

## A Philosophical Expose Towards A ‘God After God’

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### Abstract

The escalation of violent incidents in recent times has brought religions to the forefront of world politics, resulting in a shift from their traditional role as conduits of divine revelation to becoming instruments of power and dominance. This phenomenon of *kratophany* exemplifies the manifestation of violence within religious contexts. The occurrence of violence may be attributed to the foundation of eschatological interpretations within various theological frameworks. The emergence of religious triumphalism and fundamentalism stemming from these theological perspectives has posed a significant danger to world peace and ecumenical dialogue. The need for peace among faiths has transitioned from a mere choice to an urgent necessity in contemporary times. The deity sought to be understood via the lens of eschatology as a divine being that exists in the future, sometimes referred to as an "after God." Hence, to get this comprehension, it is imperative to relinquish any remnants of onto-theological thought that now plague the eschatological analysis of religions. The violent interpretations of eschatologies used by Abrahamic faiths result in a significant loss of significance. The present research aims to address the hermeneutic context that poses a threat of religious violence. This intervention might be likened to Abraham getting Isaac back after first renouncing the notion of a violent sacrifice. In the present day, the Abrahamic faiths must discontinue the practice of harsh sacrifice and instead embrace the concept of peace as a valuable offering.

Keywords: eschatology, theological, violence, God.

### **Interrogating Violent Theologies of Fulfilment**

The current theological discourse around the concept of the eschaton is characterized by a hermeneutical approach that emphasizes the violent theology of completion, which is causing significant challenges to understanding God (Milbank, 2008). Theologies that espouse notions of satisfaction might potentially justify a significant portion of the violence and horror seen in the world. It is essential to use Husserl's epoche to facilitate the suspension of the aggressive theological doctrines of ultimate realizations that contribute to the contemporary machinery of fear (Davies, 2016). The phenomenon above will initiate a cognitive state of non-knowing, often called gnosis, which is necessary to eliminate the presence of violent theological ideologies that persist within contemporary eschatological hermeneutics. The absence of knowledge in this context will lead to a novel realization, known as anagnorisis, about liberating eschatologies that have the potential to foster tranquility and unity among the human race.

### ***Questioning the mythic-mimetic apparatus***

Violent theologies use stories to incite their followers to emulate their actions, ultimately leading them toward a goal characterized by acts of violence (Olusakin & Udoh, 2018; Schwager, 2000). Many individuals involved in acts of terrorism see themselves as divinely sent agents tasked with advancing the eschatological realization promised by a higher power. Consequently, they use their understanding of holy texts to further their objectives via acts of violence. This phenomenon allows individuals to immerse themselves in a fictional realm, leading them to see their actions as a kind of emulation of the holy, therefore surrendering to and participating in violent terror networks. Religious tales often have storylines that involve acts of violence, reflecting a sense of anticipation for the arrival of God's eschaton. Hence, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the misuse of theological concepts related to fulfillment and shed light on how they lead their adherents to see their involvement in the eschatological realm of God. It is well acknowledged that terrorist organizations use religious propaganda as a means to trap susceptible individuals. The evident misuse of macro-eschatologies within Abrahamic faiths may be seen. The worldwide landscape is marked by a significant conflict known as the holy war, including the Jihad, Zionism, and Crusades (Rougier, 2007). These ideological movements have justified acts of sacrificial violence, and the clash of civilizations paradigm has expanded its reach to a global scale.

### ***Question the envisioning of the Stranger***

The portrayal of the stranger as an outsider, leading to the fragmentation of communal identity, has been used as a tool in propagating violent acts against religious groups (A. P. Cohen, 2013). The unfamiliar individual transforms into a formidable entity that confronts the boundaries of one's identity, reminding the individual's ego that it does not possess absolute autonomy. The transformation of one's identity is influenced by one's imagination as well as one's contemplation of potential threats to one's sense of self. The creation of a monstrous being often stems from the inability to cope with the unfamiliarity that is confronted within an individual's existence. Monsters are conceptualized as providing a sense of security, serving as a convenient scapegoat to whom blame may be attributed for any misfortunes experienced by individuals or society. Therefore, it is essential to analyze our inclination to define our identities about others critically. The contemporary manifestation of religious violence is rooted in a long-standing human strategy. Every terrorist organization has an axis of malevolence. The adversary is seen as an unfamiliar individual, an external entity attributed to the root source of all malice. It establishes apparent dichotomies between the ingroup and the outgroup.

