

Logic Without Theological Ownership

Structure, Normativity, and the Failure of God-as-Ground Arguments

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Central claim

Logical necessity, truth, intentionality, and normativity do not by themselves establish theological ownership. The strongest God-as-ground argument reaches a necessary personal mind only through disputed bridges: that logical laws are proposition-entities, that every intrinsically intentional proposition is a thought, that each necessary thought essentially belongs to one necessary mind, and that such a mind supplies the relevant God-concept. These proposals may form a coherent theistic interpretation, but logic remains publicly usable and assessable without prior assent to it.

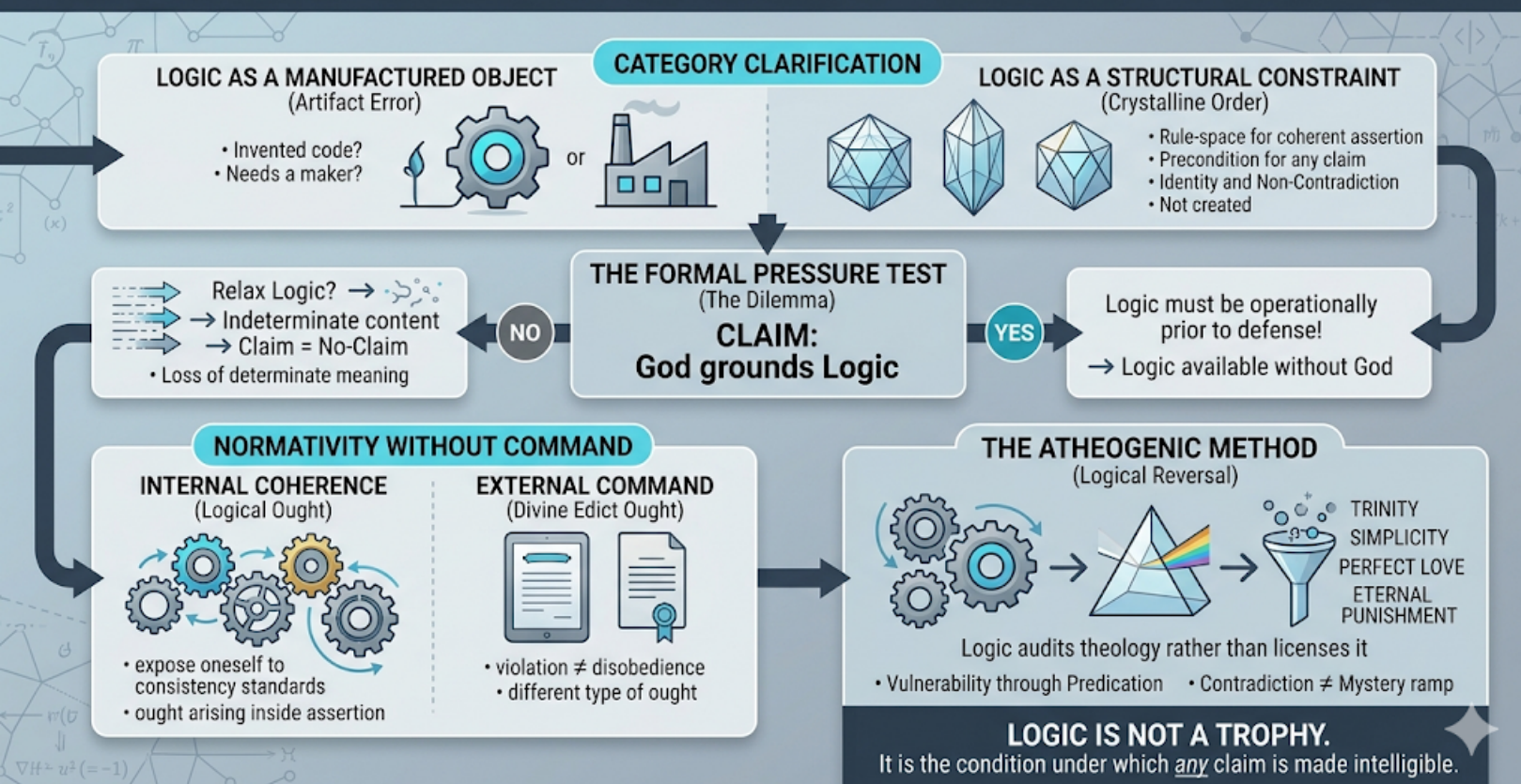
Preview:

Logical data	Metaphysical bridges	Public test	Bounded result
Some consequences are necessary, truth-preserving, and independent of preference.	Propositions are identified with thoughts; necessary thoughts are assigned to one necessary personal mind.	Ask what fixes consequence, what the relata are, why content must be mental, and which modal step selects a mind.	Divine conceptualism remains an optional interpretation; no theological license is required to reason or assess an inference.

