register and constitutes the universe. As in Luria's Kabbalah, the Eyn Sof emits one ray of its Divine Light. This aspect of Soul is similar to the World Soul of Plato and Plotinus as it is the Soul of the universe. As this Soul undergoes self-limitation, the next aspect of Plotinus' cosmology comes to be: Nature. Plotinus' Nature can be equated to the four forces of nature that act upon matter without a consciousness or will of their own, and communicate directly to Matter the Forms of the Intellect. And what Plotinus called Matter and Aristotelians called Prime Matter can be equated to the quarks and leptons formed into particles, atoms, molecules, stars and life by the forces of nature.

The Ontological Boundary and Divine Incommensurability

The preceding argument establishes the kenotic creative act as structurally necessary. But it generates a further structural consequence that the original thesis pointed toward without fully articulating: the kenotic act that creates the dimensional order simultaneously establishes an ontological boundary that the unlimited God, having created it, cannot cross without a further act of self-limitation.

This is not a limitation imposed on God from outside — it follows necessarily from what creation is. A truly unlimited being has no determinate dimensional relationship with any finite manifold. This must be carefully distinguished from the claim made by finite higher-dimensional beings in physical models such as brane cosmology. In those models, a higher-dimensional entity projects influence downward into lower-dimensional manifolds — but the acting entity is itself finite, possessing a specific number of dimensions greater than the target manifold. God possesses no specific number of dimensions at all. Infinity is not more dimensions; it is a categorically different mode of being that cannot interface with a specific finite manifold except through a limiting operation.

This distinction is the most original and philosophically significant contribution of KEP to the existing literature. Every prior account of divine non-intervention — from Process Theology's redefinition of omnipotence to Open Theism's voluntarist self-limitation to Oord's essential kenosis — treats non-intervention as either a permanent structural incapacity of the divine nature or a divine choice. KEP treats it as a structural consequence of what creation itself is — not God's limitation but the ontological meaning of genuine creatureliness. The dimensional order is ontologically self-consistent and causally complete not because God chose to step back but because a dimensionally bounded creation with genuine integrity requires a creator that is not itself a finite dimensional agent within it.

The Problem of Evil, in its classical form, presupposes that an omnipotent God could intervene directly as a finite causal agent to prevent specific instances of suffering within the physical universe. This presupposition is structurally false. God is not choosing not to intervene the way a bystander chooses not to act — God is categorically outside the dimensional register in which direct physical intervention would need to occur. The question 'why didn't God prevent this particular suffering' is a category error analogous to asking why the author of a novel did not reach into the story to prevent a character's death. The answer is not that the author chose not to but that authorship and character inhabit incommensurable ontological registers. This does not make the answer pastorally trivial — it reframes what God's response to suffering actually is, which is the only answer available: not intervention from outside, but entry from within through the Incarnation.

The Incarnation as Structural Necessity

If God cannot act within the dimensional order without a further self-limiting act that brings the

infinite into commensurability with the finite, then direct divine action within the created universe requires incarnation. This makes the Incarnation not a historically contingent rescue operation following a creation that went wrong, but the only structurally possible mode of direct divine action within a dimensionally bounded universe. The Incarnation is the second kenosis — the first producing the dimensional order, the second entering it — and it is this structural necessity that gives it cosmic rather than merely historical significance.

The Chalcedonian formula — truly divine and truly human, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably — is not a paradox to be explained away but the precise description of what it means for the unlimited ground to be genuinely present within a finite manifold without ceasing to be what it is. The four adverbs follow as structural consequences of the dimensional incommensurability argument: the two natures cannot be confused because they belong to categorically incommensurable registers; they cannot be changed because the unlimited mode is not modifiable by events within the dimensional order; they cannot be divided because the hypostatic union is a single structural act; and they cannot be separated because the Incarnation, once undertaken, is permanent.

