

## June 22

Gaya was right about my dreaming. I slept much better than last night, but again, I can clearly remember quite a few dreams. Like the night before, I woke up several times during the night. But this time I was prepared: Every time I woke, I tried to **pay attention** to the last dream. I had no problem falling back asleep, but I do remember the dreams. I will spare you the details; The interesting point being the radical change in my “sleeping behavior”. Next bulletin tomorrow morning.

“What are the inter-relations between the notion of *good* and that of *will*?” I asked Gaya over breakfast. “You had rather ask about the *will* and the *bad*, rather than the *good*” said Gaya. “Why the *bad*?” I inquired. “Think of the very first **display** of will in a baby” she explained. “When is it manifested? When the baby is content? warm and fed?”<sup>51</sup> It is only when something is **wrong**, when it is hungry, or cold, or if it is in pain. Only **then** the baby **exercises** its magnificent tool, its **will**: It ‘decides’, in a manner of speaking, to **do** something about its problem. It contracts its muscles, every nerve in its body aching with

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<sup>51</sup> “Imagine a Ping child who, in experiencing his pink and soft mother, thinks: “Pink goes together with soft.” He cannot refer to the object Mommy in early Penglish at all, and at his early age he has no need to identify the property of motherhood.” This passage is out of Ruth Manor’s brilliant article “*Simulating Imagination*”.<sup>92</sup> For me, this short article deserves special attention, whereas it is not only responsible for my interest in (the philosophy of) language, but also provided me with invaluable insight into the objectivist premise it employs.

Let me briefly describe the model that is the subject of the article, and after giving it a close examination, I shall turn to the motivations behind it and the conclusions that may be drawn from it. The **speakers** in this models are called *Pings*. They are pseudo human ‘epistemic units’, that have no **objective** perception: Their conceptual schemes contain no objects, just **predicates**. The Pings have a perception of **time**, manifested in their understanding of simultaneousness, or *coincidence*, in Manor’s terminology. All the Pings can do, epistemically, is accumulate beliefs of *togetherness* of predicates, of properties they experience. The Pings have only one logical operator: Negation. The above passage exemplifies the way the Pings accumulate beliefs: The baby accumulated the belief **{pink,soft}**. Although the Pings experience an infinite variety of sense data, presentable as beliefs (each consisting of a group of predicates), they only have two mental **states**: A ‘normal’ *ping state*, and a ‘nervous’ *pong state*. The latter occurs when the Ping encounters a **contradiction**: A state of having two distinct beliefs such as **{A,B}** and **{A,~B}** (where A and B are predicates, and ~ is the operator of negation). The way a Ping in the nervous *pong state* **resolves** this contradiction, is by splitting the predicate A into two (distinct and contradictory) predicates, with the aid of a third, C: ‘AC’ and ‘A~C’. By doing so, he substitutes **{A,B}** with **{AC,B}**, and **{A,~B}** with **{A~C,~B}**. The choice of C is such, that neither **{A,C}** nor **{A,~C}** are beliefs.

The article further describes the development of Penglish (logic), including the operators conjunction and implication (Although this is redundant, because the Pings must be assumed to be in *apriori* possession of the full syntax of propositional calculus, as will be shown shortly), and of predicates that denote abstract (imperceptible) properties. Manor then proceeds to discuss **misunderstandings**: Different Pings may use the same name (of predicate) to denote distinctly different properties; Pings do **not** necessarily hold the same (or even similar) beliefs. However, they **cooperate**, in helping resolve each other’s contradiction. In time, the Pings established the *Pingland Information Center* (PIC), a central data bank that is shared, **accessible** to all. Manor then proceeds to describe the inner workings of PIC, as her focus is more on issues in information processing and AI, rather than Ping (or human) epistemology. But let us stop here, and examine the situation thus far.

