

On Embracing Uncertainty
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Among the multiplicity of differing opinions about ultimate truth, there should be at least general agreement that there is a multiplicity of differing opinions. Everyone does not agree. Furthermore, most would agree with this proposition: *that at least in some ways the contrary positions cannot all be true.* And while there may be those who disagree with this proposition, their argument is negated by the fact that there are others that disagree with their insistence to the contrary – and surely these last two positions are contradictory. Such conundrums multiply uncertainty.

When I was a child, in a moment of personal crisis, I etched out these words: “Everything is uncertain.” Then I crossed out the word “is”. Then I crossed out the word “everything”. Then I set down my pen and wept. In time, it occurred to me that the notion of “everything” and of “is” represented some form of being and of doing (subject/predicate). From there, I concluded that I am “being” and that my effort to ascertain is “doing”. Eventually, I restored all three words of my simple sentence, and in a way, I have never moved past them. It is true I have embraced a life of faith, but not from the victory over uncertainty, but rather because of it.

Indeed, I have taken my uncertainty as the basis for the only notion that I could fully embrace: There seems to be many things I cannot do/know, thus I perceive that I am limited – that is I am incipient. This perception leads me to contemplate the most remarkable possibility that has ever passed through my mind: the possibility of the unlimited – that is the ultimate. These thoughts can be expressed in two terse propositions:

EP1A. I am limited – incipient (>i<).

EP1B. There is the possibility of the unlimited – ultimate (<U>).

My response to these propositions is both emotional and intellectual. On an emotional level I experience a kind of terrified awe. What if there is <U> and what if <U> is against me? I am just >i<. Thus I am ultimately vulnerable. On an intellectual level I experience a kind of profound wonder. What does it mean to be incipient and what does it mean to be ultimate? Thus, the conjunction and the differential of EP1 and EP2 form the foundation of my entire theological inquiry. Moreover, the fear of and the attraction to the possibility of <U> form the motivation of my inquiry...