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István Aranyosi. *God, Mind, and Logical Space: A Revisionary Approach to Divinity*. Palgrave Frontiers in Philosophy of Religion. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

During the course of the last century, philosophers and theologians became increasingly unsatisfied with classical theism both in respect to its internal coherence and its explanatory power. As a consequence, alternative concepts of the divine, like panentheism and open theism, received much attention. In *God, Mind, and Logical Space* István Aranyosi suggests a further alternative to classical theism that he refers to as *Logical Pantheism*.

Logical Pantheism is based on a number of assumptions, the most important ones of which are as follows: First it is based on a particular conception of Logical Space, which Aranyosi develops and justifies throughout the book. Logical Space, according to Aranyosi, is the sum of all logical regions whereas 'anything ... that can be said in a piece of fiction, a story, a play, or a poem, corresponds to a logical region, except ... sentences that even individually do not make sense and cannot be given any meaningful interpretation in context either' (p. 16). The category of logical regions so conceived of includes 'possible and impossible worlds, possible and impossible partial worlds or situations, as well as supra-world entities, like sets and sums of possible worlds' (p. 13). Since Logical Space is furthermore closed under 'any logical operation on any proposition whatsoever' (p. 13), Aranyosi draws the conclusion that Logical Space is the Absolute Everything: 'Logical Space is the largest conceivable space whatsoever, or the Absolute Everything. This is what I call the thesis of Logical Totalitarianism.' (p. 13)

Second, there is no ontologically significant notion of absolute existence in contrast to merely possible existence: existence is always relative to logical regions: 'All objects and states of affairs in Logical Space have equal claim to being ... To exist means to-exist-relative-to-a-region-of-logical-space.' (pp. 27-28) That is to say, each and every entity which we can conceive of – be it Pegasus or a round square – exists relative to a logical region and nothing that exists at a logical region has ontological priority over entities existing at other such regions: 'Pegasus and other winged horses exist in some surroundings (world, situation,

or any relevant region of logical space), and they don't exist in our surroundings.' (p. 25)

Third, Logical Space is 'beyond existence and nonexistence. It is the support of being and non-being' (p. 121), that is, 'existence of Logical Space is the only absolute notion of existence, and existence of Logical Space is necessitated by the plenitude principle of Logical Totalitarianism' (p. 118). Whereas every entity in Logical Space exists relative to its logical region, Logical Space itself is considered to be the absolute vessel that holds everything within.

Based on the aforementioned assumptions, Logical Pantheism is the thesis that God is identical with Logical Space: 'Logical Pantheism can be considered as the most inclusive type of panentheism, because God is identified with Logical Space, the Absolute Plenitude as characterized by our principle of Logical Totalitarianism.' (p. 117)

According to Aranyosi, logical pantheism is able to deal with several perennial questions and problems found in the philosophy of religion. First, the assumption that God is identical with Logical Space turns the ontological argument into a sound a priori argument for the existence of God because Logical Space is the greatest conceivable entity and exists necessarily: 'To deny that Logical Space exists is itself a proposition in Logical Space, so that the denial is only non-contradictory if by "Logical Space" one really meant something less than Logical Space. Logical Pantheism is the only view that brings about a successful ontological argument, because it accommodates all conceivability intuitions, and because Logical Space itself is the only entity that is absolutely necessary.' (p. 117)

Second, logical pantheism is able to deal with Leibniz' question, 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' Whereas there is a riddle of existence in respect to standard actualistic ontologies that assume only one world to be actual, logical pantheism's answer to Leibniz' question is straightforward: 'Why does anything actually exist, then? The answer is that Logical Space depicts everything as existing at some region or other ... so necessarily the states of affairs that compose our actuality will have to be in Logical Space and exist-at-a-Region-R, so there is no mystery why something contingent exists at all.' (p. 121)

Third, as regards the problem of evil: whereas on standard conceptions of classical theism, the problem of evil is perceived to be one of the most daunting problems, logical pantheism is able to dissolve the very problem by way of turning the existence of evil into a logical consequence

of logical pantheism itself. Aranyosi discusses both the existence of evil in our world and the existence of possible evil and draws the following conclusions: 'Evil is necessary, and our world has a certain amount of it. If God is identical to Logical Space, then there is no problem of evil at all. We understand that it is part of the identity of Logical Space that it contains all possible amounts of evil. This world is neither the best nor the worst, because it is easy to imagine better or worse regions.' (p. 143) Furthermore, 'there is no modal problem of evil for the logical pantheist, for several reasons. One is the obvious reason that Logical Space is itself defined by the absolute plenitude, hence, it is no wonder that a world full of pain is part of it; it must be part of it, on pain of its not satisfying the requirement of plenitude' (p. 149).