action, his vocal cords contract, the air is pressed out of its lungs - it **screams**". "What a mechanistic description!" I said, smiling. "I could have been a hell of a scientist, couldn't I?" agreed Gaya, smiling as well. I said: "This fits nicely with what you have said when I was feeding the ducks: That action is invoked by a moral problem, and when there is no **problem**, no action, no exercise of will, is required". "It does" she replied, and continued: "But let us go on with the story. The baby's mother speaks the language, although the baby does not. She **understands** that the baby is exercising its will **because** something is wrong in its world. Now, **she** has a moral problem. Not a big one; after all, it is **her** baby, her own flesh and blood. So even if she is doing something she really does not want to interrupt, like producing another baby, she will stop what she is doing, and take care of it. Well, not always; But we'll get back to this later. Now **she** acts, because something is wrong in **her** world: Her baby cries. Now the baby learned something: Crying **works**. It is a **sentence**, a means of communication, a momentary work of art: By exercising its will, the baby produced certain visible and audible phenomena, which, although very temporary and immediately evaporating, produce the desired consequence: The elimination of the source of the **bad**: It is fed, or whatever. This is the first sentence of every baby, and for it to emerge, something **bad** is required. Without it, it would have no language - the product of a **bad** feeling and **will**".

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° Initially, the Pings are very similar to our S1 and S2. They have the ability to perceive and store only **properties**, denoted by names: **predicates**. Manor does not explain how a Ping's **hearing** of the word *pleasant* or *mother* **differs** from regular sense data; In other words, when a Ping has an experience, how does it know that the experience is of a **term** in language, **denoting** something, rather than a 'raw' experience. But let us overlook this problem. Granting the Pings the ability to "put properties together" is nothing but saying that they are *apriori* equipped with the operator of **conjunction**. Conjunction (as we understand it) and **negation** are an (expressively) complete set of connectives. Hence, the Pings come *apriori* equipped with (at least) the full syntax of classic propositional calculus, equivalent to S1 and S2's P<sub>1</sub>. This **supports** Manor's implicit affirmation of the fact that the Pings have **deductive** capabilities: "*..He compares notes with other Pings, tries to find out what follows (deductively) from...*" (p. 73). Therefore, the Pings have no need to 'develop' the logical operators - they have them 'pre-installed'.

The Pings states of 'nervousness' and 'non-nervousness' can be taken as equivalent to what I have termed "a moral perception": The Pings know what they want: They want to be **happy**, i.e., have no contradictions. Having contradictory beliefs is **bad**. The Pings turn out to be more and more similar to S1 and S2. (The experience 'unpleasant' that is used in Manor's presentation carries no moral value - it is just a simple property, or predicate, like all others). In the first example of a nervous *pong state* above, our ping split the concept A (originally *pink*) into two **species**: AC and A~C. Here the first serious problem arises: What happens to the (old) predicate A? It can be perceived as the **genus** of AC and A~C, but Manor does not address this relation. In her model, A must be **substituted** by the two new predicates, AC and A~C. To be consistent with the rest of the story, the predicate A must either be **forgotten**, or if it appears separately, in a different context (say, {A,D}), rendered **irrelevant** to AC and A~C. So, as far as we are now concerned, there is no more 'A'.

Manor does not elaborate on how the pings acquire **objective** perception: How do groupings of predicates **become** an **object**, rather than a mere grouping, and how they realize that they can be (objectively) **wrong**. It seems, that the Pings do not really need anyone to resolve their contradictions. Their method of doing so is completely self sufficient, and requires no outside help. If the Pings have the ability to manipulate abstract predicates, they can make up such an abstract predicate every time they encounter a contradiction: They can turn A into AC and A~C without even having (personally) experienced {A,C}. As the story goes,

I wanted her to continue: “And if the mother does **not** respond to the baby’s sentence?” I asked. “Well, if she **never** responds, the baby will not acquire language; he would probably not survive, anyway. But if she **sometimes** does not respond, the baby is confused. The same behavior on its part, **sometimes** produces the desired outcome, and sometimes not. The baby is slow in learning the language. The more inconsistent the mother in responding to its cries, the longer it takes the baby to master the language. Parents who ignore the crying of their baby **prolong** the period in which it cries. It is the paradigm of **misunderstanding**: The baby does not learn, what (of his) **actions** produces what result. Luckily enough, mothers usually love their babies, so babies learn the language. But the case is similar every time a language is taught: If the teacher acts inconsistently, if it **lies** to the student, the student will not learn. The teacher must **care** for the student, and must be sincere with it. **Love** is the most efficient tool in teaching a language. Love and care. But this is not news: That love has positive influence on **communication**”.