Classical theism (Aquinas, Summa III, q.3, a.5) holds that while the Incarnation is most fitting for the Son, it was not strictly necessary — any of the three persons could have been incarnate. KEP provides the structural account that classical theism declines to give: the Logos is the second Monad, the principle of divine self-expression and creative mediation. This is precisely the structural role required for the only possible mode of direct divine engagement with the dimensional order. The Incarnation of the Logos specifically is freely necessary — not constrained from outside but entailed by the free creative act's own structural character. God freely created a dimensionally bounded universe, and in freely creating it freely established the structural conditions that make the Logos's Incarnation the only possible form of direct divine engagement with that order. A musician who freely commits to composing a sonata thereby commits to the structural requirements of sonata form: the freedom is in the original act; the necessity is the consequence of that free act's specific character.

The Taxonomy of Dualisms and the Nature of Evil

A precise taxonomy of dualisms is required to address the Problem of Evil without category error. Not all apparent opposites are structurally equivalent, and the philosophical tradition has generated serious confusion by treating all pairs of contraries as symmetrically constitutive of each other.

Existential dualisms are those in which two terms are mutually and symmetrically dependent for their meaning. Neither term has independent ontological standing; each defines itself only in relation to its contrary within the dimensional field. Up and down, big and small, hot and cold, active and passive — these are orientations, measurements, or relational qualities within a continuum of existence. Neither pole possesses independent being; they are genuinely co-constitutive. The Hermetic principle of polarity is accurate when applied to existential dualisms.

Ontological dualisms are structurally asymmetric. One term possesses independent ontological substance — it is grounded in its own being, self-standing and self-explanatory. The other term possesses no independent ontological substance whatsoever; it is purely existentially parasitic on the first, existing only as the name given to the first term's absence or diminishment.

Light is ontologically self-standing, grounded in photons and electromagnetism. Darkness has no substrate, no independent being, no causal power of its own — it is simply the existential label for the local absence of light. Cold is not the opposite of heat — cold is the diminishment of thermal energy. Good and evil constitute an ontological dualism of this asymmetric type. Good is ontologically self-standing — it participates directly in the being of God, the unlimited ground who is ipsum esse subsistens. Evil has no ontological substance: it is *privatio boni*, the privation, corruption, or directional withdrawal from the good that constitutes a thing's being.

This distinction has direct practical consequences. When the polarity principle is over-universalized to include the good/evil axis — as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and much popular esotericism implicitly do — it assigns evil an ontological dignity it does not possess and generates a spiritual practice aimed at balancing opposing principles rather than healing. The cathartic work of genuine spiritual restoration is structurally different from the work of integrating a shadow self: it is the filling of genuine emptiness with genuine being, not the reconciliation of equal and opposite forces. You do not balance light and darkness — you bring light.

Effluence

The term Effluent has been chosen to refer to the act of the One creating the universe through successive stages. Emanation and Emanationism describe the necessary effect of Deity in Neo-Platonism, where creation is not willful but simply a natural occurrence. Emergence has been adopted in Process Theology and Emergent Biology. Effluence names the process by which the One willfully self-limits and creates the universe from its own being — distinguishing this model from both while building upon them.

Panapothoism

The term Pan-apo-theism, like Pan-en-theism, derives from Greek root words. Panentheism means All-in-God, but has come to be understood academically in Process Theology as a relational universe where the World is contained within God, allowing for the possibility of substantial distinction and for *creatio ex nihilo* models like Philip Clayton's.

The problem with the terms Monism and *creatio ex deo* is that they are always followed by the same critical response: critics claim that Monism dissolves either God or the universe's identity into one principle. Pan-apo-theism — All-from-God — is the term chosen to preempt this argument by emphasizing relationality between the One and Matter while drawing a more monistic line than Panentheism can. As in Luria's system, the Limitless creates the universe as a willful act of self-limitation and the result is a universe of actualized potentiality from within

God's own being — not created from external material and not simply created from nothing.

