

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

CLARIFICATION OF THE KEY WORD “HALLUCINATION”

We need to achieve a clear understanding of the meaning of the word “hallucination” in order to be able to intelligently evaluate objections raised against the *Hallucination Theory*.

In his book *The Resurrection Factor* (hereafter: TRF), Josh McDowell quotes three different definitions of the word “hallucination” and then provides a similar definition of his own:

...a hallucination is an apparent act of vision for which there is no corresponding external object. (TRF, 1981 edition, p.84)

This is a fairly broad definition of “hallucination” and, although McDowell probably did not realize it, this definition *includes* DREAMS. We have visual experiences when we dream, and “there is no corresponding external object” to the visual experiences of people, animals, and objects that we “see” in our dreams. So, on McDowell’s definition of “hallucination”, every dream anyone experiences (that involves visual experiences) is a *hallucination*.

But what does “hallucination” mean to Kreeft and Tacelli? Unfortunately, because their presentation of objections against the *Hallucination Theory* are very brief, they provide no definition of this key term. However, since Kreeft and Tacelli appear to have borrowed many of their objections from Josh McDowell, it is reasonable to assume that they accept McDowell’s broad definition of “hallucination”, and thus that the term “hallucination” in their argument applies to DREAM experiences.

If the term “hallucination” does NOT include dreams, then there is a significant skeptical theory that Kreeft and Tacelli have FAILED to address and thus FAILED to refute: the theory that some disciples of Jesus had a DREAM about Jesus and mistakenly came to believe that the dream

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experience was a real experience of an actually present Jesus who had risen from the dead (or that the dream was *sent by God* and thus the truth of the contents of the dream was *guaranteed by God*). Neither McDowell nor Kreeft explicitly consider such a dream-based skeptical theory.

In order for Kreeft's case for the resurrection of Jesus to have *any chance* to be successful, most of the objections by Kreeft and Tacelli against the *Hallucination Theory* must also work against this skeptical *Dream Theory*. So, although defining "hallucination" in a way that encompasses *dreams* departs from the ordinary meaning of this word, I will assume this broad definition of "hallucination" for the purpose of clarifying and evaluating Kreeft and Tacelli's objections against the *Hallucination Theory*.

However, there is still at least one other obvious problem with McDowell's definition of "hallucination": he wrongly insists that a hallucination must involve an "apparent act of vision". This reveals McDowell's profound ignorance about the nature of hallucinations. It is common knowledge that hallucinations can occur *in other senses* besides that of vision:

Hallucinations may affect your vision, sense of smell, taste, hearing, or bodily sensations.

(["Everything You Need to Know About Hallucinations"](#) viewed 1/20/23)

For example, *the most common sort of hallucination* is when a person *hears voices* when there is no actual sound of a voice present.

McDowell's definition needs to be revised to include *other senses* besides vision:

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An experience E is a *hallucination* IF AND ONLY IF:

Experience E involves an apparent act of vision, sense of smell, taste, hearing, or bodily sensation for which there is no corresponding external object or event.

This definition still encompasses dreams, but it no longer limits hallucinations to just *visual experiences*.

ANALYSIS OF WITNESSES OBJECTIONS

WITNESSES OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	CATEGORY
Objection #1: Too Many Witnesses	HCA, p.186-187	WITNESSES Objection
Objection #2: The Witnesses were Qualified	HCA, p.187	WITNESSES Objection
Objection #3: Five Hundred Witnesses	HCA, p.187	WITNESSES Objection

CLARIFICATION OF THE KEY WORD “WITNESSES”

In his *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (hereafter: HCA) the first three objections that Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli raise against the *Hallucination Theory* are all about “witnesses”:

Objection #1: There were too many witnesses. (HCA, p.186, emphasis added)

Objection #2: The witnesses were qualified. (HCA, p. 187, emphasis added)

Objection #3: The five hundred [eyewitnesses] saw Christ together at the same time and place. (HCA, p.187 emphasis added)

Before we examine these three objections, I think it would be helpful to do something that Kreeft FAILED TO DO: get a clear idea of the meanings of the key terms “witnesses” and “eyewitnesses”.

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WHAT IS A “WITNESS”?

Here is how my *American Heritage College Dictionary* (4th edition) defines “witness”:

witness...n.

- 1a. One who can give a firsthand account of something. 1b. One who furnishes evidence.**
- 2. Something that serves as evidence; a sign.**
- 3. Law a. One who is called on to testify before a court.**
- 3b. One who is called on to attest to what takes place at a transaction. 3c. One who signs one’s name to a document to attest to its authenticity.**
- 4. An attestation to a fact, statement, or event; testimony. 5a. One who publicly affirms religious faith.**
- 5b. Witness A member of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.**

The first couple of definitions appear to be relevant, so I will keep those in mind.

Kreeft is clearly talking about people, so definition 2 (about “Something”) does not apply here.

Kreeft is not talking about people who “testify before a court”. However, people can “testify” in other less-formal circumstances too (e.g. to a police officer or detective who is investigating a crime, or to a group of people engaged in an inquiry that is not part of a legal or courtroom process.) So, I will keep definition 3a for now, with the understanding that it could be stretched beyond a legal or courtroom setting.

The appearances of a risen Jesus are not “transactions”, so definition 3b does not apply here.

Kreeft is not talking about people signing any documents, so definition 3c does not apply here.

Although “attestation” is not a person, it is something that people do,

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and such attestation seems relevant to what Kreeft is talking about here, so I will keep definition 4 in play.

Although a Christian believer who publically affirmed the religious belief that “Jesus rose from the dead” would constitute a “witness” according to definition 5a, such a “witness” would provide no help to Kreeft’s case for the resurrection or against the Hallucination Theory UNLESS that person could also provide an account of having personally SEEN a risen Jesus. So, simply affirming the religious belief that “Jesus rose from the dead” does not count as the sort of “witness” that Kreeft is talking about in these first three objections. Definition 5a does not apply here.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are a modern religious phenomenon, and so definition 5b has nothing to do with the “witnesses” that Kreeft is talking about, who are all people who (allegedly) lived in the first century C.E. We can toss aside definition 5b.

Here are the remaining definitions of “witness” that might help us clarify what Kreeft and Tacelli mean by the term “witnesses”:

- 1a. One who can give a firsthand account of something. 1b. One who furnishes evidence.**
- 3a. One who is called on to testify before a court [or to a person or group who is investigating something].**
- 4. An attestation to a fact, statement, or event; testimony.**

There is an interesting and important difference between definition 1a and definition 1b. “One who can” give a firsthand account of X might, nevertheless, NOT give a firsthand account of X, just as “One who can” beat his elderly mother to death might NOT want to do so, and thus might well NOT beat his elderly mother to death. The fact that person A can do X does not imply that person A has done X, nor does it imply that person A

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will do X. Thus, someone who is a “witness” in accordance with definition 1a might not ever have given a firsthand account of the event in question.

Compare that definition with definition 1b. One who “furnishes evidence” by giving an account of an event must necessarily give an account of the event. So, if we are talking about someone “giving a firsthand account” of some event, then definition 1a includes people who CAN do this (including people who DO NOT actually do so), while definition 1b only includes people who ACTUALLY give a firsthand account of the event. So, there is a BIG difference between definition 1a and definition 1b. Because Kreeft never bothers to clarify the meaning of the term “witnesses”, he FAILS to make it clear which of these two sorts of “witnesses” he is talking about.

Both definition 3a and definition 4 make reference to “testimony”. Definition 3a speaks of someone being called on “to testify”, and definition 4 speaks of an “attestation”, and puts the word “testimony” forward as a synonym. Also note that definition 3a has the same hypothetical character as definition 1a: someone “who is called on to testify” might, nevertheless, decide NOT to testify, or they could die or become mentally incapacitated before they get the chance to testify. The fact that person A has been “called on to testify” on matter X does not imply that person A has in fact testified on matter X, nor does it imply that person A will testify on matter X. Being “called on to testify” about some event does NOT mean that the person in question has or will ever testify about the event.

Compare that with definition 4 which talks about an “attestation to a fact, statement, or event”. If there is “attestation” to an event, then someone necessarily has already testified about that event. If there is “testimony” about an event, then someone necessarily has already testified about that

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event.

Thus, the contrast between definition 1a and definition 1b is similar to the contrast between definition 3a and definition 4. In both cases, the difference is between potentially giving a “firsthand account” (or “testimony”) and actually giving a “firsthand account” (or “testimony”).

There is another interesting and important difference between definition 1a and definition 1b. While definition 1a talks about a kind of ACTIVITY (i.e. giving a firsthand account of something), definition 1b talks about a PURPOSE for that activity (i.e. furnishing evidence—by giving a firsthand account of something). So, both definitions leave something out. Definition 1a leaves out a specification of the PURPOSE of giving a firsthand account of some event, and definition 1b leaves out a specification of the sort of ACTIVITY by which the purpose of furnishing evidence is accomplished.

One could give a firsthand account of an event for the PURPOSE of entertaining people. People like to tell stories about events they have personally experienced. When one tells such a story, one is giving a firsthand account of the event, but the PURPOSE of giving that account is NOT to furnish evidence to the audience who is listening to that account. But entertaining people with a story about an event that one personally experienced does NOT make one into a “witness”. To be a witness, one must have a particular PURPOSE for giving a firsthand account, namely: furnishing evidence. I, therefore, recommend that these two elements be combined to provide a fuller definition of “witness”:

6. One who furnishes evidence by giving a firsthand account of something.

But we must still keep in mind the important distinction between

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someone POTENTIALLY doing this, and someone ACTUALLY doing this, so I will divide my proposed definition into two alternative definitions:

6a. One who *can potentially furnish evidence* by giving a firsthand account of something.

6b. One who *actually furnishes evidence* by giving a firsthand account of something.

There is a third important distinction that is suggested by the definition 1a. The phrase “a firsthand account” suggests that there could also be “a secondhand account” or a “thirdhand account” of an event. In our legal system, there are significant constraints on “hearsay” testimony. A person who is called on “to testify before a court” is usually a person who is believed to have been present during a relevant event and who observed or experienced that event. Such a “witness” can furnish evidence by giving a “firsthand account” of that event. But there are exceptions to this general rule, so in some instances, a “witness” can be called upon to provide “hearsay” testimony, an account of what someone else said about an event:

Hearsay evidence, in a legal forum, is testimony from a witness under oath who is reciting an out-of-court statement, content of which is being offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. In most courts, hearsay evidence is inadmissible (the “hearsay evidence rule”) unless an exception to the hearsay rule applies.

For example, to prove that Tom was in town, a witness testifies, “Susan told me that Tom was in town.” Since the witness’s evidence relies on an out-of-court statement that Susan made, if Susan is unavailable for cross-examination, the answer is hearsay. A justification for the objection is that the person who made the statement is not in court and thus is insulated from cross- examination. ([“Hearsay” in Wikipedia](#))

Although there may be some exceptions to the general rejection of

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hearsay evidence from a witness, hearsay evidence is a weak and substandard sort of evidence. There can be a “witness” who furnishes evidence by giving a SECONDHAND account of something; however, such witnesses will not help Kreeft make his case for the resurrection of Jesus, because in order to show that a miracle has occurred, one needs to provide strong and solid evidence, and a witness who gives only a SECONDHAND or THIRDHAND account of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus will not be furnishing the strong and solid kind of evidence that is required to prove a miracle.

Although the term “witness” can in some cases be applied to a person who gives a SECONDHAND account of an event, this use of the term “witness” does not apply to Kreeft’s attempt to prove the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, we can use definition 6a and definition 6b as potential interpretations of Kreeft’s use of the term “witness” even though those definitions exclude people who give only a SECONDHAND account of an event.

What about definition 3a and definition 4? Both of those definitions focus on testimony. Definition 3a talks about testifying “before a court”, but I pointed out that less formal and even non-legal situations can involve a “witness” who “testifies” about his or her experience of an event. So, being a “witness” in a court trial is a paradigm case of a “witness” who “testifies” about an event, but these words are used beyond that particular sort of situation. Definition 4 is very close to definition 3a, but definition 3a talks about “One” who is called to testify, whereas definition 4 talks about “testimony” which is basically the content or information provided by a “witness” who “testifies” either in a courtroom or in a more informal setting. Because the term “witness” as used by Kreeft and Tacelli refers primarily to

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PEOPLE, definition 3a is better than definition 4 for interpreting what Kreeft and Tacelli mean, and since definition 3a captures the idea of “testimony” in terms of the action “to testify”, it is reasonable to set definition 4 aside.

I think we may also set aside definition 3a, because the action “to testify” is already captured in my proposed definitions. To “furnish evidence by giving a firsthand account of something” is “to testify”. Definition 3a is redundant in relation to definition 6a and definition 6b. Thus, we have two clear and useful definitions of “witness” that are sufficient to help us clarify the key concept of “witness” in Kreeft’s first three objections:

6a. One who *can potentially furnish evidence* by giving a firsthand account of something.

6b. One who *actually furnishes evidence* by giving a firsthand account of something.

Finally, we can set definition 6a aside, because only witnesses who *actually furnished evidence* are relevant to building a case for the resurrection of Jesus. In order to build a case for the resurrection of Jesus, Kreeft and Tacelli will need *actual evidence*; the fact that some person who lived back in the first century *might have been able to provide evidence* for the resurrection of Jesus (had they been asked or encouraged to do so in the first century) is of *no relevance* to those of us who live in the 21st century.

WHAT IS AN “EYEWITNESS”?

According to my *American Heritage Dictionary*, an “eyewitness” is:

A person who has seen someone or something and can bear witness to the fact.

This seems a bit too narrow. A blind person, for example, can be an

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“eyewitness”, even though a blind person cannot SEE someone or SEE something. A blind person can HEAR someone or HEAR something, and can “bear witness to the fact” about what he or she heard. Although seeing someone or something might provide more detailed information than hearing that someone or hearing that something, sometimes the words a person says or the sounds a person makes on a particular occasion are very important information for a criminal trial, and a blind person can have firsthand knowledge or information about such sounds.

The point here is that seeing someone or something is a kind of firsthand experience that provides a good amount of detailed information about that person or thing at the time when they were being seen. But there are other senses besides vision that can provide firsthand experiences of people, things, and events. So, I suggest revising this definition to make it a bit broader:

Person P is an *eyewitness* IF AND ONLY IF:

Person P has on a particular occasion seen, or had some firsthand sensory experience of, some event and can bear witness to what he or she experienced on that occasion.

Once again there is an important distinction to be made here between someone who can potentially “bear witness to what he or she experienced” and someone who has actually “born witness to what he or she experienced”. For the purpose of building a case for the resurrection of Jesus, only people *who have actually born witness* to what they have experienced are relevant.

I don’t see a significant difference between this definition of an “eyewitness” and the above definition 6b of a “witness”. So, I take it that for the purpose of evaluating a case for the resurrection of Jesus, the terms

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“witness” and “eyewitness” mean the same thing; both terms are properly defined by definition 6b.