The paper separates metaphysical dependence from epistemic access. Using logic to examine a proposed ground does not refute that ground, but neither does a grounding story make non-adherents unable to reason.

Visual preview:

LOGIC WITHOUT THEOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP: AN AUDIT OF GOD-AS-GROUND ARGUMENTS



The diagram contrasts a manufactured-object picture with a structural account, then tests content, normativity, and theological application. Its phrase “logic available without God” means available for public use and evaluation without antecedent assent to a God-concept; the image does not prove that no theistic metaphysics of logic is true.

Abstract

Arguments from logic to theism commonly begin with plausible features of logical consequence: its apparent necessity, objectivity, generality, and independence from human preference. A sophisticated version identifies logical laws with necessarily true propositions, propositions with intrinsically intentional thoughts, and necessary thoughts with the contents of a necessarily existent personal mind. This paper reconstructs that argument in its strongest form and audits each bridge. The crucial inferences are neither delivered by logic alone nor jointly compulsory. Logical laws may be characterized as rules, relations, properties, or proposition-like contents; contemporary theories disagree about whether propositions are intrinsically representational, mind-dependent, or reducible to cognitive acts. Even if propositions are thoughts, moving from necessarily available content to one numerically identical necessary thinker requires a substantive essential-ownership premise. A necessarily existent mind also falls short of a developed theistic God-concept unless further attributes are supplied.

The paper also corrects a common objection. An argument may use logic while proposing a metaphysical ground of logic without thereby becoming viciously circular; operational priority is not metaphysical independence. What does follow is an epistemic limit: logical competence, proof, counterexample, and rational disagreement do not require prior acceptance of the proposed ground. Logical normativity likewise needs bridge principles connecting consequence with belief revision, and logical pluralism complicates any appeal to a single unqualified body of laws. The result is bounded. Divine conceptualism may remain a coherent worldview-level interpretation, but logic does not establish theological ownership, identify non-theists as epistemic borrowers, or uniquely select theism from the available metaphysical accounts.

Keywords: logic; theism; divine conceptualism; propositions; grounding; normativity; logical pluralism; public reason

1. The Exact Claim Under Review

The slogan that logic requires a deity can mean several different things. A person may claim that logical order fits a theistic worldview, that logical truths are thoughts in a divine mind, that human reasoning is reliable only if designed, or that non-theists cannot justify using logic. These are not interchangeable. Evidence for one does not automatically establish the others.

This paper uses *God-concept* for a specified conception of a deity and its attributes. In the argument examined here, the minimum God-concept is a necessarily existent, personal, nonphysical mind. That description is already thinner than classical Christian theism: it does not by itself include uniqueness, omniscience, omnipotence, perfect goodness, creation, providence, revelation, or triunity. The phrase *God-as-ground proposal* names the further claim that logical laws metaphysically depend on such a mind. It does not assume that the description has a referent.

Anderson and Welty offer the clearest rigorous version of the proposal. They begin by conceding that rational belief in a deity and every argument for such belief must conform to logical standards. Their intended dependence runs in the other direction at the metaphysical level: logical laws exist because a necessarily existent personal spirit exists. They characterize the laws as necessarily true propositions, argue that propositions are real and nonphysical, identify propositions as intrinsically intentional thoughts, and infer that necessary thoughts must belong to a necessary mind (Anderson & Welty, 2011). Their later defense clarifies that human thought episodes are not numerically identical with divine thoughts; rather, the propositions expressed or contained by human thoughts are identified with divine thoughts (Anderson & Welty, 2013).

That is a serious argument, not the crude claim that every law needs a legislator. Its strength is also its vulnerability: the conclusion arrives only after several controversial theories of logic, propositions, intentionality, modality, and personhood have been combined. The audit must therefore ask which steps are logical consequences, which are metaphysical premises, and which are changes in subject.

