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THE BELIEF IN REALITY AND THE REALITY OF BELIEF

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOUGHT AND EXISTENCE

The Ontological Argument (henceforth OA) remains a matter of lively discussion. Under the form of a rational proof of God's existence, the discussion is about the relations between essence and existence, between subjective thought and objective reality, and between analytic and synthetic judgments. The rationalistic OA asserts that essence determines existence. Its empiricist opponents assert that existence cannot be deduced from thought, and that existence can only be verified through experience. However, both defenders and opponents of the OA made the error of disconnecting the objective existence of God from subjective thought about Him.¹ We will try to find a way out of this traditional impasse by applying a new analytical approach. Basically, we propose to demonstrate two interconnected theses:

We will try to show two interconnected issues:

A) That, in the course of its historical development, the OA did not manage to refute empiricist critiques, despite the fact that it became more objective (that is, freed itself from the subject that thinks about God).

B) That God exists objectively for the believer, and that His existence is only partial, since it is not a datum of sense-perception. A full existence needs two sources: an idea and a sense experience.

¹ Referring to God as "Him" is merely for the sake of convenience and include the Him/Her parameter.

I

In the course of Western philosophical history, the abstract monotheistic God completely lost His relation to the senses, and this is the reason that the OA is so closely connected to the idea that existence can be deduced from essence. As God was freed from limitations, He was also freed from other specific concrete predicates. Thus, God was removed from the realm of empirical examination and verification, which in some respects strengthened His existence. But by the same token, whatever lacks empirically verifiable evidence can be easily called into question. Finally, He became an object of doubt. The OA is a response to all doubts about the existence of a God Whom we cannot perceive through the senses.

The existence of something can be doubted if it is either (1) *thought of* as existent but not given to senses, or as (2) given to senses but not *thought of* as existent. Consequently, because God has a mid degree of existence, His existence must still be demonstrated. In both cases, existence is dubious. In case (1) the status of existence is bestowed on something that cannot be experienced. In case (2) thought denies the status of existence from something that is sense-experienced. An outstanding example of case (1) is the abstract God of the OA. The motion of the moon relatively to clouds is an example of case (2). This motion is experientially indubitable, yet it opposes our intellectual inferences. We believe that the moon visibly moves until we learn intellectually that it is the clouds that are actually moving before our eyes. Even in this case though, we will continue to see the apparent, phenomenal movement of the moon, and not the physical movement of clouds. However, under the said conditions we do not experience the real motion of the moon. In this case we do not have the experience of what is thought of as existing, and we do not think of something that we have experienced as existing.² In both cases, the matter at issue is not only the degree of existence, but a different quality of existence. The existence given to our senses has an immediacy that cannot be erased, although thought can scrutinize it and doubt it. By contrast, a reality whose existence depends entirely on thought

² About the antagonism and the difference between sense-perception and thought, see G. Kanizsa [1979].

must be termed an insecure reality.

Consequently, thought does not actually determine a reliable existence, but only a partial one. Indeed, God does not exist in every place, and in the same way for every believer. However, whether we can or cannot assert the existence of God, we can assert the social and personal reality He imposes over His believers. It is impossible to deny the phenomenon of the belief in God's existence. Thus, God's existence becomes a phenomenological issue and not a logical one. Existence, as a phenomenon, as a fact of the mind, is no longer a label or status, but something that has a cognitive value.

Accordingly, a discussion about God's existence must first pass through an analysis of the nature of belief. The belief implies the unconditionally and transcendency of its object – God. The fact that a subject believes in God does not mean that His existence is imaginary; rather, for the believer He is a transcendent entity.

However, just because of God's abstract character, the proof of His existence or inexistence, is unreachable. Even Elvin Plantinga, an important contemporary defender of the OA, recognizes that the argument does not demonstrate God's existence. Except for the believer who accepts the main premise ("that maximal greatness is possibly instantiated") beforehand.³ The opponents of the OA, for their part, do not argue that they prove His inexistence, but only the logical invalidity of the proof.⁴

The task, both of the supporters and the opponents of the OA, is especially difficult, since they need to overcome, by logical means, an extra-logic problem – the lack of experience. The defenders of the OA repeatedly attempt to set their "logical foot" outside the limits of the mind, but without the need for a *terra firma* of experience. Their opponents repeatedly attempt to obstruct this "foot" by drawing the mind's limits ever more decisively.

