The Missing God of Karl Jaspers (and Heidegger)

O Deus ausente de Karl Jaspers (e Heidegger)

El Dios que falta de Karl Jaspes (y Heidegger)

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Keywords:

Karl Jaspers

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Abstract:

The paper is a cross-cultural critique on how God is conceived in the works of two Existentialist Philosophers: Karl Jaspers and Heidegger (their convergence and divergences), and how we might disconceive both. And there is reference via Jaspers to Faith (since I am a Fellow of the College of the All Souls of the Faithful Departed, in Oxford), I am interested in this issue: both in respect of faith, the departed, and perhaps the yet-to-be, posthuman and postdivine. And there is a quaint Berkeley connection also; and so a small poem to begin with: *Berkeley Modern-Posts*.

Resumo:

O artigo é uma crítica transcultural sobre como Deus é concebido nas obras dos dois filósofos existencialista: Karl Jaspers e Heidegger (sua convergência e divergências), e como nós podemos "desconceber" os dois. E há referências através de Jaspers e da Fé, (já que eu fui um companheiro de faculdade em Oxford) estou interessado nesta questão, ambos em matéria de fé: os infiltrados e os talvez ainda-a-ser, pós-humano e pós-divino. E há uma conexão pitoresca de Berkeley também; e assim um pequeno poema para começar: *Berkeley Modern-Posts*.

Palavras chave:

Karl Jaspers

Heidegger

Filósofos existencialistas

Palabras clave:

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Resumen:

El artículo es uma crítica intercultural cerca de cómo Dios es concebido en la obra de dos filósofos: existencialista Karl Jaspers y Heidegger (la convergencia y divergencia), y cómo podemos "desconceber" los dos. Y hay referencias de Jaspers y de la fe, (desde que era un compañero de la Universidad de Oxford) estoy interesado en esta cuestión, tanto en asuntos de fe: los infiltrados y quizás todavía-a-ser, pós-humanos y pós-divino. Y hay una conexión pintoresca de Berkeley y tan poco poema para empezar: *Berkeley Modern-Posts*.

The Missing God of Karl Jaspers (and Heidegger)

MISSING DOG
Black Lab, white underbelly, curly tail
May be seeking owner, howls at night
Well taken care of, strayed out into
Spruce & Arc Streets, North Berkeley
Call: Jerry O'Garcia 1-008-PREALTERN
Will return by UPS-VET (F.O.B)

MISSING GOD
White male, black underbelly, hairy tale
Likely seeking disciples, hysterical by day
Kept unkempt, wondered off into
Bruce &Arche Avenues, North Bay Area
Call: FaristhaO'Gibreal 1-008-OBO ONO
Will return by FedExp-SKY (C.O.D)

Part A.

I am triggered by Heidegger's worry: whether transcendence is comprehensible without any specific reference to God? What might be meant by 'transcendence' is the unfettered pursuit of the question of being and the quest for freedom and authenticity of *be-ing*.

And I'm tickled by Jasper's pronouncement that at the root of existentialism is a mystery of Being – the Missing God – that runs deeper than our conventional categories of theism, atheism, or agnosticism.

Heidegger here will be the hovering ghost; and I shall confine myself to Jaspers, drawing mostly from Jasper's 1951 lectures (they were broadcast); that has section on 'THE IDEA OF GOD'.

Here I offer two opposite observations: (1) Heidegger – the last of the great metaphysicians - poses a radical and controversial challenge to philosophers by calling them to do without God in an unfettered pursuit of the question of being (through his "detruktion of onto-theology" and his espousal of the metaphysic of non-being[II]); and, (2) this exclusion nonetheless leaves room for a form of philosophical reflection upon the religious, and the discourse concerning — not the God of philosophers as such, but — for a notion of divinity in the experience of beings as beings, i.e. in a phenomenological mode (exemplified most clearly in Heidegger's 1920/21 lectures on the phenomenology of religious life). This is congruent with Existentialism's attempt to find this ground from within the human form as the contextual whole through which a world appears.

Let me fill out some details in thinking on God in relation to Nothingness. At the end of the day, I believe Nothingness is more important to Heidegger than any of the ancient or classical grand narrative of Transcendence which he castigates as the Western (Judeo-Christian) mistake of what he calls *onto-theo-logos*. What he means is the all of Western metaphysics, and Christianity, Judaism – we might add Islam – has a doctrine of Being via Presence – in contrast to pre-Socratic understanding of Being via absence and its concealment. What starts as Being fully present in Plato ends up as God in the Old Testament as fully present personal Being. Let me explain this a bit more.