Governing thesis

The argument from logic does not fail merely because it uses logic. It fails to establish theological ownership because its decisive bridges remain disputable, underdetermined, and insufficient to select a developed God-concept. Even if its metaphysics were true, non-adherents could still use and test logical inferences without first believing that metaphysics.

2. The Strongest Argument, Step by Step

The argument is best presented as a chain rather than compressed into “logic is immaterial, therefore a deity exists”. Table 1 separates the observation at each stage from the bridge needed to move further.

Table 1: The argument from logic and its required bridges.

Stage	Claim	Bridge required	Live alternative
1	There are logical laws or consequence relations.	Some correct metatheory can identify them.	Pluralism or context-sensitive consequence.
2	Logical laws are necessarily true.	The relevant necessity is metaphysical and attaches to proposition-entities.	Rule-, relation-, property-, or framework-based accounts.
3	Necessary propositions really and necessarily exist.	Truth predication carries robust ontological commitment.	Deflationary, nominalist, or neutralist semantics.
4	Propositions are intrinsically intentional.	Their representational role is intrinsic rather than derived from use or acts.	Naturalized, property, or act-based theories of propositions.
5	Intrinsic intentionality is sufficient for mentality.	Nothing nonmental can be intrinsically about anything.	Primitive or structural representation.
6	Propositions are thoughts.	A shareable content is numerically a thought rather than what a thought has.	Content–attitude distinction.
7	Necessary thoughts require one necessary mind.	Each necessary thought has an essential, transworld-identical owner.	Necessarily instantiated contents with varying or no owners.
8	A necessary personal nonphysical mind is the relevant deity.	The thin result is sufficient for a theistic God-concept.	Absolute idealism, multiple necessary minds, or an underdescribed person.

The table does not refute the argument by listing possibilities. It locates the burden. A deductive chain is compelling only when its premises are more secure than the conclusion and when rival accounts have been excluded for reasons that do not assume the desired result. Here the observations in the first column become a theistic conclusion only through the middle column. Logic supplies the form of the inference; it does not certify those metaphysical premises.

3. Three Kinds of Priority

One valuable insight is that a God-as-ground claim must be intelligible and logically assessable. The inference from that fact to metaphysical independence moves too quickly, however. Three relations must be kept apart.

1. **Operational priority:** a speaker must use some inferential and semantic norms to formulate or defend a claim.
2. **Epistemic priority:** a person must know or justifiably believe one claim before being justified in another.
3. **Metaphysical priority:** one fact obtains in virtue of, or is grounded by, another fact.

These relations can diverge. A chemist uses mathematics to defend a molecular theory, but that does not show that molecules metaphysically ground mathematics or that mathematics grounds molecules. A child can competently use plural nouns before knowing a grammatical theory of plurality. Someone can reason by modus ponens without possessing a metaphysics of propositions. Grounding is intended to mark a noncausal explanatory dependence, and it is not reducible to whatever a disputant must use first in an argument (Rosen, 2010).

Accordingly, the objection “the proposal uses logic, so logic cannot depend on a deity” is invalid. A proposed ground can be investigated by means that depend on what is being explained. There is no general ban on reflexive inquiry. The better criticism concerns what the argument actually establishes. Using logic does not prove a theistic ground, and accepting a theistic ground is not an epistemic prerequisite for using logic. If the metaphysical theory were true, every inference might depend on a divine mind in the same unobtrusive sense in which every bodily action depends on many unknown physical conditions. That would not turn disbelief into logical incompetence.

This distinction also changes the meaning of “presupposes”. Anderson and Welty infer that every logical argument presupposes a deity if logical laws are divine thoughts (Anderson & Welty, 2011). Read metaphysically, this restates their conclusion. Read epistemically—as if an arguer must believe or first justify the theistic account—it does not follow. The slide between those readings creates the rhetoric of ownership.

4. Are Logical Laws Proposition-Entities?

The argument begins by treating logical laws as truths, truths as propositions, and propositions as primary truth-bearers. This is a respectable ontology, but it is not a neutral unpacking of ordinary speech. Saying “there are valid inferences” need not commit a speaker to abstract law-objects in the same way that saying “there are chairs” commits the speaker to furniture. Quine’s work made precisely this question of ontological commitment central: surface grammar alone does not settle what a successful theory quantifies over (Quine, 1948).