To understand the historical circle of proofs and refutations, in

³ Cf. E. Plantinga ([1975], p. 112). Also Norman Malcolm, another contemporary defender of the OA, recognizes that he does not know "how to demonstrate that the concept of God – that is, of a being a greater than which cannot be conceived – is not self-contradictory" ([1960], p. 59). Cf. also Ch. Hartshorne [1962].

⁴ See for example, P.J. McGrath [1984]; J. Hintikka [1981]; G. Frege [1884]; D.L. Paulsen [1984]; M. Tooley [1981].

which the one does not prove and the other does not refute, we will draw an outline of the historical-logical development of the OA and its refutations.⁵ The historical development will show that by means of logical devices alone – both sides can ensure, at utmost, that possibility is deducible out of essence. However, this is not the issue under discussion around the OA.

II. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

A) *The Subjectivistic Argument: St. Anselm*

Anselm's argument relies on the definition of God ([1078], p. 101) as "a being greater than which cannot be conceived" (*esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*), and takes the following form:

Understanding this statement means that such a being is in the mind. However, "a being greater than which cannot be conceived" must also exist outside the mind. For in conceiving of such a being we are thinking of something greater than the intellect, and thus of something that exists also in reality. Therefore if this greatness is in thought, it is also in reality. If it would not exist also in reality, something even greater could be found – something *inconceivable as nonexistent*. Thus, the greater being, God, exists in reality.

In Anselm's argument we find a counter argument, which he puts into the mouth of the fool who says in his heart that God does not exist. Anselm insists that the fool thinks the unthinkable. Seemingly, one finds a contradiction here, but what is on the fool's mind is not God, since God cannot be conceived of as nonexistent. The fool therefore misunderstands the idea of God; he is using the signifier "God" without its proper signified. Indeed this use leads us to consider that the fool may say "God does not exist" without contradicting the existence of God, derived out of its true idea. That is to say, the confrontation between affirmation and negation of God, arises from a clash between two kinds of minds – each referring by the same name to a different idea. This clash must not be construed as the difference between a thought and something

⁵ For the history of the argument in its philosophical concern, see O. Balaban & A. Avshalom [1989-90].

external to that thought.

Anselm's argument deals with knowing-subjects (the subject who understands the idea of God, and the subject who does not) and with a known idea (God). The idea depends on its being known by a subject. The subject, then, comes before it. The existence of God depends on the existence of the subject. Anselm's arguments are directed against the fool's mind, and not against a logical argument alone. We can therefore call Anselm's formulation of the argument "subjectivistic". Obviously, this is contrary to its intention, because the OA attempts precisely to get outside the limits of the mind, and it would be a *contradictio in adjecto* to call it "subjectivistic". The idea, the essence, must be independent of the mind in order to get outside the limits of the mind. In Anselm's argument, however, the idea exists only insofar as is thought of by a mind. In this sense, the argument is subjectivistic. Later, we will try to show that the OA would be more resistant to empiricists' refutations if it would hold to this line of argument. However, because the OA is motivated by the desire to deduce existence from essence without the mediation of the subject, it became increasingly objectivistic.

Monk Gaunilo indeed attacks Anselm's subjectivity. He shows, on the one hand, that in understanding there can be many ideas, and on the other hand, that the idea of God is not necessarily in the mind. He shows that what exists in the understanding does not exist in reality and vice versa (Cf. [1078], pp. 6-13).

B) Descartes – A Step Toward Objectivity

In Descartes' method, the OA constitutes a stage in getting out of the *cogito*. Before this stage, the only reality is that of the *cogito*. The "I think therefore I am a thinking entity" means that I exist as a spirit, and that only thought exists. It is thought, then, that has actual, objective reality.⁶ *Cogito sum* means an assertion of the ex-

⁶ We take the concept of objective reality in its later meaning, as "being-in-itself", and not as related to the subject. For Descartes, however, objective reality meant the opposite. As in Medieval tradition, Descartes regarded objective reality to mean being related to the subject. In later times this came to be called "subjective reality". On the other hand, the concept of "formal reality" in Descartes is today called "actual", "efficient" or "objective" reality, as opposed to subjective

istence of mind. Thought has objective reality; it is the only certainty in any experience. The way out of the mind must therefore be sought within the mind itself, since nothing else is given.

