

GOD'S SPATIAL UNLOCATEDNESS PREVENTS HIM FROM BEING THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE: A NEW ARGUMENT FOR THE NONEXISTENCE OF GOD

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I discuss the relations between God and spatial entities, such as the universe. An example of a relation between God and a spatial entity is the relation, causes. Such relations are, in D.M. Armstrong's words, 'realm crossing' relations: relations between or among spatial entities and entities in the realm of the spatially unlocated. I discuss an apparent problem with such realm crossing relations. If this problem is serious enough, as I will argue it is, it implies that God cannot be the creator of the universe. I also discuss that if God cannot be the creator of the universe, then God does not exist.

1. Introduction

In this article I attack the standard classical theist position that God continuously creates the universe. My arguments also attack the position that God only created the Big Bang or the beginning of the universe. I give a novel argument in section 2 that shows that God's (alleged) causal *relation(s)* to the universe, and to any objects in the universe (that he may be alleged to create or have created), *are impossible*. If my reasoning is correct, it further leads to the conclusion that God does not exist, for reasons I will discuss.

In this introduction I will clarify my goals in this article before moving on to my arguments, which are in the next section. The causal connections that are imagined to exist by traditional theists, and which I will show do not exist, are the asymmetric causal relations that are alleged by most theistic philosophers to continually exist (or to have at least existed in the past) between the following two items and in the direction *from*

1. *God* (who is spatially unlocated {aspatial}), and *to*

2. *Spatial items* (which are either {S1} items that are spatially located, such as items located in the universe, or {S2} the entire physical universe, which is all of space and the sum of spatial locations).^{1,2,3}

Traditional theists typically make use of metaphysical items in their descriptions of God (e.g., God causes the universe via an asymmetric causal *relation*) without addressing the fine-grained details of the metaphysical items (relations) being used.⁴ For example, traditional theists tell us that ‘there is (or was) a causal relation between God and the universe,’ but will not go into *specific detail* as to the nature of the relation referred to. Such specifics are, for example: Is the relation a platonistic relation (not located in space and time)? How does the relation link up to God and to a spatial item? Is the relation an Aristotelian or moderate realist relation (located in space and time)? Is the relation a particular? Is it a universal? Is it primitive? With respect to the causal relation(s) between God and nature, theists seem to believe that all they need to worry about is that there is *some sort* of causal relation between God and the universe, *period*, and further dwelling in the minutiae of the metaphysics of relations is not their concern, since only the causal relation is needed. In this article, I show that even if we do not go into the fine-grained minutiae of the metaphysics of relations there are nevertheless fatal problems that can be pointed out with the causal relations between God and nature.

There has been much discussion in the literature about relations between spatial and aspatial realms. But the specific arguments I present here that show that such relations do not exist, are arguments I have not seen in the literature;⁵ this is contrary to the beliefs of a large number of philosophers around the world who hold that such relations *do* exist (platonists and extreme realists, many philosophers of religion, some philosophers of mind, most philosophers of mathematics, and nowadays many philosophers of physics). I will call relation(s) between 1 and 2 (between God and spatial items) *realm crossing relations* since they connect an item from the aspatial realm to the spatial realm or items in the spatial realm.⁶ I borrow this label from D. M. Armstrong, who in discussing platonistic property possession, discusses one variety of realm crossing relation and therein refers to them as ‘realm crossing’ relations.⁷ Naturally, ‘realm’ does not mean spatial realm, but ontological realm, which is definable in terms of different existents or different kinds of existents. For example, according to some philosophers, temporal existents may be said to exist in a different ontological realm than timeless existents.

To my knowledge, no philosopher has yet described the specific

details and nature of realm crossing relations, and philosophers have not described exactly *how* realm crossing relations can carry out the remarkable undertaking of connecting something that is not in space to something that is spatial. In fact, when philosophers have attempted to explain this connection, they typically acknowledge that they run into problems (a good example is Descartes' failure to describe how minds interconnect with brains). For that reason, philosophers often assert that realm crossing relations are *primitive* and we need not wonder about the details of them. Resorting to primitivism, however, seems suspicious, almost as an attempt to avoid, or hide, the mysteriousness of how a relation can link to and thereby interconnect an aspatial item to spatial items. I will argue against this in a later section.

Despite the fact that realm crossing relations have not been coherently explained, many philosophers nevertheless commonly espouse these relations for their philosophic work. By doing that, and by avoiding questions surrounding realm crossing, we can interpret their acceptance of these relations as a demand or assertion that the concept of a relation between or among spatial entities and an entity (or entities) not in space *must* (somehow) *be coherent* since this sort of connection *is required* for God's causal connection to the universe. In other words, philosophers often quietly assume and/or demand that since God exists, *therefore* realm crossing relations *must* be coherent (even though Descartes and others have never been able to explain them). But the evidence of this article shows that it is not the case that realm crossing relations between God and space *must exist just because God (allegedly) exists*. For that reason, rather than concluding as traditional theists do that realm-crossing relations can and do exist *because* God (supposedly) exists, I find that causal relations between 1 and 2 are impossible, and for that reason, *God does not exist*. Putting the matter in other words, (I) God is by definition the cause of the universe; (II) God does this causing by a realm crossing causal relation; (III) realm crossing causal relations are impossible (subsection 2.2 below); (IV) Therefore, God *relates* to the universe by a relation that *does not exist* (contradiction). Rather than it being the case that a relation *inevitably* exists just because God exists, my reasoning *instead* shows that *God does not exist*, due to absurdities that ensue if God is alleged to be causally interrelated with the universe (or any items in the universe and that are part of the universe).

