

Are We Going To Get Squished?

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January 29, 2006

God is not going to get squished. He is not squish-able. He is squisher, squishee and squishing.



Underneath the push, pull and shove of life as it appears in the "news media" is anxiety over the fate of man. This is a question about the goal (Greek *telos*), the meaning (Latin *intellectus*) and the outcome (Latin *providentia*) of history. It is not possible to underestimate the existential power, the universal foreboding this anxiety

represents. Nor is it possible to anticipate the vast array of thoughts, words and deeds that express this anxiety now and soon.

This anxiety is both conditioned by current "news" and a condition of existence *per se*. Were all known problems to be solved today or even tomorrow, anxiety would remain a factor in the daily life of every creature, including every person.

Anxiety is an unavoidable, inescapable condition of existence. To be embodied, to exist at all, is to be anxious ... about existence! Will existence cease? That question inheres in existence itself.

Furthermore, anxiety *per se*, as well as the particular anxiety conditioned by current "news," is not superficial. It cannot be dispelled by counseling or medications. It cannot be dispelled by religion. Nor can it be dispelled by faith.

No religion invites man to avoid the negative implications of existence, because no man can avoid those implications, not Saints and Sages, not the Christ and Avatars and not Prophets, Kings and CEOs.

The anxiety experienced today around the globe is anxiety about the threat of non-being. We are not worried about losing merely our lives. We are worried about life itself succumbing to the power of evil and ceasing to exist. We worry about the human race -- and with it the animal, plant and mineral realms -- losing their existence entirely. And above all we worry that existence itself is meaningless. We feel diminished by ontological anxiety ¹ from which there is not escape and for which there is no amelioration. We feel threatened with defeat by the very fact of our very existence.

We are anxious about the potential of a tragic, negative, irredeemable, hopeless, hateful, shameful, destitute and galling end of our person life and of history.

We are anxious about annihilation -- of what we are, of what we believe and value, of what we hold dear, of meaning itself and of our ultimate concern.

¹ Latin *angustus*, meaning narrow. English "anxiety" and "angina" and German "angst" refer to the phenomenon of narrowing and the experience of being closed in and constricted or strangled. The experience of narrowed (eventually to one's extinction) arises from self-awareness of one's finitude and therefore the threat of one's being not. Counseling cannot bypass the reality of one's finitude and therefore it cannot eliminate anxiety, although it can moderate compulsive anxiety.

We are anxious not just about our personal death or of death as a phenomenon but of annihilation of our centered self and of the dimensions of spirit and history. We are anxious that being will be overwhelmed by non-being and cease to be.

Abelard, Hume and Locke constructed and promulgated the nominalist *a priori* assumptions that are at once a strength (in science) and a debilitation (in spirit) of the Latin Church, which by its "cultured despisers"² is called "the West."

[Popper](#) in the realm of theory (*theoria*) and [Soros](#) in the realm of practice (*praxis*) have taken the nominalist or positivist *a priori* assumptions to their logical end.

Nominalism removes the categories of being and thought. It removes reason in the sense of *logos*. It denies the existence of principles while focusing on particular events taken as discrete and separate, having merely accidental, contingent, unpredictable relation with one another.

Speaking metaphorically, we may say that nominalism attends the billiard balls striking one another and declares those events reality *in toto*. No attention is paid to the possibility of meaning in the total context of the balls striking one another. In fact, the possibility of meaning is denied from the outset because the question of meaning raises the question of the categories of reality and thought, precisely the question nominalism, as an *a priori* assumption, denies has a referent.

The question of meaning raises the question of ontology: who/what is moving the billiard balls and why, to what end, from what supporting ground and from what universals?

² The appellation comes from the great German Theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher.

In our present situation of anxiety regarding the goal, meaning and outcome of history, nominalism forbids asking the ontological question, the question of goal or purpose, support and meaning. Nominalism has no answer for anxiety and indeed acts to intensify and deepen it. Ultimately it produces tyranny in all realms of life. ³

Nominalism as practiced in our churches, schools and courts and their political movements attacks questions of purpose and meaning as a threats to civilization. Men who ask such questions are accosted as stupid and dangerous.

We see this occurring in the movements to promote abortion, pederasty and anti-Christian sentiment, movements which militantly resist questions regarding the *gestalten* of their own activities.

We see this occurring also in the bizarre theory of "the clash of civilizations," wherein civilizations are taken as clashing billiard balls without thought taken for the universals present in whatever "clash" is under consideration, for example the table on which they are rolling or the atmosphere in which they are floating.

Again, we see nominalism in the premise that the basis of rights is the law -- by which are meant lawyers -- not anything intrinsic to a centered self. In fact, lawyers deny the reality of centered selfhood, ⁴ affirming only the reality of laws and courts they construct (for self-aggrandizement).