Descartes' first two *Meditations* reduce all existence to the ego. Without taking account of *what* I am thinking, evidently I think. Descartes treats thought as form, not as content. Starting from thought as form, or as a way of thinking, it is impossible to reach something beyond it. The problem is that, from this point of view, all ideas are identical. (Cf. [1641], p. 31).

The question about *content*, about *what* I think, appears only in the third *Meditation*. The point of departure for getting out of the mind must be sought from the *content* of thought. From the point of view of content, ideas are different from one another, because they are images that represent different things. (Cf. [1641], p. 31) As images they must refer to something outside their own limits. These ideas that are images of different things are, as it were, cracks in the wall of the mind, openings that we must pass through in order to step out of the mind. However, Descartes recognizes that, as images, they are subjective and so cannot reveal anything about the thing they represent. For Descartes, objective reality cannot originate in subjective reality. (Cf. [1641], p. 32).

Descartes sets up the OA in the fifth *Meditation*. There, he states ([1641], pp. 76-77) that among our subjective ideas there are some, which "possess true and unchangeable nature of their own". These ideas are essences, like the properties of geometrical figures. To regard these ideas as not being true would be a contradiction, and therefore unthinkable. Consequently, these essences do not depend on the mind that thinks of them, but rather force themselves upon it, and in this sense are objective. Obviously, essences do not impart reality to things, but they are necessary. Thus essences may be separated from the unity of the mind because in being necessary they have a reality of their own, even though they do not really exist. Consequently there are ideas that are independent of the subject, and thus constitute a non-subjective reality. They are *different* from the mind, and this already represents a way of going

reality. Therefore, in this paper, what Descartes termed "formal reality" will be called objective reality. And what Descartes termed "objective reality" will be called subjective reality, or the reality in the mind that pertains to the process of thinking.

beyond the mind, albeit only toward an abstract and hypothetical necessity, and not yet toward a concrete and independent reality. This outward thrust toward hypothetical necessity is the mediating stage between the “I think”, whose reality is undeniable, and the OA. The sphere of essences has a measure of perfection of its own; it has a necessity not conditioned by the necessity of mind. Its actual reality is that of the mind; but its necessity goes beyond the mind. This sphere, which is an aspect of thought and independent of it, allows the OA to pursue its conclusion. The base of the OA is the *necessary relationship* between the idea of God and His existence. From the point of view of essence, therefore, the idea of God cannot be dissociated from the existence of God, just as the essential idea of a mountain is inseparable from that of a valley. (Cf. [1641], p. 79).

For Descartes, to assert that the existence of God is a hypothetical statement is superfluous and even wrong. For the antecedent (“If there is an *idea* ...”) was already demonstrated when Descartes’ showed that the idea *qua* idea – the idea as thought or the *cogito* – has actual reality. The idea of a mountain, too, has actual reality. This idea, however, does not imply the existence of a valley but only the *idea* of a valley, whereas the idea of God implies the existence of God. The judgment “There is an idea of God and therefore God exists”, is accordingly categorical and not hypothetical. It is in this going-out from thought by means of thought that the movement out of the confines of thought is completed and the idea becomes real.

Thus Descartes goes beyond Anselm. Descartes’ argument is less dependent on the subject, since the objective existence of hypothetical necessity mediates it. So it is the agency of the objectivity of essence that resolves the confrontation between the affirmation and negation of God. However, Descartes still has to prove the *cogito* first in order to go out of it by means of the OA. The subject still precedes the objectivity of God.

C) *Leibniz and Plantinga – The Most Objective Formulation*

Leibniz intended a total cancellation of subjectivity. He developed the argument of Descartes by considering the issue from the

point of view of necessity.⁷ According to Leibniz, it is not enough to ground the argument subjectively in experience by arguing as Descartes did, that because something is clearly and distinctly conceived, it is also necessarily true. In order for the argument to be taken out of the domain of experience to make it truly necessary and therefore objective, the process of ideation must be demonstrated. The first step is to show that all perfections are in accord with one another and not mutually contradictory. It will then follow that the subject of all the perfections, the most perfect being, is knowable. Therefore this perfect being exists, since existence is one of the perfections.