I imagine that there will be many objections to the reasoning of my argument in the next section, and for that reason, in sections 3–5 I discuss objections which other philosophers have presented to me. Section 3 includes a few objections presented to me by physicists, and in section 4 I discuss the objection that God can related to the universe from an aspatial realm *without* a realm crossing relation. In both sections 3 and 4, however,

I will find that these objections apparently do not reveal problems for the reasoning in this article, and specifically to my argument in section 2.

2. The Impossibility of Relations Between God and the Universe or Items Located in Space

In this section I will discuss problems to do with God's causal relatedness to the universe. I discuss this relatedness via the terminology of the metaphysics of relations, since that has been the way philosophers of religion choose to describe God's causal interaction with space and spatial entities.

Before publication of this article, a number of philosophers of religion approached me to present attacks against the metaphysics of relations in this section. Most of those attacks appeared to be the result of the fact that philosophers of religion were not entirely clear on the painstaking details of the metaphysics of relations since many of those details are primarily discussed by metaphysicians, and not philosophers of religion. Those who approached me were attempting to show an error in my account of relations in order to undercut my argumentation before the critical last step at the end of this section where I show that an aspatial entity cannot directly contact a spatial one. It is important to note that even if all the metaphysical analysis in this section were somehow wrong, my arguments at the end of this section would still show that God cannot interact with spatial items. This is because even if someone wished to find a problem to do with the metaphysics involved in describing God's causal relation to spatial entities, regardless of any problem one could find, God would nevertheless still be outside of space, according to traditional theism, and thus to interact with space or spatial entities, God would, in the end, still have to somehow interact or contact or 'touch' spatial entities in some way. My analysis at the end of this section shows that interaction, contacting, or 'touching' of *any* sort between spatial entities and aspatial entities is impossible, no matter what one chooses to label the items involved. So the metaphysical analysis is critical, since it shows how God could be interrelated with spatial items, but the theist cannot get around my attack of the interaction between God (aspatial) and space or spatial items by merely attacking any detail of the metaphysics of relations I present.

2.1 Relations Linking to Relata

Before discussing the specific problem with realm crossing relations between 1 and 2 (between God and any physical items), in this subsection I

will discuss how I use the terms 'realm crossing relation,' and 'unmediated attachment,' which are relevant to my argument against God's (alleged) interrelatedness to the universe. In 2.2 I will present the argument.

To understand the problems to do with the (alleged) interrelatedness of God to the universe or to any objects in the universe, we must understand the nature of the co-exemplification (co-instantiation) of the asymmetric causal relation(s) (purported to exist) between God and the universe or to any objects in the universe. 'Co-exemplification' denotes the aforementioned *special way*, for lack of better words, in which non-nominaist philosophers believe they have discovered relations link to and tie to their relata (in our case, God and physical items) lest problems ensue, such as Bradley's regress. This special linkage is usually referred to as the 'exemplification' or 'instantiation' of the relation(s), which is believed to denote the tying and linking of relations to the particulars that share (co-exemplify) the relations. Consider what Loux writes on this issue, in a passage about monadic properties rather than polyadic properties (relations), but where the reasoning of which applies to both monadic and polyadic properties:

According to the realist, for a particular, *a*, to be *F* . . . it is required . . . that *a* exemplify *F*-ness . . . *a*'s exemplifying *F*-ness is a relational fact. It is a matter of *a* and *F*-ness entering into the relation of exemplification. But the realist insists that relations are themselves universals and that a pair of objects can bear a relation to each other only if they exemplify it by entering into it. The consequence, then, is that if we are to have the result that *a* is *F*, we need a new, higher-level form of exemplification (call it exemplification₂) whose function it is to insure that *a* and *F*-ness enter into the exemplification relation. Unfortunately, exemplification₂ is itself a further relation, so that we need a still higher-level form of exemplification (exemplification₃) whose role it is to insure that *a*, *F*-ness, and exemplification are related by exemplification₂; and obviously there will be no end to the ascending levels of exemplification that are required here. . . . The argument just set out is a version of the famous argument developed by F.H. Bradley. Bradley's argument sought to show that there can be no such things as relations. . . . Realists claim that while relations can bind objects together only by the mediating link of exemplification, exemplification links objects into relational facts without the mediation of any further links. It is, we are told, an unmediated linker; and this fact is taken to be a primitive categorial feature of the concept of exemplification. So, whereas we have so far spoken of exemplification as a relation tying particulars to universals and universals to each other, we more accurately reflect the realist thinking about the notion if we follow realists and speak of exemplification as a 'tie' or 'nexus' where the use of these terms has the force of binging out the *nonrelational* nature of the linkage this notion provides.⁸