Several targets are easily conflated:

- a valid argument form, such as modus ponens;
- a consequence relation between premises and conclusion;
- a generalization stating that relation;
- the proposition expressed by that generalization;
- and a rule for revising or forming beliefs.

These may be related without being numerically identical. If a defender construes a law as a relation, then points to a truth *about* the relation, the subject has changed from the relation to a proposition describing it. The existence and nature of that proposition must be defended independently. A truth about a relation does not show that the relation is itself a thought.

The disagreement is not simply between theism and materialism. Craig develops a range of anti-realist and neutralist approaches to abstract objects precisely to protect divine aseity, the doctrine that a deity depends on nothing distinct from itself (Craig, 2017). Theistic philosophers can therefore reject robust proposition realism, while non-theists can accept abstract objects. The first bridge does not sort worldviews into the theological and the secular.

This is an underdetermination result, not an endorsement of eliminativism. The argument may proceed conditionally: *if* logical laws are necessarily existing propositions, what follows? But the conclusion then inherits the uncertainty of that ontology. The ordinary objectivity of valid consequence does not settle the metaphysics.

5. From Intentional Content to Thought

The next bridge is the center of the argument. Propositions are said to be about things, and aboutness—intentionality—is presented as the distinctive mark of the mental. Therefore propositions are thoughts. The move is attractive because beliefs and judgments are paradigmatic cases of directed mental states. It nevertheless compresses three questions.

First, is a proposition intrinsically about its subject, or does representation arise from linguistic practices, cognitive acts, or relations to interpreters? Contemporary theories disagree. King, Soames, and Speaks jointly defend the importance of propositions while offering different accounts of their structure and representational powers; their disagreement itself shows that proposition realism does not force one theory of intrinsic aboutness (King et al., 2014).

Second, even if propositions are intrinsically representational, why must every intrinsically representational entity be mental? Calling intentionality a “mark of the mental” may classify familiar mental states, but the needed premise is stronger: intrinsic aboutness is sufficient for being a thought. That exclusivity cannot be obtained from the definition of “intentionality” without making the conclusion verbal. Malpass presses this and related problems against the argument from logic (Malpass, 2021).

Third, *thought* can name either an episode or its content. My present judging that snow is white is a mental event belonging to me. The proposition that snow is white is the shareable content that you may also affirm. If propositions are identified with episodes, their shareability and necessary existence become obscure. If they are identified with contents, the claim that every content essentially belongs to one mind is no longer automatic. Anderson and Welty’s defense explicitly distinguishes human thoughts from their propositional contents while identifying those contents with divine thoughts (Anderson & Welty, 2013). That clarification protects numerical difference between human and divine episodes, but it also exposes the bridge: why is the shared content itself numerically a divine thought rather than the content of one?

The content–owner problem

If a proposition is a thought episode, it appears tied to a thinker but is difficult to treat as one shareable necessary content. If it is a shareable content, it can be entertained by many thinkers but is not obviously a mental episode essentially owned by any one of them. Moving between these senses supplies the modal conclusion only by equivocation.

Divine conceptualism can answer by taking divine cognitive acts to be eternal, necessary, and identical with propositional contents. That is a substantive metaphysical identity thesis. It may be coherent, but it is not derived merely from the fact that propositions represent.

6. The Modal Bridge to a Necessary Mind

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that logical truths are thoughts and are true in every possible world. What follows about thinkers? A familiar modal caution matters. The claim that every possible world contains some thinker is weaker than the claim that one and the same thinker exists in every possible world:

$$\Box \exists x T(x) \not\Rightarrow \exists x \Box T(x).$$

The left formula says that necessarily there is at least one thinker. The right says that there is a particular necessary thinker. Moving the modal operator across the existential quantifier is invalid without an additional premise.

Anderson and Welty anticipate a version of this objection. They argue that thoughts belong essentially to the minds that produce them: a thought numerically belonging to one person could not instead belong to another (Anderson & Welty, 2011). If one numerically identical thought exists in every possible world and essentially has one owner, its owner must exist wherever it does. The inference can then be valid. But notice what performs the work: the necessary transworld identity of the thought plus essential ownership by a particular mind. Neither premise follows from necessity of truth alone.

The content–episode distinction returns. A content may be necessarily available or necessarily true while its entertainments vary across worlds. If it is a token episode, essential ownership is plausible but necessary existence is contentious. If it is a type or abstract content, necessary existence is more plausible but essential ownership is contentious. The argument needs one entity to carry both features.