“When does the baby first learn about the objective world?” I was very interested. “Well, sometimes never. I don’t think that Socrates, or Plato, or Jesus believed in it. But for most of us, it happens very early. I guess it happens on the first time the baby realizes that the distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is not “attached” to objects”. I didn’t get it. “Please explain”. “Look: Until that day, the baby has no reason to believe there is anything out there but itself. The world **responds**: May be not **very** systematically, whereas sometimes its cries do not work, but generally, it finds itself able to solve its problems: It’s wet, it

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**personal** experience is not a requirement for adapting a belief, as the Pings constantly “compare notes” and rely on each other’s testimony.

° I shall not go into the problems of *radical translation* that are evident in the Ping story, or into a detailed analysis of the case of inconsistent **naming**, as is the case with the Ping child and his sister, who understand the term *mother* differently. Those issues are not Manor’s main concern in the article. But before turning to what is, a basic premise of Manor’s whole discussion needs to be uncovered and explicitly stated: The premise of **objectivity**, of the **existence** of an objective reality the Pings all somehow **share**. This implicit premise is visible in several places throughout the article, and it is essential for what seems to be Manor’s motivation. (1) “...if a Ping describes his experience, he can list a finite set of predicates completely describing his mental representation, **but the list describes only incompletely the experience itself**” (p. 72, bold type added by me). The experience **itself** is distinct from what the Ping **experienced**. This is a clear distinction between *phenomenon* and *nooumenon*, (2) In the next sentence, Manor claims the Pings to be aware that this **is** in fact the case, “**Because...** they realized that no finite set of predicates could completely describe the experience.” **How** did the Pings arrive at such an outstanding conclusion, without Aristotle? (3) In describing *early Pinglish*, on the same page, Manor explicitly states that predicates **have an extension**. Here the presupposition of an objective reference, **distinct** from the properties that **describe** it, is almost explicit.

Manor would probably not deny having employed this premise, and would most probably be willing to make it explicit. Her motivation is not to describe the historic evolution of **human** language, but, as the title indicates, to make a point regarding artificial intelligence, and the role of **imagination** in epistemic systems. She advocates the possible employment of AI technology, with the purpose of acquiring insight into what thinking is; It is not the **particular** model that is important; It is the fact that imagination could be artificially simulated. And the Pings, whether objectivists or relativists, whether equipped with P<sub>1</sub> or any other logical system, clearly use **imagination** in solving their epistemic problems.

cries, it gets changed. For the baby, there are undesirable ‘things’ and desirable ones. The dichotomy is clear. The mother represents the concept of ‘eliminating bad feelings’, something which is definitely **good**. Nothing in the baby’s world can match this **goodness** of its mother. In time, the baby learns what works better than what: If the baby happens to have a mother that hates a particular sound it is able to emit, the baby will learn to use **this** sound when it wants something real bad. But listen to this: Suppose the mother really hates the sound, and decides to **punish** the poor baby, which still does not suspect, that there is an **objective** (and cruel!) world out there. She punishes the baby. The baby realizes, for the first time, that something **good** can (sometimes) be **bad!** What an unpleasant surprise! The baby is now forced to distinguish, in his developing conceptual scheme, between **good mother** and **bad mother**. The concept of ‘bad mother’ is the first member in the baby’s objective world.”

