

Is the Existence of God Reasonable?

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ABSTRACT

In this article the question of whether the existence of God is reasonable will be addressed. The start point will be the debate between Dr. Craig and Dr. Rosenberg that took place in 2013 around the question “Is faith in God reasonable?” This debate has been chosen for being representative of general theist and atheist positions. The former usually believe in God first, and then try to formulate arguments that can help them transmit their faith to others, whereas atheists usually find arguments first that they consider illogical or incoherent related to the existence of God, and in a second moment they come to reject faith. It will be analyzed following the pragma-dialectical approach defined by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, that considers argumentation as a speech act that aims to solve a difference in opinion. This analysis will show the main obstacles that prevented the speakers to arrive to an understanding, mainly a different vision of God and the goal that they were seeking.

Keywords: God, faith, reasonable, argumentation.

INTRODUCTION

The question of the existence or non-existence of God today maintains its entire force, despite the agnostic environment that often surrounds us, especially in Europe. Along the history of philosophy, you can find numerous approaches that aim to analyze this question and give it an answer. Traditionally, logical analysis has been called upon to verify the validity of arguments related to thesis on the existence of God. However, philosophers have usually considered that rhetoric is not suitable for rigorous philosophical analysis, understanding that it prioritizes the persuasion of the audience over the real search for truth. We believe that this perspective is not adequate, and that rhetoric can and should be used in the analysis of arguments about the existence of God.

In this article, we will address the question of whether the question of God's existence is reasonable. We will analyze the genuine argumentative debate between William Lane Craig and Alex Rosenberg in 2013. We chose this debate because we find it representative of general theist and atheist positions although, as any generalization, it might be reductionist. Theists usually in a first moment believe in God, and in a second moment try to formulate arguments to give a base to that faith, and transmit it to others. On the other hand, atheists work in the opposite way. First, they find arguments that they find illogical or incoherent related to the existence of God, and in a second moment they come to reject faith. We decided to analyze this debate using the pragma-dialectical approach defined by Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, because it can help us find where the main obstacles that prevent speakers to come to an agreement are.

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 's pragma-dialectical perspective

In the pragma-dialectical perspective, Van Eemeren & Grootendorst [1] describe argumentation "as a complex speech act, the purpose of which is to contribute to the resolution of a difference of opinion, or dispute". For Celso López and Ana María Vicuña [2], this proposal wants to strike the balance between an overly rhetorical approach to discourse (marked by a relativistic conception of reasonableness) and an overly normative one (in which an idea of logical-deductivist reasonableness that is hardly achievable in everyday life dominates). López and Vicuña distinguish in it two aspects:

1. The pragmatic: based on the amended theory of the speech acts of Austin [3] and Searle [4,5] and the proposal for a series of rules of communication, allowing them to extend the analysis beyond what is achieved through a purely logical approach. "In a speech act, one or more propositions are expressed in which reference is made to something and a particular predicate is assigned to that referent" [6].
2. The dialectic: that starts from their conception of argumentative discourse as the exchange between two parties who want to resolve a difference of opinion through a methodical exchange of speech acts.
- 3.

By defining the stages of the discussion and the roles that the different parties assume, as well as formulating the rules to be enforced in each of them, this approach allows us to discover the obstacles that prevent a dispute from being resolved and how they could be overcome. In addition, Van Eemeren & Grootendorst [7] define fallacies, not as errors of reasoning only, but as obstacles that prevent the resolution of the dispute and violations of some of the defined discussion rules.

Speech elements

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst [8] define a person's views regarding a certain proposition such as:

1. Positive, when the proposition is considered true. The person is positively committed to it.
2. Negative, when the person considers that the proposition is not true, committing negatively to it.
3. Zero, where no point of view is adopted, either because he does not want to compromise or because he does not know what to think about it.

In the case of positive and negative views, the person is obliged to defend his or her standpoint if its acceptability is questioned.

On the other hand, for a dispute to exist there must be a doubt related to one standpoint, so there is no need of having two opposing standpoints [9]. In addition, they classify disputes in:

1. *Implicit*: when doubt is not clearly expressed, but it is taken for granted.
2. *Complex*: when they can be divided into simpler ones.
3. *Single and multiple*.
 - a. In a *single* dispute the standpoint that is questioned relates to a single proposition.
 - b. In a *multiple* dispute, a standpoint that relates to two or more propositions is questioned.
4. *Mixed and nonmixed*.
 - a. In a *mixed* dispute there is a mutual denial of the opposing standpoints, and also mutual doubt is assumed about the acceptability of these opposing standpoints.
 - b. A *nonmixed* dispute questions only a positive or a negative standpoint.

They present the stages that are ideally given to resolve a dispute [10]:

1. *Confrontation Stage*, which establishes that there is a dispute. A standpoint is presented and is called into question.
2. *Opening Stage*, in which the decision is made to establish a regulated argumentative discussion to try to resolve the dispute. One of the speakers assumes the role of protagonist, which implies that he is prepared to defend his point of view through argumentation. The other takes on the role of antagonist, prepared to challenge the protagonist to defend his point of view.
3. *Argumentation stage*, in which the protagonist defends his point of view and the antagonist may require more argumentation from him, if he has more doubts. It is often considered the core of the real discussion. If the dispute is non-mixed there is only one protagonist who argues, while in a mixed there are several protagonists who must argue.
4. *Concluding stage*, which establishes whether the dispute has been resolved, that is, whether the point of view or its opposite has been withdrawn. If the point of view has been withdrawn, the dispute is resolved in favor of the antagonist; if the doubt is withdrawn, the dispute is resolved in favor of the protagonist. If the protagonist withdraws his point of view, he can take an opposite point of view, modify his original point of view, or take a zero point of view. If it is the antagonist who withdraws his doubt, then he must accept the point of view of the protagonist.

In addition, they present five rules of communication [11]:

1. Be clear, honest, efficient and to the point
2. Do not perform any insincere speech acts
3. Do not perform any superfluous speech acts
4. Do not perform any futile speech acts
5. Do not perform any speech acts that do not appropriately connect to preceding speech acts.

When analyzing and evaluating an argumentative discourse, it is necessary to define the aspects of it that are crucial to resolve the difference of opinion. To do this, they state that the following analytical operations must be carried out:

1. determining the points at issue,
2. recognizing the positions that the parties adopt,
3. identifying the explicit and implicit arguments, and
4. analyzing the argumentation structure. [12]

The rules for critical discussion and fallacies

The rules for critical discussion defined by Van Eemeren & Grootendorst [13] are:

- Rule 1: Parties must not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or casting doubt on standpoints.
- Rule 2: A party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it if the other party asks him to do so.
- Rule 3: A party's attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has indeed been advanced by the other party.
- Rule 4: A party may defend his standpoint only by advancing argumentation relating to that standpoint.

