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## ON WILLIAM HASKER'S THEODICY, THE DOCTRINE OF CONTINUOUS CREATION AND THE NATURE OF MORALITY

In this article, I would like to highlight some problems related to William Hasker's theodicies. In the first part of the text, I will present the natural-order theodicy and the free-will theodicy, and in the second part I will formulate some comments regarding Hasker's views.<sup>1</sup> First of all, however, I want to emphasize that Hasker's theodicy (or more generally: his way of thinking and sensitivity) is very close to my own understanding of how the problem of evil should be solved. I share his belief that there is pointless/gratuitous evil in the world, his criticism of sceptical theism, and I share also the libertarian conception of free will. I consider Hasker's theodicy to be one of the most attractive and sympathetic proposals addressing the philosophical problem of evil which have been formulated in the analytic philosophy of religion.

When presenting Hasker's theodicies, I will focus on the main theses only, without discussing Hasker's inspiring polemics with A. Plantinga, J. Roth or D. Z. Phillips.<sup>2</sup> I would like to note at this point that, unlike Alvin Plantinga, William Hasker does not reduce natural evil to moral evil (PLANTINGA 1974).<sup>3</sup> Hence, he proposes two separate theodicies: "the natural-evil theod-

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<sup>1</sup> Hasker's theodicy is discussed in more detail in my article (ŁUKASIEWICZ 2019).

<sup>2</sup> J. Roth advocates a theodicy of protest (ROTH 1981) and D. Z. Phillips rejects any theodicy (PHILLIPS 2001).

<sup>3</sup> I will not use the distinction between defence and theodicy. This distinction is important but I assume that it is well known to the readers interested in the current debate about the problem of evil. The same concerns the very problem of evil or the argument from evil, which can be formulated in different versions (deductive, evidential, pastoral, etc.)

icy” and “the moral-evil theodicy”. Let us begin by discussing the natural-evil theodicy (the natural-order theodicy).

Natural evil existing in the world provokes the question of why the universe is so cruel or why, at best, it is completely indifferent (“cold”) to the fate of sensitive creatures. If it is God who created the world, does the natural evil provide us with evidence against God’s existence or against his moral perfection? This problem is taken up by Hasker within the framework of the natural-order theodicy, which is based on the following assumptions (HASKER 2008, 122–25):

It is good for a world to exist. (A1)

It is good for a world to be complex, natural and multi-leveled. (A2)

It is good for a world to contain beings that are sensitive, capable of feeling pleasure, pain and which are rational. (A3)

It is good for creatures to have a significant degree of autonomy. (A4)

It is good for a world and its parts to evolve using their powers of action and capacities. (A5)

Each of these assumptions has some degree of justification. According to Hasker, the negation of (A1) is a declaration of axiological nihilism. (A1) is very general; it does not define what a world should be like, and it allows the possibility of the existence of many different worlds. The rationale for (A1) is, according to Hasker, the fact that the number of people willing to reject (A1) is negligible.<sup>4</sup>

(A2) states three different characteristics of a possible world: complexity, multi-leveled structure and naturalness. The complexity of a world means that there are many different creatures belonging to many different species, standing in many relationships with each other. A multi-leveled world is a world in which there exist creatures of a different structure (simple, complex and very complex), with different abilities to act (causal powers). A world where only atoms exist or a world with souls and nothing else would not be as good as a world in which there are beings of different kinds. The naturalness of a world consists in the fact that beings existing in that world bring about effects by using only their own powers and abilities. They are not manipulated, controlled or supported by any supernatural beings.

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<sup>4</sup> “The denial of this affirmation, while conceivable in the abstract, would be an expression of utter nihilism, *for most of us, I hope*” (HASKER 2008, 122).

The autonomy referred to in (A4) means “self-direction” and acting within the abilities and powers at the disposal of a given being. But Hasker also emphasizes that “each creature is totally dependent on the Creator for its very existence; not only for its original coming into being but for sustaining its existence from moment to moment” (HASKER 2008, 125). I think that Hasker’s understanding of autonomy in (A4) is compatible with the traditional (classical) doctrine of continuous creation (*creatio continua*).

