

Exploring Divine Attributes: A Philosophical Analysis of God’s Nature Across Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a philosophical exploration of divine attributes, focusing on both historical and modern interpretations. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle have long discussed the existence of a transcendent reality, with God being central to these discussions. Throughout history, the concept of God has been viewed from various philosophical and theological perspectives, some seeing the universe as evidence of God's presence, while others reject human-like portrayals of the divine. The paper examines key thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Al-Kindi, Xenophanes, and Spinoza, alongside theological insights from world religions. Classical theism presents God with absolute attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence, supporting ideas of divine providence and predestination. In contrast, process theology views these attributes as dynamic, emphasizing a cooperative relationship between God and creation. Feminist theology critiques traditional ideas of omnipotence, promoting a relational and just vision aligned with gender equality. Postmodern theology moves away from absolute attributes, focusing on a vulnerable and compassionate divine presence. This study highlights the diversity of theological and philosophical approaches, showing how different views on divine attributes influence ideas of providence, free will, justice, and ethics, reflecting the complexity of understanding God across time.

Keywords: Divine Attributes, Philosophical Analysis, Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Theology

INTRODUCTION

The existence of God has often been associated with nature, with elements like wind, mountains, and stars seen as reflecting divine power and hidden meanings (Rahman, 1980; Xenophanes, 2015). Philosophers have long debated God's existence, questioning whether belief arises from personal conviction or evidence from the universe. Thinkers like Plato and Aristotle proposed an ultimate reality that transcends nature, though not necessarily a personal God (Plato, trans. 2000; Aristotle, trans. 1998). Fazlur Rahman (1980) argued that the Qur'an does not "prove" God's existence but reveals ways to know God through the universe's order. Similarly, early Greek philosophers believed the universe originated from basic elements, while others pointed to a divine, eternal reality (Rahman, 1980).

Al-Kindi described God as an eternal, singular entity, while Xenophanes rejected anthropomorphic depictions of God, emphasizing His incomprehensible nature (Adamson, 2007; Xenophanes, 2015). Modern philosophers like Spinoza equated God with nature,

asserting that God's attributes are expressed through thought and extension (Spinoza, 1677). Despite these diverse views, the understanding of God's attributes remains complex.

This paper explores the attributes of the Glorious God from a philosophical perspective, addressing three key issues: understanding God's attributes, examining philosophers' views on God's existence, and exploring how humans comprehend divine attributes.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive literature review will be conducted to explore philosophical, theological, and historical perspectives on God's attributes. This includes analyzing classical and contemporary writings by key philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Al-Kindi, Xenophanes, and Spinoza, to understand their views on God's nature. Both historical and modern interpretations will be considered.

The review will also examine theological sources, analyzing religious texts and doctrines from major world religions. Recent scholarly articles and academic papers will be reviewed to assess current discussions and theories regarding the attributes of God and their philosophical implications.

RESUST AND DISCUSSION

Historical Perspectives on Divine Attributes

The nature and attributes of God have been central to philosophical and theological inquiry throughout history. Across different eras and intellectual traditions, various thinkers have sought to understand and articulate the divine qualities, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. This exploration, which spans from classical antiquity to the medieval period, reflects both continuity and change in the understanding of divine attributes.

Classical Antiquity

In classical antiquity, Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle laid foundational views on the nature of the divine. Plato's conception of God, or the divine, emerges primarily in his dialogue *Timaeus*. Here, Plato introduces the idea of a divine craftsman, the Demiurge, who creates the cosmos by imposing order on pre-existing chaos. The Demiurge is depicted as a benevolent and intelligent being who arranges the universe to reflect the principles of goodness and harmony (Plato, trans. 2008). For Plato, the divine is associated with rationality and moral goodness, suggesting a God who is both wise and just.

