



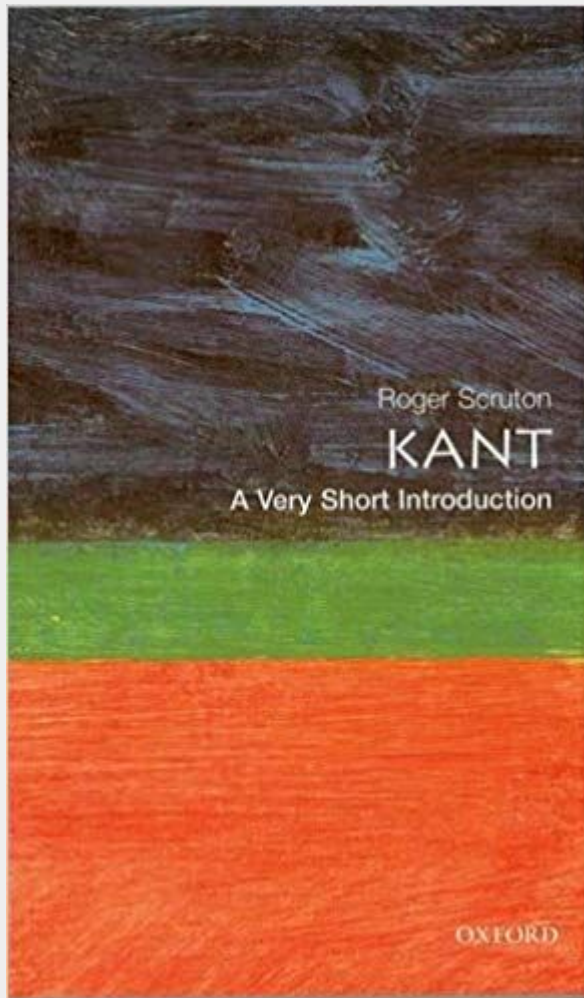
The Problem of Evil





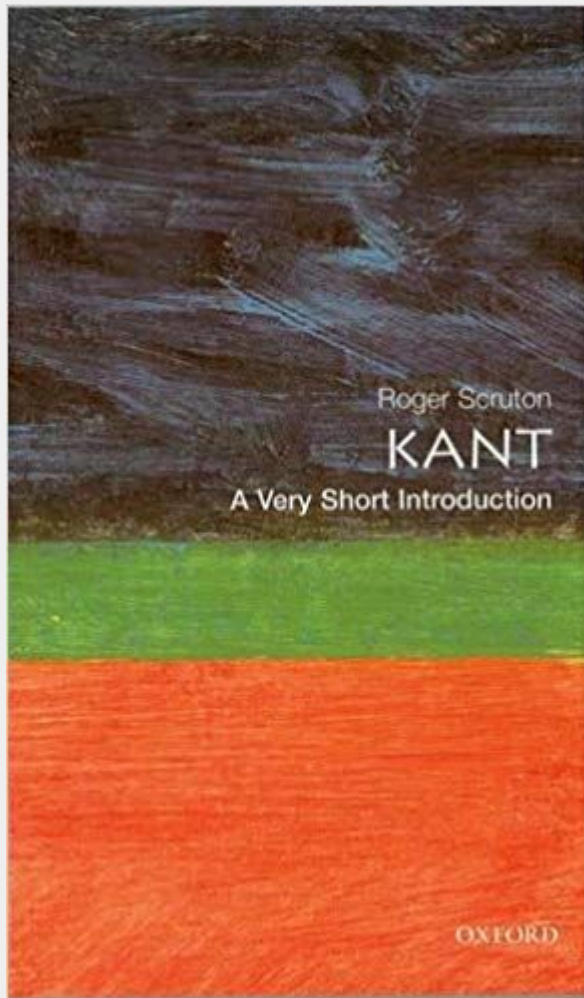


Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

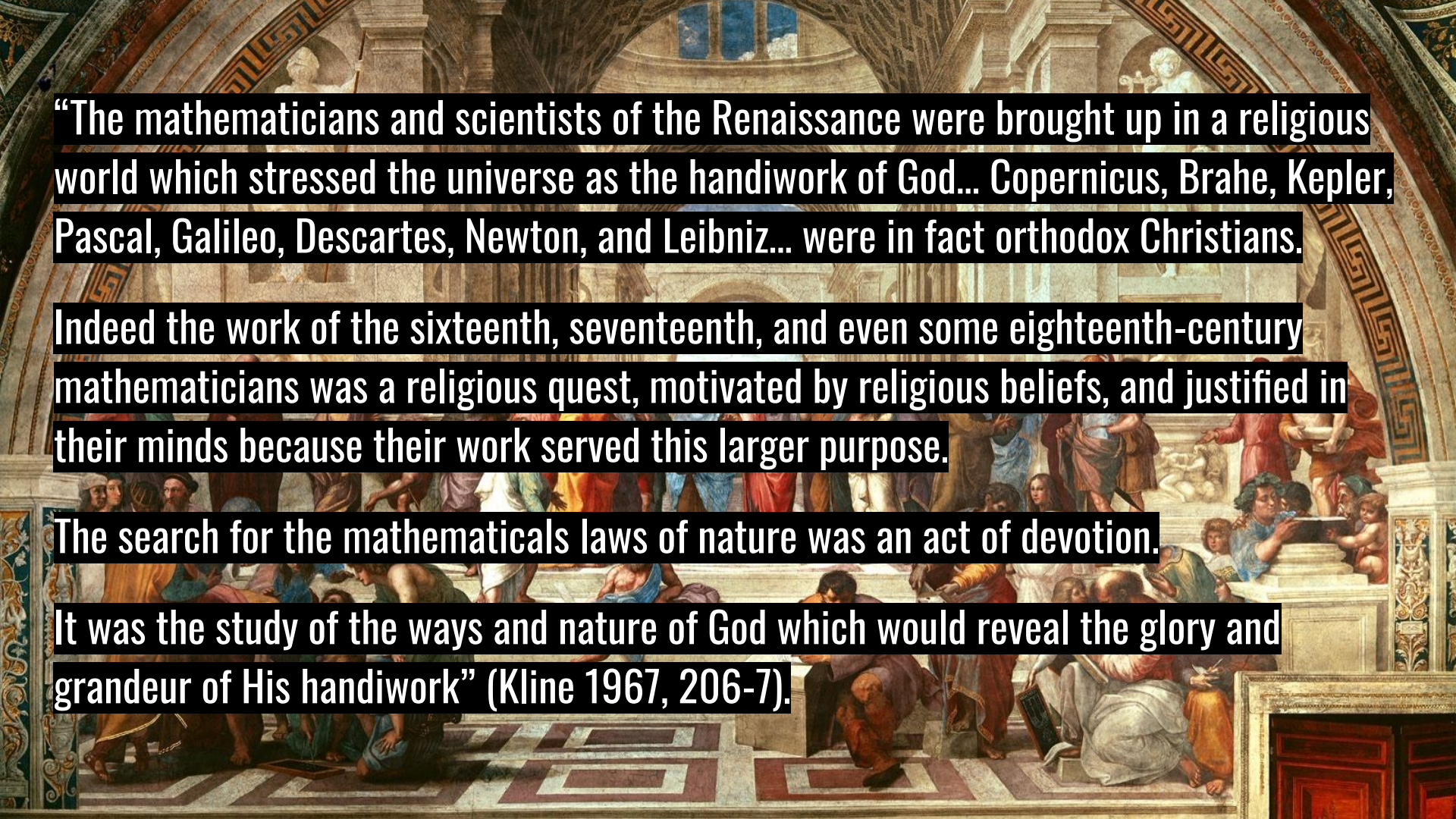


“In the chapter entitled ‘The Ideal of Reason’ [of his *Critique of Pure Reason*] Kant reviews the traditional arguments for the existence of God, and imposes upon them a now famous classification.

There are, he says, only three kinds of argument for God’s existence, the ‘cosmological’ [as in Aquinas’ Argument from Efficient Causes], the ‘ontological’ [as in Anselm’s and Descartes’ ontological arguments], and the ‘physico-theological’” (Scruton 2001: 66; interpolations are mine).



“Kant says of the argument from design [the ‘physico-theological’ type of argument] that it ‘always deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and