

# Darwin 1

Thank You, Mr. Darwin by Anaxagoras Pen

Mr. Darwin,

Please consider these insights into the deeper motivations of your most severe critics, the clergy. The subconscious aspect of their outrage arises from the way Natural Selection supplants our culture's origin story and their speaking role in it.

One thing that utterly galls them about your work is that it proves creation isn't a single spectacular event. For a creation story to engage them it must begin with the powerful intention of a lofty speaking character inciting its beginning and then proceeding at a much brisker pace than Natural Selection. One must admit, creation by process is long, drawn out and boring, not dramatic like creation by God's intention, which is accomplished in the neat span of one week with a sabbath day as denouement.

An even greater irritation is the absence of speaking roles. Religious leaders profit almost entirely from the speaking of words. Voice is to their temperament a sacred oracle. While not conscious of it, they believe they are Creators by the voicing of words. Like them, God speaks and reality materializes, in their minds if nowhere else.

If this analysis seems farfetched, I beg you consider the nature of the people we are talking about.

The religious temperament is inherently dramatic.

Take my Father for example. He attended church only sporadically because our local preacher bored him. My Father was consistently disgusted by this man's incessant requests for money and his pathetic calls for ever greater sanctity.

Our farm town's noble parson would often say, "the good is never good enough."

This infuriated my Father, who complained, 'he's always whining about the same thing, week in, week out. Hogwash!'

Monotony of any kind frustrated My Father. He much preferred the traveling preachers whose visits became special occasions. Revivalists are never boring. They deliver exhilarating sermons, colored with heartwarming

interludes. The services they perform always end in a climactic altar call. My Father never failed to participate in an altar call. The dramatic aspect of these performances and the invitation to participate had an irresistible appeal to him.

So it wasn't surprising when word came to him of countless revivals going on back east, where the second coming of Christ was spoken of as near at hand, the lure of them was irresistible to him. From the moment he heard about these exciting gatherings it was certain he would go there and join them.

To skip ahead briefly, not long after joining the Second Coming Movement, my Father would become a preacher himself and every sermon he delivered upstaged by a long measure the man who still serves our town today.

Despite my Father's somewhat glaring faults I find him very enjoyable to write about. Please humor me as I speak at length about him. I tell of his faults with sincere admiration, not as one who does so from an attitude of moral superiority. My Father is a captivating dramatic character, far more interesting than myself, and I feel compelled to tell you his story.

My Father owned and perpetually read the Complete Works of William Shakespeare, but he never wished to be an actor. He didn't want to play Henry the Fifth. He wanted to **BE** Henry the Fifth. Farming bored him to death. He once told me every season took too long to arrive, lasted far too long and then ended too soon. I've since concluded that his intense dislike of farming stemmed from its failure to play out in the opportune timing and mood appropriate pacing of a well-executed drama.

His other perpetual read, was the Holy Bible. I fondly remember his understanding of God's words to Adam and Eve after the fall.

According to my Father's reading of scripture, 'farming comes straight from the devil,' and he believed the third chapter of Genesis sustains that premise. His low opinion of marriage was supported by these same foundational scriptures. The ones where God sentenced Adam and Eve to farming, marital contention, and childbearing, because they succumbed to the devil's machinations.

As a life-long churchgoer The Fall does come up occasionally and the memory of my Father's interpretation never fails to make me lighthearted, which on occasion has leaked out and put me in an odd position. I could not recite his interpretation in our farming community's church building. But this interpretation is consistent with a plain reading of that portion of scripture. Farming and marriage **ARE** spoken of as penalties, and the devil **IS** the direct cause of all of Adam and Eve's troubles. One simply never hears anyone else interpret it that way, so it only seems odd.

I suppose, this serves a good purpose, reminding me not to take farming, scripture, or myself too seriously.

This material world of real things oppressed my Father's spirit. The day to day responsibility and immovable nature of material facts were things best driven from his mind by his overactive imagination.

When the overwhelming need for Second Coming Revivalism took hold of his spiritual being, my Father wanted to sell the farm right out from under us, but my mother scared off the prospective buyer with a shotgun.

Please don't get the wrong impression. At the time this was happening my Father believed my Mother and I would be accompanying him, to the land of Second Coming Revivalism. It was very uncharacteristic of my Mother to oppose him, but she stood up to him with an unwavering determination that for a brief time thwarted his own. She tried to help him see reason. I remember her saying to him, 'let Jesus come back on his own time, and if he likes he can visit us here on the farm.'

Such passivity would never move my Father to anything but deep sleep, so he went to bed early that night, and the next morning he was gone. He took the families savings and ran off to meet the Second Coming of Christ. He would not rest again until he'd dropped dead from exhaustion worshipping with the people who were filled with the Holy Ghost and fully expectant of the Lord's glorious return.

Soon after his arrival in the heartland of Second Coming Revivalism, the man who started it all by talking about prophecies in the Book of Daniel, set a specific date of Christ's return. The founder was rather cautious about date setting, but after much cajoling from followers for a specific date he set one. He qualified this first specific date with warnings that due to the vagaries of ancient calendars and the almost two millennia since the resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem, his determination of the timing of actual return might be somewhat less than exact. So, when Christ failed to appear, the disappointment was minor, but a penchant for date-setting and date believing was firmly established in his followers.

My Father possessed a natural gift for oratory and soon became one of the lay preachers who in so new and disorganized a religious body had all the powers of an ordained minister. The movement drew in believers from all faiths, but a few protestant faiths of similar character predominated and provided all of the venues for services. Most of the establishment ministers in these faiths stopped supporting the movement when the date believing mania took hold. This transferred religious credence to men like my Father, who now captured the loyalty of lifelong believers disaffected by their establishment ministers lack of enthusiasm for Christ's return.

Being a charismatic man with strong persuasive ability, my Father got access to the historic calendars and other date-setting tools used by the movements

founder and joined those who moved into leadership after the founders initial failure. He and another lay preacher were vying for followers and each hoped to gain predominance over the other by setting specific dates of Christ's return. This competition was during the summer following another minor disappointment, and Second Coming Camp Meeting mania was at a fevered pitch.

My Father had gotten a significant edge on the other man by further distancing believers from their establishment churches. He did this by introducing Saturday worship, because Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath. This and other innovations convinced his followers that they were fully preparing for Christ imminent return. Of course, he kept Sunday services going so his followers would not by habit visit their former congregations.

Setting a countdown timer is a great dramatic tool, so he and the other man both set a date to set a date. My Father waited for the other man to announce the service where his specific date would be revealed, and then announced his own date-setting event as the Saturday one week before the other man's event. This further increased his advantage on the other man. Everyone would come to my Father's date-setting event. Only the doubters would attend the event occurring a week and a day later. The timeframe was too compact for the other man to reschedule, so all the excitement of the entire movements follower's became centered on the event where my Father would reveal the day of the Lord's imminent return.

I'm sorry, I've gotten ahead of an important part of the story. That Spring I had come of age, I was now eighteen years old and able to enter into a legally binding contract. My Mother had not divorced my Father. She entertained hopes he would return, 'after this fever passes.' She had become as Stoic as Cicero, but occasionally she was paralyzed by one overwhelming anxiety. She feared, 'with those crafty easterners having control over him, your Father is likely to sell this farm right out from under us.' She could bear anything except the prospect that all our labors might be undone without us being able to do a thing about it. I shared her anxiety and would do anything in my power to assuage it.

So, it was decided that I would arm myself and carry the farm's precious deed into the very depth of our fears where I would convince my Father to sign legal possession of the farm over to me. We hoped he would see this as reasonable, because I was now doing all the work and functioning as head of our household in his absence. I trusted that he would do so, but given my Mother's profound anxiety concerning 'crafty easterners,' I was sure they would stop at nothing, perhaps even stooping as low as my murder, to compel my Father to accede to their profit at our families expense.

On my voyage east many frightful scenarios presented themselves to my imagination. I regretted that the large caliber pistol I carried on my person held only six bullets. I brought my favorite rifle and shotgun in my grip, but doubted I would be put in a place to use the firearms I was far more familiar with.

