

Creatio ex ethica or the ethical cause of our universe: a brief account

M J Rice

School of Humanities, Griffith University, Nathan, Queensland, Australia

Abstract

Theology/science methods, with ethical philosophy and perfect being theism, provide for a tripartite monist Ethical Encounter Theology (EET) worldview. It is argued that a divine love encounter with a prolepsis of moral evil evoked our physically-complexifying universe, so as to save the world by reifying right and wrong ethics for judgment. World history is not disposable when right- and wrong-ethical ecollations must be accumulated for eschatological justice. This cosmic origin from ethics theory subtends a robust theodicy, where moral and natural evils are normal, as in evolutionary theory. A monogenetic dual sequential anthropogenesis is argued to harmonize scientific, biblical and ethical accounts of human origins. The model is consonant with high Christology yet accessible for different theist, deist, and possibly atheist ethical thinking. It provides a much needed ethical link between biblical perfect being theology and theology/science studies. In the wider, ethics-reality-religion debate, EET could facilitate inter-disciplinary conversations and inter-faith reconciliation.

Key words

anthropogenesis, Christology, cosmogenesis, ethics, evolution, eschatology, moral and natural evils, ontology, perfect being theism, prolepsis, worldviews

Mathematician Bruce Craven (2012) recently had an insightful paper in *CPOSAT*, identifying the need for a worldview hypothesis that has room for intelligence, purpose and ethics, as well as for all the laws of physics. That is inviting to one who recently completed a Griffith University doctoral dissertation, entitled *Ethical Encounter Theology: An inter-disciplinary consonance*. My research considered the origin and purpose of right and wrong ethics in our universe. The Bible has it that the realities of nature include wrong ethics that fall short of the right-ethical ideals of God. My thesis argues that it is a divine good that the real mistakes of nature reveal mistaken ideals at the root of nature. In this model, evolution is described as one of the processes of nature, not as the

process of nature. Ethical Encounter Theology (EET) finds no evidence or reason to suggest that God evolves.

In the *creatio ex ethica* model it is argued that materiality arose from primeval ethical circumstances; not by *creatio ex nihilo* from nothing; and, not by *creatio ex materia* or *creatio continua* from matter. The differentiation of our universe is neither by design nor by chance, but by ecollation. That is, entities progressively, emergently complexify by collating pre-existing possibilities. The term 'ecollation' derives from biology, where there has to be an ecological niche prior to a species' selective adaptation to it. A similar process can be argued to be what enables mathematical, physical, chemical, astronomical and geological entities to actualize. Ecollation describes an unseen → seen, en-niching process that contributes physical, biological, psycho-social, and ethically-revelatory actualizations to our universe. In this approach, tangible scientific reality is built-up by material objects emergently occupying all the unseen ways of existing available to them.

In short: *what is* has ecollated from *what can be*. Cosmic history records the collation of unseen regularities that, in combination, have produced a series of amazing objects. Science has been able to identify regularities in our universe's unseen ecology because they can be repeatedly reified. Reliable ecollations provide the predictable regularities we use to build classificatory systems, such as the Periodic Table of elements, different languages, etc. On this hangs all of materiality plus our human capacity to make sense of reality. A similar insight to what is here called ecollation theory has been highlighted by Simon Conway Morris (2010):

But if evolution can discover mundane solutions repeatedly, so too we might suggest that it has the capacity to discover deeper realities, not least consciousness and language.

Conway Morris 2010

This is extended by EET to include discovery of ethical realities. The interdisciplinary proposal of a binary ethical origin requiring discovery processes to freely create our universe may sound radical. However, we might take heart from Lord Robert Winston's comment that:

...the best discoveries are always shocking and fly in the face of given knowledge!

