Ethical Encounter Theology: An Inter-Disciplinary Consonance

Martin James Rice
BSc (London), PhD (Birmingham), GradDipMinSt (CHC)

School of Humanities
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Griffith University

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The mature-aged Albert Einstein reflected on theology and science –

“I want to know how God created this world.
I am not interested in this or that phenomenon,
in the spectrum of this or that element;
I want to know God’s thoughts;
the rest is details.”

Abstract

Ethical Encounter Theology (E.E.T.) is developed as a scientifically coherent, perfect being theist worldview, supported by holistic biblical readings and a strong theodicy. Ethically-structured cosmogony bridges the revelational/empirical gap that separates traditional perfect being theism from Theology/Science research. The dissertation explores an ethical worldview where biblical faith in a perfect God is consonant with contemporary science. Processes of ethical encounter, binary ethical apocalypsis and ethical dialysis characterize a worldview in which science and traditional theology can share a goal of exposing and separating right from wrong. Ecollation (physical actualization of invisible information) and binary ethical apocalypsis (reification of right and wrong ethical possibilities) are argued to have accompanied the progress of naturalistic evolution and to have added lasting meaning to world history.

The ethical structuring of our world is argued to have begun with a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of moral evil. That caused the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) which imprisoned creation’s goodness in a singularity of selfishness. An encounter with divine self-giving love then enabled this to expand into our universe. Thus evolutionary complexification takes place in a matrix of invisible potentials, including right and wrong ethical possibilities. The visible and invisible moieties of a creatio ex ethica universe facilitate an ongoing dialectic between divine right ethics and human resistance to virtue. All evolutionary history is expected to be conserved to constitute the evidence required for eschatological justice. This differentiates E.E.T. from those naturalistic and panentheistic theologies where history is disposable.

The biblical story of original sin is taken to be a dramatization of the primal problem (c.e.a.p.) between God and humankind. Freedom of choice is the divine means for there to be a just judgment and ethical dialysis at the Eschaton. Our anthropic universe’s contingency, waste, suffering, injustice and futility are consequences of the freedom required to resolve the c.e.a.p. Nevertheless, ethical identification and separation processes are specifically salvific, eternally instructive and greatly honor God. They provide a theologically very good motive for creating a universe like ours.

As in evolutionary ethics, natural and moral evil are normal. Wrong ethics must be able to freely self-identify, a freedom that allows there to be natural evils that harm innocents. Biblically, wrong ethics, evil, and suffering cause the creation to groan for
right ethically-responsive humans to emerge. From this, our compulsion to care and to make laws appear to have natural origins. Biblically, divine love also guaranties compensation in the perfect aeon to come for all who suffered injustice in this process.

The biblical Rule of God is interpreted as a matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.), embracing our universe. Biblically it is close and within. The m.o.r.e. sustains both the material and the unseen realities of space-time (u.r.s.t.). Ecollation (actualization by free choice) of the potentials of the m.o.r.e. and the u.r.s.t. can influence emergent material complexification. Artistic creativity and scientific invention represent human experiences of ecollating on unseen ecology. Information transfer between seen and unseen realities may be by sympathetic resonance such as may also supply the brain/mind link. Information from the m.o.r.e. may resonate with materiality to subtend epiphenomena such as consciousness and spiritual/ethical experiences. The m.o.r.e. could store the information needed for universal resurrection and judgment.

Scientific accounts of monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis are harmonized with the two different biblical accounts of anthropogenesis. Abuse of the First Peoples (the original hunter/gatherers) by Second Peoples (the first farmer/civics) can then be read from the Bible account to have provoked global catastrophe. This interdisciplinary consonance opens new possibilities for hamartiology, soteriology, theological anthropology, and for inter-racial, feminist and environmental theologies.

*Ex ethica* cosmogony depends on holistic, scientifically-informed readings of some key texts. As a scientifically-informed and ethically-coherent perfect being theism E.E.T. is accessible to Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other theologians. It also offers a natural ethical model for irenic inter-personal and community relationship building.

As Christian theology, E.E.T. recognizes Jesus Christ as the divine self-givingness that encountered the c.e.a.p. and created our universe. The Cross, Resurrection and Ascension are understood to decode history from start to finish as: encounter → apocalypsis → separation. In this E.E.T. harmonizes creation and salvation theologies and argues for salvage eschatology. The E.E.T. worldview is not intended to challenge sound doctrine but to stimulate more discourse between the academy of Theology/Science and the academy of conservative biblical theology. That outcome is fully illustrated by contextualizing a range of sources from established scholarship.
Statement of originality

This dissertation, Ethical Encounter Theology: An Inter-Disciplinary Consonance, is submitted to Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy award. This dissertation is entirely my own work, except where another’s work is acknowledged.*

Martin James Rice  Dated: 30th October 2009

* See comments in “Technical preface - Special feature of this work”, on dissertation page xi.
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Technical preface – Special features of this work

With such a broad topic in fields that have attracted intelligent endeavors for more than three millennia the relevant literature is much more extensive that is usual for PhD research. Concepts derived during this research are likely to have been previously proposed in some form. An actual example is the concept of “a moral universe” for the full identification of evil so it can be justly and permanently separated from good. Years after this idea was derived from biblical text research by the dissertation author it was discovered that a similar idea had already been proposed by the romantic monist philosopher Friedrich Schelling, early in the 19th Century (see section 1.13). Because of the extensiveness of the pertinent literature, it is quite possible that there may be other such discoveries. Reference to works, both ancient and modern, that antecede to any extent the ideas in this dissertation is of course always appropriately given wherever these have been found by the author. Secondary sources are utilized more extensively than is customary in research having a narrower purview. The cost of researching a worldview question is that of reduced detail, though this is recompensed by the increased anabolic opportunities afforded.

This dissertation does not depend upon the absolute novelty of any of its several component ideas and concepts. The novelty and strength of the dissertation comes from the way its biblical interpretations and understanding of science and philosophy interact to permit a worldview where an ethical encounter with God’s perfect and unparalleled goodness is shown to explain many features of experienced reality. That this integrating heuristic capacity of the E.E.T. worldview is able to be expressed across all three contributing disciplines is an advantage. The dissertation offers an alternative lingua franca to serve the currently burgeoning conversation between the sciences, philosophy and theology. Nowhere does it find a need to exclude other ways of thinking, nor does it force any one of its component disciplines under the umbrella of another. E.E.T. is only a theology because the claims of theology are more contextualizing than are those of the fine-detailing disciplines of science and philosophy. There can be no hierarchy, no patronizing; failure of any discipline to fully respect the others would be subversive of basic inter-disciplinary protocol.

A new, biblically-based theistic hermeneutics may not suit the taste of every thinker today. That is well understood and the author realizes the lack of appeal of attempts
to resurrect meta-narratives based on superceded philosophies. Thus the dissertation comes with a humble appeal to readers to permit E.E.T. to speak for itself. Its holistic tones are those of an inter-disciplinary resonance hybrid. And, as dual Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling first showed in 1928, resonance hybrids may explain qualities that are inexplicable in terms of any combination of the known properties of their familiar contributing structures. In E.E.T., such mutually transformative dynamics provide the mobility in scientific, philosophical and theological tenets necessary to assist across-discipline conversations. The result is a creatio ex ethica worldview that addresses many of the hard questions that have frustrated attempts to find a deep consonance between traditional theism and Theology/Science research. In addition, the possible human and social implications of an ex ethica worldview may lend this approach a wider relevance.

Any work that ventures into serious terra incognita needs to find ways to describe the previously indescribable. This can cause problems for some readers. For example, Alfred North Whitehead’s classic book Process and Reality: an Essay in Cosmology has demanded intensive work over many years to elucidate its terminology and reasoning. With that in mind, technical prefaces have been provided to define the terms used and to demonstrate the logical connections of the sometimes dense arguments of this inter-disciplinary research on such profound subjects. These technical prefaces are offered as a courtesy for any reader who may find them helpful.
Technical preface - Abbreviations

“adap” indicates an adapted translation.


“mjr” indicates the dissertation author’s own translation.


NKJV - Spirit Filled Life Bible: the New King James Version.


TMV - The Message: the Bible in Contemporary Language.

Technical preface – Key biblical texts and style specifics

**Genesis 1:1-3**

When God began to create heaven and earth –
the earth being unformed and void,
with darkness over the surface of the deep
and a wind from God sweeping over the water –
God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

*[JPS]*

When God began to create our intangible and tangible reality –
our tangible reality was an unrecognizable potential,
enveloped in the selfish ignorance of the Singularity
with elemental powers *hovering over the potential* –
God said, “Let there be wisdom”; and wisdom began to work.

*[mjr]*

**Proverbs 9:1-6**

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars;
She has slaughtered her animals; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table.
She has sent out her servants; she calls from the highest places in the town:
“You that are simple, turn in here!” To those without sense she says:
“Come! Eat of my bread and drink of the wine that I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

*[NSRV]*

**1 Corinthians 2:6-8, 12**

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature,
but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.
No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden
and that God destined for our glory before time began.
None of the rulers of this age understood it,
for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God,
that we may understand what God has freely given us.

*[NIV]*

*This usage develops from the JPS and the NRSV and avoids any possibility of a bi-theist reading.*
John 1:5, 9-10

The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it.

The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[NIV]

Divine wisdom would illuminate unholy ignorance but it is obdurate.

The true divine wisdom that educates every person was actualized among us, yet even though called into being by divine wisdom, people rejected wisdom’s teachings.

[mjr]

Matthew 10:34

Don’t think I came to bring peace to the world!

No, I have come with a razor blade,

[TS]

Genesis 4:7

But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door;

it desires to have you, but you must master it.

[NIV]

1 John 3:8b

The reason that the Son of God was revealed was so that he would destroy the works of Slanderer-Liar.

[TS]

Matthew 10:26

So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered,

And nothing secret that will not become known.

[NRSV]

Revelation 22:11, 17

Those who are unjust, let them be unjust still;

those who are filthy, let them be filthy still;

those who are righteous, let them be righteous still;

those who are holy, let them be holy still.

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let them who hear say, “Come!”

And let them who thirst come. Whoever desires, let them take the water of life freely.

[NKJV adap]
Biblical text authorship attribution style and the default translation
The Bible is taken as the 66 books of the majority Reformed canon. The benchmark used is the *NIVSB* (2002). The Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books referred to are as in the *NRSV* (1989). To avoid enmeshment in authorial and redactorial questions, verses and pericopae are always simply attributed to “the author”. Where no specific translation is indicated, the *NIV* has been used.

Style note on capitalization
The initial letters of Ethical Encounter Theology are capitalized throughout the dissertation, so that readers may readily recognize text more specifically referring to the dissertation subject.
Technical preface - Glossary

Binary ethical apocalypsis – a process that freely actualizes invisible ethical potentials. Right and wrong ethics are continuously concretized in the history of the world by b.e.a. To the extent that historical apocalypses are truly free ethical choices they can be justly judged at the Eschaton.

Cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) - The physicist’s anthropic cosmological principle says fine-tuning of universal constants guarantees intelligent life will evolve. The c.e.a.p. says the primal and pervasive presence of evil is due to a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of human moral evil and self-deification. It is possible that the principle and the problem are related.

Creation – by sovereign choice, as a free and gracious act, God made the realities of the heavens (unseen and intangible) and the earth (seen and tangible) that we experience. These add nothing to God and do not change divine perfect being.

Demulsify – to break an emulsion (that is the conflation) of right and wrong ethics.

Ecollation – the acquisition by visible space-time entities of information held in the unseen ecology of space-time. Three types of ethical actualization are:

- Eu-ecollation: actualization of right ethics (good);
- Mis-ecollation: actualization of mixed right and wrong ethics (sin);
- Dis-ecollation: actualization of wrong ethics (evil).

Ethical conflation – actualizations that fuse or emulsify right with wrong ethics (sin).

For example, disobedience to divine teaching by an otherwise good being.

Ethical dialysis – conservation of right ethical causes and removal of wrong ethical causes (to be finalized at the eschatological judgment of all world history).

Freedom – biblically, humans are expected by God to understand divine instructions and to freely choose to obey or disobey. A person’s freely chosen binary ethical apocalypses reveal their ethical attitude towards divine goodness.

Invisible ethical influence – quanta of ethical information in the unseen ecology of space-time (including the m.o.r.e. and the u.r.s.t.) offering choices by which the world either actualizes right ethics (eu-ecollates) or actualizes conflated ethics (mis-ecollation/sin) or actualizes wrong ethics (dis-ecollation/evil).
Matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.) - (the Kingdom of God or Heaven) makes right ethical potentials available via the unseen ecology of space-time. Its invisible ethical influence permits eu-ecollative choices to be reified in the world’s history. The concept of matrix is defined in Collins Australian Dictionary (2004) as: “A substance, situation, or environment in which something has its origin, takes form, or is enclosed.” (see also ‘Other dimensions’).

Other dimensions – quantum physics deals in other dimensions that interact with the four dimensions of our material universe. By analogy, theology’s Reign of God or Kingdom of Heaven (the m.o.r.e.) is seen to have embracing dimensions of right ethics that are “close” and “within”. These dimensions exchange information with the physical world, e.g. by sympathetic resonance.

Perfect being theism – in addition to other theological descriptors, this specifically affirms God’s unity, eternity, simplicity, necessity, aseity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnibenevolence and omnicompetence.

Pentecostal theology – pentecostal theologians (especially) ascribe the miracles in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and those of today to the influence of unseen (spiritual) realities. For inter-disciplinary reasons, Ethical Encounter Theology has these as occasions that communicate ethical information, and reveal divine omnicompetence and omnibenevolence. General and special divine actions are normal and are monistic because the embrace of the m.o.r.e. sustains and interacts with all the seen and unseen aspect of reality.

Right ethics – unselfish, loving, God-honoring virtues taught in the Bible. These may include exclusive praise and worship of, or obedience to, or faith in, or loyalty to, or love of God; repentance, conversion or divine educability; veracity; wisdom, sanctity or the light of divine understanding; love; joy; peace; patience; kindness; goodness; holiness; humility; voluntary right ethical irenic encountering; etc.

Separation – salvage of right ethical causes from conflation with wrong ethical causes.

Solus Adamus anthropology – a traditional doctrine that every human is a biological descendant of a single male. The Genesis texts that have sustained this are re-interpreted in E.E.T.’s monistic dual sequential anthropogenesis consonance.
Soul – describes the unique ethical relationship of a temporal material entity with the eternal right-ethical m.o.r.e. Like all created things, souls exist by God’s will and enjoy a degree of freedom by divine providence. Each human who (reflecting God’s moral freedom) makes conscious ethical choices must account for the state of their soul (their personal relationship with the m.o.r.e.).

*Tohu wabohu* – a difficult to translate Hebrew phrase, indicating in *Genesis* 1:2 the darkness (a wrong or conflated ethical reality) that preceded and resisted the *ex ethica* calling forth of our world by light (divine love and wisdom).

Unseen ecology – a structured part of reality, not open to direct observation; includes elementary physical forces and fields, dark energy and dark matter, and right and wrong ethical potentials. Among its informational resources, the m.o.r.e. offers right ethical and the u.r.s.t. offers wrong or conflated ethical choices.

Unseen realities of space-time (the u.r.s.t.) - include the biblical principalities, powers, dominions, rulers, authorities, governments, thrones, and forces of evil (as in *Ephesians* 6:12; and, perhaps, the Stoikheia of *Galatians* 4:9; and *Colossians* 2:8). These are contrary to the m.o.r.e. and, it is argued, are first identified in *Genesis* 1:2. They provide an invisible ethical influence that informs mis-ecollative and dis-ecollative actualizations. The u.r.s.t. might be cosmic proleptic expressions of human moral turpitude or, at least, they are empowered by human rebellion against God’s teaching (see ‘c.e.a.p.’).

Worldview – one of many possible conditioning meta-narratives that claim to integrate and add comprehensive meaning to a diversity of disparate empirical observations on reality, existence, and the seen and unseen parts of the world.

Wrong ethics – self-centred, hate-filled, God-mocking vices condemned in the Bible. Wrong ethics can variously include disrespect towards, or defamation of, or disobedience to, or mistrust of, or disloyalty to, or hatred of God; unrepentance or culpable in-educability; exploitation of or failure to help other people; falsehood and deception; foolishness or the darkness of intransigence towards divine wisdom; worship of idols; dishonoring of authority; covetousness or misery; impatience; unkindness or meanness; greed; theft; cruelty or murder; arrogance; judgmentalism; hypocrisy; un-godliness; etc.
A. The central question investigated in this dissertation is:

To what extent can the concept of a cosmogonic divine ethical encounter sustain a dialogue between perfect being theism and the current developments in Theology/Science studies?

The thesis of this dissertation is that that method can facilitate such a dialogue.

B. The central question has arisen out of progress over the last 50 years or so in co-ordinated inter-disciplinary work between a small number of scientists, philosophers and theologians. The new academy of Theology/Science studies has a clear identity and it is growing; yet its connection with the parent discipline of biblical theological studies remains tenuous. It is argued that this new and vital discipline has not impacted major faith communities as much as it could have. (Improved communication may have mutual benefits.)

C. The general method applied is one of examining and broadly critiquing certain disciplinary claims shown, on the one side in some doctrinally-influenced exegetical preferences and on the other side in a tendency to scientism. Alternative biblical interpretations and an ethical conditioning of the scientific worldview are considered worthy of exploration for their potential to sponsor some additional creative mutual interactions between science, philosophy and theology.

D. Worldview research requires broad strokes. It cannot (within reasonable length constraints) develop all its arguments in full detail. This is accepted from the outset as an inherent limitation of this type of exploratory research yet as one that can also support synoptic strength and increase inter-disciplinary consonance.

E. Perfect being theism is central to the worldviews of the three major Abrahamic faith traditions. Formally, they believe in the absolute and non-negotiable perfection of the one true God. This appears dissonant with the discovery by science of a primordial and prevailing prevalence of catastrophes, cruelty and waste in nature.

Whilst there have been attempts to show that the Scriptures are always technically descriptive, this has not been the main thrust of the developing work of

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the Theology/Science academy. Consonance has often been pursued panentheistically, even though this divides theologians from many believers. John W. Cooper (2006)* has shown how some theologians of all three Abrahamic traditions (and of other religions) have relied on panentheism in their endeavour to reconcile theology with science. This dissertation makes use of the process emphasis of Whiteheadian philosophy to explore a non-Whiteheadian and non-panentheistic way out of the impasse. An ethical encounter hermeneutics is proposed to take account of both biblical perfect being theism and the prevalence of natural and moral evils in the world. It is claimed that the Ethical Encounter Theology worldview provides the strongest theodicy possible.

F. A theological component of the argument of this dissertation is that “spiritual” or “supernatural” factors can often be described (for Theology/Science purposes) in terms of unseen ethical influences, so preserving a monistic metaphysics. It is argued that New Testament teaching, summarized in pericopae such as: “God is love”, and “God is light”, emphasize divine ethical creation and education in space-time. Divine ethical creational and educational relations are taken in E.E.T. to be part of the unseen ethical ecology of space-time (see 2 Corinthians 4:18b). This process is accessible to science whenever ethical potentials become actualized as visible historical effects (that is when they are materially ecollated upon). E.E.T. locates the source of right ethics in an embracing matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.). Interpreting Kingdom of God ontology in ethical terms such as these also helps to make it more suited for consonance with science.

G. It is taken that the broad sweep of New Testament ethical teachings provide practical criteria for defining right and wrong. This method avoids (but does not exclude) other ways of defining values. It is argued that there is sufficient content in the biblical reports of the teachings of Christ and the Apostles to establish a general concept of right ethics and wrong ethics that is useful, particularly for the Christian form of E.E.T. reasoning.

H. Science contributes evidence that unseen resources always influence the visible side of space-time reality. The unseen ecology known to science includes: the extra-dimensional possibilities of quantum mechanics, the physical constants of

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nature, the laws, forces and fields of physics, the dark energy and dark matter known to cosmologists, and the fundamental rules of biogenesis, natural selection, ecosystem dynamics, and human consciousness and inventiveness. Science has revealed that visible cause-and-effect materiality is embedded in a matrix of unseen ecology. Empirically observable events are able to draw on a larger, unseen reality. It is observed that this has been a process feature of the world from its inception.

I. The dissertation refers to Pentecostal theology for examples of how the primeval properties of unseen ecology, especially its ethical realities (see F and G) are said to articulate with everyday human experiences. “Ecollation” is a technical term derived from the biological understanding that new species arise by adapting to unoccupied, invisible ecological niches. That is, new species enact as part of history some previously unseen ecological realities. Every biological species is a historical realization of a unique ecollation by which unseen potentials are actualized in materials. By direct analogy the dissertation develops the idea that unseen ethical potentials become progressively actualized into the materials of world history (Pentecostals sometimes call this “history changing”) by three types of ecollation.

J. The major types of ethical ecollation that are explored in the dissertation are:

- **eu-ecollation**, referring to actualization of right ethical potentials;
- **mis-ecollation**, referring to actualization of mixed (that is conflated or emulsified) right and wrong ethical potentials; and,
- **dis-ecollation**, referring to actualization of wrong ethical potentials.

K. It is argued that right and wrong ethical potentials are the primeval constituents of the unseen ecology of space-time. That is they existed prior to or simultaneous with the creation of energy-matter. Broad theological support for this is sought for in biblical interpretations, especially of: *Genesis* 1:2-3; *John* 1:5; 9-10; and *1 John* 1:1, 5 (also see L).

L. Current scientific understanding of the primal Singularity of our space-time universe, its descriptions of violent and painfully conflicted evolutionary processes in the universe, and its demonstration that the vacuum matrix and severe radiation of Space are radically hostile to life, are arguably all in accord with the dissertation’s ethical encounter interpretation of biblical cosmogenesis (in K). Progress in scientific data-gathering has (quite incidentally) produced examples of physical and biological
associations providing right ethical and wrong ethical analogies that can add colour to the dialogue between Theology/Science and biblical theology. For example, the material complexification of the universe is absolutely dependent on progressive levels of cooperation between entities that were originally independent. Individuality is subsumed in something greater. Very long-lived parts of the earth’s ecology like coral reefs and rainforests exist only because of symbioses between diverse organisms. At the opposite extreme, sub-microscopic zoonotic viruses (like Hendra virus) may kill a large complex human host and thus destroy themselves.

M. It is argued (without implying ontic homology) that science’s cosmogonic Singularity has some parallels with the Bible’s tohu wabohu. The dissertation introduces the term “singularity of selfishness” as one way of acknowledging this. It is argued that space-time expands and complexifies ex ethica rather than exclusively ex nihilo. This method does not compromise the perfect being theism tenet that all things (including the liberty to make free-will decisions) derive de novo from God. That is to say, the traditional theological doctrine of the majority Abrahamic faith communities that all things comprehensively, including good and evil, have and always will have absolute ontic dependence on God.

N. Contrary to an influential biblical theological hermeneutics, it is argued that God never wars. The dissertation rejects Manichaean and Gnostic dualisms that depend, for example, on a struggle between light and darkness. Ethical Encounter Theology describes encounters between the right ethics of perfect God and situations of conflated right and wrong ethics. Divine ethical encounter with conflated ethics would naturally elicit binary ethical apocalypses. The actualization in world history of right and wrong ethics supplies evidence for a just eschatological divine judgment against wrong and the divine salvage of right (see John 5:29). In the E.E.T. view God does not strive to do this, rather it is something that flows from who God is. Binary ethical apocalypses are inevitable and are argued to be biblically recognizable as a result of the Kingdom or Reign of God encountering the world. It might then be extrapolated that irenic ethical encounter is a proper work of believers. As is typical of encounters between truth-seeking and ignorance it is not accidental that advances in science often raise new ethical issues. The entire ethical worldview hermeneutic could possibly be developed in ways that increase irenic discourse between disparate faith communities.
O. It is argued that the Bible defines a major objective of our world’s history as the just and permanent separation of right from wrong (ethical dialysis). To justly demulsify the world’s emulsified ethics would seem to be a lengthy, involved and delicate process. The question arises of how right and wrong ethics became conflated (or emulsified) with each other in the first place (see K and P). Exploring this issue may enable the problem of sin to be understood in ways that promote conversation between conservative biblical theology and contemporary Theology/Science research.

P. It is argued that a primal encounter between right ethics and wrong ethics can be read from *Genesis* 1, verses 2 and 3. Parallels are identified with the Singularity and the Big Bang described in physical cosmology (see M). Even so, that does not show how right and wrong became emulsified, as is interpreted here from *Genesis* 1:2. A traditional theological opinion situates a pre-creation rebellion among God’s angels as the origin of evil and sin. *Matthew* 13:24-30 and 36-43, and *Luke* 10:18 are sometimes cited in support of (an otherwise biblically unspecified) angelic origin of evil. This idea has had to be revisited for Theology/Science purposes, because its Manichean dualism locates the genesis of evil and sin in a supernatural dimension beyond the reach of science. Scientific findings demonstrate that natural evil was inherent of the universe from the start. In attempting to bridge this revelatory/empirical gap E.E.T. interprets *Genesis* 2:17 to reflect the deadliness of humankind’s conflating of right with wrong ethics, that is, sin (see also *Romans* 6:23a). This approach accords with the scriptural censure of human deceit, hypocrisy, double-mindedness, and other ways that right and wrong are conflated. It is hypothesized that the perfect goodness of God’s plan for humankind’s world was conflated with - and bound into a singularity of selfishness by - a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of the historical reality of human turpitude.

Q. For the inter-disciplinary purposes of this dissertation it is argued that wrong ethics (that is evil) and conflated ethics (that is sin) can be usefully explored as specifically human problems. The biblical theological case that supports this argument draws on the concept that ethical conflation (sin) can only have or hold (Hebrew *tesh-o-kaw*) human beings to the extent that they voluntarily choose to actualize wrong ethics (e.g. *Genesis* 4:7; also see *Matthew* 4:3-11 and *John* 14:30b). This has broad consonances with scientific accounts of an anthropic cosmological principle and with the absolute dependence of the scientific method on right ethics.
Scientifically, it could be asked: “By what means might the highly temporarily and spatially localized biological species *Homo sapiens* influence the primal ethical potentials of a vast, 14 billion year-old space-time universe?” This is addressed by juxtaposing the biblical accounts of human rebellions against omniscient God and the theological concept of prolepsis with the anthropic cosmological principle and the quantum mechanical concept of universal entanglement, to support an anthropogenic hamartiology. That is, proleptic recognition within the entangled universe of the idiosyncratically deicidal and self-deifying motives of humankind could be the means of making evil part of the universe. Divine good purposes were imprisoned in an anthropic singularity of selfishness. That thesis has science, philosophy and theology interacting in the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.). One implication is that our whole universe labours under the problem of unresolved human ethical ambiguity. The argument proceeds to show that the means suited to solving the problem of moral evil also opens the possibility for natural evil. Thus natural evil is a non-specifically causal epiphenomenon of human moral evil. The c.e.a.p. leads to a proposition that nature’s future ultimately depends on human ethical responses - and this is a claim made by the author of *Romans* 8:21b and by some scientific futurologists.

Turning from origins to the everyday, it is argued that personal moral decisions involve freely ecollating on the ethical alternatives of unseen ecology accessed by our conscious minds. The ethical choices on offer include wrong ethical possibilities available in the unseen realities of space-time (u.r.s.t.) (see R). Unseen right ethical possibilities are available in the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.), that is the Rule or Reign of God, said to be “close” to us or “within” us (see F and N). The two ethical-informational resources of unseen ecology are available to be ecollated upon by evolving material entities. The E.E.T. model points to analogies between the important theological concept of ethical choice-making and the important scientific concept of niche-filling. Philosophically, localized freedom for individuals to make ecollative choices (their agency) is what allows individuations to occur amidst the overall ethical predestination of the world system (see V). In an analogous way biological speciation permits an unpredictable range of unique adaptations that are, however, constrained within larger, predictable realities.

T. It is argued that it does not concern science that the Bible has a complex structuring of the u.r.s.t. and of the m.o.r.e. The Bible’s evil and ethically-ambivalent entities include the satanic serpent/dragon, unholy beasts, Babylon, the *Stoikheia*, devils, demons, and the principalities, powers, dominions, rulers, authorities, governments, and thrones. The Bible’s holy and right-ethical entities include the Trinity of God, good angels, archangels, heavenly creatures, seraphim, and cherubim. In E.E.T. these entities are treated as contrasting sources of ethical information accessible from the unseen ecology of space-time. They relate either to pervasive human moral ambiguity (the u.r.s.t. or “the world”) or to confronting encounters with divine perfectly right ethics (the m.o.r.e. or “the Kingdom”). In this way, central biblical theological matters are translated into ethical processes more accessible to science. Scientific work itself depends on right ethics and is subverted by wrong ethics. It is demonstrated that this tripartite monist method (of theology and ethics and science) offers one way to bring about creative mutual interactions between the two academies, of traditional biblical theological studies and of Theology/Science studies.

U. A biblical anthropology is developed from the argument that all evil (both natural and moral) derives from human deicidal and self-deifying proclivities (see R). The question of human culpability is explored in relation to a scientific understanding of primary hunter/gatherer First Peoples and their derivative farmer/civic Second Peoples. It is argued that *Genesis* chapters 1 and 2 refer to a scientifically-concordant monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis. This reading permits a biblically-driven re-visiting of hamartiology, soteriology, Staurology and Christology. With the E.E.T. anthropic hamartiology (where all sin is the concern of us all) certain biblical theological concerns become more accessible to scientific reasoning. The biblical expectation that healthy and wealthy people will care for sick and poor people is doubly justified if human suffering *per se* results from a cosmic ethical anthropic problem (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-15). This also addresses the themes of unjust persecution as a divine opportunity for forgiveness and loving one’s enemies (e.g. Matthew 5:29; Romans 12:17; 1 Peter 3:9) and the instruction that people intent on right ethics be united in faith and action (e.g. Colossians 3:12-15). The paradoxical aspects of this are addressed by the specialized terms “authentic” good and evil to cover subjective experiences, and “expedient” good and evil to cover the universal process of binary ethical apocalypsis towards ethical dialysis (see section 7.04).
V. Arguments concerning the cosmic aspects of human sin (see Q, R and U) raise questions about the nature of time. For Ethical Encounter Theology time is marked by the progression of binary ethical apocalypsis. The justice of eschatological judgement depends on the actualization in material space-time history of all the primordial unseen potentials for right and wrong ethical becoming. Thus, the sequential accumulation of ethical revelations marks the passage of time from the singularity of selfishness to judgement and complete ethical dialysis at the Eschaton. Chronological time is seen to be embedded in the material complexifications of the evolution of energy-matter that underwrites all the ethical apocalypses required to bring the space-time aeon to a close. The vulnerability of “higher” organisms (such as humans) to extinction by “lower” organisms (like viruses and bacteria) argues against several otherwise attractive scenarios which locate inherent design or vital teleology in the evolutionary substrate. To attain its divine ethical destiny this aeon has to have a maximum of opportunity for freedom of choice. This seeming paradox is central to the Ethical Encounter Theology hermeneutics. Pre-destination is taken for granted in traditional perfect being theism (see S) and E.E.T. shows how system predestination does not exclude opportunities for freely chosen ethical self-identification.

X. In a universe called into being when omniscient divine right ethics confronted the proleptic presence of the severity of human wrong doing, the freedom needed to permit cumulative binary ethical apocalypsis also allowed the actualization of every sort of natural evil (including extinctions). This is the historical means by which wrong becomes exposed for judgement and right for salvage. It is the means by which humankind is taught the unjustly pervasive and harsh consequences of choosing moral evil. It is the background against which perfect divine love patiently deals in concrete terms with the freely-chosen, murderous, personal hatred within humankind. Hence (and in accord with evolutionary ethics), it is argued that the presence of natural and moral evils, throughout the world’s history, is normal. No additional theodicy appears to be required. The E.E.T. theodicy also goes towards explaining why the extremes of moral evil exceed those of natural evil. It also goes to support salvage over renovation soteriology and eschatology.
Y. Complementary reading of biblical texts referring to the sacrificial death of the perfect human being (the Son of Man)* suggest the authors believed this to have been enacted prior to or at the time of the creation (e.g. Ephesians 1:4a; Hebrews 4:3b; Revelation 13:8; 17:8) and then actualized in space-time history at the Cross of Calvary (e.g. Romans 16:25, 26; 1 Peter 1:20). It is argued that, if this view is added to verses that declare a categorical cosmic dependence on the Christ (e.g. Colossians 1:15-20), our universe itself appears as a soteriological creation by un-selfish love. It is argued that this approach, combined with the ethical encounter theodicy (see X), supports a soteriology that helps biblical theology to converse with Theology/Science. Here, the unchanging divine motive is shown to be to salvage the good at any cost (e.g. Ephesians 1:4). Good is salvaged by calling space-time out of the anthropic singularity of selfishness and then by continually confronting its developing history with the character of God’s love, so as to accelerate binary ethical apocalypsis. It is argued that personal salvation logically depends upon each individual’s response to the divine immanent ethical work. God’s perfect ethical competence is supported by the New Testament teachings that the unjust loss and undeserved suffering caused by evil in the world will attract divine compensatory justice at the Eschaton (e.g. Matthew 5:3-12; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18). The historical evidence for the resurrection and glorification of the Christ is held to quintessentially exemplify this teaching.

Z. The classical philosophically theist, Abrahamic faith communities adhere to perfect being theism, as does most of the large academy of traditional Bible-based theology associated with them. This dissertation will demonstrate that holistic biblical readings allow for an Ethical Encounter Theology that is able to facilitate dialogue between perfect being theism and some of the areas of special interest in contemporary Theology/Science studies. It is suggested that most of the E.E.T. hermeneutic is adaptable for use by Judaic, Islamic and other philosopher theologians and scientist theologians. E.E.T. is shown to satisfy the basic criteria of a distinct worldview. Finally, it is hoped that it contributes reasons for individuals and communities to irenically participate in a progression of the divine right ethical encounter with the world’s conflation of right and wrong ethics, to bring on the Eschaton and the coming aeon of right ethics (however they may envisage that event).

Chapter 1 – General introduction to Ethical Encounter Theology

1.01 Introduction
This chapter introduces the subject matter of the dissertation, its ethical encounter
hermeneutic, and its use of specialized terminology. From the start it is worth noting
that Ethical Encounter Theology has required careful, holistic biblical reading. This is
rare in Theology/Science publications where it is normal to emphasize science and
philosophical theology but give less weight to traditional biblical theological
propositions. In order to address the main contemporary revelational/empirical gap it
has been necessary to give greater attention to biblical source texts and their
interpretation by biblically holistic methods. This process has been made easier by
sustaining a drive towards monism, the outcome of which is most clearly illustrated in
the integrated E.E.T. worldview (see chapter 6).

Conceptual obstacles to a new inter-disciplinary integration of scientific, theological
and philosophical understanding often occur because, as Alfred North Whitehead
argued:

people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of
putting things has ever occurred to them.1

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1 Whitehead, A. N. (1925). Science and the Modern World. N.Y., Macmillan: 49. This can be an
obdurate factor in theology, wherever faith traditions prematurely entrench exegetical assumptions.
See comments on doctrinal inflexibility by Bruce L. McCormack in dissertation section 3.03.
Whitehead saw a need for investigative, inter-disciplinary research and advocated the proposition of speculative theories to stretch the boundaries of our imagination of reality. Again, almost fifty years ago, W. A. Whitehouse made a similar point:

If there is to be any interpenetration of scientific thinking and theological thinking, it would seem to be the case that this can happen only in a new formulation of ontology.²

That appeal went almost unheard by the many that were comfortable with “two cultures”, for as recently as thirty years ago Wolfhart Pannenberg was able to state:

scarcely any connection can be seen between the world-picture of the sciences which determine our practical dealings with reality and the corresponding biblical ideas. . . . Before we could live in accordance with God’s commandments there would have to be radical changes in our whole understanding of reality.³

Since that was written, there has been a mounting effort, especially among British and American scientists, theologians and philosophers to stretch the boundaries of our ontological assumptions to enable bridge-building between disciplines.⁴ One obvious advantage of bridging cognitive gaps between the revelations of holy texts and the empirically-based theories of science could be a reduction in the public credibility of incoherent worldviews and of related sectarian friction.

1.02 The contemporary Theology/Science movement

The ethos of contemporary research into mutually beneficial interaction between science, philosophy and theology has been succinctly outlined by Robert J. Russell. A long quotation summarizes his perspectives on method, ethic, vision and philosophy. It is useful to have such a clear and authoritative statement about the broad ambitions of the Theology/Science academy, one of the two main areas being researched, right at the beginning of this dissertation.

⁴ Some of the richness of the ensuing debates can be accessed in, e.g. Smets, T. A. (2007). Social and Ideological Roots of Science and Religion: a Social-Historical Exploration of a Recent Phenomenon. Theology and Science 5:185-201; and Yong, A. (2007). God and the Evangelical Laboratory: Recent Conservative Protestant Thinking About Theology and Science. Theology and Science 5:203-221. The papers published in this journal and in others, such as Zygon and Science and Christian Belief, demonstrate the current vitality of the Theology/Science academy.
‘Science and religion’ stands for a rapidly growing international, intercultural, interreligious and interdisciplinary movement of scholars held together by their commitment to responsible dialogue and creative mutual interaction between scientists and religious leaders. This commitment is crucial if we are to appropriate the wealth of discoveries of contemporary science in reshaping our religious understanding of life and its ultimate meaning, if we are to critically engage the philosophical and theological elements in contemporary science and the ethical challenge of technology and the environment as new directions in research arise in both areas and if we are to envision a future which is genuinely wholesome for all life on earth. It has broadened beyond the academy to include the general public from all walks of life whose imaginations are kindled by science and who recognize the deeper spiritual questions which science raises but cannot answer – and which religion has often overlooked. Still the major thrust comes from scholars who are willing to look beyond the narrow expertise of their fields and raise questions and insights that are foundational to life.

What is both crucial and unique is that these scholars are committed to the pursuit of such dialogue based on mutual respect and a willingness to hold their beliefs self-critically and hypothetically in hopes that such dialogue will lead to deeper understanding and even mutual-transformation. They are motivated in part by the stunning discoveries of the natural sciences in the last hundred years, discoveries which raise profound questions about the universe, its origins and future, and the role and meaning of life in it. Such questions push beyond the traditional boundaries of science. They challenge and inspire us to seek answers which, along with science, draw on all aspects of human knowledge, including philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, religion and spirituality. These scholars are concerned, too, by the diversity of contemporary technologies which challenge us to shape a future that supports all life on earth. World religions are an essential reservoir of wisdom and truth which, when brought together with the discoveries of science and the challenges of technology, can serve the betterment of human life and the environment and the envisioning of the role and destiny of life in the universe.\(^5\)

E.E.T. describes alternative biblical interpretative opportunities that are able to expand the possibilities for consonance building of this flourishing new discipline.

1.03 Three different worldviews that condition theological perspectives

Among a plethora of worldviews, two contemporary theologies attract much attention. Firstly, the move to panentheism has become conspicuous. Here, science and

philosophy dominate theology, whilst biblical theology is given a subsidiary role. A semi-competent, suffering, learning God is in everything and bibliically significant entities such as the Holy Spirit and holy angels and bibliically authentic evil entities such as the devil and demons are usually de-emphasized or radically reinterpreted. John W. Cooper has recently summarized the character of panentheism and its extensive influence on current worldviews and in philosophical theology. As a theology panentheism often finds itself defending a sort of imperfect being theism.

Secondly, there is a contrary move that depicts both the Bible and world events as evidencing to a protracted war between good and evil entities. Biblical accounts of holy angels and evil demons are seen as describing the dominating objective realities. The phenomenal universe is demonstrated to provide evidence of conflict between the unseen forces of God and those of the devil. Gregory A. Boyd has extensively documented this God-at-war hermeneutics God-at-war theology is similar to panentheistic theology in one way, as they both de-emphasize or abjure the divine perfection theism inherited from Mosaic and Christian patristic and scholastic traditions. In both of these currently popular metaphysics God seems to be struggling and in need of our tolerance and understanding. It is sometimes argued that this substantially post-Darwinian ontological emphasis resulted from the theodicical challenge of a modern biological awareness of the excessive cruelty and profligate waste sustaining the evolutionary progress of nature.

Against these popular worldview trends the consonance reached for by the Ethical Encounter Theology (E.E.T.) of this dissertation draws on Anselmian divine perfection theology. Both Old and New Testament texts are used there to show God as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. This is the active belief of

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most Jews, Christians and Moslems. To them it is unthinkable that God could be imperfect in any way. The perfect being theism of E.E.T. contributes a supportive argument drawing on careful contextual readings of key biblical texts and on evidence for scientific, philosophical and theological coherence. Crucially, it attempts to provide a theodicy based on the idea that all potential evil needs to be actualized for it to be judged and for it to then contribute to the divine ethics tutorial of eternity. This is a substantial endeavor because the blossoming scientific understanding of reality is generally thought to have made perfect being theism untenable. However, even one leading panentheist philosopher has advocated that:

constructive work should be done; drawing on the resources of other metaphysical systems, such as German Idealism, which has provided the most sophisticated philosophical account of subjectivity to date.

This dissertation responds in part, by developing a suggestion of Friedrich W. J. von Schelling’s. His real-idealist proposition was that our universe is the physical method by which the invisible problem of evil is worked out. This implies that if there were no “problem of evil” there would have been no need for a universe like ours. Difficulties with establishing consonance between perfect being theism and empirical reality are much reduced when a coherent answer is provided to the problem of theodicy. It becomes more complex again when the cosmic problem of evil is interpreted as a peculiarly human problem, as it is in E.E.T. The increased communication generated by recent inter-disciplinary research programs and their publications has made it possible to envisage an ethically-structured, scientifically-coherent and biblically-concordant worldview such as is outlined in this dissertation.

1.04 On science and theology

A world increasingly dominated by science and technology sometimes stridently questions even the relevance of theology itself. If reality is nothing but the self-

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development or complexification of energy-matter in space-time then natural science is the appropriate method for studying and describing reality. However, we self-conscious human beings seem to require further, philosophical and ethical methods for our study and self description.\(^\text{12}\) As a consequence of making the human exception, a requirement for theology develops from conscious humans asking about origin and destination and about purpose, meaning and values. Theology begins its unique exploration at the limits of both scientific empiricism and philosophical conceptualization. The issues become more complex because of the divine revelations and historical encounters with God recorded in sacred texts that record the events of believers’ lives, over several millennia. The body of academic theological research papers and books that have built on the experiences described in these primary theological sources is staggering. The output of new theological papers and books has never been greater than at the present time.

Is epistemology inherently split? For the purposes of Ethical Encounter Theology it is not, for the so-called magisteria of science and theology have no self-evident or commonly agreed boundaries that legalize such an ontological dualism. A person’s theology (even if it is a-theology) tends to color all their other knowledge. Steven Reiss argues that differences in the way people prioritize the sixteen basic human desires (known to psychologists) partially determines the apparent divide between science and religion.\(^\text{13}\) For nearly two millennia Bible scholars have developed theological methods for investigating what are essentially general questions about ultimate realities. Ethical Encounter Theology attempts to obtain a consonance between this long and substantial tradition of epistemological unity and the rich plethora of experiences provided by a world increasingly informed through the daily advances of science. This is also a world that is today confronting the painful consequences of conflicting ideas about the character of God and about right and wrong ethics. It would be redundant to state the potential value to society of works

\(^{11}\) Dawkins, R. (2007). *The God Delusion*. London, Bantam. This is an elegant and impassioned modern species of the ancient genus: “Science and common sense demand atheism.” Such an approach has been critiqued by, among others, Mikael Stenmark. - see dissertation footnote 12.

\(^{12}\) A benchmark analysis of the limits of science is to be found in Stenmark, M. (2001). *Scientism: Science, Ethics and Religion*. Aldershot, Ashgate. See also comments by Nancey Murphy in dissertation section 2.09.

(hopefully including this dissertation) that research across disciplines, seeking pointers towards a theologically and scientifically-informed, practical, irenic, ethical lingua franca.

There are many schemes for classifying the relationship between science and theology. The integrative system adopted by E.E.T. is that of Ian Barbour’s theology of nature. This is distinct, Barbour states, because it:

starts from a religious tradition based on religious experience and historical revelation. But it holds that some traditional doctrines need to be reformulated in the light of current science.

The E.E.T. approach is comprehensively based on contextualization of biblical revelation. Scientific progress inspires a re-visiting of concepts like creatio ex nihilo, the goodness of creation per se, the solus Adamus anthropology, the total inundation flood, the war between good and evil, and some of the theological structures built on these various concepts. This has not required a diminishing of canonical biblical texts, simply a degree of biblically-holistic re-interpretation in the light of some of the more established findings of science. Whilst the result may appear unfamiliar, the research on which it is based includes careful interpretation of well-known texts and first-hand knowledge of scientific theory and practice. E.E.T.’s inter-disciplinary heuristic capacity appears to have potential for stimulating further research. For example, the links between emergent material complexification and the continuous progress of binary ethical apocalypsis seem to deserve further study.

1.05 On Christian theology
Among the responsibilities of Christian theologians are three that are especially important to this dissertation:

a. Further elucidating the teachings of Jesus Christ and his disciples, as received through the most reliable texts of the New Testament canon;
b. Helping to clarify controversies that have caused (or are apologies for) serious divisions among faith communities; and

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c. Location of Christianity in the widest social context, e.g. by generating credible contributions to science-philosophy-theology consonance.

These three theological responsibilities are connected. Interpretive care in deriving holistic theological meaning is a basis for making better contributions to both church unity and to inter-disciplinarity. Establishing common positions among Christian theologians adds credibility to their contributions to inter-disciplinary studies. Improved inter-disciplinary communication is able to enlighten hermeneutics and this recursively may assist biblical interpretation. In summarizing Karl Barth’s contribution to biblical interpretation, William S. Johnson comments:

From the standpoint of practical theology, the Word is always speaking afresh to the circumstances of each new situation. As such, the Word of God is also the command of God. To hear the Word means to obey. Theology therefore always culminates in ethics (Church Dogmatics II.2; III.4; IV.4). But this ethical dimension of the Word must remain open-ended and somewhat ambiguous, since to define with precision what the Word is commanding would infringe on God’s sovereignty.\(^\text{16}\)

It is Karl Barth’s method of balancing the eternal significance of the Bible texts with a need to allow the sovereign, living God to speak freshly through them into the ethics of unfolding situations that has been adopted as a modus operandus for Ethical Encounter Theology. This helps to give the biblical contribution the flexibility needed to work in an inter-disciplinary forum. E.E.T. attempts to attain this without diminishing an appropriate deference before the traditional holistic exegesis of the whole canon. It is from within this holistic theological context that Ethical Encounter Theology establishes its major referents.

1.06 What is Ethical Encounter Theology?

Ethical Encounter Theology is the name given to a genus of theology that receives the Bible as a record of an encounter by the ethically perfect God with an ethically ambivalent situation.\(^\text{17}\) This hermeneutics aims to help clarify some biblical issues

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\(^{16}\) Johnson, W. S. (2007). Karl Barth. *DMBI*: 165. There is irony in citing Karl Barth in connection with work that seeks consonances between the Word and natural phenomena, however this is common today.

\(^{17}\) The idea of God confronting nature is implicit in the work of many Theology/Science research workers. For example, see the 2006 festschrift for Bob Russell, *God’s Action in Nature’s World: Essays in Honor of Robert J. Russell*. Edited by Peters, T. and Hallanger, N. Aldershot, Ashgate. The monism of E.E.T. drives this concept to its limits by treating our universe of space-time as entirely the result of the perfect being’s right ethics encountering something less than perfect. There is also a rich
that divide believers. It aspires to make the contributions of biblically-driven theology more accessible to philosopher and scientist inter-disciplinarians. In addition, E.E.T. attempts to set out the major tenets of a biblical worldview in a way that could assist rational conversations within a broad range of faith traditions. At the personal level, E.E.T. implies that a believer’s life should be lived in irenical encounter with the ethical conflation of the world. Just as light illuminates darkness and the biblical perfect human being was manifest to deal with the works of the devil, so a believer may recognize the call to engage in ethical confrontation. Biblically, believers are to be light, salt, and yeast - all agents of encounter and transformation. E.E.T. supports a traditional standpoint that human existence is at least as much about progress in revealing divine right ethics and the anthropic conflation of right and wrong ethics, as it is about various forms of material progress per se. For example, it is sometimes a shock for non-biologists to discover that genome degeneration is a common form of evolution. There is nothing inherently progressive about biological organisms per se. Species spread out and into (by any possible means) whatever can be lived in. Complexification and ascent may in fact be the last available option for doing that and so material progress cannot be said to contain the whole meaning of reality.

Ethical Encounter Theology is classically theistic after the model of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) yet also adapts ideas proposed in the works of theologians such as Frederich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775-1854), Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), and Wolfhart Pannenberg (b. 1928). E.E.T. attempts to make the spiritual concepts in the Bible more accessible to science in terms of the realities of right and wrong ethics, the matrix of right ethics, the unseen realities of space-time, and ethical dialysis (see Glossary pages xviii-xx). From the biblical theological side,
consonance is aided by interpreting the opening verses of the Bible as referring to
creatio ex ethica. That is, God is encountering (“Let there be light!”) to salvage what
is ethically responsive out of its prior (unexplained) conflation with a primordial
ethical unresponsiveness (“The earth was a tohu wabohu”). In contrast, Big Bang
philosophical materialism generally supports what is close to an ex nihilo account of
creation. However, if ethics is viewed to precede the genesis of the space-time and
energy-matter cosmos, an ex ethica view of creation obtains. Different views of
origins can be differentiated as either: a) deriving ethics from material; or b) deriving
material from ethics. Ethical Encounter Theology is primarily an ex ethica worldview.
In that regard it may be considered idealist. Dialysis of the ethically teachable from
its mixture with the unteachable is held in E.E.T. to be God’s main purpose in
temporarily supporting our sort of universe (an interim cosmos, whose major goal is
crudely described as ethical dialysis). In this respect, E.E.T. applies critical realism.
Idealism and critical realism are combined in the E.E.T. claim that the world has been
a salvic process from its very beginning. The conclusions of the dissertation in
chapter 7 have some reflections on the value of methodological opportunism in inter-
disciplinary work (see section 7.02; also section 2.03).

E.E.T. takes the space-time world to be the created means that allows for an exquisite
surgical exactitude in the indescribably difficult process of a just ethical self-
identification and separation. E.E.T. identifies this surgery as revelatory (i.e.
evolutionary – in the etymological sense of unwrapping or exposing or apocalyptic).
The story of divine ethical surgery is observed to run from early in Genesis to the end
of Revelation. The steady advances in human crafts, science and technology are seen
as one of the means for facilitating the simultaneous actualization of previously
unseen primal ethical potentials. The strong point is simply that material and social
progress can serve as a means for greater ethical exposure. Significantly in E.E.T. this

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21 The cosmologist’s Singularity is without time and that would seem to preclude creatio continua. This is not always highlighted by works dealing with creatio ex nihilo. E.g., see the lengthy treatise of Copan, P. and Craig, W.L. (2004). Creation Out of Nothing: a Biblical, Philosophical and Scientific Exploration. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Apollos.

22 Ethical statements about God’s character such as: “God is love!” (1 John 4:16) imply that ethics preceded space-time and that creation necessarily proceeded ex ethica. The New Testament vision of: “the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the universe” (e.g. Revelation 13:8) also helps to support the idea that the apostolic teaching was (consciously or unconsciously) indicative of the inherent primordial ethical problem of this world of space-time, that every one of us participates in.
does not lead to a Gnostic rejection of material but to its consecration and the conservation of all of its details. E.E.T. takes the completed history of materiality as eternally valued for its glorious story of how an encounter with the Reign of God evoked this universe with its progressive characterization of all inherent right and wrong ethical potentials, so as to justly separate, forgive, and save the humble of the world. Material is not so much sacred of itself as through the virtue of what it is the essential vehicle for achieving (self-identification through process).

The ethical sequence that is envisaged can be summarized as:

- the perfect being’s wisdom is prescient of human ethical ambiguity that has proleptically bound the cosmos (as the Singularity of physical cosmology?);
- expanding space-time is initiated and sustained by a persevering divine self-giving love encounter with the singularity of selfishness;
- there is a structured, emergent complexification of matter within the universe;
- this is accompanied by binary ethical apocalypsis wherever evolving material collates on the unseen, primal right and wrong ethical potentials;
- at the Eschaton, the right and wrong actualities of history that have freely collated on and exposed all hidden ethical possibilities, are justly judged;
- all who’ve suffered unjustly from the moral and natural evils that are normal in a freely-choosing, ethically-revealing world are divinely compensated;  
- right and wrong potentialities are eternally separated (ethical dialysis);  
- the history of space-time is conserved in the aeon-to-come as humanity’s own divine ethics seminar and as a testimony to the glory of divine wisdom.

23 E.g. Matthew 5:3-12; 2 Corinthians 4:17,18.
25 There is a distinction between being forgiven an offence and it still being part of biblical history. Saul’s murderous attacks on believers were forgiven as were Mary Magdalene’s offenses and Peter’s cowardly betrayals of Jesus but their failures are included in the Bible. The biblical attitude appears as: “Forgiven sin has no sting.” E.E.T. takes the position that this method is also the comprehensive divine provision for the coming aeon e.g., see 1 Timothy 5:24, 25; Hebrews 6:10; Revelation 14:13; 20:12. An all-inclusive history is taken to be a precious product of this world. As prefigured in the Bible, ethical history is instructive for all of humanity and it eternally gives great glory to God. History is a protracted and exhaustive record of the justice of God toward the world. On the basis of this tenet, E.E.T. could be classed as a historical conservationist theology. This is distinct from Irenaeus’ concept that the universe is divinely designed (with all of its evil and pain) as a means for perfecting human
By focusing on the outworking of the ethical intent of the perfect divine being, E.E.T. supplies answers to some of the hard questions regarding evolution, creation and design. The E.E.T. hermeneutics is one that, paradoxically, understands freedom of choice to be the means for obtaining a predestined result. The reason this dialetheism is thought to be able to succeed is because the alternative choices available in the unseen ecology of space-time are finite (see sections A.03 and footnote 682). Material and ethical choices are certainly numerous enough to require billions of years to all be freely eccollated on but they are finite and so could eventually all be predictably accounted for (see point S on dissertation page xxvi).

1.07 The meaning of binary ethical apocalypsis

Ethical Encounter Theology depends of the idea that the scientifically observed progressiveness or complexification of space-time subtends an increase in the possibilities for binary ethical apocalypsis. 26 With reference to the theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, ethical encounters could be taken to be anticipations (or prolepses) of eschatological realities. Every prolepsis is a dynamic interaction between the ethical conflation of the world now and its future harmonization with the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.). 27 The ethical prolepsis method justifies a re-reading of traditional dualist description. That is, of a supernatural holy world or Heaven intersecting our unholy natural world of sin needing renovation. E.E.T. suggests our universe is the divine instrument for demulsifying good from evil and for the eternal ethical education of beings that freely choose to be salvaged into a new creation. 28 Our world, with (and because of) all of its apocalypped goods and evils is the monistic means to an ethically perfect aeon-to-come. This is seen as a saving miracle that only perfect God could do. It would not be surprising if this hope for universal ethical reconciliation elicited thankfulness among the otherwise hopelessly ethically-ambivalent members of Homo sapiens. E.E.T. takes human history to begin in a primordial encounter with divine creative wisdom and to end in an eschatological beings, by ordeal. That theodicy has been widely influential and it has been developed in interesting ways, for example, in Hick, J. (1958). *Evil and the God of Love*. London, Fontana.

26 The paradox of personal evil that is also cosmically good and of personal good that is also cosmically evil is further considered in dissertation section 7.04.


judgment by divine righteous justice. It is as if the origins and the destiny of our world grasp humanity in the pincers of ethical choice. Karl Barth registered a similar thought by insisting that temporality is humanity, and God is humanity’s pre-temporal, supra-temporal and post-temporal matrix (see, e.g. CD III.2, 522).

Ethical Encounter Theology discovers evidence of divine mercy in the physicists’ depiction of space-time’s 14 billion years, immense size and complexity, and its intelligibility to human enquiry. Nested in this but dwarfed by it, is the history of biological life on Earth and the amazingly complex human story. This vast panoply (celebrated, for example, in the popular film Baraka 29) could be taken as evidence that ethically-educable humans are greatly esteemed. God’s character can be defended as one of taking extreme measures to call sentient humans out of the formless, dark nothingness of a self-imposed singularity of selfishness. Consonance between the physicists’ all-containing Singularity and some Bible texts, such as Psalm 139:15, are worth thinking about as possibly more than analogous.

The biblical accounts of the history of Israel and then the sinless life, sacrificial death, and resurrection of the perfect human being, the Christ, could also be taken to speak of the extremes of God’s love. Divine love expressed in a structured application of right ethical encounter to elicit binary ethical apocalypsis and to eventually salvage the ethically educable. History records that humankind’s reaction to physical encounter with the Christ is homicide (with undertones of deicide and self-deification). Divine justification of the resurrected perfect human then inserts a substantial question mark in history. What does this first instantiation of a new law of nature (FINLONGC) 30 say to those who become aware of it? The historical evidence of the Resurrection raises the question of whether the perfect being’s method can be appropriated, to personally join in the work of right ethical encounter of the world’s conflated ethics. The Bible often calls to emergent humanity to abjure ethical conflation, to confront it, and to seek to live a resurrection-validating right ethical life. It is not necessary to be a Christian to appreciate the broad ethical encounter worldview. Yet, E.E.T. shows the whole process, from Genesis to Revelation, is well interpreted as having been done by and for the chosen purposes of the Christ (e.g.

Ephesians 1:4, 9; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-13). It would not be biblically inappropriate to say that the whole cosmic ethical encounter has always been the work of divine wisdom, or existence per se, ministering to people (e.g. John 8:58; 15:5; Colossians 1:15-20). Theou sophian – divine wisdom - is one of the titles of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24; 30), our major example of ierenic ethical encounter.

1.08 Tripartite reality and monism
The E.E.T. analysis finds three distinct aspects of reality reflected in each historical incident (in Process theology these incidents would be called “actual occasions”). The three aspects of integrated world reality referred to are:

i. Observable matter and energy incidents or occasions in space-time;

ii. The unseen potentialities of space-time reality (the u.r.s.t.); and

iii. The unseen potentialities of the embracing m.o.r.e. (the divine Rule).

Closed, deterministic worldviews accept only realities of the first type. However, traditional biblical theology is irrevocably committed by its texts (starting with Genesis 1:2) to all three, interacting aspects of reality. E.E.T. shows how these three aspects can involve a degree of freedom in a world that eventually becomes deterministic, once it is all reconciled (in terms of the m.o.r.e.) at the Eschaton. This worldview sees cosmic ethical meaning proleptically pervading the multitudinous free choices of our world’s history and lending them their eternal significance. Ultimately this is an all-embracing deterministic view and a fulfillment of: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The compound monism of the E.E.T. hermeneutics and the high value it places on material creation (because it is the fascinatingly textured historical records of humanity’s encounters with perfect God) immunize it from any possible association with Gnostic thinking.

1.09 Goodness
Biblically, the events and processes of our universe are good and even very good, because they actualize ethical potentials that, in final accumulation, support the justice of the Eschaton. This theological method enables E.E.T. to adopt a radically

32 Matthew 6:10. See also dissertation section 1.06.
33 Psalm 1 typifies the biblical process, identified in this dissertation as binary ethical apocalypsis, of exposing right and wrong ethics in individuals and societies. E.E.T. says that the continuous ethical
contextual view of the scientific program. E.E.T. relocates the physicalist worldview in an ethical matrix of freely-chosen ecollations that collectively are ultimately deterministic. That is in accord with common experiences, like freely creating an original painting, which is pre-determined to represent a unique person. It has specified pigments and frame design and is destined to be hung in a defined position. Once the painting is finished and hung, its aesthetic and ethical goodness is not judged from its pre-determined matrix, medium and subject but from its freely-chosen, artistic and moral composition. E.E.T. understands the development of our space-time world similarly. It contains elements of freedom within a pre-determined context and purpose. Again, goodness is in the capacity of the matrix to facilitate the free choices that enable emergent evolutionary complexifications and binary ethical apocalypses.²⁴

The material process of convergence of biological species, so familiar to life scientists, is another example of the presence of invisible factors. For example, there are many convergent characters shared by African antelopes and Australian macropods, yet their divergent characters (and their DNA) show they came from different directions to arrive at closely analogous solutions to life’s challenges.²⁵ E.E.T. argues that convergent speciation exemplifies ecollation on the same unseen ecological potentials. Translating a memorable statement of Charles Darwin’s, in E.E.T. terms - it is the ecollative speciating mechanisms of our world that produce: “endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful.” However, it is ecollative speciation of shockingly cruel and disgusting forms that may give reason to seek for a deeper significance in the goodness pericopae of Genesis 1.²⁶ E.E.T. addresses that.

³⁴ A temporary dualism that serves the purposes of an embracing, systems monism could be called a compound monism or a “dualistic holism”, as is defined by John W. Cooper (2000) - reference in dissertation section 6.03. See, also Figure 1 in dissertation section 4.05 for a simple physical model of the cooperative coexistence of emergent and idiosyncratic features in predetermined systems.


³⁶ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage with moral philosophy. However the E.E.T. thesis that right and wrong ethics are basic to existence resonates positively with Raimond Gaita’s work; see, Gaita, R. (2004). Good and Evil: an Absolute Conception, 2nd edition. London, Routledge.
It is impossible to think that the author of Genesis was unaware of the natural evil that has always been inherent of material reality. The E.E.T. hermeneutics is adapted to explain how the cruelty and waste of nature works as a temporary part of our encounter with divine right ethics. In a universe created from the encounter between perfect divine goodness and human ethical ambivalence, all manner of evils can be expected to emerge by mis-ecollation. They are not good but their material actualization is good because it exposes to just judgment the unseen potentials that they ecollated and paves the way to a future aeon of unconflicted right ethics (see, e.g. 2 Peter 3:13). In this way E.E.T. addresses the heart of the problem of theodicy in attempting to show everything in our universe, willingly or unwillingly, serves the perfect and unchanging, all-encompassing goodness of God. The paradoxical aspect of this proposition benefits from a special terminology to help clarify the relationship between local instances of good and bad processes and their larger scale ethical significance (see section 7.04).

1.10 The concept of ecollation in science and theology

Alfred North Whitehead’s term “prehension”, whereby observable space-time “actual occasions” subjectively experience pre-existing realities is utilized in a structured way in E.E.T. In this dissertation the word ecollation implies that a tangible space-time entity has complexified by obtaining new information through mutual resonance with the visible and invisible moieties of reality. Thus all the material entities of space-time are viewed as having been progressively schooled by ecollating on the invisible ecology of space-time. This approach broadly accords with other “two-aspect” theologies, like that of Jurgen Moltmann:

heaven is the first world which God created so that there he might form the earth, encompass it, and finally redeem it.

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38 This approach finds resonances in moral philosopher Raimond Gaita’s discursion on the ultimate meaning of good and evil and their connection to the meaning and preciousness of human life - reference at dissertation footnote 36.

39 This modifies and extends a means of theistic evolution outlined by Arthur R. Peacocke, where the initial potentialities given by God are actualized through chance, to create the world continuously by the transfer of information not energy; e.g. Peacocke, A. (1996). God and Science: a Quest for Christian Credibility. London, SCM: 10, 21, etc. E.E.T. explores this approach through a traditional biblically-theistic means, rather than by relying on a process or panentheistic methodology.

Moltmann clearly distinguishes God and heaven, as E.E.T. also distinguishes God and the immanent unseen ecology of space-time, comprised from the u.r.s.t. and the m.o.r.e. The unseen dimensions of space-time (the u.r.s.t.) and those of the embracing matricial universe of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.) become accessible voluntarily. Acquisition of new information can be implied from changes in emerging history (that is, invisible ecollations are known from their visible consequences). This is not a revolutionary idea as it is akin to our unseen, freely-chosen thoughts leading to original decisions that result in observably novel behavioral choices that may then impact human society at large. The more power a person has in a society, the greater are the good effects flowing from their voluntary eu-ecollations and the worse the bad effects deriving from their voluntary mis-ecollations.

Ecollation is not Platonism. Distinctively, information from both perfect and imperfect forms/ideas in unseen ecology is accessible to the material parts of the universe. For E.E.T., it is progress of the ethical exposure process resulting from ecollation, that is identified by the Bible as good, and very good, not the entities themselves. The tautology of stating that what perfect God made is good is avoided in E.E.T. Here, the good of creation refers to the suitability of the world’s ethical dialysis processes for their work. The seemingly impossible task of justly separating thoroughly emulsified right and wrong ethics will be elegantly and exhaustively accomplished through the natural processes of the world. Under divine eschatological judgment, the right ethical potentials of our magnificent world will be eternalized and its wrong ethical potentials removed (e.g. James 4:12a). E.E.T. claims that this is what is most divinely good about space-time. This form of compound monism emphasizes that it is the good a person gives, not the good they get, that has m.o.r.e. (i.e. the Rule of Heaven) significance beyond material-temporality (e.g. Acts 20:35b).

E.E.T. explores the idea of ecollation as a means for actualizing unseen ethical potentials. William P. Brown expresses a similar idea in a general form by saying:

For every tradition in which creation is its context, the moral life of the community is its subtext. Succinctly put, every model of the cosmos conveys an ethos as well as a mythos.  

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41 See Schelling’s idea of cosmological ethical separation in dissertation section 1.13.
Actualized ethical ecollations are part of the history of our world. Physical ecollation also contributes to the history of the emergence and complexification of energy-matter. In this method, cosmic progressiveness (including biological evolution by natural selection) is understood to be able to be influenced by freely chosen actualizations of unseen potentials. There is a structured filling-up or discovery of the various unseen possibilities of reality, with time’s arrow. In a Whiteheadian way, a degree of agency can be attributed to all levels of being, which adds something (not yet well-defined scientifically) to the mechanical limits of a Newtonian/Einsteinian world of objects, fields and forces. This may have consonances with some of the consequences of quantum theory (e.g. as it was first popularized by David Bohm).\[^{43}\]

Expressed in another way, expanding space-time is an integrated means to actualize the possibilities that were bound in Singularity. Figuratively, energy-matter appears to be using expanding space-time as its canvas, to paint a picture of all the possibilities that were implicit in Singularity. Some scientific experiments may similarly represent methods that cleverly force energy-matter to ecollate on previously unknown realities of space-time, so as to actualize them for recording by scientific observers. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to go further, however the concept of ecollation in science merits more work. It is not a trivial question to ask: “To what extent can physical reality be demonstrated to have been influenced by the progressive, programmatic actualization of pre-existing potentials from within Singularity?”

E.E.T. raises complex issues about the interface between the progressive actualization of ethical potentials and empirical records of material emergence/complexification. Elements of freedom and determinism integrate these otherwise distinct processes. E.E.T. proposes that space-time progressively obtains eternal significance (goodness) by its divinely predetermined programmatic revelation of the intricate ethical potentials of unseen ecology. The free emergent complexification of almost endless material novelty out of a problematical Singularity of negation then attains permanent significance by subtending exhaustive binary ethical apocalypsis. It is in the context of this universal process that E.E.T. finds consonances between physical cosmology and biological evolution and ethics and traditional perfect being theism.

For E.E.T., history is understood to depend (at least partially) on progressive physical actualization by ecollation on a range of unseen, primal, informational potentialities. This does not diminish the role ascribed in science to biological selection of natural genetic variations such as mutations and transpositions of heritable molecules. There seems to be no reason why different ways of creating novelty, such as ecollation and classical evolution, should not operate in an integrated way. Clearly, novelty derived from ecollation is as vulnerable to selective forces as that derived from mutation. Mechanisms by which unseen sources of information could be sensed and freely responded to by ecollating energy-matter are subject to speculation and there appear to be further research opportunities here. Alternative molecular pathways (e.g. in DNA metabolism or expression) are a possible locus where quantum uncertainty might give responsiveness through tuned receptivity. Mutual recognitions at many levels (including by sympathetic resonances) might articulate unseen sources of information to energy-matter entities and play a part in their differentiation. That is, resonant mutuality is proposed as a way of information transfer. There are analogies, for example with the physics of fields and forces, with processes subtending artistic creativity, and with records of some spiritual experiences of Pentecostals and other believers. In such cases, generally non-mensurable, unseen influences influence material events. Subliminal supply of information to the behavioral choices of living organisms is a likely locus for ecollative information transfer as behavioral idiosyncrasies frequently spear-head speciation (this is sometimes called the Baldwin effect). If innumerable, unseen ecollative resonances permeate space-time reality, as E.E.T. hypothesizes (e.g. see comments on the complexity of real biological existence, further on in this section) complex systems interactions are likely. For example, diverse ecollative mutual resonances might add new information to a genome and/or a nervous system and synchronously contribute information to the natural selective ecology in that species’ environment. This process might punctuate evolutionary equilibria. Similar, inorganic ecollation, processes might help explain biogenesis.

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44 It is beyond the scope of this dissertation but it is noted in passing that the brain/mind interface has similarities with the E.E.T. description of material actualization in space-time of the informational potentials of the invisible ecology of space-time. This is a sort of unity alluded to by Alfred North Whitehead in the first line of his *Adventure of Ideas* (1948 - Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin): “In its widest possible extension the title of this book – *Adventure of Ideas* – might be taken as a synonym for The History of the Human Race, in respect to its wide variety of mental experiences. In this sense of the title, the Human Race must experience its own history. It cannot be written in its total variety.”
In Biology, an unseen ecological niche is only revealed by the visible ecollation of a new species. A viable new mode of life has to exist *in potentia* before an organism can speciate (that is actualizes by ecollating) on it. In one sense biological niche potentials can be said to actualize species. If there were no new niches, the existing organisms would have nothing to speciate into. The common phenomenon of convergence in biological species is explained by identical or similar niches existing in geographically-separate (allopatric) locations. As discussed by G. D. Ehrlich, N. L. Hiller and F. Z. Hu, real Biology (in contrast to textbook simplifications of Biology) continuously depends on numerous, subtle interactions and on fluctuations in the availability of ecological niches:

Metazoans and higher plants are not single-species organisms, but are complex ecosystems composed of a multicellular eukaryotic host, with its unique genetic complement, and a multitude of ‘microbiomes’. Each microbiome is composed of multiple prokaryotic and eukaryotic symbionts, and the microbiomes and the host collectively make up the ‘symbiome’. Symbiotic relationships within these ecosystems exist between each of the microbial strains and the host, and also between and among the members of each microbiome. These interdependencies run the gamut from mutualism [in which both or all species benefit] to commensalisms [where one party benefits and does no appreciable harm to the others] to parasitism [where one of the species benefits at the expense of the other(s)]. Finally, a pathogenic relationship exists if the parasite produces a morbid condition in the host. These divisions are themselves an oversimplification of what is, in all likelihood, a continuum: where a given strain of microorganism falls within this spectrum depends not only on its genomic complement but also on the makeup of the microbiome as well as the individual host’s genetics and other environmental factors.\(^{45}\)

From the E.E.T. perspective the process of life is seen to depend in a continuously fluid manner on factors that enable organisms to fit into unseen ecological matrices. In the midst of this flux a way of life, say pathogenicity may suddenly become available. Some members of a species population may have characteristics that fit them for that niche. However, they can only fill it if their relationships with numerous

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other species are enabling. This concept seems to have general applications. The new actualities that constitute emergent and complexifying evolution for example will also depend on the prior existence of suitable niches. It is arguable that as emergence and complexification occurs, evolution is unrolling what was primevally circumvoluted in unseen ecology. Even complex ecosystems could be influenced by actualizations of the richly diverse (but also finite) potentials of the unseen ecology of space-time.

Biological analogies help to illustrate how E.E.T. handles unseen theological ethics. Ethical ecollation is understood as a parallel of biological speciation and they both parallel the primary ecollative condensation of energy into the various species of subatomic and atomic matter. Ecollation logic can be applied to emergences that occur at the various levels of reality. It is possible that even the problem of consciousness could benefit from the idea that every thought has to ecollate by finding a pre-existing cognitive niche. This is similar to saying: “If an idea is to be taken seriously it has to be coherent with reality as we know it.” In that sense, successful creative thinking may depend both on a thinker’s brain’s capacity to unconsciously create or locate idea niches and then to consciously ecollate on them. The E.E.T. worldview interprets novelty as always, to a degree, revelatory. In this it has a capacity to contribute towards both theological and non-theological research programs and that is a desired objective of truly cooperative mutual interaction.46

Evolutionary advance through emergence and complexification of materials is argued to be influenced by free access to information available in the unseen ecology of space-time through the primeval potentials of the u.r.s.t. and the m.o.r.e. Material ecollations freely actualize the invisible potentials of space-time where they can facilitate the actualization of numerous and diverse energy-matter entities, including:

- Ecollation of sub-atomic structures to produce electrons and baryons, and the atoms of a hundred or more distinct chemical elements;
- Ecollation of atoms to create inorganic chemical compounds of many thousands of types;

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46 See comments regarding theological research programs (TRPs) influencing scientific research programs (SRPs) – the terminology of Robert J. Russell (following George F. R. Ellis) - reference in dissertation section 4.12.
- Ecollation that contributes to the emergence of millions of carbon-based compounds and conformations, including proteins and nucleoproteins;
- Ecollation that helps to inform systems of compounds that build living cells;
- Ecollation that provides information assisting cells to form tissues and organs;
- Ecollation that facilitates speciation of many millions of living organisms;
- Ecollation that enables billions of varieties of human artifacts, creative ideas and language constructs; and numerous behavioral choices that reveal ethics.

Associated with these prolific and diverse material ecollations there are always opportunities for ethical potentials to be actualized. Occasions of physical ecollation (including natural selection) may enable ethical (not just material) information to be added to history, concerning:

1. the ethical potentials (ethical niches) of the unseen ecology of space-time;
2. the ethical character of a historical entity that has actualized (ecollated); and
3. the ethics of the historic community which the ecollating entity is part of.\(^{47}\)

Each actualization is a public display of the nature of unseen possibilities for right or wrong ethics that may specify the historically revealed ethical character of individuals and their societies. The situation is usually more complex because several ethical ecollations and material ecollations could be connected in subtle ways.\(^{48}\) Quantum physics, much biological complexity and cognitive and ethical systems are all generally so finely poised as to make it unlikely that low-level informational influences from the unseen ecology of space-time would be observable. Some of the biblical accounts of special divine actions and numerous personal accounts of miracles could be interpreted as low-level informational articulations between energy-matter and information from the invisible ecology of space-time. The E.E.T. position is that special divine actions are rare public demonstrations of what is a prevalent (though normally private) part of all of reality. It defends the idea that empirical reality habitually draws on information from the unseen ecology of space-time. That information may contribute to eu-ecollation, if it resonates with the right-

\(^{47}\) See point L on dissertation pages xiii and xxiv.
\(^{48}\) The E.E.T. exploration asks if (in addition to the well-known physical anthropic cosmological principle) a cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) provides a way of understanding the primal connections of the observable universal possibilities for ethical ecollation and their connection to evolutionary emergence.
ethical potentialities of the m.o.r.e. Alternatively, it may contribute to mis-ecollation by resonating with the wrong- or conflated-ethical possibilities of the u.r.s.t.

The implication is that everything that emerges or complexifies or evolves or thinks or behaves in space-time is likely to have drawn on the underlying informational and ethical alternatives of unseen ecology. For E.E.T., these ethical alternatives were established at *creatio ex ethica* when divine right ethics encountered the anthropic singularity of selfishness, analogized with the Bible’s primal creation accounts. This is a different model to the popular one where it is evolution that forces selfish behavior on all things. In E.E.T. it is suggested it was divine prescience of human selfishness that mandated for a universe of chance and natural selection. Sin required evolution, rather than evolution required sin. This method also provides for a biblically-consonant theodicy having few problems and that has broad irenic utility.

A feature of the broad E.E.T. ethical method is that it could be used by both theists and atheists. An atheist need only take the unseen matrix as a given (analogous to the invisible 96% of space-time that has been called dark energy and dark matter). Theists will be able to take the unseen matrix of space-time as an ethically-charged part of the creation that was not commanded to be visible. However, no connection is implied in E.E.T. between its biblical theological use of the idea of an unseen ethical matrix of space-time and the scientific evidence for the currently invisible realities of our physical universe, like dark energy and dark matter.

### 1.11 E.E.T. and Jesus Christ

E.E.T hypothesizes that prolepsis of human moral evil (i.e. the c.e.a.p.) caused the primal singularity of selfishness and that it still pervades the world’s unseen ecology

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49 E.g. in Genesis 1:3-5; John 1:5 and 9-10; 3:19-21; and 1 John 2:8-11.
50 This approach has been well summarized recently, in Domning, D. P. and Hellwig, M. K. (2006). *Original Selfishness: Original Sin and Evil in the Light of Evolution*. Burlington, Vermont, Ashgate.
51 Dark energy and dark matter are currently considered by most physicists as the universe’s main gravitational component. Some now even refer to “the interstellar medium”, e.g. Martin, C., *et al.* (2007). A turbulent wake as a tracer of 30,000 years of Mira’s mass loss history. *Nature* 448:780-83. Popular reviews of dark energy-matter are found in *Scientific American Reports: Special Edition on Astrophysics* Vol. 17, No. 1, 2007; *Scientific American* November 2006, 23-29; and *New Scientist*. 9th December 2006: 34-37. Even further beyond the standard scientific model of invisible physical reality are the research papers on un-universes, un-particles, and un-gravity. These are summarized, for example in *New Scientist*. 26th January 2008: 32-36.
52 E.g. *Hebrews* 11:3b TS: “things which are seen came into being from things which were not made to appear.” This new exegesis by Ann Nyland is particularly apt for the E.E.T. worldview.
with wrong ethics. Divine love for teachable humans is biblically revealed to have actualized in history in the self-sacrifice of the perfect human being. The Revelation 13:8 lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, is understood as a prolepsis of the Cross of Christ. In worldview terms, there seems to be an obvious link with the light of the loving wisdom of God that at Genesis 1:3 was spoken into the ignorant darkness of selfishness described in Genesis 1:2 (see page xv). The Cross of the perfect human being could then be understood as the divine antidote to the potentially fatal effects of human moral evil. An encounter with God’s love in Christ (also to be understood as the wisdom of God) is hypothesized to have opened the primal singularity of selfishness, to birth our space-time universe. Simultaneously right and wrong ethics, immanent in the unseen ecology of the expanding and complexifying universe, would have become available to be ecollated upon everywhere.

In inter-disciplinary terms, the perfect love of God in Christ for humans, actualized at the historical Cross of Calvary, could proleptically be why the physical Singularity became unstable and produced the Big Bang and our expanding universe. It has to be said, however, that there may be no connection at all between physical cosmogenesis and the E.E.T. proposition of creatio ex ethica cosmogony (see page 336).

In addition, the question will arise: “Does a Christocentric cosmogony render E.E.T. inaccessible to non-Christian perfect being theists?” The answer is “No!” because E.E.T. can be sustained simply by faith that an encounter with God’s perfect love is adequate to manage the primal anthropic singularity of selfishness. That is, perfect divine love is sufficient to create and sustain our universe against culpable ignorance and deicidal and self-deifying selfishness up to the Eschaton. Christianity places a real human face on the creator, sustainer, savior and judge who mothers the rebellious world’s divine love encounter. However, the core E.E.T. process can be intellectually appropriated without having to identify the Christ as the primal agapaic cause. The E.E.T. story, of an ethical encounter between perfect divine love and human moral evil proleptically manifest in the singularity of selfishness, could be shared by all perfect being theists. This method does not rely on Christianity to open the core Bible story to scientific, philosophical and general theological critique. This is because the

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53 E.g. 1 Corinthians 1:24-25; though the author of John 1:5 observes humankind still stubbornly resists divine loving wisdom, even in its maximally humble presentation as the slain lamb, Christ.
Bible can be read as the historical account of a divine ethical encounter causing binary ethical apocalypsis and so moving our universe towards an eternally-saving ethical dialysis. It is an advantage that the core of the E.E.T. hermeneutics is accessible to a wide range of faith traditions (also, see section A.04).

Although E.E.T. thinking develops a tripartite analysis of reality (see section 1.08), it is monistic and concedes only one, divinely ordered, ultimate reality. Whilst E.E.T. has applications in comparative religion and beyond it also supports a high Christology. That depends on New Testament texts describing Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the Son of God,54 only teacher,55 Lord of all,56 creator and owner of all,57 and ego eimi – existence itself.58 The community that remembers and celebrates the Christ event is taken to have had a living, oral tradition from its start up to the present. This approach follows a methodology elegantly argued by Emeritus Professor James D. G. Dunn.59 As a basic exegetical strategy, E.E.T. gives most weight to Jesus’ own words and ideas, as represented in the Gospel texts, next to the claimed testimony of those who are said to have personally known Jesus, then to other New Testament texts, and lastly to the Old Testament and non-canonical texts. This interpretive method is given greater breadth by the recent survey of Christology and ethics of Richard A. Burridge.60 Space restrictions prohibit us from entering on a detailed comparison of different Christological methods that might nuance the general E.E.T. hermeneutic of this dissertation. Further biblical reflections, especially on the existence of the Christ prior to the creation of our universe are provided in section 4.05.

The synoptic gospels show Jesus teaching that the Kingdom is proximate (replacing the idea that it is in or above the stars). It is a place that an ordinary person can reach. John 3:3, 5 also represents the Kingdom as being accessible to those born from above, that is by water and spirit. The Kingdom is not externally observable, it is from

57 John 1:1-5; 1 Corinthians 8:6b; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1; Revelation 1:5.
58 “ego eimi” at Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 8:58; and also at Exodus 3:14 in the Septuagint.
elsewhere, yet it is within. The Gospels show Jesus explicitly teaching that he brings truth from another dimension, truth that the truthful people of this world will accept (i.e. could eu-eccollate upon). In E.E.T. terms, right ethical truth is accessed from the m.o.r.e. part of unseen ecology. In our ethically-conflated space-time universe, when the m.o.r.e. is actualized it always confronts sin and causes binary ethical apocalypses. Christ (as the sovereign and prime exemplar of the m.o.r.e.) is the primary locus from which divine, eu-eccollative ethical perfection confronts the inherent mis-eccollation of space-time. Such perfection is evident in Jesus’ recognition of and obedient acceptance of a divinely-directed mission to incarnately (in the world’s own terms, as it were) encounter the ethical emulsion of the world.

In order to complete this mission, the perfect human chooses to continue to love in spite of rejection, injustice, betrayal, mockery, severe suffering, and the pain and degradation of death on the cross of Calvary. Biblically, one reason that Jesus is called the human being (that is the Son of Man, the New Adam, and the firstborn of many brothers and sisters) is because he faced and took responsibility for the harsh realities of the accumulated mis-eccollations of Homo sapiens. The unseen grasp (sympathetic resonance) that mis-eccollation (sin) had on humanity itself was broken by the supreme act of Christ’s perfect eu-eccollation (sacrificial redeeming love). This neutralized the bonds of annihilation that space-time inherited from the singularity of selfishness and that are still evidenced in the destructive character of Space and in the prevalence of moral and natural evil. This is clearly an enormous deed that only God could accomplish. In this biblically-holistic approach, creation and salvation theologies find a degree of inter-disciplinary consonance within the E.E.T. method.

In E.E.T., the divine ethical encounter is what specifically characterized our universe from beginning to end. Without biblical theological revelation, it seems unlikely that science on its own would discover this sustaining ethical relationship. In regard to the wealth of its potential to contribute to an ethically-informed cooperative mutual

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62 John 18:36, 37.
63 That is what is meant by ethical encounter.
64 This was the subject of a controversial popular representation in a recent film: Gibson, M. (2004). The Passion of the Christ. Icon Entertainment, 125 minutes.
65 1 Corinthians 15:45.
66 Romans 8:29b TS.
discourse, Christology is the most fecund part of biblical theological studies.\textsuperscript{67} The strong biblical E.E.T. position would be to see Christ as the actual reason for the anthropic cosmological principle.\textsuperscript{68} That is to say, our world would lack the fine tuning that pre-disposed it to evolve plants, animals and then human beings if the perfect human being were not proleptically determinative in its calling forth from Singularity. This inter-disciplinary perspective on creation has consonances with biblical texts such as \textit{Matthew} 22:41-46 and \textit{John} 8:56-58. As already mentioned, however, the basic E.E.T. worldview can be sustained without reference to Christ.

Biblically, Jesus Christ is the perfect eu-ecollator for human eu-ecollatees. Throughout human history people who eccollate on Jesus’ commands are able to engage in the same work of ethical confrontation (e.g. \textit{John} 12:44-50; 13:12-17). Even with limited resources a human being is capable of making a contribution to the complete demulsification of the primordial ethical conflations (or, contrariwise, of contributing to maintaining it against God’s right ethical teaching). Here, every human life finds dignity and even eternal significance through personal ethical choosing. Every ethical choice is revelatory. Actualization of all the primeval ethical potentials of the world needs millennia and billions of people to supply history’s binary ethical apocalypses that accumulate to fund the justice of the Eschaton. In the E.E.T. worldview the Eschaton finalizes the soteriological and pedagogical purposes of our universe. The soteriological half of the divine project (biblically theoretically summarized as “destruction of the works of the devil”)\textsuperscript{69} is the result of persevering encounter with divine right ethics. This is initiated and sustained by the perfect human being and completed by all who share and follow his virtue ethics (learned from the biblical author’s reports of Jesus’ commands). It is this that demulsifies the ethical conflations so deeply characteristic of our world. This process is not a war.

\textsuperscript{67} F. LeRon Shults has recently argued that we should conserve the intuitions of the biblical traditions concerning Christ, in ways that liberate them for transformative inter-disciplinary dialogue. Shults, F. LeRon (2008). \textit{Christology and Science}. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans. E.E.T. also argues that Christology can offer science and philosophy a coherent matrix of ethical meaning.


\textsuperscript{69} \textit{John} 3:8b.
author of the first epistle to Corinth summarizes the anticipated outcome of this extensive and complex irenic process:

   but when perfection comes the imperfect disappears.\textsuperscript{70}

The qualitatively different, other half of this divine project could be called divine pedagogy (see section \textbf{1.14}) or even a fitting to dwell in the household of God.\textsuperscript{71}

Much of the Bible is a record of every aspect of the history of this encounter between God and human beings. This record is greatly treasured and is used formatively by individual believers and by their faith communities, when they seek to perfectly obey God. Yet, in the end, the perfection that true believers seek is recognized as something God alone can provide (e.g. \textit{Hebrews} 10:1,14; 12:23b).

Drawing the two halves of the divine project together, E.E.T. argues that the following three processes are generated by our world’s divine right ethical encounter with the Christ, the king of the m.o.r.e. These processes broadly contribute to the completion of the history of our universe of ethical encounter:

   - the full historical exposure of wrong ethics;
   - the separation and establishment of right ethics; and
   - the eternalization of the story of how it was all achieved.

