





Memory in the Philosophy of Religion: Temptations of the Cartesian Demon in Epistemology and Theodicy

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ABSTRACT This article analyzes the notion of memory in the philosophy of religion. The area of this problematic is defined by Descartes, who, in a thought experiment, postulates an all-powerful, evil demon capable of falsifying human perception. The problem of solipsism raised here also implies doubt about claims based on memory. Descartes' assumptions are taken up constructively by Alvin Plantinga in his attempt to solve problems in the epistemology of religion by raising the following new question: is belief in God rational, and, if so, is it justified? Peter van Inwagen, for his part, uses memory analysis to construct arguments in support of theodicy. In considering these issues, other key topics within the philosophy of religion, such as the afterlife and the existence of the soul, which are closely related to the analysis of personal identity, inevitably arise.

KEYWORDS belief; evil; memory; personal identity; theodicy

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INTRODUCTION

In the first meditation, Descartes performs his famous thought experiment:

then I will suppose that there is not a supremely good God, the source of truth, but an evil spirit, extremely powerful and intelligent, and that he will try to mislead me as much as possible (Descartes 1976, 65).

The echoes of this theoretical fantasy can be heard in various philosophical debates, and they have not escaped discussion in the philosophy of religion.

Usually, the phenomenon of memory has been discussed within this discourse in the context of theological controversies relating to the question of the sacraments, with the concept of ritual serving as an ongoing point of reference. The religious experience itself has often been referred to as a foundational memory (*anamnesis*), uniting modes of temporality and illuminating true being (Christian Platonism). However, Descartes' imagination makes it possible to thematize memory while also considering philosophical questions—primarily by addressing the challenges arising in the epistemology of religion (Plantinga), but also by furnishing arguments relevant to traditional questions in the philosophy of religion (e.g. Inwagen's theodicy).

The natural transition from the first steps of the method to the problem of memory is described precisely by Santayana. In his view, when interpreting Descartes, "it is also appropriate to talk about the solipsism of the present moment" (Santayana 1955, 14–15). Thus, "for the reason that sense perception provides only a variety of immediate facts, we should be agnostic about the reality of the past, and therefore of time" (Vanhoozer 2003, 98). Such reflections on memory also naturally lead to discussion of other topics within the philosophy of religion: namely personal identity, the existence of the soul, and the afterlife.

THE JUDGMENTS OF MEMORY AND FAITH IN PLANTINGA'S "REFORMED EPISTEMOLOGY"

Alvin Plantinga, a contemporary apologist for Christianity and himself an analytical theist, sets out to test the degree of validity of religious experience, to return an analytical basis to the analysis of faith, and to ask "is belief in God rationally acceptable?" (Plantinga 2002, 40). The central controversy in the context envisaged in this question pertains to the evidentialist opposition to theistic faith. Proponents of this position have argued that belief in God is irrational or unfounded, intellectually irresponsible, because "it lacks substantial evidence to support it" (Plantinga 1981, 41).

Other participants in this debate, especially the proponents of so-called natural theology, have argued that belief in God is intellectually acceptable, but only because there is sufficient evidence for it. The common ground between these two positions is the view that belief is rational only if an evidence base is specified. In the same way, a person acts rationally in accepting a belief only if they rely on evidence—or, more precisely, only if they are acquainted with such propositions as support the propositions in question and believe the latter on the basis of these.

The evidentialist line of criticism is rooted in classical foundationalism—which, since Plato and Aristotle, has dominated philosophical discourse in discussions of faith, cognition, rationality, and similar issues. In short, the core of classical foundationalism is the belief that some beliefs are based on others. For example, the word “belief” consists of six letters—this belief is based on an acceptance of the rules of the dictionary, etc. But the chain of proposition-pillars cannot continue indefinitely, so despite various solipsistic games, the consensus is that there are certain truths for which we do not seek (or cannot find) others to substantiate them. We accept such truths without referring to a set of other statements. Plantinga calls these “basic” beliefs.

According to the canon of classical foundationalism, certain truths are correctly assigned to the category of foundational beliefs, others incorrectly. In consequence, those that are not “foundational” can only be rationally accepted on the basis of evidence that connects them to a class of foundational beliefs. According to the above-mentioned kind of position, the existence of God does not belong to the class of fundamental beliefs, so a person acts rationally by professing theism only if they can justify their choice with evidence.

