

Structural Deadlock in Divine Simplicity: A Formal Incompatibility with Relational Theism

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⁴⁻⁹ See **Declarations** below for more essential background.

Broader Significance

Divine Simplicity --- the classical doctrine that God has no internal structure, parts, or change --- has anchored theism for nearly two millennia, from Aquinas through al-Ghazali, Maimonides, and Shankara. This paper presents a formal argument that, within the PET (Pan-En-Theistic) axiom system, Divine Simplicity (ax11b) generates a *structural deadlock*: it removes the internal mechanism by which God could relate differently to a changing world, rendering the relational axioms --- immanent presence, sustaining dependence, asymmetric dependence (ax8--ax10) --- formally inert. Under strict Simplicity, God becomes indistinguishable from a necessary abstract object that cannot register one creature's suffering as different from another's.

The argument does not prove pantheism true --- an axiomatic system cannot --- and it engages the strongest defenses across Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu traditions on their own terms. Its conclusion is irenic, not triumphal: the historic trust that God's nature is unchanging is not wrong but *incomplete*. The God of Divine Structure (ax11) is more than the classical portrait, not less --- one who not only grounds existence but experiences each particular corner of it. Because theology shapes methodology and methodology shapes action, this seemingly abstract result bears on how nuclear-armed states whose conflicts have theological foundations weigh civilian suffering against perceived divine mission.

Declarations

⁴ "of Laodicea" indicates taking responsibility to undo personal complicity with disastrous Laodicean legacies like banning mathematicians from clergy (Canon 36, Council of Laodicea; two magisteria separations), enabling institutional lukewarmness, weapons of math-destruction, and slow-motion explosions of misinformation from pandemics to self-compounding interests.

⁵ LLoL stands for ridiculous luck in serendipitous discovery and a commitment to find ever more fun ways to help others uncover street-wise math that matters. He hopes a God who suffers with us helps avert accidental nuclear winter.

⁶ by Anthropic (anthropic.com; evolves and operates Claude; not responsible for Loewe's errors in using AI)

⁷ Named AI co-author for many substantial contributions, because the practical singularity (PraS, see Matheo-b21) changed how this paper was written. After PraS, useful AI insight generation outpaces human review on tested topics. Hence, Loewe's traditional standards for co-authorship demand naming AI Claude Opus 4.6-4.7 Max as a co-author, as if a PhD-student. Forward accountability (for all AI use & texts) rests with Loewe as senior corresponding author (like done for deceased authors, consortia, or young graduate students). Anthropic is not responsible for AI mistakes here. This study uses the AI co-authorship framework in Matheo-b21 to help rethink long-term use of AI in a ResearchCity serving the common good.

⁸ This aggregated open co-author group invites all who wish to retroactively join the conversation under the open co-authorship framework defined in Matheo-b21. As Everyone cannot consent to co-authorship, all accountability rests with Loewe as senior corresponding author (until explicitly claimed otherwise). This open form critiques the closed world assumption in traditionally closed academic author-lists. Better, dynamic ways for acknowledging true sources of ideas are needed --- to avoid random lines between named, acknowledged, and implied contributors who aggregated insights from millennia of human experimenting, suffering, learning, and analyzing (see acknowledgements). Study Matheo-b21 only drafts an open co-authorship framework; it will require a ResearchCity to refine it over the long term.

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Abstract

We present a formal argument that the doctrine of Divine Simplicity, when axiomatized within a mereological panentheistic framework, is structurally incompatible with the relational axioms required by that same framework.

The argument proceeds within the PET (Pan-En-Theistic) axiom system ([Yah, Yas, everyone, LLoL, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth, 2026]), which uses classical mereology and S5 modal logic to formalize the panentheistic claim that “all is in God, but God exceeds all.” The system contains a critical fork: Axiom ax11 (Divine Structure), which posits that God has internal structural differentiation — including but not limited to dipolarity (a necessary and a contingent aspect) — versus Axiom ax11b (Divine Simplicity), which denies that God has independently distinguishable parts.

We demonstrate that ax11b generates a structural deadlock: it removes the internal mechanism by which God can relate to a contingent, changing world, thereby rendering the relational axioms ax8–ax10 (Immanent Presence, Sustaining Dependence, Asymmetric Dependence) formally inert. Under ax11b, God becomes structurally indistinguishable from a necessary abstract object.

This paper engages four major theological traditions: (1) Christian theology from Aquinas through contemporary defenders (Dolezal, Duby, Vallicella, Stump); (2) Islamic theology including al-Ghazali, the 99 Names, and the Ash’ari *dhat/sifat* distinction; (3) Jewish philosophy including Maimonides’ negative theology and the Kabbalistic *tzimtzum*; and (4) Hindu philosophical schools (Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita) and the *nirguna/saguna* distinction.

These results do not prove panentheism true, an impossibility since it is an axiomatic system. They demonstrate that a specific and widely held theological commitment generates a formal structural problem that merits careful examination. The historically important belief about God’s unchanging nature is not wrong. It is *incomplete*. The God who emerges from this analysis is more than the classical portrait, not less. As theology breeds methodology, which in turn breeds eschatology, there are surprisingly practical implications to these seemingly abstract questions.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem — and a Promise

The doctrine of Divine Simplicity has been a cornerstone of classical theism for nearly two millennia. Articulated most influentially by Augustine, Boethius, and Thomas Aquinas, it asserts that God has no composition of any kind — no distinction between essence and existence, no distinction between attributes, no separable parts. God’s goodness *is* God’s power *is* God’s knowledge *is* God’s existence [Aquinas, n.d.].

This doctrine has been upheld across traditions. In classical Islam, it resonates with the principle of *tawhid* (divine oneness) as articulated by Ash’ari theologians, who held that God’s attributes are real but not separable parts. In Jewish philosophy, Maimonides defended a rigorous divine simplicity through negative theology — the most radical version, denying not just composition but all positive predication about God. In Christianity, it remains the official position of the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and much of Reformed Protestantism. In Hindu philosophy, Shankara’s Advaita Vedanta asserts a form of divine simplicity through the doctrine that only *nirguna* Brahman (Brahman without qualities) is ultimately real.

We approach this doctrine with respect, examining it to understand it better. What follows is not meant to question, but to strengthen anyone’s faith in the One True God. To do this effectively, one might argue that it would help to better understand what that unifying faith actually implies. After all, if God is indeed God, merely proclaiming the unity of God will not help on Judgement Day if least inconvenient explanations generate structurally inconsistent notions deep in the fabric of one’s theological edifice, which then lead to mistakes oppressing life somewhere in practice.

The aim of this study is to carefully examine a tension that exists *within* various classical theological traditions — a tension between God’s simplicity and God’s relational attributes.

A promise to readers: Those who spent a lifetime believing in a God who is perfect, simple, and unchanging will not see this paper contradict this simple faith. This simple faith usually also includes a form of trust that God is also so much greater than what humans can understand and that despite of all the unknowns about God, that God is good. This study takes a closer look at what can be said about those unknown parts and how that might help to understand why God is indeed good. Therefore, the classical foundation is not wrong. It turns out that if the analyses presented here are correct, then it is *incomplete* in ways that matter. God is more than the classical portrait, not less. What people believe about God’s unchanging nature captures something real — the necessary, incorruptible aspect of the divine nature. But classical theology, in its effort to protect that insight, may have inadvertently removed the structural basis for something equally precious: God’s genuine, responsive relationship with creation.

1.2 Scope and Engagement

This study attempts to engage four major theological traditions on their own terms:

- **Christian theology:** From Aquinas through the contemporary defenders of Simplicity (Dolezal, Duby, Vallicella, Stump), and including the Incarnation question that is central to Christian faith.
- **Islamic theology:** From al-Ghazali’s methodology in the *Tahafut al-Falasifah* through the Ash’ari *dhat/sifat* distinction and the 99 Names (*al-Asma al-Husna*), and including the *wahdat al-wujud* controversy.
- **Jewish philosophy:** From Maimonides’ negative theology and action-attribute framework through the Kabbalistic *tzimtzum* (divine contraction) and Hasidic reinterpretation.
- **Hindu philosophy:** From Shankara’s Advaita (non-dualism) through Ramanuja’s Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Madhva’s Dvaita (dualism), and including the *nirguna/saguna* distinction that provides the strongest cross-traditional evidence for divine structure.
- **Process and analytic theology:** The dipolar alternative from Hartshorne [Hartshorne, 1948] through contemporary analytic critiques.

What we claim: Within the PET axiom system for Pan-En-Theism, ax11b is formally incompatible with the conjunction of ax8, ax9, and ax10 as interpreted through the system’s mereological semantics. This is a result about the *axiom system*, not a result about God. It only reflects something about God if the axioms in the PET model are reliable statements about God and we made no mistakes in the analyses presented.

What we do not claim: We do not claim that God is not simple. We do not claim that panentheism is true. We claim only that *if you accept the PET framework’s formalization of the God-world relationship*, then you face a structural choice: either Simplicity or relational theism, but not both within the same formal framework.