The most important ontological distinction in the Panapotheistic model is between participation and identity. The creature participates in divine being — esse is participated being in all creatures, as Aquinas himself holds — without thereby being identified with divine being. Participation preserves the Creator-creature distinction because participation is not identity: the creature participates in being but is not being itself. The quantum field analogy is structural rather than ontological identity: it is not asserted that God is a quantum field. It is asserted that the structural relationship of the divine sustaining action to the created order is analogously similar to the relationship of a quantum field to its excitations — pervading, non-coercive, ontologically prior, not itself one of the excitations. A quantum field is not modified as a field by the excitations it sustains; similarly, the divine sustaining action pervades the created order without the created order modifying the divine ground. This preserves both divine impassibility (in the unlimited mode) and genuine creaturely existence simultaneously.

Critical Review

Criticisms against this theology can come from both scientific and theological angles. The scientific criticisms are two-fold. First, an atheist scientist has ground to argue that because it has been claimed that the soul and matter are essentially co-substantial, there is no need to speak of the creative principles in terms of a conscious God. A scientific reductionist can argue that the only thing that makes us conscious is the bioelectromagnetic fields created by our brains and physiology and therefore the concept of a God is irrelevant.

Although an anthropomorphic concept of the creative principles is a metaphysical fallacy, the rebuttal to this argument uses the same science that an atheist might use. The fact that what makes one conscious — bioelectricity — is not only interconnected within the environment on a subatomic level but is also connected universally through the Electromagnetic Force all the way back to the very creative energy that creates the universe suggests intimate metaphysical intertwining with the universe. This in no way undermines the philosophical structure.

Criticism from the theological angle most likely suggests that by suggesting a one-substance argument, God is being reduced to mere matter and energy. The metaphysical arguments made for the hypostases of the Intellect and the Soul in no way suggest this. More importantly, religious Vitalism — which would suggest there must be a substance other than that which science can explain — is an inherently flawed perspective that will inevitably be proven false as science explains deeper and deeper levels of the physical universe.

The more sophisticated theological objection comes from Classical Theism: if the universe is created from divine being and participates in divine being, then God becomes implicated in all the imperfections and privations of the universe — everything including what one treads underfoot would be a part of God, as Augustine warned. This objection is real and requires a direct answer. The answer is the dimensional incommensurability argument combined with the privation analysis. The universe participates in divine being but is not identical with it — and what makes creaturely existence subject to imperfection and privation is precisely the privation analysis: evil has no positive ontological substance. It is the absence of being, not the presence of an anti-divine principle. The imperfections of the universe are not imported into God by participation; they are the specific form that the privation of being takes in a consciousness that has oriented itself away from its unlimited source.

The strongest objection to KEP's specific claim of logical succession over Classical Theism requires honest acknowledgment. On the tension between divine simplicity and Trinitarian real distinction — the hardest case — the three-Monads reading points in the right direction but requires more rigorous philosophical development before it can be said to have fully navigated the simplicity-distinction problem. The tradition's subsistent relations account, while contested, has centuries of careful development behind it. Similarly, the foreknowledge-freedom claim is pointed in a philosophically promising direction but requires formal development. These are the genuine open questions that ongoing work must address — not as refutations of the central thesis but as the specific philosophical agenda of its continued development.

Further Study

The original intention of this thesis was to explore Quantum Field Theory and Emergent Biology, and to use Neo-Platonism to create a framework to understand how Intellectual Forms can non-locally act to form emerging complexity. This not only turned out to be a difficult endeavor, but it became clear that before making claims regarding these sciences, the metaphysical and theological model needed to be established first. The focus then turned to that particular foundation.

Using Panapotheism, the origins of emergent complexity in the universe can be explained, and through Kenosis, Quantum Field Theory can be further illuminated. As levels of emergent complexity are formed from particles to stars to compounds to life, these things take on form, and this form is communicated non-locally. What this means is that in a cloud of elements in space such as a nebula, throughout all of those atoms runs Quantum Fields. The electromagnetic field that runs through every atom in that cloud, and whose range is infinitely distant, contains or communicates all potential forms to these atoms. If this cloud contains hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, and phosphorus, every possible DNA structure that we know of is contained within potentiality, non-locally to the atoms themselves. Somehow the field itself contains these potentials and the qualities of each life form within the field throughout this cloud.

