

# Creation as Terminal Expenditure: God as The Cost of Existence

PARTIBAN

*Abstract- This thesis proposes a radical reframing of divine creation — not as an act of omnipotent authority, but as an act of total and irreversible expenditure. Drawing from biological precedent rather than symbolic theology, it argues that the creator may not have survived creation. Using the life cycle of the eel and the mortality of certain mothers in the animal kingdom as organizing analogies, the model repositions God not as an eternal overseer but as a finite source consumed by the very act of generating existence. Under this model, the universe is not sustained by divine intention. It persists as residue — the structural aftermath of a source that exhausted itself completely. Meaning, morality, and responsibility do not descend from above. They emerge from below, through inheritance following divine expenditure. This thesis does not argue that God does not exist. It argues something more difficult: that God may have existed fully, acted completely, and in doing so, ceased to exist in any form capable of response. Existence, in this view, is not supervised. It is inherited.*

## I. THE EMOTIONAL ASSUMPTION OF THE IMMORTAL CREATOR

The assumption embedded in nearly every major theological tradition is this: the creator survives creation. God speaks the world into being and remains present — watching, judging, sustaining, and ultimately correcting the arc of existence toward justice or meaning.

This assumption is rarely examined because it is psychologically necessary. A living God provides continuity of authority. It reassures the human mind that suffering is witnessed, that evil is temporary, that the universe bends toward resolution. The idea of a creator who persists is not merely theological — it is emotional infrastructure.

But psychological necessity is not logical necessity. An assumption may be comforting and still be false. When this assumption is stripped of its emotional scaffolding and examined as a philosophical proposition, it reveals itself to be an exception rather

than a rule — and an exception with no compelling justification beyond the comfort it provides.

In nature, creation is not free. It is costly. In many documented cases, it is fatal. Biology offers repeated, observable examples of organisms that invest the totality of their existence into a single reproductive act, after which continuation is outsourced entirely to what was produced. The creator does not persist. The creation does.

The assumption of an immortal creator is therefore a theological preference, not a metaphysical inevitability. This thesis challenges that preference directly.

## II. THE EEL: CREATION AS TERMINAL JOURNEY

The European eel offers one of the most striking biological models of creation as terminal expenditure. Eels spend the majority of their lives in a state of preparation — growing slowly, conserving energy, accumulating the physiological reserves necessary for what will be their singular, irreversible act.

When reproduction finally occurs, it is absolute. The eel travels thousands of miles from its freshwater habitat to the Sargasso Sea. During this journey, it ceases to feed entirely. Its digestive system degenerates. Every biological resource is redirected toward reproduction. The eel does not divide its energy between survival and creation. It transfers everything it has into what it produces, and in doing so, it dies.

There is no return. There is no supervision of offspring. There is no post-creation management or ongoing presence. Life continues precisely because the creator does not.

Applied metaphysically, this biological pattern dismantles the assumption of an effortless or costless creator. If creation required not authority but total investment — if the act of generating existence consumed rather than expressed divine power — then omnipotence becomes unnecessary. What is required is not infinite capacity, but complete surrender of finite capacity.

The eel does not fail by dying. The eel fulfills its nature completely, and death is the signature of that fulfillment. A theology built on this model would not read divine silence as abandonment. It would read it as aftermath — the structural quiet that follows complete expenditure.

### III. THE MOTHER WHO DOES NOT RETURN: MATERNAL DEATH AS SACRED ANALOGY

The eel is not alone in this pattern. Across the natural world, the act of giving life carries no guarantee of the mother's survival. In some species, birth itself is the terminal event. The mother does not merely risk her life to produce offspring — she gives it entirely, and the continuation of life depends on her absence rather than her presence.

The octopus mother guards her eggs for weeks or months without feeding, her body slowly consuming itself to sustain the conditions necessary for her offspring to survive. By the time they hatch, she is dead. She does not witness what she made possible. She does not receive acknowledgment. She does not return.

Among certain spiders, the mother liquefies her own internal organs to feed her young — a process called matrophagy — providing nourishment through her own dissolution. The offspring do not merely lose their mother. They consume her. Life is purchased at the literal cost of the body that produced it.

Even in human history, maternal mortality in childbirth has not been exceptional but commonplace. For most of human civilization, bringing life into the world carried a real and significant risk of leaving it. Mothers have always

known — consciously or instinctively — that creation is not a safe act. It is a consuming one.

What these examples share is not tragedy but pattern: the one who initiates life is not guaranteed to persist after life begins. Creation and continuation are separable events. The source and the product are not always both present simultaneously.

Applied theologically, this maternal analogy introduces something the eel alone cannot fully convey: tenderness alongside expenditure. The octopus does not die out of indifference. The spider mother does not dissolve out of negligence. These are acts of complete investment — love, if the word can be extended beyond species — expressed not through ongoing presence but through total, unreserved giving.