Aristotle, Plato's student, developed a different perspective on the divine in his work *Metaphysics*. Aristotle conceptualized God as the "Unmoved Mover," a being who is pure actuality, existing without potentiality or change (Aristotle, trans. 1998). For Aristotle, God is eternal, immutable, and perfect, a cause that sets everything in motion without itself being affected. This understanding emphasizes divine simplicity, with God being entirely self-sufficient, immaterial, and transcendent. Aristotle's God is not personal or involved in the world in the way the gods of popular religion might be, but instead serves as the ultimate source of motion and order in the universe (Aristotle, trans. 1998).

Medieval Christian Thought

Medieval Christian philosophy further developed these classical ideas, often synthesizing them with biblical theology. Augustine of Hippo, one of the most influential Christian thinkers, integrated elements of Neoplatonism with Christian doctrine. In his *Confessions*, Augustine describes God as immutable, eternal, and outside of time, emphasizing God's transcendence and the idea that God is the ultimate source of all being (Augustine, trans. 1997). Augustine's conception of divine attributes includes omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence, arguing that God's knowledge is comprehensive and his will is inherently good. He also highlights the relationship between divine simplicity and immutability, proposing that God's essence is unchangeable and perfect.

Thomas Aquinas, another key figure in medieval Christian thought, offered a systematic articulation of divine attributes in his *Summa Theologica*. Aquinas built upon the philosophical foundations of Aristotle while incorporating Christian teachings. He argued for the simplicity of God, positing that in God, essence and existence are identical—a unique characteristic that sets God apart from all other beings (Aquinas, 1948). According to Aquinas, God is not composed of parts, has no potentiality, and is purely actual, existing as the necessary being upon which all contingent beings depend. His discussion of divine attributes also covers omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Aquinas reasons that God's omnipotence does not mean He can do the logically impossible (like creating a square circle), but rather that God's power extends to all things that are possible in themselves (Aquinas, 1948).

Islamic and Jewish Philosophical Contributions

Islamic and Jewish philosophers of the medieval period also made significant contributions to the understanding of divine attributes. Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, influenced by both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions, discussed God's attributes extensively in their works. Avicenna, in particular, argued for the existence of a necessary being, which possesses attributes of simplicity, immutability, and intellectual perfection *The Metaphysics of Healing* (Avicenna, trans. 2005). He held that God's essence is identical to His existence and that all other beings derive their existence from Him.

Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher, contributed to the discourse on divine attributes through his work *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Maimonides advocated for a negative theology, or *apophatic theology*, arguing that humans cannot positively describe God's essence and can only describe what God is not (Maimonides, trans. 1963). This approach reflects a strong commitment to divine transcendence and simplicity, emphasizing the limitations of human language and understanding in grasping the true nature of God.

Therefore, from classical antiquity to the medieval period, the philosophical exploration of divine attributes reveals a rich and diverse intellectual history. Plato and Aristotle laid foundational concepts that influenced subsequent thinkers like Augustine and Aquinas, who integrated these ideas into a Christian framework. Meanwhile, Islamic and Jewish philosophers like Avicenna and Maimonides offered further insights, drawing from and expanding upon the Greco-Roman and Abrahamic traditions. The study of divine attributes remains a crucial area of inquiry, reflecting humanity's enduring quest to understand the divine.

Early Modern Philosophy: Perspectives on Divine Attributes

The early modern period (late 16th to 18th century) marked significant shifts in Western philosophy, particularly in the understanding of God and divine attributes. Thinkers like René

Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz sought to reconcile emerging scientific ideas with traditional religious beliefs, offering a range of perspectives on the nature of God.

René Descartes (1596–1650), often regarded as the father of modern philosophy, placed God at the center of his theory of knowledge. In *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), Descartes argues for God's existence as foundational to securing human knowledge. He describes God as a perfect being with attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness, grounding the reliability of human reason in God's benevolence (Descartes, 1996). Descartes emphasizes God's immutability and simplicity, placing God beyond the limitations of finite beings.

Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) offered a pantheistic view of God, equating God with nature in his work *Ethics* (1677). He proposed that God and the natural world are one substance with infinite attributes, perceivable to humans through thought and extension (Spinoza, 1994). Spinoza rejected a personal, interventionist God, instead viewing God as an immanent force within the universe, with everything manifesting as a result of divine necessity.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) introduced a different view in his *Theodicy* (1710), where he argued that God, being all-knowing and perfectly good, created the best possible world from all potential realities. Even the presence of evil, he claimed, is necessary for the greater good within the divine plan (Leibniz, 1985). Leibniz's views on divine simplicity and immutability also maintained that God's attributes are unified in a single essence, and His actions always align with divine perfection.

Isaac Newton (1642–1727), while known for his contributions to science, also offered views on God, seeing Him as the ultimate lawgiver who designed the universe like a clockmaker. Newton's *Principia Mathematica* (1687) reflects his belief in a rational, orderly universe governed by divine laws, but he also believed in a God who could intervene in the world (Newton, 2004).

These philosophers reflect diverse perspectives on divine attributes, illustrating the evolving understanding of God during the early modern period. Descartes upheld God's role in securing human knowledge, Spinoza redefined God as nature, Leibniz reconciled God's goodness with evil, and Newton integrated science with theology.

Contemporary Perspectives on Divine Attributes

Analytic Philosophy: Perspectives on Divine Attributes

Analytic philosophy, emerging in the early 20th century, reshaped discussions about God's nature by emphasizing logical clarity, consistency, and empirical adequacy. Figures like Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, and William Lane Craig contributed diverse perspectives to the debate on divine attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence.

Bertrand Russell critiqued traditional arguments for God's existence in *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1927), arguing that cosmological and teleological arguments lacked logical and empirical support (Russell, 1957). A.J. Ayer and the Vienna Circle extended this critique in *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936), asserting that statements about God were unverifiable and therefore meaningless (Ayer, 1952).

Alvin Plantinga revived interest in theism in the 1960s with *God and Other Minds* (1967), arguing that belief in God is "properly basic," meaning it can be rationally held without empirical evidence (Plantinga, 1967). He defended the coherence of divine attributes and

proposed a "Free Will Defense" to reconcile God's omnipotence and omniscience with the existence of evil (Plantinga, 1974).

Richard Swinburne, in *The Existence of God* (1979), argued that God's existence is the best explanation for the universe and consciousness. He defined omnipotence as the ability to do all things logically possible (Swinburne, 2004). William Lane Craig, in *The Only Wise God* (1987), defended Molinism, reconciling divine omniscience with human free will (Craig, 1987). Through rigorous analysis, analytic philosophy has kept the discussion of divine attributes relevant in contemporary thought.

Process Theology: A Dynamic Perspective on Divine Attributes

Process theology emerged in the early 20th century, rooted in the metaphysical framework of process philosophy, particularly through the works of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. In contrast to classical theism, which presents God as unchanging and wholly transcendent, process theology portrays a dynamic God actively involved in the unfolding process of the universe. It emphasizes the relational, temporal, and experiential aspects of divinity, arguing that God is both affected by and responsive to the world's events.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) is regarded as the founder of process philosophy. In his seminal work, *Process and Reality* (1929), he outlines a metaphysical system where reality consists of interrelated events or "actual occasions" rather than static substances. For Whitehead, God is not immutable; rather, God is a "fellow sufferer who understands" (Whitehead, 1978). This suggests that God experiences the unfolding events and engages in a reciprocal relationship with creation.

Whitehead distinguishes between two natures of God: the "primordial nature," representing God's eternal potential, and the "consequent nature," reflecting God's experiential reality shaped by worldly events. This duality allows God to be both transcendent and immanent, possessing an eternal aspect while being intimately connected to the temporal world.

Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) expanded upon Whitehead's ideas, developing what is known as "process theology." He proposed that God is the "supreme relational being," perfect in love and sensitivity to the world's experiences (Hartshorne, 1970). Hartshorne redefined divine perfection not as immutability but as the ability to engage relationally with creation. He argued that divine omnipotence should be seen as persuasive rather than coercive, meaning God does not unilaterally control creation but works alongside the free will of creatures, guiding and influencing them (Hartshorne, 1970). This understanding promotes a relational and participatory view of God, emphasizing cooperation over unilateral control.

Divine Omniscience in Process Theology

Process theology also reinterprets the attribute of divine omniscience. Rather than knowing the future as a fixed set of events, God knows the future as a range of possibilities and potentials, shaped by the free actions of creatures and the unfolding events of the world (Cobb & Griffin, 1976). God has perfect knowledge of all that is actual and all that is possible, but the future remains open and indeterminate, allowing for genuine freedom and creativity within creation.

This perspective addresses the philosophical problem of reconciling divine foreknowledge with human free will by suggesting that God knows all possibilities and probabilities but does not know the future in a deterministic sense. God is aware of all potential outcomes and works to bring about the greatest good within the framework of these possibilities (Cobb & Griffin,

1976). In this sense, God's knowledge is dynamic and relational, continuously adapting to the evolving reality of the world.

Divine Omnipotence and Omnibenevolence

In process theology, divine omnipotence is redefined to highlight God's persuasive power rather than coercive force. Instead of controlling every detail of the universe, God invites creatures to participate in the divine purpose through relational means. This understanding aligns with the view that the world embodies genuine freedom, creativity, and novelty, with God actively engaging in the ongoing process of creation (Cobb & Griffin, 1976).

Divine omnibenevolence in this framework is also viewed relationally. God is characterized as loving and good, deeply caring for all creation and striving to enhance the value, beauty, and harmony of the world. However, since God does not unilaterally control the actions of free creatures, the presence of evil and suffering arises not from God's will but from the choices of creatures within a dynamic, interconnected universe (Hartshorne, 1970). God seeks to bring good from evil while operating within the constraints of freedom and interdependence.

John B. Cobb Jr., a key theologian in the process tradition, expanded these ideas across various fields, including environmental ethics and social justice. In *God and the World* (1965), Cobb argues that God's relational nature implies active concern for the well-being of creation. He posits that process theology provides a framework for understanding God's work as an invitation to participate in creating a just and sustainable future (Cobb, 1965). Overall, process theology offers a distinctive approach to divine attributes, challenging classical notions and emphasizing God's relational, dynamic, and participatory essence in the universe.

Feminist and Postmodern Approaches to Divine Attributes

Feminist and postmodern approaches to theology offer critical perspectives that challenge traditional understandings of divine attributes. These approaches seek to deconstruct patriarchal, hierarchical, and metaphysical notions of God that have dominated Western theology, proposing instead more inclusive, dynamic, and contextually grounded interpretations. Both feminist and postmodern theologians argue for a reimagining of divine attributes such as power, knowledge, and goodness in ways that affirm diversity, multiplicity, and relationality.

Feminist theology emerged in the mid-20th century as a critical response to the male-dominated perspectives of traditional Christian theology. It critiques how traditional theological constructs have often reinforced patriarchal structures and exclusionary practices, challenging the androcentric language and concepts that define God in male terms—such as "Father," "King," or "Lord." Instead, feminist theologians advocate for a reimagining of divine attributes that transcends gender binaries and promotes equality, justice, and relationality.

One of the leading figures in feminist theology, Mary Daly, argues in her book *Beyond God the Father* (1973) that traditional Christian conceptions of God as a male figure reinforce patriarchal oppression. Daly calls for a radical rethinking of God beyond patriarchal language and imagery, proposing instead a "God beyond God," an empowering, liberating force that transcends traditional boundaries (Daly, 1973). Daly's critique extends to divine attributes such as omnipotence, suggesting that the traditional view of God's power as unilateral and coercive reflects and reinforces patriarchal power dynamics.

Similarly, Sallie McFague, in *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (1987), offers alternative metaphors for God that emphasize relationality, care, and mutuality.