When we started on our daily walk, I said to Gaya: “I am writing about **God**”.<sup>52</sup> “What do you have to say about her?” asked Gaya, smiling as usual. I didn’t argue with her about God’s gender. I spend my life with four females. “The discussion is **logical**” I replied. “I artificially built a concept, based on certain relations it has with all other concepts, and after having characterized it based on these generally applicable relations, I claim that it is no other than the concept **God**.” “Can you elaborate? or is the logic involved too complicated?” “Not at all” I said. “It is quite simple.” I told Gaya the contents of footnote 52, and after a moment of thought she said: “You know why you can hardly find the concept of **God**, at least the way you people understand it, in eastern thought?” I knew the fact, but not the reason. “Why?” “Because eastern philosophy has no “objective world” which is an agreed-upon subset of totality.” She replied. I kept quiet, waiting for an

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<sup>52</sup> Let us now return to our speakers, S1 and S2. They have already made quite some progress, each of them in possession of a **subdomain**, containing properties that are **objects**, and a variety of properties that are **not** objects, i.e., predicates. Having a subdomain, they each have the property **x**, designating what all **objects** have in common: **existence**. They have a subject-predicate based language, in which they converse. When they speak, they presuppose a shared, intersubjective meaning of the property **existence**. They also share the primordial **contradiction** and one special predicate that follows from their intentional character, **G: the Good**.

Now let us approach S1, and ask him to create a **new** property, hereafter designated by the predicate **D**. What characterizes this new predicate, is that it is **implied, entailed by every other property** in his whole system (objects and predicates alike). Note, that this exactly is the relation prevailing between our well known **x** and the properties in the **subdomain**, that all imply it. But now, we want to create a property that is implied by **all** of S1’s properties, not just those in the objective subdomain. If S1 already has such a property (which is, naturally, **unique**), we shall ask him to give it the name **D**, for the purpose of this discussion. Let us now closely examine **D**: **Everything** implies it. For every property **P**,  $P \supset D$ . It is the “mirror image” of **F**: **F implies** everything in the system: For every property **P**,  $F \supset P$ . Just like the property **F** is “always off”, property **D** is “always on”. In a manner of speaking, **D** can be perceived as the negation of **F**:  $D \equiv \sim F$ .

In natural languages, **D** is very often denoted by the name **God**. A concept that includes **everything**, is the primal **cause** and the primal **reason**, is **unchangeable**, and (very) well defined. **D (God)** is **implied** by everything. If **anything**, then **God**.

explanation. It came. “Look: You make a distinction between ‘everything’ and ‘everything that exists’, right? You constantly speak of things that do **not** exist.” “Go on” I said. “But eastern thought makes no such distinction. A ‘thing’ that does **not** exist is unintelligible: If you speak about it, how can it not exist? Everything exists. Things may be different - some material, some not. But this has nothing to do with **existence**. For the eastern philosopher, **everything** is included in what you call “the objective subdomain”. For him, existence and God are the very same thing.”

She was right, of course. I should have thought about it myself. In fact, this clearly belongs in the footnotes; But it is already here. Let it be. I said: “I once heard a cute story about a *Taoist* who spit in Buddha’s face. He was brought before the chief Buddhist, or whatever he was, and was asked to explain his deed. He said: ‘Show me where there is no Buddha, and I will spit there’”. Gaya nodded in agreement: “Yes. I know the story. This is exactly what I mean. In the east, the ‘super-predicate’ you call ‘Divinity’ has many variations: ‘The nature of Buddha’, or *Tao*, ‘The way’; It is not personified, or even **objectified**. It is viewed, as you rightly pointed out, as a **property** or a **process**. In ancient Chinese literature, it is almost always described by what it is **not**, rather than by what it **is**. If your concept of God is as being the **negation** of something you call “contradiction”, then I would say that for eastern philosophy, it is contradiction **itself** that is considered divine. This is why *Zen* stories, proverbs and poems sound like sheer contradictions: They **are!** They are **articulations** of what you call ‘F’”.

“All this sounds familiar” I said, “from a seminar I took last year. It was entitled ‘Language for the Description of God’, or ‘LDG’ in short<sup>53</sup>.” Gaya was interested: “What about? Spinoza<sup>54</sup>?” she guessed. “Not at all” I replied; “It was not **about** anyone. Well, it was **about** God. It was a full year seminar. I only took it for one year, but it has been going on for three or four. The general idea was to get insight into the idea of God, and the language to intelligibly describe him, with the aid of the concept of contradiction. In fact, it was a somewhat chaotic venture: Taking two so obscure, even mysterious

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<sup>53</sup> The ‘LDG’ seminar took place in TAU philosophy department by Ilay Alon and David Graves.<sup>93</sup> It focused around what was termed ‘the Aleph rule’: In LDG, a proposition is considered **true**, if it is **about** God, and if, when interpreted in NL (a **natural**, human language) seems like a contradiction. E.g., “God is merciful and God is not merciful” is a contradiction in NL, but a true proposition in LDG. Taking this proposition in its LDG interpretation, it means something like ‘God is Aleph-merciful’. The major task was to **understand** the **meaning** of ‘Aleph-merciful’, or in general, ‘Aleph-P’, where P is a predicate.