The thought of compelling my Father at pistol point crossed my mind. I quickly banished it but resolved that if anyone including him attempted to take possession of the deed contrary to my intention the first dead man would not be me. My unflinching resolve would thwart cowardly souls animated by nefarious intention.

I arrived as my Father was shoring up the enthusiastic support of a large number of followers. To my profound relief, there was not a 'crafty easterner' in sight. Everyone around my Father was taking orders from him. Not even the other leaders in the movement were his superior, and this included the founder. My Father had to consider their feelings but he was quite free of any control by them. I was struck by how utterly undemocratic a church run this way is. The preachers run these places like petty tyrants. Their dominant personalities create in their followers an instinctual obedience far greater than that of the very best trained dog.

To digress, my own minister, in our town, whom my Father so denigrated, is not at all like that. As the senior deacon of our church, any reasonable suggestion I make gets implemented. Of course, if monies are involved I fund the program, which does contribute to his amenability, but he is no petty tyrant.

Upon informing my Father of the intention of my errand he signed the farm over to me without giving it a moment's thought. His instant consent at the mere suggestion of the act leads me to believe that he never once wanted to neglect his family. His powerful dramatic imagination's hold on him was simply too strong to resist. He was a man enthralled by the spell his own imagination had cast.

I didn't tell him of my Mother's profound anxiety. The idea that his actions troubled her seemed not to enter his mind, perhaps that was part of the spell.

Of course I stayed with him for a few days and any doubt I might have had that persons of a religious temperament are inherently dramatic was forever removed. They were very nice people. Not a thief or a drunkard among them, but their dramatic personalities animated their fervent faith. The love that was showered on me and my status as the preachers son were astounding. From the time of my arrival I was likened to the Prodigal Son of Luke's Gospel. One of them said it, and the rest adopted the term without giving it a moment's thought.

Please take a moment to consider the ease with which these folks assumed a parallel to the scriptures they adored, and the rich irony of their characterizing my relations to my Father as Prodigal, as if the likeness was a perfect fit.

My status as a Prodigal Son was so entertaining that never once did I attempt to correct them. With folks like that attempts to align their beliefs to facts on the ground cannot possibly succeed, so it is of no matter that I never tried. The memory of that aspect of the trip never failed to raise a laugh on the way home or amongst my neighbors when I returned.

My Mother did not laugh at hearing I was likened to the Prodigal Son. When I was young she often laughed. Mostly when my Father told her his thoughts, but after his departure from the family, her laughter was forever silenced.

Following that event, both of us became very serious people. I am fortunate to have the temperament of a reasonable optimist. I was easily able to shoulder with good humor the great responsibilities that were thrust upon me in my youth, and now four decades later I am a substantial man with very few regrets.

I was most pleased with my trip and was very happy that my Mother's imagination would no longer be plagued by the fear that her livelihood and home could be sold out from beneath her. I see now that my successful discharge of every responsibility given me is beyond rewarding. It is a source of deep fulfillment.

During the Summer after my trip east my Father was in a volatile campaign for followers and had set up an event where he would announce the date of Christ imminent return. At a Camp Meeting packed with thousands of passionate followers, the day's events were electric. There was heartfelt music, there was enthusiastic singing and there was fiery preaching. The period between this day and the Lord's Second Coming would be a time for the purification of the saved, a final opportunity to reach the unsaved, and a final chance to convince doubtful lukewarm Christians of the Lord's great imminency.

Many followers had already sold their earthly possessions and were living in makeshift tent communities set up at movement strongholds. Those who hadn't sold, would be expected to sell all after the date's announcement, fearing the fate of Ananias and Sapphira if they held anything back.

During any other camp meeting, my Father would have been highly visible at each of the day's events, but this day he hid from the excited crowd, adding mystique to the day's vibrant rituals, and deepening the believers already fevered anticipation.

He planned the event so the sun would begin setting as the prophetic announcement rang out. He calculated that the certainty of the date would sink

into the movement's collective consciousness as the summer night fell upon them.

During a scheduled break, word of the announcement was leaked to the expectant crowd. This brought everyone together before the stage as the program for the climactic event began. Vigorous singing of the movements favorite hymns got the crowd into the rhythm of the historic moment. My Father came out on stage, and opened strong with a dramatic description of the burning up of the wicked and the purification of the saved during the first moments of Christ glorious return.

He paused for effect and in the lull following this rousing beginning he exhorted everyone to begin observing Jewish dietary restrictions.

Then, after this calm interlude, he began to pick up the pace, but found it difficult to preach in his animated style.

The weeks leading up to the announcement had been taxing on my Father. He worked much, slept little and was one very busy petty tyrant. He suffered from the intense stress which one feeling a god-like need to control everything around him entails. He had felt a bit under the weather in the anxious minutes before taking the stage but his theatrical personality transformed him the moment he was before this massive audience.

Up till now, this excitement invigorated him, but soon after announcing the new dietary rules, everything suddenly changed. He was in awful pain and short of breath. He vomited, fell to the floor, and convulsed violently as people rushed in to help him. There was nothing they could do. After several minutes of agonizing palpitations my Fathers heart finally stopped and he died right there. As death scenes go it was unforgettable, far more vivid than any actor playing Hamlet.

To these dramatically inclined folks, the timing of my Fathers startling death was a vibrant prophetic sign. With only one date now being set what would have been a source of perplexing uncertainty had been settled by an act of God.

Because he died before announcing the date he'd set it could not have been right, so the other man's date must be the correct one. They concluded with absolute certainty that, 'the Lord had to take him to keep us from being misled. What an awesome error his calculations must have been. God's absolute truth will be revealed to us at next week's camp meeting.'

After his death, my Father's rivals welcomed his followers into their ranks, and the other date setter was elevated to the status of a biblical prophet. This man, who my Father had so skillfully edged out was assigned a credibility he would never have enjoyed without my Father's sudden death. However, his victory would soon become pyrrhic when the Lord failed to return on the date

he set. His would be the last specific date setting and become known as The Final Disappointment.

It seems strangely auspicious that one as dramatic as my Father should die on a stage before thousands. It tempts one to conclude he died happy, delivering his ultimate swan song, but I fear he died unfulfilled. An empty man trying to fill a real life with unsubstantial imaginative performance. A death scene before thousands only seems to be fulfilling. In reality it's just one more seeming thing in a long string of seeming things. Appearing substantial but being empty, unsubstantial, vain and in vain.

On a parched August day, that seemed like the hottest day of my life, at the height of a terrible drought, with my crops dying and my animals suffering, I received by telegram the news of my Father's death. My neighbors assured me they would see to what needed doing on the farm in my absence, and I set out the next day by train, telegramming those who assumed responsibility for my Father's burial of the time of my expected arrival. They had a carriage waiting for me when I arrived and we went straight to the cemetery. The service began with my arrival. He was not the man to me that he was to them, so I said very few words.

I politely declined their sincere offers of hospitality, staying instead at a hotel near the train station. I was sorely tempted to be very short with these people. To lash out with a violence of words at these creatures of imagination. I was referred to several times as, 'the Prodigal Son,' which made restraint especially difficult, but I managed to retain possession of myself and behave graciously. I returned to my farm where I have led a life that would have bored my Father to death, but this life has left me feeling grateful and fulfilled.





## Darwin 2

Mr. Darwin, given the dramatic character of the religious temperament and the role being the voice of God plays in religious leadership the slow paced monotony of Natural Selection isn't a cultural narrative the clergy can embrace. They are actors whose every line has been cut from that play.

It gets worse for them. The eternal and infinite process that is the cause of all things and the means of our true creation is impossible to express as a narrative. Things like the life cycle of a star or planet can be narrated, but the operations of the universal process cannot. Please hear me out on this.

Being a man of means, every year I donate a substantial number of books to our community's Free Public Library. I order them in the Fall, so I will have them for my winter's reading. Last year I bought the wonderful 1875 Encyclopedia Britannica, and the Sixth Edition of your book on Natural Selection.

Of primary importance to my discoveries are Britannica's exhaustive section on Chemistry and its article on the science of Atomic Processes by James Clerk Maxwell. The combination of your book and these articles enlightened me about the universal process that is the eternal cause of all things.

In Britannica's article about the Atom, Maxwell first summarizes your theory of evolution and then describes a comparison of that with the composition of elemental atoms. He writes the following.