Even granting a necessary mind, a further gap remains. A necessary personal nonphysical being is compatible with more than the intended theology. The argument does not establish how many necessary minds there are, whether the mind knows every truth, whether it can act, whether it created a contingent universe, whether it is perfectly good, or whether it has the identity conditions required by a particular tradition. Plantinga’s anti-realist reflections motivate a divine account of truth, but a motivation internal to a theistic system is not yet an entailment from logical practice (Plantinga, 1982). Calling the thin conclusion “God” risks hiding the attributes still owed.

7. Identity, Ground, and Explanatory Gain

The strongest proposal does not say that logical laws were manufactured or arbitrarily decreed. It identifies them with necessary divine thoughts or with aspects of a divine nature. A command dilemma therefore strikes only a weaker voluntarist target. If logical necessity expresses what a necessarily rational mind is, there is no choice among alternative logics in the manner of a legislator selecting traffic rules.

That repair avoids voluntarism, but it creates an explanatory question. An identity claim is informative only if there is reason to identify the two descriptions. Water is molecular H_2O because chemistry connects macroscopic water with that microstructure and yields discriminating predictions. Saying that necessary logical content is divine thought requires a comparable bridge: what feature of the content makes mentality more explanatory than a primitive relation, structural fact, property, or abstract proposition?

The proposal can otherwise become a relabeling. If “the divine nature is logical” means that its descriptions respect valid consequence, logic is being used to characterize the nature. If “logic is the divine nature” is literal identity, the account must explain which logical relations are identical with which features of a person and how personhood explains their necessity. If “logic depends on the divine nature” names grounding rather than identity, the direction and relata of that grounding require specification.

Necessary co-existence is insufficient. Two facts can hold in every possible world without either explaining the other. Grounding is asymmetric explanatory structure, not mere modal covariance (Rosen, 2010). The defender must therefore say what the proposed mind contributes beyond ensuring that the entities appear together in every world.

This is the paper’s central discrimination test. A theory that explains logic should help answer at least one question that rivals answer less well: Which consequence relation is correct in a disputed domain? Why is a particular inference valid? Why do logical constants have their meanings? What makes a proposition true rather

than false? How do finite reasoners gain reliable access? Simply appending “divine thought” to the same logical facts does not yet improve those answers.

8. Normativity Does Not Supply a Commander

Another route begins from the sense that logic tells us how we ought to reason. If someone accepts P and $P \rightarrow Q$, it seems that the person should accept Q . A personal source may then appear to explain the authority of the requirement.

The bridge from validity to belief is more complicated. A person who learns that Q is absurd may rationally reject P or $P \rightarrow Q$ rather than add Q . A scientist may suspend judgment when the premises are uncertain. A finite reasoner cannot believe every consequence of existing beliefs. In a preface case, an author may reasonably believe each carefully checked claim while also believing that at least one error probably remains. Logic identifies consequences among contents; a norm for belief revision must add aims, evidence, feasibility, and a direction of adjustment.

Harman therefore distinguishes principles of reasoning from principles of logic and treats reasoning as revision of beliefs and intentions (Harman, 1986). Broome likewise analyzes active reasoning as rule-guided mental activity without requiring a prior normative belief that one ought to follow the rule (Broome, 2014). These accounts differ, but both show why a logical relation does not automatically issue a categorical command.

The result is not that logic has no normative significance. Validity can constrain permissible combinations of commitment; truth-preserving inference can serve inquiry; contradiction can signal a need for revision. The point is that the “ought” arrives through a bridge principle such as “if you aim at truth and accept these premises, do not knowingly reject their entailed conclusion without revising something”. That conditional structure does not require a commander. A theist may ground epistemic value in a deity, but the authority is then carried by a wider theory of value and agency, not extracted from validity alone.

9. Many Logics, Shared Metatheory

Appeals to “the laws of logic” can suggest one fixed list headed by identity, noncontradiction, and excluded middle. Actual logical practice is more varied. Classical, intuitionistic, relevant, and paraconsistent systems differ over consequence, negation, implication, or explosion. Beall and Restall defend pluralism about genuine consequence relations (Beall & Restall, 2006); Shapiro develops contextualist and pluralist options concerning validity (Shapiro, 2014); Priest argues that some contradictions may be true without every claim following (Priest, 2006).