There has been a long battle in the West on the question of being: what is; i.e. existent, quiddity or what it means to be something simple, identifiable, and available for objective discovery and control. 'Plato initiated the move toward — what Heidegger called a "productionist metaphysics"— by transforming the question of Being into beingness: a transcendent or permanently present form (*eidos*) that makes things possible' (HICKS, 2003).

'Aristotle expanded this productionist attitude by arguing that for something "to be" meant [it] to be the effect of somecause, and "causing" meant to work upon something, to effect it, to make it' (ibid).

And so Aristotle invents a science that investigates being as being, and what belongs to it according to its nature. This first philosophy comes to be known as ontology, the science of being in general, and metaphysics, the science of the universal being. 'Aristotle's phrase,' however, '*on hēi on*,' 'being as being,' is as suggestive as it is ambiguous, and his ontology is deeply aporetic' (HEIDEGGER [1929], 1993, p. 2–3; DOOLAN, 2012; HART, 2004, p. 55).

By the time of Plotinus and neo-platonism, being and nonbeing are transcended in the mystical experience of the One (to hen); the theistic philosophies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam forge a relationship between metaphysics and theology in their quest for the 'highest being.' Passing through refinements in Latin and Arabic languages, especially in the distinction hedged between essence and existence, the integration is complete with Thomas Aquinas' "*analogiaenti*" of divine and dependent beings on the one hand and his two-fold correlation of the finite entities with 'universal being' (*esse commune*) and the divine 'subsistent being' (*essesubsistens*) on the other (HEIDEGGER, 1996, p. 4). In other words, as Heidegger notes: 'In medieval times, God became identified with the Being of entities and was depicted—on the Aristotelian principle that beings are inexorably linked with cause — as an all-powerful causal agent who planned, calculated, and produced 'the relatively stable and independent presence' of entities' (*ibid*). Heidegger continues: 'In *Metaphysics*, Avicenna (ibnSīnā, 980–1037) sums up the plague of being infecting this period rather perspicuously:

> Existence becomes a problem when the possibility of non-existence is taken seriously. But contingency, or the possibility of non-existence, was not regarded as an ultimate fact by the Greek thinkers…It was in the context of a theistic philosophy, a doctrine of creation, among the Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan thinkers of the Middle Ages, that the question of contingency, and therefore, of existence became acute…The discussion of existence, then, emerges from an earlier condition of thought in which the existence of things is taken for granted and the problem of being is the problem of what really is as opposed to merely apparent, or what is permanent as opposed to what is transitory.' (*ibid*, p. 5)

This concept *being*, nevertheless, survives and is developed further in Eckhart, Wolff, and Descartes, who at least grounded being to 'what can be presented to the cognizing subject as indubitable': the spiritual substance René deemed to be the mind over the entitive body, the super-being, God, over the mechanical world. With Kant, the tight hold on being begins to loosen and lag — consider the elusiveness of thing-in-itself (a limiting concept at best, or perhaps a pointer to the 'unknown') as he shifts focus to the analysis of pure understanding; conditions for the possibility of knowing sans Cartesian certitude rather than trying to prove what exists, even as he shatters the spurious predication of existence to essence ('God's essence is to exist'), for 'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something that could be added to the concept of a thing (PHILLIPS, 2006, p. 154).

This direction then taken in Western metaphysical and theology is largely a result of not having gone further behind the influences that echoed in the pre-Socratics to the Oriental or Eastern perspectives, which not only took absence seriously but also non-being; in other words

absence is predicated on non-being rather than Being; but the West could not handle non-being, so swapped the bed place of non-being for being, and then concealed it under the blankets. This substantive self-existent and universal of everything -- as we know the Buddhists totally rejected in their doctrine of impermanence, emptiness and dependent origination.

Heidegger's thinking on Nothingness is nowhere more saliently and forcefully presented than in his – no not quite *Being and Time* (1927) but his inaugural lectures of 1929 when he succeeds his teacher Edmund Husserl in Freiburg.

Think of the short step from Husserl's phenomenology to Heidegger's ideal of Dasein (humanly be-ing there) making its own authentic existence as a supplement (complementum) out of the remnant possibilitatis suggested in Greek philosophy and after. Here being—"to be"—recalls, retrospectively, and portends, prospectively, its own noneiststatis in the thrownness-onto-death, the great leveler of all actualizations. So 'what is there?' ("to be") for Heidegger becomes: 'What would its absence (non abiding presence) be like ("to be not")?'

Part B.