She suggests that understanding God as "Mother," "Lover," and "Friend" allows for a more inclusive and nurturing vision of divine power, emphasizing God's immanent presence in the world and the interconnectedness of all creation (McFague, 1987). This reimagining challenges the traditional notion of omnipotence as control, replacing it with a view of power as relational and co-creative, shared between God and creation.

In a similar vein, Elizabeth A. Johnson, in her work *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (1992), argues for a reinterpretation of divine attributes that emphasizes God's mystery and transcendence in a way that does not reduce God to male imagery or patriarchal ideals. Johnson calls for a more inclusive understanding of God that embraces a variety of metaphors and symbols, including female imagery, to capture the richness and diversity of divine reality (Johnson, 1992). This approach challenges traditional notions of omniscience and omnipotence by presenting a God who is relationally engaged with creation, whose knowledge and power are exercised through love and mutuality rather than domination.

Postmodern Theology: Deconstructing Traditional Attributes

Postmodern theology draws on the broader philosophical movement of postmodernism, which questions foundational truths, objective knowledge, and totalizing narratives. In theology, this translates into a skepticism toward any absolute or fixed definitions of God, emphasizing instead the multiplicity, plurality, and contextuality of divine reality. Postmodern theologians like Jacques Derrida, Mark C. Taylor, and John D. Caputo challenge traditional theological constructs, including the classical attributes of God such as omnipotence, omniscience, and immutability.

Jacques Derrida, a key figure in postmodern philosophy, offers a deconstructive approach to theological discourse. While Derrida does not provide a systematic theology, his idea of "différance" — the play of differences that prevents any fixed or final meaning — influences how some theologians think about God. In this context, God is not a being with fixed attributes but a "mystery" that eludes definitive description or categorization. For Derrida, God can be seen as the "impossible," a concept that challenges traditional metaphysical categories and invites an openness to otherness and difference (Derrida, 1995).

John D. Caputo, in his book *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (2006), further develops this line of thought by proposing a "theology of the event" where God is not seen as an omnipotent ruler but as a call, a promise, or an invitation to love and justice. Caputo rejects the traditional attribute of divine omnipotence, arguing instead for the "weakness" of God — a God whose power is manifested in vulnerability, love, and solidarity with the oppressed (Caputo, 2006). This reinterpretation shifts the focus from a God of control and domination to a God who is deeply engaged in the contingent and unpredictable unfolding of history.

Divine Power and Knowledge Reimagined

Both feminist and postmodern theologians offer alternative conceptions of divine power. Rather than seeing God as omnipotent in the classical sense — that is, all-controlling and all-powerful — these approaches view divine power as relational, persuasive, and participatory. Feminist theologians like McFague and Johnson, as well as postmodern thinkers like Caputo, emphasize that God's power is exercised not through coercion but through love, cooperation,

and mutuality. In this view, divine power is not about domination but about the ability to sustain, nurture, and empower others.

The attribute of divine omniscience is also reinterpreted within feminist and postmodern frameworks. Instead of understanding omniscience as exhaustive foreknowledge of all events, these approaches suggest a more dynamic and relational form of knowing. For example, feminist theologians argue that God’s knowledge is not detached or impersonal but deeply empathetic and engaged, reflecting a divine solidarity with the experiences of all beings, especially the marginalized (McFague, 1987; Johnson, 1992).

The Implications for Theology and Practice

Feminist and postmodern approaches to divine attributes have significant implications for theology, ethics, and practice. By challenging traditional notions of divine power, knowledge, and being, these perspectives open up new ways of understanding God that are more inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to contemporary contexts. They encourage a reimagining of God that affirms diversity, fosters justice, and supports relationality. For feminist theologians, this includes a call to address systemic injustices, particularly those related to gender, while for postmodern thinkers, it involves embracing uncertainty, ambiguity, and the multiplicity of divine manifestations.

