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AFFECT AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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for Jeremiah

'If God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-benevolent, then why is there (so much) evil in the world?' runs the problem of evil. Or more forcefully, doesn't the occurrence of (so much) worldly evil actually imply the non-existence of such a God, as the leading atheological gambit, the "argument from evil," contends?

In the context of theodicy or defense against the argument from evil, "evil" signifies both what is wrongly done by humans (moral evil, sin) and what is bad, something we undergo which runs counter to our desires (suffering). Following Aristotle, we may think of the ultimate good as happiness, that which we seek for its own sake and which, as a goal, conditions our choices and

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habit formation across the range of human actions and feelings. Happiness is the fulfillment of our human nature. For Christian theism, ultimate happiness is found in relationship with God. That divinely intended good is the final end for humans. In its fullest expression is the end of sin and suffering.

Because the argument from evil primarily concerns suffering, that will be our focus here. We begin by examining the connection between the philosophical and existential dimensions of the problem of and argument from evil as suffering. Next we consider the role of the affect in the constitution and interpretation of experience generally, together with the implications for the argument from suffering. Third, we look at how a key affectual element of the argument from evil might undercut that argument. Finally, we consider a proposal to categorize suffering as a species of moral or spiritual failure, i.e. as affectually wrong.

The apologetic or philosophical problem of suffering, that is, how one may respond to the argument from suffering as a philosophical challenge is often distinguished from the existential problem of suffering or how one's beliefs, attitudes and actions will be affected in relation to God in the face of, say, one's own experience of suffering. The existential problem has also been called the psychological or pastoral or religious or practical problem. Alvin Plantinga and Peter van Inwagen, among many others who address the apologetic problem, disclaim any direct connection between the philosophical and existential challenges. Yet there may be more connection between the two than first appears.

In principle, even slightly negative experiences are logically available to the argument from suffering. Woody Allen joked that he could not believe in the existence of a beneficent creator who would let him get his tongue caught in the typewriter. Were we to adduce such negative experiences to argue against God's goodness, however, the general consensus of what should count as misery would ordinarily disqualify them. A certain experiential threshold is

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necessary to really motivate the problem of suffering and especially the argument from suffering, albeit that threshold varies over time and across cultures. So in the context of the argument from suffering, the most serious challenge comes not from the existence of *any* negative experience, but from negative experience in an extreme amount, especially if it looks like gratuitous suffering. Hence John Hick defines suffering as a state of mind "in which we wish violently or obsessively that our situation were otherwise."[1] So the philosophical problem follows the curve of the existential problem.

When do we reach the appropriately motivating threshold? Here the social context can be significant. If, for example, members of a religious congregation, friends, and family rally round the cancer victim, his or her experience of suffering, all things being equal, will not play in the same register as the one who suffers alone. Indeed, we might equate the lived interpretation of the suffering experienced with its magnitude. The inner, personal argument from suffering the sufferer may begin to consider, in doubt, will be harder to make for the socially loved one. The same might be said where there is a direct inner experience of divine love. Indeed, in both cases, the affectual experience of being loved can bring about tranquility and with it a rationale for our living apart from any intellectual defense against the argument from suffering. Our personal standard of what is rational for us to believe or continue believing seems to contain an affective component, at least in relation to certain kinds of beliefs.

Martin Heidegger noted that every mood or affectual orientation has its understanding and every understanding its mood. That moods have rationales illustrates the point here. If, for example, I am angry at X for losing my book and then discover that it was Y who lost it, my anger at X disperses at once. Facts matter in affective rationales. Aristotle's account of emotional virtue and vice make sense to us for the same reason: "We can experience fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, and generally any kind of pleasure and pain either too much or too

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[1] John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 354.

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little…. But to experience all this at the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason, and in the right manner—that is … the mark of virtue."[2] Were emotion sheer subjective projection or expression, we could make no sense of Aristotle here.

Moods tune us in to our environment in particular ways, highlighting certain features and directing our purposeful action. They contain interpretations of ourselves and others. Parental love, for example, configures a whole world of relationship; it creates a teleology according to its own intrinsic logic. It makes certain courses of action rational and others irrational. Hence rationality in the case of the typically hedonic agent of so-called rational decision theory, affectually and ideologically determined in its individualism as it is, cannot count as rationality *per se*; it offers one rationale among many other possibilities.

Altogether then, without the affective contribution we could not live, since nothing would count as significant or important to us, nothing would move us to act. So, far from being a stumbling block to dispassionate reason, the affective contribution to the constitution of human experience is a *sine qua non*. In that sense the affect's role resembles the contribution of Kant's a priori categories to sensory inputs in the synthesis of experience. At least to some degree then, an experience of suffering, like all human experiences, is an interpretation constituted by an affectual understanding. As Heidegger puts it, human existence is care, about ourselves, others, and our environment.

Particular intellectual constructions of suffering, then, have their corresponding moods and vice versa. So, for instance, accepting the free will response to the problem of suffering intellectually can also bring emotional solace. And as we saw earlier, immediate powerful experience of love can directly evoke a new self-understanding and rationale for decision-making. But, in addition, the affect is or can be made subject to the will or intellect directly in

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[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), 43.

important ways. Hence classical Stoicism aimed to achieve serenity by withdrawing all affect

from what exceeds the individual's control, namely everything in the world but one's attitude

about it. Yet when the experience of suffering is denatured by *apatheia*, what remains of

existence falls short of what most consider life. Even so, the fact that affect partly constitutes our

experience and is at least in part subject to the will shows that there is no fixed, objectively

determined quantum of suffering. The morose boyfriend who kills himself over a breakup with

his girlfriend may suffer more than the person with end-stage cancer who is loved deeply and has

the hope of faith. Circumstances where the will or intellect is no longer intact would pose a

special case here, as would the cases of children and animals. Such suffering requires a different

kind of accounting.

For the one who develops wisdom and virtue through the challenge of suffering, that

suffering is not of the average "amount." Indeed, on balance, it may be felt and understood as a

good. This is the crux of the soul-making defense against the argument from suffering. And it is

nowhere more relevant than with the affect. It is under the pressure of suffering that key virtues

develop. For if there were no bad consequences of our free will, there would be no occasions

calling for patience, self-sacrifice, unselfishness, courage, or honesty as virtues or excellences in

the world. In fact, as Hick argues, the capacity to sympathize with and love those in calamity

actually requires that there be a distribution of evil not in keeping with our deserts since, if it were

so distributed, no one would deserve our sympathy. Hick cites Royce here: "Even love shows its

glory as love only by its conquest over the doubts and estrangements, the absences and the

misunderstandings, the griefs and the loneliness, that love glorifies with its light amidst all their

tragedy."[3] And the famous discourse on love of I Corinthians 13 speaks similarly of the nature of

love in relation to what it overcomes. For Christian theism all of these character qualities are

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[3] As cited in Hick, 362 footnote.

important preparation for and incipient experience of eternal life with God, a limitless good outweighing all finite suffering.

