

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

**The Knowledge of Lazarus and Raskolnikov:  
Expansive Epistemology and the Moral Argument for Theism**

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*I am far from denying the real force of the arguments in proof of a God... but these do not warm me or enlighten me; they do not take away the winter of my desolation or make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within me, and my moral being rejoice.*

– John Henry Newman

## Chapter One: *Praelocutio*

### Introduction

Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, the protagonist of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, carries out the murder of two individuals—a pawn broker (who is often referred to in the story as “the old crone”) and the pawn broker’s sister. Throughout the book Raskolnikov’s motives are not entirely clear. The issue is not simply that Dostoevsky is using his authorial prerogative to withhold the reasons or motives from us. Raskolnikov is also somewhat double-minded or at odds with himself such that he acts in conflict with his own desires and ideas at different points. Before committing the act of murder, he spends months thinking, and the act is a working out of his theories about morality and ethics, some part of which he has published previously. Raskolnikov has thought and deliberated, seeking to understand what a man is capable of, what a man is justified in doing. After this deliberation, he commits the murder (which becomes *murders*), and this by the end of part one of a six-part novel. Much of the rest of the novel recounts Raskolnikov grappling with this act after he has carried it out.

Once the act is committed, Raskolnikov is almost immediately overtaken by a fever and he continues to distance himself relationally from other people even while circumstances force him into contact with more and more people. He is by turns extremely generous with those he encounters and angry at and distant from many of the same individuals. Deep within him there is conflict; there is turmoil. His soul is divided and at odds. He is plagued by various dreams which aid in evidencing this. At one point, nearly halfway through the novel he has a dream where he is back in the room where the murder was committed, Dostoevsky writes:

The apartment door was standing wide open; he thought a moment and went in. The entryway was very dark and empty, not a soul, as though everything had been taken out; quietly, on tiptoe, he moved on into the living room: the whole room was brightly flooded with moonlight; everything here was as it had been: the chairs, the mirror, the yellow sofa, the pictures in their frames. A huge, round, copper-red moon was looking straight in the window. "It's because of the moon that it's so silent," thought Raskolnikov, "asking some riddle, no doubt." He stood and waited, waited a long time, and the more silent the moon was, the harder his heart pounded—it was even becoming painful. And still the same silence. Suddenly there came a brief, dry crack like the snapping of a twig; then everything was still again. An awakened fly suddenly swooped and struck against the window, buzzing plaintively. At the same moment he made out what seemed to be a woman's wrap hanging in the corner between a small cupboard and the window. "Why is that wrap here?" he thought, "it wasn't here before..." He approached quietly and realized that someone seemed to be hiding there behind the wrap. He cautiously moved the wrap aside with his hand and saw a chair standing there, and on the chair, in the corner, sat the little old crone, all hunched up, with her head bent down so that there was no way he could see her face—but it was she. He stood over her. "Afraid!" he thought, and he quietly freed the axe from its loop and struck the old woman on the crown of the head, once and then again. But, strangely, she did not even stir under his blows, as though she were made of wood. He became frightened, bent closer, and began looking at her, but she also bent her head still lower. Then he bent down all the way to the floor and peeked into her face from below, peeked and went dead: the little old crone was sitting there laughing—simply dissolving in soft, inaudible laughter, trying her best not to let him hear her. He suddenly fancied that the door to the bedroom had opened a little, and there also seemed to be laughter and whispering there. Rage overcame him: he began hitting the old woman on the head with all his strength, but at every blow of the axe the laughing and whispering from the bedroom grew stronger and louder, and the little crone heaved all over with laughter. He wanted to run away, but now the whole entryway is full of people, all the doors to the stairs are wide open, and on the landings, on the stairway, farther down there are people, head to head, all looking—but all hushed waiting, silent... His heart shrank, his feet became rooted and refused to move... He tried to cry out—and woke up.<sup>1</sup>

This sequence helps to underline the almost haunting quality the act has had on him. He is trying to think himself out of the chaos in his soul. He is trying to understand what he is capable of and whether he can live with the consequences. It is only to Sofya (Sonya) Semyonovna he is able to pour out his heart and confess, though he stumbles through this

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<sup>1</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (New York: Vintage Classics, 1993), 276-278.

confession because of his guilt and pride. During this encounter, the conflict in his soul and Sonya's awareness of it are evident: "His eyes were burning with a feverish fire. He was almost beginning to rave; a troubled smile wandered over his lips. A terrible powerlessness showed through his agitated state of mind. Sonya realized how he was suffering."<sup>2</sup>

This thesis deals with themes from epistemology, philosophy of religion, and ethics. It is about what and how we can know about God. It is about who we are as people and how we live. Raskolnikov comes face to face with these issues as each of us must. We act and experience consequences. We cannot run from morality and the outcomes of our choices. Raskolnikov finds himself plagued by his conscience and also by the personness of Sonya. Slowly he is learning something about his life, about his actions and choices, about reality. And these answers do not come at the end of a logical argument but from within his conscience and in the face of a living person.

### Some Preliminary Points

The main premise of this work is that there is knowledge that goes beyond propositional knowledge (or is deeper than propositional knowledge), and further that this knowledge points toward something or someone supernatural or transcendent. By propositional knowledge I have in mind the commonly referenced type of knowledge which focuses on the content and analysis of propositions, which possess truth values, truth or falsity. For instance, the statement, "I know that this music (with the referenced music being the sheet music or audio of Chopin's Sonata 2) is the Sonata 2 in B-flat Minor, Opus 35 by Frederic Francois Chopin," which is or is not true depending on whether or not this actually is the case. This may also be called "knowledge *that*,"

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<sup>2</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 417.

referencing the way in which it is typically expressed within philosophical writing. Propositional knowledge provides a significant amount of our knowledge and has the distinct advantage of being easily analyzable; for instance, if Chopin did not write the music being referenced, then the proposition is false and does not constitute knowledge.

Propositional knowledge is a vital category of knowledge; much of what it is that we know can be captured in the form of propositions and the result is something more easily analyzable and useful for argumentation and development of knowledge. Even within what I am attempting to point to or emphasize within this work, much will still be able to be captured in some way by propositional accounts. Therefore, when I mention non-propositional knowledge or an expansive epistemology, the idea is not to place something in opposition to propositional knowledge, but to emphasize something that is relevant but perhaps not receiving as much attention as it deserves.

Eleonore Stump has pointed out that the tendency within some areas of analytic philosophy<sup>3</sup> is to focus on propositional knowledge as the primary form of knowledge. “Know-how knowledge,” “knowledge by acquaintance,” or some other categorization may sometimes be referenced or considered, but this is a much less common occurrence.<sup>4</sup> Propositional knowledge is typically expressed in the form “S knows that p,” where “S” represents the knowing subject, and “p” represents the proposition known by the subject.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ch. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Matthias Steup, “Epistemology,” the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/epistemology/>, 1, for an example of this.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Acquaintance knowledge and know-how knowledge are not completely ignored areas of epistemology but seem not to receive quite as much attention as propositional knowledge. This is not particularly strange since propositional knowledge clearly has advantages in terms of its analyzability, and arguably has greater application to many topics within philosophy. However, my argument will be that there are things like acquaintance knowledge, know-how knowledge, personal knowledge, and so forth which are evidentially significant for a moral argument for theism. Moving forward, I will not be using the terms “acquaintance knowledge” or “know-how knowledge” to refer to what I am pointing to (mostly because my primary epistemological interlocutors do not use these terms), but it is likely that what is being discussed will overlap with interpretations of either or both of these (especially acquaintance knowledge).

Eleonore Stump has put forth extensive argumentation for a type of knowledge she characterizes as “Franciscan knowledge,” and, more specifically, argues for a subspecies of this knowledge characterized as “knowledge of persons.” This Franciscan knowledge is knowledge which cannot be expressed in propositional form without remainder. In a similar fashion (though over a hundred years earlier) John Henry Newman lays out an epistemological system in his book *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* and differentiates between formal and informal inference; in his system, informal inference is a process of reasoning that is performed by what he calls the “Illative” sense, and the results of this process cannot be expressed in purely logical terms (i.e. in propositional format).

Such a tendency to extend one’s epistemic approach beyond strictly propositional knowledge is evident throughout the history of the moral argument. Having canvassed a large swathe of luminaries within the field of moral apologetics, David Baggett and Jerry Walls describe the approach to knowledge of the various philosophers and thinkers in the following



way: “Few were narrow logic choppers or abstemious empiricists; they were open to the deliverances of relations, literature, poetry, emotions, and aesthetics.”<sup>6</sup> Reality is not so easily captured—a moment, a glance, a twitch communicates. A laugh can unsettle or set at ease. A loved one’s eyes can gleam with disdain or spark with passion. All of the little things between people, the heights and depths delivered by poetry, literature, and music—these are things that cannot be fully contained in propositions, at least not without losing some part of what is actually *known* in these situations.<sup>7</sup>

### Narratives and Overview of Project

The purpose of this current chapter has been to briefly set the stage for what is to come. The section just concluded has endeavored to point to the place within the philosophical world at which discussion is aimed; I have stated that there are important considerations lying beyond propositional knowledge, and once these have been brought to light we will find additional resources for the moral argument for theism as we appropriately expand our epistemic strategy. The first section of this chapter included narrative selections from *Crime and Punishment* to help illustrate what is at issue—the intensely personal and experiential questions of how one should live and how this knowledge may come about. Additionally, I have introduced a storyline—that of Raskolnikov—to which we shall return in the fifth chapter of this work. As intimated, there are things Raskolnikov is learning that apply to the subject of this thesis, and we can learn along

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<sup>6</sup> David Baggett and Jerry L. Walls, *The Moral Argument: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 214.

<sup>7</sup> The results are likely to include the propositional, but the experiences generally are not reducible to propositions; in saying there is more of relevance here, I am in some ways shifting the evaluation from the conclusions (which may often be in propositional format) to the process of getting there. There is knowledge (maybe only in the sense of depth if not purely new content) that occurs in the experiences and encounters leading up to the conclusion itself.

with him in a way that is not possible in the same way through propositional formats. A fuller, richer picture of knowledge results, then, from the combination of propositional and experiential knowledge—or so this thesis will argue.

Martha Nussbaum<sup>8</sup> and Eleonore Stump<sup>9</sup> have both argued for the utility of literature within philosophy. Stump emphasizes its importance due to the nature of knowledge of persons. Though this Franciscan knowledge cannot be propositionally formulated, the form of narrative provides a means for conveying some part of what would be known in the encounter of persons. Building from Stump's work in the following chapters, the use of narratives will aid in the illustration and clarification of the points regarding knowledge and morality. Hopefully, many of these points will begin to unfold and become clearer as we continue along in this exploration of these issues and ideas.

In chapter two we will take a deeper look at John Henry Newman's and Eleonore Stump's epistemological frameworks to illustrate more clearly what the limitations of propositional knowledge are and what role an appropriately expansive epistemology might play. Chapter three will consist of an exploration of relevant facets of personalism and development of personal knowledge. These chapters will prepare us for chapter four in which we will begin drawing connections to the moral argument for theism. Finally, chapter five will see a return to *Crime and Punishment* to further illustrate various points via narrative.

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<sup>8</sup> Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, chs. 2-4.

*This universal living scene of things is after all as little a logical world as it is a poetical; and, as it cannot without violence be exalted into poetic perfection, neither can it be attenuated into logical formulation.*

– John Henry Newman

## **Chapter Two: The Limits of Propositional Knowledge and an Expansive Epistemology**

### Introduction

The goal with this chapter is to utilize the epistemological considerations of John Henry Newman and Eleonore Stump in demonstrating the need for an expansive epistemology and investigating in what ways it can be expressed. It will remain for future chapters to illustrate the full significance of this toward the philosophy of religion.

It must of course be acknowledged that there will be some difficulties particular to this enterprise and inherent within its presentation. In thus arguing for non-propositional knowledge and ways of knowing, it will be impossible to elucidate in exclusively propositional terms that which is, by definition, not propositional. Especially in describing where these expansive epistemology concerns occur, much may be analyzed and explained, but conveying, on the other hand, what is contained or expressed in non-propositional knowledge is not so easily achievable. Thus, great care will be taken to express or gesture toward things as much as possible. In addition, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, narrative and literature will be more apt at expressing what may escape propositional formulation, and thus will be a part of the attempted elucidation. With such preliminaries concluded we will begin with an examination of John Henry Newman's thought as contained within *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Columbia, SC: Assumption Press, 2013).

## Newman's Epistemology

Newman's epistemological system is fairly intricate and yet in places ambiguous.<sup>11</sup> We will begin by investigating his conception of apprehension along with his distinctions between the real and the notional. Following this we will briefly assess his theory of inference, which will lead to a discussion of the illative sense.

