

A Deistic Discussion of Murphy and Tracy's Accounts of God's Limited Activity in the Natural World

Leland R. Harper

Abstract: Seemingly, in an attempt to appease both the micro-physicists and the classical theists, Nancey Murphy and Thomas Tracy have each developed accounts of God which allow for Him to act, in an otherwise causally closed natural world, through various micro-processes at the subatomic level. I argue that not only do each of these views skew the accounts of both micro-physics and theism just enough to preclude the appeasement of either group but that both accounts can aptly be classified as, what I term, epistemic Deism. I go on to argue that epistemic deism is a weak brand of deism that ultimately provides us with little to no answers to any of serious questions discussed within the philosophy or religion.

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Address: 43590 Bracken Drive, Chilliwack, B.C., Canada. V2R 4A3. Lxh253@bham.ac.uk

Introduction

The traditional account of deism is one in which God does not intervene in natural events, thus precluding any sort of miracles or divine intervention in the natural world. This view generally argues that the universe along with everything material and immaterial within it were created by God in the beginning, but that God then went on a “permanent vacation,”ⁱ leaving the universe to operate without His intervention. Of course, the details regarding God's specific role in creation, free will, and the like are debated within deistic circles, but for the purposes of this paper this very broad and general definition of deism is sufficient. Nancey Murphy and Thomas Tracy however, develop similar yet distinct accounts of what I call epistemic deism, deistic accounts that allow for God to intervene in the natural world while still arguing for some level of causal closure. These accounts put forth by Murphy and Tracy argue that it is possible, and in some cases necessary, for a deistic God to intervene in the natural world through subatomic processes, but that He does so without breaking any natural laws and having His actions confined to the micro-world, thus maintaining some aspects of the integrity of the deistic model.

One of the main distinctions that ought to be addressed by any deistic account would be whether or not God causally interacts with the universe, and if so, in what capacity. This distinction comes in terms of differentiating between, what I call, metaphysical deism and epistemic deism. Metaphysical deism is a form of deism that, above all, demands the causal closure of the natural world. While God is responsible for creating the universe and everything in it He has never and will never play any sort of interventionist role within it following its creation.ⁱⁱ Some of the things that this brand of deism would preclude are miracles, prayer response, and any sort of direct divine intervention. Of course, the question of why God does not have any sort of active role within the natural world is one that is open for discussion within this view, with some of the possibilities including God having an inability to act in the natural world by way of limitations on His creative power, that He created a world in which His intervention is not needed for any reason, that He is so disconnected from our world that He does not even know or care what happens, just to name a few. The key element of this brand of deism is that God has absolutely no causal influence in the natural order of the world. In contrast, epistemic deism does not demand that same causal closure of the natural world. It allows for God to act on

processes in the universe, so long as His actions are not revealed to us and that there is no possibility of them ever being revealed to us. That is to say, the ability to see God's actions within the natural world are, and always will be, beyond our epistemic grasp. On this account, like metaphysical deism, prayer response, miracles and any kind of direct personal interaction with God are precluded, but it is open in the sense that God is able to act, for example, at the micro-level of the natural world, beyond the limits of our knowledge, and influence micro-processes in such a way as to determine or influence the outcome of particular macro-level events. That is to say that on this account, God is only able to, or chooses only to weakly actualize any states of affairs within the natural world by means that are not revealed to us. Of course, the degree to which God acts (or does not act) within the world can be seen as being on a continuum, with a strong metaphysical deism being the extreme on one side and with a very liberal version of epistemic deism being the other extreme. Any deistic account would have to fall somewhere within these two endpoints with regard to God's activity and causation within the universe.

Murphy and Tracy both seem to ascribe to differing views of epistemic deism. In discussing the general viewpoint of Murphy, Robert Larmer writes "[t]he indeterminacy that characterizes quantum processes has seemed to some thinkers to suggest a way whereby God can be conceived as acting in creation without abandoning belief in the causal closure of the physical."ⁱⁱⁱ That is to say, because of the seemingly unpredictable nature of subatomic particles and quantum processes, Murphy thinks that it is possible, or perhaps even necessary, that God is intervening in order to facilitate these processes, but that since there are no deterministic laws of nature that govern the processes at the subatomic level, God's intervention cannot be said to be defying these laws of nature, meaning that the processes facilitated by His intervention cannot be considered to be miraculous, thus maintaining the causal closure of the physical and preserving the deistic viewpoint.

