DYOLOGY

On Diversity and Equality

A PRÉCIS AND READER'S GUIDE

Robin Mains

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This document is a self-contained overview of Dyology: On Diversity and Equality (1,088 pages: an Author's Note, a General Introduction, twenty-four chapters, a General Conclusion, three appendices, a Premise Register, a Glossary, and a Bibliography of 736 works). It states the book's central thesis, explains its method, draws the architecture of the argument, summarises every chapter and appendix, and closes with suggested reading paths. The book was written with AI assistance, disclosed and described in the Author's Note. Every chapter is also available as a standalone file, and the book is issued in two volumes as well as whole; the final section explains how the separate files fit together.

The Central Thesis

Try to deny that anything differs from anything else. The denial says something specific, and saying something specific means standing apart from the alternatives: from the opposite claim, from silence, from every other thought you might have had. Standing apart is a difference. The denial of difference produces the very thing it denies, and the book calls

this property self-vindication. Everything else is built on that floor, which the book accepts as thin: one difference, and no more.

From it, the book derives a connected chain of results. Every possible state of reality either contains at least one internal distinction or contains none; the book names the two conditions diversity and equality, and argues that the split is exhaustive. If the hierarchies of explanation and of time terminate, both end in the same distinction-free state, which lacks the internal structure that knowing, willing, and loving require. The theological consequences follow. The word 'infinite' names two opposite conditions, endless structure and its complete dissolution, and the classical God is asked to be both at once; creation from nothing is incoherent, though creation as dependence survives; the ground of being cannot be a mind; the kalām argument reaches no necessary being; negative theology names a limit of thought and misreads it as a being. The constructive half builds forward from the same foundation. Mind is analysed as a ladder of categorically new kinds of distinction, with experience located at a content's availability to thought; value is treated the way colour is treated, constituted by a responding system and real once constituted; and morality is identified with empathic evaluation of chosen conduct, moral rules with indispensable, revisable technologies. Freedom is shown to be real from the inside and determined in retrospect; purpose is given a structure that needs neither God nor immortality; desert fails, so restoration replaces retribution. Peace is shown to come only through deep persuasion, the transformation of the preferences that generated a conflict, and free speech, open speech, and democratic equality are the best available means of securing its conditions. The final chapter develops the one conception of God that survives the critique and suits that peace: a companion within existence whose only power is persuasion.

Method and the Scale of Confidence

The book grades its own claims instead of asserting them uniformly. Four grades are used. A self-vindicating result cannot be coherently denied, since the denial instantiates it; the book claims three, the two premises of Chapter 1 and the result built from them, that at least one difference obtains. An established result is validly derived from defended premises. A constructed result is the best available positive account, defended

against rivals that remain live. A proposed result is offered as explicitly revisable, and marked as the weakest tier. No result is more secure than the weakest premise it inherits. Each chapter closes with a Grades and Dependencies section that justifies its grades, records what each result inherits, and states what a challenger would have to produce.

Two instruments keep the grading answerable. The Premise Register, printed as back matter, records for every result its grade and the results it rests on, so that a reader who rejects any premise can see exactly what falls with it and what stands; it also names the six premises the book uses without deriving, with what each costs to refuse, and the nine results staked on empirical tests not yet run. And the book audits itself: the General Conclusion gives a verdict on every claim, identifies the weakest joints by name, and directs a hostile reviewer there first. The candour is method. A system that states its own defeat conditions can be tested efficiently, and a system of this scope has no other defensible way to ask for the specialist scrutiny it needs.

The Architecture of the Argument

The book draws its argument as an arch (Figure 1), and the numbers on the stones are chapter numbers. The bedrock is difference, the one claim that cannot be denied (Chapter 1). On it sits a footing, ontological in Chapters 2–6 and epistemological in Chapter 7. From the footing two sides rise, each first as a pier, its core, and then as a curve, the application that turns the side toward the other. The theological side is the critique of classical theism (the pier, Chapters 8–12) and its application to dogma, punishment, and religious discrimination (the curve, Chapters 17, 20, and 23); it establishes that no mind stands above the hierarchy of difference. The metaethical side is the theory of mind and value (the pier, Chapters 13–16) and its application to freedom, purpose, conflict, and law (the curve, Chapters 18, 19, 21, and 22); it establishes that no moral order stands outside the parties. Each side removes an authority that could otherwise settle a dispute from outside, and the keystone, peace, is the stone neither side can carry alone (Chapter 24): peace comes only through deep persuasion, and the God that survives the theological side is the one who persuades and does not command.