Plantinga's logical argument is a contemporary variant of the point of view of necessity. Plantinga believes, however, that he is following Anselm and not Leibniz. Plantinga thinks he is only translating Anselm, and not changing his argument, contending ([1974], p. 199) that Anselm means by "being conceivable" (that is, the subjective aspect of Anselm's argument) something "logically possible". From the perspective of the degree of objectivity, however, his "translation" is rather a changing of Anselm's original meaning, so that he is not an Anselm's follower. Plantinga's argument (Cf. [1974], pp. 213-221, and [1975], pp. 108-112) runs as follows:

(1) There is a possible world in which maximal greatness is instantiated.

(2) Necessarily, a being is maximally great only if it has maximal excellence in every world.

(3) Therefore, there actually exists a being which possesses maximal excellence.

As McGrath asserts rightly ([1984], p. 162), this argument embodies a *petitio principii*, "For if such a being does not actually exist, then maximal greatness is not instantiated in any possible world". However, Plantinga explicitly recognizes this point. He asserts that the OA does not prove the existence of God but is based on the previous believing in God, which is a self-refutation of his argument.

Because Plantinga is objective-oriented, and develops the OA analytically, he introduces a kind of tautology, something like "God

⁷ G.W. Leibniz (1765) quoted by A. Plantinga ([1965], pp. 54-56).

exists (in some possible world), hence God exists". Nothing is safer for logicians than analytical tautologies. This proof is especially easy for Kant to refute, since for him analytic judgments cannot be judgments of existence.

D) *Kant's Refutation of the Ontological Argument*

Kant refutes the OA in two ways. In the first refutation (Cf. [1781-1787], A, pp. 594-597/B, pp. 621-625), he asserts that, in an analytical judgment, the annulment of the predicate provokes a contradiction. However, the annulment of the predicate together with the subject, does not imply any contradiction. Namely, the assumption that existence is a predicate of God does not oblige us to assume the existence of the subject – God. As an analytic judgment, the OA has indeed necessity, but a hypothetical necessity. It has no way to gain existence, because experience does not reinforce it. But this refutation is precisely what the OA attempts to overcome by determining existence as a predicate.

Contrary to the first way, the second way (Cf. I. Kant, [1781-1787], A, p. 601/B, p. 629), according to which existence cannot be a real predicate, refutes the OA in a deeper way.⁸ A real predicate is either included in the concept (in analytic judgments) or added to it as a result of experience (in synthetic judgments.) Existence is not a predicate of an analytic judgment, since it is determined by experience and not by concept. However, it is also not a predicate in a synthetic *a-posteriori* judgment. Since such a predicate enlarges the concept, adds to it something not included before, whereas

⁸ By asserting that existence is not a predicate because it adds nothing to the concept, Kant adopts Hume's position (Cf. [1739], III, sec. 7). It is of interest to note that while Kant refutes the OA by arguing that existence is not a predicate of the concept, Gottlob Frege refutes the OA by an opposite argument. He contends that existence can be only a predicate of concepts, and cannot be asserted of substances. According to Frege, since God is a proper name (there is only one God), the concept of existence cannot be said of Him. He is not a concept. A predicate said of a concept does not say something directly about the substances that are subordinated to a concept. That is, if God were a concept, His existence would not as yet say anything about things that are subordinated to the concept. But asserting that God is not a concept, implies that He cannot be regarded as existent. Cf. G. Frege ([1884], § 53).

existence does not add anything to the concept.

Existence is a mode of being of the object of knowledge, it does not determine the object but only the manner in which the object is made known. The modality (possibility-impossibility, existence-inexistence, necessity-contingency) only indicates the status of the object regarding knowledge. (Cf. [1781-1787], A, p. 80/B, p. 106).

Kant illustrates (Cf. [1781-1787], A, p. 599/B, p. 627) this relation of the concept to the existence of what is conceived, by the relation between a hundred possible thalers as a concept and a hundred real thalers that are part of one's actual assets. There is nothing more in the hundred thalers that I actually possess than in the hundred thalers that I conceive of in my mind. When the existing hundred thalers are considered in isolation, they do not increase their value. Of course, when a hundred thalers are added to my assets, my wealth increases relative to what it was when those hundred thalers were merely an idea.