When justifying (A5), Hasker quotes the following statement by Darwin:

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and wonderful have been, and are being evolved. (DARWIN 1954, 490)

The data of modern science provide crucial evidence for (A5). According to these data, both inanimate and animate nature result from billions of years of evolution. Of course, the mere fact that nature arises as a result of evolution does not suffice to justify the claim that it is good, especially since higher forms of beings, as Darwin writes, arise “from the struggle in nature, from hunger and death”. The very fact that the world of living organisms has an evolutionary origin can even be evidence against divine perfect goodness. Would it not be better for God to create species just as the literal interpretation of Genesis describes it, for example, without “struggle, hunger, and death”? Would a world in which lions do not hunt antelopes not be better? In response to the last question, Hasker states that we are unable to think in a coherent and sufficiently detailed way of a world in which there are benefits from the fact that the world is just as it is but without any evils. If a lion is to be a lion, what and how is it to eat to survive? We can produce various fantastic scenarios but they are not a description of an alternative world, because it is beyond human reason to imagine such a world in detail with all its laws. Our world is the only world we can reasonably speak about. It is a world governed by strictly defined laws of nature. These laws are not conscious subjects; they are completely impersonal, and hence, they have no intentions (good or wrong). Therefore, the world organized and acting according to these laws is neither cruel nor indifferent or “cold” to the pain and suffering of living and dying beings in it.

Summing up, the question of whether it would not be better for the universe not to have arisen through evolution and to be arranged differently than it actually is arranged can be answered as follows. We do not know how

the world might be arranged differently so that there would be life in it and we ourselves, along with many other species, could exist there without pain, suffering and death.

Hasker leaves open the question whether evolution is a process free from any divine intervention, i.e. whether evolution is “blind” and carried out by the forces of nature itself, or whether it is constantly or from time to time directed by God. He states:

No decision need be made here concerning whether the world’s development, and especially the appearance and evolution of living creatures, occurred entirely through the operation of natural forces or whether special divine interventions were required in order for the desired goal to be reached. The first alternative has an undeniable aesthetic appeal, but aesthetic considerations need not be decisive here, and arguably it has not been shown that a purely autonomous development is possible. (HASKER 2008, 201)

At this point, let us only note Hasker’s openness to various possible options regarding divine action in the world. However, it seems that if evolution were guided by God, it would be in contradiction with (A2), which assumes the naturalness of the world.

Given assumptions (A1)–(A5), the natural-order theodicy (NOT) claims that:

(NOT1) The world is a complex, multi-leveled and natural whole containing sensitive beings, some of them gifted with intelligence.

(NOT2) The world arranged in such a way enables the existence of great good, which manifests itself in the order and beauty of the physical world as well as in the development and flowering of countless living creatures. It also includes a lot of suffering and death.

(NOT3) We have no reason to believe that some alternative forms of order in a world, possible to be created by an omnipotent God, would surpass our universe in terms of goodness and beauty.

Taking into account (NOT1)–(NOT3), it is good that God created the world we are part of. Therefore, there is no reason to claim that God is not morally perfect or that a perfectly good God could have acted quite differently (HASKER 2008, 138).

Hasker’s natural-order theodicy explains the existence of pain, suffering, passing and death in general. It does not explain the pain, suffering or death

of individual, particular creatures. What is God's reason in allowing individual cases of great natural evils? The answer to the last question possible within the natural-order theodicy is that God has no purpose in allowing individual occurrences of natural evils, and that these evils are or might be pointless (gratuitous). Nevertheless, though they are or could be pointless, their occurrences are explainable within the natural-order theodicy. According to (A2), the world is natural, and according to (A4), it is autonomous. In the natural and autonomous world, everything happens according to the laws of nature. The laws of nature are impersonal, without any intention or will. They cannot be morally responsible for any sufferings of individual living creatures. It would be groundless to attribute such responsibility to the laws of nature. But also God, who issued these laws, is free from moral responsibility because the laws of nature are impersonal. Hence, the world is natural and autonomous, and the fact that the world is natural and autonomous is good. If we also add that, for all we know, the laws of nature are indeterministic, probabilistic, and that they allow for the occurrence of random events, then we can also conclude that at least some particular natural evils are chancy events (unintended and not caused by God).