Winston 2012

Since classical times there has been a general understanding that right and wrong regularities are 'givens' (i.e. deontological). Christian theologians have sometimes linked this with the *Basileia Theou* or Rule of God. The link is much disputed today on the basis of neo-Darwinian socio-biological theory. The origin and meaning of ethics has become one of today's most hotly debated topics in the theology/science academy and in society in general. Evolutionarily teleological ethics (e.g. Wilson 1998; Ayala 1995) are frequently proposed as a replacement for the deontological ethics known to Christian tradition (e.g. Burrige 2007, Boyd 2007, Alexander 2002). Ethical Encounter Theology has room for both classes of ethics in its tripartite monism of ethics, theology and

science. Idealism and naturalism can coexist and so it would not be incoherent for a worldview to include deontologically perfect divine ethics (such as unconditional love) with possibilities for the evolution of naturally-, sexually-, and socially-selected ethics. Neither do we have reasons to think evolution could not discover aspects of pre-existent perfect divine ethics such as Godly love (Rice 2012). Central to the EET worldview, our universe is adapted by God who is love to explore minutely everything about right and wrong ethics, during its progressive emergent complexification. The amazing scientific realization that our universe is understandable makes sense in an EET worldview where human iniquity has been recognized from the start, through prolepsis (accurate anticipation) and/or divine prescience.

In a 1954 BBC radio interview, the mature-aged Albert Einstein is reported to have reflected on theology and science in these terms:

I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element; I want to know God's thoughts; the rest is details.

Salaman 1955

Over half a century later, humanity's greatest challenge is still to bring the revelatory wisdom of faith systems into conversation with the empirical understanding produced by science. Many intellectual short-cuts have been tried, with less than satisfying results. Parings-down of divine perfection and compromises of scientific factuality have clearly not worked. For Christian inter-disciplinarians, biblical scholarship must be taken as seriously as established physical and biological facts, and both need to reflect on the rich contributions of philosophers. This is the most difficult and most worthwhile of all intellectual tasks and, as I will argue, it is assisted by a lively faith in the living God who inspires it all. Much contemporary thought resists the idea that the unseeable God is omnibenevolent, omnicompetent, omnipotent, omnitemporal, and omniscient, and perfectly righteous, just, and faithful. Yet EET builds on the supreme, pre-creational right ethics of absolute divine perfection. It relies on evolutionary biology but not on an evolving or panentheist God (see Table). Rather, the theistic evolution of EET is consonant with perfect being theism. The way this difficult but very desirable consilience is derived will be discussed and then summarized in a sequence of 29 steps.

Biblical perfect being theism locates both revelatory and empirical understanding in a perfect ethical matrix that equates with Heaven, the Reign of God, the *Basileia Theou* or (for our inter-disciplinary purposes) the matrix of right ethics (MORE). The EET matricial approach shares features with 'two-aspect' theologies, like that of Jurgen Moltmann:

Heaven is the first world which God created so that there God might form the earth, encompass it and finally redeem it.

Moltmann 1985

Moltmann's ontology is often used to fund a 'process' or 'open theology' worldview, as for example in a seminal compendium: *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Polkinghorne 2001). However, that is not the

direction followed in EET where God is understood to be perfect in every way, eternally complete, and fully in charge of everything. Infinite God simply is, and is rightly worshipped as: 'I Am'. The EET treatment of free-will and determinism and its treatment of theodicy are necessarily distinct from what is relied on in process thought and open theology. In EET, the MORE contains and interpenetrates our universe. In English bibles it is recognized as the Kingdom or Rule of God; in Greek as the *Basileia Theou*. There is a strong New Testament witness that our material universe was begun within that matrix by '...the Lamb slain from/for the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8b; point 28 below). The MORE interfaces the transcendence of God's perfect person with the immanence of the seen and unseen ecologies of the space-time story. This critical realist/idealist methodology offers a previously unexplored consonance between scientific understanding and biblical theology.

Genuinely inter-disciplinarily-coherent models are needed if we are to glimpse anything of the divine teleology that Albert Einstein and many others have sought. In Ethical Encounter Theology (EET) it is argued that cosmic history stems from a primordial *creatio ex ethica* encounter with divine creative wisdom and finalises in an eschatological judgment by divine righteous justice. Binary ethical apocalypses (BEA) mark the progressive actualizations of unseen right and wrong ethical realities. These accumulate as space-time extends and energy-matter complexifies. In an EET universe, the start and the finish grasp us in the pincers of ethical choice. Karl Barth may have been thinking along similar lines when he emphasized that:

...temporality is humanity and God is humanity's pre-temporal, supra-temporal and post-temporal matrix.