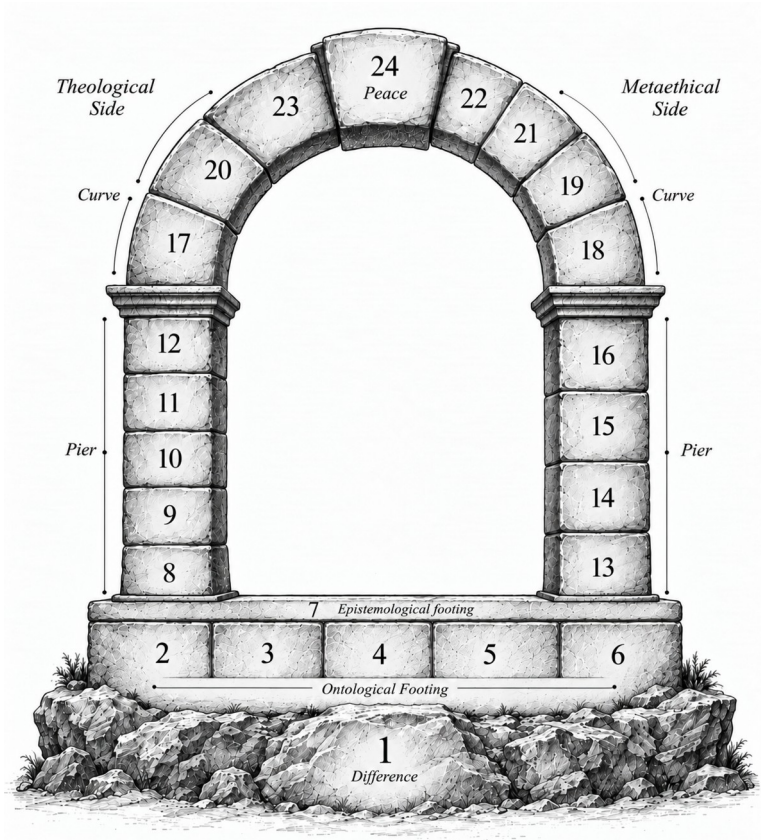


Figure 1. The arch of the argument: bedrock (1), footing (2–7), the theological side (pier 8–12, curve 17, 20, 23), the metaethical side (pier 13–16, curve 18, 19, 21, 22), the keystone (24). Load, not reading order.

The drawing shows load, and the chapter numbers give a different order. Chapters 17, 20, and 23 belong to the theological curve, though a reader meets them among the metaethical chapters; Chapter 13 opens the metaethical pier on the footing alone, presupposing only Chapters 2 and 6, though it follows the whole theological pier. The arch also thins as it rises. The bedrock is self-vindicating and the footing established; the theological side is established in its pier and, in its curve, established where it classifies and constructed where it applies; the metaethical side is constructed throughout, analytic where its political crown claims necessity and conditional on the aim; the keystone is established in what it eliminates and proposed in the God it keeps.

A few joints carry more load than their position suggests, and the book names them in advance. The determination dilemma of Chapter 2, that a content either excludes something or is no content at all, is the premise beneath the law of self-vindication, the closure of the grid of meaning, and the metaethics; reject it and those results fall together, while the bedrock result stands, since it owes Chapter 2 nothing. The response-constitutive account of value in Chapter 14 is the premise beneath the whole moral sequence; its tracking floor, that empathy registers moral value, is held by realists about value too, and it is what the purposive and political chapters use. Two constructed premises sit at the joints of the arch: the containment fork of Chapter 10, which carries the separation of ground from mind, and the premise of Chapter 13 that coupling is binary, which carries the two-axes theory of mind. Every chapter opens with a Presupposes line and an Establishes line, followed by the argument in a boxed paragraph, so a reader entering mid-book can see at a glance what is assumed and what is delivered; nine chapters carry appendices (Chapters 1, 3, 4, 8, 13, 14, 16, 22, and 24).

Chapter Summaries

The Bedrock (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1 · The Self-Vindication of Difference

Try, as an experiment, to deny that anything is different from anything else. The denial says something specific, and saying something specific means standing apart from the alternatives, which is a difference. The chapter argues that this is a kind of self-defeat the existing taxonomies leave unnamed, operating through what makes a thought the thought it is and not through the act of asserting or the logic of the proposition; it names the property self-vindication and states its mechanism as a law. The strongest modern objection, Barry Stroud's point that arguments from the conditions of thought prove only what we must believe, is met without the bridge Stroud attacked: every attempt to run his substitution manufactures a fresh, real instance of the thing in question. What the chapter finally claims is deliberately limited: at least one difference actually obtains, a fact about reality that is neutral as to what diversity is made of, secured by a route that owes the account of content nothing and

by a second, independent route beside it. Two premises of the same standing carry the result; the Register grades those and the result self-vindicating, while the law takes the grade of the thesis about content it runs through, which Chapter 2 secures.

The Footing (Chapters 2–7)

Chapter 2 · The Contrastive Structure of Content

Chapter 1 leaned on one premise: a determinate content, any concept or proposition, must be distinguishable from at least one alternative in order to be a content at all. This chapter secures it. It introduces the diff, the smallest unit of determinate content, one of two: to be one way is to be one way and not another. The observation has a long history, from Saussure to Sellars and Brandom, and the chapter shows that three rival theories of meaning all presuppose it before forcing the issue with a dilemma no theory escapes: a content either excludes something, and is thereby contrastive, or excludes nothing, and fails to be determinate. This determination dilemma is the premise the rest of the book inherits most widely. Along the way the chapter separates two forms of structural difference, relational and determinative, explains why the empiricist 'given' cannot stand alone, and marks where the book parts company with Derrida, who saw that difference precedes presence and declined to derive consequences. The differences established are features of reality itself, since for difference, unlike most properties, representing it requires instantiating it.