the most consonant with human reason. It enlivens the study of nature, just as it itself derives its existence and gains ever new strength from that source’” (Scruton 2001: 66-7).



“The mathematicians and scientists of the Renaissance were brought up in a religious world which stressed the universe as the handiwork of God... Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler, Pascal, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz... were in fact orthodox Christians.

Indeed the work of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even some eighteenth-century mathematicians was a religious quest, motivated by religious beliefs, and justified in their minds because their work served this larger purpose.

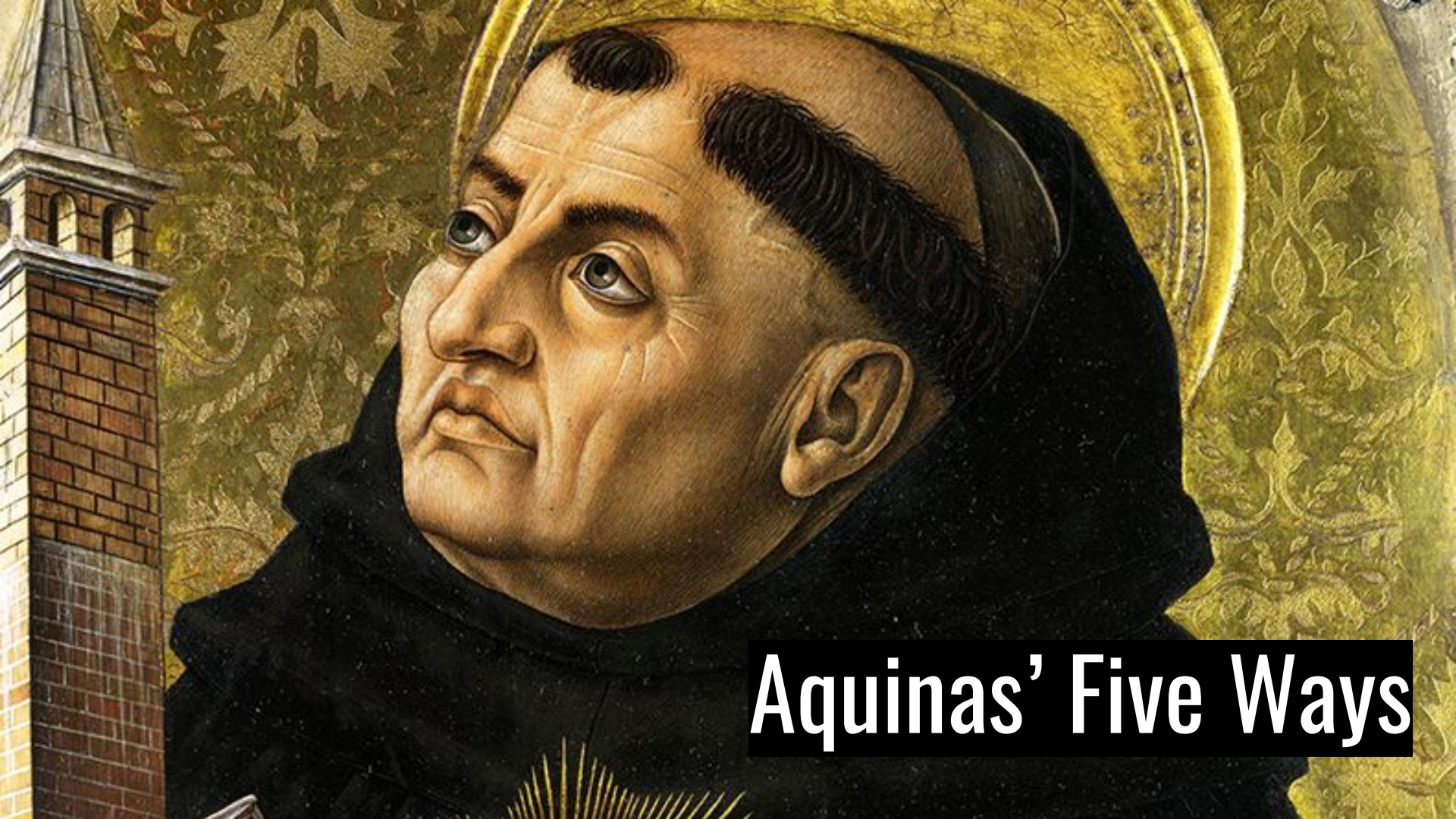
The search for the mathematical laws of nature was an act of devotion.