A theology that incorporates this model does not conclude that God was indifferent to creation. It concludes that God may have loved creation so completely that nothing was withheld — including existence itself. The silence that followed is not the silence of a God who does not care. It is the silence of a mother who gave everything and had nothing left to give.

This reframes divine absence not as punishment, withdrawal, or mystery, but as the inevitable consequence of unconditional investment. It offers a model of God that is simultaneously more vulnerable and more generous than traditional theology permits — a creator who did not stand apart from creation and supervise it, but who entered it fully and was consumed by it.

### IV. CREATION AS CONSUMPTION, NOT COMMAND

Traditional theologies frame creation as effortless sovereignty. God speaks, and reality appears — intact, ordered, and sustained. Creation in this model is an expression of power so absolute that it costs nothing. The creator remains fully present, fully capable, and fully available after the act.

This thesis rejects that framing as philosophically unnecessary and empirically unsupported. If creation

required expenditure rather than command, then omnipotence is not the relevant attribute. What is required is not infinite capacity but the willingness to invest completely — to give without reservation until nothing remains to give.

Under this model, creation is not governance. It is not supervision. It is not ongoing control. Creation is consumption — the transfer of all that the creator was into all that existence would become. Divine silence, under this reading, is not theological mystery or intentional withdrawal. It is the silence of aftermath. There is no one left to speak because speaking required a presence that creation exhausted.

This does not diminish the creator. It transforms the nature of creative power entirely. The most significant act of creation may not be the one performed by the entity with the most resources to spare, but by the one who held nothing back. Greatness, under this model, is not measured by what survives after creation but by what was surrendered to make it possible.

#### V. DIVINE DEATH VERSUS ATHEISM: A NECESSARY DISTINCTION

Atheism argues that no creator ever existed. This thesis proposes something structurally different and psychologically more difficult: a creator existed, invested completely in the act of creation, and did not survive it.

The distinction matters. Absence without precedent — the atheist position — is philosophically clean. There was no creator; therefore, there is no loss. Existence requires no explanation beyond naturalistic process, and the human desire for a God is understood as a projection rather than a memory.

But absence following presence introduces grief rather than disbelief. It implies that the universe was not always unattended — that there was, at some originating moment, a source that cared enough to spend itself completely. The silence that now characterizes existence is not the silence of something that never was, but the silence of something that no longer is.

This distinction explains what atheism cannot fully account for: the persistent, cross-cultural, historically resilient human sense that existence was intended — that meaning was placed here even if it can no longer be located with certainty. Under the atheist model, this persistence is delusion. Under the model proposed here, it may be something closer to inheritance — a residual recognition of a source that has since been exhausted.

Suffering, under this model, persists not because it is permitted by a watching God, but because intervention is no longer possible. Laws continue not because they are enforced by an ongoing authority, but because structural order does not require witnesses. The universe is not supervised. It is the remainder of supervision — the shape left behind after the shaper was consumed.

#### VI. FRAGMENTATION INSTEAD OF DISAPPEARANCE

An alternative trajectory within this model does not end in divine death but in divine dispersal. Some philosophical traditions — particularly within Hindu metaphysics — propose that God did not disappear at creation but became creation. Brahman is not a being separate from existence but the ground of existence itself. Atman is not a distinct soul but localized consciousness that is, in essence, identical to Brahman.

This thesis takes that claim seriously rather than comfortingly. If divinity became everything — if the creator dissolved entirely into the created — then it lost the one property necessary for governance: unity. Authority dissolved into distribution. Intention fragmented into uncoordinated awareness scattered across systems that barely understand themselves.

Distributed divinity is not empowerment. It is dilution. A consciousness dispersed across all forms simultaneously possesses no unified will, no central intelligence, and no capacity for coordinated oversight. What remains is awareness thinly spread across an enormous and mostly unconscious universe — present everywhere and effective nowhere.

Under this model, God did not leave creation. God became it — and in doing so, ceased to function as God. The creator is not absent from the universe. The creator is the universe, fragmented beyond the threshold of coherent agency, unable to act in any unified way on what it has become.

#### VII. ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES OF INHERITED EXISTENCE

If divinity was either exhausted or fragmented in the act of creation, the ethical consequences are substantial and unavoidable. Responsibility cannot be externalized. There is no higher, unified authority to appeal to, blame, assign to, or await correction from.

Cruelty, indifference, and exploitation are no longer deviations from divine order awaiting divine correction. They are expressions of fractured or inherited existence acting upon itself, and they will continue until conscious fragments — human beings — choose otherwise. Morality, under this model, is not enforced from above. It is negotiated among inheritors. Justice is not guaranteed. It is attempted, incompletely, by those who recognize its value without having been commanded to pursue it.

This is not a comfortable position. It removes the psychological relief of external correction. It eliminates the possibility of ultimate redress through divine agency. It places the full weight of ethical responsibility on beings who are themselves fragmentary, confused, and limited.