I begin this discussion on the possibility of Nothingness with a seminal quote from Heidegger:

> What should be examined are beings only, and besides that—nothing; beings alone, and further—nothing; solely beings, and beyond that—nothing. What about this nothing?…Is the nothing given only because the 'not', i.e., negation, is given? Or is it the other way around? Are negation and the 'not' given only because the nothing is given?…We assert that the nothing is more original than the 'not' and negation… Where shall we seek the nothing? Where will we find the nothing?… we do know the nothing…Anxiety reveals the nothing…that in the face of which and for which we were anxious was 'really'—nothing. Indeed: the nothing itself—as such—was there… How is it with the nothing?…The nothing itself nihilates. (HEIDEGGER, 1993, p. 95–96)

In his illuminating short inaugural essay titled 'Was istMetaphysik?' in 1929 (two years later than *Being & Time*, 1927) Heidegger complains that science only examines beings, and nothingfurther; it rejects 'nothing' read as 'not-ing,' 'nullity' (das Nicht), as a 'phantasm'(1993, p. 95–96).

In logic, on the other hand, nothing is the occurrence when 'not' or negatedness is given; while Heidegger likes to think the converse: negation (*Verneinung*) and 'not' (*nicht*) are given only because nothing is given (very much as Kumārila we saw earlier, in the Indian tradition, was thinking). So he asserts, 'nothing is more original than the 'not' and negation' (ibid, 97), and a little later: 'Without the original revelation of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom' (103). He then moves straight into an enquiry into nothing or, better, Nothingness; but in this quest for Nothingness, as he puts it, there is similar 'going beyond' what-is, conceived as what-is-in-totality (106). He begins by suggesting that since ancient times the subject of Nothing has been expressed in the highly ambiguous proposition '*ex nihilo nihil fit* — from nothing, nothing comes to be' (107). Even though the proposition never made Nothing the real problem, it brought out from the prevailing notions about Nothing, the over-riding fundamental concept of what-is, i.e., beings. Nothing was quickly forgotten and the question of being — Aristotle's study of being of being—or better, in what ways is something

some thing and what might be its relation to nothing?— took over the focus. Still it presupposes therewas a concept lurking beneath that of Nothing. And what was that? He explains thus: 'classical [ancient] metaphysics conceives Nothing as signifying Not-being (*Nichtseiendes*), that is to say, unformed matter that is powerless to form itself into 'being' and cannot therefore present an appearance. What has 'being' is the self-creating product (*Gebilde*) that presents itself as such an image (Bild), i.e., something seen, or being of time: 'being extant.' The origin, law, and limits of this ontological concept are discussed as little as Nothing itself'. (An aside, German Indologists working on the Ṛgvedic verse discussed earlier, rendered 'asat' in German in exactly the term Heidegger adverts to here for *Notbeing*, No-thing).

Christian dogma, he proceeds to tells us, on the other hand, denies the truth of the proposition ex nihilo nihil fit and gives a twist to the meaning of Nothing, so that it now comes to mean the absolute absence of all 'being' outside God: ex nihilo fit — *ens creatum*: the created being is made out of nothing. 'Nothing' is now the conceptual opposite of what truly and authentically 'is;' it becomes the *summumens*, God as en *in-creatum*. Here, too, the interpretation of Nothing points to the fundamental concept of what-is. In both cases the questions concerning Being (Sein) and Nothing as such remain unasked. Hence, we need not be worried by the difficulty that if God creates 'out of nothing' he above all must be able to relate himself to Nothing. But if God is God he cannot know Nothing, assuming that the 'Absolute' excludes itself from all nullity. Not wishing to lose sight of the work of Being, Heidegger's own reformulation of the old proposition '*ex nihilo nihil fit*' runs thus: '*ex nihilo omneens qua ens fit*: every being, so far as it is a being, is made out of nothing. Only in the Nothingness of *Da-Sein* can what-is-in totality…come to itself.' Now this particular observation-might strike biblical scholars and Christian philosophers of religion as being willfully controversial and unfair. I cannot presume to pronounce on its merits or otherwise, but what I see in Heidegger's excavation is something of significance to my overall argument: that thinking about Nothing has been rather thin, and it is not as easy as Leibniz assumed given the kinds of coding that occur frequently in literary and cultural productions across East and West, and indeed there is more to be got out of Nothing than hither to supposed. Contrary to general perception, Heidegger's ontology is not one of Nothingness as such; he is not a nihilist, far from it (he distances himself from a'Philosophy of Nothing' in the Postscript); rather, Being as Da-Sein remains very much the subject and project of metaphysics, and of theology too if you like.

