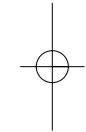
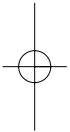


Part I

Introduction



What We Are Going to Investigate, and How

I Two Investigations

A fact, a belief, and the friction between them

This is a world in which terrible things happen for no apparent good reason. Think of the tsunami that struck Indonesia and several other countries at Christmas 2004, killing over 230,000 people, injuring many more, and leaving almost 2,000,000 homeless. Since then, we saw Hurricane Katrina cause great destruction along the Gulf Coast of the United States, a major earthquake in Pakistan and another in Indonesia, and, in the summer of 2006, a second tsunami on the Indonesian island of Java. As reported in the *New York Times* on February 2, 2006 and on June 21, 2006, the Pakistani earthquake in October 2005 killed more than 73,000 people, caused serious injury to about the same number, and left between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 people homeless. In addition to the human toll in these disasters, vast numbers of animals were killed or injured.

Along with large-scale disasters that dominate the news for a while, there are many small-scale tragedies. We all know of situations like the following: a seven year-old little girl dying of the tumor that has caused her and her family so much suffering and fear in the two years since it was diagnosed; a young woman whose breast cancer will leave her children motherless in a year, or two at the most, and who is anguished at the prospect; a man whose rich life is fading away through Alzheimer's disease; a young deer, badly burned in a forest fire caused by lightning, lying in agony for days before dying.

A common thread in the foregoing list of calamities is that there is no human responsibility for them. In the unintentionally ironic term used in insurance policies, they are 'acts of God.' But many horrors do trace

to human responsibility, and there too the scale can be unimaginably vast or specific to one individual person. Think of the Holocaust and the murders of over 6,000,000 people in the Nazi death camps, or the brutal torture of an abducted child.

The facts listed above, and many more like them, are well known to us all. For context and perspective now, let us put them alongside another fact, also well known to us.

It is the fact that many people, including many thoughtful and sophisticated people, believe the world was made by God. That is a core teaching of the monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In those religions, God is understood to be a perfectly good, all-knowing and all-powerful, supernatural being. As creator of the world, God is believed to watch over it with loving concern for all creatures and especially for us humans.

At face value, there is friction between the facts of destruction and suffering, on the one hand, and the belief in a good creator God, on the other. How could a world with so much pain and misery, so much devastation and waste of life, be made by God? Aware of those facts, how could any thoughtful or sensitive person hold the belief?

A natural friction

The friction is natural. Why? Principally because God is understood to be a perfectly good person, with limitless knowledge and power, and we expect the goodness of a good person to show itself in tangible ways. For instance, all other things being equal, we expect a good person to prevent terrible things that are within the person's power to prevent. The expectation is both natural and reasonable. After all, if a good person, who has the power to do so, does not prevent such things, in what does his or her goodness consist?

Suppose you see a young child trip and fall, bumping his head and lying face down in a shallow stream. Suppose there is nobody else about and that you are a healthy adult, not occupied at the time in any overwhelmingly important task. You see the child. All of us who know you believe you are a good and decent person. Wouldn't we expect you to help? And later, when we hear the child was left to drown, what are we to think of your goodness?

True, there may have been a good reason for your inaction, and because of our prior belief in your decency, we keep an open mind for

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the present. The point here is not that, at this stage, we judge you a certain way. It is that your behavior on this occasion seems to conflict with our justified expectation, based on thinking of you as a good person. The point is that we have good grounds for a serious question.

To drive home the point about our legitimate expectations, change the example in one respect. Suppose that all of us who know you believe you are a miserable, selfish wretch. We believe you are prone to cruelty and to enjoying the misfortunes of others, especially the weak and vulnerable. How surprised would we be now to hear that the child was left to die?

Why are the expectations in the two cases different? The reason is our different beliefs about the kind of person you are. We are surprised and puzzled in the first case, but not in the second, or at least much less so in the second.

Now switch back to the original example, and change it one more time. We believe you are a good and decent person, although we are still puzzled and troubled that you did not help that little boy who was left to drown. Then, several more times, we hear of your inaction on occasions when help or kindness from you would have cost you very little, but would have meant a great deal to another. How long is it reasonable to continue believing in your goodness?

Bill Gates and God

The world could be better in many ways. Obviously we believe it would be better with cancer curable, or smallpox and AIDS eradicated, and so on. After all, that is why people work hard for those results, why governments fund their efforts, and why the rest of us hope for their success. But progress is slow, and many terrible things seem completely beyond our power.

