

Article

The Multiverse and Divine Creation

Michael Almeida

Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78249, USA;
michael.almeida@utsa.edu

Received: 2 November 2017; Accepted: 22 November 2017; Published: 24 November 2017

Abstract: I provide the account of divine creation found in multiverse theorists Donald Turner, Klaas Kraay, and Tim O'Connor. I show that the accounts Kraay and Turner offer are incoherent. God does not survey all possible worlds and necessarily actualize those universes in the (on balance) good worlds or the worthy worlds. If God necessarily actualizes the multiverse, we have no idea which universes are parts of that multiverse. I show next that Tim O'Connor's multiverse account of creation is also incoherent. I argue that a preferable multiverse would include a much greater variety of universes than are included in Turner, Kraay or O'Connor. In the last section I offer some concluding remarks.

Keywords: creation; philosophy of religion; multiverses

1. Introduction

Among the advantages of the theistic multiverse is that it aims to satisfy the principle of plenitude. According to A.O. Lovejoy, the principle of plenitude entails that creation is as extensive and abundant as possible:

... the extent and the abundance of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source (Lovejoy 1932).

There are infinitely many universes in the theistic multiverse. Multiverse theory further ensures that the plenitude of creation is consistent with being the best possible world. Indeed, the theistic multiverse is the uniquely best world.

The theistic multiverse provides, in addition, a powerful theodicy. There is not a single instance of gratuitous evil anywhere in the entire multiverse—indeed there is not a single instance of contingent evil in the multiverse. There are plenty of instances of evil—there might well be vast amounts of undeserved suffering, horrendous moral evil, and terrible natural disasters in many universes—but there is not a single instance of evil that is not metaphysically necessary. And since every instance of evil is metaphysically necessary, it is impossible to actualize the best possible world without permitting every instance. It is simply impossible that any evil in the multiverse should be reduced, mitigated, or eliminated.

For all of the theoretical advantages of the theistic multiverse—and there are certainly many—it offers an account of divine creation that is impossible. The account of creation according to which God necessarily actualizes all of the good-enough—or the on balance good or worthy or threshold-surpassing—universes from all of the simple or complex worlds is not a coherent view. If God necessarily actualizes the best multiverse, the correct account of divine creation does not involve any choice at all among possible universes. There is indeed no reason to believe that the theistic multiverse includes any universes that are on balance good or worthy or threshold surpassing.

In Section 2 I provide the account of divine creation found in multiverse theorists Donald Turner, Klaas Kraay, and Tim O'Connor. In Section 3 I show that the accounts Kraay and Turner offer are

incoherent. God does not survey all possible worlds and necessarily actualize those universes in the (on balance) good worlds or the worthy worlds. If God necessarily actualizes the multiverse, we have no idea which universes are parts of that multiverse.¹ In Section 4 I show that Tim O'Connor's multiverse account of creation is also incoherent. In Section 5 I argue that a preferable multiverse would include a much greater variety of universes than are included in Turner, Kraay or O'Connor. I offer some concluding remarks in Section 6.

2. Creating the Theistic Multiverse

There is a widely shared view that the extent of divine creation must be proportional to the maximal greatness of God. Giordano Bruno, philosopher and theologian, expressed the following "heretical" views on the creation of an infinite divine power.

I hold the universe to be infinite as a result of the infinite divine power; for I think it unworthy of divine goodness and power to have produced merely one finite world when it was able to bring into being an infinity of worlds. Wherefore I have expounded that there is an endless number of individual worlds like our earth. I regard it, with Pythagoras, as a star, and the moon, the planets, and the stars are similar to it, the latter being of endless number. All these bodies make an infinity of worlds; they constitute the infinite whole, in infinite space, an infinite universe, that is to say, containing innumerable worlds. So that there is an infinite measure in the universe and an infinite multitude of worlds. But this may be indirectly opposed to truth according to the faith.²

Bruno's ontology reverses the order of worlds and universes, or at least seems to. Universes include an infinity of worlds rather than worlds including an infinity of universes. But he insists on an infinite creation from an infinite divine power. Similar views on divine creation are expressed in Kant's *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*:

But what is at last the end of these systematic arrangements? Where shall creation itself cease? It is evident that in order to think of it as in proportion to the power of the Infinite being, it must have no limits at all . . . the field of the revelation of the Divine attributes is as infinite as these attributes themselves (Kant 1969).