This dissertation attempts to show that such a structured ethical scenario is well supported in biblical texts and is not dissonant with the current scientific understanding of our universe. The basic story is one that would be appreciated by all classically theist theologians. The richness of its Christological specifics would be especially meaningful to Christian theist theologians (see, also sections \textbf{A.02, A.03, A.07, A.08, A.09,} and \textbf{A.10}).

\textsuperscript{70} 1 Corinthians 13:10. This dissertation does not provide an inter-disciplinary consonance with theologies of penal substitution. That is because the idea of a requirement to satisfy the wrath of God by perfect blood atonement has, as yet, proved too difficult to translate into terms that are accessible to science. Thus, E.E.T.’s soteriology focuses principally on the liberation won by the superiority of the creative and saving right ethics of Christ’s cross. In essence this states that perfect love is always ultimately irresistibly creative and salvific.

\textsuperscript{71} In ethical dialysis, the evidence of actualized ethics disposes of the wrong and conserves the right. Such an ethical demulsification is needed to fit people for life with God. Ethical dialysis is seen in E.E.T. as a divine act, not as an educational process \textit{per se}, such as was envisaged by Irenaeus and developed by, for example, John Hick (see dissertation sections \textbf{1.06, 1.13} and \textbf{A.02}). For a biblical pre-figuring of ethical dialysis, see \textit{Malachi} 3:3-5. The idea that lovers of God are invited to be part of the divine family home has been nicely developed in: Coloe, M. L. (2007). \textit{Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality.} Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press.
1.12 Consequential soteriology

Through its integrative approach to creation and salvation, E.E.T. arrives at a consequential soteriology. Creation follows upon a primeval encounter between God’s right ethics and the anthropic singularity of selfishness. Salvation is a consequence of that ethical encounter. Creation is divinely purposed to save the humble (the biblical children of God). This soteriology contrasts with “casualty soteriology” - where humans are said to inherit original sin from a fall of humanity. The casualty soteriology worldview characterizes our universe primarily in terms of a post-creation fall as an event that induces God to act as an emergency physician, as it were. That doctrine, associated with Augustine of Hippo for over 1500 years, teaches that original sin has been passed to every child in their father’s gametes, since Adam. However, casualty soteriology has a number of weaknesses not present in consequential soteriology. For example, the word “fall” is not used in the Hebrew original of the book of Genesis. Then the author of Ezekiel 18 takes pains to teach that God judges each generation on its own ethical behavior. In fact, the perfect justice of God is a major biblical theme. Science provides no evidence in support of a traditional Augustinian exegesis that would ascribes sinful proclivities to inherited paternal DNA, passed down from Adam. E.E.T. suggests how such doctrinal inconsistencies may be negotiated in a biblically and scientifically coherent way.

There are two main categories in casualty soteriology: contractual and impositional. In the contractual form, God makes an offer that is accepted by some of the victims who have inherited the original disaster. In the impositional form of casualty soteriology there is a cadre of victims that have salvation divinely imposed on them. In either case it is not a simple matter to preserve a perception of the perfection and justice of God. It may be that such problematic interpretations of Scripture could be balanced by less strongly separating creation and salvation theologies. As mentioned previously (see footnote 70) substitutionary atonement on its own is extremely difficult to interpret in terms that assist inter-disciplinary discourse. This is where the consequential soteriology of E.E.T. helps bridge a major revelational/empirical gap. The value of the atonement is not diminished nor rendered isegetic by emphasizing that it is the primordial reality of creation. It can also be argued that the consequential
soteriology method accords better with perfect being theism. In this way E.E.T. may have raised some interesting discussion questions for systematic theology.

In consequential soteriology there has never been an emergency and God has never been coerced by circumstances (see section A.09). For traditional Christians it is then the loving wisdom of God, seen in Christ’s selfless sacrifice that whole-heartedly neutralized the primal selfishness, to birth our universe of space-time. This eventually produced a world where humans are to be invited to choose new birth, by the merits of Christ’s sacrifice, into God’s own right ethical family. In biblical terms, the elder sibling shows the way. In the E.E.T. perspective the death pangs of the Christ on the cross of Calvary were both the birth pains of our universe and also of our own offer of membership in God’s family.72 For a non-Christian the proposition remains that creation (and our lives) represent an opportunity to freely choose the right ethical way provided by divine wisdom rather than choosing the usual ambivalent human ethical conflation. This does not have to be seen as a doctrine of salvation by works. Yielding to the appeal of divine education and deciding to become obedient to divine right ethics could equally well be described as the outcome of unmerited divine grace.

1.13 Theodicy

A detailed theodicy is developed throughout the dissertation. There is very much more to be said about this centrally important subject than can be covered in an introductory section. Philosopher Peter Forrest offers some valuable cautionary advice and some encouragement to those who would sail onto these traditionally stormy waters:

The moral for the project of theodicy is that our current understanding of evil could be as primitive as our understanding of astronomy was in the thirteenth century.

I accept that moral: consideration of our own ignorance might absolve us from any requirement to provide the true explanation of suffering and moral evil. It does not, however, absolve us from the requirement to provide a speculative understanding of evil.73

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72 Space limitations allow only this cursory discussion. For a major discussion of the pro-creative aspects of Jesus’ death, see: Rushton, K. P. (2000). *The Parable of Jn 16:21: a Feminist Socio-Rhetorical Reading of a (Pro)creative Metaphor for the Death-Glory of Jesus*. PhD dissertation, School of Theology, Griffith University, Brisbane.

Ethical Encounter Theology is well suited to explore consonances between perfect being theism and current scientific understanding. Its main tenet is that the universe of space-time is a divine means to deal with the problem of evil. The scientifically observed structuring of space-time is taken to reflect the requirement for a patient and delicate teasing-out of hidden evil by a persistent encounter with God’s perfect right ethics. This proposal adapts and extends an idea of Friedrich W. J. von Schelling:

The good is to be raised out of darkness to actuality in order to dwell with God everlastingly; and evil is to be separated from goodness in order to be cast out eternally into non-being. For this is the final purpose of creation.

John W. Cooper summarized this significant worldview idea of von Schelling:

Thus world history is God’s history, and it is redemptive history. It actualizes the good, incorporates it into God, and ultimately renders evil impossible.

The theodicy of E.E.T. finds consonance with this way of thinking, where evil has to freely actualize to be justly judged and separated. God judges actions not inclinations.

Ian G. Barbour introduces a related idea as part of a largely panentheist worldview:

Our lives are meaningful because they are preserved in God’s experience, in which evil is transmuted and the good saved and woven into the harmony of the larger whole.

The broad outline of Schelling’s and Barbour’s approaches can be accommodated by E.E.T. but, significantly, it attains the same result fully theistically. Good is saved and evil separated as a result of the world’s encounter with the matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.). Encounter with the m.o.r.e. (the embracing matrix that represents the Basileia Theou, the right ethics of perfect God) causes binary ethical apocalypsis, and ethical dialysis is the ultimate consequence. Psalm 75:7 is one of numerous pericopae exemplifying biblical revelations of this general principle:

But it is the LORD who judges.
He brings one down, he exalts another.

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Biblical ethical separation theology is highly textured. Good people, having right ethical orientation and willingness to love God and hence be taught by God, were in potentia enveloped in the primal singularity of selfishness. They were held by a prolepsis of obdurate culpable ignorance towards God’s wisdom, i.e. the cosmic ethical anthropic problem. It was as if the perfect divine plans for teachable humans were held captive in an anthropic prison of rebellion. It helps to unpack this theologically dense concept by reading Romans 8, verses 20 and 21 with an E.E.T. hermeneutic. Interpreted for Theology/Science purposes these verses could mean:

Against its God-given good character, our universe became ethically conflated because of humanity’s moral evil (personified as subjection to evil powers) and therefore the world is riven with natural evil and destined to totally decay.

But God still rules and gives hope that when God’s children separate from ethical conflation (by binary ethical apocalypsis and ethical dialysis) moral and natural evil will have ceased and so the new universe will be free from decay.

The primordial, enlightening wisdom of divine right ethics (highlighted in Genesis 1:3 and John 1:5) begins the inter-linked physical and ethical history of the space-time universe by confronting the cause of decay. A paralyzing ethical conflation that closed everything in a singularity of selfishness has to be opened. The end is foreseen from the start - exhaustive binary ethical apocalypsis and then judgment and comprehensive ethical dialysis. Ethical dialysis is the plenary justice of the whole world and the liberating event of the Eschaton. There, the obedient (repentants) who will to learn right ethics from God are separated from the obdurately disobedient (unrepentants) who culpably refuse to learn right ethics from God.

The final act of

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78 Texts such as Ephesians 1:4 make it plain that this preceded the beginning of the creation of space-time. The text reference to “chosen” envisages the primal presence of entities of right ethics and of wrong ethics. This is further developed in section A.03.

79 The mental process of ethical “blinding” is well understood by the New Testament authors, e.g. John 12:40; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

80 This is not fully explained by the Bible, leaving a hiatus to be filled with doctrines like that of Augustine on “original sin”, or various naturalistic theories. Biblically, members of the divine family of God can only be “born” through the process of ethical demulsification and education. In that sense the Christ is truly the loving elder sibling who gives all for the sake of creation and redemption. Step by step Christ brings his sisters and brothers out of ethical conflation and into their divine inheritance. It is the ethical component that interprets theology, so that it can speak coherently to science about complex biblical ideas, potentially opening new spaces for creative mutual interaction.

81 E.E.T. perceives the “omega point” to be the salvage of what is ethically right from “this aeon” for life in “the aeon-to-come”. In that, it differs from theories concerning progressive renovation of space-time for eternal existence, such as those of Teilhard de Chardin and Arthur C. Clarke (see dissertation section 3.13). Many recent works depend on the idea of universal renovation, e.g. Peters, T. (2006).
our world results in a complete ethical demulsification. This worldview can come as a shock if we are accustomed to contextualizing theology teleologically, in terms of a divine purpose of material emergence as such. The academy of Theology/Science has largely accepted renovation eschatology without much debate owing, perhaps, to the influence of scientism. That creates a rift with Bible-based theologies that take seriously texts about the aeon-to-come. Science itself has not produced evidence in support of the idea that material progress flows towards universal renovation. In fact, the universal 2nd law of thermodynamics opposes such an idea. The E.E.T. alternative to cosmic renovation eschatology is one of salvage out of this aeon’s judgment and dissolution, then a separation into the biblical right ethical aeon-to-come.82

In New Testament perspective, an infinitely desirable future aeon awaits (the new heavens and new earth are a complete and ethically perfect cosmos). The familiar evolutionary processes (such as “Nature, red in tooth and claw”) of this temporary aeon of space-time are redundant.83 In the perfect aeon-to-come the humble and obedient acquire a life that is really life.84 That does not have to be through annihilation of materiality as such (as in natural/supernatural dualisms). As described in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, it is an exchange of corruptible for incorruptible physicality. The entirety of space-time could experience the same law of reality that Christ’s dead body experienced when he was resurrected.85 The biblical and extra-biblical historical evidence for the Christ’s physical resurrection is strong86 and provides a useful starting point for creative conversations between traditional biblical theology and Theology/Science studies. The E.E.T. worldview addresses the role of our imperfect, temporary aeon in terms of binary ethical apocalypses and an ethical dialysis that liberate from evil. Both the origin of evil under a perfect God and the origin of evil’s potentially fatal conflation with human beings are challenging issues that are not fully explained in the Bible texts.87 However, the start of a theological response has been

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82 Salvage into an entirely new creation is a major biblical theme; e.g. in Luke 3:7; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 10:27; 2 Peter 3:7,10,12; Revelation 21:1.
83 E.g. Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25; Revelation 21:3-7.
84 E.g. 1 Timothy 6:19; Jude 21.
85 This seems to follow from Robert J. Russell’s concept of FINLONC; see dissertation sections 1.07, 4.05, and 7.06.
87 Matthew 10:28.
formed in this dissertation through a scientific cosmological contextualizing of the Gospel reports of Jesus’ teachings on evil.⁸⁸

It is claimed here that the potential within humanity to do great evil is especially clearly exemplified by Gospel reports of the 30 AD plot to kill Jesus of Nazareth. The worldview significance of the High Priest Caiaphas’ reported recommendation:

it would be good if one man died for the people⁹⁹

is extended in E.E.T. as a demonstration of the general anthropic cause of universal ethical conflation. The text is understood to depict an apocalypsis of the deeply alienated human heart. It announces a unique event - ostensibly a scheme to execute a popular teacher and healer. The universal significance of this plot is that it flies in the face of knowledge the leaders had from their own informants, describing how the teacher healed serious diseases and infirmities.⁹⁰ The teacher/healer’s unique claim to have union with God had also been publicly attested by the restoration to life of a man who had been dead and buried for four days; clearly a miracle only God could do (John 11:38-44).

The author of John claims that Caiaphas, the religious leader of Israel (and in one sense the religious representative of all of humankind) disregarded the unmistakable proof of the divine presence and advocated the killing of Jesus of Nazareth.⁹¹ In the E.E.T. worldview this is the theologically most significant apocalypsis of the human heart attitude towards God found in the Bible. In the ethical chronology method, the seriousness of this act far exceeded (and thus E.E.T. argues it is ethically more primal) the evil of the prototypical misdemeanor of Adam and Eve.⁹² Caiaphas is shown to culpably manifest (on behalf of the selfishness of all people) the quintessential human contempt for divine loving wisdom. It is argued that three other pericopae in the

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⁹¹ See John 15:24b: “they have seen these miracles, and yet have hated both me and my Father.” Also see dissertation section 3.07. This view accords with the E.E.T. tenet that evil stems from the human deicidal “instinct” (a self-deifying drive that is implied from culpably choosing to put self-will before obedience to God). See sections 1.15 and 4.13 where, by differentiating between the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 accounts of anthropogenesis, E.E.T. adduces the possibility that the author may have been drawing attention to a more profound tendency towards self-deification observed among farmer/civic Second Peoples.
⁹² See dissertation section 4.12.
Gospel of John have a theological relationship to the deicidal drive attributable to Caiaphas, in revealing humankind’s basic attitude towards God:

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.\(^{93}\)

I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; \(^{94}\) about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.\(^{95}\)

These recollections of prophetic comments made in front of Jesus’ disciples predict a climactic apocalypsis. It is to be a public revelation of deicidal intent - the core wrong ethic of the world. Prototypical binary ethical apocalypsis is effected through the world leader’s fatal encounter with Christ’s perfect obedience at the Cross. E.E.T. claims this was what proleptically caused creation of our world and that it is also the ethical attractor that draws our world towards the Eschaton. Ethically chronologically, it is the start and the finish. This is a specifically Christian theodical interpretation of the more general E.E.T. harmonization of creation and salvation (see sections 1.11 and 4.12).

Anticipation of the climactic apocalypsis at the Cross is interpreted as the process that unlocked the singularity of selfishness (perhaps even the cause of the cosmogonic Big Bang). It is truistic to say that every human being owes their physical existence to whatever made the cosmic Singularity sufficiently unstable to expand into our universe. E.E.T. finds a resonance between this and the third of the Anglican Church’s Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571, that is:

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

The E.E.T. method shows how an inter-disciplinary consonance can be centred around this part of the biblical textual evidence (Article III is based on Ephesians 4:7-10). Christ’s descent into Hell and the freeing of the invisible captives held there resonates with the Genesis 1:3 introduction of the light of divine wisdom into the abyss of selfish darkness of Genesis 1:2. This broad Christological perspective on the

\(^{93}\) John 12:31 NRSV.
\(^{94}\) John 14:30 NRSV.
\(^{95}\) John 16:11 NRSV.
E.E.T. theodicy brings the Cross and the creation of our universe and the individual significance of every human person into holistic resonance.

Whilst the capacity of an inter-disciplinary dissertation to properly address major questions of textual interpretation and harmonization is strictly limited, this approach has touched on some exciting possibilities. For example, the E.E.T. hermeneutic highlights resonances between biblical texts referring to creation, and to kenosis (Philippians 2:6-11), to the universality of God’s work in Christ (Colossians 1:15-20), and to other texts referring to pre-existence (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4; 1Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8). It is noteworthy that this biblical harmonization is not dissonant with contemporary scientific theories concerning physical cosmogony.

Traditional theist theologian Andreas J. Kostenberger draws attention to the complexity of this most central event of New Testament theology:

Paradoxically, at the cross the world and its ruler are judged, While Jesus is glorified and salvation is procured for all.96

The E.E.T. method dialogues with this problem by describing a causative link between the actualization of wrong ethics and the justice of divine judgment. This methodology also accords with a tenet of perfect being theism – that divine omniscience is and always has been aware of all truth. E.E.T. discovers it is simply for the sake of transparent, public justice and for the sake of human edification that unseen ethical potentialities are made to judge themselves by their ecollations in space-time, rather than by God anticipating and judging their unseen potential.97

Human beings are given a richly textured part in the cosmic drama because of God’s material methodology. This hermeneutics also attributes sacred value to the entire history of space-time, including its apocalypses of moral and natural evil.98 That theodicy would contrast with worldviews valuing only the latest material complexifications and finding no intrinsic value in the exposure of evil. The multitudinous injustices that befall so many people, through the randomness of

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97 John 12:30 implies that the dramatic events in Christ’s life are for the edification of humankind not for the benefit of God.

98 It is a biblical theme that overcome evil and forgiven sin are both intrinsic to the full human story that gives glory to God; see also dissertation footnote 25.
damage caused by moral and natural evil, are notable in reports of Jesus’ teachings on
divine compensatory justice (also, see page 46). 99

Every event is taken to be of significance in E.E.T. It is hypothesized that, before the
creation of the world, the proleptic potential of humanity’s deicidal drive was already
presciently clear to God as something like the lightless, formless abyss of Genesis 1:2
– that is as a singularity of selfishness. E.E.T. pursues the details of pre-historical
ontology that Karl Rahner, for example, describes as:

a free decision . . . at the beginning of man’s origins . . . explain[ing]
a failure in sanctity . . . that ought not to have happened. 100

In E.E.T. it is argued that divine prescience of this objectively abominable iniquity
was occasion for God’s perfect love to act by beginning to create. Creation began (as
in Genesis 1:3 and John 1:4, 5) with the “light of the world” encountering the
darkness of the anthropic singularity of selfishness. That light (of creative divine
wisdom) is understood to depend on the pre-creation prolepsis of Christ’s historical
sacrifice outside Jerusalem in the year 30 AD. 101 At creation, God’s perfect love in
Christ encountered the human deicidal and self deifying propensity. From this ethical
encounter our universe was born. It was so arranged that every conflation of ethical
potentials would be confronted and publicly exposed by perfect right ethics.
Theologically this can be called good because freely-chosen ethical ecollations are
subject to divine judgment and final separation. Objectively, such unprecedented
cosmic ethical achievements might also be expected to cause believers to
acknowledge that all glory belongs to God. 102

The predominant ethical process of this universe is justly able to salvage that which
freely chooses to be saved. At the same time it provides a thoroughly practical ethics

99 See dissertation point Y on page xxix; also dissertation section 1.06. The author of James 4:4 writes
that friendship with “this world” is the same as hatred of God. Correspondingly, those who suffer
unjustly because of the evil in the world will be compensated in the coming aeon. The New Testament
repeatedly teaches faithful believers to expect to be treated unjustly in this life. Patient endurance is
required. The biblical promise is that a time of acquittal will arrive, e.g. Matthew 5:3-12; 23:13-33. No
other way is offered in the Bible texts. The biblical examples of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah
and Jesus Christ suggest that heavenly perfection is not beyond human reach (see footnote 109).
101 E.g. Revelation 13:8. The “ethical chronology” method of E.E.T. recognizes the profound ethical
failure of all humanity (apotheosed by Caiaphas) as proleptically represented by the desolate ecology
of Genesis 1:2, prior to (and participative in) the founding of our space-time universe by its encounter
with God’s love.
102 E.g. Galatians 1:4, 5.
seminar that could be owned by all of humanity for all of eternity as: “The story of our getting of wisdom”. Moral evil is justly condemned by God because it is more than a personal matter. It spoils the beauty of creation by entangling it in natural evil and that afflicts many innocents. One surprising conclusion of E.E.T. is that the natural evils we face - including disasters, disease and death – ultimately result from our own moral evil.\(^{103}\) This theory bridges a traditional revelational/empirical hiatus that has been much enlarged by modern scientific evidence for the primitiveness and the universality of evil and waste in nature.\(^{104}\)

It may be that progress in perfecting conscious, freely-choosing human beings towards God’s ethically perfect image can only be done by a series of processes. One of those processes would appear to require a practical, material acquisition of wisdom concerning the extreme seriousness and complex character of wrong ethics. Plus, education in God’s loving ways for creatively responding to the multitudinous faces of willful evil.\(^{105}\) The universal teaching action of God is attested throughout the Bible, for example Psalm 94:10 NKJV:

\[
\text{He who instructs the nations, shall he not correct,}
\]

\[
\text{He who teaches man knowledge?} \quad 106
\]

A comprehensive public exposure of evil is then held to be a consequence of God’s creating and sustaining the ethical liberation purpose of our universe.

That the ethical education of humanity is exclusively the role of the perfect human being (the Christ) is a special New Testament emphasis:

\[
\text{And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ.} \quad 107
\]

\[
\text{All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers . . .} \quad 108
\]

\(^{103}\) The extreme severity and protracted duration of the lesson of natural evil is taken to be a consequence of the dogged intransigence of Homo sapiens to humbly obeying God and behaving right ethically; see, e.g. “but they refused to repent” Revelation 16:9b, 11b.

\(^{104}\) See comments on this problem at dissertation footnote 8.


\(^{106}\) See also Isaiah 28:29: “All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.” Freely choosing to learn and obey divine teaching is usually a condition for further blessings, according to the author of Psalm 132:12 NRSV adap: “If your children keep my covenant and my decrees that I shall teach them . . .”

\(^{107}\) Matthew 23:10 NKJV.
The Bible texts support a claim that it is the recalcitrance of humankind to divine teaching that prolongs the extremely painful lessons of this aeon. Obedient individuals (like biblical Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Elijah, and Moses) appear to have received their heavenly reward without having to wait for the general resurrection.  

Length constraints preclude a detailed discussion of the theodicy literature. Importantly, E.E.T has God’s purposes as never spoilt by actualization of all the evil we observe. Yet, paradoxically evil is always an open option for free beings. When evil intent is present it has to be revealed to fulfill the apocalyptic purpose of this world. Everything that rebels against perfect God has to freely reveal itself, so as to be managed for the sake of the perfect aeon-to-come. This view harmonizes with an attitude ascribed to Jesus by the Gospel authors. Actualized natural evils are not divinely willed. Biblically, they enable the principalities and powers, or elemental gods or Stoikheia to be justly judged by God. On the other hand, humans can expect to be judged for actualized moral evil. Natural and moral evil actualization is the means for all hidden wrong ethical potentials to be publicly exposed. This is far from “surgically sterile”. Evil has a malicious will of its own and often harms

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108 *John* 10:8 NKJV. See also *John* 1:17, 18.

109 As does the beggar, Lazarus, in one of Jesus’ parables, *Luke* 16:19-31. See dissertation section 4.12 on the difference between ethical time and chronological time. It may be impossible to extrapolate from time as experienced in this universe and anything similar in the ethically perfect aeon-to-come.


111 *E.g.* *Hebrews* 10:13.

112 *E.g.* *Matthew* 18:7b. Christ was made incarnate in history for the destruction of evil, not directly but by its exposure (apocalypsis), then by a just judging of it, followed by separation (dialysis) at the Eschaton (see, e.g. *John* 12:47, 48).

113 *E.g.*, see *Galatians* 4:3, 9; *Ephesians* 6:12; *Colossians* 1:16; 2:15, 20; *1 Peter* 3:22. E.E.T. asks about the ontology of these unseen potentials (= powers?). Are they an unseen product of the common iniquity of humankind or, alternatively simply co-opted and made effective by humankind’s iniquity? Could there be such a thing as a willful ecollation of unseen potentials on material entities? E.E.T. rules that out, as it would subvert the necessary freedom of choice by material entities (a plea of “the devil made me do it” is not legally acceptable). Similar questions have been addressed in detail by Walter Winks in: *Naming the Powers* (1984); *Unmasking the Powers* (1986); and *Engaging the Powers* (1992); all published from Minneapolis by Fortress Press. Biblical teaching on the reality of unseen evil beings and on the human connection is summarized in an especially lucid way at, e.g. *Matthew* 25:36-46.

innocents.\textsuperscript{115} In E.E.T. the severity of dis-eccollation is interpreted as part of the necessity for exhaustive apocalypsis of all of the hidden character of wrong ethics.

The evil in our world is, directly or indirectly, from the c.e.a.p. The outrageous suffering of innocents shows the widely dispersed consequences of humankind’s disobedience to perfect God’s right ethics. The severe lesson is that no one can predict the cascading effects of their own acts of selfishness. If such connections between moral and natural evils were appreciated it might induce a categorical revulsion for sin and eagerness to learn divine right ethical wisdom (\textit{Ecclesiastes} 9:18).

It is biblically affirmed that God will richly compensate innocent victims caught up in actualization of the natural and moral evils of the universal process of binary ethical apocalypsis.\textsuperscript{116} Many \textit{New Testament} texts make it plain that people cannot expect justice from within this world.\textsuperscript{117} That point is supported by the scientific discovery of the random basis of most catastrophes. Correspondingly, the E.E.T. hermeneutic doubly depends on the biblical promise of divine eschatological justice. At the same time, Bible believers are supposed to irenically confront injustices and other evils with unselfish right ethics. However, the E.E.T. binary ethical apocalypsis theodicy does not suggest that the world’s social justice movements and caring ministries will become redundant before the Eschaton.

1.14 Purpose and process
Biblically-based theology sets the Eschaton as the grand goal of an ethically meaningful life in this aeon. In the scientific materialist perspective there is no goal for existence other than survival and increase. In evolutionary theory there is no goal other than the emergence of the best adapted complexifications (or simplifications in the case of some parasites, for example) by random selection from natural variations. One task of E.E.T. is to find ways of bridging this wide revelatory/empirical gap. Although biblical and scientific viewpoints are entirely different it will be argued that an ethically-based consonance is a coherent possibility worthy of consideration.

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{E.g.} Mark 7:22; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; and Ephesians 4:31. Calculated commission of evil or deliberate dis-eccollation is not uncommon among humans but it is rarely addressed theodically. That omission can be a stumbling point in an otherwise cogent theodicy.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Matthew} 5:3-12; \textit{Luke} 6:20-23. This also resonates with teachings such as: “the first will be last, and the last will be first” (\textit{Matthew} 20:16).
\textsuperscript{117} \textit{E.g.} Matthew 10:39; 1 Corinthians 15:19; James 4:4.
Right and wrong ethical aspects are implicit in most traditional theological worldviews. E.E.T. attempts to show that even the supernatural statements of theology can be translated into ethical terms for interdisciplinary communication. It may not be widely appreciated that scientific progress is dependant on ethics. Concern that scientists should maintain high ethical standards led the Governing Board of the National Research Council of the U.S.A. (whose members are drawn from the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineers and the Institute of Medicine) to commission a publication: “to describe the ethical foundations of scientific practices”. The following extract is taken from the Preface:

The scientific research enterprise, like other human activities, is built on a foundation of trust. Scientists trust that the results reported by others are valid. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists to describe the world accurately and without bias. The level of trust that has characterized science and its relationship with society has contributed to a period of unparalleled scientific productivity. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical scientific conduct.

In the past, young scientists learned the ethics of research largely through informal means – by working with senior scientists and watching how they dealt with ethical questions. That tradition is still vitally important. But science has become so complex and so closely intertwined with society’s needs that a more formal introduction to research ethics and the responsibilities that these commitments imply is also needed – an introduction that can supplement the informal lessons provided by research supervisors and mentors.118

It is recognized by scientific, engineering and medical professional bodies that without fostering right ethics and discouraging wrong ethics the scientific method itself is corrupted and the ability of scientists to contribute to society subverted.

Even more interesting, several authors have argued that the worldview derived by science seems to reveal intrinsic ethical features of reality. This point has been developed by Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis, especially in regard to their identification of unselfishness and kenosis as properties of the cosmos. In support of their thesis, they cite John Howard Yoder:

We confess the determinative world to be enclosed within, smaller than, the sovereignty of the God of the “Resurrection and Ascension” . . . “Cross and Resurrection” designates not only a few days’ events in first-century Jerusalem but also the shape of the cosmos.  

In addressing the question: “What is the true purpose of human life?” Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis remark:

We argue that in the light of a theological account of ultimate reality, which includes God’s moral purpose for the universe, the anthropic features of the universe (i.e. features tending toward the appearance of humans) can now be interpreted as the necessary conditions not only for life but for intelligence and freedom. The anthropic universe is seen as a moral universe.

The logic of this model parallels that of E.E.T., though E.E.T. is distinguished by its attempt to integrate creatio ex ethica theology with hamartiology and soteriology. The richly dramatic content of New Testament doctrine, as illustrated by Kevin Vanhoozer for example, accrues meaning in Ethical Encounter Theology context. Here our world is saved and eternalized by a historical ethical process. Physical and mental processes evolve partly by ecollations on the unseen ethical realities inherited from the primal ethical encounter. This is different to a popular view that God’s mission is to use progress (especially scientific progress) to renovate space-time. In E.E.T. it is proposed that true progress is the accumulation of revelations of concealed ethics that demonstrate the justice of separating good from evil, eternally. E.E.T. is egalitarian in claiming that after the Eschaton the benefits of God’s fully revealed ethical wisdom will be universally accessible. Thus all of history and all of nature is to be greatly valued, not just for its intrinsic beauty, but for its embodying the innumerable, specific, ethical actualizations of our comprehensive getting of wisdom. This is a salvage eschatology and is distinct from the sort of renovation

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122 Wright, C. (2006). The Mission of God. Leicester, IVP depends, as with many other contemporary theological works, on the expectation of a renovation eschatology. In contrast, a detailed argument for the impossibility of renovation and the overwhelming physical and biblical authenticity of replacement (E.E.T. calls it salvage) eschatology is submitted by scientist and biblical apologist, Hugh Ross in his: Why the Universe is the Way It Is. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker; (2008); see, especially Chapter 13.
123 Traditional biblical theism is usually wedded to the idea of a universal “resurrection of the dead”, e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:21; Revelation 20:12,13.
eschatology postulated by Irenaeus and extended by John H. Hick (see section 1.06) in which this physical world is slowly and painfully educated into perfection by God.

Godly wisdom could be understood to include a responsible interplay of virtue ethics, deontological ethics and teleological ethics (also, see section A.08). E.E.T. claims this blend is able to launder-out all the inherent evil and sin of space-time that is actualized by the exhaustive ethical apocalypsis, eschatological judgment, and ethical dialysis that must precede a perfect aeon-to-come. The main purpose of our world is therefore perceived as the extraordinarily complex practical resolution of diverse ethical conflations resulting from a well-developed anthropic inventiveness in dodging full-facial encounters with divine right ethics. This common human experience has been well summarized by a poet:

I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind;
and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.124

The stand-out lesson is that mis-ecollation (conflating right and wrong ethics, or sin) is of grave seriousness.125 Culpable disobedience to God’s ethical teaching is a disaster whose magnitude and consequences are only exceeded by God’s painstaking patience and self-sacrificial love for human beings. It teaches that, in the end morals matter more than anything else.126 This is because unrepentant ethical conflation and hypocrisy or worldliness harms others in unpredictable ways and show a mind or soul attitude that precludes participation in the perfect life of the eternal divine household (see footnote 71).

History accumulates the physical and ethical events resulting from encounters between divine goodness and human ungodliness. That then leads to the question: “How could material complexification be related to the progressive actualization of ethical potentials?” E.E.T. addresses this by referring to ecollation. Ecollation processes are suggested to interface unseen primal informational potentials with the

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125 Revelation chapters 2 and 3 (apart from anything else they may contain) include several vivid portrayals of divine judgment against churches who culpably conflate divine right ethics with wrong ethics or evil.
emerging empirical. Ethical eu-ecollation is the actualization in history of invisible divine right ethics (e.g. it reflects wisdom, truth and love). Ethical dis-ecollation actualizes willful antagonism to divine wisdom (e.g. it reflects malice, self-deification, and deliberate deception). Ethical mis-ecollation actualizes conflated ethics (e.g. it reflects culpable ignorance, hypocrisy and sin).

The ecollation concept of this dissertation derives from the biological idea of niche-filling and it is influenced by the Whiteheadian ideas of prehension and concrescence. Ecollation may help explain the appearance of intelligent design in physical and biological evolution, as well as in the cognitive, creative and ethical spheres. Ecollations are articulative processes that assist tangible space-time entities to complexify through information from alternative databases in the unseen ecology of reality. Ecollation is proposed as a source of historical novelty in addition to that deriving from the interactions of physical entities \textit{per se}. It depends on the idea that the universe not only has access to its own unseen realities (the u.r.s.t.) but also to those of the embracing matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.) or Rule of God.

The unseen ecology of our universe therefore has both good and bad sources of information that can be drawn on by evolving entities. Novelties that arise from physical interactions \textit{per se}, and novelties that arise from ecollations on unseen ecological potentials, are both subject to physical processes, like natural selection. This suggests a source for some of the design content of emergent evolutionary complexification. Yet, significantly, it does not require a hands-on designer, deriving rather from a level of random or free choice from unseen potentials. Biblically-based theology situates it all in a determinate system, containing richly diverse possibilities for free but finite choice-making. In this, E.E.T. highlights consonance between some general biblical theological and Theology/Science perspectives on universal process.

Recent discoveries in molecular biology reveal that life is based on information transfer dynamics. In this there are some heuristically-valuable parallels, helpful in envisaging and formulating ecollative traction cybernetics. In short, evolution may be a free process but for E.E.T. it is limited by what is accessible in the ethically-charged
informational niches of unseen ecology, from \( t = 0 \) to the Eschaton.\(^{127}\) Interestingly, adoption of the doctrine of \textit{creatio ex nihilo} may have entrenched the idea that material entities have no unseen matrix.\(^{128}\) Karl Barth famously struggled with the concept of the nothingness (\textit{das Nichtige}).\(^{129}\) One outcome of a matrix-less universe model has been the atheistic view that everything creates itself \textit{ex nihilo}. A religious reaction to that is in the doctrine that everything was created by divine power words spoken into a total vacuum.\(^{130}\) A philosophical result has been an increased interest in Process and panentheistic theology, where the \textit{nihilo} is replaced by an endless \textit{creatio continua} god, constantly perfected by the universe as much as it by divinity. E.E.T. draws attention to some differences between these contemporarily popular worldviews and its own scientifically-informed perfect being theism.

In an attempt to solve some of the problems inherent of different worldviews, some of their elements are combined in E.E.T. The world is described as being called forth within an ethical matrix (see \textit{Genesis} 1:1-3). That is, the singularity of selfishness – representing a prolepsis of human historical ethical ambiguity – was encountered by perfect divine goodness.\(^{131}\) The propensity of divine right ethics to confront what is less than right ethical is understood as a quality of God. From its start, the history of our universe contained elements of freedom within a determinative system. E.E.T. harmonizes these two in accord with the theistic tenet that all things were created \textit{de novo} by God. The E.E.T. method avoids the erosion of truly free choice that characterizes many design methods. It also avoids the circularities of a panentheistic

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\(^{127}\) This process demands a descriptive term to replace \textit{creatio ex nihilo}, perhaps \textit{emersus} or \textit{complexio ex nihilo}. For E.E.T., perhaps \textit{emersus et complexio ex ethica} would provide a fuller description.

\(^{128}\) For a recent defense of \textit{creatio ex nihilo} see Copan, P. and Craig, W. L. (2004) - reference in dissertation section 1.06. Despite the elegance of the exhaustive arguments advanced by Copan and Craig, the authority of \textit{Genesis} 1:2 is hard to argue against, especially when it is exegeted as a description of a primordial ethical conflation. Exegeting \textit{Genesis} 1:1-3 as a description of God beginning our universe by ethically invading an ethical conflation does not detract from a doctrine of divine omnigenesis. It is an advantage of the E.E.T. method that it especially well accommodates the New Testament witness concerning the pre-creation presence of: “... the Lamb who was slain” and those who were: “... chosen in Him” (e.g. \textit{Matthew} 25:34; \textit{Ephesians} 1:4; \textit{1 Peter} 1:20; \textit{Revelation} 13:8; 17:8). This holistic biblical exegesis depends on an ethical understanding of reality. This ethical method also helps theology to offer a significant contribution in what is generally a science-dominated, origins discourse.


\(^{130}\) An anthropomorphic view of God is subverted by texts such as \textit{1 Timothy} 6:16 and \textit{1 John} 1:5.

\(^{131}\) This approach offers an addition to, not an alternative for, the scholar view that the early verses of \textit{Genesis} are written to introduce the Pentateuch’s focus on the Covenant, its breach and the promise of a New Covenant, e.g. as summarized in Sailhammer, J. H. (1990). \textit{Genesis. EBC} 2: 1-15.
self-causing cause and self-perfecting perfection. In addition, it is not obliged to
describe God as having to war with evil adversaries. E.E.T. argues that the perfect
being of God calls forth all the things that science describes, by an ethical means that
has consonance with the biblical texts. Monism is preserved because the all-
embracing matrix of right ethics or Rule of God never surrenders whole system
management. In fact, in final outcome, our universe will only have done God’s will –
to separate loving beings into the divine family.132 This allows for what is possibly
the strongest theodicy possible, where natural evil is a normal consequence of divine
management of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.). In this, E.E.T. offers a
way of harmonizing theodicy and perfect being theology (see section A.02).

One of the strongest traits in Ethical Encounter Theology can be called divine
pedagogy. The universe of space-time is viewed as the specific locus of God’s
education of an ignorant and recalcitrant part of reality.133 The E.E.T. exegesis of
*Genesis* 1:1-3 (on page xvi) identifies a theological start to the divine lesson.
Effectively, it situates physical, biological, mental, social, and spiritual experiences
within this divine ethics tutorial. God’s seamless ethics lesson is taught by means of
our evolving universe.134 Thus the developing history of the universe reveals (by
means of an almost infinite diversity of situations) the unlimited ethical perfection,
wisdom, sufficiency, and availability of God’s provision, in the midst of a willfully
ignorant, ambivalent and even antipathetic anthropic cosmos.135 The rigorously
theonomous cosmic ethics practicum presents through a divine right ethical encounter
with a thing momentarily out of accord with holiness, not from an ethical nothingness.
E.E.T. points to the ethically wrong thing as quintessentially identifiable at *Genesis*
1:2 and *John* 1:5; 9-10 (though as mentioned above, with no biblical account of its
cause).136 God takes responsibility for wrong ethics, as can be read from *Genesis* 1:1,
*Isaiah* 45:7 and *Lamentations* 3:38. Rebellions are turned into divine ethics classes.
Effectively, the space-time world serves a process that both justly separates and

132 This eschatology has connections to eschatological concepts developed by F. W. J. von Schelling
and by Ian G. Barbour; see dissertation section 1.13.
133 See dissertation section 1.06.
134 *John* 14:31a in the Greek (see INT: 431) can accommodate a sense of Christ educating the universe;
Matthew 11:29; 23:10; Romans 9:23; and *Psalm* 94:10 also have pedagogic associations.
135 *Deuteronomy* 10:17,18; *Psalm* 119:104; *Ecclesiastes* 3:14b; *John* 1:18; *Romans* 11:33-36;
*1 Timothy* 1:17; 6:15b,16.
136 An E.E.T. exegesis of *Genesis* 1:1-3 is found on dissertation page xv and of *John* 1:5; 9-10 on
dissertation page xvi.
ethically equips humans for the right ethical aeon-to-come. The frequent harshness of
this process is hypothesized to be because of the obdurateness of human nature not
because of God’s nature. Biblically, for example:

our Savior God, who wants all people to be saved
and to come to the full knowledge of truth.\(^{137}\)

The idea of building an eternal cosmic ethics seminar, through a progressive
historicization of hidden ethical potentials, opens a biblical theological bridge to
science. In science it is well understood that the actualizing informational content of
universe progressively increases. Science, however, needs philosophy and theology to
help solve the problem of the origin and the purpose (but not the material mechanisms)
of its observations of incremental increases in cosmic information. E.E.T. explains
that complexification processes are able to draw on information (including ethics) by
actualizing invisible primal potentials. Ethical apocalypses are emergent properties,
epiphenomena supervenient upon material advances. As argued, it is this exhaustive
binary apocolypse of ethical primal potentials that supports the justice of a final
judgment and ethical dialysis at the Eschaton. This does not necessarily imply that
ethics drives emergence. It does imply that a complete, embodied, ethical
actualization can be harvested from the world process for teaching purposes. Sources
(or purveyors) of wrong ethical information are sometimes identified in the Bible (e.g.
*Genesis* 3:1; *Matthew* 13:39; *Acts* 10:38; 13:10; *1 Timothy* 4:1; *James* 3:15; 4:7; *1
*Peter* 5:8; *1 John* 3:8; *Revelation* 16:4). They are characterized in E.E.T. as
facilitators of the classes of material actualizations that have been termed mis-
ecollations or dis-ecollations (see sections 1.13, 5.02 and 5.05).

An advantage of the E.E.T. hermeneutics is its suitability for positioning the
perennially challenging issues of actual moral and natural evils among the useful
purposes of space-time. It exegetes the world’s perennial encounter with God’s
perfection, not as a war, but as an irenic method of exposing wrong ethics. This
makes the painfully ungodly aspects of the world an anthropic issue.\(^{138}\) The ultimate
usefulness of manifest sin and evil is that they are free, ecollative actualizations of

\(^{137}\) *1 Timothy* 2:3b, 4 TS. See, also *John* 3:16; etc.

\(^{138}\) In the Bible the role of evil commences in *Genesis* 3 and 4 and concludes in *Revelation* 20; it is
always associated with humankind. Also, see sections A.02, A.04 and A.09.
hidden wrong ethical potentials,\textsuperscript{139} made accessible for judgment at the Eschaton. This is of great benefit to humankind, bearing in mind the tenet that all evil in our anthropic universe stems from a c.e.a.p. The question: “Surely God could have achieved these ends in a less painful and wasteful way?” might be addressed: “Yes, by not giving humankind freedom so they never had to face the serious and uncontrollable consequences of conflated morals.”

The E.E.T. worldview implies that something complicated is being achieved by our universe. The universal process has evolved the most complexified entity known to science - the human mind. The immense information storage and processing ability of the human brain subtends a vast capacity for learning, reasoning, emotion and creation.\textsuperscript{140} It also provides a material substrate for a person’s unseen ethical character (often called the heart of a person in the Bible). As the ethical teacher of humankind, the biblical Christ is shown to act pre-eminently on the human character or heart. In E.E.T. reasoning, the immense capacity of human consciousness and conscience is needed to take the world’s binary ethical apocalypsis to exhaustion.

To reiterate: Sophisticated actualization of ethical potentials not only enables all of wrong ethics to be justly judged, it also creates a history of practical ethics. According to many biblical texts wrong ethics is pervasive and a great deal of wisdom must be acquired to avoid conflating with it. Biblical wisdom teaches that wrong ethics have the painful consequence of separation from God’s perfection. The source of wrong ethical possibilities (dis-e collation) is biblically identified in some tangible and intangible components of our universe.\textsuperscript{141} These components find identity in E.E.T. as having originated from the pervasive, proleptic effects (and/or divine prescience) of the cosmic anthropic ethical problem.

\textsuperscript{139} See the thorough recent creative review of theodicy in respect to suffering and waste in the animal world by Christopher Southgate; reference at dissertation footnote 8. However, the need to address the paradoxical good of evil is recognized in the E.E.T. worldview; see dissertation section 7.04.

\textsuperscript{140} Pierre Teilhard de Chardin saw human brain activity collectively forming a “noosphere”, “outside and above the biosphere” - reference in dissertation section 3.13.

\textsuperscript{141} E.g. the author of 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 teaches believers they will judge both the world and disobedient angels in the age to come; i.e. both seen and unseen originators of evil (dis-e collators) are to be judged. The author of James 4:4 writes that friendship with this world is the same as hatred of God. Correspondingly, those who suffer unjustly because of evil will be compensated in the aeon-to-come. The New Testament repeatedly teaches faithful believers to expect to be treated unjustly by the world. Patient endurance is required. The biblical promise is that a time of acquittal will arrive, e.g. Matthew 5:3-12; 23:13-33. No other way is offered in the New Testament texts.
1.15 Monogenic dual, sequential anthropogenesis

Anthropology is central to philosophy, theology and science. How membership of the species Homo sapiens is interpreted can condition every worldview. This is even more so in a scientific universe strongly suspected to be fundamentally anthropic. Physiologist and Bible scholar Allan J. Day sees no insurmountable problem in re-exegeting biblical anthropogenesis in scientific terms:

it is proposed that an interpretation suggesting a generic (representative humanity) Adam and a gradual emergence of both humanity made in the ‘image of God’ and of the Fall is consistent with a proper interpretation of Genesis chapters 1 – 3. It is proposed that the essential message of Genesis 1 – 3 with its theology of humanity created in the image of God and embracing the development of a sinful nature needing redemption is not compromised by this reading.142

This is also a method used in the research reported in this dissertation, though it is taken further by differentiating relatively right-ethical (Genesis 1) First Peoples from seriously ethically-compromised or fallen (Genesis 2, 3 and 4) Second Peoples. The inter-disciplinary consonance proffered includes an argument for a monogenic dual sequential anthropogenic revelational/empirical consonance.

A recent summary of speculations concerning the beginnings of human art history by Cambridge University’s Nigel Spivey provides a valuable perspective:

For more than half a century, archaeologists have agreed that farming – the keeping of domesticated animals and the cultivation of crops – began in the Near East during the late Neolithic period, circa 9000 BC. Sheep and goats were the principal animals featuring in this agricultural revolution, while wheat and barley were the principal crops. Key sites providing evidence for animal enclosures and domesticated grains include Jarmo, in northern Iraq; Catalhoyuk, in western Turkey; and Jericho, in Palestine. The Jordan valley and the reaches of upper Mesopotamia have also yielded specific clues regarding the transition from nomadic hunting and gathering to settled farming. The debate then arises about which came first: a demographic shift to settled communities, leading to a reliance upon farming for food, or the intensive exploitation of certain livestock and cereals, leading to settled communities?

In the book of Genesis, the change occurs as a direct consequence of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. The sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, are specified as a tiller of the soil and a

shepherd, respectively, fulfilling God’s edict that mortals should henceforth survive ‘by the sweat of their brow’. Gobekli Tepi raises an alternative possibility – that what instigated the first production of food was art.

About 30 kilometres south from Gobekli Tepi lies the Karacadag range. Research among these hills has shown that they are home to the closest wild relative of an early species of domesticated grain, einkorn wheat. The suggestion is that wild grain was brought from the Karacadag, and cultivated around Gobekli Tepi in order to feed all the hundreds of people building or simply frequenting the site.

So there is the momentous conclusion that some 11,000 years ago imagery had become so powerful in the minds of human beings that it helped to bring about the greatest transformation in human history.\(^{143}\)

In E.E.T. worldview terms, Nigel Spivey’s analysis evidences to monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis. A good test of a Theology/Science inter-disciplinary hermeneutics is to ask if it helps to bridge an existing revelational/empirical hiatus. Indeed, one of the most conspicuous gaps between biblical revelation and science is in their different accounts of the origins of human beings. Traditionally, theologians have mainly taken Genesis chapters 1 and 2 as different perspectives on a single anthropogenic event. However, this raises problems stemming from the Hebrew texts themselves. Exegetical dissonances may be ignored from a desire to support a popular hamartiology, largely based on Romans 5:12-19. Even such a thoughtful and careful theologian as Charles C. Ryrie mels the different anthropogenic accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 into a single occasion.\(^{144}\) This seems to be a case where theological and doctrinal perspectives may have conditioned exegesis. The key question is: “Was the Genesis author likely to have known about First and Second peoples?” In terms of common sense, that question can be answered: “Most probably.”

There seems to have been a historical choice by biblical theologians to favor a particular hermeneutic. On the surface it would seem to have been equally possible to have interpreted the Genesis 2 account differently. That is as the Genesis author’s observations and appreciation of how a derivative human sub-group had brought disobedience and proud rebellion against God into a more humble aboriginal culture. Strange aspects of the second story, like the description of the way Adam was formed,


and how Eve was produced by binary fission from Adam, might alert scientifically-informed exegetists not to merge this story with the far more scientifically factual first account of anthropogenesis. In the *Genesis* 1 story humans arrive in sequence: after separation of the dry land, after plants appear, and at the end of a zoological sequence. They are created as sexually-reproducing males and females, both in the divine image and likeness. This differs fundamentally from the *Genesis* 2 story. It seems reasonable to ask if the author intended to highlight something important.

The dramatic contrast might imply the author took pains to differentiate the origins of the founding parents of the (*Genesis* 2) farmer/civic cultures. For example, it could have been observed that, among hunter/gather First Peoples, women enjoyed an independent identity. In contrast, women in farmer/civic Second People cultures may have appeared as little more than servants of men (*Genesis* 3:16c). Also, the ease of child-birth among hunter/gather women may have been being contrasted (in *Genesis* 3:16a, b) with the painful childbirth experienced by domesticated farmer/civic women. Adam’s punishment of having to sweat to get his food (in *Genesis* 3:17) dramatically contrasts with the ease of harvesting seeds and fruits (in *Genesis* 1:29). The typical embarrassment of Second Peoples with nakedness (*Genesis* 3:7, 21) may be being compared to the freedom observed among First Peoples.

Among Theology/Science workers it is well recognized that *Genesis* 3 has to be re-exegeted if harmony with a scientific worldview is to be maintained. For example, Theology/Science leader, John Polkinghorne remarks:

> The doctrine of the Fall certainly needs radical reconsideration. An Augustinian notion of decay from an original paradisial state, brought about by a single disastrous ancestral act, is one that cannot be made consonant with what we know about the history of the Earth. Following the principles that St Augustine himself enunciated, it is therefore necessary to reconsider what the meaning of this biblical story may be.\(^{145}\)

For the inter-disciplinary purposes of this dissertation, it is recognized that the *Genesis* 1 and 2 texts also require re-reading to address the co-existence of primary human etho-types, readily identified with the aboriginal First Peoples and

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farmer/civic Second Peoples human cultures.\footnote{These distinct, biologically-robust cultures would have been conspicuous at the time the original texts of Genesis were composed and/or at the time of 2nd Temple redaction. Some thousands of years later, the two primary human cultures still survive, even though the First People culture has now declined from being the vast majority to just a tiny minority. It is not the relative competitiveness of the two primary human cultures (in the Darwinian way) that is of major interest to us but their distinct ethnological, ethological, ethical and ecological characteristics. This is further developed in dissertation section 4.13.} This could also help bridge a substantial revelational/empirical gap by pointing to a consonance between the biblical texts and the findings of scientific anthropology.

This method has not been readily available because the interplay between doctrine and exegesis has melded the different stories in Genesis 1:27 and 2:7.\footnote{For a scientist, these verses may immediately appear to distinguish hunter/gatherer and farmer/civic cultural origins (currently scientifically considered to be at about 100,000 and about 10,000 years ago).} Apart from adding meaning to several traditionally difficult pericopae, appreciation of the original coexistence of two main kinds of human cultures is able to provide richly meaningful ways of looking at the Bible’s account of anthropogenesis, without offending the texts themselves. Three and a half thousand years ago the majority of the world’s peoples were aboriginal First Peoples, living largely on seasonally available fruits and seeds (see Genesis 1:29). Recognizing a subsequent creation of farmer/civic, Second Peoples, honors the intelligence of the ancient author of Genesis 1 and 2 as sufficiently discerning to have appreciated the primary occupation by widely distributed First Peoples and the subsequent advent of (culturally distinct) highly localized groups of farmer/civic Second Peoples.\footnote{It requires no contortions to read Genesis 1:26-29 and Genesis 2:5, 7, 8, 15 as possibly referring to hunter/gather and farmer/civic cultures, respectively. A biblical hermeneutics of monogenic dual, sequential anthropogenesis also has a broad and beneficial significance for biblical theology’s contribution to the inter-disciplinary consonance. Scientifically erroneous ideas about polygenic anthropogenesis [these are described in detail in Livingstone, D. N. (2008). Adam’s Ancestors: Race, Religion and the Politics of Human Origins. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press] are also theologically undermined by the: “in the image and likeness of God” pericopae of Genesis 1:26, 27.} This argument concerns the two primary human cultures from about 10,000 years ago. The significance of this argument is not eroded by evidence for subsequent instances of opportunistic switching between farmer/civic and hunter/gather life-style by later human groups.

A dual anthropogenic reading connects with diverse branches of science. Theologically, however, it interrogates doctrines as widely held (though with less textual justification) as the geocentric universe model was prior to Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo. As in science and philosophy, changing one constituent of a theology
produces reforming ripples affecting the whole. For example, E.E.T.’s critique of *solus Adamus* anthropogenesis makes available a new seam of possibilities in Christology. Light on the puzzle of the apparent conflict between *Ezekiel* 18:1-32 and *Roman* 5:12-21 is one immediate theologically-holistic benefit of a hermeneutics of monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis. Harmonizing the idea of a largely dual origin of primary human cultures with the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) leads to some significant insights on several areas of theological scholarship.

Neuroscientist and evolutionary anthropologist Terrence Deacon comments about the change of academic attitude towards First Peoples among anthropologists:

Prior to the twentieth century many believed that people in societies that still used stone tool technology for hunting, fishing, farming and warfare were also more primitive in biological terms than were European and Asian people. This was an integral part of the Eurocentric conceit during the colonial era, and was used to justify numerous injustices, from genocides to slavery. Anthropologists in the early twentieth century quickly realized that the technological status of a society was no predictor of the complexity of its language or the symbolic richness of its traditions. In general, the average member of any society probably has roughly the same amount of linguistic and cultural information ‘in his or her head’. There are no living *primitive* languages, in the sense of being more simple and elementary in structure, not even in ancient written texts. Children who have come from societies that still utilize stone tool technologies can adapt to modern industrial society and absorb its intellectual tradition as easily as those born within it.149

The E.E.T. ethical hermeneutic draws attention to a new (informed by scientific anthropology) way of reading *Genesis* 1:27 and *Genesis* 2:7, to enable biblical textual theology to productively engage with the current Theology/Science cooperative discourse. This inter-disciplinary strategy could also be a move that is not unconnected with long delayed justice between peoples (see section 4.13).

The possibility that eponymous Adam refers to the first Christ, divinely chosen to evangelize the First Peoples may afford a research opportunity in investigative theology. Some difficult texts may better exegete with that hermeneutics and it also

shines light into an especially tragic area of social anthropology.\textsuperscript{150} Crucially, much is found to hang on how we eclectically and sensitively approach the question: “What is God doing in our universe?” - see section 1.14. Creative answers to this key question could contribute to the progress of Theology/Science and could also add a new perspective to church ministry vision. The E.E.T. anthropology questions some basic traditional doctrinal and cultural assumptions, and it offers solutions that close the biblical/empirical cognitive gap, without requiring God to be anything less than omnicompetent and omnibenevolent.\textsuperscript{151} In doing this, E.E.T. cannot help but draw attention to the need to correct the virtual exclusion of Aboriginal peoples and their ethics from the literature on theological anthropology. Any increase in theological appreciation of the richness and wisdom of some First Peoples’ cultures will also have bearings on disciplines like feminist theology\textsuperscript{152} and environmental theology\textsuperscript{153}. As environmentalist David Horton writes:

Aboriginal people weren’t conservationists in the Western sense, but the effects of their beliefs were so strong as to protect the environment for a very long time. If this is true of Aboriginal people, effectively isolated from the rest of the world for years, it is a fundamental part of being Australian.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{150} Charles Darwin saw hunter/gatherers as relics, doomed to be exterminated by farmer/civics. Wolfhart Pannenberg gives them no mention at all in his major works, \textit{Jesus: God and Man} (London, SCM, 2002 edition) and \textit{Anthropology in Theological Perspective} (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1985). In this he follows in the footsteps of Karl Barth and the leading systematic theologians. Many researchers seem mesmerized by the common idea that farmer/civic progress has made First Peoples’ cultures obsolescent (or, perhaps, too problematic for research). This seems to reflect allegiance to a concept that evolution is truly progressive and so renders history disposable. E.E.T. draws attention to the research opportunity afforded by the parallels between the life styles and ethics of First Peoples, and the itinerant life-style and the ethics taught by Jesus Christ. The Gospel accounts of Christ’s unassuming gender equity is also a feature of some ancient Aboriginal cultures. This whole subject has connections to contemporary concerns about global warming and the mounting evidence for the many irreversible, ecologically-destructive effects of advances in farmer/civic/industrial/commercial ways of life. This rich seam of theological anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology and sociology seems to merit further work.

\textsuperscript{151} In passing, it is interesting to note the common oral myth that recounts how a special person was to bring a gift from God but lost it before the people benefited from it. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to investigate whether the \textit{Genesis} 2 anthropology is mythopoetic in that way.


1.16 The beginnings of an E.E.T. worldview

The topic of this dissertation is large and thus, within the length permitted, much has to be left out or only lightly touched on. E.E.T. is an essay in inter-disciplinary consonance not a systematic theology and is not orientated to consider all aspects of theology. However, if the ethical encounter paradigm proves generally useful, then the E.E.T. method may merit a more thorough, systematic theological development. The research project is motivated by a desire to help bridge the remaining gap between the traditional perfect being theist faith communities and the recent advances in Theology/Science studies. The dissertation approaches the project from a Christian theological perspective, yet provides opportunities for irenic interaction with other types of theology because its basic thesis is that all of reality is part of a divine ethics program. That is a thesis with capacity to facilitate creative mutual interaction among all those who perceive an essentially ethical character to their existence.

If it is conceded that true creativeness depends on love (self-givingness) and light (wisdom), and that destruction results from hate (selfishness) and darkness (ignorance) then a broad ethical basis exists for mutual exploration of scientific, philosophical and theological issues. The explorations of E.E.T. of this dissertation go towards showing that a worldview can be founded on an ethical method. Questions concerning the origin, process, destination, and purpose of our universe need to be addressed in an inter-disciplinary way. In this connection theologian Denis Edwards asks:

How can we think about the Christian God if we take seriously the evolutionary worldview assumed by biological science?  

In Ethical Encounter Theology it is argued that the natural selective processes of biology can be entirely embraced within a program of ethical selection, managed by the matrix of right ethics that is, by the Rule of God. Yet it is noteworthy that the natural selection process can be predicted to end in the futility of extinction of all life on earth by physical, chemical and/or biological means that are well described by science. In contrast, the biblical selection process is projected to fund the justice of the Eschaton and a new creation. It has been E.E.T.’s mission to explore the possibilities of an ethical consonance between these seemingly antagonistic predictions.

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Tradition has been known to resist paradigm shifts. Disputed doctrinal distinctives have often functioned to provide identity, continuity and unity to denominations.\footnote{For a relevant account of the past development of Christian doctrine and the possibility of future development see McGrath, A. E. (1997). The Genesis of Doctrine: a Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism. Cambridge, Eerdmans. See also quotations from N. T. Wright and Bruce L. McCormack, in dissertation section \textbf{3.03}.} Logical argument does not always find favor. Faith in what does not smoothly flow from balanced biblical exegeses may operate as identifying insignia between religions and denominations. Stubborn elements of inconsistency adhere in denominations as sectional distinguishing marks (a sort of tribalism that is out of line with the \textit{New Testament} presentation of Christ’s teachings). Clarification of such para- or extra-biblical marker doctrines is considered to be essential methodology for improving theology’s inter-disciplinary contribution. Theology based on careful holistic exegesis has the necessary stature and capacity to irenically critique various Christian doctrinal specifics (see sections \textbf{2.07, 3.03} and \textbf{A.06}). Alternative, textually-sound readings may give greater traction for inter-disciplinary harmonization; there is an inter-play. Contemporarily, the very active area of Theology/Science research is producing a range of results that help extend both its disciplines. To traditionalist skeptics it could be said: “Would apostolic or patristic evangelist/apologists, like Paul and Augustine, willingly have left any contemporary revelational/empirical gaps un-bridged?”

With a theological emphasis focused less on man and more on the biblical evidence for God’s methodology, this dissertation uncovers new opportunities for synergy in contemporary disciplinary interactions. E.E.T. argues for this without using materialist, panentheist, design, fundamentalist, or God-at-war hermeneutics. All of the six major reasons given by Ian Barbour to justify inclusion of God as a creative participant in space-time\footnote{Barbour, I.G. (1990). \textit{Religion in an Age of Science}. London, SCM: 260-261.} are addressed by E.E.T., without need to veer from classical theism. The significance of Ian Barbour as Theology/Science’s modern founder, adds great weight to his dismissal of perfect being theism. That his critique has been able to be addressed by allowing greater parity between holistic, contemporary biblical interpretation and the fund of data supplied by advances in Theology/Science studies suggests that E.E.T. has generated a worthy contribution to inter-disciplinary scholarship.
A complementary approach, toward the same classical theistic ends, has recently been published by Nick Hawkes. His treatise concludes with a strong but open-ended emphasis on the theology of the fall.\textsuperscript{158} As a theology of the origin of sin and of the introduction of death and evil, “the fall” is one of the most problematical areas for inter-disciplinary understanding. By applying a Pannenbergian proleptic approach, E.E.T. has been able to interrogate traditional fall doctrine in terms of the ethical timescale rather than the physical timescale. The human lapse is localized in the eclectic ethics of \textit{H. sapiens} that is the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) that seems to have become more exposed with the farmer/civic revolution, from about 10,000 years ago. The parable of Adam and Eve’s original sin nicely illustrates the c.e.a.p. It contributes to theological epistemology rather than to ontology. That approach to anthropology and hamartiology reveals new research areas for on-going fruitful collaboration between theology, science, philosophy and sociology.\textsuperscript{159}

The \textit{ex ethica} worldview explored in E.E.T. gives ethics precedence in the selection processes that generate cosmic progress. The apparent nothingness of Singularity is understood as an analogy for a severe primeval circumvolution, caused by the c.e.a.p. This can also be explained as a form of extreme self-destruction. It is understood that only something supremely un-selfish is able to encounter the primal singularity of selfishness without itself being captured. This encounter is described (with increasing levels of revelation) in \textit{Genesis} 1:3, then in \textit{John} 1:1-5, and then in \textit{Philippians} 2:5-11. Ecstatic revelations, like \textit{Ephesians} 1:4-10, \textit{Colossians} 1:13-20 and \textit{Revelation} 22:13 are amplified not eroded by an ethical conditioning of science’s view of cosmic origins, destiny and purpose. Biblically-holistic, scientifically-informed, philosophically-coherent readings find high human significance when they reflect the ultimate dependency of everything in our universe on divine love.

The question of how supremely self-giving love physically creates is of interest.\textsuperscript{160} The \textit{New Testament} witness in particular is that: “God is Love”. So it can follow (at

\textsuperscript{159} See comments on the advantages for the Theology/Science academy of broadening its disciplinary base, in Reich, K. H. (2008) - reference on dissertation page xxi.
\textsuperscript{160} The work of philosopher John Leslie covers the creative power of divine love, see Leslie, J. (1989) - reference in dissertation section 1.16.
least theologically) that belief in God’s creative ability is a belief that perfect right ethics can make things. Biblical descriptions of creative miracles, including the resurrection of Christ, connect with such an ex ethica cosmogonic worldview. A worldview perspective that broadly depends on creation by right ethics and destruction by wrong ethics has implications for any related Theology/Science program (see point L on dissertation pages xxiii and xxiv).

This dissertation highlights some choices that are available to theologians. It is true that worldviews can be built on the idea of a less than omniscient and omnipotent God (as in many process and other panentheistic theologies); or on the idea of a semi-competent God (as in God-at war theology). Here, we have escaped those trends by exploring the possibilities for a coherent, biblically-authentic, scientifically-informed consonance between traditional perfect being theism and an ethical interpretation of the worldview understanding being developed by the Theology/Science academy.

Some basics of this complex consonance are now summarized, as a series of tenets:

- The unseen, perfect divine being created all things and patiently oversees it (e.g. Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-4; Acts 17:24-29; 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Peter 3:9), towards an ethically perfect purpose (e.g. Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:9).

- Our universe was created when the wisdom of the perfect being voluntarily encountered (e.g. Genesis 1:3; John 1:5a; 9) an anthropic potential of extreme ethical ambiguity, described as a lightless, formless void, possibly analogous to the Singularity of scientific cosmology (Genesis 1:2; John 1:5b;10,11).

- This ethical encounter is defined as perfectly right ethical love progressively calling the ambiguities of a singularity of selfishness into material, real-life existence. That process is precious because it makes every detail of cosmic ethical apocalypsis history personal for every human (e.g. Colossians1:20), and its unique texture provides humankind’s eternal divine ethics seminar.

- The goodness of space-time is in its richly-textured story - from Genesis 1:4 to Revelation 22:17 - of the tireless dealings (beginning with Genesis 3 and 4) of the divine perfect being with the world’s ethical conflation. Material
complexifications enable actualization of invisible ethical potentials and so advance binary ethical apocalypsis towards an eschatological ethical dialysis.

- Evil itself can be described as a proleptic expression of humankind’s moral ambiguity towards God’s perfect goodness (e.g. *James* 1:13-15). Suffering and loss caused by natural and moral evil enables these potentials to be justly excluded from a right ethical future age (e.g. *1 Corinthians* 13:10). Thus, divine compensatory salvation is promised to those who experience unjust loss or undeserved suffering from a world of binary ethical apocalypsis (e.g. *Matthew* 5:3-11; 6:20; *Colossians* 1:5; *2 Timothy* 4:8). The opposite is promised to those who choose the world’s hypocritical ethics (e.g. *James* 4:4).

- E.E.T. discovers that salvation is a consequence of reality, of how things actually are. Salvation is integral to the story of our universe: firstly, in the salvific emergence of our world from a singularity of selfishness, then in the complexifications that led to life and to *H. sapiens,* and then in the call for humans to accept the saving message of God’s love over all other things, and finally in the invitation to engage in the adventure of irenically encountering ethical conflation with right ethics, learned from God’s revelatory teaching (e.g. *John* 1:12,13; *Romans* 8:16; *Ephesians* 1:3-14; *Colossians* 1:12-20; *1 Timothy* 2:3b, 4; *1 John* 3:1); also, see section A.10).

In their general form all those tenets of E.E.T. are accessible to traditional Judaic, Christian and Islamic theologians. The seventh tenet is specifically Christian.

- In terms of specifically Christian ethical theology, E.E.T. finds that our universe is the personal story of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. A saga of divinely obedient, fearless confrontation of the extremes of ambivalent ethics and the subtlety of human intransigence. This results in persistent binary ethical apocalypses, eschatological judgment, ethical dialysis, and finally a gathering together of all of the lovers of right ethics. The almost limitless pains taken to attain to a future communal dwelling in the household of perfect God are evidence of the extraordinary passion of divine love in Christ for human beings (e.g. *John* 14:12; *2 Corinthians* 5:4; *Ephesians* 1:22, 23; *Colossians* 1:24-29; *2 Peter* 3:11b-13; *Revelation* 21:1).
Such extraordinarily profound and intricate subjects, of great human importance, require specialized methodology for their investigation. That takes us to the next chapter and its detailed exploration of some of the methods that may, in combination, be suited for such a demanding task.
Chapter 2 - Inter-disciplinary methodological considerations

2.01 Methods must manage both visible/tangible and invisible/intangible reality
Methodological concerns are given special attention in this dissertation so as to clarify research that might otherwise result in mis-matches between theological, philosophical and scientific methods. The methodological reflections of some of the current inter-disciplinary world leaders are explored in detail in this chapter. However, it is note-worthy that the crucial issue of the junction between visible/tangible physicality and the invisible/intangible moiety of reality are rarely frankly dealt with. Yet, as can be seen from the quotation below, this distinction is well-recognized (also see dissertation chapter 5, especially section 5.02). The genre of biblical theology that is common in traditional, philosophically-theist faith communities relies on references to seen/unseen interactions. A significant contribution is made by Ethical Encounter Theology in facing up to this unpopular methodological task, by developing a structured ethics as a lingua franca, where seen and unseen realities can articulate.

The Templeton Foundation has mentored some of the most outstanding recent endeavors in inter-disciplinary research and publication. Its philosophy is expressed by, for example, the Templeton Foundation Press:

Templeton Foundation Press helps intellectual leaders and others learn about science research on aspects of realities, invisible and intangible. Spiritual realities include unlimited love, accelerating creativity, worship, and the benefits of purpose in persons and in the cosmos.161

161 See www.templetonpress.org; accessed 20.03.2007.
That also conveniently summarizes one part of the worldview aims of this dissertation where, however, ethical values represent the unseen spiritual realities specified by biblically-based theology and philosophy. E.E.T. provides consonance between theology and science in an ethical matrix that minimizes any appeal to dualism.

Universals such as unlimited love, creativity, worship, specific purpose, and generic purpose attract wide interest among intellectuals. Advances in science and technology, far from obliterating these ancient human interests, have sharpened the general hunger for answers in areas where science or material know-how meets spirituality or invisible and intangible realities. Human imagination has unlimited capacity to work beyond the phenomenal, yet is much influenced by it. Philosopher Mary Midgley comments:

Any system of thought playing the huge part that science now plays in our lives must also shape our guiding myths and color our imaginations profoundly. It is not just a useful tool. It is also a pattern that we follow at a deep level in trying to meet our imaginative needs.¹⁶²

The human imagination is pervasively influential, as Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry emphasize, in shaping the worldviews imagined by different societies of people:

The story of the universe has been told in many ways by the peoples of Earth, from the earliest periods of the Paleolithic development and the Neolithic village communities to the classical civilizations that have emerged in the past five thousand years. In all these various circumstances the story of the universe has given meaning to life and to existence itself. The story has been celebrated in elaborate rituals. It has provided guidance and sustaining energy in shaping the course of human affairs. It has been our fundamental referent as regards modes of personal and community conduct. It has established the basis of social authority.¹⁶³

Science has thus joined philosophy and theology in shaping the way the human imagination grapples with the interactions of visible, tangible material and those invisible, intangible realities that are sometimes called spiritual. E.E.T. recognizes them all as parts of a single reality in the biblical sense that they are all embraced by

the Rule of God. This descriptor is made more inter-disciplinarily accessible in terms of a matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.) that is ultimately determinative of all events.

When methodologically disparate disciplines are made to strongly interact there are ample opportunities for misunderstandings and for reaching conclusions that are methodologically suspect. Developing sound methodology for inter-disciplinary work has thus become of special interest, both to facilitate cross-disciplinary fluency and to help provide protection against the propagation of flawed or facile theories. Much requires methodological review, like theological doctrines whose origins owe more to politics than to biblical exegesis, and scientistic explanations like popular Darwinism, which is often applied in ways that make biologists cringe. E.E.T. has a systems approach to reality, where diverse components of the system must be accommodated in methods that are suited to furthering meaningful inter-disciplinary conversations. Methods suited to each discipline may not be compatible with such compound methodology and, of course, fideism is as much out of place as scientism.

2.02 The move to find methods that suit the problem

Biological research scientists are accustomed to exploiting whatever methods bring replicable information out of their experiments and observations. Interpretation of the data obtained is always done with respect to the limits of the particular method that produced it. This pragmatic approach to methodology is based on self-correcting interrogation of nature’s complexities. Methods are largely determined by the subject material, so there is little place for preconceived, theory-driven dictates about the philosophical propriety of one method over another. Methods, data and the theories they sustain are considered by natural scientists to be properly tested by other scientists after publication. What counts, is progressing testable descriptions of reality. In contrast, up until recently theological research was dominated by methodological theory but this has changed. For example theologian Dan R. Stiver writes:

In the modern period, method has been, perhaps, the key theological concept. For a variety of reasons, those who sought to understand Scripture believed that ascertaining the correct method or approach was foundational. In the end, however, preoccupation with method

in many ways has been seen as a hindrance to understanding Scripture rather than a help.

Focus on method has caused conservative and liberal Christians alike to neglect the theological meaning of the text itself.

In this model, method has a place, but it is not foundational nor does it have to be certain. Nor does it, as sometimes happens, become the focus rather than Scripture or the life of faith.\(^{165}\)

This factor is even more evident in inter-disciplinary co-operative work. To the outsider, inter-disciplinary research may appear to have elements of methodological opportunism. Yet there is a reason for this. The research questions asked are generally broad and inclusive and finding an answer would be a real contribution to humanity. If theory-driven methodology (e.g. the strict methodological materialism of science or the historical-critical methodology of 20\(^{th}\) century Bible exegetics) could have answered the big questions, they would obviously have done so long ago.

Theology/Science research workers may develop their own compound methodologies. Robert J. Russell has surveyed the methodologies of leading Theology/Science workers such as Nancey Murphy, George Ellis, and Philip Clayton and identified theory-driven methodological objectives that aim to:

- defeat reductionism, particularly in its more virulent forms
- as eliminative ontological reductionism and causal reductionism.

Russell considers critical realist methodology to be of value and of enduring importance in inter-disciplinary studies. However, he has also developed his own competing Creative Mutual Interaction (CMI) methodology, specifically designed for Theology/Science research work. Space constraints preclude giving a detailed account of this valuable new advance in inter-disciplinary methodology.\(^{166}\)

2.03 The search for a method allowing causal responsibility and system teleology

Many Old Testament texts are given more informational content in the New Testament than their literal meaning or historical context formally permits. This then touches on the contentious subject of prophesy. The authors of both Old and New Testament texts accepted prophesy as a natural part of reality. However, this would


not be well received in modern and post-modern circles. Yet again, there are numerous Pentecostals and other believers who experience, on a regular basis, phenomena indistinguishable from biblical accounts of the prophetic. They may find biblical support for new applications or enlargements on the meanings of texts through prophetic insights from verses such as 1 Corinthians 14:39 adap:

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, desire earnestly to prophesy.¹⁶⁷

Interpretive meanings exceed what appears literally and adds more information than could be expected to have been available to the original authors.¹⁶⁸ This methodology permits unseen teleological factors to modulate causal textual translations. That form of isegesis can be a limiting factor on inter-disciplinary harmonization. The research for this dissertation depends on careful, cause-and-effect interpretation of texts without idiosyncratic appeals to authority; isegesis is eschewed. The original language texts were consulted and interpreted biblically holistically and judiciously (see section A.06).

The non-reductive hermeneutic of the Bible authors is monistic, with past, present and future integrated by divine embracing purposes and processes. This appears incompatible with a positivist hermeneutics of reductive causal determinism, as used in much scientific work (though not in quantum mechanics). This could be a stumbling block for any serious attempt to explore creative mutual interpretations of reality between traditional perfect being theology and Theology/Science research. In E.E.T. these disparate methods are harmonized and it is recognized that successful worldview development depends on that achievement.

The E.E.T. worldview has room for both local freedom of choice and overall system determination. Without local freedom of choice, just judgment and ethical dialysis would be ruled out. Without an embracing divine determination of the system, perfect being theism is ruled out. The E.E.T. compound methodology accords with the principle of freedom of self-actualization and has free choices located in everyday cause-and-effect reality (the context of most science). Yet, whole system determinism


¹⁶⁸ For many illustrations of this, see CNTUOT.
ultimately results from exhaustion of all of the possible choices. That is, entities can not choose just anything but must freely chose to actualize from a finite pool of potentials within the pre-determined system. Also many natural limits on choice-making are inherent of the mechanics of the system. These vary with time and place so that within the embrace of systems teleology there are opportunities for a diversity of expressions of local causal responsibility. There are elements of idealism and critical realism in the compound methodology that sustains the E.E.T. worldview (see, also section 7.02).

2.04 Applying modern and post-modern methodologies

In 2002, under the auspices of the *Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences* (Berkeley, California), edited conference proceedings were published, concerning bridge-building between science and religion. In this there are helpful reflections on some practical experiences with attempts to harmonize different methodologies. Inter-disciplinary pioneer Professor Robert J. Russell and his colleague Kirk Wegter-McNelly summarize:

> In the past few decades, ongoing work in methodology has provided structural support for the bridge scientists and theologians are building between their respective fields. Though this work is sound, allowing for the weight of regular traffic, points of instability are still being discovered. But even where science and theology falls under criticism, it gains strength in the effort scholars are making to responsibly address challenges raised by feminist, post-modern, multi-religious, and other critiques. Science at its best and theology at its best both pursue truth. Both science and theology are self-critical when they fall short of truth. Both are humble and persistent in the face of mystery. If it be true, as theologians claim, that the God of Israel is the creator of this magnificent universe, then every truth about this universe discovered by science only enhances appreciation for God’s creative handiwork.169

In the same proceedings, devoted to inter-disciplinary bridge-building, Gaymon Bennett writes about the intrinsic diversity of the project:

> The way in which one builds bridges between science and religion is largely determined by how one answers the question: Why build bridges at all? Individual scientists, theologians, historians, ethicists, and philosophers often answer this question differently. . . . Because they build bridges for different reasons they build bridges differently.

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The bridges are intended to span different kinds of cultural, intellectual or political divides, forcing scholars to deal with differing intellectual terrain. In short, the tools, techniques, and materials appropriate for scholars engaged in one bridge-building project are not always the appropriate tools for another.  

Also in the same conference proceedings, philosopher Nancey Murphy comments:

I shall examine two proposals for relating theology and science. One is the critical realism of Peacocke and Barbour. The other is the comparative study of the methods of science and theology. I shall argue that critical realism is a doctrine at home only in a modern worldview. However, this doctrine may be abandoned without loss, in favour of an investigation of the similarities in method between theology and science. Post-modern philosophy of science will turn out to be just the bridge needed for relating the two disciplines.

Application of both modern and post-modern methodologies, in synergy, is becoming a requirement for anyone who would participate in the inter-disciplinary bridge-building enterprise. As mentioned in the conclusions (see section 7.02) interdisciplinary workers are often opportunist in the philosophical positions they appear to operate from (also, see chapter 5). The eclectic approach has, to some extent, been borrowed from the empirical, de facto methodology of inductive science. Here the objective is generally to winkle-out pertinent, refutable data not to try and support a particular philosophical view or deductive system. The efficacy of the E.E.T. hybrid methodology is seen from its successes in addressing serious worldview questions.

2.05 Worldview methods

In outlining the research methodology of this dissertation four broad topics are considered:

- first, the objective of the research;
- second, the starting position;
- third, the materials selected for consideration;

and finally (and more extensively):

- the techniques used in developing and critiquing those materials towards the objective of providing an opportunity for discourse between traditional perfect being theism and the research interests of the Theology/Science academy.

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170 Ibid., 11.
172 Peters and Bennett (2002), 35 - reference at dissertation footnote 169,
In regard to the research objective of this dissertation: it is defined as an exploration of the possibilities for improving dialogue between perfect being theism theology and the current developments in Theology/Science studies, in terms of a theory of ethical encounter cosmogony. To progress this topic it is considered necessary to be ecumenically eclectic in drawing together careful re-readings of biblical texts, several varieties of biblically-driven theology, scientific data and theory, and philosophical arguments, in the broad context of human social history. A strong theme in the Bible is the desirability of unity among believers; 173 science is the same. The wide connections of the E.E.T. hermeneutics contribute towards integrative theory. 174

This dissertation includes a discussion of the worldview potential of the Ethical Encounter Theology methodology (see chapter 6 especially). To support a worldview it is necessary to develop coherent positions around seven worldview questions: what is really real, what is the nature of the universe, what is a human being, what happens to a person at death, why is it possible to know anything at all, how do we know what is right and wrong, and what is the meaning of human history? 175 Whilst the complete range of philosophically-important worldview questions is extensive, 176 these seven are considered sufficiently inclusive to facilitate reflection on the most important relationships of E.E.T.

The worldview endeavour itself is one that has recently received overt encouragement from unexpected quarters, in the editorial pages of the world’s most prestigious science journal: The scientific enterprise is full of experts on specialist areas but woefully short of people with a unified worldview. This state of affairs can only inhibit progress and could threaten political and financial support for research. 177

A similar view is expressed by Colin A. Russell, a pioneering worker in multivalent studies: Although science no longer proceeds from consciously held theological axioms, it would do well to realize that especially today

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173 E.g. *John* 17:23; *Romans* 12:5; *1 Corinthians* 1:13; *Ephesians* 4:5.
174 See also the comparative treatment of the E.E.T. worldview in dissertation chapter 6.
it needs to re-examine its ideological roots and to reaffirm the nature
of its quest. If not, the ‘age of science’ may be nearer its termination
that anyone might imagine.\textsuperscript{178}

Political support for science is influenced by a public perception of the disinterested
ethics of scientists and of the community relevance of expensive scientific work.\textsuperscript{179}

At the heart of E.E.T. is its position as to why God would create a universe like ours,
with all its unique, scientifically-characterized features. The absence of a convincing,
all-embracing motive for creation can be viewed as one cause of impaired
communication between denominations and among theists in general. The general
methods applied to support the concept of an ethically-revelational (apocalyptic)
cosmos are critically investigative of existing understandings. These methods are
synthetic, developmental and even advocatory of novel theory. E.E.T. describes a
selective and programmatic actualization of unseen, ethical realities (including the
values of an embracing matrix of right ethics – the m.o.r.e.) as part of the observable
history of our space-time universe. This way of interpreting reality offers traditional
philosophically theist theologians a cognitive bridge to appreciate the advances that
have been achieved in the academy of Theology/Science.

Thus the handling of dissertation materials is necessarily eclectic and discursive as
the analysis attempts to meet the challenge of the many paradoxes and dialetheisms
that inevitably arise when ethically disparate parts of reality are interpreted to interact
continuously (and, as proposed, purposefully). The dissertation is at its most post-
modern in deconstructing some cherished doctrines in theology and science. It is at its
most modern in finding evidence for a single, concatenating ethical purpose in the
origin, processes, and grand finale of our universe.

2.06 Ethics as a \textit{lingua franca} for science and theology discourse
There are potential benefits in an integrated theological schema encompassing origins,
purpose and destiny, cautiously interfaced with the biblical account of reality and the
current scientific perspective, in a philosophically-coherent matrix. For example, it is
assumed that the importance of history as foundational in Pannenberg’s and

\textit{Can We Be Sure About Anything?: Science, Faith and Postmodernism}. Leicester, Apollos: 139.
Moltmann’s theology can be productively interfaced with the emphases on universal process of Whitehead’s and Hartshorne’s philosophies, sited in a contemporarily scientifically-coherent, ecological and cosmological matrix, in harmony with careful, holistic biblical reading. Though E.E.T. has some affinities with Process, it is distinct in its traditional, biblical theism and its embracing ethical focus, all aiming for fresh, hybrid vigour. A well-known philosopher’s weighting of the position of ethics in the quest for a comprehensive view of reality is indicative:

It is important to realise that science does not make assertions about ultimate questions – about the riddles of existence or about man’s task in the world. This has been well understood. But some great scientists, and many lesser ones, have misunderstood the situation. The fact that science cannot make any pronouncements about ethical principles has been misrepresented as indicating that there are no such principles . . . in fact the search for truth presupposes ethics.\textsuperscript{180}

In a publication for a non-specialist audience the author of this dissertation developed a similar point, concerning the foundational significance of ethics, in a different way to Sir Karl Popper.\textsuperscript{181} Although couched in simple terms, it may still be pertinent:

Science simply cannot avoid conceding that those factors that enable it to exist and to operate successfully are essentially ‘good’. Science did not exist, nor could it exist, in the pre-existing darkness of negation. Such a darkness and negation are not neutral, they are inimical to, and clearly subvert, the essential foundations of science itself, and so science would not be remiss in referring to them as objectively ‘evil’.

Factors such as light, logic, life, and love are essential for the very existence of science. Without light scientists could not see, without logic (a part of wisdom) there would be no rational basis for science, without life there would be no humans to work in science, without love and cooperation our society would be so violent as to afford insufficient opportunity for science. Science must admit that the primordial darkness of negation (revealed in the Bible and independently described by science) is evil and its invasion by light, logic, life, and love is good. The work of establishing order, understanding and cooperation in our universe is unarguably the basis for the scientific endeavour; any resurgence of chaos and confusion is an anti-scientific force.

So at its very heart, science is far from being an ethically-neutral discipline. This truth may come as a shock to most practising

scientists and technologists. Factors that facilitate science are unconsciously accepted as ‘good’, and those that degrade the scientific process as ‘bad’.

Working scientists are in the habit of applauding research work as either ‘good science’ or denigrating it as ‘bad science’. To be meaningful and productive, science relies completely on the immanence of logic and reliability in the universe, upon the integrity and skill of the scientists themselves, on the probity and standards of the community of scientists, and ultimately upon the sustaining interest and/or support of Society.\textsuperscript{182}

Science is enabled, sustained, and rendered socially acceptable by the very ethical factors that have exercised theologians and philosophers for so long. Yet the more narrowly focussed scientific method by itself is not well adapted to analyse the richness of such embracing ethical constituents of reality (see section 7.04).

2.07 Comments on biblical theological methods

Materials selected for research include the \textit{Old Testament} texts in the best available English translations, with reference to the Hebrew texts where appropriate; the \textit{New Testament} texts in the best accepted English translations, with reference to the Greek texts where appropriate; and use of the main scholarly Bible commentaries, concordances, leading theology treatises, and biblical ethical and hermeneutical studies.\textsuperscript{183, 184} Also much used are a wide range of specialised research papers, symposia and books focussing on science/theology/philosophy\textsuperscript{185} interactions; together with similar materials from each of the separate disciplines, and from other disciplines, where considered relevant. The ethical perspective is coming of age and

\textsuperscript{182} There are further observations about science and ethics in, e.g. Alexander, D. (2002). \textit{Rebuilding the Matrix: Science and Faith in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century}. Oxford, Lion: 225, 226.
some researchers have made considerable headway in the study of the interaction of ethics in an inter-disciplinary context.\textsuperscript{186}

In one way Ethical Encounter Theology is a commentary on the Bible, conditioned by ethical and contemporary scientific considerations. Biblical commentary as a genre has been surveyed and analysed by Joel B. Green, who provides some helpful definitive methodological guidelines applicable to research such as that reported on in this dissertation:

\begin{quote}
Method must be tamed in the light of Scripture’s theological aims, and some methods are more relevant and theologically friendly than others. In addition to approaches that situate the voice of Scripture sociohistorically, of special interest in theological commentary would be models of analysis that take seriously the general narrative content of Scripture. They would also respect the theological unity of Scripture, which takes its point of departure from the character and purpose of Yahweh and gives rise to its historical unity as the narrative of that purpose being worked out in the cosmos. And they would respect the final form and canonical location of the biblical texts.\textsuperscript{187}
\end{quote}

In the same review article, he draws attention to the possibilities afforded by a two horizon methodology that encourages theological exegesis in tandem with a careful exploration of a constructive theology relevant to today’s society.\textsuperscript{188} These several observations by a leading New Testament exegete are taken as encouraging of work like E.E.T. that explores consonances between biblically-led theology and contemporary Theology/Science interests.