Loux's passage shows us why there are no relations between relational

properties and their relata. For that reason, there must be a special, non-relational, primitive contacting of some sort between relations and their relata. How this occurs is unclear, but I will not be concerned with that issue here, and I will instead merely assume this account is coherent in order to discuss exemplification as a non-relational tie or link between a relation and its relata.⁹

Unmediated attachment is a kind of attachment in which entities are involved in, but which does not involve an *intermediary*. Let ‘unmediated attachment’ denote an attachment that is a *non-relational* attachment or tying that a relation is involved in with its relata, or, as I will discuss, that *parts* of the relation (if it is not simple, but rather is complex¹⁰) are involved in with each other. Unmediated attachment is not a *relation between* attached entities, and unmediated attachment does not involve *any* sort of entity that is *between* the attached entities. And I will discuss that a *realm crossing* unmediated attachment is an unmediated attachment between an entity that is not in space and an entity that is spatial and/or located in space.

I am discussing relations and their relata as *not* being *mediated* by an exemplification tie. I do this because I am considering this unmediated attachment of a relation to its relata as *synonymous with* ‘exemplification tie’ or ‘instantiation relation,’ where an unmediated attachment between a relation and its relata is an entity (in the broadest sense of ‘entity’) that is a special ‘unmediated linkage,’ to use Loux’s terminology above, that a relation and its relata are involved in. To my knowledge, this is how the exemplification tie is to be considered. Strawson’s description of the tie does not involve the tie being an *intermediary* entity, acting as mediator *between* relation and relata; but rather the tie is a special capacity of non-mediated attachment that relation and relata can allegedly be involved in. Two recent articles (Grupp 2003, 2004a) show that considering the exemplification tie as a *mediating* entity, rather than as an *unmediated attachment*, leads to a contradiction (an impossibility). If the reasoning of those articles is correct, then the exemplification tie is a special unmediated tying that a causal relation, God, and the particular created by God, are involved in, and which does not involve a *mediating* entity. Loux describes the exemplification tie as a ‘linker,’ and the word ‘link’ might imply a chain-like connection, where only the pieces of a chain are involved, and a third, *mediating* entity (analogous to a rope between a boat and a dock) that is distinct from the chain links, is not required for the linking of the chain links to come about.

It is the *realm crossing* unmediated attachment that I will specifically attack in this article and that I will show leads to fatal problems for the causal relations (allegedly) involved in traditional theism. The details of

how a relation crosses realms is nearly never discussed by philosophers, as it is usually assumed to be a primitive fact about some relations that they can indeed cross realms. As I will point out, my arguments in this section and in section 4 hold regardless of whether or not realm crossing relatedness between entities is considered primitive or not. Also, my arguments specifically reveal problems *with the realm crossing of relations from God to the universe*, and thus they are problems directed at theists, not at metaphysicians.

2.2. *The Impossibility of Realm Crossing Connections*

In this subsection I present my argument that shows that realm crossing causal interconnections between God and nature are impossible.

In 2.1 we noted that God and nature are allegedly related by realm crossing causal relations. From this we can ask a simple question: Where exactly does realm crossing occur? Does it occur with the causal relation itself? Does it occur at the point of an unmediated attachment? It seems these two options exhaust all the possibilities, and thus I will discuss both cases. I will find that regardless of which case that we take, both lead to the impossibility of realm crossing causal relations from God to the spatial realm.

Let me put in more detail the two varieties of realm crossing mentioned in the previous paragraph, one of which must be found in the interrelatedness of God to the universe:

- a. The first option involves *the relation being the realm crosser*. Such a relation would be an *intermediary* between God, and spatial entities, and it would somehow cross from spatial unlocatedness to spatial locatedness in its relating relata. On this account, the unmediated attachments do not involve any sort of realm crossing. The realm crossing relation would involve an unmediated attachment that is entirely spatially located between the relation and the physical particular in question. And the realm crossing relation would involve another unmediated attachment with God, and which is an unmediated attachment that is entirely spatially unlocated between the relation and God.
- b. The second option involves *an unmediated attachment being the realm crosser* – either the unmediated attachment of God and the causal relation, or the unmediated attachment of the causal relation and the physical particular allegedly created by

God. According to this second option, since the relation is not the realm crosser, then the relation is either wholly spatial or wholly aspatial. Accordingly, one of the unmediated attachments would be a non-relational unmediated tie between an entirely spatial item to an entirely aspatial item.

Below I will show that a reduces to b, and thus I need only to be concerned with realm crossing unmediated attachments.