OBJECTION #1: TOO MANY WITNESSES

Kreeft and Tacelli state their first objection against the *Hallucination Theory* in one paragraph:

There were too many witnesses. Hallucinations are private, individual, subjective. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples minus Thomas, to the disciples including Thomas, to the two disciples at Emmaus, to the fishermen on the shore, to James (his “brother” or cousin), and even to five hundred people at once (1 Cor 15:3-8). Even three different witnesses are enough for a kind of psychological trigonometry; over five hundred is about as public as you can wish. And Paul says in this passage (v. 6) that most of the five hundred are still alive, inviting any reader to check the truth of the story by questioning the eyewitnesses—he could never have done this and gotten away with it, given the power, resources and numbers of his enemies, if it were not true. (HCA, p. 186-187)

I have used strikethrough text to indicate parts of this paragraph that are concerned with an alleged group of five hundred witnesses of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus.

Kreeft and Tacelli have a separate objection concerning those alleged five hundred witnesses (**Objection #3: Five Hundred Witnesses**), so they are attempting to use that objection TWICE, which is unfair and unreasonable. I will consider **Objection #3** later, but for now, we should ignore their attempt to insert the third objection as part of presenting their first objection. The strikethrough text should be considered to be part of their presentation of **Objection #3**, not part of the presentation of **Objection #1**.

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THE ARGUMENT CONSTITUTING OBJECTION #1

Here are some key claims in the argument that constitutes the first objection against the *Hallucination Theory*:

1. Hallucinations are private, individual, subjective.

THEREFORE:

2. Even three different witnesses are enough for a kind of psychological trigonometry.

3. There were too many witnesses.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

I have provided the conclusion, based on the context. This is an objection raised in order to REFUTE the *Hallucination Theory*, so the context strongly suggests that the UNSTATED conclusion is that “The *Hallucination Theory* is false.”

Premise (1) makes three general claims about hallucinations. Premise (2) asserts a general principle concerning situations where there are at least “three different witnesses” of an alleged event. Premise (3) asserts a factual or historical claim about the quantity of witnesses who allegedly had an experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus.

This argument is ridiculously brief and VERY UNCLEAR. What does “psychological trigonometry” mean? Kreeft and Tacelli do not bother to explain or clarify that idea. Why are there “too many” witnesses? What constitutes “too many” and why? How does the subjectivity of hallucinations support premise (2) about “psychological trigonometry”? They make no

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effort to explain or clarify this messy and confusing argument.

It seems fairly clear that Kreeft and Tacelli borrowed **Objection #1** from Josh McDowell. McDowell presents seven objections against the *Hallucination Theory* in his book *The Resurrection Factor* (hereafter: TRF) which was originally published by Here's Life Publishers in 1981, thirteen years before Kreeft published his *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Intervarsity Press, 1994).

McDowell's second objection against the *Hallucination Theory* is the "Very Personal" objection, and that objection references all three of the concepts in premise (1) of Kreeft's argument above. Here is Kreeft's claim:

1. Hallucinations are private, individual, subjective.

Here are similar statements made by McDowell in presenting his "Very Personal" objection:

...hallucinations are linked to an individual's subconscious and to his particular past experiences... (TRF, p.84, emphasis added)

A "hallucination" is a very private event — a purely subjective experience... (TRF, p.85, emphasis added)

The third premise of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument is also very similar to statements McDowell makes in his "Very Personal" objection. Here is the third premise of **Objection #1**:

3. There were too many witnesses.

Here are similar statements made by McDowell in presenting his "Very Personal" objection:

Christ appeared to many people... (TRF, p.84, emphasis added)

The many claimed hallucinations would be a far greater miracle than the miracle of the resurrection. (TRF, p.85, emphasis added)

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Premise (2) of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument focuses on the idea of "three different witnesses" having an experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus, and this can be explained in relation to a key statement that McDowell makes in presenting his "Very Personal" objection. Here is the second premise of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument:

2. Even three different witnesses are enough for a kind of psychological trigonometry.

Here is a key claim McDowell makes in his "Very Personal" objection that is closely related to Kreeft and Tacelli's second premise:

...making it very unlikely that more than two persons could have the same hallucination at the same time. (TRF, p.84, emphasis added)

Kreeft and Tacelli have focused on the idea of "three different witnesses" experiencing an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus at the same time because that is "more than two persons" having such an experience at the same time, which according to McDowell would be "very unlikely" to occur if these experiences were hallucinations. Kreeft's UNCLEAR premise (2) thus appears to be BASED UPON McDowell's clearer principle concerning hallucinations.

ALL THREE of the key claims in the argument constituting **Objection #1** correspond with statements made by McDowell in the presentation of his "Very Personal" objection against the *Hallucination Theory*, and McDowell's book *The Resurrection Factor* was published 13 years before Kreeft and Tacelli published *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, so it is reasonable to conclude that they borrowed this objection from McDowell.

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CLARIFICATION OF KREEFT'S ARGUMENT CONSTITUTING OBJECTION #1

If we assume that Kreeft's **Objection #1** is basically a shortened version of McDowell's "Very Personal" objection against the *Hallucination Theory*, then we can make sense out of Kreeft and Tacelli's unclear argument:

1. Hallucinations are private, individual, subjective.

THEREFORE:

2a. It is very unlikely that more than two witnesses could have the same hallucination at the same time.

THEREFORE:

B. IF on multiple occasions more than two witnesses had the same experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus at the same time, THEN it is extremely unlikely that those experiences on ALL of those occasions were hallucinations.

3a. On multiple occasions more than two witnesses had the same experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus at the same time.

THEREFORE:

C. It is extremely unlikely that the experiences on ALL of the occasions when more than two witnesses had the same experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus at the same time were hallucinations.

D. IF it is extremely unlikely that the experiences on ALL of the occasions when more than two witnesses had the same experience of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus at the same time were hallucinations, THEN it is very likely that the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

A1. It is very likely that the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

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Premise (1) is Kreeft and Tacelli's summary of three key claims made by McDowell in McDowell's "Very Personal" objection.

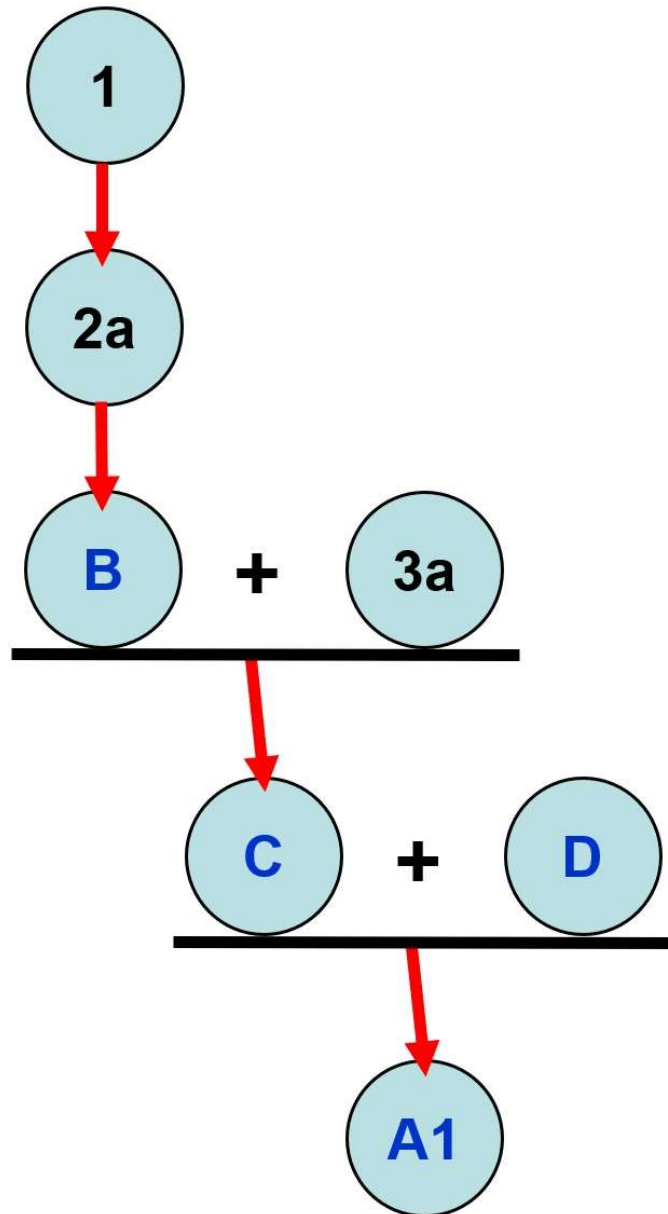
Premise (2a) is McDowell's claim that apparently was the BASIS for Kreeft and Tacelli's UNCLEAR premise (2). So, we can clarify the argument by replacing the UNCLEAR second premise with the clearer version of the claim from McDowell's statement of this objection. Premise (2a) provides the specific "principle" about hallucinations that is essential to this argument.

Premise (B) is an inference from McDowell's principle to a principle that applies to the circumstances Kreeft and Tacelli have in mind, namely that there are MULTIPLE instances when more than two people had the same experience of an alleged appearance of Jesus at the same time.

Premise (3a) is a significant revision and clarification of the VAGUE and UNCLEAR premise (3), and this clarification is needed so that this key historical premise logically connects with the clarified principle about hallucinations that is asserted in premise (B). The principle about hallucinations must closely correspond to the historical claim about witnesses to alleged appearances of the risen Jesus so that the logic of the argument will work.

The UNSTATED sub-conclusion (C) is a logical inference from (B) and (3a), and the UNSTATED assumption (D) allows us to infer the desired conclusion (A1), which is a qualified version of our initial interpretation of Kreeft and Tacelli's UNSTATED conclusion.

Logical Structure of Objection #1



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OBJECTION #2: THE WITNESSES WERE QUALIFIED

Here are the entire contents of **Objection #2** against the *Hallucination Theory*:

The witnesses were qualified. They were simple, honest, moral people who had firsthand knowledge of the facts. (HCA, p.187)

Here is Kreeft's argument in standard form:

- 1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.**
- 2. The witnesses had firsthand knowledge of the facts.**

THEREFORE:

- 3. The witnesses were qualified.**

The most obvious problem with this argument is that it says NOTHING about the *Hallucination Theory*! In order for this argument to be RELEVANT to the question at issue, it must say something about the *Hallucination Theory*, namely that the *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE. So, if this objection is RELEVANT to the question at issue, then the logic of **Objection #2** goes like this:

- 1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.**
- 2. The witnesses had firsthand knowledge of the facts.**

THEREFORE:

- 3. The witnesses were qualified.**

THEREFORE:

- A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.**

On the face of it, this appears to be a non sequitur. The conclusion (A) DOES NOT FOLLOW from premise (3). However, we can repair this logically broken argument by adding an additional premise:

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1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.

2. The witnesses had firsthand knowledge of the facts.

THEREFORE:

3. The witnesses were qualified.

B. IF the witnesses were qualified, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

Now the argument is more logical and is RELEVANT to the question at issue. However, the inference from (1) and (2) to (3) is INVALID, at least in terms of the form of the inference, because the premises do not mention anything about being “qualified”. So, to make that inference formally VALID, we need another premise:

1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.

2. The witnesses had firsthand knowledge of the facts.

C. Any witness who was simple, honest, moral and who had firsthand knowledge of the facts was a qualified witness.

THEREFORE:

3. The witnesses were qualified.

B. IF the witnesses were qualified, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

Premise (3) is UNCLEAR because the subject of (3) is UNCLEAR and the predicate of (3) is UNCLEAR. Before we can evaluate the sub-

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argument for premise (3), we need to understand what (3) means, and in order to understand what (3) means, we need to CLARIFY the subject of (3), and CLARIFY the predicate of (3):

- **Subject: “The witnesses”**
- **Predicate: “were qualified”**

CLARIFICATION OF “THE WITNESSES”

I am going to clarify the subject of premise (3) now but will hold off on clarification of the predicate of premise (3) until I do my *critical evaluations* of premises (C) and (3).

When Kreeft and Tacelli lay out their first objection to the Hallucination Theory, they use the term “witnesses”:

There were too many witnesses. (HCA, p.186)

The term “witnesses” is clarified in three ways. First, they specify that “Christ appeared” to them (HCA, p.186). Of course, Jesus’ followers saw Jesus many times *before he was crucified*, but that is not what they mean here. The context of discussing the alleged *resurrection of Jesus* implies they mean that the “witnesses” saw and/or heard (or believed they saw and/or heard) a living Jesus *after Jesus had been crucified* and had apparently died.

Second, they also refer to these “witnesses” as “eyewitnesses” (HCA, p.187). Third, they provide a list of “witnesses” who allegedly had an experience of a living Jesus after Jesus had been crucified and buried:

Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples minus Thomas, to the disciples including Thomas, to the disciples at Emmaus, to the fishermen on the shore, to James (his “brother” or cousin), and even to five hundred people at once (1 Cor 15:3-8). (HCA, p. 186-187)

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The phrase “The Witnesses” in **Objection #2**, refers back to the “witnesses” that were previously mentioned in **Objection #1**. So, this phrase refers to the people who allegedly had an experience of a living Jesus in the days or weeks after the crucifixion and apparent death of Jesus.

Specifically, in this argument, the phrase “The witnesses” refers to the following people and groups of people:

Mary Magdalene, the eleven disciples minus Thomas, the eleven disciples including Thomas, the disciples at Emmaus, some fishermen on the shore of Galilee (see John 21:1-14), and James, the brother (or cousin) of Jesus.

THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE “WERE QUALIFIED” IN PREMISE (3)

The predicate of premise (3) is also UNCLEAR: “were qualified”. What the hell does that mean? Presenting an argument to disprove the Hallucination Theory in just two brief sentences is IDIOTIC. But it is even more IDIOTIC to assert as your main premise a statement that has such a VAGUE and UNCLEAR predicate as “were qualified”, and then provide ZERO explanation of what this means.

Presumably, Kreeft and Tacelli want us to take these “witnesses” seriously; they want us to believe the TESTIMONY of these witnesses, to BELIEVE what they have to say about alleged appearances of the risen Jesus. So, my initial guess is that the term “qualified” is just a substitute for the clearer notion of credibility:

3a. The testimony of the witnesses is credible.

However, I have noticed that William Craig, another Christian philosopher (who specializes in defending the beliefs that Jesus rose from

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

the dead and that God raised Jesus from the dead), also uses the UNCLEAR term “qualified” in relation to “the witnesses” of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus:

Humphrey Ditton in his *Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1712) argues that the apostles could not have been mistaken about the resurrection. In the first place, the witnesses to the appearances were well qualified. There were a great many witnesses, and they had personal knowledge of the facts over an extended period of forty days.
(*Reasonable Faith*, 3rd edition, p.237)

Craig, like Kreeft and Tacelli, FAILS to define or clarify what the term “qualified” means here. But Craig is just summarizing the reasoning of the Christian apologist Humphrey Ditton, so it appears that the use of the term “qualified” to characterize the various people who were “the witnesses” of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus goes back at least to early in the 18th century when Ditton published his case for the resurrection of Jesus.

DITTON AND THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE “WERE QUALIFIED”

It is likely that premise (3) of **Objection #2** can be traced back to Ditton’s case for the resurrection, so we should look at how Ditton used the word “qualified” and see if his use of this word is any clearer than the UNCLEAR use of it by Kreeft and Tacelli.

In looking over passages where Ditton uses the terms “qualifications” and “qualified” (actually “qualify’d” in Ditton’s 18th-century English), it is clear that he was in fact talking about the CREDIBILITY of the TESTIMONY of witnesses. Consider, for example, pages 162 through 164 of Ditton’s [*Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*](#):

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
RESURRECTION
OF
JESUS CHRIST.

IN THREE PARTS.