### Apprehension, the Real and the Notional

Apprehension is the intelligent acceptance of an idea.<sup>12</sup> This does not require comprehension; at minimum it is seeing that something is so, having an awareness of something. Once we have apprehended a proposition,<sup>13</sup> we can doubt, infer, or assent. To doubt is to hold the proposition in suspense, neither inferring nor assenting. To infer is to conclude on the basis of premises, while to assent is to give absolute acceptance to a proposition without any conditions. Of these, inference and assent are most important to the present discussion and will be fleshed out more in what follows.

Apprehension can take place in two different modes: *real* and *notional* (and thus an assent or inference may be one or the other). The category or mode "real" refers to *things* and its referents are singular terms and unit;<sup>14</sup> what is real most often comes from experience. The mode

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, there is some ambiguity in how he describes "first principles" and the manifestation of the illative sense; Andrew Meszaros, "Newman and First Principles: The Noetic Dimension of the Illative Sense," *The Heythrop Journal* 59, no. 5 (September 2018): 770-782, 770f.

<sup>12</sup> Newman's explanations of apprehension and the differences between "real" and "notional" are primarily unpacked within chapters 1-4 of the *Grammar of Assent*.

<sup>13</sup> Note here that in Newman's terminology a proposition is essentially any item or concept which can be known or apprehended in some sense, and not the more modern and narrow philosophical usage for expressing "knowledge *that*."

<sup>14</sup> By "unit," Newman means that what is apprehended in real apprehension is unified, or taken as one thing, in contrast to notional apprehension, which views things more by its parts and separates what is apprehended into "notions."

of “notional,” however, does not stand for things, but for notions, and its referents are common; what is notional comes from abstraction.<sup>15</sup> It is important to realize that the descriptors of “real” and “notional” are not strictly governing the thing apprehended and informing us of the nature of what is apprehended, but rather is describing in what way the *individual* has apprehended. That is, it is individuals who apprehend propositions really or notionally and not the things apprehended which are either real or notional. This being said, there will be things which may not admit of real or notional apprehension due to the nature of reality.<sup>16</sup>

Some examples are in order. Note how a child in school may memorize long passages of someone like Homer or Shakespeare and have some cursory or limited understanding of the poetry, but then later in life, after experience has opened his eyes and expanded his horizons, the poetry unlocks, so to speak, within his mind and settles on him with a depth and wisdom he could not apprehend before that moment.<sup>17</sup> Again, one may consider something like grief. It is one thing to contemplate the idea, “My loved ones are mortal and will die because all people die,” and another to learn that your father has cancer, or your sister has been in a car accident. In both cases, the first apprehension is notional while the second is real.

Certain distinctions can further clarify and distinguish the real and the notional.<sup>18</sup> First, notional apprehension has to do with notions or aspects of things, working with aggregates,

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<sup>15</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, it seems unlikely that one could have a real apprehension of a logical principle like the law of non-contradiction, though one may be able to have a real apprehension of some situation in which the law applies.

<sup>17</sup> For a similar example of Newman’s own: John Henry Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 56f.

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to the analyses of both John Crosby and Michael Olson here: John Crosby, *The Personalism of John Henry Newman* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 38ff; Michael R. Olson, “Real Apprehension in Newman’s *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2005).

while real apprehension has to do with concrete unity. Consider our first example of a Homeric or Shakespearean poem. To apprehend it notionally is to apprehend its parts, to see the literary style or themes, to comprehend the words, to see the narrative structure. To apprehend it really is to see it as *that* poem, as a unit, and whole work, not comparing it to other works. It is singular, and the apprehension of it is an apprehension of it as whole and *sui generis*.<sup>19</sup>

Second, notional apprehension begins and ends with the mind's own abstract and constructive reasoning properties, while real apprehension is experiential. Take our Homeric or Shakespearean example again; in our notional apprehension, we are taking the separate aspects of the poem, isolating, and comparing them with other elements to comprehend the poem. We think about a theme of love and consider how other poems have developed the same theme and so forth. In doing such, we are taking disparate notions, comparing and contrasting, constructing new understandings and concepts. All of this is internal and within the mind. To apprehend it in a real way, we must in some way experience it. Perhaps the child of our example read a Shakespearean sonnet on love for class and found it interesting and insightful. Then, upon falling in love for the first time, he feels within his soul the Shakespearean lines:

... Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken.<sup>20</sup>

Now, because of the new experiences regarding love, the child experiences the poem in a way he had not before and enters into a real apprehension of it.

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<sup>19</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 182f. In Olson's technical language: "... It is the unity of actuality, a unity that comprehends complexity by virtue of hierarchical ordering"; see Olson, "Real Apprehension," 509.

<sup>20</sup> William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 116: Let me not to the marriage of true minds," <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45106/sonnet-116-let-me-not-to-the-marriage-of-true-minds>, lines 2-6.

Finally, notional apprehension is more capable of achieving clarity while real apprehension is often affected by a sort of obscurity. This is primarily due to the nature of what is being apprehended in each case. Notions, abstracted and separated from the experience and concrete unity, can be expressed in clearer terms, generally; in fact, the formal inferential process (to be discussed in detail next) generally begins by first stripping down terms to the most narrowly defined premises possible. The objects of real apprehension, however, must remain concrete and experiential and often resist clear expression (at least in propositional terms).

Again, propositions (objects/things/notions) to be apprehended can be apprehended really or notionally. We may then infer or assent.<sup>21</sup> It will now be useful to further clarify Newman's conception of inference, which can be either formal or informal, as well as the illative sense which is instrumental in the latter.

#### Formal and Informal Inference

When Newman uses the term "inference," he seems to have in mind our normal reasoning processes such as deductive, inductive, or abductive reasoning. By formal inference Newman means something very much like deductive logic or deductive reasoning. Newman's inferential method consists of establishing propositions, forming a proof, and analyzing it, which Newman sees as resulting in the Aristotelian syllogism. He does not think the presentation is required to be this technical, however, to be inferential. "Verbal reasoning, of whatever kind, as opposed to mental, is what I mean by inference, which differs from logic only inasmuch as logic is its scientific form."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Again, we are leaving out doubt as an action here since it is extraneous to our purposes.

<sup>22</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 174.

Formal inference as a process is focused primarily on the relations of propositions to one another and works most effectively when terms are as simple and narrow in meaning as possible; the more abstract and notional the terms are, the more suitable the propositions become for the inferential process.<sup>23</sup> Newman describes this transition masterfully:

The concrete matter of propositions is a constant source of trouble to syllogistic reasoning, as marring the simplicity and perfection of its process. Words, which denote things, have innumerable implications; but in inferential exercises it is the very triumph of that clearness and hardness of head, which is the characteristic talent for the art, to have stripped them of that depth and breadth of associations, which constitute their poetry, their rhetoric, and their historical life, to have starved each term down till it has become the ghost of itself, and everywhere one and the same ghost, “omnibus umbra locis,” so that it may stand for just one unreal aspect of the concrete thing to which it properly belongs, for a relation, a generalization, or other abstraction, for a notion neatly turned out of the laboratory of the mind, and sufficiently tame and subdued, because existing only as a definition.

Thus it is that the logician for his own purposes, and most usefully as far as those purposes are concerned, turns rivers, full, winding, and beautiful, into navigable canals.<sup>24</sup>

And so formal inference is most closely linked to notional apprehension, but this is where the need for consideration beyond the propositional arises. The world we encounter is a living world of concrete entities—the world is real, not notional. Formal inference and the notional can deliver important and useful information, but when what is needed is real and experiential, it may be that notional apprehension misses something of value.<sup>25</sup> In discussing the deliverances of science, which falls under this heading, Newman says, “Science, working by itself, reaches truth in the abstract, and probability in the concrete; but what we aim at is truth in the concrete.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 174-175.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>25</sup> Remember our second distinction regarding “real” and “notional”: the notional cannot extend beyond “the mind’s own abstract and constructive reasoning properties.”

<sup>26</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 183.



Logic and formal inference can provide ways of bringing facts together and processing them efficiently, and works well for deliberating and puzzling things out within the mind.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, formal inference is not lacking utility. Beyond this, it is natural and good as a way we process information and move forward in the world. But there are limitations—formal inference cannot well deliver apprehension of the real, which is individual, concrete, and experiential.<sup>28</sup>

Newman’s theory of how we come to apprehend in a real way involves the use of the illative sense and the process of informal inference. For Newman the illative sense is the innate faculty that carries out informal inferences and allows one to reason in concrete matters of fact; formal inference is not suited for the task because concrete reality has innumerable aspects that cannot be propositionally (in the narrow sense) analyzed the way notions can. John Crosby says that informal inference “works not only with our experience as formulated in propositions, but also with that ‘excess’ of experience that cannot be propositionally formulated.”<sup>29</sup>

By informal inference, Newman seems to have in mind something similar to inductive or abductive reasoning. The illative sense is a faculty like that of Aristotle’s *phronesis*, which “is the directing, controlling, and determining principle in such matters [conduct], personal and social.”<sup>30</sup> As an example, Newman believes formal inference may be able to lead to laws, rules, principles, examples, and so forth in something like ethical systems, but these must be applied to concrete, particular cases. When the concrete and particular is faced, an individual reasons

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>28</sup> This does not mean *nothing* of our experience can be captured in notional form, but only that the two (experience and the “notional”) are not perfectly well-suited to each other.

<sup>29</sup> Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, 120.

<sup>30</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 231.

himself, personally, from the totality of his knowledge and experience. He uses his judgment and makes deliverances, heart and mind, about that which has not been proved except possibly in the abstract.<sup>31</sup>

Crosby relates formal and informal inference to computer processing; a formal inference can be processed surely and efficiently by a computer, but an informal inference cannot just because the relevant data could never be sufficiently entered into the computer.<sup>32</sup> As should be clear, this follows from our understanding of real apprehension. For one to apprehend really, one must apprehend the proposition as a concrete unit; it is indivisible and experiential.<sup>33</sup> Because the concrete is beyond what can be fully analyzed and formally inferred, informal inference is personal, and we take responsibility for the conclusions at which we arrive.<sup>34</sup> For these reasons Crosby suggests two primary distinctions of informal inference as active and personal.<sup>35</sup> Formal inference can be passive and anonymous in the sense that one can follow the reasoning to its conclusions without involving anything unique to himself. Everything is notional, abstract, and could be accomplished by anyone the same way with the same data. Informal inference moves beyond these. In the end, we need propositional accounts of knowledge; these considerations

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<sup>31</sup> It is not clear that an epistemic “faculty” (i.e. an illative sense) is necessary or useful for capturing these ideas, but as this is how Newman has presented his epistemology, I will retain the use of “illative sense.” At the least, hopefully the comments regarding the illative sense will make clear what processes are at issue.

<sup>32</sup> Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, 120.

<sup>33</sup> I would like to clarify once again Newman’s usage of “proposition” in a broader sense; this particular point regarding apprehending the proposition as a concrete unit is an example of what I am arguing cannot be fully *reduced* to propositional knowledge, though some propositions can be stated. For example, “I know Mary”; I can utter this proposition and extend various premises in propositional format, but if I apprehend Mary in a real way, as a concrete unit, there is more that is *known*, or at least something deeper that is known than what I am expressing in however many propositions regarding the conclusion “I know Mary.” Hopefully, as we continue this will become clearer and its significance will become more apparent.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

should serve to remind us that there may be relevant items aside from the propositional account which are evidentially significant.

The illative sense may be more or less evident in various cases. My illative sense may be less evident today on a conclusion relating to science such as that the earth revolves around the sun; on the other hand, in many moral and religious situations it may be far more apparent as in forming a decision on utilitarianism versus consequentialism or deliberating on a difficult moral dilemma. In these decisions I must move beyond formal inference to make a conclusion that is to some extent personal.

We will further narrow in on the importance of these things for our assessment of propositional knowledge and an expansive epistemology below, but this should serve to provide an understanding of Newman's epistemological framework. We shall now turn to the work of Eleonore Stump regarding what she calls Franciscan knowledge, as detailed within her magnificent work *Wandering in Darkness*.

### Stump's Epistemology

Eleonore Stump begins her epic work with a detailed explanation of her project. Her overall purpose has to do with utilizing narratives in a defense against the problem of suffering; she believes narratives are useful because of her theory of Franciscan knowledge. In a typological sense one can think of the analytical tradition and propositional accounts of knowledge as Dominican, and knowledge and methods that are *not* these, as Franciscan, referencing the medieval monks Dominic and Francis. By utilizing these types she is seeking to broadly outline two different methodologies, but not to pit them against each other. The goal is that both Dominican and Franciscan methods might be used to reach a fuller, more robust account of reality.