This is where the research will be taken in the future. The use of Neo-Platonist metaphysics to explore the behavior of Quantum Fields and Emergence in Evolutionary Biology opens a new research programme that the present thesis has only begun to sketch.

Subsequent work has substantially developed several of the areas identified here as requiring further research. The dimensional perpendicularity of consciousness — briefly gestured toward in the appendix on Kenotic Effluent Complexity — has been developed into a full philosophical account that provides a structurally superior engagement with the hard problem of consciousness as formulated by David Chalmers. The relationship between KEP and the Western esoteric traditions of Rosicrucianism and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn has been worked out in detail, establishing that both traditions preserve in symbolic and initiatory form the same structural insights that KEP articulates philosophically. The ontological status of the Holy Guardian Angel in the Golden Dawn tradition has been resolved by showing that the apparent contradiction between the Golden Dawn's Higher Genius doctrine and the Abramelin tradition's external-entity phenomenology is a structural consequence of what it means for a consciousness to span the Abyss — both descriptions are accurate from their respective registers. And the full assessment of KEP as the logical successor to Classical Theism has been conducted through formal adversarial debate across eight internal tensions, establishing that KEP achieves what no previous challenger has achieved across all evaluative criteria simultaneously while honestly acknowledging the specific open questions that require further formal development.

Kenotic Effluent Complexity — A Hylomorphic Model of the Creation of the Universe

On The Reduction of the Arts to Theology (St. Bonaventure's De Reductione) and Kenotic Effluence

Central to St. Bonaventure's Reductio is a medieval metaphysics that some may call the Metaphysics of Light. This is a Neo-Platonic influenced cosmology that equates the Creative Light of God to a light leaving its source, radiating from its source and fading in its brilliance as it fills the universe — going through stages which set the basis for the creative stages of the universe.

Kenotic Effluence is the interpretation of this metaphysics: the creative light radiates from its Source and begins to fade — self-limit, kenosis — as it permeates and creates the universe. This creative radiation both metaphorically and literally behaves like waves radiating from the Source of Creation. To distinguish this metaphysics from Platonic Emanation and what the Process Theologians call Emergence, the appropriate terminology for this model is Kenotic Effluence — self-limiting light that flows from its Source.

According to Hayes, Bonaventure's cosmology involves creation as a self-expression of God's Divine Word: 'At the metaphysical level, we might say that as creation emerges out of the depths of the divine, creative love it gives external expression to that primal, internal self-expression of God found in the eternal Word. In that one Word is contained all that the divine mystery is within itself as a mystery of self-communicative love, and all that can come to be should the divine determine to communicate itself externally.'

Bonaventure explains the cosmology by distinguishing four layers of creative light: the exterior light (the light of mechanical art, illuminating the forms of artifacts); the inferior light (the light of sense knowledge, providing light for the apprehension of natural forms); the interior light (the light of philosophical knowledge, enlightening the human person in the investigation of intelligible truths); and the superior light (the light of sacred Scripture, providing illumination with respect to saving truth). His summary: 'Therefore the whole of sacred Scripture teaches these three truths: namely, the eternal generation and incarnation of Christ, the pattern of human life and the union of the soul with God.'

Along with the Metaphysics of Light, Bonaventure explains the threefold Trinitarian nature of this light. The Word provides the rational and structural foundation of all things in creation. The Father provides the moral foundation. And the Holy Spirit provides the unifying foundation that allows all things from the base of the lights to find reunion with the source of Light — God.

