

though extraordinarily prolific has only one life-time to write in; and readers who will find a thousand pages quite enough and have only one life-time to read in. Like its predecessor, this volume will undoubtedly meet with much criticism from various quarters. But in the opinion of this reviewer at least, the two volumes represent the first successful systematic response to the call of Vatican II for a renewed moral theology, one which "searches for solutions to human problems with the light of revelation", beginning with Scripture and tradition, speculating with St. Thomas as teacher, relating morality to the rest of theology, liturgy and Christian life, and elaborating it "under the light of faith and the guidance of the Church's teaching authority". Trite but true: anyone seriously interested in moral theology must read this book.

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**FROM EXISTENCE TO GOD, by Barry Miller, 1988, Routledge.
pp. x + 206.**

Barry Miller offers here a quite freshly conceived presentation of a cosmological argument for God's existence. His particular argument depends upon general logical conceptions stemming from Frege and upon a series of separate logically quite intricate moves, each worth looking at, not all of equal value or plausibility. Because of this, the book is liable to be rather difficult for the general reader, but this does not detract from its interest. For, even if some of the key moves fail as he states them, it suggests the possibility of adapted arguments of similar strategy.

Let me first state Miller's argument informally.

Miller starts from a consideration of an arbitrary 'concrete individual', Fido, and from the view that Fido's existence is ontologically complex. He thinks, in effect, that somehow Fido's existing is an act of Fido — in his phrase, Fido 'completes' his existence — but that this constitutes a problem since Fido has to already exist in order to do anything. Therefore, Fido and his existence have to be co-constituted in a peculiar way, co-constituted in such a way that Fido's existing is an act of Fido — i.e. in the relation 'Fido completing his existence'. Therefore, there must be something which does this co-constituting, in brief a cause at once of Fido and of his existence, Fido in the act of 'completing' his existence.

The idea of Fido's existing as an act of Fido may seem odd. Yet Maritain would speak of Fido as 'exercising' existence, and it is natural to think of Fido's existing or living as some kind of 'state of affairs', 'reality', 'act' or 'actuality', rather than just some fact stated in a true proposition — all this without going into technicalities, e.g., as to whether 'exists' is a predicate or 'existence' a property, or as to different uses of the word 'exists'. I have myself argued (in my *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God*) that Fido's existing is not a mere fact but an 'actuality' distinct from Fido because it is Fido's existence not Fido which has real contingency, is caused or by chance, so that unless Fido has intrinsically necessary existence the distinction between Fido and his existence must

be a real or ontological one, not merely a matter of grammar. I argued to this real contingency from the reality of time so that at any particular time the future does not exist and is therefore open. Miller has a whole different apparatus of argument supporting his conception, intriguingly also dependent on the reality of time.

His Chapter 2 enshrines the crucial technicalities, presenting, with admirable clarity, a Fregean analysis of the statement 'Fido is black' owing much debt to the expositions of Geach and Dummett. Miller concludes that what we call a predicate is a pattern found in a particular proposition (perhaps better called 'a predicate instance' than 'a predicate'), which, having no existence detachably from the proposition, is an expression with an incomplete sense — by contrast with 'Fido' as the name of an object, not thus incomplete. These two are the *semantic* constituents in Dummett's sense constitutive of the proposition, belonging to its constructional history as an utterance in the language, as opposed to components into which it may be decomposed. *Ontologically*, the predicate(-instance) stands for a property, namely, Fido's blackness, a feature or pattern in Fido's being black, an incomplete entity by contrast with Fido as a complete entity: the two together are the *ontological* constituents of Fido's being black. (In brief, there is an analogy between the way a property such as blackness has no detachability from identified facts such as Fido's being black and the way predicates have no detachability from identified propositions.)

In 3, he proves — I think validly — that a concrete individual cannot be referred to at any time before it exists (and no past individual could have been referred to before it existed). This seems to me a true conclusion, validly argued to. I note that the reality of time is here being presupposed (on pp. 89f. he tells us that the argument for existence as a real property rests not on our inability to avoid tenses but on the existence of temporal order, but he never argues for this reality of time, just assuming that our ordinary modes of speech do not reflect mere appearance at this point).

But the point of proving this is to go on to show that Socrates' existence is something real, and here his presentation cannot be right. Socrates' being referable to cannot be something real in Socrates (p. 76) because it goes on existing even when Socrates has ceased to exist, although it is the effect of something real. And Socrates' existence is not something which even could make a real difference to Socrates (*ibid*), since there can be no Socrates in existence already for his existence to be first absent from and then added to. However, clearly Socrates' coming into existence makes a real difference to the world, just as also his going out of existence will make a real difference, and this is only because his existing constitutes something real in the world —not just in that it is expressed positively like both "He is sighted" and "He is blind", but also has the character of be a presence rather than an absence, an asset rather than a privation. And, if Fido is real and Fido's existing is real, we seem to have all that Miller requires for his argument: (a) that Fido is a

complete entity, (b) that Fido's existence is an entity although only of the type called incomplete because having no existence detachably from Fido, (c) that both are required for Fido to exist. Miller did not need to establish that existence is a 'property' nor that 'exists' is a predicate, both of which seem to me mistakes, in order to justify applying the Fregean analysis which depends primarily on the 'incompleteness' or 'unsaturatedness' of verbal or grammatically predicative expressions as opposed to names, and not on classifying these as predicates in a technical logicians' or a metaphysical sense.

In Chapter 5 Miller launches into his key argument that the existence of a cause which will co-constitute Fido and his existing in the relation of Fido completing his existence is a condition of Fido's existence as such (its continuing as well as its beginning) — and similarly for any concrete individual such as Fido.

It is this idea, that the existence of a cause might be a logical condition of the existence of any concrete individual, not a matter of any general principle about the need of causes from outside logic, which constitutes the most important idea in the whole book — requiring consideration whether it turn out right or wrong. Miller's discussion of the impossibility of an infinite regress is interesting but depends on an implausible theory of reduplicative propositions, i.e. the impossibility of Fido's existing being caused by z, *qua* conditional on y's causing z's causing Fido's existing, *qua* conditional on x's causing y's causing z's causing Fido's existing, *qua* conditional on w's causing . . . *ad infinitum*. However, in 'proving' his own position here, Miller relies on the principle that a causal explanation in order to be adequate has to render it intelligible why the effect happens, whereas one of the principal designs of his book was to avoid reliance on any such principle. Aquinas is simpler: examples suggest that *per se* causal series are very short; God's causing existence provably involves immediate relation (S.Th. Ia, Q. 45, art. 5, Q. 104, art. 1).

Note also that Miller's acceptance (pp. 97f.) of Hume's view that accidental series of causes can be infinite without there being a cause of the whole is quite uncritical. After all (i) infinite coincidences invite a cause, (ii) the idea of an infinite series of hooks supporting each other with no bottom hook is contrary to the notion of them being supported (which involves being supported above something else exercising force upon them) and if we substitute a chain supported on a hook for one with no topmost loop, the question remains as to what supports the whole chain, and (iii) Duns Scotus argues that any accidental series presupposes a *per se* series which he agrees with Aquinas cannot be infinite.

Miller treats the Universe as a single object like Fido, offers unclear definitions of 'property' and 'individual', and gives unsatisfactory argument for there being but one God and for God's necessity of existence being intrinsic rather than merely extrinsic. But I think he could rectify these faults, and is admirably clear in explaining how he avoids strategic rationalist mistakes.

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