In fact, workers in the Theology/Science academy rarely return to the biblical texts themselves. The preponderance of research is on what science and philosophy can tell us about God. Few have interest in grasping the thistle of biblical hermeneutics and exegesis. Yet developments in scientific and philosophical theology can only be of interest to the large constituencies of philosophically theist Abrahamic faith communities if they demonstrate appreciation of the texts of their scriptures. This is a


non-trivial problem that will not go away. The challenge has been to find a method that permits the ancient and revered texts to add some recognizably biblical substance to the inter-disciplinary dialogue. The E.E.T. method argues for a stronger connection to the Bible texts than is customary. Its arguments include some based on re-readings of key texts. This is a method that has become more appreciated in recent years. In a keynote paper, Christine Helmer and Christof Landmesser define the sub-discipline of biblical theology in the following terms:

Since its origins, the field of biblical theology has been considered a bridge, spanning the gap and staging the dialogue between the historically and exegetically orientated biblical disciplines and the conceptually orientated theological disciplines. As a discipline distinct from either biblical or theological studies, biblical theology proved successful in preventing premature dogmatic impositions onto the interpretation of ancient texts.\(^{189}\)

Helmer and Landmesser have promoted a new direction for biblical theology, as an area of study that makes theological and philosophical questions central in the investigations of biblical theology. This is an especially helpful approach when God’s purpose in this universe is taken as programmatic and progressive. The advance of the divine purpose impacts history in events considered significant by believers, in the composition of the texts, and through the assembly of canons; and then in the interplay of all of these with faith assemblies and their contextual communities. E.E.T. provides a way to extend the scope of biblical-theological bridge-building to include the findings of Theology/Science as a highly significant contemporary contextual community factor. With respect to the need to apply new methods, biblical theologian James Barr’s comment is relevant:

There can be no such thing as the one appropriate method for biblical theology.\(^{190}\)

Ethical Encounter Theology has re-investigated the biblical story of the origins of humanity and proposes a monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis that does not clash with the major scientific findings concerning human origins. This then requires a careful reading of the soteriological connection between Jesus Christ and Adam.

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This method has been used with deference to Otto Neurath’s point (cited by Nancy Murphey): “conservatism is nearly always the best policy: keep as much of the original structure intact as possible.” Nancy Murphy provides a valuable summary of theological logic:

Systematic theology is a web of beliefs in which each doctrinal claim must be supported by a cluster of arguments. The arguments form the links between one claim and another and between each claim and its respective grounds. Theological formulations are governed by the requirement of consistency: they must be consistent with one another (and insofar as they are, they are mutually supporting); they must be tied to grounds from at least one of two sources (scripture and experience); and in the process of seeking the best solution to these several demands, the theologian must seek to deviate as little as possible from previous formulations (the requirement of continuity). 191

This can be related to Christine Helmer’s summary of a new direction in biblical theology that could encourage worldview propositions (like E.E.T.) to converse intimately with the texts of the canon (this requires a long quotation):

Schleiermacher’s concept of canon significantly challenges the position identifying canon with text by relating text to experience. Canon represents the transhistorically stable experience of a religion that produces ideas and creates language. Canon is essentially communicative; as a concept, it is the explanation of how an identical experience is circulated among those participating in the living whole of a historical religion. The nature of the transhistorical communication of a religion’s ideas through language and the maintenance of a common experience across history and across cultures are aspects to the canon that steer it towards the question of unity. The unity of the canon is both a transhistorical reality ‘behind’ the text and a transhistorical reality of individuals and communities ‘in front of’ the text.

This understanding is represented in Schleiermacher’s system as an important proposal for interdisciplinary theological work. The question of the canon’s unity is addressed by establishing the formal basis of interdisciplinary communication and by leaving the canon’s material underdetermination open to exegetical investigation and systematic-theological verification. Such an interdisciplinary cooperation is required of a biblical theology that takes seriously historical investigation on the one hand and on the other hand, explores those philosophical and theological questions inscribed in the biblical texts and posed by subsequent generations of interpreters.

Such a biblical theology would make use of philosophical theology to clarify issues of the nature of religion, its constancy amid historical change, and the justification of concepts, such as the canon. An exegetical theology would contribute historical answers to questions relating experience to text production and show how these historical results can be evaluated in light of theological questions concerning the nature of that experience. And systematic theology would verify that contemporary systematic articulations of experience are indeed parts alive in the whole of a transhistorical religion’s communication.\textsuperscript{192}

Yet there is more to be said, for above and beyond this biblical theological method few have yet addressed seriously Augustine’s idea that love (involving spiritual training, discipline and a commitment to obeying God) needs must direct all interpretation of sacred texts. This is a point that theological leader Kevin Vanhoozer has extended to include ethical contextualization (and that adds to the current intellectual ethos that is so favourable to the Ethical Encounter Theology program):

Understanding – of the Bible or of any other text – is a matter of ethics, indeed of spirituality. Indeed, interpretation ultimately depends upon the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.\textsuperscript{193}

Biblical exegete and theologian, David A. Carson, in endorsing the latest edition of John Stott’s \textit{The Cross of Christ}, lists his six theological cardinal virtues of method as:

- say what must be said on the topic; gently but firmly warn against what must not be said; repeatedly ground judgements in biblical texts; hierarchize the argument to maintain priority of the crucial issue; present the case with clarity; and so cast it as to elicit genuine worship and thankfulness from any thoughtful reader.\textsuperscript{194}

Stott describes the three great achievements of the cross of Christ as saving sinners, revealing God, and conquering evil. These are broadly the same three factors observed in E.E.T. Christology to be the major fruits of the persistent divine ethical encounter process that is evidenced in our world.\textsuperscript{195} In this, E.E.T. supports the idea


\textsuperscript{195} It is not essential to be a Christian to appreciate the E.E.T. hermeneutic. For example, the three saving achievements listed by John Stott could be understood as: accepting the invitation to submit to divine ethics, responsiveness to education in divine ethical methodology, and consequential binary ethical apocalypsis and the ethical dialysis of the Eschaton; e.g., see sections 1.10, 1.16 and 3.02.
of a cosmically pervading significance of soteriology. John Stott helpfully outlines his basic method for exploring the richness of his topic:

In developing my theme, I have had in mind the triangle of Scripture, tradition, and the modern world. My first anxiety has been to be true to the Word of God, allowing it to say what it has to say and not asking it to say what I might want it to say. There is no alternative to careful exegesis of the text. Secondly, I have endeavoured to share some of the fruits of my reading. In seeking to understand the cross, one cannot ignore the great works of the past. To be disrespectful of tradition and of historical theology is to be disrespectful of the Holy Spirit who has been actively enlightening the church in every century. Then, thirdly, I have tried to understand Scripture, not only in its own light and in the light of tradition, but also in relation to the contemporary world. I have asked what the cross of Christ says to us at the end of the twentieth century.196

The irenic approach of this evangelical theologian has been taken as a guide for developing and presenting biblical theological matters for cooperative mutual interaction with science and philosophy. For comments on the requirement to remain aware of culturally conditioning factors see section 5.02.

The techniques used in developing E.E.T. depend on discovering novel associations and theories and then testing their heuristic potency and their capacity for consonance within a complete model of reality. The usual hermeneutical spiral methodology applies, in which interpretive theory is applied to data, resulting in revised interpretive theory, which is re-applied to data, and so on until an understanding is attained that is more coherent and/or more generally inclusive.197 In the Middle-Ages, worldviews depended on methodological rules of aesthetics, where:

we see tranquil, indefatigable, exultant energy of passionately systematic minds bringing huge masses of heterogeneous material into unity.198

In worldviews today, the main aim of method is to firmly ground new proposals in a genre of theological philosophy that demonstrate heuristic value in regard to the vastly detailed, material reality depicted by science. In addition E.E.T. has applied methods that provide grounds for reflecting on materiality’s possible ethical purpose especially in regard to theodicy. It is on the success of these methods that the value of

E.E.T. will stand or fall as a resource for traditional perfect being theists to establish a two-way understanding with on-going developments in Theology/Science.

2.08 Reflections on methodological reductionism

Many educated people accept that science shows a basic explanatory efficacy. This tends to validate the reductionist methodology of scientific enquiry (though, also see philosopher Alan Chalmers’ general critique of the logical foundations of the scientific method).\(^{199}\) Methodological reductionist enquiry is never executed by mindless robots alone but invariably requires at least one active human mind. This is a mind that involves a consciousness thoroughly disciplined in the speciality where breakthroughs in scientific explanation are anticipated. It is thus hard to prove that reductionist methods are not always permeated by higher cognitive input, i.e. by processes not fully defined. For example, theoretical physicist Henry Stapp writes about a scientific basis for human free will:

Rene Descartes proposed an interactive dualism that posits an interaction between the mind of a human being and some of the matter in his or her brain. However, the classical physical theories that reigned during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are based exclusively on the material/physical part of Descarte’s ontology, and they purport to give, in principle, a completely deterministic account of the physically described properties of nature, expressed exclusively in terms of these physically described properties themselves. Orthodox contemporary physical theory violates this condition in two separate ways. First, it injects random elements into the dynamics. Second, it requires psychophysical events – called ‘Process 1 interventions’ by John von Neumann. Neither the content nor the timing of these events is determined, even statistically, by any known law. Orthodox quantum mechanics considers these events to be instigated by choices made by conscious agents. This quantum conception of the mind-brain connection allows many psychological and neuropsychological findings associated with the apparent physical effectiveness of our conscious volitional efforts to be explained in a causal and practically useful way. According to this quantum approach, conscious human beings are invested with degrees of freedom denied to the mechanistic automatons to which classical physics reduced us.\(^{200}\)


The creative events of the human brain may be unconscious or liminally conscious. They are sometimes reported to be conscious as instances of inspiration, serendipity, dreams, visions, instinct, hunches, and lucky guesses, and so forth. Many creative scientists are prepared to acknowledge sudden, inexplicable leaps of comprehension or insight that enabled new and powerful interpretations of data. Subliminal events in the brain of a thinker can have very broad consequences. When a breakthrough in understanding affects a substantial portion of a science it can effect a paradigm shift in general understanding. Of course, socio-political factors, largely among scientists themselves, are another determinant in what is accepted as scientifically true. The very liminality of human consciousness makes it both marvellously available to be original and marvellously open to be influenced. This dissertation draws attention to liminal cogitation as a process well adapted for fine ethical reasoning and decision making. This is a basis for the process of ecollation in E.E.T., where invisible ethical potentials become actualized through human value decisions and incorporated into the world’s history.

Generalizations such as John von Neumann’s “Process 1 interventions” represent, of course, only a vague beginning of an understanding of mind. Nonetheless, despite the remaining mystery of the sources of invention and despite frequent fallings-short of unbiased objectivity among practitioners of science, yet scientific method has registered innumerable practical successes in discovering how nature works. In various mutations, the scientific method has now been adopted throughout the academy and extensively in government, commerce, and industry. The success of the scientific method is frequently claimed to be evidenced by the powerful technological bases of contemporary society, especially in: agriculture, labour-saving appliances, medical sciences, education, data storage and processing, communications, transport, robotics and automated production, weapon systems, space exploration, etc.

As mentioned, the source of innovations in science is unknown and so has escaped reductive scrutiny. Such may be forthcoming, once further progress has been made in

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201 Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. We also note the work of critics of the idea of paradigm shift, e.g. Imre Lakatos and Paul Feyerabend.


the scientific understanding of the brain/mind. However, as yet there is a substantial hiatus. Cognitive scientists and the philosophers of mind are still hammering on the door of human consciousness. There is, as yet, no detailed theory of the source of inventiveness that could be subjected to rigorous scientific testing. This weakens any exclusively materialist accounts which assume the universe can be reduced to nothing more than matter-energy or genes-seeking-survival (or “nothing buttery” physicalism).\textsuperscript{204} Whilst the sources of novelty associated with human brain activity are yet outside the reach of scientific experimentation, reductionist materialism is a frustratingly incomplete story. A related question often arises, concerning whether neo-Darwinian selection of randomly generated mutations is alone sufficient explanation for the origin and major diversifications of life forms.\textsuperscript{205}

Worldviews that take the liminal properties of the human mind to be too difficult or too unpredictable for consideration may be neglecting a potentially fertile conditioning factor in worldview development. The beginnings of an insight into the significance of extraordinary human cerebral activity are suggested by a recent BBC series, \textit{How Art Made the World}.\textsuperscript{206} Here, a thesis originated by anthropological archaeologists is described and richly illustrated by Nigel Spivey. This is that prehistoric rock art has been influenced by the trance experiences of Palaeolithic hunter/gatherer shamans. This was associated with cultural changes that commenced a process leading to the complex civilizations we know today. Without needing to comment on the concept itself, it is worth noting that such major research on emergence is progressing at the interface of science, art, cultural anthropology and psychology. From the position of this dissertation, it is noted that just as art and inventions can be imagined, so too, ethical scenarios can be imagined.

In E.E.T. perspective, the human imagination could resonate with information in the data-banks of novelty of the unseen ecology of space-time. Invisible potentials could offer information including the ethically disparate possibilities of the u.r.s.t. and the m.o.r.e. The personal choices made will actualize invisible data. This then becomes

\textsuperscript{205} This has recently been thoroughly explored in: Cobb, J. B., editor, (2008). \textit{Back to Darwin: a Richer Account of Evolution}. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans.
\textsuperscript{206} Spivey, N. (2005). \textit{How Art Made the World}. London, BBC (DVD, 290 minutes); see, also dissertation sections \textbf{1.15} and \textbf{6.05}. 
available for scientific investigation in the materially-actualized ecollicative choices of history. This reflects both the basis of and the consequence of the freedom of choice facility inherent of the seen/unseen reality of our universe.  

For healthy inter-disciplinary discourse, theologians will avoid the sort of fideistic and fatalistic thinking that accepts anything and everything as simply to be expected in a universe of miracles, created and maintained by Almighty God:

who alone is immortal and
who lives in unapproachable light,
who no one has seen or can see.

The Gospel authors define Christ as generally going to great lengths to teach people in ways that are easy to comprehend for those who want to learn. Christian theology has been built on faith seeking understanding. This method automatically excludes the numerous miracles and divine revelations that, down the centuries, have been shown to have natural explanations or to have been incidents of deception. Science, too, has been plagued by cheats and frauds, yet few doubt its reliable substance.

Whilst gullible, fideist, and scientistic ways are rejected there must also be an awareness of the care needed not to throw out the silver with the dish water.

An other-dimensional, embracing matrix of right ethics such as envisaged in E.E.T., could not have the same sensory properties as the materials of our world. Material cause-and-effect relationships are in a separate part of reality to seen/unseen sympathetic resonance interactions. However, there is no scientific reason to view the unseen as ontologically ghostly, ephemeral or even spiritual. For those who doubt

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207 Again, the biological analogy is helpful: the unseen entity of an ecological niche has to be approached through an actual species that ecollates on it; it itself is not directly accessible. This reality is close to the concept of epistemic distance; see Hick, J. (1958) - reference in dissertation section 1.06; and to the idea that this is the gap where the natural sciences are able to function – see Russell, R. J. (2006). Cosmology, Evolution, and Resurrection Hope: Theology and Science in Creative Mutual Interaction. Hindmarsh, South Australia, Australian Theological Forum Press: 36.

208 1 Timothy 6:16; see also 1 John 4:12a: “No one has ever seen God.” Also, quoting: “nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37) is sometimes misused as a way of short-circuiting thoughtful enquiry. Also, isegesis of 1 Corinthians 1:20 has been used to condemn philosophy as such. Such examples of fideist fatalism have not helped the work of building bridges between biblical theology and the empirical worldview of science.


these minimal claims, modern physics has examples of regular events in our universe that are best explained as resulting from entirely other dimensional causes.\textsuperscript{211} The everyday reality we observe is like the visible tip of an iceberg with most of its material generally invisible. The E.E.T. method deals with a single system in which our tangible reality is contained in and conditioned and explained by the unseen. One of the most measurable outputs of this system is human behavioural choice, which can shape personal, local and world history. The ethical revelations that may accompany material choices are part of history and therefore of eternal significance. The parable of “The Good Samaritan” and other biblical lessons imply that practical ethical exposure is of absolute significance. That is, it is not what is done that eternally registers but what has been ethically actualized by doing it.\textsuperscript{212} In E.E.T. it is argued that history can be influenced by invisible resonances with divine right ethics. Yet it is through the world’s material that ethical encounter progressively actualizes all the ethical potentials hidden from $t = 0$. Theologically it is significant that perfect God’s intended outcome was complete from $t = 0$. Yet human knowledge has to be searched for from the changes we observe or provoke in the natural arena of world history. This has a hint of a theological justification of the work of science.

In summary, unexplained sources of invention and revelation are customarily ranked as either serendipity intrinsic to the material brain (a naturalist or internalist view) or as supernatural revelation, either accessed by mind or deposited there (a supernaturalist or externalist view). The internalist view may be atheistic or deistic if nature is considered to derive from divine design. The externalist view may be deistic or theistic, depending on how involved divinity is posited to be. Human inventors of novelty may thoroughly prepare themselves and make efforts to obtain inspiration or to access the creative realm. However, there is no reliable protocol for inventing. The results of our best efforts to produce novelty by willing it remain uncertain.\textsuperscript{213} The experience of dependency seems equally real in respect of advances in mathematics,

\textsuperscript{211} Summarized in, e.g. Barrow, J. D. (2000). The Universe That Discovered Itself. Oxford, OUP; and Ross, H. (1999) Beyond the Cosmos: the Extra-Dimensionality of God. Colorado Springs, Navpress: chapter 6 has some useful methodological rules concerning extra-dimensional paradoxes. Ross, who is a research physicist and biblical apologist, argues that the Bible is unique among the great works of faith, in being able to harmonize with many of the proposals of current extra-dimensional physics.

\textsuperscript{212} Luke 10:30-37.

\textsuperscript{213} In 1948, Albert Einstein is said to have said: “One can organise to apply a discovery already made, but not to make one.” Winokur, M. (1997). Einstein a Portrait: with an Introduction by Mark Winokur. Corte Madera, California, Pomegranate Artbooks: 68. © The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
the making of scientific breakthroughs, in solving philosophical problems, for creative theology, and in mystical prayer experiences, as well as for creativity in the visual, performing, fashion and culinary arts, etc. A significant methodological point arising from this is that there are aspects of many significant human activities that are not available for reductive analysis. In addition, because reductive analysis is a human activity, this implies that its cognitive basis is never fully defined.

A similar analysis might also be applied to the uncertain sources of increasing novelty in cosmology and macro-evolution. Physical, fossil, and DNA-pedigree records of repeated introductions of survivable novelty are incontestable. The creative processes themselves, however, seem to be largely beyond the capacity of current experimental methods to replicate. In addition, no one can predict what technology, science, the arts, philosophy, fashion, biology, or even our earth and the universe will be doing in only 100 years time.²¹⁴

The E.E.T. method appreciates the universe as a divine means for achieving disparate ethical self-identifications. Apocalypsis of all evil is a logical requirement for the justice of the final judgment against wrong ethics and its permanent removal. Biblically, the whole history of space-time illustrates the wise and loving way that the perfect being deals with the complex problem of ethical conflation, or sin. Basic biblical methodology permits the argument that consummated world history is likely to become the practical ethical wisdom of an ethically dialysed humankind in the aeon-to-come (e.g. Luke 20:35, 36). This does not offend against traditional perfect being theism, it is not contradicted by science and it is philosophically coherent. This contributes to an ethical method that creates consonance between Theology/Science research and traditional perfect being theology.

Scientifically it is not reasonable to believe that a very large explosion of a Singularity (the Big Bang) would alone result in our highly structured universe.²¹⁵ Then again, there is no aggregation of complex molecules we know of that can be predicted to produce a living cell. Likewise, the chance origin of a molecule of nucleic acid could not have been predicted to eventually lead to the vastly detailed


tapestry of living organisms on our planet. Expansion of the anthropoid cerebral cortex could not have been predicted to automatically produce human consciousness and the riches of human culture. These are substantial hiatuses in the broad physicalist causal chain.

These four key emergences have resisted the scientific requirement for replicability. Of itself, this does not necessarily identify the divine as having greater involvement in major evolutionary saltations. Quantum mechanics and parallel universe speculations show that scientifically-comprehensible unseen sources of novelty are feasible. The E.E.T. method simply calls attention to similarities between cutting-edge physical ontology and biblical ontology. In E.E.T., elegant and beautiful physical entities - the forms most wonderful of our living world - and the richness and diversity of human life partly evidence to unseen resonances with an embracing matrix of right ethics (the Rule of the one perfect God). Identifying the m.o.r.e. as one possible source of new information for the major complexifying material actualizations of our universe does not, however, answer the theodicy question. Understanding the origin and utility of evil in a world frankly admitted to have been created by encounter with divine perfection requires additional inter-disciplinary reasoning (see sections 1.13 and 3.15; and, also chapter 6).

The next four sections of this chapter are a systematic consideration of a variety of methodological principles and procedures utilized by some of the current leaders of the biblical theology academy and of the Theology/Science academy. This will show that modernist, reductive materialist methodological approaches have insufficient capacity to address the multi-valent questions evoked by inter-disciplinary research (see sections 2.02, 2.03 and 2.04). Appreciation of the rules sustaining the more

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217 Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 39; Psalm 8:1; 19:1-6; 50:1-7; 89:5-14; 97:1-6; Isaiah 40:21-31; Acts 14:17; Romans 1:19, 20; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 12:22-24; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 4:8; Jude 24; Revelation 1:4-8; and in many other texts.
sophisticated combinations of methodologies currently employed to address unanswered worldview questions has been essential for developing the inter-disciplinary consonance of E.E.T.

2.09 Nancey Murphy on inter-disciplinary methodology

An essay by Nancey Murphy has helpful observations on methodology. On the non-reducibility of theological language, she cites Niels Henrik Gregersen:

> when re-describing a reality which is already partially described in terms of the sciences, we should not expect full translatability between science and theology. Similar to the way in which ethics provides a new perspective on reality that does not merely reduplicate factual statements, so does religion provide a new language in order to catch important differences in reality, viz. qualities that are conformal with God’s identity (such as generosity, humility, . . . love), and features that run contrary to God’s identity (such as small-mindedness . . . pride, aggressiveness, despair). There is, in other words, a semantic surplus, a lingua nova, of religion that transcends that of science.

In her essay, Nancey Murphy then compares the methodologies used by two contemporary Theology/Science leaders: Robert J. Russell and Niels Henrik Gregersen. The salient propositions that she flags which are relevant for the E.E.T. worldview include the following:

1. Science cannot have a direct or normative input to theology; its influence can only be indirect and heuristic.
2. Science often produces an explanation for what is happening in simple systems. With complex systems many different explanations are feasible, opening the door for interpretation rather than explanation.
3. The structures and functions of the complex self-organising systems that are a major feature of our universe have loci where science, philosophy and theology can legitimately interact as collegial disciplines.
4. Legitimate theological interpretations include perception of God’s good creation (which is also basic to worship) and they recognize evidence of sinful

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distortion. The qualitative aspects of natural processes give latitude for theological insights.

5. Nancey Murphy says Gregersen recognises nature as having both:
   i. Fixed and balanced systems; and
   ii. Fluid and “beyond balance” systems, balancing on the boundary of order and disorder (referred to as inherent material liminality in E.E.T.)

It is the later that afford possibilities for unpredictable outcomes. E.E.T. describes a universe characterized by a plethora of fertile liminal circumstances. This is a genuine observation of material reality not a retrograde move to a god of the gaps logic.

6. Some natural systems escape the constraints of pre-established design and may increase in complexity, over time, without external intervention. The open-ended character of this gives access to reasoned theological speculation. E.E.T. takes this category and builds a cosmos-evolving ecollation mechanism on it. Where Nancey Murphey has “without external intervention”, E.E.T. describes an important category between intervention and non-intervention. It emphasizes the possibilities for recognition and acquisition of new information by sympathetic resonances between seen and unseen ecologies. Thus complexifications may progress by drawing on the informational potentials of the invisible moiety of the system, without any external intervention per se. Invisible (not ontologically external) informational resources make available either good or bad data. They may offer the right ethical or the wrong ethical information that funds differences between eu-ecollations and mis-ecollations (see page xviii for definitions). Information acquisitions that expend zero or near zero transfer energy should not be referred to as sensory transductions but rather “information recognition” (see section 4.10).

7. God may be described as the immanent One who invites people to open-ness and self-creativity. If they respond, a fragile new order emerges in human social and political life.

This touches on the serendipity, creativity, unusual mental abilities, and other gratuitous experiences, already considered in this chapter. It moves towards the type of reasoning that has produced the E.E.T. concept of “ecollation” that addresses the difficulty of imagining how an embracing, other-dimensional part of reality articulates with us. This is not God’s person but God’s Kingdom or Rule or Reign
(Greek *basileia*) that E.E.T. describes as the matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.). This is a significant methodological point with important scholarly worldview consequences.

8. Robert J. Russell’s established eight-point classification of the science-theology dialogue is critiqued by Nancey Murphy in terms of Niels Henrik Gregersen’s work. There is strong agreement that scientific theories function heuristically in theology, to provide conceptual and other sorts of inspiration. For E.E.T., such input is limited to matters where soundly exegeted, holistic biblical textual evidence permits such latitude, to enable Theology/Science contributions to retain traction with the major Abrahamic faith communities’ theological positions.

9. In the reverse direction, Murphy asks if theologians in general may be in a better position than most scientists to recognise metaphysical content in scientific work. Imre Lakatos’ work suggests science is often organised around a metaphysical core. Theologians might be able to assist in evaluating any such unconscious disciplinary mutualisms and could sometimes be helpful in suggesting alternative philosophical starting points.²²⁰

The tripartite consonance of E.E.T. is fertile in that way; by its generating research proposals in both science and theology (e.g., see sections 1.10 and 4.12).

10. Nancey Murphy advocates an increased overt participation of philosophy: “Part of the job of philosophy is to attempt to discover and interpret the culture’s conceptual resources and to recommend ways of putting them to better use”, she writes.

This is a point that is consonant with ethical encounter thinking, where the methodological vision is for a tripartite unity between theology, ethics and science.

Another theological philosopher, Philip Clayton, dissents from Nancey Murphy’s view. He considers Niels Henrik Gregersen’s general methodological approach to be much weakened by un-declared fideism:

I am less sympathetic with the methodology that he [Gregersen] is proposing for the science-religion dialogue as a whole. . . . Surely, theologians cannot switch their areas of contact with science at will, according to which results are helpful to a given theological project. . . . if one genuinely seeks a reflective equilibrium between the propositional claims of scientists and the propositional claims of theologians, then there must be more intimate points of contact and

conceptual relationship between the two positions. . . . if he believes
that all theories of evolution can be reconciled with theism in one
way or another, then I urge him to accept the consequences of this
viewpoint for the epistemic status of his own theological work and
for his overall construal of the science-religion dialogue. 221

This category of debate shows the vitality of the new academy of Theolog/Science.
And, again, E.E.T. attempts to address such differences as these in terms of its ethics-
bridging, tripartite unity worldview approach.

2.10 Michael Heller on inter-disciplinary methodology
There are a number of methodological pitfalls already well-recognised in the
science/philosophy/theology discourse and Michael Heller (a Roman Catholic theist
philosopher and mathematical-physicist) has provided a thoughtful account of many
of them, together with his proposals for avoiding such pitfalls in methodology. 222
Introducing the topic he says:

The scientific cognition and the religious cognition are radically
different from the methodological point of view. They speak
different languages and think with the help of different conceptual
tools – so different they are hardly reducible to each other. If one
tries to ‘synthesize’ them too hastily, they usually form a logically
explosive mixture. Any authentic and methodologically-valuable
synthesis must not ignore these differences but rather build on them,
and any such synthesis should be done in the personality of the
religious scientist rather than in the form of ordering propositions
and classifying standpoints concerning religion and science. It is
obvious however, that such a synthesis must be prepared and
constantly accompanied by logically organised reflection, thorough
analysis, and even systematic studies. The fact that this synthesis is
never accomplished but is always becoming implies that sometimes
it is more like a symbiosis than like a synthesis. As in the process of
life itself, creative tensions are unavoidable. 223

Michael Heller’s stated aim is to form:

a consistent whole displaying a sequence of steps that are to be
followed if one seriously wants to reach the state of peaceful co-
existence of science and religion. 224

Science Discussion. Theology and Science 4:121-127.
Templeton Foundation Press.
223 Ibid. page xi.
224 Ibid. page xii.
Other inter-disciplinary workers utilize explanatory models differing from that of the peaceful co-existence and independence which Michael Heller has settled on. The pioneer and *doyen* of Theology/Science studies, Ian Barbour proposed a much cited four-fold typology of conflict or independence or dialogue or integration.\textsuperscript{225}

Some of the significant methodological challenges and questions identified by Michael Heller can be summarised as:

1. The challenge of god-of-the-gaps theologies that abuse science in either finding proofs of God’s existence in lacunae in our knowledge; or, conceding no lacunae, finds no place for God. Michael Heller believes it is the “problem situation” in science, especially in areas remote from experimentation that should guide model-making, not metaphysical preferences. He sees god-of-the-gaps ideas as reducing God to a dubious methodological principle and as also violating the scientific rule never to go beyond the natural phenomena.

2. Given the uncertainty as to if a Singularity preceded the Big Bang said to have generated our universe or alternatively, a smooth-surfaced four-dimensional space-time form with no boundaries or Singularity - by what methods might cosmologists be convinced that God was and is able to influence such a mathematically and physically defined entity. Again, E.E.T. draws attention to the importance of virtue ethics in both science and theology. It makes available the beginnings of a structured ethical *lingua franca* that assists the interdisciplinary dialectic.

It is important to take a wide perspective when looking for consonances between the Bible accounts of creation and the physical and biological scenarios subscribed to by most scientists. Excessively specific and intimate connections are problematic. Ted Peters has produced an extended elaboration on this:

> If we assume the credibility of the standard Big Bang model for the creation of the cosmos, then one tempting oblique question would be,

‘How can we correlate the sequence of Big Bang events with the creation account in the first chapter of *Genesis*?’ Although this question looks exciting at first glance, in fact it is quite misleading for three reasons. First and least of which, the question may assume that with the discovery of a temporal beginning the remaining sequence of events in *Genesis* are similarly confirmable. Just a quick overview will dispel this hope, however. Whereas *Genesis* describes the creation of the earth on the third day, prior to that of the sun and stars on the fourth day, astronomers hold that our sun and solar system were formed together about 5 billion years ago, meaning that the sky was filled with stars and galaxies for perhaps 10 billion years previous to the creation of the earth. And, whereas *Genesis* pictures God on the sixth day resting, his creative work now completed, astronomers contend new stars perhaps with accompanying planets are being formed now and will continue to be formed for some time yet, i.e. creation is continuing. What this means is that the biblical chronology cannot be pressed easily into the scientific chronology. Yet we may be tempted to gerrymander one or the other to make them fit. We might yield to this temptation unless we understand the other two problems with this question.

The second reason for the obliqueness of trying to correlate *Genesis* 1 with Big Bang cosmology is that we might fail to apprehend the hermeneutical problem. The Priestly writer who edited if not authored *Genesis* 1:1-2:4a obviously did not have the Big Bang theory in mind during the sixth century B.C. He or she was most probably thinking about the *Enuma Elish* or some similar Mesopotamian creation myth, and the sequence of events purposely reflects this context. It is only to be expected that the biblical writers would reflect the cultural milieu and world view of their respective context and not that of a scientific age some 2,500 years into their future. Our own situation is parallel. Our cosmological thinking today cannot help reflecting the world view of modern science, which provides the framework within which we do our thinking.

Third, and most important, the Christian doctrine of creation expounded in *New Testament* and patristic times was not originally constructed on the basis of knowledge scientific or otherwise regarding the chronology of primordial events. It was rather a response to hearing the Gospel and the growing realization that the God who redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt and who raised Jesus from the dead is also Lord of the universe. Unless we apprehend the basic motive behind the Christian notion of creation, the technical comparison of the biblical passages with scientific scenarios will only lead us into an intellectual quicksand.226

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226 Peters, T. (1989). Cosmos as Creation. In *Cosmos as Creation: Theology and Science in Consonance*. Edited by Ted Peters. Nashville, Abingdon: 57, 58. In seeking for “gems of wisdom” applicable to both biblical exegesis and scientific understanding (i.e. insights that are not restricted by disciplinary methods), E.E.T. has focused on a biblically consistent, divine ethical purpose for creation
This pit-fall is avoided in E.E.T. since it has a common divine ethical purpose that explains and harmonizes both theological and scientific observations (this is developed further, especially in chapter 4).

3. Michael Heller asks: by what methods can we approach the proposal of an anthropic cosmological principle in the raw material of our universe? A principle said to predestine appearance of human beings on the cosmic stage.

4. Using what methods can we approach the critically important question of: “What breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?” This is a question that theologians may rush forward to answer at their peril.

5. Methodically focussing on the very existence of scientific theories and their effectiveness in processing our knowledge of the world may be more productive than attempts to impose theological ideas on them.

6. A crucial distinction should be noted between philosophy as an aid to discovery and philosophy as an impediment to justification of scientific theories.

7. Using methods that have room for the dynamical nature of theory evolving and having a history.

Support for this point of Michael Heller’s could be found in 1 Corinthians 13:12 TS:

> For now we look through a mirror in a riddle . . .
> now we have knowledge in part.”

Allowing for theory to be provisional is agreed to be a key methodological requirement for progress in this complex area of inter-disciplinary research by most of the contemporary Theology/Science workers. This can be a challenge to traditional theists, if they are wedded to the immutability of the system they work with.

8. This leads to the concept of the impassibility of reality seen, for example in the truly inadequate character of everyday language for interpreting the mathematical structures of physical theories. The same point applies to the simultaneous interaction of thousands of enzymes and substrates in even the simplest cell, the trillion-fold synaptic activity of the billions of neurones in a universe of space-time. This introduces the (ultimately ethically-demulsifying) process of binary ethical apocalypsis.

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228 *TS*: 439; see also in the books of *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*, in any scholarly version.
human brain, and the intricate web of life interconnecting organisms in even simple ecosystems.  

9. A search and expectation for complete consonance and consistency between the knowledge of science, theology and philosophy is a wild-goose chase, methodologically. Michael Heller sees this chase as very unwise and likely to obfuscate rather than clarify understanding. Unlike E.E.T.’s compound monism worldview, Michael Heller’s rests on ontological duality.

10. Rather than looking to scientific theories to deepen understanding of theology, even so well-established theories as the cosmic Big Bang and biological evolution, it may be more productive to explore fundamental methodological assumptions presupposed by every scientific endeavour.

While accepting most of the insights of Michael Heller’s analysis, E.E.T. specifically targets the constitutional inability of the scientific method to envisage a pervading purpose within the universe it has so thoroughly described as temporary and inherently liminal. E.E.T. introduces the idea of universal ethical processes that are logically coherent and necessary in terms of biblical theology for the eschatological ethical apocalypse. Thus, structured ethical processes and purpose come to occupy a similar cosmic teleological position to that afforded by “truth, beauty and goodness” in Whitehead’s thought. Believers who are Ethical Encounter Theology thinkers will anticipate judgment (e.g. 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10) and hope, plan and live for both the clemency and the justice of God at the end of this aeon. E.E.T. acknowledges evolutionary significance in material progress but distinguishes it from the complex suite of eu-ecollations, mis-ecollations and dis-ecollations that enable the binary ethical apocalypses of history to accompany it. These, E.E.T. says, have more significant and lasting outcomes. In this, E.E.T. is compatible with Barbour’s fourth class of faith/science interactions - that of integration. It extends hands in both directions, by instigating an ethical dialogue (without eroding holistic biblical interpretation). E.E.T. searches for the prize of a truly non-dualistic, critical realist,

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multi-valent resonance. In its objective, this method has resemblances with the sophisticated CMI method developed by Robert J. Russell (see section 2.02).\[^{231}\]

E.E.T. has considerable consonance with Russell’s “emergent monism”:

I work with a ‘thin metaphysics’ best described as ‘emergent monism’ in which novelty, along with other features such as consciousness and agency, are contingent and emergent properties at higher levels of biological and neurophysiological complexity – a metaphysics in which the kind and degree of divine action in nature might vary from level to level. . . . open to a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches, thus avoiding any concessions to reductionist bottom-up-only accounts.\[^{232}\]

E.E.T. is an example of bottom-up cosmology that avoids the problems inherent in the idea of divine supervision of each of the emergent levels of evolution. Material actualizations have been able to freely choose from unseen potentials. This results in the incorporation of both good and bad novelty into our world. E.E.T.’s ecollation method is well adapted to permit both the material realities of our world and its unseen ecology to continuously interact. In this, God does not have to tinker with the vehicle to keep it on the road. History is written by these numerous ecollations, as they progressively uncover not only material possibilities but also all right and wrong ethical possibilities. The omega point of E.E.T. cosmology is determined by exhaustion of all the possibilities for ethical apocalypsis, not by some ultimate sophistication attained through emergent material complexifications per se. This is a significant contribution to the scholarly debate on Theology/Science issues.

2.11 Alister McGrath on inter-disciplinary methodology

The general methodological philosophy of this dissertation has resonances with the pioneering methodological analyses of Alister McGrath. Helpfully, the philosophical bases of his approach have recently been succinctly reviewed:

For McGrath, there is no such thing as scientific method, but only scientific methods, finely adapted to their subject matter. The same applies also to theological method. He considers a wide range of methodological points of comparison and diversity, such as the criteria for justification of basic principles both in science and theology, how theories are tested in each discipline, whether any part of positive science may safely be considered authoritative for


\[^{232}\] Ibid., 179.
theology, the role of theoretical entities and conjecture both in science and in theology, and whether and in which respects theological theories can consider themselves provisional, as many theories in physics do. He is not afraid to face any issue with the same analytical and critical apparatus, however difficult it may have been historically for theology or science. Perhaps his most striking methodological achievement is to show the enormous range of parallels, despite marked differences, that exist between scientific and religious or theological thinking. This should put an end among reflective thinkers, once and for all, to simplistic assessments of the relations between the methods of science and theology.\textsuperscript{233}

Alister McGrath is a Reformed Evangelical theist, a historical theologian and a biophysicist who has been active in deriving an even broader methodology than Michael Heller’s (see section 2.10). Alister McGrath’s methodology is well suited for developing a formal, scientific, transparently evangelical Christian theology.\textsuperscript{234} Most of what he argues for would fit into Ian Barbour’s category of dialogue. He also takes a big step towards inter-disciplinary integration that does, in part harmonize with the perfect being theology that E.E.T. draws into consonance with Theology/Science. Among the Christian non-negotiables and many other philosophical, scientific and methodological issues raised by Alister McGrath, the following list outlines those that are most relevant to the Ethical Encounter Theology program:

1. A positive working relationship between Christian theology and the natural sciences is simply demanded by a Christian understanding of the nature of reality itself. That is, a perspective grounded in the doctrine of creation.

2. The same divine rationality or wisdom which the natural sciences discern within the created order is to be identified within the logos incarnate, Jesus Christ. Creation and Christ ultimately bear witness to the same God and to the same divine rationality.

The E.E.T. Christology goes further than Alister McGrath’s, especially in its consequential soteriology\textsuperscript{235} that discerns a Christ-encountered, -sustained, -educated, -redeemed, -ethically apocalypsed, -judged, and -ethically dialysed creation. In E.E.T.


\textsuperscript{235} See dissertation section 1.12.
the ethical purpose and processes of our world are able to stand alone or they can be based on high Christology (see page xxix; also sections 1.11 and 1.16).

3. What, if any, basis is there for proposing a unitary foundation for human knowledge while avoiding the rationalist imperialism of the Enlightenment so derided and critiqued by its opponents? Can Christian theology offer such a basis? This is a question of great importance for Christian theology, especially in relating the theological agenda to other areas of human knowledge.

The E.E.T. method answers in the affirmative. By giving ethics pre-eminence, it opens a worldview that brings traditional perfect being theism into consonance with contemporary Theology/Science research interests.

4. The variety of scientific Christian theology that Alister McGrath advocates affirms the intellectual resilience of traditional Christian orthodoxy, as stated in the classic creeds and defended as living experienced realities by the great Christian traditions – Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism. This theology involves a direct engagement between Christian thought and the natural sciences, with no mediating discipline; no chaperone of allegedly universal philosophy is required.

5. Many scientific theologies have rested on provisional scientific conclusions, themselves correlated with transient theological trends, leading to an outcome which is not of permanent value. What then are the best methodological approaches that avoid such an inbuilt tendency to historical erosion?

6. David Ray Griffin, for example, suggests scientific and religious (specifically the Christian) communities may harmonize their perspectives by adopting a Whiteheadian worldview. He refers to this theistic naturalism or naturalistic theism as providing a credible view of every aspect of human experience through the belief that all actual entities directly perceive God through non-sensory prehension.

For the purposes of E.E.T. methodology, the Whiteheadian idea of non-sensory prehension is adapted to perfect being theism, mediated by the processes of ecollation.

236 E.E.T. also endeavors to integrate something of the newer theologies of contemporary Pentecostalism with the older Christian traditions in a monistically robust inter-disciplinary resonance.
Articulation of unseen information to ecollating physical entities could be by sympathetic resonance (see section 1.10). The embracing matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e. or Rule of God) ensures that physical entities are free to choose and that is one of the bases of the phenomenon we recognize as complexifying evolution.

Alister McGrath sees danger in basing the dialogue between natural sciences and Christianity on what he terms: “a transient revision of a classical theological position”. In this seemingly dismissive manner he disposes of the rich bounty of Whiteheadian Process thinking. In contrast, E.E.T. discovers heuristically valuable insights in much of the research done by Process thinkers, without finding it necessary to be persuaded by overt or covert panentheism (see section 1.03).

7. Christian theology, sensu strictu, is obliged to respect and obey the biblical testimony and allow itself to be shaped and reshaped by it. Some of the less critical attempts to relate Christian theology to the natural sciences assume that the way the sciences currently see things is the way they really are. Unlike the now relatively settled outlooks of Platonism and Aristotelianism, the natural sciences are continually evolving.

E.E.T. has also found heuristic vigour, not weakness nor handicapping in persevering with a thoroughgoing biblically-driven theology, with special attention paid to careful, scientifically-informed interpretive holism.

8. The natural sciences break new ground, gradually rendering obsolete the views of the world that once seemed unassailable. Yet the assumptions and methods by which such provisional understandings are gained remain much the same. This is that there is an independent reality accessible to the human mind, the ordering and structure of which can be investigated empirically and expressed mathematically. Some eighteenth-century British theologians sought to forge an alliance between Newtonian physics and Christian theology that has not survived the progressing paradigms of science. Methodology must be tuned, in some way, to recognise what are transitionary phases and what are end points of theory. This is neigh impossible for those with no first-hand experience of the labours of science.239

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239 The author of this dissertation supports the call for more hands-on laboratory and field scientists to train in theology and then contribute their unique cross-disciplinary perspectives on how science and theology can interact positively and creatively.
By referencing to tripartite reality - that is a single reality described through perfect being theology, theological ethics and science - E.E.T. is able to articulate with a variety of theological traditions. It is partly inspired by Pentecostal theology’s evidence that unseen realities regularly play a part in history making, through human choices. E.E.T. uses a model in which the four readily mensurable dimensions of materiality freely resonate with other invisible dimensions that are capable of supplying information that can alter history. This very broad context should provide dialectic space for a variety of different theological and scientific positions to interact without any of them becoming obstacles to continuing creative mutual interaction.

9. Mediaeval theologians assimilated Aristotelian ideas of science that, in the last two centuries produced a situation of intense resistance to new approaches to biblical translation, because they called into question those traditional presuppositions. Subtle and largely unconscious processes of reasoning, transform a text which was originally interpreted in the light of Aristotelian presuppositions into one regarded as proof of those presuppositions.²⁴⁰ Covert metaphysical allegiances can subtend theological and scientific positions that support widely influential, doctrinally-powerful super-structures. Ethical Encounter Theology thinking has engaged with para-biblical doctrines like creation from absolutely nothing, the genetical inheritance of original sin and the infection of humanity with utter depravity, the solus Adamus origin of all Homo sapiens, and the quarantining of creation and salvation theologies. This has been done by carefully and holistically re-reading some key texts and not by trying to adapt theology to the latest scientific theory by disregarding the legitimate range of possible interpretations of the biblical texts. The E.E.T. exploration shows there are a range of useful inter-disciplinarily-helpful interpretations in biblically-authentic theology. These are able to supply inter-disciplinarily useful insights that are not always independently accessible by philosophical theology or science on their own.

10. Scientific theology explores the creative and constructive interface between the natural sciences and Christian theology, rather than the more elusive category of “religion”. In part this reflects a specific concern to respect the integrity of the Christian faith, and ensure its distinctive character is

²⁴⁰ See the quotation from Alfred North Whitehead (1925) on dissertation page 1.
maintained and explored. More significantly, this reflects an informed awareness of the failure of past definitions of religion, rendering intensely problematic any attempt to bring precision to the theme “science and religion”. Alister McGrath cites from philosopher, John B. Cobb Jr:

I see no *a priori* reason to assume that religion has an essence or that the great religious traditions are well understood as religions, that is traditions for which being religious is the central goal. I certainly see no empirical evidence in favour of this view. I see only scholarly habit and the power of language to mislead.\(^{241}\)

11. Three religions have been of particular significance in relation to the development of the natural sciences: Christianity, Islam and Judaism.\(^{242}\) It is perhaps no accident that these share what can be argued to be common insights, most notably in relation to monotheism and a doctrine of creation. Without underplaying important convergences between these three great monotheistic religions, their divergences are significant and decisive, impacting the study of religion and science. Of special significance is Islam’s rejection of the notion of natural knowledge of God. Orthodox Christianity’s theological link between the doctrine of creation and incarnational Christology is a significant distinctive.

E.E.T. responds to this with its claim that divine, pre-creation (*pro kataboles kosmou*) proleptic revelation of the severity of human ethical ambiguity is what draws the perfect being’s love to encounter the *Genesis* 1:2 singularity of selfishness. The incarnational Christology of E.E.T. is creative and sustaining in a way that grants sufficient agency to permit individuation. It is ethically confronting and educational, and the means which elicits historical exhaustive binary ethical apocalypses that conclude in eschatological judgment and ethical dialysis. This achieves consonance with traditional biblical Christian theology, where God is recognised as eternally what God’s historical self-revelation in Christ discloses God to be. Epistemology directly


correlates with ontology, and that has important consequences for scientific theology (see especially, points 16 to 21 in section 2.11).

12. Whilst stressing the central importance of the faithful interpretation of Scripture for the development of Christian theology, yet it has always been conceded that stimuli from outside the Christian community assist in the development of doctrine.

Alister McGrath cites from an essay of John Henry Newman to the tune that the intellectual currents dominant within our cultural milieu stimulate theological reflection by challenging the existing ways of thinking in the church. Newman did not hold that such external stimuli lead Christian theology to mimic the ideas and values of the secular world. He argued rather that they act as a catalyst for the church to explore the revelation entrusted to it and to reconsider whether it has indeed fully understood it or properly expressed it. A case at point could be the E.E.T. exegesis of Genesis 1:2 (see page xv). Alister McGrath cites Augustine, as supporting the authority of Holy Scripture and yet permitting obscure passages (e.g. in Genesis) to be interpreted to meet what science establishes, without prejudice to the faith received.

The negative side of that method is that secular knowledge, once lodged in doctrine, resists the advancing understanding of science (see points 7, 8, and 9 in section 2.11). Partial or premature syntheses have the potential to create long-term difficulties.

13. The natural sciences certainly offer an important resource to Christian theology, inviting the church to continually reconsider its interpretations of Scripture, in order to ensure that the settled scientific assumptions of earlier generations – now known or suspected to be incorrect – have not inadvertently been incorporated into the teachings of the church. It is a matter of observable fact that both scientific theories and Christian doctrine have undergone development (see section 3.03). This is complex and nuanced, involving important judgements concerning the criteria to be used for evaluation and especially the role of human communities in the genesis, development and reception of theories. One cannot impose a single grand narrative on this

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245 See also dissertation sections 1.05, 1.16, and 5.02.
complex history of the sometimes sophisticated interaction of science and religion without serious distortion or omission.

In E.E.T. it is argued that highly structured physical complexity and liminality are intentional parts of God’s creation of our specific universe of space-time and energy-matter. We exist in a forum tailor-made to freely (and therefore painstakingly) progress binary ethical apocalypsis (see paragraphs S and V on pages xxvi and xxviii).

14. The interaction of Christianity and the natural sciences is thus not totally conditioned or determined by their essential natures; assuming these could be satisfactorily determined and shown to be independent of time and culture, which is unlikely. They are modulated by the social situations in which they exist; leading to the conclusion that a given view of the relationship of science and religion is partly a social construction shaped by the context in which the interaction takes place. Without doubt, proposed interrelationships of the disciplines are open to at least some reconstruction by different interpreters. Additionally, individuals may legitimately take contrary positions.  

We might respond: “Yes, the challenge to the true inter-disciplinary workers is to balance a personal passion for truth with humility before the Truth. To passionately pursue and energetically labour for a point of view, yet to be interested, courteous, and charitable towards those with different, even diametrically opposed views.”

15. A dialogue between the natural sciences and Christian theology is both appropriate and potentially fruitful. However, it does not necessarily entail acceptance of any of the specific models which are in the literature. The theologian must be free to develop an approach to the natural sciences which is believed to be coherent and responsible, without regard to alleged inconsistency with a prevailing paradigm of discourse or stereotypical viewpoint. Models can be illuminating and helpful, but may also become a

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246 Inwagen P. van (1995). God, Knowledge and Mystery: Essays in Philosophical Theology. Ithaca, Cornell: e.g., 181. “Every philosopher, or so it seems to me, accepts at least some philosophical theses that are rejected by some equally able and equally well informed philosophers. But I am not willing to say that no philosopher knows anything philosophical. Such examples can be multiplied indefinitely.”

247 E.g., see Matthew 5:44; Mark 9:35; Luke 6:36-38; John 13:34; 15:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; and Galatians 5:22-26. Also, see dissertation section 1.02.

248 “Most models should not be believed too seriously. Rather, they should be challenged regularly to see whether a better one can be devised. That is, a new model may fit a wider range of data... models at best capture only ‘features’ or ‘aspects’ of how complete systems work, and a healthy skepticism is advisable.” Toates, F. M. (1983). Models of Motivation. In Halliday, T. R. and Slater, P. J. B., editors. Animal Behaviour: Causes and Effects. N.Y., Freeman: 170.
barrier to understanding and obstruct creative and constructive theological reflection and development.

16. The simplest explanation of what makes theories work is that they relate to the way things really are. If the theoretical claims of the natural sciences were not correct, their massive empirical success would appear to be totally accidental or, at best, a stunning concatenation of coincidences. So realism is not adopted through group pressure or personal whim, it results from the accumulation of experimental data and the design and development of further experiments. Natural scientists should be rated as realists because of the force of evidence, not because of pressure within the scientific community or the force of inherited assumptions.249

From the E.E.T. standpoint we might ask whether all the propositions of science and their technological applications are value free. This then may push realism one step beyond the force of the current scientific orthodoxy.250 Experienced, hands-on, experimental scientists bring an indispensable ingredient to the inter-disciplinary program but without immersing themselves in the disciplines of theology and philosophy they will face communication problems. True inter-disciplinarity is a rare qualification but one that some mature-age academics may have without realizing it.

17. Alister McGrath provides a narrower definition of realism. Scientific theology is advanced by the realist position. Theology is to be viewed as a discipline which offers an account of reality. It is conceded that realism is a multivalent term, and Alister McGrath focuses the whole of his second volume on that.

However, the acceptance of a realist position is not to be seen as an arbitrary

249 Alister McGrath is not completely realistic in this. Of many counter-examples available, the iron-grip of Big Bang proponent cosmologists on the sources of research funding has precluded the proper investigation of rival theories, as exposed by, for example: An Open Letter to the Scientific Community. New Scientist. May 22 2004: 20 - also at www.cosmologystatement.org. To some extent he begs the question of what enduring success is on a planetary scale (e.g., see dissertation sections 1.15, 4.03 and 4.13).

250 Mark 8:36 NRSV: “For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?” The stories of the first peoples (hunter/gatherers) whose values differ from those of technology-based farmer/civic societies, question a “scientific progress” worldview. Alister McGrath supports the theory that statements about reality are confirmed by them “working”. But this is ethically conditioned by a need to ascertain that we do not mean something “works” by dominating or annihilating those of other views; for example, those whose alternative interpretations of reality worked well for them, for tens of millennia, without threatening all life on earth (see dissertation sections 1.15, 3.08 and 4.13). Outcomes will always ultimately judge the more short-term views about the nature of reality. Worldviews without a right ethical purpose (i.e. exceeding “more is better”) may succeed for a while, but turn out to be aimless, prone to decadence, and ultimately self-destructive; even, perhaps, migrating towards a singularity of selfishness.
exercise of human autonomy, rather some such doctrine is essential in order to account for the tasks and responsibilities of both Christian theology and the natural sciences. A realist foundation for scientific theories removes any obligation to posit persistent coincidence or constant miracles as a means of explaining the success of science.\(^{251}\)

In that regard, E.E.T. connects a divine ethical teleology of the world to the success of the scientific method. No ethical responsibility is justly attributable to physical entities if their choices have no stable chain of cause and effect. The causality of nature provides for the justice of divine ethical purpose of the world and this causal chain also supports the method of science. At a more profound level, a world that works by cause and effect is needed for the efficacy of both binary ethical apocalypsis and for its history to be able to create a meaningful eternal anthropic ethics seminar. E.E.T. describes a consonance between the causal joint within physicality and the divine requirement for an ethical responsibility that permits behavioural choices to be fairly assessed (see paragraphs S and V on pages xxvi and xxviii).

18. There are three general claims underlying Alister McGrath’s significant but somewhat narrower use of the concept of realism in his pioneering, three volume opus on method in scientific theology. These are:

a. Ontologically, external to the inquiring human mind and independent of it, reality or realities exist, awaiting discovery or response by us. These are not called into being, projected, nor invented by our minds.

b. Epistemologically, this reality or realities can be known, however approximately, and statements about which are not totally or simply subjective assertions concerning personal attitudes or feelings. It is possible to gain at least some degree of epistemic access to a reality that exists objectively. Yet it is conceded that the manner of apprehension and conceptualisation of this may, to an extent, be conditioned by cultural, social, and personal factors.\(^{252}\)


\(^{252}\) E.E.T. assumes that the collective ethical collations of human cultures contribute significantly to the cumulative binary ethical apocalypsis of the world. It is remarkable that this universally relevant work is built-up locally and personally, through the richly diverse historical events of a relatively small planet.
b. Semantically, reality may be described or depicted in a manner that represents it, even if inadequately and provisionally, enabling statements concerning it that may at least be described as (verisimilitudinous) approximations to the truth. With the limitations placed upon human language fully conceded, yet it is considered to be both adequate and appropriate for making meaningful statements about reality.  

19. Alister McGrath uses the second volume of his trilogy to examine the application of realism to scientific theology. He favours the methodologies of Roy Bhaskar for his development of a critical realism that is suited to Theology/Science explanations. He writes:

The main consequence of Bhaskar’s analysis is to confirm the intellectual viability of the leading themes of a scientific theology, especially the following:

1. A scientific theology may legitimately be regarded as a response to an existing reality, whose existence is independent of the possibility or actuality of human observation.

2. Each intellectual discipline must adopt a methodology which is appropriate to, and determined by, the ontology of its specific object. Its methodology is thus determined *a posteriori* rather than *a priori*.

This allows a framework for identification and exploration of the various strata of the Christian faith and reflection on their importance for scientific theology, so permitting critical realism to distinguish between vertical and horizontal explanations. That then permits a challenging of both reductionism that collapses reality into a single, observable stratum, and of pluralist theories that decline to see strata as depending on each other at all.

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Theology is thus the highest of a hierarchy of sciences, built upon the insights of the “lower sciences” [1], such as chemistry and biology. Standing at the apex, it is obligated to take account of the whole. It must offer, as best it can, a total vision of God who is known in creation and redemption, to which the lesser sciences bear partial witness. A scientific theology, in affirming a Christian doctrine of creation, set firmly within the economy of salvation as a whole, evokes a vision of God in which the entire fabric of nature, human history and culture witnesses to the divine glory and wonder. Words are inadequate to convey such a vision of God. As Ludwig Wittgenstein is said to have remarked, human words cannot even describe the aroma of coffee. How can they then depict the vision of God? Here we have a worthy challenge for scientific theologians for many lifetimes; after all the longevity of any intellectual science depends upon the complexity and beauty of its subject.

An E.E.T. perspective, whilst concurring that theology is the more contextualizing science, would by no means call the non-theological disciplines “lower” (see page xi). For example, truth in a non-theological discipline must simply be argued to be infinitely more valuable than error in a theology and vice versa.

McGrath substantially engages with pioneering British theologian, Thomas Torrance, who has argued that theology and science share a common commitment to a realistic epistemology, to which they respond in manners appropriate to the nature of that reality. The precise nature of this approach varies from one discipline to another, being determined by the engagement itself, in a manner that resembles a compounding of the hermeneutical helix method (see, e.g. sections 2.07, 3.01, 7.02). For example:

> all through theological enquiry we must operate with an open epistemology in which we allow the way of our knowing to be clarified and modified pari passu with advance in deeper and fuller knowledge of the object, and that we will be unable to set forth an account of that way of knowing in advance but only by looking back from what has been established as knowledge.256

Practical scientists may recognise this as their normal “suck-it-and-see”, “trial-and-error”, “running-inductive” approach. Probing experiments or observations with little formal structure may lead to increasingly formally-structured experiments or

observations. Adaptability to experimental materials and observational situation, plus a high degree of innovative ability and mental agility enable problems to be explored from a diversity of different angles. At the bench, scientists constantly adjust their weighting of the data produced to take into account the nuances of the varied techniques they are forced to apply to squeeze that data from reality. Data is invalid without honest and balanced information (the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth) on how it was obtained and processed. Without informed, balanced and fair judgements made by experienced practitioners, data can mislead. Scientists usually build up their model of reality by alternating theory and data, according to the flow of a hermeneutical helix. This is not formally distinguishable from the methods of investigation adopted by many theology researchers. Science also has to have an ethical basis (see, e.g. sections 1.14 and 2.06). A thoughtful introduction to the literature on unethical science and the reasons for it has been provided by Sam Berry.\(^{257}\)

2.12 Other methodological matters

Methods chosen to orchestrate the inter-play of philosophical, theological, and scientific concepts are important.\(^{258}\) These disciplines encompass a plethora of very diverse endeavours, having unique histories that are not always sympathetic to each other. Their histories have bequeathed specialized language use, almost entirely separate *corpora* of knowledge, all embellished with diverse views that hardly ever focus on the same perspective. Areas of apparent interdisciplinary overlap are additionally obfuscated by the accumulated opinions of minds great and small. Albert Einstein is reputed to have quipped: “I like explanations to be as simple as possible but no simpler!” To avoid the simplistic stigma, appropriate combinations of methods and eclectic research are needed, together with a balanced presentation of findings.

Inter-disciplinary consonances succeed when practitioners in the separate disciplines accept an across-discipline innovation as a novel and non-trivial contribution to their


speciality. Genuine inter-disciplinary abstractions have to show traction in each of their cognate specialities. Gone are the days when theologians can pontificate on matters scientific, with no reference to the current discourse of science. A working scientist is foolish to extend the implications of their results into philosophy or theology, without awareness of the contemporary academic conversations in those disciplines. Philosophers venturing opinions concerning scientific theories, or regarding theological revelations, in the absence of intimate knowledge of the effective practices in those disciplines endanger the credibility of their art.

Ted Peters favours a consonance model for the science/faith interaction and he suggests some criteria for assessing progress in inter-disciplinary dialogue:

Where we need to go to say we have arrived will be a situation in which knowledge gained from theological resources will actually contribute to scientific knowledge and, conversely, one in which scientific inquiry makes a substantive contribution to the theologian’s knowledge of God’s relation to the world. We are not there yet. Anyone who says we have arrived at this point is either mistaken or pretending. Nevertheless, it is a goal worthy to be sought.259

Because of the complexities of working in different disciplines, there is constant methodological reflection among experienced inter-disciplinary researchers. The following insightful commentary is from academic psychologist Peter Hampson, who has become interested in the interface of psychology with theology and philosophy:

Cultural psychology offers a useful forum for examining the range of metaphors used in a variety of discourses. However, it now has an additional, golden opportunity to contribute to our wider understanding, psychological, theological and philosophical, of how creative religious thinkers, such as theologians and mystics, manage to escape from the entrapment of their first order, tradition constituted metaphors, critique these, then produce novel, tradition constitutive accounts. In brief, they do so by the dialectic application of one set of beliefs onto another, in search for narrative coherence. This is no mean achievement. The (in principle) demonstration that we can, as a species, transcend our received metaphors, even if this is by bringing other metaphorical themes recursively to bear, is important for all three disciplines to note.260

Work at the tripartite Theology/Ethics/Science interface has rigorous methodological requirements. In fact, there are such strenuous requirements for honest eclectic understanding and for conscientious bridge-building that inter-disciplinary studies are not for every thinker. Only rarely do academics accumulate the background resources or wide enough interests to engage in such very broad-spectrum conceptualisation.\(^{261}\)

In worldview discussions it is easy to talk at cross purposes. Science is largely an epistemological and an inductive endeavour in contrast to the mainly ontological and deductive methodologies of theology and philosophy.\(^{262}\) Consequentially, what seems like an answer to one may well seem inadequate to the other. For reasons like this, a fourth, self-contained, worldviews discipline, devoid of independent scientific, theological and philosophical refereeing is a soft option to an intrinsically intellectually demanding set of problems.\(^{263}\)

The nexus between data and interpretation is critical. Data is only helpful when accompanying integrating paradigms have enough insight to make it meaningful. As already mentioned, the hermeneutical helix is the most useful method, with theory illuminating data that then itself transform theory, and so on, progressively.\(^{264}\) Advance by saltation is familiar to process thinkers as “Whitehead’s aeroplane”, alternately flying among the clouds and descending to land on *terra firma*. The postmodernist assault on all data, as being contaminated by preconceived interpretive theory is helpful in flagging many methodological pitfalls but it is not be taken as the death knell for any hope of common understanding.\(^{265}\) For example, Ann Nyland has provided a novel translation of the *New Testament* that benefited from her knowledge of the meaning of numerous Greek documents and inscriptions dating to the time that the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation were composed.\(^{266}\) This has

\(^{261}\) The list of 59 contributors to *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* [Edited by Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson (2006). Oxford, OUP] reveals something of the amazing diversity of minds who are becoming engaged with inter-disciplinary issues. Yet, it is remarkable that there are no biblical theological or worldview contributions in this potentially influential handbook.

\(^{262}\) An experienced scientist who begins serious theological research must be prepared for a change of intellectual landscape. In theology various hermeneutical systems are tested on an accepted corpus of information; in science a single hermeneutics is generally used on an ever expanding corpus of data.


\(^{264}\) See dissertation section 2.05.


resulted (sometimes controversially) in re-exegeses and a re-interpretation of passages that had traditionally been subject to exegeses with a perceived anti-feminine hermeneutics. Given a realistic alertness to the contamination of all knowledge by the theory that produces and processes it, progress can be made on the journey of ever more reliable understanding. The major methodological requirement is that of justly and appropriately weighing the theories that condition the production and interpretation of data. Inadequate consideration of conditioning theory or a deficiency in contextualisation or a paucity of appropriate eclecticism are all to be understood as major methodological shortfalls.

Consciousness of these factors has assisted the research subtending E.E.T. in arriving at revised and harmonious interpretations of both biblical and scientific data. These support neither scientific absolutism nor simplistic versions of much-loved doctrines, such as creatio ex nihilo cosmogenesis, and solus Adamus anthropology. By applying an ethical structuring method, the Bible as a whole is given a language that permits more mutual interrogation with science. In this way, the E.E.T. method attempts to enlarge the boundaries of mutual transparency, as essential groundwork for establishing meaningful new consonances.

Colin A. Russell has critiqued the postmodernist analysis of science and suggested that Christian philosophy should be a critical realist ally for science, together resisting any systematic destruction of the concept of truth.

The crucial question arises as to how Christianity relates to the struggles of science against postmodernist relativism. The answer may be far from obvious. Elements of postmodernist thought have much to teach us, especially in its relentless war against scientism, its critique of positivist philosophy, and its denial of the scientist’s claim to absolute truth. However, in its inability to distinguish between sense and nonsense, postmodernism has to be challenged, and not least from a theological standpoint. As John Polkinghorne wisely observed, ‘If science does not attain absolute truth, surely it can lay claim to verisimilitude’. As he also remarked, ‘science is socially influenced but it is not socially constructed’.²⁶⁷ It seems to many who take both science and the Bible seriously that a form of critical realism is the nearest we can get to a position that does full justice to both science and Christian theology.

It seems that, in opposing postmodernist nihilistic relativism, science and Christian faith are on the same side.\(^{268}\) This is hardly surprising if the roots of Western science lie in Christian theology.\(^{269}\) Each has a stake in truth and objectivity, for different though related reasons. The scientist believes that out there, in the world of nature, there is truth to be discovered and shown to be demonstrable again and again, independently of the immediate social context, because it is God’s truth, embedded in nature. Equally the Christian holds the gospel to be true for all people at all times, and Christ to be the truth of God incarnate. Was Pontius Pilate the first postmodernist (\textit{John 18:38}).\(^{270}\)

Christian society was the cradle of modern science, and science a major stimulus to post-modernity. In both cases the offspring challenges the parent to think its way out of extraneous doctrines. This pruning of effete interpretations may be opposed where it subverts favourite doctrines or worldviews built on incidentals. However, it will be a stimulus to those who seek to build worldviews that more faithfully reflect reality and those who would reform and revitalize dogmatics.

Research scientists mostly use methodological naturalism as a working philosophy and as their \textit{lingua franca}. Biological scientists especially are usually both methodological and metaphysical naturalists. This can be without their necessarily being aware of their philosophical position, as their profession is learned in the laboratory (see section \textbf{1.14}). Mathematician and philosopher, Andrew Porter recommends that scientists be alert to the difference between methodological naturalism and a comprehensive, dogmatic and metaphysical naturalism.\(^{271}\) Physicist and Theology/Science leader, Robert J. Russell has recently provided a critique of the standard critical realist philosophical approach in Theology/Science studies. He describes his intellectual journey from critical realism to a new philosophical method he has called creative mutual interaction (CMI).\(^{272}\) The logical basis for this method is more complex than that for critical realism. However, Russell has made the CMI


\(^{272}\) Russell, R. J. (2008): 9-24 - reference in dissertation section \textbf{1.07}. See also, dissertation sections \textbf{2.02} and \textbf{2.10}.
schema more accessible, in the form of a block diagram, with just eight processes.\textsuperscript{273} Most of these processes are the same as those that have been most important developing the reasoning of this dissertation. Ethical Encounter Theology is internally consistent with any non-generic method for furthering the creative mutual interactions of theology and science, though it is also distinguished by its rigour in seeking consonance with biblically-authentic perfect being theism.

Thorsten Moritz also summarizes aspects of the method of critical realism. A long quotation is needed as this is especially relevant to Ethical Encounter Theology:

Critical realism distinguishes between external reality on the one hand and human knowledge on the other. The former exists objectively, but it is only accessible through the grid of knowledge or worldview. Far from being objective, knowledge is in fact more than merely ‘factual’, for it is the ever-changing matrix that connects mental consciousness to external realities, with the latter holding the former accountable. The matrix itself consists of beliefs and questions about reality, as well as epistemic frameworks for determining what qualifies as proper knowledge discourse. Almost by definition critical realism rejects any dichotomy between scientific and non-scientific knowledge. Put differently, it welcomes cross-disciplinary integration, for the critical realist’s configuration of truth has to remain open to further refinement by whatever tools are appropriate to the subject matter. In theory, what qualifies as ‘appropriate’ is determined by worldview. In practice, of course, worldview is a function of religiocultural conditioning and – as the theologians insist – revelation. In constructing representations of reality, the role of revelation is at least twofold: (1) to provide and safeguard biblical discourse; and (2) to empower the interpreter spiritually and transformatively. In recent years speech-act theory has made great strides in bringing precision to our understanding of Spirit-endowed theological interpretation. It should prove fascinating to observe the increasingly significant contributions of speech-act theory to critical-realist hermeneutics, for subjectivity of theological (or indeed any) interpretation needs to be both captivated and cultivated by the Spirit of God.\textsuperscript{274}

Among today’s traditionally theist biblical theologians there is an interest in and, for some an involvement with, major scientific issues having wide social implications.\textsuperscript{275}

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Ibid.}: 23.
In addition, a new openness to Pentecostal experiences and theory is evident among theologians, including a research on Pentecostal perspectives on Theology/Science.\footnote{E.g., see Zygon 43(4) (2008) and Theology and Science 5 (2007)}. This has legitimized traditionally connected, biblically-based theologies that seek for consonances (like that of E.E.T.) with certain aspects of Pentecostal theory.

The work of modern Pentecostal academics as recently summarised, for example, by Frank Macchia\footnote{Macchia, F. D. (2006). Baptised in the Spirit: a Global Pentecostal Theology. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan.} and in academic journals\footnote{For example, The Journal of Pentecostal Theology, http://jpt.sagepub.com and Pneuma: the Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies published by Brill.} discovers an emphasis on Holy Spirit baptism. In the terminology of E.E.T. this to refer to an unseen, non-mensurable event that has quantifiable material affects in history. Pentecostal Christians actively seek for interaction with an invisible right ethical part of reality. This is claimed to result in such mensurable consequences as a radical reorientation of a person’s life and attitude towards society through a reformed relationship with God. Physical, mental and social relational healing and endowment with new talents are expected. However, what is most evident to observers is the transformed and transforming personality of those claiming to have experienced such a theophany. Such changes are open to quantification and analysis. This new area of theological research responds to the development of a major branch of Christianity. The numbers of believers associated with Pentecostalism are, worldwide, approaching a numerical majority.\footnote{Synan, V. (2001). The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001. Nashville, Thomas Nelson. Martin, D. (2002). Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish. Oxford, Blackwell. In this dissertation “Pentecostal” is the broad category embracing classical Pentecostalism, the Charismatic renewal, and the neo-Charismatics; see Burgess, S. M. and Van der Maas, E. M., editors (2003). The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan: xviii – xxi.} Nearly one billion Pentecostal and Charismatic believers make it timely for works such as this dissertation to mention the possible significance of pneumatological methodology and data, in the context of inter-disciplinary methodology. The ontology sustained by E.E.T. is that physicality is a product of \textit{ex ethica} creation and that part of the information it has required to evolve is obtained by ecollating on the invisible potentialities of a primeval unseen ecology. In other words, as in Pentecostal theology, sympathetic resonance with unseen aspects of reality is claimed to be able to both change history and be acted upon by the forces of history.
Frank Macchia cites Sang-Whan Lee regarding Baptism in the Holy Spirit as itself the leading edge of a new hermeneutic for interpreting and exploring major Christian beliefs. Ethical Encounter Theology is one of the first attempts to consider (in a preliminary way) implications of Pentecostal research findings for Theology/Science studies. The basic motive here is largely limited to confirming the role of informational potentialities of the unseen ecology of reality. This method, as yet, remains outside the ambit of the otherwise very comprehensive, scholarly study of Alister McGrath and most others working actively on Theology/Science. Although Pentecostals are almost always evangelical, in any comprehensive study they probably should be treated separately, as one of the four main branches of contemporary Christian thought: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Pentecostal. The research of Pentecostal theologians may eventually contribute unique data to any biblically-faithful theological consonance with Theology/Science studies, like the E.E.T. essay (see chapter 7).

Theologians have produced works that critically examine distinctively Pentecostal theory and praxis, such as divine healing. Inter-disciplinary workers are generally aware that considerable caution is needed in dealing with evidence of the miraculous. We can try and tame the shock and the challenge of the miraculous by calling it special divine action. However, its gratuitousness still challenges every person at a faith/emotional level. Why some prayers are answered by apparent miracles and others are apparently ineffective, can be a personally challenging matter. The gratuitous character of miracles places them outside the scientifically controlled conditions required for formal experimentation. Miracles are somewhat of an embarrassment in the Theology/Science dialogue, and may even be excluded from discussion. Philosophically, miracles have not been found to represent a reliable object for theology. Certainly, indiscriminate reference to miracles can lend a bad odour to theology. Instead of a science it is reduced to a discipline where anything can happen, without any regularity, predictability or replicability. It is an irony that

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280 Reference at dissertation footnote 277.
an overenthusiastic, undiscerning fideistic approach to reports of special divine actions can introduce an element of disorder, inimical to cooperative mutual interaction (also, see sections A.03, A.05 and A.07).

Human personality types vary and this is one of several factors that can modulate subjective perception of objectively identical situations. The neurophysiological substrate for this type of variability is being elucidated. For example, University of Michigan neurobiologist, Kent Berridge comments on a recent paper reporting results on human experiments designed to link the placebo effect to personality type and to brain anatomy revealed by MRI:

> Placebos provide more effective pain relief to people who are reward-seekers than to individuals with different personalities . . .
> The authors report MRI data that placebo-responsive individuals, who score high reward-seeking personality traits, have higher grey matter densities in brain structures that are mesolimbic targets such as ventral striatum (which has been previously linked to placebo and reward responsiveness) and prefrontal cortex (which has been linked to placebo anticipation), as well as the insula (which has been related to pain perception).\(^\text{284}\)

In view of this type of scientific evidence caution is needed in attributing incidents to special divine action on the basis of the sensory perceptions of individuals. The E.E.T. position is that our world is specifically created to enable freely-chosen binary ethical apocalypses. It would therefore subvert a core E.E.T. tenet if special divine action introduced external design and control. That would oppose the justice of free ethical ecollation. In a theology of ethical encounter there would be no coherence in attributing actions to God that retard progress towards the Eschaton. That does not mean there is no opening at all for special divine actions in the E.E.T. world (see the three points listed at the end of this section).

Biblical theology understands the perfect being to be a God of order and the Bible depicts the life of Christ and the post-Pentecost life of the Apostles as orderly and meaningful (including some reports of miracles). It is clear that God has a definite program. Postulated incidents of special divine action always need to be examined in


\(^{284}\) Berridge, K.; in *Faculty of 1000 Biology Reports*, 13 May 2009.
the wider context of the far more significant process of general divine action (especially binary ethical apocalyptic). This stricture also helps to maintain the monistic biblical holism required of a theology founded on perfect being theism.

Miracles are a matter that needs handling with considerable sensitivity and discernment. Yet biblical theology must handle it, for without miracles the texts of both Old and New Testaments are emptied of some of the high significance their authors obviously intended. For example, an Egyptian Pharaoh (possibly Amunhotep II) is portrayed as being divinely informed, through Moses and Aaron:

I have raised you up for this very purpose,  
that I might show you my power and  
that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.\textsuperscript{285}

The famous story of the miraculous plagues in Egypt and the escape of the Israelites would lose much of its meaning without a context of the special divine actions of God. Before miraculously raising Lazarus of Bethany from the dead, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is reported to have said:

This sickness won’t end in death.  
Rather, it will bring honour to God:  
God’s Son will be honoured through it.\textsuperscript{286}

Traditional biblical theist faith communities hold these accounts of miracles as giving glory to God because in them unseen divine authority is revealed in material events that do marvels for those who love God. Among today’s believers, especially in Pentecostal assemblies, there are few who do not claim to have personal experiences of special divine actions. Reports and testimonies of divine healings and other miracles are daily events, even among well-educated and sophisticated persons.

Miracles that challenge the finality of death pose special difficulties for scientists, especially biologists and medical scientists. Yet, lively faith in the miraculous resurrection of Jesus is a solid tenet of traditional biblical Christianity.\textsuperscript{287} Length constraints preclude a more detailed consideration of miracles. The E.E.T. model allows for special divine action under certain circumstances. For example, a process

\textsuperscript{285} \textit{Exodus} 9:16 NIVSB; see also \textit{Romans} 9:17.  
\textsuperscript{286} \textit{John} 11:4 TS.  
\textsuperscript{287} \textit{1 Corinthians} 15:14-19. A comprehensive, multidisciplinary treatment is found in, Peters, T., Russell, R.J. and Welker, M., editors (2002). \textit{Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments}. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans; also, see sections \textbf{3.06} and \textbf{3.12}. 
of sympathetic resonance can be imagined to routinely communicate information about divine perfection from the matrix of right ethics. This is a sub-category of the process by which the unseen ecology moiety of reality enables the material moiety of reality to obtain new information. New data obtained from the m.o.r.e. (e.g. by sympathetic resonance) could be what supports both general and special divine actions. For believers the structure of such visible-invisible processes is the basis of worship, praying, and of the answering of prayers. This can also provide a structured understanding of the means for sanctification, as a visible result of persistent sympathetic resonance with the divine pedagogical capacity of the m.o.r.e. Actualized history depends on what specific unseen potentials are ecollated on by individuals, out of the enormous but finite data base of unseen ecology (see section 1.10).

The ecollative dynamics method outlined above could offer a different perspective on some well-known but problematic Bible texts such as:

He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.\(^{288}\)

There are two related ecollative processes. The first is that through which the world progresses by cause-and-effect evolutionary emergence and by accessing potentials for ecollative binary ethical apocalypsis. The second process is by startling notifications in the material world of the embrace of the matrix of right ethics (the closeness and within-ness of divine Rule). Divine experiences and even theophanies generally come with a call to repent.\(^{289}\) E.E.T. identifies factors that ensure special divine actions are integrated into the cosmic telos of ethical self-identification and hence ethical dialysis. As convinced witnesses to special and/or general divine action, believers and faith communities can be involved in the divine ethical encounter of the world’s ethical ambivalence. There is no reason why this E.E.T. proposition must be thought of as restricted to a single sort of believer or faith community.

There is danger in emphasizing special divine actions (miracles). For example, it could belittle the ordinary functioning of nature (i.e. prevailing encounter with the right ethical perfect being). For E.E.T., the ordinary workings of the natural world are

\(^{288}\) Mark 6:5-6. E.E.T. interprets this as a demonstration of the way that cause-and-effect influences have sympathetic resonance with the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.).

\(^{289}\) E.g. Matthew 12:28.
essential for completion of cosmic ethical purpose. All these freely-chosen eu-
eccollations, mis-eccollations and dis-eccollations are constitutive of cosmic binary
ethical apocalypse history. Significantly, it is not miracles but the structuring of
ethical processes that impels our universe towards the Eschaton. In them, persevering
obedience to God is tested in real terms. Here it is that the difference between the
perfect being’s ethics and human ethics is graphically learned. Here it is that virtues
and unselfish ethical character are developed by gratuitous eu-eccollations. It is in the
larger teleological context that the E.E.T. position on miracles can be summarized as:

- a special encouragement to believers;
- a special challenge to unbelievers; and
- extraordinary evidence of the character and immanence of the m.o.r.e.

Special divine actions reveal something of the passionate concern of God for humans
but not so much as to replace the routine method of ethical encounter, apocalypse,
and the ultimate separation of right from wrong. Genuine miracles could subvert faith
in the finality of cause-and-effect physicality. If some scientists, philosophers and
theologians find that miracles are irritating, posing far more questions than they
answer, a traditional biblical theist may imagine God thinking: “Just so!” This
dissertation adds to scholarly understanding by helping to bridge that cognitive gap.

2.13 Methodological cladistics

Philip Clayton has recently reviewed the various metaphysical methods used to
interpret biological data and theories relating to emergence. He has arranged them
as a clade, showing increasing metaphysicality. His analysis is adapted here for our
present purposes first by applying a shorthand notation for his categories. At the
bottom is the non-metaphysical reductionist-physicalist (RP) method, then the neo-
Darwinian (nDG) method, then systems biology (SB). With increasing degrees of
metaphysicality, we move to the emergentist neo-Darwinian (EnD) method, Terry
Deacon emergentism (TDE), the neo-Aristotelianist method (NA), and then the
hermeneutics that observe agency emerging from teleonomy (AET). Philip Clayton
then has the methods of Platonic biology (PB), the vitalist/Bergsonian (VB) method,
and Whiteheadian influenced process (WIP) methods. Finally, he deals with the

diversity of dualistic (DD) methods, and then what he calls the heavily metaphysical classical philosophical theism (CPT) method common in the three Abrahamic monotheistic traditions. This represents a logical and helpful 12-fold taxonomy of otherwise somewhat perplexing diversity of metaphysicality inherent in different science/faith systems.

It is too early in the development of the Ethical Encounter Theology hermeneutics to try to narrowly locate the position of E.E.T. in this novel cladistic scheme. Among biological cladists, they themselves sometimes classify one another as “lumpers” or “splitters”. Because of its commitment to an ex ethica account of the creation of our universe, E.E.T. interprets all material interactions in terms of a pre-creational, embracing right ethical matrix. That fact alone may tend to require a splitting of Philip Clayton’s metaphysical methods taxonomic tree. Perhaps a separate clade, or a major branch, would link E.E.T. with CPT, WIP, PB and EnD. Much more work needs to be done on the relationships of the young and developing E.E.T. hermeneutics with a range of other established methodologies.

In the next chapter we explore the new possibilities afforded when a structured ethical ideal/real investigative E.E.T. method is applied to some of the major areas of established biblical theological scholarship.
Chapter 3 – Biblical theological illustrations

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3.01 Introduction
The dissertation abstract, propositional sequence and the first two chapters - on context and on methods - have introduced the reader to the range of inter-disciplinary methodology used and to the ethical consonance between traditional biblical theology and Theology/Science explored by Ethical Encounter Theology. That is now followed by four chapters to illustrate ethical encounter hermeneutics in respect to Bible theology, theology and science, unseen ecology, and worldview perspectives. In regards to inter-disciplinary and worldview methodologies, it is worth repeating James Barr’s view that biblical theological research needs methodological eclecticism:

There can be no such thing as the one appropriate method for biblical theology.

This chapter now explores some illustrations of the biblical theological connections of E.E.T. It features a 30-step systematic analysis of those connections. This is a significant new contribution to contemporary scholarly theological thinking. However, this dissertation is not a systematic theology but an attempt to demonstrate the capabilities of the ethical encounter paradigm to link the interests of biblical theologians and those of theologian scientists. If there is a central theme of this chapter it is the principle of ethical eu-ecollation. This can be simplified as:

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“No matter what happens, make sure you always choose right ethics that are life not wrong ethics that are death” (see pages xv and xvi; also, section 3.14). Eu-ecollation involves a serious seeking after divine right ethics and persistent actualization of them in the life of a person or a community. It is a strong proposition of E.E.T. that culpable neglect of eu-ecollation is what necessitated creation of a universe like ours.

3.02 The main steps in a theology of ethical encounter

It is not necessary to be a Christian to appreciate the basic perfect being theist hermeneutic of E.E.T. Its cosmogony and teleology should be accessible to all thinkers. The idea that our anthropic cosmos was created to enable all unseen ethical identity to be reified, following divine perfect goodness’ encounter with a prolepsis of humanity’s moral iniquity, should be accessible to all Abrahamic theist theologians. That such a thesis has depended on New Testament evidence for its development does not diminish its basic claims. It should be no impediment that New Testament accounts of Christ add specifics. Christian biblical theology certainly explicates and enriches the core E.E.T. thesis but it does not have a monopoly on a basic chain of theological logic that is open to all perfect being theists, including those from other faith communities. Indeed, most of the logic of this program should be accessible to any ethically-concerned person.

The theological claims of E.E.T. are exposed for assessment by listing the sequence of processes that constitute its cosmology. This comes with a rider. Any attempt to describe the prolepsis-conditioned and quantum-entangled realities of our universe by means of a cause-and-effect time series is problematic. However, if the following series is read holistically (as the parts of a poem or a symphony or a work of art are) then it will reveal more of what is proposed to be the holistic ethical world reality (that is, more than just another sectarian religious way of looking at things).

The list of inter-connected processes implicated in the E.E.T. consonance is:

A. In the beginning

1. The unseen perfect love and right ethical wisdom of God continuously creates.

2. The matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.: that is Heaven, or the Rule, or Reign, or Kingdom of God) is able to supply the divine right ethical encounter to situations that are less than perfect.
3. A unique species of animal, *Homo sapiens*, is conceived *in potentia*. Humans are to be able to both consciously choose (as the divine image) and actualize divine right ethics in history (as the divine likeness).²⁹²

B. The source of sin

4. Prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of actualized space-time history shows humanity’s choice - not for an education in divine right ethics but for a deicidal and self-deifying self-determinism. This causes the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.).

5. The c.e.a.p. confines the *in potentia* humans (and the divine good planned for them and their world to be) in an abyss of formless darkness (a singularity of selfishness) that is without hope.

6. Yet divine love for humans is greater than the prolepsis of their murderous hatred. God’s perfectly right ethics encounters the anthropic singularity of selfishness with an outpouring of cosmogonic perfect selflessness.

C. Our anthropic space-time universe

7. The primal ethical encounter is where the wisdom of divine love anticipates the ignorance of human deicidal selfishness and its cure, and calls our anthropic space-time universe into being.

8. The heat of the Big Bang (about 100 trillion degrees Centigrade) is physically analogous to an ethical explosion resulting from irresistibly self-giving divine love encountering an obdurate singularity of anthropic self-determinism.

D. Interactions between the seen and the unseen

9. The expanding energy-matter of the universe has access to information in the immanent unseen ecology of the world and this seen/unseen interaction contributes to the progressive evolutionary complexification of the universe.

10. Unseen ecology contains information defining physical possibilities plus both right and wrong ethical potentials inherited from the primal ethical encounter.

11. Emergent complexifications are able to draw on information from the seen and/or the unseen moieties of space-time ecology, including from the divine kingdom (the embracing m.o.r.e.) that is close, within and always available.

E. Freedom and determinism

12. Freedom of choice is fundamental. Real occasions in cosmic history are able to exercise choices to self-actualize information from some of the vast fund of seen and/or of unseen potentials. Both seen and unseen factors create history.

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13. All unseen information was present from $t=0$, ensuring numerous choices are available to the complexifying entities of the universe. However, the possible choices are not infinite, so the system as a whole is ultimately deterministic.

F. Physical ecollation

14. From electrons to human beings, increasingly complex choices become available. Specific choice from the unseen informational content of the universe (called ecollation) characterizes each chooser.

15. Ecollation (or en-niching) means a specific unseen potential has been accessed, perhaps by sympathetic resonance. This is analogous with the emergence of biological species that actualize pre-existing but unseen ecological parameters.

