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Anselmian Explorations, Essays in Philosophical Theology, by **Thomas V. Morris**. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987. Pp. 264. Cloth, \$28.95.

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Thomas Morris obtained his Ph. D. in December 1980; since then we have had two books, *Understanding Identity Statements* and *The Logic of God Incarnate*, and a large number of articles. Some of these latter have been collected (together with two previously unpublished essays) into the present volume. It is a considerable compliment to a young philosopher for a publisher to produce a collection of his essays on separate themes.

Although the twelve essays are separate, Morris claims that they all have a unity of approach to philosophical theology, which he characterizes as 'Anselmian,' in the sense of "beginning with and employing at every point" the concept of God as "a greatest possible, or absolutely perfect, being"; and in treating "the documents of the Bible and the traditions of the church as providing vitally important and inviolable standards for theological reflection." The majority of these essays are Anselmian in the first respect, of their concern with divine perfection. "Duty and Divine Goodness" argues that God's goodness is analogical to moral goodness, in that it consists (as well as in performing supererogatory acts) in conforming to principles, which are principles of duty for lesser beings. "Perfection and Power" claims that God's inability to sin does not entail that God lacks some power. "Properties, Modalities and God" defines a property as "enduring" if an individual who has it cannot in future cease to have it, and "immemorial" if an individual who has it must always have had it; and it develops these distinctions carefully. It then argues that even if sinlessness is not a necessary property of God, it is an enduring one; if God is ever sinless, he is always in future sinless. However, Morris also claims in "The Necessity of God's Goodness" that theists have modal intuitions, which they are justified in taking to be reliable, that God is necessarily good. Such modal intuitions lead to ontological arguments; and one way of attacking an argument to the existence of God, familiar since Gaunilo, is to claim that if it works, then, by parity of argument, many other ontological arguments to the existence of lesser beings would also work. In "Necessary Beings" Morris defends ontological arguments to the existence of God against a recent attack of this form by Kane. In "On God and Mann" Morris considers Mann's recent defence of "divine simplicity" in the sense of God being identical with each of his attributes, and claims that this doctrine cannot be spelled out coherently in any careful way. "Absolute Creation" claims that the theist can coherently hold not merely that God creates the contingent universe but also that he creates such necessarily existent abstract entities as properties and propositions. "Creation ex nihilo" claims that it is reasonable to believe that God brought about the beginning

of the existence of the Universe in 15 billion B.C., while not being reasonable to believe that the Universe came into existence five minutes ago. "God and the World" looks at Process Theology and claims that its insights can be taken on board without much difficulty by a traditional theistic metaphysics, and do not require us to adopt instead the metaphysics of Process Theology. The remaining essays are concerned with taking "the God of the philosophers" as the Judaeo-Christian God. "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Anselm" claims that it can be reasonable to identify these two Gods. "Rationality and the Christian Revelation" claims that the Christian theist will be rational in believing that God became incarnate in Christ if prayer and Gospel reading move him so to believe. "Pascalian Wagering" claims that Pascal's wager presented in a sensible form gives good reason for leading the Christian life.

Morris writes very clearly and simply. His account of the issues and the views of philosophers about them are exemplary; and beginning students should find much of value in all the essays. More professional philosophers will find some valuable things in some of the essays. For example, "Properties, Modalities, and God" provides some very useful new distinctions for discussing the divine attributes. "Duty and Divine Goodness" and "On God and Mann" provide very sensible accounts of two issues about the divine nature. Others of the essays however are far too thin and reach sweeping conclusions in a most breath-taking way without any adequate discussion of obvious difficulties. "Rationality and the Christian Revelation" just jumps to its suggested conclusion that even if no argument can show that Jesus is God Incarnate, nevertheless if on reading the Gospels you are moved so to believe, believing will be rational. Even those of us who have defended a "principle of credulity" (that in general one ought to believe any proposition which seems to one to be the case—in the absence of any counter-argument) may be a little aghast at what is in effect Morris' application of the principle. It can't be applied where there are probable rival explanations of why things so seem to the subject which do not depend for their effect on the truth of the proposition believed. In this case we know very well why it often seems to those reading the Gospels that Jesus is God Incarnate—they are caused so to believe by the institutional context of church and creed in which they read the Gospels. As Morris says: "a full account of the epistemic status of Christian doctrine would be quite complex . . . the remarks of the present essay have been laid out in broad strokes and have hinted at no more than a very few elements of such an account." "Hinted" is indeed the word.

Other essays reveal Morris' confidence in "modal intuitions," intuitions about what is possible or necessary in a "broadly logical" sense. Kane's argument was that if it is possible that there exist a necessary being who has all the divine properties such as omnipotence and omniscience (and hence it is necessary that there exist such a being), then it is possible that there exist a necessary being who has only some of the divine properties or has lesser degrees of them (and so again it is neces-

sary that there exist such a being). Morris' answer is that "Anselmians" have a modal intuition that the former necessary being, *viz.* God, is possible, but lack modal intuitions that lesser necessary beings are possible. Modal intuitions are in general to be trusted, especially if an account can be given as to how we come to have them which shows how they are formed by a reliable belief-producing mechanism; and if there is a God, it might well be expected that God (p. 190) "render us at least capable under the right conditions of having reliable intuitions such as those which yield the Anselmian conception of God and provide a modal argument to his existence."