In detailing her view of this Franciscan knowledge Stump begins by describing many of the current theories of knowledge. She suggests these theories all characterize knowledge as a “matter of having an attitude toward a proposition, of knowing *that*.”<sup>36</sup> There are examples of knowledge, however, which do not seem to be reducible to propositional knowledge, such as sensory knowledge. While propositional accounts can convey something about the color *red*, a propositional account cannot adequately provide answers to questions like “what is *redness*?” or “what is it like to see red?”<sup>37</sup> Along with sensory knowledge, Stump suggests that there is a knowledge of persons that, similarly, cannot be reduced to propositional knowledge; both sensory knowledge and the knowledge of persons can be seen as subsets of Franciscan knowledge.

Consider a situation in which there is a woman Mary who has been locked away from human contact since birth and, though she has access to any and all information regarding the world and science, has only ever had third-person experiences or received third-person accounts. She knows everything that can be propositionally known of persons but has never had any sort of interaction with another person which could constitute a second-person experience (which includes narrative and story). After some time Mary is rescued from this imprisonment and reunited with her mother. “When Mary is first united with her mother, it seems indisputable that Mary will know things she did not know before, even if she knew everything about her mother

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<sup>36</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 49.

<sup>37</sup> Even in cases in which a proposition can result, such as “that appears red-ly to me,” or “that seems to be a red house,” etc., the point is that this does not exhaust what is actually known; *red* is not reducible to these propositions. Though this distinction may not be novel and may seem trivial, I do not believe this to be the case, as I hope to display as we move forward. In some part this is because, as I stated earlier, I am trying to shift focus from the propositional conclusion (such as “that seems to be a red house,”) to the process/experience in which we receive the knowledge; it is in the actual experience and the things involved in the experience that we find the evidentially significant material.

that could be made available to her in non-narrative propositional form, including her mother's psychological states... what will come as the major revelation to Mary is her *mother*.”<sup>38</sup>

A brief look at the nature of autism can help display this knowledge of persons and what its absence looks like. “Whatever ties together the different clinical signs of all the degrees of autism spectrum disorder, the most salient feature of the disorder is its ‘eerie imperviousness,’ its absence of acting in concert.”<sup>39</sup> Stump’s assertion is that what is lacking in such individuals is a knowledge of persons and their mental states.

The current research on mirror neurons seems to suggest that the mirror neuron system is “the foundation for the capacity of all fully functional human beings at any age to know the mind of another person.”<sup>40</sup> There is considerable research indicating that some of the knowledge gained in the interaction of persons is not only the result of a process of reasoning, but is a sort of experiencing in the mind of the actions or intentions of the other person as the other is experienced. “John knows *that* Mary is going to give him a flower because he first knows Mary, her action, her emotion, and her intention—but these are things which he knows by, as it were, seeing them, and not by cognizing them in the knowledge-*that* way.”<sup>41</sup>

In interactions between persons there is more occurring than what can be propositionally captured. Each individual as experienced (i.e. Mary’s mom, from the above example) is more than the sum of the propositional knowledge about them (i.e. all of the information Mary had about her mom prior to meeting her mom). Stump does, as mentioned above, extend this beyond

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<sup>38</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 52.

<sup>39</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 65.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

persons, but it is with knowledge of persons that she is primarily concerned. As has been referenced, though not spelled out, an interaction which yields this Franciscan knowledge will typically be of a second-personal nature. An individual has an experience with another individual. When a second-person encounter occurs, one is placed in position to gain knowledge of persons of the sort being indicated in this section.

Though an account of this experience (given its nature) cannot be propositionally provided, it does not follow that no account is possible. It is also worth noting that a given first- or third-person account would be insufficient to convey the knowledge which is at stake here. What is needed is a vehicle such as narrative or story. A story or narrative enables the listener or reader to have a part of what would have been had if this individual had undergone the second-person experience but without actually being a direct participant in the experience.<sup>42</sup>

Though Stump's Franciscan knowledge functions in many ways as a negative thesis (i.e. Franciscan knowledge is defined as knowledge which is not propositional) it is very natural and intuitive as is well illustrated through the autism example. Though it may be difficult to spell out what I know when I know that you are in a bad mood or being sarcastic, we fully understand what it looks like when someone is not picking up on these things or unable to grasp them. Stump compares Franciscan knowledge to perception; it is possible to be wrong in what one sees, as in a mirage or having an injury to the eye. However, we understand that these are illusions and exceptions and they can be disambiguated from perception when it is functioning normally.<sup>43</sup> And so Stump says, "... Franciscan knowledge could be understood as the veridical delivery of a cognitive faculty when that cognitive faculty is aimed at veridicality and is

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<sup>42</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 78.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

functioning properly in its typical environment where veridicality is a matter of an epistemic connection to things in the world that is correct and reliable but that is nonetheless not propositional.”<sup>44</sup>

### Expansive Epistemology Considerations

Regarding our epistemological considerations some important points can now be made. Two things are needed: to show where there may be limits to propositional knowledge and to show the utility of an expansive epistemology. It is quite clear that Stump is arguing for an increased awareness and utility of non-propositional knowledge, or Franciscan knowledge. She emphasizes at many points that this is not to decry or subtract from propositional knowledge; propositional knowledge has much to contribute to philosophy and epistemology. However, for some enterprises within philosophy, such as Stump’s work on the problem of suffering, this non-propositional knowledge has something important to offer. As I have suggested above, when working with philosophy of religion and ethics (at minimum), personal and experiential angles on knowledge are important and useful. Stump’s categories and negative thesis provide tools for trying to identify problem areas, especially when it comes to apprehending knowledge of persons.

Both authors clearly place a heavy emphasis on the role of experience and interpersonal relationships in knowledge. Newman has similar things in mind in relation to the limits of propositional knowledge, which is most evident in his clarification of formal inference. Interestingly, the categories of “notional” and “real” do *not* strictly line up with Dominican and Franciscan knowledge as may seem to be the case initially. This is because the categories of

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 72f.

notional and real primarily have to do with the individual's apprehension of a given object or proposition, etc. and is not something inherent within the proposition, whereas Dominican knowledge is defined as propositional and Franciscan knowledge is not propositional. However, there are resonances and at least some important overlaps; we are more likely in Dominican methods to apprehend notionally and in Franciscan methods to apprehend really. At least, such seems to be the case on my understanding of these two authors. In a very rough comparison, formal inference is a process which leads to Dominican knowledge and informal inference may lead to Franciscan knowledge; at the same time, often the conclusions of either process can be stated propositionally (in the case of Franciscan knowledge, it is just that the proposition does not contain all of the relevant information—there is more known, or what is known is more deeply known, than what the proposition conveys).<sup>45</sup>

And so, both Stump and Newman have delineated places in which propositional knowledge or formal inference ends, and both have linked this to religious issues; for Stump the answer to the problem of suffering is not merely propositional but involves, to some extent, a knowledge of persons. For Newman, matters of belief and even apprehending who God is come about largely through informal inference, and so regarding religious belief he says, "Persons

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<sup>45</sup> The situation is, of course, more nuanced than this: For Newman, rather than differentiating between propositional and non-propositional knowledge (e.g. "I know *that* I will die," and "I know I am about to die") as it relates to a statement of knowledge, it seems he had more in mind a situation in which the proposition "I know that I will die," might be apprehended in two different modes. In the first mode the statement is notionally apprehended and may be little more than comprehension; in the second mode of apprehending the statement, it is apprehended in a "real" way—that is, in an experiential way that goes beyond the proposition in some way; there is something visceral and tangible). However, Newman would see both of these as the product of informal inference: "The strongest proof I have for my inevitable mortality is the *reductio ad absurdum*... But what logic cannot do, my own personal reasoning, my good sense, which is the healthy condition of such personal reasoning, but which cannot adequately express itself in words, does for me, and I am possessed with the most precise, absolute, masterful certitude of my dying some day or other" (Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 197). For Stump, it would seem that the first statement above regarding my death could be propositionally understood and seen as the conclusion of an inductive argument while the second may allow for a non-propositional Franciscan understanding in which one is realizing the frailty of *his* life.



influence us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma: no man will be a martyr for a conclusion.”<sup>46</sup>

To our second aspect of where the expansive epistemology functions or is useful, the most direct answer is in personal knowledge. This is, however, not just the knowledge of persons which Stump argues for, but also a certain knowing *as* persons, both of which will be fleshed out further in the following chapter. Non-propositional knowledge is clearly more than just knowledge of persons, but it is certainly not less. As the moral argument for God’s existence is a field in which inter-personal relationships are critical, so far shall personal knowledge be of relevance as evidence in need of explanation.

By expansive epistemology, then, is meant an epistemological system which considers non-propositional evidence no less than propositional. When one approaches an issue with an expansive enough epistemology, one is beginning open to the deliverances of a wider range of input. This does not negate the requirement of truth inherent within any proper conception of knowledge but acknowledges the fullness of reality. When one thinks about the existence of God, one is interested in truth in the concrete, not just in the abstract.

### Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the relevant epistemological details of Newman’s *Grammar of Assent* and Stump’s *Wandering in Darkness* with special attention to highlighting the limits of propositional knowledge and at least gesturing toward the nature of non-propositional knowledge. The following chapter will consist of an attempt to narrow in on some important

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 62.

considerations regarding persons and personal knowledge to prepare us for approaching moral arguments for theism.

*“No one, no one in the whole world, is unhappier than you are right now!” [Sonya] exclaimed, as if in a frenzy, not hearing [Raskolnikov’s] remark, and suddenly burst into sobs, as if in hysterics.*

*A feeling long unfamiliar to him flooded his soul and softened it all at once. He did not resist: two tears rolled from his eyes....”<sup>47</sup>*

### **Chapter Three: Personalism and Personal Knowledge**

#### Personalism as a Philosophical Perspective and the Dignity of Persons

##### Personalism

Issues of religious belief, morality, and ethics are issues of persons and between persons. It is not my wife or father or best friend who must decide whether I will profess belief in God or whether I should steal or lie. In doing these things, I am also dealing with persons and as a person. At least within Christian religious tradition, God is seen as personal though not necessarily a person (at least in our normal understanding of the term), and so my decision to believe in God would include some element of expecting or engaging in personal interaction with God. If I lie or steal, there is someone<sup>48</sup> to whom my actions are directed. And so personal encounters are of paramount importance for this project and require some additional development.

This will not be all, however; it is also important to consider what it means that we, as persons, encounter the world. What I mean is that each of us in virtue of being a person experiences the world in particular and individual ways; there are things about us and our backgrounds that affect our perspectives. There is also something to the reality that I learn things in virtue of being a person and not an animal, robot, lampshade, for example. I, as a person, am somehow active in the world in a way that non-persons are not. Therefore, vital to the issues of

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<sup>47</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 412.

<sup>48</sup> Excluding perhaps cases in which one is stealing from an entity, i.e. “the state.”

religious belief, morality, and ethics is *knowledge of* persons as well as *knowing as* persons. This chapter aims to develop each of these ideas, beginning with a discussion of the nature of personhood and ending with a narrative example in which I seek to display these ideas.

Personalism has been a response in some ways similar to what I am seeking to display with epistemology. Crosby describes the rise of personalism as a reaction to some extent to “a reductionistic, naturalistic image of man.”<sup>49</sup> Personalists in response seek to assert the value and dignity of persons—that there is something more to a person than propositional accounts. A person is neither exhaustively contained in scientific, reductionist accounts nor subsumed within a pantheistic Hegelian system. I am not just a *part* or *moment*—I am something distinct, unique, and incommunicable.<sup>50</sup>

While discussing his personalist work, Karol Wojtyla says: “The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person.... To this ... we must propose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of ‘recapitulation’ of the inviolable mystery of the person.”<sup>51</sup> Here in Crosby’s explanations of personalism we see a similar awareness of the space in which an expansive epistemology is needed and useful. It is the awareness of something that will not be contained by our attempts to narrowly define and explain.

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<sup>49</sup> Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, xix.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, xix-xx. That such a proposition can be formulated (“I am something distinct, unique, and incommunicable”) does not undercut the point; it simply means the conclusion is to some extent propositional and the concepts are analyzable. What it is that is actually known in knowing a person, however, is not so easily encapsulated.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by Henri DeLubac, *At the Service of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Books, 1993), 172, formatted here as referenced by Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, xix.