16. Ecollation facilitates novel material complexifications that, in the case of physical, chemical and geological entities, simply fit them into what is available. However, ecollated novelty in living organisms (along with their natural genetic mutations and translocations) is subject to competitive natural selection. In biology various reifications generally compete for survival.

G. Ethical ecollation

17. Entities can actualize ethically as well as physically, by ecollating on unseen ethical potentials inherited from the primal event (where perfect right ethical divine love first encountered a prolepsy of anthropic conflated ethics).

18. Actualizations of right ethics are eu-ecollations; actualizations of wrong ethics are dis-ecollations; and actualizations of conflated ethics are mis-ecollations.

19. Biblically, mis-ecollations are sin and dis-ecollations are evil. The source of sin and evil throughout the universe is humankind’s attempts to be self-sufficient and independent of God’s comprehensive right ethical teaching (this also caused the cosmic ethical anthropic problem, or c.e.a.p.).

H. Moral and natural evils

20. A protracted world process of free ethical choosing enables human moral evil to be fully exposed by world history. The ambient liminal ambiguity needed for moral choice-making also provides the conditions for natural evil to occur. It also gives instruction in cause-and-effect relationships and enables science.

I. At the end

21. The ambivalence of the anthropic cosmos affords free choices at all levels of reality and yet this cosmos is also inherently temporal, so that choice-making will reach a term.

22. Biblically theologically the term of the world is the Eschaton, when right and wrong are fully separated in readiness for the prophesied right ethical aeon-to-come. This ethical destiny conditions the world from start to finish and contributes a pervasive monism to all of reality.
J. Theodicy

23. The theodicy that results from these propositions describes the actualization of all wrong ethics as necessary (following on transformation of a singularity of selfishness into an evolving universe) so that right and wrong ethics can be justly divided.

24. For the whole duration of the lengthy and complex process of ethical reification (made necessary by a divine prescience of the primal problem of human self-destructive selfishness) the universe has also to face the constant probability of natural evil.

25. Thus both moral and natural evil in our anthropic universe are the result of humankind’s well-documented history of ambivalence towards divine right ethical teaching (that causes the cosmic ethical anthropic problem, or c.e.a.p.).

26. This offers one reason why it is biblically claimed that God’s perfect justice is inherently compensatory toward the many that unjustly suffer loss or harm from the generic moral and natural evil of this anthropic aeon.

K. First Peoples and Second Peoples

27. A severe form of self-determination (possibly even the Genesis author’s view of the origin of sin) can be biblically associated with the development (starting about 10,000 years ago) of farmer/civic Second People cultures.

28. It is arguable that the author of Genesis 1 to 6 implied divine outrage against (and punishment of) arrogant farmer/civic Second Peoples because of their genocidal abuses of the humbler hunter/gather First Peoples.

L. Jesus Christ

29. All the above propositions find a specifically Christological meaning when the primal cosmogenic ethical divine love encounter with human hatred is understood to have been driven by a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of the perfect divine love of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary.

30. This kenotic Christology harmonizes creation and salvation theologies and identifies the human face of the divine love that created, sustains and educates, saves and justly judges this world and promises better things in the right ethical aeon-to-come.

These thirty stages cover most of the theologically significant processes reasoned to result from a cosmogonic ethical encounter. To get a more complete picture, the step-wise cosmic story outlined can be read together with the dissertation abstract, propositional sequence, and other parts of the dissertation, such as section 7.06, the Final Summary. Ethical Encounter Theology is not a systematic theology but aims to help bridge revelational/empirical gaps to make a significant contribution to the field. It applies a structured ethical contextualization of all of reality as a way of bringing
traditional perfect being biblical theology into greater consonance with some contemporary Theology/Science interests. The next section reflects on the biblical theological legitimacy of re-reading some biblical stories in terms of an overall ethical encounter paradigm.

3.03 Exploring new interpretations of old stories

Deferring to contemporary scientific interpretations and returning to the Bible texts are not incompatible methods. The E.E.T. program has been developed with scientific and ethical contextualizing factors in mind. It aims to contribute to the body of theological scholarship, not by structural change but by restoration (in the way plant breeders attempt to restore flavors to tomatoes and strawberries). For a biblical theology to return to authenticity means a return to the traditional texts and hence (E.E.T. claims) to perfect being theism. E.E.T.’s approach to biblical theology is influenced by the recommendations of Tom Wright (see references below). E.E.T. harmonizes the most authentic Bible texts available and assorted extra-biblical evidence with an exploration of the best-supported contemporary scientific theories. Keeping in mind scientific theories can be revolutionized over-night, whilst the combined texts of the Bible are less likely to be subject to any major alteration (see points 12-15 in section 2.11, in particular). With that proviso, the best of legitimate alternative biblical readings are used, in accord with their consistency with the scientific information to hand. Technically, to achieve harmony, holistic biblical exegetical perseverance needs to be combined with scientific competence and logical reasoning. This is quite technically challenging, though it is made easier by repeating over a period of time, in a hermeneutical helix (e.g., see sections 2.07, 2.11, 2.12).

Systematic theologian Bruce L. McCormack describes the prevalent ecclesial context that is likely to test any attempted Bible text re-interpretations, in the following terms:

“orthodoxy” is finally a church concept. It is a concept that belongs to the realm of ecclesiology because it is the Church which must make the decision as to how the Holy Scripture is to be understood – not individual theologians, no matter how great their personal prestige. To be sure, since the decision of the Church is a decision with regard to the proper understanding of a material norm that is other than itself, its decisions on any question are inherently reformable. Still, those decisions made by the Church in the past which continue to enjoy
support among the great majority of the divided churches posses a degree of ecclesial authority that is unsurpassed.\textsuperscript{293}

Four extracts referring to the biblical theological methods of Tom Wright provide a clear picture of his general approach. These insights are important as they have also become the broad biblical theological philosophy of both the research and the hypothesizing of this chapter and in other places in the dissertation.

it is, I think, a time for exploration and delighted innovation rather than for simply filling in the paradigms left by our predecessors.\textsuperscript{294}

The church and the academy both urgently need a new generation of teachers and preachers who will give themselves totally to the delighted study of the text and allow themselves to be taken wherever it leads, to think new thoughts arising out of the text and to dare to try them out in word and deed.\textsuperscript{295}

I would prefer to insist on three things. First, there are such things as texts; however much we deconstruct them, they bounce back with renewed challenge, . . . Second, there are such things as fresh and compelling readings of texts; new pairs of eyes, no doubt with new motives but none the worse for that, scan familiar words and hear unfamiliar messages, and then – this bit is enormously important – test them out, not merely on those who share the reader’s cultural and religious predispositions but on those who do not. . . . And, third, I do believe in the mysterious, unpredictable and usually hidden work of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{296}

The researcher, after a period of total and sometimes confusing immersion in the data, emerges with a hypothesis, a big picture of how everything fits together. The hypothesis is proposed, spelled out as fully as possible. In the process, it is tested against three criteria: Does it make sense of the data as they stand? Does it have an appropriate level of simplicity, or even elegance? Does it shed light on areas of research other than the one it was designed to cover?\textsuperscript{297}

Research scientists would recognize Tom Wright’s approach to historical theology as scientific. That is, it is based on extensive and intensive data gathering, an open-ness to the mystery of inspiration, creative hypothesizing and a critical verification through tests for coherence and applicability. Marcus Borg advocates a far more distancing approach, based on suspicion of all of the textual data (reference at footnote 297).

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid.: x.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid.: 17.
That is not the way science usually works. Data should be accepted as it is received and then allowed to sort itself on the basis of mutual coherence and ability to contribute to hypotheses. In science, selectivity towards data is almost always frowned upon (see section 1.14).

At the end of her forward to the 2nd edition of Garry Friesen’s, *Decision Making and the Will of God*, Rachel E. Maxson, remarks:

> It is a theology that is thoroughly rooted in the Word of God – ambitious in its scope, endeavoring to do justice to the whole counsel of Scripture, and responsible in its approach, eschewing simple proof-texts for careful exegesis. It is also a theology driven by the practices and problems of Christian living. It is not detached from the real-life concerns of the faithful, but is motivated by the intensely practical question of how we are to be faithful to God in decision making.298

These gracious words summarize the high ambitions of biblical theological research. In regard to the verses and pericopae it depends on, this dissertation also contends for whole-Bible, contextual reading. It seeks to avoid the wounding inflicted on coherent biblical philosophy by over-emphases or under-emphases. Its conscious focus is the struggles and concerns of believers and those many others who think seriously about reality. As the work explores areas where biblical theology resonates with science and philosophy and especially with ethics the particular, holistic flavor of E.E.T. thinking appears (e.g., see the 30-step structured sequence in section 3.02).

3.04 The perfect divine being as characteristically encountering

The idea of divine goodness irenically encountering the rebellious ethic of the world is not new. The Hebrew word *bara* (found in *Genesis* 1:1 and *Psalm* 51:10) has a *leitmotif* of ethical encounter. What would God create except moral excellence? And why would God create it if that excellence already existed? In *Genesis* 1:3 and *John* 1:5, the divine *modus operandus* is even more frankly described in terms of light encountering darkness. Ethical Encounter Theology interprets the Bible itself as

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largely a record (from ancient Jewish and then early Christian perspectives) of perceptions of major encounters with the perfect being. Records of these encounters are part of the sacred history of our universe and frequently evident in the history of humankind. Whenever the perfect right ethical being intercepts our ethically-compromised world, noteworthy events ensue. George E. Ladd observed such a process as basic to theology:

The unique element in Jesus’ teaching is that in his person the Kingdom of God has invaded human history, and people are not only placed under the ethical demands of the reign of God, but by virtue of this very experience of God’s Reign are also enabled to realize a new measure of righteousness. . . . Even as the Kingdom has invaded the evil age to bring to people in advance a partial but real experience of the blessings of the eschatological Kingdom, so is the righteousness of the Kingdom attainable, in part if not perfection, in the present order. Ethics, like the Kingdom itself, stands in tension between present realization and future eschatological perfection.  

A cultural extension of this - with God encountering a moribund church and a decadent society - is the subject of Pentecostal/Charismatic renewals and revivals. That is well described by academic theologian J. Rodman Williams in volume two of his 1452 page systematic theological compendium, Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective. Length constraints preclude analysis of spiritual revival, though it is closely related to the research of this dissertation. Modern personal life-changing historical impacts of perceived encounters with unseen divine provision are abundantly documented. A contemporary account of Heidi and Roland Baker’s work with Mozambique’s orphans is especially moving.

In this dissertation, the concept of a divine propensity to encounter all that is less than right ethical is explored through the apparatus of theology, ethics and science. This permits it to reflect on novel ways of correlating traditional biblical theology with the current burgeoning of Theology/Science research, with occasional reflections on Pentecostal/Charismatic experience and theory. Almost incidentally, this dissertation outlines a theoretical basis for the divine willingness to encounter people that Pentecostals and Charismatics (perhaps more than other believers) routinely claim to personally experience. It is remarkable that the divine distinctive, of perfect right ethical encountering of ethically conflated situations, is barely touched on in many theological discussions of The Doctrine of God (“Ethical Encounter” could be listed with aseity, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.). The E.E.T. analysis attends to the biblical evidence for this divine characteristic and situates it as part of a worldview. That then opens opportunities for defining the divine characteristic of meaningfully and irenicly encountering whatever is less than godly as a new aspect of Systematic Theology. This is a significant contribution to theological scholarship.

3.05 Cosmic conflict

Influential general theology textbooks permit little consideration of a sustained cosmic conflict between God and the devil.\(^{303}\) This may be from a desire to avoid the taint of dualism with its emphasis on evil (in Manichaeism for example). Believers normally celebrate the victory of God and it is this that largely modulates many contemporary textbooks. In marked contrast, among scholars of the Bible texts there are many who continue to draw attention to well-supported evidence that the biblical book authors’ believed in a universal struggle between good and evil. For example, the translators of today’s most widely-used scholarly version of the Bible synopsize the book of Job as follows:

In summary, the author’s pastoral word to godly sufferers is that God treasures their righteousness above all else. And Satan knows that if he is to thwart the all-encompassing purpose of God, he must assail the godly righteousness of human beings (Job 1:21,22; 2:9,10; 23:8,10; Genesis 15:6). At stake in the suffering of the truly godly is the outcome of the titanic struggle between the great adversary and

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God. At the same time the author [of *Job*] gently reminds the godly sufferer that true godly wisdom is to reverently love God more than all his gifts and to trust the wise goodness of God even though his ways are at times past the power of human wisdom to fathom. So here is presented a profound, but painfully practical, drama that wrestles with the wisdom and justice of the Great King’s rule. Righteous sufferers must trust in, acknowledge, serve and submit to the omniscient and omnipotent Sovereign, realizing that some suffering is the result of unseen, spiritual conflicts between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan – between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness (*Ephesians* 6:10-18).\textsuperscript{304}

In the *New Testament* section of the same *NIV* Study Bible there are footnotes, for example to *Ephesians* 1:3 and *Revelation* 17:11, confirming the editors commitment to the cosmic conflict worldview, including comments such as:

At stake are God’s eternal eschatological purpose (*Ephesians* 3:11) and the titanic conflict between God and the powerful spiritual forces arrayed against him – a purpose and a conflict that comes to focus in the history of redemption.\textsuperscript{305}

the cosmic struggle between God and Satan.\textsuperscript{306}

Independently, Steve Mason, reviewing our knowledge of the Pharisees, identifies much the same cosmic conflict philosophy in the Gospels:

Mark and John portray the Pharisees as key elements of the cosmic battle between Jesus and the evil spirits.\textsuperscript{307}

Accepting that our earth and universe are immersed in such a battle must greatly influence the type of worldview held. Monism is excluded and metaphysics assumes high significance. In contrast, although E.E.T. is based on the radical incompatibility of good and evil, it yet aspires to monism and minimization of the metaphysical. Physical/metaphysical dualism can undermine inter-disciplinary dialogue. Instead, in

\textsuperscript{304} *NIVSB*: 729.

\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.: 1831, its footnote to *Ephesians* 1:3 concludes by referring to: “great spiritual forces that war against God in heaven.” Also, *Ephesians* 3:10: “the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms;” and, *Ephesians* 6:12: “against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” The *New Testament* authors refer to part of what E.E.T. calls the unseen ecology of our universe. God at war is rarely treated of in current systematic theology (see, however Greg Boyd’s major work - reference in dissertation section 1.03). A discussion of the relevance of biblical theology’s unseen ecology to attempts to find consonance with the discourse of Theology/Science, is given in dissertation sections 5.05 and 5.09.

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid.: 1985. Gregory A. Boyd has built a short systematic theology on this hermeneutics - references at dissertation footnote 7.

\textsuperscript{307} Mason, S. (2000). Pharisees. *EDB*: 1043-1044. Also, see works by Gregory A. Boyd - references at dissertation footnote 7. In support of its own more irenic approach, E.E.T. adduces the biblical evidence that evil beings are only ever depicted in connection with human activity (see section 3.07).
E.E.T. the cosmic significance of these biblically-prominent but only indirectly tangible and mensurable good and evil forces is explored in terms of unseen sources of ethical information. Scientists and philosophers are generally friendlier toward the idea of unseen binary ethical potentials than to the idea of unseen wars between good and evil spirits. In this, the dissertation has provided a significant critique of the worldview of the editors of the most influential contemporary version of the Bible.

Notwithstanding our ignorance of what the apostolic authors believed such a cosmic battle to involve, the texts’ approach to evil is not always reflected in the policies of churches. The biblical authors prescribe a moral victory to be achieved through loving, ethical righteousness, subtended by truth and faith in a perfect God. History has examples of large, rich and politically influential churches sometimes losing the apostolic script. They may lose it to the extent that they fail to irenically cause the world to encounter divinely-graced faith, love and righteous truth as described and taught in the Bible (where the objective could be as in Philippians 2:13).

History demonstrates that conflations of right and wrong ethics by humans may be temporarily resolved by force but are never cured by it. According to the Bible texts, real transformation needs the ethical example of divinely-graced love and righteousness, founded on knowledge of and obedience to divine teachings.308 Many religious systems lay claim to a capacity to order and improve human life and yet they are coercive and have conflated ethics - down the centuries and across the world the evidence stands. It is true that the texts represent Paul and others as highly approving of the work of creating civic order.309 In ethical encounter thinking, civic order is admired yet not as the highest objective of God’s encountering the world. E.E.T implies that the divine encounter specifically targets wrong ethics concealed in society (see, e.g. Philippians 2:15). Accumulating binary ethical apocalypses is the desirable result of divine right ethical encountering of the world. These cumulative ethical exposures accrue towards a comprehensive, omni-generational ethical unveiling, finalized at the Eschaton (e.g., see 1 Corinthians 4:5). The Eschaton itself

308 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15. The Bible emphasizes the essential contribution of personal revelation from the Holy Spirit of God, e.g. 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. The same irenic theme occasionally appears in the Old Testament, e.g. Psalm 37.
is described by poet and biblical exegete, Eugene Peterson as “the curtain of history”.\(^{310}\) This addresses the puzzle of why today - after so many centuries of civilization and conquest of nature - peace on earth and justice between peoples seem as far away as ever.

It is proposed that God’s **primary** purpose is not peace between people, or the triumph of one group over another, or advances in technological civilization *per se*, but rather a continuous,  irenic ethical confrontation that evokes exhaustive binary ethical apocalypsis. An ethical encounter theologian might summarize the world process as that of an ethical dialysis machine. Here, the progressive actualization of wrong ethics (even of the worst sort) makes sense. Here, the world’s main value is not in self-perfection of a fault-ridden physical system, as general opinion and popular science sometimes appear to imply. Nor is the world to be especially valued as a long and messy spiritual war. Rather, as is argued, it is primarily to be valued as a practical means of ethical self-identification, of ethical demulsification, and of eternal ethical education. E.E.T. posits the ambivalence that characterizes our liminal, space-time world is ideal for such a divine ethical purpose. It is a vision of the E.E.T. program that increased appreciation of the deeply ethical character of reality be shared by those of different faiths and of none. Wider comprehension of the ethical-encounter worldview might make  irenical right ethics more attractive. Common sharing of an honor-based virtue ethics might help to defuse some of the aggressive interactions around the world. The main alternative view - that by endless struggle, involving immense suffering and injustice, the winner (whose dominating and aggressively competitive character has somehow to then transform) will create heaven on earth - is surely no longer a viable worldview. This is a substantial theological ethical point.

### 3.06 Universal bodily resurrection

Historical theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg, describes the world’s tumult as a confrontation with God, with the God of the future evoking novel and unpredictable events throughout history, culminating in a resurrection of all dead people.\(^{311}\) E.E.T. recognizes this, to the extent of appreciating God to have a clear purpose in creating

\(^{310}\) *TMV*: 1771.

\(^{311}\) *Revelation* 20:11-15 is an example of pervasive *New Testament* expectations of the bodily resurrection of every person who has ever lived on earth. See also *Romans* 5:5-16; *1 Corinthians* 4:5; 15:1-54.
an idiosyncratic universe containing our remarkable planet. However, that purpose is represented as an ethical separation and divine education of the universe. This is by a graded transfer of accurate information from the freely available divine perfection of the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.), especially concerning the relationship between right and wrong ethics. This divine wisdom can be seen as a priori truth slowly unveiled, piecemeal, through a painfully-won a posteriori accumulation of practical insights. That is, experiences of ethical encounter with divine loving wisdom effect a paradigm shift, by means of the deductive to the inductive.312 Wolfhart Pannenberg, however, directly perceived a general physical resurrection as the actual good of all of history. This raises questions regarding the character of God’s renovation. How much of the presently observable reality is renovated, how much is replaced by the new? This seemingly minor matter could have some profound consequences on inter-disciplinary dialectic (see section 1.12). In Wolfhart Pannenberg’s early work he gives some historical background regarding belief in the resurrection:

All other ancient religions see the world as a cosmic order, rooted in the order of the gods themselves, of which the myths give an account. For these religions earthly events are meaningful only in so far as the eternal divine order is reflected in them. . . . . . . The God of Israel is not tied to world-order, but confronts the world in freedom. God’s freedom is immediately evident in the fact that he constantly brings about the emergence of what is new and unexpected. Ancient Israel, therefore, did not look to an eternal world-order but to the future which its God would bring forth. The promises of God, for which Israel lived, were directed to the future. It was solely as a result of this that time gained its irreversible direction, from promise to fulfillment. In the oldest historical books the tension of promise and fulfillment embraced only part of the events of the world’s history . . . . . . . At the end, in apocalyptic literature, Israel came to see world events as a whole as God’s way to a final goal. This ultimate fulfillment was now expected as the event of the resurrection of the dead.313

Wolfhart Pannenberg is here observing God in the future, proleptically bringing into being the new and unexpected: a sort of retrospective ethical encounter. He sees God having a universal purpose and destiny of general resurrection. Although it is a problematic idea for science, the concept of resurrection of all humans who have ever

312 The texts represent the change of mind required for genuine repentance and true conversion is able to be facilitated by the empirical, e.g. John 10:38a; 14:11b; 17:21; Acts 19:17-20; etc.
lived concurs with the *New Testament* textual witness,\textsuperscript{314} and with the faith of Israel, particularly as exemplified in 2 *Maccabees* 7:14.\textsuperscript{315} This understanding is also foundational for E.E.T.’s historical conservationist eschatology (see section \textbf{1.06}).

Almost 30 years later, Wolfhart Pannenberg has given us another clear reading of his understanding of the resurrection of the dead. This he situates in the context of an integrated theological worldview:

The personal difference and self-distinction of the Son in relation to the Father is the model for . . . independent existence of creatures. It is an independence, however, that finds its satisfaction in the free submission of the Son to the Father and in his communion with his eternal life. This is the special destiny of living creatures, and in particular of human beings. Being destined to independent existence and to a freedom that is fulfilled in communion with God through submission to him is the aim of all creation; it is a determination to which God sticks even in the face of the finitude of his creatures, of their sin and their death. The eschatological accomplishment of a new life in communion with God, a life that will conquer sin and death, is the final accomplishment of creation. It will affirm and ultimately realize the original determination of the Creator to grant his creatures an independent existence in communion with himself.\textsuperscript{316}

This has consonances and dissonances with the E.E.T. story of a right ethical-driven origin, purpose and process concluding in a general resurrection of the dead, prior to the biblical aeon-to-come. The E.E.T. understanding of the textual evidence causes it to anticipate a less universalistic result from the summing-up of all the history of the world’s interaction with divine right ethics. It may not be very fashionable to remind ourselves of biblical teaching on judgment and separation (ethical dialysis) but there are few concepts so textually well supported (e.g. *John* 5:27-30; *Acts* 17:31; *Romans* 2:16; 2 *Timothy* 4:1; *Hebrews* 12:23; *James* 5:9; 1 *Peter* 4:5; *Jude* 15; *Revelation* 6:10). Even church leaders are cautioned that they could be (in E.E.T. language) dialyzed out of the system (*Matthew* 24:45-51; *Luke* 12:42-46; also, section \textbf{A.10}).

Resurrection and judgment can be seen as necessary consequences of the confronting ethical encounter that frees and educates, a basic tenet of the E.E.T. thesis. In many

\textsuperscript{314} References at dissertation footnote \textbf{311}; this is also foreshadowed in *Ezekiel* 37:1-14.


places the raw textual evidence of the *New Testament* effectively indicates the author’s belief in the existence of an ethically-polarizing, progressive cosmic encounter, with a term. E.E.T. interprets one stream of textual evidence as showing that the overthrow of evil occurs without God needing to engage in a war, or struggle or conflict (violent conflict in *Revelation* is then taken as metaphor). Divine teleology is made plain, for example, where the author of the epistle, *1 John*, writes:

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.  

This, pre-eminently important, time-conditioned process of destroying the works of evil by the incarnate Christ is connected in the *New Testament* with his finding and rescuing of human souls who have somehow become entangled with “the world”:

The Human Being came to look for and save those who are lost  

In E.E.T. thinking, entanglement with the world is actually a condition resulting from humankind’s ethical ambivalence. Divine ethical encounter of this situation is what provokes binary ethical apocalypsis. Part of that is the reification of unseen evil in historical events that are able to be judged. The other part is the self-identification and actualization of ethically-educable beings, eager for salvation. People who consciously experience divine encounter face a crisis of decision: to continue as they are or to begin to live in obedience to God’s teachings? Significantly, those who decide to change sometimes report that the saving goodness of a loving God is experienced as a personal encounter with goodness and right ethics. Biblically, this can be taken to be a proleptic taste of the resurrection to come (e.g. *Ephesians* 4:30; *Colossians* 3:1-4). The author of *Luke* 20:36 reports Christ as teaching about the resurrected life:

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317 *1 John* 3:8.
319 *Luke* 19:10 TS; also see *Matthew* 18:14; *Colossians* 1:28; *Hebrews* 2:15; *1 John* 4:14.
321 See Macchia, F. (2006): 259-265 - reference in dissertation section 2.12. Here, Frank Macchia dialogues with Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Jurgen Moltmann over the love nature of God and the personal experiences of human beings encountering the Holy Spirit of God. E.E.T. enlarges on this, to propose: “Since God is love, our theology should try to reflect the manner by which perfect love is itself creative of all things.” This could be a perspective that opens doors for biblical theology to offer information to science that its own methodology is constitutively unable to access.
they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.
They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection

The universality of bodily resurrection is affirmed by the author of John 5:28-29. It is followed by what, in E.E.T. terms, is defined as an ethical dialysis, or permanent separation of the right ethical from the wrong ethical:

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

The E.E.T. hermeneutics offer a biblically-concordant, cosmic ethical anthropological reason for bodily resurrection and judgment, consonant with a scientifically-coherent account of ethical cosmogenesis. This also sponsors a theodicy based on a requirement to irenically address the primordial cosmic ethical anthropic problem. This adds a substantial new approach to the core of scholarly theological discourse.

3.07 God’s twin purposes in our world
Biblically, the world is portrayed as both the locus of the devil’s works (that is dissemination and cultivation of the illusion of human independence from God) that must be destroyed, and of lost souls (ethically compromised but divinely educable persons) who must be rescued. This bi-functional biblical worldview is strongly represented in the New Testament (e.g., see section 1.06). The theologically familiar, evil-destroying/soul-rescuing process can only result, E.E.T. says, from divine right ethical encounter with the world’s conflated ethics. This encounter will cause binary ethical apocalypse. Some may choose God’s way but others will react. For example, where Christ is reported to have taught with great clarity:

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: “No servant is greater than his master.” If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet
have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason’. 

In E.E.T. this is assumed to be prophetic about the opponents of the Christ during his lifetime and also an observation about the antipathy between divinely ethically-educable people and the culpably uneducable, for all time. The events of our world distinguish those who have an open heart for divine education from those who choose to harden their hearts against God’s desire to teach and so voluntarily remove their anthropic ethical compromises from the cover of divine mercy.

Culpable ignorance is sin. Apostle Paul is shown to attribute some of this to a blinding by the god of this age. The editors of the NIVSB comment:

*god of this age.* The devil, who is the archenemy of God and the unseen power behind all unbelief and ungodliness. Those who follow him have in effect made him their god.

This particular biblical theological approach to the origin of evil is problematic for interactions with Theology/Science studies, and seems to be made redundant where E.E.T. attributes the source of evil to a cosmic ethical anthropic problem (see point R on page xxvi, and sections 1.11, 1.13, 1.14, 1.16 and points B.4-6 and G.19 in section 3.02). Whether evil beings have a separate existence, or are brought into existence by or simply empowered by human wrong ethics, is not considered here. Rather, the E.E.T. focus is on the way divine love operates to call humans out from entanglement with sin (conflated ethics) and also operates to progressively expose hidden evil, so that it cumulatively becomes subject to judgment and categorical removal at the Eschaton. World history is then the story of how divine right ethics persistently, irenically works to remove the world’s primordial inheritance of anthropic wrong ethical potentials. This activity is taken to be part of who God is. For biblical theological interactions with Theology/Science there appears to be no added advantage in connecting wrong ethics and evil to the devil, demons, etc.

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322 *John 15:18-25 NIV; reiterated at John 17:14 TS* as: “I have given them your Word and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world just as certainly as I am not of the world.” This is also an *Old Testament* theme, e.g. “The wicked will see it and be grieved” (*Psalm* 112:10 TM).
323 2 Corinthians 4:4.
324 NIVSB: 1807. The god of this age or the spirit of the world is interpreted for E.E.T. purposes as an ethical intent to disregard God’s right ethical teaching and to set up an independent ethical system. In its extreme form this is an urge to deicide and self-deification. Whether that set of wrong ethical influences is a person or persons or simply the potentials of the u.r.s.t. inherited from the c.e.a.p. is not addressed in this dissertation (see section 3.05).
3.08 The nature of sin

The major educational content of both the *Genesis* 3 story of Adam and Eve and the *Genesis* 4 story about Cain is of the severe consequences of humans culpably ignoring divine teaching. Interestingly, in the light of the E.E.T. monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis (see section 1.15), the *Genesis* author mentions that Cain was the first to build a city. The E.E.T. reading brings the two *Genesis* accounts (the origin of hunter/gatherer peoples and the origin of Adamic farmer/civic peoples) into harmony with the scientific anthropological understanding of hunter/gatherer origins at about 100,000 years ago and farmer/civics at about 10,000 years ago. With that perspective, it becomes arguable that the *Genesis* author intended to attribute the origin of sin (outright culpable disobedience to God) to the farmer/civic peoples. There is a significant amount of consonance between the biblical anthropogenesis parables and Theology/Science in the monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis proposed in E.E.T. A more detailed biblical interpretation of anthropogenesis finds greater consonance with the scientific evidence (see sections 1.15, 2.12, 4.13, A.05 and A.09). This is also a hermeneutics that supports a more textured hamartiology than is normally able to be reconciled with a *solus Adamus* anthropogenesis.

According to the *New Testament* accounts (see section 3.07), the right ethically-encountering actions of Jesus and his followers elicit rejection, persecution, and hatred from the world. In the process, the ethos of the world becomes characterized as actual hatred of God, in spite of the divine irenic omnibenevolence. The offense to the establishment that Jesus’ prophesies (and teachings) caused is understandable. He criticized an old and very religious society. Leaders whose self-image was of having inherited a most favored status with God were offended by much that Jesus Christ said. The worldviews they had depended on were being subverted. In the biblical accounts, genuine relationships with God always involve revelation, conviction, repentance, *metanoia*, a change of self-image and a progressive acquisition of divine worldview metaphors (e.g. 2 Corinthians 2:18). The living God is never portrayed as a passive idol at the service of human manipulation or hierarchism. In fact, God is

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325 *Genesis* 4:17. See also thesis section 1.15.
326 See dissertation sections 1.07 and 7.03, on the concept of humanity’s attempted deicide having priority in a chronology of wrong ethics. The *New Testament* (e.g. 1 Peter 1:20) shows that from the beginning of the universe God had prepared an answer to the virtually insurmountable problem of freely-chosen evil. This hamartiology conditions all of E.E.T.’s contribution to biblical theology.
shown as a supremely active consuming fire. An unwillingness or incapacity for repentance when faced with divine ethical teaching is what the Bible describes as stiff necked (e.g. Exodus 34:9). Reaction against being encountered and changed by divine teaching is counted as sin. It is culpable ignorance that obdurately resists the transmission of wisdom and truth. From this perspective, the instruction: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30 adap) is a requirement for comprehensive teachableness and obedience. Jesus is shown in John 14 to emphasize this standard lesson. It is especially clear at John 14:15, 23 and 24. Biblically, unteachable pride before God is always sin (e.g. James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). In the ethical structuring of the E.E.T. worldview this is called mis-ecollation. It reflects sympathetic resonance with the wrong ethical potentials of the u.r.s.t., the worst side of the world’s unseen ecology (see section A.04).

The author of Luke describes an incident at the start of Christ’s ministry that illustrates ethical encounter dynamics. Christ returns from fasting and praying in the desert and is: “in the power of the Spirit.” He teaches in the local synagogues (a sign of favor): “and everyone praised him.” The Nazareth congregation: “all spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.” Yet, after Jesus is shown to speak a few sentences of prophesy, the author of Luke says: “All the people in the synagogue were furious”; they forcibly expelled him and determined: “to throw him down the cliff.” The congregation intended to summarily execute him (if someone “fell over a cliff” the authorities might view it as an accident not as an illegal execution). Here the Gospel of Luke (arguably the most historically scientific among biblical texts) graphically recounts a shocking volte-face, involving

\[327 \text{Hebrews 12:29 TS.}\]
\[328 \text{See, e.g. Romans 1:18-20; 2:4, 5; Psalm 50:17-19. Jeremiah 32:33 records God’s disappointment: “They turned their backs on me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.” This is typical, in the E.E.T. worldview, of biblical condemnation of culpable disobedience to God’s perfectly wise and benevolent teaching.}\]
\[329 \text{Luke 4:14-29; also Mark 3:4-6 TS: “Then Jesus asked them, ‘On the Sabbath Day is it legal to do good or to do bad, to save life or to destroy it?’ But they kept quiet. Jesus looked around angrily. ‘Stretch out your hand,’ Jesus said to the person. The person stretched it out, and his hand was restored to its proper condition. At this the Pharisees left and immediately started plotting with their friends and supporters of Herod Antipas against Jesus, plotting how they were going to kill him.” The miracle powerfully prophesied the presence of God’s reign (the m.o.r.e.) and encountered the world – here equivalent to today’s church. A striking apocalypsis of concealed evil resulted. The human self-determining, deicidal motif is shown as not far below the surface of what is ostensibly the height of civilized society.} \]
people who knew Jesus better than anyone. These childhood friends and neighbors switch from warm, honoring interest and acceptance to insensate, murderous rejection, all over a call to repentance. In E.E.T., this offers a good example of the process by which right ethical encounter elicits ethical apocalypsis. God’s purpose in the world is shown not to be an amassing of lovers of charisma but a speaking of sharp words of truth that provoke the self-exposure of hidden heart attitudes. In the overall E.E.T. worldview sense (i.e. bearing in mind the ethical-conflation ravaged character of our world) this unhappy process is actually necessary and is eventually best for everyone concerned. Whether the good of right ethical encounter is personally appropriated or not is a significant individual choice (also, see section 7.04 for differences between authentic good and evil and expedient good and evil).

Repentance and conversion to the truth, no matter how personally challenging that may be, is God’s invitation. The love of the biblical God is energetic and confronting, not at all passive. Without fear or favor, the texts describe Jesus facing the establishment with the plain truth; this then provoked an apocalypsis of the concealed ethics of the local church. Ecclesial historians, contemporary observers of the churches, and social commentators report that the same truth-resisting behavior continues to this day. Worldliness, devaluing truth, a preference for and a resting upon attitudes foreign to a: “fervent anticipation of the newness God has promised

Hebrews 4:12,13 TS: “For God’s Word is living and active and sharper than every double-edged sword, piercing to the extent of dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to discern the reasoning and thoughts of the heart. And there is no creation that is unseen in his presence, but everything is naked and laid open to scrutiny in his eyes, and in his view, the Word is our responsibility.” Ann Nyland’s new translation - reference on dissertation page xxix - makes a sharp application of the Word of God to be the job description of every believer. That accords with an ethical encounter understanding of Christ’s followers as ethical co-encounterers of the ethical ambivalence of this world. Matthew 10:34b TS: “I have come with a razor blade,” is a statement that speaks plainly of the perfect being’s method and purpose of finely dividing.

1 Timothy 2:3b, 4 TS: “Our Savior God . . . wants all people to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of truth.” In the Bible, at Revelation 22:17, God’s offer of free grace for everyone is made for the last time (see page xvi).

Luke 2:34, 35 states this was prophesied by Simeon a man anointed (2:25) with the Holy Spirit. At John 7:7 TS, we hear Jesus telling his siblings: “The world can’t hate you, but it hates me because I give evidence that what it does is evil”. John 7:25b TS: “Isn’t this the one they’re trying to kill?”

From many examples, a recent classic is the story of Anna Rosmus’ research into what happened in the lovely town of Passau during WWII. This story was dramatized in the 1990 film, Das Schreckliche Madchen (The Nasty Girl) directed by Michael Verhoeven. The movie portrays the complex and endemic character of truth-resistance in the world and in the church, involving the nicest of people. Some may then take to the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, hoping the Church can force the world to be a better place. However, the E.E.T. method prioritizes irenic ethical confrontation (and so binary ethical apocalypsis) before either power-over politics or social improvements for their own sakes.
and will surely give*, seems to be as inherent of the church as of the world itself. Walter Brueggemann continues:

Thus I suggest that prophetic ministry has to do not primarily with addressing specific public crises but with addressing, in season and out of season, the dominant crisis that is enduring and resilient, of having our alternative vocation co-opted and domesticated.335

The Ethical Encounter Theology alternative vocation will evoke binary apocalypsis by encountering the world’s ethical conflation with biblical right ethics. It has to be asked if believers’ failure to confront mis-ecollation (i.e. ethical conflation or sin) is not itself sin? Is confrontation with the world not inevitable for anyone who is eu-ecollating on divine right ethics? This has been better said:

friendship with the world is hatred towards God
Do not love the world or anything in the world 336

For E.E.T., these texts speak of a world, brought out of a singularity of anthropic selfishness by divine love, at great cost. This is a world that shows its origins by still rejecting the teachings of the perfect human being. In the event, sin appears as refusal to realize one’s own best right ethical interests. The E.E.T. inter-disciplinary consonance implies that there is such a thing as right ethical selection, corresponding to the survival of the ethically fittest. This is a concept that is accessible to traditional biblical theologians and to Theology/Science researchers (see comments on E.E.T. and genetics in sections 4.09 and 4.11).

Many different hamartiological perspectives have been developed by theologians and those who work at the Theology/Science interface. For example, Robert J. Russell develops a perspective, deriving from the metaphorical approach of Paul Ricoeur, Ian Barbour and Sally McFague. He writes:

Thermodynamics is needed if moral evil is to be actualized in the world. As I wrote almost two decades ago: “if evil is real in nature, entropy is what one would expect to find at the level of physical processes.”337

335 Ibid.
336 James 4:4b; 1 John 2:15a.
337 Robert J. Russell refers to Paul Tilich’s description of evil as having: “no independent standing in the whole of reality, but . . . it is dependent on the structure of that in and upon which it acts destructively,” and his memorable phrase that the form of evil is the: “structure of destruction.” Russell then says: “Thus evil ‘aims at chaos’ and when chaos is attained, ‘both structure and destruction have vanished’.” Russell, R. J. (2008): 258, 270 - reference in dissertation section 1.07.
The E.E.T. hamartiology is different. It explains moral and natural evil as the inevitable outcome of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem. It is because of the c.e.a.p. that our space-time universe is perfectly adapted for binary ethical apocalypsis, as God’s irenic method of addressing freely chosen conscious resistance to divine wisdom. This aspect of creation stems from a primal divine prescience (and/or prolepsis) of humankind’s determination to be independent from God’s teaching (as beautifully illustrated by the Genesis chapter 3 and 4 parables of the culpable acts of disobedience of Adam and Eve and of Cain).

3.09 Binary ethical apocalypsis
There are personal and social outcomes from encounters with divine right ethics that are anticipated to be normative for believers. Truth must be present to contradict lies. Light is indispensable to reveal what is hidden in darkness. Light is indispensable to reveal what is hidden in darkness. Life itself shows-up that which merely mimics life. Genuinely unselfish love soon gives the lie to pretense, hypocrisy and exploitation. And the genuinely holy cannot help but provoke evilness to react. In fact it is in the process of reacting against right ethics that subtly concealed wrong ethics discloses itself. The specifics of each reaction speak unequivocally of a character trait of a specific ungodly process. Throughout history the world’s ethical jig-saw puzzle is put together from many apocalypses of heavily disguised ethical values. Following their exegesis of 1 John 3:12, Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger III reflect:

Righteousness draws hatred from the devil and hatred from the children of the devil. Darkness cannot tolerate light; immorality morality; hatred love; or greed sacrifice. The hatred of the world for the community of faith must not surprise the believers.

338 E.g. Ephesians 5:11; Philippians 2:15.
339 Psalm 107:42: “The upright see and rejoice but all the wicked shut their mouths.” Psalm 112:10: “The wicked man will see and be vexed”; see also Psalm 119:23, 51, 61, 69, 95, 143. Psalm 125:3 provides a divine reason why practitioners of wrong ethics have to be separated from those of right ethics: to avoid corruption of goodness. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is much concerned with identification of and the separation of all that is evil. In E.E.T. this is described as binary ethical apocalypsis, followed by ethical dialysis. E.E.T. understands the reality of our world to be well adapted to achieve ethical objectives that can readily be expressed in both biblical theological and Theology/Science terms.
340 Barker, K. L. and Kohlenberger, J. III, editors (1994). B&KNT: 1096. It may be not be always the community of faith that is rejected but quite often those individuals who witness to truth. History has plenty of examples of communities of faith themselves savaging speakers of truth.
They also say Cain’s motive in slaughtering Able was that his brother’s acts were righteous.\textsuperscript{341} E.E.T. recognizes this Genesis 4 story as an especially poignant parable of binary ethical apocalypsis. A parable that could be interpreted in Theology/Science studies as behavioral heterogeneity emerging from genetic homogeneity.

Major biblical teachings on good and evil are readily interpreted in terms of binary ethical apocalypsis. Recognition of this could, perhaps, motivate believers to confront hypocrisy in the world system.\textsuperscript{342} Psalm 37 implies that in doing right and loving peace people will become poor and needy yet beloved of God who will justify them. Many New Testament texts also teach believers to look past what the world values to divine right ethical values. In E.E.T. it is observed that irenic right ethical encounter of the world is personally challenging and is arguably the ultimate challenge to virtue.

Faith communities may not always show appreciation of the historically-additive process of ethical encounter whereby succeeding generations could cumulatively penetrate the whole heart of darkness. Indeed, such a process also needs to be held in balance with an awareness of the many crimes perpetrated by self-righteous people. Not every ethical encounter is free of the very corruptions of the systems it faces up to. The issue of corruption of process is immediately addressed. Quintessentially, those who lack self-giving love (of even their cruelest enemies) transgress the biblically specified limits of divine ethical encounter.\textsuperscript{343} For Christians, the New Testament life of Christ gives a benchmark, able to inform effective participation in the divine ethical processes that give the world its meaning. Significantly, exactly the same ethics are available to those of other faith connections and of none (a point appreciated by the author of Romans 2:6-11).

The E.E.T. analysis provides relief for believers from pressure to succeed in the world. Their role is to do their best to lovingly manifest God’s irenic ethical method. Biblically formed, they confront (often without knowing it) the hypocrisy of the

\textsuperscript{341} Genesis 4:4; see also Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; John 3:19-21; Hebrews 11:4; Psalm 37:12, 32; 112:10; Proverbs 29:10: “Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity.”

\textsuperscript{342} Psalm 119:109: “Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.”

\textsuperscript{343} Luke 6:27-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 4:7-12. In John 17:21 Jesus is reported to say (effectively) that the world will believe he is the appointed leader of the divine Ethical Encounter if believers are united in love, in the same way that he is with the Father. It will be their all-embracing love that confronts the world’s conflated ethics and actualizes in space-time physicality the unseen divine right ethical purpose. This is obviously something one either believes or does not.
world and even within the church. By scientific analogy, they are a demulsifying detergent able to break the mis-collated emulsion that worldliness has aggressively formed with goodness (e.g. Genesis 4:7; Hebrews 12:1b). Like a hydrolyzing enzyme they are to split conflations of wrong and right ethics. By enabling primordially-syncretized right ethics to become free, they further the divine world process that must be persevered with up to the Eschaton. This is the very process that gives enduring value to all of history (e.g. Romans 8:21-23), as is emphasized in Wolfhart Pannenberg’s theology (e.g., see section 3.06). This is also structured into the Ethical Encounter Theology cosmology and hamartiology, with an observation that the major biblical textual evidence suggests the process is finalized in salvage eschatology rather than in renovation eschatology.

The E.E.T. exploration has arrived at a major theological conclusion in perceiving that, biblically, promoting binary ethical apocalypsis is the main work of obedient believers. Co-working for a progressive outing of all that despises God’s ways, and facilitating discovery of the humble and obedient, gives every person an ability to contribute to bringing-on the Eschaton (e.g. 2 Peter 3:12). Each one may choose to be part of the everlasting story. It is as they faithfully co-labor with God at this ethical unraveling work that they can rest confident of divine interventions. This is distinct from power-over doctrines that give little weight to right ethics. The Gospels provide criteria for recognizing right ethics, in reporting Jesus’ comment, that: “By their fruit you will know them!” It would be hard to imagine a greater dignity made available to every person than that of co-laboring with God towards a perfect future for everyone. Yet it is easier to grasp the aim than the crucial irenic method.

A teaching on the inevitability of apocalypses of wrong ethical offenses (or snares) and a caution to avoid being the cause of these offenses is given by the author of Matthew 18:7b. Biblically, that neatly summarizes what in E.E.T. is called binary ethical apocalypsis. The dialetheism that is imbedded in this analysis of the world ethical process is addressed in section 7.04.

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344 Ephesians 5:11b and 5:13b typify the Bible’s call for wrong ethics to be exposed.
346 E.g. James 3:17-18; 1 Peter 3:11.
347 The author of Galatians 5:19-23 also contrasts the opposing empirical evidence of wrong and right ethics.
3.10 The monism of E.E.T.

Although having strong binary elements, E.E.T. is far from Manichaean dualism, as it envisages no equivalence of powers. Indeed, it accepts no power struggle as such (largely contra a common theological opinion referred to in sections 1.03 and 3.05). A faith-inspired attitude of confident trust in God’s higher purposes for the duration of this aeon’s confronting ethical encounter is taught as normative. For example, the author of Matthew recounts one of Jesus’ several rebukes of Simon Peter:

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than 72,000 angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that say it must happen in this way? 348

The author of John’s gospel conveys the same sense of limitless power, restrained for a purpose, by contextualizing the world in terms of Christ’s own account of his triumphant, divine authority and his pre-Adamic antiquity, for example:

I’ve told you all this, so that you will have peace because of me. In the world you will have oppression. But be brave! I have had the victory over the world! 349

And now, Father, give me the honor I had in your own presence, the honor that I had with you before (Greek pro) the world began. 350

The author of 1 John writes extensively about believers’ experiences with the world but again the pervading message is one of an established ethical victory:

You, my dear members, are certainly from God’s family, and have had the victory over them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 351

Whilst a good case can be made for this biblically theologically the challenge remains for Theology/Science researchers to be convinced of how the unseen, righteousness of obedience to divine right ethics articulates with the phenomenal (see 2 Corinthians 4:18 for a biblical example of such seen/unseen-monism). It is easier to bridge the revelational/empirical gap when perfect being theism is kept undiluted. This method does mandate for a competent theodicy. However, it also eases the traction problem by enabling the virtues of an omnicompetent and omnibenevolent God (via unseen ecology for example) to be intimately available to all the entities and processes of the

348 Matthew 26:53, 54 NIVSB adap, with 12 legions re-translated as 72,000; see also Psalm 119:165.
349 John 16:33 TS; see also John 14:30 TM: “the chief of this god-less world is about to attack. But don’t worry – he has nothing on me, no claim on me.”
350 John 17:5 TS.
351 1 John 4:4 TS. Paul, too, is pacifist in 2 Corinthians 10:4, encountering his enemies only with the power-under weapons of truth and holiness.
world. A particularly clear form of priority monism is available to theologies that insist God is totally perfect.352

3.11 “Your kingdom come” in E.E.T. perspective

Jesus Christ is characterized at Hebrews 4:14 and throughout the text of that book as the great high priest of the divine ethical encounter. By his obedient self-sacrifice Christ paid for the ethical integrity of every person who chooses to unite with him, from every part of the earth (Revelation 5:9). It is by identifying with the perfect human being that they become dignified as priests of God’s Reign, and resonate with the universe-embracing matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.). They are priests because they are commissioned to mediate ethical apocalypsis to all peoples (Revelation 5:10). And nature groans for humankind to learn its divine lesson and get free of evil so it can fulfill the primal divine call to be very good (Romans 8:22; Genesis 1:31).

In 1 Peter 2:5 believers may hear that they are a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ. E.E.T. recognizes these sacrifices as consisting in their persistent costly witness to an ethically conflated world. They do their part in the divine process of binary ethical apocalypsis. These men and women are recognizable as kingdom priests who are privileged to administer God’s gift of merciful, unconditional grace in forgiveness, salvation, healing and in diverse deliverances from every evil conflation. Yet paradoxically, as in Jesus’ own ministry, it is their God-endowed righteousness and unselfish love for even the least person that is capable of irritating and polarizing the world, as it follows its own agenda. A nineteenth century hymn by John Chandler (1806-1876) speaks of the difference:

Conquering kings their titles take, from the foes they captive make:
Jesu, by a nobler deed, from the thousands He hath freed.

Viewed by the inter-disciplinary ethical lingua franca of E.E.T., eu-ecollation on the right ethics of the m.o.r.e. brings it into encounter with the world. This can have a polarizing, historical outcome. It’s an attractive aroma for any who are looking for perfect God’s right ethics but it stinks like a dead body to any who prefer worldly conflated ethics (e.g. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16). E.E.T. predicts that such Kingdom

encounters will continue to cause binary ethical apocalypses until all things cease from pursuing an independent agenda and depend on God’s perfect sufficiency alone.

The work of the biblical priesthood of these eu-eccollating representatives of all peoples is both constructive and destructive. And it is for their sake that divine love will ultimately disassemble the space-time universe it called into being. With all this in mind, it is claimed that what can be expected from praying: “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth” is not Paradise on earth now but a confrontational presence of right ethics, penetratingly searching out the ethical compromises of the world. For a supremely merciful God (who, generation after generation perseveringly teaches the human remedial class) this process has needed thousands of years to finalize. Yet, as Eugene H. Peterson writes, each passing day is illuminated by the Last Day. Such an irrepresible presence of the wisdom of holiness is this as will, all through this aeon of ethical encounter, irritate, and provoke binary apocalypses. This historically progressive process of ethical apocalypsis is evidenced as a structured process of unwaving an almost infinitely subtly inter-woven Gordonian knot of potential evil. Only God’s persevering love could find a way to un-pick the almost hopelessly entangled conflation of evil within human hearts and society. This is indicated by the author of Genesis, where God is shown to recognize and mourn over the cause of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem:

All the inclinations of the human heart are evil from childhood.

The Theology/Science discourse challenges biblical theologians to provide a more textured account of pervasive moral evil, than simply blaming it all on the unseen
devil. In the absence of a convincing theological argument, philosophers and natural scientists generally take moral evil as being completely explained as a cost of the power-over means of human natural selection. That is, by the survival of the fittest and disposal of the unfit.\textsuperscript{358} E.E.T. attempts to bridge this revelational/empirical gap with a hamartiology that is a consequence of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (see section 3.02, points G.19, H.20, and J.24 and J.25). This does not compete with the scientific understanding of the evolutionary connections of moral evil (see point X on dissertation page xxviii). The E.E.T. hermeneutic has the possibility of evil available in the primordial unseen realities of space-time (the u.r.s.t.) from where it is can be accessed by emergent people and societies that freely choose to mis-eccollate and actualize it as part of world history. This creates actual evil that is paradoxically simultaneously expediently good (see section 7.04).

As a matter of observation, our news media’s reports of wars, acts of terrorism, atrocities, environmental degradation, official corruption, human trafficking, substance abuse, child labor, murders, mutilations, rapes, assaults, robberies, sectarian hatred and violence, and every form of iniquity, injustice, cruelty and human neglect must sadden even the greatest optimist. Such crimes also occur frequently in the wealthy, civilized and educated countries. Paradoxically, world-wide evil contains a seed of hope. The obverse of the process of the apocalypsis of evil is an individuation of people willing to step out of the base human character by \textit{metanoia}.\textsuperscript{359} They are personally willing to stand with the divine ethical encounter, in its comprehensive exposure of hidden evils.\textsuperscript{360} As discussed in the first part of this section, it is not just sin that is exposed by binary ethical apocalypsis. People who choose to be taught by God also self-identify. A universe called into being - through the overcoming love of God encountering a singularity of extreme selfishness - can be expected to have natural resources of potential goodness within it. There is an abundance of Kingdom right ethics in unseen ecology, accessible to all entities that would eu-eccollate on it. And that model has consonance with \textit{New Testament} parables, such as the separation

\textsuperscript{358} This problem has recently been examined in depth by Christopher Southgate - see thesis footnote 8.
\textsuperscript{359} E.g. Romans 8:6, 7.
\textsuperscript{360} This has yet to have a significant influence on higher education, the media, governmental and military decision-making, according to the introductory comments of Charles K. Bellinger, in his survey: \textit{Religion and Violence: a Bibliography}, www.wabashcenter.edu/resources/article2 - accessed on 19/07/2009.
of goats from sheep.\textsuperscript{361} It also resonates with the godly psalmist’s passionate theme of the purging of evil, e.g. in Psalms 9, 101 and 125.\textsuperscript{362}

Significantly, E.E.T. does not specify a gradual evolution of ethical or holy behavior (though there may be examples of that). Its universe is inherently supportive of continual ethical apocalypsis - the public distinction between good and evil affinities to permit fair judgment at the Eschaton. Because of this, the last days of this aeon might be predicted to be those that expose every last sort of evil. That broadly concurs with the dangerous and trying end-time scenario vividly depicted in the book of Revelation and in reports of Christ’s comments in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Everything of hidden evil must actualize by its own free choices before, in all justice, it can be categorically outlawed.\textsuperscript{363} With the categorical removal of all deicidal and self-deifying and other wrong ethical potentials, human beings will, at last, discover who they always were supposed to be. This part of the E.E.T. eschatology largely concurs with Wolfhart Pannenberg’s eschatological vision:

\begin{quote}
It will affirm and ultimately realize the original determination of the Creator to grant his creatures an independent existence in communion with himself.\textsuperscript{364}
\end{quote}

Because it is the means of bringing in this longed-for aeon of right ethics, apocalypsis of evil serves a good purpose; although it would have been better if it had not had to happen. This may evoke the same emotion as that of a believer meditating on the crucified Christ – deep thankfulness that perfect divine love did that for us but also shame that it was the ethically ambivalent human heart that made it necessary. However, in the end, all things redound to the perfect being’s glory.\textsuperscript{365}

3.12 The heart of a Christian theology

Contemporary Christian theologians and philosophers may find themselves more-or-less embedded in today’s post-modern, technological paradise. From that vantage point, it is easy to assume that the immense suffering and deprivation of millions of human beings is part of the price of evolutionary progress. A scientific worldview

\textsuperscript{361} Aphorizo separation (i.e. desirable separation; not chorizo): Matthew 25:32; 2 Corinthians 6:17.
\textsuperscript{362} Psalm 9:5,16; 101:3-8; 104:35; 125:1-5; also 119:118, 119.
\textsuperscript{363} Chapters 12, 13, 17 and 20 of the book of Revelation appear to describe the ultimate exposure of the sources of all evil.
\textsuperscript{365} Romans 5:20, 21; Hebrews 1:1-4.
suggests that ever-evolving, human technological mastery will eventually solve all such problems. That worldview can be combined, for believers, with the idea of God winning an ultimate victory, as in the cosmic conflict paradigm.\(^{366}\) What is most unsatisfactory about those methods is they fail to give value to the loss, suffering and futility of life. In contrast, in E.E.T. it is argued that there is eternal value for humankind in all of this immensity of suffering. That is because it exposes the concealed causes of evil and funds the just removal of all the wrong ethical potentials inherited in the unseen ecology of the universe. These hermeneutical differences also give rise to the contrast between renovation eschatology and salvage eschatology. Either, “Progress is inevitably built on cruelty and waste but it will be overcome by renovation of our world;” or “Evil is a reflection of human independence of God and is being exposed for judgment and separation, so the good can be salvaged into the aeon-to-come.” By highlighting this dichotomy this dissertation makes a significant contribution to the current inter-disciplinary scholarly debate, where the second alternative (that is favored in E.E.T.) is almost always ignored.

Few Christian believers would dispute that the crucified and resurrected Christ is the core of their faith. The biblical texts’ accounts of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Wisdom of God, the perfect human being, the Lamb of God, Son of God and Son of Man, author of life, and Lord of glory are surely intended to imply something inordinately meaningful. Further, the claims for the bodily resurrection of the savagely slaughtered Christ are extraordinarily well attested in ancient texts.\(^{367}\) Those observations still impact and interrogate any believer’s worldview concept. Would a Christian theology or philosophy that minimizes the

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\(^{366}\) See dissertation section 1.03. Many theologies build on a “God-at-war” worldview. For example, David Burnett says: “Two kingdoms are at war. A spiritual battle is going on, a clash that permeates the entire range of human activities.” Burnett D. (2002). *Clash of Worlds: What Christians Can Do in a World of Cultures in Conflict.* London, Monarch: 214. Others include: Prince, D, (2003). *War in Heaven: God’s Epic Battle with Evil.* Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker; Boyd, G. A. (1996) - reference in dissertation section 1.03; and Barnhouse, D. G. (1965). *The Invisible War.* Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan. Many other works imply that God is forced to tolerate the activities of ungodly beings and powers for a season. The E.E.T. paradigm is quite other. For a perfect being there is never a war. Evil is permitted for a season as it shows the children the terrible consequences of independence from divine right ethics. The E.E.T. perfect being perspective is more irenic and would seem to offer a greater likelihood of positive inter-disciplinary and inter-faith communication than seems possible for “God-at-war” worldviews. The binary ethical apocalypsis method is arguably more socially responsible than metaphysical systems that might be taken to legitimize violent, domineering over other people.

central *New Testament* event jeopardize its own identity? The reverse is so with E.E.T. Here the central, kenotic event of the Christian story is discovered to be universally significant.\(^{368}\) Christ confrontingly communicates God’s unselfish ethical identity to the limit of human comprehension. Such knowledge of God in Christ illuminates the purpose of the universe and is integral to human history.\(^{369}\)

Christ’s ministry is portrayed by the Gospel author’s as being devoted to the loser’s in the struggle for survival. God is not triumphalist but works by a power-under method. God’s knowledge of and concern for the dispossessed and suffering is made clear throughout the Bible. In many places (e.g. *John* 10:30) the author show Jesus as directly representing the perfect being, Almighty God. In short, Christ’s ethical rules are absolute, as there is no higher appeal court. Ethical Encounter Theology maintains that this is the fundamental process of all reality. For the power that called our universe out of its singularity of selfishness was this same love of God in Christ - in the Lamb who was loved by God *pro kataboles kosmou*, was chosen *pro kataboles kosmou*, was slain *apo kataboles kosmou*, and whose work has been finished *apo kataboles kosmou*.\(^{370}\)

Divine recognition of and compensation for suffering and loss contributes both a robust general meaning and a deeply personal significance to our cosmos and its processes. For example, reading *2 Corinthians* 4 verse 17 in the light of verse 18 shows the author emphasizing the exchange of present, seen and temporary troubles for a currently unseen, eternal glory that far outweighs them all. This biblically holistic worldview describes a very positive relationship between the perfect divine being and humankind. The characteristics of this all-conditioning ethical matrix facilitate the compound monism (or dualistic monism) of E.E.T. hermeneutics.

\(^{368}\) E.E.T. applies a more biblically-focused understanding of kenosis than in Murphy, N. and Ellis, G. F. R. (1996) - reference in dissertation section 1.13. However, E.E.T. completely concurs with their proposal that our world is primarily an ethical venture.

\(^{369}\) Something of this is conveyed in *Acts* 3:15 by the divine title: “author of life”; for more on the E.E.T. Christology see, point Y on dissertation page xxix, paragraphs L.29 and L.30 in dissertation section 2.02, and dissertation sections 1.11, 1.16, 4.05, and 7.03.

\(^{370}\) *John* 17:24; *Hebrews* 4:3; *1 Peter* 1:20; *Revelation* 13:8. The concatenation of these pericopae makes so much theological sense, that it is hard to imagine the implication of Christ’s suffering with cosmogenesis was not intended by the authors of these four different books. When *Ephesians* 1:4; *Colossians* 1:16-17; and *Revelation* 17:8 are added to this, the biblical theological case is even more broadly based. See also, Simon Gathercole on the significance of the: “I have come” statements in the synoptic Gospels (see dissertation section 4.05).
Importantly, the swinging criticisms often poured on philosophers who would dare to do metaphysics so broadly may find less purchase on a biblically-based, scientifically-competent hermeneutic, such as is developed in E.E.T. It follows the irenic path rather than the polemic or apologetic way and applies every means, within the confines of biblical integrity to resonate with non-theological sources. The ethical method helps in connecting the biblically central crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ to the empirical realities that science is committed to interpret.

The author of *Matthew* records Jesus as encouraging his followers not to fear people who will deceitfully slander and attack them and their confronting message. They are to be brave, not because – always on the instant – God will vindicate them. Rather because every concealed, malicious lie, slander and assault will ultimately be exhibited before the whole Court of Heaven. Only there, in the unflickering light of the matrix of divine right ethics will it be that Jesus’ persevering followers find their vindication and compensation:

- Therefore do not fear them.
- For there is nothing covered [*kalupto*] that will not be revealed [*apokalupto*].

This eschatological apocalypsis of accumulated motives has both inherent ethical logic and a requirement for personal faith. Many different religions contain the concept of a just judgment in the afterlife. This concept hangs on trust in unseen entities and processes such as the incorruptibility of truth, the immortal personal soul, the efficacy of divine information-gathering and record-keeping, the perfect judgment of the Divine Parental Person, and their perfect will and ability to administer justice, punishment and compensation. Ethical Encounter Theology itself depends on a

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372 All Theology/Science workers are in debt to Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis for their painstaking groundwork in exploring how ethics and cosmology can be related - see dissertation footnote 368.

373 1 Corinthians 4:9b: “we have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.” *Hebrews* 12:1a *NRSV*: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.”

374 Matthew 11:25, 26 *NKJV*; also Luke 8:17; 1 Corinthians 4:5, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:10; see Romans 2:16 *TS*: “This will happen on the day when God will judge the hidden things of people through Jesus the Anointed One, according to my Good News!”

375 1 Corinthians 2:9 *TS*: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it occurred to a person, the things which God has prepared for those who love him;” this quotes directly from *Isaiah* 64:4. See also, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.
vigorou[s appreciation of the perfect being’s utterly impeccable and dependable character. History’s record of Christ’s life and redemptive sacrifice are taken as our best example of who the unseen God consistently is. For Christian theology, the historical person of Christ is all that is known of perfect God. The wide connections and implications of E.E.T. all meet within its Christology. The realities of space-time are interpreted staurologically, that is, through the cross of Christ, the cross of each human being, and the cross of the universe. This is no fatalistic or stoical suffering but intentional and meaningful suffering suffused with awareness, purpose and with the lively expectation of resurrection and reward.

3.13 The ethical character of our universe

It is a biblical truism that, simply understood, there is goodness in the experience of freely being, doing, becoming, knowing, living, sharing, loving, family, friends, society, stability, truth, creativity, health, well-founded hopes, prosperity, virtue, honor, aesthetics, sport, playfulness and humor and so on. Contrariwise (simply understood) there is evilness in enslavement, exploitation, annihilation, frustration, stagnation, ignorance, death, turmoil, meanness, hate, deception, loneliness, isolation, alienation, sickness, false hopes, poverty, ugliness, vice, abuse, infirmity, humorlessness and so on. It hardly needs to be said that normal human life is a mélange of such goodness and evilness. The biblical promise is of a time when there will be only goodness and no evilness. The doorway to that future is one of universal resurrection, judgment, and ethical dialysis (see section 3.06). There is an implied conservation of all of history for it is what really happened in the world’s history that is of eternal interest to God and to everyone else.

Models such as those of Pierre de Chardin and Arthur C. Clarke show naturalistic antecedents when they require preceding generations to be entirely disposed of, on the way to achieving their predicted, naturalistic paradisial end-points. If ethics are

377 Romans 8:18-27.
378 E.g., see Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:2.
379 E.g., Romans 14:9-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10.
considered to have a part in those schemes at all, they are of the teleological sort. The idea that only what is inherited by descendents has ultimate value is fundamental to neo-Darwinian thought but is quite alien to biblical thought. The contrast is between behaving as if the ends justify the means and behaving as if the means are everything (because the end is in God’s hands and the means are here to be judged). It makes a considerable difference when - as E.E.T. claims (with Wolfhart Pannenberg, for example) - all of humankind are to be resurrected and will participate equally in the dénouement of the entire space-time story. Traditional biblical theology is committed to the idea of the resurrection of all of the dead, from the greatest to the least. The E.E.T. perspective of a cosmic ethical meta-narrative, commencing from the first verses of Genesis, provides causal logic for the egalitarian resurrection vision. Virtue ethics are central in this vision. Personal love of God and hence a love of people made in God’s image, is the foundation of all virtue.\footnote{Matthew 22:37-40; 1 Corinthians 13.} This is by no means a passive philosophy for it is taken to be a great honor to have been made to suffer for the sake of divine right ethics (e.g. Acts 6:41).

Some biblical, theological, philosophical, and even scientific possibilities only become accessible once the primarily ethical foundations of our space-time world are addressed. The main alternative view has always been that everything is mechanistically self-serving, and ultimately without residue, ethical or otherwise. Theology is then seen as a complex human delusion.\footnote{See dissertation section 1.14.} This perspective has its roots in physicalist philosophy (often termed nothing buttery).\footnote{A recent, combative airing of these issues is found in Dawkins, R. (2006). The God Delusion. London: Bantam; and, McGrath, A. and McGrath, J. C. (2007). The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine. London: SPCK. Experienced Theology/Science researcher, John F. Haught, has recently entered the fray; see Haught, J. F. (2008). God and the New Atheism: a Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.} Causal physicalism (as a stand-alone explanation of all of reality) is itself scientifically challenged by, for example, the evidence of quantum mechanics, human consciousness studies, and by community ecology. A diverse and complex matrix of relationships between organisms is required to sustain any particular species population at a particular place and time.\footnote{See dissertation section 1.10.} Systems include more complex relationships than cause-and-effect, since every entity owes its existence to many factors. It is impossible to rule out
participation of virtue ethics in the complex relationships of the ecology of reality. Francisco Ayala has argued that all of ethics has been spun-off from human cultural evolution. That observation is not necessarily dissonant with the idea that much of what evolving human culture exhibits was gradually actualized through eu-ecollation and mis-ecollation on the unseen primordial ethical potentials of our universe. The E.E.T. position on this is further developed in sections 4.09 and 4.11.

For the organelles participating in and contributing to the life of a living cell, existence is a matter of serving, not of selfishness. The same applies to the cells, tissues and organs of a complex biological organism. Cancers arise when certain normal cells are triggered, at the level of their molecular biology, to multiply uncontrollably. Some cancers kill their parent organism, including the selfish cells themselves. Even in the most elementary parts of biology, selfishness can be like suicide; just as it can be in complex, contemporary human society. The more we learn of biology, the more we understand that ecosystems, such as rainforests and coral reefs, are sustained by numerous mutualisms. The rich diversity of ethics within nature is a vast research area that could benefit from the attention of an interdisciplinary research team. It is hoped that the more sophisticated methodology of E.E.T., explored in this dissertation, might provided a stimulus for work that will take the idea of ethics in nature beyond the simple binary of selfishness versus altruism that has dominated naturalistic evolutionary ethics debates up to now (e.g., see compendium edited by Holmes Roulston III).

3.14 Ecollation
As is well known, the influential biblical theologian, Karl Barth evinced a marked dislike for theologies that defer to naturalism and philosophy (unlike Alfred North Whitehead, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and many modern and post-modern theologians). The eminent biologist, Stephen J. Gould also defended a position of separate

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Karl Barth’s problem was not actually with nature or philosophy but with the threat of compromising the divine revelations in the Bible. In the tradition of the reformers, Karl Barth essentially resists human ideas and observations ever being allowed to stand above the Word of God. For example, he writes:

As part of Christian dogmatics it pursues its own special task, which is imposed upon it in the service of the Church’s proclamation, and which consists in an increasing unqualified and full apprehension, and faithful and exact reproduction, of the self-witness of the Creator in His revelation, and therefore of the biblical witness to creation. If the worldviews cannot help it in this, neither will it allow itself to be disturbed by them in it. Understanding the creation of God as benefit, it proceeds independently, and is not embarrassed to confess that in regard to the creation sagas of genesis, for example, it expects no material and direct help from any worldview, ancient, modern or future.

The saving clause here is: “an increasing unqualified and full apprehension . . . of the biblical witness to creation.” That also defines the brief of E.E.T. It is to gain that unqualified and fuller apprehension that the concept of binary ethical apocalypsis and the ecollation processes have been derived from in-depth textual research, with an eye on scientifically meaningful alternative interpretations.

With a holistic biblical theology of divine revelation, E.E.T. hermeneutics brings the current scientific cosmology into conversation with divine ethical encounter theory. Avoiding the well-founded Barthian sensitivities, E.E.T. attempts to show that biblical theology can be safely brought into consonance with philosophical theology and current scientific theory. Hopefully, the irenically synthetic potential in E.E.T. will be found to have something useful to offer to various schools of theology. In practical applications, there is a generosity in the wide connectivity of the Ethical Encounter Theology paradigm. This is pleasantly surprising, given the tightness of the perfect being theist foundation of E.E.T. One result of this approach is to re-introduce a sense of ethical purpose. This partly accords with the objective (but not with the panentheistic conclusion) of John Cobb:

The rejection of the role of purpose in evolution is metaphysical, not scientific. A better metaphysics is available.

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Another major theme in E.E.T. is that of freedom. All material entities are able to actualize change by freely ecollating on informational possibilities from the world’s seen and unseen ecologies. Choice is present at a fundamental level in the space-time universe. This implies entities could have a degree of subjectivity. Any degree of agency brings with it accountability, at least in regard to any ethical self-actualization. In a Whiteheadian sense, every real occasion is self-revealing, if only at an elementary level. This is not panpsychism but a consequence of the primal ethical encounter creation event. Perfect divine love gave all to call our universe out of its c.e.a.p. singularity of selfishness and that has left a signature on all things – the cosmic background ethical radiance. To quote Romans 8:22 again:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.  

E.E.T. explores a compound monist worldview and its structured ethical analysis discloses a consonance between the strata of physical and theological realities.

Dennis Bielfeldt argues there is a fundamental incoherence in non-dualistic strategies advocating divine information transfer without energy transfer. The E.E.T. thesis is that all the free-chosen, ecollative processes of the cosmos escape from that class of objection. Constant choice-making is part of life in a space-time world. All sorts of informational sources are drawn on in making choices; including from the right and wrong ethical potentials in the unseen ecology of the world. Information recognition doesn’t have to involve significant energy transfer but can be by sympathetic resonance, for example. A good practical example of ecollation is provided when a new species actualizes by exploiting an unoccupied ecological niche. It is not energy transfer that enables a species to ecollate with a new niche but a previously

391 The authors of Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:16; and Hebrews 1:3, depict an interconnected cosmos that stems from and totally depends on God’s love in Christ. This is not contradicted in John 1:3 or Revelation 22:13, nor in John 8:58, where Jesus is reported to self-identify as ego eimi. That an ethical sensitivity should pervade such a cosmos is then not surprising. That it would groan implies there is something that offends against its inherent ethical sensitivity. The author of Romans 8:19 makes it clear that tardiness of human ethical maturation (what in E.E.T. is called eu-ecollation) is what causes the (clearly anthropic) universe to complain.


unexploited commonality. This is essentially an informational phenomenon, as when a key is made that fits a previously unopened lock. In this regard, it is important to recognize that sensory perception is essentially an information-recognition process and that the term sensory transduction is misleading (see section 4.10). The human experience of sometimes learning much more from the sub-liminal clues than from obvious sensory stimuli in a situation is related to this. Another helpful analogy comes from quantum entanglement research showing that physically distant members of pairs of related particles reliably communicate without transfer of energy.

Entities that contribute to a monistic reality can experience information exchange with traction on each other as part of the universe’s inherent process of progressive ecollation. If choices are informed by sympathetic resonance with unseen potentials (with no significant energy or material transfer) they escape from the normal cause-and-effect lawfulness of the universe. There is gratuitousness in information recognized by sympathetic resonance. Appreciation that traction can occur through information-recognition opens some possibilities of new consonances between Theology/Science models and biblical theological virtue ethics. For example, the ecollation process can supply the articulation needed between unseen ecology and material actualizations. Availability in unseen ecology of both good and bad information and both right and wrong ethical information ensures a degree of freedom in choice-making. Eu-ecollation or mis-ecollation exposes the unseen information as visible material actualizations. Apart from actualizing unseen potentials and reifying them in history, ecollation also enables self-discovery of the character of the chooser.

With its dependence on unseen informational potentials, how dependent is E.E.T on Plato’s philosophy? To the degree it says our lives in this world are indispensable contributors to the constitution of the eternal aeon-to-come, it is not. Even the most perverse occasion in our universe finds some value in the cosmic ethical encounter worldview. Also, the availability of good and bad informational potentials to be materially ecollated-on is not of Platonism. On the other hand, many considerations faced in Plato’s philosophy are also meat for ethical encounter thinking. The divine, the ideal, the empirical and how these three categories participate with one another are common interests. Something of how this works-out in Plato’s eclectic but far from consistent approach to divinity is nicely encapsulated by Richard Tarnas:
A taut irony, a playful seriousness, colors Plato’s use of myth, so that one cannot pin down precisely the level on which he wishes to be understood. He often prefaced his mythical excursions with the ambiguous ploy, at once affirming and self-distancing, of declaring that it was “a likely account” or that “either this or something very like it is true”. Depending on a specific dialogue’s context, Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Ares, Aphrodite, and the rest could signify actual deities, allegorical figures, character types, psychological attitudes, modes of experience, philosophic principles, transcendent essences, sources of poetic inspiration or divine communication, objects of conventional piety, unknowable entities, imperishable artifacts of the supreme creator, heavenly bodies, foundations of the universal order, or rulers and teachers of mankind. More than only literalist metaphors, Plato’s gods defy strict definition, in one dialogue serving as fanciful characters in a didactic fable, in another commanding an undoubted ontological reality. Not infrequently, these personified archetypes are used in his most philosophically earnest moments, as if the depersonalized language of metaphysical abstraction were no longer suitable when directly confronting the numinous essence of things.395

There are parallels between E.E.T. and Platonism. In E.E.T. information from unseen ecology is described as being ecollated upon and actualized in the history of material ecology. This means our whole reality is evolutionary - all is *e-volvere* - a rolling out discovery, or apocalyptic actualization of what was primally, divinely made possible. Contra Plato, E.E.T. understands the imperfections of energy-matter entities are also indispensable ecollations. These mis-ecollations are part of binary ethical apocalypsis. Information concerning mis-ecollation is ethically revelational and needed as evidence for the justice of ethical dialysis at the Eschaton. This comes closer to Aristotle where it claims intangible potentials and tangible matter are parts of a cosmic compound monistic process.

Science and E.E.T. are in consonance where they both observe that our world has constructed itself from innumerable choices. It also brings the Whiteheadian emphasis on freedom into consonance with biblical theology. However, E.E.T. also specifies the free choices that made the universe. They began with God’s free choice of right ethics, including faithful love. Then, there was God’s free choice to have a matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.), or biblical kingdom of God. After that there was a divine prescient recognition of a prolepsis of humankind’s free choice to be

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independent of divine right ethics. The perfect being’s free decision to irenically encounter that wrong must be imagined to have been instantaneous or even eternal. It was that encounter, between divine right ethics and human ethical ambiguity that launched our space-time universe on its lengthy journey. This aeon, of ecollative apocalypsis, began and material entities began to freely ecollate on unseen potentials. As the universe complexified, the ecollation process became more and more sophisticated. With the emergence of humans, diverse and sophisticated free ethical choosing has come to dominate cosmic reality. Exhaustion of all the unseen primordial ethical potentials is a real possibility and that is able to open the way to the Eschaton when, as actualized choices, they can be publicly judged and separated.

In the E.E.T. worldview, our space-time universe of free choices is not eternal and it is not here for its own sake. It does not exist primarily for the purpose of creating a diverse and wonderful world with an independent destiny. All of the choices that constitute our world are apocalyptic. Every choice involves a separation that exposes to a greater or lesser extent the unseen ethical ecology of our anthropic cosmos. This is what is meant by ethical ecollation (see, especially, chapter 5). Ecollation provides a unifying theme that helps to concatenate diverse actual occasions. Some have ethical encounter equivalents to the entities of Plato’s metaphysically-fluid pantheon. However, the monotheistic author of Genesis 1:1 provided a stronger view. Here, the universe is one. It is made up of intangible (heavenly) and tangible (earthly) reality. It is a place where every diverse being serves the perfect being. Beings great and small, those that are both visible and invisible, beings that are good, that are uncertain, and beings that are outright evil, all have their part to play in the story of divine wisdom, love and justice. The Christian perspective on this generally accessible cosmology is able to put a historic divine/human face in it:

He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and things on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17.

The method of E.E.T. helps to close the gap between this revelation and the empirical. Here, our material universe exists for ecollation of the numerous empirical choices

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396 Colossians 1:15-17.
required to exhaust the fund of informational potentials in its unseen ecology. The Bible repeats the eternal significance of choices made by every being, within perfect God’s ethics practicum. This appears especially clear at the very end of the Bible:

Let the person who is unjust continue to be unjust,
Let the person who is filthy continue to be fouled up;
Let the person who is honest continue to be honest,
And let the person who is holy continue to be holy! 397

In E.E.T. it is claimed that the major division at the Eschaton is between eu-ecollation and dis-ecollation. By then all conflated ethics (mis-ecollations) will have been demulsified through the completed right ethical encounter/binary ethical apocalypsis process of world history (itself a treasured commodity). The purposes of the perfect being are thus achieved in a way that permits free choosing at all levels, especially at the level where we humans self-actualize.

In this worldview it is information - not energy sensu Bielfeldt (see footnote 393) that is transferred. Information transfer occurs when a potential way of behaving in unseen ecology is perceived (prehended) or sympathetically resonated with, and then actualized (as a real occasion) through ecollation by a physical perceiver. This will always be able to carry an element of voluntary responsibility, as is emphasized throughout the New Testament. The often repeated divine offer to voluntarily choose right ethics (eu-ecollate) and so receive the free offer of divine life, is given one last time, at the conclusion of the Bible:

Let the one who is thirsty, come.
Let whoever wishes, take the water of life without paying for it.398

The meaning intended appears clear. The E.E.T. method interprets this as the perfect being’s loving ethical encounter - which made our world - enables voluntary separation between those who choose to accept and learn from God’s right ethics (i.e. the water of life without cost) and those who freely choose to decline God’s offer. One reason why this is all so painfully slow for us is made clear in pericopae like:

The Human Being came to look for and save those who are lost.399
Keep in mind that the Lord’s patience with us is our deliverance.400

397 Revelation 22:11 TS; see thesis page xvi.
398 Revelation 22:17b TS; see thesis page xvi.
399 Luke 19:11 TS.
400 2 Peter 3:15 TS.
Our universe of space-time exposes all of the primal, unseen ethical conflation. That is achieved physically, by free agents eu-eccollating or mis-eccollating to create history. The choices, although numerous, are not infinite and the ultimate outcome is divinely predetermined. However, it is fair because every entity has opportunities (perhaps many times over) to freely choose its place in the divisions of right or wrong ethics. This is not an esoteric process. It is a common experience for a thinking person to eccollate as they think about ethically distinct potential courses of action and freely decide to actualize one or other. As something like a theological theory of everything, the dissertation submits eccollation as the universal process of space-time reality, succinctly explained by the Bible as: “Choose life, not death!” 401 In this, E.E.T. makes a significant contribution to scholarly inter-disciplinary studies.

3.15 Theodicy
The Ethical Encounter Theology worldview could be described as centrally a theodicy. This will be clear from the specifics summarized in the abstract on pages iii–iv, in the points E, Q, R, U, and X of its propositional sequence (pages xxi–xxviii) and also, especially, in section 1.13. In this section, the subject of theodicy is given a more contextual treatment that is a significant contribution to theological thought.

For a thoughtful person to be a sincere believer requires ownership of a well-developed, honest and efficient theodicy. Making excuses for the Creator will not do. That would be like the apologist who asked people to kindly overlook the road accidents, malaria mosquitoes, sharks and pathogenic viruses by explaining: “This is only Jesus’ first attempt at making a universe and, as I hope you’ll agree, like the Curate’s egg it has more good than bad!” Gottfried Leibniz’s elegant “best of all possible universes” theodicy resembles that. 402 Apparently, this god is perfect only within the limits of what can be encompassed by a philosophy that carefully instructs itself from what it observes in the world around it. From the E.E.T. purview the perfect God of traditional theism never needs apologizing for not even by means of

401 That some people have a long time, others only a short time to choose to learn from divine right ethics is addressed in texts such as Matthew 20:1-16; and 22:1-14.
the most subtly disguised sub-texts. That is admittedly a strong conjecture and fairly exposes the E.E.T. theodicy to refutation. It is a good test, though one rarely taken.

*Prima facie*, the God who is imagined to punish billions of human beings over thousands of years in retaliation for freshly-created, naïve Adam and Eve being deceived on one occasion does not resemble the God who is love (*1 John* 4:8). That paradox does not escape the critical eyes of thoughtful, truth-loving non-believers.

Alan Gould nicely summarizes the heart of the offense against reason presented by the well-established generationally-punitive God hermeneutic:

> I would find this *Genesis* creation story attractive were it not that it is integral with that of The Fall. The forbidden fruit has the effect of turning a benign creation into a cruel joke with the resulting effect on morale. The use of the story in the sermonizing I can recall was to place a stain on the perception of human life and make the life journey one that was about restoration to bliss. Original sin may not be so prominent a part of Christian teaching now, but I find it a repugnant and cynical attempt to hijack human nature. ⁴⁰³

A biblical theologian might answer, in all honesty: “I, too, see that God could have positioned the cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way ⁴⁰⁴ to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *before* the act. That would have made it unnecessary subsequently to use the cherubim to deny access to the garden and tree of life.” In the story, Adam and Eve’s easy access to the unsecured, deadly fruit is compounded by the murderous serpent’s easy access to these newly-created ingénues. How could such dangerous arrangements be understood to be the work of the same responsible and loving parent divinity exemplified by the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ? ⁴⁰⁵

That is unless God’s loving plan always encompassed the option of educating Adam and Eve (they stand for *H. sapiens* as a species) by practical exposure to the reality of the moral and natural evil consequences of independence from the perfect being’s right ethical teaching. Such a practicum designed to exhaust the potential of wrong ethics in all its subtle confluences may be prolonged, especially if insecure or rebellious students cling tenaciously to ethical ambiguity. E.E.T. claims God’s

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⁴⁰⁴ *Genesis* 3:24.
response to humankind’s bid for independence is irenic. Ironically, we human beings will do it our way, anyway. A universe that is full of the beauty and elegance of divine wisdom becomes inter-penetrated with the consequences of humankind’s moral ambiguity. This then becomes a tantalizingly liminal, semi-perfect world, well suited to set any sapiens thinking about the meaning of life!

Humans find themselves making history through concretized, public binary ethical apocalypses that both teach receptive souls and fully sets forth the justice of the final separation that will end all conflation with wrong ethics. Crucially, God (who is perfect love) treats human beings as the victims of evil, even though it has been our own choice to mis-collate (sin). Throughout history, the perfect divine response has required prolonged, extensive and intimately personal encounter with God’s values. This indicates: (a) how very tenacious and subtle is the conflation between wrong ethics and the human heart; and, (b) how very greatly God loves human souls to be set free from wrong ethics. Taken together, these two factors are argued to constitute a continuing moral theology lesson of cosmic dimensions.

The next chapter explores some examples of how the ethical theological factors discussed in this chapter may be seen to be consonant with the reality of being as it is currently described by science.
4.01 Introduction

This chapter provides examples to illustrate the capacity of the E.E.T. method to bridge the empirical/revelational gap. Examples are adduced to show the way biblical theological thinking and Theology/Science thinking can be brought into consonance by the E.E.T. worldview. This is a topic that is basic to the purpose of E.E.T. research and has been touched on in earlier chapters, especially in sections 1.02, 1.04, 1.10, 2.04, 2.05 and 2.06. The same topic is further addressed in sections 5.06, 5.07, 5.08, 5.09, 6.07 and 7.03. In this chapter, the central research theme is approached by reflecting on different aspects of the grounds of being. This opens an appreciation of what is “really real” according to the ethical encounter worldview. Dissertation length constrains deep discussion of scientific matters however several clear opportunities for further work on the scientific interface of E.E.T. are outlined.

4.02 On the high value of science

Science represents the first comprehensively international, non-sectarian and freely transferable:

- universally accepted hermeneutics;
- system of standards, publication, and exchange; and
- method of assessment, recognition and reward.

Science, as it is practised today, is an outstanding, arguably even the greatest, human
cultural epiphenomenon.\textsuperscript{406} (Science is epiphenomenal in the sense that human cultures have thrived for tens of millennia without any of the science most of us depend on today.) Modern science seems to hold out, in an agnostic way, the hope for universality extended throughout the Bible. The advance of science and technology has transformed the conditions of life for the human species more than any other factor. Comprehensive knowledge about and control of the materials, energies and life forms of the earth are within reach. Science represents the systematized peak of a long history of improvements in mathematics, measurement, agriculture, mining, working of materials, building, transport, processing of chemicals, armaments, information storage and transfer, and the fabrication of machines and instruments. And, in contrast to other biological species these represent an evident human drive to understand and to control, even a search for a paradise (see page 141 for a comment on ethical goals and irenic methods). This drive of civilized peoples to advance is often related, in a general way, to biblical reports of divine cogitations:

Let us make humans in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth . . .\textsuperscript{407}

And of the biblical report of divine instructions to:

Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.\textsuperscript{408}

However, it needs a big step from those texts to arrive at what technologically advanced humans do today.

No other species has such broad biological descriptors as \textit{Homo sapiens}. This is partly due to our language capacities and interest in the meaning and functioning of everything. Faith in our ability to know how things are sustained and how they relate was fostered by centuries of European Christendom and this helped launch the western scientific revolution. Many have suggested this is not an accident, since biblical and scientific reasoning have close cultural ties.\textsuperscript{409} The practical application of the word subdue (Hebrew \textit{kabash}) has been at the centre of disputes between pro-industrial and pro-environmental thinkers. Ethical Encounter Theology is different.

\textsuperscript{406} If there are conscious, rational life-forms on other planets, science is expected to afford a shared data-base between them and us, mediated through the language of mathematics.

\textsuperscript{407} \textit{Genesis} 1:26a KJV.