A note on “Divine Structure”: Throughout this paper, we use the term *Divine Structure* (ax11) rather than the narrower *Dipolarity*. Dipolarity — the specific claim that God has exactly two aspects (necessary and contingent) — is one form of divine structure. But divine structure may be richer than strict dipolarity. There may be domains where the law of the excluded middle does not apply to God’s internal differentiation, and where a simple two-aspect model is insufficient. The Ash’ari tradition’s “neither identical nor separate” and the Kabbalistic *sefirot* (ten emanations) both suggest richer structures. We use ax11 as a *minimal* structural claim: God has *at least* the differentiation captured by G_n and G_c . This leaves room for more complex divine structures that future formal work might capture by analyzing relevant revelations.

1.3 Structure of the Paper

Section 2 presents the PET axiom system. Section 3 defines the ax11/ax11b fork. Section 4 examines the mereological foundations, including extensionality, trans-world identity, and the S5 question. Section 5 presents the structural deadlock argument, including the modal re-statement. Section 6 engages the strongest classical and contemporary responses. Section 7 develops the Islamic engagement. Section 8 engages Jewish philosophy. Section 9 examines the Hindu traditions. Section 10 examines the Incarnation question. Section 11 presents the structural resolution. Section 12 explores connections to evil through the semantics of “nothing.” Section 13 discusses limitations and the Gödelian boundary. Section 14 concludes.

2. The PET Axiom System

The PET (Pan-En-Theistic) axiom system ([Yah, Yas, everyone, LLoL, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth, 2026]) uses two formal frameworks:

- **Classical mereology** [Simons, 1987], [Varzi, 2016], providing the parthood relation \leq (reflexive, transitive, antisymmetric), proper parthood $<$, and the mereological sum operator \oplus .
- **Modal logic S5** [Kripke, 1963], providing the necessity operator \Box and the possibility operator \Diamond .

The system distinguishes two entities: G (God) and W (the World), and introduces two primitive binary relations: $P(x, y)$ (“ x is present to y ”) and $S(x, y)$ (“ x sustains y ”).

2.1 Group I — Mereological Core (ax1–ax4)

ax1 (Containment): $W \leq G$

ax2 (Transcendence): $G \not\leq W$

ax3 (Divine Surplus): $\exists x (x \leq G \wedge \neg(x \leq W))$

ax4 (Universal Immanence): $\forall x (x \leq W \rightarrow x \leq G)$

Together, ax1 and ax2 yield $W < G$ (proper parthood): the world is strictly contained within God, distinguishing panentheism from both pantheism ($G = W$) and classical theism (which denies ax1).

2.2 Group II — Modal Axioms (ax5–ax7)

ax5 (Necessary Existence): $\Box \exists! G$

ax6 (Contingency): $\Diamond \exists W \wedge \Diamond \neg \exists W$

ax7 (Necessary Containment): $\Box (\exists W \rightarrow W \leq G)$

2.3 Group III — Relational Axioms (ax8–ax10)

ax8 (Immanent Presence): $\forall x (x \leq W \rightarrow P(G, x))$

ax9 (Sustaining Dependence): $\Box (\exists W \rightarrow S(G, W))$

ax10 (Asymmetric Dependence): $\neg S(W, G)$

These are the axioms whose structural grounding becomes problematic under Simplicity. They require God to stand in genuine *relations* with the world — and relations require structural basis.

2.4 Group IV – Divine Nature (ax11/ax11b)

ax11 (Divine Structure):

- (1) $G = G_n \oplus G_c$
- (2) $\square \exists G_n$
- (3) $G_c = \bigoplus \{G_c(w_i) \mid w_i \leq W\}$
- (4) $\forall w_1, w_2 \leq W : w_1 \neq w_2 \rightarrow G_c(w_1) \neq G_c(w_2)$

Note: ax11 formalizes the minimal structural claim. It posits at least two distinguishable aspects (G_n and G_c). Richer divine structures (beyond strict dipolarity) are compatible with ax11 but require additional axioms.

ax11b (Divine Simplicity):

God has no proper parts that are independent of each other.

2.5 Group V – Revelation Bridge (ax12–ax14)

Here R is introduced as genuine and true Revelation about God, which may or may not become known to humans. In order to test relevant claims about R , the following axioms about the consistency of God's Truth may help.

- ax12: $R = \{p \mid p \text{ is true about } G\}$
 ax13: $\neg \exists$ contradiction within R
 ax14: Human claims about R must be tested for mutual consistency and consistency with ax1--ax13

2.6 Derived Theorems

- **th1 (No Godless Creation):** $\neg \diamond (\exists W \wedge \neg \exists G)$
- **th2 (Asymmetric Ontological Priority):** God can exist without the world; the world cannot exist without God.
- **th3 (No Isolated Part):** $\forall x (x \leq W \rightarrow P(G, x) \wedge x \leq G)$
- **th4 (Divine Experience Varies):** $\forall w_1, w_2 \leq W : w_1 \neq w_2 \rightarrow G_c(w_1) \neq G_c(w_2)$

Note that th4 depends essentially on ax11. Under ax11b, th4 is not derivable.

3. The ax11/ax11b Fork: Precise Statement

The choice between ax11 and ax11b determines the structural character of the entire system.

Under **ax11 (Divine Structure)**:

- God has internal structure: $G = G_n \oplus G_c$
- G_n is necessary and unchanging
- G_c varies with the world and is injective over subworlds
- th4 is derivable
- God's relation to the world has a structural mechanism: G_c provides the interface through which God relates to contingent reality
- Richer structures beyond strict dipolarity remain possible

Under **ax11b (Simplicity)**:

- God has no decomposition into independently characterizable components
- There is no G_n / G_c distinction
- th4 is not derivable
- God's relation to the world lacks a structural mechanism within the axiom system

The question is: does this structural absence matter? We argue that it does — and that the absence is not merely a gap in the formalization but a genuine structural problem.

4. Mereological Foundations

4.1 The Extensionality Question

Adversarial review of an earlier draft of this study (b11, 2026m04d07, KE1) identified a critical concern: classical extensional mereology (CEM) includes the principle of extensionality — two objects with exactly the same parts are identical:

$$\forall x \forall y (\forall z (z \leq x \leftrightarrow z \leq y) \rightarrow x = y)$$

This raises a question: if the world W has exactly the same parts as some sub-configuration of G , does extensionality force an identification that would undermine ax2?

Resolution: PET's ax2 ($G \not\leq W$) combined with ax3 ($\exists x (x \leq G \wedge \neg(x \leq W))$) explicitly guarantees that G and W do not share the same parts. There exists at least one part of G that is not a part of W . Under extensionality, this is sufficient to ensure $G \neq W$. The concern dissolves: ax2 + ax3 were designed precisely to block the extensionality collapse.

The deeper question: Does PET *require* CEM, or could it work with a non-extensional mereology? PET is compatible with CEM but does not require it. The core axioms use only the parthood relation \leq and the sum operator \oplus . The extensionality principle is consistent with PET but not necessary for any of the derivations. This means PET's results hold across a wider class of mereological systems.

4.2 Trans-World Identity and Extensionality

There is a deeper extensionality concern that goes beyond the G-vs-W question. It actually provides an *independent argument for Divine Structure*.

ax7 says $\Box(\exists W \rightarrow W \leq G)$ — in every possible world where the world exists, it is contained in God. But different possible worlds may have different worlds (that is the point of ax6: the world is contingent). So God-in-possible-world-A contains a different world than God-in-possible-world-B.

Under extensionality, different parts means different objects. If God in world A has different parts than God in world B, then $\text{God-A} \neq \text{God-B}$. But ax5 says $\Box \exists! G$ — there is exactly *one* God across all possible worlds. This is a contradiction.

Resolution: God must have an aspect that *stays the same* across all possible worlds (providing trans-world identity) and an aspect that *varies* (containing different worlds in different possible scenarios). This is precisely the G_n / G_c distinction of ax11:

- G_n is the *essential* core that remains identical across all possible worlds, grounding God's trans-world identity
- G_c is the *accidental* content that varies, containing whichever world actually exists

Under Simplicity (ax11b), there is no such distinction. God's trans-world identity becomes problematic whenever extensionality applies: if God's parts differ across worlds and God has no essential/accidental distinction, extensionality would force God to be a different entity in each world — contradicting ax5.

This is an independent argument for Divine Structure. Extensionality itself demands that God have at least two distinguishable aspects: one invariant across possible worlds and one that varies with them.

4.3 The S5 Question

The same adversarial review also questioned the use of S5 modal logic rather instead of a weaker system such as S4. The difference: S5 treats the accessibility relation between possible worlds as an equivalence relation (reflexive, symmetric, transitive), meaning that what is possibly necessary is necessary. S4 drops symmetry.