According to Aranyosi, he wrote *God, Mind, and Logical Space* 'without paying too much attention to whether it follows some rules and canons of how philosophy is written nowadays and to whether it will please or raise to the expectations of his peers. In fact, he thinks it will not please them, and he foresees universally negative reviews' (p. xii). As regards the latter point, I have to disappoint Aranyosi: *God, Mind, and Logical Space* is interesting to read and provides many intellectual stimuli as it deals with many problems in the philosophy of logic, the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of religion from the point of view of logical pantheism. However, whereas the thesis of Logical Pantheism is clearly elaborated and related to the notion of Logical Space, there is a problem with the book: the main arguments to vindicate the basic assumptions of logical pantheism would have benefitted from a more extensive treatment. As they stand, they often did not convince me because they look question begging or ambiguous as regards the use of their key terms. In what follows, I only have the space to briefly discuss the argument for the thesis of existential relativity.

The assumption that there is no absolute notion of existence which we could use in order to demarcate between objects that exist and those that do not is one of the most important assumptions in respect to Aranyosi's conception of Logical Space, and consequently in respect to his Logical Pantheism: both the answer to Leibniz' question concerning the contingency of the existence of the actual world and the solution to the problem of evil essentially depend on existential relativity and its consequences, that is, that evil has to exist in Logical Space and that every contingent entity exists relative to its own logical region. However,

although existential relativity plays such a crucial role in Aranyosi's system, the argument for it is problematic. It goes as follows:

(1) If existence is absolute, then fictionality is a relevant alternative to our belief that we and our surroundings exist.

(2) Fictionality is not an alternative whatsoever to our and our surrounding's existence.

(3) Hence, existence is not an absolute notion. (pp. 20-21)

The argument is obviously valid, so let us look at some problems: A first problem concerns the justification of the first premise. According to Aranyosi, the assumption that existence is absolute entails that 'the hypothesis that you and me, and all the others around us are characters of a fiction is not provably false' which 'is the best sceptical scenario one could think of' (p. 18). Since globally sceptical scenarios are seldom provably false, Aranyosi offers further support for the first premise:

> Suppose there is a story in which the character Pegasus and a large number of winged horses are depicted as present in the world, and there are also two philosophers, call them 'Wilma Schwine' and 'Alexa Seinong'. The two philosophers are having a discussion. They agree that 'Pegasus is one of the finest winged horses' is true, because Pegasus, indeed, a very fine winged horse, is part of the two philosophers' surroundings. They also agree that 'Man o' War does not exist' since there are no wingless horses in the philosophers' surrounding, such horses being just characters in a fiction the two philosophers know about. The fiction they know about happens to depict us: you and me, and all of our surroundings. If existence is absolute, then either *we* are right in saying that it is Pegasus who does not exist and Man o' War does, or *they* are right when saying that Pegasus exists and Man o' War does not. However, the symmetry of our situation with respect to them (Schwine, Seinong, and so on) and their situation with respect to us raises the obvious worry: how do we know that *we* are right, specifically that it is us ... who exist, and not them: Schwine, Seinong, Pegasus, and their surroundings? For all we know, we could be the fictional ones. (p. 21)

The biggest problem with this justification of the first premise of the argument is that it presupposes the truth of the conclusion of the argument for existential relativity and thus begs the question: one can only plausible assume that Schwine's and Seinong's situation is ontologically relevant at all and not just an interesting thought if one

yet already presupposes existential relativity and assumes that it is coherent to suppose that in Schwine and Seinong's world a thoughtful conversation is going on. If one does not share this assumption but continues to presuppose an ontologically committing notion of absolute existence, then the argument for the first premise does not even get off the ground because in this case the situation is simply as follows: there is a possible world including Schwine and Seinong and winged horses, but in contrast to our world, this world does not obtain and only possibly exists.

A second problem with the argument for existential relativity concerns the term 'fictionality'. Although the way he introduces the term at first suggests that there has to be an author of a fictional story on whose imagination the story and its characters ontologically depend (cf. p. 18), he later argues that there does not have to be an author because all the stories are yet already there in logical space and just have to be discovered by the mind: 'there is one-one correspondence ... between a fiction and a region of logical space.' (p. 28) However, if, on the one hand, by 'fictionality' he means something like 'participation in a region of Logical Space' or 'being depicted in some way by a region of Logical Space' then it is unclear what the second premise actually asserts because in this case it looks like the negation of the ultimate conclusion of the argument: that existence is relative to a region of Logical Space. That is to say, if something's being fictional is equivalent to there being a logical region relative to which it exists, then the second premise of the argument is false: in this case fictionality would be a correct description of the situation at hand. But if, on the other hand, he deploys a notion of fictionality according to which fictionality is not an alternative whatsoever to our existing, then he presupposes an absolute notion of existence against which fictionality is rejected. That is, we obtain an obvious interpretation according to which the second premise is true if we assume that it implicitly presupposes an absolute notion of existence: the reason why fictionality is no alternative whatsoever to our existence is that *we* actually and absolutely exist while fictional characters do not.

Of course, the problems in respect to the justification of existential relativity do not entail that existential relativity and consequently logical pantheism itself are false. However, since the argument is either question begging or presupposes an absolute notion of existence itself, Aranyosi's case for logical pantheism ultimately failed to convince me.