There is something sobering in his suggestion that only because 'Nothing is revealed in the very basis of our Dasein is it possible for the utter strangeness'—the dread, the angst, the anxiety, the boredom, the facticity of thrownness in the face of my death (it is always my death) —'of what-is' to dawn on us. 'The outermost possibility of death is the way of being of Dasein in which it is purely and simply thrown back upon itself' (KISIEL,1995, p. 336; HEIDEGGER, 1966, p. 235–236). 'Only when the strangeness of what-is forces itself upon us does it awaken and invite our wonder. Only because of wonder, that is to say, the revelation of Nothing, does the 'Why?' spring to our lips. ['Why are there beings at all, why not rather nothing?' (1929 endline)]. Only because this 'Why?' is possible as such can we seek for reasons and proofs in a definite way. Only because we can ask and prove are we fated to become enquirers in this life. The enquiry into Nothing puts us, the enquirers, ourselves in question. It is a metaphysical one' (379). To be sure, Heidegger never gives up on the quest for the 'ground possibilities of being as a

whole' (while Nishitani takes Nothingness as the 'home ground,' Heidegger remains committed to the mereological whole-part discourse: that bit is the Greek in him). For him Nothing is not merely the nugatory that equates with the non-existent (das *Wesenlose*); 'rather,' he preaches, 'we should experience in Nothing the vastness of that which gives every being the warrant to be' (385). Hence, what is instructive is his exhortation that rather than 'a leap of faith' the task of 'letting oneself go into the abyss of Nothing' is more important, that is to say, 'freeing oneself from idols as all have and to which we are wont to go cringing' and lastly, letting this 'suspense'—'morbid mood, dread' (383) range where it will, so that it may continually swing back again to the ground question of metaphysics, which is wrested from Nothing itself (and he ends with this): 'Why is there any Being at all—why not far rather Nothing?' Wrested from Nothing, Heidegger brings back concepts of sacrifice as gifting and thanking, feeling empathy for the other (Sorge/care), disburdening calculative and utilitarian thinking, and all the promises of techno-scientific culture, even obedience to the 'voice of being,' alongside imagination, the work of art, poetical flights into the holy, and so forth.

In this abyss, which is only representationally poised in opposition to Being, Heidegger finds the Abgrund of freedom: it is the groundless ground that is indistinguishable from nothing and from which all determinations emerge. Hegel had already explained the peculiar relationship between nothingness and freedom in these words: 'In this highest form of explication nothingness would be freedom. But this highest form is negativity insofar as it inwardly depends itself to its highest intensity; and in this way it is itself affirmation—indeed absolute affirmation' (TAYLOR, 2007, p. 117). Negativity is affirmative insofar as it is the condition of creative emergence of everything that exists. It is a theme—this latter—that postmodernist philosophers have taken up and as it were run the full gauntlet on, and I wish to get to this in drawing the essay to a close. 'Perfect nothingness…shadows…neither light nor absence of light: origin of that which has no origin, groundless ground, abyss, freedom, imagination, creativity. For Nietzsche, the plenitude of this void is the nonplace of the birth of tragedy; for Derrida it is la différance worked into the non-metaphysical deconstructive theology of absence.' Mark C Taylor more recently commenting on these tropes compares Kant's schemata of productive imagination (in the work of poetry, art, etc.) to God creating freely *ex nihilo*.

The power of imagination 'reveals' the concealment—the as-yet-unearthed—at the heart of subjectivity. It is precisely in the moments of radical temporality when the subject encounters deep within its own absence that nothingness haunts subjectivity; the *dues absonditus* of Kierkegaard, Luther, Calvin, and possibly Don Scotus, becomes *subjectus absconditus*; only in the next inspired moment does self-reflexivity arise, and the 'something' presenced to consciousness is given representation or expression. The German Romanticists, such as Schlegel, had identified the springing of this agency within subjectivity variously with the 'breath,' 'Will,' Being, *ousia*, logos, *telos*, ideas, even Reason (with Hegel) of Spirit (Geist), and the Holy Ghost: 'Every good human being is progressively becoming God.' In short, the premise is that beliefin nothing/nothingness in this radical sense of the temporality of subjectivity that isthe driving force towards its self-reflexivity is not in-and-of-itself nihilistic; rather, it opens the floodgates of light towards transcendence (even Nietzsche would be citedas conceding to this premise). 'After God—is art; after art—life; Three-in-one–One-in-three'—as Taylor sketches this interloping trinity. But what does 'after' mean inthis locution

as indeed in the title of his recent, rather controversial book, After God (taking a hint from MacIntyre's *After Virtue*)?

This is his iteration:

> God is not the ground of being that forms the foundation of all beings but the figure constructed to hide the originary abyss from which everything emerges and to which all returns. While this abyss is no thing, it is not nothing – neither being nor nonbeing it is the anticipatory wake of the unfigurable that disfigures every figure as if from within. Far from simply destructive, disfiguring [I read kronos] is the condition of the possibility of creative emergence. Even when expected, emergence is surprising—[as the consciousness out of singularity is for Dave Chalmers] —without surprise, there is no novelty; without novelty, there is no creativity; without creativity, there is no life [animation]'.