Tracy, on the other hand, argues that because of the indeterministic nature of quantum processes, there are multiple equally possible outcomes that can result from any particular quantum starting point. Because of this, God is able to act at the quantum level in order to realize whichever of these possible outcomes He desires without His actions being deemed as miraculous or as tampering with the causal structure of nature because each outcome was equally realizable. Through this, God's doing is simply ensuring that one particular possible outcome (that may have arisen anyway) is realized over a variety of other equally possible outcomes.

In this paper I will discuss Murphy's account of God's interventions at subatomic levels, and provide several reasons why I find her view to be inadequate and ultimately unsuccessful, barring extensive revision and substantial explanation supplemented by an advancement in scientific knowledge of the causal relations between subatomic processes and processes that we see at the macro-level. I will then go on to discuss Tracy's account of God acting on the subatomic level, and show how it falls prey to many of the same faults as Murphy's view. Finally, I will go on to discuss how both of these views fail to address many of the basic distinctions required to create an adequate deistic account of God, and highlight some of the problems that any account of epistemic deism will face.

Murphy's Views

Nancey Murphy's paper aims to "provide an alternative account of causation and divine action that is both theologically adequate (consistent with Christian doctrine and adequate Christian

experience), and consistent with contemporary science.”^{iv} The position that she ultimately puts forth is that

In addition to creation and sustenance, God has two modes of action within the created order: one at the quantum level (or whatever turns out to be the most basic level of reality) and the other through human intelligence and action. The apparently random events at the quantum level all involve (but are not exhausted by) specific, intentional act of God. God’s action at this level is limited by two factors. First, God respects the integrity of the entities with which he cooperates – there are some things that God can do with an electron, for instance, and many other things that he cannot (e.g., make it have the rest-mass of a proton, or a positive charge). Second, within the wider range of effects allowed by God’s action in and through sub-atomic entities, God restricts his action on order to produce a world that *for all we can tell* is orderly and law-like in its operation.^v

That is to say, Murphy puts forth a bottom-up account of causation, divine action, and determinism, arguing that God acts in events at the subatomic level which in turn affects the events at the macro level. Because of the apparent randomness of most subatomic events, argues Murphy, we are left with two options to explain them. Either they are completely random, or they are determined by God. Because of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, we ought to reject the idea that the processes and events are random, thus leaving only the option that they are determined by God.^{vi} In this sense, since there are no natural laws in operation at the subatomic level, God is able to act at that level, which ultimately influences or determines events at the macro level without the events being deemed miraculous, thus maintaining the deistic ideal of causal closure as well as the scientific perspectives of causation and natural laws at higher levels.

Tracy’s Views

Tracy, much like Murphy, focuses in on subatomic processes, and the explanatory gaps that surround them, as a likely place where God may choose to act. What Tracy means by “explanatory gaps” are cases in which we must admit that we do not have viable and adequate explanations to questions raised by scientific inquiry, or when particular theories entail that we will not in principle be able to give sufficient explanations for some events that are within the scope of that theory.^{vii} Tracy is not in favor of “God of the gaps” kinds of theories, arguing that God is not to be found in what we *don’t* know, rather He is to be found in what we *do* know. In most “God of the gaps” theories the progress of science entails a push-back on the defined role of God in the world, which Tracy feels is not an adequate account of God and His actions. While this may be the case, Tracy believes that there are still some aspects of nature that will, in principle, never be knowable by human minds or scientific advancements, thus allowing a spot to insert God as a causal agent without the risk of having the progression of science force Him out of that position. Of quantum processes, Tracy claims that some

are so extraordinarily sensitive to their initial conditions that arbitrarily close starting points for these processes can produce dramatically divergent outcomes. The results will be unpredictable in principle, since it will not be epistemically possible either (a) to specify the initial conditions with full accuracy or (b) to predict their result by considering the operation of the system under similar, yet slightly difference, initial conditions.^{viii}