It was the study of the ways and nature of God which would reveal the glory and grandeur of His handiwork” (Kline 1967, 206-7).



The Teleological Argument

1. The world displays order, function, and design.
2. Other things (e.g., watches) display order, function, and design.
3. Other things (e.g., watches) that display order, function, and design, do so because they were created by an intelligent designer.
4. Therefore, the world displays order, function, and design because it was created by an intelligent creator (and this is God).



Aquinas' Five Ways

Storytime!

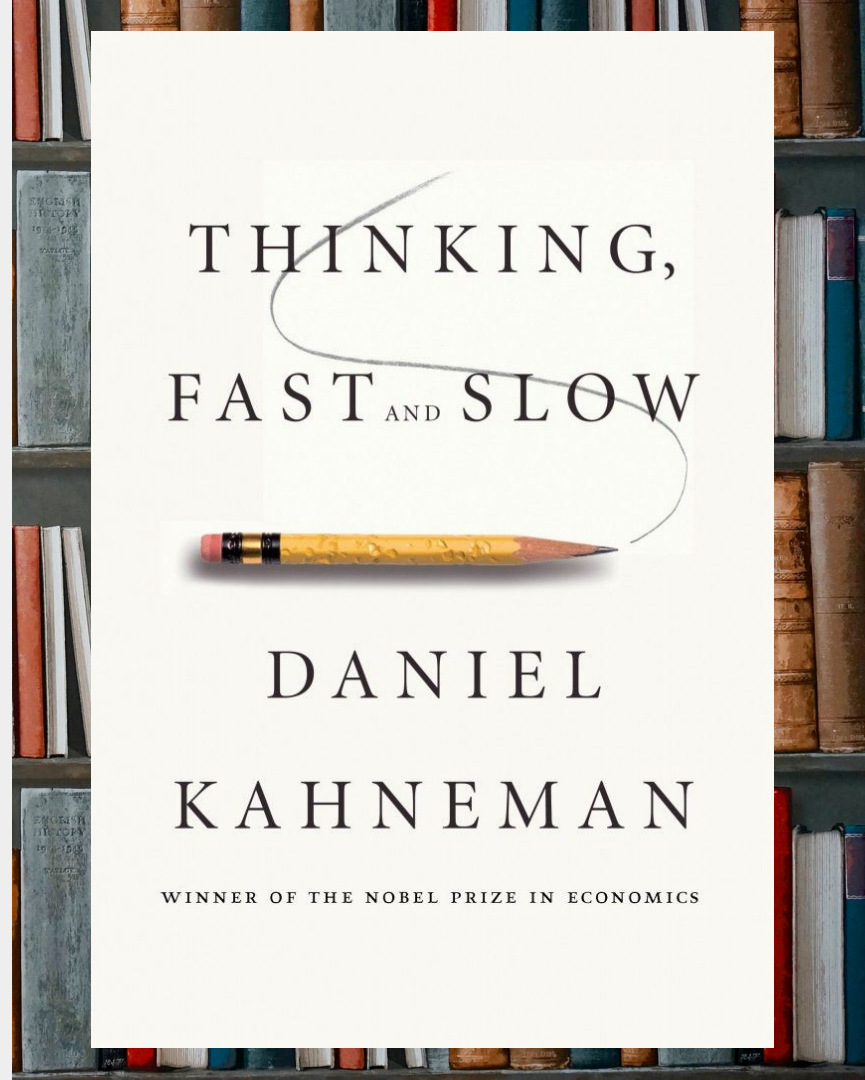




Question:

Why are analogical arguments (sometimes) so convincing?

“We are pattern seekers, believers in a coherent world... We do not expect to see regularity produced by a random process, and when we detect what appears to be a rule, we quickly reject the idea that the process is truly random” (Kahneman 2011: 115).



THINKING,
FAST AND SLOW

DANIEL
KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

Pareidolia



Problems with the Teleological Argument

The Regress Problem

If complexity implies that there is a designer, then consider how complex God must be. It seems like God, since He is so complex, also had a designer. Who is this *meta*-god?