Barth, 1960a

EET is unique in proposing that from the beginning of our universe there was an accurate anticipation (prolepsis) of human moral evil. The ethical prolepsis method legitimizes a scientifically-conditioned re-reading of dualistic doctrines, like that which suggests a perfect universe fell into sin and merely needs renovation. EET has it that our cause-and-effect universe serves, from beginning to end, to expose good and evil. This model accords with the scientific evidence that destruction and waste, and suffering and death are inherent of physicality. Science has discovered no discontinuity. *Creatio ex ethica* theory provides a biblically-concordant account of these circumstances. For example, an EET reading of *Romans* 8:19-21 has our universe set on a predetermined path that continually encounters new opportunities for ethically-revealing choices. Out of many possible universes (Leibniz 1701) ours offers the human species the maximum of opportunities for actualizing divine goodness

The kind of universe we inhabit gradually creates itself. As it does so, it progressively actualizes all unseen goods and evils. The process that does this is called binary ethical apocalypsis (BEA). For example, godly actions can stimulate emulation but may also provoke denigration. When completed, BEA provides the just means for the biblical necessity of a summarising ethical judgement to fund the ethically-perfect aeon-to-come. This teleology was identified in 1809 by the philosopher

FWJ von Schelling (referred to later in this paper). The complete ethical history of our universe, built-up by BEA, would afford a consummate ethical education for those who freely chose to be salvaged by it. For believers this achievement might be received as a saving miracle that only God's gracious love could synchronize. Scientists are likely to be unpersuaded by theological propositions that are not readily scientifically testable. Yet EET accords with the scientific method of discovering unseen universal regularities, describing progressive emergent complexifications, and progressively separating what is false from what is true. A biblical, church dogmatic position is that, in Christ, God's work is eternally complete. We do no good works other than eu-ecollating what God has already made available (Genesis 2:2, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3b, Barth 1960b). What is is what becomes reified.

EET has a level of consonance with evolution, design and creation, yet it is not a scientific, design, or creationist paradigm (see Table). Our universe is taken to make itself by progressively choosing possibilities from an unseen primordial ecology that reflects both the perfect divine plan and the imperfections introduced by a primeval prolepsis of anthropic rebellion. The anthropic cosmological principle was originally identified by Brandon Carter (1974, 1983). This principle has proved fertile in the hands of, for example, John Barrow and Frank Tipler (1986), and Simon Conway Morris and colleagues (2007). How this fits with EET is that a physical cause-and-effect universe was necessary to solve the enigma of the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (CEAP). A causal universe permits comprehensive encounters between human ethical conflation and divine right ethics. It appears that, from its inception our universe had to be anthropic and it had to be open to the possibilities of good and evil. In the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich wrote: 'Sin is behovely; but all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well'. The painful truth is that free actualizations of wrong ethics (i.e. mis-ecollation) and of evil (i.e. dis-ecollation) must accumulate to resolve the CEAP (e.g. Matthew 18:7, Luke 17:1) and so clear the way to God's long-standing plan for humanity's entirely eu-ecollative happiness (e.g. Matthew 25:34).

EET says our universe has always laboured under the problem of human ethical ambiguity. The means needed for resolving the problem of moral evil also opens the possibility for natural evil. Thus natural evil is an epiphenomenon of the freedom needed to deal with human moral evil. Nature's future ultimately depends on how individual humans respond to moral and natural evils and free encounters with divine right ethics. This is a claim made by the author of Romans 8:21 and one that is held, in a non-theological form, by most scientific futurologists. In summary: the ethical encounter universe functions to separate right ethics from its anthropic conflation with wrong ethics. This can only be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by emergent material complexification and, today, this largely depends on the advances of science and technology that provide new opportunities for human ethical differentiation.

The theology/science/ethics, tripartite monism of EET can be simplified as a series of steps. Reading these holistically (like a poem, or symphony, or movie) may give a sense of the scientifically-informed, ethical, theological ontology of EET. The main processes in this worldview are:

- 1.** God's love and right ethical wisdom characteristically creates from the beginning.
- 2.** The matrix of right ethics (the MORE— i.e. Heaven, the Divine Reign or *Basileia Theou*) characteristically encounters any ethically-conflated situations that arise.
- 3.** A unique species of animal, *Homo sapiens*, is divinely conceived *in potentia* with a capacity to consciously choose right ethically (as divine image) and to actualize right ethics in our world's history (as divine likeness). This ethical characterization of humanness can be traced back to Irenaeus.
- 4.** From the start, a prolepsis and/or a divine prescience recognized human moral evil as inherent of every possible anthropogenic universe. As in the Genesis 3 parable, rather than education in divine right ethics, we choose self-deifying self-determinism. This resistance to divine wisdom is argued to result in the cosmic ethical anthropic problem (CEAP) that afflicts our universe.
- 5.** The CEAP binds *in potentia* humanity and the divine good planned for us and our world in a singularity of anthropic selfishness. This ethical nadir accords with the abyss of formless darkness depicted in Genesis 1:2, the darkness of John 1:5, and elsewhere.
- 6.** Divine, kenotic right ethics compassionately encounters anthropic conflated ethics. Creative, selfless love is as light entering our darkness (e.g. Genesis 1:3, John 1:3-5, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:2b-3a, 11:3, 1 John 1:5). The biblical revelation of the centrality of this profound ethical event enlarges our appreciation of physical cosmogony and, importantly, is not dissonant with the current scientific understanding of primal events.
- 7.** Divine, self-giving love calls our anthropic space-time universe into being, so as to cure the ignorance of human deicidal selfishness, perhaps starting with an ethical Big Bang or other ethical encounter event. Biblically, God is all loving and all wise Creator, and following Gottfried Leibniz (1701), we may understand that God's good plan is most efficiently achieved in our specific universe.
- 8.** The heat of the physicists' Big Bang (~100 trillion °C) possibly but not necessarily relates to the impact of the Genesis 1:3 light of God's irresistible wisdom and love encountering the Genesis 1:2 singularity of selfishness (that resulted from the CEAP). God created space-time in full awareness of human rebellion as: 'The universe you have to have, before you have the universe I have for you'.
- 9.** Since then, seen/unseen interactions have persistently contributed to progressive emergent complexification of space-time/energy-matter and our expanding universe has always had access to both perfect and imperfect information. Unseen ecology includes both good and evil 'platonic forms'.
- 10.** From unseen ecology come mathematical relationships, physical constants, laws, forces and their diverse combinations; plus, EET claims, the right and wrong ethical possibilities inherited from the divine/human

primal encounter. As argued by polymath, Arthur Gibson (2000), an enduring ethics, invisible to temporal physicality, is mirrored in it, in the same way that mathematics is. Texts, such as Romans 8:24 and Hebrews 11:3 are consonant with the unseen → seen dynamic of ecollation.

11. The information reified by our complexifying universe includes right ethical information from the embracing MORE (that is the eternal *Basileia Theou*) and wrong ethical information from the unseen realities of space-time (URST) made present at creation by the CEAP prolepsis of human rebellion.

12. Creation is saltatory not continuous. For example, ecollation (or enriching, or discovery) is the process by which new biological species are known to emerge through actualizing (ecollating) pre-existing, unseen possibilities. Niches are places that species can successfully live in; for example, the many niches of a richly structured environment can support the evolution of many new species. It's worth referring back to what Simon Conway Morris has written (see above) concerning: evolution as a discovery process; the convergence of species; and the emergence of human-kind.

13. Our universe is ultimately determinate yet has a rich range of alternative ways to actualize its unseen possibilities. Self-characterizing choices constantly collate information from a vast fund of undetermined opportunities. Numerous ethically-revealing choices are incorporated into the pattern of predetermined outcomes. In other words, cosmic history is based on idiosyncratic choices towards a stereotypical outcome (in the same way that a jig-saw puzzle is assembled by conditional free choices). Free-will and predetermination co-operate in EET.

14. Only what was possible at $t = 0$ can be ecollated, so significant physical and ethical choices are not infinite yet there are opportunities for fungible entities and individuals to choose their parts in the pre-determined outcome (Rice 2009). The ethical encounter universe builds itself. It exemplifies the divine plan (by eu-ecollation) and exposes rebellious anthropic plans (by mis-ecollation).

15. Progress in ecollation gradually concretizes the unseen primordial realities. From quarks to humans, increasingly complex selections are made from the unseen informational content of the universe. The divine purpose is not materiality itself but an ultimate revealing of the ethical character of human choice-makers (e.g. Matthew 7:16-18, 12:33-37, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

16. In the case of physical, chemical and geological entities, their ecollation fits them to what is materially and stochastically possible. In contrast, the ecollations of organisms, with their inheritance of genetic mutations and translocations, involve naturally-, sexually-, and socially-competitive selection. This is the basis for Darwinian evolution. 'Ecollation' is a more inclusive term for all the processes by which the universe collates information, starting from the physicist's Big Bang, through the actualization of galaxies and the reification of planets, geomorphology, life forms and human societies. It would help clarify matters if the descriptor

'evolution' were kept as a biological distinctive and not used for non-living physical, chemical and geological ecollations.