WHEREIN,

- I. The CONSEQUENCES of the *Doctrine* are Stated Hypothetically.
- II. The *Nature and Obligation* of MORAL EVIDENCE, are explain'd at large.
- III. The *Proofs* of the FACT of our Saviour's Resurrection, are Propos'd, Examin'd, and fairly Demonstrated, to be *Conclusive*.

Together with

An APPENDIX concerning the Impossible Production of *Thought*, from *Matter and Motion*: The Nature of *Human Souls*, and of *Brutes*: The *Anima Mundi*, and the Hypothesis of the TOPIAN; as also, concerning *Divine Providence*, the *Origin of Evil*, and the *Universe* in General.

Ἠγάθη ὁ Κύριος ὅντως. Luke xxiv. 34.

By HUMPHRY DITTON, Master of the New
Mathematical School in *Christ's-Hospital*:

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N, Printed by J. Darby in *Bartbolomew-Close*, and
Sold by Andr. Bell in *Cornhil*, and B. Lintott near the *Temple-
Gate* in *Fleetstreet*. M.DCC.XIV.

On page 162, Ditton uses the phrase "credibility of testimony" three times, and uses the term "credible" to describe "testimony" three times:

162 *The Nature, &c.* Part II.

P R O P. XV.

WHEN we speak concerning the decrease of the *Credibility of Testimony* (whether Oral or Written) we ought to distinguish those Causes of it, which have their Rise in our own Minds and Notions; from those which are founded on the Nature and Circumstances of things without us.

The *Credibility of a Testimony*, is then really diminish'd, when it is (by any means whatsoever) robb'd or depriv'd of any of those Circumstances, which once it was attended with, and which all together concur'd to the giving of it such a Degree of Authority and Credit amongst Men, as was proportional to the intrinsic Value and Momentum of those Circumstances.

What these Circumstances are, may (partly at least) be known from PROP. XI. and therefore I shall not repeat them in this place. All that I say here, is, That no *Testimony is really and in the Nature of things, render a less credible, by any other Cause; than the loss or want of some of those Conditions, which first made it (rationally) credible in such or such a degree.* 'Tis this alone that is sufficient to make it, a less fit or proper Object of any Man's Belief: For that is what I mean, by its being really, or in the Nature of things, less *credible* than before. And therefore, the just and real Decrease of the *Credibility of Testimony*, will always be proportional,

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On the very next page, Ditton uses the phrase “Qualifications and Conditions” as being what determines the “Degree of rational Credibility” of a particular instance of “Testimony”:

Prop. 15. *of Moral Evidence.* 163

tional, to the Loss, or Diminution of the Momentum of these Circumstances. So that where they continue as they were, the Credibility of that Testimony is not really diminish'd. But then, as there is a great deal of difference between the Credibility of Testimony, consider'd with respect to the *just intrinsic Causes and Reasons of that Credibility*, and with respect to the *Notions and Apprehensions of the Person, to whom that Testimony is propos'd*; so there is as great a difference between the Decrease of the Credibility of Testimony, in these two Respects.

A Testimony may be less credible, in the Thoughts and Opinion of a Man, that considers it; when at the same time (in the Nature of things) it is not become at all, a less fit and proper Object of Belief; as having still, all the same Qualifications and Conditions, which once gave it the Stamp, of such a Degree of rational Credibility amongst Men.

This may arise from several Causes, *which lying all within our selves*, we our selves are responsible for all the Consequences of it, as far forth as we have contributed to it, by any sort of irrational Management. If we make a Testimony less credible to our selves, by any wrong Notions or *Hypotheses*, by slight and superficial Consideration, or neglect and disregard of any of the material Circumstances of it; the Blame of this redounds to our selves, and it would be absurd for us to cry out in such a Case, *that the Credibility of this Testimony is almost dwindled away.*

And therefore, I say, we ought in these Matters, to distinguish very nicely, what is real and true in the Nature of things abroad, from

M 2

what

Note that the phrase “Credibility of Testimony” occurs four times and that the word “credible” occurs twice as a description of “Testimony” on the above page.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

On page 164, Ditton is still clearly focused on the “Credibility of Testimony” but he uses the phrase “well qualify’d” to describe some “Witnesses”, again implying that the “qualifications” of witnesses help determine the CREDIBILITY of their testimony:

164 *The Nature, &c. Part II.*

what is the mere Effect of our own unjust and partial Reasonings.

P R O P. XVI.

THERE is no Decrease of the Probability or Credibility of Testimony deliver'd by faithful, careful, and knowing Witnesses; tho propagated through a Series of Ages, ever so far continu'd.

By the foregoing PROP. XV. a Testimony continues equally credible, when it is transmitted with all those Circumstances and Conditions, which first procur'd it such a degree of Credit amongst Men, as was proportional to the intrinsic Value of those Conditions.

By the Hypothesis, the Testimony is transmitted by such Witnesses, as are every way well qualify'd, viz. able to determine the just Circumstances and Conditions of a Testimony; honest, to represent them fairly, when so determin'd; and diligent and careful, to make all necessary Enquiries in order hereto.

Therefore it is transmitted intire and compleat, as to all the intrinsically necessary Conditions of its Credibility.

Therefore 'tis (at least) still equally credible.

Coroll. I. All such Calculations therefore, are utterly to be rejected, which pretend to establish and determine the decreasing Credibility of Testimony in general; without distinguishing Cases, as they ought

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Furthermore, it is clear that **Objection #2** has historical roots in Ditton's defense of the resurrection because the considerations briefly mentioned by Kreeft line up with some of Ditton's reasons why we should take the "testimony" of the apostles (Jesus' inner circle of disciples) about alleged appearances of the risen Jesus to be "credible". Recall the first premise of Kreeft's argument constituting **Objection #2**:

1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.

Here is how William Craig summarizes Ditton's reasoning on this question:

A second popular argument against the disciples' being deceivers was that their character precludes them from being liars. Humphrey Ditton observes that the apostles were simple, common men, not cunning deceivers. They were men of unquestioned moral integrity and their proclamation of the resurrection was solemn and devout. ... Finally, they were evidently sincere in what they proclaimed. In the light of their character so described, asks Ditton bluntly, why not believe the testimony of these men? (*Reasonable Faith*, 3rd edition, p.340-341)

Ditton asserted that the apostles were "simple" and that they were "not cunning deceivers" (i.e. they were honest people) and that they had "moral integrity". These are among the reasons Ditton gives as the basis for taking their *testimony* to be *credible*.

The use of the odd and UNCLEAR term "qualified" by Kreeft and Tacelli to describe "the witnesses" of alleged appearances of a risen Jesus suggests that **Objection #2** derives from Humphrey Ditton's case for the resurrection, but in addition to that, the very reasons that Kreeft and Tacelli give in support of premise (3), are the same as some of the reasons that Ditton gave in support of the *credibility* of the *testimony* of the apostles, in Ditton's case for the resurrection. Clearly, **Objection #2** has historical roots in Ditton's argument about the *credibility* of the *testimony* of witnesses who

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allegedly had experiences of a risen Jesus.

Because **Objection #2** was derived from Ditton's case for the resurrection of Jesus, it is reasonable to view premise (3) of this objection, as supporting a claim about the *credibility* of the *testimony* of the witnesses:

E. The *testimony* of the witnesses is *credible*.

This unstated claim makes it clearer WHY the testimony of several witnesses of an alleged experience of the risen Jesus would be taken as powerful evidence that the *Hallucination Theory* was false.

Credible testimony from *just one witness* about experiencing the risen Jesus would provide *some evidence* against the *Hallucination Theory*, but this would not be sufficient by itself to *disprove* the *Hallucination Theory*. However, the addition of *more credible testimony* from *more witnesses* would increase the probability that the *Hallucination Theory* was wrong. If there were several different witnesses, *each providing credible testimony* for the appearance of the risen Jesus, then one might reasonably conclude that the *Hallucination Theory* was false.

We can now clarify the argument further:

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D. The witnesses each had an experience sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) that they believed to be the experience of a living and embodied Jesus.

1. The witnesses were simple, honest, moral people.

2a. The witnesses had firsthand knowledge of the circumstances in which they each had an experience sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) that they believed to be the experience of a living and embodied Jesus.

C1. Any person who was a simple, honest, moral person and who had firsthand knowledge of the circumstances in which they had an experience that they believed to be the experience of another living and embodied person was a *qualified witness* concerning that experience.

THEREFORE:

3a. The witnesses were *qualified witnesses* concerning experiences they each had sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) that they believed to be the experience of a living and embodied Jesus.

THEREFORE:

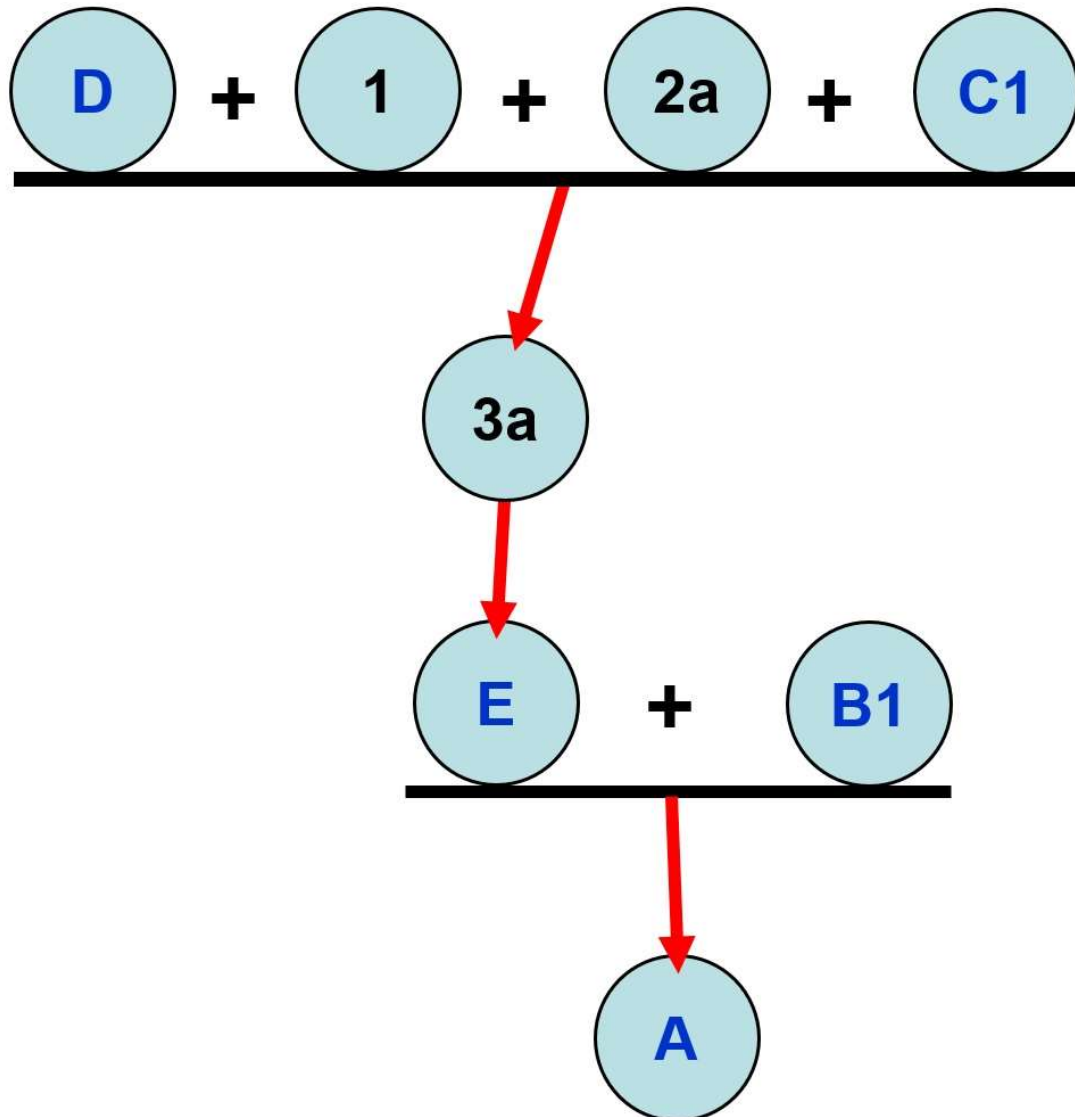
E. The testimony of the witnesses concerning experiences they each had sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) that they believed to be the experience of a living and embodied Jesus is *credible testimony*.

B1. IF testimony of the witnesses concerning experiences they each had sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) that they believed to be the experience of a living and embodied Jesus is *credible testimony*, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

Logical Structure of Objection #2



OBJECTION #3: FIVE HUNDRED WITNESSES

Here is how Kreeft and Tacelli state their third objection against the *Hallucination Theory*:

The five hundred saw Christ together, at the same time and place. This is even more remarkable than five hundred private "hallucinations" at different times and places of the same Jesus. Five hundred separate Elvis sightings may be dismissed, but if five hundred simple fishermen in Maine saw, touched, and talked with him at once, in the same town, that would be a different matter. (HCA, p.187)

We should also recall their comments about these five hundred alleged witnesses of the risen Jesus from their statement of **Objection #1**:

There were too many witnesses. Hallucinations are private, individual, subjective. Christ appeared...to five hundred people at once (1 Cor 15:3-8). Even three different witnesses are enough for a kind of psychological trigonometry; over five hundred is about as public as you can wish. And Paul says in this passage (v. 6) that most of the five hundred are still alive, inviting any reader to check the truth of the story by questioning the eyewitnesses... (HCA, p. 186-187)

The main historical claim that this objection is based upon is this:

1. Five hundred witnesses saw Christ together at the same time and place.

First, the term "Christ" here *begs the question*. If Jesus did NOT rise from the dead, then he probably was NOT the messiah or the "Christ". Second, according to the Gospels *thousands of people* saw Jesus together at the same time and place, for example when Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount. That has *no relevance* to the question at issue. The fact that lots of people saw Jesus at the same time and place BEFORE he was crucified tells us nothing about whether he rose from the dead.

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What they mean, but don't say explicitly, is that these people saw a living and embodied Jesus sometime *after he was crucified* and removed from the cross:

1a. Five hundred witnesses saw together at the same time and place *sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross)* a living and embodied Jesus.

The way that (1a) is stated, however, *begs the main question at issue*.

People "saw" a living and embodied Jesus only if there was in fact a living and embodied Jesus in their presence to see. But that is precisely what the *Hallucination Theory* casts into doubt. So, asserting premise (1a) involves ASSUMING that the *Hallucination Theory* is false. They need to ARGUE for this claim, not just ASSUME it to be so!

To avoid begging the question, this premise should be phrased in terms of *the beliefs of the people* who allegedly had this experience:

1b. Five hundred witnesses *experienced* together, at the same time and place *sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross)* what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus.

This clarified statement of the key historical claim in **Objection #3** does NOT beg the question against the *Hallucination Theory*, and it is also relevant to the question at issue. So, this is a significant improvement over the previous two versions of this key historical claim.

There is also *a stronger claim* than (1b) that is suggested by the following part of Kreeft and Tacelli's statement of **Objection #3**:

Five hundred separate Elvis sightings may be dismissed, but if five hundred simple fishermen in Maine saw, touched, and talked with him at once, in the same town, that would be a different matter. (HCA, p.187, *emphasis added*)

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This comment suggests the following *stronger claim* about the five hundred alleged witnesses:

1c. Five hundred witnesses experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus, and an ordinary tactile experience of touching a living and embodied Jesus, and an ordinary auditory experience of hearing a living and embodied Jesus talking with them.