Chapter 3 · The Exhaustive Partition

Every possible state of reality either contains at least one internal distinction or contains none. Logic guarantees the split; the chapter argues that it also matters, for a reason no other partition shares: sorting anything into categories is itself an act of distinguishing, so this partition classifies the very operation by which any partition, itself included, gets drawn. The chapter then tests the claim against six traditions that seem to offer a third option, from Deleuze's difference-in-itself and Hegel's dialectic to negative theology, and against the most basic candidate of all, nothingness: each proposed third either has structure, and falls on the diversity side, or lacks it, and coincides with equality. One instrument made here is used throughout the book, the two-names result: an

undifferentiated condition is equality if it obtains and non-existence if it does not, so that 'nothing' and equality are one featureless condition under two names. The suspicion of unfalsifiability is answered directly, with a statement of where the framework can still lose, and an appendix supplies a formal consistency model for undifferentiated being, which Chapter 11 later uses.

Chapter 4 · The Undifferentiated Limit of Ground

Ask 'why?' of any fact and the answer invites the same question. Philosophers disagree about whether the chain of answers ever stops; the chapter finds a possibility both sides of that debate have missed. At almost every conceivable stopping point the question 'what grounds this?' still makes sense and simply goes unanswered: explanation is declined. At one stopping point, and only one, the question loses its grip entirely, because a state with no internal distinctions gives the grounding relation nothing to work with: explanation is foreclosed. The chapter proves that undifferentiated being, equality, is the unique foreclosing terminus of grounding, and names the position grounding limitarianism. It prices the position against its strongest rival, Schaffer's priority monism, on which the maximally complex cosmos is fundamental: the brute foundationalist pays one unanswered question per feature of the terminus, while the foreclosing terminus pays a single featureless fact, that it obtains bounded by diversity, and a commitment about possibility that the monist does not share. It also delivers a result that holds whether or not the chain ever ends: on no branch was there ever nothing. Everything built on the terminus carries a condition the Register tracks, that the hierarchy terminates, and the question whether equality is so much as possible is deferred.

Chapter 5 · The Undifferentiated Boundary of Time

What came before the Big Bang? At the boundary it aims at, the chapter argues, the question is unaskable. Time, on any going account, is an ordering of distinguishable states, so wherever 'before' applies there are distinctions, and a state with none, equality, is one at which 'before' has nothing left to order. The chain of moments can therefore end without ending at a moment: as the open interval between 0 and 1 approaches 0 without containing it, the temporal series can be bounded by something that is not a member of it. That third option resolves Kant's first antinomy

on realist terms, since both of Kant's arguments assume that a terminus must be a moment. The temporal hierarchy and the grounding hierarchy of Chapter 4 converge on one and the same state. The chapter logs its debt in public: on the termination branch the framework owes exactly one unexplained fact, that the bounded series obtains at all, and it prices that fact against its opponents' costs. On every scenario, something has always existed.

Chapter 6 · Cognition and Zero Complexity

A person born deaf does not hear silence; she has no auditory field in which silence could register. A person born blind does not see darkness. In every modality, removing all contrast leaves the absence of experience, and the chapter generalises the observation into the zero-complexity constraint: no property that requires even one distinction, whether content, feeling, knowledge, intention, or awareness, can characterise a state that has none. The constraint is close to analytic; what the chapter is built to earn is the bridge to it, the phenomenal-idleness argument, derived from the intrinsicalist's own vocabulary. The constraint is tested against meditative reports of 'pure consciousness', against Russellian self-standing qualities, and against the mathematics of integrated information theory, and it holds. Panpsychism survives with a floor: consciousness may extend wherever there are internal distinctions, and no further. The consequence that powers the theological side follows at once: the foreclosing terminus is unintelligent. If the ground of all things has zero complexity, it cannot think, know, will, or love.

Chapter 7 · The Grid of Meaning

Is there anything meaningful that is not a contrast? Whole traditions say yes: Kant's things-in-themselves, the mystic's ineffable God, the felt quality of music that no words capture, what it is like to be a bat. The chapter argues that the assumption fails structurally. Meaning and difference are one domain, meaningful if and only if a diff, and the account is built as three grids ordered by containment: real distinctions in the world, distinctions grasped in a mind, and the labels language attaches to them. The central result is a closure argument, stated in two forms: every cognitive act, including the act of pointing 'beyond' all contrast, is itself a contrast, so any counterexample to the biconditional arrives already gridded. The closure holds for any possible mind, which separates

it from Kant, and it is carefully bounded: the bat's experience lies beyond our grid without lying beyond all grids, and the unknown is a region of the grid, not an exit from it. One consequence is a structural floor beneath scepticism: the existence of difference is the one thing doubt cannot coherently target. The theological pier, the theory of value, and Appendix C all use the closure.