Now suppose that five years ago, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, George Soros, the Saudi royal family, and a large number of other billionaires and governments pledged huge sums of money for a great philanthropic project. Suppose Bill Clinton joined them to co-ordinate efforts to raise billions more, and to arrange for hundreds of thousands of volunteers. The initial aim of the project is to make significant progress against poverty and disease over a five-year period.

Someone special would be needed to direct this ambitious venture. Suppose the person hired for the job is the best possible candidate, being

omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good. For the sake of argument, let's suspend disbelief and suppose that. This person is put in complete charge of the project, with no strings attached, for the initial period of five years.

Suppose those five years have passed, and that it is now the present day and time to take stock. Ask yourself – as you compare things now to five years ago, as you think about diseases, starvation, droughts, ongoing genocides, and so on – would you be surprised to find things as they are, that is, seemingly no better than before? Would you be inclined to judge that the project had met expectations? Would you think the project director should be rehired, perhaps paid a bonus?

A question

Let us go back now to the idea of God. It is the idea of a personal being who is perfect in goodness, knowledge, and power. If you were to pause and think about the idea of such a being, what expectations would you legitimately have about a world that was brought about by that supernatural person?

As our supposition about the imaginary Gates philanthropy seems to show, our reasonable expectation would be simple and straightforward. All other things being equal, we would expect omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness to make a discernible difference for the better.

Now place alongside that expectation what you know about the world in actuality. There are many good things, of course, but nonetheless the world is obviously imperfect in many ways. Perhaps there are good reasons for things to be this way. The point right now is not to reach a verdict. It is to see an obvious and legitimate question clearly.

That question is this: How well do the idea of God and the fact that there is a vast amount of seemingly pointless suffering, death, and destruction in the world fit together? Do they square with one another? Or do the enormous quantities and varieties of such seemingly pointless and terrible things justify a reasonable person in thinking there is no God?

Who is asking the question, and why?

On May 29, 2006, the *New York Times* reported that Pope Benedict XVI had visited the site of the Nazi extermination camp at Auschwitz in Poland

the previous day. As reported in the paper, the pope said this: "Why, Lord, did you remain silent? How could you tolerate this?"

For a reflective believer, surely, these are urgent questions. They arise at the intersection of faith and reason. But the friction is equally apparent to reflective unbelievers, and the question arising from it is important for them too. For the core theistic idea is remarkable, and, if true, could perhaps be the most important truth of all.

It is the idea that everything that there is, the entire universe, exists at all only because of the choice of a unique supernatural being. That the universe exists on purpose is an idea worth examining seriously. Accordingly, our question about how well the core theistic idea fits with the existence of enormous destruction and suffering is a question of interest to all reflective persons, not just believers.

Certain variations on that philosophical question arise for believers alone. The variations I have in mind are questions intended to be resolved within faith, perhaps in scripture, or in conversation with a minister or rabbi, or in prayer. The goal of those questions is peace of mind. Perhaps the pope's questions were so intended.

But the underlying point is the same, whether it comes up as a philosophical question in a fair-minded effort to discover the truth, regardless of whether the things discovered support the theistic idea or undercut it, or as a religious question aimed at clarifying or solidifying faith. It is that, at face value, there is a clear friction between the idea of a perfect creator, on the one hand, and a supposedly created world that is obviously imperfect in many ways, on the other.

Our examination here is of philosophical questions only. Purely religious questions will receive no further discussion.

A second question

To this point, our question is whether the idea of God squares with the fact that many terrible things happen for no apparent good reason, or whether that fact is good reason to think there is no God. But even if, at face value, the fact of seemingly pointless suffering, waste of life, and so on counts against the existence of God, do not other things support it? For instance, there are pleasure and happiness as well as pain and misery. There is great natural beauty. The universe is vastly complex, yet orderly and regular, and basic conditions at its origin almost fourteen billion years ago were right for the eventual emergence of life. Are these

not things that count in support of the idea that God is the original source or cause of the world?

Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that they are. That raises a second question. It is whether, all things considered, the good as well as the bad, it is reasonable to conclude that God is the original source or cause of the universe.

The keys to this second question are the words 'all things considered' and 'conclude.'

All things considered, and believing and concluding

What things are being considered in the second question? There is the fact that, even though the world is massively complex, it is orderly and regular. In addition, there are its conduciveness to life, the development of morality, the existence of great natural beauty, and so on. In the view of many believers, these things testify to the world's divine origin.