Another important personalist principle is the subjectivity of persons, which has been developed and influenced by Max Scheler, Karol Wojtyla, and John Crosby, among others. A person lives, acts, and experiences the world “from within,” in a first-person perspective, as it were. To understand persons then requires something more than viewing them “from without.”<sup>52</sup> As an extension of this point, a person cannot be narrowed down to *simply* another instantiation of a human being; rather, as a subjective being, “a creature of interiority,” a person “exists as *this* unrepeatable person and so stands in a sense above the human kind, being always more than an instance of it.”<sup>53</sup>

### The Dignity of Persons

A chapter in John Crosby’s *Personalist Papers* develops an understanding of the sources for the dignity of persons.<sup>54</sup> By “dignity” he means something different from the rights of a person. Personal dignity is not concerned with a social dimension the way rights are. I cannot violate my own rights, though others can; personal dignity, however, can be violated by myself and others. Personal dignity is also inalienable in a way rights are not. “... I can suspend or block my rights as a morally relevant factor in a given situation. But I cannot remove my dignity from a moral situation in this way.”<sup>55</sup>

Crosby sees the sources for the dignity of persons as twofold. The first is rationality. A significant part of the philosophical tradition of the West lends support to the idea of the dignity

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<sup>52</sup> Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, xx.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, xx-xxi.

<sup>54</sup> John F. Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

of the rational characteristics of human beings beyond that of all other creatures. Mankind “is not just governed by reason but governs himself with his own reason.”<sup>56</sup> This is a fairly uncontroversial point and is of great value for our understanding of persons. As Crosby continues to point out, however, if this is our only source for the dignity of persons, this suggests that one may be able to argue (in contrast to the personalist themes noted above) that in sharing in the common source of dignity that is rationality, each person is just one additional instance of a rational human being.

If my dignity rests in the idea that I am rational just as are all other instances of human beings, then I could be replaced by another human being sharing in that same rationality without anything of significance being lost. Indeed, to some extent, this is exactly what Peter Singer suggests in his work *Practical Ethics*. Since Singer is utilitarian in his ethical views, if a hemophiliac infant interferes with the potential for its parents to have a subsequent healthy infant, it would be morally justifiable to kill the hemophiliac infant.<sup>57</sup> As Crosby emphasizes, without another source of dignity than rationality, it is not clear how one could adequately or decisively respond to this view.<sup>58</sup>

It is worth pausing at this point to reflect on why we might find ourselves desiring to disagree with Singer’s conclusion to begin with. Is it self-evident that we should not kill infants? Singer himself points out that the current attitude toward infanticide is based on Christian principles and influence “rather than a universal ethical value,”<sup>59</sup> and that many varied societies

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<sup>56</sup> Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 169ff.

<sup>58</sup> Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 9f.

<sup>59</sup> Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 172.

in the past (Australian aborigines, ancient Greeks, and mandarin Chinese, for example) have seen infanticide as permitted or even obligatory.<sup>60</sup> Singer is not trying to say infants can or should be killed for any reason or even to equate abortion and infanticide (the context of the infanticide issue is a discussion of abortion). Rather, he is suggesting that there is no intrinsic difference between the ethical situations of the two scenarios (neither the unborn child nor the infant is developed enough to have desires) and that in both cases it is permissible to kill the child provided “those closest to the child do not want it to live”<sup>61</sup> (presumably for utilitarian reasons). So what is the impulse to disagree with this that many have? Is it only because we have received a Christian heritage and thus have been conditioned into moral outrage?

Crosby would say no to this—there is a second source of dignity. “Each human being, besides sharing in this common nature [rationality], also has something of his own—something his own and not another’s—incommunicably his own.”<sup>62</sup> There is something unique and unrepeatable about each person. Here we see another relation to the expansive epistemological concerns—as with our understanding of knowledge, there is something about persons that cannot be fully expressed, confined, or cornered.

Crosby uses the example of Socrates to demonstrate this point. As far as qualities are concerned, there are of course commonalities of Socrates with others. Other persons have been human beings, Greeks, philosophers, and even ironic in a “Socratic” way. “But those who knew and loved Socrates will not grant that everything that they knew and loved in him can be repeated in others; they will insist that there was in Socrates something absolutely unrepeatable,

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<sup>60</sup> Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 172.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>62</sup> Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 7.

they will say that there was a mystery of the man and that Socrates was not a mere instance or specimen of this mystery but that he *was* this mystery, so that another Socrates is strictly, absolutely impossible.... The incommunicable Socrates was something ineffable, something too concrete for the general concepts of human language; something knowable through love but not utterable in concepts.”<sup>63</sup> On Crosby’s conception of things, then, the dignity of persons resides both in their common rationality and their individual incommunicability.

### Knowledge of Persons

Having set a foundation regarding the nature of persons (albeit briefly), we will now turn to the nature of knowledge of persons. Eleonore Stump has helpfully broken down the types of encounters in which she believes knowledge of persons to result: second-person experiences. Crosby has also explored some relevant themes, again within his *Personalist Papers*, where he is concerned with examining the nature of empathy and its role in interpersonal communication.

In the previous chapter we looked at Eleonore Stump’s account of Franciscan knowledge and personal knowledge, which is a subset of it. Much of the intention then was to point toward this non-propositional knowledge, for instance the kind of knowledge of another person that is often lacking in the encounters of autistic individuals with others. On Stump’s view, this type of knowledge of persons happens primarily or at least most obviously in the context of a second-person experience.<sup>64</sup> For instance, in our example using Mary and her mother from the previous chapter, what was needed for Mary to allow her the opportunity for the knowledge of persons that she could not get propositionally was that she encounter or experience her mother.

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<sup>63</sup> Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 75ff.



In order to further clarify what a second-person experience is and how it differs from a first or third-person experience, Stump describes things in the following way: “One person Paula has a second-person experience of another person Jerome only if (1) Paula is aware of Jerome as a person (call the relation Paul has to Jerome in this condition ‘personal interaction’), (2) Paula’s personal interaction with Jerome is of a direct and immediate sort, and (3) Jerome is conscious.”<sup>65</sup> Second-person experiences require, as one would expect, at least two individuals and the one having the experience must have personal interaction with that other, to see them “as a person.” Jerome has to be conscious, but not necessarily conscious of Paula. For Stump, this is the bare minimum for a second-person experience, and she finds that this definition of a second-person account is a more accurate conception than that of first and third-person attempts to describe the same phenomenon.<sup>66</sup> When I say, then, that when Paula and Jerome interact and Paula learns something about Jerome that is not propositional, I am trying to convey something like the idea that she has had a second-person experience of Jerome.

Crosby, in his second chapter of *Personalist Papers*, entitled “The Empathetic Understanding of Other Persons,” also provides some helpful thoughts related to the knowledge of persons. Building upon the foundation of the incommunicability of other persons and their subjectivity, he draws attention to the hiddenness between persons that occurs as a result. This hiddenness of subjectivity provides an obstacle for knowing a person as a person; however, Crosby does not believe that it prevents the ability to encounter other persons.<sup>67</sup> He writes, “It would seem that, though we can never experience them exactly as they experience themselves,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>67</sup> Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 34.

we can nevertheless understand what it is like for them to experience what they experience and in this way we can achieve a certain solidarity with them. I refer to the act of empathetically understanding others.”<sup>68</sup>

This seems to overlap well with Stump’s understanding of mirror neurons and autism discussed previously: there are things we know about the other person because we are experiencing it from within ourselves in a way, and this provides a foundation of understanding. As she points out, the research is suggesting and indicating that this “experiencing of the other from within” is not the result of cognitive processes, of a chain of reasoning. Through empathy, a sort of “entering into a person subjectively,” our knowledge of the other person is enlarged—we have a path through the subjective hiddenness that is characteristic of each individual being an incommunicable person.<sup>69</sup>

A second-person experience, then, and especially an empathetic understanding, can provide the framework in which knowledge of persons can occur. At most, this only provides us with a way of characterizing the situation in which the knowledge might occur, but it so far does not provide us with any indication of its content. It should be obvious that some of this content will be propositional, but my argument is that at least some of it is not. What is propositional can be easily analyzed and the content expressed and so that will not be of direct relevance here, but what shall we do with the things which are not propositional? How shall we give an account of them?

This is where Stump’s concept of second-person accounts comes into the picture. Since second-person experiences differ from first- and third-person experiences (which might be more

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 39.

easily conveyed in propositional format), first- and third-person accounts are also not sufficient. Stump asserts that what allows us to overcome the difficulties of expressing the second-person account are stories or narratives. “The re-presenting of a second-person experience in a story thus constitutes a second-person account. It is a report of a set of second-person experiences that does not lose (at least does not lose entirely) the distinctively second-person character of the experience.”<sup>70</sup> For this reason, we will return at the end of this chapter to a narrative to attempt a better illustration of a second-person experience and gesture at the knowledge of persons being conveyed.

### Knowing as Persons

Not only is there knowledge of persons, but there is also a way of knowing as persons. For this we can think back to Newman’s illative sense as well as focus on the idea of experience. It is not necessary to pull in all of Newman’s characterization of the illative sense, but it at least provides an instructional way of thinking about how we approach the world. Every person is unique in his personality, in his psychological makeup, in his past experiences, in his particular giftings and skills. The combination of these characteristics reveals a unique, incommunicable person who interacts with the world as himself and no other. In his sermon “Implicit and Explicit Reason,” Newman writes:

The mind ranges to and fro, and spreads out, and advances forward with a quickness which has become a proverb, and a subtlety and versatility which baffle investigation. It passes on from point to point, gaining one by some indication; another on a probability; then availing itself of an association; then falling back on some received law; next seeing on testimony; then committing itself to some popular impression, or some inward instinct, or some obscure memory; and thus it makes progress not unlike a clamberer on a steep cliff, who, by quick eye, prompt hand, and firm foot, ascends how he knows not himself; by personal endowments and by practice, rather than by rule, leaving no track behind him, and unable to

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<sup>70</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, 78.

teach another. It is not too much to say that the stepping by which great geniuses scale the mountains of truth is as unsafe and precious to men in general, as the ascent of a skillful mountaineer up a literal crag. It is a way which they alone can take; and its justification lies in their success. And such mainly is the way in which all men, gifted or not gifted, commonly reason,—not by rule, but by an inward faculty.

Reasoning, then, or the exercise of Reason, is a living spontaneous energy within us, not an art.<sup>71</sup>

The point that I would like to make here is not concerning a new form of knowledge that is only obtained as persons, but rather that there is something distinctive and important about being persons which affects our knowing things. As Newman has expressed, there is something obscure and difficult to trace in the way the mind moves through premises and conclusions—this is, at least in part, a consequence of the incommunicability and uniqueness of persons. This becomes especially evident when the things we are discussing are real, rather than notional—experiential rather than abstract. When the thing one is trying to know is objective, is abstract and notional, anyone can follow the premises and find the conclusion. But when one is trying to conclude on something real, something from experience, it is far more difficult for someone else to climb that mountain the same way.

Experience is the most important aspect of this. We experience the world. We experience people and values. We gain knowledge from this. This is not to say that one cannot state propositionally what it is that she has learned, but stating propositionally what she has learned is not the same thing as what she learned. If she goes out into the world and learns about morality and about suffering, she may be able to sit down and write out a propositional account of the lessons she learned—“I know that taking care of my family is a good thing”; “I know that actions have consequences”; or so forth. Knowledge of persons and knowing as persons is

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<sup>71</sup> John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford, Between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 176.

emphasizing something different, though. These propositions are not the things that change us, that bring us to *realizations*, that result in a real apprehension and assent to truths. One can state a thing propositionally all day long, for years and years, but until she knows it as a person (which often occurs in second-person experiences), she does not *know* it in the same way. Let us see if a story can more clearly convey this.

### Marmeladov and Sonya

As indicated above, it is very important to remember that not everything occurring within a second-person experience or within our experience of the world as persons is non-propositional. There will be aspects of things that can be conveyed propositionally and are useful. When Jerome smiles and Paula notices the smile, sees his eyes and the contours of his face, and concludes that Jerome is happy, she can say something like “I know that Jerome is happy.” There is always more nuance to this, of course, since to some extent, emotions are not always so neat and clear, but the idea remains. We can often propositionally convey parts of the second-person experience. When I learn the value and utility of perseverance from overcoming various challenges and seeing the fruit of that, I can state, “I know that perseverance is an important value.” However, we cannot convey everything, and it may just be that those things that we cannot convey propositionally are nonetheless true—and still things we *know*—and that they are valuable for understanding ourselves and the world.