The Theological Pier (Chapters 8–12)

Chapter 8 · The Original Illusion

Try to picture nothing. You pictured dark, empty space, and darkness is something: a contrast your visual system registers. The chapter explains the substitution. The undifferentiated condition established in Chapters 3–5, the terminus, is met by the mind under three names, and the names are numbers: zero, one, infinity. The first two name it outright; the third also names its structural opposite, the endless extension of structure, and that ambiguity, one word for maximal structure and for its dissolution, is among the most consequential in theology. Under every name picturing fails the same way: a mind built from distinctions cannot form an image of a state without them, so it substitutes darkness for zero, a dot for the One, an endless void for the boundless. The illusion is original in both senses. It attaches to the origin, where the terminus is most often sought, and it is the first error, powering the question 'why is there something rather than nothing?', which divides once 'nothing' is disambiguated, and the demand that one being be maximally rich and absolutely simple at once. An appendix reads the cosmological singularity structurally, with the claim graded and its refutation condition stated.

Chapter 9 · The Dissolution of Creation

God cannot create from nothing, because God counts as something: a state that includes an eternal God already contains the one thing creation from nothing demands be absent, being itself. The chapter dismantles creation from nothing in two stages and is candid about which does the work. Three pictures of creation as a transition from non-being are each incoherent, but the mature doctrine of Aquinas and Feser holds none of them; for it, creation is no change at all, only the world's total dependence on God. Against that doctrine the chapter deploys an agent dilemma: an agent is either structured enough to act, and then its act diversifies being

that already includes it, or simple enough to be the ultimate source, and then, by the zero-complexity constraint, it has no will with which to act. Either way 'creation' names dependence or transformation, and the sustainer, a God on whom all else depends, survives the transition picture under that name. Leibniz's question divides with the doctrine: one reading names no state, the other a brute fact the framework owns. The chapter also names and costs the vehicle premise, that a possibility is a way reality could be, which the Register lists among its contested premises.

Chapter 10 · The Separation of Ground and Mind

Why must the terminus of explanation be a mind? Demanding that the final cause of motion be coloured would be an obvious mistake, and the chapter argues that the demand for intelligence at the terminus has the same structure. The prime mover tradition fuses two separable demands, an explanatory ground and an intelligent agent, and at the absolutely simple terminus the two cannot be satisfied together. Aristotle, Aquinas, and Leibniz each exhibit the conflation at a different point, and six contemporary defences of divine simplicity are tested, from truthmaker and modal simplicity to the Eastern Orthodox essence/energies distinction. The instrument is the intra-attribute constraint: identifying God's attributes with one another leaves untouched the distinctions within any single attribute, since knowing that P still differs from failing to know it, a distinction no simplicity doctrine can afford; the identity thesis, on which God's knowledge is God's power is God, collapses the wrong distinction. The result is ecumenical, a ground without mind, and it splits the classical God in two: read as absolutely simple, incoherent; read as maximally determinate, an inhabitant of the diversity it was meant to ground. The joint a critic should press is the containment fork, which the Thomist doctrine of virtual containment refuses at a cost the Register states.

Chapter 11 · Equality and the Kalām's God

The chapter gives William Lane Craig almost everything. The universe has a cause; the cause is timeless, immaterial, powerful, even personal. What it blocks is a single word, necessary, and necessity is what turns a cause into God. Without it the kalām reaches an uncaused cause whose necessity is undischarged, a brute fact for all that can be shown and no

advance on a brute universe. The necessity of an internally complex God requires that undifferentiated being, equality, be impossible in every possible world, and that impossibility is neither a conceptual truth nor a datum nor anything the kalām delivers: it is a heavyweight metaphysical thesis no one has discharged, against which the book has already exhibited a consistency model for the undifferentiated state. The burden falls unevenly, and the asymmetry is the argument: proving an impossibility is the heaviest of modal burdens, declining to grant one the lightest. Craig needs the question closed; the framework needs only that it stay open. Both results are dialectical, the burden moved onto the proponent and the proponent's thesis left unrefuted, and the chapter's note records what that means for their grades.

Chapter 12 · The Limits of Negative Theology

Negative theology is the most structurally accurate theology available, and the chapter argues that this accuracy is the problem. The tradition says the divine ground is without form, attributes, or dimension, unpicturable by any mind; read privatively, as the tradition's own descriptions favour, those are point for point the properties of the undifferentiated terminus, and the book agrees. The dispute begins at the interpretation. The tradition reads the limit as a mind too great for concepts; the chapter reads it as a state too simple for them, lacking the very distinctions that knowing, willing, and loving require. The instrument is Chapter 7's closure: every negation draws a new contrast, so each act of stripping away generates content, and the via negativa cannot walk to its own destination. Six forms of the apophatic claim, from unknowability to the claim that the divine lies beyond the duality of diversity and equality, are examined, and the closure catches each. The eminent reading, on which God exceeds every predicate by excess, is granted at the cost it carries, a God within the grid and the hard apophatic claim given up; and mystical experience receives a positive account, real and transformative, located within the differentiated world.