Plantinga’s views (which come under the banner of “reformed epistemology”) are based on a distinctive set of interpretations of the claims of the Reformation. Natural theology (understood as the tradition of proofs for the existence of God) was strongly rejected by the proponents of Reformed Theology, and this, according to Plantinga, was done “not even because of the fallacy of the arguments, but because of the very flawed approach to the question of God” (Plantinga 2002, 41). Thus, the Reformation movement can be treated as an implicit rejection of classical foundationalism (of which natural theology may then be viewed as being little more than a kind of decorative embellishment). However, it is a mistake to think that in asserting that belief in God does not require propositional support its proponents were advocating an extreme form of fideism. Rather, they were arguing for the believer’s intellectual right to assert the existence of God without even presenting an argument (be it inductive or deductive),

or knowing of one—or, perhaps, even simply in the absence of one. It is a consequence of this that faith in God then turns out to be fundamental.

To justify such a position, we inevitably have to look at the criteria that evidentialists use to typologize beliefs. First of all, the position of foundationalism is normative: accepting theistic beliefs classifies a person as irrational, which in turn means that they have failed to meet a certain (rationality-based) standard. Thus, there is a bad way and a good way to believe in God, or, as Blanshard puts it, “faith has an ethical aspect . . . to square one’s attitudes with the available evidence” (1974, 401). Unable to substantiate the existence of God, one must reject such a belief when one is led by duty. In this way, in Socratic thinking, evidentialists do not so much accuse theists of being weak-willed in accepting a belief for which there is no basis, but rather diagnose them as possessing an intellectual disability, which is the root of their wrong choice. This approach also explains why theists are met with more sympathy than hostility.

Thus, an evidentialist critique of theism presupposes a way of distinguishing actually justified foundational truths from merely apparent ones, which in turn presupposes a prior understanding of what a foundational belief itself actually is. In the case of foundationalism, a proposition p is indeed foundational for a person S if and only if p is self-evident to S (modern foundationalism) or self-evident and supported by sense perception (ancient and medieval foundationalism). According to Plantinga, both forms of foundationalism are self-referentially incompatible, so the conclusions supported by them are unfounded.

Beliefs of the sort recognized as cornerstones of classical foundationalism typically pertain to perceptions of objects, together with those that rely on memory (sometimes with the addition of a commitment to the existence of other minds, and/or an acceptance of certain logical and mathematical truths). Thus, the statements “I see a tree,” “I had breakfast in the morning,” and “that person is angry,” are generally considered to be foundational, but, according to Plantinga, “it would be a mistake to think that they are unsupported” (2002, 43). Of course, although the enumerated cases of belief are generally accepted as not derived from others, this does not mean that they cannot yet be considered foundational in the sense that their truth value is self-evident and unsupported. These seemingly obvious truths are actually based on certain experiences (“I see a tree,” “it seems that I had breakfast this morning,” etc.), together with the context and other circumstances that determine my belief. For example, with respect to the consciousness of others, my perception of pain plays a crucial role in substantiating a “fundamental” claim about another’s well-being.

This is also relevant to truths of specific sort that go to make up a significant part of our information about the world: namely, memories. Suppose that I *think* I had breakfast this morning: it would be more correct to say that I am irresistibly inclined to believe the statement that I breakfasted this morning, given that this is accompanied by certain flashes of recollection (from the recent past), such as are familiar to everyone but nevertheless remain indescribable. However, this is not enough. The acceptability of the truth of memory is ultimately established by various circumstances—a wider context of lived experience. So-called “fundamental” beliefs are constantly accompanied by circumstances that serve to confirm and justify them. In this way, we are already dealing with the following propositional form: under condition *c*, *S* is justified in taking *p* as a reference. *C* here involves more than just the image I have at my disposal for a given statement. If I see a pink sky but know that my glasses are like that, or that an insidious disease causes such images, then accepting the statement “this sky is pink” will not be justified. In the case of memory, let’s say I know that I cannot trust my memory, that it often catches me out. Under such a condition, I cannot reasonably regard the statement “I had breakfast this morning” as containing a genuine reference to an event in the past, even if that is how it appears. Thus, the mere possession of visual or sensory material is not sufficient for validity: there must be another criterion. The main point is that truth is only truly foundational under certain conditions, and these conditions are its justification. Hence, one can say that foundational beliefs do not exist, or that such beliefs are not necessarily groundless.