However, if this stronger historical claim is what Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind, then **Objection #3** immediately FAILS.

The problem is that the evidence for this historical claim is a single brief sentence written by Paul in one of his letters to the Corinthians:

Then he [Jesus] appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. (1 Corinthians 15:6, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

Paul does not mean literal “brothers and sisters”; he is talking about a group of Christian believers in some particular town or community. Paul says NOTHING about these people *touching Jesus*, or *hearing Jesus*, or *talking with Jesus*. Paul only says that Jesus “appeared” to these people, which implies some sort of *visual experience*.

So, the strong claim (1c) is clearly not supported by the skimpy bit of evidence that we have about this alleged appearance of the risen Jesus to a large group of people. If **Objection #3** is based upon the very dubious unsupported historical claim in (1c), then **Objection #3** immediately FAILS and should be rejected. Therefore, I will ignore this stronger claim implied by Kreeft and Tacelli, and instead formulate **Objection #3** in terms of the weaker historical claim made in premise (1b).

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

I previously excluded claims about the “five hundred” witnesses that Kreeft and Tacelli made in **Objection #1** because I knew that they had a separate objection based on that alleged information, namely: **Objection #3**. Recall also that the term “witnesses” used in **Objection #2** related back to the use of that term in **Objection #1**. Since I excluded claims or information about the “five hundred” in **Objection #1**, I also identified the “witnesses” in **Objection #2** so that this *excluded* the “five hundred”.

However, since Kreeft and Tacelli used the term “witnesses” in **Objection #1** so that it included the “five hundred”, that means that the claims they made about “witnesses” in **Objection #2** were intended to be claims that also applied to the “five hundred” who allegedly experienced the risen Jesus.

Therefore, the claims made in **Objection #2** about “witnesses” can be taken to be claims by Kreeft and Tacelli about the “five hundred” and can be used as premises in the argument for **Objection #3**, if those claims seem relevant or useful to that argument. Showing that these five hundred people were *qualified witnesses* does seem to be a relevant point, so I will incorporate those claims from **Objection #2** into the argument for **Objection #3**:

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- 1b. Five hundred witnesses experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus.**
- 2. The five hundred witnesses who experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus were simple, honest, moral people.**
- 3. The five hundred witnesses who experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus had firsthand knowledge of the circumstances in which they had this experience together.**
- C1. Any person who was a simple, honest, moral person and who had firsthand knowledge of the circumstances in which they had an experience that they believed to be the experience of another living and embodied person was a qualified witness concerning that experience.**

THEREFORE:

- 4. The five hundred witnesses who experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus are *qualified witnesses* concerning that experience.**

THEREFORE:

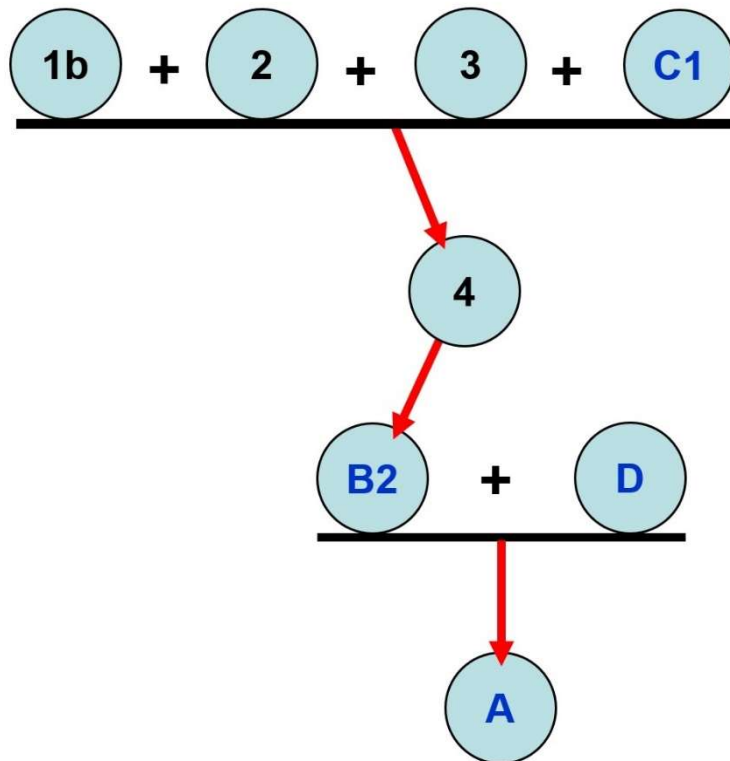
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- B2.** The five hundred people who experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus provide *credible testimony* about that experience.
- D.** IF the five hundred people who experienced together, at the same time and place sometime after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) what they believed to be an ordinary visual experience of a living and embodied Jesus provide *credible testimony* about that experience, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

- A.** The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

Logical Structure of Objection #3



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

ANALYSIS OF HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE OBJECTIONS

According to Kreeft and Tacelli, *the specific contents* of some of the alleged experiences of the risen Jesus show that those experiences were not hallucinations:

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	CATEGORY
Objection #4: A Long-Lasting Hallucination	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #5: Returned Many Times	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #6: Surprising Words & Actions	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #7: The Unbelief of the Disciples	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #8: Hallucinations Do Not Eat	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #9: The Disciples Touched Jesus	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection
Objection #10: The Disciples Conversed with Jesus	HCA, p.187	HALLUCINATION PRINCIPLE Objection

They thus assert or assume some general principles about the nature of hallucinations in making seven of their objections against the *Hallucination Theory* (**Objections #4 through #10**).

OBJECTION #4: A LONG-LASTING HALLUCINATION

Kreeft and Tacelli state their 4th objection against the *Hallucination Theory* in just two sentences:

Hallucinations usually last a few seconds or minutes; rarely hours. This one hung around for forty days (Acts 1:3).
(HCA, p.187)

The statement of this argument is, as usual, UNCLEAR. However, the first sentence appears to be fairly clear:

1. Hallucinations usually last a few seconds or minutes; rarely hours.

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The second sentence is a more problematic:

2. This one hung around for forty days (Acts 1:3).

In the context of premise (2), premise (1) appears to imply the following additional claim:

A. Hallucinations do not ever last for forty days.

To what does the phrase “this one” in premise (2) refer? The previous sentence was talking about *hallucinations*. The NT passage from Acts, however, talks about alleged appearances of a risen Jesus:

After his suffering he [Jesus] presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

(Acts 1:3, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

So, “this one” seems to either refer to a *hallucination* (of Jesus) or else to *the actual presence* of Jesus:

2a. A hallucination of Jesus hung around for forty days after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross).

2b. A living and embodied Jesus hung around for forty days after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross).

Both of these interpretations of premise (2) *beg important questions*.

Premise (2a) assumes that various alleged appearances of a risen Jesus were all hallucinations, so (2a) begs the question in favor of the *Hallucination Theory*. Obviously, Kreeft and Tacelli don't assume that the *Hallucination Theory* is true. They do not believe or assert premise (2a).

However, premise (2b) assumes that various alleged appearances of a risen Jesus happened because people actually saw a living and embodied Jesus after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross). So, premise (2b) begs the question in favor of the Christian view that Jesus rose from the dead. Thus, neither (2a) nor (2b) are acceptable as part of

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

an argument for **Objection #4**.

What Kreeft and Tacelli probably had in mind was an historical claim that does not beg the question at issue:

2c. After Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross), various people had experiences for a period of forty days that they believed were ordinary visual experiences of a living and embodied Jesus (Acts 1:3).

Based on (2c) Kreeft and Tacelli probably also had in mind a *hypothetical claim* about what is implied by the *Hallucination Theory*:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) some people experienced hallucinations of Jesus for forty days.

From premise (A) and premise (B), we can infer the conclusion that Kreeft and Tacelli were trying to prove. We have now identified the core argument for **Objection #4**, as well as claims made in support of the premises in the core argument. Here is the core argument:

A. Hallucinations do not ever last for forty days.

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) some people experienced hallucinations of Jesus for forty days.

Therefore:

C. It is NOT the case that the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

Here is the argument for premise (A):

1. Hallucinations usually last a few seconds or minutes; rarely hours.

Therefore:

A. Hallucinations do not ever last for forty days.

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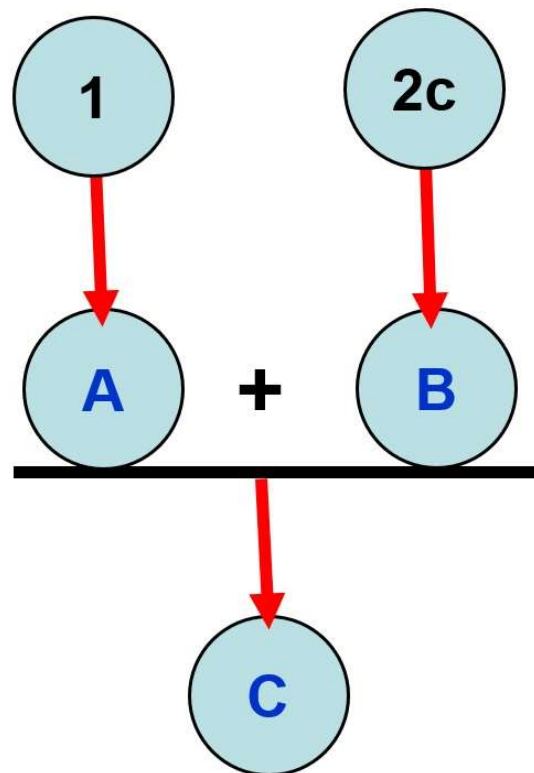
Here is the argument for premise (B):

2c. After Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross), various people had experiences for a period of forty days that they believed were ordinary visual experiences of a living and embodied Jesus (Acts 1:3).

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN after Jesus was crucified (and removed from the cross) some people experienced hallucinations of Jesus for forty days.

Logical Structure of Objection #4



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

OBJECTION #5: RETURNED MANY TIMES

Kreeft and Tacelli state their fifth objection against the *Hallucination Theory* in just two brief sentences:

Hallucinations usually happen only once, except to the insane. This one returned many times, to ordinary people (John 20:19-21:14; Acts 1:3). (HCA, p.187)

They do not provide a conclusion to this argument, but the context here is that he is trying to refute the *Hallucination Theory*, so it is obvious what the conclusion of this argument should be:

- 1. Hallucinations usually happen only once, except to the insane.**
- 2. This one returned many times to ordinary people.**

Therefore:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

Before we can reasonably attempt to evaluate this argument, we need to clarify the meanings of the premises.

CLARIFICATION OF PREMISE (1)

Premise (1) has at least two UNCLEAR words that need to be clarified: "usually" and "insane". The word "usually" is unclear because it is a VAGUE QUANTIFICATION. Ideally, we would interpret this word with some quantification that was a bit more precise. The word "usually" is close in meaning to the word "most", so we could interpret premise (1) this way:

1A. Most hallucinations happen only once, except to the insane.

The word "most" can reasonably be understood to mean "at least 51% of".

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So, if claim (1A) is an accurate interpretation of Kreeft's claim in premise (1), then we could make this premise a bit more precise:

1B. At least 51% of hallucinations happen only once, except to the insane.

Claim (1B) is a fairly weak claim, and it probably will not be strong enough to allow Kreeft to establish the strong conclusion that the *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE. One could argue that the word "usually" is a bit stronger quantifier than the word "most". So, let's bump up the percentage a bit more:

1C. At least 60% of hallucinations happen only once, except to the insane.

Granted that this is a more precise claim than premise (1) which uses the VAGUE QUANTIFIER "usually", but this is a reasonable interpretation of the word "usually" and I have been generous to Kreeft by bumping the percentage up above 51% (which corresponds to the closely related quantifier "most").

It is possible that Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind a *stronger claim* than (1C). Perhaps they believe that "at least 70% of" hallucinations happen only once, or that "at least 80% of" hallucinations happen only once, except to the insane. But *the stronger* the claim, *the less likely it is that the claim is true*. Ultimately, the best interpretation is the one that makes the strongest claim *that can be justified by the available empirical evidence*. I will stick with the 60% interpretation for now, because the stronger claims seem dubious, especially since ZERO evidence is provided for this premise.

What does Kreeft and Tacelli mean by "the insane"? Clearly, they are referring to some serious kinds of mental illness. But we can make this a bit more precise by specifying the causal relationship with hallucinations that

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they, no doubt, had in mind:

A person X is INSANE if and only if: person X has a serious mental illness that causes person X to have hallucinations or that makes it likely that person X will have hallucinations.

This definition is problematic, however, because many people who have a serious mental illness that causes them to have hallucinations, or that makes it likely that they will have hallucinations, are NOT insane. That is to say, many people with such a serious mental illness nevertheless manage to live normal or fairly normal lives, and do not require being locked away in a mental institution. So, it seems inappropriate and insulting and inaccurate to say that ALL people with such serious mental illnesses are "insane".

However, we could define a positive category of "mentally normal" people that requires the absence of such a serious mental illness:

A person X is MENTALLY NORMAL if and only if: person X does NOT have a serious mental illness that causes person X to have hallucinations or that makes it likely that person X will have hallucinations.

This would imply that people who have a serious mental illness that causes them to have hallucinations or that makes them likely to have hallucinations are NOT "mentally normal", but that does seem appropriate and accurate, and is far less negative than saying that ALL such people are "insane".

Here then is a nicely clarified version of premise (1):

1D. At least 60% of hallucinations experienced by mentally normal people will happen only once.

I have one more clarification to make to this premise. My understanding of premise (1D) is that it is intended to be *applicable to individuals*. So, if James is a mentally normal person, and if James has a hallucination of a 6-foot tall talking rabbit, then premise (1D) allows us to

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infer that there is at least a 60% chance that James will NOT have another hallucination of a 6-foot tall talking rabbit.

Given this understanding of the implications of (1D), I think it is misleading to state the generalization here simply in terms of *a percentage of hallucinations*. This generalization is intended to apply to individual mentally normal people, and not just to various hallucinations in a large collection of hallucinations experienced by various mentally normal people.

Suppose that you have identified a group of 100 mentally normal people who have experienced various hallucinations. Suppose that two of those people have each experienced 300 hallucinations (for a total of 600 hallucinations between those two people) and that all of those hallucinations were experienced *only once*. Suppose that 90 of the remaining mentally normal people each experienced 4 hallucinations (for a total of 360 hallucinations) and each of those people experienced 2 different hallucinations *twice*. Suppose that the 8 remaining mentally normal people each had 5 hallucinations (for a total of 40 hallucinations) and each of those people experienced 1 hallucination three times and a different hallucination twice.

In this scenario, the breakdown of hallucinations among the 100 mentally normal people who have experienced hallucinations is as follows:

- **600 hallucinations out of 1,000 hallucinations occurred only once**
- **400 hallucinations out of 1,000 hallucinations occurred more than once**

So, the hallucinations experienced by this group of 100 mentally normal people appear to fit with the generalization in premise (1D), because 60% *of the hallucinations* experienced by this group of people occurred only

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once.