17. Biblically, the power of sin and evil is in human attempts to be self-sufficient and independent of God's comprehensive right-ethical teaching. For the sake of precision, historical actualizations of right ethics have been defined as eu-ecollation; historical actualizations of wrong ethics as dis-ecollation; and historical actualizations of conflated ethics as mis-ecollation.

18. Prolepsis and/or divine prescience of human rebellion produced the cosmic ethical anthropic problem, or CEAP (see points 4 and 20). God's encounter with this, via the MORE, has originated a beautiful and elegant but evil-wracked universe, requiring material definition of all ethical realities for just judgment. This process is biblically guaranteed to be worthwhile for the sake of the joy ahead.

19. Divine teleology is that moral evils be fully exposed so as to allow a just separation at the Eschaton. Ambient ambiguity is needed for moral choice-making but it also allows natural evil, as an epiphenomenon of the liminal, contingent, cause-and-effect universe required to address the CEAP. In our universe, both moral and natural evil can be said to ultimately result from humankind's propensity to be ambivalent toward divine right ethical teaching (see points 4 and 22).

20. Natural evil causes meaningless suffering and waste and Sir John Polkinghorne (1989) noted this as an unintended consequence of the free-process needed for physical evolution. EET suggests that sins are not only condemned for offending God's holiness but also because their cure depends on an open type of universe that randomly damages innocents (see point 23). Interestingly, the ethical teleological requirement to address the CEAP by accumulations of a decisive, physical, cause-and-effect process also provides conditions that support the reliability of the scientific method. A philosopher might say that this means epistemology is intrinsic to the EET cosmology.

21. Biblically theologically the term of the world is the Eschaton, when right and wrong causes are judged and divided in preparation for the predicted right ethical aeon-to-come. When ethical destiny is understood to be what drives the chronometer of material history, all of reality is pervaded by monism. Many research questions arise from this concerning ethical/physical interfaces.

22. Ecollation of all wrong ethics is necessary (following a divine kenotic transformation of an anthropic singularity of selfishness into a complexifying universe) to enable confluences of right and wrong to be justly divided. This humanly-desirable goal honors the mercy and patience of God who is love. Is there irony in human complaints about evil, since it derives from anthropic resistance to divine right-ethical instruction?

23. As mentioned, in the EET universe the suffering of innocents is one reason why God hates sin. This relates to what Sir John Polkinghorne (2012) has called: 'the ragged edges of the evolutionary process'. The lesson for any human being, according to EET, is that the consequences of

our sin are never simply personal. In 1624, John Donne famously wrote: 'Anyone's death diminishes me, because I am involved in humankind'.

24. The EET worldview has a logical place for the biblical claim that God's perfect justice is inherently compensatory toward the many that are unjustly made to suffer loss or harm by the generic moral evils and/or the epiphenomenal natural evils of this aeon (e.g. Matthew 5:3-12, Luke 16:25, James 2:5). It seems clear that we too are all called to care.

25. A severe form of self-determination (even arguably the Genesis author and/or redactor's view of the origin of sin) can be biblically associated with the evolutionary selection of farmer/civic Second People cultures, which began about 12,000 years ago in Anatolia. Scientific anthropology questions some well-accepted exegeses. In EET, biblical textual resources are used that are strong enough to accommodate scientific anthropology without diminishing good doctrine (Rice 2009, in preparation).

26. It is possible the author and/or redactors of Genesis 6 implied divine outrage at, and punishment by inundation of farmer/civic Second Peoples for their ungodly abuses of the more humble hunter/gatherer First Peoples. This continued up to modern times (Livingstone 2008). It would be social-scientifically ingenuous to think the authors and redactors of Genesis were ignorant of the generally ubiquitous, hunter/gather humans, living separately in contented simplicity, without armies and slavery, and with no need to work for food, clothes, farms, houses or cities (Rice 2009). Much research remains to be done on the critically important theology/science of anthropogenesis.