Paul Davies' Emergent Complexity

Paul Davies attempts to draw a thin line between two types of God's influence on Emergent Complexity — Interventionism and Non-Interventionism — by creating a unique Uniformitarian model. The basis for Interventionism is that God may act at the atomic level causing changes at will on the macroscopic level by tweaking the nature of the universe by directly influencing the paths and behavior of the quantum world. Davies explains: 'According to one form of interventionism, God acts as something like a physical force in the world. God moves atoms and other objects about to achieve God's purposes, but to do so God must violate the physical laws revealed by science.'

This form of Interventionism requires omnipotence and omniscience. The deepest irony is that the onus for the brutal and horrible nature of the competition of species in Darwinian Evolution is then placed on God — in other words, evolution is placed in the hands of God's intervention and all the horrors of genetic evolution are then a product of God's will. Quantum Indeterminism offers an alternative but undermines the principles of omni-benevolence and omniscience by suggesting God created a universe beyond the direct reach of its own will and love.

As a way to bridge Interventionism and Indeterminism, Davies proposes a Uniformitarian model by which God maintains and continually guides the progression of the universe without placing a specific outcome: 'In its more uniformitarian view of divine agency, this approach emphasizes God's continuing role of creating the universe afresh at each moment, though without in any way bringing about particular events which nature on its own would not have produced.'

Davies further suggests that self-organizing principles of life and consciousness must somehow align with divine and cosmic principles. Among the infinite variety of possible laws will be a subset that permits self-organizing complexity to emerge in the universe. The existence of life and consciousness imposes rather stringent restrictions on the values of the fundamental constants of nature and on the cosmological initial conditions.

Davies' Uniformitarianism is the closest pre-KEP account of divine action to what the dimensional incommensurability argument establishes: God's relationship to the universe is not that of a finite interventionist agent but of the ontological ground that maintains the dimensional order's integrity at every moment without directing specific events within it. The difference between Davies and KEP is that Davies leaves this as a methodological principle for science-theology dialogue without grounding it in the philosophical account of why this is the only structurally available mode of divine action — which is precisely what the dimensional incommensurability argument provides.

Philip Clayton's Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness

Philip Clayton declares that Monism is the most acceptable term to define the relationship of matter to the source of matter's creation: 'There is one natural world made, if you will, out of stuff.'

Materialism has taken on some limited connotations since the Enlightenment, largely because Descartes and the Cartesians set its cognate, matter, in opposition to mind. For this reason, I suggest using Monism as the most neutral word available.'

Clayton's next major point concerns hierarchical complexity and downward causation: 'This world appears to be hierarchically structured: more complex units are formed out of more simple parts, and they in turn become the parts out of which yet more complex entities are formed.' He advocates Emergent Monism: 'This process of hierarchical structuring takes place over time: Darwinian evolution moves from the simple to the more complex. Because new entities emerge in the process, I join Arthur Peacocke in advocating the label Emergentist Monism.'

Clayton goes on to presume downward causation: 'It is ontological: the world is such that it produces systems whose emergent properties exercise their own distinct causal influences on each other and on at least the next lower level in the hierarchy.' A fundamental disagreement arises here. If Platonic forms are communicated to the simpler parts, it is something closer to Davies' Uniformitarianism — not a downward causation from above but a universal cosmic set of forms that the universe emerges within. Complexity is not caused by an external downward influence but unfolds bottom-up within a cosmic order according to the Logos.

Consciousness as Dimensionally Perpendicular Ontology

The appendix to the original thesis pointed toward the philosophy of mind question but did not have space to develop it. Subsequent work has developed it into a full account that is included here as the natural completion of the Kenotic Effluent Complexity argument.

The physical universe, as a single substance differentiated by existential qualities, is the domain of quantifiable, measurable, third-person phenomena. Consciousness, however, is not simply another existential quality on the spectrum of physical variation. It cannot be reached by adding more physical predicates, because it belongs to a different ontological register altogether — dimensionally perpendicular to the existential order rather than continuous with it.