But a theory of evolution of this kind cannot be applied to the case of atoms, for the individual atoms neither are born nor die, they have neither parents nor offspring, and so far from being modified by their environment, we find that two atoms of the same kind, say of hydrogen, have the same properties, though one has been compounded with carbon and buried in the earth as coal for untold ages, while the other has been "occluded" in the iron of a meteorite, and after unknown wanderings in the heavens has at last fallen into the hands of some terrestrial chemist.

**James Clerk Maxwell**

Maxwell exposes the two levels of processes operating as our visible world and the particle universe beneath it. There are the processes of our sensible universe, such as Natural Selection. And beneath that, there is the particle level, where processes of a different character operate.

Natural Selection operates in the world of things, where local, temporal and discrete things come to be, exist for a time, and pass away. On this level of process things are limited by boundaries. The boundaries may be porous and ill-defined but they delineate things as discreet entities that are limited to a

distinct location in space and time. This is the world of things we experience with our senses and the universe we observe using telescopes.

Our sun and the earth came to be by these processes, so local, and temporal does not imply brief and small, since some bounded things endure for long periods and occupy vast spaces. The orbits of the planets, our ocean tides, and other cyclical processes in the world of things appear to operate with complete invariability but an eternal view of these things reveals that they came to be and will pass away like any other bounded thing.

In our world of things, the processes by which bounded things come to be, masquerade to our perceptions as paradigmatic but are heuristic in nature. Natural Selection is a process that is archetypical of this dynamic.

Since in theory every variation could be beneficial to each organism those variations which prove not to be beneficial are errors. Organisms exist to thrive so variations that fail to benefit thriving are by definition errors. A true paradigmatic process would not only operate by some apparent law of action, it would also not produce errors.

What Maxwell pointed out with his comparison is that elemental atoms, by whatever subatomic processes they come to be, do not come to be with beneficial or detrimental variations, though one has been compounded with carbon and buried in the earth as coal for untold ages, while the other has been “occluded” in the iron of a meteorite. Processes operating in the particle universe are paradigmatic, their operations are invariable and don't generate errors.

This particle level is where the true uniformitarian process operates. The variable changes in the sensible universe of our perceptions are the results of this invariable process. Beneath the heuristic processes of the world we see is the invisible paradigmatic level of particle matter, where the physical universe is actually one invariable ongoing universal process. A unitary process that envelopes the heuristic world of variability and error into its invariable particle reality.

Not only is this level inaccessible to ordinary sense perceptions it is alien to us. We are everything it is not. We are local, temporal, and discrete beings, while the particle universe is infinite, eternal and boundless. We come to be as a bounded being at one place in time and space, we exist for a time in a limited amount of space, and then we pass away. Because of this, we have a story. Narrative is inherent in the nature of our being. Unlike us in every way, the particle universe operating by one uniform paradigmatic process is by nature impossible to narrate as story. Scenes are the basis for all narrative, and in unchanging particle reality there are none of the distinct events that create dramatic scenes.

In the particle universe, the cast of characters is duplicated by infinite number giving the whole thing an undramatic nature. There are no heroes, no villains, no extras. There is no beginning, middle or end. Nothing incites its non-beginning. Nothing makes its non-ending meaningful. There is no foreground, no background and no place that is not the stage of action from which an audience could view it. This anti-narrative essence is most obvious, but also the last one most people would ever consider important. Even now you may not have grasped the significance of this simple aspect of scientific reality.

Special creation is a striking dramatic event. The brief incremental timeline of creation in Genesis makes the narrative exciting and the obvious intention of Almighty God drives each scene and its powerful drama. Truth aside, it's a fantastic story, and we instinctively believe interesting stories where intention drives events in a scene by scene cause and effect chain.

While not essential, intention plays a vital role in dramatic storytelling. The powerful intentions of strong-willed characters drive exciting stories. Any story characterized by an absence of intention will lack the excitement of personalized drama.

There is no intention in the pure science of Natural Selection and the invariable universal process beneath it. Because it operates on the heuristic level Natural Selection can be narrated in story form but truly accurate narrations of Natural Selection's processes cannot be animated by intentional agents.

Because of the absence of intention, a narration of Natural Selection could never rival the intense drama of special creation. All it can do is spoil an incredibly good story people have an instinct to believe. The clergy complain that it will foster unbelief, but unbelief is never at the root of great misery, and for the preachers to lose their speaking role, they would have to shut up, and we all know they won't. Perhaps a preacher here and there will lose a paying job, but I expect they will have even more stuff to shout about than before Natural Selection came along.

Natural Selection won't end religious belief either. There has never been much actual mercy in Christianity. The ordinary attitude is to talk about afflicted people getting what they deserve, and the idea of survival of the fittest can only help that along. Take the simple farmer for example. Those who supply him know him as a price payer. He needs so he must buy whatever the price. When he sells his crop he is a price taker. He must sell the crop, so he takes what they offer. When he goes broke, which he often does because of these exact circumstances, they all say it was his own fault. I don't see the survival of the fittest idea doing him any favors, but it won't be doing anything moralizing founded on religious sentiment wasn't already doing.

Your critics see themselves as much better than they are, and cannot see that these new doctrines mostly amplify their own unacknowledged wrongs. Religious Belief has always been a political tool useful to powerful interests, and it appears these interests may have found a better god to replace the God of the Preachers who has been the source of much self-doubt and inhibition.

Most prominent individuals are already convinced of their own superiority and they will eagerly embrace ideas like survival of the fittest. The political minded and ambitious will see it as the reason they always had to be so ruthless. A doctrine that justifies self-enriching actions in simple axiomatic terms is superior in every way to one that invites self-doubt, so perhaps the clergy has been bested in ways they would rather not admit.

The ways survival of the fittest will be incorporated into the structures of society is where the real danger lies.

In truth, Natural Selection is an impersonal process that lacks the intention to favor anyone or anything, but it can be warped into becoming a powerful social narrative. Nature can be made into an omnipotent God who blesses Her favorites and damns their opponents. In economics Natural Selection is already seen as free trade favoring the industrious, and survival of the fittest has sanctified many ruthless business practices. As I showed with the simple farmer example, things were already going that way, and now survival of the fittest amplifies the pernicious narrative of justification they already believe.

And it leaves out the aspects of Christianity that trouble them. Christianity invites prominent individuals to practice self-examination. A practicing Christian being a conscientious person ought to ask, "how does what I am doing affect others?" I have done this myself, and refrained from profiting by harm. The passing away of this idea is a welcomed thing to those who refuse to practice it.

The new thinking based in survival of the fittest invites no self-examination. It would condemn sentiments like that as weak and irresponsible. There is nothing in survival of the fittest to invite anything but scorn for those deemed unfit. Survival of the fittest condemns its sinners in the here and now instead of leaving judgement to God in the afterlife.

We could soon see Nature turned into an Omnipotent God, having understandable intentions. Survival of the fittest is far more narratively direct than the unknowable will of God. Instead of guessing the God of the Bible's mysterious intentions, everyone will already know the will of this God, and the path to favor will be plain to see. Simply be in the superior position and you will be Nature's favorite.

A country can adopt Nature as their God by seeing themselves as superior. The country's origin story becomes its creation myth driven by Nature's omnipotent intention to see her favorite thrive. It would require an imagination

far darker than mine to see how far a proud nation convinced of its own superiority could take a heartless dogma like survival of the fittest.

Perhaps within the clergy's gut-wrenching dread is an instinctive fear of being replaced. They may already fear Nature becoming the omnipotent God of Darwinism. Some of them might even have been rattled enough to take up a self-examination of their own beliefs and seen the weakness of their passionate embrace of the counterfactual.

But the great majority of them, like the multitude of religious leaders who came before them, will never see it as they're own responsibility to have a philosophy of deity capable of creating our world as it truly is. The problem religious leaders suffer from today is one their predecessors ought to have solved a very long time ago. Men of their ilk have shirked this problem for centuries. Destroying the messengers of truth whenever they could and ignoring the real problem they have on their hands. And this was easy for them, because religious leaders are creatures of imagination who flee from substantial reality and refuse to think in its terms. For ages a theology that describes Deity as consistent with reality has been needed and not been available to meet the needs of our understanding.