However, the 60% ratio does NOT, in this scenario, apply to any individual mentally normal person in this group:

- **For two people in the group, 100% of their hallucinations are experienced only once.**
- **For ninety people in the group, 100% of their hallucinations are experienced twice.**
- **For eight people in the group, 100% of their hallucinations are experienced either twice or three times.**

There is not a single individual in this group of 100 mentally normal people for whom it is true that about 60% of their hallucinations occur only one time. But that, it seems to me, is completely contrary to the intended implications of premise (1D).

So, the misleading focus on the *percentage of hallucinations* needs to be changed so that the 60% chance of a hallucination happening only one time applies to individual people:

- 1E. Whenever a mentally normal person experiences a hallucination, there is at least a 60% chance that that person will not experience that hallucination again.**

CLARIFICATION OF PREMISE (2)

Here is the initial version of premise (2) of the argument constituting **Objection #5:**

- 2. This one returned many times, to ordinary people.**

This premise consists of three phrases, and each phrase is UNCLEAR:

- **This one**
- **returned many times**
- **to ordinary people**

The phrase "This one" is a referring phrase, and it is referring back to

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something mentioned in premise (1). It is a reference to the main thing mentioned in the subject of premise (1): hallucinations. So, we can get rid of the referring expression "one" to clarify premise (2):

2A. This hallucination returned many times to ordinary people.

However, the phrase "This hallucination" is still a referring phrase.

We need to eliminate the word "this" by figuring out the specific hallucination or kind of hallucination that Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind here. They support premise (2) with some NT passages about people having experiences of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus. Clearly, it is hallucinations *of the risen Jesus* that they have in mind, so we can eliminate the word "this" to clarify premise (2) further:

2B. Hallucinations of the risen Jesus returned many times to ordinary people.

The phrase "returned many times to" is ambiguous between two different possible meanings:

were on many occasions experienced by different [ordinary people]

OR

were experienced many times (i.e. repeatedly) by several [ordinary people]

On the first interpretation, each person who experienced a hallucination of the risen Jesus may well have had this experience ONLY ONCE. But Kreeft and Tacelli intend for there to be a sort of conflict or tension between premise (2) and premise (1), and on the first interpretation, there would be no conflict or tension between these two premises. So, in order to capture the intended conflict between premise (1) and premise (2), we must interpret the phrase "returned many times" to be about particular individuals

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each having multiple hallucinations of the risen Jesus:

2C. Several ordinary people each experienced hallucinations of the risen Jesus many times (i.e. repeatedly).

Furthermore, the NT passages that they provide in support of premise (2) indicate that some individual disciples of Jesus each had at least three different experiences of an alleged appearance of the risen Jesus. This confirms the interpretation above in claim (2C). This also indicates a way to make the VAGUE QUANTIFICATION "many times" more precise: "at least three times".

The phrase "ordinary people" is clearly intended to contrast with "the insane" mentioned in premise (1). But as I argued when clarifying premise (1), the relevant distinction is between people who are "mentally normal" and other people who are NOT "mentally normal". So, in order for there to be a clear logical connection between premise (1) and premise (2), we need to interpret the phrase "ordinary people" to mean "mentally normal" people. Also, these people were not just any people, they were followers of Jesus:

2D. Several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each experienced hallucinations of the risen Jesus at least three times.

Now we can state a significantly clarified version of Kreeft's argument constituting his **Objection #5** against the *Hallucination Theory*:

1E. Whenever a mentally normal person experiences a hallucination, there is at least a 60% chance that that person will not experience that hallucination again.

2D. Several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each experienced hallucinations of the risen Jesus at least three times.

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Therefore:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

With this clarified version of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument, it becomes clear that the conclusion does NOT FOLLOW logically from their two premises. In fact, premise (2D) provides strong evidence against the conclusion! So this argument is WORSE than being a *non sequitur*. Kreeft and Tacelli have put forward a premise that implies that their own conclusion is FALSE, a premise that supports the view that the *Hallucination Theory* is TRUE!

But this is not a decisive or deadly flaw with the argument, because what this actually indicates is that premise (2) should NOT be understood in a *literal and straightforward* way. We need to formulate an interpretation of premise (2) that has a significantly different meaning than this *literal and straightforward interpretation*.

Kreeft and Tacelli were thinking in terms of *the implications of the Hallucination Theory*. They were trying to show that the *Hallucination Theory* has an implication that is false or absurd or extremely improbable. They were attempting to reduce the *Hallucination Theory* to absurdity. So, what they intended to claim in premise (2) is NOT a claim about *hallucinations of the risen Jesus*, but a claim about experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus:

2E. Several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus at least three times.

Their intention was to use this historical claim, a claim which they accept--and which they would support with the NT passages referenced in their statement of premise (2)--in conjunction with the *Hallucination Theory*

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in order to infer an implication that they believe to be absurd or extremely improbable.

THE LOGIC OF THE ARGUMENT CONSTITUTING OBJECTION #5

We now have a clear idea of what the explicit claims or premises of this argument mean. However, the logic of this argument is still UNCLEAR, and this is because there are some important premises or claims that Kreeft and Tacelli left UNSTATED. I will now make those UNSTATED premises explicit:

1E. Whenever a mentally normal person experiences a hallucination, there is at least a 60% chance that that person will not experience that hallucination again.

THEREFORE:

B. If a mentally normal person who was a follower of Jesus experienced a hallucination of the risen Jesus, there is at least a 60% chance that that person will not experience that hallucination again.

This is an application of the general principle in premise (1E) concerning hallucinations to the more specific case at hand: in premise (B) we are talking about *possible hallucinations of the risen Jesus* experienced by mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus.

One might object that hallucinations of persons, or hallucinations of admired religious figures are *special categories of hallucinations* and that a general principle about ALL hallucinations might not apply to these specific categories of hallucinations, or that the quantification that applies to hallucinations in general might be significantly off the mark in relation to these specific kinds of hallucinations (of persons or of admired religious figures). But my inclination is to view this inference as a reasonable

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inference, even though it is not a deductively valid inference. The conclusion does NOT follow with logical necessity, but I think it does follow as a *reasonable inference*.

Premise (2E) also has an implication, in Kreeft and Tacelli's view, that they left UNSTATED:

2E. Several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus at least three times.

THEREFORE:

C. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had at least three hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

In other words, it appears that Kreeft and Tacelli understand the *Hallucination Theory* to have a significant implication when combined with the historical claim in premise (2E). That implication is that "at least three hallucinations of the risen Jesus" were experienced by "several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus."

From premise (C) Kreeft and Tacelli can logically infer their desired conclusion, by a logically VALID inference called DENYING THE CONSEQUENT:

C. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had at least three hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

D. It is NOT the case that several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had at least three hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

Therefore:

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A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

This is the CORE of the argument constituting **Objection #5**.

Notice that both premises are UNSTATED premises, and that the conclusion was also left UNSTATED. Thus, the entire core of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument here was only hinted at by the stated premises. This example illustrates why presenting an argument concerned with historical claims about Jesus in just two brief sentences is IDIOTIC: such arguments are inevitably UNCLEAR.

Also, note that the UNSTATED premise (D) is presumably being supported by the UNSTATED premise (B):

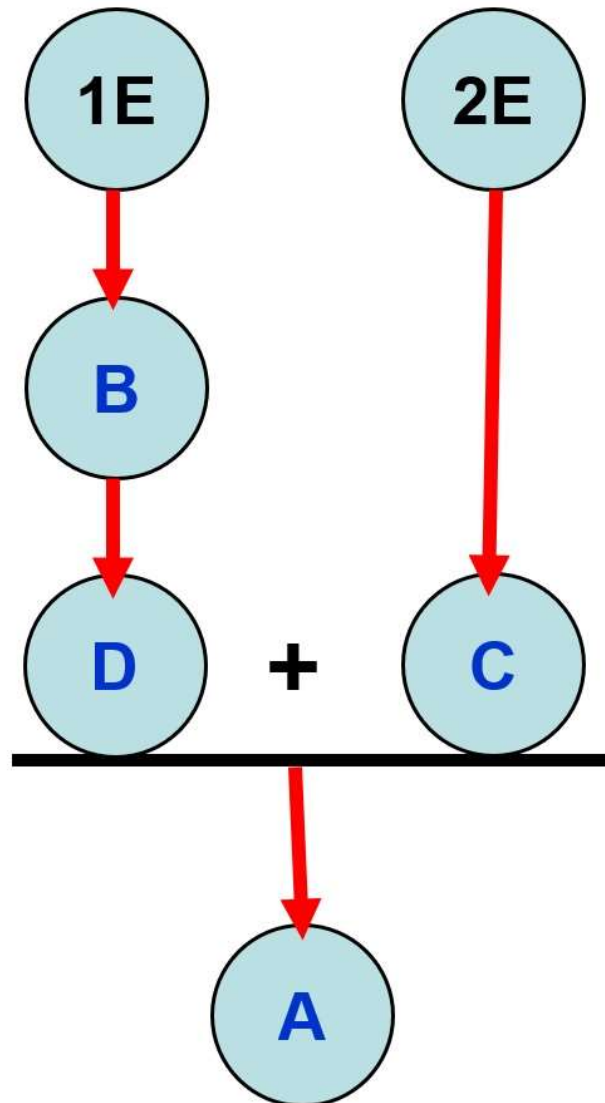
B. If a mentally normal person who was a follower of Jesus experienced a hallucination of the risen Jesus, there is at least a 60% chance that that person will not experience that hallucination again.

Therefore:

D. It is NOT the case that several mentally normal people who were followers of Jesus each had at least three hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

Now that we have uncovered the key UNSTATED premises and their logical relationships with the two stated premises, we can diagram the logical structure of the whole argument constituting **Objection #5**:

Logical Structure of Objection #5



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OBJECTION #6: SURPRISING WORDS & ACTIONS

Kreeft again presents a very brief and UNCLEAR argument constituting his sixth objection against the *Hallucination Theory*:

Hallucinations come from within, from what we already know, at least unconsciously. This one said and did surprising and unexpected things (Acts 1:4,9)—like a real person and unlike a dream. (HCA, p.187)

Once again Kreeft and Tacelli left the conclusion of the argument UNSTATED:

1. **Hallucinations come from what we already know.**
2. **This one said and did surprising and unexpected things.**

THEREFORE:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

Once again Kreeft and Tacelli leave important premises UNSTATED, because the conclusion clearly does NOT FOLLOW logically from these two premises. Once again they use a referring expression "This one" in premise (2) which is a reference back to the subject of premise (1): "Hallucinations". Once again if we take premise (2) literally and straightforwardly it *contradicts* the view of Kreeft and Tacelli:

1. **Hallucinations come from what we already know.**
- 2A. **Hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.**

THEREFORE:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

If some of Jesus' followers experienced hallucinations of the risen

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Jesus, then that *supports* the *Hallucination Theory*, which Kreeft and Tacelli are attempting to *disprove*. Once again, because their argument is so UNCLEAR, it needs significant revision before we can properly evaluate it.

The second premise of their argument was not intended in a literal and straightforward way. It needs to be revised so that it does not beg the question in favor of (or against) the *Hallucination Theory*:

1. Hallucinations come from what we already know.

2B. Experiences were had by some followers of Jesus that were believed by them to be experiences of the risen Jesus and that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

THEREFORE:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

Premise (2B) is stated in a way that does not beg the question at issue.

However, the conclusion still does NOT FOLLOW from these two premises.

Once again what Kreeft and Tacelli have in mind here is a reduction to absurdity argument. They think they can show that the *Hallucination Theory* has an implication that is false or absurd or highly improbable. So, they are assuming another premise that asserts an alleged implication of the *Hallucination Theory*:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN some hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

Premise (B) is based on an historical assumption that is stated in premise (2B):

2B. Experiences were had by some followers of Jesus that were believed by them to be experiences of the risen Jesus and that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and

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unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN some hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers and were hallucinations that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

The conditional claim (B) that appears to be implied or supported by premise (2B) needs another premise in order to be used in a reduction-to-absurdity argument against the *Hallucination Theory*:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN some hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers and were hallucinations that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

C. It is NOT the case that some hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers and were hallucinations that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

That this is the core argument for **Objection #6** is also indicated by the fact that premise (1) can be used to support premise (C), by means of an *intermediate inference* (another unstated premise):

1. Hallucinations come from what we already know.

THEREFORE:

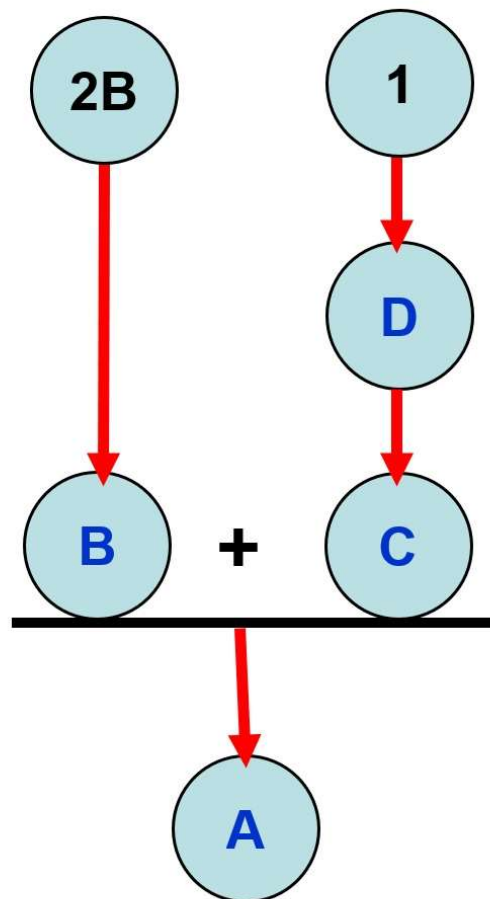
D. Any hallucinations of the risen Jesus experienced by his followers would have included Jesus saying and doing only things that were unsurprising and expected things for Jesus to say and do.

THEREFORE:

- C. It is NOT the case that some hallucinations of the risen Jesus were experienced by some of his followers and were hallucinations that included Jesus saying and doing surprising and unexpected things for Jesus to say and do.**

Now that we have determined both the core argument and sub-arguments supporting the key premises of the core argument, we can diagram the logical structure of this argument:

Logical Structure of Objection #6



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OBJECTION #7: THE UNBELIEF OF THE DISCIPLES

Here is how Kreeft and Tacelli present their **Objection #7** against the *Hallucination Theory*:

Not only did the disciples not expect this, they didn't even believe it at first—neither Peter, nor the women, nor Thomas, nor the eleven. They thought he [Jesus] was a ghost; he had to eat something to prove he was not (Lk 24:36-43). (HCA, p.187)

Yet again, Kreeft and Tacelli leave the conclusion of their argument UNSTATED, so I will state it for them:

- 1. The disciples did not expect this.**
- 2. The disciples didn't even believe it at first.**
- 3. They thought he was a ghost. (see Luke 24:36-43)**
- 4. He had to eat something to prove he was not. (see Luke 24:36- 43)**

Therefore:

A. *The Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

It is immediately obvious that the conclusion DOES NOT FOLLOW from the premises. There is, for example, no mention of the *Hallucination Theory* in any of the stated premises, so no conclusion about the *Hallucination Theory* is implied by these premises, at least not in terms of a *formally valid* inference. That means that once again Kreeft and Tacelli have left at least one key premise UNSTATED.