- Rule 5: A party may not falsely present something as a premise that has been left unexpressed by the other party or deny a premise that he himself has left implicit.
- Rule 6: A party may not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point nor deny a premise representing an accepted starting point.
- Rule 7: A party may not regard a standpoint as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argumentation scheme that is correctly applied.
- Rule 8: In his argumentation a party may only use arguments that are logically valid or capable of being validated by making explicit one or more unexpressed premises.
- Rule 9: A failed defense of a standpoint must result in the party that put forward the standpoint retracting it and a conclusive defense in the other party retracting his doubt about the standpoint.
- Rule 10: A party must not use formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous and he must interpret the other party's formulations as carefully and as accurately as possible.

Finally, they group fallacies according to the corresponding rule that is not followed [14]:

1. Fallacies in the confrontation:
 - a. Putting pressure on the opponent
 - b. Attacking the opponent personally
2. Fallacies in the distribution of discussion roles:
 - a. Evading the burden of proof
 - b. Shifting the burden of proof
3. Fallacies in representing a standpoint:
 - a. Attacking standpoints
 - b. Imputing a fictitious standpoint to the opponent
 - c. Distorting the opponent's standpoint
4. Fallacies in choosing the means of defense
 - a. The argument does not refer to the view under discussion
 - b. The point of view is not defended by argumentation, but by using non-argumentative means of persuasion: manipulating audience emotions, parading one's own qualities
5. Fallacies in dealing with unexpressed premises
 - a. Magnifying an unexpressed premise
 - b. Denying an unexpressed premise
6. Fallacies in utilizing starting points
 - a. Falsely presenting a premise as a common starting point
 - b. Denying a premise representing an accepted starting point
7. Fallacies in utilizing argumentation schemes
 - a. Relying on an inappropriate argumentation scheme
 - b. Using an appropriate argumentation scheme incorrectly
8. Fallacies in utilizing logical argument forms
 - a. Confusing necessary and sufficient conditions
 - b. Confusing the properties of parts and wholes
9. Fallacies in concluding the discussion
 - a. Making an absolute of the success of the defense
 - b. Making an absolute of the failure of the defense

10. Fallacies in usage
 - a. Misusing unclearness
 - b. Misusing ambiguity

The debate between William Lane Craig and Alex Rosenberg [15]

The cognitive context

Miller and Gould [16] transcribe the debate between Craig and Rosenberg, which took place at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, on February 1st, 2013. In this debate philosophers William Lane Craig (representing the Christian standpoint) and Alex Rosenberg (representing the atheist standpoint) debated the question "Is faith in God reasonable?"

The debate is therefore located in the United States. In 2010 81% of the population was a believer, with 74.54% of Christians [17], so when we speak of God in this context, we can understand that we refer to God's vision from a Christian perspective.

The audience

The debate was watched live, either in person or via *streaming*, by 14,000 people from all U.S. states and about 60 countries around the world. In March 2020 it reached almost 190,000 views on YouTube, thus being one of the most watched debates of the decade. The audience overwhelmingly voted that Professor Craig had won the exchange. Rountree [18] doubts that many of the people who formed the audience of the debate between Professor Craig and Professor Rosenberg would be sufficiently trained to carefully weigh the arguments involved in all the philosophical, scientific and historical claims that each party held. Thus, Professor Rosenberg's arguments mostly fell into a broken sack, firstly, because most of the audience was predominantly Christian and, secondly, because few were sufficiently trained to appreciate the arguments he was making.

The speakers

The moderator of the debate, Corey Miller, presented both speakers. The discussion began with the speaker who took the positive position towards the question being asked. In this case, it is William Lane Craig, Research Professor of Philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. He obtained a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Birmingham, England, before doing a PhD in Theology at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany. Before committing to Talbot, he spent several years at the Higher Institute of Philosophy at Catholic University Louvain, Belgium. He has written and edited some 30 books including "Kalam Cosmological Argument", "Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus", "Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology", and "God, Time and Eternity", as well as more than a hundred articles in professional philosophy and theology journals such as "Journal of Philosophy", "New Testament Studies", "Philosophy", "British Journal for Philosophy of Science". He is regarded as one of the main defenders of the Christian faith, as can be seen in his book "Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics" and his website reasonablefaith.org.

The speaker who takes the negative stance in this debate, and therefore participates secondly, is Alex Rosenberg. He is Professor of Philosophy and Head of Department at Duke University with secondary commitments in the departments of Biology and Political Science. He completed his training at Johns Hopkins University in Philosophical Analysis of Microeconomic Laws. He is the author of about 40 articles or chapters, of more than a dozen books, some of which have been

translated into several languages. He has participated as a visiting professor and member of the Center for the Philosophy of Science, University of Minnesota, as well as at the University of California Santa Cruz and Oxford University. He has also been a visiting fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the Research School of Social Science at Australian National University. He has been a member of the National Science Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. In 1993, he received the Lakatos Award in Philosophy of Science. In 2006 and 2007, he was a member of the National Humanity Center. It was also the Phi Beta Kappa-Romanell Lecturer from 2006-2007. On a website (Miller does not indicate which) that cites the 50 most famous atheists in the world, Dr. Rosenberg ranks 13th. His most recent book is "The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions".

For McGrew [19] a philosophical debate of this style can be evaluated at two levels: as acting, seeing the unfoldment of each speaker, and as a philosophical argument, analyzing both the arguments presented and those that were omitted. Regarding the first level, McGrew emphasizes that Craig has a lot of experience in discussions of this style and is highly qualified for this, showing in the debate a higher level of organization, preparation, and time management. He emphasized his eight points set out in his opening address, responded to Rosenberg's objections, insisted on Rosenberg's failures, and summarized his view both in his rebuttals and in his conclusion. Rosenberg's performance was often interesting, but he was less organized and allowed Craig to take control of the structure of the debate from the beginning. McGrew agrees with Rosenberg when he claims that such formal oral debates and with a defined time are not an optimal means of attaining the truth. When one of the two points of view is wrong and cannot be rationally based on plausible arguments, then the adversary should try to show it. Rosenberg clearly wanted to persuade the audience that faith in God is irrational, out of contact with modern science and epistemologically discredited. However, for McGrew he failed, due in part to his lack of preparation and, on the other hand, in the tone of condescension that constantly arose in his comments. As the debate began, suggesting that Craig's arguments have been refuted on numerous occasions put him in a somewhat strange situation of having to continually refute them.