Compatibility with Polytheism

This argument, if sound, does not necessarily prove the existence of a singular God.

It's possible that many gods collaborated to create the universe.



Hume's Objection



The way analogies work is that you have to know the two things you are comparing. Maybe you've seen a watch get made, but you've never seen a universe get created. Your analogy doesn't work.

**Argument from Ockham's Razor
(Atheist Edition)**



+ GOD

To posit the supernatural as an explanation for some natural phenomenon explains nothing.

The teleological argument has no explanatory power.

By Ockham's Razor, this argument is untenable.





A hand is shown from the bottom, holding a miniature model of a solar system. The central star is a bright, glowing orange-yellow sphere with a textured surface. Surrounding it are several planets of various sizes and colors, including blue, grey, and brown. The background is a dark, starry space with a faint blue glow on the left side. The overall scene is dramatic and symbolic, representing the vastness of the universe and the human role in it.

The Problem of Evil

Person of Interest: Marilyn McCord Adams



Occupation:

Philosopher

Priest (Episcopal Church)

Affiliations:

Yale Divinity School

University of Oxford

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Rutgers University

Notable Work:

Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God, 1999; (Warning: Contains discussion of sensitive topics.)



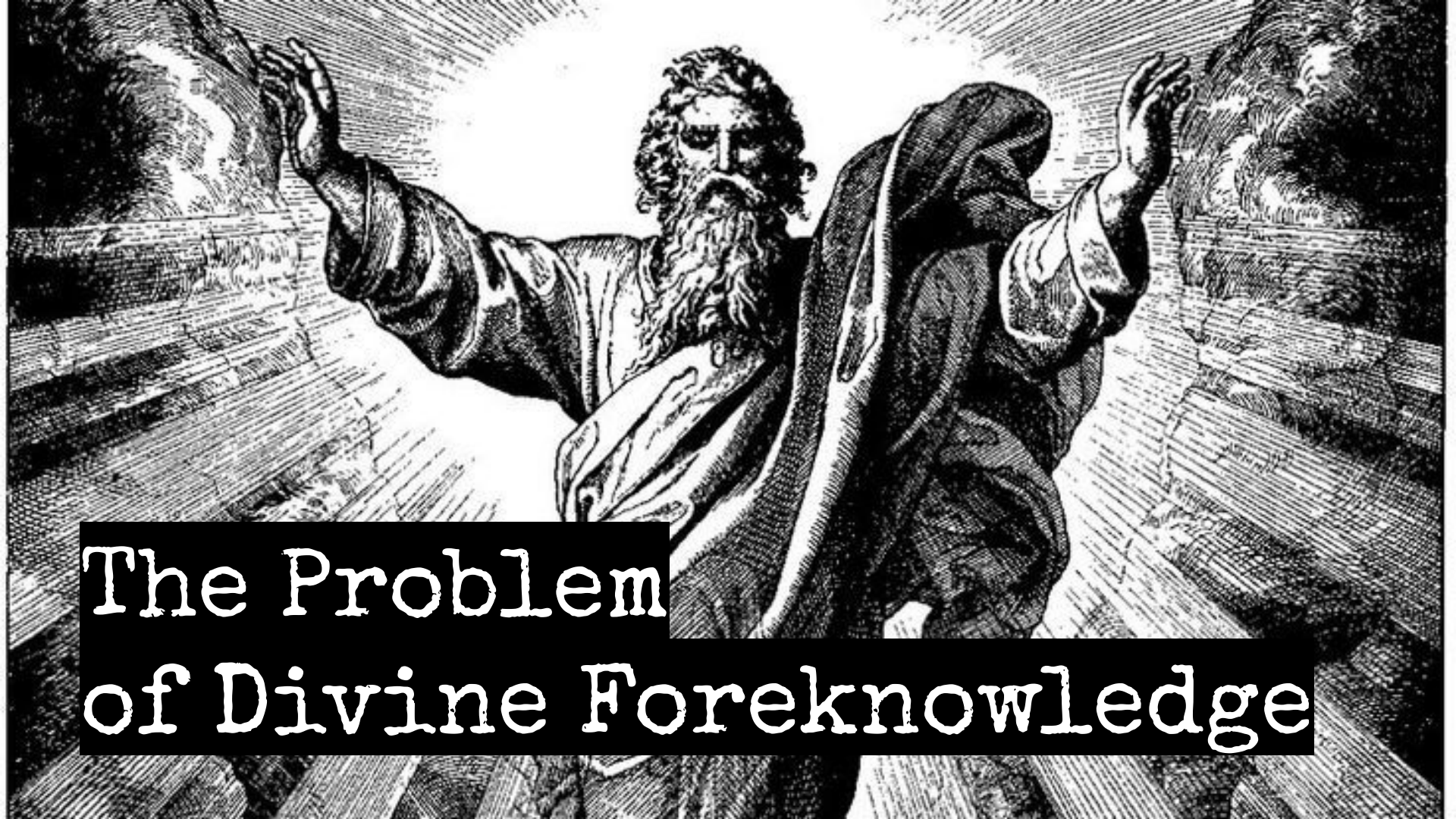
Important Concepts

Omniscience is the property of knowing everything there is to know, i.e. being all-knowing.