My arguments I give in this subsection, and which apparently reveal the impossibility of realm crossing relatedness between God and nature, are not concerned with any specific variety of relation (platonistic, Aristotelian, etc.). I am only concerned with a less fine-grained issue: realm crossing relations are alleged to be mere connections of some sort between a spatially unlocated entity (God) and entities in space, or the entirety of space. My arguments attack any account of realm crossing from the aspatial realm to the spatial.

The realm crossing relation is either partless (simple) or it is not partless (complex). For that reason, the relations and unmediated attachments discussed in the previous section involved in the (alleged) interconnecting of God and spatial entities come about according to one of the following two accounts, both of which are relevant to the attack against realm crossing relations that I will present in this subsection:

- A. The causal relation is *partless* (noncomplex, simple), and thus is either wholly spatially located or wholly spatially unlocated. If the relation is an intermediary causal connection between a spatially located entity and God, then the noncomplex relation involves an unmediated attachment to *both* spatial entities *and* to God.
- B. The causal relation is both spatially located and spatially unlocated, and therefore is *composed of two or more parts* (the relation is complex), where at least one part is wholly spatially located (and involves an unmediated attachment to all of space, or with entities in space), and where at least one part is wholly spatially unlocated (and involves an unmediated attachment to God). In order that the relation give rise to a connection between spatially located entities and God, a wholly spatially located part and a wholly spatially unlocated part of the relation must involve an unmediated attachment.

Since the realm crossing relation is an alleged connection between God and

spatial entities, theses A and B both imply that if there is a relation across realms from God to the universe, this interrelatedness must involve at least one unmediated attachment of a *spatial entity* and an *aspatial entity*. A and B imply that a simple relation, or the simple parts of the complex relation, are either spatial or aspatial, and cannot be spatial and aspatial. This is because a simple relation, or a simple sub-relation of a complex relation, cannot be in a spatial realm and in an aspatial realm simultaneously, for the following reasons. If a simple relation or a simple sub-relation of a complex relation were in both realms, it would be spatial and aspatial. This appears to be an impossibility, however, since these simples cannot have such mutually exclusive properties. The entirety of the simple would be aspatial, and the entirety of the simple would be non-aspatial (spatial), which is a contradiction, and thus a spatial and aspatial simple is impossible. We can only give contradictory properties to items that have parts (such as the tree, which has a part that touches the ground {does not touch the sky} and touches the sky) because it has different parts that possess the contrary properties. But with a partless item, as a simple relation, or a simple sub-relation of a complex relation, these do not have distinct parts with contrary properties, and instead it can only be the case that the entirety of the simple has the impossible combination of properties: entirely spatial and entirely aspatial.

If a simple relation, or the simple parts of a complex relation, are entirely located or unlocated, and not both located and unlocated, then it appears that the relation does not do the work of crossing the realms. Rather, it is one of the unmediated attachments that is responsible for the realm crossing. It is that unmediated attachment that I am concerned with in this article, and which I will argue below is impossible. If my argumentation is correct, it will vindicate my aforementioned claim that traditional theists, have not explained or rendered intelligible how a causal interrelatedness between God and entities in the universe, or between God and the entire universe (the sum of all entities in the universe and all spatial locations), could have the capacity to cross realms.

There are several scenarios for *which* entities might be those that are involved in the unmediated attachment of a wholly spatially located entity and a wholly spatially unlocated entity. I will not discuss or argue the issue of *which* entities are those that must specifically be involved in this unmediated attachment (God and the causal relation, or the causal relation and the physical particular created by God). I will only be concerned with the issue that there is *at least one* such unmediated attachment between a wholly aspatial entity and a wholly spatial entity, if it is the case that God causally relates to objects in the universe, or to the entire universe, as described in points A and B.

With respect to this unmediated attachment, I will call the entity

wholly outside of space O, and the entity wholly in space L. According to the scenarios described in points A and B above, L could be the physical particular caused by God (the universe, or an object located in the universe, such as, for example, the Earth¹¹); or L could be the entire causal relation if the causal relation is simple and is wholly located in space, as discussed in point A. Or L could be a *part* of the realm crossing causal relation that is wholly in space, as discussed in point B. O could be God, or could be the entire causal relation, if the causal relation is simple and not in space, as discussed in point A. Or O could be a *part* of the causal relation that is not in space, as discussed in point B above. What L and O symbolize depends on the case: if point A is correct, or if point B is correct; and, beyond that, it also depends on many of the specific details to do with points A or B. In this paper, I am not concerned with which is correct point A or point B. My concern is not *specifically where* the unmediated attachment of L and O occurs. My only concern is that realm crossing indeed involves an unmediated attachment of L and O at some point in the scenario of God causally relating to the universe.