#### THE FREE-WILL THEODICY

The free-will theodicy, like the natural-order theodicy, is based on some general statements and evaluations (let us call them "evaluative world description" (EWD) which characterise the world as an immediate environment for human life. The claims which describe this world are as follows:

- (EWD1) It is good for there to exist free, reasonable and responsible persons.
- (EWD2) It is good for these persons to have opportunities to develop their potential.
- (EWD3) It is good for individuals to be able to unite into families, communities, and larger communities where they can take responsibility for others.
- (EWD4) It is good that the structures and processes that characterize the social life of human persons are the product of members of human communities, and not that they are given to these communities from above by some "higher power". (HASKER 2008, 159)

All these statements are intuitively true, and hence they do not require, at least to my mind, any further justification. It should only be remembered that Hasker understands freedom of the will in a libertarian way within the

framework of his open theism, which is the view rejecting God's infallible foreknowledge and claiming that God, the Creator of our world, exists in time.<sup>5</sup> It is worth emphasizing, however, that Hasker's theodicy does not justify God for allowing moral evil caused by free human actions by referring to limited divine omniscience. It is not the case that if God foreknew what evils particular human beings would do, He would prevent those evils from happening in advance, or He would not have created this world but a completely different one. God's incomplete knowledge about the future events is not the reason for the natural and moral evil that has happened and will happen in the future.

Bearing in mind EWD, Hasker's free-will theodicy (FWT) might be presented by the following propositions:

(FWT1) There are free and intelligent beings in the world that live in communities and they are mutually responsible for each other. Human societies came into being developed by making use of the potential of the persons constituting these societies. Human beings organized in such a way enhance their control over their social environment.

(FWT2) The human world understood in this way gives the possibility of realizing the good consisting in the development of the potential and abilities of human beings, including the development of human culture. But this world offers the opportunity to do great evil, because human persons can use their abilities and potential to choose evil and reject good, preferring immediate benefits over long-term common good, hatred over love.

(FWT3) No alternative world we could think of, devoid of the general properties referred to in EWD, offers the possibility of obtaining a good comparable to the good present in our world.

(FWT4) Divine interventions in the human world aimed at preventing created free persons from abusing their freedom or divine interventions aimed at cancelling damages caused by wrong human choices and deeds would undermine the structure of the human world and human morality that God intended in His plan of creation. Such interventions are therefore *not to be expected*.

(FWT5) Therefore, it is good that God has created a world containing such communities of human persons as mentioned above. God is not morally responsible for

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed explanation of why human freedom and divine infallible foreknowledge are incompatible has been offered by Hasker in *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY–London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

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creating a world with such properties, and there is no basis for accusing a perfectly good Creator of not creating another world. (HASKER 2008, 162–63)<sup>6</sup>

Hasker's free-will theodicy gives reasons why God allows evils done by free persons, but also clearly states that God can intervene in the human history.<sup>7</sup> God can intervene in the human life because He is an omnipotent being but *it is not to be expected* that He will intervene because He has good reasons for non-intervention policy. Hasker strongly emphasizes human responsibility for the fate of this world. In other words, the history of the human world, with all its good and wrong events, depends on human free decisions and actions. There is no determinism or fatalism here. From this, however, it should not be concluded that every individual moral evil, including horrendous evil, was allowed by God because of the extraordinary value of the free will of the wrong-doer. Nor is it the case that the extraordinary value of the suffering experienced by the victim of a wrong action may outweigh, defeat or balance off the evil of that action. Hasker does not claim that every particular evil committed by free persons was allowed by God because God had a particular reason to allow it. On the contrary, the free-will theodicy admits that some cases of abuse of free will are neither planned by God nor aimed at any greater good; hence they are just gratuitous evils. Hasker's position, then, is by no means a kind of sceptical theism.

#### THE PROBLEM OF CONSISTENCY

Let us turn now to the question of the consistency of not (the natural-order theodicy) and FWT (the free-will theodicy) with other crucial doctrines accepted by William Hasker. I would like to refer here to two problems.

Firstly, Hasker's theodicy and open theism assume that god exists in time and is subject to certain changes. This is in line with the biblical image of god as a person active in history and in direct relationship to individual people and nations. The biblical god reacts emotionally to the behaviour of

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<sup>6</sup> The free-will theodicy recapitulated here is only minimally paraphrased compared to the original; in a few places some wording has been simplified for the sake of clarity.