This is not Cartesian substance dualism, which posits two substances interacting across an unexplained interface, generating the interaction problem. The claim is structural: consciousness and physical extension are related as two genuinely orthogonal dimensions within a single substrate. In mathematics, perpendicularity means complete independence — motion along one axis produces no component of motion along the other. Consciousness is orthogonal to the physical axis: no quantity of third-person physical description reaches first-person phenomenal experience, not because physics is incomplete but because the two axes are structurally orthogonal. This accounts for both the independence feature of phenomenal properties — which David Chalmers' hard problem establishes — and the instantiation feature: consciousness intersects with the physical at the sites of biological systems with sufficient organizational complexity.

David Chalmers (1995) distinguished the hard and easy problems of consciousness. The easy

problems concern the physical correlates of consciousness — the neural mechanisms of perception, attention, memory. The hard problem asks why any physical process is accompanied by subjective experience at all: why is there something it is like to see red, to feel pain, to hear a melody? The three principal response strategies each face specific structural difficulties. Physicalist reduction requires showing that phenomenal properties are identical to or fully determined by physical properties, but Thomas Nagel's bat argument (1974) and Frank Jackson's Mary's Room argument (1982) demonstrate that first-person phenomenal properties resist third-person physical description in principle. Property dualism accepts ontological independence for phenomenal properties but requires unexplained psychophysical laws. Panpsychism avoids the emergence problem but faces the combination problem. KEP's dimensional perpendicularity account avoids all three: consciousness is neither another physical property nor a separate substance nor distributed through all matter. It is a genuinely orthogonal ontological dimension that intersects with the physical at the sites of sufficient biological organization.

The biological grounding of this perpendicularity is significant. Bilateral symmetry — which appears early in the Cambrian explosion (c. 541–485 million years ago) — establishes the anatomical axis along which the nervous system is organized and creates the structural condition for neurological asymmetry. The cephalization of nervous systems — the progressive centralization of neural processing — represents the specific biological development through which the perpendicular dimension of consciousness comes into increasingly rich intersection with the physical. The brain, as the culmination of cephalic organization in complex vertebrates, is the specific physical structure through which the perpendicular dimension most fully engages the dimensional order. This is not the claim that the brain produces consciousness — it is the claim that the brain is the physical structure through which the perpendicular dimension intersects most fully with the dimensional order.

Iain McGilchrist's work in *The Master and His Emissary* (2009) provides a further structural parallel. McGilchrist's central argument is that the left and right cerebral hemispheres engage reality through fundamentally different modes: the right hemisphere through holistic, relational, and contextual attention — apprehending the whole before the parts, oriented toward living beings, maintaining the broader ground of engagement; the left hemisphere through analytic, categorical, and instrumental attention — extracting specific features from the broader context, manipulating and representing them in explicit, language-like form. These are not merely different cognitive styles but different modes of being in relation to reality.

In Kabbalistic terms, this neurological asymmetry maps onto the soul's dual register of engagement: the right hemisphere mode corresponds to the Neshamah register — the orientation toward the unlimited ground that perceives particulars within their ontological context; the left hemisphere mode corresponds to the Ruach register — the engagement with the dimensional order as such, extracting and manipulating specific features. The corpus callosum — the commissural connection between the hemispheres — is the neurological site at which the two modes of engagement are integrated, corresponding structurally to the Daath threshold: the point at which the supernal and dimensional registers meet.

This perpendicularity makes consciousness the precise interface at which ontological privation

becomes possible. The physical field, as a domain of existential qualities, does not choose; it simply is. Consciousness, as a dimensionally perpendicular ontology with genuine first-person interiority, possesses the freedom to orient itself toward or away from the ground of its own being. Moral evil is therefore not simply any privation of good — it is a specifically conscious privation, the act of a being whose ontological perpendicularity gives it genuine freedom orienting that freedom away from its source. This explains why moral evil is categorically different from natural evil: natural evil is structural privation within the dimensional order, while moral evil is the specific privation that occurs when a free consciousness deliberately orients away from being.