In *Crime and Punishment*, we read of Semyon Marmeladov, a drunkard who has squandered all of his money and led his family into impoverishment; these actions caused his daughter Sonya (the same Sonya mentioned above as the eventual confidant to Raskolnikov) to have to go into prostitution in order to provide money for their family to live. As Marmeladov is dying the following scene occurs: “But with an unnatural effort he managed to prop himself on

one arm. He gazed wildly and fixedly at his daughter for some time, as though he did not recognize her. And indeed he had never seen her in such attire. All at once he recognized her—humiliated, crushed, bedizened, and ashamed, humbly waiting her turn to take leave of her dying father. Infinite suffering showed in his face... “Sonya! Daughter! Forgive me!” he cried.”<sup>72</sup>

What is it that is happening in this scene? By Stump’s and Newman’s lights Marmeladov has a second-person experience of Sonya, and there is a sort of real apprehension occurring. He is seeing her garbed as a prostitute. There is of course grief and suffering, but what is it that he knows? He knows something deep and disturbing within him which forces him to cry out for forgiveness. Does he just know the propositions “It is wrong to be a drunkard” and “It is wrong to force my daughter into prostitution due to my drunkenness”? I do not think this narrative moment can be so encapsulated, and, even if it were, these propositions lose what is valuable in the knowledge. Indeed, Marmeladov himself is already aware of both propositions before this scene.

In chapter two of part one of the book, Marmeladov tells Raskolnikov the full story of how Marmeladov and his family came to be in the situation they are in, including about Sonya. Marmeladov, in telling this, is fully aware of the wrongness of what he is doing, saying, “I ought to be crucified, crucified on a cross, and not pitied! But crucify, O judge, crucify, and having crucified, pity the man!”<sup>73</sup> These words refer to his drunkenness and to what he has caused to Sonya. So the “infinite suffering” in his face, the cry of forgiveness, the moment captured in the above scene is not simply the knowledge of the wrongdoing captured in the propositions. It is the

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<sup>72</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 185.

<sup>73</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 23. The full scene between Raskolnikov and Marmeladov encompasses all of chapter two of part one of the book.

moment of seeing Sonya, seeing her dressed as a prostitute, perhaps the situation of knowing he is dying, it is all these things and more, happening as they do at that moment, in that experience that form the moment and realization Marmeladov has.

Here, Marmeladov has a second-person experience with Sonya; he sees what his actions have caused, manifested in all their gaudy glory. He is also encountering Sonya as a person; this is the conclusion of his journey, of his thoughts and actions, of his climbing the mountain. In this moment of realization, in this encounter, Marmeladov is learning so much more than just propositions. Now, in this particular case, to say that Marmeladov knows these propositions is to say something *more* than what is in the propositions. There is a knowledge of persons, something irreducible, something deeper in this knowledge, and significantly, it has a profound impact on Marmeladov as a person.

“But what I say is this: if one convinces a person logically that he essentially has nothing to cry about, he’ll stop crying. That’s clear. Or are you convinced that he won’t?”  
 “Life would be too easy that way,” Raskolnikov replied.<sup>74</sup>

## **Chapter Four: Applications of an Expansive Epistemology to the Moral Argument for God’s Existence**

### Introduction

In the last three chapters I have attempted to lay out an understanding of an expansive epistemology and specifically to indicate what this might look like in regards to knowledge of persons. I should now like to develop these ideas as they relate to the moral argument for theism. My intention here is to display the ways in which these expansive epistemological concerns can positively support a moral argument.

Moral arguments for theism have many angles and facets, but are, in general, arguments seeking to connect some aspect of morality or ethics to the existence of God. One theoretical form of the moral argument can be expressed in the following form:

1. There are objective moral facts.
2. God provides the best explanation of the existence of objective moral facts.
3. Therefore, (probably) God exists.<sup>75</sup>

There are, of course, those who do not believe in objective moral facts—perhaps because there is no personal or impersonal force or mind that can serve as the basis of moral facts.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 424.

<sup>75</sup> C. Stephen Evans, “Moral Arguments for the Existence of God,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/moral-arguments-god/>.

<sup>76</sup> This is a simplification, of course; J. L. Mackie, for instance, does not believe there is an objective standard for morality but does believe there are first-order moral evaluations that can be made separate from the second-order denial of objectivity.



Though this is an important perspective to consider, space does not permit an extensive treatment in response to those who would deny objectivity to morality. What will be attempted is more in line with providing support to premise 2 of the argument above. Through discussion of various moral phenomena, I will seek to illustrate how these phenomena evidentially point to the existence of God.

There is a helpful clarification from H. P. Owen that may obviate an initial objection regarding the movement from moral phenomena to the existence of God. In the world, we first encounter and experience people and their actions, and thus encounter moral claims and values as things which exist in themselves. Morality and moral facts or any objectivity they possess are pressed upon us with “their own distinctive meaning and validity.”<sup>77</sup> It is another step to see behind these things the hand of a Creator, One who is the source of all reality. What this illustrates is the difference between the “order of knowing” and the “order of being.” For the theistic philosopher, God is first in the order of being but not in the order of knowing. In our pursuit of knowledge, we know of and feel the effects of morality before we see from whom they are derived. In my moving from moral phenomena to the existence of God, I am seeking to illustrate that “what is first in the order of knowing is second in the order of being.”<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, as the abductive language above indicates, it is important to realize that I do not expect this argument to be deductive or irresistible. Religious belief, by its nature, is a personal act that each person makes for himself. As discussed previously, each person has his own history of knowledge and relevant experience which will come with him to the discussion.

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<sup>77</sup> H. P. Owen, *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965), 34-35.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

While some theistic arguments, such as the cosmological argument, are more conducive to logical proof, I do not believe that the moral argument is best construed in this way. To clarify, this is not to say that logical proofs are not applicable or not useful (indeed we began the chapter with one), only that they may not be best suited to the task.

We live in a world of experience, of phenomena, and as was discussed in chapter two, it is real apprehension which is best suited for reaching truth in the concrete. This is especially true when it comes to matters of goodness and beauty. If I desire truth about such realities, then I must have some experience of them; I must experience the world as it is and so have *real* apprehension of it. While the process may end in a conclusion that can be put in notional terms, in a proposition (for instance “Therefore, [probably] God exists”), it seems to be the case that much of the relevant information comes or is deepened as a result of my interaction as person with the world and/or a personal God. Much in this vein, A. E. Taylor writes, “But the force of this evidence will naturally be under-estimated by the thoughtless and the self-satisfied; one may doubt whether it is ever disclosed in its full strength to any man who has never from the bottom of his heart uttered the cry, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’”<sup>79</sup>

## The Moral Argument

### Conscience and Obligation

Conscience is, of course, one of the most obvious and historically rich moral phenomena.

John Henry Newman in his *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* spends much of the fifth

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<sup>79</sup> Taylor, A. E. *Does God Exist?* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 120-21. There are also resonances here with the work of Paul Moser and his concept of “Gethsemane Epistemology”; the context of the relationship between a person and God is Gethsemane and the conflict between the human and divine will. “Faith in God, then, is not a leap in the dark; instead it is the affirmative *response to God* of yielding oneself to (participating in) God’s experienced moral character and will. Clearly, such faith is no merely intellectual response of assent to a proposition”; Paul K. Moser, “Gethsemane Epistemology: Volitional and Evidential,” *Philosophia Christi* Vol. 14, No. 2 (2012), 263-274, doi: 10.5840/pc201214223.

chapter extending an argument from conscience. Conscience has two aspects: “a judgment of the reason and a magisterial dictate.”<sup>80</sup> The judgment of the reason is akin to our sense of right and wrong while the magisterial dictate functions as a particular voice approving or disapproving of our actions.

Newman clarifies the nature of conscience: “Thus conscience has both a critical and a judicial office, and though its promptings in the breasts of the millions of human beings to whom it is given, are not in all cases correct, that does not necessarily interfere with the force of its testimony and its sanction to that testimony, conveyed in the feelings which attend on right or wrong conduct.”<sup>81</sup> For Newman, we find in conscience a route to a real apprehension of God. Clearly Newman does not believe that everyone will interpret the evidence this way, but the point remains that it is possible. When one lives in the world, as a person, she experiences a sense known as conscience, which indicates to her what is right and wrong, and produces a judgment on her actions.

At least one aspect that points in the direction of theism is deliberation about the source of this phenomenon. Where does the sense of conscience come from? Why do we feel that some things are right, and some things are wrong? Why do we feel guilty for our actions (especially the ones that do not directly affect others)? In many cases this feeling of guilt goes beyond what is imposed on us by others or ourselves but has the character of some outside standard to which we are being held. Newman wants to suggest that all of these questions and factors points to a transcendent personal judge—a truth which is confirmed and then extended by special revelation.

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<sup>80</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 71.

<sup>81</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 72.

It is important to note the personal aspect of this. Our phenomenological experience suggests that feelings of obligation or guilt are always in relation to other persons. A stone does not hold me obligated to perform actions; I do not feel guilt from the sky.<sup>82</sup> And so there seems to be some phenomenological evidence here supporting a personal transcendent judge.

Though there are various objections to accounts of conscience like the one just given, the Freudian objection that identifies conscience with the superego is likely the strongest. However, arguably the two should not be equated, and John Crosby has defended Newman's conception of conscience against this objection. Crosby writes, "What Freud calls the superego is a pre-personal and in many cases a depersonalized form of moral life, whereas what Newman calls conscience is an eminently personal form of moral life; therefore Newman's conscience falls outside of the Freudian superego and cannot be reduced to it, or explained in the terms in which the superego can be explained."<sup>83</sup>

Because conscience is internal and experienced separately by each individual there is room for others to come to different conclusions on the same evidence. It is intriguing, however, to note how well we understand the phenomenon of conscience. It is for good reason that its deliverances are taken to be instructive and powerful, and even for many to point to theism by their personal and poignant nature. In the fifth chapter of this work we will return to *Crime and Punishment* to explore this a little further.

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<sup>82</sup> Even in such a case where one might feel guilt for mistreatment of the earth, I do not think it is because the trees *themselves* are holding him accountable, but possibly because the deliverances of conscience stricken him with this guilt or because he has personified the earth (i.e. "Mother Earth") such that he believes the source of the guilt to come in this way. But even in this case, he is seeing nature in a personal rather than abstract way and my point holds.

<sup>83</sup> Crosby, *Personalism of John Henry Newman*, 204.

Inextricably tied to conscience is moral law and moral obligation or duty. David and Marybeth Baggett write, “To have a moral obligation to perform an action is, among other things to be guilty for failing to perform it, perhaps to deserve censure of some sort for neglecting it. Binding, authoritative obligations seem to be real phenomena in need of robust explanations.”<sup>84</sup>

We recognize certain things that exert some sort of claim on us, a sense of duty. I ought not lie to or abuse my family; I ought to provide for my family, to look out for those in society around me; I ought to be good or just or loving or kind. Now, of course, this is not to say that everyone feels these claims or feels them to the same extent; it seems apparent, though, that obligations or duties of this sort affect many people.

It is not outside the realm of possibility to envision one who does not feel (or assent to) the claim to love truth or to be good. This in no way invalidates the claim itself. Owen, in his excellent discussion of this issue writes:

An even stronger proof is afforded by the fact that values exert an obligation. Their obligatoriness is inexplicable unless they are personal. Platonic Forms could, perhaps, attract. But how could they impose an obligation? How could we be indebted to them? Why should the failure to enact them engender guilt? I can betray a person and I know that I deserve the guilt I feel. But I cannot see how I could betray values if they are impersonal. Personal theism gives the only explanation by affirming that value-claims inhere in the character and will of God. In rejecting them we do not merely reject an abstract good; we do not merely reject our own ‘good’ (in the sense of our ‘well-being’); we reject the love which God is in his tri-une being.<sup>85</sup>

Much like Newman and the discussion of the internal view of conscience, the idea of outwardly imposed obligations, especially regarding values such as loving the good and truth, provides evidence in need of an explanation. Especially regarding the issue of obligations and

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<sup>84</sup> David Baggett and Marybeth Baggett, *The Morals of the Story: Good News About a Good God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 52-53.

<sup>85</sup> Owen, *The Moral Argument*, 80.

values, Owen believes the argument to be more nearing a logical proof. Our next two moral phenomena to investigate will not follow this tactic, but will be focusing on much more phenomenological and personal evidence.

### Scripture

While the previous point related to general revelation, this next point moves into special revelation. General revelation provides an important starting place, especially since we have established that morality comes first in the order of knowing. Conscience and obligation are important aspects of this, though not the only direction in which things could be argued from general revelation. Nonetheless, the world as it exists today contains special revelation. Even if the deliverances of special revelation could not have been perfectly predicted by reason alone, if the special revelation is a plausible extension of what is found in general revelation and even serves as being evidentially significant in its own right, then we do a disservice to the pursuit of truth in ignoring what is here.