But those outside any particular religious confession have also seen the soul-making result of suffering. Aristotle's discussion of the development of virtue in the passions certainly includes this overcoming aspect. Or consider Michael J. Fox in his 2002 memoir, *Lucky Man*: "If you were to rush in to this room right now and announce that you had struck a deal-with God, Allah, Buddha, Christ, Krishna, Bill Gates, whomever-in which the ten years since my diagnosis [with incurable progressive disease of the central nervous system] could be magically taken away, traded in for ten more years as the person I was before, I would, without a moment's hesitation, tell you to take a hike [dust jacket]." So what looked like a clear instance of severe, long-term suffering and a premise for an argument from suffering is intellectually and affectually reconstituted as something quite different.

Or consider Mabel and the effect of divine love in her suffering: "One side of her face was being eaten by cancer. There was a discolored and running sore covering part of one cheek, and it had pushed her nose to one side, dropped one eye, and distorted her jaw so that what should have been the corner of her mouth was the bottom of her mouth. As a consequence, she drooled constantly…this woman was eighty-nine years old and that she had been bedridden, blind, nearly deaf, and alone, for twenty-five years."[4] It is probably impossible for those outside such affliction to genuinely appreciate it. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how a well-meaning visitor might even address her.

Her life also seems to be paradigmatic evidence for the argument from suffering. Yet to a visitor who asks her what she thinks about while lying in her bed, she replies: 'I think about my Jesus. I think about how good He's been to me. He's been awfully good to me in my life, you

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[4] William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2003), 110.

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know…. He's all the world to me.'[5] And with her experience of Christ, Mabel not only preempts a personal argument from suffering, but also makes her suffering unavailable to the outsider for a more general argument from suffering.

Of course alternative rejoinders to the argument from evil from an affectual angle are possible. William Hasker, for example, finds an apparently self-thwarting element in the argument from suffering based on our moral sentiments. He notes that the argument from suffering depends on a moral sentiment which, when violated, gives rise to moral protest. Extreme and/or gratuitous suffering seems unjust. Without some moral feeling, apparent discrepancy between evil done and evil received would not issue in protest. Even the philosophical challenge depends on this sort of moral care. Yet can the indignant one be existentially authentic in his or her protest? Hasker argues that this is impossible.[6]

He begins by asking the objector whether he or she is glad to exist, a person-relative appeal to each one's core value sentiments. Next he proposes that my existence depends on the coming to be of my body. If I am glad I exist, I cannot be sorry my body came to be.   But if my body is a necessary condition of my existence as a person, then whatever my body needs to exist, I also need. To be the person I am requires particular parents at a particular time. Many contingent causes played into my parents meeting, marrying, and conceiving me at a given time. Were I to trace back through their ancestors for the same sorts of contingent causes, I would very likely find that war, famine, sickness, disease, betrayal, even murder and adultery all played a role in making my existence possible. So Hasker concludes: "Had major or significant events in the world's past history been different than they were, then in all probability neither I nor the persons whom I love would even have existed."[7]

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[5] Ibid., 111-112.
[6] Michael Peterson, *God and Evil* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), cf. 114-120.
[7] Ibid., 117.

Here is where the moral protest against evil becomes self-thwarting. If I object that no good or just God would have tolerated the manifold suffering of the world yet I am glad for my own existence and its necessary conditions (the manifold suffering), I have a contradictory will. On the other hand, if I am not glad I exist, perhaps even leaning to suicide, this argument cannot be made. Altogether, then, Hasker very intriguingly suggests how the affectual component of the argument from suffering might be turned back upon itself.

Does Hasker's argument work? If his premises were all true, it would be a powerful argument speaking directly from and to the existential element of the problem of suffering. Yet his principal move is suspect. If I will my existence, even my body, am I thereby committed to willing, say, the abduction and rape of my great-grandmother, had that led to the conception of a grandparent? Or, alternatively, must I will the suicide of her fiancé so that she could come to marry my great-grandfather? If my German parents met and married in the US having fled as children with their parents from WWII, am I committed to willing Hitler?

Here a question of personal identity arises. Abstracting away from all but biological conditions for my existence, I might have to commit to a certain genealogy. But that just means my parents meeting, marrying, and conceiving me, for example. I am just as consistent to will this having happened in Germany as in America. I can will that my great-grandmother decided to drop suitor number one in preference for my great-grandfather rather than suitor one killing himself. It isn't easy to see why I must commit beyond *a* set of sufficient historical conditions of my coming to be, why I must commit to the actual historical sequence. For that actual sequence is not necessary in principle for my existence. Alternatively, I could consistently will that God create me like Adam, *de novo*, without any human progenitors, without any history.

Finally, let us consider John Hick's claim that suffering just is sin. In that case, the problem of suffering is successfully met by a changed affectual understanding away from our

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self-centeredness and toward God. As Hick puts it: "If we were fully conscious of God and His universal purpose of good we should be able to accept our life in its entirety as God's gift and be free from anguish on account of it."[8] There is clearly something to this for Christian theism. Hick could garner significant support for this claim drawing on the pertinent biblical sources, as also for his claim that Christ suffered for others. Yet protest Psalms are also part of the canon. And Christ appeared to suffer for his own part as well. On the cross He cries out to God as having forsaken Him. He is clearly full of anguish in Gethsemane with his disciples, sweating blood over his coming crucifixion. Is He weeping only for others at the tomb of his friend Lazarus? If the existential problem can be solved, perhaps the drama of suffering en route is a necessary condition for that solution

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[8] Hick, 355.

A MEA CULPA FOR THE FELIX CULPA?

Ian Spencer

One of the most promising defenses theists in general have against the problems of evil and hell is the free will defense. This defense, however, requires assuming an incompatibilist conception of free will. For those who have either doubts about this free will response or wish to hold to a compatibilist view of free will, however, exploring further defensive options is desirable. Elaborating on an old theme, I will defend a version of the greater-goods defense and offer it as a defensible, though controversial, alternative to the free will defense. Like all greater-goods views, this one relies on explaining the existence of evil in terms of the greater goods that come out of it. Among these goods are the greater goods of Incarnation and Atonement, their respective goodness consisting in large part in the higher-order divine good of glorifying God through the display of divine virtue.

Given a Libertarian[1] view of free will, the free will defense[2] seems to be a likely candidate for successfully defusing the problem of evil. The basic strategy involved in this defense would be to claim that God could not guarantee an evil-free world unless he refrained from creating free, morally-responsible, rational creatures. However, without the assumption of Libertarian freedom – or at least its possibility – the free will defense does not seem able to get off the ground. After all, if compatibilism were true then it would seem that God could actually

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[1] Libertarian views of free will take it that causal determinism is incompatible with free will (that is, they are *incompatibilist*) and that we do in fact have this incompatibilist kind of freedom.

[2] In the literature, there has tended to be a strict distinction between what are called *theodicies*, which try to justify God's permission of evil in terms of what are supposedly his actual reasons for doing so, and *defenses*, which merely try to show that God's existence is compatible with the existence of evil by coming up with possible reasons that would justify God's permission. For my purposes here, I will use 'theodicy', 'defense', and 'response' pretty much interchangeably and will not make any distinction between the categories.

guarantee an evil-free world full of free creatures just by making sure that the initial conditions and laws of nature were such as to guarantee that no sin or evil actually ever arises.