The Metaethical Pier (Chapters 13–16)

Chapter 13 · Consciousness as Differentiation

A system can discriminate a million shades of colour and be no more advanced, in the relevant sense, than one discriminating two. What raises

a mind's level is a categorically new kind of distinction, and the chapter derives the ladder of kinds, from thermostat to moral agent, from a categorical transition principle and the single premise that content requires contrast. It separates the two axes into which every mental state divides, content, what is detected, and orientation, the felt pull toward or away from it, and it locates the boundary of experience at availability to thought and the boundary of mattering at valence. It names the question every theory of consciousness must answer before the hard problem arises, which physical events constitute experience, and answers it in an appendix with a proposal no later result uses. The chapter does not solve the hard problem as posed; it offers in its place an identity, feltness as availability to thought, that a critic can doubt, and explains why the doubt arises. All four results are graded constructed, and the premise that coupling is binary, on which the two-axes theory rests, is one of the joints the General Conclusion names.

Chapter 14 · Emotion as Value

After tasting several foods, could you decide which tastes best without any emotional response? Strip away emotion and every difference between things remains, detectable and classifiable, except the difference between better and worse. The chapter argues that evaluative difference stands to emotion as colour stands to vision: real once constituted, response-dependent always. This is the response-constitutive account of value, and the book's longest chapter builds it in full: two constitutive forms of goodness, aesthetic and empathic, with orthotic goodness, conformity to a standard, cognitive and derivative; morality identified as the empathic evaluation of chosen behaviour; and the moral fact anchored in the affected party's own informed registration, observer-independent though not mind-independent. Its sharpest instrument is the vacancy result: the clause 'value obtains independently of every response' marks no contrast by any route the account can locate, a clause both wings of metaethics needed, the realist to affirm and the error theorist to mourn. What emerges is realism with the one clause that says nothing removed. One thing the account does not supply is owned in the text: registrations do not sum across their bearers, so it has no first-order resource for weighing one party's agony against a million inconveniences, and every applied verdict inherits that residue.

Chapter 15 · Evaluation and Choice

Why does a shirt your father once wore feel different from an identical shirt bought yesterday? The difference is in you, and the chapter supplies its mechanics. Total value is a composite of primary value, the direct pull of the thing itself, and added value flowing backward from its source or forward from its effects. The severing test keeps the distinction disciplined: cut the association while holding the object fixed, and whatever dies was never the object's own; peel the label from the wine and the provenance glow goes with it while the flavour's pull remains. The same mechanics constitute the evaluative hierarchy and answer the hardest question a response-based theory faces, what happens when accurate responses conflict. There is no cosmic exchange rate waiting to be found. Deliberation is the widening of the field until it ceases to be tied, and between people it is each party's taking in of the other's registration; what such mutually informed fields converge on is the only fact a trade-off has. Later chapters turn that discipline into the line between persuasion and manipulation.

Chapter 16 · The Great Moral Conflation

A person can satisfy a rule and still be morally monstrous; a bureaucrat can execute a procedure flawlessly while facilitating cruelty. Morality and correctness come apart, and the chapter argues that the major traditions have systematically confused them. We evaluate a sunset aesthetically, a kind act morally, and a correctly spelled word orthotically, by checking it against a standard, and moral philosophy has persistently treated the third operation as if it were the second. Morality, on the account developed here, is constitutively empathic, the evaluative response to what chosen conduct does to others; the rules are moral technologies, indispensable and revisable codifications of empathic insight, whose felt bindingness is borrowed from the responses they codify. A thermometer is not heat; a moral standard is not morality. A two-layer analysis carries the diagnosis across Kantianism, contractualism, divine command theory, rule-consequentialism, and virtue ethics. The refutation condition is stated openly, a requirement that binds while engaging no feeling and carrying no sanction, and every candidate the traditions supply came back with valence.

The Curves (Chapters 17–23)

Chapter 17 · Certainty, Perfection, and Dogma

A clock that has shown the correct time for a thousand years is perfect; it could still break in the next second. Perfection says no error has been detected; infallibility says none is possible, a claim no finite evidence can carry. The chapter separates the two and shows what their confusion costs. On the subjective side, the mathematician who grasps a proof and the dogmatist who clings to a creed feel identical conviction, because the feeling of certainty tracks emotional pull and logical status leaves no trace in it. On the objective side, to verify omniscience you would need omniscience, so only God can prove God, and the omniscient yet simple guarantor classical theism requires conjoins the two infinities Chapter 8 opposed. A four-stage anatomy takes a standard from earned authority to severed foundation, with a refutation condition, and the book applies the verdict to itself: one self-vindicating claim, and everything above it perfect at best, revisable, and graded so. The Register's own epistemology, why the self-vindicating tier alone is infallible, is given here.