Tracy notes that in many cases trying to provide an account of divine intervention, concessions will often have to be made either on the scientific side or on the theological side to accommodate for the other, but he goes on to argue that if it is the case that the unpredictability of indeterministic chance at the quantum level and the chaotic unpredictability in the system that conveys the quantum effect are both confirmed “then it is open to us to propose that one way in which God may act in history is by determining at least some events at the quantum level.”^{ix}

That is not to say however, that God determines the outcome of each and every quantum event, or that He randomly chooses what outcome will result from each subatomic process, “[r]ather, God will realize only one of the several potentials in the quantum system, which is defined as a probability distribution.”^x In other words, the initial starting point of the quantum process is one that is open to multiple equally possible and equally realizable outcomes, and the intervening role that God plays, on Tracy’s account, is that He determines which of these equally realizable outcomes is actually realized in this particular case.

The key aspects in which Tracy’s view differs from Murphy’s is that, for Tracy, only *some* quantum processes and events are intervened in by God whereas for Murphy, at least on the surface, it seems as if God’s action is required in order for any quantum process to be carried out. Secondly, while it seems that, on Murphy’s account, that God has absolute power in determining what the outcomes of each quantum process will be, the same does not seem to be the case on Tracy’s view. For Tracy, God’s ability is limited to an unknown finite number of potentialities that He is able to realize for each respective quantum process.

Evaluation

While Murphy’s view has several attractive points, namely that it (a) maintains physics as it is, at both the macro and micro levels, (b) eliminates the supernatural at the macro level, (c) preserves the causal closure of the physical at the macro level, (d) excludes irregularities like miracles, and (e) still allows for the existence and intervention of God, it has received its share of criticism, specifically with regards to the scientific aspects of how quantum processes actually work, in that processes in the micro world rarely relate to events in the macro world. If this is the case, it raises the ever-present question, in anything relating to God’s intervention in the natural order of things, of what the reasoning behind God’s alleged intervention would be. Of course, the response that we can never truly hope to imagine God’s reasoning behind any action He commits will always be present, but it still stands to make the case that it would be peculiar for God to choose to intervene in the natural order of the world solely to facilitate the actualization of some subatomic quantum processes that have no translation into anything in the macro world. That is to say, to actualize some subatomic process that has no influence whatsoever on anything at all. To do so would simply seem pointless. It just seems as if it would be out of God’s nature to be constantly intervening in what appear to be meaningless subatomic processes that have no effect on the natural world. In this sense, Murphy needs to do more work in demonstrating, scientifically, the causal connections between events at the micro level and events at the macro level.

Of course, the previous objection can be argued on several grounds (as noted above), but even in the case that that objection is refuted, it still remains that God’s intervention in the world, be it at a subatomic level or not, is an intervention nonetheless, which is fundamentally contrary to the view proposed by metaphysical deism. The key component to Murphy’s argument, that allows it to ascribe to a deistic model while at the same time argue that God is active within the world, is that deism precludes miracles, miracles are violations of laws of nature (at the hand of God), there are no laws of nature in place with regard to subatomic processes, therefore God can intervene in subatomic processes without breaking any laws of nature (since none exist at the relevant time and place), thus maintaining a deistic model that is consistent with God’s intervention in the natural world. So, in a sense, by arguing against the fact that any natural laws are being broken by the intervention of God, it is as if Murphy is arguing for a view that is not quite metaphysical deism, but also not quite epistemological deism. She seems to be arguing for

a very narrow kind of metaphysical deism in which causal closure is demanded, but in which the definition of causal closure is an odd one, where it simply means that no natural law has been broken.