For Rountree [20], persuasion involves five arts that go hand in hand, and have to do with arguments and appeals (inventiveness), effective organization, well-chosen words (style), an effective system for remembering content during an oral presentation (memory) and a good physical presentation. Rountree applies this framework to the analysis of the discourse between Professor Craig and Professor Rosenberg in his discussion, to assess his effectiveness in carrying forward his views. In general, while Professor Craig scores a high score on organization, style, memory, and presentation, he falls short in terms of inventiveness, especially in his reasoning (*lógos*). In Rountree's opinion, Professor Craig lost the debate for this reason, given that reasoned persuasion is critical in an argument. Rountree begins with a brief consideration of the last four canons of classical rhetoric as they were used in this exchange, along with the speaker's credibility (*êthos*, one of the three elements of inventiveness), before moving on to the arguments and emotional appeals that are central to inventiveness.

Professor Craig learned to speak in public in an excellent communication program at Wheaton College, which is clearly visible. His speech was more orderly, polished, and transmitted more effectively than Professor Rosenberg's. He gained a big advantage by being the first speaker and

took advantage to offer his eight syllogistic arguments, systematically presented on Power Point slides with consistent transitions between them that linked them carefully.

Style and presentation support Professor Craig's credibility as a speaker. He is sincere, self-confident, and intelligent, presenting himself as a reasonable believer in the Christian faith, a faith that evokes ideas of charity, kindness and justice. During his speech, he makes a lot of eye contact with the audience, which sustains the perception of sincerity and security in what he is saying. His tone of voice varies to sustain what he says, such as when he raises the tone and volume of his voice to express disbelief when referring to the episode of two walkers who find a ball in the forest and one tells the other that it was not created and always existed. It maintains an equal voice throughout the debate, even when it becomes more intense.

On the contrary, Professor Rosenberg is combative, disbeliever and dismissive. This is partly because he uses his opening speech to refute what Craig had said, rather than providing his own argument as to why we do not need God to explain the universe. Although he shows ease with the subjects he is dealing with, the difference between his belligerent style and Professor Craig's friendly behavior is remarkable. This may have diminished the feeling that Professor Rosenberg is committed to a constructive search for answers to these complicated questions.

Professor Rosenberg speaks in a clear and energetic voice that conveys his disbelief to the positions presented by Professor Craig. It is spontaneous in his comments using a single page with comments on both sides (which contrasts with the elaborate slides in Professor Craig's Power Point presentation) and looks at the audience with a visual contact that makes evident and conveys his reflective character. It includes many more interjections in his speech than Professor Craig. Communication scholars have observed that orderly presentations are more persuasive than those that are disordered [21].

The two speakers use language that is understandable and add examples to clarify some points. However, Professor Rosenberg relies more on scientific technical terms, which can leave the audience somewhat confused. Professor Craig often alludes to common sense, intuitive knowledge, while Professor Rosenberg offers difficult explanations that are not as intuitive. This common-sense-focused understanding of the world fits well with Professor Craig's presentation as a sincere and reasonable Christian, while Professor Rosenberg is relegated to the role of the atheist scholar frustrated by the challenge of explaining his complicated positions and seeing Professor Craig gain ground. The exception to these roles comes when Professor Craig tries to explain the problem of evil. Here Professor Rosenberg gains the sympathy of the audience by referring to his family decimated by the Holocaust. Professor Craig's attempt to respond to this allusion to the Holocaust is unsatisfactory, as he affirms that it may not be possible for God to have a world with as much good as this, but without a comparable level of evil. That is, if the Holocaust had not happened, another event with such suffering would have been necessary. This balance between good and evil is hard to square with an omnipotent God, which takes Professor Craig away from his commonsense appearance.

The argumentation

The discussion was structured into four alternate interventions of each of them, with the following duration and content:

- 20 minutes initially to present the position.
- 12 minutes to disprove the opponent.
- A second 8-minute rebuttal.
- 5 minutes of conclusions

So, the debate lasted a total of 90 minutes, 45 minutes for each of them.

In his second rebuttal Dr. Rosenberg [22] made a remarkably interesting point: the structure of the debate does not work. And he referred to another way of proceeding, similar to the one that Russell and Copleston followed in their debate, in which Dr. Rosenberg could ask Dr. Craig a question, listened to his answer, made an answer and listened to his answer, to finally give an opinion and hear his answer. This, he said, is the way in which a philosophical dialogue proceeds, which would allow them to at least find what are the crucial points between them and how they could agree to come to a ruling on the question. This makes us see that somehow Rosenberg was forced to accept a structure of the debate, in which he disagreed. If he anticipated it was not going to work, we might wonder why he agreed to participate.

Dr. Craig's argumentation

In his opening address, Dr. Craig presented the eight arguments in which he structured his argument for the existence of God [23]:

1. God Is the Best Explanation of Why Anything at All Exists
 - a. Every contingent thing has an explanation of its existence.
 - b. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is a transcendent, personal being.
 - c. The universe is a contingent thing.
 - d. Therefore, the universe has an explanation of its existence.
 - e. Therefore, the explanation of the universe is a transcendent, personal being.
which is what everybody means by "God".
2. God Is the Best Explanation of the Origin of the Universe
 - a. The universe began to exist.
 - b. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
 - c. Therefore, the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. God Is the Best Explanation of the Applicability of Mathematics to the Physical World
 - a. If God did not exist, the applicability of mathematics would be a happy coincidence.
 - b. The applicability of mathematics is not a happy coincidence.
 - c. Therefore, God exists.
4. God Is the Best Explanation of the Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life
 - a. The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design.
 - b. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
 - c. Therefore, it is due to design.

5. God Is the Best Explanation of Intentional States of Consciousness in the World
 - a. If God did not exist, intentional states of consciousness would not exist.
 - b. But intentional states of consciousness do exist.
 - c. Therefore, God exists.

6. God Is the Best Explanation of Objective Moral Values and Duties in the World
 - a. Objective moral values and duties exist.
 - b. But if God did not exist, objective moral values and duties would not exist.
 - c. Therefore, God exists.

7. God Is the Best Explanation of the Historical Facts about Jesus of Nazareth
 - a. There are three established facts about Jesus:
 - i. His empty tomb,
 - ii. His post-mortem appearances, and
 - iii. The origin of the disciples' belief in his resurrection.
 - b. The hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" is the best explanation of these facts.
 - c. The hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" entails that God exists.
 - d. Therefore, God exists.

8. God Can Be Personally Known and Experienced

Dr. Rosenberg's argumentation

For his part, Dr. Rosenberg made three arguments against the existence of God, although he focused fundamentally on the first.

The argument of evil.