<sup>54</sup> It is time to turn to **Spinoza**<sup>94</sup>, with the aid of our two devoted speakers, S1 and S2. Let us see if we can make some sense of what he says, equipped with the newly formed super-predicate ‘D’. This D, in **Spinoza’s** conceptual scheme, was *Nature, or God: the Substance*. This substance **we** experience in two flavors, two *attributes* (although there could be more): Thought and Extension. Note: What is thought is not extension, and what is extension is not thought. Let us denote *extension* with E, and *thought* with T. Naturally,  $T \supset \sim E$  and  $E \supset \sim T$ , while both T and E imply D:  $T \supset D$ ,  $E \supset D$ . Both E and T are further ‘divided’ into *modes*:  $T_1, T_2, \dots$  and  $E_1, E_2, \dots$ . The predicate that S1 and S2 call ‘G’ (Good), is Spinoza’s *conatus*: His version of **intentionality**: ‘*The endeavor wherewith each thing endeavors to persist...*’. S1 and S2’s *wffs* that denote **objects** (things that *really* exist) are in Spinoza’s language *adequate ideas*, and their **predicates**, things that do not (really) exist, are his *inadequate ideas*.

concepts as ‘God’ and ‘contradiction’, and trying to derive new insight by applying them to each other. At first, it seemed like gibberish. But slowly, some sense began to emerge out of the chaos. It was interesting. There were a variety of consequences, in different directions. For instance, that a **divine command**, as opposed to a regular, human command, was that it is **inherently refusable**: A divine command is what **constitutes** human **freedom of choice**. Or a divine **declaration**: It changes reality in such a way, that it was never different in the first place - a kind of ‘retroactive creation’ - we called it ‘decreation’. Or the question whether (the concept of) God was a **universal** or a **particular**.” Gaya interrupted: “Which is it?” I was glad to be the teacher, even for a moment: “Both. It is the genus of these two contradicting concepts, just as ‘animal’ is both a dog and a cat.”

We were walking on Edam’s main street (and canal). I already felt completely at home. I knew all the streets, quite a few shop owners greeted us as we walked by. In the last few days I have done quite a lot of walking, as Esti had commanded before she left. I kept looking for the smaller, more picturesque alleys, to find new points of view on (or of) the wonderful surroundings. Many points were inaccessible, and must have been privately owned. I wondered many times why there are never little boats on the canal, only yachts or large sailing boats. A boat ride on the canal could be a great tourist attraction. So much more could be seen from there! I posed the question to Gaya: “Is it forbidden to take boat trips on the canal? I mean small rowing boats, or pedal boats?” Gaya seemed mildly surprised: “Forbidden? Why ever? Look!” and pointed ahead, along the canal we were walking by. I couldn’t believe it. She’s done it again. Four or five small boats were making their way towards us. In a minute they were real close: Rowing boats. Two double seater canoes, and two regular rowing boats. They looked like two families of tourists; kids and all. They seemed to be enjoying. A lot. I raised my astonished eyes to Gaya, who seemed quite amused. I smiled and put both my hands on my head, in a gesture of “this is too much”. People around us stopped walking and watched the strange scene. To them it must have looked as if Gaya played an extremely successful practical joke on me. Well, she did, didn’t she?