Somewhat related to the objection above is Murphy's claim that God acts on and affects macro-level events by acting on micro-level events, creating a bottom-up causal connection. Murphy argues that there is a scientifically proven connection between micro and macro-level events, while Larmer argues that it is scientifically proven that there is no such connection. Despite the fact that I am in no position to evaluate the truth of either of those claims based on my limited knowledge of quantum physics (especially seeing as neither author cited any scientific studies in their respective papers), we are left with two options: (1) either there are no causal connections between micro and macro-level events, or (2) there are causal connections between micro and macro-level events. If the first case is true, and there are ultimately no meaningful causal connections between micro-level and macro-level events (which is a view that Murphy would object to), then there would be no reason to think that the principle of sufficient reason should apply to micro-level events simply because it applies to events at the macro-level (which is, itself, arguable). If this is the case, then this would leave open the option for the chaos theory of quantum processes, meaning that the apparent randomness of quantum processes is just that, random. This raises a secondary question of whether or not "randomness" can be considered a sufficient reason under the principle of sufficient reason, because while it seems that Murphy would say that it could not be, others may argue that it can be, and if the latter is even a possibility then this would mean that Murphy has stricken a completely viable option that is consistent with the principle of sufficient reason, a principle that she argues so heavily for. Lastly, a disconnect between micro and macro events would also mean that any actions performed by God at this level would be utterly pointless (at least to us) since they would in no way influence anything taking place at the macro-level. Again, this is not the view that Murphy would take, but I am simply presenting it to show what the consequences would be for Murphy's view should it turn out that, scientifically, such a causal connection did not exist.

On the other hand, if there does exist a causal connection between micro-level events and macro-level events, as Murphy argues, since macro-level events display law-like behaviour, it seems hard to believe that such law-like behaviour would simply stop upon reaching the micro-level. There is simply no reason provided that would lead us to believe that everything in the universe would display law-like behaviours and then suddenly cease to maintain such behaviours at a certain point, and this is something that Murphy needs to explain in order for her account to stand up as a plausible theistic account. It would seem more likely that perhaps the behaviours that these subatomic particles are displaying are cohering to some natural laws but, for whatever reason, we are simply not able to discover or understand them. The fact that we have not yet discovered or come to understand these potential laws does not mean that they are not in operation. If it is the case that there are some sort of natural laws governing subatomic processes then it would mean that there is no need to invoke the presence and intervention of God to explain their causation, and Murphy's account would fail. Even if we set that aside however, and God does intervene in order to facilitate or actualize subatomic processes, it is not entirely clear how Murphy's view is so different from the classical conception of God, save for the fact that He is in a sense limited to *only* acting at the subatomic level. This seems like something that proponents of the classical conception of God would be opposed to since it, at least on the surface, constrains God's ability, and something that proponents of metaphysical deism would oppose to because it prescribes God's intervention in the natural world. So, in both cases,

whether there are causal connections between micro-level events and macro-level events or not, we can see how Murphy's account could be rejected in the first case, or require serious revision in the second case.

Finally, it seems to me that in this case Murphy is working with a distorted definition of what I call metaphysical deism, in which her view is only deistic at the macro-level. While it is true that metaphysical deism would preclude miracles, it does not just preclude miracles, rather it precludes any sort of intervention whatsoever. It demands causal closure, and whether or not there are any natural laws at play is simply irrelevant to whether or not any kind of external or divine intervention is permitted under metaphysical deism. Whether a particular external intervention happens to find some loophole in which no natural laws are operational, thus preventing it from being declared a miracle is not of concern here. The main concern is whether or not an external intervention defies the causal closure of the natural world that is proposed by metaphysical deism and it seems that any external intervention, miraculous or not, would defy that causal closure thus making any view that supports both divine intervention and metaphysical deism to be inconsistent. Any such view must ultimately be dismissed. On the same note it seems that a scientific account of the world would demand causal closure as well, which would pose a large problem for Murphy's overall project of trying to create an alternative account of divine intervention that maintains both theological and scientific integrity. The traditional view of the Judeo-Christian God is one in which He, while perhaps intervenes in the universe, does not *reside* in it. That is to say, while He impacts it, He is not a part of it, which seems entirely contrary to the causal closure of the atheistic model generally put forth by modern science. The two simply do not seem to be able to co-exist, at least on this account. What Murphy has done is presented a theologically inadequate view of Christian doctrine, as well as an inadequate view of science in order to create just enough of a gap to fit in a theory that attempts to satisfy both sides of the equation.