\textsuperscript{408} \textit{Genesis} 1:28b NIV adap.

again. Here “subdue” is taken to imply – “spread right ethics everywhere.” In a sense, this process subtends the prayer: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth;” showing a desire that divine right ethics will confront ethical conflation everywhere. The E.E.T. paradigm comes with an implication that the most significant role for both religions and the sciences is to set the scene, in their several ways, for worldwide ethical encounter. Both science and E.E.T. are committed to encounters that force right and wrong to be revealed. But physical and biological ruling and subduing (no matter how technologically competent it may become) would not be a satisfying goal without the accompanying binary ethical apocalypses and the justice of eventual ethical dialysis that it enables. Greatness today without goodness forever is a bitter pill to swallow. E.E.T. finds that science and technology make major contributions to the divine purposes of ethical encounter and binary ethical apocalypsis. Significantly, this is without them ever demonstrating any truly convincing independent purpose. It is argued that to be meaningful, material progress has to advance the primal and persevering divine ethical encounter that both called our universe into being and now carries it towards the Eschaton. Thus, E.E.T. establishes a strong new interdisciplinary perspective that critiques some current opinions and positions.

4.03 The scientific facts of life on a planet in a space-time universe

Because the scientific project has majored in providing an ever more finely-detailed account of physicality it has conditioned the way we see ourselves (see section 2.01). Scientific research has found that the liquid centre of our home planet is a highly compressed core of iron and nickel, at a temperature of about 4,000°C. Thus, all of us biological organisms live atop a giant foundry! This red-hot core occupies most of the Earth’s diameter of about 13,000 km. On the surface of the Earth’s core, less dense elements float, aggregating to form a granite crust, between 6 and 64 km thick. Below the inner part of this crust is the asthenosphere, rendered molten by the heat of the core. The outer crust is cooled by black-body radiation (into the effectively limitless vacuum of Space, at minus 273°C - very close to absolute zero). The Earth hurries at over 100,000 km/hr through this ultra-freezing ultra-vacuum. It is a very speedy speck of dust in a vast and potentially destructive vacuity of uncaringness.

410 See dissertation section 7.04 for the important distinction between authentic goodness and expedient goodness.
The Earth’s crust mainly consists of solidified silicon oxide and it floats on the interface of the molten asthenosphere. The floating crust is in the form of 15 solid plates that very slowly slip around the planet. These tectonic plates push against each other, subduct under one other and variously interact. Volcanoes and earthquakes are evidence of the dynamic interactions at the edges of the 15 tectonic plates. Most of the earth’s crust is submerged, with only 29% above water. This is the dry land of the familiar seven continents. Dry land is never very far above sea level. Mt Everest is the high point, at less than 9 km above sea level. Deep ocean trenches reach down to 11 km below sea level. Both the heights and the depths are trivial compared to the earth’s diameter. In any case, mountains and trenches are not permanent geological features as slight movements of the tectonic plates can still totally transform the geomorphology. They have often done that in the past. For example, the top of Mt Everest is made of limestone, created on the ocean floor over 400 million years ago.

Both the surface area and the volume of the water in the oceans far exceed the area and volume of the exposed land. We live on a very wet-surfaced planet. Whenever the polar ice-caps melt it becomes even wetter, with much more of the land submerged. Human preference for building important permanent structures beside rivers and estuaries and along coastlines exposes civilization to major losses when ocean levels rise. The current international worry about climate change and global warming and the consequent melting of the ice-caps and inundation of low-lying areas by rising sea levels has brought this situation to public attention. The texts that support Bible theology frequently state that life on this planet is essentially liminal.\(^{411}\) That finds consonance with science’s developing knowledge of the geo-physical conditions on earth, and of the astronomical context of our planet (see section \(4.04\)).

The scientific data emphatically demonstrates that human life on this planet in a space-time universe is highly contingent. “Living on borrowed time” is a phrase that reflects the concrete, scientific reality of life for humankind on Earth. In E.E.T. this is taken to be a significant conditioning observation. This E.E.T. emphasis contrasts with that of worldviews that diminish or ignore the excellent scientific evidence concerning the extreme liminality and contingency of the human situation.

A scientific understanding of our geo-physical realities can make the conspicuously lengthy *Genesis* 6:1 to 9:28 account of a global flood accessible in the following terms. For cities and towns built on low-lying islands the devastation due to the rise of sea levels at the end of the last Ice-Age would have been total. The research of Stephen Oppenheimer makes it feasible that the story of Noah’s Ark recollects the means by which early farmer/civic peoples survived such a major event. A few of them, with some of the stock animals they had bred, may have floated from the inundated cities of S.E. Asia, to make landfall in the Persian Gulf area. Scientifically, this could reflect a severe transient bottleneck through which much of the human genome was squeezed, about 8,000 years ago. Scientific understanding shows there is nothing to stop that sort of phenomenon from happening again.

The vulnerability of even the world’s currently most civilized and technologically advanced humans was illustrated by a television programme on the Australian ABC-1 channel, on 8th March 2007. This was based mainly on interviews with a range of research scientists. They described the Cascadia subduction zone, where two tectonic plates are superimposed, about 100 km off the Pacific North West coast of America. The 600 km long subduction zone is the local part of several thousand kilometres of the Pacific Rim of Fire, which identifies a zone where tectonic plates are currently in collision. And that is just one part of an extensive system whereby the world is ringed by subducting tectonic plates and their fault lines.

The television report described geological research on how major tsunamis had impacted the coast of N.W. America, every few hundred years. These were caused by the subducting plate periodically locking with the superducting plate at Cascadia. Each time it happened, a sudden slip resulted, not the normal very slow slide. That always resulted in a mega-thrust earthquake of Richter scale 9 intensity. Each of them was about a thousand times more severe than the earthquake which devastated Asian

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412 Oppenheimer, S. (1999). *Eden in the East: the Drowned Continent of Southeast Asia*. London, Phoenix. Stephen Oppenheimer presents a carefully researched case for extensive inundation due to global climate change and world-wide post-glacial flooding, at about 7,500 years ago. What was once a vast fertile wetland ecosystem is now under the South China Sea. There are several alternative, scientifically-based inundation theories, concerning the Aegean basin, the Black Sea, etc.

countries in December 2004. The sudden oscillation of the fault region is what drastically lifts the sea level over a considerable area, causing a very severe tsunami. The earthquake’s leading shock waves travel at 10,000 kph. So the next one of these events may severely shock major cities like Seattle and Vancouver a few minutes after it takes place. Because of the size of the tectonic event, shock waves of various destructive types will continue for 5 to 10 minutes, much more prolonged than for normal earthquakes, and this will destroy many more buildings and much more of the infra-structure. It could be salutary for our culture with its increasing confidence in technology to also keep in mind the physical limits of our vulnerable existence.

Geological records of the regularly repeated Cascadia earthquake/tsunamis go back to 600 BC. The most recent was in March 1700 AD. After 300 years it is increasingly statistically more probable that another one is due. The exact timing depends on many imponderables and geo-physicists have no way of accurately predicting it. The main experts interviewed said: “We do know it is going to happen but we don’t know when,” and “We don’t know if the whole Cascadia fault will go.” “We don’t know what will happen in cities.” “We do know that at the coast there will be little time to warn people.” Severe damage to the cities and peoples of the west coast of North America would also have repercussions across the whole world.

This is, of course, only one of the many unpredictable physical, chemical, biological and political life-threatening hazards facing peoples all over planet Earth. Most such hazards are largely unavoidable, contributing to the contingency of our existence here. In E.E.T. it is argued that a major contribution of science, as an epistemic sortie into reality, is the clear proof that physicality is inherently provisional (that is, completely inhospitable to material certainty). Science’s original search for certainty was for a sure foundation on which to build identity and the pyramid of knowledge. That long and detailed search has comprehensively confirmed the non-existence of such a foundation. Instead science has discovered pervasive uncertainty at each level of reality it has gained access to. This has proved so in cosmology, in particle physics, in geomorphology, and it is the foundation of Wallace and Darwin’s idea of natural selection. Species themselves are not seen to have any fixity; neither do the ecosystems of which the species are a part. All the material structuring of space-time is ontologically liminal. All of the entities of space-time that are accessible to
experimentation (that currently excludes dark energy and dark matter)\textsuperscript{414} are ambiguous. They teeter, as it were, on the edge of the vacuum matrix of Space—itself a vast, formless, lifeless, loveless, freezing, dark vacuum, containing high-velocity projectiles and periodically sterilized by bursts of extremely high energy radiation. Should a black hole form or a supernova explode anywhere near our galaxy, the radiation produced would kill all living things on the earth. That is only one of many hazards of life on a planet in our universe of space-time and energy-matter.

Scientific triumphalism has thrived on the success of the scientific method in solving practical problems and vastly improving the standard of living (at least for a percentage of the global human population). This is not all that there is to say; there is a down-side. Along the way biodiversity has crashed, unique cultures have been destroyed, many millions killed in technologically-armed wars, minute by minute much mortality and crippling is occasioned by automobile accidents, human survival is threatened by ecosystem destruction and atmospheric pollution, babies are born already contaminated with hundreds of synthetic chemicals, deadly pathogens are bio-engineered and crime and corruption diversify and accelerate. For the first time in over 100,000 years, \textit{H. sapiens} has a capacity to destroy all life on the earth by thermonuclear war and by atmospheric pollution. Who, then, would doubt the need to research ethics-based worldviews that are powerful enough to critique the applications of science? This recent appeal by Ronald Cole-Turner is to the point:

\begin{quote}
Having created biotechnology, human beings are losing control of their own creation. Biotechnology seems to drive itself, as if by some technological imperative that compels us to solve problems even if our solutions create greater problems. To some extent, this complaint points out the deficiencies in religion’s engagement with biotechnology; deficiencies of rigour, consistency and, of course, universality.\textsuperscript{415}
\end{quote}

Work such as that reported in this dissertation attempts to respond to this criticism by Ronald Cole-Turner through the rigour and consistency of its arguments and the strength of its worldview position. Ethical Encounter Theology provides a significant new contribution to scholarly research on the integration of science, having wide human implications.

\textsuperscript{414} See the end of dissertation section \textbf{1.10} for comments on dark energy and dark matter.

The many problems arising from the advance of technology tend to show that science has never been rationally pruned enough to allow cultural integration. That may be because advances in science and technology provide military and commercial advantages to nations. When matters are represented as of critical national importance the higher level control of contextual reasoning is reduced. Contemporaneously, atheistic scientism has replaced theism as the *de facto* religion of many people. That trend does not appear to have increased international motivation to intelligently modulate commercial and military competition. In such a situation, a reinvigoration of theology and philosophy is urgently needed for human reasons, even for the extreme reason of saving humanity from itself. The Ethical Encounter Theology interdisciplinary consonance outlined in this dissertation offers one possible way of assisting at a high scholarly level, towards such a reinvigoration.

4.04 Biblical cosmology and scientific cosmology
Perhaps it was partly the dawning realization of radical material insecurity and the lack of an enduring scientific basis for certainty or for self-sustaining values that inspired Whitehead and other process thinkers to look for significance in unchanging processes rather than in unchanging entities. That type of approach has generally been welcomed by many theologians who have kept themselves up-to-date on scientific advances in cosmology. This preference is partly because of the shock value of the model of our universe that has been revealed by science. It is nothing like the *Old Testament* model. For example, our world depends on the sun. This relatively small star is at the centre of our planetary system, the solar system. It is a major thermonuclear event (like an enormous hydrogen bomb, about 330,000 times the mass of the earth). The sun is remarkably stable but is capable of periods of deadly instability. Without the sun there would be no centre of gravity to hold the solar system together and none of the electromagnetic radiation required to warm the earth and supply radiant energy for plant growth. The sun therefore holds things together physically and is the main necessity of biology, yet it is well able to annihilate life on

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416 Ethical Encounter Theology follows Alfred North Whitehead’s lead regarding the permanence of process but describes major processes in terms of the biblical virtue ethics and perfect being theology. The idea that right ethical processes matter more than material advantage is a clear theme in the *New Testament*. However, E.E.T.’s biblical theological method recognizes all the choices of the present as conserved in the perfect divine record of the world’s history. This diverges from the Darwinian “perpetual perishing” of Whitehead’s system (and of most evolutionary theist systems). See Whitehead, A. N. (1929): 517 - reference in dissertation section 4.04.
earth in a moment. This perfectly exemplifies the severity of the ambivalence inherent of physicality.

Our sun is just one star in the Milky Way galaxy. This galaxy is thought to contain over 200 billion stars. They rotate very slowly around the gigantic mass of an axle-like black hole that is super-massive enough to draw the stars into an astronomically conspicuous aggregation. The Milky Way is a rare spiral galaxy, having a diameter of about 100,000 light years. That is about 946,000 trillion kilometres. But, mind-bogglingly enormous as it is, the Milky Way galaxy is a mere drop in the cosmic ocean. Our whole universe of space-time is thought to have at least 100 billion galaxies of various types and sizes. The most distant we can detect are thought to be over 10 billion light years away. These numbers exemplify, beyond words, how vast space-time has become and how physically insignificant our planet and we are. If humankind would seek for significance it surely must be in an arena beyond the physical uncertainties of size, mass and power. Those who favour power-under theologies might take encouragement from the sobering facts about physical existence. This amazing information about material reality is able to change our ideas of who we are. Much of this would be unknown without the magnificent discoveries of numerous scientists, many working by right ethics that honour unselfish cooperation, integrity and veracity and who often work long hours out of concern for the well-being of others and in pursuit of truth.\footnote{The paradox that this represents is discussed in dissertation section 7.04.}

If the data is accurate (and there is currently no reason to doubt it) the starlight that we observe now began its journey towards us a very long time ago. The light of the stars we see on earth evidences very ancient history. It is likely that many of the stars we observe now ceased to exist millions of years ago. It is certain that few of them now actually look at all as they appear in our night sky today. The same problem faces every sort of telescope, from radio telescopes to x-ray detectors. They all gather extremely stale information. Once this is grasped intellectually, a journey has commenced into the strangeness of our situation in this vast universe of space-time. Very little of it is as it appears. Philosophers of the empiricist mindset of David Hume would probably be shocked to know about the amount of theory that must be
mastered. Theory that is indispensable if the rude visual appearance of things is to be interpreted to yield coherent appreciation of the amazing subtending reality that is accepted by most scientists today. Very few entities are as they are observed or are experienced by humans. This transforming journey of understanding of nature began in earnest with the invention of the telescope and the microscope. It is their greatly magnified images of the extremely distant (≈ ancient history) and of the very small (≈ fundamental effectors) that have altered how we interpret everything. It is relevant to E.E.T. to contemplate that before these structures were magnified, identified and analysed, they were actually part of the unseen ecology of space-time! Without anyone being aware of it, they were all providing information that was constantly being ecollated upon. This information became incorporated in the observable structuring of the world, assisting it to complexify and emerge to new levels of being. This physical analogy may assist towards understanding the more abstract, biblically-derived concept of history-making by progressive ecollation on the physical possibilities, and alternative ethical possibilities, of the unseen ecology of space-time.

An interesting universe becomes known, where dynamic images of everything that has happened are strung out, in strictly historical sequences, through all of space-time. For example, an observer on a planet 68 light years distant could now be seeing the light reflected from events in our planet at the time of my birth. Extending this . . . as we train our telescopes on the light coming from the edge of the universe, the events attending the earliest existence of the universe come into view. One of the most amazing scientific discoveries is that electromagnetic radiation travels in almost straight lines for thousands of millions of years. During this time it traverses more than 9 million, million kilometres every year. Yet, when these photons/waves arrive in our telescopes they are still of sufficient quality to be focussed, imaged and able to be related to discrete historical entities and processes. It is the outstandingly reliable qualities of light (and related electromagnetic radiation) that have enabled scientists to describe our material reality, from the most microscopic to the most macroscopic. It is philosophically interesting to imagine an observer outside of the constraints of the space-time of our universe, one able to objectify all its electromagnetic radiation. They would have access to the entirety of earth’s history instantaneously.

What is “really real”? The matter of reality is central to science/theology/philosophy inter-disciplinary discussions. There are many levels of understanding of reality, each sufficient for a particular purpose. However, the seeker after truth may pursue an absolute reality that underpins all other realities. This is considered impossible in most post-modern philosophies, where all realities can be described as equivalent interpretations. Particular interpretations are inseparable from the position that each thinker comes from. It is common today to hear comments like: “Absolute, or non-relative reality is either unattainable or non-existent; a meaningless quest.” In this there is an echo of the opening words of Ecclesiastes. Through a real-idealism methodology, ethical encounter thinking breaks away from the direct approach in its quest to express a view of what is really real. The question is approached from another angle. For example, if the universe can be argued to have an embracing purpose there is then a benchmark against which individual opinions concerning reality can be ranked. If ontologically our universe is considered as a process for binary ethical apocalypsis, direction is provided for interpreting everything. The roles of material entities and processes within our universe can be identified in terms of their respective contributions to the divine ethical encounter. For atheists, maybe this could be usefully expressed in terms of ethical encounter per se? 419

Four great emergences have been identified by science - first, the primal, intensely hot energy of nascent space-time, then chemical-ordering of matter, then biogenesis and evolution of abundant life, lastly emergence of conscious minds. These steps are logically and almost self-evidently necessary for achieving a divine ethical purpose such as that which is argued for by E.E.T. For what other arena would be so perfectly adapted, in any real sense, to enable conscious, freely-choosing, right-ethics-seeking humanity to be delicately unwoven (i.e. evolved, in the evolvere sense of un-rolling) from their primal conflation with wrong-ethics? In this, Ethical Encounter Theology provides a significant new argument to the current scholarly inter-disciplinary debate.

How, simultaneously, could the universe be given a thorough, tangible education in the perfect being of God and in divine love’s irenic way of dealing with the clinging reality of evil? How else could ethically-illiterate persons be called out of the

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419 See dissertation section 7.04.
darkness of god-less self-opinion? How else could people be orientated by their own individual and collective free choices towards an ethically-perfect aeon of divine love and wisdom? The peculiarities of our universe can also be addressed in terms of divine pedagogy. A related way of understanding has been made available through the perceptive way Ann Nyland has exegeted *1 Corinthians* 11:32 from the Greek:

When we are judged by the Lord we are educated [*paideuo*], so that we would not have sentence passed on us [*katakrino*] in company with the world.

4.05 Science, theology and the ground of meaning

Progress in science is based on discovery of more and more fine detail of the cause-and-effect means of material existence. However this method has not yet succeeded with quantum mechanics, nor with the dark energy and dark matter that dominate our universe’s gravitation, nor with biogenesis, nor with the origins of the major phyla, nor with the unique basis of human consciousness and its impressive creativity. Scientifically-aware post-modern thinkers have seen no alternative but to deconstruct it all, process and entity alike, in order to rescue the experiential reality and value of human uniqueness. These changes in philosophy occurred largely independently of theology. If asked, a biblically theist theologian could perhaps have contributed along the lines: “Without perfect God, the unmoved and immovable, it is impossible to lend eternal significance to anything, nothing is reliable, nothing can give certainty, everything falls apart.”

E.E.T. argues that biblical significance ultimately depends on what the divine matrix of right ethics values. *Psalm* 116:15, for example, relates: “Precious in the eye of the Lord is the death of his saints.” The Bible instructs: “Be holy as God is holy.”

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420 See alternative approaches to divine pedagogy in dissertation sections 1.06, 1.11, 1.14 and A.02 and A.04.
421 “The world” here refers to all beings that culpably resist divine education and render themselves subject to eschatological separation by ethical dialysis. There is no neutral position.
422 See dissertation section 1.10 for notes on dark energy and dark matter.
423 However, Bruce Ellis Benson has examined the vital question of whether we can faithfully speak of God without interposing ourselves. He comprehensively critiques some postmodern efforts to solve the problem of ideological idolatry. In the end he finds no secure solution apart from the biblical theological one. Benson, B. E. (2002). *Graven Ideologies: Nietzsche, Derrida and Marion on Modern Idolatry*. Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP.
424 E.g., *Psalm* 19:7, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.”
425 *Leviticus* 19:2; *1 Peter* 1:16; also 2 *Samuel* 22:33; *Psalm* 18:32; 2 *Corinthians* 13:11; *Colossians* 1:28.
Traditional theists believe that divine perfect values are the benchmark of all that is worthwhile and survivable. In the end, all else is counted as refuse, as Paul the apostle is reported to have written:

Yes, that’s for sure! I consider all things as a loss
To me they’re just a pile of manure [Gk skubalon]!
Their loss was so that I would gain the Anointed One,
and to be made right with God by him. \(^{426}\)

The Bible repeatedly affirms that God is reliable, faithful, unchangeable; a rock who can always be relied on. Arguably, such revelatory insights of traditional biblical theology enable it to make unique contributions to the Theology/Science interaction. Neither science nor philosophy has been able to find any ground for permanence, constancy and dependability. In that regard, theologies resting on less than a perfect being theism have less to offer to the inter-disciplinary dialogue. \(^{427}\) The perfect being theism of E.E.T. supports an unambiguous ethical standpoint, affording solid ground from where many bridges might be built, to help cross revelational/empirical gaps. \(^{428}\)

The author of Ecclesiastes is a self-identified teacher of wisdom, possibly connected to King Solomon. This book, which is similar to others in the corpus of mid-eastern wisdom literature, describes a range of characteristic disillusionments with material and personal achievements. The text starts with a clear statement:

Meaningless! Meaningless! - says the Teacher.
Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless! \(^{429}\)

After twelve chapters of developing this and related themes, the author summarizes:

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of a person.
For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. \(^{430}\)

\(^{426}\) Philippians 3:8 TS.
\(^{427}\) Faith is needed to assist others, e.g. Romans 1:12; 14:1; 15:1; etc.
\(^{429}\) Ecclesiastes 1:2 NIV; the Hebrew word hebel really refers to the impermanence or transitory-ness of possessions and ambitions in the world, rather than meaninglessness or vanity per se. It is used more in this book than anywhere else in the OT. See Kathleen A. Farmer (2000). Vanity. In EDB: 1352-3. See also Jesus’ reported comments contrasting impermanent and permanent value, e.g. Mark 8:36-38.
\(^{430}\) Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 adap and Psalm 5:4-12; see also Revelation 22:12 and many other verses and pericopae.
As well as prefiguring some *New Testament* theology, this is consonant with the E.E.T. perspective - of a scientifically-structured, ephemeral universe containing philosophically-structured human beings. A universe that, despite the best efforts of scientists and philosophers, is frustratingly empty of absolute meaning. Yet it is a universe that specifically allows a thorough actualization of right and wrong ethical potentials. In E.E.T. it is claimed that ours is a pervasively anthropic universe ideally suited to address the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.). The world can be seen to be a real means for binary ethical apocalypsis. And biblical texts copiously illustrate the need for this process to produce public evidence for a fair judgement and for ethical dialysis at the Eschaton.\footnote{For an *Old Testament* pre-figuring of a sort of ethical dialysis, see *Malachi* 3:3-5.} This is the core of the E.E.T. holistic biblical cosmology (see section \textit{3.02}). However, challenging questions arise as to how the ontology of a sustaining ethical purpose articulates with the particulars of an apparently free-running material universe. These tough questions can only be properly addressed in the context of an inter-disciplinary research program.

In contrast to scientific futurologists, biblically-informed critical realists may, perhaps, recognise the discoveries of science concerning the uncertainty of existence on our planet as additional evidence of God’s persistently ongoing seminar on right and wrong ethics. Ethical encounter thinkers may imagine a time when binary ethical revelation and ethical dialysis are completed (for Christians this is the *Philippians* 1:6 “Day of Christ Jesus”) opening the way to an aeon of unconflicted right ethics.\footnote{This is a consistent theme of Christian biblical theology, e.g. *Matthew* 12:32; *Mark* 10:30; *Luke* 18:30; 20:35; *Ephesians* 1:21; *1 Timothy* 6:19; *Hebrews* 6:5; *1 Peter* 3:10-13; *1 John* 2:15-17.} The scientifically-demonstrated, ambiguous liminality of our contingent space-time world seems to suggest that it is not the right place to look for answers to the deep questions of existence. Despite millennia of effort the practical details of the future of our species are unknown to science and even to theology.\footnote{Matthew 24:36; *Mark* 13:32.}

Still, as in any good story, the last pages are the least dispensable. Theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg has assisted the development of Theology/Science (see section \textit{4.06}) by applying the concept of anticipation or prolepsis. In this, the present always contains a representation of the Eschaton. Even the present actions of God are seen as proleptically projected from the future. Christiaan Mostert has recently summarized
Wolfhart Pannenberg’s ideas and their evaluation by inter-disciplinarians. He describes how all-embracing the idea of prolepsis (anticipation) is:

Beyond recognising the anticipatory structure of all assertions, and especially of hypothetical assertions concerning reality as a whole, Pannenberg sees it as a task of metaphysics to investigate the structure of anticipations.434 The relation between the anticipation and the content toward which it is directed may be seen either as external, that is, accidental, or as intrinsic. Pannenberg argues for a more than accidental connection between an anticipation and its content. On the one hand, the truth of the anticipation ‘hinges on the still-absent future’; on the other hand, the anticipation is ‘a real instance of something’s occurring in advance’.435 An anticipation is unavoidably ambiguous. Its truth-content will always depend on a future verification. But if there should be no further confirmation of the truth-claim implicit in the anticipation, it will turn out to be wrong, mere ‘prophetic enthusiasm’. We can never have final certainty about the truth of our assertions in philosophy, theology or any science that is empirical and predictive.436

Wolfhart Pannenberg’s many contributions have stimulated much debate in the groves of the Theology/Science academy. His development of the idea of prolepsis has been greatly appreciated but with reservations. Pannenberg has always struggled in trying to persuade his many critics as to how an immutable yet non-deterministic God can retrospectively create from the future an open system that God participates in.437 As argued in the next few pages, it may be that the Pannenbergian dilemma can be ameliorated by the universal ethical method of E.E.T. If it is accepted, this would be an exciting, integrating contribution to the existing inter-disciplinary program.

In E.E.T. it is recognised that anticipatory or proleptic experiences are inherent in the numerous, accumulating occasions actualizing right and wrong ethics that will sponsor the eschatological judgment. The eschatological Apocalypse and judgment is pre-figured, as it were, in a continuity of historical ethical apocalypses. In a related way, Genesis 1:3 to Revelation 22:17 can be interpreted as a series of reflections on progress in the divine ethical encounter and its proleptically influential terminus.

435 Ibid.: 96.
Figure 1: Slightly reduced, un-touched photographs of a plastic container full of Australian five cent coins – the volume and shape of the container was predetermined, as was the standard size and shape of all the coins. When the container was shaken, the coins unexpectedly self-organized *en rouleaux* (in columns, like erythrocytes in histological preparations). In addition, individual coins were able to characterize themselves by being heads or tails up, by their axial rotation, and by their positions in the columns. This illustrates how, even in a simple physical system, there can be scope for elements of determinism, emergent complexification, and individuation.
Appreciation of the ambivalent contingency of our universe and of its pre-eminently ethical, unrelenting teleology opens a door for an alternative hermeneutics and a new appreciation of the purpose of human life.\textsuperscript{438} Thus prolepsis, \textit{sensu} Pannenberg, is subsumed into a larger concept. That is a full actualization of the cosmic potentials for ethical unteachableness (evil) and for ethical teachableness (good). These will accumulate to assume decisive meaning in the ethical dialysis of the Eschaton. The Eschaton (the finalé of the cosmic ethical encounter that saves, cleanses and teaches humankind) can be seen to condition the present (see also sections 3.02 and 4.12).\textsuperscript{439}

Personal histories are created by free choices, yet the total number of choices is finite and the ultimate system outcome is, in the broad sense, pre-determined. The figure on the facing page (Figure 1) shows the results of an experiment with basic materials that demonstrates how even a simple, determined physical system can yet contain an unexpected capacity for self-assembly, with plenty of scope for idiosyncrasy.

Perfect being theology increases the coherence of Pannenbergian proleptic reasoning. Where God is omniscient, omnitemporal and omnibenevolent it must be that God has full cognisant of human moral ambivalence from before the creation of our universe. Hence, it can be confidently assumed that the world we know, in its completeness, must be ideal for separating the historically-evidenced anthropic conflation of right and wrong ethics. Whilst our universe is a system that \textit{in toto} is predetermined by prolepses of its final outcome, yet it has abundant capacity for both self-organising complexifying emergences and a surprising amount of freedom for personal choice-making and ethical self-actualization. In developing this new solution to the Pannenbergian dilemma, this dissertation about Ethical Encounter Theology contributes a significant additional viewpoint to contemporary Theology/Science scholarship. Future research could attempt to correlate Pannenbergian anticipations or prolepses with the pervading prescient ability of the omniscient perfect being.

\textsuperscript{438} E.E.T. discovers numerous examples of the divine confronting ethical encounter in biblical texts from \textit{Genesis} 1:3 to \textit{Revelation} 22:17.
What an individual ethically was, is now, and will be judged to be at the Eschaton, forms their unique, personal ethical history. It is on individual and collective ethical history that the Eschaton exerts ownership in the present, and hence on all of the past. The perfect ethical character of the Christ, through obedient righteousness (that is perfect divine educability) was the reason death could not hold him. E.E.T. provides an ethical basis for Robert J. Russell’s concept of FINLONC, whereby the bodily resurrection of Christ instantiates a new law of the New Creation. Here the prophetic joins the proleptic. The divine transliteration of localized space-time physicalities into eternal ethical realities will also be familiar to biblical theologians:

God decreed before the ages for our glory
he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world
He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together
grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began
which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time
He was chosen before the creation of the world
through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages
the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world
written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world.

Such pericopae go to support an E.E.T. perspective on atemporality; that is the physical timelessness of our universe when observed from the vantage point of the eternal m.o.r.e. (the Rule of God). These texts introduce features of a biblical ethical chronometry (explored further in section 4.12). It is also important to recognize that two independent ethical systems are needed to make sense of what is really real. Both temporal authentic ethics and eternal expedient ethics are needed (see sections 7.04 and A.08). The combination of biblically-concordant, structured ethics with ethical chronology by E.E.T. provides a significant new scholarly perspective on the ground of being, having traction in science, philosophy and theology.

440 Acts 2:24b: “because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” - implying that evil has no purchase on one who lives by perfect right-ethics, in total obedience to God. Unlike all other humans, Christ’s ethical history is reported to be perfect, e.g. Hebrews 13:8. Also see John 14:30b.
442 1 Corinthians 2:7 NRSV; Ephesians 1:4 NRSV; Colossians 1:17 NRSV; 2 Timothy 1:9b NKJV; Titus 1:2b; 1 Peter 1:20a; Jude 1:25b; Revelation 13:8b; 17:8b NKJV. See also John 1:1-5; 8:58; 17:5; Hebrews 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1-2.
New Testament references to the pre-existence of Christ are basic to the E.E.T. Christology. Theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel, in a comprehensive summary of the corpus of theological ideas and discussions about the pre-existence of Christ identifies in the pre-existence biblical testimony a response to ancient challenges to Christian orthodoxy.

The disparate nature of the New Testament evidence itself shows that there are situations of Christian experience which have not led to the confession of the pre-existence of Christ. But there are also existential situations in which such statements have assumed an indispensable function. At Colossae, Christians could be challenged by competing cosmological ideology, by experiences of time and feelings about life, and by experiences of elemental threat (cosmic powers), similarly to give their faith in Christ a cosmic dimension. The Easter experience was also a legitimation for this. The Christ present in the Spirit is no longer bound to space and time but is universally and cosmically present. ‘Exaltation’ to God indeed also means exaltation to be pan-creator. Nowadays it is wrong to bracket off this cosmic dimension with existentialist theology (as Bultmann did) or to eliminate it as a relic of a mythical picture of the world. The cosmic dimension of the confession of Christ must be developed today, of all times, when cosmology is again being taken seriously by science as well, and scientists themselves are coming up against the limits of thought and language.\(^{443}\)

In this particular extract, Kuschel highlights a biblical theological conviction that, whilst Jesus Christ lived a fully human life in the world, the world is actually divinely embraced in Christ (an idea that is affirmed in the Christian aspects of the E.E.T. worldview). However, the overall tenor of Karl-Joseph Kuschel’s book is to question the eternal reality of Christ’s pre-existence. That approach has recently been subjected to a detailed critique by Simon J. Gathercole, especially on the basis of the: “I have come” sayings attributed to Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. Simon Gathercole observes that Karl-Josef Kuschel has used soteriology systematically as a means to diminish the credibility of pre-existent Christology. He concludes:

such (Matthew 27:40, 43), is crucified and then proclaimed as ‘Son of God’ by the centurion (Mark 15:39 par. Matthew 27:34). The heavenly pre-existence of Christ, then, does not diminish the importance of his death, but rather is part of the reason for the scandalous paradox of that death.  

In his exegetical commentary on John’s Gospel, Andreas J. Kostenberger strongly supports the same position that Simon Gathercole has arrived at from analysing the synoptic Gospels. Andreas J. Kostenberger argues that the text makes it clear that John presents Jesus as clearly claiming to be God. For example:

Thus Jesus does not merely claim pre-existence – otherwise he would have said, “before Abraham was born, I was” – but deity (note the reaction in John 8:59). The present instance of ego eimi (I am) startlingly culminates earlier occurrences of this expression in this chapter (e.g., John 8:24, 28).  

In that case, the claim of pre-existence is obviously subsumed into this larger claim.

A Theology/Science researcher will want to know if there is any way that the important biblical theological concept of the pre-existent Son of God finds traction in the empirical. For Ethical Encounter Theology this New Testament perspective addresses the question of what/who it was that dealt with the t = 0 prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of historical deicidal and self-deifying wrong ethical choices of humankind. Humankind’s choice to be independent of divine right ethics provides a possible origin for the primeval singularity of selfishness, and hence the origin of sin and both moral and natural evil (see paragraphs R and T on pages xxvi and xxvii, points B and H in section 2.02 and also in sections 1.13, 3.07, 3.08, and 3.09). For inter-disciplinary consonance, it is necessary to know who or what broke the primeval singularity of selfishness that evidenced from the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.). What made this monad of selfishness to expand into the complexifying and emerging universe – a universe that the works of science have now contextualized in much detail as inherently and permanently liminal and contingent?

Whether science dates the universe from the Big Bang (currently confirmed at about 13.7 billion years ago) or not, the biblical testimony asserts Christ’s saving act

It can be assumed that the extraordinarily compressed Singularity from which space-time was birthed (apparently by the Big Bang) was lightless, logicless, lifeless and loveless. That does not have to mean that it was ethically empty or a moral zero. E.E.T. suggests that, whatever the seed of space-time was - and this is unknown to theology and science and perhaps is even inexpressible in any language known - it was dominated by wrong-ethics. Prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of humankind’s wilful independence of divine right ethics is understood to explain the ubiquitous possibilities of wrong ethics present in the unseen realities of space-time (the u.r.s.t.). It is possible to speculate that the mathematical physicist’s concept of Singularity also represents the ultimate compression that extreme self-centredness would contract to.\footnote{This is an idea that I owe to C. S. Lewis from his book \textit{The Great Divorce}.}

The possibility that this represents a circular argument is addressed in section \textbf{A.04}.

The Big Bang has produced an expanding and ecollating universe of energy-matter, with evolving life forms from which, most significantly, human beings complexified. Concurrently, the transformation of Singularity into the Big Bang publicly exposed a cosmic vacuum matrix that is non-luminous, lifeless and loveless, and is inimical to science itself (see paragraph \textit{M} on page \textit{xxiv}, points \textit{A}, \textit{B} and \textit{C} in section \textbf{3.02} and sections \textbf{2.06} and \textbf{3.13}). Mathematical physicist, Bernard Carr, summarizes these cosmogenic events as a smooth sequence, apparently proleptically influenced from the anthropic complexity of the future:

\begin{quote}
The Anthropic Principle also explains why the history of the big bang allows an increasing degree of organization to develop. As the universe expands and cools, a ‘Pyramid of Complexity’ arises, with different levels of structure as one goes from quarks (at the bottom) to nucleons to atoms to molecules to cells and finally to living organs (at the top). Despite the earlier pessimistic notion of heat death, no violation of the second law of thermodynamics is involved, because local pockets of order can be purchased at the expense of a global increase in entropy. These structures arise because processes cannot occur fast enough in an expanding universe to maintain equilibrium. However, disequilibrium is only possible because of the anthropic fine-tuning of the coupling constants. This suggests that the Anthropic Principle should really be interpreted as a Complexity Principle.\footnote{Carr, B. (2008). Cosmology and Religion. In Philip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, editors, \textit{The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science}. Oxford, OUP: 149. E.E.T. need not rely on homology between physical Big Bang theory and the ethical Big Bang implicit of \textit{creatio ex ethica} cosmogony.}
\end{quote}
In ethical encounter perspective, the vacuum matrix of Space must be said to be more than a lightless, lifeless, loveless super-freezing vacuum. In E.E.T perspective, Space is argued to be inherently antipathetic to the progress of the divine ethical encounter’s emergent complexifications and ecollations towards the Eschaton. Space (not space-time) sharply contrasts with the complexifying riches of structure, life, wisdom, love and right ethics associated with our planet. It is vacuous, yet subjectively it can be perceived as dominant, controlling, destructive, death-dealing, ignorant, pitiless, and a major source of natural evil, including total extinctions. Millennia ago, the author of Genesis 1:2 named a similar perception of a vacant, formless situation as a tohu wabohu. Karl Barth understood “the nothingness” (das Nichtige) to be those things that God decided not to create when our universe was made. As Gregory A. Boyd notes, it is curious that Barth describes what was not made by God as resisting what was made. That is a resistance that takes the form of the devil, demons, evil, sin and death. Boyd considers this to be of doubtful meaning and uncompelling, except if free agents choose and hence actualize that which God has rejected. He writes that when human beings choose what God has rejected, we are:

in effect, attempting to dethrone God as Lord of all reality
and to enthrone ourselves as lords of an alternative reality of our own willing. This is the essence of sin.

We can go further and identify in humankind’s independence the deicidal and self-deifying stamp of wrong ethics and conflated ethics that required an immense act of divine kenotic love to call out and sustain our space-time universe to resolve the almost insoluble c.e.a.p. One lesson could be, if you want to be independent of perfect God the consequences themselves (not God’s anger) will be immanent in your universe. Astronauts who generate space-junk should not be surprised when their space station (and that of innocent others) is damaged by orbiting projectiles. It is bitter and humbling medicine indeed to have to accept that all the evil we observe and experience can be traced back to human rejection of divine right ethical teaching.

The E.E.T. anthropic model of the origin of evil can be explored in tandem with Pannenbergian prolepsis. For in E.E.T. it is argued that the primordial problem of our

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448 CD III.3: 289-368.
450 Ibid.: 341. This is what is identified in E.E.T. as the anthropic urge to deicide and self-deification.
universe, that is the primeval singularity of selfishness, is possibly a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of the extremes of human historic ethical ambiguity. This is also mentioned in paragraphs M and V on pages xxiv and xxviii, at points B.4, B.5 and B.6 in section 2.02, and in sections 1.07, 1.14, 1.16, 3.08, 3.09, 3.13, A.03 and A.04.

On the same topic, Gregory A. Boyd has written:

Now ‘the nothingness’ acquires authority, for now a free agent with authority has invested itself into it. Nothing has now become something. What was negated by God is affirmed by a creature, and thus the possibility of something opposing God - the possibility of evil – becomes actualized.\(^{452}\)

E.E.T. also observes analogical consonances between the ancient Hebrew phrase *tohu wabohu* and science’s discovery of the negative ethos of Space. Significantly, our universe is much more than a *tabula rasa* on which the story of our space-time world is being written. The vacuum matrix of Space physically challenges the emergence and complexification of energy-matter (that, in E.E.T. is proposed to be the outcome of the primal ethical encounter). The emergence of light, logic, life, love, human society, science and technology has not altered the baleful negativity of the vacuum matrix (see section 4.03). Space always has been, and is now set to degrade everything, according to the second law of thermodynamics. It would be easy to assume that the negativity of Space is simply, unremarkably, the natural background of any possible reality. However, in highlighting that there will be no ravenous negative background in the aeon-to-come (e.g. *Revelation* 21:1-4) traditional biblical theology cannot help but draw attention to the peculiar ontology and process characteristics of what we know scientifically about Space. It is noteworthy that Theology has a capacity to alert science to such factors. In the E.E.T. context it has to be asked: “To what extent is the destructive and pitiless aspect of Space a physical revelation of the primal prolepsis of human culpable ignorance and selfishness?”

Biblically theologically, it is worth noting again that a primordial state of cosmic negation seems to be identified at the start of the Torah and at the start of John’s Gospel. This can be analogized with the scientifically known Singularity that was the origin of the cosmic Big Bang. The residue of that Singularity is the scientifically

\(^{452}\) *Ibid.*: 340. This accords with a biblical exegesis that notes the association of the category of evil with human-kind; see dissertation footnote 324.
described vacuum matrix of Space. For E.E.T. purposes this can be interpreted as the residual evidence of an anthropogenic singularity of selfishness, vividly representing the insidious outcome of rejecting the right ethics of the perfect being. Believers sometimes describe their pre-salvation inner ethical life in terms that are analogous to this primordial negation. Then again the decadence of contemporary western society could also be described as tending towards an implosion of destructive self-absorption. Although this ethical means of analysing macro-reality may seem strange at first, it has its advantages. It is a method that sets theology, science, individual persons and society in an accessible ethical matrix. An ethical lingua franca provides opportunities to explore conceptual traction between disciplines. Consonance building is a major objective of the E.E.T. inter-disciplinary exploration of this dissertation. Through ethical contextualizing, traditional biblical theological views are re-interpreted for Theology/Science, to increase opportunities for creative mutual engagement (see xxi, paragraph A). Even if it is seen as contentious, this consonance is a significant contribution to the scholarly inter-disciplinary debate.

4.06 Theologies that engage with science

Science is here to stay. As an increasingly influential part of the human cultural matrix, the days are gone when theologians can exclude it from their calculations. A number of theologians have already made sustained efforts to understand science and to take scientific methods and worldviews into account in their theological formulations. Of these, two are well known because their systematic theologies have been much influenced by science. Wolfhart Pannenberg and Karl Rahner have made very different attempts to achieve a universal theological science. The published work of both theologians has recently been thoroughly reviewed and compared and contrasted. In addition, Alister McGrath is another theologian who has published extensive ground-work for his forthcoming systematic opus on Scientific Theology. These three are the most widely influential theologians contributing to inter-disciplinary studies. There are still major obstacles to overcome and theological

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455 See thesis section 2.12.
contributions to Theology/Science still tend to be somewhat tentative and not yet fully engaged, as was observed in some summarizing comments by theologian, Mark Worthing:

One has to ask in the case of both Rahner and Pannenberg whether, in the praxis of dialogue they have [been] taking the implications of their own programs with the radical seriousness these demand. This question, still being asked by those too few theologians and even fewer natural scientists . . . who are seriously engaged in the dialogue between theology and the natural sciences, requires further treatment.456

Fear of contamination by unreasoned fideist agendas (acknowledged or unacknowledged) may cause significant scientists to be reticent. Public disputes between atheist scientists (like Richard Dawkins) and Christian theologians (like Alister McGrath) deter many (as does the over-publicized war between evolutionists and creation scientists). Nonetheless, developing the dialogue is of over-riding importance and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen has summarized the current philosophical situation in the following terms: 457

For Bowker the real challenge of science to religion and theology is not so much a conflict of competing propositions and worldviews, but rather a ruthless challenge to the independence of religion’s own authority.458 In doing this, science is taking over areas where religion traditionally had its authority and control. Against the background of this argument Mary Hesse has asked whether science and technology in some sense represent ‘the new religion’.459 By asking this Hesse too wants to alert us to issues of power and authority as crucial for thinkers trying to rescue a sense that religion has an essential function in human life. . . . . . The power of science today is certainly overwhelmingly present in the technology without which our society would almost certainly collapse. But the focus of the power of science is certainly still found – in spite of the postmodern mood – in its claims to rational authority.460 In addition, of course, postmodern pluralism makes it almost impossible to speak generically about ‘science’, ‘religion’, and ‘theology’ today. Both post-modernity’s epistemic pluralism as well as modernity’s marginalization of religious meaning have therefore been very successful in

460 Ibid.: 122.
deconstructing our attempts to find a space for meaningful dialogue between disciplines as diverse and different as theology and science. I have argued elsewhere that the only way out of the confusing ‘double challenge’ presented by modernist as well as postmodernist themes in contemporary culture is to probe the interdisciplinary possibilities and shared resources of the ongoing conversation between theology and science.\(^{461}\)

This dissertation contributes along similar lines to those proposed by J. Wentzel van Huyssteen. It contributes by probing the possibilities afforded by situating theology and science in a broadly harmonizing ethical matrix. Both science and theology inherently depend on ethics to function as intellectual disciplines and to meet society’s expectations. Both science and theology aim to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Secure foundations are sought for in E.E.T. in what is identified as a natural, tripartite unity between science, ethics and theology.

4.07 Scientist as inter-disciplinarians

It is not always easy to move between science and theology. For example, an opinion of Charles Darwin’s is frequently cited, where he questioned divine omnipotence and beneficence on the grounds of the misery felt by caterpillars being eaten alive by Ichneumonids.\(^{462}\) However, subsequent work has shown that it is unlikely that insects have anything resembling a sense of pain.\(^{463}\) Lacking nociception, insects can not be implied to suffer misery. This is a sovereign example of the extreme care needed by those who would theologize from current scientific opinion. It is also cautionary for those many that would try to use science to bolster their metaphysical presuppositions.

There is a disparity in the personnel who are equipped to contribute to the interdisciplinary revolution. Numbers of leading theologians and philosophers participate. But, generally speaking, it is somewhat atypical scientists who seek to work with theologians and philosophers. The heavy work-load of a professional scientist allows little time to assimilate different methodologies and the range of new knowledge required to make meaningful inter-disciplinary contributions is heavy. The inter-

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disciplinary academy has developed an in-house language that scientists especially find difficult to understand. Also the bad publicity given to religious thinking, on the basis of historical events (rightly or wrongly reported) does not encourage them. Faith-based systems, it is implied, have impeded the progress of fact-based studies. Philosophy scarcely has a better report among scientists and technologists in general. A few scientists have braved all the obstacles and pioneered significant contributions. These have almost all had careers in physical or biophysical sciences. They include Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke, John Polkinghorne, Holmes Rolston III, Robert John Russell, Alister McGrath, Paul Davies, Russell Stannard, Michael Heller, and others.\footnote{A comparison of the methods of three leaders in Theology/Science can be found in: Polkinghorne, J. (1996). \textit{Scientists as Theologians: a Comparison of the Writings of Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke and John Polkinghorne}. London, SPCK. For a greater range of inter-disciplinary researchers see pages xiii-xvi in Clayton, P. and Simpson, Z. (2008) - reference at thesis footnote 261.} Physical sciences, in their dealings with universals and abstracts and unseen forces and uncertainties and relativities and paradoxes are, to an extent, pre-adapted and are therefore more open to philosophical and theological interpretations.

The more earthy subjects of chemical, geological and biological sciences generally harmonize less readily with the philosophical disciplines. Biological sciences play such an important part in contemporary society that specialists having advanced skills in both biology and theology are urgently needed. Whether universities should be addressing this problem as a priority is an issue beyond this thesis. To do the job properly, it is desirable to have two PhDs, one in biology and one in theology. In Australia, at least, government funding is not provided to support study for a second PhD. There are encouraging signs from Britain. Professional botanist Celia E. Deane-Drummond holds a personal chair in Theology and the Biological Sciences at Chester. Professional population geneticist Jacqui Stewart held a senior lectureship in theology at Leeds. Both of these pioneering inter-disciplinarians have PhDs in biological sciences and in theology.

Especially since Charles Darwin, biological sciences have gained growing relevance for theology. The interaction has now become very complex and finely detailed. The complexity resulting from combining two intellectually-challenging disciplines has resulted in many poorly informed publications and much misunderstanding. This emphasizes the world-wide need for professional theologians who are also
professional biologists. As an example of the complexity, in a recent article on the
genetical factors that determine phenotypic variability in humans, it is stated:

Human genetic variation was named ‘breakthrough of the year’ by Science in 2007, reflecting the marked advances in understanding the
genetic basis of normal human phenotypic diversity and susceptibility to a wide range of diseases. The human genome is
composed of 3 billion nucleotides with approximately 0.5% of these
nucleotides differing among individuals. This genetic variation, the
nucleotides that differ from person to person, affects the majority of
human phenotypic differences, from eye color and height to disease
susceptibility and response to drugs.

New technologies for rapidly assaying DNA sequences have
revealed that the degree and nature of human genetic variation is far
more complex than previously realized. These same technologies
have also resulted in the identification of common genetic variants
associated with more than 30 human disease traits.

Much of human diversity has been tied down to single nucleotide polymorphisms
(SNPs). At a fundamental level, science has causatively linked specific differences in
the SNP components of the inherited genetic code to differences between individual
persons. A question arises of divine purpose, because one person may have SNPs that
specify a brief, intellectually-compromised and cancer-prone life, whilst another has
SNPs that specify longevity, intellectual brilliance and disease resistance. A theology
without close traction on such practical aspects of biology may lose its attraction for
many educated people. If theology is to contribute to an increasingly technology-
based society it requires a worldview that accounts for the powerfully determinative
fine details of nature now being revealed. Alister McGrath has pointed out the
dangers in adapting theology to what may turn out to be transient theories (see point 5
in section 2.11). On the other hand, theology would be negligent if it left the
increasingly full and finely-detailed biological worldview without biblical traction. It
is a positive move that some schools of theology are establishing positions for
biologically-qualified inter-disciplinarians.

4.08 The revolution in Theology/Science studies

To know how informed theologians see science, what better than to listen-in as a
theologian pioneer of the Theology/Science academy reflects on the contribution of a
pioneer scientist theologian. Ted Peters makes some interesting observations on the

persuasive approach of Robert John Russell, the Founder and Director of the Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS), at Berkeley:

As what we affectionately call a hybrid, both a physicist and a theologian, Bob Russell demands that theologians engage scientists as laboratory researchers and as theoreticians who critically pursue truth about the natural realm.
This knowledge about the physical world then becomes data for the theologian to assess, evaluate and incorporate into our understanding of God’s creative and redeeming work.
At CTNS, we press both science and theology into engagement, into mutual interaction and into pursuing creative development.
. . . many scientists among us want to inquire into religion’s purchase on reality, while many theologians are inquiring what nature scientifically understood, means for their view of reality. They wish to open science to questions of transcendence and open religion to non-dogmatic appreciation of the natural world. And still more, some scholars are looking for consonance: shared domains of inquiry wherein the same subject matter is examined scientifically and theologically.466

Something of the energy of the revolution in Theology/Science relationships is conveyed by those remarks. And it has not been just a matter of words. Many research programs (including that of Ethical Encounter Theology) have benefited from the range and depth of cross-disciplinary books and research papers published in recent years out of CTNS, under the tutelage of Robert John Russell and Ted Peters. Their work and that of other inter-disciplinary specialists has moved the discipline of Theology/Science toward the main-stream of contemporary academic endeavour. This young, fast-expanding, discipline is part of the intellectual context for the explorations of E.E.T. and of the revelational/empirical consonances explored in this dissertation (see section 1.02).

4.09 Ethical Encounter Theology and evolution
Among Theology/Science workers today it is common to adopt a neo-Darwinist perspective. This is despite the possibility that unethicized Darwinism could seem to demean the perfect being of God that is so strongly adhered to by all orthodox Abrahamic theists.467 There is something of an intellectual self-righteousness: “Well

467 This may be one of the reasons that Darwinism, devoid of an ethical matrix, such as that of E.E.T., has provoked such a strong reaction from some biblical fundamentalists. The E.E.T. analysis shows one way that ethics could help bridge the gap between ordinary Bible believers and contemporary advances in the Theology/Science endeavor.
those are the scientific facts, there is nothing we can do about it, tough luck for traditionalists.” For example, Robert John Russell cites Niels Henrik Gregersen:

The costs of evolution in terms of death and pain now appear as the inescapable price that must be paid for the process of complexification in nature . . . Creation is a package deal, and we cannot have the one without the other.\textsuperscript{468}

Most likely this is the majority theodicical proposition held by theistic evolutionists today. We may ask, is this not a throwing in of the towel, over an essential of traditional biblical theism? That is, not only faith in the resurrection of all of the dead and just judgment, but also faith in a perfectly loving God who numbers each hair on our heads. Lacking a theological ethical consonance, by itself neo-Darwinian deism falls short of the vigorous theism of orthodox believers. Un-bridged, this well-known hiatus can cause reactions such as unreflectively, biblical literalist worldviews some of which may be disguised as a science of creation. Even though E.E.T. has a more thoughtful and irenic stand than biblical fundamentalism yet it still defends the perfect character of God and the profound truth of divine revelation. E.E.T. implies that if all ecollation was eu-ecollation there would be no evil, sin, no death or suffering in the world. Without perceiving a need to be literalist over the Adam and Eve parable, E.E.T. still has a high anthropology and appreciation of the biblical theological causal connection between human sin and moral and natural evil.

A century and a half after the first publication of \textit{The Origin} a common “making the best of the mess” mitigation type of deistic theodicy seems to have scarcely progressed. Yet, in contrast to Niels Henrik Gregersen, Robert J. Russell argues that Christians look to the fruit of death and suffering in the melt-down of universal transformation and general resurrection, not through the mitigating value of biological complexification. But he does wonder whether this method precludes creative interaction with cosmological science.\textsuperscript{469} A recurring challenge in across-


\textsuperscript{469} Russell, R. J. (2006). An Appreciative Response to Niels Henrik Gregersen’s JKR Research Conference Lecture. \textit{Theology and Science} 4:129-135. Teilhard de Chardin wrote that the quantity and malice of evil spread through the world: “resembles nothing so much as the way of the Cross” (\textit{TPM}: 313; his footnote 135). Also, see Murphy and Ellis: 248: their footnote 92 - reference in thesis section 1.13. E.E.T. has a simpler theodicy, observing that (although maliciously unholy) evil is permitted and given a role in God’s education of humanity for right ethical life in the aeon-to-come. Along the way, the whole potential of evil is exhausted by being actualized and so exposed to eschatological judgment,
discipline research is that reinterpretations in one discipline (in attempting to improve interaction with another discipline) risk a degree of compromise of their own disciplinary integrity. This is one of the reasons why working between disciplines is among the most challenging kinds of academic work today.

Charles Darwin exulted in the grandeur of natural selection for producing life forms. He clearly felt personal satisfaction from discovering (slightly preceded by Alfred Russell Wallace) that:

> From the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is a grandeur in this view of life...\(^470\)

It has been almost universally accepted that the selective shears of famines (that is natural evil) and wars (that is moral evil) are the means that produce fit and healthy individuals and advances in diversity of life on earth. This could be abbreviated as: “Life is tough. Nature shows us that it is necessary to be cruel to progress.”

Charles Darwin’s thinking was not without sociological concomitants, even from its inception. For example, in a letter to W. Graham dated July 3rd 1881, he wrote:

> The more civilized so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence. Looking at the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.\(^471\)

This might also be how crude simplifications of the major biological works of Darwin have been understood by many powerful leaders (e.g. Nietzsche, Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong); causing them to think, perhaps, as follows:

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\(^471\) Darwin, F., editor (1929). *Autobiography of Charles Darwin*. London, Watts: 153, 154. Charles Darwin’s disparagement of non-white military skill would not have been accepted by the British and ANZAC soldiers at Gallipoli in 1915. Darwin’s racial dominance prediction has not been proved by history. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Slobodan Milosovic and Saddam Hussein are among those who tried to implement it. Sadly, there is also evidence of genocidal intent in the past treatment of some of Australia’s Aboriginal peoples, as part of a long history of abuses against hunter/gather cultures in many countries.
It is natural that, out of dominance and out of cumulative violence, from cruelty and swingeing injustice; including meaningless accidents and gratuitous sufferings, comes biological progress. It is nature’s way of picking the best. Among humans, superior people rise to the top, by any means. This is the way forward. Quite incidentally, this selective process created us and all of life’s diversity, so it has proved to be good; even grand.

Robert Richards has recently written about the influences of scientific researchers’ emotions on their theories.⁴⁷² For those familiar with Charles Darwin’s biography it is possible to imagine his scientifically-trained, stream of consciousness seeking closure over heart-wrenching family tragedies. Perhaps, continuing beyond what he wrote as a biologist, as follows:

And so for all the tragedies of life, including the premature deaths of my dear mother and my beloved daughter; it now all makes sense. Their suffering and loss was after the manner of nature, without purpose or design, but the same mechanism through which all the wonderful life-forms, like us, have come to be selected.

The somewhat fatalistic, theodicical-like possibilities in Charles Darwin’s theory may help explain its great popularity with people who know nothing of the biological evidence supporting it. Pain, suffering, disasters, diseases and premature death are shown to be random acts of nature. However, they also have positive meaning in that by natural selection species are made fit and new species enabled to arise. Without a matching theology of an equivalent intellectual caliber, this powerful argument implicitly conveys a deist or materialistic teleology. This then may be able to ameliorate the unpleasant emotion of guilt sometimes associated with perceptions of an immanent theist deity, and also the self-accusation that can be associated with personal and family mishaps. “It’s only natural,” may appeal because it can excuse both systemic and personal failures. Simultaneously, there could be a self-righteous triumphalism for successful groups to think as follows:

We are the survivors of ferocious natural selection; healthy, wealthy and wise.
We are self-evidently the right sort!⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² The power of personal tragedy to influence the formulation of scientific theories has been highlighted in Richards, R. J. (2008). *The Tragic Sense of Life: Ernst Haeckel and the Struggle Over Evolutionary Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Postmodern, deconstructionist philosophy, especially, has made Theology/Science researchers alert to such uniquely personal influences.

⁴⁷³ Nietzsche’s troubling propositions concerning *Ubermenschen* harmonize with this; see, e.g. Nietzsche, F. (1833). *Also Sprach Zarathustra*: Prologue, section 3.
By ethically contextualizing the world, E.E.T. implicitly questions naïve applications of Darwinism. Reality and even biological reality is far more sophisticated.\textsuperscript{474} One difficulty is that naïve Darwinism suits the purposes of many people. In contrast, the E.E.T. biblical ethical hermeneutics might be challenging, as it adds personal ethical responsibility to the story of evolution, something that can’t be measured materially.\textsuperscript{475} In Ethical Encounter Theology, Darwinian selective processes are proposed to work (together with ecollations) to reify the primal unseen possibilities of the space-time universe. This dissertation argues that the biological observations supporting evolution by natural selection are not dis-concordant with a creatio ex ethica cosmogony and traditional biblical perfect being theism. The E.E.T. worldview contextualizes and humanizes evolution and lends it a positive theological ethical purpose without diminishing its Darwinian biological factuality. A significant philosophical difference is that Darwinism’s “progress for its own sake” is transformed into “progress towards resolving the cosmic ethical anthropic problem.” This is a significant break-through in a very difficult area of scholarship with considerable academic and social consequences.

Central to the E.E.T. worldview is the emphasis that unseen informational potentials can add new information to both physical and ethical actualizations in the developing history of our universe. These processes are not divinely directed or designed. Actualizations depend on a multitude of causal influences sustaining the possibilities of free choices made by entities. From such free choices the visible universe obtains increasing capacities for emergence of complexifying novelty. It is argued there is consonance between this universal process and the biblical theological imperative that unseen good and evil potentials have to be exposed (or apocalypsed). Through the unseen ecology method of E.E.T., evolution can be approached as e-volvere, an unrolling of the unseen ecological possibilities. Evolution and ecollation continuously add to the world’s accumulating store of empirical knowledge. Entities and beings are only known for what they are by their physical or ethical actualizations. For example, there has never been a biological species that did not have a pre-existing ecological niche to speciate into. Actualized species exemplify the character of the niche that

\textsuperscript{474} See dissertation footnote 45.  
\textsuperscript{475} See dissertation footnote 469.
they occupy. It is argued that the ecollative process exclusively enables physical, chemical and geological cosmogenesis (that is they do not evolve but only ecollate). Evolution only comes into play with biological, intellectual and ethical emergences. The research of this dissertation has provided new terminology that enables a distinction to be made between physical and biological processes.

As a technically descriptive term, evolution has acquired two separate meanings. In addition to the information recognition, niche fitting process just described, there is a more restricted meaning. Evolution today, describes the continuous adaptations (by natural selection and other selective processes) of biological organisms to their constantly changing ecological environment by survival of the fittest. This second process is also a form of ecollation but is one that is dominated by the causality of a range of survival-of-the-fittest mechanisms. That must be clearly distinguished from the inorganic ecollation mechanisms that permit condensation of energy into matter and of matter into all the other forms of physical, chemical and geological entities. These must all be distinguished from the biological evolutionary mechanisms that, epiphenomenally, permit unseen ethical potentials for good or evil to be actualized in world history. Because of these disparate meanings, it would better to restrict the word evolution sensu strictu to its biological meaning. That is to the progressive development of organisms by competition and causal selection of the most fit for the prevailing ecology. The popular uses of the word “evolution”, as a descriptor to highlight non-biological cosmogenesis and for claims of improvements in commercial products, typify the confusion about the scientific nature of the process.

For E.E.T. purposes, all emergences since Singularity have potentially been able to benefit from ecollation. Ecollation can be used to refer to any reification of unseen information, any actualization in cosmic history of unseen potentials. That would encompass biological evolution by competition and selection as a sub-class. It is argued that, in general, such reifications are not attained through competition but by sympathetic resonance. That is, by information recognition and acquisition. This seems to apply from quantum indeterminacy, through all the levels of complexity of energy and matter, up to the human conscious capacity to think about moral or creative alternatives to choose from and to enact. In each case, an unseen potential is recognized and acquired for reification. Progressive actualizations of the unseen
riches of our universe’s potentiality are literally an evolution in a larger sense. That is a revealing, unfolding or apocalypsis (just as the opposite process of in-folding, kalypsis or concealment can be called circumvolution). However, language is rarely completely logical and the term evolution is currently best limited to describing the process of biological improvement through competition and natural selection (that is in the original sense of Alfred Russell Wallace and Charles Darwin). 476

The descriptor “ecollation” covers all forms of actualization of unseen information. It implies that unseen informational potentials are quantized and, although numerous, are not infinite. This perspective is the basis of the capacity of E.E.T. to allow for free choices within a system that is ultimately deterministic, once all its potentials have been actualized. The great diversity of galaxies, stars, and other cosmic phenomena, of ecosystems and biological species on earth, and of human creative activities all exemplify the richness of potentials in the unseen ecology of space-time. Yet they cannot be scientifically considered as inexhaustible. That also has strong biblical theological connections. 477 In the E.E.T. consonance, these potentials are taken to date back to the encounter between divine self-giving love and the singularity of selfishness, at the birth of our universe. They represent an inheritance of the perfect divine plan for humans and their world, including divine right ethics and also of the wrong ethics of the c.e.a.p. These potentials are available in an unseen fund of very diverse information available to be physically actualized in world history. Such possibilities within the unseen ecology of space-time are claimed to be evident as an accessible resource that permits conscious humans to freely create and invent and to ethically self-actualize within an ultimately determinate system.

By recognizing the need for new terminology and exploring the matter of ecollation, this dissertation provides a significant new contribution to scholarly cosmogenic theory and hence to Theology/Science research and worldview studies. The possible scope and influence of ecollation in emergent complexification phenomena requires to be addressed by a new inter-disciplinary program.

477 E.g. Psalm 102:26; Isaiah 51:6; Hebrews 1:11.
Figure 2: An eleven-component functional model of sensory behavior (free of tropisms and “drive”). **Component 1**: represents the numerous modes and grades of information available in the external environment. **Component 2**: represents neural input on that part of the environmental information that is recognised by mechano-, thermo-, hygro-, chemo-, and photo-receptors. **Component 3**: represents internal clocks (circadian and other) that influence component 4. **Component 4**: represents the (unknown) mechanism within the c.n.s. that facilitates inputs relevant to a particular behavioural activity. How it selects which behavioural activity to pay attention to at any particular time is one of the central questions of sensory physiology. **Component 5**: represents the modifying effects of memory traces of previous experiences, both long-term and short-term. **Component 6**: represents the mechanism that compares the selected sensory input with an anticipated input relevant to the behavior that is being attended to. **Component 7**: represents the output resulting from the comparisons made in component 6. **Component 8**: represents the motor instructions that lead to muscle contractions and gland secretions, etc. comprising the observed behavior (that is **Component 9**). **Component 10**: represents the neural input of mechano- and chemo-receptors that provide information on the internal state and relationships of body parts. **Component 11**: represents the mechanism that compares this autoassessor input with an anticipated input relevant to the behavior being produced. Any discrepancy maintains or modifies the action decision until there is concordance between the autoassessor input and the internal model of reality. It also supplies feed-back to the attention switch, able to switch ecoassessor attention appropriate to the attainment of pre-programmed behavioural objectives.
4.10 Neurobiology and E.E.T.

Biologists describe a diversity of millions of different living species that are adapted to (and, in E.E.T. terms, ecollated on) an extremely varied range of environments. This plethora of emergent novelty is only exceeded by the diversity of emergent human thoughts, communications and other creative activities. It is argued that these two flowerings of great novelty are partly the result of ecollative actualizations of primal potentials. Human cognition is especially tuned to sense new informational potentials. How this is achieved is the active research project of many neurobiologists and philosophers of mind. Theologian philosophers also have a stake in this research, because the human mind/brain is (or is close to) the moral conscience and free decision-making parts of a person. What it is to be human, in the divine image and likeness, is likely to be related to mind/brain neurobiology.

Humans are part of a biological continuum. The simplest prokaryotes have macromolecular sensory information-processing and behavioural response systems. The human brain has billions of sensitive cells interacting through trillions of connections. As an information acquisition and processing facility it is by far the most complex system known to have emerged anywhere in the universe. This complexity supports a capacity for thought, extraordinary memory, creative reflection, sophisticated communication, and moral conscience. Dialoguing with current neurobiological research is outside the scope of this dissertation. However, in previous research the author developed an insect sensory behaviour model. It illustrates how small changes in sensory information processing can influence behaviour and ecological preferences and hence speciation (see Figure 2 on the facing page). The numbers of neurones and their connections vastly exceeds the capacity of genes to tightly specify them. Even in insects, genetic determinism of all neural connections and hence all behaviour is not physically possible. This liberates the physical substrate to subtend neurobiological idiosyncrasy and that then allows for novelty in ethological and ecological relationships. Similar factors contribute to human personality differences (and to individuality in animals).\textsuperscript{478} It is claimed that plenty of scope is always available, neurobiologically, for chance and for ecollative choice-making.

\textsuperscript{478} Nobel Laureate Barbara McClintock even described genetically-identical corn plants as having individuality. Clearly there are biological exceptions to neo-Darwinian tight genetic determinism. Ecollation theory explores some ways in which the resulting freedom of choice may be expressed.
An infinite range of information modalities and gradations is available around and within; the number and variety of receptors is limited. Each species represents a gamble, that the information its sensory receptors are able to obtain is the most useful for its way of life. In addition, a slight change in sensory information processing is probably responsible for the changes in behavioural preference that can generate sub-species and possibly, eventually species. It has been argued that multiple, multimodal sensory receptor input to the ganglia forms patterns that are compared with predicted input patterns, the discrepancy driving much of the behaviour; and that success at predicting the consequences of the motor output resultant from pattern comparison, is what is selected for in the evolution of behaviour (Rice, 1975). If this is true it has many implications; for example the essential difference between two closely related species may be no more than slight differences in sensory information reception, processing or decision making. Even highly divergent species may be so only because long ago a slight sensory physiology divergence caused their ancestors to adopt a new life style that exerted very different selection pressures.

Using this sensory approach, incipient new species are considered to begin their passage towards genetic fixing with slight c.n.s. changes in the interpretation of sensory inputs. Central nervous system models of reality, thus changed, will sponsor behavioural decision differences. Because of the complex architecture of the neuropile, it is likely to be under highly polygenic control so that mutations affecting c.n.s. models of reality are certain to be common. These are probably generally deleterious or neutral; however an occasional mutation may lead to c.n.s. models for more appropriate behaviour and hence a selection advantage. Such advantageous genes would probably spread through the population, leading to a species change, such as the extension of host range seen in some tephritid species. Should reproductive isolation intervene at some point whilst the new gene(s) are spreading, then a new species might eventuate. The vital point to grasp here is that speciation is more likely to occur by c.n.s. leading, sensory receptor changes taking place subsequently. The steps envisaged are:

i. occurrence of a mutation affecting the way the c.n.s attends to or interprets sensory input;

ii. a resultant change in behaviour, due to the c.n.s. model of reality expressing a changed model of the environment;

iii. spread of the mutant gene and, perhaps, isolation of parent and mutant populations;

iv. selection of new sense organs better adapted to the information needs of the new model, as the mutant population adapts further;

v. divergence of specific mate recognition systems when parent and mutant populations become separated.479

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The significance for E.E.T. of this sensory neurobiological/behavioural/speciation analysis is that (combined with the Eleven-Component Functional Model of Sensory Behaviour - see Figure 2, on page 198) it locates loci of flexibility within the behaviour-generating neuronal circuitry. There is a natural liminality and ambiguity in the information-processing and decision-making circuitry of the central nervous system, interposed between the relatively simple causality of the sensory acquisition system and the motor output system. Considerable latitude resides in the c.n.s. due to the mathematical impossibility of one-to-one genetic management. This is the most likely locus for sympathetic resonance with informational potentials in unseen ecology. Openings for freely chosen or random information transfer would not compromise the well-described, causal behavioural mechanisms. Also, this does not rely on any form of special divine intervention. For example, tiny changes in the responsiveness of neuronal connections mediating sensory processing or behavioural decision-making are able to induce behavioural changes and take individuals into new environments. Changes in environment can apply selection pressure that favours rare genotypes, better suited to the novel behaviour or new environment. Research work is needed on slightly “strange” individual animals to examine to what extent epigenetics, such as non-genetically determined neurobiological factors (e.g. ecollation on unseen informational potentials), could contribute to speciation.

The volume of information locked-up in physical and biological reality is immense, thus scientists have to specialize. However, this necessary narrowing of focus limits understanding. For example, sensory physiologists rarely extend their interests to behavior, applied ecology, or genetics. Yet when they do, new paradigms may emerge that can alter established understanding of how things work in nature, and this may then have useful practical applications.\textsuperscript{480} History is made by conscious recognition of unseen possibilities and then actualizing them behaviorally. In E.E.T. it is claimed that this general property of organisms attains its apogee in human minds.

The E.E.T. analysis extends the potential scope of the Baldwin effect.\textsuperscript{481} In both cases the importance of the idiosyncrasies of individuals is highlighted. Rare but important individual characteristics are normally lost in the standard statistical methods of biological research. In E.E.T it is claimed that ecollations within the individual’s c.n.s. could subscribe to speciation by causing behavioural leading into selectively different environments, followed by the usual natural selective and genetic fixing mechanisms. A significant question arises from this for neuro-ethologists: “Does any low-level analogue of human conscious creativity or imagination operate in simpler organisms?” For example, could we experimentally determine if c.n.s. activity is open to ecollation? Monitoring c.n.s. activity of individuals, from a genetically-uniform population of a simpler animal, like an insect species, may be one way to approach that question. Here the aim is to account, electrophysiologically, for the origins of neuro-ethological idiosyncrasies (in contrast to the stereotypical). It is worth noting that it is the philosophical theology side of E.E.T. that has pointed to the need for this crucial scientific research. That is an outcome of true inter-disciplinary thinking (see page 209).

4.11 Some major themes of Theology/Science addressed by E.E.T.
In exploring the possibility of developing more dialogue between perfect being biblical theism and Theology/Science studies an ethical encounter worldview has proved useful. Positions have been outlined on: the purpose of our space-time universe, on the primal state of singularity, on the genesis of our universe, on cosmic liminality and ambiguity, on the bases of goodness and evil, on freedom, on biogenesis, biological evolution, and on anthropogenesis. Although these topics are discussed at other places in the dissertation, this section integrates them into a single scientifically-orientated outline account.

As an offering for the inter-disciplinary banquet of ideas, E.E.T. proposes ethical ways of contextualizing some of major questions about reality. The specific physicality of our universe is suggested to be the perfect divine means for addressing the problem of conflated ethics or sin, resulting from the cosmic ethical anthropic

problem. The c.e.a.p. implies that the universal futility discovered by science results from the human will to be independent of divine right ethical education. A prolepsis of humankind’s historical alienation from right ethics (especially divine prescience of human deicidal and self-deifying intents) is proposed as the force that circumvoluted all of the divine good intentions for our world into a singularity of selfishness, prior to or at t = 0. Perfect, self-sacrificing divine love (Christologically expressed as a prolepsis of the perfect human being’s self-sacrifice on the cross of Calvary) encountered the singularity of selfishness at t = 0, and called our universe into being. From the start, liminality and ambiguity were inherent in all the processes of this world. Natural evil is always possible in such a universe, as a consequence of the inherent uncertainty required to allow ethical choices to be actualized by binary ethical apocalypsis. In this, E.E.T. provides a ethically-informed, inter-disciplinary development of the traditional biblical theological hermeneutic of creation versus chaos. For example, Bernhard W. Anderson writes:

the Creator holds the world in being, so to speak,
in the face of the potentialities of chaos.482

Freedom to choose enables energy-material to progressively complexify by free ecollations on a range of informational potentials in our universe’s unseen ecology. These primal potentials are informed either by divine perfection or by human ethical conflation (sin). Slowly and painfully, with many dead-ends, the anthropic cosmos has complexified to the point where humans evolved. Biblically theologically, humankind’s independence from God changed a very good divine plan into a very lengthy and painful process of binary ethical apocalypsis. Even so, the freedom to choose good or evil, to eu-ecollate or dis-ecollate, is very good because it ensures progressive actualization of all the world’s unseen ethical potentials. Comprehensive binary ethical apocalypsis is a “very good” destiny for a universe of conflated ethics. This painful process logically has to precede release from the moral evil (and epiphenomenally, natural evil) that resulted from the cosmic ethical anthropic problem. Historically-actualized obedience to divine right ethical teaching and actualized culpable rejection of divine wisdom are scheduled to be justly judged and separated at the Eschaton. In this way the universal process provides a fair solution to

the problem of evil and reveals much about the character of the perfect being and about us human beings. This process is less intimidating when it is understood to be only an early stage of our species’ eternal relationship with the perfect divine being. In that connection it is interesting to note how science-fiction writers have long been interested in the idea that nature, unknown to us, is investigating us humans as much as we are investigating it!

Complexifying emergent evolution in space-time depends on energy-matter progressively ecollating on seen and unseen informational potentials. The standard evolutionary paradigm depends only on cause-and-effect complexifications by natural selection with respect to visible influences. Ecollation theory queries how much of the emergent novelty of evolution might be from actualizations of information accessed by ecollative sympathetic resonances between sensitive parts of materiality (such as subtle complexities in the genome and the c.n.s.) and the primal potentials of unseen ecology. It is also worth asking if biogenesis could be better elucidated by including reference to ecollation in the overall equation (rather than by those famous appeals to panspermia or to alien invaders by senior scientists). A similar suggestion could be applied to progress in the study of macro evolution. Research on the evolution of consciousness might benefit from taking into account the rich range of explanation afforded by ecollation theory. To what extent could brain/mind research benefit from the idea that liminality in very finely-tuned neural circuitry is pre-adapted for sympathetic resonance with unseen, primal informational potentials? Questions about the various possible scientific benefits of ecollative thinking derive from but do not depend on what has been previously argued in this dissertation concerning the advantages of ethical ecollation theory in inter-disciplinary revelational/empirical consonance-building.

4.12 Ethical chronometry
In science, chronological time is one of the four basic aspects of the space-time-energy-matter fabric of reality. Here, we must address the question of whether, for inter-disciplinary purposes, that is all that time represents. Theologians debate the question of God’s relationship with chronological time and there are four main

483 See the proposal by Francis Crick - reference at the end of dissertation section 2.08.
schools of thought. They differ by believing God is either: absolutely timeless, or relatively timeless, or timeless and omni-temporal, or completely temporal. A new, science-based view of time, that could also assist inter-disciplinary consonance, has been provided by Julian Barbour (a quantum-gravity physicist and philosopher). He views time’s arrow as an artefact of a timeless existence:

There are no hard mathematical proofs to support my idea, but I hope you are persuaded that at least the arguments for a timeless universe are strong. If it nevertheless appears intensely temporal, there must somewhere be a massive reason for the fact. I think it is the asymmetry of being. Being can be more or less. Sitting in the midst of things, we feel ourselves carried forward on the mighty arrow of time. But it is an arrow that does not move. It is simply an arrow that points from the simple to the complex, from the less to the more, most fundamental of all from nothing to something.

Whilst much of Julian Barbour’s work is unrelated to the E.E.T. program, the idea that physical time is an illusion concurs with its position that progress in binary ethical apocalypses, towards the Eschaton, is the most significant chronometer of our space-time universe. The dual, historical accumulation of actualized evil and of actualized good marks off the progress of the cosmogenic ethical encounter. This is the gradual realization of: “Thy Kingdom come and Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” Space-time does not drift, nor even shoot along like an arrow. As it expands and complexifies it freely chooses its way, through an exhaustive series of binary ethical apocalypses towards eschatological justice and ethical dialysis. The pre-determined ethical future of space-time reels-in its freely-choosing present. The outcomes are certain, though how each individual gets there and determines their place in eternity is their own free choice. The present instant is pre-eminently the choosing point. All our “nows” are encounters with fresh ethical choices, building on previous choices (rather like the Whiteheadian concrescences that accumulate from real occasions). The divine harvest from the world is made up of all the ethical outcomes are certain, though how each individual gets there and determines their place in eternity is their own free choice. The present instant is pre-eminently the choosing point. All our “nows” are encounters with fresh ethical choices, building on previous choices (rather like the Whiteheadian concrescences that accumulate from real occasions). The divine harvest from the world is made up of all the ethical

486 The Gospels say that God’s feast has been prepared and all the places readied. But those who will fill the set places do so by freely responding to God’s invitation, e.g. Matthew 8:11-12; 22:8-10; Luke 13:28-29. What has always been determined is the banquet itself and the ethical character of those who participate. To be part of it requires an individual, freely-decided response to the divine invitation. To the question: “What does a perfectly loving God get out of all of this?” An ethical encounter thinker might reply: “More, free, right ethically-responsive individuals to share in God’s indescribably perfect joy!” It is characteristic of divine perfect love that God loves to share God to the maximum.
487 The author of Luke 21:34b-36 has Jesus teaching this especially clearly.
responses to an almost infinite plethora of situational opportunities. The E.E.T. paradigm predicts that the universe’s ethical chronometer will stop when no more actualized ethical choices are needed for divine justice to be seen to be done.

For E.E.T., time’s arrow has reality in the sense that as soon as an ethical choice is actualized it becomes a part of chronological history. That is, the present binary ethical apocalypses find instant identity in the future eschatological judgement and so cannot be revisited. Importantly, unlimited hope resides in the rich stream of new ethical opportunities afforded, as the Eschaton continues to create the present by drawing it into the future. For Christian believers this is more than a process, it is a vital personal human relationship. Through all of time the history-evoking power of the Eschaton flows from its source, the perfect human being (the Lamb slain from the world’s foundation who is the Alpha and Omega) who biblically self identified by saying:

I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, The First and the Last.

For E.E.T. purposes, these pericopae could be translated as: “I want you to realise that I am the pre-existent One whose ethical perfection continuously calls everything into being and I stand at the end of this aeon, observing the ethical affiliations of all.” E.E.T. argues that personal progress is measured not by material complexification *per se* but by a willingness to be educated towards the perfect divine ethical identity. When this ethical criterion is taken as the real measure of on-going progress, material atemporality (see Julian Barbour quotation on page 205) obtains a greater inter-disciplinary coherence. This is a significant scholarly approach to a complex problem.

A limited, but still helpful, scientific analogy for this crucial ethical process is the way that a massive black hole reams-in the fabric of space-time. The fabric of space-time streams over the event horizon and into a totally different order of reality. For E.E.T. the Eschaton is the ethical mega-attractor that called space-time into being. It is an ethical attractor that progressively and irresistibly draws the four dimensions of

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488 This provides an E.E.T. perspective on traditional exegeses of verses such as *Hebrews* 9:27.
489 *Matthew* 3:58.
space-time into ethical encounters and binary ethical apocalypses until good and evil are totally demulsified. This type of model enables re-reading of the Bible’s remarkable representations of chronological time, in terms more accessible to scientific cosmology. Its theological advantages include a harmonization of several difficult texts, an immutably perfect God, a pre-determined outcome, and personal freedom of choice to claim a place in the aeon of right ethics. In suggesting resolutions for paradoxes and in discovering concordances between the revelatory and the empirical Ethical Encounter Theology significantly adds to current scholarship and points to opportunities for shared domain research (see sections A.03 and A.07).

It is by modelling physical time (= space-time) as an artefact of the ticking of the ethical chronometer that E.E.T. offers a solution for the Pannenbergian dilemma (see section 4.05). Prolepsis is a much easier concept to explain in an ethical-temporal frame than in a physical-temporal frame. From the perspective of the m.o.r.e., physical time is inconsequential. Bible texts like Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 are readily read as referring to God’s time being measured-off by the fulfilment of divine ethical purposes, rather than by the passage of physical time. Texts referring to the pre-existence, pre-eminence and omnipotence of Jesus Christ and his Cross are hard to understand in terms of chronological time. They are, however, more comprehensible within a hermeneutics of ethical temporality. A pervasive New Testament teaching is that ethical character endures, whilst material gain is ephemeral. Ethical temporality is part of the E.E.T. worldview and it provides a domain where science, philosophy and biblical theology can converse. One important consequence of ethical chronology hermeneutics is that little of the 14 billion years of physical cosmogenesis counts as real time. Another consequence is that, since the differentiation of farmer/civic Second People cultures, time has been greatly expanded by our very inventive ethical mis-eccollations and eu-eccollations. On the ethical chronometer the last few millennia have registered a much greater duration than the previous billions of years of cosmic history. The ability of a theology, like E.E.T., to facilitate such creative mutual exchanges with other disciplines is one of the ways of estimating its usefulness (see section 1.05).

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Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett have remarked on the fact that:

More important than chronological calendar time (*chronos*) is the *kairos*, or the moment of time’s fulfilment.

What we look forward to now is the future new creation, the advent of the *kairos* that will reinterpret all previous *kairos* as well as chronological time throughout cosmic history.  

Classically, etymologically, *kairos* can be used to refer to:

the space of time in which decisions are made for the individual, which one must dare to exploit. Those who miss or evade their *kairos* destroy themselves. It is important to take to heart the call to recognize the moment and in all one’s activities to find the right moment.

Clearly, there is a long history of thought leading up to the E.E.T. idea that it is the accumulation of ethical decision-making (towards the Eschaton) that is divinely recognised as time, not the arrow of chronological time as such. This also accords with the E.E.T. *creatio ex ethica* worldview (see section 1.06). Perhaps a period of calendar time which lacked ethical encounter and ethical decision-making would fail to leave any mark at all in the eternal divine history of this aeon?

In identifying a metaphor for universal ethical processes in *Genesis* 1:1-6, E.E.T. taps into a rich source of meaning that can assist interpretation all the way through the Bible. The E.E.T. hermeneutics does not conflict with the scientific story of origins but complements and contextualizes it. For science by itself is not suited to discover the primarily ethical purpose of space-time. Yet, once informed, in an integrated way, of this theological revelation, science could examines its own methods and data to see if this conforms to or conflicts with such a view. The E.E.T. methodology assists theology to establish its place as an indispensable inter-disciplinary partner. It would surely be an encouragement to biblical theologians to find they can contribute otherwise inaccessible contextualizing knowledge and even stimulate research in non-theological disciplines. In the terminology of George F. R. Ellis, as developed by Robert John Russell - theological research programs (TRPs) are able to influence scientific research programs (SRPs).

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493 NTW: 633.
inter-disciplinary fruitfulness. Without sustaining stimulation of useful new perspectives in diverse disciplines, any inter-disciplinary worldview becomes diminished.

4.13 Reconciling the biblical and the scientific accounts of anthropogenesis

Ancient historian and Egyptologist, David Rohl has provided us with a popular account of the New Chronology harmonization of archaeological science and the Old Testament texts. It has proved possible to re-interpret the texts in ways that are consonant with a scientific chronology, for example:

Adam appears on the scene at the end of the Neolithic Age (c. 5375 BC) when the archaeological record reveals the first signs of agriculture and the domestication of animals in the Middle East. A thousand years later, in the time of Enoch (the city builder), the earliest cities are being founded in the southern marshes of Mesopotamia. The ancient texts of this region then tell of a great flood and a hero who saves Mankind by building a ship in which to ride out the mighty storm. The story is set in the Late Ubaid period at around 3113 BC – the time of Wooley’s flood at Ur. Toward the end of the Uruk period (c. 2800 BC) the first ziggurat or tower-temple is erected in Eridu – the prototype upon which the legend of the biblical Tower of Babel is based.495

Precise, harmonizing chronologies are contentious, yet the general concept that a broad historical parallelism can be established between the biblical account and the archaeological record supports inter-disciplinary critical realism research. This is one way that the empirical and the revelational have found traction on one another.

However, the Ethical Encounter Theology biblical worldview starts much further back. In its cosmos the possibilities for evil are present from the start. There the goodness of all of creation resides in its suitability for resolving the problem of evil by encountering and exposing wrong ethics and so permitting just ethical dialysis. The biblical story of Adam and Eve’s transgression is taken to be a parable of the historical wrong ethics of humankind that (proleptically) corrupted our world from the start. For Christians, the Lamb slain from the creation of the world is taken to be God’s primeval answer to that cosmic ethical anthropic problem. This divine answer


to selfishness is a prolepsis of the historical event of the self-giving love of the perfect human being’s self-sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. E.E.T. describes our universe as a product of that encounter between the love of God and the human will to independence from God’s right ethics. Seen in another way, the world is the encounter of the perfect human being with humankind’s wilful ethical conflation. Interestingly, scientific evidence is accumulating to suggest our universe was programmed from the start for the evolution of carbon-based living organisms and even for conscious life, like human-beings. This is the anthropic cosmological principle. E.E.T. argues that traditional biblical theology and Theology/Science research find consonance in the concept of an anthropic universe suited to solve a cosmic ethical problem. This is a strong worldview position (see chapter 6 and sections 3.11, A.02 and A.09).

The story of Adam and Eve can be seen as symbolic of the sinfulfulness of humankind. Owing everything to God, life itself and even divine friendship, they create their own ethics, betray divine trust and become ethically-conflated and guilt-ridden. Their relationships with God, with nature, with each other and within themselves are ruined. This parable attributes the origin of moral evil to humankind’s rebellious independence from divine teaching. Then, because of human ethical conflation, the whole of creation has to work through a freely-choosing, ecollative resolution of ethical conflation. The author of Romans 5:12; 15-19 and the author of 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 recognize the devastation caused by humankind’s spurning of divine right ethical instruction. Biblically, the answer to the problem is recognized as the perfect act of divine self-givingness of Christ on the cross of Calvary. Problems arise when, as in Book XIII of Augustine’s Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans, the story of Adam and Eve is imagined to describe historic individuals, e.g.:

But human nature in him was so vitiated and altered, so that he experienced the rebellion and disobedience of desire in his body, and was bound by the necessity of dying; and he produced offspring in the same condition to which his fault and its punishment had reduced him, that is, liable to sin and death.  