Dr. Rosenberg appealed in his opening stage to the greatest problem facing theism: the incompatibility between the problem of evil and the existence of God. For centuries theodicy has tried unsuccessfully to make it compatible that God exists, is omnipotent and benevolent, but nevertheless evil exists. If there was a God who was omnipotent and benevolent, he would eliminate all suffering, just as every benevolent creature would. It is however obvious that in our world there is much suffering, both natural and caused by man. Therefore, if there is a God, either He is not omnipotent, or He is not benevolent, or He is neither and the theism is false. He ends up adding a personal note: his entire family, except his parents, were killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust, including two half-brothers.

Appealing to the authority of eminent scientists

According to Rosenberg, 95% of the members of the National Academy of Sciences are atheists [24]. As McGrew [25] remarks, this is a "unfortunate dialectical misadventure" since theology and philosophy are not their areas of expertise. But further on, there is something else hiding behind this assertion: first, that science is somehow marking which areas are truthful, and second, when people develop intellectually, they part away from God believe.

The argument of the absence of scientific role

In his conclusion, Rosenberg suddenly introduces a new line of argumentation, that believing in God is unnecessary since He plays no role in science. Drange [26] outlines it as follows:

“The argument from absence of scientific role”, goes as follows:

1. If God were to exist, then scientists would have made some appeal to Him in their work.
2. But no appeal to God is ever made in any scientific work
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Rhetorical analysis of argumentation

Before we go into this analysis, we would like to evaluate the validity of the rhetoric in such a debate. Medhurst [27] starts with Aristotle's [28] definition of rhetoric: “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion”. Thus, before making a speech, it is necessary to discover what needs to be said. Taking the first part of the definition – *rhetoric is the faculty of observing* – rhetoric has to do with the methods one can use to look and find what to say. The primary means that Aristotle provides to discover the content of a discourse are on his list of topics or common places to which one can go looking for argumentative substance. To see where the argumentative substance of a discourse is, Aristotle [29] defines twenty-eight topics, including opposites, definition, meanings of the word, parts, cause and effect, and the meaning of a name. These topics do not tell the speaker what to say, but point to the places where he can find argumentative substance so that, if he consults each of those places, he has enough substance for the speech he wants to make. The art of rhetoric would be to decide which of these topics should be used in each situation.

This brings us to the second part of the definition: *in any given case*. For Aristotle, social and political situations, unlike scientific cases or logical demonstrations, are always unique. Every situation is different because the audience of the speech is always different. Thus, he should organize his arguments according to the people he wanted to persuade, the purpose towards which he wanted to move them, and the restrictions he faced on the day in question. Thus, since each situation is unique the speaker should analyze himself, the audience, and their situation before trying to discover what means he has available to persuade. Not all means of persuasion are always valid and in front of any audience. He should discover the specific means he had available at any given time and select and organize them in a way that is as persuasive as he can in front of his audience.

In his work “Rhetoric”, Aristotle [29] identifies three specific sources of persuasion: the character of the speaker (*êthos*), the content of the arguments of the discourse (*lógos*) and the emotions that arise in the audience (*páthos*). Thus, speakers choose among them to design a speech that they believe will move the audience to believe in something or to initiate action. For Aristotle there are two forms of very persuasive arguments that can be used: enthymemes and examples. Enthymeme is a deductive argument that works similarly to syllogisms in formal logic. Unlike syllogism, enthymeme is only a quasi-logical form since it has only two parts, not three. In syllogism there is a greater premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion that, if the laws of syllogism are followed, can be sustained with certainty. On the other hand, in the enthymeme, one of the parts is not intentionally mentioned because it is thought to reside in the hearts and minds of the audience. Thus, listeners supplement that missing part of the argument from their own beliefs, emotions, and convictions. In this way, the audience cooperates in their own persuasion by supplying part of the argumentative chain. These arguments are often very persuasive, but the conclusions cannot be held with certainty since the rules of syllogism have not been followed. While the enthymemes are deductive, the examples are inductive reasoning that, like any induction, cannot lead to certainty. However, the examples can be very persuasive.

For Medhurst, rhetoric is so useful in so many areas because in a person's daily life there are few topics for which there are certain answers. In Professor Rosenberg's world of natural science there are many topics that have a certain answer, so he tries to take the subjects in that direction, using the methods of science that will allow them to discover those truths. On the other hand, in Professor Craig's world everything can be reduced to syllogistic or quasi-syllogistic reasoning. But, even if he tries, Professor Craig cannot prove the existence of God through human reasoning, if we understand by prove to reason until we reach a conclusion that can be held with certainty. However, for Medhurst [30] neither Craig nor Rosenberg's methods will help much when discussing faith, God, and reasonableness. However, rhetorical methods would be useful because they never seek to lead people to hold positions with certainty, but only to plausible conclusions, which can be sustained, even if they are uncertain.

Rhetorical analysis based on the pragma-dialectical perspective of the debate between Craig and Rosenberg

As noted above, Van Eemeren & Grootendorst consider argumentation as a speech act whose purpose is to contribute to the resolution of a dispute. In this case, the difference of opinion is expressed in the subject of the debate: "Is faith in God reasonable?", where Professor Craig takes the protagonist role, in favor of the reasonableness of faith in God and Professor Rosenberg is the antagonist, against it. In addition, this would be a multiple dispute, given that the point of view called into question relates to two or more propositions (eight in the case of Dr. Craig and three in the case of Dr. Rosenberg) and a mixed dispute, since both a positive point of view (in favor of the reasonableness of faith in God) and a negative one (against it) are questioned. It is at stake the mutual denial of opposing views, as well as the reciprocal doubt about the acceptability of those opposing views.

We turn on this point to discuss the fallacies that occurred in the debate that prevented speakers from reaching agreement on their difference of opinion around the question: "Is faith in God reasonable?" Probably some more could be mentioned and some could be analyzed deeper, but we would point out the main ones, and take some more time in the more relevant ones.

Fallacies in usage (rule 10): misusing ambiguity

Although Van Eemeren & Grootendorst locate them in the last place, we will discuss them here to begin with, since we consider this point to be of vital importance when discussing this debate. This discussion shows how there was no prior agreement on the use of the terms to be used, so each speaker used them with the connotations they considered individually. Medhurst [31] stresses that for meaningful discussion, the interlocutors must agree on the conditions of the debate and how to define the key concepts of the purpose to be dealt with. In this case, this was "Is faith in God reasonable?", so before presenting any arguments, speakers should have discussed what they understood by the three key terms: "faith", "God", "reasonable". Since none of them did, Medhurst deduces what their definitions were from how they framed their arguments during the debate.

Faith

Miller and Gould [32] begin by highlighting the controversy of the concept of "faith" that is often mistaken for "belief." In the Judeo-Christian tradition, however, faith is more than mere belief including both "intellectual assent" as "volitional consent". For others, such as the atheist Richard Dawkins, faith is contrary to reason.