Now we do indeed have modal intuitions about logical possibility and impossibility, in the sense of intuitions about what entails or does not entail a self-contradiction, and intuitions about logical necessity, in the sense of intuitions about the negation of some proposition entailing a self-contradiction. Such intuitions (in accord with a principle of credulity) provide our initial grounds for our views about what is logically possible or necessary, and our considered judgments are formed by systematizing these intuitions. But Morris claims that there are intuitions of "broadly logical possibility," which seems to be a much wider sort of "logical" possibility than the narrow sort of logical possibility which I have just delineated. I say "seems" because Morris makes no attempt to define his "broadly logical possibility" and say what makes it a "logical" possibility. He merely contrasts it with "consistency in first order logic" and gives examples of it. Clearly there is logical possibility in my sense, other than "consistency in first order logic." There is plenty of consistency, entailment and self-contradiction around other than that captured by first-order logic. The role of first-order logic, or any other logical calculus, is to formalize preexisting consistency, entailment and self-contradiction; and there is plenty which has not yet been formalized and perhaps never will be. "This is red" entails "This is coloured," even if first-order logic cannot explain how.

My grounds for saying that Morris seems to have in mind by "broadly logical possibility" a kind of possibility wider than my narrow kind are some of the examples of it which he gives (see below), the fact that he contrasts it sometimes with "consistency" *simpliciter* (rather than with "consistency in first-order logic") and the use to which he puts it—his argument against Kane has no plausibility if we equate his "broadly logical possibility" with my narrow logical possibility. So the questions arise as to what is meant by saying that there is a "logical" necessity and possibility beyond my narrow kind, whether there is such logical necessity and possibility, and how we can know about it. And it is no good attempting to solve these issues by saying that a proposition is logically necessary if it holds in all possible worlds, since presumably "possible worlds" is to be read as "logically possible worlds"; the definition is circular and the circle too small to provide illumination.

Morris attempts to support his claim that there is "broadly logical possibility" by giving three kinds of examples of it. One example (p. 184) is "the example

of mathematical propositions such as Goldbach's conjecture, the continuum hypothesis, the Axiom of Choice, and Fermat's Last Theorem which are such that either they, or their negations are impossible, without either being formally inconsistent." But these just seem to be propositions such that they or their negations are inconsistent, but not "formally" (in the sense of "in first-order logic") inconsistent. Their impossibility or necessity is logical in my narrow sense.

Morris' second example is that the proposition that water is not H₂O is impossible. And this proposition is, of course, a member of that genus of propositions about the natures of individuals and natural kinds which Putnam and Kripke have drawn to our attention. My view of such propositions is that their necessity or whatever is analysable in terms of entailments of the defining characteristics of the objects or kinds in fact picked out by the names in sentences which express the propositions. There is no new kind of necessity here beyond narrow logical necessity. That view will be disputed; and Morris presumably cites these examples because he accepts the view of those who have put them forward as illustrating a new kind of necessity. But note that those who have claimed that there is here a new kind of necessity have also insisted that knowledge of it is *a posteriori*. Mere "intuition" will not reveal that water is H₂O. Morris' third example of "broadly logical" modality is the necessity that Socrates is a person. Now maybe it is among the linguistic rules for the use of the word "Socrates" that an object only counts as Socrates if it is a person; and in that case we have narrow logical necessity. But if this is not among the rules, but application of the rules in fact picks out a person, then the necessity of this proposition is like that of "Water is H₂O; and *a posteriori*. So even if Morris were by his examples to have shown that there is a broad "logical" modality, his examples are not ones where mere reflection can detect the modality. Indeed, what was regarded by some as scandalous about the suggestions of Kripke and Putnam that there was necessity beyond the narrow logical was just that it was only detectable *a posteriori*. There is no analogy outside theology for the claim that "modal intuition" can reveal other than narrow logical necessity, and that casts very considerable doubt on whether modal intuition can discover anything beyond the narrowly logical in the realm of theology. Morris needs to explain what "broadly logical necessity" is, and to justify his confidence in the power of "modal intuition" to reveal it. In fairness to Morris I should add that he is not alone in his confidence that he understands what is meant by "broadly logical necessity" and that intuition is able to reveal it. As far as I know, the phrase "broadly logical necessity" got its baptism in the philosophy of religion on p. 2 of Alvin Plantinga's *The Nature of Necessity*. Since then so many philosophers of religion have come to believe that they knew what this kind of "logical" necessity was, and have grown ever more confident in the power of "intuition" to reveal it. They need to think the issue through more thoroughly than Morris has done in this volume.