A creation that is in proportion to the power of an infinite being, according to Kant, must itself be infinitely or limitlessly large. More recently, Paul Draper has expressed similar thoughts concerning what a perfectly good God of limitless resources would create:

. . . a perfectly good God of limitless creative resources would be likely to create vastly many worlds, including magnificent worlds of great perfection as well as good but essentially flawed worlds that are more in need of special providence For by creating valuable worlds, God adds to the excellence of reality and also provides for the expression of divine benevolence, divine justice, and other virtues (Draper 2004).

These views all seem to express some logical or metaphysical relationship between maximal greatness and the principle of plenitude. We noted above that the principle of plenitude is most closely associated with Arthur Lovejoy. The principle of plenitude, according to Lovejoy, states that no genuine potentiality can remain unfulfilled:

. . . the extent and the abundance of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source . . . the world is the better the more things it contains (Lovejoy 1932).

¹ I will argue in what follows that God should actualize every possible universe. This perhaps follows trivially on the account of multiverse creation under discussion.

² See (White 2002). See also (Munitz 1951).

The principle of plenitude is also invoked in the explanation of the theistic multiverse. According to Donald Turner, it is God's love that explains why he creates anything at all. Divine love also explains why God creates every valuable cosmos.

But why would God be committed to the Principle of Plenitude? In fact, why should God create anything at all?God is a loving God, and while he does not need anyone to show his love to, nonetheless, his love leads him to create beings to show his love to.

. . . . So God creates a cosmos full of beings. But why stop there? The same considerations that lead him to create this cosmos would lead him to create any valuable cosmos (Turner 2014, p. 11).

According to the multiverse account of creation, the theistic multiverse is composed of an important subset of the possible universes in metaphysical space. A maximally great being creates *all and only* those universes that meet a certain standard of value.

. . . Thus I claim that God ought to actualize that complex possible world which contains cosmoi corresponding to every simple possible world above some cut-off line—for example, every simple possible world with a favorable balance of good over evil.³

According to Turner's account of creation, God surveys all possible worlds—perhaps all of the simple possible worlds—and selects for creation the cosmoi of all of those possible worlds that are on balance good. The theistic multiverse therefore includes all and only those cosmoi that are on balance good. It is easy to see that the theistic multiverse, on Turner's account, is the best possible world. It is God's perfect goodness, omnipotence, and love that explain why God actualizes the best possible world—the theistic multiverse.

Klaas Kraay offers several plausible principles that aim to explain the divine creation of the theistic multiverse.

Pushed to their logical limit, these considerations suggest that an unsurpassably powerful, knowledgeable, and good deity will create every universe that is worth creating. I suspect that this way of thinking is motivated by a principle of plenitude . . . ⁴

Since it also true that God cannot create a universe that is unworthy of creation, God must create all and only the universes worth creating. The universes that God selects from are instantiations or concretizations of possible worlds.⁵ So, just as God can survey possible worlds and evaluate them according to their good-making and bad-making properties, God can survey the universes and evaluate them according to their good-making and bad-making properties.

The axiological framework for possible worlds discussed [above] can now be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to universes As we earlier restricted our attention to possible worlds actualizable by God, let's now restrict our attention to universes creatable by God. Finally, just as there are three candidate hierarchies of possible worlds . . . so too there are three candidate hierarchies of universes: either there is exactly one unsurpassable universe, or else there are none, or else there are infinitely many.⁶

On Kraay's picture of divine creation, God surveys all of the possible universes we find in possible worlds. God evaluates the universes according to their good-making and bad-making properties. Finally, God creates all and only the universes that are worthy of creation in the theistic multiverse. Indeed, God *necessarily* creates all and only the universes that are worthy of creation.