Existence is determined by the connection of a concept with sensation. Existence that is not included in the context of the totality of experience has no meaning. It is only an *ideal* of pure reason.⁹ No connection can validly be made on an experiential basis between the concepts "God" and "existence".

This, then, is the essence of Kant's critique of the OA. Kant's main assumption in this regard is the gap between existence and concept. Existence has meaning only within the context of experience, whereas the concept does not. The gap between them does not allow a transition from one to the other, so that the concept cannot be realized. The mere fact of the existence or inexistence of the object of a concept does not change the concept. The reverse, as well, is true: the concept has no part in the determination of existence.

Concept and existence do not "encroach" upon one other, and cannot be referred to one another. The difference between existence and inexistence does not belong to the content of thought, because the content is the same in every modal sphere. Thus, there is nothing in the concept that enables it to become real, to have "existence" as a predicate. Existence remains extrinsic to the concept. Namely, the gap between concept and existence remains

⁹ However transcendental must be distinguished from ideal; transcendental is the rule, whereas *ideal* refers only to the domain of possibility.

unbridgeable. To relate to knowledge, to be related to the totality of experience, is external to concept. Therefore, every assertion of the existence of something is essentially a mere projection of thought – it is the use of thought beyond the domain to which it can legitimately be applied.

Thus, Kant and the supporters of the OA agree concerning the gap between concept and existence, between essence and reality. The OA even sharpened this gap to facilitate the transition to objectivity, to avoid remaining within subjectivity.

E) *Hegel – A Return to Subjectivism*

Hegel supports the OA in its capacity of asserting the transition from essence to existence, precisely by means of a return to subjectivism. However, he rejects all the OA's formulations. Probably, he would also reject the contemporary formulations of the OA. Hegel attacks Kant's concept of existence as being abstract and empty. Abstract existence or inexistence, namely, existence or inexistence that are not of something, can substitute one for the other. For this reason, existence adds nothing to the content of a concept, as Kant correctly asserts. Abstract existence and inexistence can substitute each other as follows: If existence is not of this or that thing, it is then an inexistent existence, namely, it is not an existence. On the other hand, inexistence that is not of this or that thing, is then not an inexistence – it is an existence.¹⁰ According to Hegel, a true concept, a concept that has a specific rather than an abstract content, must be found in a certain context and must be related to other contents. A content of something is determined by its relations.

The existence or inexistence of a hundred thalers in relation with my assets, in relation with me, is a specific existence or inexistence. The lack of a hundred thalers in my assets is for me a meaningful inexistence. The existence or inexistence of a hundred

¹⁰ Hegel makes his first reference in *The Science of Logic* to the OA and its refutation by Kant in "Remark I: The Opposition of Being and Nothing in Ordinary Thinking". Hegel attempts to surmount an obstacle in the way of understanding abstract Being and Nothing. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel ([1816] I, book 1, sec. 1, ch. 1, p. 83).

thalers, beyond the relation with a subject to whom they belong – is meaningless. Namely, it is inherent in a hundred thalers to belong to someone. Just as existence is inherent in the concept of God, so it is inherent in the concept of money to belong to someone.

To point out the abstraction implied in the identity between something as possible and as real, Hegel observes that a person who is indifferent as to whether he possesses a hundred thalers or not (“whatever may be their quantitative relation to his fortune” [1816], p. 89), must have been mentally elevated to a condition of abstract universality, of the sort that Christianity inspires in its adherents. In this elevated mental state persons nullify themselves before the Nothing, since what is affirmed here is the lack of specification. This state can be achieved only through the use of drugs or the influence of special circumstances on the mind; the perception or appreciation of dissimilarities can only be annulled in extreme conditions.

The transition from subjectivity to objectivity is not confined merely to the concept of God, since God is only a particular concept. To understand the OA we need to turn to the nature of concept *per se*, to the concept of the concept. In this turn, we realize that its very nature is to pass from subjectivity to objectivity. This is the sense in which Hegel accepts the OA. In Kant’s system, this transition cannot occur since the ego, in its capacity as reason or perception, is absolutely separated from external things. Hegel observes (pub. [1832], III, p. 455) that this is not true even of creatures less developed than human beings. Animals achieve a unity with the external world by their activity – for example, by satisfying their internal needs with external objects. In the process by which the concept becomes objective, every action diminishes subjectivity. To imagine a hundred thalers is certainly not to possess them, although to possess a hundred thalers one has first to possess the concept of a hundred thalers (Cf. pub. [1832], III, p. 455.) This is the case only of a true concept, which is the sole instance in which a transition takes place from subjectivity to objectivity. On the other hand *false* concepts pertain to traditional formal logic. They are abstract concepts, which lack the context of experience. They have no relationship with external things. Thus, a false concept touches neither existence nor objectivity.