27. EET theory has high Christological meaning since the primal, cosmogenic divine love encounter with human conflated ethics is taken to have been driven by a prolepsis and divine prescience of the perfect Godly love of the historical Christ's self-sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary (1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8b). God's gracious offer is to all humans on earth and, indeed it would seem, to any humans who may have evolved on planets elsewhere in Christ's universe (Colossians 1:16-17).

28. EET hermeneutics finds resonances between biblical texts referring to creation, and kenosis (Philippians 2:6-11); the universality of God's work in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20); and other texts referring to pre-existence (Matthew 25:34, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20, Jude 25: *apo pantos ton ainos* in Greek, Revelation 13:8b, 17:8b). Simon J Gathercole (2006) has provided a cogent new approach to textual assertions about pre-existence. The New Testament makes it plain that, in Jesus Christ's self-giving-ness, God's grace towards us was from the beginning of time. Interestingly, this theme is not dissonant with some theories of quantum entanglement and physical cosmogony. The prolepsis theory and ethical chronometry of EET demonstrates some possibilities for re-phrasing traditionally difficult theological questions in contemporarily meaningful terms.

29. Creation and salvation theologies are harmonized by the kenotic Christology of EET. The New Testament reveals the human face of the divine love that creates, sustains, educates, saves, and justly judges this

world; promising better things in the right-ethical aeon-to-come. Yet, you do not have to be a Christian to access the basic ethical encounter worldview. Science has rendered some familiar biblical exegeses redundant. However, other exegeses may substitute cogent, scientifically-concordant perspectives on current issues of interest to the burgeoning theology/science academy.

In the context of the current interests of theology/science researchers, EET offers a structured ethical contextualization to assist perfect being biblical theologians to converse more with theologian scientists. It develops syntheses of ethics and cosmology, as pioneered for example by Frederich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1809) and Nancey Murphy and George F R Ellis (1996) and opens them to a broad church, ranging from perfect being theists to Buddhists and other atheist ethicists. Many philosophies and faiths imply that progressive ecollation of ethical possibilities is what our universe is all about. EET contributes structure and terminology to allow this to be studied by methods that also deeply accord with New Testament Christology. After all, it is of the nature of God in Christ Jesus to evoke what we call binary ethical apocalypse (e.g. Luke 2:34-35a; see point 22, above).

Where does EET fit in the current scheme of theology/science discourse? Among the 'big three' of: 1. biblical literalist creationism and divine design; 2. atheistic evolutionism; and, 3. theistic evolutionism, EET is in the theistic evolution (TE) academy. This school has been said to include theologians Thomas Berry, George Coyne, Michael Dowd, John Haught, Michael Heller, Alister McGrath, Thom Oord, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ted Peters, Keith Ward, Tom Wright, and Joe Zycinski. Numerous scientists are said to support TE, including Bob Bakker, Sam Berry, Dick Colling, Francis Collins, Darryl Falk, Karl Giberson, Owen Gingerich, Dennis Lamoureux, Keith Miller, Ken Miller, Joan Roughgarden, Simon Conway Morris, and John Polkinghorne. However, TE is also home to many evolutionists with no interest in or allegiance to traditional biblical understanding. Even among Christian theistic evolutionists, many have found they can't, in all honesty, bridge the gap between classical perfect being theism and the raw facts of emergent physical complexification and biological evolution (Clayton 2008). An important analysis of the current situation has been provided by John W Cooper (2006).

A kenotic theology of hope in a co-creating, suffering divinity is especially associated with Jurgen Moltmann. It has attracted many, even those who do not agree with Moltmann's panentheism. However, EET is distinct in its tenet that divine kenosis was completed prior to space-time expansion and was revealed at the cross of Calvary (e.g. 2 Timothy 1:9b-10a). EET and ecollation theory show how perfect being theism positively interacts with scientific cosmic genesis and biological evolution. Because of the complexity of inter-disciplinary studies and a burgeoning of publications, theology/science can be an almost impossibly complex discipline for non-specialists. To clarify where EET fits among alternative worldviews, a simplified comparison of the main ontologies that are currently defended by interested parties is provided at the end of this paper (Table).

EET depicts the progressive complexification of space-time as accumulating binary ethical apocalypses that eventually actualize all significant right and wrong ethical possibilities. In terms of the theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg (2005), ethical encounters could be taken to be anticipations (or prolepses) of eschatological realities:

God's eternity and omnipresence are the medium of God's powerful presence with his creatures at the place and time of their existence.