Moreover, the concept of the divine is often reduced to a simplistic apocalyptic portrayal when seen as a force that would ultimately eradicate these monstrous entities. The concept of eschatological redemption is seen as a present phenomenon manifested in the ongoing endeavor to delineate the limits of one's identity and its relationship with other entities.

### ***Questioning the Taming of the Scripture***

The holy scriptures have normative significance among the majority of religious traditions. The Abrahamic faiths, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are sometimes called "religions of the book." The Bible, revered by Jews and Christians, and the Koran, held sacred by Muslims, including a comprehensive collection of authoritative teachings, beliefs, and practices. Frequently, a literal interpretation of these revered passages has been used to incite, provoke, and validate an unthinking reaction among followers of religious factions. Due to the belief that divine inspiration guides the writings, the interpretation endorsed by those in positions of authority remains unassailable (Gorak, 1991). The use of a discernible, biased, and zealous interpretation of the holy text is employed to manipulate, sway, and indoctrinate those who may be inclined to fulfill God's promises through acts of violence (Kidd, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to examine the process of regulating the holy texts to scrutinize interpretations that serve as a shield for the murderous objectives of terrorist organizations.

The analysis of sacred texts is a foundational repository for prospective individuals who may engage in violent acts. Consequently, there is a pressing need to develop a novel hermeneutical approach that may foster harmony and tranquility among all individuals (Luna-Nemecio et al., 2020). It is imperative to counteract the refusal to acknowledge any excess of significance in the interpretation of these works by fundamentalist organizations. There is a need not only to engage in a deconstructive analysis of the fundamentalist interpretation of religious texts but also to attain a novel and enlightened understanding that can foster global peace and harmony.

### **Towards A Micro-Eschatology**

The prevailing eschatological framework among fundamentalist organizations that resort to violence to achieve their envisioned eschaton might be categorized as macro-eschatological (Tibi, 2023). This particular eschatological perspective lacks the inclination to exercise patience in anticipation of divine intervention at its designated moment. It seems that a divine entity determines the timing of one's labor. Therefore, the concept of micro-eschatology is put out to discuss the future arrival of God. This endeavor seeks to examine the concept of God from a perspective that is neither directly observable nor fully comprehensible. The concept referred to may be seen as a deity that succeeds a previous deity, representing the ultimate revelation of divinity (referred to as the "God who will be").

### ***Looking at God from Behind***

Examining God from a posterior perspective is a formidable undertaking since it requires the deliberate avoidance of what philosopher Emmanuel Levinas refers to as egology (Jackson, 2017; Larios, 2018). Furthermore, Levinas's central idea of substitution underscores relinquishing one's place in the exhalation that follows the "inspiration by the other" (Reed, 2016). Ecology considers the concept of "the other" about the self's similarity (Larios, 2018). Moreover, it is imperative to refrain from succumbing to the allure of contemplating and discussing the other while avoiding the pitfalls of apophatic mysticism, which emphasizes the inexpressibility of divine truths and reverting to a simplistic everyday eschatology. Instead, it entails embracing a phenomenological approach that directs attention

towards the objects or phenomena under investigation. This enables individuals to expand their contemplations towards the occurrence of eschaton at the divinely appointed moment.

Phenomenology is approached via the lens of eschatology, whereby the objects' nature is examined in relation to future events (Yates, 2011). This particular methodology is often referred to as phenomenological eschatology, which offers the potential to apprehend the divine according to its inherent nature rather than via the lens of egocentric perspectives (Dahl, 2010). This concept unveils the prospective deity yet to manifest and the deity that succeeds the philosophical conception of deity. This phenomenon facilitates the comprehension of the divine presence within mundane experiences, enabling individuals to confront the inherent transcendence of God that manifests itself in their daily existence, providing opportunities for revelatory encounters with the divine. This phenomenon enables individuals to confront the boundless inside the minuscule and encounter the divine within the commonplace.