Plantinga transfers this strategy to the analysis of the situation of belief in God. So, when looking for an answer to the questions of whether belief in God is rational, and, if so, whether it is justified, we have to think about it in the context of other claims that are taken for granted. If we think back to Calvin and other proponents of a reformed approach, we cannot say that in accepting God they were rejecting the circumstances that confirm it. Calvin was convinced that God reveals Himself daily in the entire structure of the Universe. This means that “God has created man in such a way that he has a tendency to recognize His footprint in the world” (Plantinga 2002, 44). In other words (and more precisely), a person is characterized by a disposition to accept, say, the statements “the flower was created by God” and “God created the Universe,” while contemplating a flower and gazing up at the starry sky. Likewise, reading the Bible can feel as if God is speaking to one, the emotion of guilt points to God’s disapproval after doing something wrong, a sense of forgiveness indicates acceptance when confessing sins, calling for help in the face of danger rests on the thought

that God hears what one says, and gratitude to God strikes us as appropriate when we find ourselves living a good life.

Thus, there are many conditions and circumstances that motivate belief in God. Apparently, both traditional proofs of God (whose primary concern is with truth) and the existentialist “limit situations,” albeit with some reservations, would fit into such a list, with phenomenology as a separate serious topic. Here we can only say that there are quite a few such circumstances. It is also important that the situations listed are not simply affirmations that “God exists.” Instead of this statement, we get the following: “God speaks to me,” “God created the Universe,” “God forgives and accepts,” “I must be grateful to Him.”

These propositions are indeed fundamental under the relevant conditions. However, it is also understood that the statement “there is such a person as God” is neither properly foundational nor accepted as such by those who believe the above statements. Thus, the existence of God really remains an object of empty controversy until we find ourselves dealing with certain special, circumstantially specified statements. In other words, the more or less general and abstract statement “God exists” is not properly foundational: rather, only those propositions that actually detail His attributes and/or actions are.

Returning to the analogy between belief in God and belief in a perceptible object, other persons, and the existence of the past, specific and concrete propositions, not general and abstract “images” of them, are also accepted as reasonably foundational in relation to the latter. Statements such as “trees exist,” “other persons exist,” or “the world has existed for more than seven seconds” are not really foundational, whereas the propositions “I see a tree,” “this person is satisfied,” “I had breakfast more than an hour ago” deserve such an evaluation. Of course, the latter presupposes the former, and it is probably not wrong to say that both are indeed foundational. However, their inseparability resonates in specific contexts, as in Plantinga’s warning that it is then overlooked that God’s existence is itself also affirmable—or, rather, that it is not unreasonable or pointless to assert it. So obviousness, a sensory criterion, is not a necessary condition for a statement to be foundational. On the other hand, belief in God does not mean that this claim is unfounded (under the circumstances).

FALSIFICATION OF MEMORY IN INWAGEN’S THEODICY

Plantinga’s reformed strategies for Christian theism have crossed over the boundaries of epistemology to find application in other areas of the philosophy of religion. Peter van Inwagen discusses memory by addressing the

questions of the origin and duration of evil and providing theodicy-related arguments for the implicit skeptic. It should be noted that Inwagen makes constructive use of Plantinga's distinction between theodicy and mere apologetics as a response to critics of Christianity. Christian apologetics

constructs stories to explain the coexistence of evil and God and seeks to show that such stories are possible in a broader logical sense, whereas theodicy opens the way for God to man (Inwagen 2002, 370).

It is through the rejection of empty sophistry that true theodicy maintains a balance between tradition and argument, narrative and analysis. This is exactly what Inwagen's theodicy amounts to, centering as it does on the analysis of memory.

In particular, Inwagen suggests imagining a dispute between brothers that turns into hatred for one another. Their mother prays to God to restore their former mutual love, and to do so not gradually but immediately. What is really being asked for in such a situation? According to Inwagen, "to grant his request, God must inevitably remove the memory of everything that happened between the brothers since the beginning of the conflict" (2002, 380). Of course, such a task already raises further philosophical questions, but for now let's imagine that it does not cause greater problems for the executor (say, thanks to the attribute of omnipotence). However, God would not be able to do this, because, according to Descartes, "there is no deceiver" (1976, 107), and such an action (erasure of memory) implies a gross deception with respect to the facts of the past (history). If God has erased the facts pertaining to my conflict with the other person, and somehow reconciled the remaining set of memories without destructive consequences, then He has lied to me about the past. We cannot logically justify a situation where God (with a wave of the hand) simply and instantaneously restores the condition of fallen humanity, except by falsifying the historical memory of that humanity. On the other hand, such a situation prevents a person from consciously, authentically participating in salvation.