³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴ See (Kraay 2010, p. 361).

⁵ Kraay's terminology is that universes 'comprise' worlds. In Kraay's metaphysics, possible worlds are maximal states of affairs. So it is perhaps better to see universes as actualized or concretized maximal states of affairs.

⁶ Ibid., p. 360.

If there is a unique unsurpassable world . . . there is good reason to think that it would be morally unacceptable for God to allow any other world to be actual. But if it is morally unacceptable for God to permit any world other than the unique best to be actual, it seems that this is the only world that could be actual—which is just to say that it is the only possible world . . . (Kraay 2011)

According to Tim O'Connor, God creates a superuniverse containing every single universe that meets his own standard of goodness.

More likely . . . is that God would elect to create that super-universe containing every single universe at or above [some goodness threshold] τ . . . ⁷

According to O'Connor, the superuniverse that results would be infinitely valuable. Indeed, God would have a choice among such infinitely valuable superuniverses. And, again, for O'Connor, the principle of plenitude explains the creation of the superuniverse.

. . . So God has reason not to settle for creating a superuniverse that has only one universe as a member. Nor will it help for God to create two or three-membered superuniverse, or in fact an n-membered superuniverse, for any finite value n. But it would appear to help if God were to create an infinitely membered superuniverse, provided there is no finite upper limit on the value of its members.⁸

According to O'Connor, God surveys all of the universes existing in all possible worlds and creates all and only those universes whose value exceeds some value τ .

3. Incoherent Creation: Turner and Kraay

Both Turner and Kraay maintain that it follows from the principle of plenitude and God's essential perfection—God's maximal greatness—that God actualizes the best possible world. The best possible world, according to Kraay and Turner, is the theistic multiverse. Turner urges that God *ought to actualize* the theistic multiverse and since, necessarily, God does what he ought to do, God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse.

Kraay also concludes that God—a maximally great being—necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse.

theists should maintain that the actual world is a multiverse featuring all and only universes worthy of being created and sustained by God, and—more controversially—it recommends that theists embrace modal collapse: the claim that this multiverse is the only possible world.⁹

But if both Turner and Kraay are right that God necessarily actualizes the best possible world—the theistic multiverse—then both of their accounts of divine creation are flatly incoherent.

Reconsider Turner's account of the divine creation of the theistic multiverse. According to Turner, God surveys the cosmoi of all simple possible worlds and selects for creation those cosmoi whose value is on balance good. The theistic multiverse is composed of all and only those cosmoi that are on balance good. And the theistic multiverse is therefore the best possible world.

But if God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then this account of divine creation is obviously not possible. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then *there are no simple possible worlds*. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then the theistic multiverse

⁷ Ibid., p. 117.

⁸ See op. cit. (O'Connor 2008, p. 117).

⁹ (Kraay 2011, p. 361).

is the only possible world.¹⁰ Therefore, there exist no simple possible worlds whose cosmoi God created in actualizing the best possible world. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then necessarily he does not create cosmoi corresponding to any cosmoi in any simple possible world. It would be impossible for God to do so.

So, if God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then God creates whatever universes happen to exist in the theistic multiverse. There is nothing else it is possible for him to do. Whatever universes exist in the theistic multiverse are the only universes that exist, full stop. Are all of those universes on balance good? Perhaps they are, but then perhaps not. It is another infelicity in Turner's account of divine creation of the theistic multiverse that he assumes that God actualizes the best possible world only if God creates all of the on balance good cosmoi. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then he actualizes the best possible world *no matter how good or bad* the universes happen to be that compose the theistic multiverse. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then God necessarily actualizes the best possible world. The intrinsic value of universes composing the multiverse is irrelevant to the question of whether the multiverse is the best possible world.

Reconsider Kraay's account of the divine creation of the theistic multiverse. According to Kraay, God creates all of the universes, or sets of universes, that are worthy of creation. All of these universes or sets of universes comprise possible worlds. So, the theistic multiverse is composed of all and only those universes that are worthy of creation. And the theistic multiverse is therefore the best possible world.