It's about time we got a theology that makes sense.

Until last year, I was a churchgoing unbeliever. Unlike my Father's fervent faith, my unbelief never caused anyone any grief, so I never felt compelled to change it. However, I have always believed there is a God. I just felt that people are incapable of understanding deity. For some reason it's a thing we always get wrong. In my Fathers case, very wrong.

During that Winter when I read the Sixth Edition of *On the Origins of Species*, I began pondering the moral fallout from the survival of the fittest idea at work in the psyche of our society, and the hollow arguments the clergy was making against Natural Selection. It was obvious to me that a vital part of the puzzle was missing, so I began to look for it.

That's when I saw the significance of what Maxwell said about the invariable nature of the particle universe, and observed that this paradigmatic level of reality cannot be narrated.

This idea that the universal process cannot be narrated was the key that led to my enlightenment. It opened the door that led to the world beneath our perceptions. Until then my intuition failed to overcome the obscuring influence of narrative thinking. After seeing narrative impossibility, I stopped looking for humanlike intentions that would fit particle reality into a story. I was able to see the creative aspect of the paradigmatic process, and wondered what kept it all unified.

Embodiment is the key. The universal process is the homeostatic operations of boundless being, where all the paradigmatic processes of the particle

universe work together for the single organismic purpose of thriving. I was seeing a thriving universe, and concluded it must be the embodiment of the Ultimate Supreme Being, God.

So, God is our Creator after all, not by dramatic acts of conscious intention but by the processes of boundless being.

I was astonished but I felt no compulsion to tell anybody about it.

At first I refused to believe I had been enlightened at all, but now I'm willing to accept this burden that has been shirked for centuries by those who should have met its responsibilities.

This is a responsibility I'm able to take up and execute with skill. Theology isn't difficult to me. I've seen through the fallacy that God is like us and can be known by the same perceptions and self-reference we use to understand one another. When one abandons that fallacy and embraces sound informal logic a Deity that makes sense follows. The magical creatures of imagination vanish and a truly substantial Deity whose embodiment is the particle universe appears. A Deity of Limitless Personality whose being's paradigmatic life process is responsible for the creation of the world we see, where things come to be, exist for a time and pass away.

As an unprepared youth I gladly took up the responsibilities my Father abandoned. These were heavy responsibilities that have crushed mature men. I trust you gathered from the story of my Father that I am not bitter, but grateful instead. Nor do I despise the countless religious leaders who failed to see God as something greater than a disembodied man with a formidable array of magical powers. I've taken up the responsibility they've shirked with a glad heart and willing hands. Questions asked during decades of unbelief have been answered and ever greater illumination is ongoing. Chasing the muse of my enlightenment has been an enjoyable adventure, so I don't consider the responsibility ages of error laid on my shoulders a bitter burden, instead it's a rich source of deep contentment in my mature years.

In the attached sketch I will show that a non-anthropomorphic theology gives rise to a Deity whose being creates by processes, including Natural Selection, and could do so no other way.

Thank you, Mr. Darwin for helping me find God.

Sincerely,

*Anaxagoras Pen*

## Darwin 3

### **A Brief Sketch of Non-Anthropomorphic Theology**

I do not intend to go into great detail. For now, I will only show an Infinite and Eternal Deity whose physical embodiment is a universal process that is the sole underlying cause for all things. Creation by process rather than intention will follow from the theology's logic, regardless of the fact that the Deity, being a Limitless Personality, does have conscious intention.

It's amazing how easily this worldview all falls into place like water filling a container of any shape. Its fluid nature becomes an adaptable way of looking at things, especially people. I expect to finish with theology over the next couple of years, but the philosophy's capacity to better understand people is inexhaustible.

### **The Anti-Narrative Reality of the Paradigmatic Level**

There is no beginning, no middle, no end in the realm of uniformitarian particle process. Time is boundless. From our position in the present, we look back to an infinite past and forward to an infinite future. Eternity, is part of how our minds perceive things. Things take place on an eternal timeline and nothing instinctual to our perceptions finds this objectionable.

The concept of boundless material space strikes our instinctive perceptions a different way. When I say, 'the physical universe,' my mind imagines a vast but bounded thing, and the idea that it has no origin and has no ending raises an instinctual objection in my mind. The point I am making is that our perceptions of time create very different inferences than our perceptions of space. We put events onto an eternal timeline but look for the spatial



boundaries of things and add them when obvious boundaries are missing. Spatial boundaries include a things coming to be and passing away. Because it is alien to our perceptions, boundless space is likely to be debated while eternal time is mostly accepted.

This split perception is counterfactual because space is just where all that time in the eternal past happened, where the present is happening, and where the future will occur. Uniformitarian time is just the constant movement of the plenary particle process happening in the boundless physical universe. Time and space are in this way one thing and I will begin using the term spacetime to express this as this sketch proceeds.

The best example of spatial perception limiting our ability to grasp boundless deity is our instinctive interpretation of the word body as a thing having well defined boundaries that moves about in the world. The boundless universe as the embodiment of the Living God is the opposite of this perception. The things of our world move about within the boundless universe and it is boundless in the most absolute meaning of that term. Understanding this requires one to think like a dispassionate scientist or philosopher and see embodiment of any kind as an active ongoing process. In humans and animals a body begins with its generation by reproduction, exists as its life process and then passes away. The process is the essential thing, not the outer layer of skin and fur that give it a distinct outline. This is an example of our perception hiding the essential things behind mere appearance. The eternal and infinite universal process of God's embodiment are essential and the absence of skin and fur is irrelevant.

The concept of boundless embodiment is the most difficult to grasp of all the philosophy's ideas because our perceptions and intuitions see bodies as solid things not as ongoing processes.

Narrative cannot function with the cast of characters in particle reality. There are too many individual players. There are almost two hundred elements, four forces and a couple of dozen subatomic ingredient particles that make up all the aforementioned elements. Because each of these actors has an important role this is too large a primary cast even for a great epic, but the nature of the players dashes epic ambition into an infinite number of pieces. Except for the forces, each of these players is infinitely duplicated with identical perfection, and there is no one of them who performs in the foreground while the others inhabit the background as extras. With a cast of this nature, narrative is a functional impossibility.

Narrative impossibility is a fortunate thing because the plenary particle process moves at an invariable pace and nothing unusual ever happens. Invariability nullifies the concept of an event, no events, no scenes.

This ultimate monotony is nothing anyone would want to watch for entertainment, and it happens everywhere so there would be no place in which the narrative was not physically playing out. An audience for ultimate monotony is a physical impossibility because there wouldn't be anywhere for an audience to sit if there were one.

There is no hero, no villain. Notice the shift from plural to singular. The Boundless Deity is a solitary being, and this reveals the absolute uselessness of anthropomorphism. We are social creatures. Every one of us was sired by a man and born of a woman. We all became part of a society. Even feelings of alienation and loneliness are not born of solitude, but arise from the human need for society. That we should think we could ever use our feelings to understand the feelings of a completely solitary being is just plain wrong and that ought to be very obvious to us. But it is not. We think we can understand God the way we guess the intentions of our friends.

No hero. God is omnipotent. A hero must be vulnerable, the obstacles must be difficult and many minor ones leading up to the climax must thwart the hero's intentions. That is not a role fitted to an omnipotent being of unthwartable intention.

No villain. All of our negative feelings follow from thwarted intentions. Absent any thwarting we would have nothing to be angry about. Given the nature of our social existence and limited personalities this is physically impossible. The point I am making by this rather obvious negative anthropomorphism is that I can see no reason for an omnipotent being ever to become angry. There is no 'Villain's Baleful Motive,' to make the narrative interesting, and from my observations, it appears there is a benevolence without favoritism aspect to life here on earth.

Apparently I failed to abstain entirely from anthropomorphism. Such is the nature of language and human expression using it. I'll leave off the narrative theme and try some informal logic instead.

The greatest failing of theologians is seen in their use of the word, attributes. Is a person ever kind because someone says they are? They may indeed be kind, but it will not be the result of kindness being attributed to them. Kindness must follow naturally from the operations of their personality, so logical point number one is that things like omniscience, omnipotence, etcetera must follow from the operations of the Deity's personality and being.