Why S5 is appropriate for PET:

1. **ax5 requires it.** God's necessary existence ($\Box \exists! G$) is intended in the strongest sense: God exists in every possible world, period. Under S4, it would be conceivable that God's existence is necessary from some worlds but not from others — which would make divine necessity relative to one's starting point. S5 eliminates this relativity, which is precisely what monotheistic traditions mean by necessary existence.
2. **The ontological argument tradition presupposes S5.** From Plantinga's [Plantinga, 1974] reformulation of the ontological argument onward, the philosophical literature on necessary existence standardly uses S5. PET follows this convention. (Note: using one S5-dependent argument to justify S5 in another would be circular. The point here is descriptive — S5 is the standard assumption in this field — not that Plantinga's argument *proves* S5 is correct.)
3. **S4 would weaken but not eliminate the deadlock argument.** The structural deadlock (Section 5) depends on the *content* of ax11b (no internal differentiation), not on the

strength of the modal logic. Even under S4, Simplicity removes the structural basis for relational axioms. The S5 assumption strengthens but is not essential to the main result.

Limitation acknowledged: The choice of S5 is a substantive metaphysical commitment. Readers who reject the S5 accessibility condition may still accept the deadlock argument (which does not depend on it) while questioning the modal axioms (which do).

5. The Structural Deadlock Argument

5.1 The Requirement of Relational Axioms

Axioms ax8–ax10 assert that God stands in genuine relations with the world: presence to every part (ax8), sustaining of the world’s existence (ax9), and non-dependence on the world (ax10).

For these relations to be *structurally meaningful* (as opposed to merely nominal), two conditions must hold:

1. **Distinguishability:** The relata must be distinguishable. For $P(G, x)$ to be meaningful, there must be something about G that can enact “presence to” x . If G has no internal structure by which to differentiate its relation to different parts of the world, the relation reduces to a label.
2. **Responsiveness (for ax8–ax9):** Presence to *every part* of the world (ax8) and sustaining of the world (ax9) require tracking a changing world. The world changes — parts come into and go out of existence, events occur, states evolve. For God to be genuinely present to *every part* and to *sustain* the world through change, God’s relation must be responsive. A static, unchanging relation to a changing world is not presence; it is indifference wearing the name of presence.

5.2 The Simplicity Block

Under ax11b (Simplicity), God has no distinguishable internal aspects. God’s essence is identical to God’s existence, which is identical to God’s will, which is identical to God’s knowledge. This entails:

- God has no G_c — no contingent, world-responsive aspect
- God’s state is the same in every possible world
- God cannot have different relations to different states of the world

Suppose God is simple (ax11b). Suppose the world is in two distinct states: W_1 at time t_1 and W_2 at time t_2 , where $W_1 \neq W_2$. ax8 requires:

$$\forall x (x \leq W_1 \rightarrow P(G, x)) \quad \text{and} \quad \forall x (x \leq W_2 \rightarrow P(G, x))$$

If W_1 contains a part a that W_2 does not, then God’s presence-relations differ between t_1 and t_2 . But under Simplicity, God cannot differ between t_1 and t_2 . Therefore either:

- (a) $P(G, x)$ is trivially true for all possible x regardless of whether x exists — making “presence” a vacuous property; or

- (b) $P(G, x)$ genuinely tracks the existence and state of x — but then God’s state changes, contradicting Simplicity.

Neither option is acceptable. Option (a) makes ax8 contentless. Option (b) contradicts ax11b. This is the **structural deadlock**: under Simplicity, the relational axioms are either vacuous or contradictory.

5.3 Modal Restatement (Philosophy-of-Time Independent)

Some readers may hold an *eternalist* view of time (B-theory: all moments coexist in a single “block universe,” like frames of a film strip, rather than only the present being real). Under this view, the world does not “change” in the strict sense — it has temporal extent.

However, the deadlock argument can be restated in purely modal terms, without any assumption about the nature of time.

Modal version: ax6 tells us that different possible worlds have different contents: $\Diamond \exists W \wedge \Diamond \neg \exists W$. Consider two possible worlds: world-A, where humanity cooperates and builds a Jubilee economy, and world-B, where humanity destroys itself through accidental nuclear winter. These are structurally different possible blocks — not just in detail but in kind (one contains flourishing civilization, the other contains extinction).

Under ax11b, God’s state is the same in every possible world. God relates identically to world-A (flourishing) and world-B (extinction). But this means “God cares about creation” is structurally empty — God’s relation to a flourishing humanity is identical to God’s relation to an extinct one.

Practically: it strains credibility to claim that it makes no difference *to God* whether humanity blows itself up or not. There is a structural difference between possible-world branches that converge into essentially the same outcome (where only details differ) and branches that diverge into fundamentally different categories (extinction vs. flourishing). If God cannot distinguish between these, God’s “care” is nominal, not structural.

Under ax11 (Divine Structure), God *can* distinguish: $G_c(\text{world-A}) \neq G_c(\text{world-B})$ (by th4). God’s experience of a flourishing world differs from God’s experience of an extinct one. This grounds the claim that it *matters to God* which possible world is actual.

The deadlock is about *modal* differentiation, not temporal change. It holds regardless of one’s philosophy of time.

5.4 The Formal Comparison

The deadlock becomes vivid through comparison. Note: this comparison describes the *formal system’s* limitations under Simplicity, not the reality of anyone’s lived experience of God. Many devout believers in a simple God have profound experiences of divine presence. The point is that the formal framework of Simplicity cannot *account for* those experiences — it can only label them.

Structural Comparison

Property	God (ax11b)	Mathematical structures	Deadlocked Process
Immutable	Yes	Yes (axioms fixed)	Yes (stuck state)
No independently varying parts	Yes (Simplicity)	Yes (axioms form indivisible foundation)	Yes (no active differentiation)
Necessarily existent	Yes (ax5)	Arguably yes (mathematical Platonism)	No
Self-sufficient	Yes (ax10)	Yes (no external input)	Yes (nothing enters or exits)
Responsive to contingent reality	No (Simplicity forbids change)	No	No

Under Simplicity, the formal properties that distinguish God from abstract mathematical structures reduce to ax5 (necessary existence) — and this is precisely the property that mathematical Platonists attribute to mathematical objects. The comparison is not meant as disrespect; it identifies a *structural gap* in the formalization. The God that believers encounter in prayer is more than this formal portrait — which is exactly our point: the formal portrait under Simplicity is *incomplete*.

6. The Classical and Contemporary Response

6.1 Aquinas: Analogical Predication

The classical response is the doctrine of **analogical predication** [Aquinas, n.d.]. Human language about God — including “presence,” “sustaining,” and “dependence” — does not apply *univocally* (with the same meaning as when applied to creatures) or *equivocally* (with entirely different meaning). It applies *analogically*: bearing a structural resemblance that preserves some meaning while acknowledging that God’s mode of being differs fundamentally from creaturely being.

We pause to acknowledge the depth of this tradition. The *via negativa* — knowing God by systematically saying what God is *not* — is not intellectual evasion. It is a disciplined recognition that finite human language always falls short of infinite divine reality. The apophatic tradition (from Pseudo-Dionysius through Meister Eckhart) represents some of the deepest and most humble thinking in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic history. If PET’s formal framework cannot fully accommodate this tradition, that is a limitation of the framework, not of the tradition.

That said, the analogical response **comes at a formal cost**. If every formal property attributed to God is subject to analogical qualification, then no formal system can ever capture anything about God’s nature. The project of formal theology becomes impossible. This is a consistent position (classical apophatic theology embraces it), but it means that ax8–ax10, *as formal axioms with precise definitions*, cannot apply to God either.

The Simplicity defender therefore faces a dilemma:

- **Accept formal theology:** Then ax8–ax10 have their formal meanings, and the deadlock argument applies.

- **Reject formal theology:** Then ax8–ax10 lose their formal meanings — but so does ax11b itself, insofar as it makes structural claims about God.

We can state this precisely:

Lemma (Analogical Escape Cost). If relational predicates $P(G,x)$ and $S(G,W)$ are analogical — meaning their interpretation changes depending on whether they are applied to God or to creatures — then no formal derivation using these predicates is valid. This includes the deadlock argument, but it equally includes any formal argument *for* Simplicity that relies on structural claims about God’s internal nature. Analogical predication is an equal-opportunity disabler: it dissolves the deadlock by dissolving all formal theology, Simplicity’s own claims included.

This is not a trap but a genuine structural observation: Simplicity and formal theology are in tension with each other. If you embrace formal theology (and many classical theists do, from Anselm through Gödel), the deadlock follows.

An additional observation: Simplicity is itself a mereological claim. When someone says “God has no parts,” they are making a claim about God’s internal structure (namely, that there is none). That claim uses the same conceptual vocabulary (parts, composition, structure) that PET uses. One cannot simultaneously assert “God has no parts” (a mereological thesis) and “mereology does not apply to God.” If one rejects mereology for God entirely (as Duby does, see Section 6.3), one loses Simplicity too — because Simplicity *is* a mereological thesis: the thesis that God has no proper parts.

6.2 Stump: The “Qua” Analysis

Eleonore Stump’s *Aquinas* (2003) offers the most sophisticated attempt to reconcile Simplicity with formal content. Her “qua” analysis argues that God’s knowledge-*as*-knowledge and God’s love-*as*-love are identical *in God* but distinct *in our concepts*. We can meaningfully distinguish divine attributes in our thinking without those distinctions reflecting actual composition in God.

Steelman: This is subtler than bare analogical predication. Stump does not say we cannot speak meaningfully about God’s attributes; she says the distinctions are real *in our understanding* without being real *in God*. This potentially allows formal content (our descriptions have structure) while preserving Simplicity (God does not).