<sup>7</sup> It is metaphysically and logically possible for God to intervene in the world.

free creatures: he rejoices, grieves, expresses regret, surprise but also anger.<sup>8</sup> As Hasker points out, this should be understood precisely in the way that god is open to creatures endowed with the freedom of will, and therefore, he does not control and does not know in advance how they will act.<sup>9</sup> If all that is taken into account, then the following problem arises. If God

- (a) is a being “of unimaginable wisdom and power”,
- (b) sustains everything continuously in existence, that is, each individual being and the whole world consisting of all individual beings,
- (c) selects a specific type of world and creates that selected type of world,
- (d) has no infallible foreknowledge but has infallible beliefs about the past and the present (open theism),

then God has beliefs about the future that allow him to predict any future event with very high precision or great probability.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is unconvincing to accept the biblical image of God as a person who truly *spontaneously* reacts to the decisions people make and their actions. It is not convincing that God, as a being “of unimaginable wisdom and power”, is angry like a husband cheated on by his wife (HASKER 2008, 205).

Secondly, the question arises as to whether and how the classical theistic doctrine of continuous creation can be reconciled with the thesis about libertarian freedom and the relative autonomy of the world (A4). Within the relative autonomy of the created world, each being uses its own forces for action and self-determination, but the problem is that given continuous creation all these “own forces” are determined by God. William Hasker rejects the traditional compatibilist conception of the freedom of will and the autonomy of created beings defended, for example, by Thomists or (more generally) by

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<sup>8</sup> I write more about the biblical premises for drawing such an image of God in (ŁUKASIEWICZ 2014, chap. 4), referring there to the statements and texts of various representatives of open theism.

<sup>9</sup> Here, there is an additional difficulty related to the logical value of propositions about the future. Hasker himself shows some hesitancy on this point. In his texts, there are two different and incompatible concepts of the nature of such propositions. According to the first one, propositions about the future are true (they have a logical value), but God does not know it; according to the other, propositions about the future have no logical value and are neither true nor false, because the future does not exist yet. It is assumed here that the future and time are dynamic in nature, that time is passing and that time is becoming. Basically, at present there is only the present, the past is gone, the future is not there yet, which is the Augustinian (dynamic) doctrine of time.

<sup>10</sup> There is no need to be more precise regarding our understanding of the standards or degrees of precision of God’s predictions. I hope that the main intuition I wanted to express in this context is clear enough.



classical theists, considering it as a kind of determinism. In his opinion, Thomism or Lutheranism—as forms of theological determinism—make the problem of evil harder and more difficult.

The question arises whether Hasker's own theodicy (NOT and FWT) is in a better position compared to the theodicies proposed by classical theists or by Molinists. This question is particularly urgent because Hasker, as said above, shares with classical theists the doctrine of continuous creation (divine sustaining everything that has been created in existence).<sup>11</sup>

In order to make clear why I suggest that there is a problem with the doctrine of continuous creation and its incompatibility with Hasker's theodicies, I will present briefly the main claims that the doctrine of continuous creation embraces, and I will refer to some problems resulting from these claims (cf. ŁUKASIEWICZ 2015).

Christian theism is a *creation ex nihilo* view. This theism is also the view that God is the only Governor and the Lord of all created and existing beings. If God the Creator is the only Lord of all creatures, then it follows that He is at every moment of time the Lord of existence of all that exists. Continuous governance of all existing beings is called in the theistic metaphysics "conservation" or "continuous creation". If there were no conservation, then all created beings would cease to exist because they could not continue to exist by themselves. Given the latter we are allowed to accept the following definition (principle); let us call it the principle of conservation (CON):