But there are bad things in the world as well as good: pain as well as pleasure, death as well as life, destruction and ugliness as well as growth and beauty.

Our second question, then, is whether, all those things considered, good things and bad, it is reasonable to conclude there is a God? Is the idea of God a good explanation of the existence of a world containing all the things mentioned, good and bad?

The second key to our second question is the word 'conclude.' All things considered, is it reasonable to conclude that God exists? This is not the same as asking whether, all things considered, it is reasonable to *believe* that God exists. It is narrower in scope than that.

Believing and concluding are not the same. Concluding or inferring something involves deliberately moving from evidence to judgment. While it is true that we acquire some of our beliefs that way, we do not acquire them all, or perhaps even most of them, like that. For example, think of a child acquiring many of his beliefs just by the experience of living and interacting with others, or by being told, and not by figuring things out for himself. The process is more absorption than inference.

The difference holds up in the other direction too. We may conclude something without believing it.

Our second question, then, is not about religious belief as such, at least not directly. Neither is it directly about the justifiability of such

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belief. Instead, it is about the justifiability of concluding or inferring that God exists.

Two investigations

We are going to pursue two investigations. First, does the idea of God square with the occurrence of vast amounts of seemingly pointless suffering and waste of life? Second, when the occurrence of such terrible things is taken in conjunction with the fact that vast amounts of good things happen too, would it be reasonable to conclude that the best explanation of the existence of the world is a perfect, supernatural creator? All things considered, would that be a reasonable conclusion?

Another difference between the two questions

Because the two questions cover some of the same ground, it is important to be clear about their essential differences. In addition to the difference already noted, that between the justifiability of believing something and of concluding something, respectively, here is another: In our first question, the idea of God is part of the investigation from the start, but in the second investigation it is not.

Our first question is directed to discovering how well the idea of God squares with certain known facts about the world. In this investigation, then, both of those things, the idea of God and the facts of suffering and waste of life, are part of our evidence from the start.

But in our second investigation, if the idea of God comes in at all, it can only be as a conclusion, at the end of the inquiry about the nature and origin of the universe. In that investigation, the idea of God is deliberately excluded from the evidence.

There is good reason for the exclusion. It is to avoid committing the fallacy that logicians call 'begging the question': that is, the kind of fallacious reasoning which presupposes its conclusion from the start. We cannot genuinely arrive at a conclusion if we have been assuming it all along.

When we exclude the idea of God from the evidence in our second investigation, we do not thereby deny the idea. If we did that, we would be guilty of the same fallacy in the other direction. Instead, the point is that, in our second inquiry, we will be strictly neutral on the idea of a

creator God, unless and until there is impartial evidence to justify introducing the idea.

The stakes in our questions

Our first question is directed to discovering how well the idea of God squares with certain known facts about the world. If it does not square well with those facts, then, in proportion to the lack of fit between the two things, those facts will be reason to think there is no God.

Our second question is whether, all things considered, it would be plausible or reasonable to conclude that God is the original source or cause of the universe. For the sake of argument, suppose the answer is no. This would mean that, on the evidence considered, we would not be justified in arriving at the idea of God.

But, in itself, this failure would not be sufficient reason to think there is no God. In itself, failure to prove something, that is, to establish it as a conclusion on the strength of evidence and argument, does not mean that the thing in question is false or ought not to be believed.

To illustrate the point, take Al Capone. The authorities tried to prove he was a racketeer, a bootlegger, a murderer, and head of the mob in Chicago. But they failed. He was convicted on tax fraud, and on none of those other charges. Now, does this mean that he was not a racketeer, bootlegger, murderer, or head of the Chicago mob, or that we should not believe he was those things? Of course not. The point stands up to generalization. It is that, sometimes, we can be well justified in believing something we cannot prove.

The upshot is that the stakes are higher for theistic belief in posing the first question than in posing the second. Failure to square the facts of evil with the idea of God provides reason to think there is no God, while, in itself, failure to prove the existence of God does not.

The rest of this book runs on the two tracks of the different, but related, questions just set forth. Because the inclusion and exclusion, respectively, of the idea of God in our two investigations is a crucial difference between them, understanding that difference is crucial to the overall enterprise in this book. For that reason, I am going to stay with it a while longer.

Two tales of headhunting

Here, from the world of business, is an illustration of the difference. Suppose you work for an executive search firm as the director of a regional office.