She later denied having done **anything**, of course. She had a completely reasonable explanation: “I don’t know why you’re making such a big fuss over this stupid incident. If it wasn’t so funny, I would be mad at you. What is the big deal? Up until now, there was no boating on the canals. Then you had a thought: Why in the world should it be prohibited? And really, particularly in **your** ‘really’, there was absolutely no reason. It was unquestionably **good** to have this nice way of sightseeing Edam. So you made it

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° But most interesting is Spinoza’s conception of **truth**: “*A person who has a true idea knows at the same time that he has a true idea*”: If a speaker **knows** that an idea is true, the idea **is** true. This **knowing** does not come from outside: it is stipulated, **constituted** by the person. Spinoza’s adequate idea only need to satisfy the requirement of **coherence**: Of adhering to the syntax of P<sub>1</sub> (or equivalent). Spinoza, as a perfect rationalist, claimed that understanding the prevailing logical rules provides the full picture of **reality**. The concept of **God** has, “folded” within it, a whole world of (adequate) ideas. Spinoza not only described the contents of his **particular** subdomain, as most thinkers did. He outlined the necessary logical **structure** of the world (or conceptual scheme), providing the rules by which **every** such scheme is constituted.

happen. I can even prove to you that this is no coincidence: I am positive, that as of now you will be seeing boats filled with kids and tourists all the time.” I suspected she was right in her last remark, but could not resist asking: “Tell me: Did **you** often see boating on these canals before?” For the first time in my six days of acquaintance with Gaya, she said: “Let us leave you with some mystery. You like it better this way”, and said no more. The incident did not leave my mind: I was intensely looking at these canals since June 12th. Never have I seen a trace of boats - not with tourists, nor with locals. And **now** they appear.

Before we parted, Gaya said: “There was one thing I wanted to add about the difference between the traditional eastern and modern western attitudes towards the Divine: In the east, ‘philosophy’ and ‘religion’, and also ‘theology’, are one and the same. This is not the case in the west; at least not in the last several centuries. In the west, the **three** are clearly distinct.” I didn’t want to start an argument, as we were already standing at the door of *De Fortuna*, but still replied: “This is not true for the Jews. The **real** Jews. for them, like in the east, the three are one and the same<sup>55</sup>. But let us talk about it over dinner. Are you having dinner? Are you free?” Gaya smiled: “Are you asking me out?” I played along: “Will you have dinner with me?” Gaya replied formally: “will eight thirty be convenient?”

As I am writing this, I am thinking about my **heritage**. I never observed any of the commandments. But I absorbed a substantial amount of Judaism, of **tradition**. I used to always put down the emphasis my father laid on ‘tradition’, and even considered it a kind of hypocrisy: Going to the synagogue to pray to the same God whose commandments we do not observe. But this upbringing vested me with a deep religious consciousness. Never in my life have I had **doubts** as to the **existence** of a **good super-entity**, whom I conveniently agreed to refer to as **God**. (Even before I had any idea what **existence** is). I have lived with the concept all my life. (Incidentally, I never knew that God was a serious metaphysical subject matter before I took up philosophy). Frankly, I often refrained from advertising this belief: The world I grew up in made a strong point of completely denying the existence of God, treating it as a backward superstition, like believing in witches and fairies.

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<sup>55</sup> I am a very small expert in Jewish philosophy, but a few words are in order in this context. Spinoza was strongly influenced by *Moses Maimonides*<sup>95</sup>. This 12th century great Jewish philosopher exemplifies the attempt to reconcile (Aristotelian) philosophy with (Jewish) faith. Although (the existence of) God was for him not only a basic **premise**, but an eminent unquestionable truth, he still tried to **prove** the existence of God by employing Aristotelian principles. Maimonides is well aware of the possible conflict between philosophy and faith, and sees this conflict as particularly dangerous for the less educated, and to those who suffer from frail faith. His solution to this problem was to write in a deliberately complicated, sometimes cryptic style, so only learned scholars would understand. Maimonides maintained that knowledge of God should not be sought by formulating descriptions of him, but by the **denial** of (earthly) attributes; What is known as God’s **negative attributes**. In the terminology employed in the preceding footnotes, Maimonides’ approach was to describe D with statements such as  $D \supset \sim P$ , rather than  $D \supset P$ .