For my purposes, what I take away from all this is the preparedness to take the possibility of nothingness as a ground, or the lurking empty space, tunneling vacuum, or where God intervenes or plays out her Will, energetic Desire (tejasvikāma, mahimānah˙), whatever, which is quite an admission: whether the ultimate cause is traced to an intelligent mind, causeless cause, or an infinite regress of endless internal triggers, disinterested Desire, integers of zeros, old universes, or turtles all the way down… is not the moot point; for all such possibilities seem to have been entertained and dare I say anticipated in the early insights and cosmological developments that occurred in the debates between the Vedic-Upanis˙adic bards and the śrāmaṇic doubters. There is not much that is crudely or naively pre-scientific here; metaphysical it might be, even trifle speculative and mythical, but it is also challengingly troubling, or so for any sensitive, worrying philosophical mind.

Heidegger is very aware of Chinese thinking in this context and as he attempts to translate with a Chinese scholar the Tao-te-Ching, he is moved by this particular verse on the Dao, I will cite as I end this section on Heidegger:

> The Dao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Dao;
> The name that can be named is not the eternal name…
> Therefore let there always be non-being so we may see their subtlety,
> And let there always be being so we may see their outcome.
> The two are the same,
> But after they are produced, they have different names
> They both may be called deep and profound..
> Deeper and more profound…
>
> Tao-teChing by Lao-tzu, trans by Wing-Tsit Chan (Tao = Dao)

PART C.

Now in the next part of the talk I move to Jaspers.

Jaspers for his part tells us that Western theology and philosophy have reflected on" Who or what is God? And he explains that most philosophers of our times seem to evade the question of whether God exists. Among those who confront it, some philosophers offer logical proofs for the existence of God, while others argue that if all proofs of the existence of God can be refuted, then there is no God.7 Jaspers rejects both of these positions, and argues that the existence of God can neither be proved nor can it be disproved in logic or language (echoing Kant, and perhaps also Pascal here). The supposed proofs and

disproofs of God's existence treat God as an object and are therefore invalid. These proofs and disproofs are only attempts to achieve subjective certainty through the use of fallacious modes of reasoning." According to Jasperswe cannot make God an object of our knowledge. Still, even if we admit we cannot know God it doesn't follow that we cease to philosophize, or throw up our arms saying: It is best not to talk of what we do not know.

So he takes up the oldest form of inferential proof for the existence of God: the cosmological argument. Rather than refuting the argument Jaspers looks upon it to derive a metaphorical chipper; and this is what he adduces (quite interesting);

> "… this notion takes on a new meaning when it is no longer regarded as a proof. Then metaphorically, in the form of an inference, it expresses awareness of the mystery inherent in the existence of the world and of ourselves in it. If we venture the thought that there might be nothing, and ask with Schelling: Why is there something and not nothing? we find that our certainty of existence is such that though we cannot determine the reason for it we are led by it to the Com- prehensive, which by this very essence is and cannot not be, and through which everything else is. But if from all this abounding mystery we infer that God, the benevolent creator, exists, we must call to mind all that is ugly, disordered, base in the world. And this gives rise to fundamental attitudes for which the world is alien, frightening, terrible, and it seems as plausible to infer the existence of the devil as of God. The mystery of transcendence is not thereby solved but merely grows deeper. But what clinches the matter is the imperfectibilityof the world. The world is not finished, but in con- tinuous change; our knowledge of the world cannot be completed, the world cannot be apprehended through itself. "

Far from proving the existence of God, these so-called proofs mislead us into placing God within the real world, or second cosmos, which is as it were ascertained at the limits of the cosmos. Thus they obscure the idea of God.

But they move us deeply when, leading through the concrete phenomena of the cosmos, they confront Nothingness and imperfectibility. For then they seem to admonish us not to content ourselves with the world as the sole meaning of our life in the world.

So yes, it is true, Jaspers argues, we cannot know God, God is incomprehensible; but we can believe in God. He can have or entertain belief as distinct from knowledge; however, belief in God requires faith. What though warrants this call to faith, what is the source of faith, and what kind of episteme is this? Does it have its loci in reason, cognition, clear light of mind or intellect, or is its radiance to be found elsewhere? Well, Jaspers asserts at this point, which might be disappointing to a deeply thinking philosopher, that Freedom is the source of faith, and our freedom comes from God. True awareness of freedom produces certainty of the existence of God.

Indeed, faith in God is not the same as knowledge of God, but we may gain a clarity of insight through philosophy which may enable us to have a comprehensive consciousness of God. Jaspers argues that in boundary situations we may perceive either being or nothingness. And he further argues that the concept of human freedom without God, in which the will to make free choices is perceived as if it were independent of God, exemplifies nothingness. If we acknowledge that we depend on God for our being, and if we accept responsibility for making our own free

choices, then our awareness of our own freedom becomes an awareness of God.