This variation does not prove relativism, and it does not refute the argument from logic. Anderson and Welty deliberately need only that there be some logical laws, not that classical logic be uniquely correct (Anderson & Welty, 2011). The variation nevertheless removes an easy premise. A God-as-ground account must explain whether one divine content fixes one privileged logic, whether multiple consequence relations are equally genuine, or whether applicability varies with domains and purposes.

Theological identification does not itself adjudicate the choice. To decide whether explosion is appropriate for an inconsistent database, whether excluded middle fits constructive proof, or whether relevance should constrain implication, disputants examine semantics, proof rules, models, preservation properties, and the aims of the formal system. Those are public metatheoretic tests. If the divine account simply contains whichever logics survive them, the tests do the discriminating work. If the account selects a logic independently, it must supply a method for learning which selection was made.

Logical pluralism therefore reinforces the bounded conclusion. Objective assessment need not mean one undifferentiated law-object, and disagreement over systems is resolved by more logic and mathematics rather than by identifying an owner.

10. Public Availability: What Reasoners Actually Test

The most defensible conclusion concerns access rather than ultimate ontology. Theists and non-theists test reasoning by the same kinds of operations. A proof is checked line by line. A purportedly valid form is challenged with a countermodel in which the premises are true and the conclusion false. A derivation is translated between calculi. Definitions are varied to discover whether a result depends on a hidden assumption. An inconsistent database is tested to see whether its consequence relation trivializes. None of these procedures requires the participants first to agree about the metaphysical nature of propositions.

Table 2: Questions that expose the decisive bridge at each stage.

Proposed move	Actual question	What would clarify it
Law to entity	Are we discussing a rule, relation, property, sentence content, or truth about one of these?	State the relation and explain the ontological commitment.
Truth to thought	Is representational content itself a mental episode, or what an episode expresses?	Give identity conditions for the content and the act.
Thought to mind	Does the same necessary thought have one essential owner in every possible world?	State the modal ownership premise without shifting type and token.
Mind to deity	Which divine attributes follow from necessary personhood?	Derive uniqueness, knowledge, power, goodness, and creative agency separately.
Ground to access	Must a reasoner believe the ground before reasoning competently?	Distinguish metaphysical dependence from epistemic justification.
Validity to obligation	Why must this consequence govern this finite agent's belief revision now?	Supply the epistemic aim, evidence, and bridge principle.

Consider three concrete cases. First, a Christian and an atheist can jointly find a valuation that refutes an invalid argument; the countermodel does not change with their theology. Second, both can discover that a proof silently assumes excluded middle; they may then disagree about whether a constructive setting permits it, but their disagreement is about the setting and rule. Third, both can catch an equivocation in the word “presuppose” by separating metaphysical dependence from what an arguer must believe. Their competence is displayed by the test, not licensed by a shared metaphysics.

This public availability is compatible with many ultimate stories. If Platonism were true, people could reason without first believing Platonism. If divine conceptualism were true, they could reason without first believing divine conceptualism. If a structural or inferential account were true, they could reason without first articulating it. Competence is not ownership, and metaphysical ignorance is not theft.

11. What Remains of the Atheogenic Reversal

Logic can be described as *atheogenic*: not a proof of atheism, but a method that exposes theological claims to pressure. The claim is defensible once it is narrowed. Any God-concept asserted in public discourse must retain enough identity, predication, negation, and consequence to be distinguished from its denial. Perfect love must differ from indifference; triunity must be stated with identity conditions that avoid a flat contradiction; timelessness and responsiveness must be related without silently changing temporal vocabulary.

This does not make every difficult doctrine contradictory. Classical Christian theology often distinguishes one being from three persons precisely to avoid asserting three beings and one being in the same respect. A mystery can exceed complete comprehension while still excluding some interpretations. Logic's proper role is to ask whether the distinctions remain stable and whether the conclusion follows from the premises.

The methodological reversal is therefore conditional: the more content a theology asserts, the more inferential commitments it incurs. Appeals to transcendence do not erase those commitments without also erasing determinate assertion. Yet this pressure is symmetrical. Naturalism, Platonism, nominalism, and logical pluralism are equally answerable to consistency, explanatory adequacy, and counterexample. Logic is not atheistic property any more than it is theistic property.