God conserves  $x$  at  $t =_{\text{def.}}$  God's willing that  $x$  exists at  $t$  brings about  $x$ 's existing at  $t$ , and there is some  $t'$  prior to  $t$  such that  $x$  exists at  $t'$ <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Hasker himself proposes a different way of refuting this allegation. When God creates the world, he chooses general strategies and not detailed plans (HASKER 2008, 204). This is illustrated by some analogy with an engineer doing a highway design. The engineer is aware that there may be tragic accidents on it, but he does not plan in advance that specific persons will die in strictly defined circumstances and he does not build the road so that exactly what he had planned would happen after that. In the former case, the engineer is like the God of open theism, and in the latter, like the God of theological determinism and Molinism. However, bearing in mind God's unimaginable power and wisdom and the divine sustenance of everything in existence, the God of open theism is an engineer of the second kind rather than an engineer of the first kind. The analogy, therefore, is not sufficient and is not convincing as defeater for the allegations that open theism has some advantage over theological determinism and Molinism. Besides, as Hasker himself admits, God had a generally good plan, but on the level of its realisation, there has been so much evil, chaos and disorder that he would have to intervene on a "massive scale" to prevent them. Here, some critics could rightly question the limitless divine wisdom. This line of defence is, as should be stressed, ineffective and unconvincing.

<sup>12</sup> This wording of divine conservation is a slightly altered version of Quinn's first exposition of the doctrine of continuous creation presented in QUINN (1983).

This principle is based—as I think—on another and even more fundamental principle, which I call the principle of divine control. The principle of divine control says that all that exists and happens is willed by God or permitted by Him.

Now, it seems that the conservation principle leads, if not to occasionalism, as Malebranche argued, then to weak or strong concurrentism.<sup>13</sup>

The weak concurrentism is a view that God continuously conserves every created contingent being, which means that God brings about that it exists at every moment of divine action related to that being. This type of divine causation is the only one God does in the world, perhaps apart from special divine actions such as miracles. Therefore, there is room for secondary causation in the world. The secondary causes can bring about changes in other contingent beings even though they cannot be directly responsible for their existence. According to this view, God brings about the existence of the causal power in the secondary causes and brings about that they have sufficient degree of this power to be able to cause something. God, however, is not directly responsible for the existence of causal relations between secondary causes; they are natural causes which produce their own effects. Divine continuous conservation is compatible with the existence of secondary causes in the world and this is compatible with Hasker's assumption (A4).

I doubt, however, that this position is tenable. In order to demonstrate the weakness of weak concurrentism we should have a theory of contingent beings (things). I think that there is only one promising metaphysics of contingent beings which could be useful in the debate about the compatibility of divine continuous conservation and secondary causation in the world. This is the Aristotelian theory of substance,<sup>14</sup> according to which, a substance is a whole composed of material and formal parts (constituents). Formal parts of the substance are responsible for the internal structure of the whole and functions of particular material parts of the substance. The Aristotelian theory of substance also says that there are essential constituents of it determined by the kind to which a given substance belongs and accidental or non-essential constituents (parts/properties) which are not strictly determined by any kinds of substances. Other theories of contingent beings: the bundle theory and the theory of bare substratum cannot help us in solving the problem of divine continuous creation as they imply considerable difficulties (LOUX 2002).

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<sup>13</sup> The weak concurrentism has been called “mere conservationism” by Alfred Freddoso (1991).

<sup>14</sup> In my view, the Aristotelian theory of substance (human beings included) is fully consistent with Hasker's emergent dualism presented and defended in his work *Emergent Self* (1999).

Now, suppose that  $x$  stands for a substance in the Aristotelian sense. Thus, if God brings about that  $x$  exists either at the moment  $t'$  (creation) or at any subsequent moment  $t$  (conservation), then He brings about the existence of all its parts (constituents), essential and accidental parts included (qualitative, relational and quantitative properties). In order to be a substance, a being has to possess all its properties and it must be determined in every respect; hence it must be the case that  $x$  is  $F$  or  $x$  is not  $F$ . Let  $y$  be an effect produced by  $x$ . Then  $x$  has the property of  $x$ 's producing the effect  $y$  (let it be  $G$ ). If it is God who brings about  $G$ , then God brings about both the existence of  $y$  and  $x$ , since He brings about the existence of all the properties of  $x$  because He brings about the existence of  $x$ —as stated by the principle of conservation (CON). And because it is true for all substances, it follows that God directly brings about the existence of all substances and all their material and formal parts (constituents); He is the cause of all effects “produced” by any existent substance. This way God is directly responsible for  $x$ 's being the cause of  $y$ ; but if it is God who is the cause of  $y$ , then  $x$  cannot be the cause of  $y$ , or at least it cannot be the only direct cause of  $y$  (as strong concurrentism claims).