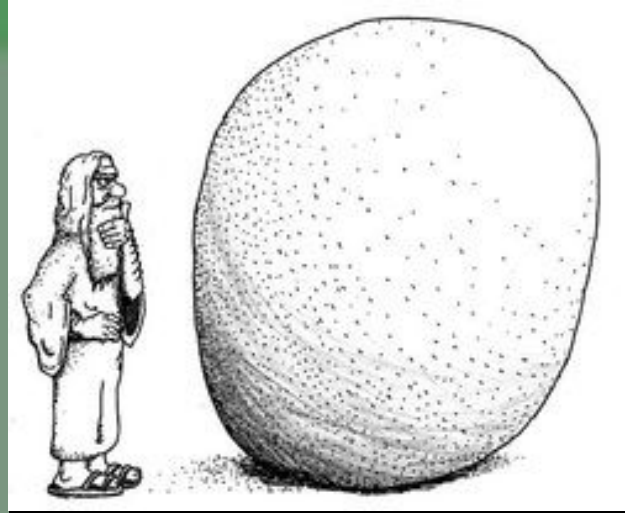
Omnipotence is the property of being able to do anything, i.e. being all-powerful.

Omnibenevolence is the property of having only good intentions, i.e. being all-loving.

Associated Problems



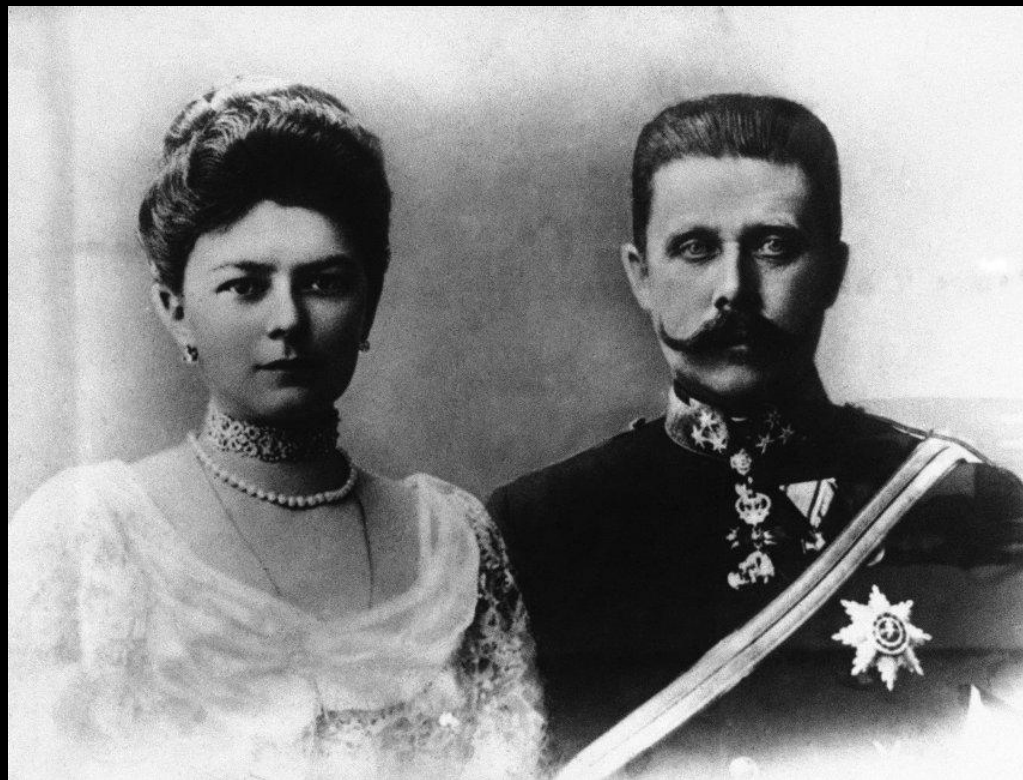
The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge



The Omnipotence Paradox

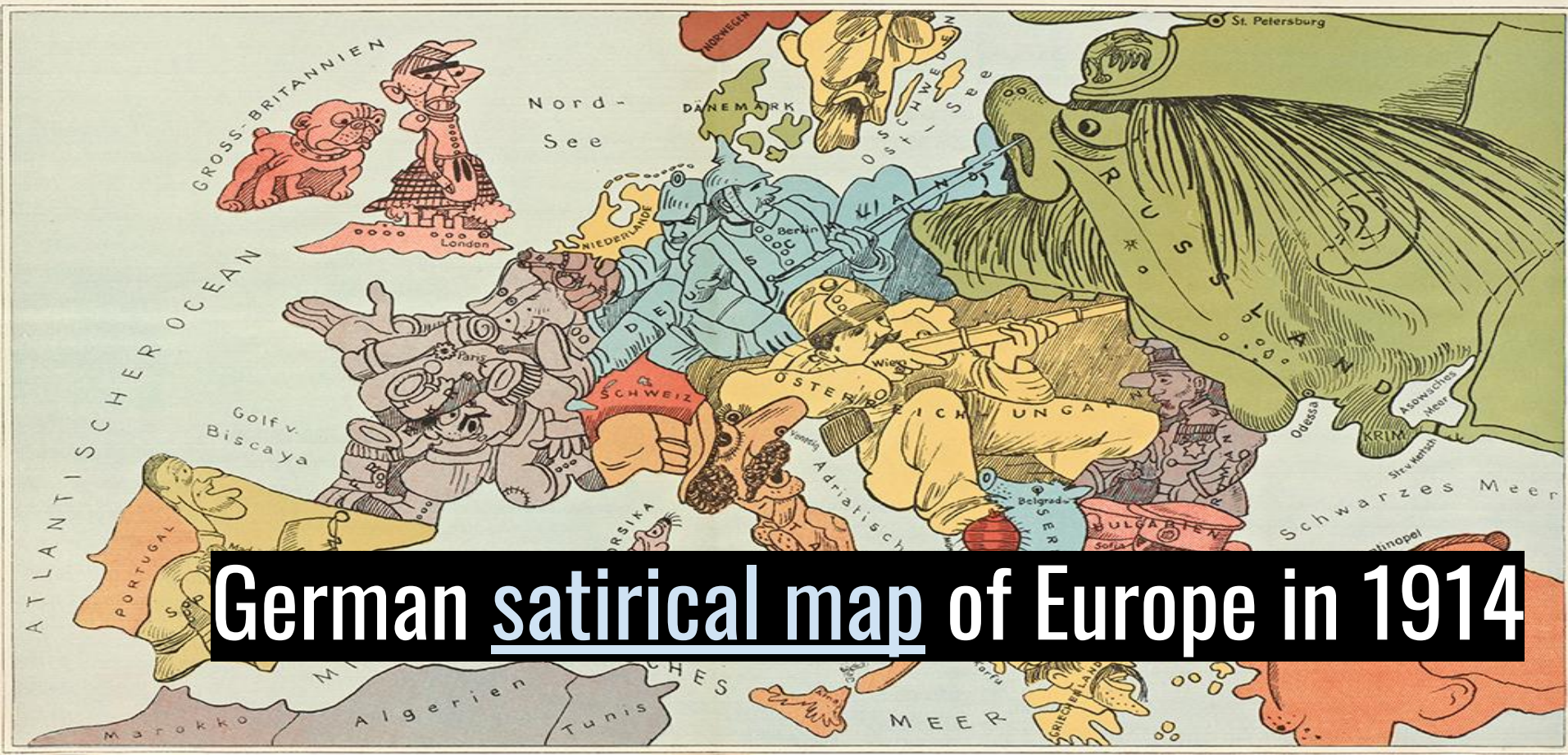
These problems, however, each only utilize one of the traits mentioned.