Another illustration offered by Inwagen is useful here—the parable of the prodigal son (Gospel according to Luke 15:11–32). Suppose the father had foreseen the consequences of his son recklessly wasting his inheritance and had hired actors to pretend to be gamblers who would lose significant sums to his (prodigal) son. To go further, let's say that the father bribes some sex workers to confess their love for the prodigal son and offer him all their wealth (actually given to them by the father), and let there also be bodyguards secretly hired by the father to protect the prodigal son from

the dangers of ancient Middle Eastern nightlife. What would be the consequences of such paternal concern? Most likely, the son would continue living a carefree life; after all, his actions would not be self-destructive. However, the presence or absence of self-harm should not be understood exclusively in terms of such cares here. The son would be living an illusory life—and, after all, it is difficult to say what, from the perspective of such a life, would encourage the son to return to his father (and when it would do so).

In this modification of the biblical myth, Inwagen aims to show how we can understand why God does not simply “cancel,” by miraculous intervention, the suffering and evil to which the very situation of mankind’s existence, separated from God, gives birth. In particular, in the case of such an intervention as memory falsification, it would be a great deception, the creation of an illusory world. Our existential decisions, then, would be determined by God, while it would seem as if our successes were the result of humans’ natural abilities. According to Inwagen, this would “reduce the human situation to something more than meaningless, namely comic” (2002, 380). In the modernized version of the prodigal son, the transition from hero to clown is just that.

Such illusoriness is in and of itself evil, but its consequences go beyond this implicit negativity. If God did as we say, we should be perfectly content with our existence, or at least much closer to contentment than many are now. In a state of complacency, appeals to God for support and protection would become meaningless. (Unlike Plantinga, Inwagen does not believe that such an appeal can be based on gratitude.) An essential part of the divine plan for salvation, and one which forms the core of Inwagen’s theodicy, is to cause mankind to become dissatisfied with the situation of being separated (from God, or from his or her true being). And this must be done not by falsifying values, providing illusions, and causing pain—this is not directly related to human hubris—but simply by allowing oneself to live with the consequences of this condition (separation from God), not being able to be deceived by the horrors of this world, which mainly arise from the human inability to direct oneself or to be the master of one’s own life. Thus, an essential part of God’s redemptive plan is mankind’s realization that his or her own attempt to control the events of personal or collective history leads to dire consequences. Hence, the world is terrifying not primarily on account of itself, but because it is inscribed with the constant failure of mankind.

Why is it so important to become aware of the horrors of the world? First of all, because this is the real state of things—or, rather, this is the way

mankind exists. The obvious facts of evil—concentration camps, coercion, injustice, exploitation, and finally the threat of nuclear or ecological catastrophe—are still only finite evils in the eyes of God, whereas when a person risks surrendering to eternal evil in their daily life it entails a forgetting of the fundamental purpose of their existence.

Nonbelievers, of course, do not treat the human situation as being the result of a prehistoric fall, but they can (and, according to God's plan for redemption, they must) realize that not everything is in order, and that all efforts to overcome this malaise dissolve into evil; after all, mankind cannot adhere not just to God, but also to his or her own humanly formulated standards. A large part of our ideologically driven mythology (whether it be "enlightenment," "revolution," or "progress") has been created precisely to cover up these immanent human weaknesses. The psychological consequences of such conditionality are also known: the inability to give one's life direction (even in a secular sense) means, for some people, that no such direction (meaning) exists at all. However, another part of humanity still believes that the negative world image is due to the mistakes of human history—be they intellectual, ideological, flaws in our modes of economic organization, etc.—and thus something that will be fixed in the future.

Such a situation, according to Inwagen, presupposes true godlessness, which he illustrates by discussing the cultural-geographical spread of religiosity using the metaphor of therapy. It is known that religious faith is widespread in South America, the Middle East, and Africa, while the situation in English-speaking countries and Western Europe is not so favorable where reverence for the sacred is concerned. Generally, poor, uneducated people turn to religious institutions much as a person with a painful and incurable disease turns to a charlatan, while the middle class in the West believes in the myth of human nature and improving living conditions. The post-religious people of Western Europe and the United States are desperately ill, but possessed by some temporary panacea; they do not believe the doctors, who draw attention to the seriousness of the situation. In refusing to "undo" the suffering that is a natural consequence of the Fall, God is like a doctor who refuses to prescribe painkillers (angina) on the grounds that the patient will then return to a beloved but destructive hobby (cold beer). To overcome such weak will (or, perhaps, from a Socratic point of view, such an intellectual error), a constant experience of pain is necessary. Of course, such behavior on the part of the doctor can be questioned: they can even be accused of paternalism or of "playing God." But these accusations hardly apply to God Himself. The paternalistic position of God is based on the theological tradition

of attributes, the hermeneutics of symbols, and the human situation. The very solutions proposed to the problems associated with paternalism are only possible thanks to God.