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Just to be clear, executive search firms specialize in screening and hiring high-level personnel, for instance, presidents, vice-presidents, chief operations officers, and so on, on behalf of various kinds of public and private institutions. You may have heard such firms or their employees referred to as 'headhunters.' Anyway, now that we have you working in such a firm, I want to describe two scenarios, each involving an executive search that you undertake on behalf of a large institution.

First search

Suppose your firm is hired by a teaching hospital in a major city. A search is already underway for a new head of emergency medicine. You and your firm are being brought in now, after the search has been going on for almost two months. At this point in the search process, a clear front-runner has emerged among the candidates who have been screened and interviewed. The chair of the hospital's board of directors has explained to you that the board is close to offering the job to this candidate. However, before doing so, they want further advice about how well the candidate fits the profile of the kind of head of emergency medicine that the board has in mind. The chair of the hospital's board tells you that she wants you to see if there is a good match, a good fit, between the candidate and the institution, and to advise the board accordingly.

You are quite clear that you are not being hired to recommend other candidates, or to address aspects of this candidate's credentials other than his fit with the job description and the institution. You understand what you are being hired to do, and what you are not hired to do, and you accept the commission.

After meeting the board's candidate, perhaps you will think you could have found them a better candidate. But if so, you will keep that opinion to yourself, for you know it does not mean that the candidate in place cannot be a good fit with the institution. Being a good fit does not require being the best fit.

Second search

Suppose your firm is hired by a teaching hospital in a major city. The hospital's board of directors wants to hire a new head of the emergency medicine department. The board wants the search to be national and international, and your firm is hired to run the search from start to finish. You will assist the board in drafting the advertisement for the position, you will then advertise the position, solicit recommendations and applications

from your contacts in the field, screen the applications, conduct preliminary interviews of promising candidates, run credential checks as well as other kinds of background checks on the finalists, and then present a shortlist of candidates to the board for consideration. You will participate in the board's interviews of those finalists, and afterwards give advice on each of them. Then the board will make its selection of the candidate who, in its judgment, best meets the advertised description of the job.

Comparison

As a business person, it is important for you to be quite clear about the differences between the two commissions. Otherwise, you may not explain the task in hand well to your staff or do a good job. That task is more limited in the first search than in the second. In the first search, you start from a position where there is already a candidate in view, and your job is to judge the quality of the fit between candidate and institution. But in the second search, you start with a blank slate, commissioned to come up with the candidate who best fits the institution.

I'm sure you see quite clearly what I have in mind in contrasting the two searches, and how the contrast applies to our two lines of inquiry in this book. Nonetheless, let me briefly state it anyway.

In the one investigation, we are attempting to discover how well the idea of an all-perfect creator squares with the world, as we find it to be in experience. In particular, how well does it square with the enormous amounts of suffering, death, and destruction that seem to have no point or purpose whatsoever? But in the other investigation, starting from a description of the world neutral in respect of religion, and taking into account the mix of good and bad in the world, we are attempting to come up with the best explanation of the fact that such a world came to exist at all.

II The Veil of Ignorance

Our second investigation calls for us to exclude the idea of God from the evidence. But isn't that unrealistic? After all, won't any person engaged in that inquiry be familiar with the idea that the world was initially brought about by God? And that being so, how can we realistically expect to exclude the idea from the evidence? Isn't it naïve to think that could be done?

The objection seems to go further. In addition to being the case that most people are familiar with the idea of a creator God, isn't it also likely that very few are neutral regarding it? Isn't it probable that, like you and me, most adults already have some opinion on the matter, either belief or disbelief? And even if they don't come down firmly on one side or the other, isn't it likely that they have at least some tendency to believe or disbelieve it? And won't that opinion, or that tendency, undercut impartiality in trying to understand and explain the origin of the universe? Again, isn't an expectation to the contrary just naïve?

Similarly, in our first inquiry, won't religious believers be inclined to think that the existence of God does somehow square with the occurrence of terrible things? So won't they automatically think that belief in God is not undermined by those things? And won't unbelievers automatically incline to the opposite view? Again, how can we expect impartiality?

These are good questions. They bring up difficulties we must face.

The worry about impartiality does not apply uniquely to philosophical questions about religious topics. It applies also to other controversial issues in philosophy, for instance, the moral permissibility or impermissibility of abortion, the fairness or unfairness of affirmative-action policies, the metaphysical idea that the mind is nothing above and beyond the functioning brain, and so on. So the question is really about the possibility of genuine philosophical reflection on issues about which some people have strongly held views.