We see nominalism in the premise that war is a "poor" or "sad" choice among bullies, without significance beyond a clash of unrefined egoism

³ This phenomenon is observed in Jesuit history (for example the assertions of Vatican I) and in recent events such as the heckling and hectoring of Larry Summers from the Presidency of Harvard University.

⁴ And with it the reality of justice, which is modulation of the independence and relatedness of centered selves.

or passion. President Chirac's phrase for this condescension was "not well brought up." Conflict has no moral driver, no desire or duty to uphold universals such as safety, dignity, honor, elegance and proper conduct. Nominalism denies the duty of persons towards themselves and towards the communities in which they participate through reliance and obligation. ⁵

Finally, we see nominalism in the theory of market economics, that economic activity *per se* builds capital which is happiness automatically. ⁶ Costs to persons, animals, nature, communities and nations are irrelevant by-products. Loss of dignity and freedom through denial of universals, principles, intrinsic natures of plants, animals, persons and history ... all of this, again, is irrelevant by-product. The continuous expansion of buying and selling (consumerism) is the sole definition of reality and therefore the whole meaning and goal of history.

Not even humanism, a frail system of attenuated inquiry and tepid charity, is so callous respecting centered selves.

The dimension of spirit unites power with meaning. The dominance of the dimension of spirit characterizes human creatures. Humans are aware not only of themselves, as are animals also, they are aware of being separated or estranged from their selves, from what they really are, from their essential nature. Among creatures, only man is aware of being estranged from himself.

Humans are anxious not just for their ability to remain alive but for the meaning of their life, for which they are aware of yearning. Simultaneously, humans are aware that the power and meaning they experience as themselves, even though it is an incomplete and distorted

⁵ Soros promotes this attitude with one face while pursuing with militant skill and zeal his personal self-aggrandizement with the other.

⁶ Greek *ekonomos*, building up.

power, is related directly, immediately to divine power and meaning, to God.

Man feels related to God, to that which is unconditioned, self-manifesting and grand. He is. God is the root of man.

God is Spirit and man experiences the dimension of spirit, which is the unity of power and meaning. Man and God are related essentially, which means in unity. They belong to one another. Existentially man is estranged from his unity with God and that estrangement is compelled by what man feels, rightly, as a "fall" from unity with God into the conflicts and triumphs, hopes and fears, actions and reactions, winning and losing, knowing and not knowing that characterize existence. Man's unity with God is the basis of his unity with his self and his world.

Despite the polarities of his existence, man recalls and yearns for the immediate unity of power and meaning he has essentially with God. His existential estrangement from God and himself drives man to be anxious that his unity with God can or will be broken and even annihilated. The threat, through estrangement, of annihilation of his unity with God appears to man as the threat that God will get "squished." The idea of getting squished, an actualization of ultimate anxiety, is a symbol for the threat of non-being, the threat of having neither essence nor existence. Man is aware that apart from his unity with God, his self and his world he is squished and is not.

This anxiety cannot disappear or leave man's experience so long as he has existence. It can, however, be sublimated in courage, the courage to be, which is a consequence of the condition of being grasped by Grace and thus established in faith. God creates the power to be and authors life ⁷ in all its dimensions. He also authors salvation in life, the reunion of life with Himself.

⁷ French *auteur/pouvoir/puissance*, Latin *auctor/auctoritas*.

If man is to pray for anything, he should pray for Grace, to be established by God in the condition of faith and therefore surcharged with courage. Only in the orbit of faith can man have courage to be. Without faith, man has hope but not courage, and hope is a colossal waste of time. Man can wish but he cannot establish. He can change but he cannot progress. He can act but he cannot build.

It is said of Soldiers that they are called to engage in the highest form of religious practice, which is self-sacrifice. The inner meaning of this saying is that soldiers are the embodiment of faith in God and therefore of the courage to be. Soldiers have courage in the ceaseless struggles and strains of life because they have faith in the ground of being, faith in God, which is also the basis for faith in their comrades and their mission.

St. Paul uses the metaphors of the Soldier and the prisoner to describe the life of a Christian. These metaphors are united in the great Pauline symbol of living "in Christ," meaning, living while grasped and inspired immediately (without mediation) by Jesus as the Christ.

The core value of Soldiers, whether in the Army of their Mother Land or the Army of Christ, or in both, is courage. God is not squish-able and is not going to get squished. Man cannot be squished because God cannot be. God's creating, sustaining and directing creativity are ceaselessly present in the life of individual creatures, their worlds and the universe. Those who live in the Grace of Faith know this and that knowledge is love.

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