What operations would result in omniscience? This has a fairly simple answer, but I did not explain boundless embodiment from the start as I intended to. God is an embodied being. Disembodied personalities exist only in fiction, in reality, personality is by nature an embodied thing. Personality operates over time in embodied beings, so logical point number two is that God, contrary to the mental image of a humanlike spirit which many people

construct, is an embodied being. The boundless universe is the material stuff of God's being, and particle processes are the life of God's being.

Boundlessness is a difficult concept for any bounded being to contemplate. My suggesting a boundless body, even for an eternal and infinite Deity, might not be accepted by your perceptions. For now, please accept it provisionally so you can follow my thinking.

There is quite a lot to being that I cannot get into now, and this explanation is I admit, very deficient, but it will have to suffice for now.

Logical point number three, limitless mind operates subjectively and objectively. It perceives all things as related within itself and understands them from a unitary perspective of the whole. With boundless spacetime this gives the word complete a whole new meaning. Consider as bits of understanding, subjective mental apprehension of every individual atom, the subatomic particles it consists of and the movement within each atom's structure. Add to this a boundless understanding of the forces that operate in particle reality and you get total subjective apprehension of all physical reality. Couple this with a holistic operational understanding and use of this information and you have practical omniscience. No mere attribute, omniscience is essential in the operations of God's personality.

I may have lost you on the details but I gather you get the point of practical omniscience, so logical point number four, limitless volition and emotion follows from the operations of omniscience. Having complete boundless knowledge whatever God's intentions are they cannot be thwarted, and being of unthwartable intention we can reasonably assume God's emotional disposition to be benevolent, or at least free of negative feeling.

The intellect, emotion, and volition structure of God's Limitless Personality isn't anthropomorphic because this mind, heart, and will structure is found in all living things. Pond slime knows when the sun is shining and when it is not. Pond slime loves the sun and grows by intention towards it. Personality structure is basic to all living things everywhere in the world, so it's reasonable to assume its presence in the nature of limitless personality. The intellect, emotion, and volition personality structure essential to functionality in all living things is inherent in the nature of the universe.

The intellectual content, emotional nature, and the actual intentions of the Limitless Personality of God which I just outlined are by nature inscrutable to limited personalities like ours. Only a limitless mind could comprehend the thoughts of a limitless mind. Only a personality without the experience of negative emotions could understand the emotional nature of a personality characterized by limitless emotion. Unthwartable volition is nothing at all like our own, so we cannot hope to guess it by self-reference.

The general structure of God's personality can be outlined, but its contents are inscrutable to us, not because we lack enlightenment, but because of who we are and Who God Is.

As I said, theology is easy to me. I hope you enjoyed this sketch.

I have a great desire to send the letter I put much work into writing. I fear if I try to fix the glaring insufficiency of this sketch we will both be dead before I am finished, so I send it along, warts and all.

I am fascinated by the idea that these concepts ought to have become known to ancient philosophers. I have now in the works a short story about the logician William Ockham that gives this idea form. I shall finish it soon. I hope to hear from you soon and will send a copy of the Ockham piece along in my next correspondence.

*Anaxagoras Pen*



**Postscript:** And creation is the result of the processes inherent in God's embodiment. There is a subconscious intention to thrive incorporated into the homeostatic processes of every embodied being. This subconscious intention is simply to thrive and it is distinct from conscious intention, so Natural Selection is just a subprocess in the boundless being of God and creation is by process not conscious intention.

Creation as an eternal and ongoing process is long and slow and offers no dramatic competition to the way a preacher projecting his voice shouts.

“LET THERE BE LIGHT!”

“And there was LIGHT!”

Have a nice day, *Anaxagoras Pen*



## Ockham 1

Ockham's Epiphany by Anaxagoras Pen

**April 1, 1347**

Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig arrives unannounced at Mittenheim, the small hamlet that houses the Franciscan community led by William Ockham. The regal livery of the Emperor's carriages, riders, and footmen are proud and colorful compared to the humble buildings and drab clothes of the community. The bright sun of a beautiful spring day in the Bavarian countryside shines down as a footman opens the door of the carriage and heralds the appearance of Emperor Ludwig.

A few moments after the announcement Ludwig appears in the doorway of the carriage, holding the doorframe. He's dazzled by the bright morning sun as the footman calls out, "Friar William Ockham, the Holy Roman Emperor summons you."



William, already stepping forth from among the people says, "greetings Emperor Ludwig, the community of Faithful Franciscan Brethren welcomes you."

William stops at a respectful distance in front of Emperor Ludwig, bows in reverence and holding both palms out in a gesture of supplication says, "at your service."

After a moment the Emperor says, "come out Wikman and meet your new mentor."

A young man emerges from the carriage and stands next to Ludwig. His resemblance to the Emperor is remarkable, especially if one had known Ludwig when he was a much younger man.

"This is my illegitimate son Wikman. He is to be an Oblate to your order."

Indeed the young man is wearing the robes of a Franciscan oblate, but he does not appear to be very happy about that. His head hangs down but not from humility. He's suffering from a terrific hangover.

"But, your Excellency, our community doesn't accept oblates because they will not be recognized by the Franciscan Order."

"You will make an exception and I believe you will find Wikman to be an exceptional lad. Now, come closer so I can bless you."

William steps forward, bowing slightly. Ludwig puts his hand on William's shoulder and leaning in close he whispers, "don't even think about giving Wikman back."

William steps back and without any of the usual ceremony Ludwig gets back into the carriage and the whole entourage departs without a single man even getting off his horse.

Struck dumb by the sudden appearance and abrupt departure of their Emperor the whole community remains standing where they are as Wikman lets out an enormous yawn. The yawn unsettles his stomach. Wikman looks queasy and then he pukes onto William's bare feet.

William steps back, and there is an awkward silence till he says, "perhaps you would like a drink of water. Let's go to the dining hall where I can get you one."

"Bring me wine!" shouts Wikman, though the loudness of his voice bothers him and causes him to wince.

"I will have wine," he says, in a much lower voice, "have someone bring me some wine."

William says, "I don't think that's a good idea. You're dehydrated and need plenty of water till you can take a little food."

"I don't care what you think. I have a splitting headache that only wine will cure, get me wine. Now!"

"But you are an oblate. No wine will be permitted. Not even with meals."

"I'm no oblate, you fool. I'm your God."

William is speechless.

"Now get me some wine."

William says, "that's not permitted."

"Friar William Ockham, I know who you are. My mother told me all about you. You say God can do anything. Had God wished to upon creating this world he could have made murder a virtue and honoring one's parents a vice. Do you not say that God has omnipotent freewill?"

"God is omnipotent," says William.

"Well then, I am God, and in my world drunkenness is virtue. Now bring me wine."

"You are not God," says William.

“Is that so? Then why do priests scurry about making excuses for me.”

“What do you mean?” asks William.

“Isn’t that your job, to make excuses for me like you do for that man you call God in your scriptures?”

“God isn’t a man,” says William.

“Not a man like you. Bowing and scraping and going about in tattered robes begging. He’s a man like me. The bastard son of an Emperor.”

William is shocked silent.

Enjoying the effect he’s having, Wikman begins to rant, “consider the man Noah whom God spared so he could get drunk and screw his daughters. There’s a man who needed a priest to clean up his messes. For God so loved the world that he gave it priests to make excuses for men like Noah and me. And for Himself, of course. Now get me a pitcher of wine.”

“God has no need of anyone making excuses for Him.”

“Is that why you quit theology for politics? Because God no longer needed your excuse making skills.”

“What?” says William, growing uncomfortable.

“My mother told me that before you became sycophant to Minister General Michael Cesena you were quite the theologian. You said Thomas Aquinas was wrong to say the existence of God could be proven, but the Pope didn’t agree. He rather liked the idea of proof that God exists, so you got out of theology and went into politics.”

“Apostolic Poverty is a religious matter that should never have been politicized,” says William, growing uncomfortable with Wikman’s insinuations.

"I'm sure you would much rather have spoken to the inquisitors about that other thing. The thing that got you called to Avignon in the first place. The one about God being capricious."