But, according to Kraay, God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse. So, again, this account of divine creation is not possible. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then *there exist no possible worlds apart from the multiverse*—there simply are no possible worlds except the multiverse. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then the theistic multiverse is the only possible world, full stop. Therefore, there exist no other possible worlds whose universes God surveyed and then created or duplicated in actualizing the best possible world. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then necessarily he does not create all of the worthy universes existing in other possible worlds. That cannot be how divine creation occurs.

How could divine creation occur, if God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse? If God necessarily actualizes the multiverse, then God creates whatever universes happen to exist in the theistic multiverse. The universes that comprise the multiverse might all be worthy of creation. But perhaps many of them are not worthy of creation. Perhaps many of them are intrinsically bad worlds. None of these questions matter to whether God actualizes the best possible world. No matter what their intrinsic value or disvalue, God necessarily actualizes the best possible world.

It is an infelicity in Kraay's account of the creation of the theistic multiverse that he assumes that God actualizes the best possible world only if God creates all of the universes worth creating. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then he actualizes the best possible world no matter how worthy or unworthy the universes happen to be that compose the theistic multiverse. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then God necessarily actualizes the best possible world. The intrinsic value of the universes composing the multiverse is not relevant at all to the question of whether the multiverse is the best possible world.

The accounts of divine creation in Turner and Kraay are not coherent. It is impossible that God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse and that he creates all of the on balance good or worthy cosmoi existing in all other possible worlds. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse,

¹⁰ Turner updates his views in (Turner 2014). His revised view, which he assimilates to Leibniz's views, is that there are possible worlds that God cannot actualize. To make the revised view work it would have to be true that God actualizes some worlds as a matter of metaphysical necessity and nonetheless there are possible worlds that he cannot actualize. But there could be no possible worlds that it is metaphysically impossible for God to actualize. Alternatively, Turner could hold, with Leibniz, that it is not metaphysically impossible for God to actualize a less-than-ideal world. If that is true then it is hard to see why we need the theistic multiverse.

then there exist no other possible worlds whose universes God might have duplicated or created. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then there is no requirement that the universes composing the multiverse be on balance good or worthy of creation. The theistic multiverse is the best possible world no matter the intrinsic value or disvalue of universes composing that world.

4. Incoherent Creation: O'Connor

According to Timothy O'Connor, God would not create any single membered superuniverse or any finitely membered superuniverse, since there is, for each of them, infinitely many better superuniverses.

... it is plausible that God, intending to create, would not wish to settle for a universe than which there are an infinity of better universes, whose increase in value over our universe stretches without limit as we go up the series So God has reason not to settle for creating a superuniverse that has only one universe as a member. Nor will it help for God to create a two or three-membered superuniverse, or in fact an n -membered superuniverse, for any finite value n . But it would appear to help if God were to create an infinitely membered superuniverse, provided there is no finite upper limit on the value of its members.¹¹

But even the infinitely membered superuniverses are not sufficiently good for God to actualize any one of them.

More likely ... is that God would elect to create that super-universe containing every single universe at or above [some goodness threshold] τ ...¹²

But, again, O'Connor refines God's principle of selection from among the infinitely valuable worlds.

... notice that [as] we go up the scale of superuniverses (unlike universes), eventually the values become infinite, in such a way that the hierarchy seems to 'flatten out'. The superuniverse God creates is one of these equally top-valued members, the choice between them to be decided on grounds *in addition to* objective value.¹³

The additional criteria are measured along three qualitative dimensions of value. First, for each universe, we can assess the intensive value of each of the basic objects. Using criteria for the perfection of each kind of object, this measure concerns the perfection of each object in the universe. Secondly, there is the aggregate value of objects taken collectively. Finally, there is the organic value of each universe, and perhaps the organic value of its subregions.