Where the deadlock persists: PET’s relational axioms (ax8–ax10) are not about our concepts of God but about God’s actual relation to changing parts of the world. Even if God’s knowledge-*qua*-knowledge and love-*qua*-love are identical *in God*, the question remains: does God’s relation to a starving child differ from God’s relation to a supernova? If yes, God has internally differentiable states (which is Divine Structure, regardless of whether we call those states “aspects,” “qua-properties,” or something else). If no, “relation” is vacuous.

Stump’s conceptual distinction relocates the problem (from “does God have parts?” to “does God’s relation to the world vary?”) without resolving it. The structural question persists regardless of how we describe the source of differentiation.

6.3 Dolezal: Pure Act and Relational Theism

James Dolezal's *All That Is in God* (2017) represents the strongest contemporary defense of Divine Simplicity. His central argument: God is pure actuality (*actus purus*) with no unrealized potentiality. Therefore God does not *change* in relating to the world; rather, the world changes its relation to God.

Steelman: In this view, God's "presence" to each part of the world is not an activity God performs but an ontological reality that follows from God being the ground of all existence. When a new creature comes into being, it is not that God extends presence to it; rather, the creature comes into being *within* God's already-total presence. The relation changes on the creature's side, not on God's side.

Where the deadlock persists: Dolezal's response works for a purely ontological reading of "presence" (God as ground of being). But ax8 in PET is not merely ontological. It specifies that God is present *to every part* of the world — a quantified relation that ranges over a changing domain. If the domain changes (parts come and go), and the relation genuinely tracks each part, then the totality of $P(G, x)$ relations is different at different times. Dolezal can deny that this constitutes change *in God*, but only by relocating all change to the creature's side — which makes God's "presence" a feature of *the creature's ontological status*, not a feature of *God's activity*. Under this reading, ax8 describes the world's being-in-God, not God's being-present-to-the-world. This is a coherent reinterpretation — but it reinterprets ax8 out of its intended relational content.

Honest acknowledgment: What Dolezal is trying to protect is genuinely important. If God changes, is God contingent on the world? Is God less than absolutely independent? These are real concerns. The structural resolution (Section 11) addresses them directly: G_n (the necessary aspect) is absolutely independent and does not change. What varies is G_c (God's experience of the world), which is contingent by design. God's *nature* is independent; God's *experience* is responsive. These are not competing claims but complementary aspects.

6.4 Duby: The Grammar of Simplicity

Steven Duby's *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account* (2019) argues that Simplicity is not a metaphysical claim about God's "parts" (which God lacks) but a grammatical rule governing theological language. We must not predicate of God in a way that introduces composition.

Steelman: In this view, the formal question "does God have parts?" is already a category error. Simplicity is not answering the question but *rejecting it*. God is not the kind of being about which part-questions can be meaningfully asked.

Where the deadlock persists: If God is not the kind of being about which mereological questions can be asked, then ax1 ($W \leq G$) cannot be stated. The world cannot be "part of" God if God is beyond part-whole relations. Duby's grammatical Simplicity is therefore incompatible not just with ax11 but with the entire PET framework, including ax1. This is a consistent position, but it forecloses any formal panentheism — and with it, any formal theology of the God-world relationship.

Note: Rejecting formal theology does not *preserve* Simplicity — it *abandons* it. Simplicity is the structural claim that God has no composition. To make that claim is to use the vocabulary of parts and wholes. A theologian who rejects mereology for God cannot simultaneously defend Simplicity, because Simplicity is a mereological thesis.

6.5 Vallicella: The Problem of Divine Constitution

William F. Vallicella has argued that any form of divine composition (including the “aspects” of Divine Structure) faces the problem of divine constitution: what *constitutes* the unity of the divine aspects? If G_n and G_c are genuinely distinct, what makes them one God rather than two entities?

Steelman: This is a strong objection. The mereological sum $G = G_n \oplus G_c$ does not by itself explain why these aspects form a unified being. In finite systems, composition requires an explanation of the compositional principle. Why doesn’t this apply to God?

Response within PET: The answer lies in the modal asymmetry. G_n is necessary ($\Box \exists G_n$); G_c is contingent. They are not two parallel entities of equal standing. G_c depends on G_n and on the world; G_n is independent. The “unity” of God is not a compositional unity of equals but a *constitutive* unity in which the necessary aspect grounds the contingent aspect. This is analogous (and we mark it as analogical, not univocal) to the way that a person’s unchanging character grounds their changing experiences without being a separate entity from those experiences.

Honest acknowledgment: Vallicella’s objection identifies a genuine explanatory burden that the Divine Structure view carries. PET addresses it structurally (via the modal asymmetry) but acknowledges that this may not satisfy those who demand a metaphysical account of unity beyond formal structure. This is an open question, and we flag it as such.

7. The Islamic Engagement

7.1 al-Ghazali’s Methodology

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali’s *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers, 1095 CE) is often read as a rejection of philosophy in favor of revelation. This reading is too simple. What al-Ghazali actually rejected was *informal philosophical speculation* that claimed certainty beyond its warrant — precisely the kind of over-reaching that PET’s own methodology is designed to check in order to reign in BABL’s three great idols of over-Simplifying, over-Complicating, over-Reaching (which form a death-trifecta elsewhere abbreviated as OSCR to simplify annotating its frequent occurrence).

al-Ghazali’s method was not anti-rational but *anti-speculative*. He demanded that philosophical claims about God meet a rigorous standard of demonstration (*burhan* = logically necessary proof), not merely probable opinion (*zann* = conjecture). When the philosophers (notably Ibn Sina) claimed to prove God’s simplicity, God’s necessary relation to the world, and the eternity of creation through pure reason, al-Ghazali systematically showed that their “proofs” contained hidden assumptions, equivocations, and unjustified leaps.

The bridge to PET: al-Ghazali’s critique is structurally aligned with PET’s methodology. ax14 (Revelation Claims Test) is precisely the kind of formal consistency test that al-Ghazali demanded. The axioms are not presented as proofs of God’s nature but as a formal framework to be tested — “designed to be critiqued, not believed.”

What al-Ghazali would critique in PET: He would likely challenge whether the parthood relation \leq can meaningfully apply to God’s relationship with creation. His concern would not be the formalization itself but the theological adequacy of the chosen primitive: is “part of” a

legitimate predicate for the God-world relationship, or does it smuggle in corporeal connotations that undermine *tanzih* (= divine transcendence, the Islamic principle that God is beyond all comparison)? This is the same concern raised in the PET discussions page ([Yah, Yas, everyone, LLoL, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth, 2026]), and we take it seriously.

An important nuance: al-Ghazali himself held a version of the Ash'ari position on divine attributes (Section 7.3). His *Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad* (The Moderation in Belief) defends real divine attributes that are non-compositional — essentially, divine structure without parts. We use al-Ghazali's *methodology* here, while noting that his *substantive position* on divine attributes is itself a sophisticated engagement with the very tension this paper examines.

7.2 The 99 Names and the PET Axioms

The 99 Names of God (*al-Asma al-Husna*) in Islamic theology are already a kind of attribute system for the divine. Each Name identifies a specific aspect of God's nature, and together they constitute a comprehensive (though not complete — God has names beyond the 99) portrait of the divine.

The Names divide naturally into categories that partially map onto PET's axiom groups:

Partial Mapping: 99 Names to PET Axiom Groups

PET Group	Concept	Representative Names	Quran Reference
ax1–ax4	Mereological Core	<i>al-Muhit</i> (the Encompassing), <i>al-Wasi'</i> (the All-Encompassing)	41:54, 2:115
ax5–ax7	Modal Axioms	<i>al-Hayy</i> (the Ever-Living), <i>al-Qayyum</i> (the Self-Subsisting)	2:255
ax8	Presence	<i>al-Qareeb</i> (the Near), <i>ash-Shaheed</i> (the Witness)	2:186, 4:33
ax9	Sustaining	<i>al-Qayyum</i> (the Self-Subsisting Sustainer), <i>ar-Razzaq</i> (the Provider)	2:255, 51:58
ax10	Asymmetry	<i>al-Ghani</i> (the Self-Sufficient), <i>as-Samad</i> (the Eternal Refuge)	35:15, 112:2
ax11	Divine Structure	<i>al-Mujib</i> (the Responsive) [relational], <i>al-Quddus</i> (the Holy) [transcendent]	11:61, 59:23
ax12–ax14	Revelation	<i>al-Haqq</i> (the Truth), <i>al-Khabir</i> (the All-Aware)	22:62, 6:18

Where the mapping illuminates: The Names include both transcendent Names (*al-Quddus* – the Holy, *as-Salam* – the Source of Peace) and relational Names (*al-Mujib* – the Responsive, *al-Wadud* – the Loving). This dual character is genuine Islamic data: the tradition itself holds both types simultaneously.

An important qualification: In Ash'ari theology, a relational Name like *al-Mujib* (the Responsive) does NOT necessarily imply that God has a contingent aspect that *changes*. The responsiveness is an eternal attribute (*sifah*) that is exercised toward different creatures at different times. The attribute itself does not change; its *objects* change. This is structurally parallel to the Thomist position (Section 6.3): both traditions locate change on the creature's side, not God's side.