In addition, if there is no Libertarian free will, then the free will defense may not be the only response to the problem of evil to suffer because of it. It seems to me that soul-making views (according to which evil and suffering are required for growth into moral or spiritual maturity) themselves may, if they are to be plausible, need to rest on a foundation of Libertarian freedom. Otherwise, it may be hard to see why God could not simply create each of us already in full maturity and in complete sinless perfection. Whatever the case may be on this issue, however, I will simply leave soul-making views mostly to the side for the purposes of the rest of this paper.

A large number of Christian theists, of course, *do* in fact believe in Libertarian freedom and, hence, such thinkers often find the free will defense to be fairly convincing as a response to the problems raised by suffering and evil. In the minds of such believers, it may seem that all we really need to do is to defend Libertarian freedom and the free will defense which relies upon it in order to do a good job of defending theism or the Christian faith against the attack from evil. However, many Christians and other theists are *not* in fact Libertarians and many explicitly *reject* incompatibilist views of freedom. For these latter folks, there will be a very genuine interest in developing a response to the problem that does not rely on a kind of freedom that they would question or sometimes even reject. For these folks, there is a very genuine need to develop an alternative response.

But it is not simply the anti-Libertarian theist who ought to have an interest in the development of a theodicy which does not presuppose Libertarianism. The Libertarian committed to the free will defense ought to be interested in such a project as well. For one thing, we could be wrong about free will – perhaps compatibilism is true. It would be nice if we had a

backup plan – a kind of defensive fall-back position or Plan B – just in case the whole Libertarianism thing simply does not work out in the end. In addition, it could help win others to theism or at least help them to think it just a little less implausible than they did previously. If I am having a discussion with a die-hard compatibilist and I want to try to convince them to become a theist, asking them to first swallow Libertarianism may be too big a pill for them to take. Better, instead, to find something better suited to their condition – that is, a reply to the problem of evil which a compatibilist can consistently accept. Lastly, developing a Libertarianism-free response may be a good idea in the unlikely event that, despite the truth of Libertarianism, the free will defense still cannot quite cut it in defeating the problem of evil.

So given that we ought to be interested in developing a response to the problem of evil which is consistent with compatibilism, what are our available options? Not the free will defense, for obvious reasons, and I have already explicitly set soul-making views aside. For the sake of this paper, I will also set aside so-called 'skeptical theist' responses to the problem and consider only those responses which try to show the actual or possible reasons which might justify God's permission of evil. To remain as orthodox as possible, let us also set aside any views which require that we make God less than perfectly good, knowledgeable or powerful, as well as any sort of view which claims that good can only exist if there is some evil for it to stand in contrast with.

The option I would propose instead is a kind of greater-good defense against the problem of evil. Not every version of a greater-good defense is going to work, of course, so the success of such a defense will depend on the details, including crucially the precise goods we take to be great enough to justify allowing all of the world's evil. As our springboard into developing a better greater-good defense, I want to take a look at some remarks of Mackie's on greater-good responses to evil. With J. L. Mackie (1955), let us call evils such as pain and suffering, which do not necessarily metaphysically require the presence of other evils for their existence, *first order*

evils. Similarly, call goods such as pleasure which also do not require any evils, *first order goods*. Mackie suggests that a theist might respond to the problem of evil by insisting that the existence of first order evil is justified because it is necessary for the existence of the more valuable *second order goods*. Here, second order goods could be things like acts of courage or sacrifice – exercises of certain important virtues which cannot exist in the absence of any evils. Without threat of danger or without real cost, for instance, there could be no genuine acts of courage or sacrifice – evil is a logical precondition for anything to count as falling into the category of such goods. However, Mackie thinks that there are also *second order evils* which are *not* required for the existence of genuine second order goods. These would be things like hatred or cruelty, which the world could do entirely without and yet still contain plenty in the way of acts of courage or sacrifice. Following Stewart (1993, 15-16), it is possible to respond at this point that some human actions, such as forgiveness, are *third order goods* which *do* in fact require second order evils. However, Mackie (1955, 207-208) takes it that no matter how high we go up, third order or even higher, there will always be an evil at the same order which will not be justified *at that order*. If we then try to move up an order to some higher good which requires this evil, we will just have pushed the problem up a level once again and we are off on an infinite regress.

Now, I think there may in fact be room to dispute Mackie on his infinite regress claim, even if we concern ourselves solely with human moral goods. However, I think Mackie's discussion can help point us in a more promising direction – if we focus on human goods, we may end up explaining quite a lot of the evil that exists in the world, but there may still remain some evil left-over that no purely human good can cover. Rather than look at *human* goods involving *human* manifestations or displays of various virtues, I suggest that we look to *divine* goods – that is, *divine* manifestations or displays of various virtues. It is not implausible, after all, to think that *divine* displays of *divine* virtue are much – if not infinitely – more valuable than

otherwise similar human displays of the same or similar virtues. And, of course, many of these displays will require the existence of evil in the world. More importantly, unlike higher order human goods, there will be no corresponding evil of the same order left out of this sort of defense. After all, it is a basic tenet of classic theism that there simply *are no* divine evils to take into account. God is wholly good, after all. So perhaps here we have a place to stop Mackie's vicious regress and explain those evils that could not be sufficiently explained by the higher order human goods.

What we have here now are the makings of a potentially successful greater-goods defense, whereby we can justify the existence of lower order evils via the higher order, moral goods whose existence such evils make possible, with the ultimate moral goods being the divine goods of displaying divine virtue. Indeed, as has been suggested throughout the Augustinian and Calvinist traditions in Christianity, one might understand God's primary goal in allowing evil, which according to many in these traditions is to "glorify himself", as primarily a matter of producing precisely these divine goods required by this greater-goods defense. When a Calvinist declares that God's chief aim is to glorify himself and that this is why there is evil, so that God would be even more glorified, we can, on this way of understanding it, take God's self-glorification to be simply a matter of God's self-display of divine virtue. The more perfect in quality and quantity of such displays, and the more aspects of God's character they reflect, the more the character of God is reflected in the world, which is a more-than-plausible interpretation of what it means for God to be glorified.

This greater-goods response, then, stands firmly in the Augustinian-Calvinist tradition (though it could well be used by theists who do not do so, including those who happen to fall outside the Christian tradition altogether). It is now important to add that according to both this tradition as well as much of the larger Christian tradition as a whole, God most glorifies himself through undertaking his plan of redemption, particularly through his Incarnation and Atonement,

in order to bring salvation to the world. Many medievals, in fact, found the Incarnation to be the very pinnacle and end-goal of creation itself. And Christians throughout all ages have found the value of God's redemption of humankind, here represented by the Atonement, to be second to none. But redemption, of course, requires that there be someone to be redeemed and something for them to be redeemed *from*. And this requires a *Fall*, or at least some kind of *fallen state*. God's great act of redemption logically requires that there be fallen people. And if, as a number of thinkers have suggested, the acts of God's redemption – specifically, as embodied in the Incarnation and Atonement – are the highest of goods then in order for the highest of goods to be realized in a world, such a world must be at some time or other a fallen one. That is, it must be a world of sin, evil, and death. This thought – that the Fall was necessary or justified because of the greater goodness of the redemption which required it – can be found throughout the history of the church and the sorts of defenses or theodicies which are based on such a thought have been known as *Felix Culpa* views after the "O felix culpa!/ O happy fault!" line in the famous hymn from the Latin liturgy. This hymn, the "Exultet", entered the liturgy somewhere between the fifth and seventh centuries and embodies an early expression of a Felix Culpa response to the Fall, one which finds many echoes before and after.[3]

Indeed, fitting nicely with the greater-goods defense we have been so far examining, Felix Culpa views have often defended the great value of the Incarnation and Atonement *precisely* in terms of their value as displays of the divine character. Along these lines, Melville Stewart (1993, 153 – see also his 1986) says, "[R]edemption allows God to demonstrate his love in a way that otherwise he could not". In firm agreement, Paul Helm (1993, 215) proclaims, "Finally, without the permission of moral evil, and the atonement of Christ, God's own character would not be fully manifest". Arthur Lovejoy (1948, 294), of this approach to the Fall, claims,

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[3] Lovejoy (1948), in his essay on John Milton's appropriation of this tradition in *Paradise Lost*, notes that these ideas find expression or echoes early on in, for example, Ambrose, Augustine, Pope Leo I, and Gregory the Great.