Chapter 18 · Free Will and the Perspectival Asymmetry

A rock rolls downhill because gravity pulls it; you chose your career because something pulled you too. The forces differ, the structure is the same: a chain of attractions and repulsions producing an outcome the final link did not author. The chapter argues that the free will problem is about self-consciousness before it is about determinism. In the moment of choosing, the chooser and the choice are one, so freedom is undeniable from inside; from the retrospective view, the chain that delivered the agent's evaluative field is equally undeniable. Both reports are accurate, neither is complete, and their permanent divergence, the perspectival asymmetry, explains why the debate never resolves. The causal model holds for any possible substrate, so the escape through immaterial souls is closed. The resulting position, bounded authorship, shares Pereboom's hard-incompatibilist verdict that no one possesses basic desert, while adding the mechanism behind the feeling of freedom: a musician improvising in a key she did not choose is a real author of her melody. Practical responsibility survives intact. What falls is the theological

grade, desert sufficient for eternal sanction, and it falls for any possible mind in any possible world.

Chapter 19 · The Constitution of Purpose

Does the universe care that you exist? No. Does that settle whether your life has meaning? Also no; the inference from cosmic indifference to meaninglessness is a non sequitur, and the chapter dissolves it by giving purpose a structure. Purpose has two parts, an object, the thing pursued or cared about, and a sense, the felt pull toward it: a map of a city is a representation, a desire to visit the city is a purpose. The nihilist reporting that nothing matters is the blind person concluding that colour does not exist, and the chapter separates evaluative silence from the dominance of negative response, a distinction with clinical weight. The meaning-of-life impasse divides: subjectivists have been describing the sense, objectivists the object, hybrid theorists the conjunction the architecture entails, and Susan Wolf's hybrid formula is given the structure it lacked. The objectivist's further question, whether a purpose is worth having, passes to Chapter 16. The response is involuntary and the world is not of our making, but the conjunction is real, and it is ours.

Chapter 20 · Purpose and Punishment

Can anyone be justly punished for what they never ultimately authored? The chapter treats purpose and punishment as two faces of one coin: the modality that constitutes meaning without cosmic endorsement is the one whose involuntary delivery makes ultimate accountability impossible. Against Craig's claim that life without God and immortality is absurd, it argues that significance requires neither permanence, endorsement, nor duration, a sunset's beauty being undiminished by its ending, and that immortality invites evaluative saturation, the running out of novel differences for a finite mind, with Makropulos's tedium given its mechanism. Against divine retribution, the desert basis fails by two independent routes: the wrong of eternal damnation is that it is punishment, a response to a desert no agent possesses and a value no register supplies, and its eternity magnifies a wrong already done. Practical and restorative responses to wrongdoing survive. The terminus toward which the argument's own logic points, the eventual reconciliation of every soul without coercion, is proposed for the

companion God alone, as an aim and never a guarantee, on the weakest tier.

Chapter 21 · Conflict and Deep Persuasion

Most of what passes for peace is managed conflict, held in place by force, incentive, or fatigue and stable only while its overrider holds. The chapter derives what structural peace requires. A conflicting preference can be addressed at exactly three points: the capacity to act on it (enforcement), the calculation around it (shallow persuasion: compliance bought, deterred, or bargained), or the preference itself (deep persuasion, its transformation, so that nothing is left suppressed). There is no fourth, and the three form a hierarchy. Only the third leaves nothing waiting on a change of circumstance to re-express itself, so the strict definition of peace is forced; the Rawlsian modus vivendi and Galtung's negative peace fall on the managed side. Peace and freedom turn out to be one limit approached from two directions. Deep persuasion is field-enrichment between agents, which supplies the line between persuasion and manipulation, and its empirical signature is durability, a shift that survives the removal of what sustained it. Rawls's fact of reasonable pluralism is met by levelling alignment, and the deradicalisation literature, which finds transformation rare, reads as the theory's own forecast.

Chapter 22 · Democracy and the Lawmaking Mechanism

'Who are you to tell me what is right and wrong?' A tyrant asks it to silence a community, a relativist asks it to forbid persuasion, an absolutist answers it by placing the law beyond human reach. All three share one defect, authority-dependence, and the chapter names the pairing of relativism and absolutism bipolar authoritarianism. Democracy rejects the demand itself: lawmaking needs opportunity, and authority is beside the point. Deep persuasion at scale requires three things with necessity, that perspectives be expressible, received on their merits, and none excluded in advance; free speech, open speech, and equal standing are the best available means of securing them, an empirical claim, and the three conditions also draw the limit on speech. Moral consideration is graded, standing to participate is level. The lawmaking mechanism converts private evaluative hierarchies into shared law, each hierarchy entering the field carrying perspectives that can restructure the others, values first and

rules second, and democracy is identified as the form that keeps both of its defining laws, all equal under the law and all equal above it. Majority voting enters as the least-bad shallow-persuasion instrument for the not-yet-persuaded residue, and the epistocratic challenge is answered on the way.