One might consider two strategies of how to avoid occasionalism or strong concurrentism, given weak concurrentism and the Aristotelian conception of substance taken as a starting option, without rejecting the principle of conservation (CON).

The first is that God brings about solely the existence of  $x$  but not any of its properties. Properties are effects of secondary causes acting upon substances. This solution however is internally inconsistent, because for any being to be a substance means to belong to a certain kind, and hence, it must have some essential properties or constituents. Thus, if God brings about the existence of  $x$  which belongs to a certain kind  $K$ , then He brings about the existence of all its essential properties determined by  $K$ . What is more, God brings about the existence of the kind  $K$  itself.

Perhaps we can better understand that this position is incoherent if we restrict our consideration to the *creation* only, that is to the first moment of the existence of any substance. As it follows from the Aristotelian theory of substance, every substance has to belong to a certain kind. But it is impossible that any other contingent beings (substances) determine in any way the essential properties of any other substances because they also have to be created *ex nihilo* by God as substances of a certain kind. Thus, if God creates every substance (meaning that He brings about the existence of this and not

that substance at the moment  $t'$ ), then He also brings about the existence of all of its essential properties at the moment  $t'$ .

The second way of avoiding occasionalism—a more promising one—consists in the claim that divine conservation has a restricted range (essential range) and it concerns only the existence of  $x$  and *all its essential properties* but it does not concern any of its accidental properties or constituents. All accidental parts of the substance  $x$  are produced by some external agents (secondary causes). In this way we make room for non-divine agency in the world of substances created and continuously sustained (conserved) by God. Thus, God brings about the existence of  $x$  but not the existence of all its parts. At least some of them can be produced by chance in a sense (e.g. actions of many external agents).

Let us suppose that such a scenario is true. However, one must note that God, when He brings about the existence of  $x$  and its essential parts, determines the range and kind of its possible accidental properties as well as its substantial changes. For example, a table cannot sing and a man cannot fly (like a bird can). Thus, if  $x$  belongs to a kind  $K$  ( $x$  is  $K$ ), then no other contingent being (substance) can bring it about that  $x$  is  $F$ , if  $F$  is incompatible with  $K$ . But if it is true for any substance  $x$  that  $x$  is  $F$  or  $x$  is not  $F$  meaning that  $x$  is determinate in every respect, and  $F$  is not essential for  $x$ , then it must be the case that if God brought about the existence of  $x$ , then He brought about that  $x$  is  $F$  or non- $F$ . If  $x$  has been created by God, then  $x$  must be determinate in every respect, since  $x$  is a substance. Therefore,  $x$  is  $F$  or  $x$  is non- $F$ . It is also impossible that any non-essential properties of  $x$  could be (directly and totally) caused by other created substances because every other substance distinct from  $x$  has to have all its own properties, including all its accidental properties. It must be so because every substance to be a substance must have all its properties, both essential and accidental ones. Thus, it is not possible that any substance created by God (*ex nihilo*) could bring about the existence of any accidental properties of any other substance because all its properties (parts or constituents) are determined directly (intimately) and totally by God.

It might seem that this trouble could be easily omitted by the hypothesis that a substance  $x$  created by God at the moment  $t'$  or conserved by God at any subsequent moment  $t$  can itself determine (“decide”) to be  $F$  or non- $F$  at  $t'$  or  $t$ . This process of partial self-determination could concern all substances created by God *ex nihilo*. Also, it might seem possible that accidental properties of  $x$  which are produced by it at the first moment of its existence could

be replaced by other properties compatible with a given kind  $K$  produced by agents distinct from  $x$  and from God (say by  $z$ ). But if  $x$  brings about at the moment  $t'$  that  $x$  is  $F$ , then  $x$  creates  $F$  *ex nihilo*. The reason for this is that if God creates  $x$  and God does not bring about  $F$  (or that  $x$  is  $F$ ), then either  $x$  is doing it or another causal agent distinct from  $x$  and from God is doing it. Whatever that being could be, it would have to create  $F$  *ex nihilo*. But it is impossible because only God can do this. If  $x$  brings about at the moment  $t'$  that  $x$  is  $F$ , then either the principle of divine control has to be rejected or  $x$ 's self-determination is an illusion.<sup>15</sup>

If this line of reasoning is correct, then all substances must be totally and directly determined (created and caused) by God. They must be determined by God "from the bottom up". Therefore, it is metaphysically impossible that God create  $x$  and conserve it at the moment  $t'$  without conserving all its essential and accidental properties at  $t'$ .<sup>16</sup>

Thus, if God created *ex nihilo* and continuously conserves all contingent beings, then He determines not only their existence (brings about their existence) but He brings about the existence of all their constituents (parts), be they essential or accidental. Therefore, we may conclude that mere conservationism (weak concurrentism) is untenable.