I do not know of any explanation of *how*, exactly, a wholly spatially located entity and a wholly spatially unlocated entity can be involved in an unmediated attachment. An unmediated attachment between a wholly spatially located entity and a wholly spatially unlocated entity appears impossible, for the following reasons. An unmediated attachment between a wholly spatially located and a wholly spatially unlocated item would require either that the wholly spatially unlocated entity ‘reach across’ the realms in order to be *at a place* and thus to involve an unmediated attachment to the wholly spatially located entity, or vice versa. Since a wholly spatially located entity cannot fail to be at a place, a wholly spatially unlocated entity then must indeed ‘reach across’ *to the wholly spatially located* entity, in order to involve an unmediated attachment to the wholly spatially located entity. Since the wholly spatially located entity can only be *at a place*, the wholly spatially unlocated entity must *become wholly spatially located*, and must somehow be *at a spatial place*, if it is to involve an unmediated attachment to the wholly spatially located entity. Similarly, a wholly spatially located entity would have to ‘reach across’ the realms in order to *become spatially unlocated*, if they are to involve an unmediated attachment to a wholly spatially unlocated entity. However, how this occurs is not only unexplained, it is also apparently self-contradictory (impossible): in order that such an unmediated attachment occur between a wholly spatially located entity and a spatially unlocated entity, either a wholly spatially located entity must *not be spatially located (not be at a spatial place)*, or a wholly spatially unlocated entity must be spatially located (*be at a spatial place*). But by

the definition of 'spatially unlocated,' what is wholly spatially unlocated cannot be at a spatial place lest it be spatially located; and by the definition of 'spatially located,' what is wholly spatially located cannot fail to be at a place lest it be spatially unlocated. If the realm crossing intermediary (the relation, *causes*) is indeed a connection between God and the entities of the universe, the realm crossing intermediary apparently involves such impossible features.

3. Objection 1: The Entire Universe is Unlocated and God can Causally Relate to It

Some philosophers may object to the reasoning of the previous section for the following reasons. If our universe is the only universe (as some astrophysicists maintain), then *it is not spatially located*, since there is no physical space outside our universe for the universe to be located in. In other words, the points in space are *locations*,¹² and the entirety of space is a set of *locations* that are, as-a-whole, *spatially unlocated*, and thus God can be related to the universe as-a-whole, such as, for example, when initially creating the universe. God cannot be related to the individual parts of the universe since parts of the universe are spatial items, but God can be related to the entire universe since the entire universe is spatially unlocated (if our universe is the only universe).¹³

There is a problem with this objection. Since the universe is a collection of spatial locations, it is *made up of* the individual locations, and God would *also* be related to each of the individual locations. In other words, by being related to the entirety of the universe, God would also have to be related to each of the *individual* points of space that *make up* the universe. If God was not related to any of the individual points of space of the universe, then God could not be related to the *entire* universe, since space is the sum of the individual locations. If God is related to the universe as a whole, then God must be also related to each of the individual locations that compose the entire universe.

One could object to the reasoning given to this point in this section by maintaining that God need not interact with the totality of the universe at any time except the initial singularity, where the universe may have been a simple (partless) entity, and thus God's interaction with the singularity was an interaction with one point-sized, or Planck-sized, item, which is spatially unlocated. This objection however, will not due, since the singularity at t_0 was not space (was not the universe). Quentin Smith writes:

The universe is standardly defined as the set of events, each event being a point in a four-dimensional spacetime continuum, such that each event is characterized by four coordinates (x_1, x_2, x_3, t) But the singularity at t_0 is not in a three-dimensional space. . . . Accordingly, the singularity at t_0 is not a part of the universe and *a fortiori* not the earliest part of the universe. Rather it is a *source* of the universe. The universe began at some time after t_0¹⁴

If God created the singularity at t_0 , but, the singularity was not part of the universe, the question arises: How could God *create the universe* if the singularity before space came into existence was *not the universe*? If God only causally related to the singularity in his act of causing the universe, and if the singularity was not the universe, then God did not create the universe, but created the entity (singularity) that (allegedly) lead to the existence of the universe. At best, on this account it would instead be the case that God did *not* create the universe, but rather created an entity that in some sense transformed into the universe: God created the singularity, and then *after that* the universe came into existence not by God, but by the singularity's transforming into the universe by way of its expansion. If this reasoning is correct, the truth value of the statement 'God created the universe' is false, and the truth value of the statement 'God created the singularity' is true.

But perhaps one could get around this objection if we merely change the descriptions of the universe just given, and maintain that the initial singularity *was* the first temporal part of the universe, even though it was not space.¹⁵ But there may be serious problems with this objection. To understand the problems, we need to consider God from two perspectives at the very moment that God was (allegedly) creating the singularity:

- P1. When God (allegedly) created the singularity at t_0 God was *located in a realm* of some sort (which is of course not a spatial realm, and it was a realm that can only be labeled God's realm, and thus appears to be heaven), or if that is not the case, then . . .
- P2. When God (allegedly) created the singularity at t_0 God was *not located in any sort of realm*, and thus was *nowhere*.¹⁶

It appears that P1 and P2 exhaust all the possibilities for God at the moment that he (allegedly) created the singularity at t_0 . I am not sure which is the correct account for God at the time of his supposed creating the singularity, and thus I will next show that both P1 and P2 are impossible. If they are, then God could not have created the singularity at t_0 , since God could not do it from nowhere or somewhere, and thus God could not do it at all.