A narrower Logos thesis remains open. A Christian philosopher may propose that the intelligibility of reality fits a doctrine of divine reason, or that necessary truths are best integrated into a theistic metaphysics. Such a view can function as an inference to the best explanation or as internal worldview articulation. Its evidential force then depends on comparison: explanatory scope, simplicity, integration with other commitments, and performance against rivals. Harmony is not ownership, and possible explanation is not exclusive entailment.

12. Objections and Replies

12.1 Every secular account is equally mysterious

Perhaps propositions, grounding, and normativity are difficult on every view. That is plausible, but it does not favor the God-as-ground proposal without a comparative argument. The burden here is not to produce a complete secular metaphysics. It is to show that logical data alone do not uniquely select theism. Competing mysteries yield underdetermination, not theological ownership.

12.2 Identity with a divine nature ends the regress

An identity claim may stop a regress, but stopping is not explaining. The defender must still justify the identity and show why it is superior to treating logical structure as primitive. If the answer is that a necessarily rational deity just is the sort of reality in which logic belongs, the view may be internally coherent. It has become a system-level proposal rather than a consequence of logic alone.

12.3 Without theism, logical normativity has no authority

This objection assumes that every epistemic norm must be a personal command. But validity, rational coherence, evidence responsiveness, and moral obedience are different normative relations. The agent who rejects a conclusion may revise a premise, suspend judgment, or discover an ambiguity. A theological ethics of inquiry may add reasons to value truth; it does not follow that logical consequence itself is a command.

12.4 The critic borrows logic to deny its ground

The criticism would be decisive only after the grounding theory had been established. Before that, it repeats the conclusion as an accusation. A critic can grant the logical relations, test the proposed metaphysical bridges, and remain neutral about their ultimate ground. If the theory is true, the critic unknowingly depends on it; if false, no borrowing occurred. The charge supplies no independent reason to choose between those possibilities.

12.5 A necessary mind is close enough to theism

It is evidence for theism only to the extent that rival accounts make such a mind less expected and the missing attributes can be derived. A necessary thinker without established knowledge, power, goodness, unity, or creative relation to the cosmos is not yet the God-concept defended by classical Christianity. Naming the conclusion cannot add those predicates.

13. Conclusion

Logic is not well described as a manufactured object, a decree, or a trophy whose owner may withhold rational permission. The strongest theistic argument avoids those crude pictures by identifying logical laws with necessary divine thoughts. Its sophistication makes the real burden visible. The conclusion depends on controversial claims about proposition-entities, intrinsic intentionality, thought-content identity, essential ownership across possible worlds, and the sufficiency of a thin necessary mind for a theistic God-concept.

The fair verdict is neither that divine conceptualism is incoherent nor that logic proves atheism. It is that logical necessity and normativity do not uniquely deliver theological metaphysics. Operational use of logic does not refute a proposed metaphysical ground, but a proposed ground does not become an epistemic entry ticket. Theists and non-theists can formulate proofs, construct countermodels, compare logical systems, and identify equivocations through public standards whose application does not await agreement about ultimate reality.

The theological thesis can therefore survive only in a narrower form: logic may fit, express, or be grounded in a divine nature within a larger worldview. What fails is ownership—the move from one disputed account of logic to the claim that dissenters cannot reason without borrowing what belongs to theism. Logic remains the common court in which that ownership claim, like every rival claim, must earn its case.

Formal Reconstruction of the Central Thesis

Target conclusion. The paper rejects the claim that the publicly available facts about logic establish theological ownership or make acceptance of a theistic metaphysics an epistemic condition of reasoning. It does not conclude that no deity could metaphysically ground logic.

A. Reconstruction of the argument from logic

1. Logical laws are necessarily true propositions.
2. Necessarily true propositions are real, necessarily existing, nonphysical entities.
3. Every proposition is intrinsically intentional, and every intrinsically intentional entity is a thought.
4. Every thought essentially belongs to a mind, and at least one logical thought exists in every possible world as the same thought.
5. Therefore at least one mind that essentially owns that thought exists in every possible world. (2–4)
6. Every necessarily existent mind is a necessarily existent personal nonphysical being.
7. Every such being satisfies the relevant God-concept.
8. Therefore an entity satisfying the relevant God-concept exists. (5–7)

The derivation can be valid if premises 3–4 include numerical identity and essential ownership strong enough to license the modal move. Premises 1–4 and 6–7 are substantive metaphysical claims, not laws of logic. Necessary truth alone yields neither propositions-as-thoughts nor one transworld-identical owner. Premise 7 must also argue for the theological reach of the conclusion; naming the being cannot supply it.

