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WILLIAM LANE CRAIG, In Defense of Absolute Creationism

Absolute creationism is a sort of theistic Platonism, which preserves intact the host of abstract objects but renders them dependent upon God. From its inception, absolute creationism has been dogged by a vicious circularity that has come to be known as the bootstrapping objection. Many philosophers, including the author, have taken the bootstrapping objection to be decisive against absolute creationism. But a review of the most sophisticated statement of the objection suggests a way out for the absolute creationist. By denying a constituent ontology the absolute creationist can avoid the vicious circularity, since explanatorily prior to his creation of properties God can be just as he is without exemplifying properties. Still, in light of the metaphysical idleness of such abstract entities, theists would be well advised to deny instead the Platonist's presumed criterion of ontological commitment and so to avoid realism altogether.

EUGENE GARVER, Charmides and the Virtue of Opacity: An Early Chapter in the History of the Individual

The *Charmides*, searching for a definition of temperance, constantly confronts problems of reflexivity, transparency and opacity. Transparency and opacity structures the *Charmides*, from the dramatic beginning of Socrates peeking inside Charmides' cloak, to Charmides' initial depiction of *sôphrosynê* as concealing what one can do. The final two proposed definitions of temperance in the *Charmides*, self-knowledge and the knowledge of knowledge, are explicitly reflexive. That reflexivity is best understood by juxtaposing it to transparency (or transitivity) and opacity, in the issue of whether someone with knowledge of, say, the science of medicine, also knows the subject of medicine, health, or whether health is opaque to that second-order knowledge, and whether such opacity would be a defect or an advantage. In identifying self-knowledge with the knowledge of knowledge, as in many other things, Critias is a parody of Socrates. Critias's knowledge of knowledge is a form of architectonic knowledge that, because of opacity, makes unnecessary any appeal to an objective truth and goodness beyond their political determinations. As such, it creates a serious challenge to Socratic claims that such appeals are unavoidable.

THOMAS M. OLSHEWSKY, The Dynamics of *Dunamis*

The important conceptual innovation of *Metaphysics* 9 is not in an extension of *dunamis* into the ontological realm, but in establishing *energeia* as the primary sense of the unit of being. The career of *dunamis* moves from principles of contrariety requiring a *hypokeimenon* (*Physics* 1.1–8); through its role in the concept of natural motion (*Physics* 3.1–3); to different roles for active and passive (*Physics* 8.4 and 5); to correlations of capacity/fulfillment with body/soul, matter/form, and inner/outer potentialities (*On the Soul* 2&3). These developments lay bases for conceiving the reality of natural beings as enactments, undergirded with the potentials of their

constitutional fulfillments (*Metaphysics* 9), and opens the way in *Metaphysics* 12 to understanding a being of pure enactment without *dunamis*.

DOMINIC FARRELL, Wanting the Common Good: Aquinas on General Justice

Ancient philosophers develop what has been called a compositional conception of justice. They treat the virtue of justice as conceptually anterior to a just social order and the moral standing of others. By reversing the order of priority, modern thought proposes structural conceptions of justice. However, Thomas Aquinas's compositional account of justice may satisfy the demands of modern conceptions. He argues that there is a moral virtue called general or legal justice, which consists in responding to the demands of the common good and a society's laws. The article reconstructs Aquinas's account of general justice and argues that he manages to resolve certain difficulties inherent in a compositional conception of justice. He can explain how a shared conception of the common good is reached, and how those who hold rival conceptions can be accommodated and expected to promote it.

ANN HARTLE, Reordering the World: The Modern Philosophical Act in the *Essays* of Montaigne

The modern philosophical act, as it appears in the *Essays* of Montaigne, reorders the world by radically altering the relationship between the mind and the world. Montaigne replaces the premodern philosophical act of contemplation with the modern philosophical act of judgment. While contemplation is the natural end or natural completion and perfection of the mind, judgment is the freedom of the mind from nature. Contemplation is the receptive attitude of the mind toward the world; judgment is the attitude of mastery. Contemplation is the ordering of the human to the divine, while judgment reorders man to man himself. This reordering entails a reevaluation of all things in relation to man as man. Judgment eliminates the classical distinction between actions that are good in themselves and actions that are for the sake of production, thereby undermining the hierarchy of leisure and work, the foundation of classical civilization. The liberal order is the new form of human association, which replaces the old order.