Thus, we have already mentioned that the initial stage of God's redemptive plan, according to Inwagen, presupposes a reflection of the terrible condition of creatures separated from Him, nourished by constant unsuccessful attempts to control that situation. Concluding his theodicy, Inwagen theologially states that salvation ultimately culminates in the eternal oneness of creatures with their Creator. However, he immediately adds that "such a being must inevitably include the memory of the discomfort of existential separation" (Inwagen 2002, 383). To distinguish between the pre-fall (garden) and post-redemption (heavenly) states of mankind, Christians have long emphasized that while both states are fundamentally defined by oneness with God, one is lost and the other is eternally gained. But how can we be sure that when a person reaches heaven, they will not use their will to disobey God once again? The answer brings us back to memory. Those who will be chosen by God for eternal joy will remember what it means to be separated from God. They will remember the horrors of the separated world, and their presence in the restored primordial state is no more mysterious than the prodigal son's refusal to leave his father's house a second time. This is the meaning of the statement that people in heaven cannot sin: just as Socrates was convinced that if he really knew what was bad, he would not do it, so weak will is just a chimera.

THE MEMORY OF DEATH OR THE DEATH OF MEMORY?

The discussion of epistemological and theodicean aspects when thematizing memory inevitably leads to the point where memory in religious discourse turns from an everyday phenomenon into one of the foundational metaphors. Such memory is, in a tradition that looks back to Plato, called "*anamnesis*," marking as it does the place where all modes of temporality (past, present, future), as well as the earthly and eternal worlds, are gathered.

Jasper, viewing religious discourse through the prism of a desert metaphor, is just looking for favorable conditions for religious experience (a kind of recollection), discovering such pastoral "places" as the desert, and the depths of despair, in world literature as well as in the Holy Scriptures. The desert is not only a place of stories of exile, but also one of divine blessing. It is a place to remember what is woven into myths, what is captured and retained with the assistance of rites, what is the meaning of the Eucharist and the sacraments in general:

in the heart of every true desert there is a garden, and when we reach it, it seems completely familiar to us, despite the fact that we are coming for the first time (Jasper 2004, 151).

The anamnesis of the Eucharist, the commemoration of Christ's suffering, is not just a collective testimony of a historical event. It is an apocalyptic affirmation, fully realized in the imagination of true poets, for whom language becomes the true kenosis—the isolation of the desert, the silence of speech. Such silence lies at the heart of the sacramental event. As in the desert, it is not only life that is exalted here, but also death, which at the same time is the birth (genesis) of God. Such a beginning is possible thanks only to the absolute kenosis of God; for a person it is always a memory of abandonment (anamnesis), recognized in the words “my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). This is the moment when Jesus fulfills his mission in failure, “having accomplished the greatest work of his life, surpassing all the works and miracles he performed on earth or in heaven” (Jasper 2004, 154).

In this way, the foundational event of memory seems to fuse the “not-yet” of lost peace and the “not-yet” of perfect being in the temporal existence of man. However, in such a combination existence is transcended, so the question that requires us to discuss memory inevitably arises again: is existence after death, in an incorporeal form, intelligible and logically possible?

It has often been argued (e.g., by Bernard Williams, D.Z. Phillips and Antony Flew) that an immaterial and therefore unobservable soul cannot be the basis of a person's identity. The identity of a person does not depend on the continuity and immutability of the soul (as a substance), because in that case we would not know ourselves or those around us. Since the soul is unobservable, no thesis concerning it can be justified. It is not known whether other people have souls, whether animals are characterized by this, whether there is one or several souls (for temporal and eternal life). However, people undoubtedly make valid claims about their identity and that of others, so it is tempting to think that the questions of the soul and personal identity have nothing to do with each other. In that case, the identity of a person must be based on a bodily criterion, and no thesis about survival after death thanks to the soul is plausible.