Chapter 23 · The Democratic Deficit of Theocracy

Laws can ban segregation and police the workplace; they cannot compel friendship, love, or marriage. Behind that boundary, the wall of private intolerance, the only tool with power is speech, and the form of belief most resistant to it is the belief that someone is not good enough to be right. The chapter argues that a specific doctrine gives that belief eternal sanction: when God is believed to separate souls by creed and not character, the celestial line is projected onto earthly relations, producing the divine wall of discrimination. The strongest defence a believer can offer, that her urgency is love for her neighbour's eternal fate, is granted and then shown to answer a danger constituted by the doctrine itself. The thesis predicts a doctrinal gradient in private intolerance and names the pattern that would refute it. Conditional on the empathic constitution of morality, three transformations are derived, theocratic to humanistic, absolutist to democratic, creed-based to merit-based, each already under way inside the traditions through named reformers, and the chapter says what remains for religion after them: what is removed is the claim to absolute authority, never faith. It closes by asking the converse question its successor answers.

The Keystone (Chapter 24)

Chapter 24 · Peace and God

When the traditions say that God is infinite, which infinity do they mean? Everything turns on the answer. Infinite equality is the terminus, unintelligent and undifferentiated being at zero complexity; infinite diversity is a maximal mind that did not originate existence from nothing. There is no third condition, and the classical incoherences come from demanding both at once. Two conceptions survive on the diversity side, a sustainer on whom all else depends and a companion who shares existence without grounding it, and the chapter develops the second: a temporal mind of maximal richness, affected by what happens, who lures

and does not command and whose only power can be freely declined. The companion is the structural negation of the theocratic God of the previous chapter, and the form of theism compatible with structural peace. The pricing is unusual for constructive theology. The proposal sits on the ladder's weakest tier; its two deepest attributes, mindedness and benevolence, are declared posits and costed where they are made; the residues of inefficacy and hiddenness are carried openly; and the gravest trade is owned in a sentence: a God who could guarantee rescue, or one not answerable for its absence, and never both. An appendix draws the consequences, faith as evaluative orientation, worship, and the convergence with process theology.

The General Conclusion, the Appendices, and the Back Matter

The General Conclusion

The General Conclusion audits the book in five sections. It repeats the arch's table with a verdict on every claim, from 'Established; the premises self-vindicating' at the bedrock to 'Proposed; three posits, costed' at the keystone, and concludes that the arch stands established below, constructed on its metaethical side, and proposed at the keystone. It then maps where the argument can fail, each fault a joint the Register names: the reach of the self-vindicating tier and the determination dilemma; the response-constitutive account of value and the premise that coupling is binary; the containment fork; the conditionality of the political derivation; and the companion's posits. It enters what the framework has not achieved: it does not settle whether the grounding hierarchy terminates, it treats each subfield more thinly than a monograph would, it offers no standpoint-independent way to adjudicate between evaluative hierarchies except deep persuasion, and, because registrations do not sum, it leaves a trade-off between parties without a fact beyond what mutually informed fields settle on. It sets research directions across six domains, most of the remedies empirical, and closes by asking each specialist to take the chapter nearest her expertise and test it.

Appendix A · Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing

A child asks why there is a world at all; Leibniz asked it on the assumption that nothing is the default. The appendix gathers the book's answer in one place, and the General Introduction says it can be read first. It establishes no result of its own: each claim is argued and graded at the chapter it cites. The short answer is that there could not have been nothing, reached by two independent routes. The modal route shows that nothing was never available. It cannot be a third state beside diversity and equality, since holding at least one distinction and holding none are contradictories, and it cannot be a second featureless state beside equality, since nothing could tell the two apart. The second step rests on the vehicle premise, so the closure is graded established. The factual route looks at the chain of grounds and the order of time: either both run on without end, so there is no first moment and no moment of nothing, or they stop at a state that is; on either branch something is in place. Theology and cosmology, set against the map, each described equality and each added something the description excludes, a mind, a describable state, a necessary Being. What survives is brute and owned: why being has distinctions in it at all, the obtaining residue. The appendix closes by retelling the whole for a child.

Appendix B · The Terminus Without Diversity: One, Zero and Infinity

Plotinus called it the One; Advaita Vedānta, nirguna Brahman; Heidegger, das Nichts; the apophatic traditions, the infinite, and the Kabbalists, Ein Sof. The appendix argues that singularity as oneness, nothingness, and infinity-as-equality are three presentations of one structural condition, the terminus without diversity, individuated by the contrast each tradition takes as salient: multiplicity, being, and finitude. The engagement is textual, endorsing the identification for the privative strand of each tradition and hedging where the reading is contested. The productive stories, emanation, creation from nothing, and the Kabbalistic self-contraction, are diagnosed as importing determinations the terminus cannot bear. Katz's contextualist objection is granted its premise about experience and refused its inference to different ultimates. The appendix introduces no new structural result; it is consolidatory in its use of the framework and substantive in its exegesis, and Chapter 8, which enters the three names as a classification of words, records that the appendix

depends on the chapter and nothing in the chapter depends on the appendix.