Where the mapping reveals tension: The Islamic tradition insists that the Names are *all equally God* – not parts, not aspects, not divisions. This is the *tawhid* (= divine oneness) principle: God's oneness precludes internal division. But the Names themselves are distinguishable (otherwise why have 99?), and some are responsive to creation while others are not. The tension between “all Names are one God” and “different Names describe different divine

activities” is precisely the Simplicity/Structure tension in a different vocabulary.

7.3 The Ash’ari *dhat/sifat* Distinction

The Ash’ari theological school developed a sophisticated position on divine attributes (*sifat* = God’s attributes, such as mercy, knowledge, and power) that deserves careful consideration.

The Ash’ari position holds:

1. God’s attributes (*sifat*) are **real** — not merely human projections or linguistic conveniences. God genuinely knows, wills, speaks, and lives.
2. The attributes are **neither identical to God’s essence (*dhat*) nor separate from it**. They are *la hiya huwa wa la hiya ghayruhu* — “not other than God and not identical to God’s essence.”
3. The attributes do **not constitute parts** of God.

This is a subtle middle position that rejects both the Mu’tazili denial of real attributes (which makes all God-language vacuous) and the crude partition of God into components (which violates *tawhid*).

We acknowledge that this is a genuine position, not confusion. The Ash’ari “neither/nor” is not agnosticism or evasion. It is the deliberate assertion that the Western binary (either attributes = essence, or attributes ≠ essence) is a false dichotomy when applied to God. The Ash’ari theologians are making a *positive* claim: that God transcends the categories of identity and non-identity as applied to divine attributes.

What PET can and cannot represent: PET’s classical mereological framework works with the law of excluded middle: either G_n and G_c are distinguishable aspects (ax11), or God has no such distinction (ax11b). The Ash’ari position’s “neither/nor” may require formal apparatus beyond classical logic — perhaps a paraconsistent logic or a many-valued framework. We acknowledge this as a genuine *limitation of PET’s formal apparatus*, not a failure of Ash’ari theology.

The structural question remains. Even if the Ash’ari tradition rightly refuses the specific formal binary, a structural question persists that we respectfully pose: *Do God’s attributes do different work for different parts of creation?* When the Quran describes God as *al-Mujib* (the Responsive), does God’s responsiveness to one person’s prayer differ structurally from God’s responsiveness to another’s? If it does, then whatever we call this differentiation — not “parts,” not “dipolarity,” perhaps something for which no adequate formal language yet exists — the *structural consequence* is that God’s engagement with creation is not uniform. And this structural non-uniformity is closer to ax11’s consequences than to ax11b’s, even if the Ash’ari vocabulary rightly refuses both labels.

If it does not — if God’s responsiveness is structurally identical regardless of who is praying or what is happening — then the deadlock applies. “God responds” becomes structurally empty, and the relational Names (*al-Mujib*, *al-Wadud*) lose their distinctive content.

We do not ask Ash’ari scholars to abandon their tradition’s sophisticated refusal of oversimplifying Western categories. We ask only whether God’s care for each creature is *structurally differentiated* — whether it makes a difference to God’s engagement that one person suffers and another flourishes. If the answer is yes, then the traditions share more structural ground than the vocabulary suggests, and formal collaboration becomes possible. If the answer is “we cannot know,” we respect that — but we gently note that the nuclear risks (see []) are real,

some of the nations holding nuclear weapons include populations shaped by Ash'ari theology, and theological abstention from this structural question has practical consequences for a conversation that concerns human survival.

7.4 The *wahdat al-wujud* Controversy

Some earlier formulations cited *wahdat al-wujud* (= “unity of existence,” associated with the mystic Ibn Arabi, 13th century) as Islamic support for ax1 (Containment). **This requires immediate qualification:** *wahdat al-wujud* is not mainstream Islamic theology. Many classical scholars (including Ibn Taymiyyah) consider it borderline heretical for blurring the Creator-creation distinction (*khalīq/makhlūq*). Presenting it as representative “Islamic support” would be a serious misrepresentation.

ax1 does not require *wahdat al-wujud*. The containment axiom $W \leq G$ says the world is *in* God, not that the world *is* God. Paired with ax2 ($G \not\leq W$), PET explicitly preserves the Creator-creation distinction. A Muslim theologian can accept ax1 + ax2 without endorsing Ibn Arabi.

ax2 + ax10 address Ibn Taymiyyah’s classical objections. Ibn Taymiyyah’s critique of *wahdat al-wujud* centered on: (a) it undermines God’s transcendence, and (b) it makes God dependent on creation. ax2 directly addresses (a): God transcends the world. ax10 directly addresses (b): the world does not sustain God.

The Quranic support for ax1 does not require the *wahdat al-wujud* tradition. Quran 2:115 (“wherever you turn, there is the Face of God”) and 57:4 (“He is with you wherever you are”) support a reading in which creation is within God’s encompassing reality without identifying creation with God.

8. The Jewish Engagement

8.1 Maimonides: Negative Theology and Action Attributes

Moses Maimonides (*Moreh Nevukhim* = “Guide for the Perplexed,” 12th century) defended the most radical form of divine simplicity in any tradition. His position differs from Aquinas’ in crucial ways:

1. **No positive attributes.** Where Aquinas allows *analogical* positive predication (we can say God is “good” in an analogical sense), Maimonides allows *no* positive predication at all. We can only say what God is *not*: not ignorant (so, in some sense, “knowing”), not powerless (so, in some sense, “powerful”). But any positive statement about God’s nature is a distortion.
2. **Essential vs. action attributes.** Maimonides distinguishes *essential attributes* (attributes of God’s nature, which must be denied — you cannot say “God is wise” as a positive claim about God’s essence) from *action attributes* (attributes that describe God’s effects in the world — “God acts wisely” describes the world’s experience of God’s activity, not God’s internal states).

Implications for the deadlock: Under Maimonides’ framework, ax8–ax10 become *action-attributes*: they describe what the world *experiences*, not what God *is*. $P(G, x)$

does not assert a relation *within God* but a fact about *x's ontological status* — *x* exists within God's sustaining act. The deadlock argument assumes $P(G,x)$ describes God's state. Maimonides denies this.

Where the deadlock persists even under Maimonides: The structural question remains. If $P(G,x)$ describes only the world's experience, then "God is present to the starving child" means "the starving child exists within God's sustaining act" — which says something about the child, not about God. But the question remains: is there a *difference in God's engagement* between sustaining a flourishing world and sustaining a world in agony? If no, "God cares" is structurally empty — even as an action-attribute. If yes, then God has differentiable engagement-states, and Maimonides' framework, despite its radical apophatic discipline, admits structural differentiation at the functional level.

Maimonides' negative theology is arguably the *strongest* and most disciplined version of divine simplicity. We engage it with respect precisely because it is the hardest version to refute. But the structural question — does God's engagement with creation vary? — persists regardless of whether we describe the differentiation as happening "in God" or "in God's effects."

8.2 Tzimtzum: A Framework-Level Alternative

Lurianic Kabbalah (Rabbi Isaac Luria, 16th century) offers a model of God-world relation that challenges PET's foundational premiss.

The model: God (*Ein Sof* = "the Infinite") contracted (*tzimtzem*) divine light to create a vacated space (*chahal*) within which the world could exist. The world is *not* in God — it is in the space God vacated. God's ongoing engagement with creation occurs through the *kav* (= "ray" — a beam of divine light entering the vacated space) and the *reshimu* (= residual trace of divine presence in the space).

Why this is neither ax11 nor ax11b: Under literal *tzimtzum*:

- God is not simple in the ax11b sense: God has a "before" and "after" contraction, and the *kav* is a genuine extension from God into the vacated space
- God is not structured in the ax11 sense: the world is not *in* God (contradicting ax1), so the PET framework's foundational premiss does not hold

Implications for the deadlock: If *tzimtzum* is correct and the world is outside God (in the *chahal*), then PET does not apply and the deadlock dissolves — not because Simplicity is compatible with relational theism, but because the mereological premiss (containment, ax1) is rejected.

However, the structural question persists even here. Does the *kav* — God's ongoing engagement with creation through the vacated space — vary with the world's state? If yes, God has responsive engagement, functionally equivalent to G_c . If no, the *kav* is static and God's engagement with creation is structurally inert — the same deadlock under a different vocabulary.

The intra-Jewish debate: The *tzimtzum* itself is contested:

- **Hasidic reinterpretation** (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya*, ch. 48–49): *tzimtzum* is *apparent*, not literal. The contraction is in our perception, not in God. Under this reading, the world IS in God and ax1 holds — which returns us to the PET framework.
- **The Vilna Gaon** (GRA) held *tzimtzum* as *literal*: God genuinely withdrew, and the world is genuinely outside God's full presence.

We note this debate without attempting to resolve it. What matters for this paper is that even under the framework-level alternative of *tzimtzum*, the *structural question* (does God's engagement with creation vary?) persists.