Although it is possible that premises (1) through (4) taken together imply (A), that inference would have to be based on *the meaning of the term* “Hallucination Theory”, and so there ought to be a premise that makes any such logical connection between the premises and the conclusion clear in relation to some specific aspect(s) of the meaning of “Hallucination

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Theory”.

There are also *referring expressions* (“this”, “it”, “they”, “he”) in every stated premise, so each premise requires some clarification:

- 1A. The disciples did not expect that Jesus would physically rise from the dead.**
- 2A. The disciples did not believe at first when they had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.**
- 3A. The disciples thought at first when they had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus that Jesus was a ghost. (see Luke 24:36-43)**
- 4A. The disciples became convinced that Jesus was not a ghost after they had experiences of an alleged appearance of Jesus in which Jesus ate something to prove to the disciples that Jesus was not a ghost. (see Luke 24:36-43)**

THEREFORE:

- A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.**

Not only did they FAIL to state the conclusion of this argument and FAIL to state at least one key premise of the argument (that connects their stated premises to the *Hallucination Theory*), but it is UNCLEAR how they think these premises are RELEVANT to the conclusion. In some of their UNCLEAR arguments, one can easily guess at the content of the UNSTATED premises, but in this case, there is no obvious logical connection between their stated premises and the conclusion that they are trying to prove. This is an extremely sloppy and UNCLEAR argument.

Because this argument is so UNCLEAR, and because this argument is obviously *missing a key premise* or premises, and because Kreeft and Tacelli draw most of their arguments from Josh McDowell's apologetics

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books, I'm going to turn to McDowell's objections against the *Hallucination Theory* for clues about what Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind in **Objection #7**.

After reviewing McDowell's objections against the *Hallucination Theory* in his book *The Resurrection Factor* (hereafter: TRF), it is clear that **Objection #7** was borrowed from one of McDowell's objections against the *Hallucination Theory*. Here is McDowell's version of this objection:

A fifth principle is that hallucinations require of people an anticipating spirit or hopeful expectancy which causes their wishes to become father of their thoughts and hallucinations. As we look at the disciples, the last thing they expected was a resurrection. They thought Christ had been crucified, buried. ...That was the end of it.

The late theologian, Paul Little, made an acute observation about the anticipatory attitude of the alleged "hallucinators": "... In fact, when the Lord finally appeared to the disciples, they were frightened and thought they were seeing a ghost." (TRF, 1981, p.85-86)

We see from McDowell that the stuff about the disciples thinking Jesus was a ghost is being given as a REASON in support of the claim that "the last thing they [the disciples] expected was a resurrection". More importantly, we see that the connection between the doubt of the disciples and the *Hallucination Theory* is the alleged "principle" that "hallucinations require of people an anticipating spirit or hopeful expectancy". Kreeft and Tacelli neglected to include this crucial assumption when they re-stated McDowell's objection, making the logic of their **Objection #7** very UNCLEAR.

But since we have located the probable source of **Objection #7** in an objection presented by McDowell against the *Hallucination Theory*, we can

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now clarify **Objection #7** so that it actually makes sense:

3A. The disciples thought Jesus was a ghost when they had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus. (see Luke 24:36-43)

4A. The disciples became convinced that Jesus was not a ghost after they had experiences of an alleged appearance of Jesus in which Jesus ate something to prove to the disciples that he was not a ghost. (see Luke 24:36-43)

THEREFORE:

2A. The disciples did not believe at first when they had experiences of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

THEREFORE:

1A. The disciples did not expect that Jesus would physically rise from the dead.

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the disciples would have expected that Jesus would physically rise from the dead.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

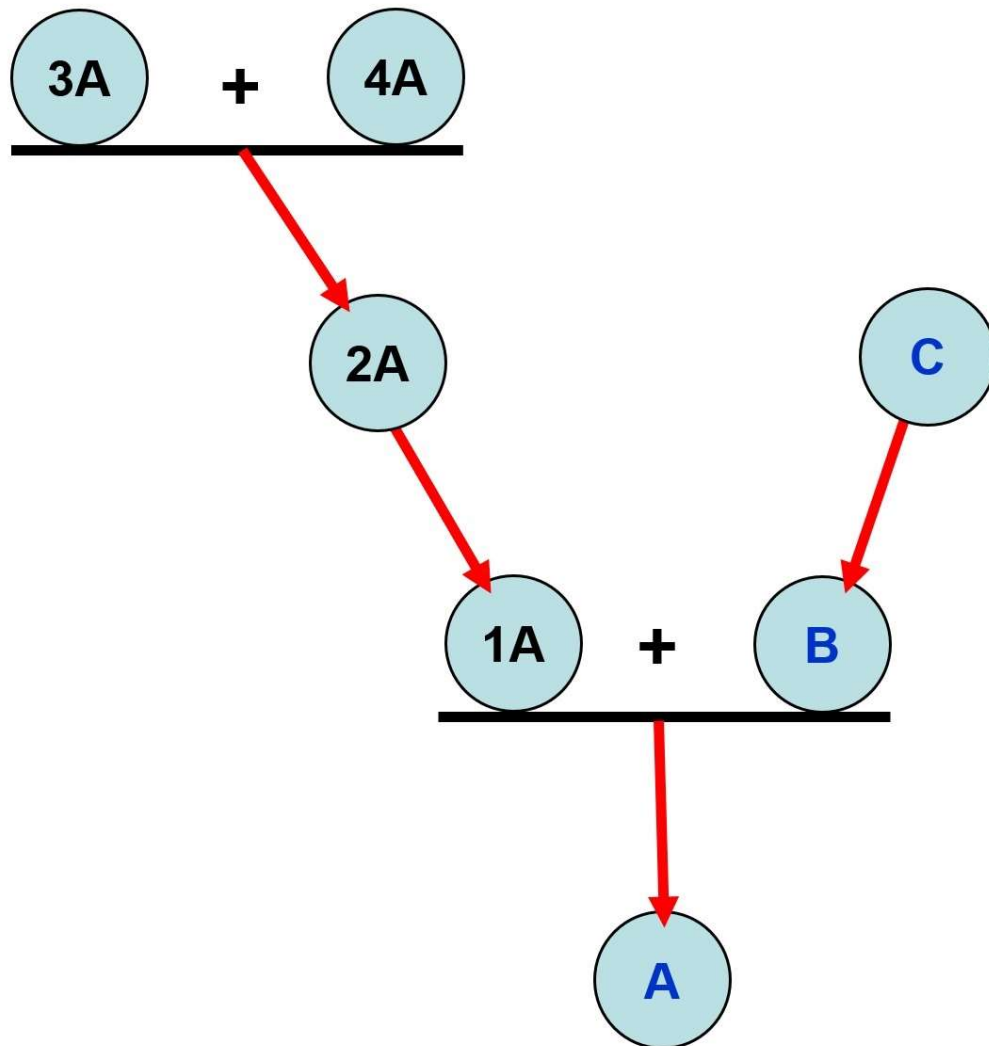
The missing key premise (B) is presumably based upon the principle about hallucinations that McDowell put forward, but that Kreeft and Tacelli neglected to mention:

C. A person P will hallucinate that X occurs (or has occurred) ONLY IF: person P anticipates or hopefully expects that X will occur (or has occurred).

Thanks to McDowell's clearer presentation of this objection, we can now analyze the logical structure of Kreeft and Tacelli's argument that

constitutes their **Objection #7**:

Logical Structure of Objection #7



OBJECTION #8: HALLUCINATIONS DO NOT EAT

Kreeft and Tacelli present their **Objection #8** in just two brief sentences:

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Hallucinations do not eat. The resurrected Christ did, on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14). (HCA, p.187)

Once again, they do not bother to state the conclusion of this argument, so I will state it for them:

1. **Hallucinations do not eat.**
2. **The resurrected Christ did on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14).**

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.*

SOME INITIAL PROBLEMS WITH THIS ARGUMENT

The word “did” in premise (2) needs clarification: *did what?* This is a reference back to premise (1) which talks about *eating*. Thus, the unclear word “did” should be replaced with the phrase “ate something”. Also, the term “Christ” is *biased language*, so it should be replaced with the more objective term “Jesus”:

1. **Hallucinations do not eat.**
- 2A. **The *risen Jesus ate something* on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14).**

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.*

The conclusion DOES NOT FOLLOW from the premises (1) and (2A). For example, there is no mention of the *Hallucination Theory* in either of the premises, so this cannot be a formally valid deductive argument, as it stands. In any case, it is unclear WHY Kreeft and Tacelli think these premises support the conclusion.

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It is reasonable to assume that once again Kreeft and Tacelli have in mind a *reduction-to-absurdity* argument, and thus that they have left an important assumption unstated. We can formulate a conditional statement about an alleged implication of the *Hallucination Theory* to fill in the logical gap in their argument:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, then the risen Jesus could not eat something.

2A. The risen Jesus ate something on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14).

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

I believe that this is the core argument for **Objection #8**. Further evidence that this is the argument Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind is the fact that premise (1) can serve as a reason in support of the key premise (B):

1. Hallucinations do not eat.

THEREFORE:

C. IF the risen Jesus was just a hallucination, THEN the risen Jesus could not eat something.

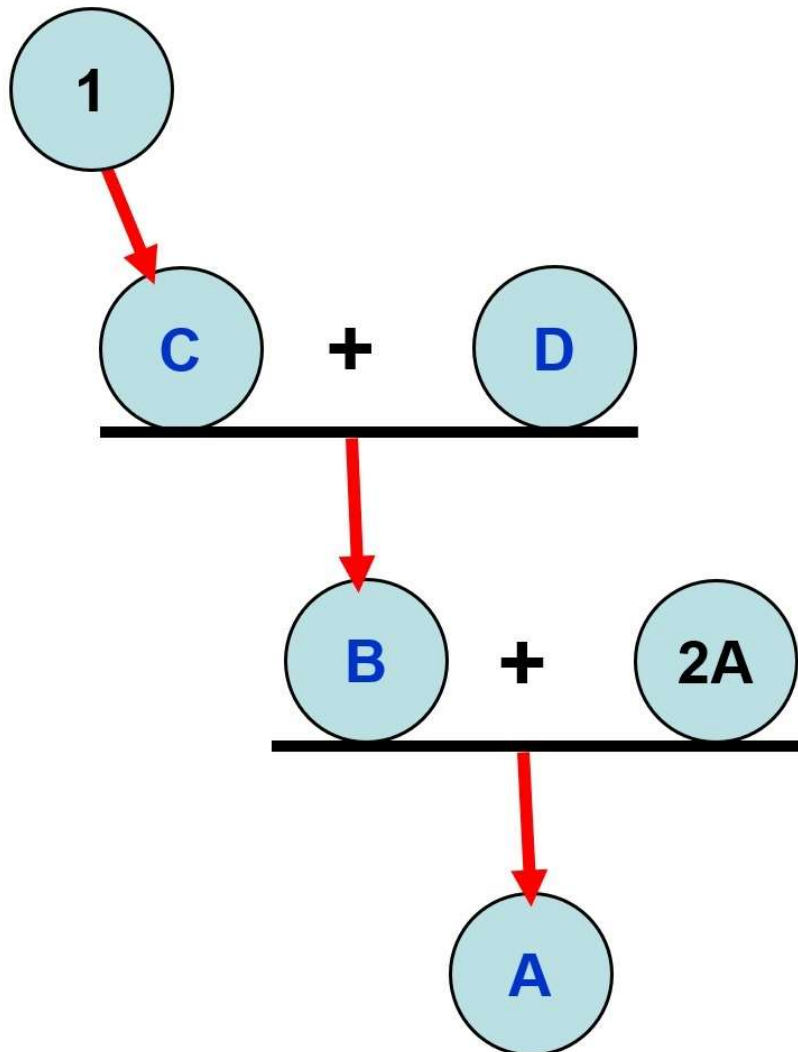
D. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the risen Jesus was just a hallucination.

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, then the risen Jesus could not eat something.

Now that we have determined the core argument of **Objection #8** as well as a sub-argument in support of a key premise in the core argument, we can lay out the structure of the argument:

Logical Structure of Objection #8



OBJECTION #9: THE DISCIPLES TOUCHED JESUS

Kreeft and Tacelli once again present a very brief and UNCLEAR argument constituting their ninth objection against the *Hallucination Theory*. This is the only objection that Kreeft states in a SINGLE SHORT

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SENTENCE:

The disciples touched him (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).
(HCA, p. 187)

As usual, they do not bother to state the conclusion of his argument. So, we can help him by providing at least that missing piece of this argument:

1. The disciples touched him (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).

Therefore:

A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.*

Before we attempt to fix this sad and broken little argument, we should clarify the pronoun “him” in the first premise:

1A. The disciples touched **Jesus (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).**

Although (1A) is clearer than (1), it will not work in this argument. Before Jesus was crucified, he was touched by many people, but this has no relevance to the question of whether Jesus rose from the dead. Also, after Jesus was crucified, the people who removed him from the cross and buried him also touched him, but that doesn’t show that Jesus rose from the dead.

The Gospel passages that Kreeft and Tacelli reference talk about disciples touching *the risen Jesus*. So, that is presumably what they have in mind in the first premise:

1B. The disciples touched **the risen Jesus (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).**

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.*

Once again, they failed to provide a premise that provides a logical connection between the claim they make in premise (1B) and the truth or falsehood of the *Hallucination Theory*. Once again, they appear to be hinting at a *reduction-to-absurdity* argument, so we can construct a

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conditional claim that asserts an alleged implication of the *Hallucination Theory* that is false or absurd (at least in their view):

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the disciples could not touch the risen Jesus.

1B. The disciples touched the risen Jesus (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

This appears to be the core argument for **Objection #9**.

Unlike with **Objection #8**, they do not offer any reason in support of the conditional premise (B). However, because **Objection #9** appears to be another very brief *reduction-to-absurdity* argument using the same logic in the core argument as **Objection #8** (i.e. denying the consequent), it is likely that they had in mind similar reasoning for premise (B) in **Objection #9** to what they had for the parallel premise (B) in **Objection #8**.

Here is the sub-argument for premise (B) in **Objection #8**:

C. IF the risen Jesus was just a hallucination, THEN the risen Jesus could not eat something.

D. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the risen Jesus was just a hallucination.

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, then the risen Jesus could not eat something.

We can just substitute the idea in **Objection #9** of the disciples being *unable to touch the risen Jesus* for the idea in **Objection #8** of Jesus being *unable to eat something*, and this would provide a parallel bit of reasoning in support of premise (B) in **Objection #9**:

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C. IF the risen Jesus was just a hallucination, THEN the disciples could not touch the risen Jesus.

D. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the risen Jesus was just a hallucination.

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, then the disciples could not touch the risen Jesus.