For Stenger [33] “Not only is faith in God is unreasonable, faith in anything is unreasonable. Faith is belief in the absence of supportive evidence and even in the light of contrary evidence. No one disputes that religion is based on faith”.

McGrew [34] places this term within the topic of debate, which was the question “Is faith in God reasonable?” Unfortunately, the word “faith” is often defined as “blind and irrational belief.” In this sense, a negative response would appear to be a foreseeable conclusion. Since Craig's research work [35] is titled *Reasonable Faith*, he clearly does not want to use this word in the degraded sense cited above. For McGrew, as well as for Drange [36] the question should have been better asked as: “Is it reasonable to believe in the existence of God?” [37].

According to Medhurst [38], the Greek term most often translated as faith in the New Testament is *pistis*, which is the term used by Aristotle in modes of persuasion. Kinneavy [39] conducted a study on the use of the term *pistis* in the New Testament and in ancient rhetorical works, including those of Aristotle. Kinneavy concluded that the Christian concept of faith originated in the Greek rhetorical tradition in which *pistis* had connotations of both trust and belief. For Medhurst, biblical faith is neither blind nor irrational. The writers of the New Testament created a different concept of faith from all those known at the time, linking the Jewish notion of trust in God with Greek modes of persuasion. Kinneavy notes the similarities that can be found between faith and persuasion:

- In both traditions, faith/persuasion is something valued, honest.
- Trust (in the speaker for the Greeks and in God for Christians) is central to both.
- Both concepts include intellectual consent to a belief or proposition.
- This consent refers to matters of substance: ideas, beliefs, or doctrines.
- Both traditions see faith/persuasion as a gift (grace or charisma) whose effects are greater than the sum of its parts.
- Faith/persuasion is accepted in freedom, without coercion.
- In the two *traditions* *pistis* involves only a limited measure of certainty that counts to sustain conclusions as plausible or probable, rather than absolutely true.

For Medhurst [40] to understand the concept of New Testament faith through the lens of rhetoric is important because “the Bible largely is rhetorical”. The Bible is rhetoric both in its structure and in the elements and techniques it incorporates, having as its ultimate objective that its readers come to know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. Thus, it has all the elements that Aristotle would recommend using to a pagan Greek:

The fact is that of the six component meanings that *pistis* had in the Greek rhetorical tradition, all six are incorporated into the Christian concept of faith. These six are the categories used in the classifications of the rhetorical situation: Faith is a free decision change (a conversion), faith embodies a measure of uncertainty, faith is a belief in the credibility of the source of the message (ethical argument), faith is a belief engendered by a promise of some good or threat of some evil (pathetic argument), faith is a belief engendered by a rational cause (logical argument), and faith can be a belief engendered by an outside cause (extrinsic argument). Across the entire New Testament, there is no doubt that the concept of faith generally carries these component meanings. [41]

For Medhurst [42] "We believe because we have been persuaded by good reasons". The Christian faith is a matter of persuasion, not of logical demonstration or scientific certainty. We cannot know for certain that God exists, as with love or hatred, although there is substantial evidence that these do exist and that they can be experienced directly by human beings.

God

Drange [43] highlights how the two speakers started from totally different concepts of God. For Dr. Rosenberg, He is a being who has omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and unreserved goodwill, while for Dr. Craig he is a transcendent person. Thus, Drange argues that anyone who took the atheist position in a debate with Dr. Craig should first call him to define God and base all his observations on that definition. We can tell the vision of God each speaker has from the arguments they use to sustain their thesis. Dr. Craig presents seven arguments that show how one person can know that God exists from the signs of His creation: the origin of universe, mathematics, the fine-tuning of the physic variables that allowed human life... So, he is thinking of a transcendent person, Creator of the World. On the other hand, Dr. Rosenberg's main argument that prevents him from believing is the argument of evil: why did God not avoid the Holocaust? In consequence, his image of God is the one that theodicy has usually taken: a being that is omnipotent, has unreserved goodwill, but it lets the evil exist.

Reasonable

Katia [44] distinguishes between what is reasonability and majority consensus. The first concept concerns the quality or content of the methodology, while the second refers to the percentage of people who agree on a particular option. If there are two possibilities for discussing a particular issue, the fact that there is a majority consensus on one issue does not necessarily mean that the other is unreasonable.

Professor Craig seems to consider reasonable equal to logical, so he spends most of his time trying to create logical arguments that prove the existence of God. On the other hand, Professor Rosenberg seems to regard it reasonable as what is scientifically demonstrable. However, for Medhurst [45] both positions are wrong because they do not consider that reasonableness refers to faith and God. Both, by definition, cannot be reduced to either a logical test or a scientific demonstration. Medhurst takes as a reference a bible verse "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb 11,1)" (King James Bible Version). Therefore, faith has to do with substance and evidence. For Medhurst, only a rhetorical approach to the three key concepts is sufficient to sustain an affirmative answer.

For Medhurst, both "faith" and "God" are rhetorical constructs, and the same is going to happen with "reasonable." In this context, reasonable cannot mean demonstrable or that it can be sustained with absolute certainty, but must mean what a normal person would believe, if he possesses the right information. Medhurst (2014) points out that, in the debate between Craig and Rosenberg, they both try to make "reasonable" equal to "true." However, in the rhetorical tradition the two terms are almost opposite. Aristotle [46] distinguishes between tests that may be true (*apodeixis*) and those that are only likely (*eikos*). It also distinguishes between topics that are scientific, nature-based, and those that are social, based on human action. The type of testing required for scientific subjects is not the same type of test needed or possible for social issues. Thus, for Medhurst when Professor Rosenberg tries to apply scientific certainty to problems of social importance, he makes

a category error. Something similar happens with Professor Craig when he tries to circumscribe his defense of God within the structures of syllogistic logic, he is applying a pattern based on demonstration (*apodeixis*) that does not adapt to any human subject if it is a realistic way. It follows that most of the syllogisms he proposes are not valid at all.

What is reasonable in a rhetorical universe is what most people, or the wisest, defend as such. In ancient Greece, the art of rhetoric applied mostly to social cases because in this field questions arise that cannot be given a certain answer. The same happens today with all social, moral, political and religious issues. Thus, for Medhurst what is reasonable depends on the nature of the case being discussed, the strength of the arguments and the evidence that may be presented, the perception of the character and credibility of the person making the argument, the strength of the opposing arguments, the time frame within which the decision must be made and the composition or values of those who make up the audience. If one or more of these elements change, the nature of what is reasonable also changes. Therefore, what is reasonable always depends on the situation and the audience.