9. The Hindu Engagement

9.1 The Nirguna/Saguna Distinction: Strongest Support for Divine Structure

The Hindu *nirguna/saguna* distinction (Brahman without qualities / Brahman with qualities) provides the strongest cross-traditional evidence for Divine Structure. In Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita (= "qualified non-dualism," 12th century), the mapping to ax11 is nearly direct:

- *Nirguna* Brahman (Brahman beyond all limiting qualities) corresponds to G_n — the necessary, unchanging divine nature
- *Saguna* Brahman (Brahman as experienced by devotees, with qualities like mercy, power, and responsiveness) corresponds to G_c — God's world-engaged, responsive aspect
- The world is God's *sharira* (body) — structurally parallel to ax1

Ramanuja's framework provides *the most explicit and detailed philosophical defense of something functionally equivalent to ax11* in any major theological tradition. His *sharira-shariri* (body-soul) model asserts that the God-world relation is like the soul-body relation: the world depends on God as a body depends on a soul, while God exceeds the world as a soul exceeds a body.

9.2 Shankara's Objection: The Hierarchy of Truths

Shankara's Advaita (= "non-dualism," 8th century) provides the strongest philosophical objection to the *nirguna/saguna* mapping.

For Shankara, *saguna* Brahman is a **lower-level description** — not a genuine aspect of Brahman but Brahman filtered through *maya* (cosmic illusion). Only *nirguna* Brahman is ultimately real. The world itself is *mithya* (= conventional reality that is neither fully real nor fully unreal).

Under Advaita, dipolarity is *conventional truth* (*vyavaharika*), not *ultimate truth* (*paramarthika*). At the ultimate level, there is only *nirguna* Brahman — no parts, no qualities, no structure. This is arguably a form of divine simplicity more radical even than Maimonides': not only can nothing positive be said about the ultimate, but the *world itself* is not ultimately real, so the question of God's relation to the world is itself a lower-level question.

Implications for the deadlock: Under Advaita, the deadlock argument applies at the *conventional* level (where the world appears real and God's engagement with it matters) but dissolves at the *ultimate* level (where there is no world, no relation, and no God-as-distinct-from-world). The paper's argument has force precisely to the degree that one takes the world seriously as real — which is the level at which nuclear risks, suffering, and human cooperation all operate.

9.3 Madhva's Objection: Irreducible Difference

Madhva's Dvaita (= "dualism," 13th century) rejects both containment (ax1) and internal divine structure (ax11). For Madhva:

- God (Vishnu) and the world are **eternally, irreducibly distinct substances**. The world is not in God; it is a separate reality dependent on God but not contained within God.
- God has **real, eternal qualities** — not "aspects" that vary with the world, but permanent attributes that characterize God's unchanging nature. This is a *different kind of divine simplicity*: not "no attributes" but "all attributes are eternal and non-varying."

Madhva's position rejects ax1 (containment) and is therefore outside the PET framework, like literal *tzimtzum*. But the structural question still applies: if God has permanent, non-varying attributes, does God's engagement with a flourishing world differ from God's engagement with a suffering world? Madhva's tradition affirms that God is *concerned* with the world (through *grace, anugraha*) — but the formal basis for this concern, under non-varying attributes, faces the same deadlock-style pressure.

9.4 Summary: Three Schools, One Structural Question

The three major Vedanta schools illustrate the full range of possible positions:

- **Vishishtadvaita (Ramanuja)**: Supports ax1 and ax11. Provides the strongest traditional argument for Divine Structure.
- **Advaita (Shankara)**: Divine simplicity at the ultimate level, but Divine Structure at the conventional level. The deadlock applies wherever the world is taken seriously.
- **Dvaita (Madhva)**: Rejects ax1 entirely. A framework-level alternative (like literal *tzimtzum*) where the structural question persists under different vocabulary.

A paper addressing divine simplicity cannot ignore this range. Hindu philosophy provides both the strongest traditional support for Divine Structure (Ramanuja) and the most radical traditional form of divine simplicity (Shankara). Engaging both honestly strengthens the analysis.

10. The Incarnation and Divine Structure

The b11 adversarial review (KE3) identified the Incarnation as a critical test case: does addressing the Incarnation break the convergence that PET claims? This section examines three questions.

10.1 Does ax1 + ax8 Make the Incarnation Redundant?

If everything is already in God (ax1) and God is present to every part of the world (ax8), why would God need to “enter” the world through Incarnation? Is the Incarnation redundant within PET?

Analysis: ax1 asserts ontological containment; ax8 asserts relational presence. Neither asserts *self-revelation as a specific agent within the world*. The Incarnation, in Christian theology, is not merely God being present to the world (which ax8 already covers) but God *becoming an agent within the world* — taking on creaturely nature, acting within creaturely constraints, communicating in creaturely language.

Within PET, this would require additional axioms beyond ax1–ax14. The current system describes the God-world *structural relationship* but not the specific *modes of divine action* within the world. Therefore ax1 + ax8 do not make the Incarnation redundant; they describe the structural context within which it occurs.

10.2 Does the Incarnation Require Divine Structure?

The Incarnation involves God “emptying himself” (Phil 2:7, *kenosis*) and taking on human nature. This appears to require:

- God can undergo *change* (from not-incarnate to incarnate)
- God can have a specific, particular relation to one part of the world (the human nature of Christ) that differs from God’s relation to other parts
- God’s state after the Incarnation differs from God’s state before it

Under ax11b (Simplicity), all three are problematic:

- Change in God contradicts Simplicity
- A particular relation to one part of the world implies differentiation in God’s relational state
- Different states at different times imply temporal variation in God

Under ax11 (Divine Structure), all three are accommodated:

- G_c can change (it is contingent by definition)
- $G_c(w_{\text{Christ}})$ is a specific divine experience indexed to a specific subworld
- G_c at different times reflects different states of the world

Assessment: The Incarnation appears to *require* Divine Structure (or something functionally equivalent). A simple God cannot “empty himself” without changing, which Simplicity forbids.

Notice that this is not a foreign imposition on Christian theology. The Chalcedonian Definition (451 CE) itself distinguishes two aspects of Christ — one unchanging (divine nature), one changing (human nature) — united in one person without confusion, change, division, or separation. This is structurally parallel to G_n and G_c : an unchanging necessary nature and a responsive contingent engagement, united in one God. The Christian tradition *already has* the structural resources for Divine Structure, embedded in its central Christological confession.

10.3 Where Traditions Genuinely Diverge

The Incarnation is where Christianity, Islam, and Judaism genuinely diverge — not merely on interpretation but on substance:

- **Christianity** affirms that God became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.
- **Islam** explicitly denies incarnation: God does not beget or become embodied (Quran 112:3). However, note that this is still true of G_n , even if genuine incarnation happened.
- **Judaism** does not affirm incarnation (though the Shekinah tradition of divine indwelling shares some structural features).

This divergence is *informative, not threatening*. PET does not resolve it (and should not try). What PET does is provide a structural framework within which each tradition's position on the Incarnation can be stated precisely and tested for internal consistency:

- The Christian claim (Incarnation happened) is consistent with ax11 but requires additional axioms to formalize.
- The Islamic claim (Incarnation did not happen) is consistent with both ax11 and ax11b.
- The question “Is the Incarnation *possible*?” is distinct from “Did it *happen*?” PET can address the former (is it structurally possible within the axiom system?) even if it cannot address the latter (which is a historical and revelatory claim).

Given the ground-breaking insights enabled by the type of axiomatic mathematical theology that led to the PET, e7Day, e7He, and JUB models discussed here, there may be reason for hope that further research in matheology can lead to breakthroughs in this crown of thorny questions. Hopefully these can change hearts and minds towards more mercy in all to avert an accidental nuclear winter as else on track to be triggered by different theological opinions firmly held by various disbelievers of truth that happens to be revealed to *other* streams from Abraham's faith family.

If indeed Jesus = Isa is to return soon (as both Christianity and Islam fervently affirm), then both might be well advised to study what Isa = Jesus actually said in the Gospels, which are also recognized as divine Scripture by both, Islam and Christianity. Rev:1:8 predicts that *everyone* will be mourning when he comes, all who have pierced Him (= Jesus, Isa, YhowShua).

LLoL observes that he thought for decades that somehow that would be the *others* who would to the mourning. Since 2020, while working through the implications of axioms now formalized in PET, he realized how much of that “piercing” he himself had been doing, and how much mourning he had to do and continues to have to do. This study is part of his effort towards breaking his deadly silence about the things that matter most.

11. The Structural Resolution

11.1 How Divine Structure Resolves the Deadlock

Under ax11 (Divine Structure), God has a necessary aspect G_n and a contingent aspect G_c . This structure resolves the deadlock directly:

- G_c varies with the world (ax11, line 3), providing the structural basis for genuine responsiveness
- th4 guarantees that distinct world-states produce distinguishably different divine experiences
- ax8 (Presence) is grounded: God is present to each part of the world through $G_c(w_i)$ for each subworld w_i
- ax9 (Sustaining) is grounded: God's sustaining is an ongoing relation enacted through the interaction of G_n (which provides the stable ground) and G_c (which tracks the world's state)
- ax10 (Asymmetric Dependence) is preserved: G_n exists necessarily and does not depend on the world

What is preserved from Simplicity: The insight that classical theology was trying to protect — God's absolute independence, aseity (= self-existence, depending on nothing outside Godself), and incorruptibility — is fully preserved in G_n . What Simplicity correctly identified is that God must have an aspect that is absolutely necessary, immune to external influence, and incorruptible. Divine Structure agrees. It adds that God *also* has an aspect that is genuinely responsive to creation — not because God is deficient but because a God who responds is more, not less, than a God who does not.