How can Jaspers be so certain? That in perceiving or introspecting the phenomenology of our own freedom we arrive at a certitude about the being of God? Heidegger chided Jaspers precisely on this sorts of claim as smacking of extreme subjectivism and a misinterpretation of phenomenology. Let is press on with the discussion on faith, with a question. Is this the same faith as that of the religious, sectarian, evangelical adepts? That is, does Jaspers mean to collapse the conditions for the possibility of philosophical awareness of the divine with religious and theological faith? Faith in Jasper's thinking is a category that stands squarely within the pure conceptual-metaphysical schema, only just touches the borders of the spiritual, albeit via Nothingness, which it must overcome in ontology not in as it were the heart as such. Let me go on with this and develop a critical background from contemporary philosophy of religion and some cross-cultural refractions, that will help unpack Jasper's thinking on this matter.

First up, there is an epistemological question of how much weight can we give to 'faith' vis-à-vis *belief*. Jaspers collapses the two. Surely, we reduce whole junks of knowledge-claims to beliefs and represent these in propositions, sentences, and then begin to interrogate or connect them logically with other sets of beliefs for their coherence, correspondence with reality and so on. In old-style philosophical theology, 'faith' belonged to matters religious, a religious way of life, commitment to ultimate values and some ultimate inexplicable and *ineffable reality*. Faith in that sense would be personal, even a matter of feeling, emotions, evocation, and subjective disposition , and it has the most tangential connection with the proposition and thought in which it *might* be articulated and expressed, but not necessarily so. 'Belief' just might be tagged onto it as the could labels in our overflowing email inbox, in deference to ersatz folk psychology but not in strict philosophical thinking, unless we are prepared to subject the contents of the belief to rational scrutiny and the criteria of justified true belief or unjustified false belief (there can't be 'or neither' position here).

Whereas of *belief*, again, as the philosopher of religion , J L Schellenberg has put it, 'the belief that p is a disposition to form the thought that p.' Feelings are not essential for belief, much less a sense of confidence and even certitude that is not given in a justificatory calculus. Hence, 'faith-that' is not identical with 'belief-that' (PF review p 6); belief that p is a disposition to think p, while faith that p is voluntarily thinking (i.e thinking or portending its possibility) or just feeling that p. (though thinking is not essential to it).

Second point, John Schellenbach, who develops a theory of what he calls 'Utlimism' , argues nevertheless for the 'neither' position: that neither belief in theism, nor belief in naturalism is justified; and faith in personal God is not justified, but only faith in Ultimism. This is very interesting: taking my cue from Schellenberg I wish to argue Jasper's God in as much it is a Being of a Certain Divine Status has a 'missing Personal qualia' - in it – that is the missing element and is what essentially makes Her/That invisible – and so there is no necessity of having 'faith in a Personal God' in this sense; however, since J's God is not Dead (not Nietzsche's Moribund God), you could safely bet that the missing God (even Heidegger's God-Yet-To-Be incubating in a prenatal cosmic womb, Hindu Hiranyagarbha, in all possible worlds except this one)… may show up, become itself manifest or be found loitering around at any time in this or another space,) ersatzly, faith in that Transcendent Possibility - Ultimism – that there is an elusive Ultimate - is not unwarranted.

God is not what we may see with our eyes ; not as factual elements of deity, but as symbolic ciphers of human possibility, or symbols of transcendence, as the human existential possibility of inner change, reversal and transformation. Wherever this cipher is hypostatically defined as mere positive fact of belief, he concluded however, the freedom of transcendence obtained through the sympathetic interpretation and recuperation of this cipher is obstructed.

Jaspers kept a book of critical notes on Heidegger, and he routinely described Heidegger's fundamental ontology in a tone of moral-humanistic disapprobation, yet a common association of Heidegger and Jaspers is that transcendence can intrude (be something of an intrusion) in human consciousness only as an experience of the absolute insufficiency of this consciousness for interpreting its originary or metaphysical character.

Historically, then, we are at the apotheosis of a crisis in transcendence, or crisis of metaphysics.

Jaspers' own metaphysics is always a post-Kantian metaphysics: it is a *negative metaphysics*, which resists all suggestion that human reason might give itself an account of metaphysical essences, which defines the realm of human meaning as formed by its difference against positive metaphysical knowledge, but which nonetheless sees reason, in Kierkegaardian manner, as driven by a despairing desire for metaphysical transcendence.

Remains for me to elucidate on two mutually distinguishing pair of concepts I have introduced here: Missing vis-à-vis Dead; Faith vis-à-vis Belief.

Stop: ad lib rest of the stuff.

Begin with atyantābhāva.