The real, non-abstract concept has its content in its predicate.

Until then, no matter what the concept “may be for feeling, intuition and pictorial thinking, for rational cognition it is only a *name*” ([1816], p. 706). Existence is inherent to essence insofar as it is concrete and not abstract.

III. EXISTENCE, CONCEPT AND SENSE-PERCEPTION

Hegel is partially right. He is right in asserting that a true concept indeed implies the transition to existence. If we have a true idea of a hundred dollars that belong to our assets, and if we really believe in it, then we will get into debt on account of that money, even if we make a mistake and those hundred dollars are not really in our bank account. The existence of the idea of a hundred dollars affects our reality, as does their absence once we realize we were mistaken. If instead of an idea of a hundred existent dollars, we have an idea of a hundred imaginary dollars, those imaginary dollars have much less impact on our reality. We will not get into debt on account of them.

This transition from essence to existence takes place through the subject. Obviously, however, this is not the intention of the original OA. The original OA tries to establish the objectivity of God, and therefore tries, in its historical development, to annul, as much as possible, Anselm’s knowing subject and Descartes’ ego. By a pure logical procedure, it hopes to prove *a-priori* that this entity exists independently of the subject, so as the sum of the angles of a triangle is of 180 degrees, whether it is or not actually thought of. However, as Plantinga confessed, the common way of the OA is not resistant against the empiricist critique. On the other hand, the empiricist critique, which harshly and absolutely rejects the deduction of existence from essence, also fails. Empiricism cannot refute the rationalistic argument intrinsically, but must base its contention on assumptions that rationalism rejected *a-priori*.

Thus, the dispute, ultimately, is based on the presuppositions of each faction. One faction assumes that existence can be deduced from essence – or perhaps they merely believe in God. The other faction assumes the contrary, or perhaps they simply do not believe in God. So, both factions use philosophy and logic as an ideological *a-posteriori* justification for their beliefs, while their original inten-

tion was to offer an *a-priori* proof of God's existence. Instead, our motivation is not the need to prove or refute an object of belief, but to understand and explain it.

Beyond rationalism (which contends that the true idea of God already proves its unconditioned existence) and beyond empiricism (which contends that an idea, whatever its content, is never more than an idea, namely, a possibility) – a true idea of God implies a subject who has it, and therefore God really exists for him. God is not imaginary; He governs the believer's life and, if the believer lives in a religious regime, God arranges his social life as a whole. The non-abstract idea of God influenced much of human history and, in this sense, God was very existent. His existence can be deduced, without a doubt, from its essence, which is to govern peoples lives.

Notice, however, that this existence is permanently doubt, even on the part of believers. The faith of believers must be continually reassured, and they need to keep reassuring themselves. No wonder the concept of fidelity invariably appears in discussion of religion and theology. Not infrequently, incredulity and skepticism have been condemned as sins. Of course, nobody has ever considered it sinful to doubt the existence of a tree or a triangle. But God's existence is fragile, and lacks something that would make it stable and permanent. It is a middle existence, a gray and flickering existence, an existence that survives chiefly on promises that can neither be completely dismissed nor completely fulfilled.

The idea of God needs sense experience in order to achieve full existence. Empiricists recognize this implicitly when they refute God's existence, and rationalists recognize it when they make efforts to demonstrate His existence. Our conclusion is that "existence" derives out of concept, but this is not a sufficient existence. A full existence demands an object given also to sense-perception.

We tried to find the way in which God's existence is *given* to the mind, and not within or beyond it. We looked for the criteria by which the mind determines existence. We agreed with rationalism that God's existence can derive out of the mind, but we contend that His existence remains related to the mind. Thus, God is objective for the subject who really understands it. We agreed with empiricists who claim that the objectivistic formulation of the OA is invalid. However, despite the fact that God's existence cannot be

verified by the senses, God exists insofar as the *idea* of God affects objective human reality.

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