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496 See dissertation paragraph S on page xxvi and also footnote 35.
This theory has largely conditioned dogmatics in the traditional Abrahamic faith communities and their associated schools of theology. Several different problems arise in today’s scientifically-informed world from this hermeneutic. It clashes with geo-chronology, anthropology, ethics, genetics, and philosophical theology. Yet, if Augustine of Hippo were alive today we can imagine him energetically re-exegeting the whole matter with regard to current solid scientific understanding.\footnote{See comments in paragraph 12 of dissertation section 2.11; also dissertation sections 1.15 and 1.16.}

In fact, the biggest revelational/empirical gap to divide traditional biblical theism from the contributions of Theology/Science research is the difference between dogmatic and scientific anthropologies. Lack of traction between the abundance of paleoanthropological evidence and conservative biblical theological solus Adamus anthropology can also generate a more general disregard for the inter-disciplinary value of biblical theology. It has always been clear that Ethical Encounter Theology has to address this thorny matter if it is to be able to claim to have provided a major scholarly contribution to inter-disciplinary consonance. Also the primal cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) of the E.E.T. hermeneutic cannot be developed properly without a cogent, or at least workable, theological anthropology.

It is an extremely well-known traditional, and even hallowed, view that all humans derive from Adam (here called solus Adamus anthropogenesis). This reading faces two main problems. Both a biblical textual comparison of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 and the accumulated scientific data concur in opposing the idea that all humans have derived from a single male. Traditional biblical solus Adamus anthropology depends on conflation of two different texts - that which refers to the first humans who were created, male and female in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1:24-31) and that which refers to the formation of the Adamic children of God, formed from the dust of the ground and God’s breath (Genesis 2:6-5:5). Unintentionally, theological problems were created by fusing separate texts into a single story. It is also a problem for perfect being theology if God breaches religious, cultural and biological sanctions against incest, as is required by Genesis 1 and 2 fusion-anthropogenesis.

The problem is in an over-simplification of the actual textual evidence that doctrinally defines Adam as the sole source of all H. sapiens’ DNA. With care, it is possible to
find a consonance between the frank ancient textual evidence and what current science has found about anthropogenesis. The evidence of paleoanthropology and that of a more holistic reading of the Genesis 1 and 2 texts concur in finding that the original hunter/gatherer peoples and original farmer/civic peoples had a common, sequentially separated genetic ancestry. This monogenetic dual sequential anthropogenesis resonates both with the distinctiveness of the two texts and with current scientific anthropology. It also accords with the overall E.E.T. model of reality. If this inter-disciplinary consonance is accepted it will be a major contribution to scholarship.

Traditionally, monotheistic theologies tend to ignore the hunter/gatherer, aboriginal First Peoples and focus entirely on the more recent history of the progress of the Adamic farmer/civic Second Peoples. This may have been done unconsciously by theological exegetes. Or it may have been with the intention of harmonizing Genesis with a particular interpretation of Pauline sin genetics based around Romans 5 and related New Testament atonement texts. However, such a method is not biblically theologically mandatory. There are other cogent ways of exegeting these New Testament texts. Literalism is not essential, in view of the fact that the style of many key texts in the Pauline corpus is generally acknowledged to often be metaphorical. The powerful influence of social conditioning has also to be considered. There may have been cultural expedients (both doctrinal and political) to write the First Peoples out of the equation. That might also have contributed to an increased propagation of a perception of a Pauline sin genetics theory that appeared to confirm solus Adamus anthropology.

499 The last sentence of David N. Livingstone’s book Adam’s Ancestors: Race, Religion and the Politics of Human Origins (Baltimore, John Hopkins, 2008), appeals for more writers: “to champion the cause of those on the receiving end of the vilification meted out by these self-appointed heirs of adamic man.” The ethical encounter theory of this thesis has necessitated a re-visiting of the biblical textual basis of the popular but problematic solus Adamus anthropology. The early results of this exploration go some way to answer David Livingston’s desire to see a truthful theological anthropology emerge; one that exposes the “pitiless horror” and “ghastly vigor” of farmer/civic oppression of hunter/gatherers. A capacity to irenically address this major issue is one of the benefits of a tripartite biblical theology—Theology/Science—ethics worldview.

500 This is especially so in the light of Ezekiel chapter 18.

501 The misuses of the idea of polygenic anthropogenesis have been addressed by David N. Livingstone - reference at dissertation footnote 148.
Certainly, empire-builders after Augustine seem to have had no hesitation in ignoring the existence and human significance of the First Peoples. Accidentally or deliberately, hunter/gatherer peoples have been rendered socially and theologically invisible. Perhaps the First Peoples were always a puzzle and a nuisance or even a non-people in the eyes of aggressively expanding farmer/civic Second Peoples. As far as most farmer/civics were concerned, civilization is everything. This cultural attitude may have fed the sociological roots of that 19th century natural-selectionism (with reverberations in the following two centuries) which unreflectively accepted the inevitable genocide of the “lower races” by the “higher civilized races” as their traditional lands were occupied.502

Wolfhart Pannenberg gives a thoughtful theological analysis of what it is to be a human being. Whilst much of what he says is applicable to both hunter/gatherers and farmer/civics, the substance of his research (as with other theological leaders) has a flavour of, “civilization is the true expression of humanness”:

Man does not transcend himself only in his environment and from its resources. He does not only transform his milieu by appropriating it as his own. He is also capable of methodically changing his world, in order to alter the conditions of his own existence. That presupposes first that man is able to conceive the phenomena of his world as they actually are and not only in relation to his drive-governed wishes. Man can ‘empathize’ materially with things distinct from himself in a way open to no other creature. The second presupposition of the methodical transformation of the world by human activity is that man is capable of projecting a future different from his present. That makes him master of his present. Both aspects depend on the even more basic presupposition that man can take up a position beyond himself and so to speak study himself from that vantage-point. In other words, he has ability to reflect. The reflective human consciousness emphatically illustrates the specifically human form of existence beyond oneself. Precisely because he is beyond himself, man is himself.503

503 Pannenberg, W. (1977): 36 - reference at dissertation footnote 3. More startling still, the recent proposition that the original, Adamic, farmer/civics were given souls by God and thus became the first truly human hominids, about 10,000 years ago. That this implies the Australian Aboriginal peoples and other ancient lines of hunter-gatherer peoples are not human seems to have escaped the attention of the eminent editor and author: Robert S. White (2005). Truth in the Geological Sciences. Can We Be Sure About Anything? Science, Faith and Postmodernism. Edited by D. Alexander. Leicester, Apollos: 210-211. Even such a socially-conscious publication as New Scientist still blunders in this area. In an article about fossil footprints on 7th March 2009 (page 10) it is indicated that Homo sapiens originated 10,000 years ago! This information is then attributed to nothing less than the leading American general science journal (Science 332:1197). The reasons for an apparent scientific (and theological) blindness...
In addressing this definition of what it is to be human, it has to be admitted that most hunter/gatherer societies do not manifest a strong drive to transform their milieu. They greatly value it for what it is and feel a sacred responsibility to preserve and protect it. The link between the natural environment and their own lives is particularly strongly felt. This is in no way a “lower” form of humanness.

Aboriginal people were comfortable with their environment and felt a spiritual unity with it. This can be summarized as: “We do not exploit country, we deeply relate to it and care for it!” It is feasible that all the original First Peoples did not intrinsically value a future different from the present but venerated the balanced way of living and relating that they inherited for so many millennia. This, and many other factors, genuinely differentiated them from the “ever-onward” ambitions of the farmer/civic Second People’s (illustrated by Wolfhart Pannenberg, above). He, unintentionally, has largely excluded hunter/gatherers and their ancient way of relating to nature from his description of humanness. This is a most serious omission that should stimulate reflection on the possible negative ramifications within traditional Christian theology of its current inheritance of a narrowly interpreted Pauline/Augustinian, solus Adamus anthropology. The societal moral leadership roles that churches are still generally expected to provide makes this matter even more pressing.

Prehistorian and ethnologist Richard Rudgley has made a passionate attempt to restore the visibility of prehistoric peoples:

Bringing together for the first time disparate evidence from the fields of archaeology, ancient history and anthropology, Richard Rudgley shows that the achievements, inventions and discoveries of prehistoric times have all but been edited out of popular accounts of the human story. The rise of civilization 5,000 years ago has often been portrayed as if it were somehow created out of nothing, but the author describes how the explorers of the Stone Age discovered all the world’s major land masses, how writing can be traced back via Neolithic systems of accounting to its Palaeolithic origins, and how mathematical and astronomical science and technological and industrial activities such as tool-making, mining and pyrotechnics all date back to the Stone Age, as do many significant medical practices towards almost 100,000 years of H. sapiens cultural riches itself deserves to be researched (see footnotes 471 and 499).

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including cranial surgery. *Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age* brings into question many assumptions about our own cultural superiority, and argues that prehistoric life was in many ways more advanced than our own.505

In his book many examples are given of the academic obstacles set up by the guardians of traditional anthropological doctrines. Established time-lines for the introduction of technical innovations are often used as the criteria to accept or reject new discoveries. Richard Rudgley’s book argues for a much earlier invention of many of the artefacts of human pre-history. First People cultures (focussed on human and ecological relationships not on money or possessions) have occupied the earth much longer than Second People cultures. This should not be ignored.

Again, science writer Colin Tudge gives an account of the evidence for the extremely ancient origins of much that we accept as specifically human:

I want to tell the story of human beings beginning at the beginning, around 5 million years ago. I also want to put that history into perspective, by showing what went before it and why our own history began in the first place. The past 2,000 years of conventional history are effectively the present. The past 40,000 years, when our own species truly got into its stride, is only yesterday. The 5 million years that are the main focus of this book are: “the day before yesterday”.506

That is all in stark contrast with a conservative tradition of *solus Adamus* biblical exegesis that depends on all *H. sapiens* descending from Adam, who lived a few millennia ago. In this matter, Ethical Encounter Theology raises serious and significant questions that will have to be adequately addressed for the sake of the integrity of theological anthropological scholarship. This is a major issue.

The point raised in this dissertation is that it is actually a doctrinal anthropogenesis rather than a biblical anthropogenesis *per se* that has now been found wanting by paleoanthropological discoveries. As an inter-disciplinary partner, biblical theology would lose all credibility if it seriously advocated that every *Homo sapiens* has descended from a single male who lived about 10,000 years ago. That doctrine of anthropogenesis is entirely contrary to some of the strongest scientific evidence ever

discovered. Recognisably modern human remains are consistently present in archaeological strata going back about 100,000 years; and related forms go back several million years. For the sake of inter-disciplinary consonance, E.E.T. questions: Does this have to clash with the Bible texts? Are we biblical theologians not disrespecting the texts by assuming the writer/redactor of *Genesis* chapters 1 and 2 saw nothing strange in repeating the story of human creation? *Genesis* has no other examples of such gross reiteration. Is there not an ethical resolution? The explorations of E.E.T. support a strong alternative approach. Informed scientists would immediately perceive the two *Genesis* accounts as textual evidence of their author consciously referring to the prior origins of hunter/gather peoples and then, the much more recent and specialized origins of the farmer/civic peoples. Always trying to make scientific facts harmonious with the biblical texts can be a futile exercise. However, the E.E.T. hermeneutics are strengthened and heuristic riches flow from textually coherent interpretations of monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis.

For example, the close textual attention paid to Adam and Eve and their line of offspring could readily be interpreted as the *Genesis* author’s perception of a requirement for new inputs of divine wisdom to advance any living species (an important E.E.T. eu-ecollation concept, with major worldview consequences). The very painful outcome for the Adamics, illustrated in *Genesis* 3 and 4 seems like a diagnosis of the causes of the chequered history of farmer/civic peoples up to the time of Moses or later. As a group their history is marked by lying and cheating, conflict and stealing, militarism, slavery, war, and a pervading fear of and harm of one another. The history of wrong ethics, war and genocidal behaviour by Second Peoples has exceeded the more regulated, lower-level violence recorded from many pure First People’s cultures. From an ethical perspective, the more personal and ecologically-balanced lives of unmixed First People’s makes them, in E.E.T. terms, superior. Interestingly, many of the biblically reported recommendations of Christ for human behaviour could be interpreted to refer more to hunter/gatherer ethical norms rather than farmer/civic mores. That suggests a need for research on the distribution of hunter/gatherers at the time of Jesus Christ and on any evidence of the ethics of these

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“invisible people” having influenced the teachings of the Christ and John the Baptist, for example (see page 221).

How much did the authors of the Bible know about hunter/gatherers? It seems unlikely that Abram, Moses, David, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus of Nazareth (among many other biblical persons) would never have had contact with local Aborigines, in the wilderness; even receiving help from them on occasions, perhaps. They could have been aware of the First People’s lifestyle, social values and ability to thrive without agriculture or cities; and with a minimum of possessions. The textual evidence supports the idea that the life-style of John the Baptizer and Jesus Christ (reported from their years of ministry) have characteristics of First People ways. This is by no means an alien idea to some Australian Aboriginal Christians. They are alert to the marked differences between their traditional values and the lifestyle and morality of the European farmer/civic peoples who began to settle in their land from 1789 onwards. This suggests there could be an ironic side to European colonists trying to share their culture’s concept of Gospel values with the First Peoples.508

Judith Wright McKinney describes the observations of one of her early nineteenth century settler ancestors:

At all events, when later Governor Gipps issued a questionnaire to the landholders as to how Aborigines might be persuaded to work the labouring hoe on their holdings, he much annoyed the propounders of the question by his replies: ‘Two hours spent in catching an opossum or in fishing will supply them with all they want for a day, why then should they vex themselves with the drudgery of labour? They are not fools, they are not labourers at all, and for the same reason that any gentleman is not, viz. that he can live without labour.’ He characterized them as philosophers, who: ‘realize the philosophy that Diogenes only dreamt of, yet are not Cynics rather Gymnososophists’. This implied that they were teachers of wisdom who did not indulge in warfare or the pursuit of profit, had no need of government and so were free of fear and guilt, and lived a life of; ‘discipline within nature’. This was an intelligent judgment and remains so to this day.509

This is valuable as a first-hand account of a relatively recent encounter between Second People farmer/civic (Adamic) colonizers and the original First People

508 Texts such as James 2:13-26 support the need for believers to only preach that by which they live.
indigenous hunter/gatherers. The E.E.T. approach to biblical anthropogenesis takes such local interactions to reiterate a ten millennia long, world-wide, human cultural collision phenomenon. The particular genome of Aboriginal peoples would have acquired new single nucleotide polymorphisms (see section 4.07) from farmer/civics, though the rate of intermarriage and genetic exchange between the First Peoples and farmer/civics must have varied from place to place. Hunter/gatherer lifestyles seem to have been based on freely-chosen, cultural-ethical decisions, irrespective of genetic lineage factors. The present continuing threat of nuclear bomb and biological weapon attacks and the global ecological crisis provoke a philosophical questioning of the meaning of “progress”. It suggests the area of First People cultural ethics is worthy of fresh attention. The E.E.T. perspective on anthropogenesis suggests that there may be some interesting possibilities for cooperative research between biblical theologians, anthropologists, ethnologists, Aboriginal historians, human geneticists, and biological community ecologists. It appears, at least on the evidence to hand, that First Peoples more often behaved in accord with divine right ethics than did Second Peoples. Their’s would be what has been called authentic good. However, the continuous commissioning of wrong ethical abuses by Second People societies would, unhappily, have to be classified as expedient good.

Biblical theologian, Graeme Goldsworthy, out of the context of a traditional solus Adamus theological anthropogenesis, still has some trenchant observations on the abundant biblical evidence for what E.E.T. would call the conflated ethics of the Adamic farmer/civics. He also offers sterling advice on the key criterion for genuine improvements in biblical interpretation:

After the fall, developments in the godless line of Cain (Genesis 4) show the potential for culture to be an expression of rebellion against God. The city which has its beginnings with Cain and Nimrod, will continue to be a prime expression of godlessness throughout Scripture, for example Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh’s city, Jericho and Babylon (see Jacques Ellul - 1970 - The Meaning of the City. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans). The latter becomes the symbol of all urban godlessness which must be overthrown before the city of God replaces it. The motif of Babylon versus Jerusalem warns against cultural adaptation that amounts to assimilation. We need to consider in what way a concrete reality such as Jerusalem is transformed in the process of revelation. The hermeneutic methods

510 See dissertation section 7.04 for definitions of authentic good and evil, and expedient good and evil.
of literalism impose a very rigid no-go zone on the whole process of contextualization. Form and content are perceived to be static in the biblical story. This is a fundamental error (literalism follows a sound instinct in resisting the separation of form and meaning, but it fails in not allowing for the actual transformations that occur in Scripture). Transformations do occur in form and meaning, but they are always towards the Gospel-based redeemed culture of the Eschaton. Jerusalem renewed, as in Revelation 21-22, is the norm of the redeemed culture for humankind.\footnote{Goldsworthy, G. (2006). Gospel-Centred Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles. Nottingham, Apollos: 282.}

This accords with E.E.T. and suggests Theology/Science researchers might discover unexpected riches of interpretation among the academy of biblical theologians. Among the many biblical texts that are unfavourable towards cities,\footnote{E.g., Exodus chapters 7-11; and Ezekiel chapter 28. Revelation chapters 17-19 condemns civic and commercial pride and profanity; at 12:8 it demeans worldly Jerusalem as a ‘Sodom’ and an ‘Egypt’.} some pericopae from Psalm 55 speak especially poignantly:

- I would flee far away and stay in the desert (verse 7)
- for I see the violence and strife in the city. (verse 9b)
- Day and night they prowl about on its walls;
- malice and abuse are within it. (verse 10)
- Destructive forces are at work in the city;
- Threats and lies never leave its streets. (verse 11)

The contrast between humans depicted in Genesis 1 and in Genesis 2-4 is understood in this dissertation to reflect a real observation by the author/redactor. Biblical and sociological evidence suggest that ethical conflation is implicit in Adamic farmer/civic cultures because they habitually make up their own ethical standards of convenience. However, in the context of expedient good (that is processes that increase binary ethical apocalypsis and speed the Eschaton), farmer/civic wrong-ethical actualizations are not eternally unfruitful\footnote{As mentioned, a definition of expedient good and evil is provided in dissertation section \textit{7.04}.}. Free, wrong ethical choices by the Adamics have accelerated actualization of what is concealed in the ethical conflation of the unseen realities of space-time (the u.r.s.t). Can Second People cultures be shown to be more prone, for a variety of reasons, to “eat the fruit” of conflated right and wrong ethics? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17) is absent in Genesis 1 and in New Testament accounts of the right ethical aeon-to-come.\footnote{Revelation 22:2.}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{E.g., Exodus chapters 7-11; and Ezekiel chapter 28. Revelation chapters 17-19 condemns civic and commercial pride and profanity; at 12:8 it demeans worldly Jerusalem as a ‘Sodom’ and an ‘Egypt’.}
  \item \footnote{As mentioned, a definition of expedient good and evil is provided in dissertation section \textit{7.04}.}
  \item \footnote{Revelation 22:2.}
\end{itemize}}
ethical double-mindedness (that is ethical conflation) as a process. Jesus Christ is reported by all four Gospel writers to be severe on those who live by ethically-confuted double standards (e.g. they are nice-looking tombs, full of decay – *Matthew 23:27*). This is especially meaningful in E.E.T., where our world is observed to have been made exactly for the divine purpose of resolving ethical conflation, proleptically recognized as constitutive of human history. Some texts depict the conflation between good and evil to be as iniquitous as undiluted evil (*vide* the divine vomiting-out of the ethically lukewarm in *Revelation 3:14-16*). Consistent condemnation of lying, deceitfulness and hypocrisy are related *New Testament* themes.\footnote{E.g., *John 8:44; Revelation 21:8; 22:15*. This can be cross-referenced to the threat posed to scientific progress by scientific frauds, referred to in e.g. dissertation section 2.08.}

Monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis has some interesting consequences. *Genesis 1* peoples (created in God’s image and likeness) are identified as the First Peoples, the aboriginal hunter/gatherers. For tens of millennia they were the only people on the Earth. Paleoanthropological evidence suggests these ancestors of ours spread to all major land masses. Once the Adamics differentiated from them everything changed. From being the only human beings the hunter/gatherers now had to learn to become invisible.\footnote{Out of the many documented accounts, the following are sufficient to make matters clear: Blomfield, G. (1992). *Baal Belbora: The End of the Dancing*. Armidale, Colonial Research Society. Simon, E. (1987). *Through My Eyes*. Blackburn, Victoria, Collins. Reynolds, H. (1998). *This Whispering in Our Hearts*. St Leonard’s: Allen and Unwin. Reynolds, H. (1999). *Why Weren’t We Told?: A Personal Search for the Truth About Our History*. Ringwood, Victoria, Viking.} The farmer/civics’ crops and flocks, their wood-gathering, their weapons and regimentation, their slave-making and their commerce and city building relentlessly arrogated ancestral environments that the hunter/gatherers were wedded to. To understand this very painful process (that may have begun in Mesopotamia about 8,000 BC) we can turn to a much more recent and local account of the impact of European settlers on Australian Aboriginal people:

> Government files around this time [mid-1850’s] contain a wealth of suggestions for the accommodation and normalization of Aboriginal presence in the “occupied” areas. One correspondent writing in 1864 maintained that missions failed because educated children had little option but to return to families already struggling with destitution and disease on marginal pockets of land. He argued that the annexation of hunting grounds, deprival of food, and restriction of
liberty of the Aboriginal inhabitants: “. . . does not comply with the ideas of British justice nor with religious precepts.”

In contrast to the frequently barbaric treatment that occupying Second Peoples meted out to Aboriginal First Peoples the colonists were often treated with human kindness. The conclusion of Thomas Pamphlet’s account of his hospitable treatment by the local people, when he and two companions were ship-wrecked at Morton Bay in 1823 reveals a more virtuous human ethics:

upwards of 8 months had elapsed since I left Sydney: consequently, I had spent nearly 5 of them with these hospitable natives of Moreton Bay. Their behaviour to me and my companions had been so invariably kind and generous, that notwithstanding the delight I felt at the idea of once more returning to my home, I did not leave them without sincere regret.

Whilst there are some contrary records, many similar discrepancies in inter-cultural ethics are widely evidenced. This can, even today, bring a blush of embarrassment to the face of someone who realizes their forebears succeeded through unethical dealings with peoples whose lives were largely ruled, even in biblical terms, by right ethics. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation but it would be valuable to have a comparison between whatever can be found out about the range of pre-biblical ethical values of First Peoples with the sources of Old Testament and New Testament ethics (see page 216).

Apart from identifying possible references to First Peoples in Genesis 1 and 4, the research of this dissertation indicates they are alluded to again in Genesis 6. This traditionally problematic text could be read in the context of interacting First and Second People cultures, at about ten millennia ago. The highly socially co-ordinated, mobile, technically and militarily sophisticated, and dominating farmer/civics are likely to have seized innocent hunter/gatherers for wives (possibly by enslavement).


Biblically ethically, this would have involved a serious infringement of God’s provision for the First Peoples of *Genesis* 1. The evidence does not conflict with the biblical (*Genesis* 1:28) accounts of First Peoples having been divinely blessed - eating leaves and fruits and nuts, and multiplying to fill \(^519\) and look after the earth, and manage the fish, birds and land animals. They spread through the world many millennia before the farmer/civic Second Peoples differentiated. Biblically, the Adamics are shown to have corrupted themselves before God (*Genesis* 3:1–6:17). No such alienation from God is biblically indicated for the *Genesis* 1 peoples, prior to the impact of the farmer/civics.

In connection with the above, there are two well-known, vexing biblical exegetical questions: From where did Cain obtain his wife (*Genesis* 4:17)? And, who were the people he feared would punish him as a murderer (*Genesis* 4:14)? These difficulties dissolve in the context of a world already populated by ancestral hunter/gatherers. Also, as mentioned, the mysterious account at *Genesis* 6:1-7 may be a reflection of the author’s perception of a divine negative reaction to: “the sons of God” misusing “the daughters of men”. For example, a perceived despoiling of the innocence of the First Peoples may explain the original author’s perception of a sufficient cause for spectacular divine retribution, in the form of the rise in sea level that is likely to have destroyed many centres of Adamic civilization in coastal cities and towns.\(^520\) The E.E.T. analysis affords these difficult verses some traction with historically known events and sociological science, rather than leaving them unconnected and so available for all manner of speculation. This is another example of the effectiveness of the ethical consonance (tripartite monism) methodology for bridging the gaps between traditional biblically-based theology and contemporary Theology/Science interests.

Science has much more on the early history of *H. sapiens*. For example, Henry Harpending and Elise Eller have summarized some genetic and other related data:

> It is widely accepted (but not necessarily true) that modern humans appeared in Africa and expanded from this homeland within the last 100,000 or so years. While the northern branch is readily apparent in

\(^{519}\) Not over-filling, because every environment has its own carrying capacity - fullness is time and situation specific, requiring just and balanced judgment by local people.

\(^{520}\) See dissertation section 4.03 for the scientific background to such catastrophes.
the archaeological record of Europe and west Asia, the early appearance of humans in Australia at 40,000 to 50,000 years ago suggest that there was a southern branch of the human exodus that roughly followed the Indian Ocean coast. The hypothesis of a southern branch receives support from the distribution of language macro-families in the Old World and from the presence of modern humans in Tasmania. This island had been separated from Australia for thousands of years before the other candidate for the peopling of Australia, the event 5,000 years ago when dogs and microliths appeared and population increased by roughly a factor of ten. The surprising implication of the model of a separate southern branch is that ‘Mode 4’ technologies – fancy blade tools and worked bone – are not a distinct signature of new human cognitive capacities but mere signs of male leisure in a new rather empty ecosystem.\(^{521}\)

Some ancient hunter-gatherer cultures have proved to be extraordinarily robust. They demonstrate this by having continued for thousands of years, often whilst severely pressured by the evolving agricultural and city-building expansions of farmer/civics. This has been in spite of exchanges of genes between the two main cultural types of humans. Harpending and Eller (op. cit.) point out that cultural factors - such as language and socially-selected external appearance - “resist” the effects of gene immigration”. Cultural sophisticated habits such as particular methods of hunting and gathering have resisted the challenge of incoming genes,\(^{522}\) and cultural education has over-ridden farmer/civic contributions to hunter/gatherer people’s genomes (see section 4.10 on evolution by “behavioural leading”).

It might be a surprise to find an inherent resistance to the benefits of civilization. This can be seen to be a strong effect because only in recent times have the remaining hunter/gatherers’ life-styles been threatened with extinction. It is noteworthy that this impending extinction is not so much a result of persuading them of a superior culture. It is largely because the Adamic population explosion and wide-scale exploitation of the environment has compromised the last marginal ecosystems able to support a hunter-gatherer life-style. Around the world, the remaining communities of

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522 Though there may be some preliminary evidence for genes that are associated with the hunting and gathering way of life, e.g. BMC Evolutionary Biology. (2008). 8:173.
indigenous hunter/gatherers tenaciously believe their ways have advantages and are worthy of preservation against immense pressures from most of the farmer/civics.\textsuperscript{523}

From the E.E.T. perspective, it is an advance in interpretation to recognize the lengthy \textit{Genesis} account of the Great Flood as most likely representing the biblical author’s perception of a just punishment visited on farmer/civics because of their corruption of the hunter/gatherers. Allowing ethics to mediate between science and theology can be heuristically productive. The E.E.T. approach is able to place the biblical stories of the primordial events of human history in an ethical context. There may be other difficult inter-disciplinary issues where the interpretive value of ethics could enable biblical theology to converse more fluently with the empirical observations of science. In that the methods of E.E.T. depend on perfect being theism and biblical virtue ethics, this may surprise some Theology/Science researchers. However, as this dissertation attempts to show, bridges can be built between biblical theology and Theology/Science studies through the E.E.T. understanding that God is perfect and that divine encounters are always conditioned by right ethical factors.

A biblically-based, monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis can be argued to be more logically coherent and to have more scientific support than the traditional \textit{solus Adamus} exegesis. It also honours the author’s distinct textual separation and thus credits the writer/redactor of \textit{Genesis} 1 and 2 with accurate observations and honesty in recognizing a need to explain the sequential origins of the First and the Second people cultures of that time. Recent science has shown that ten millennia of interaction have allowed an almost unrestricted exchange of genes. Surprisingly, it has been cultural selection not genetic inheritance that has conserved distinct morphological features and language identity. For example, the Khoi-San of southern Africa who are easy to recognise from their facial and bodily features and their behavioural and language distinctives appear genetically as just another African population (Harpending and Eller \textit{op. cit.}). Unrestricted mixing of hunter/gatherer and farmer/civic genomes is also likely to have occurred in other countries. Questions arise as to what part this has played in the differentiation of the range of human types. What mixtures of hunter/gatherer-selected and farmer/civic-selected genes are found

\textsuperscript{523} The early Australian story of Bennelong and Governor Phillips was a dramatic demonstration of the capacity of First Peoples to readily master the sophistications of Second People’s culture.
in the different strains of Asians, Europeans and Africans? How do the few, culturally-distinctive selected genes of each interact with the major, naturally-selected part of their genomes? What is the profile of the ethical exchange between First and Second people and their cultures? The theory of E.E.T. provokes such questions.

Ethical Encounter Theology hypothesizes a biblically-derived, ethically-laden, monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis. This hermeneutics obtains traction with a foundational part of anthropological science and raises research questions. Wherever a theology research program stimulates a scientific research program, creative mutual interactions are especially enlivened (for terminology see section 4.12). The original scholarly contributions of this dissertation have raised important questions that will need to be addressed.

To the question: “Why is there no further reference, beyond Genesis 6, to the First People in the Bible?” E.E.T. speculates that this is because after that the Bible texts are entirely focussed on Adamic conflated ethics and the divine work of exposing them through binary ethical apocalypsis. Technical reasons contribute, in that the thousands of nations of hunter/gatherers, with their rich oral cultures, have left few written records. They have also had to specialize in being inconspicuous, so as to simply survive on the margins of aggressively expanding farmer/civic populations. A special Christian perspective of E.E.T. perceives Jesus of Nazareth completing the work that the eponymous Adamic founders of farmer/civic culture failed to do, in opening a way for all people’s to gain access to the perfect divine view of reality. Further, in answer to the question: “What about the importance sometimes given to objective, genetic lineages in the Bible?” It is possible to see it as a human interest that was set divinely aside, as in a report of Christ’s correctional teaching:

I tell you that out of these stones
God can raise up children for Abraham.

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524 See, e.g. John H. Sailhammer’s discussion of the narrative typology of Genesis in the context of the whole Pentateuch, as reflecting the author’s hermeneutic. In this hermeneutics Sailhammer discerns consistent interpretation of past and current events as pointers to future events; a form of biblical, temporal monism. Sailhammer, J. (1990): 7-10 - reference at dissertation footnote 131.

525 Matthew 3:9b; see also, Matthew 11:11. The Gospels show Jesus as having more interest in the functional ethical identity of a person than in their biological inheritance, e.g.: Matthew 17:9-13; Mark 9:11-13. Also see Luke 1:17, where the work of John the Baptist is significantly described to be: “in the spirit and the power of Elijah.”
A person’s identity and affiliation is said to derive from each one’s core values and behaviour; that is from their response to divine ethical encounters, not from their complement of inherited genes. Perfect being theism implies that all right ethics results from a person’s responses to divine teaching. For example, goodness, wisdom, and love and all good gifts flow (knowingly or unknowingly) from a right relationship with God. Humble obedience to God is the major way to eu-ecollate.526

If the Adam of Genesis 2 was intended to exemplify a second, special modification of human kind (such as science has defined), formed by God for a new purpose, this opens up some theological possibilities. Adam is referred to by the author of Romans as: “a type of the one who was to come”, that is of the Christ.527 The E.E.T. hermeneutic allows us to ask: “If Adam was created to be a Christ, who was he to be sent to serve and die for? Who was Adam to heal, deliver and tell that the kingdom of God is at hand? What works of the devil was he manifested to destroy? Where was he to find his apostles? From what peoples was his church to be formed? A theologically coherent and scientifically feasible response might be that Adam (as a type of Christ) was to go to the First Peoples - the various groups of hunter/gatherers who had long ago filled the earth. Adam is described as created from soil, the basic world material but transformed by the breath of God (Genesis 2:7). This is, theologically formally at least, the same process described in an account of the conception of Jesus.528 The human Mary (“for dust you are”529) was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit of God.530 Jesus is to be called both “the Son of Man” (i.e. the perfect human being TS) - and “the Son of God” - a name the Bible also bestows on Adam.531 Whilst it may have contentious aspects, this is a significant new contribution to biblical theological thought and the opportunities for further research that this view offers are clear.

526 “Ecollation” is a multi-purpose descriptor that can also be used to describe processes, such as: the condensation of matter after the Big Bang, or a new biological species filling an ecological niche, or applied to ethical eu-ecollation, mis-ecollation and dis-ecollation. Ecollatory complexifications will be as vulnerable to natural selection as novelties that become actualized through the standard evolutionary means. The basic philosophical concept is that our universe has not been expanding on an informational tabula rasa.
527 Romans 5:14b NRSV.
528 Luke 1:35.
529 Genesis 3:19b.
530 Luke 1:35.
Ethical Encounter Theology provides a new perspective on some complex social anthropological circumstances. A number of texts refer to the origin of the nations (e.g. *Genesis* 9:19; 10:32b; 11:8a, 9b; *Acts* 17:26). In E.E.T. reading these refer to the global extension of farmer/civics, after the Flood and after Babel. They do not refer to the pre-existing *Genesis* 1:28 populating of the world by hunter/gatherer peoples. Again, in regard to *Romans* 5 – the severity of the sin of Adam can be exegeted as not just his failure to obey God but his resultant incapacity to go to the existing First People nations as the first type of Christ. As a consequence all the hunter/gatherers, all the Adamics, and all of their mixed lineages were un-evangelized (at least biblically formally). Biblically, they were left in their sins and subject to death (had no access to the divine pathway of eternal life) until the Second Adam, Jesus Christ appeared. This surprising new interpretation is at least biblically feasible and scientifically coherent. In short, it fits with the facts as we know them.

Something of the same understanding is conveyed in the deeply moving confession of Jewish leader Arni Klein, at the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People at Monte Ohia in New Zealand in 1996:

> I need to come on behalf of my people and ask your forgiveness, because we did not fulfil our calling to the nations. We were entrusted with the word of God and were called to be a light to the nations. I’m sorry for what my forefathers did with the trust God gave us, for we bear upon ourselves the weight of that. Please forgive us. We had the tools in our hands to penetrate the darkness and open up the heavens and we didn’t do it. All that has happened to indigenous peoples has come out of this great darkness that perhaps we were able to change. So I repent to you, the nations of the world, for our sin, our disobedience and our rebellion. Please forgive us.

> The response came from those indigenous people present:  
> “We forgive you!”

4.14 Summary

In this chapter the high value of science has been recognized together with its amazing major discovery, concerning the extreme liminality and contingency of our
universe that makes human life so vulnerable. Unsuitability of the sciences to say what is “really real”, the ground of being, is contrasted with the strength of the ethical Encounter Theology perspective. The current scholarly attempt to build consonances through dialogue between Theology and Science is discussed. The relationship between evolutionary theory and the newly proposed ecollation theory is described and illustrated through a discussion of neurobiology and biological speciation. The difference between chronological time and ethical time is outlined. A major scholarly contribution to reconciling biblical and scientific anthropology is adduced. In these endeavors the dissertation focuses on methods that provide stronger consonances between traditional biblical theist philosophy and the recent interests of the Theology/Science academy.

The next chapter takes us into regions of reality where the usual methods of theological and scientific research are stretched to their limits.
Chapter 5 – Exploring the idea of an unseen ecology

5.01 Introduction
The core of the Ethical Encounter Theology method has been described in chapters 1 through 4. These chapters have presented the main evidence and arguments for the ethical cosmogenesis consonance that is developed between traditional biblical theism and Theology/Science specifics. Chapters 5 through 7 will build on that by exploring various issues that arise from the E.E.T. worldview, particularly the way seen and unseen realities are articulated and the harmonizing benefits of a tripartite ethical mediation between science and traditional biblical theology.

The E.E.T. worldview depends on the development of a biblical interpretation that claims our universe is composed of visible/tangible and invisible/intangible moieties and that it has been like that from the start (e.g. Genesis 1:2 and 3; 1 Kings 19:11-13; Psalm 102:25-27; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 6:6; 6:18; John 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; Colossians 1:15-16; 1 Peter 1:20; 3:22; 2 Peter 1:4). In the same connection, the author of the book of Revelation depicts visions of unseeable but complex and influential realities by analogizing them to familiar visible objects.533 It is common for worldviews to dualistically divide the seen and the unseen into entirely separate realities (such as physical and spiritual). However, the E.E.T. method treats them as two parts of the same reality, compounded by a single divine ethical purpose.534 The seen and the unseen moieties of our universe are taken to have been inseparably entangled since their ex ethica creation from a monad or singularity.535

533 Traditional biblical theology describes aspects of reality that are normally invisible and intangible in this aeon but that are part of visible and tangible reality in the perfect aeon-to-come.
534 See discussion of compound monism in dissertation sections 1.08, 1.09, 1.10, 2.10, 3.12, etc.
535 This factor has to be taken into account in both objective and subjective thinking (see section 2.01).
Methodological issues, such as a requirement to balance critical realist methods with real-idealistic methods, have been discussed in sections 2.01, 2.02, and 2.03. It is noteworthy that some previously unseen parts of the universe have been made visible by optical and experimental methods (see section 4.04). Science specializes in opening access to apparently inaccessible objects and processes. Some major unseen entities (like Physics’ dark energy and dark matter)\textsuperscript{536} may yet be visualized. However, many unseens are ontologically inaccessible, other than in the metaphors and analogies of human imagination. Fundamental physical things, like the weak and the strong atomic forces, gravitation and the electromagnetic force; plus ethical qualities, like divine love and wisdom, and right and wrong ethical potentials, for example, must all be termed unseeable. E.E.T. argues that this unseen ecology of our world originated with the primal creation encounter between divine love and the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.). The influences of the embracing matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e. or Kingdom of God) is biblically within and close but not seen. Then, the unseen realities of space-time (the u.r.s.t.) represent the persistent residues of the singularity of selfishness. The multi-faceted unseen ecology of our world has diverse potentials, able to transform emergent physical complexifications and to offer choices to inform the emergent ethical apocalypses that accompany them.

5.02 Cultural conditioning of our perceptions of the unseen

Appreciation of the unseen part of reality varies between cultures. For example, when Christianity spread from country to country, many new theological issues arose. The original Jewish vehicle sequentially invaded Greek, Roman and Northern-European cultures. Christians of those cultures elaborated biblical understanding in ways unforeseen by the Jewish Apostles. Similarly, in our times, many new theological issues arise from the interactions of Christianity with, for example, African and Asian cultures. Christians are now more numerous in those cultures than in Europe and America. From a wide experience of intercultural religious studies, Andrew F. Walls, comments:

Africa is already revealing the limitations of theology as generally taught in the West. The truth is that Western models of theology are too small for Africa. Most of them reflect the worldview of the Enlightenment, and that is a small scale worldview, one cut and

\textsuperscript{536} See dissertation section 1.10 for comments on dark energy and dark matter.
shaved to fit a small-scale universe. Since most Africans live in a larger, more populated universe, with entities that are outside the Enlightenment worldview, such models of theology cannot cope with some of the most urgent pastoral needs. They have no answers for some of the most desolating aspects of life – because they have no questions. They have nothing useful to say on issues involving such things as witchcraft or sorcery, since these do not exist in an Enlightenment universe. Nor can Western theology usefully discuss ancestors, since the West does not have family structures that raise the questions. Western theology has difficulty coping with principalities and powers, whether in their relation to their grip on the universe or to Christ’s triumph over them on the cross. The reason is that is hard for Western consciousness to treat them as other than abstractions. So Western theology has difficulty in relating personal sin and guilt and structural and systemic evil and sometimes offers different gospels for dealing with each or quarrels as to which has priority. Perhaps Africa, which knows so much about systemic evil and where the principalities and powers are not a strange concept, may open the way to a more developed theology of evil.

The rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the West may redress this imbalance to some extent. Among Pentecostal Christians of many cultures there is often an emphasis on biblical texts referring to unseeable spirits (for inter-disciplinary reasons, in E.E.T. spiritual factors are generally interpreted as right and wrong ethical potentials) considered to be able to influence empirical events only when freely chosen by humans. These influences could then make a quantifiable difference to history.

In Australia a related issue arises, to do with Christianity’s relatively recent interactions with ancient Aboriginal cultures. Indigenous worldviews are more richly populated with unseeen influences than the imported Western worldview of Enlightenment-encultured Christianity. From the biblical theological viewpoint there is an interpretive choice, for the Bible itself has many texts that refer to an unseen ecology of elementary principalities, powers, dominions, rulers, authorities, governments, thrones and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Numerous biblical texts witness to the unseen but real authority of Christ and his first

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538 See paragraph F on dissertation page xxii, and sections 1.07, 1.16, 2.01, 2.06, 3.13, and 5.07.  
540 Ephesians 6:12; also. see page xx, paragraph T on page xxvii, and section A.05.
disciples. This authority is mainly demonstrated by expelling invisible evil spirits and commanding visible miraculous physical healings. Five centuries after that, Augustine documented similar deliverances and miracle healings. He also clearly identifies various false gods celebrated in pagan ceremonies as unseen evil entities:

the false gods whom they used to worship openly and still worship secretly, are really unclean spirits; they are demons so malignant and deceitful that they delight in the wickedness imputed to them whether truly or falsely, and have wished their crimes to be publicly represented at their festivals, so that it may be impossible for human weakness to be recalled from the perpetration of such enormities, because a supposedly divine authority is given for their imitation.

Augustine identifies unique unseen realities of our world, some of which are perceived to have malign intent (referred to in E.E.T. as part of the unseen realities of space-time or u.r.s.t.), and whose input is able to degrade human religious behaviors. Augustine describes: “harm done by the delusions of the demons, whom the Romans worshipped as gods, and their disastrous effect on Roman morality.”

5.03 Unseen ethical realities and science

The question faced by Theology/Science research workers today is to what extent have the discoveries of science made traditional reference to unseen aspects of the universe of space-time unbelievable or redundant? Should the unseen ecology specified in the New Testament texts, prominent in both the worldviews of non-Western cultures and in that of many Pentecostals and Charismatics, and accepted as part of reality by many biblical theologians, from Augustine to the present day, be dismissed as un-scientific illusions or primitive superstitions? In addressing this, E.E.T. re-interprets the multiple reports of spiritual things in terms of those primal potentials for right and wrong within the world’s unseen ecology that it claims always accompany visible ecology. This treatment is unusual only because it is so rare for Theology/Science workers to consider both seen and unseen moieties of reality.

541 Pentecostals refer to texts such as Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:9; and John 14:12-14, in support for their expectations of the same signs today as described to be demonstrated by Jesus and the Apostles.
543 Ibid.: Book II, 137, for example. Unseen angels can be elect or not elect; see 1 Timothy 5:21, for example. Presumably, non-elect angels are among those unruly powers and demons referred to. E.E.T. includes them all in the u.r.s.t. as: “unseen informational sources for wrong or conflated ethics.” They are interpreted, for inter-disciplinary purposes, as wrong ethical potentials in the unseen ecology of space-time that can be ecollated on and actualized in history along with physical ecollations.
544 See works by Greg Boyd - references at dissertation footnote 7.
However, eminent physicist and pioneering inter-disciplinary author John Polkinghorne reasons that the unseen aeon-to-come is logically one that is without the suffering and waste of this aeon:

it is conceivable that the divinely ordained laws of nature appropriate to a world making itself through its own evolving history should give way to a differently constituted form of ‘matter’, appropriate to a universe ‘freely returned’ from independence to an existence of integration with its Creator. 545

The E.E.T. model of our universe is distinct from that of John Polkinghorne, yet his outline of a history of independence from God that culminates in reconciliation with God and begins a new history of submission to God, is biblical and is similar to (though less structured than) that of this dissertation. The concept that the world makes itself is conditioned, in ethical encounter thinking, by the process of ethically-revelational ecollation. Here, eu-ecollations contribute to right ethical physical reality by selecting the unseen potentials of God’s perfect creation plan accessed via the m.o.r.e. And mis-ecollations contribute spoilt physical reality by selecting the ethically-conflated imperfections of the u.r.s.t. History realizes the unseen primal potentials that have accompanied the expansion of our space-time universe.

Science has many ways of understanding unseen forces and entities but none for spirits as such. Science has no category for invisible, conscious, sentient volitional entities. Consciousness is understood to be supervenient on higher level neurobiology, and restricted to H. sapiens. Theology/Science studies are handicapped without a way around this impasse. A common solution is to simply ignore anything beyond cause-and-effect materiality. However, this fails to accommodate the biblical revelation and traditional theology of all three Abrahamic faiths. It would also exclude an aspect of reality richly experienced by many cultures and by millions of Pentecostals. The E.E.T. method attempts to bridge this revelational-existential/empirical-physical gap in terms of ethical informational potentials within unseen ecology, rather than of spirits. This method builds on two certainties. Firstly, that science acknowledges an unseen ecology of forces and fields. Secondly, that all humans (including scientists) commonly experience making choices between unseen ethical alternatives.

545 Polkinghorne, P. (1994). Science and Christian Belief. London, SPCK: 167. This then leads John Polkinghorne to write: “Panentheism is true as an eschatological fulfillment, not a present reality”: 168. Also, see Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett theistic evolution proposal and commitment to an eschatological panentheism, in dissertation section 6.06; also, see section 6.03.
Availability of an ethical *lingua franca* referring to what is available in the unseen ecology of the world could facilitate new, on-going conversations between traditional theology and the more empirical interests of the Theology/Science academy.

Robert Pollack, Director of Columbia University’s Centre for the Study of Science and Religion, comments on the central place of right and wrong ethics:

> The issue of what is right, and of what one must do, is wholly undetermined in nature and wholly independent of education. Good and evil, right and wrong, are both real choices, and people do in fact have their freedom to choose one or the other, for no data-driven reason at all. Their different choices did not in either case emerge from nature, nor did either choice need to be justified as a fact uncovered by science. . . . I am even more certain that the question of what is right and good must remain an issue for us all, despite our inability to find data that justify moral values. And because it must, the question of ‘science and religion’ has to be seen not as a debate, but as a single question: what shall we all do with our science-based knowledge of nature, and why shall we do it? ²⁴⁶

E.E.T. understands Robert Pollack’s *cri de coeur* as an expression of a truism, that science for the sake of science is ultimately sterile. The honorable purpose critique, that funds the verdict of history eventually comments on all human activities. In short, the activities of science are not excused from extrinsic ethical evaluation. ²⁴⁷

### 5.04 Quantum theory contributions to unseen ecology

In his acclaimed inter-disciplinary book on the fundamental realities of existence, cosmologist, John D. Barrow devotes a substantial chapter to “Unseen Worlds”. Physicists are generally more aware of what in E.E.T. are termed unseen ecology issues than are biologists. Barrow cites from the work of Paul Dirac, the leading British physicist of the last century:

> It has become increasingly evident, however, that Nature works on a different plan. Her fundamental laws do not govern the world as it appears in our picture in any direct way, but instead they control a substratum of which we cannot form a mental picture without introducing irrelevancies. ²⁴⁸

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²⁴⁷ Space constraints prevent a critique of the idea of ethics as an entirely naturalistic, teleological phenomenon. E.E.T.’s focus is on the deontological virtue ethics of biblical theology, in their function as an interface between biblical revelation and science’s empirical description of reality.
The clockwork of classical Newtonian physics has been thoroughly submerged by those new relationships found to describe quantum reality. As these have been progressively explored, new understanding has forced a conclusion that reality is radically different to all human intuitions and common sense opinions. Yet quantum physics is the most successful methodology ever discovered by science for accurately describing and predicting the workings of Nature. Emphasizing this paradoxical combination of extreme precision and uncertainty, Barrow cites from F. J. Belinfante:

If I get the impression that Nature itself makes the decisive choice what possibility to realize, where quantum theory says that more than one outcome is possible, then I am ascribing personality to Nature, that is to something that is always everywhere. Omnipresent eternal personality which is omnipotent in taking decisions that are left undetermined by physical law is exactly what in the language of religion is called God.\textsuperscript{549}

The work of physicist cosmologists, like John D. Barrow, is establishing a tenet that is now fundamental in any Theology/Science discourse. It is that all of observable space-time reality is sustained by an extremely complex, unseeable reality that constantly makes available the possibility of freely made choices.

Theologian Ted Peters has been a leader in attempting to find consonances between scientific discoveries and theological theory. Commenting on the work of physical cosmologist C. J. Isham, he says:

Isham argued that the initial event does not have a different status. Rather, all ‘times’ are co-present to God and the ongoing indeterminacy of quantum processes represents the continuing activity of God’s bringing something out of nothing. What is at stake for the theist is to understand God as a contemporary factor in world events. This means that God’s creative work is not limited to a one-time event in the ancient past; but continues now and we can expect more things yet in the future. Today’s research in physics challenges us to think through what this means.\textsuperscript{550}

From the perspective of Ethical Encounter Theology, quantum indeterminacy both opens the door for a physical means for divine action and affords a possible way for material entities to obtain novel information by sympathetic resonance with the unseen. Such \textit{terra incognita} begs to be investigated by a major research program.

\textsuperscript{549} \textit{Ibid.}: 171.
5.05 Attempts to harmonize unseen theological and physical parts of reality

It is worth repeating that science is cognizant of various sorts of unseen ecology. Contemporary physics accommodates a range of inaccessible entities. These include the invisible dark energy and dark matter that make up most of the universe.\(^{551}\) Then, as mentioned above, quantum theory is a highly successful branch of physics yet how it works is not agreed; its *modus operandus* is diversely explained. Then again, in an expanding universe, the speed of light imposes an absolute limit on how far telescopes can see, and astronomers are aware that beyond this horizon there could be significant unseen structures. Of course, there are many other unseens and unseeables that science refers to, such as the fundamental physical realities that predispose space-time to permit an energy/matter universe like ours, the most fundamental particles or strings, various forces and fields, the processes that gave rise to life, and the sources of human creative consciousness. Some opinions about the influences of such unseen factors, by a well-known cosmologist who is a Christian, are reported by theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel:

In an exegesis of the Colossians hymn, Carl Frederick von Weizsacker has rightly stressed that this poem seeks to go beyond the history in which God encounters human beings. ‘In heaven and on earth, visible and invisible’? That means ‘the whole world. Not just the human world, not just the visible earth. For the world is governed, conceived by spiritual powers.’ Thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities? That does not mean ‘human authorities, but the spiritual powers, the gods, who are so often feared and revered and yet are under God. If one wanted a modern surrogate, one might say ‘the laws of nature’. But modern physics itself gives us no occasion to believe that these laws dominate only that which we call material, or that there is nothing else. The world is spiritual.’ And the ‘reconciliation’ accomplished in Christ? It means ‘turning enmity into friendship. In the world there is conflict, power struggle. The helpless Christ, through the blood of his cross, has changed the relationship between human beings and God from hostility to friendship. However, to perceive that we must . . . make peace in the Spirit.’

Thus even for a scientist, the question arises not only by what forces and powers our world is in fact governed but also what forces and powers should dominate in this world. Might not the statements in Ephesians and Colossians about the universal presence of the Spirit of Christ be brought more emphatically into dialogue with the natural sciences . . ? In other words, the scientist engaged in cosmological research also cannot avoid the basic question which in

\(^{551}\) See dissertation section 1.10 for comments on dark energy and dark matter.
the New Testament lies behind the statements about Christ’s mediation at creation. What is the universe for? 552

This sort of inter-disciplinary dialectic raises questions about interfaces: between energy-matter and unseen natural laws; between energy-matter and unseen spiritual powers; and between energy-matter and unseen ethics and purpose. Karl-Joseph Kuschel quotes from the writing of physicist Harald Fritzsch, regarding humanity’s improved understanding of our place in the universe by virtue of scientific advances.

One may certainly ask whether all this is meaningless. What is the universe for, if at some time in the distant future there will be nothing left of us and the results of human toil but a thin gas made up of particles of light to which the past is a matter of indifference? 553

A common question that arises in many of the Theology/Science interactions is: “What is this amazingly intricately-structured universe for?” Perhaps science supplies part of the answer in identifying the universe as anthropically-specified. We may attempt to take it a step further by noticing that the complexifying sophistications of nature permit greater and greater actualization of invisible ethical potentials. This culminates with the sequential emergence of H. sapiens (especially the Second People farmer/civics) as the ultimate right and wrong ethical-actualizing beings. Biblically theologically, accumulation of ethical apocalypses is argued to enable the justice of the promised ethical dialysis and open the way to the right ethical aeon-to-come. These biblically-revealed ethical processes bestow great significance on every human being as a maker of eternal history. This could be seen as an indicator that the E.E.T. worldview represents a genuinely new harmony between theology and science, for fideistic and scientistic worldviews generally tend to de-humanize (see chapter 6).

5.06 The unseen ecology envisioned by Ethical Encounter Theology

Following on from the above, E.E.T. offers unique inter-disciplinary, ethically-based explanations of the basic worldview interfaces that so intrigue scientists, theologians and philosophers. By careful reading of biblical texts, in combination with an eclectic scientific worldview, E.E.T. has been able to propose that our world is particularly

552 Kuschel, K.-J. (1992): 510, 656, 657 - reference at dissertation footnote 4.05. There is, of course, a plethora of works by Christians who are well-recognized scientists, pioneered by Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke, John Polkinghorne, Sam Berry and others. At heart, they all chew on the same exceptionally meaty bone of cross-disciplinary communication. Their appetites are sharpened by passionate conviction that there is something of great importance hidden in the marrow of the interdisciplinary bone.

553 Ibid.: 510, 511.
suited for the combined purpose of binary ethical apocalypsis and subsequent ethical dialysis of primordially conflated right and wrong ethics. In the process of doing this, individuals that will to be obedient to divine ethical education are identified and separated. At the same time, the eternal history of our world becomes God’s seminar on how the unchanging goodness of the perfect divine nature interacts with the potential for evil that inheres the mis-use of human free-will.

Time and hence space-time is considered to be an artifact, with ethical accumulation towards the telos of an ethical mega-attractor (for Christians, that is the ethos of the resurrected perfect human being) operating as the universe’s executive ethical chronometer. As is proposed throughout the dissertation, an E.E.T. perspective on reality enables the integrated interpretation of the data of science, biblical revelation, and some of the conundrums familiar to philosophers. Both that which is open to direct measurement by science and that which is not, make up a single purpose-filled universe. E.E.T. proposes that it is the character of the specific ethical dynamics of creation that contains the solutions to some of the apparently insoluble problems of theology, ethics and science. By paying attention to the unseen half of reality, *creatio ex ethica* is fertile in raising a range of novel possibilities for bridging revelational/empirical gaps. This significant contribution to scholarship helps to harmonize disparate aspects of main-line traditional theological faith with contemporary scientific understanding.

5.07 Mythologizing intangibles in tangible terms
Philosopher and Jewish theologian, Neil Gillman comments on the fact that awareness of unseen realities is becoming the common factor in science and theology.

Both disciplines now realize that they deal with realities way beyond the very possibility of any form of human experience. And, both are doing the same thing – trying to explain the world we see by referring to a world we do not see. Both find the ultimate explanation for the immediately visible by postulating a world that is invisible and accounts for why things are the way they are. That’s what myths do; they deal with the invisible to explain the visible.  

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554 Refer to dissertation section 4.13. Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett (2003): 166, mention a related idea, where: “it is the eschatological pull of God’s future right now that is drawing the present out from its past;” - reference in dissertation section 4.05.
It is indeed a breakthrough in inter-disciplinarity when all participants acknowledge their common interest in the invisibles. However, for E.E.T. this is not so much about mythologizing the empirical in terms of the unseen, rather its utility is in building novel consonances between four different categories of information concerning imputed invisible entities and influences:

- biblical history and its revelations of unseen aspects of reality;
- human cultural convictions concerning unseen forces and entities;
- scientific data and theories about unseen entities, fields and forces; and
- the unseen influences of potentials for right and wrong ethical values.

The aim is to lay the foundations for an integrated worldview position regarding the interaction between the seen and unseen parts of reality (see chapter 6). It starts from acknowledging that all four of the above listed types of information are valid ways of interpreting the unseen ecology of our space-time world.

In Ethical Encounter Theology the visible and directly mensurable processes and real occasions of the world are juxtaposed with an unseen and non-directly mensurable ethical matrix. This transliterates all prior dualisms, such as essence/existence, idea/object, spiritual/material, transcendent/immanent and numinal/physical, etc. into a monad, where material is grasped by an inseparable ethical informational context. Through this, entanglement in ontological questions is avoided by focusing on the ethical influences of the unseen ecological matrix of space-time. This method facilitates a robust treatment of the unseen (including spiritual) aspects of biblical theology, without compromising scientific theology. A catch-cry of E.E.T. is: “Theology with an ethical voice converses more fluently with science.” The method of applying ethics to facilitate a tripartite unity with science and theology will be intrinsically critiqued by its success or failure in furthering fruitful creative mutual interactions. Should E.E.T. fail to facilitate a productive communication between traditional biblical theology and the interests of the Theology/Science academy it will have failed by its own criterion. It is not a focus of this dissertation but the E.E.T. method seems to be adaptable for irenic inter-disciplinary conversations with non-biblical faith systems, too. That would involve an extensive program, though it is one that is urgently called for in our increasingly nuclear-armed world with its unreconciled faith systems and present neglect of lively and informed ethical dialectic.
5.08 Ethics as a language that unites seen and unseen realities

In his *The Order of Things: Explorations in Scientific Theology* Alister McGrath strongly argues that: “ontology determines epistemology . . . what something *is* determines both *how it is to be known and the extent to which it can be known*” [his emphases].

A scientific theology believes that such a stratification of reality is both demanded by *a posteriori* reflection on the scientific enterprise, and by the Christian vision of the nature of the world. A unitary understanding of reality, such as that mandated by a Christian doctrine of creation, thus does not demand that each human intellectual discipline should adopt identical methods for their tasks, but that they should accommodate themselves to the distinctive natures of those aspects of reality which they attempt to represent and depict. Every level of reality demands to be investigated on its own terms, which are established *a posteriori* by reflection on the way things are, not determined *a priori* in advance of any such interpretation. A scientific theology thus insists on the need to reject the methodological uniformitarianism which the Enlightenment sought to impose on all disciplines.\(^{556}\)

It is understood that different disciplines have different methods of maintaining their internal coherence and that those depend upon the pre-existing nature of their subject matter. The idea of an ethical *lingua franca* claims that ethics provides a method for harmonizing the values of different ontic perceptions of a single reality. In that ethics are dynamic not static, E.E.T. (after Whitehead) emphasizes more what things do rather than what things are said to be. Those entities that eu-ecollate right ethical information from unseen ecology are identified as eternally distinct from those that mis-ecollate or dis-ecollate wrong ethical potentials. In this way, the construct of an impermanent space-time world operates to effect an eternal ethical reality. This brings the work of biblical theology studies and that of Theology/Science studies together in a common vision of unseen but prevailing universal purpose and restores some value to epistemology in inter-disciplinary consonance building.

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There are undoubtedly limits on the transferability of particular methods from one discipline to another. However, the Bible, especially through its Christology, strongly claims there is a single, comprehensive plan and meaning within all of reality. This monadology could be poetically summarized as personally accepting God as the alpha and the omega, the first and the last (see Revelation 1:17 and 22:13). Presented as an ethical formulation, this core of kerygma would probably be acceptable to a diversity of belief systems, and to all people who have a concern for virtue ethics.

A biological analogy is helpful. Each living cell has compartments containing discrete biochemical structures and processes; nonetheless a single, embracing whole-cell method interprets all of them. Indeed, individual biochemical methods for studying intracellular organelles can not do what can only be achieved by cytology and cell biology, that is, by whole-cell hermeneutics so to speak. In analogy, E.E.T. argues that holistic biblical ethics provides a hermeneutics whose power exceeds that of the specialized methodologies of compartmentalized science, philosophy and theology. In the absence of holistic biblical ethical interpretation it would seem impossible to bring the three disparate disciplines into a fully workable inter-disciplinary conversation.

Ethical Encounter Theology has practical applications representing a common language between biblical theology and philosophy. In theology and philosophy there is much that may be thought to be incomprehensible or inconsequential by scientists; but ethics is something that science also has to take seriously. The very concept of an academic discipline implies a just application of ethical standards, rules rewards and sanctions. So it should not surprise us if development of a common application of unseen ethical ecology facilitated advances in inter-disciplinary understanding.

5.09 Re-interpreting biblical dualisms in terms of E.E.T. monism

Unseen ecology involves a complex of invisible ethical relationships interacting with the visible space-time universe. That view attempts to structure a basic aspect of reality which it is claimed was assumed by most authors of the Bible texts. The texts

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557 One simple analogy is that techniques for examining banknotes are incompatible with those used for checking coins and yet the two are united in the common ethical aim of detecting counterfeits so as to maintain the exchange value of the currency. Technically disparate they still have an identical ethos.

558 See dissertation sections 1.08, 2.03, and 3.13.
imply that our world reality interacts with a greater, sustaining, eternal and efficacious reality. This commonly appears as something like a Platonic dualism of spirit and matter. Such a dualism probably seemed obvious in a pre-scientific world, where the body of a dying person clearly lost no material. It was easy to conclude that an invisible life principle or human spirit had passed on, leaving the body inanimate. Breath or spirit (Hebrew ruah and Greek pneuma are used frequently in the Bible texts) seemed necessary for life. This was confirmed by the common observation that a neonatal child who did not breathe did not live. Body/spirit dualism is still a powerful worldview in many cultures. By careful reading of biblical texts in the light of scientific discoveries, E.E.T. argues that a more monistic interpretation is a workable alternative. For example, Jesus is reported to state:

I came forth out of the Father
and have come into the world;
again I leave the world and go to the Father.\(^{559}\)

E.E.T. interprets this as movement into and out of two parts of a single, structured reality. In other words it treats our universe of space-time (a world with a goal of binary ethical apocalypsis as a solution to the anthropic conflated ethics problem) as profoundly related to the invisible embrace of the matrix of right ethics (m.o.r.e.).

A biological analogy for this is the way specific information from the DNA of a cell’s nucleus is sequentially made available to the endoplasmic ribosomes. The endoplasm communicates with the nucleoplasm via a selectively permeable nuclear membrane. These two compartments of the cell are both necessary for life, though they are discrete. The analogy can be taken further, since the nucleus is able to direct the endoplasm’s developmental history, from one form and function to distinctly different ones. Throughout these changes the endoplasm has almost no access to the nucleus, because of the properties of the nuclear membrane. The attraction of the analogy is that the more permanent and efficacious inner reality is virtually invisible to the outer reality whose history it largely manages. Yet there is no question that nucleus and endoplasm are a functional monad that permits a degree of autonomy to the endoplasm. Given the solid physical reality of this type of arrangement it seems less necessary to continue to think dualistically of spiritual and material entities.\(^{560}\)

\(^{559}\) John 16:28 in Marshall’s INT literal translation from Greek.

\(^{560}\) Colossians 1:16 provides a powerful Christogenic basis for the unity of visible and invisible reality.
Millie Johnson-Abercrombie was one of the first to analyze the evidence that a scientific perception of reality is itself a trained skill.\textsuperscript{561} E.E.T. proposes that all the different methodologies of “finding what is there” and “finding what things do” need to be brought together, so as to provide a dynamic, multivalent understanding of existence. The continued pursuit of a fractured understanding of reality, where each part ignores the other parts, or even violently competes with them, is likely to obscure much systems reality. For example, progress might be accelerated if all stake-holders in inter-disciplinary conversations were to agree that reality is monistic. More inter-disciplinary discussion of what defines right ethics and wrong ethics would also be a help; as would more research aimed to elucidate how the physical parts of reality articulate with the unseen parts. E.E.T. raises new perspectives on existence (see sections \textbf{A.03} and \textbf{A.05}).

5.10 Resonance between the seen and the unseen

The monadic reality referred to in E.E.T. differs from that of process theologians because it depends on perfect being theism and is subtended by a standard biblical ethical understanding of our world’s beginning, purpose and final resolution. The purpose of the world is seen to be the self-identification and separation (salvage) of those who freely chose to be educated by divine right ethics. This process concludes with the demulsification of conflated right and wrong ethics and provides an eternal seminar on the divine methodology for encountering conflated ethics. This is not an anti-materialist theology. The E.E.T. model follows frank biblical lines in accepting that the way from an impermanent material part of reality (currently visible) to a permanent material part of reality (currently invisible) is by seeking for, discerning and enacting unseen divine right ethics, under divine grace. This is the general tendency of many biblical texts, for example \textit{2 Peter} 3:13-14 \textit{NIV} adap:

\begin{quote}
But in keeping with God’s promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.
So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God.
\end{quote}

The same theme is made clear in \textit{1 Corinthians} 15:19, by Ann Nyland’s \textit{TS} exegesis:

\begin{quote}
If it is only for this life that the Anointed One has given us hope, then we’re more to be pitied than all people!
\end{quote}

Biblically theologically, attaining to the new and permanent heaven and earth is never something done by human decision and strength alone. Becoming wise enough to listen to and obey gratuitous divine instruction is the only way forward. This is a common biblical theme, for example:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.  
I give them eternal life, they shall never perish;  
no one can snatch them out of my hand.  
My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all;  
no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand;  
I and the Father are one.\(^{562}\)

It is clear, from the E.E.T. method, that processes of being chosen by God and of choosing to behave appropriately are delicate sympathetic resonances between the free-wills of two persons. This does not take anything from God, whose perfect character makes it all possible in the first place. A traditional theological aphorism makes the arrangement plain: “Without God humans can not and without humans God will not.” For Christians, the lesson and the glory of the Holy Trinity is that God is both the absolute context of and a necessary participant in human history. This resembles the idea of bipolar theism, developed especially by process theologians. Yet, for perfect being theists, omnipotent God originates the rules and is also, through the embracing matrix of right ethics, an unchanging influence in the game.

The complex involvement of God is easier to grasp with the revelation of 1 John 4:16, that God is love. At base, ethical encounter depends on an understanding of divine love encountering that which is less than divine love. Even in today’s postmodern world, historical time is usually divided into before and after Christ. Following nearly two turbulent millennia, unselfish love for those in need is arguably more prevalent on Planet Earth. Slavery has been outlawed. Gender discrimination and racial discrimination are on the way out. Environmental protection for the sake of future generations is increasingly on the agenda. Yet the claim of John 3:16, that God affectionately loves the human world beyond imagination, might not be accepted by every thinker to have assisted such advances in right ethics. In the E.E.T. worldview, divine love is even more fundamentally significant. God’s embracing and permeating love is seen as holding all things in being and guaranteeing the ultimate success of the currently fractured monad of primary reality. This must be achieved by the free

choices of individuals or community’s who choose to resonate with divine love. In one way, the inter-disciplinary Theology/Science quest can be seen as an exploration of the character of the ongoing divine love resonance.

Such theocentric, agapaic logic serves to emphasize the divine perfection, monist cosmology of E.E.T. thinking. Here, it is claimed the consonance between the academy of biblical theological studies and the academy of Theology/Science studies is most evident when they both focus on the effects of unseen divine love or, alternatively, on right ethics *per se*. The E.E.T. method implies that any real progress in our world depends (consciously or unconsciously) on sympathetic resonance with unseen divine love/right ethics. Biblically, it is asserted that after the Judgment all that will persist of human lives and society will be what has eu-eccollated by sympathetic resonance and so actualized divine love (see, e.g. *1 Corinthians* 13). Then the extraordinary story of how this was done, the history of our universe, will be a treasured memento, given an honorable place in the perfect aeon-to-come (see section A.10).

5.11 Conclusions

The topic of unseen ecology is central to E.E.T. thinking. It is a deeply textured topic that can not be properly canvassed in a few pages. The above ten sections provide an outline of some of the main issues that arise from a consideration of unseen ecology as a facilitator of inter-disciplinary consonance. Because this important part of reality is not visible does not imply that it is outside the reach of research work. Many of the most fundamental realities of science are not visible, yet they have been investigated through the influences they have on visible entities. The relationship between the seen and the unseen is central to traditional biblical theology and has, up until now, been largely ignored in Theology/Science studies. This has to change if only because right and wrong ethics are powerful effectors of personal and social transformations. Ethics makes history. E.E.T. claims that such an irenic change towards ethical contextualization could be broadly beneficial to people throughout our world.

Building on this chapter about the unseen, the next chapter compares and contrasts science-based, faith-based and ethics-based worldviews.
Chapter 6 - The Ethical Encounter Theology worldview in context

6.01 Reiteration

In connection with the worldview topic of this chapter it may be worth reiterating what was written earlier in the dissertation:

The worldview endeavour itself is one that has recently received overt encouragement from unexpected quarters, in the editorial pages of the world’s most prestigious science journal:

The scientific enterprise is full of experts on specialist areas but woefully short of people with a unified worldview. This state of affairs can only inhibit progress and could threaten political and financial support for research.  

Signs of humility from among the leaders of the scientific community, together with an acknowledgment that human society has other interests and priorities apart from those of science, indicates recognition of the value of creative inter-disciplinary cooperation and adds value to attempts (including that of E.E.T.) to find worldview consonances between historically separated academic disciplines.

6.02 Some advantages and disadvantages of worldviews

Philosopher David K. Naugle has comprehensively reviewed the literature concerning the role of biblical worldview concepts in Protestant evangelicalism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. He concludes that “worldview” has been one of the central concepts of recent times and an intellectual tool that is of:

utmost, if not final, human, cultural, and Christian significance.

After all, what could be more important or influential than the way an individual, a family, a community, a nation, or an entire culture conceptualizes reality? Is there anything more profound or powerful...
than the shape and content of human consciousness and its primary interpretation of the nature of things? 565

David K. Naugle has pioneered the study of the history of the worldview concept and concludes by listing three potential dangers to Christians of thinking in worldview terms, where, for example:

excessive objectivism supplants appreciation of the love of God and neighbor; visual modeling dominates the sacramental value of the whole; and where a saving allegiance to Christ is overshadowed by intellectual self-sufficiency.

He also lists three major benefits of clothing the content of biblical faith in the garment of a worldview. These are that:

- presented in a worldview context, any faith system is more readily critiqued with standard philosophical tests for coherence, comprehensiveness and viability;
- a worldview provides a conceptual space where the claims of a faith system can more readily be grasped; and
- the personal and cultural transformative power of biblical faith has been found to be uniquely effective when presented in worldview terms.

Even though he is writing mainly for Christian believers, David K. Naugle raises some points that are helpful for the more general E.E.T. project of closing the revelational/empirical cognitive gap. It is especially clear that biblical texts should not be used out of context, in a doctrinaire or fideistic manner. A balanced and insightfully holistic method should be evident in the way Scripture is interpreted for the purposes of interacting with science and philosophy.

In the contemporary postmodern intellectual climate many thinkers reject the possibility or utility of metanarratives. Theoretical physicist Diederik Aerts has tried to answer some of these general criticisms of organized attempts to construct integrating worldviews.

Some people say that world views cannot be constructed, they can only develop spontaneously. Others see this attempt at construction as a revival of the old Enlightenment belief about the ‘explainability of the world’. Yet others find the project interesting but extremely utopian and therefore a priori impracticable. And others have doubts

565 Ibid.: 344, 345.
about the importance of worldviews in the context of the current state of the world.

I believe these criticisms are partly justified. The project [that is the project of the Brussels-based *The Worldviews Group*] is utopian; there is no certainty that relevant functioning worldviews can be constructed; I too believe that the world is only partly explainable; and the importance of worldviews in the context of the current state of the world is a hypothesis. Nevertheless, I believe that even under these circumstances ‘what happens in the Worldviews group and subgroups’ is necessary and important. . . . I believe that intellectual fragmentation is now so great (in my own discipline, physicists in different subdivisions can barely read each other’s articles, let alone understand them), that the best vehicle for any attempt at integration is a specific project, so that efforts do not deteriorate into talking shop. On the other hand, this project should not be small-scale and quickly realizable because then there is the immediate risk of another discipline being formed. On the other hand, this project should address fundamental questions in order to achieve a level of analysis that at least equals the depth of existing disciplines. In this respect a conscious effort to construct world views can be a means of healing of pernicious effects of fragmentation.566

As an inter-disciplinary leader Diederik Aerts reflects on the fact that just as many of the unconscious actions of our human ancestors are now done consciously, perhaps the time is right to extend conscious human effort to constructing fragments of worldviews. This philosophy is also in accord with the ethos of the E.E.T. project. The world can only benefit from attempts to increase intelligent conversations between disparate disciplines (and this has probably always gone on at personal and informal levels). That is said with an insight that, for various reasons, most monodisciplinarians lack enthusiasm for inter-disciplinarity.567 Research is needed to see if specialists perceive inter-disciplinary work as less rigorous. Or is the probing of preconceptions and the potential for highly original perspectives (both implicit in inter-disciplinary programs) seen as a threat? Is it perceived as a threat for a colleague to have expertise and allegiances both inside and outside the discipline? If current fractionation of knowledge is, even partly, sustained by the reluctance of specialists to have their specialties contextualized, it is a matter that begs to be addressed by the larger academic community. It is possible that well thought-out administrative

567 See dissertation section 2.05.
structuring and funding measures will be needed, before fruitful inter-disciplinary (worldview) approaches receive the fuller attention they merit.

6.03 Ways of defining a worldview

James W. Sire has defined the intellectual reality of a worldview as:

fashioned by words and concepts that work together to provide a more or less coherent frame of reference for all thought and action.\(^{568}\)

He has listed four criteria that need to be met by any worldview, if it is to be taken seriously.\(^{569}\) Firstly, it must have an inner intellectual coherence. Then, it must embrace the data of reality. Thirdly, it must genuinely be able to explain what it claims to explain. Finally, it has to be subjectively satisfactory, that is, the worldview must work at the personal level (it has to pass the road-test). Failure to meet one or more of these criteria suggests that the system may not be a worldview but it is only a view. Sire also conceives of a list of questions that a genuine worldview must be able to answer coherently.\(^{570}\) He expresses these questions in the following terms:

1. What is prime reality – the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality; that is the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of history?

These cover the main informational content of a worldview. Attempting to address these questions clarifies personal or group belief systems. The answers obtained give diverse belief systems an increased language of comparison. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, any increased correlation of the ethics of the main Abrahamic, monotheistic worldviews could help to moderate extremism. Behind some of the mass-murderous acts of terrorism and attempts to find a military solution to them in today’s world there are incoherent worldview positions that have little correlation


\(^{569}\) *Ibid.*: 200.

\(^{570}\) *Ibid.*: 18.
with theological ethics. When different faith systems are exposed to worldview analysis (however inadequate) it may be that more of a common ethical basis will be brought to light. Cultural and historical differences will remain but a developing focus on ethical similarities could fund an increase in mutual understanding. Ethical Encounter Theology implies that the proper work of humans is irenical ethical encounter with the world’s conflated ethics, to evoke binary ethical apocalypses. This is unique work that only humans can do and the universe may have been poised for us to do this job. Increased appreciation of a shared ethical purpose could form the basis for cross-cultural cooperation. Rational incentive to move away from violent, power-over reactions and toward rational, power-under empathy based on a shared irenic ethical understanding would be an authentic good for contemporary human society.

The E.E.T. emphasis on ethics draws biblical revelation and scientific theory towards a monistic worldview, in a way similar to religions that have a mystical focus:

At any rate the dialectics of worship implies the otherness of the God, and for this reason all religions which focus centrally on worship, whatever else they may do, emphasize Dualism. Mystical or contemplative religion homes in on an experience in which duality is abolished, and so has a tendency within the ambience of theism to stress a kind of union. For this reason it is liable to conflict with the purer religion of worship.

There is an aspect of ethics that is experiential in a similar way to Ninian Smart’s description. This may be one reason why ethics draws theology and science closer together in what, in the language of E.E.T. is referred to as a tripartite unity.

James K. A. Smith has recently advocated a vitalistic worldview he has called enchanted naturalism or en-Spirited naturalism. This is to accommodate a perceived need for a new approach that may facilitate participation by Pentecostal theologians in the Theology/Science academy. In its worldview, E.E.T. has a similar interest in responding to the abundance of evidence of Pentecostal experience and interpretation.

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571 E.g. Romans 8:19-22.
572 For an accumulation of evidence on the need for this see Charles K. Bellinger - reference in footnote 360.
However, biblical textual evidence is not supportive of vitalism. Traditional perfect being philosophical theism tends to be dualistic because the Bible consistently radically separates God and the world. There are a few verses reporting Paul’s preaching that appear, in English translations, to imply that God is ontologically “in” the world (see the NIVSB translations of Acts 17:28; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:23; and Colossians 1:17). However, this is contrary to major New Testament themes, such as the uniqueness of the incarnate Christ and the novelty of the Holy Spirit of Christ poured out at Pentecost. The Source, a recent New Testament translation by Classical Greek scholar Ann Nyland, avoids implication of God being “in” created things. See, for example, all her exegeses of the verses listed above. In all of its exegeses The Source New Testament depicts created things proceeding from, sustained by and at the service of God in Christ. In the Ann Nyland exegesis there is no hint that created things are ontologically divinely in-dwelt.575

The spectrum of worldview positions regarding monism/dualism can be simplified and summarized under seven headings to assist a broad location of the E.E.T. position:
1. Atheism can be located as a reductive physicalist monism;
2. Deism can be located as a minimally connected dualism;
3. Traditional theism could be described as interactive dualism;
4. En-chanted naturalism is located as a maximally-connected dualism;
5. Panentheism may appear as a semi-monism;
6. Pantheism appears as identity monism; and
7. E.E.T. could be located as a systems or compound monism.

The systems monism of E.E.T. appears similar to the dualistic holism of John W. Cooper.576 In the E.E.T. version, God created our universe in full knowledge of both the iniquity of actual human rebellions against divine right ethics and their deicidal and self-deifying implications. Our universe results from the encounter between

575 Whilst careful exegeses of the Greek New Testament texts argue against panentheism, they provide good support for the idea that God very selectively in-dwells those who love and obey divine right ethics (e.g. 1 John 2:24-25; 3:24; 4:15-17). That personal indwelling could, perhaps, be called “Idioentheism” so as to distinguish it from Panentheism and En-Spirited Naturalism, etc.; this idea is also mentioned in dissertation sections 7.01 and A.07. In the E.E.T. ecollation method, selective divine indwelling is interpreted as eu-ecollation; that is a perfect sympathetic resonance with the eternal right ethical potentials of the m.o.r.e. (God’s reign) moiety of the unseen ecology of our world.
divine right ethics and a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of this historical human ethical ambivalence. In the sense that the Kingdom of God (the matrix of right ethics) is envisaged by E.E.T. to precede, embrace, over-sight and succeed the aeon of our world, the ethical encounter position can also be described as a “matrix monism” (also, see sections A.03 and A.09).

Our universe has a physical ecology that has observably progressed by accumulating and selecting choices made from alternative potentials available in its accompanying unseen ecology. E.E.T. discovers consonance between this empirical observation and the *Genesis* 1:1 vision of God creating our heaven (with its invisible ecology) and our earth (with its visible ecology). This monistic system perceives God as providentially originating, sustaining and opening many opportunities to the world and yet remaining personally distinct from it. This is argued to be true even after the Eschaton, when God’s mercy will have raised humans to live together, fully under divine right ethics, knowing and worshiping God revealed. However, human communal dwelling in loving unity in God’s presence is to be but part of a single, large and complex social system. This is made plain, for example, in *Revelation* 5:1-14; 11:15-19; 14:1-5; 21:1-22:17. There it is not suggested that people are in-dwelt by God, other than in the sense of the mutual sympathetic resonance of love and through obedience to divine right ethics. A similar “unity of distinction”, systems monism famously describes believers as different members of a body with the resurrected perfect human being its divine head (e.g. *Ephesians* 4:4-16). Not much more can be said because, apart from the benchmark study of John W. Cooper on holistic dualism, biblically-coherent systems monism has attracted surprisingly little attention (see section 6.02).

6.04 A *New Testament* worldview

Ground-work for any sharing of ethical values between faith communities requires clarification of the ethical basis of each of the interacting belief systems. This is in the same way that creative Theology/Science interactions require clear definitions in each discipline. The biblical theological holism of E.E.T. specifies that the whole Bible is needed to fully comprehend a *New Testament* worldview. This resonates with the existential worldview methodology of Karl Barth, concisely explicated by William S. Johnson:
cultural presuppositions are infused throughout the various worldviews of the biblical texts. The goal of interpretation, then, is for all merely contingent worldviews, whether they are those of the contemporary interpreter or of the biblical writers, to yield themselves to the substance (Sache) of Scripture.

Yet, within this desirable program of existential biblical holism, it is possible to identify texts that especially clearly present some of the major New Testament worldview positions. For example, the first two chapters of the letter to the Ephesians contain some particularly clear biblical worldview statements by the author:

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better . . . his incomparably great power . . . is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything . . . who fills everything in every way.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who now works in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

By unwrapping some of the densely-packed meanings of this we can see the author operated out of a well-developed worldview emphasizing the following elements:

1. The unseen God is incomparably great in power and strength and glory.
2. God has all-encompassing plans for this aeon and for the aeons to come.


Ephesians 1:17 and 1:19b - 2:10.
3. The three persons united in divinity can be called Father, Son and Spirit.
4. Unseen hierarchies of lesser power and authority are subject to God.
5. The unseen, disobedient prince of the world oversights sin and death.
6. The humans are alienated from God and under sin and death.
7. The perfect human being is resurrected from the dead and ascended;
   And recognized as omnipotent, omnipresent cosmic creator and sustainer.
8. God’s supreme gift to humankind is the Christ as savior.
9. Human liberation from sin and death follow from obedience to Christ.
10. An unseen aspect of reality is that the obedient reign with Christ.
11. Those born again in Christ Jesus are predestined to do good works.

The most outstanding hermeneutics of this worldview is that of perfect being theism. God is totally in charge, lacks nothing and has perfect plans that are gradually being fulfilled. Other Bible texts state that God alone is immortal, dwells in unapproachable light and is impossible for human beings to see,\(^{579}\) that God is love,\(^{580}\) that God is spirit,\(^{581}\) that God’s invisible qualities can be clearly learned from an unbiased examination of the world around us,\(^{582}\) and that everything a believer needs to know about God has been revealed to them by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.\(^{583}\) In summary, a New Testament worldview claims everything in our universe is built, sustained and brought to its best outcome by divine Love at work.

The rapidly accruing fund of empirical data concerning our universe, solar system and planet, and biology and humanity make it plain how temporary and contingent is the existence of our species (see sections 4.03 and 4.04). Science has made it plain that the complexifying emergence of human beings is a very likely to be a transient phenomenon. In E.E.T. these realities of life on planet Earth are interfaced with the outline of the New Testament worldview given above. For example, Tom Schreiner describes the worldview of John’s Gospel in fairly dualistic terms:

> What we have in John, then, is an ethical and eschatological dualism between truth and error, light and darkness, what is above and what is below. Jesus declared to the Jewish leaders that they are from below and from this world, whereas he is from above and from

\(^{579}\) 1 Timothy 6:16.  
\(^{580}\) 1 John 4:8.  
\(^{581}\) John 4:24.  
\(^{582}\) Romans 1:20.  
\(^{583}\) E.g. Philippians 2:6; John 6:36; 10:30; 14:9.
heaven (John 8:23). In what sense were the Jewish leaders from below? Jesus explained that they are relegated to this world because of their sin, confirming that the dualism here is ethical. We understand, therefore, why Jesus demanded that Nicodemus be born from above (John 3:3, 7). As a sinner from below, he needed the work of the Spirit to enter God’s kingdom. John predominantly uses “world” [kosmos] to designate the people of the world but in doing so he highlights their subjection to evil, so that he announces that the entire world is under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). The devil is characterized as “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), which signifies that human beings are in thrall to wickedness.584

In E.E.T. it is argued that biblical representations of the ethical dualism of human independence from God (with its requirement for eschatological ethical resolution) are able to dialogue with the scientific discovery that our world is contingent and temporary. The E.E.T. method describes many possible consonances between science, philosophy and theology. The brief sketch in this section is intended as an appreciation of the connections between the Ethical Encounter Theology interdisciplinary worldview and traditional Christian biblical faith. Space limitations preclude the detailed analysis that New Testament worldview perspectives deserve.

6.05 The main features of the Ethical Encounter Theology worldview

Turning now to James W. Sire’s seven major worldview questions: 585 Summary answers, in terms of E.E.T., follow.

1. **What is prime reality – the really real?**

Prime reality is the utter perfection and total competence of God. It is expressed in the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.), that is the biblical Kingdom of God or Heaven. The m.o.r.e. is the origin of, and invisibly embraces, all material reality because only perfectly unselfish love is able to create and sustain entities. The otherness of the m.o.r.e. cannot be described in our world’s terms, except in superlatives.586 A life-time of enculturation into the world’s conflation of right and wrong ethics renders it impossible to think in terms of perfectly right ethics. The m.o.r.e. - as the Reign of God - is the unseen originator of our space-time universe and it continuously expands with

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584 NTT: 91.
585 See dissertation section 6.03.
space-time, as it gradually actualizes all the potentials concealed in singularity. The right ethics of the m.o.r.e. are available for eu-ecollation, via the world’s unseen ecology. Divine right ethics will be the criteria used in the eschatological judgment of the world. The m.o.r.e. is also the perfect ethical basis for the Bible’s right ethical aeon-to-come. That will be the ultimate inheritance of individuals who will to respond positively to divine education.

2. What is the nature of external reality; that is the world around us?

The world around us – the physical universe of space-time - is understood by E.E.T. to be a product of an ethical encounter. All of the real occasions of this universe ultimately derive from a primal encounter by the self-giving love of God with the vacuity of the singularity of selfishness. Space-time physicality has thus derived from an ethical confrontation. At the beginning of our world, God’s self-giving love encountered the imploded nothingness of anthropic selfish singularity, forcing it to open its dark, cold, vacuous grip and permit space-time to expand. The signature of this singularity is still visible in the lightless, lifeless, loveless negation of Space; in natural and moral evils; and in the availability of primal wrong ethics in the world’s unseen ecology. The signature of God’s encountering love is always visible in the goodness of being, expressed in all the entities of our world, in acts of unselfish faith and love, and in the availability of right ethics in the unseen ecology of space-time.