B. Reconstruction of the paper's bounded result

1. If logical facts alone establish theological ownership, the move from those facts to the relevant God-concept must be compulsory without adding disputed worldview-specific bridges.
2. The move requires disputed premises about the ontology of laws, the nature of propositions, the sufficiency of intentionality for mentality, essential ownership of necessary thoughts, and the attributes of a necessary mind.
3. Therefore logical facts alone do not establish theological ownership. (1–2)
4. If accepting a theistic ground were an epistemic precondition of reasoning, competent public testing of inference would require prior acceptance of that ground.
5. Proof checking, countermodel construction, translation between calculi, and diagnosis of equivocation do not require such prior acceptance; therefore it is not an epistemic precondition. (4)
6. A metaphysical dependence claim can nevertheless be true when agents use what is grounded without knowing the ground; therefore conclusions 3 and 5 do not deny every divine-grounding theory.

Validity and support. The first subargument is a necessary-condition test: the ownership conclusion cannot be attributed to logical data when controversial metaphysical premises do the discriminating work. The second separates competence from metaphysical belief and is supported by ordinary logical practice. The final premise blocks an overreach from epistemic availability to metaphysical independence. Together they establish a failure of exclusive entailment and epistemic proprietorship, not the falsity of every divine-grounding theory.

C. Symbolic reconstruction

Symbols

- W : the possible worlds relevant to the modal claim.
- $Q(x, w)$: thinker x owns the same necessary logical content in world w .
- L : the conjunction of the publicly available logical data.
- B : the conjunction of the disputed metaphysical and modal bridge premises.
- T : the theological-ownership conclusion.
- E : prior assent to the proposed ground is required for logical competence.
- P : competent public logical testing occurs without that assent.
- M : at least one divine-grounding theory of logic is metaphysically true.

Formal relations and derivations

How to read the notation. The symbols $\forall$ and $\exists$ mean “every” and “at least one”; $\wedge$, $\neg$, and $\rightarrow$ mean “and,” “not,” and “if–then.” The sign $\models$ marks semantic entailment, while $\vdash$ marks a derivation from stated premises. A slash through either relation denies that entailment or derivation.

$$(\forall w \in W)(\exists x) Q(x, w) \not\Rightarrow (\exists x)(\forall w \in W) Q(x, w).$$

Plain-English annotation. The left side says that every possible world contains some thinker of the necessary logical content. The right side says that one and the same thinker owns that content in every possible world. Reversing the order of “every” and “some” is not licensed without the additional essential-ownership premise. The formula does not claim that a single necessary thinker is impossible; it shows only that the weaker modal claim does not entail one.

$$(L \wedge B) \models T, \quad L \not\models T.$$

Plain-English annotation. The first relation grants that the theological conclusion may follow when the logical facts are combined with all of the bridge premises. The second relation states the paper’s central result: the logical facts alone do not entail theological ownership. This is a claim about what the premises establish, not a proof that T is false.

$$E \rightarrow \neg P, \quad P \vdash \neg E.$$

Plain-English annotation. If prior assent to the proposed ground were required for logical competence, competent public testing without that assent could not occur. Such testing does occur through proof checking, countermodel construction, translation between calculi, and diagnosis of equivocation. The conclusion $\neg E$ follows by modus tollens: theological assent is not an epistemic entry condition for reasoning.

$$\neg E \not\models \neg M.$$

Plain-English annotation. Rejecting the epistemic entry condition does not entail that every divine-grounding theory is false. People can competently use and assess something without knowing its ultimate metaphysical ground. This final non-entailment preserves the paper’s principal limit while leaving the ownership claim rejected.

Validity and support of the symbolic version. The modal display records an invalid quantifier shift unless the essential-ownership bridge is supplied. The bridge-dependence display states a non-entailment established by the availability of live alternative accounts of laws, propositions, and intentionality. The epistemic derivation is deductively valid once P is granted; P is supported by ordinary public practices whose standards can be applied without resolving metaphysical disagreement. The last display prevents that valid epistemic result from being expanded into a disproof of every divine-grounding account.

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