Feminist and postmodern approaches to divine attributes offer critical alternatives to traditional theological understandings, emphasizing a more inclusive, relational, and dynamic conception of God. By reimagining divine power, knowledge, and goodness, these perspectives seek to affirm the diversity and complexity of human experiences and challenge hierarchical and exclusionary models of the divine. They provide a framework for understanding God that is not only more relevant to contemporary concerns but also deeply rooted in the principles of justice, equality, and love.

Comparative Analysis

Similarities and Differences in Understanding Divine Attributes

The study of divine attributes across various theological and philosophical perspectives reveals both significant similarities and notable differences. These differences often arise from differing assumptions about the nature of reality, the nature of God, and the relationship between the divine and the world. This comparative analysis highlights the core similarities and differences in understanding attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence among classical theism, process theology, feminist theology, and postmodern approaches.

Similarities

Omnibenevolence, or divine goodness, is a core attribute across various theological perspectives. Classical theism, process theology, feminist theology, and postmodern approaches all emphasize God's profound love and care for creation. In classical theism, divine goodness ensures moral order, while process theology sees it as relational and aimed at enhancing the beauty and value of creation. Feminist theology promotes a nurturing, inclusive view of divine love, and postmodern approaches often frame it as a call to justice and compassion.

Many contemporary perspectives also stress relational and participatory aspects of divine attributes. Process and feminist theologies argue that God's attributes are best

understood in terms of relationships with creation, contrasting with classical theism's more static, deterministic view.

Additionally, process theology, feminist theology, and some postmodern views present a dynamic understanding of divine knowledge. Rather than exhaustive foreknowledge of a fixed future, these views propose that God's knowledge includes potentialities and evolves alongside creation, differing from the fixed knowledge often associated with classical theism.

Differences

Omnipotence: Control vs. Persuasion

Classical Theism views omnipotence as God's absolute power to accomplish anything logically possible, often implying divine control over creation. Process Theology, on the other hand, redefines omnipotence as persuasive rather than coercive. God influences but does not control, working with the free will and creativity of creatures in a relational power dynamic. Feminist Theology challenges traditional notions of omnipotence as domination, proposing divine power as relational and empowering, criticizing how traditional views reinforce patriarchal structures. Postmodern Theology deconstructs omnipotence, focusing instead on God's vulnerability and solidarity, viewing divine power as engagement with life's complexities rather than unilateral control.

Omniscience: Fixed Knowledge vs. Dynamic Understanding

Classical Theism traditionally sees omniscience as God's exhaustive knowledge of all things, including future events, in an unchanging and predetermined way. Process Theology suggests that divine knowledge encompasses possibilities rather than fixed outcomes, emphasizing God's engagement with an open and evolving world. Feminist Theology, while not always focusing on omniscience, portrays divine knowledge as empathetic and relational, rooted in understanding the struggles of creation. Postmodern Theology questions absolute knowledge, viewing God's understanding as partial, contextual, and relational, reflecting the world's uncertainties rather than an all-encompassing, fixed viewpoint.

Immutability: Change vs. Constancy

Classical Theism holds that God is immutable, unchanging, and unaffected by temporal events, affirming God's constancy and perfection. Process Theology rejects divine immutability, proposing that God is in a state of continuous becoming, affected by and responsive to worldly processes. Feminist Theology critiques static images of God, supporting a dynamic view of God engaged in justice and liberation. Postmodern Theology challenges immutability, viewing God as fluid and responsive, aligning with its critique of absolute truths.

Theodicy: The Problem of Evil

Classical Theism often addresses the problem of evil through God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, with the free will defense reconciling evil's existence with a benevolent deity. Process Theology sees evil as a result of the genuine freedom and creativity of creation, with God working to bring good from within this free world. Feminist Theology critiques traditional theodicies for overlooking systemic and structural evils, particularly related to gender, calling for divine attributes that address systemic injustices. Postmodern Theology challenges traditional theodicies, emphasizing complex, nuanced responses to evil, focusing on suffering and injustice in context-sensitive ways.