The Missing God in Indian Thought

The Nyāya work up the most sophisticated argument to date in the Indian tradition for the existence of God – described often as bearing on "cosmo-teleological inferential proofs" (BILIMORIA, 2011, p. 664). Our interest presently is not with this argument as such, nor with the robustness of the logical analyses and evidence of a complicated ontology developed over 1200 years, but rather with the issue of how God's goodness and other benign properties fare within the discourse when confronted with the ubiquitous problem of evil. In terms of *Īśvara's* properties, he is said to possess certain divine qualities that include being an intelligent agent/maker (*buddhismat-kartṛ*), single/unitary (*eka*), omni-extended (*vibhu*), omniscient (*sarvavid*), omnipotent (*sarvaśakti*), and timeless (*śāśvat*). He does not possess or exercise the property of creating the world in the way that the Abrahamic traditions (á la the Genesis), and later Vedānta schools, would ascribe to the supreme divine being of which there is no greater. He is at best an efficient cause and not a material cause of the universe, and this fact is demonstrated through a set of inferences from the world to the existence of a first cause or necessary being. The "proof" (which would not get past Kant's critical gaze) in a nutshell reads something like the following: "Because the world has an apparent design – that is, it appears to be an artefact – there must be an intelligent designer who made it".

Hence, on the cosmological front, *Īśvara*, not unlike the potter, does not produce the universe *ab initio* (much less, out of nothingness); rather, he fully depends on prior materials (pre-existing constituents of dyads-triads of atoms, geometric forms and remnant banks of *karma* from the previous collapse of the universe). Thirdly, much like the demiurge, exercising his omni-will, the cosmic architect fashions

minor deities and other divinely-endowed beings who might be entrusted with the task of threading together inert atoms and properties, and even to provide support for an upright and operative cosmos. This is not a case of 'creationism' as such; but still one would expect God to be in full control over his dominion. One may dispense with the property of creating the world *ab initio*, out of nothing; however, if the properties of omnipotence and goodness are to be maintained, then the fact of evil, or gratuitous suffering for that matter, poses the same problem as it does in any account that includes a monotheistic deity.

And so the question arises: Why is there such vast amounts of evil and suffering, especially if God in his merciful wisdom could have fine-tuned and 'fashioned' or constructed a much better universe after correcting the defects and deficiencies in each prior world-state, one that comes cleansed of evil and its sorrowful consequences? In defence, the Nyāya response is standardly that God through his omniscient state oversees the operation of karma, which is binding on all selves except God's self, and through his yogic ('supranatural') powers dispenses rewards and punishments on the basis of the agent's or collective's stock of merits and demerits.

At the same time, the almighty relies on human efforts (as well as on the middling gods, the natural orderliness of planets, other creatures, and eco-systems in our world) towards regulating the cosmos. At the end of the day, compassion does mark God's intentions, even in the face of natural calamities and misfortunes that may or may not be caused by an agent's previous *karma*; God, though, is not responsible for these. God's compassion also has its limitations, for he is respectful of the laws of karma and leaves people to work-off their *karma* in ways most appropriate and conducive for their salvific future. The soteriological end for which the world could be said to have been created – i.e. ultimate good and salvation for all human beings if not all sentient creatures (gods and animals alike) – seems to be sparsely hinged onto the cosmological design of the universe (as paradoxical as this may sound).

So there is absent anything close to the Western religious concept of providence in this account, because there is neither a full-scale creation, nor a very decisive teleology, nor any sense of a continuous presence of the divine *Geist* throughout history; he is not a fellow-sufferer with human beings, much less with other 'lowly' creatures (CHATTERJEE, 1997, p. 325). In other words, God relies on a pre-existing set of conditions which were then put in place at the time of creation, including *dharma*, right order or law, and *karma*, the root trigger of evil in the world, which is governed by its own inexorable laws. For this reason God does not intervene; but the overall cosmic design ensures that the ultimate good can still be striven for and attained, *ceteris paribus.* The cogency of this argument is of course questionable: it is not clear why God does not intervene if he desires the best (*niḥśreya*) for all sentient beings? Suppose the cumulative karma perpetuates itself seamlessly and individuals under the veil of their own ignorance fail defeasibly to heed to the edicts of *dharma*, and so no one reaches the soteriological end or liberation. That ultimate good is forfeited, and evil reins supreme – until the end-time, after which another cycle returns, and so on, *ad infinitum*, like a cosmic circus. Does God just sit back and let it be? That would be rather callous of him, and not a fitting tribute to his omnipotence and benevolence.