The total value of a universe appears then to be a point in three-space. Given that none of a universe's objects may have infinite intensive value, its value in this regard ... will typically not be infinite ... And crucially a universe's organic value will always be less than maximal. Even allowing for infinite aggregative value, then, no single universe will be of maximal value ... Hence, there is a natural impetus for a perfect being to create an infinitely membered superuniverse whose members are ordered by value without an upper bound.¹⁴

According to O'Connor, then, a perfect being will actualize some rich and infinitely value superuniverse.

¹¹ See (O'Connor 2008, p. 117).

¹² Ibid., p. 117.

¹³ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 118.

I have argued that all the possibilities deemed creation-worthy by a perfect Creator would conform to a rich structure. Even so, an infinity of options satisfies these constraints, and there is no reason yet uncovered to suppose that any highly particular sort of universe will be deemed necessary.¹⁵

No highly particular sort of universe is necessary, according to O'Connor, but it is necessary that God actualize a possible world that satisfies the criteria he has set forth. *Necessarily*, God actualizes an infinitely membered, partial ordered superuniverse for which there is no finite upper bound on the intensive value on the objects in each universe and no finite upper bound on the organic value of its universes, all of which exceed the threshold τ .

But O'Connor's account of divine creation of the superuniverse is incoherent. According to O'Connor, God would elect to create that superuniverse containing every single universe at or above some goodness threshold τ . There are superuniverses, according to O'Connor, that contain a single member, a single universe. And there are superuniverses that include n universes for every finite number n . Some of those universes have a value that exceeds some goodness threshold τ and some do not. What God does is survey all of the single (and presumably, finite numbered) universes in the superuniverses. God then elects to create all of those universes that exceed the goodness level τ . And the result is a superuniverse that has infinite value. God chooses to actualize a superuniverse that is among the infinitely valued ones.

But if God necessarily actualizes an infinitely membered, partially ordered superuniverse for which there is no finite upper bound on the intensive value of the objects in each universe and no finite upper bound on the organic value of its universes, all of which exceed the threshold τ , then there *exist no single membered superuniverses*. Indeed, there could not be a superuniverse that is even finitely membered, since God must choose to create a superuniverse from among a subset of the infinitely membered superuniverses.

The picture of divine creation according to which there are sufficiently good universes in various superuniverses that God chooses to create in the top-superuniverses is not a coherent one. It simply cannot be what occurs in divine creation, if it is true that, necessarily, God chooses to actualize a superuniverse that meets the specific criteria that O'Connor specifies. Most of the universes that feature in O'Connor's account of divine creation are necessarily non-existent. So, it is impossible that God should have chosen to create any of them in the divinely preferred set of superuniverses.

5. On Creating All Metaphysical Reality

Multiverse theorists in general restrict the universes composing the theistic multiverse to those meeting some standard of goodness. O'Connor requires that the universes in the superuniverse exceed the threshold τ , Kraay requires that the universes in the theistic multiverse all be worth creating, and Turner requires that the cosmoi in the theistic multiverse all be on balance good. Other multiverse theorists place similar restrictions. Hud Hudson suggests that God would actualize a multiverse that includes a plenitudinous hyperspace that includes every 'world' worth actualizing.

... I am suggesting ... that the many independent regions of a plenitudinous hyperspace provide [the hyperspace] theorist with the resources to affirm a perfectly good sense in which God creates the best world and our own world is not the best. The sense in question amounts to the double claim that at least one of the independent three-dimensional subregions of hyperspace is as valuable as any three-dimensional subregion could be, and that the particular three-space in which we find ourselves is not the fortunate one ... [P]lenitudinous hyperspace ... also provides the resources to maintain a ... sense

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 120.

in which God creates absolutely every world worth creating, even if their number is indenumerable.¹⁶

Peter Forrest, too, suggests that God would create every possible world meeting some standard of goodness.

In the absence of arguments to the contrary, it is reasonable to assume the Principle of Compatibility and that God can create one version of every possible good world. It follows that God never chooses between one possible world and another; rather, God examines all possible worlds and, for each possible world, decides whether to create it or not.¹⁷

The theistic multiverse, by any of these accounts, is not plenitudinous. The theistic multiverse does not include possible worlds or universes that correspond to every way things (non-skeptically) might have been. The multiverse includes only those possible worlds that meet or exceed some standard of goodness.