Pannenberg 2005

For EET, each prolepsis is a dynamic interaction between the present ethical conflation of the world and its post-eschatological harmonization with the matrix of right ethics (MORE). Indeed, according to New Testament accounts of Jesus Christ's teachings, the *Basileia Theou* is already close-by and within. The divine distinctive, of perfect right-ethical encountering of ethically conflated situations is highlighted by EET. It is rarely touched on in theological discussions of the doctrine of God; yet ethical encounter could be listed with aseity, omnipotence, omniscience, etc. EET finds biblical evidence for this divine encountering characteristic and locates it as part of a theology/science worldview. Irenical divine encountering with all that is less than right ethical deserves to have a part in the teaching of systematic theology. The EET ontology and worldview could also have social benefits if they help to replace the oxymoron, 'holy war', with 'mutual ethical encountering', as the sensible, godly process to be used for reconciling doctrinal and political disagreements.

More than 50 years ago, Walter Whitehouse (1960) predicted that a new formulation of ontology would be needed before there could be any inter-penetration of scientific and theological ideas. For some reason, this insight has not been followed up. Whilst it is true that there can be negative aspects about worldviews, they need not devolve into the 'ontological violence' that Emmanuel Levinas warned of and that so much contemporary thought has been anxious over. Surely, it is only when ontological thinking unjustly excludes legitimate participants that it becomes oppressive. Therefore terms such as 'ontology' and 'worldview' should be reserved for genuine, truth-seeking paradigms that are demonstrably open to all of reality.

This short paper is a simplified digest of a sizeable doctoral project, as requested by the editors of CPOSAT. Many complex questions arising from *creatio ex ethica*, EET and ecollation theory were addressed in the doctoral thesis. They are the basis for future publications regarding the relationship between EET and New Testament salvation teaching, the Holy Spirit, the pre-existence of Christ and of the elect, the problem of evil, the EET position on free-will and determinism, middle knowledge theory, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, and cognate matters.

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As would be clear, these ideas are built on the work of classical, idealist, and process philosophers, and on the ground-breaking interests of scientist philosophers like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Alfred North Whitehead, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Charles Birch, and Paul Davies; and those of pioneering scientist theologians like Arthur R Peacocke, Ian G Barbour, and John C Polkinghorne.

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Martin J Rice is in the School of Humanities at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. He has been a faculty member of the University of Birmingham, England; of Makerere University, Uganda; and, of the University of Queensland, Australia. Marty is a scientist and biblical theologian interested in inter-disciplinary consonance and inter-faith reconciliation through ethical sharing. He holds a science PhD from Birmingham and an arts PhD from Griffith. As well as lecturing and researching in science, Marty has served on university ethics and chaplaincy committees and has taught in theological colleges. His many

scientific publications include five in *Nature* (London). For many years he has also worked on an Ethical Encounter Theology (EET) worldview to embrace theology, science, and society (recently much assisted by membership of the Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences and ISCAST). Perfect being theism with divine omniscience and omnibenevolence is central to his methods. This paper summarizes some of a Griffith University doctoral dissertation now being prepared as a book.

Table: A comparison of well known worldviews with Ethical Encounter Theology

The purpose of this comparison is to assist the reader in identifying the broad distinguishing claims of the ethical encounter worldview ('yes' and 'no' are allocated by personal qualitative estimates that may differ from the estimates of other theology/science research workers; 'yes/no' and 'no/yes' are intended to indicate positions that are especially disputed).

	Literalist creation	Divine design	Atheist evolution	Panentheist evolution	<i>Creatio ex ethica</i> and ecollation
Full Biblical concordance	yes	yes/no	no	no	yes
Full scientific concordance	no	yes/no	yes	yes	yes
Determinism accounted for	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Free-will accounted for	no/yes	no/yes	yes	yes	yes
Failures explained	no/yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Autonomous emergence	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Prolepsis of moral evil	yes	no	no	no	yes
Coherent theodicy	yes	no	—	no	yes
Coherent teleology	yes	no	no	no/yes	yes
Empirical anthropogenesis	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Christ's work complete	yes	no	—	no	yes
History conserved to fund cosmic ethical justice	yes	no/yes	no	no	yes