Significant portions of Scripture contain narrative (within the Old Testament: the so-called “historical books,” and in the New Testament: the “Gospels” and “The Acts of the Apostles”). These narratives consist of some of the most timeless and pervasive stories in all of western culture. Some of the stories have parallels in other cultures (creation accounts or flood myths, for example). There is an argument that could be made for the transcendent and fundamental role these stories play—a function which is so psychologically deep, resting on foundational archetypes—that it is part of the framework of reality; the idea here is that the themes or ideas in these stories are not just interesting, but actually reflect something of how reality is constructed and how we experience it. Something of this sort is currently being argued and unpacked in clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson’s detailed psychological analysis of

Genesis, presented in lectures available online.<sup>86</sup> On this view of the world, Scripture captures something accurately about how the world actually is and resonates deeply within us. This would seem to be apparent historically and is still the case in much of the world today (interestingly, not just in the West, either).

It will help to remember our earlier discussion of Stump and the knowledge of persons. This knowledge is most clearly visible in second-person experiences and it is only second-person accounts which seem to capture this. Narrative or story is the most obvious example of a second-person account. And so for the portions of Scripture which are narrative, we are presented with an opportunity for a second-person experience. When one reads Scripture, he has the opportunity to experience something, possibly to have something of a second-person experience, to see portrayals of faith or love or evil or grace. It matters, of course, what the quality of the narrative is, and it also matters how the reader comes to the text. If he does not pay attention or if he distances himself with an overly critical and abstract mindset, if he pulls things apart, apprehending only notionally, or if he is too skeptical and doubtful—by all these means he adds difficulties to his encountering the text and engaging in a second-person experience.

This understanding of the second-person experience through narrative accounts is significant because this is a way through which so many people have come to religious belief. I am far from suggesting this as a proof in the traditional sense, but arguably it is evidence worthy of consideration. If someone has encountered God through Scripture in narrative format it may well be because something about God—about His personal nature—came through in the text.

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<sup>86</sup> Jordan Peterson, “The Psychological Significance of the Biblical Stories: Genesis,” Jordan B Peterson, [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL22J3VaeABQD\\_Izs7y60I3IUrrFTzkpat](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL22J3VaeABQD_Izs7y60I3IUrrFTzkpat).

From our journey in unfolding expansive epistemological ideas and the knowledge of persons we have captured the gist of the framework within which such encounters might occur.

The most evident example of what I am trying to point to is the person of Jesus as exemplified in the Gospels. In reading the Gospels one comes face-to-face, as it were, with the person of Jesus. One learns something about who He is, one reads of His love of the sisters Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus; one reads of His compassion for tax collectors, outcasts, and prostitutes; one reads of His wisdom in teaching to crowds and to disciples; one reads of His humility and grace in bearing an undeserved cross.

Now it must be clarified that I do not suggest any of this in a vacuum. This argument, as moral arguments generally are, should be alongside other arguments for God's existence. Their cumulative force becomes all the more powerful. An "argument from narrative" need not stand by itself from an argumentative standpoint. But the point is that, even before knowing it is true—even in doubting—the reading of the narrative of Scripture can impress upon one that it is true (of course, one does at least need a premise that Scripture is possibly true, that the issue is one to be considered). Again, this is not a deductive logical argument. I am *not* saying if someone experiences Scripture and takes it to be true, then this automatically guarantees its truth in an objective sense. I am saying, however, that if one has a second-person experience, say, involving Jesus of Nazareth, and thereby arrives at knowledge of persons of this Jesus, and finds the account compelling and assents, she is justified in so doing. This should also be seen as working in conjunction with the foregoing accounts of conscience and obligation. It is not likely one will assent to such a belief without realizing the need for it—without being aware, in some sense, of a transcendent personal judge and the realization that she herself has missed the mark and is



accountable before this judge. It is often the encounter with the narrative, however, which provides the *content* for the belief.

This brings us close to the realm of “reformed epistemology,” especially the likes of Alvin Plantinga. Trent Dougherty and Christ Tweedt write, “According to Alvin Plantinga, when religious belief is produced by God in a religious believer in the right kind of way, the result is faith, which is an immediately justified (even more, a warranted) religious belief.”<sup>87</sup> The point is that religious experience of this sort, specifically narrative, has the potential to bring about and/or support knowledge of the existence of God. This happens through apprehending something of who God is (especially his moral qualities, His being the Good), and on the basis of this knowledge, assenting (that is, professing belief). What happens in these encounters, as expressed in the previous chapter, though perhaps describable in a proposition (i.e. “I know that God exists”), is not reducible to that. There is more that occurs in the second-person experience provided by narrative than what can be propositionally described. Propositions, however, are still quite useful and serve an important role within religious belief, especially in the formation and reception of doctrine. Where the experience provides something concrete and real and is the foundation of most religious belief, the propositions (the notionally represented) provide the clarification and development of the content of religious belief.

### The Effect of Moral Exemplars and Personal Influence

The final moral phenomenon that we will discuss here is that of personal influence. John Henry Newman was a staunch advocate of the role of personal influence as a means of communicating moral truth (as well as a stellar example of such a thing in practice). The idea

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<sup>87</sup> Trent Dougherty and Chris Tweedt, “Religious Epistemology,” *Philosophy Compass* (2015), 10: 547– 559. doi: 10.1111/phc3.12185.

here follows from much of our discussion of persons and knowledge of persons. As has been suggested throughout this work, the second-person experience is the best means of communicating knowledge of persons, and morality has to do primarily with relations among persons (including, as shown earlier, obligations or conscience, which can be seen as having their foundations in their relation to God). Thus, it should not come as a surprise that personal influence between individuals might be a potential source of communicating these moral truths.

Newman, in his sermon “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth,” writes at length about the difficulties involved in truth being communicated and the advantages error has over it in terms of communicability. Notwithstanding, Newman writes that it is through holy exemplars, the virtuous, through whom moral truth is most emphatically and forcefully communicated, and this happens through their personal interactions in the world. Newman writes, “Men persuade themselves, with little difficulty, to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men; but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form which they cannot steadily confront and bear down: so that the silent conduct of a conscientious man secures for him from beholders a feeling different in kind from any which is created by the more versatile and garrulous Reason.”<sup>88</sup>

It is of course no revelation that many are converted to religious belief through personal influence, and therefore some disambiguation is needed here. (1) Not all those exerting personal influence have good intentions (i.e. not all are holy, to use religious language). In emphasizing personal influence as a means of conveying moral truth, we are restricting this to moral exemplars and thus ruling out charlatans, the charismatic but corrupt, and those who are not

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<sup>88</sup> John Henry Newman, “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth,” in *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between A.D. 1826 and 1843* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 72-73.

intentionally deceiving others but still not morally exemplary. The fact that personal influence can be captivating even when the influence is corrupt or ignorant illustrates the power of personal influence but does not negate the proper unfolding and living out of one who *is* a moral exemplar. And so there is an amount of discretion that must be taken. It is noteworthy that this discretion often happens naturally in personal relationships. What is primarily in mind with personal influence is personal one-to-one relationships or relationships within small communities, and not public speakers on stages. Charisma can overwhelm at a distance and with measured and honeyed words, but in close relationships such a façade is much more difficult to maintain.

(2) It is also important to note that the suggestion is not that the experience of personal influence immediately justifies itself and/or guarantees truth without the involvement of other premises. We will return to this objection in the following section, but a brief comment here will hopefully be illustrative. Personal influence is not *just* an experience—there is content involved: moral truth delivered in a knowledge-of-persons format. What happens is more along the lines of learning or understanding moral truths as communicated or embodied by a moral exemplar and this personal experience being confirmed or supported through one's own experience or reflection. Conscience, obligation, narrative, and personal influence will generally all build and strengthen each other.

(3) We are generally able to discern what is true or not, to some extent, in personal encounters. In our relationship with another, we discern the rightness of this person's love and kindness, the soundness of their wisdom, the wrongness of their manipulation, and so forth. This does not mean it is always clear or we are always right, but in general we can discern the difference between a rogue and a holy man. Our conscience speaks, our experience confirms. We

tend to pick up subtle cues regarding the genuineness of the individual and we also tend to attempt to verify through our conscience and experience of the world the validity of what the individual is communicating.

(4) Additionally, there is something especially distinct about the moral exemplar or holy man, as compared to others or even to “good” men. Newman writes,

The men commonly held in popular estimation are greatest at a distance; they become small as they are approached; but the attraction, exerted by unconscious holiness, is of an urgent and irresistible nature; it persuades the weak, the timid, the wavering, and the inquiring; it draws forth the affection and loyalty of all who are in a measure likeminded; and over the thoughtless or perverse multitude it exercises a sovereign compulsory sway, bidding them fear and keep silence, on the ground of its own right divine to rule them,—its hereditary claim on their obedience, though they understand not the principles or counsels of that spirit, which is ‘born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’<sup>89</sup>

So much for the nature of personal influence, but how does this relate to Christian theism? Surely there are examples of moral exemplars who were not theists or Christians, such as Socrates or Gandhi. This evidences our earlier distinction between the order of knowing and the order of being. Moral exemplars at least have a real and deep apprehension of morality, though some of them may not be aware of its source—that is, God. They recognize, they *see* the Good, but they do not see its source, they do not realize that “what is first in the order of knowing is second in the order of being.”

But it is significant that such a thing occurs, that there are individuals who so embody moral truths that their personal interactions transfix and awe us. It speaks of deep truths to reality about morality and the nature of things, as well as displays how personal these truths often are.

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<sup>89</sup> John Henry Newman, “Personal Influence,” 74.

There is something different and powerful about a holy man exemplifying good as compared to our logical, abstract reflections on the good.

### Owen's Objection

Though space may not allow for isolated treatment of objections, there is at least one important objection raised by H. P. Owen that we can unpack. Owen writes,

The theist can attempt to prove the existence of a moral Absolute on the grounds of religious experience. The core of the argument is that the religious person feels himself to be in the presence of an ineffable, all-encompassing, mystery. Those who practise the 'higher' religions (pre-eminently Judaism and Christianity) interpret this mystery in terms of moral holiness. This experience guarantees the existence of its object.

The argument is invalid. The experience may be psychologically self-authenticating to its possessors; but it is not logically so to the skeptic. All the skeptic needs to do is, firstly, to dispel the numinous element by the usual methods of reductionism, and secondly to show that what is left is a purely moral experience of an absolute (or at any rate very high) ideal which (for the reasons I have given) need not objectively exist.<sup>90</sup>

It should be first noted that Owen still believes a moral argument can be offered and is compelling, only that it will not take the form above, as being from religious belief. We have already quoted Owen in affirmation when we discussed obligations and especially of the sort that values seem to impose, so there is no need to deny what Owen seeks to show there. However, perhaps it remains useful to include religious belief in the category of evidence, especially in the form of the interaction of one with Scripture and the effect of personal influence.

The first thing we can note in response to Owen is that our goal with these latter two phenomena is not to assert so strong a conclusion as "This experience guarantees the existence of its object," at least not in an objective sense. He is suggesting that such an idea is not logically compelling to the skeptic, but of course that is to be expected. As I have tried to make clear, I do

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<sup>90</sup> Owen, *Moral Argument*, 76.

not believe that religious belief or experience is best explained or demonstrated in logical categories (though logic has its place and can still be quite useful in various roles with the moral argument, particularly in supportive roles of highlighting and displaying the consistency of different elements of the belief or defending their rationality).

The truth we are trying to investigate or ascertain is one relating to the existence of another being, of His being in the world and real. If He is real, I will meet Him best, apprehend Him most fully only in a real or experiential way, of the sort I am suggesting can occur through narrative and personal influence. These methods open the door for a personal encounter, a second-person experience. In saying that I know my wife, know she exists or her character, I will not find this truth most grounded, most real in my abstract mental reflections of her but rather in my real experience of her, here in the world.

For this reason, Owen's criticisms utilizing the skeptic's response seem to miss the point. I do not think dispelling the numinous element through reductionism succeeds in the way he suggests. The skeptic has not actually "dispelled" the numinous element of his own in any way but only dismissed another's experience of the numinous. Since these truths are not deductive, of course you can dismiss someone else's numinous experience and suggest that it is only a "moral" experience, but this does not impact the truth of the numinous experience in any way. I am saying that numinous experience is exactly the thing that is needed and powerful. Until the skeptic has undergone this himself, his criticisms have no power over the believer (and even when he has had some sort of experience, his judgments will not reach the believer since they will be different by virtue of the skeptic's individual personality). To the extent that the skeptic attempts to dismiss the religious experience grounding or providing content to the believer, the

skeptic is attempting to reduce to the notional what is real in the believer, and this cannot be done—at least not in any way that is accurate.