"Omnipotent," says William.

"God could have made murder virtue, that sounds more like capriciousness than omnipotence to me."

"I was called to Avignon just before I would have gotten tenure and my philosophical differences were questioned, but nothing further came of them. My explanation for the omnipotence of God is at slight variance from better established scholars. That's not heresy."

"Capricious, you say God is capricious."

"I said, God is free to do as God likes because God is omnipotent."

"Capricious," says Wikman, being insolent.

William says nothing.

"And then you made room for yourself in politics by selfishly taking issue with the man you sought to replace."

Then in a mocking tone, Wikman says, "A man not as holy as thou."

"He was replaced because he lived in sin. He took a vow of chastity when he already had two daughters and then continued relations with the woman after taking his vows."

"You mean my mother, and my sisters."

William realizes who Wickman's mother is and says nothing.

"You pushed the man I first called my father out of your way, so you could become the Minister General's right hand man. Thank God my real father isn't so easily pushed around. He's no priest, he does as he pleases. He's a God.

William is stunned silent and Wikman pauses to savor the effect he's having on William.

Wickman smiles adopts a pedantic tone and says, "when the Emperor summons a woman who depends on a stipend from the court she presents herself. Even a eunuch like you can guess the rest."

"The appetites of our Emperor are well known."

"He does as he likes and his priests clean up the messes, even if that means raising his bastard son. He is their God and they serve him, just as you will serve me."

"No, you are to be an Oblate. It's normal for a lad in your position to rebel, but in time you will find your place in our community."

"As its God."

"No, as an Oblate."

Wikman pulls off the Oblate robe, throwing the robe as far from him as he can, he says, "Now bring me wine and clothing fit for a prince."

William turns towards his assistant and says, "bring him his robe and help him put it back on."

Hearing this Wikman removes his undergarment and begins to dance about, gyrating his hips so that his uncircumcised penis swings about in a provocative way, all the while chanting, "I am God, Capricious is my name. I do as I wish and my priests serve me."

The community is shocked silent, except for a couple of the young women who giggle and gawk.

Finishing his dance Wikman puts his undergarment back on and says, "bring me trousers or I shall go about naked."

William's assistant instructs one of the women to find clothing for Wikman in the village laundry. This pains William but he says nothing.

Wikman smiles and says, “there you go, nothing like the Superior Friar’s assistant to find solutions where none seem apparent.”

William says, “let’s go to the dining hall where I can get you some wine.”

“To wine,” says Wikman.

Wearing only his undergarment Wikman takes a seat on the bench of a humble table as William brings him a plain wooden drinking cup and a pitcher of wine. He sets the cup in front of Wikman and fills it with wine, setting the pitcher down next to it.

Wikman grabs the pitcher saying, “to capriciousness and God. Share and share alike.”

Putting the pitcher to his mouth he guzzles off a sizeable quantity of the wine.

“I feel better already,” he says with delight.

After a moment he says to William, “God must be the bastard son of an Emperor because He can do as He likes.”

Before William can answer, his assistant Rudolph appears with the clothing. As Wikman dresses on the far side of the room near the wine barrel, William whispers to Rudolph that he intends to sequester himself to pray and meditate. Rudolph is dismayed.

“What about Wikman?”

“Keep him knee walking drunk. He may get loud but he won’t bother escaping if we don’t let the wine run out.”

“Must you sequester yourself now, of all times.”

William grows serious and whispers in Rudolph’s ear, “I have hid from my true beliefs for far too long. As age settles upon me, I have grown sick of maintaining my safety by cowardice. I long to speak the truth, come what may.”

William grows serious and whispers in Rudolph's ear, "I have hid from my true beliefs for far too long. As age settles upon me, I have grown sick of maintaining my safety by cowardice. I long to speak the truth, come what may."

Rudolph says, "William, confessing doxology while feeling contrary is not cowardice."

"Perhaps not, but keeping what one knows to be truth hidden from those who deserve to hear it is."

"But they will not be the only ones to hear it—"

William stops Rudolph short with a gesture and says, "I retire to silence."

Understanding the phrase, 'I retire to silence,' to mean that Friar William Ockham would speak no more till the period of silent meditation resolved itself into an important decision, Rudolph assumed responsibility for Wikman in humble obedience, troubled by his beloved Superiors words.

The next day, William Ockham leaves sealed letters addressed to the Emperor and the Archbishop of Bavaria to be delivered that day. He gives a note to Rudolph explaining that he intends to make an important speech before the community, and wishes the Emperor and all the religious authorities of Bavaria to attend. The prospect of this horrifies Rudolph, because he knows the Pope's Inquisitors will attend, openly if allowed to and secretly if forbidden.

## April 9, 1347

The sudden appearance and abrupt departure of their Emperor, the presence of Wikman, clothed as a colorful prince doing as he wishes, and the mysterious seclusion of the Superior Friar William Ockham are the strangest things to ever happen in Mittenheim, a tiny peasant hamlet created to support a community of excommunicated Friars, under the protection of Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria.

Ludwig had also been excommunicated by then Pope John XXII, whom he, in turn defrocked, because each claimed sovereignty over the other. Despite these theatrics the Emperor remained Emperor and the Pope in Avignon remained Pope. However, the Avignon Popes suffered nothing of lasting consequence from Emperor Ludwig's rebellious defrocking ceremony, but Ludwig remained excommunicated, and that very consequential disability limited his power as Holy Roman Emperor till his death.

William Ockham, the barefoot Friar who defied Popes, had just spent seven days cloistered in his quarters and is now expected to make an important speech.

Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig and his religious advisors, including Wikman's stepfather are comfortably seated to one side of the lectern. A large crowd of clergymen are assembled on the village green in front of the lectern. Conspicuous are the official inquisitors and their scribe who stand in the front rows opposite from the Emperor's Court. After a brief ceremony, William emerges from his office, sets his manuscript onto the lectern and begins speaking in the clear powerful voice of a skilled orator.





## Ockham 2

Socrates could never have been a Christian without ceasing to be Socrates, because Socrates never allowed any person, even those in positions of authority, to tell him what was true and what was not.

I suspect that being an excommunicant, whom the Church declared a heretic, has caused some people to assume that my mind became as free as the mind of Socrates. This idea is absurd. In the months following my excommunication I became even more dogmatic, and depended more than ever on the power of religious authority.

Contrary to myth, chained men do think, they think harder than free men. Creating the rationales that make absurd notions seem true is hard work. The heaviest lifting in all philosophical thought has been devoted to making religious dogma seem reasonable to people capable of seeing that it is not, and all of this heavy lifting has been done by suborned philosophers whose thinking is enslaved by the strength of religious authority.

During the struggles that followed our forbidden departure from Avignon, I relied on the authority of Scripture, and the precedents set forth in the Bulls of Nicholas the Third to declare then Pope John at Avignon a heretic and justify his Roman replacement. During this endeavor, my mind was the obedient servant of the authority that empowered it. As factotum to Minister General Michael Cesena, I did whatever was needed to further his goals for the Order we had devoted our lives to.

In all of these various efforts, I was obeying the only authority I had ever known. As the bastard son of an unknown man, I was given to the Friars before I was mature enough to be an Oblate. I have no memory of my mother or anything else about my life before the Friars. I was too young for study, so they raised me like uncles given collective charge over their dead brothers infant son.

Upon the death of Michael Cesena, four and a half years ago, the last vestige of that authority died. I was surprised to find that everyone else in the community felt as I did, that Michael enforced far too much ritual upon us. We all felt the actual poverty of our living conditions was acceptable but dogmatic obedience to the rituals of a Church who had rejected us was not. The day he died we forgot midnight vespers and chose not to remember their rigors ever again. Not a soul amongst us ever wanted to interrupt our sleep by getting up in the middle of the night to recite rote prayers. Our grief for the loss of Michael was great, but we chose to grieve in the morning after getting a full night's sleep.

Wikman laughs, and so do some others.

William pauses until the laughter subsides.