This analysis of divine attributes reveals a wide range of interpretations. While classical theism emphasizes a static and controlling deity, process theology, feminist theology, and postmodern approaches offer more dynamic and relational views, reflecting broader shifts in theological and philosophical thought.

Theological Implications

The theological implications of different views on divine attributes have a profound impact on doctrinal formulations and religious practices. Perspectives on attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence shape various theological doctrines, influencing how religious communities perceive the nature of God, the problem of evil, and human responsibility. This section explores how these differing views affect theological doctrines and religious life.

Omnipotence: Control and Providence

Classical Theism

In classical theism, omnipotence is seen as God's absolute control, leading to a doctrine of divine providence where God directs all events. This view supports doctrines of predestination and divine determinism, asserting that every event, including evil and suffering, is part of a greater divine plan. However, this perspective raises tensions with human free will, leading to debates on predestination versus free choice. The free will defense is often used to justify the existence of moral evil while maintaining God's control.

Process Theology

In contrast, process theology views omnipotence as persuasive rather than coercive. God works with creation through influence, not control, leading to dynamic doctrines of divine interaction. This approach supports human agency and moral responsibility, emphasizing God's role in encouraging good in a free and evolving world. The problem of evil is addressed by stressing that God does not control evil but works to bring about good within the limits of a free world.

Feminist Theology

Feminist theology critiques classical omnipotence, which it argues reinforces patriarchal power structures, and instead advocates for divine power as relational and empowering. This perspective promotes a God aligned with justice, equality, and mutual respect, and it influences doctrines related to social justice and ethical action. Feminist theology encourages active resistance against oppression and transformative justice, particularly for marginalized communities.

Postmodern Theology

Postmodern theology rejects traditional omnipotence, viewing divine power as characterized by vulnerability and solidarity. God's presence is seen in human suffering, emphasizing empathetic engagement over control. This approach impacts ethical doctrines, promoting a flexible, context-sensitive theology that responds to individual and community needs.

Omniscience: Fixed Knowledge and Open Future

Classical Theism

Classical theism views omniscience as exhaustive knowledge of all events, including the future, leading to doctrines of predestination and divine foreordination. God's knowledge

of all outcomes is seen as compatible with human free will, but this raises challenges in addressing the problem of evil, as God's foreknowledge seems to conflict with the existence of suffering.

Process Theology

Process theology, however, sees omniscience as encompassing possibilities rather than fixed outcomes, allowing for an open future. God knows all potentialities but engages with an evolving creation. This view supports doctrines of providence and human freedom, emphasizing human creativity and responsibility in shaping the world.

Feminist Theology

Feminist theology focuses on omniscience as empathetic and relational, with God engaging deeply in the experiences of marginalized communities. This understanding informs doctrines of justice and inclusion, advocating for a divine knowledge that prioritizes social justice and the empowerment of oppressed groups.

Postmodern Theology

Postmodern theology rejects absolute knowledge claims, instead promoting a view of divine knowledge as partial and contextual. Doctrines arising from this view encourage open, diverse interpretations of divine attributes, emphasizing engagement with human complexity and rejecting fixed, universal truths.

Omnibenevolence: Absolute Goodness and Relational Ethics

Classical Theism

Classical theism upholds divine omnibenevolence as aligned with the highest moral standards, supporting doctrines of moral order and divine justice. Theodicies attempt to reconcile the existence of evil with God's perfect goodness, often emphasizing moral alignment with divine standards.

Process Theology

Process theology redefines divine goodness as relational and participatory, supporting doctrines of ethical engagement and social transformation. God's goodness is seen in efforts to enhance creation's value, reflecting a commitment to social and environmental justice. This view influences doctrines that prioritize moral responsibility and positive change.

Feminist Theology

Feminist theology promotes a doctrine of inclusive goodness, emphasizing gender justice and social equity. This view challenges traditional understandings of divine goodness that reinforce inequalities and advocates for empowering marginalized communities, particularly in the context of gender justice.