Overall, Murphy's view appears to be an attempt at finding a way of incorporating divine intervention into metaphysical deism. Murphy would argue, as far as I can tell, that metaphysical deism demands a causal closure of the universe, but she proposes a view in which certain divine actions are permitted since they would not count as breaking the causal closure of the universe. Thus allowing for a version of metaphysical deism in which God can freely intervene in the universe at the micro-level. I think that Murphy's attempt fails in this respect because allowing for any kind of divine intervention within a metaphysical deistic theory is simply contradictory, and therefore I have tried to look at her view as proposing a version of epistemic deism, which seems like it could be more in line with some of the claims that she makes. If, however, this view is to be interpreted as an account of epistemic deism then, there are a variety of questions that must be addressed and answered before Murphy's account can be taken as a complete account of epistemic deism.

Tracy's view, while much like Murphy's, is far closer to what I have described as epistemic deism and is subject to several problems as well. The first problem that arises, which seems to be one that is almost inherent in these sorts of theories, is that the introduction of God into any explanatory account of nature means that the system on which He is acting cannot be causally closed, and that any intervention within that system would be epistemically problematic. That is to say that

The idea of a direct act of God is unacceptable for us because such an event would involve a gap in the order of nature; it could not be sufficiently explained in terms of antecedent finite events, and so would constitute "an absolute beginning point" for a novel causal series...such an event is not epistemically problematic, it is "literally inconceivable," for the notion of an event without "adequate

finite causes is “quite as self-contradictory as the notion of a square-circle.” We must, therefore, rigorously avoid all talk of divine action *in* history. Nonetheless, it is open to us to think of history as a whole as God’s act.^{xi}

So the problem that Tracy’s theory faces is precisely one that he describes at the outset of his paper. Of course, while it is not entirely clear whether or not this is the case, it could be that Tracy views his theory as one in which history as a whole is an act of God, in which case it would be plausible to think that his view is left untouched by the “absolute beginning point” objection. Tracy’s view however, even if it is one that views all of history as a whole as an act of God, still maintains that God makes continuous interventions in the world through His manipulation of quantum processes. Despite the fact that God would only be actualizing one of the several equally realizable effects of any given quantum starting point, the need for a cause that originates within the system itself still remains, otherwise the “absolute beginning point” objection stands. There would still be a series of quantum processes and effects that cannot be adequately explained by one or more finite causes within the closed system. So, much like Murphy, Tracy seems to argue for a worldview in which the macro-level is causally closed while the micro-level is causally open.

A second problem that Tracy’s view faces is how to properly deal with the apparent limitations on God’s power in his conception of how and when God acts in the world. A difference between Tracy’s view and Murphy’s view is that, in Murphy’s view God seems to have complete freedom in what effects to actualize for each particular quantum starting point, whereas in Tracy’s view He does not enjoy that luxury. For Tracy, God can only actualize one of a limited number of equally realizable potentialities that are already associated with each quantum starting point. It is not entirely clear whether or not this is so because God is limited to these options by something other than Himself, or if He *chooses* only to actualize one of these options (and this is something that Tracy needs to clarify), but if it is the case that God is limited in His abilities of which outcome to actualize then this would indicate a limitation on His powers, which is something that many theists would most likely object to, since it would deny God some sort of creative power. This being the case, Tracy needs to do some explanatory work to describe (a) his conception of what omnipotence entails, and (b) how this conception can be maintained despite the apparent limitations on God’s causal power when it comes to actualizing particular outcomes for various quantum starting points.