I am not mentioning these other areas, where the same worry quickly comes up, in order to dilute the problem in our investigations here. To the contrary, I think that the reluctance to suspend pre-existing opinions may be stronger and more common in philosophical discussion of religious topics than it is in discussion of other subjects.

Nonetheless, I think genuine philosophical investigation of the various issues mentioned is indeed possible. I hope so, for it is perhaps our most strongly held opinions that should least escape serious scrutiny. And I do not only mean scrutiny by people who do not themselves hold the views in question. I especially mean serious scrutiny by the holders of those views themselves. After all, if I am going to hold an opinion strongly, as opposed to tentatively or provisionally, then I want to be as sure as I can that I have good grounds for my view. And if I don't, I certainly want to know that too.

Impartiality and Rawls's veil of ignorance

But my optimism is not a solution of the problem, nor a tactic to deal with it. For tactics, I propose to borrow an idea from John Rawls (1921–2002), one of the most influential thinkers of modern times. Rawls was a political theorist, whose principal objective was to develop a theory of social justice.

In his theory, the primary emphasis is on the kinds of social institutions and governmental policies that would have to be in place to ensure fairness for all citizens equally. But in modern mass societies, the United States for example, there are large and deep differences among citizens, differences of social class, race, education, income, access to health care, and so on. What is equal justice for all in a society like that?

The question of Rawls's that I want to pick up here is a procedural one, not the foregoing substantive question about the nature of justice. The procedural question comes to this. How can we examine the issue, or try to solve the problem, without bias stemming from our own self-interest? After all, we come to the question of equal justice and its achievement with a vested interest in our own social and economic status, our own prospects for success and a good life, in a society where vital resources are relatively scarce.

The brilliance of Rawls's idea is to use self-interest to get to a fair-minded discussion of the demands of justice and, from that, perhaps to justice itself. He proposes a thought experiment in which, through an imagined negotiation with other citizens, we are to work out the blueprint for the society in which we will live out our lives. Each of us comes to the negotiation with the goal of working out the best possible arrangements and circumstances for ourselves and our families. That is, self-interest rules.

But certain restrictions apply. The principal restriction is that, in this imagined negotiation, we do not know who we are. This extraordinary thought is the key to Rawls's proposed solution to the problem of bias.

Suppose we do not know our own actual life-circumstances. That is the procedural idea I propose to borrow from Rawls's thought experiment. It is the idea that the discussions take place behind a veil of ignorance, a kind of selective suspension of memory. The details of how to bring about the kind of selective ignorance that the thought experiment calls for don't matter. What does matter is that anything that might reflect bias is beyond our awareness.

The veil of ignorance and our investigations here

Let us adapt Rawls's procedure to our own investigations, with a view to coping with our problem of bias. Let us agree to pretend along the lines that Rawls suggests. In reality, we have nothing to lose. For, just as the participants in Rawls's thought experiment are, all the while, people with specific life-situations, so we too, all the while, are believers or unbelievers. By agreeing to pretend for the sake of argument, we agree to see how the issues would look from neutral ground. It's hard to see the harm in that.

First investigation

Does the idea of God square with the fact that terrible things happen for no apparent good reason? To investigate this question, we will imagine we do not know whether we believe or disbelieve in God. While imagining or pretending this, we will retain all of our knowledge about religion, as well as everything else we know. We just won't know, temporarily, our own individual religious preference.

So, not knowing whether we are believers or unbelievers, we cannot be guided in our investigation by whatever personal stake that we might, in reality, have in the answer to the question. But we retain all of our normal desire for understanding and knowledge. So we have a strong desire to investigate the question and to learn the answer, whatever it is, as best we can. We also retain our ability to reason and to think critically as well as imaginatively.¹

Second investigation

To investigate our second question, we will imagine, as before, that we do not know if we are believers or not. But now, in addition, we will make believe we know nothing at all about religion, not even that there is such a thing. We will pretend to know nothing about philosophy either. We will imagine we know nothing about anything that might be called

¹ William L. Rowe, an influential philosopher whose work on the problem of God and evil we will discuss in detail later on, proposes a context of ignorance similar to that in our first investigation. See William L. Rowe, "The Evidential Argument from Evil: A Second Look," in Daniel Howard-Snyder, ed., *The Evidential Argument from Evil* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 265.

supernatural. We will attach no meaning to the word 'God,' no more than we do now to the collection of letters 'Hsz.'