With this objection addressed, we will return to *Crime and Punishment* in the next chapter, where I will seek to display what these expansive epistemological points look like in practice, so to speak. As expressed, the sorts of second-person encounters which lead to knowledge of persons are best expressed through narrative and story; hopefully, through encountering the narrative of Raskolnikov, we will be able to glimpse something of the moral argument for which I am arguing.

*As if forgetting herself, [Sonya] jumped up and, wringing her hands, walked halfway across the room; but she came back quickly and sat down again beside [Raskolnikov], almost touching him, shoulder to shoulder. All at once, as if pierced, she gave a start, cried out, and, not knowing why, threw herself on her knees before him.*

*“What, what have you done to yourself!” she said desperately, and, jumping up from her knees, threw herself on his neck, embraced him, and pressed him very, very tightly in her arms.<sup>91</sup>*

## **Chapter Five: Crime, Punishment, and Conclusions**

### Raskolnikov’s Journey

*Crime and Punishment* is an exploration—a psychological exploration of one man and the consequences of his actions. Raskolnikov is on a journey, though primarily one of his mind and soul. In the first chapter we set up some details regarding the storyline, Raskolnikov’s inner conflict, and one of his haunting dreams. Having now laid out our epistemological considerations, personal knowledge, and developed this further in its relation to the moral argument, I would like to dig deeper into the story of Raskolnikov as it relates to these items. In Raskolnikov’s journey in *Crime and Punishment*, I see evidence of the points relating to the moral argument that I have introduced, and we have already touched on the usefulness of narrative in conveying knowledge of persons. We will begin by a discussion of the effect of conscience, and then the effect of Sonya on Raskolnikov, before attempting to identify a bit more closely the nature of Raskolnikov’s redemption.

#### The Effect of Conscience

The role that Raskolnikov’s conscience plays is likely the most obvious and clear here within the work. Even the name “Raskolnikov” comes from Russian roots meaning “schism” or “to split.”<sup>92</sup> Throughout the novel, Raskolnikov is plagued and tormented by his mind, which

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<sup>91</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 411.

<sup>92</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, xx.



shows in dreams like the one mentioned in chapter one, fever and delirium, fainting (this happens in the police headquarters when he overhears the police talking about the murders), contemplation of suicide, and wavering between confessing and avoiding detection. It has been suggested that this internal conflict within Raskolnikov is presented externally by Dostoevsky in the characters of “Svidrigailov, epitome of self-willed evil, and Sonia, epitome of self-sacrifice and spiritual goodness.”<sup>93</sup>

Svidrigailov is an individual for whom Raskolnikov’s sister (Dunya) used to work (as a housekeeper, essentially) and who had become obsessed and enamored with Dunya. Svidrigailov is a selfish individual who seemingly has no real qualms about morality; he knows he is base but does not seem to be inclined to change (at one place he says, “I am indeed a depraved and idle person”<sup>94</sup>). He is also plagued by visions of his wife who recently died; it is never clearly established that he was a direct cause of her death, but he seems to be aware that he was not good to her (having constantly been involved in adulterous relationships) and may have played some role in the decline of her health.<sup>95</sup> The visions he is having as well as recognition of his depravity link him to Raskolnikov, who has committed an evil act and is grappling with delirium and dreams (a connection even further emphasized if Svidrigailov did, in fact, kill his wife). Svidrigailov has apparently decided he does not want to change or that he cannot; he refuses to let go of his depraved nature—he refuses to repent.

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<sup>93</sup> J. M. Beebe, “The Three Motives of Raskolnikov,” in *Crime and Punishment and the Critics*, edited by E. Wasiolek (San Francisco: Wadsworth, 1961).

<sup>94</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 291.

<sup>95</sup> Raskolnikov’s sister, Dunya, does accuse Svidrigailov of having killed his wife by poison, though it is not confirmed by Svidrigailov; arguably, it is implied contextually by Dostoevsky that Svidrigailov did murder his wife.

Sonya is a Christ-figure, an image of light and goodness, but one who has been circumstantially stained. Because of her drunkard of a father (Marmeladov), she has turned to prostitution in order to provide money for her family, who would starve otherwise and already cannot keep up payments for their lodging. She is humble and self-sacrificing, giving up everything, including her own innocence, to attempt to make a way for her family. When Raskolnikov finally confesses to Sonya what he has done, she explains to him what he must do in response:

“What to do!” she exclaimed, suddenly jumping up from her place, and her eyes, still full of tears, suddenly flashed. “Stand up!” (She seized him by the shoulder; he rose, looking at her almost in amazement.) “Go now, this minute, stand in the crossroads, bow down, and first kiss the earth you’ve defiled, then bow to the whole world, on all four sides, and say aloud to everyone: ‘I have killed!’ Then God will send you life again. ... Accept suffering and redeem yourself by it, that’s what you must do.”<sup>96</sup>

In these two persons, we see personified some of the conflict Raskolnikov is facing. He can refuse repentance, like Svidrigailov, continuing on the path he is on; or he can repent, following Sonya’s directives. Svidrigailov seems to be aware of exactly this when he tells Sonya, ““There are two ways open for Rodion Romanovich [Raskolnikov]: a bullet in the head, or Siberia.””<sup>97</sup> This is because Svidrigailov has apparently realized that he cannot defeat his conscience or live with himself, but he refuses to repent. Indeed, shortly following these statements to Sonya, he shoots himself in the head.<sup>98</sup> So the stage is set for Raskolnikov. He can

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<sup>96</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 420.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 500.

<sup>98</sup> To clarify, it is not explicitly stated in the text that Svidrigailov’s motive for the suicide is a direct consequence of his inability to live with his conscience; Svidrigailov makes one more attempt to persuade Dunya to be with him, and she rejects him. One interpretation may be that Svidrigailov kills himself in heartbreak over her rejection. While I believe this plays a part, I believe it is too simplistic to function as a full interpretation. Dunya’s rejection is in large part because of the *character* of Svidrigailov; she accuses him of killing his wife and labels him a scoundrel. She is rejecting him because he is not a good person, and he knows this. So while heartbreak is indeed a significant part of the cause of his suicide, I believe it also has to do with his awareness of the kind of man he is—he

decide to refuse repentance, though he will not be able to live with himself and the psychological conflict going on, or he can take the path of Sonya, taking upon himself a burden of suffering to serve others.

Some things can be noted regarding Raskolnikov's conscience. Raskolnikov's motives are only partially clear throughout much of the novel, but he seems to reveal most accurately his true motivations and thought process in this exemplary passage worth quoting at length:

“Be still, Sonya, I'm not laughing at all, I know myself that a devil was dragging me. Be still, Sonya, be still!” he repeated gloomily and insistently. “I know everything. I thought it all out and whispered it all out when I was lying there in the dark... I argued it all out with myself, to the last little trace, and I know everything, everything! ... I wanted to kill without casuistry, Sonya, to kill for myself, for myself alone! I didn't want to lie about it even to myself! It was not to help my mother that I killed—nonsense! I did not kill so that, having obtained means and power, I could become a benefactor of mankind. Nonsense! I simply killed—killed for myself, for myself alone—and whether I would later become anyone's benefactor, or would spend my life like a spider, catching everyone in my web and sucking the life-sap out of everyone, should at that moment have made no difference to me!... And it was not money above all that I wanted when I killed Sonya; not money so much as something else... I know all this now... Understand me: perhaps, continuing on that same path, I would never again repeat the murder. There was something else I wanted to know: something else was nudging my arm. I wanted to find out then, and find out quickly, whether I was a louse like all the rest, or a man? Would I be able to step over, or not! Would I dare to reach down and take, or not? Am I a trembling creature, or do I have the *right*...”

“To kill? The right to kill?” Sonya clasped her hands.<sup>99</sup>

Raskolnikov lays it all out now; he wanted to know if he was a sort of Nietzschean *übermensch*. He wanted to know if he could step over conventions of right and wrong.

Consequently, one objection regarding Raskolnikov's conscience is that the torment he feels is not about remorse for his evil actions, but rather the pangs of his pride as he realizes that he is

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cannot live with himself because no one else can live with him. He has separated himself from humanity through his depravity.

<sup>99</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 419.

not a man but a louse. Firstly, it can be noted that the conscience does not have to be infallible in its deliverances to be evidentially significant and so even if Raskolnikov's conscience is bothering him regarding his pride rather than conviction of his guilt for his actions, his feelings of conscience are significant. Secondly, it is not necessary that the true nature of his conscience be transparent to himself. He could attribute the wrong source to the tormenting feeling he has. Thirdly, I do not think it is impossible to see here a combination of psychological factors. On my reading, it seems Raskolnikov is tormented in his conscience regarding his evil actions and also that his pride is deeply wounded *because* he is tormented by his conscience. The tormenting of his conscience is confirmation that he is not an *ubermensch*, not a "Napoleon";<sup>100</sup> a Napoleon has the right to step over morality by virtue of being such a person. This also provides a way of understanding why Raskolnikov is not completely remorseful; he still seems to believe his thesis about the *ubermensch* or Napoleon, but to realize that he is not one yet. And so his conscience is tormenting him, but he is not yet repentant.

#### The Effect of Sonya

As noted, Sonya functions within the narrative as a Christ-like figure. Raskolnikov first learns of her and her circumstances through her father Marmeladov in the second chapter of the book. Then, after Marmeladov is seriously injured and dying, Raskolnikov sees her again at Marmeladov's deathbed. The next day she shows up at Raskolnikov's lodging (while Raskolnikov's family is with him) to ask if he would join her and her family at a memorial dinner for Marmeladov. There is something strange and captivating in their encounter; Raskolnikov tells her he will come to see her soon.

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<sup>100</sup> Throughout the book, Napoleon is used by Raskolnikov as an exemplar of a great man who steps across moral boundaries to do what is needed and is celebrated as a hero for doing so.

Their first encounter alone is awkward in its beginning, as their connection is in regard to her father and that on a chance encounter Raskolnikov had with Marmeladov in a bar.

Raskolnikov has already noted the strange childish innocence she has, her meager lodging, and knows that she is prostituting herself out in order to provide for her family. As their conversation develops, it regards her family mostly, and she displays an extraordinary amount of compassion and love for them, even blaming herself for minor things that she could have done better to love them. In a sort of mean way he presses on her the reality that her consumptive mother-in-law will likely die soon and her sister will then need to go into prostitution as well; when she protests that God would not allow it, he laughs and chides, ““But maybe there isn’t any God.””<sup>101</sup> At this point, she breaks into tears and is silent for some minutes. Then, in a strange turn, he kneels before her and kisses her foot.

Raskolnikov, who is quite perceptive and intelligent, has apprehended Sonya for what she is: a humble, pure, self-sacrificial being willing to shoulder her cross of suffering in order to save her family. He is puzzled by her and says, ““I said it of you not for your dishonor and sin, but for your great suffering. But that you are a great sinner is true.””<sup>102</sup> He presses into this, suggesting that she has destroyed herself through sin in vain because she will not end up saving anyone. ““But tell me, finally,’ he spoke almost in a frenzy, ‘how such shame and baseness can be combined in you beside other opposite and holy feelings? It would be more just, a thousand times more just and reasonable, to jump headfirst into the water and end it at once!’ ‘And what would become of them?’ Sonya asked weakly...””<sup>103</sup> And Raskolnikov sees it all, sees the

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<sup>101</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 321.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>103</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 322.

suffering that she has carried, sees the despair she has been through, the thoughts of suicide, the complete lack of concern for his cruel words. But he cannot understand her and how she is able to keep going. He is confused at why, in the midst of all of her shame and depravity, she would not turn to suicide as a better recourse. He saw that so far none of the depravity had actually reached her heart, but he did not believe it could last.

He realizes next that it is only through God that she has sustained herself through these trials and Sonya confirms this with cries that God “does everything.” “‘Here’s the solution...’ he decided to himself... ‘A holy fool!’”<sup>104</sup> Raskolnikov notices the New Testament on her chest of drawers and asks her to read the story of Lazarus from the Gospel of John to him. Sonya’s reading of the passage is conveyed by Dostoevsky in astounding perception and poignancy, as Sonya is clearly envisioning Raskolnikov before her, knowing he is Lazarus needing to be raised from the dead. The reading of the passage ends in silence and Raskolnikov immediately begins on a new topic: “‘I left my family today,’ he said, ‘my mother and sister. I won’t go to them now. I’ve broken with everything there.’ ... ‘I have only you now,’ he added. ‘Let’s go together... I’ve come to you. We’re cursed together, so let’s go together!’ ... She went on looking at him, understanding nothing. She understood only that he was terribly, infinitely unhappy.”<sup>105</sup> In the end, Raskolnikov prepares to depart, telling her that when he sees her next he will tell her who killed Lizaveta (the sister of the old crone).