Kreeft and Tacelli also gave a reason in support of premise (C) in

Objection #8:

1. Hallucinations do not eat.

THEREFORE:

C. IF the risen Jesus was just a hallucination, THEN the risen Jesus could not eat something.

Very similar reasoning could be used in support of premise (C) in **Objection #9**, so it is likely that such reasoning was what Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind, but left unstated:

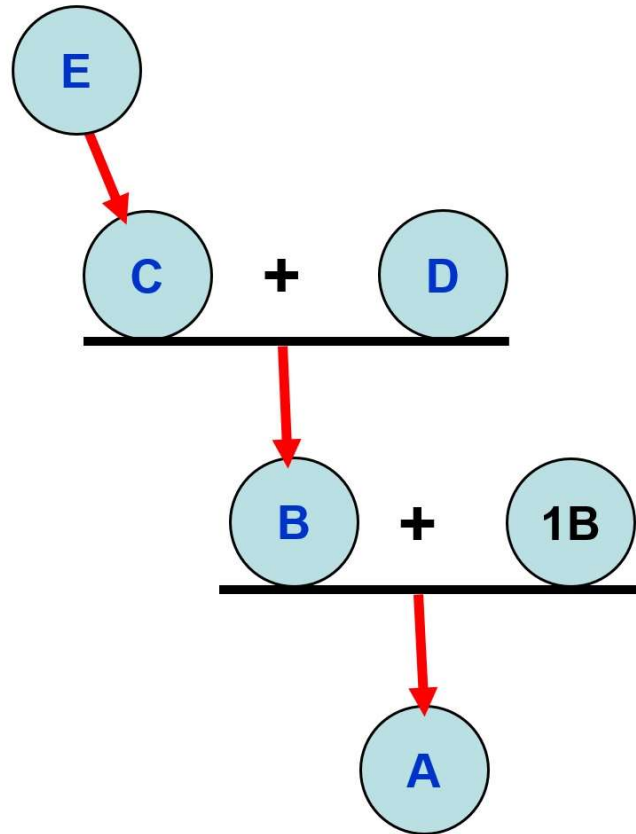
E. Hallucinations cannot be touched.

THEREFORE:

C. IF the risen Jesus was just a hallucination, THEN the disciples could not touch the risen Jesus.

Now that we have determined the core argument of **Objection #9**, and have a reasonable guess as to the reasoning of Kreeft and Tacelli in support of the key premise (B) in the core argument, we can diagram the structure of the argument, and the logical structure will be very similar to the logical structure of **Objection #8**:

Logical Structure of Objection #9



OBJECTION #10: THE DISCIPLES CONVERSED WITH JESUS

Kreeft and Tacelli present their **Objection #10** against the *Hallucination Theory* in just three sentences:

They also spoke with him, and he spoke back. Figments of your imagination do not hold profound, extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you. But this "hallucination" conversed with at least eleven people at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3). (HCA, p.187)

Once again, they do not bother to state the conclusion of this argument, so I will state it for them:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

1. **They spoke with him, and he spoke back.**
2. **Figments of your imagination do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.**
3. **This "hallucination" conversed with at least eleven people at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3).**

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

First, we need to get rid of the pronouns in premise (1):

1A. *The disciples* spoke with *Jesus*, and *Jesus* spoke back to the disciples.

(1A) is clearer than (1), but (1A) will not work for this argument, because the fact that the disciples conversed with Jesus BEFORE he was crucified is irrelevant to the question of whether Jesus rose from the dead. The premise needs to indicate that these conversations took place AFTER Jesus was allegedly killed:

1B. *The disciples* spoke with *the risen Jesus*, and *the risen Jesus* spoke back to the disciples.

Second, the referring expression "This 'hallucination'" and the vague phrase "eleven people" in premise (3) need to be clarified:

3A. *The risen Jesus* conversed with *Jesus' eleven disciples* at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3).

Acts 1:3 talks about alleged appearances of *the risen Jesus* to his disciples, so we can specify who the "eleven people" are in this premise, as well as specifying who was conversing with them.

Third, the second premise is obviously related to the idea of "hallucinations", so we should make that logical relationship explicit:

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2. Figments of your imagination do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.

B. Hallucinations are figments of your imagination.

THEREFORE:

C. Hallucinations do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.

The initial argument outlined above--three premises supporting conclusion (A)--suffers from the same problem that we noted in a number of the previous objections. The conclusion is about the *Hallucination Theory*, but there is no premise in the argument that talks about the *Hallucination Theory*, so the logic of the argument is INVALID. This argument also appears to be an attempt at a *reduction-to-absurdity argument*, so we can construct the unstated assumption about the *Hallucination Theory* as a conditional claim with a consequent that would be denied by Kreeft and Tacelli:

D. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the eleven disciples did not have extended conversations with the risen Jesus.

E. The eleven disciples had extended conversations with the risen Jesus.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

I believe this to be the core argument of **Objection #10**. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the explicitly stated premises provide support for the above premises in what I take to be the core argument.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

We have seen above that the explicitly stated premise (2) provides support for the unstated premise (C):

2. **Figments of your imagination do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.**

B. Hallucinations are figments of your imagination.

THEREFORE:

- C. **Hallucinations do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.**

Furthermore, it seems likely that (C) is part of a sub-argument in support of the key premise (D) in what I take to be the core argument:

- C. **Hallucinations do not hold extended conversations with you, unless you have the kind of mental disorder that isolates you.**

F. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the risen Jesus was just a hallucination.

G. The eleven disciples did not have the kind of mental disorder that isolates a person.

THEREFORE:

- D. **IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the eleven disciples did not have extended conversations with the risen Jesus.**

Since (2) is a reason in support of (C), and (C) is a reason in support of (D), the fact that (2) is an explicitly stated premise provides evidence that (D) is a key premise in the core argument for **Objection #10**.

There are two other explicitly stated premises that should provide support for one of the key premises in the core argument, if my interpretation of the core argument is correct:

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1B. The disciples spoke with the risen Jesus, and the risen Jesus spoke back to the disciples.

3A. The risen Jesus conversed with Jesus' eleven disciples at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3).

These premises make similar historical claims and are thus somewhat redundant. However, premise (3A) is a bit more specific than premise (1B). In any case, both of these premises provide support for premise (E) which is a key premise of what I take to be the core argument. Since only premise (3A) provides support for the claim that the disciples had “extended conversations” with the risen Jesus, we may set premise (1B) aside, and just use (3A) in a sub-argument supporting the key premise (E):

3A. The risen Jesus conversed with Jesus' eleven disciples at once, for forty days (Acts 1:3).

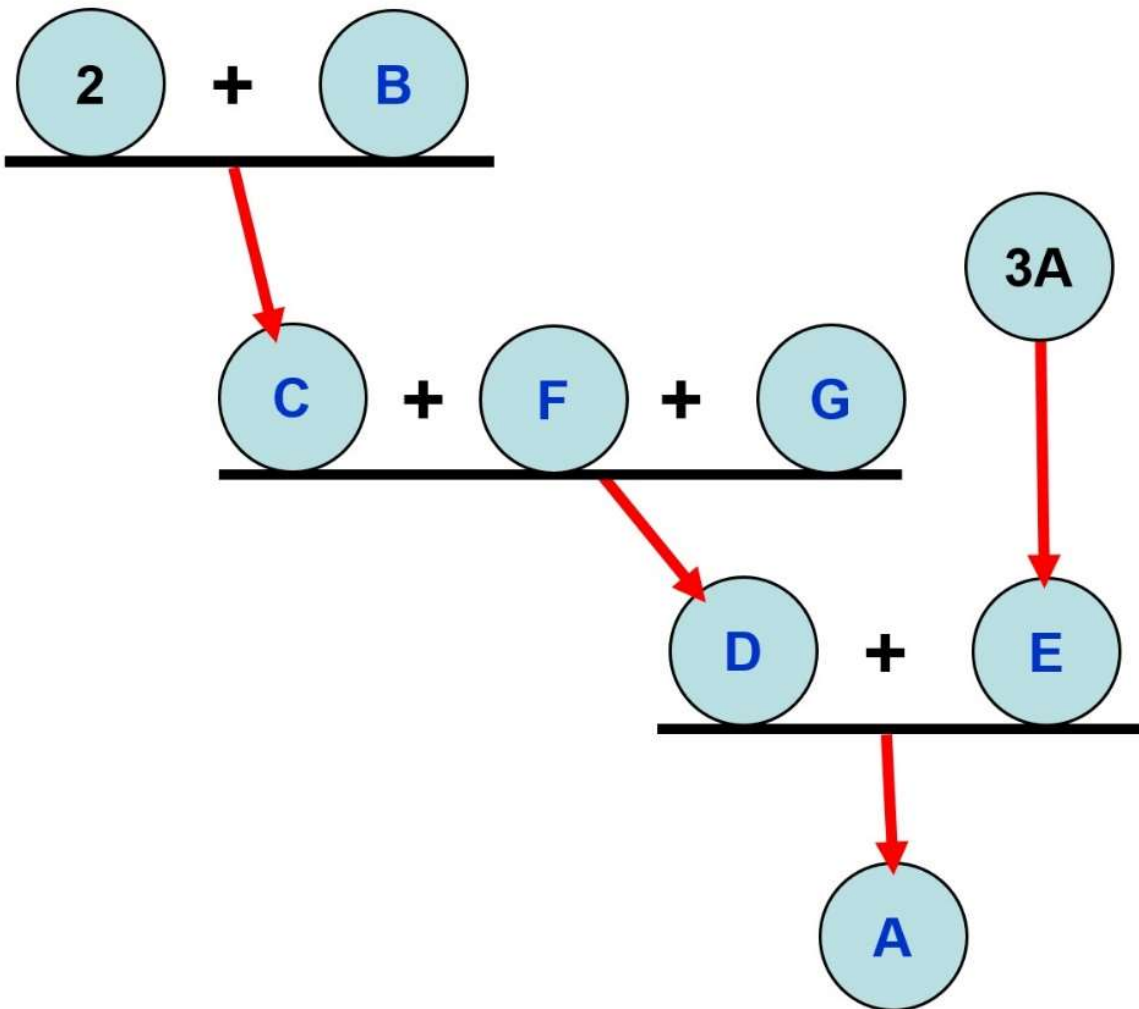
THEREFORE:

E. The disciples had extended conversations with the risen Jesus.

Because (3A) clearly provides support for one of the key premises in a relevant reduction-to-absurdity argument against the *Hallucination Theory*, this is further evidence supporting my interpretation of the core argument of **Objection #10**.

We have identified the core argument of **Objection #10**, and also the sub-arguments supporting the two key premises of the core argument, so now we are ready to diagram the structure of the full argument constituting Kreeft and Tacelli's **Objection #10**:

Logical Structure of Objection #10



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

ANALYSIS OF EMPTY TOMB OBJECTIONS

According to Kreeft and Tacelli, the alleged discovery that Jesus' tomb was empty raises three serious objections against the *Hallucination Theory*:

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	CATEGORY
Objection #11: The Disciples Could Not Believe a Hallucination if the Tomb was Not Empty	HCA, p.187-188	EMPTY TOMB Objection
Objection #12: The Disciples Could Not Persuade Others if the Tomb was Not Empty	HCA, p.188	EMPTY TOMB Objection
Objection #13: The Hallucination Theory Does Not Explain the Empty Tomb	HCA, p.188	EMPTY TOMB Objection

OBJECTION #11: THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT BELIEVE A HALLUCINATION IF THE TOMB WAS NOT EMPTY

Kreeft and Tacelli state their **Objection #11** in on brief paragraph:

The apostles could not have believed in the "hallucination" if Jesus' corpse had still been in the tomb. This is a very simple and telling point; for if it was a hallucination, where was the corpse? They would have checked for it; if it was there, they could not have believed. (HCA, p. 187-188)

Here are the key claims they make:

- 1. The apostles could not have believed in the "hallucination" if Jesus' corpse had still been in the tomb.**
- 2. If it was a hallucination, they would have checked for it.**
- 3. If it was there, they could not have believed.**

Statement (1) appears to be a conclusion that is based on premise (2) and premise (3).

Premise (1) needs clarification. The phrase "The apostles" refers to Jesus' *eleven disciples*. The idea that they "could not have believed in the

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

‘hallucination’” presumably means they would not have believed that *Jesus physically rose from the dead* on the basis of a hallucinations of the risen Jesus:

1A. If the experiences of Jesus’ eleven disciples of the risen Jesus were hallucinations and if Jesus’ corpse had still been in the tomb, then Jesus’ eleven disciples could not have believed that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

The pronoun “it” in the first clause of premise (2) refers to *alleged experiences of the risen Jesus* of the eleven disciples, and the pronoun “it” in the second clause of premise (2) refers to the “corpse” or body of Jesus in the tomb:

2A. If the experiences of Jesus’ eleven disciples of the risen Jesus were hallucinations, then they would have checked the tomb for the corpse of Jesus.

3A. If the corpse of Jesus was there in the tomb and the disciples checked the tomb, then they would have found Jesus’ corpse and Jesus’ eleven disciples could not have believed that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

THEREFORE:

1A. If the experiences of Jesus’ eleven disciples of the risen Jesus were hallucinations and if Jesus’ corpse had still been in the tomb, then Jesus’ eleven disciples could not have believed that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

This argument appears to be logical, but what does it have to do with the *Hallucination Theory*? As with many of the previous arguments, none of the stated premises in **Objection #11** mentions the *Hallucination Theory*. There is, however, an obvious connection between the Hallucination Theory and premise (1A), which suggests an unstated assumption:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

A. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the experiences of Jesus' eleven disciples of the risen Jesus were hallucinations.

1A. If the experiences of Jesus' eleven disciples of the risen Jesus were hallucinations and if Jesus' corpse had still been in the tomb, then Jesus' eleven disciples could not have believed that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

THEREFORE:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true and if Jesus' corpse had still been in the tomb, THEN Jesus' eleven disciples could not have believed that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

This additional inference gets us to a conclusion about the *Hallucination Theory*, but it does not get us to the conclusion that the *Hallucination Theory* is absurd or false or highly improbable. There is, however, another fairly obvious connection between the *Hallucination Theory* and the belief of Jesus' disciples that "Jesus had physically risen from the dead":

C. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN Jesus' eleven disciples came to believe that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

The point of the *Hallucination Theory* is to explain why Jesus' disciples came to believe that Jesus had physically risen from the dead, so (C) appears to state an implication of the *Hallucination Theory*.

From (B) and (C) one can validly infer the following conclusion:

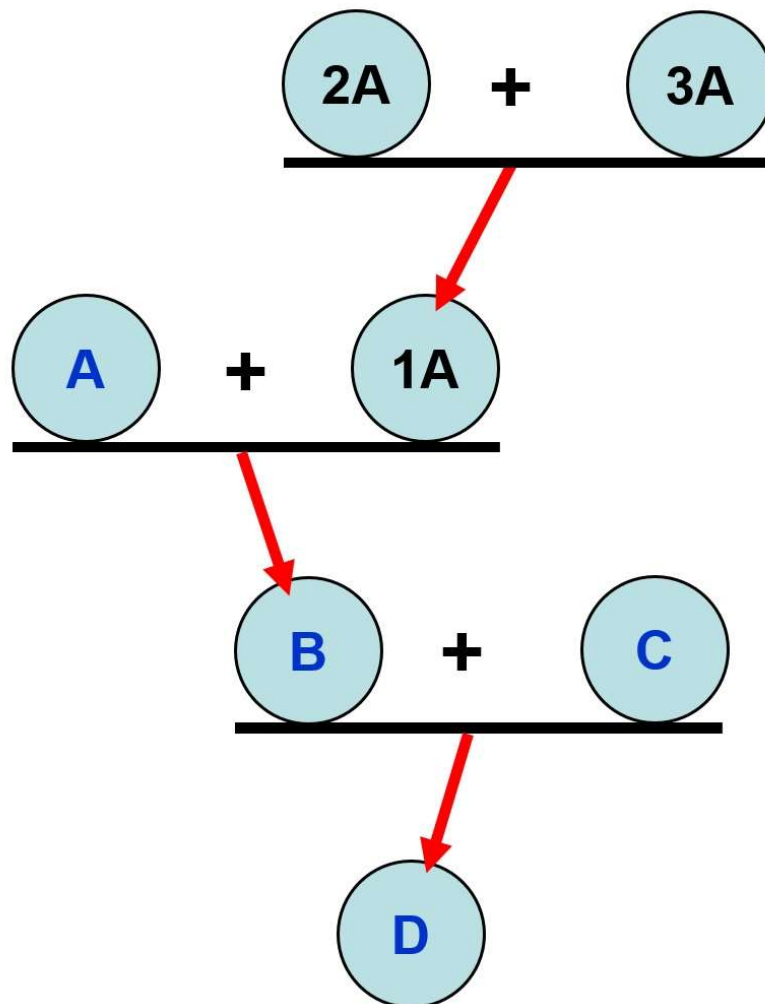
D. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN it was not the case that Jesus' corpse was still in the tomb (when the eleven disciples came to believe that Jesus had physically risen from the dead).