"God himself *needed* a fallen race to evoke fully the divine attributes and powers." Alvin Plantinga (2004, 7), in his defense of a Felix Culpa theodicy, asks, "Could there be a display of love to rival this? More to the present purposes, could there be a good-making feature of a world to rival this?". Later in the same work (*op cit.*, 20), Plantinga adds that God may be so loving that he "would be willing to undergo the suffering involved in incarnation and atonement, even to save just one sinner…but that is compatible with its being more appropriate that God's magnificent action here save many, perhaps indefinitely many." Finally, Jesse Couenhaven finds such views in as early a figure as Augustine, of whom Couenhaven (2007, 294) claims, "Augustine's late theodicy is thus, basically, an argument that a world in which at least some relate to God as redeemer is beautiful and good in ways that an alternative world in which none relate to God as redeemer, and there is no evil, is not."

On this view, then, there would be tremendous goods missing were there no Fall and no evil. Higher order human goods would be missing, as would many divine goods. And preeminent among the missing, highly valuable divine goods, would be God's ultimate displays of love and self-sacrifice in his Incarnation and then Atonement. But notice that such an approach does not require us to accept an incompatibilist view of freedom. So long as the moral and divine goods are all intact, we have a sufficient justification for the existence of evil without relying on Libertarian free will. Recommending a Felix Culpa view to fellow determinists, Nick Trakakis (2006, 31) writes,

> On this view, the fall is either the only way or the most fitting way for us to be
> provided with the kind of disclosure of divine love made available in Christ's
> life, death and resurrection. In line with this view, the divine determinist may
> add, in response to Mackie's challenge [from evil], that a 'fallen' world enables
> God to reveal himself, and in particular his grace and mercy, more fully than in a
> world in which no-one needs renewal or salvation.

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I would recommend, then, for all theists, this greater goods/glorifying God response to the problem of evil as an alternative to the free will response. And I would recommend it specifically to Christian theists, particularly as it is refined in the particularly Christian way proper to the Felix Culpa tradition.

To flesh out this view a bit more, we ought to see how it might incorporate perhaps the greatest apparent evil of all – that of eternal damnation. It may be natural for some to wonder here whether, due to the fact that the pinnacle of divine goods is found in God's redemptive activity, this means that universalism must be true – that is, that all persons will eventually be redeemed from sin and evil. After all, if evil only exists so that various virtues may be displayed and if the highest good for the sake of which we are fallen is so that God might redeem us, thus displaying his infinite love and self-sacrifice, why would anyone be left out of such a redemption – especially given that being left out is such a horrendous thing?

If we accept a Libertarian view of free will, I think it is much easier to reject universalism at this point. But suppose we do not. Suppose we are compatibilists. Must a compatibilist who takes on our proposed response to the problem of evil also accept universalism? The short answer is no. Defending this answer, however, may be a little more complicated. I will here only make some gestures towards such a defense. Suppose first that the traditional view of eternal damnation is true and that the damned exist forever in a state of brokenness and separation from God's redeemed order. In that case, the existence of this great evil – persons suffering eternal conscious damnation – may be justified by another divine good, that of displaying God's just wrath against sin (and those who commit it) and having this in eternal juxtaposition with his eternal display of just love and salvation towards the redeemed. To paraphrase Augustine, God is just in condemning people and loving and gracious in saving them. To save is an act of pure

grace and, perhaps, thus not morally required of God – or at least not universally so. And the divine good of displaying wrathful justice in damnation is also an important divine good alongside the divine good of displaying love in redemption. As Couenhoven (2007, 293) describes Augustine's views, the suggestion is "that the best explanation of the scriptural witness concerning God's character and behaviour is that the Fall and limited forms of punishment by themselves is not enough to show the full depth of God's justice and mercy; both the Fall and eternal punishment are required." On the other hand, if annihilationism is true and the damned are ultimately sentenced to non-existence rather than an eternal existence of low or negative value, then we have much less evil to deal with and the charge that damnation creates too much negative value in a world to possibly be justified seems to begin to loosen its grip. Either way, we have some kind of answer to give if we decide not to be universalists and still accept the divine goods response.

I believe that this view of the role of damnation in the divine goods response also has the resources to tackle a couple of potential objections that one might hear from time to time against views such as this. One is that Christ's suffering and death on the Cross was a sufficient and ultimate display of God's justice and wrath and that hence further display is not needed. I am not sure, however, that this is not question-begging or at least not unclear. Surely the event of the Cross is a "sufficient and ultimate display" in the sense that nothing need be added to it to legally atone for anyone's sins who might, by God's grace, place themselves in the body of Christ. Christ's suffering was enough to take the place of all and anyone to earn them redemption, should they receive such a gift. But here we are not concerned with legal or redemptive sufficiency or ultimacy. What we are concerned with is whether, to maximize the divine goods in the best, most justified way, this will require that some persons be ultimately eternally damned. In such a case, it is by no means clear that any world with the Atonement and no damnation will display God's wrath and judgment just as well as one with it. Indeed, it seems to me that the opposite is more

probably the case, the eternal juxtaposition of love and wrath displaying the two qualities in all their glory being much better than the display of only one of them.[4]

In response to Supralapsarian views which hold that God decided to glorify himself by creating creatures to be variously damned and redeemed, Diller (2008, 95) asks, seemingly rhetorically, whether a world could really have more value if it featured people who had eternally broken relationships with God than if it did not. Indeed, he (*op cit.*, 92-93) also claims that it is plausible to see the Atonement as a mere means to the end of a right relationship with God and that *this* is its source of great value, a concern echoed by Bruce Reichenbach (1988, 81). Contra some Felix Culpa supporters, Diller rightly sees that (absent considerations from Libertarian freedom, perhaps) God could very well have established a right relationship with his creatures and even went through Incarnation *without* any Fall or any sin and evil.