Existence

Ruse [47] discusses Dr. Craig's argument about the fact of existence itself, which is what Heidegger [48] calls the fundamental question of metaphysics: "Why is there something rather than nothing?". Dr. Rosenberg does not address this point in depth either, alluding only to the fact that in quantum mechanics we have uncaused events, from which he suggests that the universe and its content might have no cause either. Ruse suggests that perhaps the case is not that there are no causes, but that we cannot ask for them. Ruse is not sure that the fundamental question raised by Heidegger has an answer, or at least an answer that we will be able to find at some point. But he does call into question that the only answer may be God. Going back to the question of existence, although the ontological argument suggests that the need for something to exist is a logical necessity, it is usually claimed that God has a necessary and objective existence (Hick [49]). Ruse wonders if sentences as "God is the cause of Himself" or "His existence is derived from His essence" really make sense.

Fallacies in the confrontation (rule 1): putting pressure on the opponent

We can highlight the pressure Dr. Craig puts on Dr. Rosenberg throughout the debate. He begins his speech by developing his eight arguments and shifting to Dr. Rosenberg the weight of having to dismiss them. Throughout the debate, he resumes at each stage Rosenberg's responses to his arguments, dismissing them. Rosenberg himself in his keynote address accuses Dr. Craig of not listening to his opponents, or not really seeking the truth, but pretending only to win the debate, with a clearly competitive tone in his presentation. Dr. Rosenberg positions himself on a different plane, stating that both atheists and theists seek the truth together, while positioning themselves as if it were a match is a wrong positioning. We consider this to be one of the major obstacles that prevent the debate from really evolving towards trying to resolve the doubt on the subject under discussion.

Fallacies in the distribution of discussion roles (rule 2): shifting the burden of proof

As the debate was presented, each speaker would initially proceed to present his position. However, at the end of his first time, Dr. Craig [50] concluded shifting the burden of proof to Professor Rosenberg, insisting that: "He must first tear down all eight of the reasons that I presented and then in their place erect a case of his own to show why belief in God is unreasonable". This provocation

led Professor Rosenberg to react to these arguments in his opening speech, rather than presenting his own case. This did not give him the opportunity to present a tightly organized structure in his responses, although he did insert strong transitions for the audience to follow the lead in his speech.

Fallacies in representing a standpoint (rule 3): distorting the opponent's standpoint

In his first rebuttal, Dr. Craig goes on to question Dr. Rosenberg's work, starting with his skepticism about God's existence being based on his scientificism or naturalism, which makes it unreasonable to believe in God. Similarly, to how he did in his opening speech, he goes on to cite a series of arguments, in which the first premise is Dr. Rosenberg's assertions and the conclusion is, in all cases, that naturalism is not true. These arguments are:

- Argument of intentionality: there are no intentional states.
- Meaning argument: no phrase has meaning.
- Argument of truth: since there is no meaning, there are no true phrases.
- Argument of praise and guilt: moral values and obligations do not exist.
- Freedom argument: everything is determined.
- Purpose argument.
- Duration argument.
- Argument of personal existence: there are no individual beings, no first-person perspectives.

To this, Dr. Rosenberg [51] replies in his first rebuttal that Dr. Craig's claims are a consequence, not of atheism, but of modern science and that the *modus tollens* arguments that Dr. Craig enunciates are based on misinterpretations of his book. The book that Dr. Craig refers to is "The Atheist's Guide to Reality" [52]. In this book Dr. Rosenberg identifies 14 implications of science and only one of them is atheism. None of those other strange implications Dr. Craig refers to is supposed to derive from atheism.

Fallacies in choosing the means of defense (rule 4).

The argument does not refer to the view under discussion

On this point, we can highlight the insistence of Dr. Craig [53] about naturalism. He distinguishes between two types of naturalism:

- 1 *Epistemological naturalism*, which holds that science is the only source of knowledge. For Dr. Craig, it is a false theory of knowledge for two reasons:
 - a. It is too restrictive, given that there are truths that cannot be proven by natural science.
 - b. It rejects itself, since the claim that "natural science is the only source of knowledge" is not a scientific judgment in itself, so it cannot be true.

On the other hand, epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. Here Dr. Craig refers to Willard van Orman Quine, the most famous naturalistic epistemological of the twentieth century, who postulated the existence of intangible, non-physical objects, that is, the Homeric gods, mathematical objects such as numbers, sets, etc. Quine [54] stated: "If I saw indirect explanatory Benefit in positing... *possibilia*, spirits, a Creator, I would joyfully accord them scientific status too, on a par with such avowedly scientific posits as quarks and black holes". Craig claims that his arguments about the existence of God go along this line with Quine's assertion: they show, based on scientific evidence, the benefit of postulating God, so they would be acceptable to an epistemological naturalist. Therefore, an epistemological naturalist could be theist. With this movement, by aligning his arguments with the thinking of this epistemological naturalist, Craig

becomes strong in his dialogical opponent, so that potential auditors in the audience who consider themselves epistemological naturalists, or accept this line of thought as true, could open up to Craig's postulates.

1. *Metaphysical naturalism*, which affirms that only physical things exist. After the distinction between epistemological and metaphysical naturalism, and after showing that his arguments would be acceptable to an epistemological naturalist, Dr. Craig focuses the debate here on metaphysical naturalism. In his opinion:
 - a. His arguments about the existence of God show that metaphysical naturalism is not true, given that there is a transcendent reality beyond the physical universe.
 - b. Metaphysical naturalism is absurd, being contrary to reason and experience.

Dr. Craig's insistence on naturalism would be a clear example of this kind of fallacy. Scientific naturalism, which believes that only physical things exist, implies atheism. However, Dr. Craig also states the opposite: that atheism implies metaphysical naturalism. This is not true for Drange and neither for Rosenberg. In fact, Dr. Craig himself filed a counterexample by mentioning W.V.O. Quine, who was an atheist, but not a metaphysical naturalist. For Drange, an atheist can believe in all kinds of non-physical things (abstract entities such as numbers, propositions, mental events, even vampires, ghosts, karma...) This error makes Dr. Craig's entire attack on metaphysical naturalism irrelevant to the topic of debate, as Rosenberg highlights in his first rebuttal. In it, Dr. Rosenberg emphasized that the topic of debate was not metaphysical or epistemological naturalism, but whether believing in God is reasonable or not. To give more strength to his words, Rosenberg [55] took the book into his hands and added: "and that question has practically nothing to do with whether the strange theses that I argue for in this book are right or not".