This is an interesting conclusion about the *Hallucination Theory*, but it still

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

does not show that the *Hallucination Theory* is false or absurd, as far as I can tell. At this point, **Objection #11** does not appear to be relevant to the question at issue: Is the *Hallucination Theory* true or false? Nevertheless, I will lay out the structure of the reasoning that I have outlined above:

Logical Structure of Objection #11



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

OBJECTION #12: THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT PERSUADE OTHERS IF THE TOMB WAS NOT EMPTY

Kreeft and Tacelli state their **Objection #12** in just one long sentence:

If the apostles had hallucinated and then spread their hallucinogenic story, the Jews would have stopped it by producing the body—unless the disciples had stolen it, in which case we are back with the conspiracy theory and all its difficulties. (HCA, p.188)

This appears to be another attempted *reduction-to-absurdity argument* where Kreeft and Tacelli fail to state their assumptions about the *Hallucination Theory*.

As usual, Kreeft and Tacelli do not bother to state the conclusion of this argument, but we can provide the conclusion ourselves:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

Their one long sentence can be broken into three statements:

- 1. If the apostles had hallucinated and then spread their hallucinogenic story, the Jews would have stopped it by producing the body—unless the disciples had stolen it.**
- 2. In that case we are back with the conspiracy theory.**
- 3. And all its difficulties.**

THEREFORE:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

In premise (1) the phrase "the apostles" needs clarification, as does the phrase "their hallucinogenic story" and "the Jews", and the pronoun "it":

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

1A. IF the eleven disciples had hallucinated about the risen Jesus and then began to preach that Jesus had physically risen from the dead, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus, UNLESS the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried.

In premise (2) the phrase “in that case” needs clarification, as does the phrase “we are back with”:

2A. IF the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried, THEN that means the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

Premise (3) uses the UNCLEAR phrase “all its difficulties”, which refers to the Conspiracy Theory:

3A. The *Conspiracy Theory* has several serious difficulties.

Because Kreeft and Tacelli believe their objections refute the *Conspiracy Theory*, I take it that premise (3A) supports an unstated premise:

3A. The *Conspiracy Theory* has several serious difficulties.

THEREFORE:

B. The *Conspiracy Theory* is not true.

The unstated premise (B) connects logically with the stated premise (2A) to support another unstated premise:

2A. IF the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried, THEN that means the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

B. The *Conspiracy Theory* is not true.

THEREFORE:

C. It is not the case that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

The combination of the UNSTATED premise (C) with premise (1A), implies a simpler conditional claim than (1A):

1A. IF the eleven disciples had hallucinated about the risen Jesus and then began to preach that Jesus had physically risen from the dead, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus, UNLESS the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried.

C. It is not the case that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb where Jesus was buried.

THEREFORE:

D. IF the eleven disciples had hallucinated about the risen Jesus and then began to preach that Jesus had physically risen from the dead, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus.

Premise (D) is an interesting and significant claim, but it does not constitute a conclusion about the truth or falsehood of the *Hallucination Theory*. As with a number of previous objections, Kreeft and Tacelli have failed to make explicit an assumption they are making about the *Hallucination Theory*. We can formulate their assumption about the *Hallucination Theory* in view of premise (D) and the idea that they are attempting once again to present a reduction-to-absurdity argument:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

- E. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the eleven disciples had hallucinated about the risen Jesus and then began to preach that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.**
- D. IF the eleven disciples had hallucinated about the risen Jesus and then began to preach that Jesus had physically risen from the dead, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus.**

THEREFORE:

- F. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus.**

Now we have arrived at a conditional claim about the *Hallucination Theory* that can be used to argue that this theory is false:

- F. IF the *Hallucination Theory* were true, THEN the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would have stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus.**
- G. It is NOT the case that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem stopped the spread of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by producing the body of Jesus.**

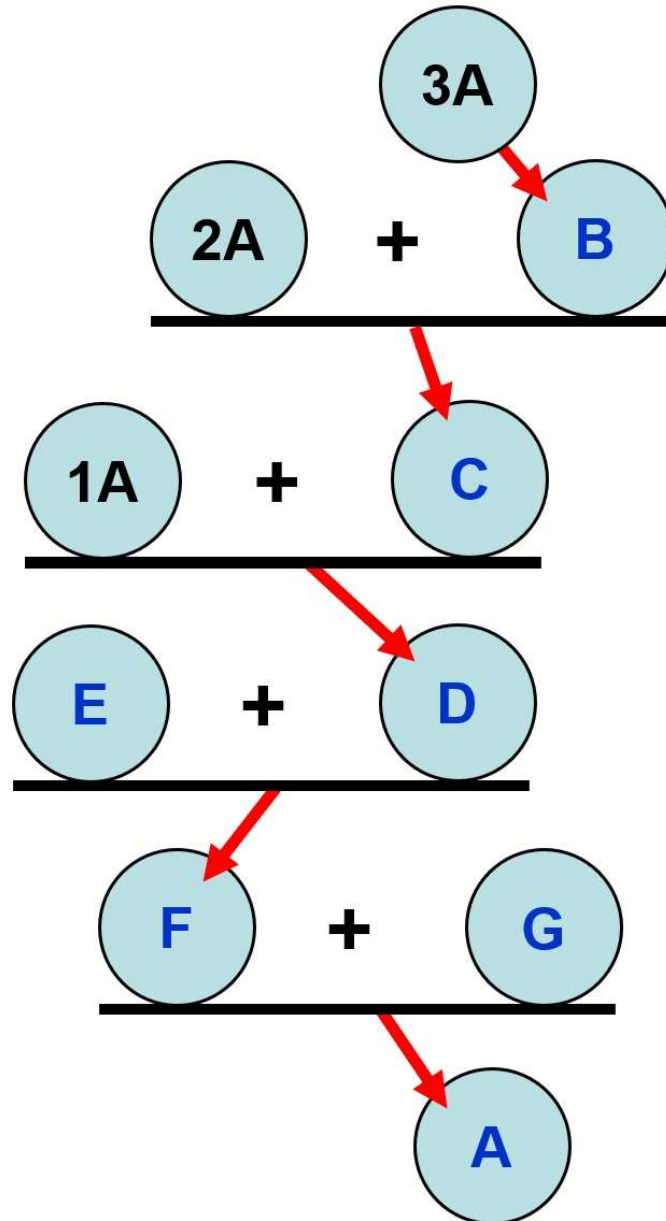
THEREFORE:

- A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.**

Premise (G) is a plausible historical claim, a claim that I am confident Kreeft and Tacelli believe to be true. And I have shown how (F) can be inferred from the stated premises (1A), (2A), and (3A) along with some other assumptions that Kreeft and Tacelli would accept: (B) and (E). So, I believe that (F) and (G) are the key premises of the core argument in the overall argument constituting **Objection #11**. Given the reasoning I have spelled out above, we can diagram the structure of the full argument for this

objection:

Logical Structure of Objection #12



OBJECTION #13: THE HALLUCINATION THEORY DOES NOT EXPLAIN THE EMPTY TOMB

Kreeft and Tacelli state their **Objection #13** in a few brief sentences:

A hallucination would explain only the post-resurrection appearances; it would not explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, or the inability to produce the corpse. No theory can explain all these data except a real resurrection. (HCA, p. 188)

As usual, they fail to state the conclusion of this argument, but since they are attempting to disprove the *Hallucination Theory*, a reasonable assumption is that this is the conclusion they are attempting to establish:

A. The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.

The paragraph quoted above can be analyzed as making three claims that function as the premises of the argument for **Objection #13**:

- 1. A hallucination would explain only the post-resurrection appearances.**
- 2. A hallucination would not explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, or the inability to produce the corpse.**
- 3. No theory can explain all these data except a real resurrection.**

THEREFORE:

A. The *Hallucination Theory* is false.

Once again Kreeft and Tacelli fail to provide any premise that talks about the *Hallucination Theory*. However, it is easy to see that premise (1) can be re-stated so that it makes a claim about the *Hallucination Theory*:

1A. The *Hallucination Theory* would explain only the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Premise (2) can also be re-stated as such a claim:

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2A. *The Hallucination Theory* would not explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, or the inability of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to produce the corpse of Jesus.

Premise (3) could also use a bit of clarification:

3A. No theory, except the theory that Jesus physically rose from the dead, can explain all these data: the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, and the inability of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to produce the corpse of Jesus.

Now that we have clarified the stated premises, we can re-state the argument constituting **Objection #13**:

1A. *The Hallucination Theory* would explain only the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

2A. *The Hallucination Theory* would not explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, or the inability of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to produce the corpse of Jesus.

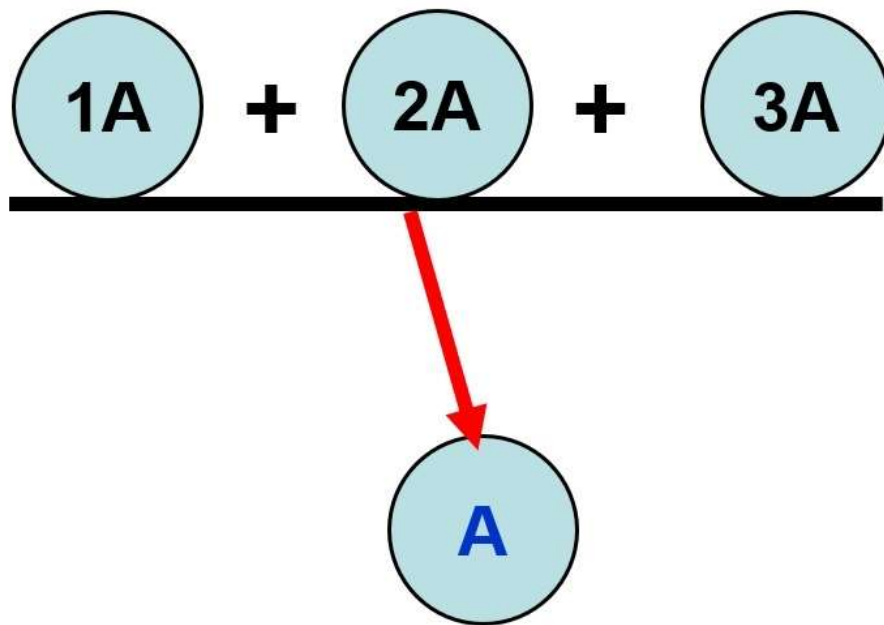
3A. No theory, except the theory that Jesus physically rose from the dead, can explain all these data: the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, and the inability of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to produce the corpse of Jesus.

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory* is false.

Because this argument does not appear to be logically VALID, the conclusion (A) might not be the conclusion that Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind. Perhaps they intended to show a weaker conclusion about the *Hallucination Theory*. But this is an issue that I plan to take up when I evaluate this argument, so for now I will stick with this interpretation of **Objection #13**. The logical structure of this argument is fairly simple:

Logical Structure of Objection #13



OBJECTION #14: SOME APPEARANCES WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED AS JESUS

Kreeft and Tacelli think that they gave only thirteen objections against the *Hallucination Theory*, but they are mistaken. In the paragraph immediately following **Objection #13**, they state another different objection but fail to label it as **Objection #14**. Apparently, they failed to notice that this paragraph presents a different objection than the one presented in the previous paragraph.

Here is their fourteenth and final objection against the *Hallucination*

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

Theory:

Any theory of hallucination breaks down on the fact...that on three separate occasions this hallucination was not immediately recognized as Jesus (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4). Even granting that God sent a holy hallucination to teach truths already widely believed without it, and far more easily taught by other methods, and certain to be completely obscured by this, might we not at least hope that he would get the face of the hallucination right? Is he who made all faces such a bungler that he cannot even work up a recognizable likeness of the Man who was himself? (HCA, p.188)

As with previous arguments, Kreeft and Tacelli again fail to clearly state the conclusion of their argument:

A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.*

As with previous arguments, Kreeft and Tacelli confusingly refer to appearances of Jesus as “hallucinations” even though they themselves reject the view that these appearances were hallucinations:

...on three separate occasions this hallucination was not immediately recognized as Jesus (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4). (HCA, p.188)

So this statement needs to be revised to avoid *begging the question* in favor of the *hallucination theory*:

1. In three cases of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples, the person who appeared was not immediately recognized as Jesus. (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4).

Another key claim is given in the form of a *rhetorical question*:

Even granting that God sent a holy hallucination to teach truths already widely believed without it, and far more easily taught by other methods, and certain to be completely obscured by this, might we not at least hope that he would get the face of the hallucination right? (HCA, p.188)

This rhetorical question can be revised and re-stated as a clear claim:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

- 2. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.**

The rhetorical question also suggests an argument for premise (2):

- 3. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God did so in order to teach the disciples that God raised Jesus from the dead.**
- 4. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus in order to teach the disciples that God raised Jesus from the dead, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.**

THEREFORE:

- 2. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.**

THE LOGIC OF THIS ARGUMENT IS INVALID

Here is the core of the argument that we have constructed so far based on the unclear statement of the argument from Kreeft and Tacelli:

- 1. In three cases of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples, the person who appeared was not immediately recognized as Jesus. (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4).**
- 2. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.**

THEREFORE:

- A. *The Hallucination Theory is FALSE.***

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The inference in this argument is clearly INVALID. For one thing, there is no mention of the *Hallucination Theory* in the premises, so the argument cannot be formally valid. In any case, the conclusion DOES NOT FOLLOW from the premises.

One could add another premise to make this argument VALID, a premise that links the *Hallucination Theory* to the idea that God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of Jesus:

B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* is true, THEN God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

In combination with premise (2), this additional premise implies another key claim:

C. IF the *Hallucination Theory* is true, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.

Now we can spell out the full argument constituting **Objection #14**:

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B. IF the *Hallucination Theory* is true, THEN God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus.

2. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as being Jesus.

THEREFORE:

C. IF the *Hallucination Theory* is true, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.

1. In three cases of alleged appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples, the person who appeared was not immediately recognized as Jesus. (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4).

THEREFORE:

A. *The Hallucination Theory* is FALSE.

Premise (2) is supported by this sub-argument:

3. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God did so in order to teach the disciples that God raised Jesus from the dead.

4. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus in order to teach the disciples that God raised Jesus from the dead, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.

THEREFORE:

2. IF God caused the disciples to have hallucinations of the risen Jesus, THEN God would have caused the person who appeared to the disciples in those hallucinations of the risen Jesus to be immediately recognizable and recognized as Jesus.

Logical Structure of Objection #14