But if God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then the multiverse is identical to *all of metaphysical reality*. There are no possible worlds, objects, events, or states of affairs that are not actual worlds, objects, events, and states of affairs. If God necessarily actualizes the theistic multiverse, then the theistic multiverse at least nominally satisfies the general principle of plenitude.

The most general form of the principle of plenitude does not distinguish among *possibilia*. If there are possible objects, kinds of objects, events, kinds of events, states of affairs and so on, then the general principle entails that every possible object, kind of object, event, kind of event, state of affairs and so on *exists* at some time or other where the existence of merely possible objects, kinds of object, events, kinds of event, states of affairs and so on do not differ ontologically from the existence of actual objects, kinds of object, events, and so on.¹⁸

In the theistic multiverse, every possible object, event, etc. exists at some time or other where the existence of these possible objects, events, etc. does not differ ontologically from the existence of actual objects, events, etc. There is no ontological difference between possible objects and actual objects, since the possible objects *just are* the actual objects. The theistic multiverse does not make the distinction between actual worlds, objects, events, states of affairs and possible worlds, objects, events, and states of affairs. The theistic multiverse is the only existing possible world, so God actualizes every possible world.

It is nonetheless an important criticism of the theistic multiverse that it is not plenitudinous. It nominally satisfies the general principle of plenitude, but there are many ways things non-skeptically might have been that are not represented in the theistic multiverse. There are, for instance, no on balance bad worlds in that multiverse. There are no worlds in which there is pervasive suffering and injustice. And there are no worlds in which the level of goodness falls just below the standard of goodness for universes in the theistic multiverse.

¹⁶ See (Hudson 2005, p. 166 ff). The plenitudinous hyperspace Hudson describes is similar to a possible big world that Lewis proposes. See (Lewis 1986, p. 72).

¹⁷ (Forrest 1981). On Forrest's ontology, possible worlds are collections of individual objects.

A world is a set of material objects and/or minds (excluding God) connected by chains of causal, temporal or spatial relations, but to which no other material object or mind is so connected (except via God). By an individual, I mean a human being's life, considered as a four-dimensional entity (also the life of any animal capable of experiencing evil). By a world-version (or individual-version) I mean a complete description of a possible world (or individual). How does one classify world-versions? One can consider kinds of worlds: our kind of world is one in which there are regular laws with few exceptions and these laws are like the ones in our world. I assume the Principle of Compatibility, namely that any two worlds of different kinds might both exist. If this principle is correct, one can define a possible world to be an incompatibility class of world versions, that is, two versions are of the same world if they cannot both exist. Are any two world-versions compatible? If they are, there is the odd possibility that in another actual world everything is exactly like this world but for one grain of sand missing. Thus it seems that the same possible world has several different versions.

¹⁸ See (Almeida, chp. 1, sct. 1.4.2).

It is important to note that it is open to defenders of the theistic multiverse to argue that God creates all of metaphysical reality, more broadly understood. The theistic multiverse might include universes corresponding to every way a universe non-skeptically might have been. There is, it might be argued, one possible world, but that possible world includes every possible universe.

But, the universes in the theistic multiverse, whatever universes they are, must be compossible. Compossible universes are more accurately described as isolated parts of one scattered universe in one big world. But, the defender of the theistic multiverse might argue, the isolated universe-parts or quasi-universes might be *close enough* to complete universes to represent them. Here is Lewis on big worlds:

One big world, spatiotemporally interrelated, might have many different world-like parts. *Ex hypothesi* these are not complete worlds, but they could seem to be. They might be four-dimensional; they might have no boundaries; there might be little or no causal interaction between them. Indeed, each of these world-like parts of one big world might be a duplicate of some genuinely complete [Lewis] world.¹⁹

There are several ways in which there might be a big world. The theistic multiverse theorists generally elect to have all of the actual universe-parts spatiotemporally isolated. But there is really no reason to isolate the world-like objects into clearly demarcated regions of metaphysical space. There is no theoretical advantage to doing so. Perhaps the world-like objects all fall into epochs in an infinite temporal sequence.