So if Diller is right about this then the great goods of the Atonement and Incarnation do not require sin and evil since the Incarnation can occur without them and redemption without Atonement is all that is required to bring about the value possessed by the Atonement. After all, the Atonement has value precisely as that which brings a right relationship with God, and apart from this quality we can probably all agree that it would have little or no positive value. However, I think both Diller and Reichenbach are too quick here to think that this fact shows that the Atonement's value is merely *instrumental* value insofar as it brings salvation. It is important to remember that relational value and instrumental value do in fact come apart. Indeed, we can perfectly agree that the Atonement's value is largely grounded precisely in its bringing salvation. But that does not mean that this value is purely instrumental. It is important to look at the big picture – without sin or evil, important divine goods would be missing and it is *precisely because* a relationship with God is so immensely valuable that the Atonement as God's rescue of us into it

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[4] Note that these kinds of considerations might also be used to effectively answer Reichenbach 80-81, where he questions whether it would really be more valuable to have a Fall and then redemption rather than have everyone simply begin in perfection.

is *also* so valuable a display of his sacrificial love. Without sin, there would definitely be displays of divine love, but it would not be like this and it would not be so valuable. And without eternal displays of divine wrath, it may not be so clear that things would really be more valuable. If the divine goods view we have been canvassing so far is correct and its assessment of the role of damnation in achieving the divine goods is also correct, then Diller's question ultimately has a relatively straightforward answer – the answer is a resounding yes, as paradoxical as that might initially sound. A world really *could* have more value if it featured people who had eternally broken relationships with God than if it did not. The Felix Culpa and divine good views seem to emerge, if not unscathed, then definitely still alive and kicking from Diller's attacks. So I think, ultimately, the defender of the doctrine of eternal damnation, whether in its traditional or more revised forms, can incorporate their views into the divine goods view without too much difficulty and hence reap from it a kind of defense or theodicy of Hell unattached to and unadorned with any presuppositions about the nature of free will.

So far, I think we can see that this divine goods view that I have been examining is powerful indeed. There are, however, some much more serious objections to it that have yet to be considered. I will answer the main one first, followed by two lesser objections. The first of these is that the persons whom God creates in a sinful, evil world are in fact being used merely as a *means* for God to achieve his greater divine goods – a seemingly bad and unloving action on the part of God. This Kantian point, of course, holds no weight if some sort of consequentialism were correct, or at least if it happened to be so for God. But suppose consequentialism is *not* correct and that it is in fact a fairly absolute matter that we should never treat a person as a mere means to our ends, no matter how good these ends may be. In that case, I still think we can get around this criticism. Consider, for example, ordinary punishment of criminals. This, at first glance, looks to be an example of treating people as means only – few, if any, really want to be punished after all. But if we are rejecting consequentialism of any sort, then it becomes unclear

what could justify such apparent violations of the criminals' autonomy. Here I think the most likely approach is to take a rather Kantian line in response to this rather Kantian problem. The idea is to take punishment to be precisely the way we *ought* to treat criminals if we are to treat them as ends in themselves. By doing evil, they in effect condone whatever punishment they deserve and make it a matter of justice and respect for them as rational beings to see to it that they are punished appropriately. A full Kantian retributive account of punishment will, of course, be more complicated, but this superficial gloss ought to be enough at this point to do the work for which it is needed.

Now let us put this Kantian view of punishment into play. We can now claim that, as far as our own voluntary sin goes, since it is precisely *voluntary* God is not using us as a mere means when he sets things up in the beginning so that we will end up committing some particular sin. After all, *we* have consented to it. And all the other evil we suffer can – perhaps at least in part – be seen as punitive in nature. Since it is suffered as a punishment for our own voluntary evil, such evil or suffering will not count as a violation of our autonomy on God's part.

One might wonder, however, how this deals with, for instance, the suffering of innocent children – are they not being used as mere means? But if Helm (1993, 211) and many other Reformed thinkers are right, then the Fall may make guilt for sin universal, even among children. If the doctrines of original sin and original guilt are taken on board – assuming the combination of the two can be adequately defended – then we have our answer. Indeed, more generally, as Plantinga (2004, 24) states, we could also potentially argue that much of the suffering that we – children or not – undergo might also be justifiably thought to respect our autonomy if I actually consent to it, if I would consent to it were I able to make the decision or be free of relevant ignorance, or perhaps even if I would consent to it were my disordered affections suitably repaired.

The second objection I wish to consider is that God is not just to judge us or punish us for our sins since it is God who ordains that we sin in the first place. Of course, much of the sting of this objection is already removed by my answer to the previous one – by voluntarily doing wrong, we thereby call judgment and punishment upon ourselves. And it is, after all, part of God's cosmic role to be the one who ensures that such punishment is paid out. Indeed, if determinism is true, then no punishment *could* be paid out without God's consent. So if someone deserves punishment and can only be punished if God determines it – if it would be unjust not to do so, since there is no one else to take over this task – then I can see little plausibility in the claim that God is not in fact obliged by justice to mete it out.

Now for the final objection. The final one, which may be found in Diller (2008, 96), and which one hears sometimes in theological circles in regards to theodicies in general, is that if a Felix Culpa or related response describes reality truly then "[w]e can no longer condemn evil and injustice as wholly antithetical to what is good." One might also find this sentiment expressed various other ways: "It would make evil good", "It would trivialize peoples' pain and suffering", "It would rid us of our reasons for preventing evil", and so on. But these sort of objections represent a significant misunderstanding of the view under consideration. As Stewart (1993, 146) insists, the Fall and evil are all *inherently* bad. They just so happen to also be *instrumentally* good. One mistake behind the kind of objection we are now considering is to fail to see this difference. That something is instrumentally good and that God is justified in allowing it for something greater does not render that thing any less bad in its own right. Indeed, such a cost ought to be seen as indeed costly and genuinely lamentable in its necessity. It ought not to make any of us any less vigilant against evil since we are not in God's position and morality (as well as God himself) still demands that we prevent evil. Indeed, our prevention of evil is precisely one of the higher order goods for which evil exists in the first place!

Given our discussion, what then should we say about the problem of evil? Ultimately, I find the free will response highly attractive. I am myself a Libertarian about free will and would gladly appeal to this view in defense of theism. However, I also find the view defended so far in this paper one worthy of even further defense and development. Moral goods, both human and divine, are natural components of a response to the problem of evil, particularly such great divine goods as those embodied in God's redemptive work on behalf of humankind. Such a response not only seems to do well against general evil and suffering but also against the potentially infinite sufferings of hell and eternal damnation. I most definitely have not fully deflected all possible moral criticism of such a response, nor have I even necessarily provided unanswerable replies to the objections I have addressed. What I *hope* I have done is to show that such a view is not completely out of the ball park in regards to plausibility and, indeed, that it is worth our consideration. If Libertarianism is true, as I think it is, perhaps the best idea would be to try to have the best of both worlds – to combine the free will response with the divine goods response canvassed here. Libertarian freedom could indeed do wonders in deflecting any remaining moral criticism from the divine goods view and the divine goods view could do the same for the free will response. If we then integrated some sort of soul-making view into this mix, that would truly be a response to the problem of evil that would be hard to beat. Not only would the various combined views be mutually reinforcing, but we would also be able to potentially successfully combine and weave together (at least on this particular topic) multiple theological traditions into one coherent whole – Felix Culpa traditions, divine glorification traditions, Augustinian and Calvinist traditions, free will traditions, Irenaean traditions, and so on. In doing so, we would be heeding the wisdom of the Teacher:

Though one may be overpowered,

two can defend themselves.