But it also produces something traditional theology struggles to generate: genuine moral agency. If human beings act ethically because they are commanded to by a living God who enforces consequences, the ethics are conditional — contingent on belief, on reward, on threat. If human beings act ethically because they have inherited a universe from a source that no longer exists to manage it, then ethics becomes unconditional. It is chosen, not compelled. It is the decision of the inheritor, not the obedience of the supervised.

Human discomfort with this implication explains the persistent resistance to it. God is framed as 'within us' metaphorically precisely to avoid the weight of what

literal inheritance would require: total responsibility, without appeal, without correction, without guarantee.

#### VIII. EXISTENCE AS RESIDUE, NOT TRAJECTORY

If creation exhausted its source — whether through death, dispersal, or fragmentation — then time is not a plan unfolding toward a designed conclusion. Time is a remainder. Processes continue not because they are moving toward an intended end but because the collapse of the source did not erase the structure it generated.

This has specific implications for how existence is understood. Entropy is frequently misread as progress — a directional movement through stages toward something better or more complete. Aging is mistaken for development. Historical change is mistaken for moral or spiritual advancement. These interpretations impose trajectory on what is, structurally, drift.

Nothing is going anywhere in the sense of moving toward a designed destination. Events are rearranging within the structure that creation left behind. The appearance of progress is the pattern-recognition of conscious fragments imposing narrative on residue — a deeply human activity, but not therefore an accurate one.

In this context, liberation — if the concept retains any meaning — is not ascension toward a reward or reunion with a living God. It is the end of fragmentation: the dissolution of the particular back into the undifferentiated, the cessation of the maintenance cost that consciousness requires. Not heaven as a place of ongoing presence, but silence as the end of the effort of being a separated self.

#### IX. PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTEREFFECTS: THE MANAGEMENT OF UNSTRUCTURED AWARENESS

Consciousness without central coherence — awareness that is fragmented, dispersed, and without clear origin or destination — is an uncomfortable

state. Human behavior under this model can be understood as a set of persistent strategies for managing that discomfort.

Addiction narrows awareness to a manageable intensity. Distraction prevents awareness from settling long enough to notice its own groundlessness. Belief systems provide inherited narratives that impose structure on experience that would otherwise feel arbitrary. Authority structures delegate the burden of meaning to designated figures who claim to hold it on behalf of others.

These are not failures of rationality. They are rational responses to an existential condition that most frameworks refuse to name directly. Consciousness distributed across a universe without a central source is excessive for the individual to manage without tools. The tools humans reach for are, almost universally, tools of reduction and simplification.

Power exploits this condition systematically. Whoever can organize fragments — by offering coherent narratives, identifiable enemies, promised futures, and stable identities — acquires authority that resembles divine authority, not through merit or wisdom, but through the vacancy left by a source that no longer occupies that position. The human hunger for God is, in this reading, the hunger of fragments for the wholeness from which they came — and that hunger is reliably and cynically exploited by those willing to perform wholeness without possessing it.

#### X. CONCLUSION: INHERITED REALITY AND THE QUESTION THAT REMAINS

If creation was terminal — whether through divine death following complete expenditure, or through total fragmentation into the fabric of existence — then the universe is not guided. It is inherited. No redemption is scheduled by an external authority. No final correction is on the way. No apology is coming from a source that still exists to offer one.

The maternal analogies examined in this thesis — the octopus that consumes itself to feed its young, the spider mother dissolved by her offspring, the human mothers who have always known that creation carries mortal risk — do not make this conclusion less

severe. They make it more generous. They suggest that the absence of the divine is not indifference but consequence: the structural result of love expressed without reservation, creation pursued without self-protection, existence given rather than managed.

The eel does not fail. The mother who does not return did not abandon what she made. The God who no longer speaks may not have withdrawn. These are the signatures of complete investment — the silence that follows when nothing was withheld.

This reading does not resolve the suffering that persists in an unmanaged universe. It does not make injustice easier to bear or meaning easier to locate. What it offers instead is a reframing of responsibility: if the source is gone, if the creator was consumed by creation, then what remains belongs to what was made. The universe is ours — not as a gift from an ongoing patron, but as an inheritance from a source that spent itself completely to make our existence possible.

The central question this thesis raises is not theological in the traditional sense. It is not a question about God's nature or God's will. It is practical and urgent:

What do conscious fragments do when the source that produced them is gone — or dispersed beyond the possibility of recovery?

This thesis offers no final answer. The question is too large and too personal for a single framework to resolve. What it offers instead is a refusal — a refusal to pretend that someone else is in charge, that correction is coming from outside, that responsibility can be deferred to a presence that the evidence of existence suggests is no longer there to receive it.

The inheritance is real. The inheritors are here. What happens next depends entirely on what the fragments choose to do with what they were given — and whether they can do so with the same completeness of investment that, under this model, made them possible in the first place.

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