The Problem of Evil (PoE) utilizes all of them...

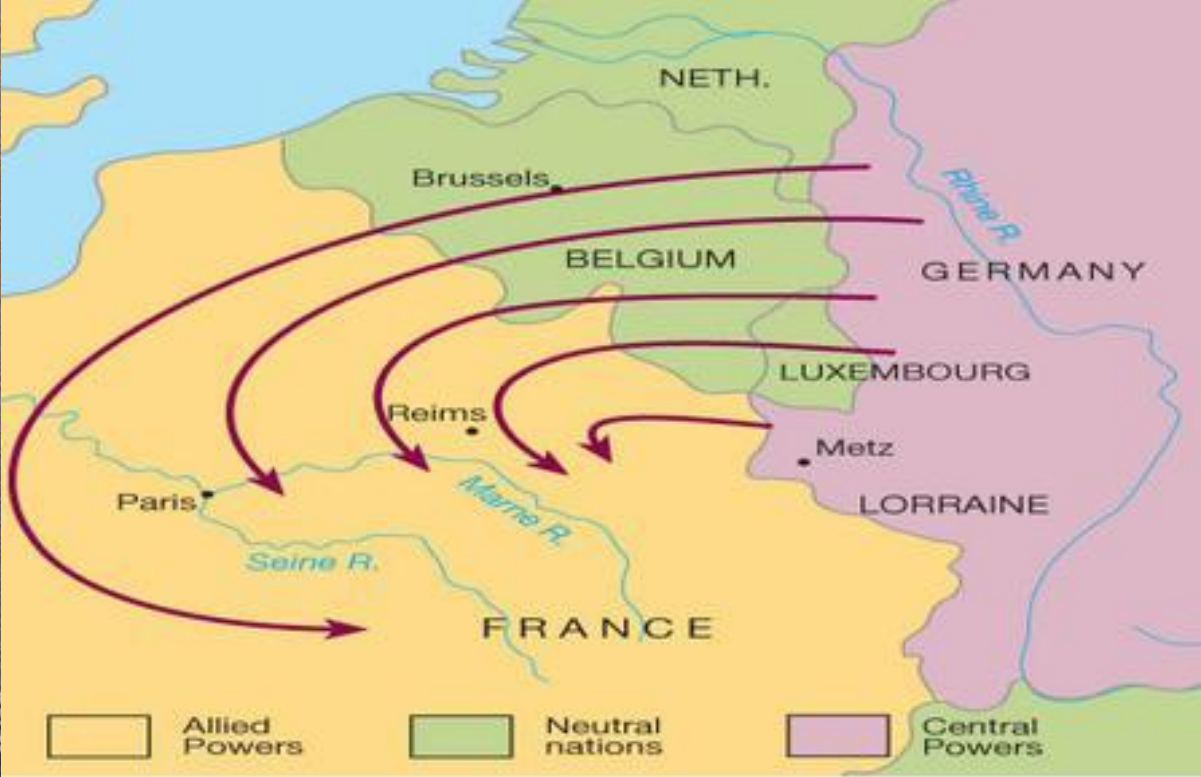


KARTE VON EUROPA IM JAHRE 1914

Gezeichnet von W. Trier

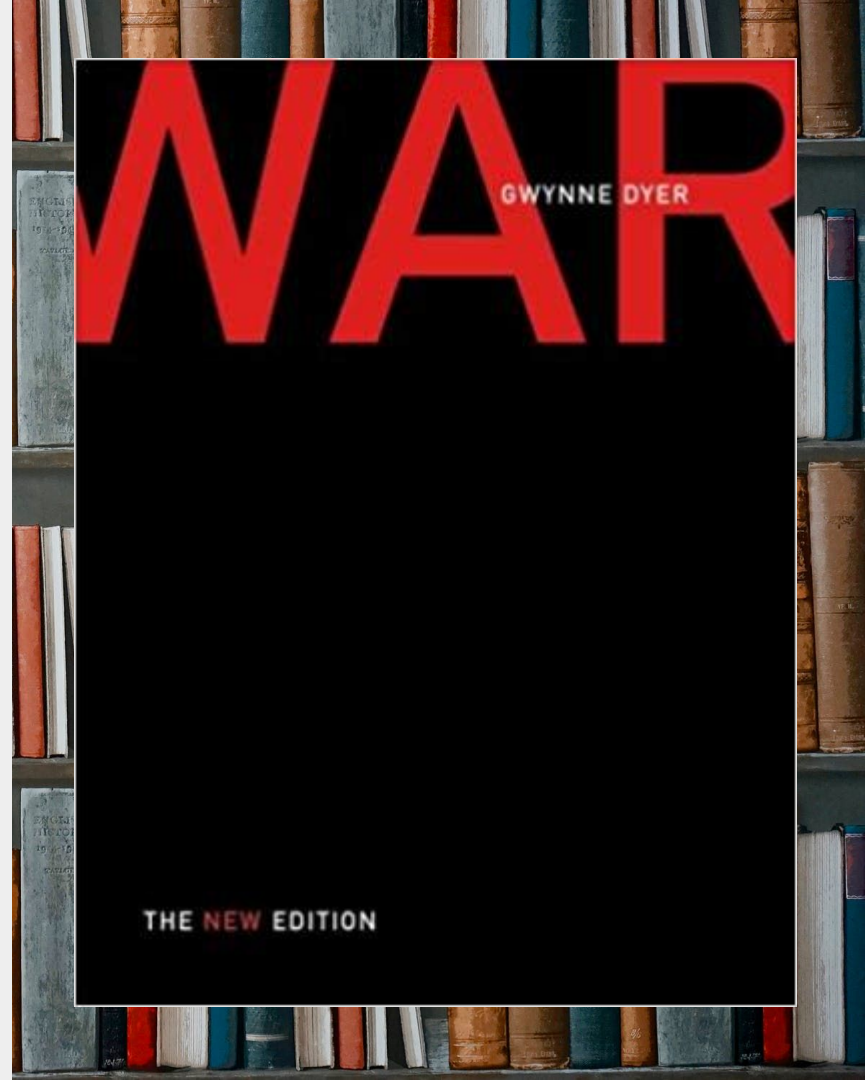


German satirical map of Europe in 1914



The Schlieffen Plan

Gwynne Dyer discusses the changes brought on by World War I in a chapter entitled “Reductio Ad Absurdum: Total War” in the new edition of his 1985 classic *War*.



“For the men in the trenches, it was a kind of war such as few soldiers had experienced before.

Instead of fighting a battle on one or two days of the year, they were in the field, within shouting distance of the enemy, all the time. Each day they faced the risk of being killed, and each day they endured the misery of living in a ditch” (Dyer 2005: 253).





“With strategy paralyzed and tactics narrowed to the search for even bigger bombardments, the war became a simple matter of attrition.

New weapons like poison gas only increased the casualties without breaking the deadlock” (Dyer 2005: 259).

“It is significant that the term ‘home front’ came into use during World War I, when the role of munitions workers, and of civilian production more generally, was becoming as important to victory as the soldiers in the trenches.

Without a constant flow of supplies equal to the vast consumption at the front, the soldiers would soon be helpless” (Dyer 2005: 239-40).





“And what the governments of Europe that found themselves trapped in the first total war discovered to their dismay was that if the means used to fight a war are total, then so must be the ends;

it was almost impossible to stop short of total victory for one side, and unconditional surrender for the other” (Dyer 2005: 265).