The point of view is not defended by argumentation, but by using non-argumentative means of persuasion

Manipulating audience emotions

At the end of his opening stage, Dr. Rosenberg [56] tells how his entire family, except his parents, were killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust, including two half-brothers. Thus, he refuses to accept the argument that Dr. Craig has used on other occasions saying that those innocent children who died in the Holocaust, including his two half-brothers, were more fortunate as they ascended directly to heaven, than the SS soldiers who killed them, or that suffering is part of the divine plan, which we cannot comprehend. Although he did not insist, we can consider that he is falling here in some kind of fallacy *ad misericordiam*, for compassion for that terrible story he lived personally makes the audience able to lean favorably towards his rejection of God's existence.

Appeal to the authority

As we mentioned above, Dr. Rosenberg has insisted in his speech on the fact that of the 2000 members of the United States National Academy of Sciences (NAS) 95% are atheists, although he does not indicate the source that is used for obtaining this data. In Larson and Witham [58], the percentages cited are 72.2% personal disbelief, 20.8% doubt or agnosticism, and 7% personal belief. However, the percentage indicates what the majority consensus of the group is, but, as Katia [59] argues, this fact cannot be used to affirm that belief in God is not reasonable. Doing so, as Dr. Rosenberg has done, is a type of *argumentum ad verecundiam* fallacy, that is, to appeal invalidly to

authority. NAS members are recognized scientists in their field of scientific knowledge, but they are not faith authorities.

Fallacies in utilizing argumentation schemes (rule 7)

Relying on an inappropriate argumentation scheme

We would like to analyze this point with some depth, although many other fallacies could be found in the debate.

Craig's arguments as arguments to the sign.

For Rountree [60], Professor Craig's eight arguments in favor of God's existence correspond to what scholars of rhetoric call the sign's argument, which urges one thing to be an indicator of something else. A typical example would be that where there is smoke, there is fire. The problem is that most signs are not foolproof (smoke may be due to other causes such as a smoke machine). The sign arguments gain strength when:

1. The connection between the sign and the thing it indicates is strong
2. There are many signs for support
3. There are few (or no) contrary signs [61]

From the Christian vision, the argument of the sign is central because the Judeo-Christian God created the universe out of nowhere, leaving Him outside that universe, to which He pre-examined. Even when God intervenes in this universe, he is not part of it; the known laws of the universe do not apply to Him. Our scientific knowledge develops theories to explain the universe, but has no way to explain anything outside it, other than to theorize about other alternative universes. Therefore, no evidence of God is direct evidence of God in himself, but only of his work. In Professor Craig's arguments, God's work is taken as a sign of God, proof of its existence. However, Professor Craig does not designate his arguments as arguments to the sign, but he uses the generic term explanation in seven of his claims and gives them a deductive syllogistic form. Some of their claims could be characterized as causal arguments rather than sign arguments which would give them more force, since they invoke a literal connection between the two. For Rountree, there are at least two reasons why Professor Craig's arguments cannot be considered causal. First, because God is not of this universe, so we cannot attribute to him causality properties that are rooted in the functions of our universe. Second, causal arguments must unite the causes and effects in the way in which the causal connection is understood.

On the other hand, for Rountree the scientific challenges to Professor Craig's claims are based on causal arguments. They suggest that much of the signs he uses to point to God can be explained as effects of natural processes. These processes, which are part of this world, fit into the existing scientific understanding of the operations of these processes and can therefore be treated as causal arguments. In his analysis, Rountree explains how the arguments of Professor Craig's sign are structured, showing that what he takes as signs are rather effects of explanatory material causes through scientific theories.

Professor Craig presents his arguments of the sign in syllogistic form, although they are not categorical syllogisms but rhetorical or enthymemes, as Aristotle called them. The difference between the two is that the enthymemes base their arguments on probable, not true premises, so the conclusions they offer are only probable (Bitzer [62]). Rountree [63] shows how Professor Craig

bases his claims on the existence of God on signs that are weak, as well as fallible. It should be noted that the enthymemes itself has a rhetorical appeal. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca [64] claim, arguments that take the form of syllogisms or mathematical tests apparently gain power because of their quasi-logical form. Thus, since Professor Craig presents eight enthymemes in an orderly manner and adopting the quasi-logical form, his case seems stronger. However, the actual strength of these arguments will depend on that of the premises on which they are built.

Dr. Craig's first seven enthymemes serve as the basis for conclusions that begin with the phrase "God is the best explanation for...", followed by some sign of God's work that supposedly points to Him. By saying "the best explanation," he is recognizing that there are other ways to explain things that are taken as signs of God, but he urges us to assume that God's existence wins over all other explanations. Thus, all the facts Dr. Craig lists in his arguments are not infallible signs of God, but quite good. Therefore, this causes Dr. Craig to show that these other ways of explaining these facts are incomplete, flawed, or at least not as convincing as to assume that God created the universe. Hence his frequent references to the weakness of scientific arguments that would provide alternative explanations for these signs.

Additionally, for Rountree [65], the weakest enthymemes offered by Professor Craig are those in which the facts he invokes as indicators of God are insubstantial, as it happens in the following case.

God Is the Best Explanation of the Origin of the Universe

Throughout the history of humanity, and of religions, the question about the origin of existence has been repeated, why there is something instead of nothing. For Rountree, the answer to this question is simple: there was no origin, existence was always there, existence is the natural state of things. The Big Bang theory from a "cosmic egg" (which is something and nothing) supports eternal existence. Before this moment, the universe as we know it now did not exist, but this does not mean that there was no energy or matter that pre-existed our universe. Lawrence M. Krauss [66] explains how this "nothing" is in fact a complicated "something" with virtual particles coming in and out of existence in the strange world of quantum mechanics. For Rountree, Professor Craig bets because there was nothing before there was anything, but the example he sets in the debate of the ball found in the forest is not fortunate, given that it is a manufactured object, which somewhat ridicules the position of the skeptic. But even we accepted that God was that first cause, the question that would arise then would be: "Where did God come from?" The fact that God is eternal makes it as difficult to explain as the universe. It is even more difficult to try to find an argument that explains the existence of an eternal, almighty, omniscient, and all loving being.

For Stenberg [67], to refute Dr. Craig's assertion that the universe can only be explained by a transcendent personal creator, it is sufficient to provide a plausible natural explanation for the origin of the universe. Unless Dr. Craig can prove that this explanation is impossible, both at this time, with the knowledge that we have, and in the future and that only a personal and transcendent creator can be conceived, his argument will fail. Modern cosmology, based on well-precise data, provides several arguments in favor of a purely natural universe independent of supernatural forces. Stenberg puts as an example one of the favorites: the eternal multiverse. The universe began at any given time with a brief exponential expansion of several orders of magnitude followed by linear expansion. In 1983 the cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin [68] suggested what is now called "eternal inflation", according to which once the universe began to expand, it never ends, creating

new universes continuously. Andre Linde [69] elaborated more on this idea, showing that it is possible for the universe to reproduce indefinitely and that "may have no beginning or end". Thus, numerous physicists agree that our universe would be only an expanding bubble within a multiverse filled with an unlimited number of other bubbles, in a process that existed eternally in the past and will continue eternally in the future. Dr. Craig refers to the multiverse as an unproven scenario based on chance, which Stenberg regards as an insult to scientists who have seriously studied this matter.