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A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.[5]

If nothing else excites the theist trying to find an adequate solution to the problem of evil, the prospects of such a combined, strengthened front should.

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A PHYSICALIST VIEW OF THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Joungbin Lim

My project in this paper is to provide a plausible idea of Christ's suffering and death in terms of a theory of the human person. More specifically, I want to contrast two major theories of the person-body relation. One is dualism. Dualism is the view that a human person is composed of two substances, that is, a soul and a body, and he (strictly speaking) is identical with the soul. On the other hand, physicalism is the view that a human person is numerically identical with his biological body. In this paper, I argue that dualism is not successful in explaining Christ's passion for some reasons. Rather, physicalism, as I shall argue, provides a better explanation of how Christ's physical suffering and death are real just like everyone else's, so it is philosophically and theologically more plausible than dualism.

Dualist Views of the Passion of the Christ

There are two Christological theories dualists can choose.[1] On the first view, God the Son became a human soul when he was embodied. It says that Christ was composed of a human

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[1] There are two kinds of substance dualism. One is Platonist dualism, according to which a soul has a body or it is related to a physical body in a certain causal relation just like a pilot in a ship. The other type of dualism is often called 'compound dualism,' according to which a person is a whole composed of a soul and a body. Augustine held this kind of dualism: "A man is not a body alone, nor a soul, but a being composed of both." (*City of God*, ch.24, par.2). Descartes arguably was a compound dualist too: "For these sensations of hunger, thirst, pain and so on are nothing but confused modes of thinking which arise from the union and, as it were, intermingling of the mind with the body." *Meditations VI*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol.2, trans J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 56. The compound dualist says that two substances are united with each other, and eventually he is that soul in that the substantial soul is responsible for the person's mental life. For the purpose of this paper, I do not make a distinction between the traditional substance dualism and compound dualism. For a critique of compound dualism, see Eric Olson, "A Compound of Two Substances," in *Soul, Body, and* Survival, ed. Kevin Corcoran. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). And a recent critique of dualism for the so-called 'paring problem,' see Jaegwon Kim, "Lonely Souls: Causality and Substance Dualism," in the same volume.

soul and a human body. I will call this view the human soul view (HSV). On the second view, in

the Incarnation, God the Son's divine soul took the place of a human soul. That is, Christ was

composed of a divine soul and a human body, and the divine soul was the same soul before the

Incarnation. I will call this view the divine soul view (DSV).

I first want to criticize DSV. The theory claims that Christ was a divine soul having a

human body. But by definition and tradition, the divine soul cannot experience physical pain, and

it cannot die.[2] Dualists could argue that Christ did suffer when a certain physical state of his

body caused the divine soul to feel pain. But I would reply that whether there is a causal relation

between the soul and its body does not matter. My point is whether the *divine soul* felt pain and

died. If Christ, God the Son, was a divine soul, it is hard to understand what it is like that he

suffered and died. So long as the soul was *divine*, as he was before the Incarnation, his pain and

death could not be like ours. So DSV does not offer a good explanation of Jesus' suffering and

death.[3]

A more popular dualist Christology is HSV. According to HSV, Jesus' psychological

nature as well as his physical nature was entirely human. It seems to explain how his suffering

and death were real just like any other human beings' given that the dualist view of the human

person is right. So HSV seems to provide a good explanation of Christ's humanity and his

physical suffering.

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[2] According to Christian tradition, God is divinely impassible. That is to say, God does not
change or suffer. Events in the world cannot affect God in any way. If this tradition is right,
DSV is untenable, if it says that Jesus, God the Son, suffered and died. If the divine soul suffered
and died, soul was not divine according to that tradition. Perhaps liberation theologians and
supporters of open theism would deny the Christian tradition. Discussion of such theories is
beyond the scope of the purpose of this paper, so I hope I will discuss them in another place.
[3] DSV was condemned as a heretical idea (called Apollinarianism) at the First Council of
Constantinople in 381.

Although this view seems attractive for that reason, it is not a good Christological theory. It is worth noting that the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation says that Christ had two natures in one person.[4] On the orthodox doctrine, Christ was fully divine and fully human. Now HSV says that God the Son became a human soul and had a human body, so he was fully human. But on this view, where is Christ's divinity? HSV, as I shall argue, cannot answer the question.

On dualism, a human person's *essence* not only contains but *is* soul.[5] That is, what makes a being a human person is a human soul; if something has a human soul, it is essentially a human person. If a human person did not have a soul, he could not exist, since according to dualism, he is that soul; he is numerically identical to the soul. With this in mind, let's look at the current dualist Christology. If God the Son became a human soul, he was fully human. But it appears hard to say that he was fully divine as well, since by becoming a *human* soul he, HSV must say, lost his essential properties for being divine. On HSV, Christ was a divine soul before the Incarnation, but he became a human being by becoming a human soul. Obviously, a human soul is qualitatively different from a divine soul. So if God the Son became a human soul, he

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[4] So the Definition of Chalcedon says:

> "[O]ne and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ."[4] (The Definition of Chalcedon)

The Definition says there was integrity of the two natures in the Incarnation while explaining the unity of the natures as a union in one "person." It suggests three conditions of orthodox Christology:

1. Christ was fully divine.
2. Christ was fully human.
3. Christ had two natures in one person.

For the Definition and an explanation of it, see *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56, and Linwood Urban, *A Short History of Christian Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 76 and 93.

[5] Cf. Peter van Inwagen, *Material Beings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 121.

must have been a totally different being. That is, HSV must say that Christ was merely a human being, not a divine being, since a human soul cannot essentially be divine. By losing divinity of his original soul, he lost the divine attributes he had before the Incarnation.[6] Thus, although HSV seems successful in explaining Jesus' real suffering, it has a trouble with the issue of Christ's divinity.

So the dualist Christology has a dilemma. If it says that God the Son was incarnated by becoming a human soul (HSV), then it cannot explain his divinity. But if it says that he was a divine soul (DSV), it must admit that he was not fully human so he could not experience any pain.

A Physicalist View of the Passion of the Christ

If dualism is not successful, we need to seriously consider physicalism. Physicalism in this paper is about metaphysics of the human person. The basic idea of the theory, as some philosophers have recently argued, is that a human person just is his body.[7] That is, he is identical with a living human organism. An important advantage of physicalism is that it can avoid an absurd consequence of a human person. For example, if I am not identical with my body, it seems that I coincide with something distinct (my body) from myself. That is, there are two distinct objects that occupy exactly the same region of space at the same time. But this appears absurd. If I am numerically identical with my body, there is no such absurdity. Similarly, I am the subject of certain mental states, and the physicalist says that my whole body is

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[6] So HSV naturally leads to the kenosis theory, according to which when God the Son became incarnated he lost some of his divine properties such as omnipotence and omniscience. I will discuss the theory in the final section.