Time might have the metric structure not of the real line, but rather of many copies of the real line laid end to end. We would have many different epochs, one after another. Yet each epoch would have infinite duration, no beginning, and no end. Inhabitants of different epochs would be spatiotemporally related, but their separation would be infinite . . . ²⁰

However the one big world is structured, it would include infinitely many world-like objects. Those world-like objects are parts of the vast, temporally infinite, universe. The defender of the theistic multiverse might argue that—contrary to what we might have thought—the one big world comprises all of metaphysical reality, and the totality of the world-like objects in the theistic multiverse represent every way things non-skeptically might have been.²¹

David Lewis has offered this style of argument against the position that there might be possible worlds that include island universes—that there might be possible worlds that include as parts spatiotemporally isolated universes.

If you thought, as I did too, that a single world might consist of many more or less isolated world-like parts, how sure can you be that you really had in mind the supposed possibility that I reject? Are you sure that it was an essential part of your thought that the world-like parts were in no way spatiotemporally related? Or might you not have had in mind, rather, one of these substitutes I offer? Or might your thought have been sufficiently lacking in specificity that the substitutes would do it justice?

The multiverse theorist might argue analogously that if you thought there was a possible world for every way things non-skeptically might have been, how do you know you are not thinking of world-like objects? How do you know that you are not thinking that there is a *world-like object* for every way things non-skeptically might have been? If the theistic multiverse includes an infinity of world-like objects, and if the theistic multiverse—the one big world—is all there is to metaphysical

¹⁹ See (Lewis 1986, p. 70 ff). All of the bracketed material is my own.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

²¹ Certainly multiverse theorists run into the problem of such worlds being a part of metaphysical reality. But we do have some evidence from modal imagination that there is a rich variety of possible worlds in the pluriverse.

reality, then we might be moved to conclude that metaphysical reality is in fact plenitudinous or close enough.

6. Conclusions

The accounts of divine creation in Turner, Kraay, and O'Connor are not coherent. If God necessarily actualizes a multiverse, then divine creation cannot be other than the necessary creation of some multiverse or other. The intrinsic value or disvalue of the multiverse could not be relevant to God's decision to actualize it. Divine creation could not be—as the multiverse theorist envisions it—a moral decision reflecting the perfect goodness of a creator. That is not at all what transpires during creation. The necessarily actualized multiverse—for all multiverse theorists can coherently tell us—might include nothing but intrinsically bad universes.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Almeida, Michael J. Forthcoming. *Theism and Modal Realism*, Unpublished manuscript, under review.
- Draper, Paul. 2004. Cosmic Fine-tuning and Terrestrial Suffering: Parallel problems for Naturalism and Theism. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 41: 311–21.
- Forrest, Peter. 1981. The Problem of Evil: Two Neglected Defenses. *Sophia* 20: 49–54. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hudson, Hud. 2005. *The Metaphysics of Hyperspace*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1969. *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*. Translated by W. Hastie. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Kraay, Klaas. 2010. Theism, Possible Worlds, and the Multiverse. *Philosophical Studies* 147: 355–68. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kraay, Klaas. 2011. Theism and Modal Collapse. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 48: 361–72.
- Lewis, David. 1986. *On the Plurality of Worlds*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. 1932. *The Great Chain of Being*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Munitz, Milton K. 1951. One Universe or Many? *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12: 231–55. [[CrossRef](#)]
- O'Connor, Timothy. 2008. *Theism and Ultimate Explanation: The Necessary Shape of Contingency*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Turner, Donald. 2014. Revising the Many-Universes Solution to the Problem of Evil. In *God and the Multiverse: Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Perspectives*. Edited by Klaas Kraay. New York: Routledge.
- White, Michael. 2002. *The Pope and the Heretic: The True Story of Giordano Bruno, the Man Who Dared to Defy the Roman Inquisition*. New York: HarperCollins.



© 2017 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).