Something similar happens according to Stenberg with Dr. Craig's argument about the beginning of the universe. Dr. Craig [70] relies his theory about the beginning of the universe on what he calls "Kalam cosmological argument", which is that the universe had a beginning and that since everything that has a beginning must have a cause, it implies that God exists. Stenberg differs from this theory, claiming that he may have had a principle that was not caused, wondering that, if it was caused, why did God have to be that cause.

In his opening speech, Dr. Craig argues that the universe had to have a beginning referring to Borde, Guth and Vilenkin [71]: "a cosmological model which is inflating – or just expanding sufficiently fast – must be incomplete in null and timelike past directions". Vilenkin [72] reiterated the conclusion presented in 2003: "all the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning". From here, Dr. Craig's answer to the origin of the universe is a transcendent cause. However, faced with the same question, and from Vilenkin's own basic reasoning, Vilenkin [72] nevertheless concludes the opposite conclusion: "I fully agree with Stephen that the most promising approach is, appears to be the quantum nucleation of the universe from nothing".

Nevertheless, Stenberg points out that Vilenkin argues that his theorem does not prove that the universe had a beginning, but that the expansion of the universe must have had a beginning, adding that it can be postulated that the universe was contracting before that beginning. Authors such as Aguirre and Gratton [73], or Carroll and Chen [74] show that, if a time space diagram is depicted, the path followed by particles emerging from the origin of an expanding universe, those lines, apart from showing expansion into the future, could return to the origin and continue on the negative side of the temporal axis, opening up the possibility of an eternal universe. So, for Stenberg our universe got off to a beginning, but it was not necessarily the beginning of it all.

Using an appropriate argumentation scheme incorrectly

Dr. Craig and his conclusions that do not derive from the premises

Drange [75] rates Argument 5 of Dr. Craig that God is the best explanation for intentional states of consciousness as *non sequitur*, a fallacy that is committed when the conclusion is not derived from the premises. Dr. Craig here assumes that there are only two conceptions of the world: physicalism (which appeals only to physical things) and the existence of a transcendent person, God. On the one hand, it is possible that physicalism at some point may come to an explanation for mental states, explaining how observation of objects becomes printed on brains. But there can also be many other types of worldviews.

Dr. Rosenberg and the argument of lack of scientific role

In his conclusion, Dr. Rosenberg introduces the argument that believing in God is unnecessary since He plays no role in science. Similarly, he claims that science admits that mathematical objects exist

because they are useful to him when predicting situations. However, we consider that there is no point in substantiating the existence of something in its usefulness. They really are two different concepts: something does not exist or ceases to exist because it is useful for a particular collective. It cannot therefore be inferred from here, as Dr. Rosenberg has done, that since God is not useful to science, then it has no arguments for its existence and even has them against it.

CONCLUSION: IS THE EXISTENCE OF GOD REASONABLE?

While the title of the debate between Dr. Craig and Dr. Rosenberg was "Is faith in God reasonable?", it actually focused on the subject of God's existence. Thus, Dr. Craig began his exposition by stating that it is reasonable to believe that God exists, because it is what best explains a series of data from the human experience. On the other hand, Dr. Rosenberg, in his opening stage accepted the change that Dr. Craig made in the terms of the debate, since, instead of faith, he was talking about whether believing in God is reasonable. Additionally, we consider that Dr. Craig was too oriented to the goal of winning the debate, rather than arriving to an understanding and real dialogue with Dr. Rosenberg.

The first step that we should take if we want to find an acceptable answer to this question, is to come to an agreement as to what we consider as "existence", "God" and "reasonable". And here is where we think the major obstacle remains. We can think of God as a transcendent being, the Creator of the World, an adequate object of religious attitudes and worship (as Findlay [76] sets). Copleston and Russell [77] agreed on considering God as "a supreme personal being—distinct from the world and creator of the world". We can consider reasonable as logically coherent, scientifically demonstrable, or what a normal person would think given that they have enough information. And finally, what would we understand by existence? Each agreement would take us to a different argumentation scheme.

We agree on Medhurst [78] when he concludes by returning to the title of the debate: "Is faith in God reasonable? Absolutely. Can such a faith be held with certainty? No, not if by «certainty» one means a scientific demonstration or a formally valid logical analysis". According to George Mavrodes [79]:

We are [...] interested in whether there is any argument that will prove God's existence to everyone. Such an argument has apparently not yet been invented. If it is to be invented, there must be some set of propositions that everyone knows and that entail, by logical relations that are also known to everyone, that God exists [...] there is not much reason to believe that this is possible.

On the other hand, we should not forget what Moser [80] calls "argumentism about God": The prospect that knowledge of God's existence depends on having an argument about his existence. An argument is but a finite series of propositions, some of which (the premises) are intended to be the basis, by inference, of others (the conclusions). This inference can be deductive, inductive, or abductive. There is no consensus among philosophers on the exact conditions that must be given for an inference to confer reasonableness to the conclusion. However, for Moser, the most important thing is whether we should expect the human knowledge of God's existence to depend on an argument. Moser stresses the importance of Craig's eighth statement, which Craig barely touches in his speech: God's personal experience.

We need not be limited to arguments for our evidence for God's reality, because we could rely on our experience of God as basic, foundational evidence for God [...] Evidence is not exhausted by arguments, given that the evidence provided by experience is not always an argument. [81]

Thus, for Moser the "argumentism about God" forgets the fact that God can provide evidence of his existence for men, without them being based on any argument. That is, it suggests that we should rely on arguments to reason about our way of ensuring that we know the reality of God.

Using the pragma-dialectical approach of Van Eemeren & Grootendorst helped us detect where the major obstacles for the discussion between Dr. Craig and Dr. Rosenberg were. But we are aware that this theory was designed considering argumentation as a speech act that tries to overcome a difference in opinion. In this sense, this theory is not suited for analyzing this kind of debate, since positions about believing or not believing in God are so deep anchored in a person's mind, that we do not think speakers are going to change their minds in a debate like this. But we would like to consider this debate as a part of a long humankind history debate, where philosophers of different ages have tried to do their best in analyzing the existence or non-existence of God. If we consider it this way, we can think that each debate, article, and argumentation is a step that we can take in the search for truth. It is extremely important that theists and atheists enter this search with a pure heart and an open mind and work together in the search for truth.

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