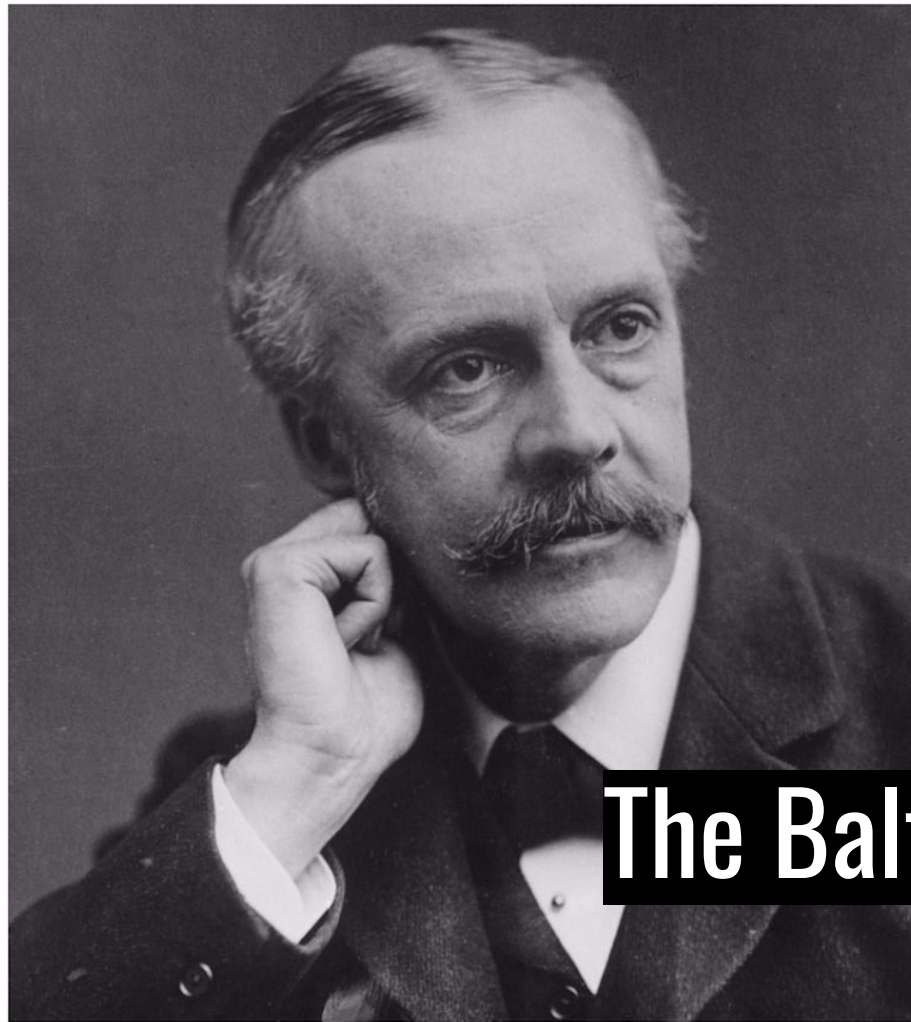




Vladimir Lenin



The Bolsheviks Divulge the Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1917



November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

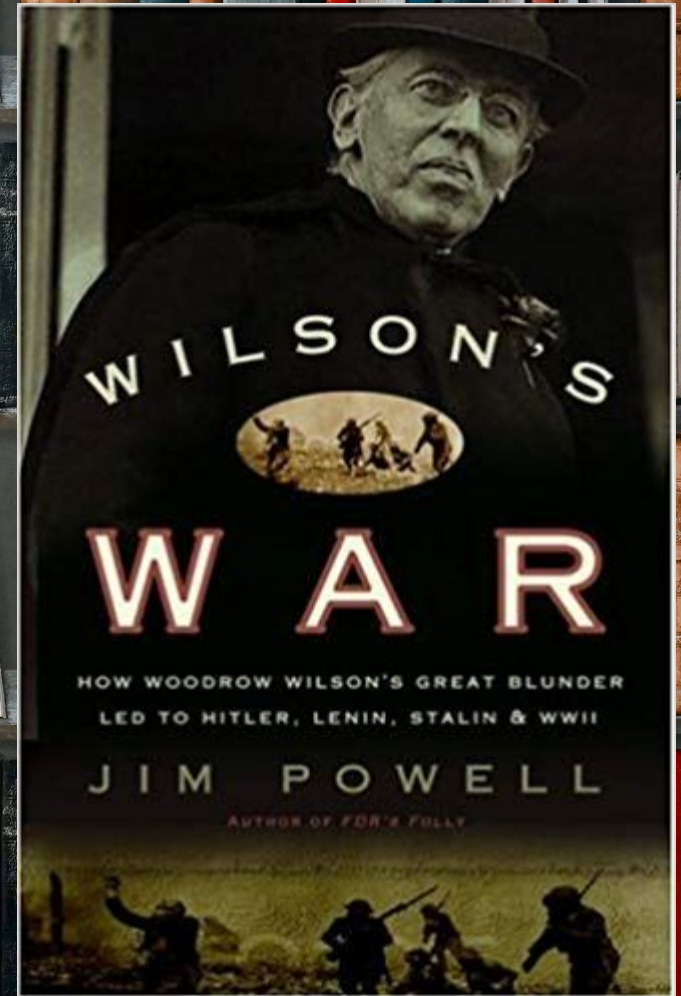
The Balfour Declaration, 1917

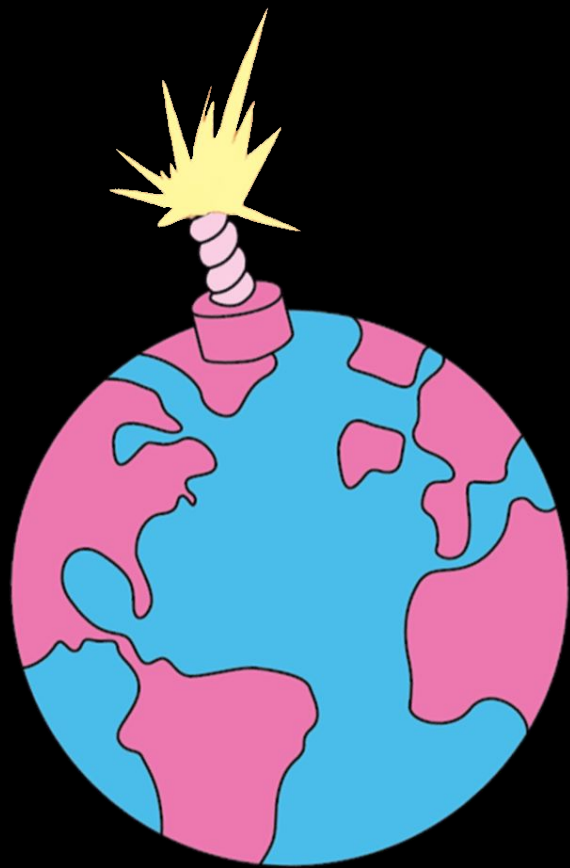
Handwritten signature and initials, likely Arthur Balfour's, at the bottom of the document.



Lenin, a radical leftist, made his case in his *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

But even some historians on the right believe that World War I only led to millions of casualties and disturbing long-term consequences (see Powell 2005).







The Problem of Evil

1. If God exists, then there would be no unnecessary suffering.
2. But there exists unnecessary suffering.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