First I will show that P1 is apparently flawed. According to P1, God was in a realm when he (allegedly) created the singularity. Anything that is created by God must be where God is in order to interact with God. If something is not where God is, then that something is not interacting directly with God. (I will discuss an objection to this below.) This however may lead to problems if God created the singularity, as so many theists may imagine he did. The problem has to do with the fact that if God was or is in a realm, that realm can be described as 'God's realm', and this realm can only be holy, lest God exist in an unholy place, which seems impossible. But consider that according to traditional theism, the universe is supposedly not spiritual; it is a secular, physical, spatial manifold. Now consider that anything that exists in God's realm has holiness by the mere fact that it exists in God's realm (anything in God's realm is in heaven and *ipso facto* has heavenliness and is therein holy). Therefore, the singularity, in being the first moment of the universe, would be by definition not holy, but if it is created by God, for reasons we just gave, the singularity could only be in God's realm and thus could only be holy. So the singularity would be both holy and not holy, which is a contradiction. If God is allowed to create by action at a distance, and thus God can create the singularity without directly touching it and where it was the case that the singularity was not in God's realm, then it would appear that God would do so by a realm crossing *relation* of action-at-a-distance. But this relation would be susceptible to the very problems pointed out in section 2.

Next I will show that P2 is flawed. If God was *not* in a realm when he (allegedly) created the singularity, he was *nowhere*. As we saw in the previous paragraph, the singularity cannot be in God's realm, and for reasons arrived at earlier in this section we are considering that it is not spatially located. For those reasons, it seems our only option is to maintain that both God and the singularity are, on this scenario, *nowhere*. But that seems lead to the impossibility of God having anything to do with the singularity (such as having causal interconnection with the singularity) for the following reasons. If God is nowhere then nothing is proximate to God (since nowhere is not nearby any other realm since nowhere is not proximate to anything else, such as any items that are to relate to it). Similarly, if, as we just discussed, the singularity is also nowhere then nothing is proximate to it. For reasons just given, God and the singularity are not proximate to one another if each are nowhere – they are each not proximate to, or near enough anything to relate to it – and for that reason they cannot have anything to do with one another. If they cannot have anything to do with one another, then they cannot have causal interrelatedness with one another.¹⁷

P1 and P2 both appear to fail, and thus God cannot be somewhere or

nowhere when he (allegedly) created the singularity, and accordingly God cannot have created the singularity if it is considered a non-spatial first temporal part of our universe.

4. Objection 2: Relations that are Not Realm Crossers

An objection to the argumentation in section 2 is treated next, and is given as follows. Armstrong's phrase 'realm crossing' is a spatial metaphor, but the concept of an interrelation between an entity in the realm of space and an entity in the spatially unlocated realm need not correspond to any spatial 'crossing' concept. A *relation* between God and a physical thing need only exist in the spatially located realm, and in the spatially unlocated realm, not *across* them, or 'in-between' them. The notion of *realm crossing* is misguided since the realm crossing relation need not do any 'crossing of realms.' The exemplifying of the relation, *causes*, is a co-exemplification that *only* exists at the spatial location of the entities of the universe, and *only* aspatially, in God's realm, and need not be described according any sort of concept of a connection *from* one realm *to* the other.

I next argue that this objection fails. Consider a relation, R, that only relates while existing where its relata are. Consider R as a relation between or among a wholly spatially located entity E, such as the Earth, and God, G, who is wholly spatially unlocated. Being a physical object, E cannot *fail* to be at a spatial location, x. This implies that E only possesses n-adic properties (such as when it takes part in the co-exemplification of the asymmetric relation, *caused*) at x and nowhere else, since E is nowhere else *but* at x. An exemplification of a property not at x, or a co-exemplification of a relation that does not involve a relatum at x, is polyadic property possession that does not have to do with E. G, being a spatially unlocated entity, cannot *fail* to be spatially unlocated, call this being at y. This implies that G only possesses n-adic properties (such as when it takes part in the co-exemplification of the relation, *caused*) at y, since G is nowhere else *but* at y. An exemplification of n-adic properties not at y, or a co-exemplification of a relation that does not involve a relatum at y, is polyadic property possession that does not have to do with G. If these restrictions are correct, and if R is not a realm-crosser between E and G, then this implies that G and E could not be interrelated: if E exemplifies n-adic properties *only* at x, and if G exemplifies n-adic properties *only* at y, since $x \neq y$, then E and G apparently cannot have any sort of dealings with one another (such as being interrelated by the co-exemplified asymmetric relation, *causes*). It appears that in order for G to share in the co-exemplification of a relation

with E, G, which is wholly at y, must be at x, and thus must apparently take on characteristics that are self-contradictory.