A final area where Tracy’s view needs further explanation is the discussion of what quantum processes God chooses, or is required, to act on. Tracy’s theory proposes, unlike Murphy’s, that God only acts to determine the outcome of *some* quantum processes, not all. It is not altogether clear why it is the case that God only intervenes in determining the outcomes of some quantum processes, and not all, or none. Let us suppose that there is a 50/50 split between the micro-processes that God intervenes in and the micro-processes that are allowed to run their natural course according to the natural laws that are in place. Tracy needs to explain why exactly it is the case that God does not simply intervene in the outcomes of *all* quantum processes, as in Murphy’s view, since it would seemingly be no extra “effort” for God to make that move and increase His activity in the determination or influence of quantum process outcomes from 50% to 100%. On the other hand, Tracy also does not make it entirely clear why God’s intervention is required in any quantum processes at all. If we are to go back to the original 50/50 split, with 50% of all quantum processes being left untouched (directly) by God and left solely to operate under the natural laws that are in play, then there needs to be an explanation about what makes the other half of quantum process outcomes so special as require or call for God’s intervention. Even if it is the case that God has some particular will that can only be realized through the

specific outcome of a particular micro-process then it would seem that, given God's omnipotence and omniscience, He could have foreknown each particular situation and set up the natural laws in such a way as to generate the desired outcomes of each and every quantum process so as to realize any and every desired outcome that God may have without being forced to directly intervene in the natural order of the world. With that in mind, it seems almost arbitrary to decide which events are those that were influenced by the hand of God, and which ones were purely the results of the operational natural laws, and Tracy provides no explanation of how such a distinction is to be recognized.

Relation to Epistemic Deism as a Whole

Through the discussion of both views that have been put forth by Murphy and Tracy we have seen that they are each in line with aspects of epistemic deism, in that they both generally argue for God's intervention in the universe, but that these interventions can and do only happen at levels and in ways that are epistemically inaccessible to us. The discussion has also gone to show a variety of problems that are present within these types of theories, namely that there is an enormous amount of explanation that must go into each and every detail within the theory. The reason for that is because any theory that can be reduced to a version of epistemic deism is essentially a theory that is based on justifying varying numbers and degrees of exceptions within itself.

The term deism typically connotes the causal closure of a system, but epistemic deistic theories try to posit and justify ways in which divine intervention can be permitted yet maintain aspects of that causal closure. In the case of epistemic deism theories the claim is often that divine interaction occurs at levels that are unknowable to us, therefore leaving the world (as far as we can and will ever know) as causally closed. This simply does not seem right since it would entail that God's actions would be limited by and dependent on the intellect of humans, in that He only chooses to do actions that we cannot know about. With our knowledge of science and physics constantly advancing this would seem to result in God's active abilities becoming more and more limited as our knowledge progresses. Of course, this is just one objection to the overall account of epistemic deism, but it does go to show that all epistemic deists face an uphill battle in trying to justify how they aim to maintain a deistic undertone in their theories that is based on the human capacities for knowledge while at the same time allowing God to act but still placing limitations on His acting abilities. It just does not appear that the epistemic deist will ever be able to satisfactorily and completely develop a substantial account of how and why certain limitations are able to be placed on God, and how or why certain actions that He does do not count against the requirement for causal closure of the universe that any theory labelled as deistic should entail.

Furthermore, the epistemic deist will need to answer the question of what exactly makes his theory deistic in any sense. Again, since deism generally tends to entail causal closure, which is an aspect that epistemic deistic theories lack, it is not entirely clear just how these theories can be properly labelled as deistic. To take it one step further, the epistemic deist will also need to answer the question of how his view ought to be distinguished from classical theism. While it appears that the interventions that God makes in the world under the epistemic deism framework would generally tend to be very subtle and, by definition, unknowable to us, it is not clear that this kind of action would be inconsistent with a version of classical theism. Some versions of classical theism could, in theory, argue that God is active only in ways that are

unseen by us, so the epistemic deist would have to provide some amount of explanation to differentiate his view from such a version of classical theism.

Finally, as alluded to earlier, for any account of epistemic deism there is a need to describe what kinds of limitations are placed on God and His activity within the universe. The common thread, as noted, that will be present is the epistemic boundary of God's actions. The epistemic deist will have to detail exactly what kinds of limitations, if they are to be more complex than the simple "unknowability" of them, are placed on God and his creative ability, since epistemic deism entails limitations on God's creative ability. The epistemic deist will also have to detail why exactly these particular limitations are relevant and necessary for his particular account, as well as detail how these limitations are able to coexist with the absolute nature of most of the divine attributes.