### ***Sighting the Otherness in the Thisness of Divine***

The use of John Duns Scotus' concept of "thisness" allows for an examination of the distinctiveness of the divine and its connection to the inherent sacredness within various entities (Tonner, 2007). This statement suggests that individuals can see each moment as a fresh opportunity for the divine to manifest itself in the physical realm of temporal existence. Enfleshment, also known as narcosis, refers to the concept of endless embodiment present in all forms of life. The phenomenon of the divine descending into the realm of the ordinary, known as *Katabasis*, serves to beckon individuals toward a connection with the divine, referred to as *Anabasis* (Kearney, 2010). The concept referred to is a perceived eschaton progressing towards its ultimate realization. The divine is seen within the particularity and ordinariness of the created world, prompting us to be summoned or reminded (anamnesis) of the God of the ultimate future. The deity associated with the eschaton may be found inside the realm of saturated phenomena, as described by Jean-Luc Marion. In this context, individuals regularly encounter and engage with others directly and personally. Thus, the concept of God is often seen as a powerful force that can enable possibilities, functioning as both the origin, sustainer, and pinnacle of existence. This perspective examines the concept of God in its most commonplace form, emphasizing the self-emptying nature of the divine. It allows us to surpass absolutism, which lacks diversity, and relativism, which lacks unity.

The universe and the whole of existence might be seen as a vessel for something that cannot be confined, serving as a symbolic guide to the divine that leads us towards the ultimate culmination - the eschaton. Tillich (1964) effectively expresses the concept of the eschaton as a transformative experience that allows individuals to encounter the ultimate within the realm of the ordinary. The first occurrence was the most recent instance—maximizing efficiency. Engaging in communication with those who seek the divine inside the interlude between two breaths would be facilitated—the concept of transcendence as shown in the presence of a thorn bush. The Eucharist is symbolically represented by a little piece of Madeleine (Coletti, 2013). The concept of a kingdom is encapsulated inside a cup of cold water. The San Marco area is characterized by its cobblestone streets. The presence of a divine being on a public thoroughfare elicits emotional distress and vocal expressions of sorrow.

### ***Sighting the end beyond the end***

In this context, the selected perspective on eschatology is "macro-eschatology," which conceptualizes the end of times as a culmination of history whereby God orchestrates the ultimate resolution for humanity (Firmanto, 2021). Currently, ontotheological thought conceptualizes the divine

as the Supreme Being, whose might surpasses that of the created order. When examined from the perspective of ontotheological reasoning, the concept of eschaton may be seen as the culmination of existence, representing the conclusion of time and the ultimate events. Micro-eschatology aims to explore the temporal interval between the end (telos) and the subsequent beginning, as discussed by Manoussakis (2016). Eschatology is the theological concept that seeks to return all things to a state of simplicity, tracing back to both the initial and ultimate causes. Therefore, it is essential to note that individuals are not deprived of their ability to see or talk (apophasis) when confronted with the grandeur of the divine. Instead, they possess the capacity to articulate thoughts even in the absence of words (anaphasis), see things that are not visible (ana-aesthesis), and experience sensations that go beyond the physical realm (ana-pathos). There is the potential for seeing, observing, and experiencing once again, indicating the capacity to perceive the other in a renewed manner for a subsequent occasion. Therefore, it facilitates the perception of divine intervention in the realm of existence. When engaging with micro-eschatology, individuals are freed from the constraints of aporetics and can delve into the realm of poetics, namely anapoetics. The Kairos 121 allows for the manifestation of the totality of time inside each moment.

### **Towards The Micro-Eschatology**

According to Manoussakis (2007), the concept of "tropos" represents a manner or a method, but the concept of "topos" reveals the space where God's eschaton is situated. The concepts of tropos and topos contribute to the interconnectedness of all entities. Every entity exists as an intermediary entity. Existence is characterized by its inherent relationship with oneself and the external world. Examining the intermediary connections provides insight into the manner and location of God's eschaton, which manifests within ordinary existence—the entity in the middle encounters dual relationships, exhibiting introversion towards itself and extroversion towards others.