5. Objection 3: Realm Crossing Relations are Primitive

Before the publication of this article, some objected that the problem which I disclosed in section 2 against the existence of realm crossing relations *do not* show that these relations do not exist, but rather show that they are *primitive*. I believe I have good reason to disagree with this, however, because if realm crossing relations are impossible, as I showed, it immediately follows that they do not exist and therefore cannot be either primitive or non-primitive. I shall make clear why introducing an argument that these relations are primitive misses the point of my argument.

It seems that the inference from the premise that realm crossing relations can be found to be impossible (which I showed in 2.2) to the conclusion that realm crossing relations are *primitive* appears to be an inference that is *missing the point*, in the terminology of the logic of informal fallacies. It seems that this argument's conclusion is not the expected conclusion. Rather, from the premise that realm crossing relations can be found to be impossible we can infer the conclusion that realm crossing relations do not exist. It seems that the 'argument' that realm crossing relations are primitive rather than nonexistent is merely an ad hoc attempt to deny the reasoning of section 2 above. And it seems that *not* espousing an ad hoc solution is apparently a more worthwhile stance to take, but one which leads to the nonexistence of realm crossing relations, if my reasoning in subsection 2.2 is correct.

6. Conclusion

If relations between or among spatial entities and an entity outside of space are *impossible relations*, given that God is outside of space, God could not have in the past, present, or future caused the universe or entities in the universe, and thus could not be the creator of the universe. Some philosophers may hold that although God is not in space, God can still interact with nature since he is located at every point in space in the sense that he is conscious of every point in space and causes every point in space. But this merely sidesteps my argumentation above: If God (spatially unlocated) is conscious of every point in space (spatially located), or is the cause of every point in space (spatially located), then God has the relations, *causation*, or *consciousness of*, with space, and to hold that God causes or is

conscious of every point in space is an assertion that God (outside of space) and space (nature) would be related in some way, and the problems I have discussed would ensue.

If my argumentation is correct, it may show that God cannot, for example, be the creator of the universe, and my argumentation may lead to the conclusion that God is apparently a contradictory entity, since God is defined as the creator of the universe, but cannot be the creator of the universe.

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Endnotes

1. Some philosophers may wonder why I may appear to be limiting discussion of causation in this article to a metaphysics of causation via causal *relations*, rather than causation via some other mechanism. The reason I do this is because this article is about criticism of the philosophers of religion, who ubiquitously maintain that God's causal interaction with spacetime is an interaction via asymmetric causal *relatedness* between God and spacetime. The theist philosophers of religion who are nominalists are rare in number and are overshadowed by the realists, and thus I consider the pressing issue to be to attempt an attack of the very widely held realist interpretation of God's alleged creation of the universe. Therefore, in criticizing philosophers of religion, it seems that I need only to discuss account of causation that involve causation *relations* between God and the universe, not other possible account of causation between God and the universe.
2. Philosophers typically consider God to be outside of space, even though he is omnipresent (aware of all points of space), due to the fact that God is the cause of the universe and thus is separate from the universe. Therefore, when I refer to 'God' I am not referring to, for example, any sort of pantheistic notion or interpretation of what God is. Also, I am not considering any monotheistic accounts of God that are non-Western. Rather, my point is only to focus on traditional theism in the Western tradition, and the standard interpretation of the nature of God which is assumed by Western philosophers of religion, such as Quentin Smith, Alvin Plantinga, William Lane Craig, William Vallicella, just to name a few. The primary way that the theistic (monotheistic) philosophers have explained God as being the cause of the universe is to invent the idea that there are or have been causal relations between God and the universe, such as in the way that Craig alleged in this recent book with Quentin Smith (1995) about the possibility or impossibility of God's causal relationship with the Big Bang singularity at the beginning of the universe. (If it is found that these sorts of causal relations are impossible, as I intend to show in this article, then it would be the case that God *would be* the cause of the universe [since this is part of the definition of God] and would *not* be the cause of the universe [the evidence of this article], which is an impossibility, and thus God would involve contradiction and thus would not exist.)
3. My arguments against relations between spatial and physical items are arguments that would attack not just traditional theists, but any philosophers who hold that there are relations and connections between aspatial and physical items. If, however, any traditional theists are oriented more toward non-moderate nominalism (e.g., Quinean nominalism), for example, or some other position where relations are not included as mind-independent items contributing to the makeup of reality, such theistic accounts would not be attacked by the reasoning against theism in this article.
4. I use the expression 'fine-grained' here since that is the expression metaphysicians, such as Loux (1998), use to refer to the painstaking details of their metaphysical analysis of relations (and other purely metaphysical items).
5. I am not suggesting by this that I am the only person to argue against the existence of such relations. Rather, I am saying that to my knowledge, before

me philosophers have only either suggested that realm crossing interrelatedness between spatial and apatial items is (*) mysterious, or (**) unexplained. (An example of (**) is perhaps Descartes' inability to show how, and describe specifically how, immaterial minds are related to material brains.) If this is the case, neither (*) or (**) show that realm crossing relations are impossible. For that reason, my argument I will give in this subsection is unlike other criticisms of realm crossing relations since my argument does not just discuss the mysteriousness or unexplained nature of realm crossing relations, but rather it specifically shows their nonexistence.