Prior to Michael's death, I expected only my outward circumstances to change, but an odd transformation occurred within me. At first I didn't understand it. I no longer felt comfortable ordering members of the community to do things. As Michael's subordinate I gave far more orders than he did, and I soon realized they had been his orders not my own. Of course I knew that, but found it difficult to give orders after his passing despite the unquestioned assumption that I was now the community's Superior. I didn't feel superior and found I had no desire to fill the role everyone had expected me to step right into.

There was one order I felt very comfortable giving. The one that made Friar Rudolph my regent while I cloistered myself to grieve the Superior's passing and sort out my unwillingness to step into his role. At the time, my unwillingness was attributed to sincere humility, but freedom from hierarchy was the main reason I now shunned authority. All my life there were Superior Friars over me. In the end there was only Michael, so after he passed I was subordinate to no one. For the first time in my long life I was free to do as I wished. I even thought about leaving our community to live in Munich as an independent philosopher.

In the absence of Michael's commanding presence, all of us felt some welcomed freedom alongside our sincere grief, but my freedom was complete. Completely free from all of the responsibilities to religious dogma, I was reborn and began to think for myself. My mind now is as free as the mind of Socrates.

William pauses, and looks at the inquisitors.

They feel singled out by his gaze.

They fear he will request their expulsion and how they will be handled by the Emperor's guards if that happens.

In a friendly tone, William asks the scribe, "are you getting all this down?"

The scribe, who is a youth, writes the sentence and looks up. He isn't expecting to be spoken to and looks surprised.

Even friendlier William says, "I said, are you getting all this down?"

The scribe writes William's question and then looking up a second time, he blurts out, "yes," and immediately returns to a ready position.

"Good," bellows William, "It's not every day William Ockham gets to tell the Pope exactly what he thinks!"

The boy writes that down as the other inquisitors look about with fear.

"I don't want him to miss a word of it."

He turns to Ludwig and asks, "Emperor Ludwig, can you promise these men safe passage through the territories of the Holy Roman Empire and beyond, so they can bring these words I am speaking to the Popes ears unhindered?"

Ludwig stands up and says, "I can, and I will."

"Good, I'd hate for this bolt to miss its mark."

Assured that his intended audience will hear his words, William resumes the spirited reading of his manuscript. End Part One

Having left Rudolph in charge I engaged in an intense period of reflection on my newfound freedom and what it could mean to me as a man of God. No longer having anyone or anything in authority over me turned these meditations into a waking epiphany of profound logical insights. The system of dogmatic inhibitions that had prevented me from having a worldview of my own were swept away and I saw the universe that religious dogma had hidden from me.

I began to reason things out for myself and clarity replaced the disjointed irrationality religious dogma imposes on the human mind.

My attitude toward the books I had depended on was changed. I no longer needed their authority. I had begun to think for myself and I no longer needed anything to back me up. My mind was now free as the mind of Socrates, and like Socrates I would reason things out for myself. Both God and the universe are quite sensible to an earnest thinker who has jettisoned the nonsense of religious dogma, so the logic I once used to rationalize the irrational now made sense of the sensible.

William looks up, so he can observe the reactions of the audience, no longer reading from the manuscript, but following it, he says, "my epiphany lacked the drama of an illuminated vision of God. My insights into the nature of God were almost all via negativa. A deep realization that God does not think as we think, feel as we feel or have a capricious intentionality like we have. These ideas about God came to me as I realized what it truly means to be a human being. In many ways my epiphany was an insight into the ordinary.

As I began to see myself and others as limited, rather than sinful, I saw the mistaken self-righteousness that has characterized my life as a friar. When I stopped seeing everyone as sinful my entire personality was unburdened. There is nothing unusual about myself or anyone else being mistaken. Our every act is from shortsighted intention. Our entire personality is limited.

There are limitations of time and space. We are born and one day will die. There are limitations of ability. Some of us are far stronger than others, but the real limitation is what we all share. We all have limited minds, limited hearts and limited wills. Personality

limitation is the defining characteristic of our human nature and the different ranges of limitation between us are of no consequence.

It is the quality of being limitless that sets God apart, and our not being limitless is the quality that defines our human being.

This principle is encapsulated in a two part formula from which all of my new philosophy will follow. The Personality and Being of God is Limitless. The personality and being of human beings is not limitless.”

William pauses, and looking out over the crowd he says, “that probably shot right past you, so I will try to explain it using more down to earth language we can all understand.”

“Real God, the One and Only Limitless Being, cannot function as a character in stories.”

William observes that everyone hearing this statement is even more puzzled than before.

“Of course there are plenty of stories where there is a character called God. The God of the Scriptures is the central character of many stories in sacred writings, but to be a character in story, the personality of that character must be limited. As the one and only Limitless Being, the role of God in the life of our world is not the stuff of timebound dramas.”

William pauses to observe that his audience remains puzzled.

“Perhaps this illustration can introduce the idea, and then I can explain it in depth.”

After suggesting this, William returns to his prepared text.

## Ockham 3

Consider the Stonemason, strong, reliable, and competent. Does the Stonemason rely on intuition to set the foundation of a building? No. The Stonemason employs the natural level of water to true his work after intuition has put the blocks in place. After that, do the walls rise according to the Stonemason's estimation of plumb? No. The Stonemason puts the blocks into a rough position and then trues them up with a plumbline.

What I'm telling you today is that the builders who construct our church buildings are wiser than those who minister in them because the builders rely on true measures to correct their intuitions.

From nature itself the Stonemason has the plumbline and the water level and we from nature itself ought to see the limitless being of True Deity and the limitless personality of Real God. To say that church builders are wiser than church ministers is true, but very unreasonable. The true measures the ministers ought to use



are far more difficult to find, because they elude our perceptions. Truth be told, it's natural to assume that the Living God can function as a character in story, just like the gods of Homeric myth can, and only a clear understanding of how narrative functions can refute that misunderstanding.

The Stonemason has no confusing delusions inherent in the perceptions of things obscuring the utility of the water level and the plumbline. Nothing in his ordinary perceptions inhibits their use. So, rather than being outraged we ought to be grateful to have overcome the difficulties of the past, and see those who cannot overcome them as honestly mistaken. Self-righteous anger has no place in limitation philosophy.

The Holy Scriptures of each of the Abrahamic faiths portray God as capable of being understood by the same self-referential methods we employ to understand one another, and the reasons for that are not complicated. We refer to our own personalities to inform our relations with others, expecting them to think act and feel as we ourselves would if we were in their situation. The more like us people are, the easier it is for us to understand them.

A God who thinks as we think, feels as we feel and intends things as we intend things can be understood and One who does not is inscrutable to our ordinary methods for understanding persons.

A Deity, unlike us in thought, feeling and intention isn't easily recognizable to us, so the idea that God might be completely unlike us in thought, feeling and intention never becomes apparent to our conventional perceptions. By nature, we avoid people whom we don't understand and it's consistent with our character to avoid recognizing God as a Personality we cannot understand, having thoughts not at all like our thoughts, feelings unlike our own and intentions we cannot guess.

In the next aspect of my insight into the ordinary, I saw that people are, all of us, storytellers and story believers, so a God who plays an understandable role in the drama of human history can be presented to us in a variety of forms all of which make sense to our perceptions. The God character in these stories functions in ways that a character in a story must. When that character participates with other functional characters in a proper story, both the story and the character make sense, in the story, if nowhere else.

Characters can be incredible and do many impossible things so long as they think and feel using the same methods that we use to think and feel. Their discernable intentions drive the story.

Stories are often about ancient heroes pitted against despicable villains, and of course myths about the gods of past civilizations. Characters who on the surface look not at all like us. Stories, more often than not, are about extraordinary persons. Remarkable characters who are interesting because they are different from plain ordinary persons like us. The best stories seem to be about the kind of persons most unlike us.

But this is not entirely true. The things that make the heroes and villains of story remarkable are superficial. Their extraordinary features set them apart from other characters, and set the story they are in apart from other stories. The remarkable features enhance the story, but are not required to make a story work. A storyteller could, without any functional difficulty, tell a workable story using characters who are in every way ordinary and the workability of the story would not suffer one bit. We could follow such a story just as easily as we would if the characters were remarkable.

It turns out that you and I have something in common with every character in story-world no matter how fantastic that character might be or whatever impossible feats they are capable of. Something basic to our structural being, that is not in any way superficial. Something that makes each of us very individual, but is common to us all.