This line of criticism also bears on memory as a criterion of personal identity. According to Perry, it is precisely because of the (both Cartesian and mundane) fact that memory is deceptive that it is impossible to distinguish real memory from fantasy without an additional criterion. Therefore, those who believe in immortality fall into a closed circle: they hold that the identity of a person is based on and unfolded by authentic memory (the

purported John is John in the afterlife only if he remembers the events that happened to John from John's perspective), while at the same time asserting that it is precisely identity that draws the line demarcating the purported memory from the real one (the supposed John can only remember John's past if he is John, otherwise the memory is only imaginary). In this way, the idea that the soul conquers death, based on memory as a criterion of identity, turns out to be untenable.

Perry's basic premise seems valid; indeed, we must somehow distinguish between authentic and inauthentic memory, because the mere fact that John seems to be remembering John's life from John's perspective does not remove all doubt about whether the supposed John is John. The question arises whether the criterion of memory is a parasite operating at the expense of the criterion of the body. This is not an absolute truth—people often establish an identity based on the criterion of memory alone. After receiving a letter from a friend, we will trust our memory and only in cases of doubt will we refer to both criteria. However, if we conceive hypothetically of a case where the corporeal criterion could not be relied upon, how would rational claims of identity then be possible? According to Stephen T. Davis, they would be so with the help of the memories of several different individuals, coordinating with and correcting each other (2002, 533). If, say, there are a hundred disembodied souls floating around wondering if they are who they think they are, it would be irrational to deny that their memory-based identities are authentic if the memories fit together, confirm each other, and form a coherent picture.

Such a complex context for memory in each case reveals uniqueness as a fundamental criterion of the identity of both the person in general and the believer. Christianity strongly denies that there can be qualitatively identical individuals in the Eschaton. On the other hand, the attributes of God allow such a situation to be thought of, so the question can be raised: how would this affect the understanding of the afterlife? In short, such a situation, where several qualitatively identical "Johns" existed after death, would require either a revision of what we take to be a basic criterion of personhood (namely, that only one "incarnation" of a person is possible), where this corresponds to an intuition that is deeply rooted, or an admission that John (as a unique personality on earth) did not survive death.

CONCLUSIONS

Descartes' hypothetical positing of an all-powerful deceiver has been used constructively in the philosophy of religion, especially in the fields of epistemology and theodicy. In discussing the problem of the obviousness of

sensory perception, memory, and other minds—i.e. rejecting the existence of self-authenticating phenomena—Plantinga recalls Descartes' hypothetical warning about a man who can be deceived by a demon. This caveat also applies to truths based on memory. Thus, the mere possession of visual or sensory material is not sufficient to confer validity upon a belief: where a belief that is rational is concerned, an additional criterion will be the specific context that serves to validate it.

Belief is only truly foundational under certain conditions. These conditions are the justification for belief. Thus, foundational beliefs do not exist, or are not necessarily unsupported by anything. It is only specific and concrete, rather than abstract, propositions that are experienced as truly fundamental. The main conclusion of Plantinga's epistemological reform is that beliefs (among them truths about the past) that are usually taken as obvious (not requiring justification) are supported by a specific context, while belief statements (rooted in certain experiences) are mistakenly considered unfounded and therefore irrational.

In considering the question of evil, Inwagen uses a variety of parables that are unfolded in terms of how they relate to memory and furnish arguments that form a theodicy. The hypothetical "cancellation" of evil allows us to depict a reality in which there is no room for free, conscious decision-making. On the one hand, such an action (removing the memory of evil) presupposes a delusion about the past, which would contradict Descartes' refutation of his own hypothesis. We cannot logically justify a situation where God simply restores fallen humanity instantly to its prehistoric state, except by falsifying humanity's historical memory. On the other hand, such a situation prevents a person's conscious, authentic participation in salvation.

According to Inwagen, the conception of salvation presupposes, above all, a reflection on the evil and suffering inherent in existence. First, in the absence of such conditioning, a person would only be satisfied with secular interests. So, if God were to miraculously "undo" the natural consequences of separation from Him, not only would He be a deceiver, but He would also deprive mankind of the motivation for godliness. Second, the memory of evil experienced or created in existence is a necessary component of the restored condition of humanity, negating the possibility of a second fall and completing the plan of salvation.

As we have seen, the thematization of memory is also appealed to when discussing the doctrine of the afterlife. Opponents of this doctrine (e.g. Perry) claim that memory without the criterion of a body is not sufficient to justify a person's identity, while supporters (e.g. Davis) claim that memory,

or rather a coherent context of memories, can be a sufficient criterion for non-corporeal existence and thus for the identity of the soul.

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