On the positive side, we will be as rational, lucid, and curious as ever. From our experience of making decisions in daily life we will continue to be good judges of adequate and inadequate evidence, of reasonable as opposed to unreasonable interpretations, of bias and impartiality, of justified and unjustified conclusions. True, these things are studied by philosophers and there are philosophical theories about them. But, behind the veil of ignorance, we will not know this. Back there, our knowledge of good reasoning will be practical, not theoretical.

We will be free to pursue any line of investigation we wish, in any direction we choose. We will start with no religious or theological concepts, nothing supernaturalist, and nothing philosophical or metaphysical, but we will be free to come up with such ideas, to invent them in effect, if that is where our inquiry leads. Apart from these gaps in our knowledge, we will be our normal selves. Insofar as some people you know are concerned, you may wonder how to tell the difference from their normal state, but I leave that issue for you.

When an actor gets in character in a play or film, her outlook is that of the fictional person the writer created. If she cannot suspend her own personality or beliefs for the life of the performance, then she is hardly an actor at all, let alone a poor one. We likewise, by suspending our religious belief or unbelief, as the case may be, and by remaining in character for the life of each investigation, enable ourselves to explore ideas here minus the filter of our own pre-set beliefs. In addition, we put aside any form of group-think to which we may be susceptible in real life. We get to try various controversial ideas on for size.

Trying ideas on for size is not fundamentally different from trying on shoes for size. It only works if we first take off our own. And there is no obligation to buy, so we can always leave with our own shoes in the end. Likewise, when we try on ideas.

The benefit of the tactic is this. Our ability to engage in fair-minded, impartial inquiry determines our ability to discover the truth. Our willingness to engage in such inquiry reflects our desire to know the truth.

A near-precedent to reassure believers

There are precedents or near-precedents, even in the history of theistic philosophy, for this veil-of-ignorance approach to trying to understand

the origin of the universe. The most famous is the effort by Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74) to explain various fundamental facts about the natural world.

Experience shows the world to be an orderly, cause-and-effect universe (nowadays we might qualify this by adding, at least above the quantum level, the level of sub-atomic particles). These facts of order, regularity, and causation are presupposed in all scientific inquiry. Consequently, it may be that we cannot expect science itself to provide an ultimate explanation of them. If so, what does explain them?

Aquinas pursued that question. Starting just from the recognition of such fundamental facts about the universe as that it is orderly and regular, that its order is cause-and-effect order, and so on, Aquinas tried to account for the coming into existence of such a universe in the first place. The point I'm emphasizing is that Aquinas's only tool was the application of intelligence and reason to those basic facts of nature. True, he did not set the stage for his inquiry with a gimmick like the veil of ignorance, but the effect is the same as if he had.

Committed theist that he was, Aquinas believed that a satisfactory explanation could be found only in the idea of a certain kind of supernatural being. But the point to note right now is not Aquinas's view of the answer to the question, but the procedural idea embedded in his approach to finding an answer, and especially in his approach to persuading others that he had found the right answer.

His procedure reflected the idea that if supernaturalist ideas came into the investigation it would be to answer questions that otherwise would be unanswerable. But no such idea would be an assumption or a piece of evidence in the inquiry to begin with. So, if such ideas did come into play, they would do so only on the strength of the evidence and in proportion to the evidence; and therefore, such ideas would come in only in the conclusion.

Accordingly, on this characterization of his inquiry, I think Aquinas would have had no objection to stepping behind our veil of ignorance.

Suggested Reading

Aquinas, Thomas (2003) "The Five Ways," in Louis P. Pojman, ed., *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. Belmont: Wadsworth. Most philosophy-of-religion anthologies contain these arguments of Aquinas's.

Gaskin, J. C. A. (1988) *Hume's Philosophy of Religion*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press. Chapter 3 addresses the difference between our two investigations.

Hume, David (1998) *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin.

Oxford: Oxford University Press. Of the twelve parts comprising the work, Parts I and XI, in particular, are relevant. The second of our two investigations is sketched out in Part I, while in Part XI the distinction between our two investigations is described. Several editions of the *Dialogues* are available. Any will do.

Peterson, Michael L. (1998) *God and Evil: An Introduction to the Issues*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. A good introduction to the main issues and debates, with a point of view a bit different from mine in this book.