We all have intentions. Lots and lots of intentions. Lifelong intentions, sudden in the moment intentions, and intentions that are at variance with one another. We are, all of us, just a bit capricious.

The God of the Scriptures sure is capricious, and it's that profound capriciousness which makes the story of Noah and the Great Flood work. We all know what it's like to make a mistake and change our mind, so we can understand the role of the God character in that story.

We are not able to flood the earth but we are able to comprehend a change of mind following a mistake because we have them all the time. For a character to work in a story, that character must think as we think, feel as we feel and have the same sort of intentionality that we have. To be a character in a story the God character must have a capricious intentionality, like ours, and it's the God character's humanlike intentionality

in the story of Noah and the Great Flood that make it work.

Because each of our personalities has a strong narrative element, workable stories attract our attention. Story enables our limited minds to make sense of complexity. We long to see the sense in any functional story. So long as a story works our perceptions are comfortable with it and we understand it with ease. It would be foolish to imagine we could stop doing this. We are, all of us, storytellers and story believers.

We are not sinful for doing this. Our thinking is discrete, local and temporal. Our thoughts are about things that exist in a limited area of space for a period of time, and story has an important role in organizing the complexities of our sometimes disjointed thinking.

In Bible stories, the God of the Scriptures thinks like this too. The God of Scripture knows things, discrete things, and knows them in the same local and temporal way we know discrete things. It's as if He has a human personality and a human perception of things that reflects our own. The God of the Scriptures sees things from our own human perspective.

Perception plays an important role in our relationship to things. We are local and temporal beings who think in terms of local and temporal things using a limited means of

perception that renders ever changing reality into something our minds can grasp. Story is perceptions ever present helper. A Personality having a different form of perception would not relate to things the same way we do. Therefore, it's entirely natural for us to misunderstand God the way we do and to perpetuate that misunderstanding using a method unsuitable to telling the truth about God's real personality and being.

Human beings and gods based on human personalities are the stuff of stories because they are free to act as they choose. Characters in story often choose to act contrary to instinct and other expectations. We do this too. We can choose to be heroic, risking our lives to help the helpless. And sometimes we do this for powerful emotional reasons. We love, we hate, and we want to act because of these strong feelings. In story, we are characters of strong intention because we have strong feelings. Feelings that can and do change. Feelings that drive us to attempt the impossible and then break our hearts when our attempts fail. We are the stuff of stories because we have the freedom to attempt the impossible and be thwarted at every turn.

But can omnipotent God be thwarted? To be thwarted God would be something less than omnipotent, so if God cannot be thwarted there is no reason to believe God can be angered.

Much of our volatile emotional nature is negative because our intentions are inconsistent and often thwarted. The intentions of the personality of Limitless God are neither inconsistent nor can they be thwarted. So, the negative emotions that arise from the quandaries of a capricious will: frustration, anger, hatred, and others like them have no place in the emotional aspect of God's personality. Because God has only positive emotions and they, like God's mind are limitless, we could not possibly hope to understand them. The contents of God's personality are inscrutable to us. Because divine emotion cannot be negative, divine intention must be benevolent. Not benevolent in a local and temporal way but benevolent in an eternal and infinite way.

When speaking about the afterlife, the Apostle Paul spoke of the complete nature of God when he expressed the hope that being transformed in the afterlife he would understand as he is now understood. The complete limitless understanding of God is not at all like our incomplete limited understanding. God's personality is complete personality and

that completeness is eternal and infinite, it's boundless.

The ultimate reality of the universe is God's boundless personality and being. Within God's Boundless Being all limited things have their being. God's intention is dramatic but its scope is far too wide for any human drama. Every story exists within the embodiment of God as the universe where things come to be, exist for a time and then pass away, so God does have a role in story, just not as a character.

William pauses for a moment, looks at the young scribe working with the inquisitors and says, "There is no original sin, only limitation."

Having observed that sentence being written down, William says, "What we call sin, our inability to be perfect human beings, is simply us living in the world of things as limited human beings with limited personalities. Like the Apostle Paul we do not understand ourselves and others in the complete way God does. We are incomplete. We are limited. We are bounded beings existing for a short time, in a small space, and we pass away. We err, not because of our first ancestor's transgression, but because of the nature of our being.

So, if as the Apostle Paul wished, we could know as we now know, our being and personality would be transformed, fitting us for boundless life with God.



I retire to silence.

At that point, without saying another word, William Ockham cloistered himself once more in his apartments.

The official inquisitors departed straightaway, but their spies remained behind to infiltrate the banquet for the Bavarian clergy, to be hosted by Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig.

Ludwig had hunted that morning and the game from that hunt was already roasting. The imperial staff brought other victuals and plenty of wine, so there would be plenty of food to eat and wine to drink as they discussed William Ockham's profound speech. Because he was cloistered, William Ockham didn't attend the celebratory gathering.

Late in the afternoon of the next day, when serving the mid-day meal, Friar Everett noticed that the food and water left for William that morning were untouched. That the food was untouched during the first day of his meditations was not unusual, but William always drank water when cloistered.

Friar Everett hailed Rudolph saying, "Friar William does not appear to be eating or drinking, what do you make of that?"

"I'll see if I can get his attention."

Rudolph looks in through the service cupboard and sees William's body motionless upon his cot, covered with his blankets as if

sleeping. It would be very unusual for William to be sleeping at this time of day. Rudolph fears he is unconscious or dead. He knocks very loudly on the door and then yells through the service cupboard. Getting no response he enters Williams room and tries to rouse him, but finds he is dead.

Wickman hearing the commotion rushes to William's room finding Rudolph grieving and Friar Everett milling about.

After a few minutes of grief, Rudolph stands, crying.

“He's dead.”

Upon hearing this, Friar Everett points to the fireplace. What had been a very small fire is out, and a few unburnt edges of William's manuscript are visible.

“Apparently, he committed suicide.”

Rudolph says, “Suicide? That's preposterous, William would never commit suicide!”

Wickman, who had stuck his head out of the open window at the far side of the room, turns around and says to Rudolph, “It wasn't suicide.”

THE END

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## Anaxagoras Pen

The Letter Writer of Thank You, Mr. Darwin is a fictional person living in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A contemporary of Charles Darwin, Anaxagoras Pen is about sixty years old when the letter is written.

Both he and Charles Darwin are in their Sixties.

It's unclear if he has communicated his philosophy to anyone besides Charles Darwin. He's no zealot, a bit the opposite of an angry prophet, so perhaps he hasn't communicated it to anyone else.

I chose the name Anaxagoras because my far more detailed treatment of limitation philosophy called the Logic of Limitless is narrated with complete objectivity by the scientist/philosopher Anaxagoras (b.500 bc – d. 428 bc). A contemporary of Socrates (b.480 bc – d. 399 bc). The events in the Logic of Limitless are coincident with the completion of the Parthenon, in Athens. Anaxagoras narrates Logic of Limitless when is old and recounts a heroic Socrates confronting the Athenian Assembly as a young man in the prime of his life.

Logic of Limitless is alternative history.

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## About the Composition

These stories are written by the surprise method of composition. There are two forms of surprise employed. One is a central surprising theme which guides the storyline, becoming apparent sometime after the mid-point. This theme can be expressed in one brief pointed sentence which 'states the story.' The other form of surprise is the surprise at the ending. At the very end of the story an un-introduced detail containing sudden surprise gets stated just as the story ends. This can be followed by an epilogue.

In 'Thank You, Mr. Darwin' the theme is, 'the Particle Universe Cannot Be Narrated,' and the surprise is the letter writer thanking Charles Darwin for helping him 'find God.' In 'Ockham's Epiphany' the theme is, 'Real God Cannot Function as a Character in Stories.' The surprise at the ending of 'Ockham's Epiphany' is 'There is no sin only limitation,' coupled with the possibility of a transformed life with God.

There is a small distinction between a surprise at the ending and a surprise ending. Because of the use of theme a completely unexpected ending would impair the method of composition, so a surprise at the ending is the goal, not a surprise ending.

Also surprising reverses play a large role in the unique story being told. These must come about in the nature of the subject and not be gratuitous.

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