Postmodern Theology

Postmodern theology frames divine goodness as compassionate and engaged, affecting doctrines related to ethical decision-making and social justice. This perspective supports responsive and contextually relevant ethical doctrines, emphasizing empathy, solidarity, and a commitment to addressing diverse needs.

Therefore, theological views on divine attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence significantly shape doctrinal formulations and religious practices. Classical theism emphasizes God's control, fixed knowledge, and absolute goodness, leading to doctrines of providence, predestination, and moral order. In contrast, process theology, feminist theology, and postmodern approaches offer more dynamic, relational, and context-sensitive interpretations. These perspectives emphasize human agency, social justice, and ethical

decision-making, reflecting broader shifts in theological thought. Understanding these implications highlights how varying views on divine attributes influence religious beliefs and practices across different traditions and contexts.

Philosophical Implications

Differing conceptions of divine attributes have broad philosophical implications, influencing fundamental questions about reality, ethics, and human nature. Classical theism's view of divine omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence as absolute and unchanging reinforces a metaphysical framework of divine determinism and moral order. This perspective supports a worldview where divine attributes provide a stable foundation for ethical norms and the coherence of existence.

In contrast, process theology's view of divine attributes as dynamic and relational challenges traditional notions of divine immutability and absolute control. This shift towards understanding God's power as persuasive rather than coercive invites a more fluid and interactive conception of reality, where change and human agency play central roles. It prompts philosophical inquiries into the nature of free will, the open future, and the evolving relationship between the divine and the world.

Feminist and postmodern approaches further disrupt traditional conceptions by emphasizing relationality, empathy, and context. These perspectives challenge the universality and absoluteness of classical attributes, advocating for a more inclusive and responsive understanding of divine attributes. They raise critical questions about the nature of power, justice, and the role of divine presence in addressing human diversity and complexity.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of divine attributes across various historical and contemporary perspectives reveals a rich tapestry of interpretations that profoundly impact theological and philosophical understandings.

Classical Theism posits that divine attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence are absolute and unchanging. This view supports doctrines of divine providence and predestination, suggesting that God has complete control over the universe and a fixed, foreordained plan. The implications for free will and the problem of evil are addressed through the free will defense and the notion of a greater divine purpose. Philosophically, this view reinforces a deterministic framework where divine attributes underpin a stable moral order.

Process Theology reinterprets divine attributes as dynamic and relational. Omnipotence is seen as persuasive rather than controlling, and omniscience encompasses all possibilities rather than fixed outcomes. This perspective emphasizes a collaborative relationship between God and creation, with an open future where human agency and creativity are central. Theodicy in process theology focuses on God's efforts to bring good from an evolving world, rather than a predetermined plan. Philosophically, this approach challenges static notions of reality, inviting a view of divine power and knowledge that is interactive and evolving.

Feminist Theology critiques traditional views of omnipotence and omniscience as reinforcing patriarchal structures. It advocates for a relational and empowering vision of divine attributes that aligns with justice and gender equality. This perspective influences doctrines by promoting a theology that addresses systemic inequalities and supports transformative justice.

Philosophically, feminist theology challenges traditional power dynamics and emphasizes a more inclusive and empathetic understanding of divine attributes.

Postmodern Theology rejects absolute, fixed conceptions of divine attributes, focusing instead on divine presence characterized by vulnerability and compassion. This view supports a relational, contextual approach to theology, emphasizing diverse and responsive interpretations. Philosophically, postmodernism questions universal truths and highlights the importance of context and complexity in understanding divine attributes.

In summary, the study of divine attributes reveals diverse theological and philosophical implications, influencing doctrines on providence, free will, justice, and ethical behavior, and reflecting broader shifts in understanding the divine nature.

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11th ISC 2024 (Universitas Advent Indonesia, Indonesia)
“Research and Education Sustainability: Unlocking Opportunities in Shaping Today's
Generation Decision Making and Building Connections” October 22-23, 2024

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