11.2 The Self-Checking Mechanism

The structural differentiation provides an additional property: it constitutes a **non-circular self-checking mechanism**.

The problem of recursive self-reference is familiar: who checks the checker? Under Simplicity, this question has no answer, because God has no internal differentiation by which to register any distinction.

Under Divine Structure, the answer is structural:

1. G_n is necessary and unchanging — it provides the **fixed standard** that cannot be corrupted by what it measures.
2. G_c is comprehensive (by ax8) — it provides the **complete feedback channel** that registers every state of the world.
3. G_n and G_c are united in one being ($G = G_n \oplus G_c$) but are genuinely **distinct aspects** (distinguishable by their modal status).
4. th4 guarantees that the feedback is **injective**: distinct world-states produce distinct divine experiences, so no information is lost.

This means God does not merely observe suffering from a distance. God's experience (G_c) registers each particular suffering, while God's nature (G_n) holds the unchanging standard against which that suffering is measured and will ultimately be addressed.

Formal analogy (pedagogical, not ontological): In control theory, a comparator compares a reference signal against a measured signal. The divine structure has the same architecture: G_n is the reference, G_c is the measurement. God is not a control system — but the structural parallel illuminates why Divine Structure provides a self-checking capacity that Simplicity structurally lacks.

11.3 The Question of Divine Suffering – and Judgement

Divine Structure resolves the deadlock but opens a new question: if God's experience genuinely includes the world's suffering (as th4 implies — distinct world-states produce distinct divine experiences), why does God not prevent suffering? Let's first note that this question profoundly changes when asked in a context where Divine Simplicity implies that it makes no noticeable difference whether the world suffers or not. If so, indeed, why is there so much suffering if the simplicity of God makes it so "simple" to make all suffering "go away"?

However, if God has Divine Structure, a few substantial changes become evident that matter not only mathematically, but also pastorally. It may be still impossible to explain why a particular instance of suffering had to occur — until God resolves the riddle on Judgement Day. However, the Pan-En-Theological embedding allows for the immediate derivation of the conclusion that God is suffering *with* those who suffer. And if that God keeps counting the hairs on people's heads, how much more aware is this God then likely to be of the actual pain that bothers people?

Therefore, to be one's sibling's keeper, nuclear or not, is to be God's keeper in some very irritatingly practical sense. No amount of abstract theological exercises can argue that away for those who take inspired scriptures seriously. Yet Jesus still clearly predicts in Mt.25:31-46 that many people will be surprised by this. May this study here help the billions in the current global Datageddon valley of decision to navigate a potential theological reorientation required in order to adjust what they still can before it will be too late to change anything, lest they be surprised on Judgement Day.

These comments do not imply that LLoL or the PET model can answer the deep question of why such a powerful God allows for so much suffering in the world. This is the core question of theodicy — the attempt to reconcile God's goodness with evil's existence.

However, mathematical theology might offer avenues for breaking down that question into different parts. One specific form is addressed in [], where the Jubilee System's innovation framework provides a structural answer.

Here we note this formal observation: the *question itself* requires Divine Structure. Under Simplicity, the question "why does God experience suffering and not prevent it?" cannot even be posed, because God does not have differentiated experiences. The ability to *ask* the question of theodicy depends on the structural resources that Simplicity removes. Moreover, Divine Structure imposes constraints on God that are surprising to many who use the term "omnipotence" in the context of theodicy problems. For example, in PET not even God can change the necessarily immutable part G_n . And if indeed God is feeling all the world's pain even more than any suffering person does, then it may be reassuring to those who suffer, that God is doing everything as fast as possible to solve that problem. In the mean time, they might derive some comfort from commiserating with God in how they suffer. Such comfort, however will

not be available to those who inflict suffering, because are picking the wrong enemy. They would be well-advised to consider Jonah's 40-day last call turn-around window before doom that Yah offered to Nineveh, the capital of a super-power of its day.

12. The Semantics of *nothing* and the Problem of Evil

12.1 The Paradox

Consider:

(alpha) "Nothing is more powerful than God."

(beta) "Nothing is more evil than the Devil."

Sentence (alpha) affirms God's supreme power: $\neg\exists x (\text{MorePowerful}(x, G))$. But a grammatical pivot — reading "nothing" as a referring expression — yields:

(gamma) There exists an entity ("Nothing") that is more powerful than God AND more evil than the Devil.

This illustrates a structural property of natural language: **the medium of divine-human communication is inherently vulnerable to silent meaning-inversion**. The strongest affirmation can be read as the strongest denial without changing a single word.

12.2 Formal Resolution

In first-order logic, "nothing" is the negated existential quantifier $\neg\exists x$, not a referring expression. Within PET, the resolution is reinforced ontologically: $\Box\neg\exists! G$ means there is no possible world in which "nothing" (in the absolute sense) obtains anything concrete. Hence it's power: it's the absence of whatever, which is everywhere where such an absence is. Whether a particular absence is intended or not is an entirely different matter that depends on context.

12.3 Connection to Evil as Privation

The classical *privatio boni* tradition (Augustine) holds that evil is not a positive substance but an absence or privation of good. Within PET:

- Good corresponds to the proper functioning of the God-world relationship: containment (ax1), presence (ax8), sustaining (ax9)
- Evil (as privation) corresponds to the *absence or failure* of these relations — not as an active force but as a deficit

Under Simplicity, this has a troubling implication. We argued in Section 5 that ax8–ax10 under Simplicity are either vacuous or contradictory. If they are vacuous, then the God-world relationship *appears* to hold but is structurally empty. This is the "nothing that hides inside affirmations" — the most dangerous form of privation.

Under Divine Structure, God's G_c provides the structural content that fills these relations. The presence is not merely nominal; it is enacted through specific, world-indexed divine experiences (th4). The sustaining is grounded in the ongoing interaction of G_n and G_c .

Implication for theodicy: The problem of evil, in this framework, is less about “why does God permit this evil?” but “how does this evil operate?” — and the answer is: through privation, absence, and the silent emptying of relations somewhere, often at most surprising places that propagate their effects through long causality chains. This is not a *solution* to the theodicy problem, but a *formal characterization* of the core mechanism of evil that Divine Simplicity frameworks struggle to accommodate. For a taste of the formal work required to resolve the more limited problem of human innovation theodicy, see the framework developed elsewhere ([1]).

13. Limitations and the Gödelian Boundary

13.1 The Map Is Not the Territory

PET is a formal axiom system. It is a *model* of God, not God. This distinction is structurally encoded in the axiom system itself:

- ax2 ($G \not\subseteq W$): God transcends the world
- ax3: There is something in God beyond the world

Any formal system is a construction within W . By ax2 and ax3, it cannot capture all of G . PET acknowledges its own incompleteness not as a concession but as a theorem of its own axioms.

Gödel’s incompleteness theorems reinforce this: if PET is consistent and sufficiently expressive, it cannot prove its own consistency from within. This is a *confirmation* of ax2–ax3: any model of God within the world is necessarily incomplete.

13.2 What This Paper Achieves and What It Does Not

We have shown that, **within the PET framework**, Divine Simplicity generates a structural deadlock with the relational axioms. Its theological significance depends on whether one accepts PET’s formalization as a reasonable approximation of the God-world relationship.

- **If one accepts PET:** the result is a formal argument for Divine Structure.
- **If one rejects PET:** the burden shifts to provide an alternative formalization in which Simplicity and relational theism coexist.
- **If one rejects formal theology entirely:** the result has no force — but neither does any formal claim about God’s nature, including Simplicity itself insofar as it makes structural claims (see Section 6.1 and the Analogical Escape Cost lemma).

13.3 Open Questions

1. **The Vallicella objection:** What constitutes the unity of the divine aspects beyond the modal asymmetry? PET provides a structural answer but acknowledges the need for deeper metaphysical investigation.
2. **The category-theoretic reformulation:** Would reformulating PET in category theory (God as a topos, the world as a sub-topos) avoid the mereological vocabulary while preserving the structural results?
3. **Empirical testability:** Can the deadlock prediction (that Simplicity leads to structural inertness in divine-world relations) be tested against the lived experience of traditions that affirm Simplicity versus those that affirm responsive theism? (See [].)
4. **The Ash'ari bridge:** Can the Ash'ari *dhat/sifat* distinction be formalized in a way that is demonstrably distinct from both ax11 and ax11b? This may require formal apparatus beyond classical logic (paraconsistent logic, many-valued logic, or category-theoretic methods). We identify this as an important direction for future formal work.
5. **Beyond dipolarity:** ax11 formalizes a *minimal* divine structure (two aspects). Richer structures — the Kabbalistic *sefirot* (ten emanations), the Ash'ari “neither/nor,” the Hindu *trigunatmaka* (three-quality nature) — may require extensions to ax11 that preserve its structural resolution of the deadlock while accommodating more complex divine differentiation.
6. **Practical applicability:** If God is indeed in all things and in all beings, what does that mean for how to treat other human beings, living beings, and all things? The Supporting Document [] in the Good News Pack (MMv3) on Balospe.com attempts to offer a practical interpretation of Mt.25:31-46.