[7] I adopted 'physicalism' in Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002), Chapter 10. Trenton Merricks uses the same terminology in "The Word Made Flesh: Dualism, Physicalism, and the Incarnation," in *Persons: Human and Divine*, eds. Peter Van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Eric Olson uses a different term, 'animalism' for the same view in his *The Human Animal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

that subject in virtue of its brain and nervous system. But if I am not my whole body, then it appears that there are two distinct objects that have the same thoughts and feelings. This seems absurd too. This absurdity can be avoided by maintaining that I am my body.[8]

It is worth noting that although physicalism of the human person says that a person does not have a soul as a substantial part, it is consistent with the view that all the properties a human person has are not physical properties in that his mental properties are *sui generis*. I believe that although certain atoms of my brain play a role in producing thoughts, my thoughts are not reducible to those atoms. There are at least two reasons for this belief. First, one simple, unified state or act, like thinking, cannot be divisible into lots of physical parts; thinking cannot just be many nonthinking atoms. Further, there is an explanatory gap between mental properties and physical properties; the truth of the sentence 'I feel pain' is not guaranteed by the sentence 'C-fibers fire.'[9] So we cannot account for the act of thought in terms of the activities of parts of the brain. Obviously, physicalism of the human person is not incompatible with these two ideas. It does not say that mental properties are merely physical things. Rather physicalism can imply that although atoms of the brain jointly produce a simple and unified act of thought, the mental

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[8] I assume that coincidence of two objects is not possible. But some philosophers argue that it is possible that there are two distinct objects at the same region of space at the same time, and one is composed or constituted by the other one. On this view, a human person is not identical with his body, and the former is coincident with the latter; he is constituted by his body. For the defense of the so-called colocationism or the constitution view, see Lynne Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and E. J. Lowe, *Subjects of Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chapter 2. For a critique of the constitution view in philosophy of religion, see Dean Zimmerman, "Christians Should Affirm Mind-Body Dualism," in *Contemporary Debates in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Michael Peterson and Raymond VanArragon (Malden: Blackwell, 2003). I think that colocationism cannot explain the passion of Christ for following reason. According to the theory, a human person is not identical with his body but something distinct from it. Now suppose that someone pinched Christ. Colocationists must say that the two objects, that is, Christ the person and his body, were pinched by someone. But if Christ was something distinct from his body, then he could not feel pain when he was pinched. This is not biblical. If colocationists reply that Christ felt pain because his body was pinched, this admits that Christ was identical with his body, but this is what colocationism rejects.

[9] For the explanatory gap argument, see Joseph Levine, "Materialism and Qualia," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1986): 354-361.

property is not reducible to the nonthinking parts. Thus, physicalism does not necessarily imply type-type identity or logical supervenience or any other reductionist idea. So on the physicalist view, a human person is a living organism having irreducible mental properties.

The doctrine of the Incarnation can be explained in terms of physicalism of the human person. On this view, that God the Son became a human being means that he became a living human organism having sui generis mental properties. Of course, this does not mean that Christ was merely a human being. Necessarily, if Jesus was God the Son, he was God the Son even after he was incarnated. Then it is logically possible that although he became a material object like a living organism, he did have essential properties as God the Son. That is, he possessed properties that make him God the Son in this world (I will argue for this in more detail in the next section). It is hard to enumerate every essential property of God the Son, and this is not a main topic of this paper. We can simply think of some representative properties of God such as omnipotence and omniscience. Since Jesus was God the Son, he had properties of omnipotence and omniscience. Thus, in this actual world where he was walking and living almost 2000 years ago, he still was God the Son because of those essential properties, although he did not have an immaterial part.[10] So the physicalist Christology explains two natures in one person. Christ was fully divine because he possessed essential properties as God the Son. He also was fully human because he was a living human organism.

Moreover, the physicalist Christology provides a more plausible view of Jesus' real suffering and death than dualism. As we have discussed above, dualism has a dilemma regarding Christ's suffering and death. But the physicalist view does not have such a problem. On this view, Christ was feeling pain when his body was hurt. He died when biological functions of his

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[10] Obviously, being immaterial is not an essential property of God the Son, although it may be essential to God the Father and God the Spirit. God the Son certainly had physical properties so he was not purely immaterial in this world.

body ceased to work. Since he and his body are one and the same thing, it is to be said that anything true of him is true of that body.

In my view, the physicalist view of the passion of the Christ is contrasted to dualism the most in the following sense. Dualism must say that Christ could not die, since he was a soul that cannot essentially die. So dualists must say that God the Son cannot die. On the other hand, physicalism accepts that he can. If Jesus' suffering and death were real, and that he was God the Son, then given physicalism, the incarnate God suffered and died. This idea could be shocking to some Christians, but this is a logical conclusion of the identity statement (Jesus *is* God the Son), and what the Bible tells us.[11] The dualist view, whether it is HSV or DSV, cannot capture that idea, since it must say that God the Son was alive even after the Crucifixion. Thus, given dualism, it is very hard to make sense of the death of God the Son. Moreover, if God the Son were alive after the Crucifixion, it would be hard to see why his resurrection is very important. For the resurrection in the Bible and Christian tradition means the resurrection of the dead body.[12] But if Christ is identical with his body, this shows why the resurrection is a big deal. All things considered, physicalism is philosophically and theologically more plausible than dualism.[13]

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[11] Some could claim that it is hard to understand God the Son died, since he was a divine being, that is, God. So physicalism, according to them, is wrong. I agree that God as the divine spirit cannot die. However, this does not apply to Christ. Again, by assumption he was fully human and fully divine. Because of his full humanity, it was possible that he died. Certainly, he was a divine being, but he was not a spirit after the Incarnation. So we should not say that the divine spirit was crucified and died. Rather we should say that a divine being who became a human person physically suffered and died.

[12] i.e., The Apostle's Creed says "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Similarly, the Nicene Creed says "I look for the resurrection of the dead."

[13] My view is consistent with Martin Luther's "theology of the cross," according to which "Christ is God and a human being in one person because whatever is said about him as a human being must also be said of him as God, namely, "Christ has died," and, as Christ is God, it follows that "God has died" – not God in isolation, but God united with humanity." Cited from *The Christian Theology Reader*, 2nd ed. Ed., Alister McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 281. Tertullian, an early Church Father, held that everything, including God and the human soul, is corporeal. See Raymond Martin and John Barresi, "Introduction," in *Personal Identity*, ed. Martin and John Barresi (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 12. If this is right, when Jesus died, his human soul died too. By appealing to this idea, HSV could explain Christ's death. But I think this kind of

Objection and Reply

Objection: Suppose for *reductio* that the physicalist view of the passion of the Christ is true. On the physicalist view, a human person is identical with his body, and he does not have a substantial soul. If so, God the Son became a human being by being identical with a human organism. He did not have a substantial soul. Now that he was fully human by becoming a human body, he must have possessed essential properties of human beings. Then he must have been mortal; for every physical body (a human person given physicalism) essentially is mortal. Besides, material objects cannot be omnipotent or omniscient so Jesus must have lacked such divine properties. If so, we have a strange idea that God the Son was mortal, and that he was not omnipotent and omniscient. So the physicalist Christology is wrong according to traditional Christian theism.