6. I will discuss an objection to the concept of realm crossing in section 3.
7. Armstrong does this in a passage about the platonist instantiation relation, which is considered by some philosophers to be a relation between a platonistic universal (which is an entity that is not in space) and physical particulars (which are spatial entities):

Once you have uninstantiated [spatially unlocated] universals you need somewhere to put them, a 'Platonic heaven,' as philosophers often say. They are not to be found in the ordinary world of space and time. And since it seems that any instantiated universal might have been uninstantiated . . . then if uninstantiated universals are in a Platonic heaven, it will be natural to place all universals in that heaven. The result is that we get two realms: the realm of universals and the realm of particulars, the latter being ordinary things in space and time. . . . Instantiation then becomes a very big deal: a relation between universals and particulars that *crosses realms*. (Armstrong, 1989, 76)

Unlike Armstrong, philosophers of religion portray *causal relations* as realm crossing relations, rather than only *instantiation* relations that link causal relations to God and to the physical items created by God, as realm crossers. I will explain in 2.2, it in fact does not matter to the argumentation of this paper *which* entities (causal relations or instantiation relations) are realm crossers, but only that at least one of them is a realm crosser. It does not matter because, in this paper, my argument against realm crossing focuses on the general *concept* of realm crossing, rather than on *which* specific entities are realm crossers.

8. Loux, 1998, 38–41.
9. In Grupp, 2003, 2004a, and 2004b, I argued that the ways in which philosophers have attempted to get around Bradley's regress fail, and for that reason, the philosophy of property possession is a dubious enterprise. If it is, then a philosophy involving nominalism, conceptualism, blob theory (see Grupp, forthcoming), or something else is needed to describe human experience of reality.
10. Complex relations (or properties) are relations that have conjunctions of other relations as (simpler) parts. Armstrong writes:

Consider conjunctions of universals. If there are complex universals at all, then conjunctions of universals should qualify. . . . Given that F and G are distinct universals, then F&G can be a universal, provided always that a particular exists at some time which is both F and G. . . . But, it may be objected, if there are complex properties, then they must be complexes of simple properties, or at least complexes of simple properties and relations. If it is also maintained . . . that all universals are instantiated, then any complex

property can then be replaced in each of these instantiations by a conjunction of states of affairs involving simple properties and relations. The alleged conjunctive property, or any other complex property, will supervene on these states of affairs. And then what need to recognize anything but the complex of states of affairs involving nothing but simple universals? (Armstrong, 1997, 31–32)

Some, such as David Mellor (Mellor, 1991, 1992) deny that there are any complex properties. This would not matter to my reasoning in this paper, since I am also going to argue that there are not any. I am considering that there are complex relations here for the sake of argument, and as a way of showing that temporally located, temporally extended, complex properties are problematic.

11. Some platonists may question why a physical object, such as the Earth, is a *wholly* spatially located object, since, according to platonism, physical things have spatially *unlocated* properties. Platonists often neglect to disclose *what entity*, specifically, it is that a first-order property ties to, and they merely claim it is 'the particular' that exemplifies properties. But this is not specific. First-order platonic properties cannot be tied to other properties, lest a platonic substance be a wholly unlocated *bundle*. Thus, first-order properties must tie to the only remaining element of the substance: the *particularity*. Since this particularity cannot be a property (lest a substance be a bundle), this particularity can only be the *thin particularity* of the substance. Accordingly, the Earth is a physical, spatial entity in the sense that it is a thin particular (wholly located) exemplifying (wholly unlocated or wholly located) platonic universals (wholly unlocated). In this way, platonic metaphysics only involves wholly spatially located or wholly spatially unlocated entities, and in considering the Earth as *wholly spatially located*, I am referring to the *thin particular* that is *wholly spatially located*, and which is distinct from, but attached to, wholly spatially unlocated properties, one of which may be the property, *created by God*.
12. Roeper writes: '... a point is a location in space'. (Roeper, 1997, 251)
13. I am grateful to David Charlton of Western Michigan University for fruitful discussions that led to this objection.
14. Smith, 1995, 116.
15. This very issue leads to the extremely mysterious question of how a point-sized item (the initial singularity) can lead to a non-point-sized item (the universe after the initial singularity). This seems to imply that an item without size can give rise to an item with size, which seems very difficult to reason. It seems to be analogous to maintaining that zero leads to nonzero.
16. 'God created the heavens and the earth,' (Gen 1) seems to imply that there was nothing (inducing no realms) before God, and thus this position may be a worthwhile position.
17. I developed the argumentation in this paragraph in collaboration with Gabriel Ziegler of Indiana University Northwest.

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