I do not think that strong concurrentism can be an alternative to the weak one. The strong concurrentism is a view that God not only continuously conserves all created *ex nihilo* contingent things, but He also has direct (intimate) although not exclusive *causal contribution* in every causal action of every created contingent thing (substance). This view, in spite of some interesting advantages (first of all, an explanation of *contra naturam* miracles), leads finally either to occasionalism (theological determinism) or to deism,

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<sup>15</sup> We still keep in mind Hasker's statement that every created being is existentially completely dependent on the Creator ("each creature is totally dependent on the Creator for its very existence; not only for its original coming into being but for sustaining its existence from moment to moment" (HASKER 2008, 125).

<sup>16</sup> There is of course another important aspect of the problem of divine creation and conservation. If an omnipotent God wills something to exist or to happen, then it must exist or it must happen and if He does not will something to exist or happen, it cannot be or cannot happen. So, if  $x$  is  $F$ , then  $x$  cannot be non- $F$  provided that God wills that  $x$  is  $F$ . Perhaps, there are some indeterminate divine volitions and therefore God wills only that ( $x$  is  $F$  or  $x$  is non- $F$ ), but by willing that ( $x$  is  $F$  or  $x$  is non- $F$ ), He wills neither that  $x$  is  $F$  nor that  $x$  is non- $F$  (Peter van Inwagen's idea). Thus, if there are such indeterminate divine volitions, not all properties are necessarily determined by divine will. It is an important suggestion, but it does not solve the problem discussed above because if God wills  $x$  to exist, then  $x$  must be either  $F$  or non- $F$ , and only God can bring it about that  $x$  is  $F$  or that  $x$  is non- $F$ .

which are totally incompatible with Hasker's views on the essence of human freedom and the divine nature.<sup>17</sup>

There is, however, another option for theism left open. God creates *ex nihilo* a set of substances  $\{x, y, z, \dots\}$  and every element of this set is completely determined from the bottom up, all essential and accidental properties included  $\{P, Q, F, G, \dots\}$ , and every element of this set has a common and compound property given by God himself: "being unconserved by God and existent" ("SS property").<sup>18</sup> There is no reason to think that it is impossible for an omnipotent God to create substances which have such a property.<sup>19</sup> Substances created by God can act one upon another and bring about effects of different kinds; they can produce substantial and accidental changes and they can even "produce" new kinds of substances and properties as a result of perhaps longstanding and numerous transformations and changes of the initially created set (say, by evolution).<sup>20</sup> The substances and properties emerging in this way can be more complex and organized than the substances and properties at the very beginning of the universe. It is also possible that God did not determine in His creative volition all kinds of substances and which of them will exist (indeterminate divine volitions).<sup>21</sup> It is possible that at least some of the changes and transformations in the created world will be purposeless, meaning that they will not be intended by any mind, divine

<sup>17</sup> The argument for the latter has been formulated by Timothy Miller in his dissertation from 2007.

<sup>18</sup> J. Kvanvig and H. McCann called such a property "a self-sustaining feature" (KVANVIG and MCCANN 1988).

<sup>19</sup> A self-sustaining property of created (contingent) beings can have limited power. If this power (energy) is finished, then a self-sustaining being must cease to exist. But it is possible for an omnipotent God to sustain in existence some part of a contingent being (substance) after it lost its original power of self-sustaining. According to Hasker's emergent dualism, such a situation can happen after human brain's death. After the brain's death, God supplies to the (emergent) soul the power (energy) to exist. The existence after death is very important for Hasker's theodicy, in particular for his conception of God's triumph over evil. That triumph is partially dependent on human free will, for example, the free will to forgive someone her wrong deeds, to repent for sins, etc. However, if the doctrine of continuous creation (the divine sustaining in existence) is incompatible with the contingency of human will, then Hasker's conception of God's triumph over evil should assume the long-lasting existence of a property of self-sustaining attributed to the human soul. It is crucial because Hasker's free-will theodicy belongs to eschatological theodicies. In brief, horrendous and gratuitous evils such as Holocaust cannot be defeated or balanced off by any greater good in our mundane world. In case of such evils everything depends on events which will happen in our afterlife.

