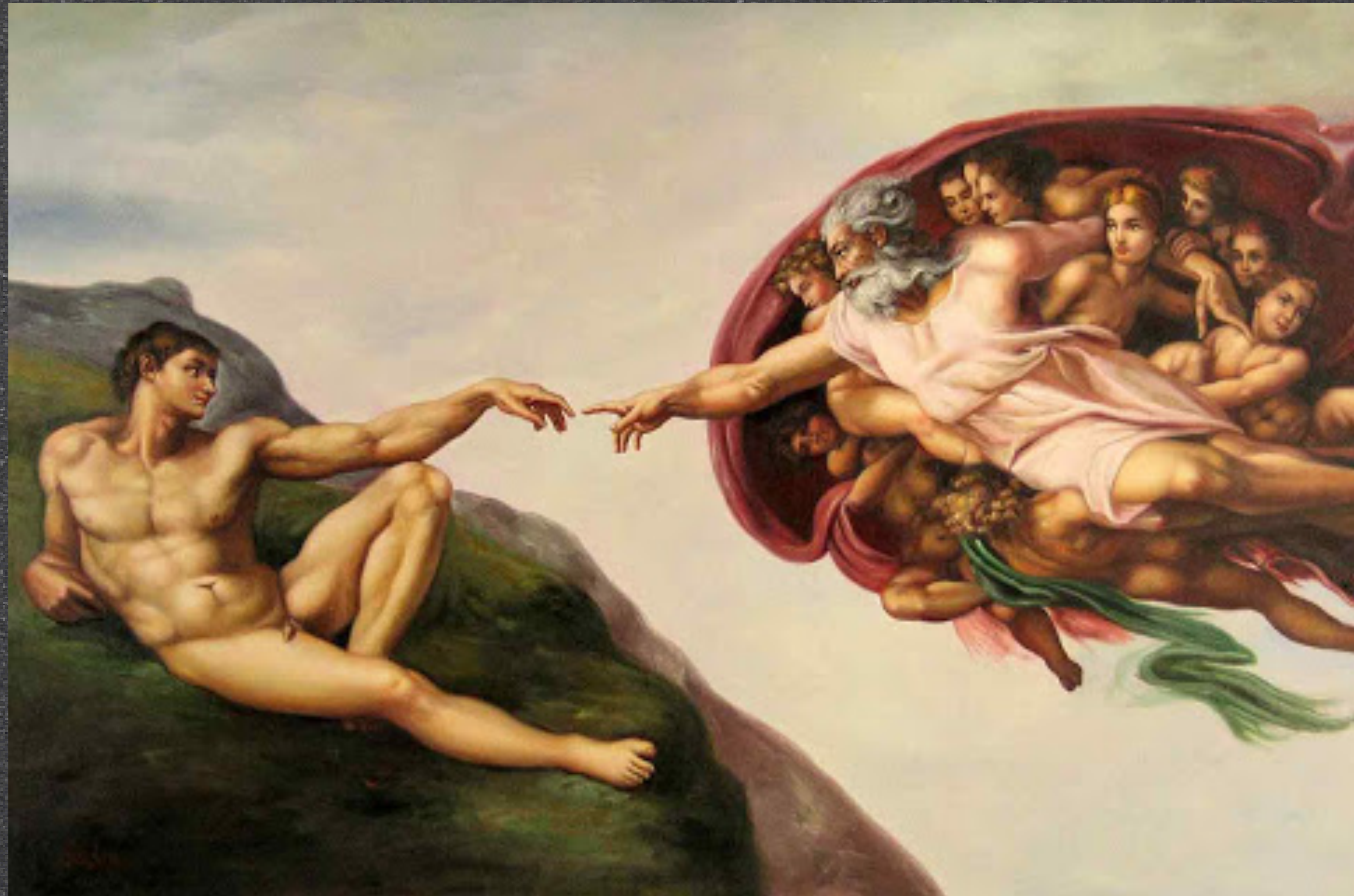


NATURE of GOD

HZT4U1 – Mr. A. Wittmann - Unit 6 - Lecture 1



Michelangelo's Creation of Adam

Conceptions of God

- Theologians & philosophers have studied countless widely varying conceptions of God in different time periods & cultures
- Abrahamic conception as a father includes Christian's trinity manifestation & Judaism/Islam's singular transcendent
- Hindu views vary by region, sect, & caste, ranging from monotheistic to polytheistic to atheistic to God as ultimate reality
- Buddhism makes no connection between human nature & God
- Most Eastern conceptions of God are impersonal & reject the Western concept of a separate all-powerful, all-knowing personal God

Conceptions of God (continued)

1. Theism

5. Atheism

2. Deism

6. Agnosticism

3. Pantheism

7. Process Theology

4. Panentheism

Theism

- Believing in a (personal) monotheistic God or polytheistic gods
- Omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), omnipresent (all present), benevolent (loving), everlasting
- Exists realistically, objectively, independently within the universe of space-time, interacting with the universe via human religious experience & prayer, possessing volition, emotion, intention, & other anthropomorphic attributes (God the father)
- Transcendent (surpassing) &/or immanent (inherent), having a personal relationship with all
- Not all theists subscribe to all the above statements..
- Infinite & finite, voluntarily self-subjugates to space-time

Deism

- 17th & 18th centuries belief which rejects theism
- Transcendent separate supreme being-creator
- Does not intervene in the universe (determinism)
- Having created the universe & its laws, he remains apart from it & allows it to operate on its own according to these laws.
- Watch maker or independent immovable mover.
- May or may not be anthropomorphic/personal
- Does not answer prayers or cause miracles
- God does not intervene in human affairs.

Pantheism

- “all God”
- Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)
- Impersonal
- If God is infinite, eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, & all-present, then God must be everything & can't be separate from anything.
- Everything is God & God is everything, thus God & the universe are identical.
- God is the immense, interconnected system of everything.

Panentheism

- “all in God”
- Impersonal
- Krause, Schelling, Peirce, Emerson
- Universe is in God but God is more than the universe.
- “Oversoul” that interpenetrates or inhabits everything in the universe, but also transcends the universe.
- God’s transcendent nature is infinite, but also temporally empathizes with creatures in the universe & thus can be personal.

Atheism

- “no God”
- David Hume (1711-1776), Ernest Nagel (1901-1985)
- Based on the ability of science & the scientific method to explain the world.
- If an all-good & all-powerful God existed, there would be no evil. But there is evil. So, an all-good & all-powerful God does not exist.
- Moral evaluation is not based God’s laws, but on the empirical satisfaction of the complex needs of all humans.

Agnosticism

- English scientist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895)
- “it is wrong” to believe any statement unless one has evidence which “logically justifies” any belief, for or against.
- Linguistic analysts assert that the statements “God exists” & “God does not exist” are meaningless because there is no possible way of verifying these claims.
- Logical syllogisms that assume positive or negative claims without evidence are invalid.

Process Theology

- Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947)
- Free will
- Voluntarily limited by metaphysical laws of space-time
- Knowledge of the past & the present, but not the future
- Can not interact with the world as a personal being
- What God does know of the future is in reference to what he knows of present human dispositions, intentions & probabilities of free choice.

THE END