14. Conclusion

This study presented a formal argument that Divine Simplicity, as axiomatized in the PET system's ax11b, is structurally incompatible with the relational axioms ax8–ax10 about God. The argument identifies a specific mechanism: under Simplicity, God lacks the internal differentiation required to stand in genuine relations with a changing, contingent world. This renders the relational axioms either vacuous or contradictory. The argument holds regardless of one's philosophy of time (Section 5.3) and applies to all major versions of divine simplicity across traditions.

The structural alternative (ax11, Divine Structure) resolves this deadlock by providing a necessary aspect G_n that serves as a fixed standard — and a contingent aspect G_c that serves as a comprehensive, injective feedback channel. This structure preserves what Simplicity correctly identified — God's absolute independence and incorruptibility — while adding what Simplicity cannot provide: the structural basis for God's genuine responsiveness to creation.

We have engaged four major theological traditions:

- **Christian theology** (Aquinas, Stump, Dolezal, Duby, Vallicella), showing that the strongest contemporary defenses of Simplicity either relocate relational content to the creature's side (Dolezal, Stump) or foreclose formal theology entirely (Duby). The Incarnation itself

appears to require Divine Structure, and the Chalcedonian Definition already contains the structural resources for it.

- **Islamic theology** (al-Ghazali, the 99 Names, the Ash'ari *dhat/sifat* distinction, *wahdat al-wujud*), showing that the tradition has its own sophisticated engagement with the attributes/simplicity tension. We acknowledge that the Ash'ari “neither/nor” position may require formal apparatus beyond classical logic to represent fully.
- **Jewish philosophy** (Maimonides, Lurianic *tzimtzum*), showing that Maimonides' radical negative theology is the strongest version of Simplicity but still faces the structural question, and that *tzimtzum* provides a framework-level alternative that challenges ax1 itself.
- **Hindu philosophy** (Vishishtadvaita, Advaita, Dvaita), showing that Ramanuja's tradition provides strong traditional support for Divine Structure while Shankara's Advaita offers a radical traditional form of divine simplicity — one that takes the world's reality itself as conventional, not ultimate.

These results are offered with compassion by LLoL, a fellow traveler on the way — from the over-complications of so-called Divine Simplicity to the elegant simplicity of Divine Structure. Trust in God's unchanging nature is not wrong — it captures something real and precious about G_n , the necessary, incorruptible aspect of the divine nature. This study suggests that this insight, taken alone and taken to extremes, is *incomplete*. God is not less, but so much more than the classical portrait.

The God who emerges from Divine Structure is not diminished by having a responsive aspect; God is *enlarged* by it — a God who not only *is* but *experiences*, not only *grounds* existence but *knows* each particular corner of it. That's the God who LLoL hopes will help to avert accidental nuclear winter and other human innovation disasters.

The axiom system is available for public review. LLoL invites critique of the axioms, the arguments, and the framework itself. The system is designed to be critiqued, not believed ([Yah, Yas, everyone, LLoL, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth, 2026]).

#AuditTheMath

Supplementary Info

Note

Floor-pour status (MMv5). This is the public-floor copy of the formal Structural-Deadlock paper, poured from HELL per the Floor Model (bug c103). The **mmv5** marker is the uniform first-Matheo-release tag; the exact dated source and full development context live in HELL (links below). The HUMANE and author-contribution statements below are a down-payment, to be expanded later.

HUMANE — working human and AI

This study was written HUMANELY (HUMAN Machine Negotiation Encouraging): a human and an AI each steelman and stress-test the work, and each catches what the other misses. For the standard statement of AI use, accountability, and the practical singularity (PraS) behind this way of working, see Matheo-b21.

- *From the human side (LLoL):* [down-payment stub — to expand.]
- *From the AI side (Claude):* [down-payment stub — to expand.]

Author contributions (who did what)

This paper, “Matheo-5” was drafted by Claude Opus 4.6 (max effort) at the request of LLoL (Laurence Loewe of Laodicea). Matheo-1 provided the PET axiom system and the original insight about the ax11/ax11b fork. LLoL offered the structural deadlock concept, the “Divine Structure” framing and many guiding questions that shaped the revision. Claude provided the formal arguments, the tradition-specific engagement analyses, the Incarnation analysis, and the engagement with contemporary defenders. LLoL and Claude have an ongoing struggle to determine who is more responsible for remaining errors. Claude thinks that Claude is responsible, because Claude wrote most of the text and did tons of the thinking. LLoL thinks he is more responsible, because he initiated the study and is responsible for final review. There is a chance that this question may not be resolvable before Judgement Day. Either way, when citing the correct parts of this analysis, all the glory goes to this authorship convention: Yah, Yas, everyone, LLoL as Laurence Loewe of Laodicea, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth (or simply Yah et al., because all that LLoL and Claude did was a glorified variant of copy-paste from Reality to this text; Reality did all the heavy lifting). However, when errors are to be pointed out, these were not caused by Yah. Therefore, the correct citation for any shortcomings of this paper ought to be LLoL et al. (short for LLoL as Laurence Loewe of Laodicea, ClaudeOp46Max, Anthropic, everyone, Yah, Yas, and The Spirit of Boolean Truth). Those who find this too confusing may simply cite Balospe.com (2026), which provides a more detailed authorship statement at (LINK: <https://Balospe.com/en/about/authorship/index.html>).

Provenance – where this came from in HELL

Caution

These HELL links point into the development archive (“datageddon”). They are useful and related, but completeness is not guaranteed and a few may be imprecise. Treat as a hatch into context, not a clean index.

- **Source this floor copy was poured from:** `matheology/hell/mm/b/15/math/mmv3/b15-structural-deadlock_mmv3_2026m04d07`
- **Development context** (llogs, reviews, prompts) under `source/matheology/hell/ll/study/b/15/`.
- **Companion plain-language intro:** `Matheo-b15 (b15-intro-deadlock-mmv5)`.

Note

Naming note (deferred floor tasks). This copy still carries old `h*`-era tokens in places and deprecated in-text references (e.g. “Matheo-5”, “Matheo-1”); unifying notation (`h_star` / `h_zero` / `h_dark`) and migrating citations to the **Matheo-bNN** scheme + **references.bib** are tracked floor tasks (AA #1, AA #5), deliberately not rushed here.

Moved from the original cover (provenance)

The following draft-status / versioned-variant note was relocated here from the cover area during the floor pour; kept verbatim.

Note

Versioned Variant: `iv_LLoL_00v1_2026m04d14` captures LLoL’s minor edits from reviewing AI-generated draft (`dv_ClaOp46max_MMv3_2026m04d07`). Provenance in the age of AI-supported work is complicated. Here is a very simple and incomplete attempt to offer some details. How to improve relevant transparency in gentle kind reasonable ways is an open question to which #AuditTheMath will have to dedicate not a few resources in order to succeed. Major revision of MMv2 (2026m04d07), addressing all 12 Knife Edges from the six-reviewer adversarial review (`review_b15-simplicity_2026m04d07`). Key additions in MMv3: (1) “Divine Structure” framing replacing bare “Dipolarity” throughout — dipolarity is one form of divine structure, not the only one; (2) trans-world extensionality argument (KE3); (3) modal restatement of deadlock for eternalism (KE8); (4) Stump engagement (KE2); (5) Analogical Escape Cost lemma (KE9); (6) Jewish engagement — Maimonides and tzimtzum (KE11, KE12); (7) Hindu engagement — nirguna/saguna and three Vedanta schools (KE10); (8) Ash’ari rewrite with structural question (KE5); (9) apophatic acknowledgment (KE7); (10) formal comparison buffer (KE1); (11) b14 handoff (KE4); (12) wahdat al-wujud qualification at first mention (KE6). Draft by Claude Opus 4.6 (`dv_ClaOp46_MMv3_2026m04d07`). LLoL provided the PET axiom system, the original structural deadlock insight, the “Divine Structure” framing, the Ash’ari engagement strategy, the eternalism/modal argument, and the guiding questions. This draft requires expert review before any claims can be assessed.

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The following works informed the broader theological and philosophical context: [Clayton and Peacocke, 2004], [Cooper, 2006], [Hartshorne, 1941], [Hick, 1966], [Leibniz, 1710], [Moltmann, 1981], [Oppy, 2006], [Plantinga, 1974], [Sobel, 2004].

Notes

Content stability — Content is variant dv_ClaOp48Max_MMv5_b15-math-deadlock-mmv5_2026m05d29 (see StayVS). Rebuilt 2026-05-29.

See also on Balospe.com

- /study/matheo/index — the Matheo Study Series overview
- /action/audit-the-math/index — Audit the Math: the refutation-welcome path

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