When I entered the dining room at eight thirty, Gaya was already there, reading an abbreviated translation of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*.<sup>56</sup> When she noticed me, she closed the book and smiled: "This guy has **five** proofs that God exists. Apparently five is not enough!" I smiled back: "But he mixes his premises with his conclusions, does he not? As I recall, he made a great fuss out of proving what he considered unquestionable". "So what?" she asked. "Does this make him refute himself? Incoherent?" But I had still something to comment on her remark from this morning on east and west: "Aquinas is a good counter example of your claim from this morning. He must have been **Chinese**, because, for him, philosophy, theology and religion were inseparable." Gaya decided to be argumentative: "I said **modern** philosophy. There was a **breach**, sometime in the 16th or 17th century. But even before, the only reason the three went together was **fear**. Philosophy and theology accommodated themselves to the criteria set by the church. Theism and objectivism are inherently in dispute. Religion is so much more in peace with Plato than it is with Aristotle!" "What religion? Christianity?" I inquired. "Any monotheistic religion. Take St. Augustine<sup>57</sup>, for instance." "I know next to nothing about him" I admitted. "You don't need to know much. Just that he was a Platonist. For **him**, Aquinas' problems did not exist, as he was not bound by Aristotelian objectivism. He had no serious conflict between philosophy and religion. He had other problems he strived to solve, like the problem of the nature of **time**. At no avail, needless to say. But let us not talk about Christian saints. Can you tell me about **your** God?" I was already used to Gaya's swift changes of subjects, and said: You mean God of the Jews?" "The one and only" she replied. "Well, where do you want me to start? You want the full or abbreviated version?" "I'll tell you what I want" said Gaya in a determinate tone. "I want you to tell me the abbreviated version, but in the **first person**." "You mean **as** God?" What an odd request! "Precisely" said Gaya; "Tell it as if it was **you**. Please." She said **please**. She never said **please** before. I hesitated for a moment, then started:

"There is a lot of stuff I don't remember; After all, It's been close to six thousand years since it all started. But I must have known in advance I will forget, so I wrote it all in a book; a kind of diary." Gaya was enthused: "Perfect. Go on". "It started like a game: I felt like **creating** something. So I started **splitting** myself into opposites: Heaven/earth, light/darkness, above/below. You know the game. I made quite a marvelous creation. In just six days. Then, one day, something got into me: I wanted to **participate**. You see, it

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Aquinas' "Summary of Theology"<sup>96</sup> deals with reason and revelation as means to knowledge of God. Like Maimonides, his philosophical roots were Aristotelian. But he developed a more elaborate metaphysics, in distinguishing **essence** from **existence**. He says: "Every *essence or quiddity can be understood without its act of existing being understood. I can understand what a man or phoenix is and yet not know whether or not it exists in the nature of things. Therefore, it is evident that the act of existing is other than essence or quiddity*". This distinction (similar to Kant's who denied that existence is a predicate almost five hundred years later), does **not** apply to God. Decartes<sup>97</sup> uses one of Aquinas' proofs for the existence of God, based on this equivalence, which later became famous as the *ontological proof for the existence of God*.

<sup>57</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo<sup>98</sup> maintained that all human knowledge was of two **kinds** of things: Objects of sense, and things known independently from sense data (predicates?). He had a Platonic notion of **Good**, and explained the **bad** as nothing but the **lack** of good (~G)!

is a bit of a **bore**, being so powerful, and yet just an observer. So I invented this **trick**: I **separated** myself from the rest of me. I was still **God**, but I **also** played the role of Adam. Not a very **complicated** trick; not for **God**, anyway.” I started to get into it - even started to like it. Gaya was fascinated. “So I found myself thrown out of *Eden*, me and the wife. And some fig-leaves. I felt as if my eyes have just opened; I had absolutely no idea that I was God. I thought I remembered God as someone **else**; someone who’s order I broke. Anyway, these were hard times. My first son killed my second son. Big tragedy.”

“Hundreds of years went by. I don’t really remember the details; I can look in my diary if you want them..” “No, no” said Gaya. “Please proceed”. “The next thing I remember is being **Noah**. I believe that at the time, I **did** know that I was actually God. But I knew better than to tell anyone. Anyway, things were less than perfect. So I decided to ‘wipe the board’ and start anew. I kept what I wanted to preserve, in a big **ark**. And immigrated to Arrarat, to start a new civilization. I made new rules, and told everyone they were conveyed to me by **God**. I didn’t tell anyone, not even my three boys, that this God was in fact (in) me.”

