

What do I mean, exactly, by “radical monotheism”?

I mean, first of all, *theism*, as the assertion that strictly ultimate reality has the character of one or more individuals.

I mean, secondly, *monotheism*, as the assertion that strictly ultimate reality has the character of one individual.

I mean, thirdly, *radical monotheism*, as the assertion that the distinction between the one strictly ultimate individual and all merely particular individuals, actual or possible, is a modal, ontological distinction.

What makes radical monotheism “radical,” then, is asserting, more or less clearly and consistently, that the one individual, God, alone exists necessarily, while all merely particular individuals exist, insofar as they do, merely contingently.

In my understanding, Christianity originated only after radical monotheism in this sense had emerged in different forms in both of the traditions shaping the classical Christian tradition, that is, the tradition of Israel and Judaism and the tradition of ancient Greece and Hellenism. I say, “more or less clearly and consistently,” because, in both traditions, the conceptuality in terms of which radical monotheism was typically formulated was either mythological or categoric~~al~~-metaphysical, as distinct from transcendental-metaphysical, which is to say, a conceptuality capable of appropriately formulating the modal, ontological distinction between the one universal individual who alone exists necessarily and all particular individuals who exist, if they exist, only contingently.

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