There are further questions raised by the Mīmāṃsā philosophers, very much in the spirit of, or anticipating, the Humean critique (BILIMORIA, 1990). They point to the imperfections of the world and ask wheth-

er God might have botched up the job, and that he might therefore be an inefficient designer, as well as morally callous, indifferent, and lacking in compassion. Moreover, why does the huge amount of bad *karma* that abounds in the world not bring blemish upon God's nature? Is he really in control? In other words, if God is omnipotent, then he should be able to eliminate all evil accruing from *karma* by mitigating the residual traces of all acts. If he is omniscient he would know each individual's *karma* (which he probably does when he puts his mind to it) and the suffering this will likely bring about; but in his infinite wisdom, he should also be able to guide the individual toward a safer recourse or rescue from the deleterious consequence of the prior *karma*-effected disposition.

The short answer to these questions, usually, is that human effort can both be culpable and efficacious toward countering the pitiable travails of existence: that indeed is the hidden hand of *karmic* laws. It also means that being thus free to choose, human beings are not pawns in the hands of a superior power. But still, wouldn't there be greater justice possible if God, who is said to be good by virtue of his nature (not just by some arbitrary fiat), actually did intervene rather than simply allow the brute, impersonal operations of *karma* to determine certain specific outcomes? Besides, do all instances of good *karma* get rewarded equally and fairly, or is some favouritism involved, particularly where God is moved to respond to the obsequious prayers and, supplications, of some but chooses to ignore those of the infidels or the unrepentant? Is he, in his infinite resignation, incapable of allowing another chance, or transmuting or even transferring *karma* elsewhere, or offering some rehabilitative dispensation rather than be hamstrung by a rigidly impersonal retributive justice automaton? Human beings complain about the uneven calculus – amounting to starkly universal injustice.

Nor does the justificatory paradigm based on karma account for the presence of natural evil. Are earthquakes, tsunamis, bush-fires, hurricane and other devastating natural turbulences of necessity casually linked to people's *karma*, especially that of the hundreds and thousands of victims, particularly innocent children, animals and plant-life, affected by such disasters? What have the latter done to deserve this ignominy? Wouldn't a personal judge who has compassion and empathy be better placed to make adjustments, avert such disasters which he in his omniscient mind should be able to foresee coming? Or, alternatively would he not desire to compensate the victim, even of a culprit who has behaved heinously, on the basis of their prior good *karmas* and felicitous track-records, etc.? Is ita moral imperative to accumulate good *karma* or merely a prudential decree? This question is asked because there are clearly set moral consequences when it comes to accruing bad *karma*, which appears not to be so with respect to good *karmas*, and therefore the respective consequences are calculated differentially between proscribed bad acts and prudentially good acts. Just as, for example, in some human social and filial practices, a perceived misdemeanour or egregious conduct may be gravely admonished and indeed punished rather harshly, especially if remorse and expiatory atonement are not evinced in the culpable agent, or there is threat of potential recurrence, such that all prior good deeds and virtues of the agent may forever remain unacknowledged and unrewarded (which is why, in modern secular India, capital punishment has been abolished in most states). So there just isn't a proportionate balance conceptually and ontologically between the planks of good and bad karmas; the supposed symmetry between 'reward' and 'punishment' is entirely misplaced, such that the former may afford one 'an orange for Christmas' (as in Ray Charles' experience) but the latter could well sentence him to capital punish-

ment, i.e. death (KAUFMAN, 2005, p. 21) Is then the theory of *karma* aligned with God as an available but too often inaccessible moderator an unexemplary model for divine justice? And if God does or can intervene or interfere with the operation of the laws of *karma*, does it mean there could be something unjust – not quite right – in the operation of karma (hence, *karmic* injustice)? Perhaps an impersonal law is neither just nor unjust – it does what it is as it were programmed to do, regardless (CHADHA; TRAKAKIS, 2007, p. 541). But if it cannot be mitigated either by God or human free will to a large extent then it is a case of *hard determinism*. A theodicy for *karma* is not at stake, for as argued, left to its own devices, *karma* theory does allow for assuaging the moral burden in less deterministic or fatalistic terms than often imagined; but since a God is involved and he is supposed to be essentially good and yet there is evil, the Nyāya theodicy runs into a few problems.[III]

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II I discuss this in my recent paper "Why is there Nothing rather than Something? An Essay in the Comparative Metaphysic of Non-Being," for the Max Charlesworth Festschrift in Sophia, 51(4), 2012, pp. 509-30.

III I have eschewed going into further historical developments in Nyāya where more fortified arguments for the existence of God [in the face of evil in the world] were harnessed (from Udayana, 11th cent. to Gaṅgeśa, 14th cent). There weregallant attempt to shield orthodox beliefs from misperceived theodicy and criticisms [that had been] brandished by Indian non-theists (Buddhists and Jains) and Hindu agnostics (Mīmāṃsā, Yoga-Sāṁkhya). For whichsee Vattanky 1993, and Patil 2009.