“The next thing I remember is, again, centuries later. This time I was Abraham. I don’t remember when I actually **realized** that I was the boss; I think it was a dream I had. I used to take dreams seriously back then. I took my wife and my nephew and moved to Kena’an. I did really well, but when I was already some hundred years old, my wife suddenly decided she wanted a son. Can you imagine? And she was ninety! She was really miserable, so I arranged it. As usual, I never revealed my true status to everyone. I told them all it was some external super power that worked the miracle. Like with Sodom: I heard terrible things were going on there. So I went to see for myself. **horrible** place. I destroyed it immediately. Earthquake.” Gaya interrupted: “You went into the destruction business again?” “Yes” I replied. “But on a limited scale, not like the flood. I decided to handle things **locally**. There was no sense wiping **everything** out every time I didn’t like something.”

“Tell me about the sacrifice of your son” asked Gaya. “I was coming to that. It started quite innocently: Me and Isaac, and another two servants, went on a trip; A kind of ‘initiation’ for Isaac. I meant to sit with him on the mountain for a couple of days, and tell him who he **really** is. I brought some fire wood, and the two servants kept wondering how come we didn’t take food. We left them behind and climbed on the mountain, just Isaac and me. He was a smart kid. Real smart. He understood almost immediately. In fact, the story about sacrificing **him** was his own idea. He said it would be very impressive. He was right, of course. It worked wonderfully. As Isaac, I had a relatively enjoyable quiet life - no major events, no catastrophes. My only mistake as Isaac was that I had a hard time deciding which of my boys I should let in on the secret. I made the mistake my father didn’t make: He told me on the mountain, when I was still a boy. But I dragged it too much, and told Jacob only when I was already tired of being Isaac. When I finally told him, the secret came out; someone must have been listening in to my conversation with him. Esau was very insulted. Nobody knows this, but I told him too. It was wrong, because it made them fierce enemies: The whole idea came to them as a surprise, they

were already middle aged, and Esau, for some reason, couldn't bear the idea of two Gods."

"So who's story are you going to continue with now?" asked Gaya. She liked it a lot. "Jacob's, I guess. You asked about the God of the **Jews**, didn't you?" She nodded and I continued: "As I said, I found out relatively late. My father kept it a secret too long. He almost died without telling anyone. Had I not pulled the trick with the disguise, I would never have known<sup>58</sup>. He would have just told my brother. Anyway, he told both of us, and I left home. I didn't want to fight Esau. After all, he was my older brother. I didn't want to start my career with murder. I had big plans; I wanted to change the world, with this new incredible information. I started paying attention to everything, even dreams. I married two sisters and had a whole bunch of kids." The food was getting cold, so I took a break and started eating. By the time I finished, the whole game seemed foolish and boring, so we left it at that.

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<sup>58</sup> **Counterfactual** propositions are implications, e.g.,  $A \supset B$ , where A is a 'contrary to fact' proposition. In my terminology, A is **treated** like an object (a matter of fact, something that **actually** exists), although it is **not**. The variety of problems associated with counterfactuals all result from the unclear status of A. A is false, but **treated as** true for the purpose of the counterfactual proposition.

An example: 'Had I not disguised myself' (A)  $\Rightarrow$  'I would not have known' (B). The antecedent is clearly a predicate: The property of '(Jacob) not disguising'. It is a predicate and not an object because in the **world**, Jacob **did** disguise himself. The statement in question claims that this predicate **entails** another predicate: '(Jacob's) not knowing' (B). There is nothing wrong with this proposition, for every system in which A entails B (such as in mine). But supposing that in **my** system,  $\sim(A \supset B)$ ; For example, if I believe that Esau would have told Jacob the secret **anyway**. In this case the implication is false. It is useless to ask which is **true**, whereas counterfactuals deal in predicates and not objects, hence, there is no **objective** truth. It is a categorical mistake to talk about what is **actually** the case when discussing **non-actual** things!