### ***In the relations nexus***

All beings establish a complex web of interconnected relationships, leaving no aspect of existence unaffected by this network of connections (Bassey, 2020). Every being discovers its position within the intricate network of these interconnections. Every individual has an inherent inclination toward establishing connections and relationships. All entities have a propensity to establish connections with fellow entities. The observation of the being's dynamic is contingent upon its inherent connectedness. Furthermore, it also demonstrates the interdependence and reciprocal exchange of entities interconnected inside a relational network.

Those above dynamic relational nexus serve as the divine micro-eschaton's focal point. The revelation of the divine micro-eschaton becomes the role of revealing the essence of creatures themselves. God is the ultimate origin, sustainer, and pinnacle of interconnected existence. This implies that the essence of the collective being binds together the interconnected being. This location serves as the spot where the heavenly epiphany occurs. Elías (2015, p. 15) eloquently expresses the concept by stating, "The understanding of the inherent uniqueness and individuality of objects is what Duns Scotus, the Celtic philosopher, referred to as haecceitas." The concept posits that creation and incarnation are closely intertwined and co-occur, so every instant presents a fresh opportunity for the eternal to manifest via the physical embodiment within the temporal realm. Ensarkosis, or enfleshment, refers to the concept of the infinite being manifested in every moment of life, requiring activation, recognition, and attention

(Kilburn-Smith, 2004). The one entity engulfed amid a multitude. The phenomenon of perpetual illumination within a temporary context. The concept of the sacredness of chance occurrences.

The divine epiphany serves as a manifestation of God's existence as the ultimate source of strength. Therefore, it might be argued that God is responsible for actualization, sustenance, and ultimate fulfillment. The essence of an entity is intricately connected to how it exists. The process through which existence manifests itself serves as the framework for identifying the emergence of micro-eschatology. The presence of God may be seen within the ever-changing nature of existence. The concept conveyed is that all aspects of existence possess a holy essence, leading to the characterization of the God of the micro-eschaton as a powerfully empowering deity, identified as the embodiment of potentiality.

### ***In the least of Things***

The manifestation of the divine presence in Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, is perceptible even in the most insignificant aspects of life and may be attributed to the self-emptying nature of God (Tickell, 2007). The phenomenon may be seen as a manifestation of divine intervention. He has all positive qualities, and, as a result, he cannot possess any negative qualities. When the concept of God is seen as lacking the ability to do some actions, it deviates from the conventional metaphysical understanding of omnipotence (Ceria et al., 2022; Lina & Wijanarko, 2022). The manifestation of divine force is more prominently seen within micro-eschatology, which pertains to the eschatological implications inherent in the minutiae of existence. The phenomenon is seen as a manifestation of power within the context of our inherent impotence and vulnerability. The concept of heavenly power surpassing human frailty is a fundamental belief among Christians, who believe that the death of Jesus was intended to provide life.

The phenomenon of death presents the potential for realizing what was previously deemed unattainable. In this context, the concept of the living God of the eschaton is seen as the embodiment of the potentiality for the complete realization of life. It is conceptualized as the act of God emptying Himself (kenosis), enabling the reception of the fullness of life. A reevaluation of the conceptualization of God in terms of power dynamics may be warranted. This comprehension is undoubtedly grounded in the onto-theological reasoning intended to be transcended in this context. The contemplation of the economic aspects of the eschaton allows us to see the functioning of a deity of the future who perpetually bestows upon humanity till the conclusion of existence. The deity called God is often understood to mediate between individuals and their transformation process until the ultimate eschatological event.