The evolutionary development of energy-matter, chemical elements, galaxies, stars, planets, moons, geology and biological life-forms occurs amidst negation. The entities of our world are always liminal and ephemeral. Their contingency does not signify limits to God’s power or love but rather it demonstrates that God’s purposes exceed them. E.E.T. understands the two main divine purposes in the world to be binary ethical apocalyptic and ethical pedagogy (see section A.02). Firstly, binary ethical apocalyptic progressively uncovers all good and evil potentials, in preparation for eschatological judgment. After that world history will be conserved as an eternal seminar on the character of evil and on how the love of the perfect being dealt with evil - from the initial singularity of selfishness to the summing-up of the Eschaton.
E.E.T. claims that the physical progressiveness of our world reflects a divine program for demulsifying the primordial conflation of right and wrong ethics. Its history is an eternally-valid lesson in the way that irenic, self-giving right ethics achieved this. The complexification of energy-matter in space time is necessary to create history, and history is needed to actualize ethics so as to justly separate right from wrong (ethical dialysis). Materiality is critically important, not only as the cause and effect vehicle that carries God’s ethical purpose to completion but as the real historical record of the whole saga.

3. What is a human being?

From God’s viewpoint a human being is a beloved child, a treasure hidden in a field, a pearl of great price. God is prepared to go to the limits (even, Christians believe, giving the beloved Christ to suffer on the Cross) to save human beings from their own fatal conflation with evil. E.E.T. has argued that the proleptic effects (and/or divine prescience) of historical human iniquity bound the good plans of God into the singularity of selfishness (see section A.02). This cosmic ethical anthropic problem required a drastic solution. The self-sacrifice of the perfect human being, the Christ, is biblically defined as a pre-creational reality. E.E.T. argues this great act of love was enough to call our universe out of its singularity of selfishness. Our aeon was created ex ethica. Its evolutionary history was pre-destined to discover and save people trapped in potentia by the singularity of selfishness. E.E.T. claims that immense value is placed on every person. Humans are the only space-time entities that can consciously chose or refuse God’s love. However, history reveals that only some people respond to divine self-sacrificing love. Some despise God, culpably refuse divine education and freely choose to continue to be associated with the selfishness that caused the primeval singularity. However, humans more than all other beings, accelerate the progress of binary ethical apocalypsis, by inventively and persistently ecollating on all the varieties of right and wrong ethical possibilities. This process has greatly accelerated since the farmer/civic Second Peoples differentiated, about 10,000 years ago.

587 This is admittedly an idiosyncratic way of applying Matthew 13:44-46.
4. **What happens to a person at death?**

Only in life can humans contribute to the physical and ethical progress of the world. At death, the life of each one is fairly judged, as having accepted or rejected God’s love. The history of the ethical resonances of a person’s life becomes a permanent part of unseen ecology. The summated personal resonance or soul aspect of a person (see page xx) is given an imperishable body at the universal resurrection, preceding eschatological judgment. Responsiveness to divine education in this aeon will have self-identified those with affinities in the m.o.r.e. and those without.

God’s love created our world as the means to set every person free from ethical conflation, and to teach the seriousness of sin and how costly it is, even for God, to demulsify a conflation of right and wrong ethics. The Christian revelation cogently affirms this. To reject Christ is to reject divine loving wisdom, the compassionate creator and sustainer of our universe, the ethically-perfect teacher of all humankind, one who has personally paid the price and experienced bodily death to set every human free of their sin (their conflation with evil), the only human qualified and appointed to judge everyone, existence itself, the start and the finish, and the rightful ruler of the m.o.r.e. From the Christian E.E.T. perspective there is only one catastrophe that can truly befall a person. The eternal consequences of a failure to recognize and respond positively to the love of God in Christ far exceed death or any natural or moral evil that could afflict a person.

5. **Why is it possible to know anything at all?**

From the E.E.T. worldview it is understood that knowledge is possible for two main reasons. Firstly, an ability to acquire information, process it, and make decisions about appropriate behavior is needed by every living being – even single cells and prokaryotes (see section 4.10). Success at acquiring and utilizing information is highly selected for in evolution. Life is not possible without inherent knowledge. The better the knowledge processing ability an organism has, the greater will be its chances of survival and reproduction.

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588 Hebrews 9:27.
Secondly, humans have acquired complex language capacities, the ability to reason consciously so as to solve complex problems, invent and create. From its inception, human consciousness seems to have been associated with descriptive knowledge of the world’s seen and unseen ecology. Humans have always been intrinsically wise, interested in unseen ethics, and spiritual. There seem to be no atheist hunter/gatherer peoples, and there is good archaeological evidence suggesting religious observance by early humans. Arguably, conscience has always been part of abstract reasoning. E.E.T. considers the evidence of paleontology to suggest *Homo neanderthalensis* developed knowledge of the unseen and with *H. sapiens* is likely to have been a true “*Homo ethicus*” from its beginnings. It is arguable that both abstract thought and ethical reasoning were inextricably linked to sensing of unseen realities. E.I.T suggests the possibility that *H. sapiens*’ characteristic inventiveness evolved by the natural selection of genes favoring improved ability to extract novelty from unseen ecology (by cerebral ecollation). This then refers to a special sensitivity of the human mind/brain. Some artistic creativity, scientific discovery and technological progress can be categorized as examples of conscious ecollation. It is an integrating idea that these, too, can include demonstrations of the progressive actualization of potentials from the world’s unseen ecology.

Theology/Science common domain research projects may be able to approach the question of the precise link between human efforts to gain knowledge of

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589 Two biologists provide the following chronology: “Our planet is some 4.5 billion years old. Primitive life here began almost 4 billion years ago; the first life forms on land appeared some 350 million years ago; the first mammals, 200 million years ago; the first primates, a little more than 65 million years ago; the first apes, thirty million years ago; the first hominids, about 7.5 million years ago; *Homo sapiens*, perhaps 100,000 years ago.” Leakey, R. and Lewin, R. (1993). *Origins Reconsidered: in Search of What Makes Us Human*. London, Little Brown/Abacus: 32-33. All hominids, prior to *H. sapiens* have been restricted to hunting and gathering. Farmer/civics first arose within the *H. sapiens* hunter/gatherers, about 12,000 years ago. The farmer/civics’ pursuit of knowledge has funded scientific, technological, industrial and commercial advances. There has been a vast improvement in the knowledge-base of society. This has improved the quality of life for some, but has also destroyed some of the natural environment and could even render it uninhabitable in the future. Comparing the high stability of long-lived, hunter/gatherer cultures with the riskiness of advanced farmer/civic cultures raises questions about the utility of knowledge. The E.E.T. perspective is that all knowledge is actualized from potentials in the unseen environment of space-time. Those potentials can be right ethical (wise) or wrong ethical (foolish). Wisdom, rather than knowledge, is required to distinguish them. This then connects to the debate concerning power-over versus power-under life choices. That enters a complex inter-disciplinary domain, of great human importance, and which could benefit from focused research.
the unseen and the evolution of consciousness, conscience and inventiveness. The point of transition between pre-human and truly human consciousnesses might be connected with the evolution of cerebral capacity to deal with knowledge of the unseen. Some of the evidence from Paleolithic art research has been suggested to imply a perception of encounters with normally unseen informational potentials (spirit beings) during shamanistic trances induced to seek for knowledge and healing.\(^{590}\)

6. *How do we know what is right and wrong?*

E.E.T. provides strong answers to Sire’s worldview question concerning how we know right from wrong. In E.E.T. perspective, space-time cosmogenesis results from divine perfect right ethics confronting a singularity of selfishness. Biblically, God’s love and light and wisdom and Word called forth creation amidst the incomprehension of the dark ethical formlessness of singularity. Expanding space-time then progressively actualized, in energy-matter form, by ecollating on the unseen primal informational potentials that accompany it. Thus history is not only the story of the creation and complexification of energy-matter, it is also the story of the freely-chosen concretizations of unseen potentials, including right and wrong ethics. Ethics require complexifying energy-matter to be actualized in history. Right and wrong are built into the choice-making fabric of space-time.\(^{591}\) In the most recent stage of biological evolution, this process is experienced as a quality of conscience, that has been selected for in the higher cerebral cortex of *H. sapiens*. Conscience can be trained by the social environment and by a person’s on-going free decisions. That is, conscience can be educated or corrupted - it can be made wise or ignorant – by cause and effect processes. So, in the E.E.T. worldview, humans are understood to be equipped from birth with a drive to distinguish right from wrong and with a capacity to develop and refined their ethical conscience throughout life (*Hebrews* 5:14; 12:11).

\(^{590}\) E.g., see Spivey, N. (2005) - reference in dissertation section 2.08.

\(^{591}\) This could be a biblical way of identifying what process thinkers call prehension.
Biblically, God is shown to inspire prophetic women and men who are charged with divine wisdom and a love of right ethics and are willing to risk their lives to encounter ethical conflation. There is a dynamic, because societies can foster or quench the flow of the call to seek divine right ethical education. Major faith communities have all conserved cannons of sacred Scriptures to recall the highpoints of human interactions with God. These resources, together with historical records of faith community life, can teach believers what is right and wrong. This is more than a simple profession of faith or an inherited membership. For example, Jesus Christ is reported by two of the Gospel writers to rebuke hypocrites, saying:

Why do you call me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say? 592

7. What is the meaning of history?

In regards to history the E.E.T. worldview takes a strong position. It suggests that the main purpose of history for humans is to accumulate binary ethical apocalypses. That is the progressive exposure of all unseen ethical potentials, ready for judgment. This then permits a just ethical dialysis at the Eschaton. Those individuals in this aeon who have responded to divine right ethical teaching qualify to dwell in the divine household in the perfect ethical aeon-to-come. In addition, the world’s history is conserved as an eternal seminar on how divine love dealt with the anthropic conflation of right and wrong ethics by means of an amazing space-time universe. History will show that the wisdom of God is vindicated, good people are salvaged from the singularity of selfishness, the cosmic ethical anthropic problem is solved, wrong ethics are removed, and everyone inherits a complete education in the loving, ethical methodology of the perfect being, ministered by the perfect human being.

History, recorded by sympathetic resonance in the m.o.r.e., subscribes the evidence needed for just judgment of all resurrected people at the Eschaton. History is also the basis for the justice of divine compensation of all who suffered injustice or unfair loss in this aeon. History is central to the E.E.T. worldview and E.E.T. could be called a historical conservationist theology.

The E.E.T. worldview depends on dialectic between biblical theology and scientific understanding, through the mediation of a universally-contextualizing ethical paradigm. It has intellectual coherence and attempts to address all of the data of reality. It is genuinely able to account for the origin, purpose and destiny of the world. In perceiving eternal meaning in all of the world’s history, E.E.T. recognizes the part played by every individual entity. E.E.T. plainly states what a good life consists in and how every human life achieves an eternal significance through it. The E.E.T. worldview is one that is intelligible and livable. It is able to dignify persons of every sort and it is a worldview that causes the justice of the past, presence and future to cohere.

Some of the propositions of E.E.T. have deep roots in the historical development of theology. For example, E.E.T.’s linear view of history and its historical conservationism are related to the eschatological restorationist theologies of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. The differentiation of God’s nature from God’s energies, originated by Gregory Nyssa (and developed by Gregory Palamas) has similarities with the E.E.T. recognition that the potentials of divine right ethics are constantly available in the unseen ecology of the world. An “internal and external” model of reality is close to what E.E.T. recognizes as a systems, or matrix, or compound monism of seen and unseen ecologies (see sections 6.03 and 6.05). Worldview development in this dissertation has had to proceed without examining many possible connections. However, a perception of its many connections with the rich resources of historical theology promises some attractive possibilities for future research.

6.06 A comparison of E.E.T. with two familiar worldviews
Of the many alternative worldviews owned by a range of people, two extremes are frequently encountered by inter-disciplinary researchers; these are naïve biblical fideism and naïve physicalist scientism. The following brief comparison is intended to highlight some of the ways these two common major worldviews differ from the Ethical Encounter Theology worldview. There is, of course, very much more that could be written about the diversity of less extreme worldviews than is able to be included here.
1. A summary of an extremely naïve scientistic worldview position:

Evolving material evidences the permanently necessary means to attain higher material developments that are emergent, open-ended and continuously render history obsolete. This system is entirely self-supporting and has no higher meaning. It all began spontaneously from an unexplained Singularity, about 14 billion years ago. Ethics are not causative but merely emerge from psycho-social evolution. Right and wrong ethics are teleological human constructs. Science has now placed conscious control of future evolutionary advances – including ethical – in the hands of humankind.

Naïve scientism is a monistic worldview and it is usually atheistic and generally unreceptive of biblical theism. This worldview is philosophically materialist and correlates with the secular understanding of “nothing buttery” or, “what I can see is all that there is” or, “it obviously all made itself”, and even suggests science explains everything and will solve all our problems. In a deist variation (e.g. like that of Charles Darwin) God is understood to have begun the universe but then left it entirely alone to develop itself. There are, of course, many less extreme versions of this worldview. This type of worldview excludes, as an illusion or worse, reports of the very long and richly textured history of perceived encounters by human beings with God. It also lacks a cogent and coherent philosophical basis for empathy and altruism. It has no grounds for describing a higher meaning for suffering and injustice. It even struggles to describe a basis for aesthetics.

2. A summary of an extremely naïve fideistic worldview position:

The appearance of evolving material is a deceptive illusion since all material entities have been virtually unchanged after being created for no known reason out of nothing about 10,000 years ago. Right and wrong ethics were pre-programmed into the system by the Creator. The first human couple disobeyed God and this has caused all the natural and moral evil in the world. Jesus Christ has provided for reconciliation with God and will return to bring this world to perfection.

Biblical fideism is a dualistic and strongly theistic view. It is supported by literal (usually non-holistic) interpretations of favored texts. However, extreme fideism is generally incompatible with the majority scientific interpretations of the data
concerning cosmogenesis and the evolutionary emergence of complexity, especially scientific anthropogenesis. There are several less extreme versions of this worldview. Theologically, this widespread genus of worldviews has always faced insoluble problems in trying to reconcile divine omnibenevolence with a creation that is full of injustice, undeserved suffering and loss and scandalous waste; that is, the problem of theodicy. It is hard for an extreme fideist to argue that God is not responsible for evil.

3. A summary of a Christian Ethical Encounter Theology worldview position:

*From an embracing matrix of divine right ethics, through a prolepsis of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, God both created and contextualized our universe. Evolutionary complexifications of space-time material are a temporary means to attain the divine ethical purpose of actualizing hidden ethical potentials. At the Eschaton this will enable just separation of right from wrong and the salvage of individuals amenable to divine teaching. In the right ethical aeon-to-come, the world’s history will be conserved. Ex ethica creation is the divine response to a primal conflation of right and wrong ethics (the singularity of selfishness) representing a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of corruption of God’s good plans by historical human sin.*

E.E.T. is both monistic and strongly theistic. It attains that position by taking the division between seen and unseen moieties of our space-time universe as a temporary means to achieve a divine ethical purpose. To solve the cosmic ethical anthropic problem, divine right ethics called the world into existence from the singularity of selfishness. Over its entire duration, from singularity to Eschaton, material evolution also progressively actualizes right and wrong ethical potentials as an epiphenomenon. Once total ethical apocalypsis is achieved, this aeon has no further purpose and it is to be discontinued. Life then continues in the perfectly right ethical aeon-to-come. This worldview is able to bridge the massive cognitive hiatus that separates scientism from fideism, without challenging the scientific data or compromising holistic biblical theology. It might be complained that traditional theism requires the creation and the fall to chronologically precede salvation. The E.E.T. perspective accommodates this, in that it understands God’s complete and perfect plans for the world to have anteceded historical human iniquity and actualization of the divine sacrificial solution for that (see sections A.03, A.04 and A.09).
A brief E.E.T. critique of physicalist scientism would center on the difficulties that this worldview has encountered in attempting to adequately explain:

- why there is a universe at all and why it has the properties science describes;
- foundational physical phenomena, and the origin of life and consciousness;
- a rich diversity of humanly important, non-physical phenomena; and
- the historical accounts of the miraculous life and work of Jesus Christ and subsequently of the Apostles and in the church up to the present time.

A brief E.E.T. critique of naïve biblical fideism would center on problems that this worldview has in cogently addressing:

- important cosmological, palaeontological and paleoanthropological evidence;
- apparent contradictions between key Biblical texts; and particularly
- how the omnipotence of God permits the ruination of the perfection of the whole of the universe (including the lives of billions of humans) literally through the solitary failure of one, naïve ancestral couple.

In contrast, Ethical Encounter Theology has the advantage of suggesting a clear purpose for our universe. Scientism could be taken to imply: “Well, it just exists.” Fideism generally implies: “Well, creating and fixing universes is what God does.” These answers are unsatisfying in that they both neglect the value of a human being. That is ironic, for in science the anthropic cosmological principle is sometimes invoked to explain the directionality of evolutionary cosmogenesis. It is even more ironic for biblical fideism, where God’s beloved Christ is incarnated to suffer terrible torture and physical death, all for the sake of salvaging human beings. Both the empirical and revelational suggest there is something especially significant about *H. sapiens*. Worldviews are more persuasive when they account for the worth of each person.

Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett have surveyed some of the main worldviews that can be considered to depend on a philosophy of theistic evolution. They also add their own constructive proposal regarding the means and the larger significance of a form of evolution that is created and semi-supervised by God towards a pre-

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593 See section A.07.
determined divine *telos*. They also specify five credentials that they consider to define an authentic theistic evolutionary worldview. These are, acceptance of deep time, acceptance of natural selection, appreciation of common decent, acknowledgement of divine action, and all these must be integrated with a theodicy. In terms such as these, E.E.T. could be listed as one among the *schools* of theistic evolution. The plural is necessary because there are many different ways of addressing the five credentials that Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett use to categorize authentic theistic evolutionary thinking. Their interesting constructive proposal attempts to improve on the deficiencies they identify in other schools of evolutionary theism. It is important to note their constructive proposal, as is typical among most of the schools of theistic evolutionary philosophy disregards, without mention, the major traditional Abrahamic faith communities’ insistence on the absolute perfection of God.

Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett describe human beings as co-creating alongside God ("We are condemned to be creative") This idea would be unacceptable to traditional theists because it diminishes the perfection of God as creator. Their reason for right ethical behavior is also humanistic because right ethics rely only on our opinions about what the new creation will be like. What we imagine will be in the eschatological aeon-to-come must determine our behavior (rather than what God has commanded and revealed, e.g. *1 John* 2:3-6). Through that position and their idea that God cannot manage without us, they attribute great significance to human free ethical choices but by a method that is completely different to that of E.E.T. The Peters and Hewlett theodicy is a belief that although natural and moral evil are rampant here, God will be justified in a panentheistic Eschaton (that seems to be the sum of their entire theodicalical argument).

Briefly, the Ethical Encounter Theology worldview differs from the Peters/Hewlett constructive proposal worldview by arguing:

- that God is perfect in every way and can not be assisted or added to;
- that humans freely actualize God’s very good, unseen creation obediently (by eu-eccollation), imperfectly (by mis-eccollation), or disobediently (by dis-eccollation);

- for a historical conservationist, salvage eschatology rather than a disposable history, renovation eschatology;
- for a theodicy that locates the cause of moral and natural evils in human sin that, at its worst, is an anthropic deicidal and self-deifying intention; and
- that has a biblically well-defined judgment interposed between the universal resurrection of the dead and life in the right ethical aeon-to-come.

These are major theological distinctives yet none of them precludes evolutionary theism. The process of natural selection is entirely compatible with ecollation. The benefit of the E.E.T. approach is that it has a detailed and coherent theodicy and supports perfect being theism. This, together with careful attention to the biblical texts, means there is no serious reason why any of the major, traditional, philosophically theist faith communities should find E.E.T. lacks cogency for them. This cannot be said of many of the schools of theistic evolution. This short discussion shows some of the reasons why E.E.T. has special advantages for building bridges between current Theology/Science interests and traditional biblical philosophically theist theologies. The central research question of this dissertation (see page xxi) can be answered in the affirmative.

6.07 Complexification, emergence and ethics

Ethical Encounter Theology explores a remarkable association and shows that this universe is extraordinarily personal. It suggests that the unseen ethical conflation of every potential human being is sufficient to require the calling-forth of an actual space-time universe. For Christians, this makes the saving work of Christ personal. This type of universe is able to answer the question of how a perfectly loving God will solve the seemingly insurmountable anthropic problem of freely-chosen independence from right ethics. According to E.E.T., the confrontation by God of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem has been totally beneficial; it is very good. The called-forth universe of space-time turns out to be the perfect and necessary vehicle needed:

- to actualize unseen potentials by ecollation;
- to confront ethical conflation with the divine matrix of right ethics;
- to exhaustively expose right and wrong by binary ethical apocalypsis; then
- to separate right from wrong ethics by ethical dialysis;
Having actualized through the space-time evolutionary mill, each right ethical individual is effectively redeemed into the embracing matrix of right ethics. Each is an ethically-complexified and emergent person. Each graduate also inherits the whole ethical-education history of the world. From Singularity to the Eschaton, the world becomes the story of those who (knowingly or unknowingly) depended on the perfect human being’s example. This method strongly dignifies every human person and enables everyone, including those who might be otherwise handicapped or impoverished to create eternal history. In the E.E.T. worldview, *H. sapiens* is identified as the major locus of ethical actualization and the major emergent outcome of the entire *ex ethica* universe’s evolutionary complexification. As such, we could reasonably say the universe has been waiting for us (see section A.07).

In contrast, Diederik Aerts has developed a related, non-theological account based around a cosmic force he calls the *biomoussa*. For example:

> Long ago only pre-material quantum entities existed in a pre-material layer. They organized themselves into matter and space as a meeting place for this matter was created. The same creation process that began in the pre-material layer is now fully under way in the cultural and intellectual layer, and new small phases constantly appear. We shall call this creation process ‘the biomoussa’ [or ‘the muse of life’].

> When neutrons, protons and electrons were busy deciding whether to organize themselves into atoms, atoms were world views. When atoms organized themselves into macroscopic matter, this macroscopic matter was a world view. When cells organized themselves into plants, animals and humans, these entities were world views. World views are precursors of reality.

> The highly speculative view we are putting forward here identifies man as the vehicle for the most recent force of nature, the cognitive force, and as the foundation of the new layer of reality, the cultural layer.\(^{597}\)

In comparison to E.E.T.’s richly structured ethical consonance between traditional perfect being theism and the contemporary advances in Theology/Science studies the biomoussa worldview claims that a simple sentient nature spirit pantheistically organizes the whole material creation as an exercise in nested complexity building. Scope is given for making free choices at each layer but there is no overall purpose other than complexification. The biomoussa “god” seems like a person progressing

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through different levels of Lego® kit building. History appears to be disposable; as are individual people. Advances in complexification are everything. The liminal and contingent realities of existence on a real planet in a real space-time universe do not seem to be accounted for in this worldview and that could be one of its biggest challenges (see sections 4.03, 4.04 and 4.05). It worth reiterating James W. Sire’s point that worldviews lacking a cogent account of human beings and of the value of history tend to lack immediacy. The progressive complexifications of biomoussa theory are interesting and would combine well with the E.E.T. divine teleology.

6.08 Staurology and pneumatology

This section can be best understood in partnership with section 6.04. The Cross of Jesus Christ has a different meaning for “vale of soul-making” theodicy (e.g. that of Irenaeus and John H. Hick - see sections 1.06, 1.11, and 1.14) than it does for the “mandatory binary ethical apocalypsis” theodicy of Ethical Encounter Theology (see section A.02). In a Christian theological context, E.E.T. explores a balanced view of the Cross of Christ. It gives equal importance to the role of Christ’s perfectly loving sacrifice in both the world to be created and as the means for individual personal salvation by faith. In this worldview, creation and salvation are different aspects of a single staurological process. This is a major theological proposition. In the E.E.T. worldview there is no false start caused by an originally perfect material creation becoming corrupted. Natural evil was part of the physical universe from its creation, though not from its original inception in God’s mind (see sections 6.06 and A.03). This approach helps to address questions about the pre-existence of Christ and it provides traction for references in texts such as Revelation 13:8b to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The creation is interpreted to derive from an encounter between a prolepsis of staurological divine love and a proleptic anthropic singularity of selfishness, before (or at the moment) physical creation began. Perfect God was not changed by that event, which started the long and involved process of emergent complexification of our universe, leading to us humans.

In the same way, personal salvation can be interpreted to evidence an encounter between the perfect divine love shown at the Cross and each person’s own ethical conflation. Perfect staurological love will challenge every ethical conflation – for any ethically-choosing individual, throughout the universe. This is a synoptic view of the
starkness of divine right ethics encountering both the universal and the personal. This consonance is offered as one of E.E.T.’s main contributions to the Theology/Science interaction with biblically-based theology. It contains an insight suggesting that perfect God’s right ethics are inherently encountering. Anything that is not perfectly right ethical will be encountered by God’s perfection (e.g. Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20; 3:11). It is argued that the logic of this general method remains cogent even without the staurological specifics that characterize it as a high Christological view.

Hopefully the E.E.T. insight (borne from a search for an inter-disciplinary consonance between science, ethics and theology) will add something useful to the spectrum of staurological understandings of evil, like that of the traditional position recently well described by Vincent Battaglia:

The staurological import of the suffering of Christ is not lost on Augustine: “When we acknowledge His Passion, we also confess His Resurrection. What did he do in the Passion? He taught us why we suffer. What did He do in the Resurrection? He showed us why we hope. Here there is labour but there, reward; labour in the Passion, reward in the resurrection.” (Sermones 213.4). Theodicies that postulate a mutable and passible God (J. Moltmann, E. Jungel, D. Solle, et al. and ‘process’ theologians) or those that argue that evil exists to prepare us to be worthy of eternal life (J. Hick, R. Swinburne, T. de Chardin) bring with them their own set of problems. Questions will always remain, especially as to why God chose to create a world in which he knew sin and suffering would abound. The best Christian response to such intractable questions is found in the certainty of faith, a faith that sits in happy tension with unfathomable mysteries, because whatever the origins of evil, and however numerous sins, we know that grace abounds all the more (Romans 5:20).

Vincent Battaglia writes that faith in God exposes the non-causality, meaninglessness, and banality of evil. In this way God brings something beautiful out of the nothingness of evil. The cosmic ethical anthropic problem of E.E.T. (the c.e.a.p.) explains that moral and natural evil confront all people with both specific and non-specific evils consequent upon human rebellion against the right ethical teachings of perfect God. The chief lesson is that human submission to God’s wisdom is what

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598 It is recommended that this crucial theological characteristic of divinity should be taught as part of “The Doctrine of God” component in Systematic Theology; see dissertation section 3.04.

resolves the vicious cycle. Biblically, the power that resurrected Christ can be traced back to submission to God that is, to obedience even to the Cross (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44; Mark 14:36, 39, 41; Luke 22:42; John 18:11). In contrast, continuous evil is shown to result from obdurate resistance to divine correction (e.g. 2 Chronicles 7:14; Revelation 16:9,11). There is a strong contrast between the wisdom of suffering, pain, loss and death that is ultimately life-giving and that of unteachableness which is ultimately futile. From this it is argued that theodical specifics such as staurology inevitably powerfully condition worldviews that could be held without them.

Christian biblical worldviews also require a position vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit of God. It is impossible to summarize this extensive topic here; however, a recent paper by David Bradnick has summarized and extended modern popular pneumatology as exemplified in the work of Jurgen Moltmann and Dennis Edwards.600 There, it has been claimed that, the Holy Spirit both created our universe and continually oversights its evolution:

The Spirit relentlessly operates within the world to generate pockets of organization out of disorder, not only by begetting initial creation but also continuing to act within the cosmos, sustaining the natural order and giving rise to innovative and dynamical formation.601

There is a marked divergence between this modern analogy and that of more traditional, Bible-based pneumatology as, for example, in the work of Max Turner.602 There is no undisputed textual evidence for the Holy Spirit as creator according to Max Turner.603 E.E.T. is also biblically traditional in its understanding that Jesus Christ (rather than the Holy Spirit per se) is the creator and sustainer of both the visible and the invisible ecologies that constitute our space-time universe. That finds consonance with standard exegeses of, for example, Colossians 1:16-18.

According to the E.E.T. worldview the Holy Spirit of Christ 604 wisely mothers creation by educating in divine right ethics, reminding believers of Christ’s teachings

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603 Ibid.: 4-5.
604 Ibid.: 81.
and comforting believers through times of difficulty and persecution. The Holy Spirit brings forth the gifts and fruits of Christ’s earthly life among believers, until the Eschaton. In the E.E.T model the Holy Spirit of Christ teaches about and advocates for the values of the matrix of right ethics (the invisible Kingdom of God that is close and within). Remembering that, in the worldview of E.E.T., the u.r.s.t. and the m.o.r.e. are rival sources of informational potentials in the unseen ecology of our universe. So, the reign of God is allowed to appear in constant competition with the unseen realities of space-time, so providing the unseen substrate for historical ethical choices. The Holy Spirit of Christ is argued to be “the good conscience of creation”, pleading with the consciences of each person and advocating wise and right ethical choices. At this work the Holy Spirit even groans over us, like a mother with birth pangs. In accord with Colossians 1:16, E.E.T. finds that Christ is the creator of the visible and the invisible parts of reality. The Holy Spirit advocates to physicality the virtues of Christ’s invisible Kingdom of right ethics and divine wisdom. Thus, the Holy Spirit facilitates the in-breaking of the invisible, perfect, finished creation into our evolving physical reality in both general divine action and special divine action. As more elegantly expressed by Max Turner:

It is thus as Teacher and Revealer, that the Spirit will also be ‘Paraclete’ or ‘Advocate’.

From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, the choices being made are always those of humans, individually and collectively. Yet we have not been left orphans without a helper or a teacher to encourage us towards making right choices.

The universe is a hybrid of actualization of good potentials (eu-ecollation) and actualization of less-than-good potentials (mis-ecollation). We see some of the beauty, elegance and perfection of God’s creation (resulting from obedience to the counsel of

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605 Ibid.: 346-347.
606 Competition between right ethical potentials and less-than-right ethical potentials commences at Genesis 1:2 and 3 (see also John 1:5;10-11), it is the basis of the Genesis 3:1-4 and 4:7 choice situations, and it persists right up to the moment before the Eschaton (Revelation 22:11). This theme of biblical theology has been systematized in the E.E.T. worldview as a foundational cosmic process of competition between eu-ecollation and mis-ecollation.
607 Romans 8:26.
608 Turner, M. (1999): 87 - reference in dissertation section 2.12. This work of the Holy Spirit of God demonstrates that God is far from being an absentee parent. Yet, like all good parents God advises, encourages and facilitates but does not control or interfere in the self-actualization of the children.
609 Romans 8:26; Philippians 1:19; 2 Timothy 1:14; Hebrews 13:6.
the Holy Spirit), mixed with some ugly, inept, and imperfect features (resulting from the counsel of the spirit of independence from God, the “ruler of this world”). Such a binary ethical, biblical view of our temporal aeon offers diverse opportunities for consonances with the recent advances made in Theology/Science studies. Dissertation length constraints preclude further development here of these very interesting topics.

The next chapter contains a consideration of some outstanding matters and summarizes and concludes this dissertation’s account of the Ethical Encounter Theology inter-disciplinary consonance.
Chapter 7 - Conclusions and outstanding matters

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7.01 General conclusions from the ethical encounter inter-disciplinary consonance

It is has not been easy to bring traditional biblical theism into conversation with the current Theology/Science discourse. One reason is that inter-disciplinarians and philosophical theologians may acknowledge the existence of classical philosophical perfect being theism, within the three Abrahamic traditions, but then generally:

seek to show [perfect being theism] is antiscientific and should therefore be rejected by anyone interested in integrating contemporary science and metaphysical reflection.\(^{611}\)

Perfect being theism’s inherent commitment to divine omnipotence has been a *bete noir* for some leading inter-disciplinarians, who have discounted this part of traditional biblical theology as simply a mistake.\(^{612}\) Perceived difficulties in collating science with biblical theism have convinced inter-disciplinary thinkers of deism, or non-biblical sorts of theism, and even of agnosticism or atheism. Varieties of evolutionary theism that recognize an inherent goodness in the process of survival of the fittest (see section 6.06) have proved popular. In contrast, this dissertation has not supported sanctification of material progressiveness. Noting that when evolution becomes a goal in itself history appears forgettable and disposable, this dissertation has argued that a better, anthropic ethical encounter worldview is available.

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\(^{611}\) Clayton, P. (2008): 308 - reference at dissertation footnote 290. In this paper, Philip Clayton also identifies twelve distinct metaphysical methods that are currently used to interpret evolutionary theory today; though he says some of them are illegitimate. This raises the question of what researchers are aiming for. Do proponents of the different methods hope to find a clinching argument - one that will triumph and be accepted by the majority of believing thinkers? E.E.T. affords an inter-disciplinary method that does not graft easily into Philip Clayton’s cladistic tree (see dissertation section 2.13).

Process theology and panentheist worldviews have provided a solution to the dilemma for many thinkers; yet this leaves a hiatus between traditional Abrahamic perfect being theisms (representing most believers and biblical theologians) and recent Theology/Science process thinking. Few attempt to heal the wound. For example, world-leading panentheist inter-disciplinarian, Ian Barbour has provided an analytical and systematic critique of the idea of divine omnipotence. He writes:

John Polkinghorne recently convened a working group whose papers he edited as *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* [Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans; 2001]. In my chapter I outlined five reasons shared by most of the participants for questioning divine omnipotence; the integrity of nature, the problem of evil and suffering, the reality of human freedom, the Christian understanding of the cross, and feminist critiques of patriarchal models of God.  

Scientifically-literate theologians, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg and Keith Ward, have resisted and have consistently defined God as the one being who is omnipotent:

The word “God” is used meaningfully only if one means by it the power that determines everything that exists.  

God is such that he cannot fail to exist; he is an “absolutely necessary being and he necessarily possesses the property of omnipotence  

Thomas V. Morris has constructively critiqued the process philosophy foundations of the anti-omnipotence critique. Lively philosophical theological defences of the logical cogency of divine omnipotence reasoning continue. The topic of divine omnipotence has polarized inter-disciplinary research. This tension is plain to see throughout the comprehensive discussion of theodicy given in biochemist, poet and Theology/Science leader Christopher Southgate’s excellent book on the groaning of creation. This dissertation has provided a healing dialectic. In Ethical Encounter Theology it has been argued that a scientifically-informed *creatio ex ethica* worldview is able to cogently address all the objections to divine omnipotence.

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617 References at dissertation footnote 9.

In terms of the work of this dissertation, it is impossible to harmonize the interests of traditional biblical theology and the interests of the Theology/Science academy without the matter of perfect being theism being addressed. Without bridging this revelational/empirical hiatus the core question of this dissertation\(^{619}\) would have to be answered in the negative. Thus it has been important, in the development of the Ethical Encounter Theology argument, to address (in Ian Barbour’s terms) the orderliness of nature, the prevalence of natural and moral evil in the world, the freedom that humans and nature experience, the place of the cross of Christ, and the authentic, non-tyrannical, socially-just character of God’s rule. In negotiating consonances with Theology/Science thinking it would not have been sufficient for this dissertation to appeal to subjective experiences of God. That is not to say that faith experiences are not crucially important at the personal and social levels, as for example in Christopher Southgate’s testimony that:

I have encountered the God of “determinate entity theism”.\(^{620}\)

The challenge has been not to ignore but to negotiate personal faith experiences in the language of science and/or that of metaphysical reflection, as noted previously. For this purpose, spiritual entities and processes have been interpreted in terms of unseen ethical realities and E.E.T. has established a tripartite ethical lingua franca to facilitate its consonances between biblically-based theology and Theology/Science.\(^{621}\)

To the extent E.E.T. has represented the physical world (the earth) as complexifying by freely actualizing the unseen potentials (of heaven) given to it at creation, it has valued something from the inheritance of G. W. F. Hegel and A. N. Whitehead. This is not a sign that the dissertation has in some way relied on panentheism. John W. Cooper helps to elucidate this complicated situation where he summarizes:

As an approach to Christian theology, process thought is likewise in the modernist tradition. Like Hegel and Schelling, it reinterprets Christianity in terms of a dynamic philosophy instead of generating a contemporary worldview in terms of traditional Christianity. The doctrines that it generates are typical of modernist Christianity rather than historic Roman Catholic or Protestant teaching.\(^{622}\)

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\(^{619}\) See dissertation page xxi.


\(^{621}\) E.g., see dissertation sections 1.06, 1.07, 1.08, 1.16, 2.06.

E.E.T. has moved in the opposite direction to panentheism by interpreting scientific understanding strictly in the light of traditional, biblical, perfect being theology. By doing this in a coherent way, a positive answer has been provided to the central research question investigated in this dissertation. The cost, as it were, has been that some well-known biblical texts have had to be carefully and respectfully reinterpreted. The return from this biblical macro-exegetical investment has been an interdisciplinary consonance that offers access to current Theology/Science studies for the large constituency of traditional philosophically theist believers and theologians. In addition, the ethical method developed is claimed to have a capacity to converse irenically with a wide range of faith systems. The theodicy developed in E.E.T. could be widely understood in a personally and socially-positive way.

By arguing for a *creatio ex ethica* origin of our universe, E.E.T. has circumvented the traditional impasse between *creatio ex materia* and *creatio ex nihilo* worldviews. It has been argued that the almost limitless breadth and depth of free human decisions to commission moral evil was clear to divine prescience, before creation of the world. The primal proleptic presence of humankind’s selfish willingness to countenance every sort of evil has been identified as a wrong ethical force that held the goodness of whole of the *in potentia* universe in a singularity of selfishness. This approach has been used to explain the reason for the abyss of lightless, formless, negation that the Bible depicts in *Genesis* 1:2 as the pre-creation circumstance of our universe. As one of its sustaining concepts, E.E.T. has described this as a conflation that emulsifies right and wrong ethical intents. The right ethical moiety of it has been identified as God’s detailed plans for humankind’s good. The wrong ethical moiety of it has been identified as humankind’s deicidal and self-deifying intent to be independent from God’s right ethical teaching. It is claimed that, at creation, God characteristically poured unlimited divine love into the abyss of human ethical conflation, salvaging all who would accept divine coaching in right ethics. This was the *ex ethica* moment of creation, as irresistible divine loving wisdom encountered the stubborn anthropic singularity of selfishness. The result was not an ethically perfect universe, in that a great deal of liminality in space and time was needed to allow the delicate processes

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623 See dissertation page xxi.
of ecollation (free ethical choosing) to occur. E.E.T. has argued that it was biblically declared to be “very good”, because it was foreseen to be perfect for exposing and separating right from wrong ethics and so for the salvage of all that is teachable.

The biblical theological ethical interpretation of the creation of our world derived is concordant with the Old Testament and New Testament texts. It has not depended on scientific facts or theories, though it is influenced by the current understanding of physical cosmogenesis. Whether the events described are homologous with the physicist’s accounts of the Big Bang and the origin of our expanding universe of space-time cannot be said. Nothing in the creatio ex ethica account is dissonant with the current scientific account. Science has not yet found a cause for Singularity or for it exploding into an expanding space-time universe. No cause (other than appeals to general quantum entanglement) is known for anthropic fine tuning of fundamental forces and constants ensuring our universe would favour the evolution of human life. As things stand, the E.E.T. view of creation by irresistible divine love encountering an abyss of proleptic human selfishness is not discordant with science. It is also shown to be fruitful in enabling more structured interpretations of biblical descriptions, such as those of John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:16, 17; and Hebrews 11:3.

Biblical cosmogenic theology provides no understanding of how divine love creates. However, the traditional biblical position is that God is love and God is the creator of everything. It was argued that this position needs more structure if it is to have traction in Theology/Science. That raises questions that seem worthy of further research. The Gospels report several creative miracles done by the perfect human being: water into wine, multiplication of food, non-functional body parts restored to health, and three examples of dead people being restored to life. These stories may possibly exemplify perfect divine love creating physical reality - an interpretation that is in need of further research. Quantum physics suggests that the four dimensions of empirical reality depend on other, unseen dimensions. This offers the possibility of making materials appear, apparently ex nihilo, by acting on the unseen dimensions of reality. It is a disappointing aspect of this dissertation that this matter has not been able to be more fully accounted for. The dissertation has identified several areas for future research.

E.g. Ephesians 1:4; Revelation 17:8.
Gregory of Nyssa (c.335–c.395 AD) explained the basic immateriality of the perception of a reality of material in our world in terms of a sort of holographic effect caused by the interaction of qualities and values. Donald L. Ross comments:

Thus matter as such doesn’t really exist; bodies are really just “holograms” formed by the convergence of qualities. Consequently there is no problem in how an immaterial God could have created a material world, for the world isn’t material at all.626

The transitory character of this world is taught in many biblical texts and the contrast drawn with the eternal unchangeableness of God’s Kingdom. The dissertation has argued that our space-time world is created by the encounter of God’s love with human selfishness. It is a necessary means, both for exposing all that is right ethical and wrong ethical, and for demonstrating the evil consequences of sin. The Eschaton then shows how God comprehensively deals with actualized sin and evil. Once that has been achieved, a new aeon of right ethics commences, where our space-time, ethical encounter story is conserved as a museum piece or educational diorama.

That divine love is able to create material has been carefully reasoned by philosopher, John Leslie.627 The shortage of Theology/Science information in this area means that many such assertions seem close to “god of the gaps” propositions. For example: just because physics cannot explain what caused the vast amounts of energy and matter of space-time to appear ex nihilo out of Singularity, the opportunity is afforded to implicate divine agency. The biblical theological position is clear. It now remains for Theology/Science research to pursue the question of what factors cause energy/matter to come into being, in both general and special divine actions. The hiatus between revelational and empirical understandings cannot be properly addressed as matters stand.628 In making this distinction the dissertation draws attention to what is arguably the most significant research question in Theology/Science studies.


627 See dissertation sections 1.16 and 7.01.
628 Nicholas Saunders has surveyed the range of attempts to explain divine action in scientific terms. He judged that no one has provided a persuasive model of divine action that operates by scientifically coherent mechanisms: Saunders, N. (2002). Divine Action and Modern Science. Cambridge, CUP. In E.E.T. this is addressed by the idea that sympathetic resonances articulate seen and unseen moieties.
claim to have experienced or witnessed creative miracles. A classic example is: “The Christmas Miracle of the Juarez Garbage Dump”. In 1972, a Charismatic prayer group from El Paso took their Christmas dinner to the impoverished people on the garbage dump of the neighbouring town of Juarez. They were all surprised to observe a multiplication of food and a series of other creative miracles. Over the years, these events have led to sociologically fascinating changes in the lives of the Juarez dump workers and their families. The sustained miracle is the transformation of the lives of needy people and their community, arguably by what in E.E.T. is called ecollation.

The relationship of special divine actions and general divine action in the E.E.T. worldview has been discussed in dissertation section 2.12. It is worth repeating the conclusion of that discussion:

Special divine actions reveal something of the passionate concern of God for humans but not so as to replace the routine method of ethical encounter, apocalypsis and the ultimate separation of right from wrong. Genuine miracles can subvert faith in the finality of cause-and-effect physicality. If some scientists, philosophers and theologians find that miracles are irritating, posing far more questions than they answer, a traditional biblical theist may imagine God thinking: “Just so!” E.E.T. understands its mission is to help bridge this cognitive gap.

The historical evidence for creative miracles (including the resurrection of Christ) is strong. However, the extremely gratuitous occurrence of miracles makes it difficult for scientific method to be applied to their cause-and-effect. In a significant scholarly contribution, E.E.T. has argued that this is because special divine actions are structured to avoid interfering in the general divine action of the binary ethical apocalypses that progress the ethica world toward the Eschaton (also, see second quotation from Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis on dissertation pages 283-284).

The divine influence is toward personal and community moral reformation not toward magical reversal of natural processes. The kingdom call is to power-under humility not power-over tyranny. For Christians, at least, the cross is supposed to be carried not forced on others (e.g. Matthew 10:38-39; Mark 8:34-37; Luke 14:25-27).

630 See page 115 of dissertation section 2.12.
632 *Mark* 10:42-45.
The E.E.T. proposal has been that God does not directly direct the world because that would tend to obviate the purpose of calling such an *ex ethica* cosmos into existence where ethically self-revelatory choices would enable the problem of human evil to be resolved. Motivationally, this is even weaker than the Whiteheadian approach:

> He does not create the world, he saves it: or more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness. \(^633\)

This dissertation has not argued that God leads or lures or persuades entities and beings. The divine provision of the matrix of right ethics, embracing the world, makes God’s kingdom close and within. Eu-ecollative choices are always available. What is chosen and the way it is chosen actualizes world history. The distinction is important. Panentheists perceive this immanent participation of divine right ethics in the world as God’s own person. E.E.T. has argued instead that it is the immanence of divine values, provided to the unseen ecology of space-time by the all-embracing matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.) (see section A.07). If perfect God were to be truly panentheistically immanent, non-divine ethical possibilities would be excluded; binary ethical apocalypsis would be impossible. To a traditional biblical theist this may imply that panentheism only works if God is imperfect. In accord with perfect being theism, the imperfections in the universe are not God’s. In this dissertation it has been argued that the primeval unseen ecology of space-time provides alternative sources of information - perfect from the m.o.r.e. moiety; and imperfect from the u.r.s.t. moiety. The dissertation is not defending a deistic worldview because it has argued that God’s love for everyone provides continuous education through holy men and women, whose message always instructs: “Repent; chose right not wrong, life not death; pray, seek God; be holy and perfect as God is holy.” God has provided the ethical choices and God teaches the right way but God does not interfere or over-ride free choice-making. Yet scope is identified for counseling and comforting by the Holy Spirit (see section 6.08).

Clearly, E.E.T. has not argued that God is deistically distant but is intimately providential and pedagogical. As with any skilled human teacher, God is passionately involved but never controlling. \(^634\) In addition, the Bible states that God is able to be


\(^634\) See comments in dissertation footnote 608.
immanent in a human person.\textsuperscript{635} This process can be distinguished from the process of panentheism; and the technical term “idioentheism” has been tentatively proposed as able to convey the idea that God’s person is immanent in the world through those who obey divine right ethical teaching. The idioentheist descriptor draws attention to God as a person relating to persons.\textsuperscript{636} That contrasts with some panentheist theories where God can appear more like an impersonal benign field effect (a “the force is with you” sort of thinking).\textsuperscript{637} Relationships with persons have to be negotiated; they have a history of their own. Unlike a force, a relationship cannot simply be switched on or off. Relationships build unique histories, distinct from the generality.

Nancey Murphy and George F. R. Ellis have described the world itself as non-coercive of right and wrong ethics, releasing people to make free ethical choices:

So what we see in nature is that the impartial operation of the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology offers to all persons alike the bounty of nature, irrespective of their beliefs or moral condition. The major requirement is that the laws of physics allow the growth of food for all humankind in an impartial way – their religious observance or obedience does not affect this provision (as they are taken to do in many of the older religions). This does not impose further physical conditions . . . . rather it follows from the basic anthropic understanding [that] humankind could not evolve were this not the case. Thus, the very existence of humanity, in a world governed by physical laws, guarantees the satisfaction of this requirement. This mode of operation of the physical world thus fulfills the condition of freeing people from a need for obedience to God in order to survive, and makes a free and unconstrained response possible.\textsuperscript{638}

They have anticipated one of the goals that E.E.T. has identified as part of the divine purpose in calling forth our world - that of identifying those who are responsive to divine right ethical teaching;

Sufficient evidence is given for knowledge of God’s existence and an outline of God’s will, but this evidence is not overwhelming; human sinfulness (self-interest) can make us see without seeing and

\textsuperscript{635} John 14:23; also see 14:16-18. See note on quantum indeterminacy in dissertation section 5.04.
\textsuperscript{636} John 14:9-11.
\textsuperscript{637} It is possible to use texts like Acts 17:28 and Ephesians 4:6 and 10 to support the panentheist idea of God permeating all things. However, texts such as John 15:9 and 12, and 2 Corinthians 13:5 make the process more specific. God is shown to dwell only in those who obey divine right ethics (by what in E.E.T. has referred to as idioentheism). This narrows proper interpretation of the Acts and Ephesians texts to refer to the all-embracing divine influence of the m.o.r.e., or matrix of right ethics or Kingdom of God. Holistically biblically, God is never represented in any of the wrong ethical material entities of the world see section A.07. This claim has theodical significance; see sections A.02 and A.04.
hear without hearing. The ability to see the truth is dependent on readiness to listen and openness to the message (John 3:3).\textsuperscript{639}

The Murphy/Ellis ethical identification paradigm has been integrated into E.E.T. by explaining the requirement for the freedom to do this as essential for binary ethical apocalypsis, that itself is a consequence of an \textit{ex ethica} creation process, begun by perfect divine love encountering a primal prolepsis of the whole magnitude of historical human moral turpitude. The dissertation has argued that this cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) conditions all of space-time, from creation to Eschaton because of a divine prescience of the presence of anthropic moral evil in history. As argued, natural evil is then a consequence of the ethical openness-of-being divinely provided to allow free moral self-identification, so as to resolve the c.e.a.p. (see sections 1.07, 1.13, 1.14, 2.06, and 3.13). Consequently, the universe’s openness to natural evil has also been argued to be a result of human sin. Natural evil has been claimed to be a fall-out from the ethical structuring of the universe that has been necessary to remedy moral evil. This provided the dissertation with a theological perspective on the evolutionary biological understanding that evil is normal in nature. If the claims adduced by E.E.T. are accepted, it will have provided a major consonance between the otherwise widely separated positions on biological evolution of traditional biblical theology and most Theology/Science research.

The dissertation also has traction at a more local level. For example, J. Jeffrey Tillman argues that current measurements of a diminution of agapaic right ethics among Christians could have more than academic consequences:

\begin{quote}
If sociobiology is correct about the significance of sacrificial altruistic behaviors for the survival of communities, this shift away from sacrificial agape by American Christianity may cut the community off from important resources for the development of a global ethic crucial for the survival of the faith community and humankind itself.\textsuperscript{640}
\end{quote}

In the perspective developed in E.E.T., such hurtful consequences of a communal failure to embody unselfish giving would be described as authentic evil. However, as

\textsuperscript{639} \textit{Ibid.}: 211.

part of the process of binary ethical apocalypsis leading to the Eschaton, they appear simultaneously as expedient good (for terminology see sections 7.04 and A.08).

7.02 Inter-disciplinary theology and compound methodology

A philosophically-inclined reader who has gotten thus far in the dissertation may want to know how much of the methods it has used are those of realism and how much of idealism (also, see sections 1.06 and 2.03). Because Ethical Encounter Theology has included the seen and unseen moieties of reality in a single system, and given preeminence to actual historical events, the approach is identifiably realist. However, by specifying that the world originates from the unseen encounter of anthropic wrong ethical potentials by divine right ethical potentials, and by finding the world’s purpose to be an actualization of all right and wrong ethical potentials, the method of E.E.T. has been idealist. In its combination of methods E.E.T. has exceeded methodological categories, as is common in inter-disciplinary research. For example, mathematical cosmologist John D. Barrow reflected on the same issue:

We shall adopt the realist view about entities, but not about theories, as a working hypothesis, and continue with it until it runs into problems – as we shall find it does. That is, we shall regard the laws of Nature and scientific theories as our own inventions. They may be only an approximation to reality, but it is independent of our minds. The aim of our theorizing is to come up with models of reality which are realistic. We hope that they are always converging towards a closer and closer approximation to reality, and we conduct continual comparisons between what is seen in the world and what is predicted in our models, to confirm that this convergence is truly occurring. Nonetheless, we do not deny that some elements of our picture of Nature are idealistic, just as some parts are undoubtedly just plain wrong. Einstein regarded the most effective scientist as a polyglot who, to the philosopher, appears as a pure opportunist because: he appears as a realist, insofar as he seeks to describe the world independent of the act of perception; as an idealist insofar as he looks upon the concepts and theories as the free invention of the human spirit (not logically derivable from that which is empirically given); as a positivist insofar as he considers his concepts and theories justified only to the extent to which they furnish a logical representation of relations among sense experiences.\(^\text{641}\)

The E.E.T. monistic ideal (that space-time is a temporary construct of the rule of God, wherein a challenging anthropic ethical problem is being addressed) has been derived from biblical theology. That space-time primarily serves to demulsify a primordial ethical conflation is not a theory that is open to scientific experiment. However, E.E.T. has argued that the concept is not contradicted by the evidence of science and is a valid way of interpreting what science says about the origin, the evolutionary progress, and the destination of the world. The method used by E.E.T. accords with the quantum cosmological insight that all space-time entities have been entangled since the primordial Singularity. E.E.T. has argued that, from Singularity to the end of space-time, all the ethical choices of history are the inevitable product of encounter with divine perfection. Historically actualized ethical choices are then argued to be the most valuable products of space-time. This is because right ethics have to be disentangled from wrong ethics for us to ever see a new aeon of peace and love (that, over millennia, many philanthropic people have been working for). The dissertation has argued that, science itself has depended on there being deontological right and wrong ethics. Science has also depended on there being an unseen logical consistency, for if reality were inconsistent all/no hypotheses could be proved right. It has been argued that in practice science itself operates by a form of binary ethical apocalypsis. Many scientists will admit that the desire to confront the unknown so as to expose and separate truth from error is the strongest methodological motive in good science. Science incorporates a system for judging truth and disposing of error, analogous to the Bible’s eschatological judgment of right and wrong ethics. And scientists’ motives for doing this are sometimes expressed as stemming from a desire to: “find a cure for cancer”; or to “make the world a better place”; etc. (see section 7.04).

Ethical Encounter Theology bridges revelatory/empirical gaps with ethics. Everything in space-time is argued to serve one purpose - that of exhaustively actualizing the underlying ethical potentials inherited from Singularity. An amazing and endlessly beautiful cosmic diversity has resulted from the freely-choosing explorations of the unseen ecology of space-time by emergent complexification. It is argued that this has always been accompanied by progressively more profound and more extensive ethical actualizations. Biblical theology reveals that this universe of natural selection will be redundant once its potential for ethical actualization is exhausted. This is a crucial
claim for inter-disciplinary discussion. At that point, E.E.T. has claimed, the detailed record of ecollation history will enable a just ethical disentanglement of the world. The dissertation claims that the singularity of selfishness’ emulsion of right and wrong ethics will at last have been demulsified. God’s original creation will recommence with a clean slate. In this, E.E.T. argues that theology, as a discipline, shows its value of being able to consistently reach beyond the ambit of science, though not beyond that of ethical logic.

The theological interpretations presented by E.E.T., regarding the creative, interactive and eschatological role of the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.), are outside current scientific experimental methodology. Indeed, if science were able to experiment on the m.o.r.e. there would then be no need for theology and for inter-disciplinary collaboration. As with all the potentials of unseen ecology, the m.o.r.e. is only accessible to science in terms of its physical actualizations. It has been pointed out that a special type of science is required to study this because ecollations may depend on sympathetic resonance between the seen and the unseen. Each transfer of information into the material world is idiosyncratic. This is like quantum uncertainty but on a physically larger scale. Currently science or Theology/Science has no methods to investigate information acquisition by ecollation whether it is via sympathetic resonance or some other means of seen/unseen articulation. E.E.T. has highlighted the importance of developing such methods for future inter-disciplinary progress (e.g., see section 4.10).

Scientists working at the cutting edge of cosmology have recognized there are limits:

It appears that science is best done by believing that realism is true, even if in fact it isn’t. Although this last statement sounds weird it resembles Immanuel Kant’s view of Nature. He believed that, although we cannot prove that Nature is purposely organized, we must co-ordinate our observational data as though it were so organized. Such a systematization is only possible if we believe in the existence of a ‘Principle of Natural Purposefulness’, and so investigate Nature as though it were ordered by an intelligence other than our own. Whether or not they subscribe to such an idea

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642 That is, the Eschaton appears as the ethical consummation of all the binary ethical apocalypses of the primal mis-ecollation of our anthropic universe. From that point on, the whole of the history of the space-time universe is preserved, only for its educational and sentimental value. Once the problem of evil has been resolved, our world of liminal ambiguity becomes redundant, according to the E.E.T. ethical consonance.
explicitly, this is what scientists actually do; otherwise they would not become scientists. This is in itself a logical difficulty for rival philosophical viewpoints. If all scientists work believing realism to be true then, by the criterion of the idealist, realism is true; and the fact that science is evidently most effectively done by adopting the realist perspective makes it the most useful view to adopt, and hence by the instrumentalist’s criterion also the correct one.

Yet one can object to an over-confident subscription to the realist view. It ignores the limitations of our biased and often totally erroneous human understanding. We cannot foresee how subtle and elusive that underlying reality we are seeking may ultimately be. It might be, quite literally, inconceivable.

Obviously, theology has to avoid the temptation to try to fill gaps that science leaves; yet it also needs to be able to exercise its alternative vocation of adding genuine revelatory meaning to the world’s fund of knowledge. In terms of the current and future importance of science in the world and with reference to the billions of people who belong to faith communities, it is argued that exploring compound methodologies like E.E.T. would appear to be a potentially beneficial activity.

Leading New Testament theologian, Craig C. Hill’s makes some pertinent methodological observations in the introduction to his work on general eschatology:

Why flee eschatology? A few reasons, such as embarrassment and incomprehension, were mentioned above. Another powerful motive is the desire to reconcile faith with science. While that goal is laudable, how and on whose terms it is to be effected are real sticking points. In many cases, what is promoted is not accommodation to scientific discovery but capitulation to ‘scientific’ rationalism. Eschatology is about God acting in and through human history. For some, that possibility is ruled out in advance. What can God do? Again the litmus test is the resurrection. It is understandable that some people can not believe in the possibility of the resurrection. They have that right, and I respect it. But if there was no resurrection, then really there is no point in talking about Christianity. Jesus is not the living, vindicated Christ (Messiah) who is and will be God’s agent for the realization of God’s purposes. The usual fallback position is to focus on the ethics of Jesus, but calling the result Christianity is, at least technically, a misnomer. Moreover, it is clear that Jesus’ ethic itself is eschatologically grounded: because the coming reign of God has a certain character and value, says Jesus, one would be sensible to respond to it in certain specific ways.

Three related but somewhat less acute problems also are raised by science. The first concerns the early Christians’ limited view of the

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cosmos. . . . Which leads to the second problem. The early Christians had a limited view of human (much less geological) history. . . . The third problem concerns creation. Although eschatology is technically about the ‘end’, most eschatologies are heavily dependant upon the doctrine of creation. . . . Eschatology is similarly basic. Its elimination undermines all of Christian theology.644

Following-on from this, E.E.T. queries how the biblically revealed Eschaton can be understood in the context of a scientific culture. E.E.T. has followed an idea of Friedrich von Schelling, in finding that genuinely indeterminate will, the capacity for good and evil, is the basis for freedom, not rationality _per se_.645 The worldview consequences of truly free choices are that ethics must encompass both theology and science. And, it is argued, that does not work without something like the biblically revealed Eschaton. As Craig C. Hill comments - “Jesus’ ethic is eschatologically grounded . . .”

In E.E.T. it has been argued that scientific advance is the most recent of many processes of the current phase of historically progressive, binary ethical apocalypsis that fulfils the deepest purpose of our world. E.E.T. argues the inner character of space-time is being exposed with persistence, wisdom and mercy, enabling the problem of ethical conflation to be resolved. This defines a clear and positive hermeneutics. Scientifically, it is not impossible to imagine that ethical potentials concealed in Singularity are actualized by the evolutionary expansion and complexification of space-time resultant from the Big Bang. This unique biblical ethical hermeneutics has potential benefits for a positive interfacing of the biblical worldview with science and society. This dissertation has argued for a distinctly different approach but still one that sits comfortably with some summarizing comments recently made by Theology/Science leader, Alister McGrath, in regard to the theological direction of his recent book, _The Order of Things_.

This brief essay on the starting point for a scientific dogmatics runs somewhat counter to many contemporary trends in theology – yet it is an approach that I believe to be entirely legitimate in the light of the nature of theological method that I defend in my ‘scientific theology’ project. When linked with the notion of theological iteration, it offers an approach to theology which is firmly grounded in the earthly realities that we inhabit, while entirely capable of

ascending upwards in a hermeneutical arc to embrace heights of theological reflection.\textsuperscript{646}

J. Wentzel van Huyssteen has developed a different, less specifically biblical method than Craig C. Hill’s or Alister McGrath’s. His method is constructive, taking scientific discoveries about space-time entities to have unearthed valuable new resources for theology. A common feature of the methods recommended by Hill, McGrath and van Huyssteen stands out as a readiness to recursively examine Christian biblical theology in the light of its interaction with scientific discoveries about nature.

I will argue that precisely in the interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the sciences of cosmology and evolutionary biology there are rich resources for retrieving a comprehensive approach to human knowledge that would be neither modernist nor foundationalist. As we shall see much of contemporary cosmology argues for treating the observable universe as a single object, and therefore implies that the universe has intelligibility as a single object of study. This will also imply, however, a comprehensive epistemology that reflects the interdisciplinary nature of this mode of knowledge. In this sense, contemporary cosmology may offer a positive response to the postmodern disillusionment with all the totalizing forms of knowledge and may succeed in pointing the way to a comprehensive epistemology that might actually still enhance and elucidate our interdisciplinary reflection without subsuming it under the dominance of ideological metanarratives. I will also argue that theological reflection is radically shaped not only by its social, historical and cultural context, but also by the biological roots of human rationality. Especially in contemporary evolutionary epistemology we find surprising, if not startling, attempts to facilitate precisely the challenge of a constructive form of postmodernism: the need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the problem of human knowledge. \ldots \ldots . I will accept, at least in a minimalist sense, that all our knowledge, including our scientific and religious knowledge, is grounded in biological evolution. And if human knowledge results from, and is shaped by, evolution then the study of evolution will be of extreme importance for an understanding of the phenomenon of knowledge.\textsuperscript{647}

A similar approach has been developed in Ethical Encounter Theology, showing that the world’s acquisition of knowledge and ethics and its emerging physical complexifications flow monistically from a primal cosmogonic ethical encounter.


Whilst theology has been shown to benefit by referring to the facts discovered by science, each theologian still must discern the strengths of the specific claims of science. It is claimed that, true to itself, theology will be based on a clear understanding of God, removed from scientific fashion. The dissertation demonstrates there is scope for experimentation, in attempting to find “what goes with what”, and “at what cost”. Methodological opportunism helps. The history of science can teach investigative theology that each solid advance has usually to be built on the back of many failed theories. However, this is not an invitation to ad lib.; the theological and philosophical matters at point have serious human social correlates and demand conscientious and balanced consideration. Helpfully, four main criteria have been adopted by John W. Cooper for assessing novel conclusions and re-interpretations arising from theological investigations. Potential new contributions need to:

- reflect the entirety of biblical teaching;
- preserve the doctrines of the Church tradition;
- be consistent with the best philosophy; and,
- remain open to the most recent discoveries of science.

As the first attempt to bring a biblically holistic appreciation of perfect being theism into consonance with current Theology/Science thinking by an ethical articulation method, Ethical Encounter Theology has benefited from the methodological approaches of inter-disciplinary pioneers like Alister E. McGrath, Craig C. Hill, J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and John W. Cooper.

7.03 Biblical theological related features of Ethical Encounter Theology

Ethical Encounter Theology could be classed as a neo-traditional, perfect being Christian, biblical theology that is modulated by the reinterpretation of some key texts, in the light of current scientific and ethical understanding. E.E.T. is not a systematic theology. Length constraints preclude anything more that a short outline of a few of the many theological subjects that are addressed by ethical encounter thinking.

Regarding God’s person, Ethical Encounter Theology has received the traditional biblical theist perspective, summarized by the author of 1 Timothy 6:15b-16a (adap):

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God, the blessed and only Ruler, and King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, who no one has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.649

The E.E.T. worldview is firmly attached to the concept that God alone has always been and will always be omnibenevolent, omnitemporal, omniscient, omnipotent and omnicompetent. All things – reality itself – are taken to derive de novo from God. Every aspect of reality, including good and evil, has always and will always have absolute ontic dependence on God. It is impossible for anyone to war with God, in that it is God’s will that holds all things in being for as long as God chooses. Anything that chooses to differ from God is only permitted to do so by God, for perfect divine purposes. The divine Kingdom or the Rule of perfect right ethics (the m.o.r.e.) irenically encounters anything that is less than right ethical, and this promotes binary ethical apocalypsis, exposing the wrong ethical moiety to judgment and removal by ethical dialysis. God’s right ethical nature is always that of self-giving, including the gift of purifying or demulsifying anything that is ethically emulsified: “God is a consuming fire.” 650

The dissertation argues that our space-time cosmos was called out of a singularity of selfishness by and for an exact divine ethical purification process. E.E.T. has interpreted Genesis 1:2 and 3 and John 1:5, and 9,10 to be inspired revelatory accounts of how the light of divine love and wisdom encountered the proleptic darkness of human selfishness and the depths of deicidal and self-deifying intentions. The visible/tangible world that resulted, carried with it an unseen/intangible environment of information, including right and wrong ethical potentials, inherited from the ethical encounter creation event. It has been argued that physical, chemical and biological evolutionary complexifications were provided for in this fund of unseen information that could be accessed by the ecollation processes of the expanding universe.

The outcome of the divine encounter, the process of binary ethical apocalypsis, and the ethical dialysis are claimed to be eternally significant. For example, these processes open possibilities for ethical self-identification by any human beings who

649 Also, see Isaiah 40:28; etc.
650 Hebrews 12:29; etc. Also see sections 3.04 and 6.08.
might be intent on obeying divine right ethical education. Until humans have self-identified, the Bible analogizes that the whole of the created cosmos is in labor pains (Romans 8:19, 22). The E.E.T. position is that salvation has been made available for all people but can only be accessed by a free human decision to be taught by God. That gracious free choice of personal salvation is founded on and consequential upon the divine salvific action of encountering the singularity of selfishness. In E.E.T. it has been argued that creation and salvation are closely inter-related. This dissertation maintains the divine intent is to rescue whoever wills to be salvaged out of a desperately seriously defective anthropic primal ethical situation that is able to be studied and described in detail since it has continuously conditioned the world from the beginning. It is claimed that, if Ethical Encounter Theology has a facility for explaining complex worldview issues, that is not surprising because our existence has largely been created by ethical encounter.

The dissertation argues that the primal singularity of selfishness contained the right ethical purpose of God towards created things, especially toward human beings who, in the divine image, were to be able to make free moral choices. But these all became bound into a lightless abyss of formless negation by the proleptic (and /or divine prescient) recognition that the world’s only free moral agents would freely choose independence from God and commission every variety of wrong ethics.

The hamartiology described in this dissertation has all sin as failed human ethics, resulting from the will to independence from education by our parent God (parent in the sense that we owe everything to God and especially the dignifying gift of consciousness and the ability to freely choose, as an image of God). Humans introduced the process of conflating right and wrong ethics (sinning). Evil could also be seen as anthropic, in the form of the aggregate force of humanity’s opposition and antipathy towards God. Or, if evil does involve independent beings (like the devil and demons), they may be called into being by human iniquity or at the least empowered by it. E.E.T. recognizes that demonology and angelology are part of biblical theology but it has needed to translate them into wrong and right ethical potentials, as part of its ethical lingua franca, so useful for building consonances with some basic interests of the Theology/Science academy (see sections A.05 and A.10).
It has been argued that the ubiquity of liminality and ambiguity in our space-time universe provides the arena for free informational and ethical choosing, essential for a physical system whose complexifications derive, in part, from ecollations on the information available in unseen ecology. This system has a remarkable degree of independence, considering the physical determinism that sustains it. Developing from the E.E.T. worldview (see section 6.05), it is almost as if the features of our world demonstrate to any observant person: “The painfully slow, wasteful processes of this wonderful world, and its injustices, moral and natural evil, and its death and futility, result from striving to be independent of divine right ethical instruction.”

In E.E.T. it is claimed that the conditions needed to allow free ecollative choices to sustain the evolution of the universe also permit access to wrong ethical potentials in unseen ecology. Thus natural evil can be argued to be a consequence of the free processes that support the binary ethical apocalyses needed for self-actualization of human right and wrong. In that sense, humankind has to take responsibility for natural as well as moral evil. This is seen to carry a message - sin is not a simple matter - its outworking cannot be confined. Sin has wide and unpredictable impacts on the community and on innocents who may have to bear the cost. In the dissertation it is observed that this ethical method finds concord with evolutionary thought, in observing that evil is inherent of the nature of the universe. However, the E.E.T. argument moves beyond that to address the theodicical paradox:

If God is omnicompetent then God is not omnibenevolent!
If God is omnibenevolent then God is not omnicompetent!

In the dissertation it is proposed that without the free actualization of all evil potentials there can be no justice in an ethical dialysis and therefore no future aeon of perfect right ethics. E.E.T. shows that, under the circumstances needed to justly settle the problem of freely-chosen anthropic turpitude, God is both omnicompetent and omnibenevolent. This is a significant contribution to scholarly theodicical thinking (see sections A.02, A.04, A.08 and A.10).

651 In answer to the question: “How could the universe evolve without the horrors of natural selection?” E.E.T. draws attention to the emergent complexifications of energy-matter; and all of the complexities of chemistry and geology that are achieved without natural selection. Most of the universe has been derived by physical, chemical and geo-morphological ecollation. It is proposed that this could also have been the divine means for complexification of living organisms. A progressive eu-ecollation on the good information in the m.o.r.e. would result in a world of perfect biology, without the pain and waste of natural selective mechanisms.
The E.E.T. Christology has focused on the pre-existence of the perfectly unselfish love of God in Christ. The encountering “light” of Genesis 1:3 and John 1:5 has been read as “the light of the world”; 652 the loving wisdom of the perfect human being, the Christ of God. The cosmogonic divine love encounter with the anthropic singularity of selfishness has been interpreted as a prolepsis of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. This was supported by the argument that the authors of Colossians 1:15-20 and Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 (for example) appreciated the pre-creational dynamics of a divine prescience of human sin being responded to by the encountering, kenotic Word of God in Christ. This understanding has conditioned the Ethical Encounter Theology worldview. In that hermeneutics the whole space-time universe emerges and complexifies as a product of the extraordinary kenotic means God applies to address the problem of human alienation. And this is a problem that itself is caused by humankind’s free choice to be independent of divine right ethical teaching. Yet, it is noted, human beings are capable of much better (see section A.07). Acceptance of divine education (knowingly or unknowingly) is argued to result in doubly commendable choices. Firstly, by eu-eccollating and so faithfully actualizing God's Rule (the values of the m.o.r.e.); secondly because that choice will often encounter and elicit binary ethical apocalypsis from the ethically-conflated world.

7.04 Theology/Science related features of Ethical Encounter Theology
This dissertation has argued that structured ethics can provide a lingua franca for improving communication with biblical theology. This claim may not immediately appeal to all Theology/Science workers. There exists a well-entrenched assumption that ethics are an evolutionarily recent epiphenomenon, dancing capriciously on the surface of the main game of anthropic social evolution. The idea that ethics are fundamental to all things would probably be strongly resisted by some Theology/Science researchers. This observation identifies the source of a major empirical/revelational hiatus between the academy of Theology/Science and the main biblical theist faith communities and their theologians. A naïve neo-Darwinian (or naïve neo-Herbert Spencerian) sociobiological explanation for morality is widely accepted.653 A popular view among many inter-disciplinarians is that philosophy, 652 E.g. John 8:12.
ethics and, indeed, religious faith will eventually be out-competed by science and assimilated by it, into a physicalist monism:


As has been shown in this dissertation, any such flavor of scientific intellectual imperialism is likely to be toxic for creative mutual interactions between science and other disciplines. The idea that there is no unique truth content in other disciplines except what can be assimilated and formulated by science could be destructive of the collegiality so necessary for fruitful inter-disciplinary research.\footnote{See comments regarding the mutual respect needed for inter-disciplinary progress on dissertation page xi; and in dissertation sections 1.04, 2.05, 2.08 and 2.12. Dissertation section 6.01 reiterates the warning, published in Nature (London), that science jeopardizes its public support by neglecting worldview thinking.}

Yet authors who are so sure that selfishness, deception and dominance are the only real ethical code, themselves espouse high moral behaviors. They are caught in the dilemma of teaching basic selfishness and survival of the fittest and yet, personally abjuring that sort of behavior! Robert Wright identifies this paradox in the work of two leading biologists:

The practice of that which is ethically best – what we call goodness or virtue – involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed, not so much to the survival of the fittest, as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. (Thomas Henry Huxley, 1893)

Huxley viewed the cosmic process as an enemy that must be combated. I take a similar but more extreme position, based both on the more extreme contemporary view of natural selection as a process for maximizing selfishness, and on the longer list of vices now assignable to the enemy. If this enemy is worse than Huxley thought, there is a more urgent need for biological understanding (George Williams, 1989).\footnote{Wright, R. (1997): 326, paragraphs f and g - reference at dissertation footnote 653.}
This significant quandary has been identified, reviewed and summarized by leading theologian, Langdon Gilkey. Gilkey’s densely reasoned paper was itself reviewed by Holmes Rolston III, highlighting some of the most important conclusions, such as:

Gilkey reinforces this general conclusion [“Nature edges into mind; mind edges into nature”] by turning to press the sociobiological accounts of human nature against the sociobiologists themselves. Their accounts fall into an incoherent dualism. They discover what theology already knew, that the human condition is broken.

Biologists regularly not only urge, but themselves illustrate, the achievement of a nonselfish morality. They exhibit the transcending ethical, evaluative, responsible human world experientially while professing to be reductionists biologically. Gilkey finds . . . “The scope of the theory is thus radically limited, since it cannot include the morality and rationality of the authors themselves.”

As was commented, towards the start of this dissertation: “Methodological reductionist enquiry is never executed by mindless robots alone but invariably requires at least one active human mind . . .” From the viewpoint of an experienced field and laboratory biologist, it has to be admitted that the scientific method of isolating objects for investigation produces results that generally poorly reflect the systems complexity of nature. There is ample scope for developments in less reductionist methods. Higher order relationships can be of critical importance, yet they may be poorly represented in the results of research methods that have had to isolate so as to analyze.

In this dissertation it is claimed that our universe was created as an interim means to solve the problem of evil. This resulted from the pre-creational proleptic (and/or divine prescient) recognition of freely-chosen human independence of divine right ethics (that is the cosmic ethical anthropic problem). It has been shown that, in an entangled universe, all evil can be traced back to wrong ethical human choices. This conclusion is surprisingly similar to that reached by sociobiological reasoning, when it claims that morality was introduced into the universe by H. sapiens. As highlighted in this dissertation’s treatment of monogenic dual sequential anthropogenesis, both


658 Ibid.: 165.

659 See dissertation section 2.08.

the biblical and the scientific evidence point to emergence of farmer/civic Second People’s cultures as the major source of serious sin against God, against prior human cultures, and against the natural environment. This new hamartiology of E.E.T. accepts a challenging theological task, as can be appreciated from some summarizing comments by veteran theologian James Montgomery Boice:

If God created the angelic beings and then later the man and the woman, all with a fullness of virtue and every possible incentive to continue in virtue, as again God undoubtedly did, how could such beings possibly find disobedience to God or opposition to God attractive? To my knowledge no one has ever satisfactorily explained how such things were possible.  

The dissertation proposes a cosmic ethical anthropic problem originated when the primeval presence of a prolepsis of human turpitude circumvoluted all the good potentials of the universe-to-be, into a singularity of selfishness. The divine mission in the world is then to call a universe out of this singularity, so as to patiently actualize all evil potentials in history, in preparation for their just separation at the Eschaton. It is shown that this creates a situation where the continuous flow of natural and moral evils, that is personally harmful and hateful (it is authentic evil), has the positive general advantage (it is also expedient good) of bringing on the Eschaton and the aeon of perfect right ethics. Something of this understanding of the paradox of good and evil is plain in the attitude towards suffering of the authors of many of the epistles of the New Testament.

The Ethical Encounter Theology analysis has drawn attention to a need for distinguishing two sorts of good and evil, called “expedient” good or evil and “authentic” good or evil. The subjective personal or community experience of good or harmful events is authentic good or evil. The objective progression or retarding of the universal, salvific process of binary ethical apocalypsis is expedient good or evil. In the E.E.T. worldview, expedient goodness is progression of the world away from

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662 As has already been discussed, it is the conditions necessary in the world to enable human free choices to ethically collate that opens the door for natural evil. In this view natural evil is an epiphenomenon of the universe’s openness that is needed to solve the problem of moral evil; see dissertation sections 7.03, A.02 and A.04.
663 See next paragraph.
664 Ibid.
665 E.g. Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; 6:4-10; Colossians 1:24; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6; see, also Acts 5:41.
the singularity of selfishness, towards the Eschaton. That is achieved through
ecollative ethical choices that visibly actualize the ethical potentials of unseen
ecology (also, see section A.08).

Expedient evilness is the opposite. That is, anything which opposes the progress of
the salvific process of ethical apocalypsis is expedient evil. This is because it tends to
cause the universe to maintain ethical conflation and even to circumvolute (the
opposite of evolve) towards a singularity of selfishness. Expedient evil causes
circumvolution of the universe’s potentials for physical and ethical actualization, thus
opposing progress towards the Eschaton and the perfect right ethical aeon-to-come.
This E.E.T. analysis has gone some way to bridging the hiatus reported by James
Montgomery Boice (see page 298). This is a significant contribution to scholarly
thinking about the structuring and significance of good and evil.

The distinction established in this dissertation between authentic good and evil and
expedient good and evil contributes a new, biblically-inspired way of explaining the
sociobiologists’ quandary that has been identified by Langdon Gilkey (see page 297).
That is, at the personal level a sociobiologist (or any person) may support the highest
right ethical behavior and be involved in good deeds; yet, professionally, she may
describe nature and society progressing through cruel and evil means. The E.E.T.
analysis is that these two, apparently ethically contrary activities, are both good.
Unselfishness and thoughtfulness towards others is authentic goodness; whilst, the
general exposure of selfishness and evil by actualization in the world is expedient
goodness. Matters become more complicated when an act is both authentically good
and expediently evil, or authentically evil and expediently good. E.E.T. provides a
more sophisticated way for analyzing a range of ethical acts having implications at
different levels of reality. This is part the sustaining ethical structuring hermeneutic of
this dissertation that has opened new possibilities for inter-disciplinary consonance.

Science has no commonly agreed theory as to why the pre-creation Singularity came
to explode as the Big Bang. That is, why it expanded to become our particular
universe of space-time and energy-matter. Science is stretched in trying to understand
what happened to set up the fundamental laws and constants of physics, what sustains
strings, quarks and gluons, neutrons and protons and electrons, and a hundred or so
species of atoms, how so many molecules first became organized as life-forms, how exactly the major phyla evolved, what the laws are that give an ecosystem longevity, and what happened in hominisation and in the genesis of human consciousness and the cultural richness of art and of science itself. Fragments of physical processes are understood that partly address these. Yet current understanding would not exclude an input from ecollation at each of the levels. This dissertation draws attention to the possibilities for acquiring new information by emergent ecollations, through sympathetic resonance with the primal unseen ecology of the universe.

It goes without saying that if basic science has no settled conceptual foundations (as in the paragraph above), questions arise concerning any attempt to make lasting progress in Theology/Science studies. In his recent book, The Self-Evolving Cosmos, cosmologist Steven M. Rosen has attempted a radical new approach to solving the inability of philosophical physics to lay a solid theoretical foundation that the rest of the sciences and philosophy can build on. He comments:

I intend to show that it is not so much an absence of the right theory that has frustrated physicist’s attempts at a comprehensive understanding of the natural world, but the unacknowledged presence of deeply engrained assumptions about the world that are essentially incompatible with the radical non-classical phenomena underlaying it.666

Has not modern science assumed the Cartesian attitude presupposing the division of subject and object, and has this not strongly influenced the conduct of science, making detached ‘objectivity’ the order of the day? I intend to demonstrate that, in the case of contemporary theoretical physics, scientific progress critically depends on shifting from the stance of Cartesian philosophy to a phenomenological posture that surpasses the subject-object split.667

He refers to the problem of philosophical dualism that has been addressed in E.E.T. in terms of tripartite (theology/ethics/science) monism. Choosing from among the alternative possibilities available in the unseen ecology of space-time requires agency and that could endow entities (in a Whiteheadian way) with at least a trace of individuality or subjectivity. The progressive complexification of space-time, by energy-matter actualizations, is accompanied by increasing voluntariness, up to the

667 Ibid.: xiii.
level of advanced subjectivity and individuality displayed by H. sapiens. This dissertation has argued for a monism that goes further than Steven M. Rosen’s. It dialogues with the biblical view that the historical progression of the universe is not only for its own sake, in that actualization of objects is able to be accompanied by progressive ethical self-identification. From the E.E.T. analysis it is argued that this is a visible response to the unseen eschatological imperative for resolution of the primal ethical conflation. Its beginning and its end are connected (see related discussions in sections A.02, A.03 and A.04).

In this dissertation it has been speculated that ethical selection and ethical education in divine perfection represent subtending creative purposes that operate at cosmic, planetary, and personal levels. This is based on the above-mentioned process whereby the world functions to reveal unseen ethical potentials, by actualizing them in the material of history. For example, the self-giving sacrifice, before creation, of the pre-existent Christ remained unseen until the historical actualization (incarnation) of that sacrifice in Jesus Christ, a first century itinerant Jewish rabbi. E.E.T. has asked Theology/Science: “Is this pre-existent/historical ethical high point the source of all that has happened.” Such a personally-experienced biblical truth about God’s immense love can be harmonized with the way singularity can be understood to expose its ethical content during the evolutionary expansion of space-time. The E.E.T. unseen ecology method depicts the m.o.r.e. having all the information needed to call light out of darkness, to cause cooperation of inanimate molecules to produce life, and to informationally fund the hominisation of primates, leading to human cultural riches. Important milestones in the scientific chronology of the history of our world can be made more accessible to traditional theists through the tripartite hermeneutics of this dissertation.

In the Christology developed in E.E.T., a divine ethical driving purpose is claimed to articulate the key cosmogenic events and also give intense meaning to all of human experience. In the E.E.T. method reality is an ethical story. For, when the self-giving love of God encountered the self-centredness of singularity, the cost of this universe was already settled to be the actual crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the perfect human being. E.E.T. claims that this is the transaction that enabled the space-time story to
begin and to progress to anthropization. In the work of the Christ, science and theology and ethics have been shown to unite. The inter-disciplinary ethical consonance developed in this dissertation may enable *Colossians* 1:16-17 to be appreciated in a way that is less of a religious challenge to scientists. That is, that:

all things were created by and for the perfect human being.
Who is before all things, and in whom all things hold together.

A biblical theological view of cosmogenesis has been shown to have consonance with an ethical hermeneutical understanding of the latest advances in Theology/Science. The E.E.T. analysis has been able to give the biblical revelation more traction on the empirical. Ethical bridging of the revelational/empirical gap has also facilitated formulation of cosmological insights in terms that may be more comprehensible to people of other faiths and perhaps to atheists. One strength of the worldview developed by E.E.T. from its scientific and philosophical reflections on Christocentric biblical theology, is its ability to also offer a non-religious, ethical interpretation of the character of ultimate reality that should be accessible to every concerned person.

From its eclectic exploration of reality, E.E.T. has argued that unresisted ethical negation (that is opposition to irenic divine right ethics) naturally implodes. Ultimately it is able to circumvolute good and evil potentials into a singularity of extreme self-centredness – into a miniscule of absolute ignorance of divine goodness. That would be an extremely ethically-charged speck of negative subjectivity. When encountered by the wisdom of supremely self-giving love it expands into a space-time universe, releasing potentials for light, energy-matter, life and consciousness. Yet, even as it expands, it carries the selfish signature of singularity inherent of the freezing vacuum of Space. The main significance of this universe is then not in its physical evolution *per se*. And “evolution” is used conventionally here, in the sense of progressive, freely-chosen actualizations of unseen potentials for being, by emergent complexification and then by natural selection. Rather, the main significance of the expanding universe is in its progressive ethical evolution (here “evolution” is used with the *evolvere* etymology, of an unrolling of a scroll to reveal concealed meaning). This dissertation’s revelational/empirical consonance, expressed here by these two distinct meanings of the term “evolution”, constitutes a significant contribution to inter-disciplinary discourse.
As the universe expands, so potentials for right and wrong ethics - once concealed in no-dimensional singularity - are actualized in the drama of evolving four-dimensional space-time history. For E.E.T., actualized ethics are the divine ethical harvest and the main value of our universe. Materially the universe has no future after the “heat death” that physicists predict to finalize the ground-state activity of space-time (see also 2 Peter 3:10,12). Yet the materially actualized events of the world can be eternally valued, for the irreplaceable ethical story they tell. By analogy, in any good book in any language, it is not the ink and paper, nor the alphabet and syntax that are the purpose. Although necessary and beautiful, these are just the arena that displays the author’s yarn. As with all the best gripping yarns, the story of our universe is a complex human ethical drama. The world’s main “storyline” is about how perfect God causes right to separate from wrong, simultaneously educating the educable to forever avoid entrapment by the ineducable. Such a Theology/Science proposition - that our universe has a coherent ethical storyline from the Big Bang through to the end – could also open conversations with thinkers beyond the biblical fold. Through this, Ethical Encounter Theology has added a significant new approach to the range of hermeneutical methods available to Theology/Science studies.

7.05 Other matters
The research subjects explored by this dissertation are also being actively investigated by research teams around the world. Recently, the importance of the non-material moiety of reality has been highlighted. Lothar Schafer, Diogo Valadas Ponte and Sisir Roy have developed a speculative model of the cosmos whose quantum physics-derived ontology accepts a non-empirical domain of physical reality, consisting of nonmaterial forms rather than material. They say this is: “the ultimate reality because everything empirical is the actualization of its forms”. In a similar, intangible but less extreme way, this dissertation has argued the potentialities of the unseen moiety of space-time reality supply information that can be exploited by the entities of its visible, tangible moiety. E.E.T. has gone further, in considering a biblical basis

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668 In the biblical aeon-to-come people do have free-will but also know how to use it properly, having gained wisdom from the collective human ethics tutorial of space-time. As Ted Peters and Martínez Hewlett have emphasized, the ethics of the eschatological era set the benchmark for right ethical behavior today - reference in dissertation section 4.05.

for the presence of good and bad information (ethically distinct potentials) in the unseen ecology of our universe. It has also developed the concept of ecollation as an explanation for how invisible information is articulated in an ethically-revealing way. The Schafer/Ponte/Roy proposal is that the human brain is: “sensitive to the potentiality waves in the cosmic field”, enabling humans to communicate with the cosmic field. They propose this communication: “can translate into moral ideas and actions”. As with E.E.T., they have attempted to develop a tripartite unity between science, ethics and theology. This can be seen in the summary of the conclusions of their paper:

In analogy with the structure of physical reality, where all empirical phenomena are actualizations of non-empirical forms, it is suggested that the structure of morality, too, is that of a tacit, non-empirical form that actualizes in explicit principles and moral acts through our consciousness. The tacit form is thought to exist in the realm of cosmic potentiality, together with all the other forms that the empirical world actualizes. It can appear spontaneously in our consciousness when needed, offering its guidance to our judgment and free will. Because it does not appear in the form of commandments accompanied by threats, the actions of the tacit moral form define a higher level of morality, similar to that offered by some aspects of Christian teaching, where one acts not out of fear but on the desire to do things right.  