Appendix C · The Grids of Analytic Philosophy: Fission, Projection, and Escape

Analytic philosophy's highlight reel is a gallery of splittings: Frege on 'is', Gettier on 'knows', Kripke on the necessary, the a priori, and the analytic. The appendix argues that the pattern has a mechanism. Ordinary words are bundles lashed to clusters of distinctions that need never respect the boundaries between what is real, what is grasped, and what is said, Chapter 7's three grids; hard cases pull the faces apart, and mature analysis is the repair, fission, one term per register. The damage is Chapter 8's projection mechanism at work on vocabulary, and coinages engineered to exceed the grids arrive, as the exhibitive closure requires, already gridded. The reading of analytic method as grid-repair is graded constructed, with its rivals named; the organisational programme, which predicts where terms such as 'emergence' and 'information' will split, is proposed. The appendix closes by presenting the Premise Register as a method any philosophical system could adopt, in four steps and a fifth: enumerate the results, grade each on a ladder whose every grade names its defeat condition, list each result's presuppositions by name, audit the graph, and group the rows under the claims of the arch.

The Premise Register

The Register is the Introduction's table expanded: every result the book establishes, 123 rows grouped under the twenty-four claims of the arch, each with its chapter and section, its grade, and the rows it rests on. Three rows are self-vindicating, sixty-three established, fifty constructed, and six proposed, and one, the formal exhaustiveness of the partition, stands ungraded because it is true by logical form. Lettered conditions beneath the table say what a grade is conditional on, and rows inherit the conditions of what they rest on, so that a result whose chain runs through the terminus of grounding carries the condition that the hierarchy terminates. Three further sections make the audit usable. Compounding conditions stacks the requirements of the foundational sequence in three tiers, unconditional, relative to termination, and deferred; Empirical stakes gathers the nine results staked on tests not yet run; Contested premises names the six premises the book uses without deriving, with

what falls with each. A reader who rejects a premise can look up, in one place, everything that falls with it and everything that stands regardless.

The Glossary and the Bibliography

The Glossary defines every recurring term of art, 188 entries from the diversity/equality partition to the severing test and the divine wall, nearly all with a pointer to the section where the term is introduced or most fully developed, and many with cross-references to neighbouring entries, so that a reader of a single chapter can resolve any inherited term. The Bibliography gathers the 736 works cited, which each chapter also lists at its own end.

Suggested Reading Paths

The General Introduction gives three routes through the arch, and shorter paths serve readers with a single interest:

- The footing and the theological side: the General Introduction and Chapters 1–12, a complete argument in themselves; Appendix A, which assembles the answer to the something-from-nothing question from those chapters, can be read first.
- The metaethical side, mind, value, and ethics: begin at Chapter 13, taking Chapters 2 and 6 on trust, since the sequence needs only the determination dilemma (Chapter 2, §2.4) and the zero-complexity constraint (Chapter 6, §2).
- Peace: begin at Chapter 14 and read through to Chapter 23, adding Chapters 8–12 before the keystone, Chapter 24, which rests on the theological pier as well.
- The shortest path to the system: the General Introduction, Chapters 1–4, the General Conclusion, and the Premise Register.
- Philosophy of religion: Chapters 8–12, 17, 20, 23, and 24, with Appendices A and B.
- Grounding, time, and the something-from-nothing question: Chapters 3–5, 8, and 9, with Appendix A.
- Self-refutation, scepticism, and meaning: Chapters 1, 2, and 7, with Appendix C.
- Consciousness: Chapters 6 and 13.
- Metaethics and ethics: Chapters 14–16.
- Free will and desert: Chapters 18 and 20.

- The meaning of life: Chapters 19 and 20.
- Conflict, politics, and peace: Chapters 21–24.
- Analytic method and metaphilosophy: Appendix C, with Chapter 7 and the Premise Register.

Using the Chapter Files and the Two Volumes

Each chapter, each appendix, and the General Conclusion is available as a separate file, with the manuscript's formatting and page numbers preserved. The book is also issued in two volumes. Volume I, Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion, carries the Author's Note, the General Introduction, Chapters 1–12, and the three appendices; Volume II, Ethics and Political Philosophy, carries a note on the division, the General Introduction again, Chapters 13–24, and the General Conclusion; each volume prints the Premise Register and the Glossary in full and lists the works its own chapters cite. Every chapter opens with a Presupposes line and an Establishes line, so a reader beginning anywhere can see the local dependencies at a glance; the Premise Register resolves them in full, and the Glossary defines any inherited term. Chapters were written to be read in sequence, but the theological pier (Chapters 8–12) stands on the footing alone and can be read as a unit, and a reader whose interest is peace can begin at Chapter 14 and read on to Chapter 23, since the political chapters inherit the metaethical pier and the theological curve, adding Chapters 8–12 before the keystone, which rests on both piers.