### ***In the Human Persons***

The divine presence is actively and profoundly realized in the lives of individuals. Every individual is considered a person. An individual might be seen as an eschatological manifestation of potentiality. In addition to being imbued with divine qualities, the human being demonstrates the presence of the divine via dynamic interactions with other humans, the natural world, and the divine entity (Alinuridin, 2020; Damayanti, 2023). While individuals may not always possess an explicit understanding of objectification and may be able to counteract it via conscious efforts, they nonetheless maintain a receptiveness to engaging with others. Engaging with people inherently involves an attempt to shape or influence their behavior or characteristics. To conceptualize another individual as a person entails comprehending their existence in the context of absence, recognizing their simultaneous embodiment in physical form and transcendence through time. This implies that by embracing the potential for boundlessness inside another individual, one may directly encounter and engage with their

essence. Suppose an individual fails to acknowledge the presence of an infinite aspect inside another person. In that case, it becomes possible to see and treat that person as an object, which may lead to their deformation or distortion. Therefore, by designing the other, one opens up the potential to see the embodiment of the divine in human individuals.

### **Sighting The Divine Person**

The eschatological viewpoint posited in this work should not be interpreted as a depersonalized perception of God as an unidentified entity. The concept being discussed is not that of a 'Monarchian deus absconditus' but rather one that facilitates the perception of the divine persona of God via phenomenological exploration.

### ***Divine as one-for-the-other***

The eschatological viewpoints remind us that once they return home, the individual's identity does not possess any authority or control over them. When individuals face this initial incapacitation, they are restored to a state of ability. The existence of a limit is contingent upon the presence of an alternative. Once this acknowledgment is embraced, it allows for the liberation of both the individual and others. This statement implies that an individual's identity, whether it pertains to oneself or others, exists both in the present and future. Consequently, the individual in question consistently maintains their status as the "other" despite their physical presence before me. It represents the excess that defies the totalizing hand's hold since there is always more to it. The concept of persona serves as the foundation of individuality. A reduction to an I-IT connection is not possible. The relationship between individuals is consistently characterized as an I-THOU dynamic. The phenomenon in question manifests itself in our human existence, particularly emphasizing the facial region. Every individual has the intrinsic quality of irreducibility. Love cannot be seen as a state of self-sufficiency when it revolves around itself since such a perspective is narcissistic. The persona has a selfless orientation, prioritizing the needs and well-being of others over their own. The concept of ontotheological thinking has resulted in a reduction of the divine as a self-contained and self-sufficient entity—God, who has complete self-absorption and refrains from all involvement in the created order.

### **Conclusion**

The representation of the other serves as a symbol of the divine. Prosopon represents the visage of the alterity, carrying the weight of being a representation of the other. It alludes to the face of the other when it turns to face us and reveals itself. It is necessary to acknowledge that one has a face (prosopon) rather than being devoid of a face (prosopon). Being a face (prosopon) entails being directly oriented towards another face. In his analysis of the Levinasian perspective on God, Jacques Rolland concisely articulates that this encounter is characterized by a direct encounter between the singular individual and the one divine being.

This refers to being near the face of another individual. The act of approaching the face of another individual has significant ethical implications. The concept exhibits a considerable degree of inter-subjectivity. The statement inherently assumes the presence of another individual positioned near the speaker. The individual now positioned before me is a prosopon challenging us to cultivate a sense of mutual support and interconnectedness. The concept of the Self is not inherently bound to a state of being the Self. Suppose one were to consider the notion that the self is inherently confined to its existence. In that case, it may be argued that this perspective emphasizes the state of being rather than

the pursuit of moral goodness (Essien & Umotong, 2013; Umotong, 2014). Martin Heidegger is a prominent figure who exemplifies this kind of thought.

Levinas critiques the Heideggerian emphasis on ontology, contending that those who see themselves as confined to their existence are essentially oriented toward their mortality (R. A. Cohen, 2012). The author provides more clarification by invoking his ethical framework, asserting that the well-being of the individual (ethics) is intrinsically connected to the existence of the self (ontology). My primary motivation focuses on prioritizing the individual's well-being and welfare. A cognitive problem exists in contemplating the concept of God from a deontological perspective. The concept of God, when examined from an eschatological perspective, facilitates contemplation on the ethical nature of God. The divine being places a high value on the well-being and interests of others and recognizes its existence as interconnected with and dependent on others. The concept of God encompasses an essential philosophic component. In this context, individuals can encounter the visage of the divine.

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