<sup>20</sup> By "production" I mean that contingent beings can bring about that a certain kind  $K$  which had not been exemplified before a given moment  $t$  has some exemplifications at any subsequent moment  $t'$ .

<sup>21</sup> This claim amounts to the rejection of the principle of divine control.

mind included, and will not play any important role in the world history. It is possible that some of them will be unpredictable even for the perfect mind. God could issue a command: let there be something unpredictable for my mind in the universe I decide to create *ex nihilo*.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is at least logically possible that there will be no causal explanation for some events in the world. Such events or beings are simply chance events or chance beings. The crucial point is that chance events in the latter sense cannot exist in the world sustained by God. Divine conservation and chance exclude each other, but chance is not out of any divine control and providence because chance has mathematical measure called probability. Chance events, that is more or less probable events, although not conserved by God, are part of His creative volition and the tool of His providence (ŁUKASIEWICZ 2020).

Such a view seems promising if we want to have, as William Hasker does, the divine openness to the creatures (HASKER 2004): the libertarian freedom of the human will and relative autonomy of the world (A4). Therefore, I suggest replacing the traditional doctrine of continuous creation by the doctrine of God's gift of the SS property to all creatures. Thus, I think, it is still true that every creature is "totally dependent on the Creator" because without the divine gift of self-sustaining in existence nothing could ever exist.

I am wondering whether the above outlined understanding of divine action could be acceptable to William Hasker. To my mind, it would be fully consistent with his natural-order theodicy, as well as with his free-will theodicy.

Finally, there is a minor problem regarding the very nature of human morality. William Hasker defends the thesis that a possible reason for God's policy of non-intervention in the world of human decisions and actions is the threat of destroying human morality and human motivation to fight evil (FWT4). On my view, Hasker's assumption that God's interference in the course of the world's history would undermine the foundations of human morality is not evidently true. If we assume, for example, that morality is based on duties, then God's action or non-action in the world has no bearing on human moral motivation. If I am obliged to do something, I have this obligation, no matter what happens if I do not fulfil my duty; and I am morally *motivated* to fulfil my duty because I am convinced that it is morally wrong not to fulfil moral duties. Thus, from this point of view, it does not matter to human morality understood deontologically how many occurrences of evils God will prevent.

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<sup>22</sup> Such a scenario is fully compatible with open theism and, I suppose, it should be acceptable to William Hasker.

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ON WILLIAM HASKER'S THEODICY, THE DOCTRINE OF CONTINUOUS CREATION  
AND THE NATURE OF MORALITY

S u m m a r y

In the article, I present the main assumptions of the natural-order theodicy and the free-will theodicy defended by William Hasker. Next, I pose the question of whether Hasker's theodicies



are compatible with the Christian doctrine of continuous creation accepted by Hasker himself. I consider several different ways of how the doctrine of continuous creation can be understood and the difficulties associated with them. Finally, I propose a modified conception of continuous creation and I claim that it is consistent with the main assumptions of William Hasker's theodicies.

**Keywords:** God; continuous creation; theodicy; evil.

O TEODYCEI WILLIAMA HASKERA, DOKTRYNIE CIĄGŁEGO STWARZANIA  
I NATURZE MORALNOŚCI

Streszczenie

W artykule autor przedstawia główne założenia teodycei porządku naturalnego i teodycei wolnej woli Williama Haskera. Następnie zadaje pytanie, czy teodycea Haskera jest kompatybilna z chrześcijańską doktryną ciągłego stwarzania. Rozważa różne sposoby rozumienia pojęcia ciągłego stwarzania i związane z nimi trudności. Na końcu proponuje zmodyfikowaną koncepcję ciągłego stwarzania i stawia tezę, że jest ona zgodna z założeniami teodycei Williama Haskera.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Bóg; ciągle stwarzanie; teodycea; zło.