With all of the problems mentioned above, both specific to Murphy and Tracy's views and those addressed to epistemic deism in general, it is almost as if each claim made within an epistemic deistic theory simply raises more questions than it answers. Of course, each individual theory may be able to deal with some, or even most of these problems, but I am not convinced that any version of epistemic deism will be able to adequately address all of the questions raised. Each adequate answer to one question will simply result in pushing off some contradiction, counter-intuitive thought, or highly debated claim to the end of the line, where eventually it will show itself to weaken, if not destroy, the plausibility of the account.

Conclusion

Both Tracy and Murphy provide interesting accounts of how and where God intervenes in the natural order of the world that are alternatives to the classical theistic model. Both views present an account in which God intervenes in the natural world only at the subatomic level, using these determined micro-events, in turn, to causally determine subsequent events on the macro-level.

Murphy's view, which argues that God has complete freedom in determining the outcomes of quantum events, and that He acts in *all* quantum events, simply relies on too many unknowns regarding how exactly micro-processes work and how (and if) they are causally connected to the macro-world. While her account may hold some plausibility it cannot be rationally accepted as a complete worldview until there is substantial advancement in the areas of quantum-processes and causation so as to provide some level of foundation on which to build her arguments. Until then, the basis of her argument seems to rest on the presumed high level of causal connectivity between the micro and macro worlds.

Tracy's account, while holding some similarities to Murphy's view, maintains that there are some limitations of the creative power that God exercises in determining the outcomes of the various subatomic processes in which He chooses to intervene. The problem facing Tracy's account however, is much the same as the one faced by Murphy, in that there is simply a lack of explanation in certain aspects to allow for it to be accepted as an adequate account of God's activity in the natural world. Where Tracy needs to expand his account is to provide further explanation on why it is that some micro-processes are governed by the natural laws that have been put in place by God while others seem to require the intervention of God in order to produce the desired outcome, and how he intends to maintain God's omnipotence in a theory that places restrictions on His powers by limiting the amount of possible outcomes that He can bring about for each micro-process.

In discussing the views of Murphy and Tracy and how they fit into the larger picture of epistemic deism we have also been able to see just how many problems, not only the views of Murphy and Tracy face, but how many problems epistemic deism as a whole must deal with. There are a substantial amount of severe problems and questions that remain to be answered about epistemic deism, most dealing with apparent contradictions between two or more aspects within any given particular viewpoint. Given these the views of Murphy and Tracy, it is not clear that there will be able to be an adequate epistemic deistic viewpoint put forth that will be able to provide all of the answers and explanation necessary to rid itself of any and all contradictions or other weaknesses.

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ⁱ There are any number of reasons for which God could be non-active within our world, and "permanent vacation" is meant to encompass all of those possibilities, be it metaphysical or epistemic.

ⁱⁱ The details regarding creation and whether God could create a universe without being causally connected to it are an entirely different debate that, due to space restraints, is not discussed in this paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Larmer, "Divine Action and Divine Transcendence," *Zygon* 44, no.3 (September 2009): 550.

^{iv} Nancey Murphy, "Divine Action in the Natural Order: Buridan's Ass and Schrodinger's Cat," in *Chaos And Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell et al. (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 326.

^v Murphy, "Divine Action in the Natural Order: Buridan's Ass and Schrodinger's Cat," 339.

^{vi} Murphy, "Divine Action in the Natural Order: Buridan's Ass and Schrodinger's Cat," 341.

^{vii} Thomas Tracy, "Particular Providence and the God of the Gaps." In *Chaos And Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell et al. (Notre Dame: The Notre Dame University Press, 1995), 290.

^{viii} Tracy, "Particular Providence and the God of the Gaps," 312.

^{ix} Tracy, "Particular Providence and the God of the Gaps," 318.

^x Tracy, "Particular Providence and the God of the Gaps," 318.

^{xi} Tracy, "Particular Providence and the God of the Gaps," 301.