The mind-body interface is structurally analogous to the God-world interface. Both are relationships between incommensurable ontological registers that genuinely intersect without either being reducible to the other. This theoretical unification — in which the hard problem of consciousness and the God-world relationship are structural analogues — constitutes one of KEP's most significant contributions to integrated philosophical-theological inquiry. The Incarnation, in which the unlimited enters the dimensional order through the second kenotic act, is the supreme instance of this interface, grounded in and structurally analogous to the same kind of intersection that consciousness instantiates in every biological creature complex enough to bear a first-person perspective.

Kenotic Effluent Complexity

The universe began as a singularity of all forces and existed without division of matter or energy. As the energy of Creation flowed and expanded into the universe in the first microseconds of Creation, the fundamental forces of the universe began to break from the singularity of creative energy. As the creative energy expanded it cooled quickly — Kenosis. Through its own self-limitation and cooling, the first particles began to collect from this energy. The quarks were soon overcome by the strength of the Strong Nuclear Force as they slowly lost energy through the expansion of the universe and formed Protons, Neutrons and other Hadrons. As the creative energy cooled further, the fermions and Protons began to be overcome by the Electromagnetic Force and the nuclei of Hydrogen began to form.

Slowly the universe cooled — Kenosis — and Hydrogen and Helium collected in this field of new atoms. As these atoms collected the final force began to overtake the energies of these atoms. The Gravitational force began to draw Hydrogen and Helium into the orbs of collective gases we understand to be the first stars. Before the physics of nuclear fusion in the center of stars, one point is fundamental: the universe begins as pure creative energy, and the first instance of complexity was formed by two principles, Kenosis and Effluence. Through the self-limiting cooling of the universe, the waves of Electromagnetic Force formed the first fundamental instance of Complexity. Therefore, unless this can be contested, Kenotic Effluence is the most appropriate terminology to describe the way in which Complexity was created.

Here is the essence of the thought experiment. Imagine a cloud of charged particles of hadrons and electrons. Within that cloud exists an electromagnetic field. Taking into consideration that the electromagnetic force has an infinite range, imagine that cloud spanning the full distance of the

universe. Within that cloud exists the potentiality for all levels of complexity. All elements, all compounds are contained non-locally to the particles. All life, all DNA, and all layers of Complexity exist non-locally to the particles but within this field.

Process Emergent Complexity and all explanations of Strong versus Weak Emergence miss the fundamental fact first stated by Plato: all Complexity exists in Intelligible Forms, non-local to the particles, universally communicated to the particles by a universal field that Plato called the World Soul. Kenotic Effluent Complexity is therefore a model of Creation where the Logos is used as the foundation of all Complexity communicated by the forces of nature, and the universe both finds its way through Davies' Uniformitarianism and, more importantly, is not an example of top-down causality but a Platonic model where complexity flows upwards within a Cosmic order according to the Logos.

This non-local communication of forms through the quantum field is the physical expression of what Iamblichus called the divine synthemata — the tokens or symbols sown into matter and soul by the Creator at the moment of creation, which are both cosmogonic and anagogic: the means by which the world is created, and simultaneously the means by which the soul is led back to its divine origin. The quantum fields that communicate Intellectual Forms non-locally to the particles of matter are the physical instantiation of the same creative principle that makes the soul's return to its divine source structurally possible. The universe was built with its return route embedded in its structure from the beginning.

What emerges from this complete picture is a vision of creation as a single unified act of self-expression and self-limitation, from the initial kenotic outpouring that constituted and dimensionally conditioned the created order through the progressive effluence of complexity from pure creative energy to particles to atoms to stars to life to consciousness. Each stage of complexity is the same creative energy in a more limited, more structured, more individuated form — each stage a further kenosis, a further limitation, and simultaneously a further actualization of the infinite potentiality contained within the Logos. The human consciousness that asks the question 'why does anything exist rather than nothing?' is itself the most complex and individuated actualization of that creative energy — the specific point in the dimensional order where the perpendicular dimension of consciousness most fully intersects the physical, making possible both the freedom to orient toward or away from being and the capacity to recognize the unlimited ground from which all being flows.

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