Beyond being incredibly beautiful writing, this passage illustrates some very important points that I would like to highlight. (1) The passage shows how Sonya is beginning to form an impression on Raskolnikov; he calls her a “holy fool,” but he is also baffled and impressed by

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 329.

her ability to carry on under the suffering she carries. Though she is in the midst of terrible circumstances, in which she has “killed herself” in a way through sacrificing her innocence, he sees her purity and love for her family, her self-sacrifice and suffering. Sonya is a moral exemplar, and her life, conveyed through her personal interaction with Raskolnikov has convinced him of her holiness though he seems to doubt the strength of her source (God). He is at least captured enough by her holiness, though, to indicate that he will confess something big to her (who killed Lizaveta), which, as we know, he does later in the book.

(2) Raskolnikov sees part of himself in Sonya; as noted above, he sees her as having “killed herself”: ““You’ll understand later... Haven’t you done the same thing? You, too, have stepped over... were able to step over. You laid hands on yourself, you destroyed a life... *your own* (it’s all the same!).””<sup>106</sup> As noted earlier, Sonya represents one path for Raskolnikov—the path of repentance and bearing one’s own suffering for the sake of others’ well-being. He is drawn to her through her holiness and through his identification of their commonality in suffering. Svidrigailov has also (presumably) taken the life of his wife, and so Raskolnikov can identify with him as well, and find his other choice.

(3) Raskolnikov and Sonya participate in a narrative within the story—that of the raising of Lazarus. Of all passages, this is the one that Raskolnikov asks Sonya to read, and Dostoevsky’s text seems to indicate that they are both listening attentively in such a way as to be in position for a real apprehension of the text, a second-person experience. Does Raskolnikov identify himself with Lazarus?

We have already looked at many key passages from Raskolnikov’s later confession to Sonya; the passage regarding his motives earlier in the chapter takes place during the confession,

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<sup>106</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 329.

as well as the epigraph to this chapter, which I might recommend reading again at this point. Sonya never deserts Raskolnikov and consistently points him toward repentance and voluntary acceptance of his suffering, toward redemption. After he confesses his crime to the police and is sent to Siberia, she follows with him. She comes and sees him regularly, though he is often withdrawn and distant. She displays and embodies holiness and remains consistent over time without being overbearing. Her consistent holy example within his life is key for the redemption that is to come.

### Redemption

The moment of transformation—of redemption—comes at the very end of the book, in the last two pages. We will return to this moment shortly, but I would first like to clarify some of the steps leading to this one. First, Raskolnikov confesses to Sonya, as I have already mentioned. He finds in her a confidant to whom he can pour out his soul. Second, he does end up obeying her instructions of what he should do in response to his sin: bowing down in the Haymarket and kissing the ground as a symbolic apology to humanity (though he does not follow through with the public apology of “I have killed,” for after he sees people jeering he loses his nerve). Third, he goes through with his confession, though he loses his nerve here multiple times. In all of this, he is not yet repentant; in a conversation with Dunya after she understands what he has done (conveyed to her through Svidrigailov who overheard Raskolnikov’s confession to Sonya), Raskolnikov still defends his actions. I believe these three steps toward redemption are indicative of some level of guilt or remorse that he feels, of something within his conscience propelling him further, even though he is not actually repentant yet.

It becomes even clearer that he is not repentant after he is taken to Siberia. Raskolnikov is still divided within himself and removed from the rest of humanity. Sonya has followed him to



Siberia and comes to visit him, but he is cold and distant with her. The other inmates dislike and revile him, though they love Sonya. Dostoevsky writes, “‘You’re godless! You don’t believe in God!’ they shouted. ‘You ought to be killed.’ He had never talked with them about God or belief, but they wanted to kill him for being godless... Still another question remained insoluble for him: why had they all come to love Sonya so much?”<sup>107</sup> Even without having to say anything to them, the inmates decry Raskolnikov, and he does nothing to respond because he seems to see it only from a distance, as a curiosity—he is not *present* to them.

After about nine months like this in Siberia, Raskolnikov gets sick. While he is sick, he has a dream, one that is haunting and stirring, though difficult to explain. Dostoevsky does not explain any direct meaning of it in the text, but it leaves a deep impression on Raskolnikov of which he cannot let go. The dream regards some sort of trichinae that lodge themselves within people, causing these people to go mad. However, these mad individuals become possessed of unshakeable certainty of their intelligence and grasp of the truth, such that their convictions and deliverances on all subjects seem to them incontrovertible. Dostoevsky describes this affecting nearly the whole world and the breakdown in society that occurs since no one can work together or get along together. Everything is dying and the pestilence spreads further. There are supposed to be some chosen people, pure and holy, responsible for bringing new life, but no one has seen or heard them.

Raskolnikov has this dream in his head and thoughts for the remainder of his illness. It is likely that much of the effect of the dream is implicit and experiential, not necessarily logical. Whatever it means exactly, we see the consequences soon after. Raskolnikov hears that Sonya is sick and becomes worried about her; she is not seriously ill, though, and lets him know she will

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<sup>107</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 546.

see him soon. Raskolnikov goes out with a guard and some other workers where they are working on baking gypsum. Raskolnikov escapes for a break, looking out over the steppe:

Raskolnikov sat and stared fixedly, not tearing his eyes away; his thought turned to reverie, to contemplation; he was not thinking of anything, but some anguish troubled and tormented him.

Suddenly Sonya was beside him. She came up almost inaudibly and sat down next to him. It was still very early; the morning chill had not softened yet. She was wearing her poor old wrap and the green shawl. Her face still bore signs of illness; it had become thinner, paler, more pinched. She smiled to him amiably and joyfully, but gave him her hand as timidly as ever.

She always gave him her hand timidly; sometimes she even did not give it at all, as if fearing he might push it away. He always took her hand as if with loathing, always met her as if with vexation, was sometimes obstinately silent during the whole time of her visit. There were occasions when she trembled before him and went away in deep grief. But this time their hands did not separate; he glanced at her quickly and fleetingly, said nothing, and lowered his eyes to the ground. They were alone; no one saw them. The guard had his back turned at the moment.

How it happened he himself did not know, but suddenly it was as if something lifted him and flung him down at her feet. He wept and embraced her knees. For the first moment she was terribly frightened, and her whole face went numb. She jumped up and looked at him, trembling. But all at once, in that same moment, she understood everything. Infinite happiness lit up in her eyes; she understood, and for her there was no longer any doubt that he loved her, loved her infinitely, and that at last the moment had come...

They wanted to speak but could not. Tears stood in their eyes. They were both pale and thin, but in those pale, sick faces there already shone the dawn of a renewed future, of a complete resurrection into a new life. They were resurrected by love; the heart of each held infinite sources of life for the heart of the other.

.... he was risen and he knew it, he felt it fully with the whole of his renewed being....<sup>108</sup>

Raskolnikov has a moment of transformation in a literary passage of unspeakable depth and beauty. This journey, this discussion through this whole paper, is exemplified in many ways through Raskolnikov's journey in *Crime and Punishment*.

It is through his conscience that the first indications come, that the guilt begins to press on him. He is tormented and oppressed by the feeling that he has stepped over morality but

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<sup>108</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 549-550.

should not have.<sup>109</sup> This is presented in dramatic and powerful form through the narrative but is a common phenomenon of human experience. Next, Raskolnikov encounters Sonya, who embodies Christ to him; she points him toward repentance and redemption. Additionally, they read the narrative of Jesus and Lazarus, in which Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Raskolnikov appears to still have this passage in mind during the redemption scene when Dostoevsky describes Raskolnikov's thoughts: "he was risen and he knew it."

Now the narrative example can only go so far, and there are, of course, things that are not stated explicitly. For one, it is not explicitly stated that Raskolnikov *repents*; secondly, it is not explicitly stated that what Raskolnikov gains is knowledge of the existence of God. Both of these, I believe, are implicit within the narrative. Regarding repentance, I would suggest that the self-integration that occurs between Raskolnikov's last encounter with Sonya and the opinion of the inmates, and the encounter in this redemption scene evidence an internal change in Raskolnikov towards the good. For the entire novel, Raskolnikov has been divided against himself—divided against the good, as evidence by the Svidrigailov/Sonya external conflict—and has been unable to come close to *anyone*. He is removed from his only friend, Razumikhin, he is removed from his mother and sister, he is removed from Sonya; he is even distant from people generally, as in the inmates' perception of him. It is startling that this has suddenly changed in his approach to Sonya, and I believe it is only because there is a change within. He is no longer divided against himself because he has become integrated around the *good*.<sup>110</sup> It is only because

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<sup>109</sup> It is worth comparing Raskolnikov's thesis about morality and the individuals who can step over it with his dream in Siberia, which is possibly the extension of this idea into the world in large form. Nonetheless, as I have stated above, it is most plausible to find in Raskolnikov an awareness of his guilt and also a wounding to his pride that he feels it.

<sup>110</sup> Though there is not space remaining to fully dive into this account of self-hood, Eleonore Stump has marvelously treated these issues in *Wandering in Darkness*, chs. 5-8 (especially ch. 7).

repentance has occurred—because re-integration around the good has occurred—that Raskolnikov is able to fall on his knees before Sonya and is able to love another person. This is all further strengthened by Dostoevsky conveying that by the time Raskolnikov returns to the barracks, the inmates have already started to look at him differently. Raskolnikov realizes this and understands it, thinking, “but that was how it had to be: did not everything have to change now?”<sup>111</sup>

Regarding whether it is that Raskolnikov now believes in the existence of God, I believe this is also intended by Dostoevsky; the Lazarus parallel, as well as the symbolic representation of Sonya, are intended to suggest this. One might reply that even if the author suggested it, this does not mean it is realistic. But again, it is through these kinds of moments, through conscience and the witness of holiness, through Scripture, that so many come to a knowledge of God. The methods here are also especially important for relating the *character* of God. Raskolnikov understands something of God’s view of righteousness and justice through his conscience, of God’s grace, mercy, and love through Sonya, and of God’s compassion through the story of Lazarus. All of these intensely personal and morally revealing methods are the ones that Dostoevsky portrays in the story. One of the particular strengths of moral apologetics is the ability to communicate not just evidence that God exists, but also to communicate who He is.

### Conclusion

Finally, we reach the consideration of the main thesis regarding an expansive epistemology. Could this same knowledge have been effectively conveyed in propositions? Even my main ideas stated in premises would be substantially less impactful removed from the

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<sup>111</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 550.

narrative examples provided throughout and especially in this chapter. This does not mean that there are not important things that can be captured propositionally, but there is the potential that something is lost when we do this because the truths in discussion here are not *just* logical and notional. They extend beyond this, they are real and experiential and until they are apprehended that way, one cannot properly assess their content and judge its warrant. The nature of morality requires an expansive epistemology for a full grasp of its import.

And so when it comes to the moral argument, arguably when one opens his eyes to an expansive epistemology, to the experiential and the poetic, the relational and aesthetic, the personal and phenomenological, he finds a wider range of evidence for God's existence. There are epistemological frameworks like Stump's and Newman's that can help to categorize this broader rationality, expansive epistemology, and richer empiricism, to put some analytical clarification around it. There are ways of knowing that sometimes extend beyond what is captured by propositions, the narrowly empirical, the domain of logic choppers and positivists. These personal ways of knowing provide a congenial context in which to feel the force of the moral argument(s) for God's existence—and for His goodness and grace.

In 1922 G. K. Chesterton wrote a sonnet entitled "The Convert," which seems appropriate in relation to Raskolnikov's journey and the conclusion of this work:

After one moment when I bowed my head  
 And the whole world turned over and came upright,  
 And I came out where the old road shone white,  
 I walked the ways and heard what all men said,  
 Forests of tongues, like autumn leaves unshed,  
 Being not unlovable but strange and light:  
 Old riddles and new creeds, not in despite  
 But softly, as men smile about the dead.  
 The sages have a hundred maps to give  
 That trace their crawling cosmos like a tree,  
 They rattle reason out through many a sieve  
 That stores the sand and lets the gold go free:

And all these things are less than dust to me  
Because my name is Lazarus and I live.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> G. K. Chesterton, "The Convert," *The Chesterton Review* Vol. 26, Issue 4 (November 2000), 443, <https://doi.org/10.5840/chesterton200026488>.

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