It is interesting to notice some similarities in objectives and in conclusions between the paper of Lothar Schafer, Diogo Valadas Ponte, and Sisir Roy and the research that has been reported in this dissertation. There would appear to be a timeliness in attempts to develop this specific category of inter-disciplinary consonance. E.E.T. is a broader and more structured project, with greater emphasis on theological objectives. Nonetheless it is encouraging to see the cooperative thought experiment of a physical chemist (Lothar Schafer), clinical psychologist (Diogo Valdes Ponte), and theoretical physicist (Sisir Roy) pursuing some of the lines of consonance identified by the research reported in this dissertation.

In a non-academic article about ethics, veteran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg elegantly pulls the threads of religious faith, science and ethics together:

It is a striking oddity of our modern circumstances that the subject of morality and ethics is assumed to be a matter of public significance,

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670 Ibid.: 265, 266.
while the subject of God is thought to be an esoteric matter of interest to theologians and ‘people who go in for that sort of thing’.

It was not always so, and it is very much worth asking how we arrived at this present circumstance, and what might be done about it. Then, at last, our culture may be renewed by understanding that we do not need to choose between nature and religion, and that freedom, far from being limited when ordered to moral authority, is not possible without it.

That nicely summarizes the general philosophy and hopes of this dissertation and it is an appropriate place to end our discussion.

7.06 Final summing-up

It is arguable that some of the many murderous acts of violence in today’s world are partly sustained by a lack of shared ethical understanding. Yet the ethical systems of the three main traditional Abrahamic monotheistic worldviews, for example, share much from some common authoritative texts. The practicality of supporting a common ethical worldview has recently been strengthened by ideas from a new direction. Advances in Theology/Science studies have opened the possibility of access to cosmic ethical reality through a non-fideist, self-critical method. It is timely to tentatively explore some opportunities for a scientifically-informed, biblical hermeneutics of cosmic ethical purpose. This enables development of an ethical cosmogony hermeneutics with a capacity to address difficult issues.

Contemporary inter-disciplinary theology/science studies generally seek mutually useful concordances between the ideas of science, philosophy and theology. They sometimes depend on conditioning worldview perspectives like philosophical naturalism, process philosophy, or design theology. In contrast, the research reported in this dissertation on Ethical Encounter Theology (E.E.T.) has sought for consonances that are conditioned by traditional perfect being theism. Perfect being theism is taken to be mandatory for any consonance that aims to remain articulated with traditional, philosophically monotheist, biblical theology.

Ethical Encounter Theology is mainly shaped by application of critical realist methodology to the interactions of perfect being biblical theology, philosophy, and science. From this, the main good achieved in the history of space-time is

hypothesized to be the exposure of good and evil through binary ethical apocalypsis (b.e.a.). This technical term is used to describe actualization of all good and evil potentials in cosmic history up to the Eschaton. B.e.a. is an extension of an idea of F. W. J. von Schelling. Through its exploration of this method, E.E.T. discovers ethically-coherent reasons for the start, the end, and the evolutionary progressiveness of our universe of space-time.

Scientific discoveries challenge some traditional exegeses of sacred texts because they show our universe is both very ancient and has always been highly contingent. Nature is inherently liminal and in constant flux. Both living and non-living entities have to exist on the edge of extinction. Quantum physics now questions our ability to ever fully grasp reality; uncertainty seems to be basic. Although, from the cosmic to the sub-atomic, science reveals many wonders it also describes a non-luminous, lifeless, and loveless origin and future. Everything significant to humans (including life, consciousness, friendship, family, society, learning, beauty, and sport) is evanescent on the surface of highly localized, crude (and themselves continuously vulnerable) complexifications of energy and matter. Waste, decay, cruelty and futility predominate in nature. The scientific perspective implicitly suggests a revisiting and possible re-reading of biblical texts that traditionally have been interpreted to depict our universe as created naturally good in every way, and as created to be permanent.

The incoherencies between some traditional exegeses of familiar biblical texts and empirical reality have motivated an exploration of the evidence for more permanent and beneficial aspects of reality. To this end, ethical processes are explored as a means for articulating the material facts of science (via an unseen ethical ecology) with a re-interpretation of some traditional biblical theology. For example, the historical accumulation of ethically-revelatory occasions is identified as a feature of our universe that is permanent, good, and even very good. Implicit in this approach is a biblical interpretation of what our universe is actually achieving and what its larger context might be. The E.E.T. theodicy finds moral and natural evil to be normal in a universe dedicated for a comprehensive ethical apocalypsis.

The idea of the biblical Kingdom of God is explored as if it were an embracing matrix that makes virtuous ethics accessible everywhere in the world via an unseen ecology.
The theodicy that develops from this takes the actualization of all evil potentials (including the injustices of undeserved suffering, deprivation and death) to be the historical evidence needed to support the justice of the divine eschatological judgment of evil. It is argued that universal ambivalence is a necessary condition for the freedom required to permit entities to progressively ethically self-actualize. It is argued that this is able to take place within an otherwise predetermined system. The E.E.T. systems approach subtends a compound monist worldview.

In addressing the question: “Why do primal ethical potentials need to be actualized?” it is biblically argued that good became entangled with evil prior to the Genesis 1:3 calling forth of light (light understood from John 1:5 to be the encountering wisdom of divine right ethics). Theological and scientific ideas are linked in exploring an anthropic cause of this primeval conflation of right and wrong ethics. A cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) describes the way the moral failure of humankind has proleptically conditioned the world from its start. In summary, in consultation with biblical textual and scientific studies, E.E.T. describes an encounter with divine perfection as promoting separation of right and wrong ethics from their primordial cosmic conflation. Historical occasions of ethical identification and separation are argued to be specifically salvific, eternally ethically instructive and greatly honoring of God. Those three consequences alone can be said to provide sufficient theological motive for the calling into existence of a universe having the general properties science ascribes to ours.

Terms such as ethical apocalypsis, unseen ecology, ethical dialysis and ecollation are used to interface the work of theologians and philosophers with that of scientists. Ecollation is the process that enables information from unseen ecology to be actualized by material things. For example, in biology an ecological niche is only recognizable through the successful ecollation of a new species. Humans experience something similar when making ethical choices. We actualize right ethics when we eu-ecollate, we mix right ethics with wrong when we mis-ecollate and we actualize wrong ethics by dis-ecollating. These three types of ethical ecollation are used as a way to categorize the means by which unseen potentials for good and evil could influence history. The biblical texts provide a number of objective criteria for the rightness or wrongness of behavioral choices. The cosmic ethical encounter is
biblically interpreted to commence at *Genesis* 1:3. It is projected to finalize by a categorical judgment of all right and wrong after they have been exhaustively actualized by history. Ethical Encounter Theology supports a view that evolutionary history is ethically revelational from start to finish, with nothing disposable. This contrasts with those more naturalistic and panentheist theologies that may require history to be disposable. In connection with this, E.E.T. argues that the ethical chronometer is the true measure of time in our world.

Ecollation is not seen as diminishing the role ascribed in science to biological selection of natural genetic variations, such as those due to mutations and transpositions of DNA. There is no obvious reason why different ways of creating novelty, such as those of classical evolution and others by ecollation could not operate at the same time. E.E.T. highlights the current need to define mechanisms that permit the unseen informational resources of our space-time world to be chosen and actualized by ecollating energy-matter entities. Resonant mutuality is known to science as a means of transferring information. Alternative molecular pathways (e.g. in DNA metabolism or expression) could be where quantum uncertainty might afford the sensitivity needed for tuned receptivity and responsiveness. Mutual recognition by sympathetic resonance could articulate unseen ecology to material things. There are other analogies, for example, with quantum entanglement, with the physics of fields and forces, with processes subtending artistic creativity and even with some records of religious experiences. Sub-liminal influence on behavioral choice is a likely locus for ecollative information transfer. It is known that mild behavioral idiosyncrasies (for example in the Baldwin effect) are capable of spear-heading biological speciation. Ecollative resonances might bias genetic or neurobiological outputs and simultaneously influence the selective circumstances in an organism’s environment. In that way system ecollation could facilitate a genetic or behavioral change and a suitable ecology for it to flourish. In its simplest form, ecollation says there are a finite number of possible choices and the character of these is likely to condition the emergent complexification of self-organizing systems of energy-matter in expanding space-time. This method provides for a theistic but non-interventionist worldview, where God can be readily found but otherwise does not interfere in ethical choosing.
The pre-creational Singularity is largely an unknown quality. E.E.T. explores the concept of a singularity of selfishness, where only perfect divine love can confront and elicit material structure. This ethical genesis, or *creatio ex ethica*, cosmogony is inherently monist as it views the material and unseen ecology moieties of the universe as inseparable products of the encounter of perfect divine ethics with a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of human moral ambivalence. E.E.T. develops the idea that it is a quality of God’s perfect love to encounter ethically-conflated situations. In this, God is not observed to change and there is no war. As the cosmogenic ethical encounter progresses it is seen to prepare the way for a separation of the teachable from any who are obdurately unteachable. From this, E.E.T. derives a salvage soteriology not a renovation soteriology. Culpable unteachableness (evil) is taken to actualize especially clearly where it maliciously victimizes the ethically teachable (good). Biblically, divine eschatological justice guaranties compensation for all who suffer loss because of the world’s antipathy to its encounter with divine right ethics. Once completed, world ethical history would be eternally ethically instructive.

As a Christian theology, E.E.T. perceives the recorded life and work of Christ as divine eu-eccollative perfection encountering worldly mis-eccollation. The cross, resurrection and ascension of the perfect human being decode ethical history, from creation to the Eschaton as encounter → apocalypsis → separation. The physically and temporally localized Christ event is seen to anticipate the dynamics of a comprehensive ethical separation that is to usher humanity into the right ethical aeon-to-come. This is related to Robert J. Russell’s concept of FINLONC, where the physical resurrection of Christ is the first instantiation of a new law of the new creation. Allegiance to and obedience to the perfect human being is the traditional biblical theological way, available for every person to eu-eccollate and to experience that biblically-promised new physical reality.

James W. Sire’s seven worldview criteria have been used to explore E.E.T. Some implications of E.E.T. are considered in regard to theist and non-theist moral theology. Distinctively, E.E.T. gives eternal substance to righteous suffering and to ethical educability (wisdom). It does not attempt to revise systematic theology as such but responds to a pressing need to face the consequences of a scientific and ethical revisiting of biblical theology. The relevance of E.E.T. for dogmatics, discipleship
and ministry is briefly discussed. Its creative findings are not offered as a replacement for sound church doctrine but as a contribution to fostering discourse between the academy of Theology/Science and the academy of conservative biblical theology.

Some traditional doctrines are re-visited by E.E.T. as it seeks to bridge the existing revelational/empirical cognitive gap. A harmonization of creation and salvation theologies is basic in the E.E.T. method, as is its monogenic dual sequential anthropology. The location of references to first peoples in chapters 1 through 6 of *Genesis* could offer new perspectives in inter-racial, feminist and environmental theologies. In its re-interpretations E.E.T. applies a “whole Bible” hermeneutics that should retain wide ecclesial appreciation. Readings have been elucidated in the light of the best Hebrew and Greek texts and commentaries. The interpretations derived in E.E.T. are, hopefully, more accessible in the contemporary world where society is increasingly scientifically literate and technology conditioned.

Ethical Encounter Theology is a scientifically informed perfect being theism. It argues that biblical faith in a perfect God can be defended as an intellectually justifiable position in an age of science and technology. This proposition finds biblical textual warrant, it is made as logically coherent as possible, and it has advantages in affording refutable explanations for some difficult scientific and ethical data. Opportunities have been opened by this dissertation for comparative studies that use similar ethically structured methodology to explore other worldview perspectives. A high aim would be to assist disparate worldviews to converse irenically and perhaps to even begin to share ethical memes, without any need to directly question their respective (often politically tender) doctrinal positions. Such an outcome would accord with the theme of the E.E.T. method of this dissertation, in its exploration of some inter-disciplinary ideas about what things in our universe can be shown to do, more than what they might be said to be.
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A.01 Introduction

In a wide-ranging worldview investigation, such as that of Ethical Encounter Theology, questions are certain to arise concerning long-standing theological and philosophical problems and paradoxes. Many of the matters researched for this dissertation have been the subject of intelligent and persevering enquiry for at least three millennia. Some of the issues raised are complex and confusingly interconnected, touching on profound and sacred matters that can be of great personal and social significance. Questions concerning the purpose of the universe and of our lives, the nature of divine knowledge, the problem of evil, the ontological status of spiritual beings, the types of textual interpretation, how God may operate in nature, the logical status of ethics, how souls may be saved and the extent of such salvation, all make demands on theological philosophy. Both eclecticism and precision are required in an endeavor to avoid the dangers of fideism, scientism, and of premature and/or circular arguments.

The observations and arguments presented in the following nine sections may be useful to readers who are interested in pressing the E.E.T. argument further into some of the most challenging realms of analytical philosophy, and of Theology/Science research, and of what is usually called spirituality. These essays afford new perspectives, some that are argued to support the inter-disciplinary consonance of Ethical Encounter Theology and some which outline questions that require further research.
A.02 Divine creational teleology and “vale of soul-making” theodicy

The Ethical Encounter Theology worldview observes our world as an arena where divine right ethics meets with all other reality, to provoke comprehensive binary ethical apocalypsis. Biblical theology admits that encounters with perfectly self-giving divine love provoke exposure of hidden ethical causes. Ethical exposure teleology accords with the liminal, uncertain and disposable natural universe of science. Creatio \textit{ex ethica} cosmogony differs from well-known \textit{creatio continua} (a.k.a. \textit{creatio ex materia}) and \textit{creatio ex nihilo} models. Whilst Ethical Big Bang creation is not necessarily the same as the Physical Big Bang of scientific cosmology, it is more than a metaphysical speculation that our specific type of empirical universe was created by an encounter between divine love and a prolepsis (anticipatory revelation) of creaturely selfishness. Theologically, it harmonizes with a range of biblical texts concatenated by important pericopae describing the pre-existence of the divine supreme sacrificial act. Scientifically, it interprets the cosmic anthropic principle as evidence of a cosmogonic prolepsis of human nature, arguably communicated by cosmic quantum entanglement. Creation and salvation theologies are able to be ethically integrated, with ethical time ultimately more significant than chronological time. Progressively accumulating apocalypses (reifications) of good and evil build a basis for the public justice of eschatological divine judgment. From a divine perspective, our universe could be said to be good because it has mediated the progress of:

ethical encounter $\rightarrow$ ethical exposure $\rightarrow$ just ethical separation $\rightarrow$ real life,

as an effective means of salvaging all that wills to love and obey God.

This teleology differs from one where evil is divinely designed to educate humans in the consequences of selfishness. That approach is central to “vale of soul-making” theodicies, such as the one made well-known by John Hick (see pages 43, 270 and 272; and footnotes 25 and 71).

\footnote{672 Whilst the basic idea can be traced back to Irenaeus the term “vale of soul-making” seems to have originated in a letter from the poet John Keats to G. and G. Keats in 1819. This category of theodicy is usually contrasted with “the fall” or “original sin” theodicy attributed to Augustine of Hippo. The theodicy of E.E.T. offers a third alternative, where divine ethical encounter elicits binary ethical apocalypses that subtend the justice of a comprehensive ethical dialysis, and are thus able to fairly salvage what is right-ethical. Biblically, the grand purpose of this aeon is the total apocalypsis (empirical exposure) of ethicality (e.g., see \textit{Matthew} 13:40-43; \textit{John} 5:22). In this process, ethical history reaches completion in parallel with the evolution of the physical possibilities of our universe.}
properties of our universe (which, for example, subtend the reliability of the work of science and technology) allow continuous human moral education. However, in E.E.T. that is argued to be secondary to nomocratic exposures of right and wrong ethics, accumulated in conjunction with complexifying and emergent cause-and-effect natural evolution. Comprehensive ethical exposure enables wrong-ethical causes to be justly quarantined. The dissolution of this world’s characteristic ethical conflation (where natural and moral evils appear as inextricably emulsified with the good) is the entrée to the biblical right-ethical aeon-to-come. After an idea of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775-1854), it is argued that salvage by ethical separation is the primary divine teleology in our world.

Liminal qualities within physical, biological, cognitive, and social realities allow indeterminism and the freedom of choice that subtends both emergent evolution and culpable ethical choosing. The indeterminacy that allows for evolutionary emergence and binary ethical apocalypsis also permits stochastically dispersed consequences to harm innocents. Biological natural selection depends on chance and culpable choice making. Its tight causal chains may be obscured by stochastic factors and by the waste and inequity of natural and moral evils. Biblically the logical connections of this vast complex of causes and effects are made clear Eschaton. There the transformation of humankind, by quarantining of all wrong-ethical causes, finalizes our world’s primary teleology. History is suffused with opportunities for partial ethical education. The persistent, culpable refusal of divine right-ethical education by a proportion of people is an obstacle to vale of soul-making theodicy but is meaningful in the E.E.T. worldview. Here, it is argued that total moral education is only feasible post-eschatologically, after ethical dialysis. After the Eschaton, the conserved history of our world may demonstrate to the willing the completed cause-and-effect matrix and the perfectly wise, divine judgment of this aeon.

Bibliically, this is addressed by divine compensatory justice. It also instructs humanity that wrong-ethical choices have random and unpredictably dispersed consequences, often with bad impacts on innocents. To what extent does God have knowledge of stochastically dispersed effects, sometimes called “bad luck” and “good luck”? The E.E.T. approach enables this to be addressed in terms of resonances between tangible effects and unseen ecology (see section A.07). Both causal and stochastic effects draw on unseen potentials that pre-exist, in either the m.o.r.e. or the u.r.s.t. What is surprising to humans need not be a surprise to God (biblically affirmed in, e.g. Ecclesiates 1:9).

As something like an album of humanity’s kindergarten years that would be instructive and interesting for those who populate the biblical, right-ethical aeon-to-come.
Ontologically, E.E.T. does attribute the requirement for a liminal, evolving, anthropic type of universe to humankind’s basic intransigence to divine education. The biblically-concordant, ethical dialysis teleology developed from *creatio ex ethica* simply reflects the divine process of lovingly managing the specifics of that unfortunate ontological reality. Post-eschatologically, salvaged humans would be fully amenable to uninterrupted divine education and the aeon-to-come can be argued to be filled with the ambience of this biblical reversion in ontological reality.

In summary: E.E.T. does not depend upon vale of soul-making teleology because the tight causal chain necessary for efficient moral education of humans is often obscured in the conflicted streams of natural and moral evils. It is acknowledged that the completed history of our universe will have full pedagogical value in the post-eschatological aeon-to-come. Our universe’s inherent uncertainty is understood as an arena where concealed ethical causes can be freely and progressively actualized without divine coercion, in association with the freely-emerging and complexifying evolution of energy-matter. The exhaustive actualization of concealed ethics provides the evidence required for a just judgment and dialysis of the conflated ethics of this aeon.\(^{675}\) Encountering, exposing and justly separating all concealed conflagrations of right and wrong ethics is argued to be an impetus of divine love working to salvage all that wills to respond lovingly. These ethical and scientific perspectives add meaning to the accounts of eschatological judgment and separation found in the Bible.

The full history of our world could provide a narrative on the comprehensive actualization of unseen ethical causes. It could teach the justice of separation that results from the encounter of divine love with anthropic selfishness and its decidal and self-deifying resistance to divine education. Salvage of the right-ethical through the publicly demonstrated justice of their separation from the fully exposed causes of evil can be recognized as the “very good” process at the heart of what the Bible refers to as “this aeon”. Education in divine right-ethics is an all-important process but, in this aeon, it is ancillary to the processes of comprehensive ethical encounter that accumulate the binary ethical apocalypses required for a just ethical dialysis.\(^{676}\)

\(^{675}\) E.g., see footnote 339.

\(^{676}\) The author of *Romans* 8:19 and 22 depicts this ethical separation as the parturition of all parturitions; wherein the nativity of the right-ethical children of God is the telos of this whole aeon.
Despite the secondary role of education in this aeon, it may still be worth considering if well-known objections to the idea that evil is divinely-ordained for progressively improving human souls have any traction on creatio ex ethica. This is briefly explored here by referring to questions analytical philosophers ask about Irenaen/Hickian divine pedagogy teleology and vale of soul-making theodicy:

(1) Does “vale of soul-making” compromise the omnipotence of God who appears to find it necessary to use a harsh and crude instrument to morally-educate creatures?

(2) Does it impute immorality to God who is made responsible for the existence of evil rather than human beings?

(3) Do not the evils it argues to be necessary for human moral formation include an inordinate amount of apparently pointless death, waste, pain and suffering?

(4) Might not John Hick’s “epistemic distance” from God - said to enable moral education - be equally likely to inhibit moral learning from God’s goodness?

(5) Is not the universalism of John Hick’s soul-making teleology dissonant with traditional biblical theology and also in conflict with the philosophical concept of human freedom to choose?

(6) Would not the proposal that moral self-improvement is driven by evil be dissonant with biblical theology?

(7) Where is the evidence that the world’s evils have consistently resulted in measurable soul-making or lasting moral improvement in humankind?

(8) Even if evil could morally improve humans, what would limit the amount of evil that could still be said to be consistent with divine omnibenevolence?

Point (1) does not bear directly on E.E.T. where it is not argued that God uses evil to educate people. It has evil arising from human rebellion against divine instruction, a proposition related to Augustinian “fall” theodicy. Yet E.E.T. envisages no corrupting ancestral fall. Instead it sees a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of historic human self-deifying and selfish choices conditioning our space-time/energy-matter universe from its start. The famous Genesis 3 “fall” account is interpreted as a simple (but profound) parable for a complex subtending reality. A progressive unfolding of divine revelation accords with texts such as Romans 16:25-26. The divine, loving motive is

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677 That is, criticisms of vale of soul-making teleology.
discovered to be the salvaging of what is godly out of the world’s ethical conflation. As the world’s history accumulates it is able to contribute, albeit inconsistently, to human self-understanding. However, those educational possibilities do not limit divine teleology to the use of evil to train humans. Because it gives teleological priority to the divine ethical encounter/separation paradigm over evil as pedagogy, E.E.T. avoids the first criticism of vale of soul making theodicy.

Point (2): Is it possible for any theodicy to escape from making omniscient, omnipotent deity responsible for evil? What is the nature of God’s pre-creational knowledge that humans will do moral evil? There is biblical textual evidence that God knows how divine love deals with such situations (e.g. *1 John* 3:8b; *Revelation* 13:8b). To sustain the E.E.T. theodicy it may be sufficient for omniscience to know that an intermediary, liminal construct like this aeon will efficiently reveal all wrong ethical causes for judgment and separation (as in, e.g. *Luke* 12:5). The biblical God cannot look on evil (*Habakkuk* 1:13; also see *1 Timothy* 6:16) and may simply know that all ungodliness will be revealed and nullified prior to the life that is really life (*Matthew* 7:14; *Mark* 10:30; *Luke* 21:19; *John* 10:28; *1 Timothy* 6:19; etc.). This depends on God’s faith that the divine presence will ensure that everything ungodly will be revealed as nothingness before an eternity of real life starts. If such is the case, it can be argued that divine ignorance of evil is not a deficiency in omniscience. This connects with the Barthian idea that everything God does not choose is, by definition, the evil of nothingness. This is consistent with a New Testament perspective that constantly focuses beyond personal loss, pain and suffering (e.g. *Acts* 16:23-25; *Romans* 5:3; *Hebrews* 12:2-10; 13:14; *James* 1:2; *1 Peter* 1:4-6; 4:12-13; 5:10). Subjected to the very worst of evils believers are encouraged to look always to God’s glory in the perfect aeon-to-come and to patiently endure (e.g. *Romans* 2:4; 9:22; *1 Timothy* 1:16b; *2 Peter* 3; 9,15; *Revelation* 13:10).

It can be argued God is ultimately responsible but blameless because divine wisdom unfailingly diverts evil to good uses in this aeon and guarantees just compensation in the evil-free, real life of the perfectly right-ethical aeon-to-come. For example, in

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678 “Think now, history has many cunning passages, contrived corridors and issues, deceives with whispering ambitions, guides us by vanities.” T. S. Elliot, *Gerontion* (1920). Also, see page 337.
679 Old and New Testament texts richly support a theological interpretation that God applies severe means only as a last resort.
680 See page 45.
E.E.T. it is argued dialetheically that the actualization of the authentic evils of this world brings on the Eschaton and thus it is also an expedient good.\(^{681}\) This theodicical argument is part of the larger proposition of E.E.T. teleology – that right-ethical encountering of wrong ethics and of conflated ethics is inherent of divine perfection and of the divine mission and hence is characteristically entirely benevolent, resulting in priceless gains for humankind in the aeon-to-come (see section A.08).\(^{682}\)

Personal or cultural experiences of evil can turn out to be an ultimate good (see page 299); authentic good and evil and expedient good and evil can be distinguished; and dialetheism (two contradictory truths) can be argued to characterize the ethics of much of the world’s history.\(^{683}\) Humans are allowed to experience various evils by God because evils must be actualized to allow a just cleansing of this aeon. That then brings in the perfect aeon, where divinely promised compensations ameliorate any self-pity (for a Christian perspective on this see, e.g. Hebrews 12:2). E.E.T. argues that pain, suffering and waste are inevitable in a world where all hidden wrong ethics are progressively elicited for divine judgment and removal. The infinite good of this is that it accumulates to salvage humankind (or “save the world” in John 12:47b) into an improved future in a renewed creation. Altruistic significance and eternal value are assigned to the unjust suffering and loss that so many millions have to bear. This is for as long as our evolving and ecollating, anthropic universe groans under the ethical conflation of humanity’s independence from divine right ethics. The shocking moral story in Luke 16:19-31 can be argued to make good sense if read in this context.\(^{684}\)

Point (3): E.E.T. argues it is sufficiency of freedom to progressively reify all unseen ethical realities in our liminal world that permits a just eschatological judgment and salvage of right-ethical causes from their conflation with wrong. Natural evil is then an epiphenomenon of the necessary liminality of a world of indeterminate properties permitting exhaustive ecollative choices of right and wrong to enable moral evil to be justly removed. John Hick suggests that even severe and apparently meaningless natural evil is divinely designed for soul-making and there are some biblical texts that

\(^{681}\) For different reasons, biologists claim nature’s cruelties are necessary; see section A.04.

\(^{682}\) It would seem appropriate for what is here identified as God’s inherent mission of right-ethical encountering to be part of The Doctrine of God in Systematic Theology texts (see page 126).


\(^{684}\) See also, Romans 8:18-22.
may give grounds for that (e.g. Revelation 15:9b;11b). In addition, a major biblical position is that divine compensation is promised for those who suffer unjustly (e.g. Luke 6:20-26; 16:25; 1 Peter 1:4). Despite all of this, in everyday experiences natural evil surely remains the biggest challenge to trust in God’s omniscience, omnipotence and justice. The teleology derived from E.E.T. research submits an inter-disciplinary argument for God’s goodness through it all.

The inter-disciplinary research of E.E.T. aims to build a bridge between traditional biblical perfect being theism and recent progress in Theology/Science studies. To be authentic it has had to treat the major textual sources seriously. With reference to point (4), concerning John Hick’s valuation that “epistemic distance” from God is essential for human moral improvement, biblical theologians may have to differ on the basis of much biblical textual evidence (e.g. Romans 1:18-20). Biblical textual issues separate E.E.T. from several aspects of vale of soul-making theodicy, for example, in regard to points (5) and (6). Much could be said about questions raised in (7) and (8). The presence of evil in the world has led to widespread interest in theodicy. There have been long-standing debates within the world’s religions and among philosophers about how God could allow death and so much waste, pain and suffering. That also involves debates on the nature of right ethics and wrong ethics and what can be done via the channels of law, mercy, and education to improve things. The E.E.T. perspective on all this ethical dialectic is that it stimulates behaviors that will help finalize the universal process of binary ethical apocalypsis. It is argued that without an exhaustive completion of b.e.a. there can be no transition to the biblical real life of the aeon-to-come. Progress towards this immense good, even by such painful and wasteful means, is argued to be the major goal of our universe.685

In addition, individuals may do more than just patiently eu-ecollate. Active participation in the divine ethical encounter process (page 145) is an option. Willingness of individuals to risk their own lives by irenically encountering evil (biblically recognized at, e.g. Revelation 12:11c) exemplifies, in E.E.T. terms, unseen, kenotic right ethics apocalysed in response to reified wrong or conflated ethics.686

685 E.g., see Acts 3:19-21; 2 Peter 3:12a.
686 Movements, such as Mahatma Gandhi’s satya graha (truth-insistence) in early 20th century India, have unseen ethical theological substrata that are more universal and more durable, according to E.E.T., than the urge (legitimate and laudable though it is) to be free from cruel colonial dominion. Contemporary examples are found in the work of Theresa of Calcutta, Mary MacKillop, etc.
In summary: some of the well-known objections made by analytical philosophers to vale of soul-making teleology/theodicy are discussed in terms of the *creatio ex ethica* teleology/theodicy of E.E.T. Most of these objections, especially that concerning the immorality of God in using evil as an instrument to improve human morality, have no traction on the specific, divine ethical apocalyptic teleology that subtends *creatio ex ethica*. Basically, E.E.T. observes our universe as well structured to enable all resistance to divine lessons in love to be justly removed, so that real life can start for all who responsively love and listen to God. Resistance to divine love is exposed by its rebellion against divine education. Education *per se* is for the willing; no amount of education can remove an obstinate decision to rebel. The ethical encounter process within our universe is abundantly accompanied by pedagogical possibilities; however, humankind can only be properly impacted by the perfection of divine education after removal of whatever subverts the process. Hence, our world’s primary response to the pedagogical process of divine right-ethical encountering has to be binary ethical apocalypsis and quarantining of everything culpably ineducable.

Perhaps this is where misconceptions could arise? The perfectly loving, predestined purpose of divine right-ethical encounter is pedagogical. In advancing towards that, ethical conflations must first be separated to permit all that is culpably ineducable to be quarantined (see part 2 of section 6.05). In contrast to vale of soul-making theodicy, E.E.T. soteriology does not depend on the human achievement of learning from the divine lesson of this world’s evil. It has salvation depending upon each person’s choice to sincerely seek and learn from God and so become identified as an eternally-chosen child of God (also, see sections A.03, A.04, A.10). The activity of divine grace (e.g., see pages 30, 128, 143, 180, 243, 254, 271 and 365) is arguably more evident in eu-ecollative persuasions than in the human works processes seemingly required to progress vale of soul-making teleology (see footnote 71).

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688 For inter-disciplinary debate, it may be helpful to have a working definition of divine grace. In E.E.T. terms, divine grace can be defined as unmerited access for ethically-conflated persons to the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.; i.e., the all-embracing and close and within *Basileia Theou*). Grace is an initiative of divine mercy, constantly inviting ethically-compromised persons to eu-ecollate, i.e. to sympathetically resonate, with the Rule or Reign of God that is very close to them. This ethical theological interpretation parallels some scientific processes and may help to place “grace” as part of a wider inter-disciplinary debate.
A.03 Prolepsis and divine prescience compared with “middle knowledge”

In the ethical encounter process God does not have to progressively anticipate the future in a step-by-step way like that of the middle knowledge (Molinist) process. In E.E.T., “prolepsis” refers to the inherent anticipatory features of our world that allow its future to resonate with its present. It is argued that this may be a property of the quantum-entanglement of all potentials in Singularity, and/or of a sympathetic resonance of the temporal with non-temporal potentials within unseen ecology. Another term, “divine prescience” is applied to a process that may accompany natural prolepses or may be an alternative to them. This is why the phrase “prolepsis and/or divine prescience” is used. The term divine prescience reflects a biblical understanding of the authority of the omniscient perfect being to embrace our temporary universe from start to finish (e.g. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:2, 3; Revelation 1:8). The biblical God has access to all of history, unlike a Molinist understanding of God who participates in the present and comprehensively anticipates all that could possibly happen in the future (i.e., time contains God, who participates in making history). Professor John B. Cobb Jr argues that Molinists are panentheist process thinkers, often without knowing it. They argue God cannot be the all-powerful and all-knowing being described in traditional perfect being theism and negotiated in E.E.T. For most Molinists, God exists with creatures, suffering and learning but predicting the future more effectively and so able to lure humans towards right-ethics. This, “vulnerable, temporal God” view has some current popularity but it is not biblically traditional (see, especially John W. Cooper’s Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers - 2006) and it is beyond the ambit of the main question addressed by E.E.T. research.

The major biblical philosophical problem in regard to divine knowledge is how God can logically know our future (as in, e.g. Isaiah 41:22, 23; 46:9,10; Psalm 139:4; Matthew 26; Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2; 20) AND judge moral responsibilities that could only be justly assessed if our ethical choices were freely-made (as in, e.g. Acts 10:42; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 12:23; and 1 Peter 4:5). The author of Romans 9:14-23 strives to explain the public justice of the

689 The scientia media or middle knowledge analysis of divine knowledge has been dated back to Luis de Molina (1535-1600).
690 Personal communication, 31st March 2009.
691 See page xxi.
judgments of a Judge who also has authority over everything, including the future. The text effectively reiterates the biblical truth that God will have God’s magnificent way and need answer to no one (see also, Job chapters 38-41; Psalms 75:7; 115:3; 135:6; Romans 11:32-26). All that God does is faithful and just (e.g. Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 9:7, 8; 92:15). Several Psalms imply that God is both Judge and Appeal Court. God is the only being who has complete freedom and, indeed, reality itself depends on the responsibility of this perfectly loving being. 692 Despite these supra-philosophical biblical revelations, there are still many features of traditional perfect divinity that can be argued to be philosophically coherent with the empirical observations of science. Seeking to express that theology/philosophy/science consonance as an ethical worldview has been the major task of E.E.T. research.

E.E.T. argues the free-will/divine determinism paradox in terms of the accessibility of God’s perfect creation - the biblical Basileia Theou, or the m.o.r.e., the matrix of right ethics - from within the unseen ecology of our universe. It is argued that the wisdom inherent of this unseen dimension of reality contributed to creation and is constantly drawn-on during the evolutionary emergences of nature, up to the Eschaton. By actualizing right-ethics (eu-ecollating right-ethical potentials from unseen ecology) complexifying entities incorporate part of the goodness of God’s primal plan for creation. By loving and obeying God, humans sympathetically resonate with pre-existent and eternal right-ethical personal identities. 693 At a specific time and place a person can choose for God and inherit a new identity that was always known to God. 694 This approach is facilitated by the E.E.T. worldview, with its tripartite monism of science, ethics and theology, where the pre-existent in unseen ecology is made part of empirical history by means of ecollative choices. Even more significantly, humans (evolving latterly in the spatio-temporal, emergent, ecollative complexifications of cosmic history) are able to consciously choose to eu-ecollate and accept sympathetic resonant identity with what pre-existed and is eternal.

This way of understanding the predestination/free-will problem can be analogized with basic biochemistry. Ribosomes of pre-determined nucleotide sequences

692 The resulting interplay between God’s intangible eternal wisdom and the errors of this tangible world is poetically illustrated by the author of 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, 12; see page xv.
693 See, e.g. 2 Corinthians 5:17 for a Christian perspective.
694 This contention is supported by arguments in the following pages.
encounter a range of freely-moving amino acids and other molecules in the cytoplasm of a living cell. Numerous amino acids are linked together as a protein by these ribosomes and thus participate in several billion years of RNA coding history. The fate of individual amino acid molecule is not predestined; what specific protein they will be synthesized into, on particular ribosomes, is. In other words, the outcome is determined but incorporation of specific participants is fungible. Returning to theology, E.E.T. argues God coded all the right-ethical outcomes from the start but permits creaturely enacting of them during the history of our world. Choosing right-ethically incorporates a chooser into eternal divine history. Choices made beyond divine providence have no resonance with the pre-determined aeon-to-come (e.g. Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28; also, see page 339). It is biblically logical that the complex history of the world’s great diversity of misecollations is irrelevant to God (e.g. Matthew 7:13,14; 13:30). As a rebellion against divine love, sin identifies with the Barthian nothingness. Therefore, the ecollative choice for humans is stark: sympathetically resonate with the pre-destined right-ethical future or of God-less nothingness. This is a somewhat radical solution to the old paradox. However, it is founded on traditional biblical and ethical theology, is philosophically coherent, and builds on ecollative processes analogous to those science has shown to be implicit in physical, chemical, and biological emergences.

Micro-exegetical insights from experts in Ancient Greek usage are also helpful. For example, Verlyn D. Verbrugge, in his commentary on the New Testament use of kaleoo, kleesis and kleetos, suggests that Romans 4:17b shows God’s invitation or call means a new and different existence for a person who responds.696 Ann Nyland’s translation and her notes on this pericope are also illuminating:

God, who makes the dead come to life and summons (kaleeo - calls or invokes or invites) the things which do not exist into existence (literally meaning that the things which do not exist are called on the grounds that they do exist).697

A fungible person in our liminal and uncertain universe of chance, mischance and death is invited to exist in a permanent, pre-determined way. Their positive response leads to a new identity of predestined peace with God, as a beloved family member.

695 Termed mis-ecollation in E.E.T.
696 NTW, 642.
697 TS, 379.
This insight is argued to assist with the interpretation of Romans 8:28-30, which is an important source text for theological thinking about predestination:

We know that everything works in conjunction for good with those who love God, with those who are invited in accordance with his proposals (prothesin).698 Because, the people that God foreknew he also predestined to share the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn of many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also invited; those he invited, he also made right with him; those he made right with him, he also gave his splendor.699

Such foreordained divine purposes are part of the Bible’s unseen - but close and within – Basileia Theou, also referred to as the m.o.r.e. or matrix of right ethics. In our temporary world of ethical conflation, people who love God are invited to be part of an eternally-predestined, accessible but unseen right-ethical reality. By accepting the invitation, they are identified as new creatures, incorporated in an eternal creation. Having self-identity with a pre-determined divine reality, these people are now marked as predestined (e.g. Ephesians 4:30b). From being self-dependent in a temporary world that is destined for dissolution, they accepted a new, immortal identity in the pre-existent divine plan. The New Testament emphasizes the significance of this invitation to become one of those predestined for eternal life (e.g. Matthew 22:1-14; Mark 2:17; 1 Peter 2:9,10; Revelation 3:20; 19:9; 22:17).

This raises the question: “How is it possible for someone to become predestined at a point in time?” It seems to involve a confusion of definitions. However, it is argued that this has meaning because divinely-predestined eternal identities are in potentia, whereas the temporal, in actualis persons who are invited to find themselves in those identities, are fungible (see especially, Matthew 22:8, 9; also, 1 Corinthians 15:19). It is through accepting the divine invitation that an interchangeable person takes up a unique, new identity, always recognized by God (e.g., see Ephesians 1:4). The New Testament has many descriptions of the transformation of personal priorities after such inter-aeonal identity acceptance (see, e.g. Matthew 10:34-39; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; Romans 6:19-22; Ephesians 2:1-5, 19-22). These ethical processes

698 The use of the same word in Ephesians 3:11 helps to fill out the meaning (prothesin ton aionon, purpose of the ages, i.e. divine teleology). In E.E.T. context, our temporary space-time universe is accompanied by the unseen eternal plan of God, including pre-ordained roles for those in this world who will to love God. Sympathetic resonance with the m.o.r.e. has eternal significance: those willing to obediently recognize eternal God are eternally recognized by God (e.g. Luke 12:8, 9).
699 TS, 388.
parallel biological speciation processes. Behavioral leading into a pre-existing, unseen ecological niche results in an organism being subjected to new selection pressures and so acquiring new adaptations with modified DNA (see section 4.10).

The ethical re-identification process can be loosely analogized with common experiences. For example, two young babies sometimes become separated from their birth family and are raised in another family. Later in life they may find out about their origin and receive an offer to return to their original family. One child accepts the invitation and assumes their ancestral identity, with its different history, present and future. The other child declines the offer – finding their destiny in their adoptive family. E.E.T. argues that New Testament pre-destination theology can be interpreted in a similar way. The intimate embrace of the eternal Basileia Theou on the seen and unseen ecologies of our temporal universe permits the apparent contradiction of the availability of new identities that were divinely pre-destined, to be freely accepted or freely declined at a point in time. ⁷⁰⁰

Yet there is possibly a contrary aspect to it. Other New Testament texts imply that human ethical choices can reveal our deepest character (e.g. Matthew 13:1-30). If the two different biblical scenarios are combined, the result is something like a quantum-entangled paradox. Here our choices cause us to find our predetermined identity because the unseen presence of that eternal identity has influenced our character and hence our choices. In everyday terms, it can be argued the nature of life in this world assists each person to discover who they really eternally are. ⁷⁰¹ Some of the many eschatological consequences flowing from the logic of that process were developed in an interesting and accessible way by C. S. Lewis in The Great Divorce (1945).

This subject has been worked on for over a millennium. Despite the impenetrable aspect that remains, the E.E.T. worldview provides a biblically-consonant way to view the voluntarism/libertarianism discussions of analytical philosophy. In particular, despite the high degree of determinism inherent of our world, it is argued that many people subjectively experience voluntarily accepting or declining a divine

⁷⁰⁰ There is considerable disagreement among theologians as to what happens to the soul of a person who mis-eccollated and missed-out on a new, pre-destined identity in the Basileia. Are they to be eternally part of God-less nothingness? Do some or all get a second offer? See section A.10.

⁷⁰¹ This biblical theme is especially clear at Revelation 22:11.
invitation. This is a compatibilist position. On the other hand, E.E.T. also observes the traditional biblical theological teaching that eternally-predestined identity is acquired by each person who genuinely chooses to accept the divine right-ethical invitation. That doctrine is more of a determinist position. What is certain, in both compatibilist and determinist aspects of human ethical action people are never free to change the world’s divinely predestined telos. Freedom is limited to accepting/rejecting a place in the divine plan. Despite the rich and intriguing diversity of personal and cultural experiences (plus some apparent randomness), it is argued that life persistently constrains humans to either eu-ecollate toward predestined perfection or to mis-ecollate toward a God-less nothingness. The E.E.T. paradigm implies that ethical ecollation is the great leveling principle applied to all people.

External to such biblically-coherent reasoning, scientia media or middle knowledge presents a different approach to the omniscience/free-will problem. As discussed earlier, Molinism is a much-debated area of analytical philosophy. It has also assumed great importance in more general theological speculations and is of considerable current interest to the influential Open Theism and The Emerging Church schools of practical theology. In the kind of “soft incompatibilist” metaphysical reasoning valued there, we again find a questioning of how the perfect being could possibly know all things and yet could still facilitate genuine human freedom to choose. This is typically argued as part of a theological philosophy critique of the practicality of the divine omniscience aspect of perfect being theism theory, similar to process philosophy critiques.

Philosophers may be categorized as hard determinist incompatibilists, libertarian incompatibilists, or compatibilists, depending on how they verify or refute the proposition that divine omniscience and human free-will are incompatible. Middle knowledge compatibilist arguments contribute an “epistemological ecology” of God. As well as God’s pre-volitional Natural Knowledge of every necessary rule and relationship, and God’s post-volitional Free Knowledge of how God responds in all circumstances, divine epistemological ecology includes a third type of knowledge that is temporally located between these two (hence the descriptor middle knowledge).

702 E.E.T. says they are either eu-ecollating or mis-ecollating on unseen primal realities.
Middle knowledge is argued to enable a panentheistic sort of divinity to respond to the almost infinite range of free choices that are made, or could be made, by humans. Divine anticipatory knowledge is said to include “counter-factuals” (such that God knows how divinity responds to every free choice that is never made). That is to say, God knows everything which could happen and exactly how God would respond to achieve the divine telos, which is thus pre-determined.

Middle knowledge claims to be compatibilist because it has God knowing everything that can be known and also allows human libertarian freedom. A disadvantage is that, so as to respond appropriately, God has to pay attention to everything that each freely-choosing creature does. The perfect being is forced to be unimaginably busy. Only by constantly overseeing absolutely everything (including every human thought) can the future be known with certainty by God. If such infinitely intimate attention were a property of divinity it would seem to threaten the claim regarding genuine libertarian freedom of choice. It would also subvert the completeness of divine omnipotence by having God coerced by human freedom. The middle knowledge God appears as an omnipotent chess champion who perseveringly anticipates every move that every freely-choosing creature makes, or could make. The intimate supervision requirement makes it difficult to quarantine God from substantial responsibility for creaturely wrong choices. It should be clear from what has already been said that these and other criticisms of the tenets of scientia media have little bearing on the categorically different creatio ex ethica worldview. In the following pages some objections to Molinism will be briefly dealt with, in combination with re-statements of the E.E.T. position. However, the many speculations that have been used to justify scientia media in terms of parallel universes and the various critiques of those maneuvers will not be addressed here.

There are grounds to question the divine epistemological ecology construct of middle knowledge. It is even reasonable to doubt that creatures of this aeon could fully discern the epistemological categories of the creator of the aeons. The traditional biblical theological position (indispensable in the E.E.T. consonance) is not given much weight by middle knowledge epistemologists. Biblical theologically the divine system interrogates humans rather than humans interrogating divinity (e.g. Romans 9:14-21). Humans discover God by divine self-revelation not by logical analysis.
However, this critique still leaves room to debate other matters of common interest. In the E.E.T. holistic biblical perspective, for example, before creation God was prescient of the precise persons who will be part of the aeon-to-come. Yet voluntariness is still present because how fungible persons of this ethically-conflated aeon choose to be one of the eternal identities in the divinely-ordained right-ethical aeon-to-come cannot be specified. When a child is born, no one can predict if they are going to grow up to love or hate divine right ethics. Further to that, arguments have already been presented on why it would not be a deficiency in omniscience if God were agnostic of everything that ends in eternal nothingness.

The New Testament has a relationship between this aeon and the aeon-to-come as pre-existent of creation (see section 3.02). Humans ultimately enter into the pre-existent eternity known by God or into nothingness (e.g. Matthew 7:13-14). A person can choose to accept the divine invitation to become part of the family in the aeon-to-come without changing God. Biblical theologically, God knows those who belong to God (e.g. John 10:14, 27; 17:3; 2 Timothy 2:19b) and does not know others (Matthew 7:23; 25:12; Luke 13:25, 27). This can seem harsh, though standard processes in biology and information-technology purge systems of whatever corrupts them. For the welfare of all in the divine household, the God of love ensures only what is right ethical enters there (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; Luke 19:10; John 12:47; 1 Timothy 2:4; Titus 1:15). The necessity of purging all evil for the sake of the good is especially clear in Psalm 125:3. E.E.T. is rare among contemporary theologies in noting that the primary divine biblical process in this aeon is separation of right and wrong ethical causes for the sake of the aeon-to-come. The impetus of this is at least partly educational and transformative. As mentioned above, the final outcome produces a highly instructive ethics seminar. However, in our aeon pedagogy is secondary to a process that moves towards nomistic ethical dialysis. This traditional biblical

703 E.g., see point 2 on page 338; also discussion on pages 339 and 340.
704 “Nothingness” is here used for what God has not chosen, in the sense of Karl Barth and contra that of Scotus Eriugena (c.800-c.877) and others who have built on apophatic accounts of God.
705 This idea has been traced back to Friedrich von Schelling – see page 5. Is it unfair to quarantine all who culpably refuse divine education? The creatio ex ethica worldview claims that Christ’s sacrifice enabled our universe – with its humans, to actualize out of the dark formlessness of the singularity of selfishness. Everyone owes their life to God. Any who then culpably reject God’s love have already had a life paid for by God; there would thus appear to be no basis in justice to demand more.
706 But education is not the primary teleology of the universe, such as was proposed by Irenaeus and more recently much developed by John Hick – see pages 43, 270 and 272; and footnotes 25 and 71.
theological grounding distinguishes E.E.T. from vale of soul-making, *scientia media*, and other theologies where this world’s primary process is argued to be divine educational formation of humans (see section A.02).

Ethical Encounter Theology is not reasoned as a defense of perfect being theism *per se* but refers to defenses published by others. It argues that an ethical cosmogony worldview increases opportunities for dialogue between traditional biblical perfect being theism and the academy of Theology/Science studies. For this, biblical perfect being theism must accord with a scientifically-concordant *creatio ex ethica* worldview. Biblically, human evil is considered to condition the universe of space-time (e.g. *Genesis* 3:17; *Romans* 8:19-22; *2 Peter* 3:7,10,12-13; *Revelation* 13:8b). In E.E.T., the evil in our universe is attributed to the selfish, self-deifying and deicidal proclivities of humans. The cosmic ethical anthropic problem (c.e.a.p.) involves a system’s prolepsis and/or a divine prescience of human rebellion against divine goodness. Creation of a liminal and anthropically-entangled universe like ours then enables the c.e.a.p. to be gradually resolved by an exhaustive series of ethically-revealing reifications, followed by a just judgment and ethical dialysis. This cosmology integrates *New Testament* textual references to pre-existence (see section 4.05) and concatenates and contextualizes other major theological themes.

In summary: E.E.T. builds holistically on defensible re-interpretations of canonical texts so as to properly address its main research question (e.g., see paragraphs A-E on pages xxi and xxii). As already discussed, it does not depend on *scientia media* for its distinct position on the omniscience/free-will paradox. Its method is consonant with texts such as *Matthew* 18:7 and *Luke* 17:1, with processes and outcomes pre-ordained but personal involvement optional. In a related way, God is said to know outcomes from the start but does not look at the things humans look at. To reiterate an argument given above: if the divine presence ensures all evil becomes nothing before an eternity of real life starts, it could be argued that it is not a significant failure in omniscience to be ignorant of what evil does. In the E.E.T. worldview God does

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707 See references at footnote 9.
708 E.g., see *Isaiah* 46:10.
709 *1 Samuel* 16:7b adap.
710 This fits with *New Testament* teaching that good should be returned for evil (e.g. *Romans* 12:14,17,21) and that love should be returned to those who do us harm (e.g. *Matthew* 5:44; *Luke* 6:27-28; 35).
not need to know all the details of what each person will do to be fully confident of the final divinely pre-determined outcome (see paragraph S on page xxvi and paragraph V on page xxviii; also page 15; and Figure 1 on page 178). This should by no means be read as showing God cannot or may not know all such details. In considering divinity, we merely argue on the fringes of the imponderable.

Middle knowledge encompasses a near infinity of free acts that constantly cause God to draw on a fund of divinely intelligent inventive responses. In contrast, E.E.T. argues libertarian freedom does not require us to be free to do whatever we want with this world. It could just as well reside in a single, infinitely-significant free choice. The God of the Bible pre-determined everything in our universe, including provision for our freedom to accept or reject the divine invitation to belong. The most important human freedom is one that enables us to choose to side with divine ways or to oppose them. The former opens amazing prospects in the “real life” community of the aeon-to-come, the latter decision releases us to be entirely who we want to be, without God. Thus, E.E.T. does not depend on a Molinist God who has to be always thinking about what everyone may freely choose. Scientia media relies on a type of divine prescience that knows what has to happen in the future and orchestrates the right choices. In contrast, E.E.T. has divinity as omniscient of the good of the unseen Basileia Theou, whose wisdom supplies the world’s natural evolution and ethical ecollation, toward the fullness of that goodness. In the creatio ex ethica world, God lovingly and painstakingly provides a degree of freedom that even allows evil to “have a fair go”.711 All that is hidden must be freely ecollated, to enable the just removal of the hidden causes of ineducability. Beneficial behaviors (such as training in godliness or right ethics, working to make the world a better place, and education towards reformation of humankind) will ultimately fail if humanity is not freed from the urge for independence from God. Crucially, irenic encounters that aim to free people from abusive and exploitive governments or church authorities are to be distinguished from moves that aim to create independence from divine, right-ethical education.

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711 See, e.g. Matthew 5:45b.
In scientia media, God knows all the rules of nature and how God freely behaves. Through middle knowledge, God anticipates every outcome of all human libertarian free choices. In contrast, the E.E.T. universe is divinely set on a pre-determined trajectory that places no constraints on God. Here, the pre-determined future can have inter-dimensional commerce with the more indeterminate natural world. This is argued to be how our world functions as the arena for a linked series of ethical encounters, binary ethical apocalypses, divine judgments, ethical dialyses, and entries to the aeon-to-come. This is argued to be effective whether God has comprehensive knowledge of every future particularity or not. The core result is that freely-chosen ethical self-identification justly releases what is right-ethical from what is wrong. Biblically, God has prepared a rich variety of places that sympathetically resonate with all who choose right-ethically. They accept pre-determined identities in a secure future, in the life that is “really life”, the fore-ordained ethically-perfect new creation. Those who are culpably ignorant and deliberately refuse the gift of God exclude themselves (e.g. Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Luke 12:46; Revelation 3:5). They register as devoid of sympathetic resonance with any of the fore-ordained right-ethical identities in the aeon-to-come. Even if this is argued to be compatibilist freedom (choosing in accord with one’s desires) not libertarian freedom (radically indeterminate choosing) it does not diminish the justice of the outcome. E.E.T. argues our temporary universe is primarily about divine justice towards humankind. This is an elevated anthropology (see first paragraph on page 349).

Human judicial systems accept that people identify themselves by their free ethical choices. New Testament texts teach the importance of having one’s name on the list of those destined for eternal life (e.g. Luke 10:20 and Philippians 4:3; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 19:13; 20:15; 21:27) and right-ethical choices are said to provide a hold on eternal life (e.g. 1 Timothy 4:8b,16b; 6:12b,19b). There are warnings that this can be taken away (e.g. Exodus 32:33; Matthew 22:7-8,13; Luke 12:46; Revelation 3:5; 20:15). The Matthew 22 parable instructs in this process by telling of predetermined positions taken up by lowly, amenable people when the celebrity guests prove murderously unamenable. The system’s outcome is predetermined but, crucially, the roles in it are open to be assumed by persons who

712 See footnote 697.
freely choose to obey God (also see *Matthew* 18:7). The fungibility of this resembles a scientific account of convergent evolution - at different locations, different genetic resources speciate into identical, pre-existent ecological niches. In E.E.T. the common process is termed “ecollation” and it is given traction in ethics, theology and science. Its progress is in terms of ethical chronology, argued to be more basic than physical time. Our universe’s extended temporal chronology is seen as allowing for right and wrong ethical choices to be exhaustively explored. *Creatio ex ethica* enables ethical resolution to accompany physical complexification. The expansion of space-time provides diverse opportunities for ethical choice making (see, e.g. 2 Peter 3:8-9).

The main difference between an E.E.T. solution to the omniscience/free-will dilemma and that of *scientia media* is that free-agents respond to an unchanging God. They self-identify to become parts of a divinely fore-ordained outcome. Molinism requires a maximally fluid God to respond to the unpredictable choices of libertarian agents so as to compensate for them and ensure the fore-ordained divine plan succeeds. As already argued, Molinism’s intimate divine supervision may subvert claims regarding human freedom. That does not apply to E.E.T. where agents freely choose life or death by self-identifying their positions within a fore-ordained divine plan (e.g. *Deuteronomy* 30:19). Here, even if nowhere else, it is argued, people have an opportunity to exercise radically independent freedom.

It has been argued by analytical philosophers that Molinism compromises either creaturely freedom or divine providence and so demonstrates that omniscience and free-will are incompatible. Molinist dependence on “counterfactuals” has attracted much criticism and resulted in a plethora of responses that try to conserve the idea of middle knowledge. Counterfactual theory has been said to be “viciously circular” because counterfactuals need to precede divine creation yet creationary alternatives are what determines counterfactuality. The grounding of the concept of counterfactuality has been much debated, especially the question of whether divine creative decisions can be informed by counterfactuals that also permit libertarian free choices. Defenses of Molinism sometimes appeal to possible other worlds.\(^\text{713}\)

It is not clear that any of this energetic debate surrounding middle knowledge significantly touches the biblically-consonant ecollation theory of E.E.T., where God has created fixed alternatives that enable humans to self-identify by free choices to eu-ecollate or mis-ecollate. The ethical ecollation approach does not seem to compromise either divine providence or creaturely freedom and does not involve putative counterfactuals or many-world theories. Over all, the creatio ex ethica worldview presents a less conflicted response to the problem of divine omniscience and human free-will than the divine epistemic ecology implied by Middle Knowledge theory. This may be because creatio ex ethica observes considerable interplay between the seen and unseen ecologies of our universe to resolve the primal cosmic ethical anthropic problem. The E.E.T. worldview is argued to have advantages because of its strong biblical and ethical theological credentials and its concordance with scientific perspectives on the way things work.

Finally, we could imagine a Molinist asking an ethical encounterist (or other perfect being theist) how they envisage their perfect and unchanging God responds to prayer. Answered prayers must refer to something more than a predilection for recalling incidents of good luck over bad (see footnote 673). Biblically, it can be argued that people who genuinely seek after God will find sympathetic resonance with the m.o.r.e. or Basileia Theou (see, e.g. Matthew 6:33; 7:7-11; Luke 12:31; Hebrews 11:6). Submitted to God in love, they ask according to God’s will (1 John 5:14) and are not disappointed (John 14:14). All provision stored in the Basileia is accessible to those who are in genuine unity with it (Luke 6:38). Godly prayers are answered, yet God is not changed. This tripartite monist, perfect being theist, E.E.T. view of our world draws attention to answers that have never been prayed for, rather than to prayers that have never been answered.

A.04 Solving the problem of evil by means of a universe that manifests evil

Creatio ex ethica cosmogenesis is one way of building consonances between traditional perfect being theism and on-going research in Theology/Science. It also opens new opportunities for inter-faith ethical dialogue. It describes interaction between the primal perfect provision and a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of anthropic ethical ambiguity. Prolepsis is understood to be a natural, anticipatory
influence of the future on the present that may be a consequence of universal quantum entanglement. Divine prescience is part of omniscience, an intrinsic characteristic of the perfect divine being. The inter-disciplinary implications of both of these theoretical concepts are in need of research, in a quest for greater empirical grounding.

In Ethical Encounter Theology, it is proposed that at T=0, prolepses (and/or divine prescences) of human moral evil held the perfect divine anthropic universe in a singularity of selfishness. A supremely unselfish act of divine love then expanded this singularity into the complexifying universe that we now know: a universe of space-time/energy-matter, having an unseen ethical conflation of opposed self-serving and self-giving possibilities. Such a temporary, liminal universe affords a diversity of developing opportunities for ethical choice-making. Whilst creatio ex ethica is cogent and has coherence with biblical theology, philosophy and science, it also invites further research on the relationship between prolepsis, divine prescience, human moral evil, and the empirical. To start with, is the basic argument circular? This section of the Appendix considers the issue of circularity. In the scenario of an incipient, perfect universe, bound by the certainty of future moral evil, and expanded by divine love in a way that removes that evil is there a logical fallacy? For example, if God and/or the pre-universe anticipated anthropic (moral) evil is it not illogical to claim evil causes could be removed through the very universe that actualized them? Does this not suggest a problem can be solved by its cause?

There are ways that science and philosophy could address this matter, however, a convenient way forward is provided by biblical theology. Three separate steps are featured in creationary accounts in the book of Genesis. For example, God created perfection (Genesis 1:1); it is then reported as an ungodly problem (Genesis 1:2); with, divine love responding: “Let there be light!” (Genesis 1:3; also, see John 1:5a; 8:12a). Another sequence of 3 related steps characterizes the account of Adam and Eve. In this, God created Edenic perfection for humans (Genesis 2:8, 9); they corrupted themselves by betraying God (Genesis 3:6, 7); and then had to live out their lives under much more trying circumstances (Genesis 3:23). These two biblical parables help to provide a perspective on the creatio ex ethica circularity question.

A similar 3-step sequence is envisaged as basic to creatio ex ethica cosmogony:
1. God creates a perfect in potentia universe for humans;  
2. Human rebellion is present by prolepsis and/or divine prescience; and  
3. The liminal, temporary, in actualis universe we know is provided.

According to this analysis, the stage of prolepsis and/or divine prescience of human moral evil preceded any actual universe. Anticipation of the historic wrong ethics and deicidal and self-deifying proclivities of human-kind arguably refers to all possible anthropic universes. Then, as the very good solution to that problem, creation of our specific universe follows; in this there are echoes of Gottfried Leibniz’ “best of all possible universes”. So, the events of our specific universe cannot be argued to be the cause of human generic turpitude. This is admittedly a fine distinction as the 3 steps could have been virtually simultaneous. Yet, at least formally logically, they are sequential, like the 3-step sequences in the two potent Genesis parables. From this, it can be seen that creatio ex ethica does not depend on circular reasoning. That is not to say the character of the evils reified in stage 3 is different from those apprehended in stage 2 (see next paragraph).

It is argued that creatio ex ethica can operate without prolepsis and/or divine prescience of individual guilt. Every aspect of human rebellion against divine right ethical teaching may be fore-known without imposing a need to know who among the fungible humans of our world’s lengthy evolutionary history will choose to enact those mis-eccollations (see pages 345-350). This is consonant with the New Testament teaching that, whilst wrong-doing has to take place, the persons who actualize it are fungible (e.g., see Matthew 18:7; Luke 17:1). The author of Luke 22:10-13 provides a nice example of prolepsis and/or divine prescience, and of the scope of human freedom. In these verses, the perfect human being (Jesus Christ) defines some future events that the apostles Peter and John are able to freely choose to enact or not.

E.E.T. provides an answer to the question: “If the main value of our universe is in its comprehensive exposure of wrong-ethics, why would we not mis-eccollate as extremely and as frequently as possible, so as to more rapidly bring-on the infinite good of the Eschaton?” The authors of the biblical texts specify pursuit of right ethics and abjuring of wrong ethics as the way to personal success (e.g. Deuteronomy 30:19; Matthew 18:7; Luke 17:1) and the author of Romans 6 deals specifically with the issue, at a personal level. In E.E.T., it is argued that separation of those who freely
choose to obey from those who choose independence from God is the goal of binary ethical apocalypsis, and has priority over the revelation of evil *per se*. Identification of peoples’ ethical allegiances is as important as exposure of the diversity of evil causes. That is, vehicles of mis-ecollation and dis-ecollation are especially identified.

In a physicalist ethical encounter model, without reference to biblical divine ethical encounter, the argument still stands that it is prolepses of the moral evils of this anthropically-entangled universe that require it to be this contingent, ethically-exposing type of universe. Even if argued as an atheistic ethical cosmogony, *creatio ex ethica* is not hopelessly circular. This atheist physical/ethical model resembles the self-purging, regulatory feedback mechanisms that are so important for maintaining health and specialized functionality in living cells, in biological organisms, and in ecosystems. Feedback loops have to have an element of circularity but it does not have to be “viciously circular”. More research is needed on the ethical, theological and empirical evidences for feedback mechanisms in the processes of our universe.

**A.05 Unseen ecology and angels and demons**

Much could be written on the richly diverse subject of Pentecostal beliefs about supernatural beings and their reports of experiences of the activities of angels and demons. Of most relevance to E.E.T., in acknowledging this vast body of information, are the plain references in the Bible to angels and devils and their interactions with humans. Can the fund of ancient and contemporary information be harmonized interdisciplinarily? As discussed, E.E.T. research builds consonances with the research interests of the Theology/Science academy, whose research workers have little interest in angelology and demonology (see pages xx, xxvii, section 1.03, and footnote 543). This is not surprising in that idiosyncratic supernatural encounters are beyond the reach of scientific critical realist methods. For this reason, it has been judged best to argue for what such supernatural beings may mediate in accessible ethical terms, rather than attempt to account for numerous independent incidents. Whilst, Satan the devil and many other supernatural beings are well demarcated entities of the *New Testament* worldview, E.E.T. questions if such entities have an ontologically independent status or if they are manifestations of, or are empowered by, anthropic iniquity (see pages 134 and 293). There are opportunities here for further
research in an area of theology especially important to Pentecostals and to other large congregations of believers belonging to a variety of religions (see section 5.02).

Sympathetic resonances with the m.o.r.e. (the Basileia Theou) could be mediated by holy angels (that is messengers of the divine right-ethical Basileia). The question of miracles or special divine actions is mentioned on pages 22, 57, 80, 111-115, and 281-282. As is argued, rare incidents of special divine intervention encourage the godly, warn the ungodly, and give glory to God; all this without interfering with this world’s on-going binary ethical apocalypses towards eschatological justice.

In terms of divine methodology, it could be argued that God may anthropologize some complex ethical processes to assist communication with humans. That view would allow a place for angelic and demonic personalized expressions of the m.o.r.e. and the u.r.s.t. in the E.E.T. worldview. The same “divine courtesy” argument could help explain accounts of anthropomorphic theophanies. This insight could help facilitate inter-disciplinary discussion of complex unseen entities and forces. As with miracles and theophanies, E.E.T. argues that angelic and demonic experiences never act to overturn the world’s persevering divine teleology of ethical encounter, binary ethical apocalypsis, judgment, and ethical dialysis. Arguing in terms of monistic ethical interactions between the seen and unseen ecologies of the world provides a way to avoid dismissing unseen agents of good and evil and yet it minimizes the potential for the incoherences that can arise from natural/supernatural dualism.

A.06 Biblical exegesis and the scriptural interpretations used in E.E.T.

The use of the Bible has been macro-exegetical, in that the author of the dissertation is not a specialist linguist and exegete. The interpretations preferred in E.E.T. draw on an embracing tripartite monist, scientifically and ethically-informed contextualization of the whole Bible project. Any novelties that emerge from the dissertation’s holistic readings of texts such as Genesis 1:1-3; 1:26-30; 2:7-23; 6:1-7; John 1:5; 9-10; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; etc. are available for critique by exegetical specialists. It is hoped that the publications resulting from the dissertation will invite such specialized work. That is not to say that E.E.T. has failed to draw heavily on
some of the huge fund of excellent, micro-exegetical works that is available.\footnote{714} Among those, for example, the different approaches to interpreting Christ’s pre-existence provided by Simon J. Gathercole, Karl-Joseph Kuschel and Andreas J. Kostenberger have proved very useful in E.E.T. research.\footnote{715}

A.07 God’s energies distinguished from God’s nature

The Ethical Encounter Theology worldview recognizes the unity of the invisible perfect divine person and the kingdom (Greek: \textit{Basileia Theou}). That is, the rule or reign of God expresses the divine person in a way that is anthropically accessible. The \textit{Basileia} is homologized with the matrix of right ethics (the m.o.r.e.) that perfectly reflects divine love, truth, righteousness, faithfulness, mercy and justice. This is not argued to be an emanation of God but an encounter with the embracing love of God; that is, as a sympathetic resonance with God who is love that is God. There are scientific analogies, e.g. the sympathetically-resonant connections between apparently widely separated but entangled particle pairs. Jesus Christ is reported to say: “Almighty God and I are one” (\textit{John} 10:30 adap) and many similar things. This is taken as the basic paradigm of the \textit{Basileia}. Sincere knowledge of, harmony with, obedience to, and love of God entangles with the unseen matrix of right ethics, the “close” and “within” rule and reign of God. This concurs with Christ’s: “I am” (Greek: \textit{ego eimi}) statement (\textit{John} 8:58b). None of Christ’s claims to divinity refer to his miraculous conception or royal ancestry but to his ethical teachings and public activities. Jesus is described as God present because his whole life represents the right ethics of the \textit{Basileia Theou} (e.g., see \textit{John} 14:9-11). Sympathetic resonant entanglement of the characteristics of the Divine Trinity with the \textit{Basileia Theou} mediates expressions of perfect oneness among ontologically unique identities.

From this argument it can be taken that God’s energies are present wherever there is eu-eccollation, that is, eccollation on the values of the m.o.r.e. This does not involve movement on God’s part but represents the choice by anyone, anywhere, to eu-eccollate. Christ’s advice to those who want to do this is reported to be: “First of all search for the \textit{Basileia Theou} so as to allow it’s principles to rule your life; everything else will follow from that” (\textit{Matthew} 6:33 adap; also, see page \textbf{283} and footnotes \textbf{575}).

\footnote{714} See Dissertation section \textbf{2.08} and also the bibliography, pages \textbf{311-333}.
\footnote{715} See Dissertation pages \textbf{181-182}. 

and 637). E.E.T. provides reasons as to why it may sometimes be entirely accurate to perceive eu-collated aspects of the natural world as “divine” or “perfectly heavenly”.

As often found in E.E.T. research, *New Testament* ethics suggest an approach that is able to be applied in a more generally theistic way. So, in regard to God’s nature and God’s energies, E.E.T. has extrapolated that divine virtues are sought for by some, who by eu-collating idioentheically reify God’s presence in various situations. This is by non-coercive sympathetic resonance. This is taken to be more than “a nice feeling”, for it can irenically encounter conflated ethical situations to provoke binary ethical apocalypses and so create history. Facing divine, irenic ethical encounter, ethically-emulsified entities will demulsify, by either eu-collating or mis-collating. Divine justice gains fair access to mis-collators and so cosmic preparations for separating and salvaging what is right-ethical into union with God are advanced.

The rider has to be added, that whilst a general divine program of:

ethical encounter → binary ethical apocalypsis → ethical dialysis

is the way God’s energies attract the world towards the Eschaton, divine energies also have special means of expression. However, in both general and special divine actions it is God’s energies that enable change. It is argued that there is no necessity for God’s person to be involved in a direct way (see, e.g. *1 Timothy* 6:16). E.E.T. argues that most of reality is automatically reified through ecollative emergences and complexifications, accompanied by binary ethical apocalypses. Revelatory theophanies and miracles then introduce joyful divine personal resonances into what would otherwise be somewhat mechanical. The idea of laughter leavening lawfulness fills-out the Karl Barth quotation given on page 8. Hence, the transcendent, Divine Parental Person (biblically variously termed Almighty God or The Lord or The Father) is available to be known by people: i. by discerning observations on the automatic processes of our world; ii. by experience of special revelations and the history of such; and iii. through the intimacy of idioentheism. E.E.T. argues this richly diverse provision enables the perfect, unchanging, loving being to be known and to be uniquely, joyfully exemplified in the life stories of billions of people.

716 See footnotes 301 and 684.
717 See description of “idioentheism” on page 283; and, in footnote 637 where a preliminary scriptural basis for this potentially important descriptor is discussed.
718 E.g., see sections 6.07 and 6.08; pages 110, 126, 206, and 283; and footnotes 301, 321, and 575.
A.08  Authentic and expedient ethics and consequentialism

Are terms such as consequentialism and deontologicalism applicable to what E.E.T. identifies as a dialetheism involving authentic and expedient goods and evils? Consequentialism comes in many forms, some with properties resembling deontological virtue ethics.\(^{719}\) Ethical taxonomy aims to provide a philosophical basis for allocating moral responsibility: How do we know if what we or others are doing is right or wrong; is it to be assessed in terms of law-keeping or in terms of goal-attainment? How do we estimate comparative degrees of rightness and wrongness? That analysis exceeds the ambit of the central question investigated in this dissertation. However, E.E.T. teleology could be argued to be utilitarian consequentialist, in that it works to prevent reversion to the extreme badness of the primal singularity of selfishness. Biblical propositions, such as God’s desire to be known, and desire for all people to be part of the perfect aeon-to-come, also, that all wrong-ethical causes be removed at the Eschaton, work to maximize good outcomes and minimize the bad. In terms of the definition of act utilitarianism in G. E. Moore’s “Ethics” (NY, OUP - 1912): it can be argued that, of all possible acts, divine ethical encounter would produce the highest sum, if the total of bad consequences for all involved was subtracted from the total of good consequences for all.

However, the terms authentic ethics and expedient ethics are distinct from the consequential/deontological dichotomy. The assessments by individual persons or by a society of persons of the contemporaneous, subjective, beneficial or detrimental impacts on them of natural and moral goods and evils can be said to be in terms of authentic goods and authentic evils. Then, it is noted, the identical natural and moral goods and evils may be assigned quite different post-eschatological benefit and detriment values by the same individual persons or society of persons, necessitating the terms expedient evil and expedient good; hence the dialetheism. Several New Testament texts can be argued to accord with the authentic/expedient ethics

\(^{719}\) E.g., in his 2006 review, moral philosopher Walter Sinnott-Armstrong of Duke University mentions the following: actual consequentialism, act consequentialism, rule consequentialism, welfarist consequentialism, perfectionist consequentialism, eudaemonistic consequentialism, holistic consequentialism, objective consequentialism, subjective consequentialism, proximate consequentialism, motive consequentialism, agent-relative consequentialism, virtue consequentialism, rule consequentialism, obedience rule consequentialism, acceptance rule consequentialism, public acceptance rule consequentialism, satisfying consequentialism, and progressive consequentialism. Reference at [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism)
dialetheism (e.g. *Matthew* 5:12; *1 Peter* 1:6-7; *James* 1:2,12); as with the central *New Testament* event - the degrading and unjust crucifixion/glorious, divine creative and saving act of the perfect human being - and this is all argued to be in concert with the general, “now but not yet” ethos of the *New Testament*.

From what is argued in this outline, authentic ethics/expedient ethics dialetheisms do not bear on the sources of goods and evils nor do they need to attempt to allocate moral responsibilities. Authentic/expedient dialetheisms are in a different descriptive category and raise a different set of questions to those normally debated in moral philosophy (such as the relative interestingness of various consequential and deontological classificatory terms).

For the sake of consonance-building between traditional perfect being theism and the work of the Theology/Science academy, terminology is needed that highlights the dialetheistic aspects of our benefit/detriment valuations of the goods and evils of this world, and our valuation of the same goods and evils in terms of the Basileia. As concluded, it is feasible to argue that E.E.T. is classically utilitarian, in that the maximum possible amount of eternal pleasure and minimum possible amount of eternal suffering ensue from eschatological ethical dialysis. Yet this goal is arrived at largely by processes based on deontological, biblical virtue ethics teleology. The apparent paradox (as with some other ethical concepts that have been touched on in E.E.T.) is at a stage when it would benefit from further research.

**A.09 Infralapsarianism and the Incarnation’s causal dependence on The Fall**

Debates about the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*) centre on whether God chose the elect before creation of humans and their fall (supralapsarianism) or after the creation and fall (infralapsarianism). E.E.T. is modified supralapsarian. God made the perfect world *in potentia*, including predestined identities for humans, via the authority of the Christ of God. This *Basileia Theou* was not actualized because of a prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of willful human independence from divine right-ethical teaching.

To resolve this, Christ became “the Lamb that was slain” (*Revelation* 13:8) enabling our space-time/energy-matter universe to begin. In E.E.T. terms, the creational moment was when totally self-giving divine love encountered the singularity of selfishness. An Ethical Big Bang created our universe to function as a temporary,
liminal arena, suited for ecollation, evolution, and binary ethical apocalypses. In this universe, visible ecology is accompanied by an unseen ecology of selflessness (the m.o.r.e.) and of selfishness (the u.r.s.t.). Here, there are opportunities for all that is truly right-ethical to freely actualize the Basileia of the m.o.r.e., and for all that is culpably opposed to God to actualize the deicidal and self-deifying potentials of the u.r.s.t. Theological, ethical, and scientific understandings of reality find consonance in this real/ideal worldview. The making of history by physical and ethical ecollations can be observed and experienced by anyone. An elevated inter-disciplinary anthropology, general theological accessibility, and ethical philosophical coherence are argued to provide for broad applicability of E.E.T. Yet in its central theory E.E.T. can also be demonstrated to cohere with a high Christology.

History is argued to be crucially important. It aggregates from emergent, evolutionary complexifications of matter depending, in part, on ecollations from unseen ecology. Eu-ecollations reify the loving Basileia values of the m.o.r.e. and mis-ecollations reify the selfish values of the u.r.s.t. About 100,000 years ago, when human hunter/gatherer cultures evolved, binary ethical apocalypsis was accelerated. About 10,000 years ago, with the emergence of farmer/civic cultures, it accelerated much more. Biblical theology reveals that the primal, creationary, divine sacrifice was reified in human history, by Jesus of Nazareth at the Cross of Calvary, about 2,000 years ago.720 The resurrected and ascended Christ then left a corpus of theological revelation and lived examples of right-ethical encounters with the world’s ethical conflations. Some of this was recorded and the texts copied and distributed by the authors of the New Testament and their followers and, as they reported, with the help of the Holy Spirit of God.

In this temporal world, right-ethically-choosing people sympathetically resonate with predestined identities in the unseen, eternal Basileia Theou (see section A.02). Any who culpably choose to follow their own will, rather than seeking the right-ethical way, identify with a God-less future. Peoples’ practical choices become final at the eschatological judgment and separation. After that, the in potentia, primordially-perfect Basileia becomes the in actualis reality our world, so that divinely predestined real life can begin. The ethical dialysis phase concludes when all that identifies with

720 E.g., see 2 Timothy 1:9b,10.
the rule of God gains access to the completed history of our world, its causes and
effects, and its comprehensive lessons in divinely wise, loving, irenic, competent
demulsifications of the myriad subtleties of intransigent anthropic ethical conflation.

Thus a supralapsarian order of salvation is coherent with the E.E.T. worldviw:

- firstly, origination of the in potentia perfect Basileia, including the identities
  of all its predetermined right-ethical elect; then prolepsis of the cosmic ethical
  anthropic problem (= the fall); and then prolepsis of The Lamb’s saving act;
- secondly, and consequentially, creation of the seen and unseen ecologies of
  our temporary universe; physical and chemical and geological ecollations;
  biological evolution and emergence of hunter/gatherer and then farmer/civic
  peoples; the incarnation of the Christ, divinely teaching and exemplifying the
  Basileia and staurologically redeeming people from their wrong-ethics.

Debates about the ordo salutis, supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism are not often
given a major role in today’s Reformed theology. For example, Wayne Grudem remarks:

But in the last analysis it seems wiser to say that Scripture does not
give enough data to probe into this mystery, and, moreover, it does
not seem very edifying to do so.\footnote{Grudem, W. (1994). Systematic
Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Leicester: IVP:
footnote 12 on page 679.}

The E.E.T. tripartite monism argues for a consonance between biblical theology,
ethics, and science and this enables a more positive value to be placed on ordo
salutis studies, specifically on supralapsarianism. Much work remains to be done.

John Duns Scotus (c.1265–1308) was a defender of traditional perfect being theism
who emphasized God’s complete freedom of action. He argued that the Christ would
have become incarnate even if humans had not sinned. The incarnation was a free
choice of God, not a response to human turpitude. There are many imponderables in
this argument (as with the ordo salutis question, there is insufficient textual evidence
to establish a strong case from revelation). The texts that refer to the pre-existence of
the Christ, often link that to the sacrificial redemption of humankind (see, e.g. 1 Peter
1:18–20). In the context of an E.E.T. worldview, there are three pre-creational events
that could have effectively been simultaneous. That is, the divine predestining of the
Christ as ruler of a Basileia of right-ethical humans; a prolepsis of human conflated ethics; and the ruler’s decision to be the sacrificial Lamb, whose divine, kenotic love would encounter and resolve the cosmic ethical anthropic problem created by deicidally selfish and destructive independence. This encounter then evoked the history of our composite world of seen and unseen ecologies. Within that, processes of binary ethical apocalypsis, eschatological judgment, and ethical dialysis operate to supply the biblical triumph of the Lamb/ruler and of humankind salvaged into the actualized Basileia Theou.

The issue is made more complicated by the idea of incarnation. If humans had been foreknown to always use their freedom of choice right-ethically, the in potentia Basileia would have been actualized from the start. There would have been no need for divine ethical encounter to produce our temporal world and mother it towards an ethically dialytic Eschaton. What sort of bodies might the creator/ruler and the people of the Basileia have? The author of 1 Corinthians 15:35-54 theorizes about the transformation of a natural body into a spiritual body. The New Testament evidence concerning the empirical characteristics of the Christ’s resurrected body is all we know of such bodies in practice. They have properties quite different to mortal human bodies but are still individual, tangible human bodies. That seems to be the sort of bodies unfallen humanity was to have had. In such a case, we could readily agree with Duns Scotus and argue that the Christ would be incarnate in a real/ideal body (or spiritual body) as divine ruler of the perfect anthropic creation, if from the start human-kind were invariably open to divine right-ethical education.

A.10 Divine omnibenevolence and omnicompetence and “universalism”

Ethical Encounter Theology does not argue that divine perfect love and competence necessarily lead to the salvage of all humans into God’s perfect age to come (“universalism”). This position derives from the E.E.T. approach to free-will/determinism (see section A.03) and to theodicy (see section A.02). Divine omnibenevolence and omnicompetence was evident when the m.o.r.e. (the Basileia Theou) was provided as a secure and perfect future for humankind. This is central to New Testament theology. Fully self-giving divine love and supreme competence reified in the Christ of history, eu-eccollating the Lamb slain from the start of the
world. This super-generous act of divine kenosis offered to deicidal and self-deifying humankind an escape from the consequences of wrong-ethical choices (e.g. *Romans* 5:10; 2 *Corinthians* 5:19a; *Colossians* 1:21-22). Biblical history reports this omnibenevolence of God in Christ Jesus as empirically realized when the perfect human being prayed forgiveness for those who unjustly betrayed, mocked and tortured him to death on the humiliating Cross of Calvary (*Luke* 23:34). The texts can be argued to show the omnicompetence of God in the works of the resurrected Christ, in the Ascension of Christ, and in the prophesied outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God. As a consequence, the message of God’s omnibenevolence in Christ (see *Revelation* 22:17) was and is being taken to every nation in the world. That too is evidence of divine omnicompetence and persevering omnibenevolence (biblically scheduled to be fully empirical after the Eschaton). It is also possible to argue towards approximately the same conclusions in a non-specifically Christian, ethical encounter theological way.

Supreme divine concern and wise competence is demonstrated by the exposure, just judgment, and dialysis of the extraordinarily complex situations that arise from human ingenuity in devising every subtle ethical conflation. It is a measure of supreme benevolence (also called unmerited grace - see footnote 686) that humans receive sufficient libertarian freedom to be able to accept a predestined identity in God’s eternal household, or to choose to continue to be independent. The *New Testament* depictions of the weeping and gnashing of teeth of those quarantined by God may possibly be indicators of rage because they cannot control matters, rather than signifying their regret and repentance. Divine omnibenevolent and omnicompetent justice is evident in the eternal love returned to all who love Love, and also in the quarantining from Love of those who culpably decide not to love Love.

There are many who are forced to suffer unjustly in these extensive, complicated and very finely-honed, evolutionary and ethically-separating processes. They are biblically acknowledge and they are promised compensation (e.g. *Luke* 16:25). 

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722 There is continuing debate among theologians as to whether people who have been quarantined by choosing against God’s love have subsequent opportunities to yield to perfect divine goodness.  
723 Any who choose to be independent of God’s teaching do so with a life that was won for them out of a singularity of selfishness, by the perfect divine kenosis. The E.E.T. worldview enables it to be argued that being quarantined from the perfect aeon-to-come does not necessarily impose anything worse than the lightless (wisdom-less) *tohu wabohu* of the primordial singularity.
unpredictable and wide-spread suffering of innocents which results from sin can be argued to be an important ethical lesson taught by the processes of our universe. All sin should therefore be a concern of all humans. Arguably, Homo sapiens are called to become Homo harmartiologiens – experts in distinguishing right from wrong ethics. Many different religions would accept that right ethics are to be lived by all on behalf of everyone, even when there is no apparent personal return. No one can be an island unto themselves in this world though, in creatio ex ethica terms that can be argued to be the empirical consequence for any who eventually becomes quarantined from the perfect aeon-to-come.

The perfect being theism of the creatio ex ethica cosmogony does not result in universalism. The weight of the arguments presented in the dissertation show the E.E.T. position on divine omnicompetence and divine omnibenevolence is consonant with its teleology of ethical separation. However, it can be argued that the biblical God has means and ways beyond human understanding, and the faith of perfect being theists may argue that God has plenty of surprises in store and these always turn out to be totally competent and totally loving.

A question arises regarding the place of evangelism in a world created through prolepsis (and/or divine prescience) of the sacrifice of the Christ. If the universe was primevally suffused with the saving act of the perfect human being, what is the value of communicating the Gospel? An evangelist might say the Cross of Calvary revealed in relatively recent human history what was hidden for a very long time in the unseen ecology of our universe - though it was known to some prophets (e.g., see Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26). Biblical reports of the lives of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah and other prophets and holy women and men indicate that, before it was historically empirical, the Gospel was always at work among humanity. In E.E.T. terms, the life of Jesus Christ could be described as perfect eu-eccollation, or classic reification, of what pre-existed in unseen ecology. Further, it could be argued that the era of the Roman Empire provided an opportunity for the life, teachings, sufferings, and resurrection of the Christ (the Gospel) to be historically recorded, give rise to churches, and begin a journey of encounter with the

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724 From this it is apparent that the harmartiology deriving from an E.E.T. worldview can be argued to rely on both deontological and utilitarian ethics.
peoples and nations of our world. Yet, according to E.E.T., this good news has been inherent of our world from its start. It can be argued that, once humans emerged, there has always been a church of those who sought to be taught by divine right ethics.

In accord with E.E.T. Christology, authentic evangelism should communicate, by word and example, the universality of the unseen pre-creational wisdom that became empirical in Israel, nearly 2,000 years ago. Individuals everywhere have an opportunity to hear about and be personally transformed by this worldview (i.e. to be born again, as in John 3:3, 5-7). Even so, it is not universally agreed among believers on how to discern:

a. if the Gospel has been fairly and appropriately presented;
b. who has become truly re-born by the Holy Spirit of Christ;
c. whether those who do not respond are eternally lost; or
d. what finally happens to any who never had a chance to hear the Gospel.

Biblically holistically it is made clear that all judgment is the prerogative of the Christ (e.g. Matthew 16:27; John 5:21-23). Yet it is also made clear that evangelism is expected of Christians (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; etc.); people who are born again of God are expected to irenically encounter society with their personal experiences of the Gospel (e.g. Matthew 10:27; Philippians 2:15). However, human works of evangelism and church planting are not always right-ethical and can sometimes be disapproved of by God (e.g. Matthew 7:21-23; 8:12; 22:14; 23:15; 24:24, 51; and Revelation chapters 2 and 3). How can this be resolved?

There appears to be a rôle for ethical encounter thinking. E.E.T. provides one way of helping to leaven evangelism and church life with the divine right ethics advocated by all the writers of the New Testament. By implementing such a program, an ethical lingua franca could also be made more generally accessible. A broadly shared, virtue ethics system could assist in promoting irenic dialogues within and between denominations and religions; and, as has been developed in this dissertation, affords opportunities for bridging the gaps between biblical faith communities and different academic disciplines.