Reply: The assumption of this objection is that a living organism cannot have divine attributes, since being physical and being divine are contradictory. This assumption, however, is misleading. It is similar to a Platonic view, according to which something spiritual is good and something physical is evil and corrupted, so the Holy God cannot become a human body. I do not want to buy such a Platonic view, because it is not biblical (The Bible does not say that something physical is essentially bad. Note that God created the physical world and said that it was good). In a similar vein, I want to argue that it is not unbiblical and logically impossible that a material object like a human person has divine attributes. But this applies only to Christ, because before the Incarnation, he already was God the Son; God cannot lose his divinity since he

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dualism is radical and not a dualist view in a traditional sense. I am not sure how dualists can explain that a soul is corporeal.

is essentially divine.[14] Thus, even though he became a human organism, this does not necessarily imply that he lost his divinity. It is worth noting that the Incarnation was an addition of human attributes to God the Son. So he was fully divine as well as fully human even though he was incarnated by becoming a human organism.[15]

I want to say more about the objection. Was Christ, a living human organism, omnipotent, omniscient and immortal for the period of the Incarnation? This question is two-fold. If the question asks whether he was *always* omnipotent and omniscient, and mortal, the answer is 'no.' Obviously, the Bible tells us that Jesus was sometimes not omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal (God the Son died on the cross, and as we have discussed above, physicalism does say that). But if the question asks whether he was *essentially* omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal even for the period of the Incarnation, I would answer, 'yes.' Even though Jesus was not always omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal, it does not follow, as I shall explain below, that he lost such properties that are essential to God.[16]

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[14] Another reply says that that lacking maximal power or maximal knowledge is not an essential property to be a human being, although it is common to all human beings. Being common does not imply being essential. That is, it is possible that a human being is omnipotent and omniscient. This is very attractive but not successful. For a human being is necessarily a creature in every possible world he exists, and then he is not powerful to create himself. For the strategy, see Thomas Senor, "The Incarnation and the Trinity," in *Reason for the Hope Within*, ed., Michael Murray (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 248-249.

[15] HSV cannot say the same thing. On HSV, a human person is essentially a human soul, and God the Son became a human person by becoming a human soul. But a human soul is essentially a human soul so it is necessary that it cannot be divine. But in the case of God the Son's becoming a material object like a living human organism, there is no reason to think that such a being cannot essentially be divine or loses his divinity. Physicality, unlike having a property of being a human soul, is neutral with being divine and being not-divine, so it is possible that the property does not hurt God the Son's divinity.

[16] Some philosophers suggest the "two minds view," according to which Christ had two minds, one divine and one human. It says that the divine mind is omniscient, whereas the human mind is not. The divine mind is omnipotent while the human mind is not. But I am not convinced by this theory for the reason of a schizophrenic Jesus. It is hard to understand the existence of two consciousnesses in one person. Besides, it is unclear how a mind is omnipotent. But for a defense of the "two minds view" of the Incarnation, see Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), chapter 6.

I believe that even though God the Son became a material object, he still had properties essential to God. This, some could say, is contradictory to the view that God the Son did not know some truth (i.e., the hour of his return) and that he physically suffered and died. How can we solve the contradiction? Some could argue that to solve the problem, physicalism should be connected to the kenosis theory, according to which God the Son abandoned some of his divine properties in order to become incarnated (Philippians 2:6-7). For example, when he became a living human organism, he laid aside omnipotence and omniscience while his moral properties (i.e. love and mercy) were maintained. But I am not convinced by the kenosis theory for a simple reason. If God is essentially omnipotent and omniscient, then he would not be divine any more if he did not have such divine properties. God cannot give up his divine properties that he essentially has. If God is necessarily omnipotent and omniscient, it is impossible that God does not have such properties in any possible world. Thus, the kenosis theory is wrong.[17] Again, the Incarnation was not a subtraction from his divine natures but an addition of human natures.

If the kenosis theory is wrong, how should the physicalist understand his divine attributes during his earthly life? For example, if Christ was essentially omnipotent, how could he not avoid his suffering and death? I think his omnipotence does not imply that he could do whatever he wanted to do during the period of the Incarnation. Note that he was fully human. Physicalists must admit that since he took on human natures, he had limitations on functioning omnipotence. But such limitations did not result from the loss of omnipotence. Rather he *voluntarily* decided not to use all of his power by taking on some human natures. Thus, the limitation was not a result of the loss of his divinity. Think about this analogy. Suppose that Tiger Woods, the world's greatest golfer, voluntarily covers up one of his eyes and plays a golf

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[17] Some theologians argue that the kenosis theory is based on a wrong interpretation of Philippians 2:6-7. They say that what God the Son emptied himself of was not divine properties but the glory he had as God. This interpretation claims that Jesus emptied himself in order to become functionally subordinated to the Father for the period of Incarnation. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 751.

game. In that situation, he cannot fully perform his great golf skill since he had a limitation on his ability. But it is hard to say that his ability is in essence diminished in that situation. Similarly, so long as God the Son voluntarily limited his power by taking some physical natures, it does not follow that his omnipotence was not in essence surrendered. Of course, Jesus sometimes used his power for some reason (i.e. to show his divine Sonship). Obviously, he could have avoided his suffering and death because he was omnipotent (as he told Paul) but he did not choose to avoid them. The problem of omniscience can be understood in the light of this idea too.

Likewise, the Incarnate Word was essentially immortal. The divine property of being immortal was not displaced by the property of being mortal. So it was possible that he became immortal in this world. But he voluntarily chose to die. He voluntarily accepted human mortality for some reason. But this does not imply that the property of being immortal was divested when he became incarnated.

In conclusion, although physicalism does say that God the Son died on the cross, it does not say that he died just because he abandoned some of his divine natures when he was incarnated. Rather it says that he still had all the divine properties during his period on earth and even on the cross, but he suffered and died because he rendered himself vulnerable to physical pains.[*]

MOLINISM, OPEN THEISM, AND MORAL LUCK

Mark Anderson

Libertarian theists are forced to grapple with the problem of divine foreknowledge.

Among the most salient options available to them are Molinism, on which God has pre-volitional

knowledge of counterfactuals of freedom, and open theism, on which God's knowledge is

severely restricted—not only lacking in knowledge of true counterfactuals of freedom (all of

which open theists typically deny to be true at all), but also in knowledge of future free actions in

the actual world.[1]

The choice between them is sometimes presented as a trade-off between competing

values. On Molinism, God has providential power over the history of the world, but acquires it

only at the cost of flirting with something close to theological determinism—God has the ability,

in an indirect way, to manipulate my behavior by manipulating the circumstances in which I am

placed.[2] And insofar as God's judgment of me is contingent upon some aspect of my behavior,

God thus has the ability, in an indirect way, to control that in virtue of which I will be judged. On

open theism, this ability is denied, but so is God's providential control. To put it (very) crudely,

Molinism wrests control from human beings and gives it to God, while open theism wrests

control from God and gives it to human beings.

In this paper, I argue that this picture is mistaken. I think the Molinist can have her cake

and eat it, too—she can grant that God has providential control *and* claim that human beings have

more control over that in virtue of which God judges us than they would have had on open

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[1] Of course, there are intermediate positions on which God has no knowledge of the truth-value of
counterfactuals of freedom (with false antecedents) but has knowledge of the actual future. However, since
Molinism and open theism represent the extreme positions in the field, the contrast between them is both
striking and instructive.
[2] Despite the fact that, on Molinism, God can't control what I would freely do in those circumstances.

theism. This can be seen by the different ways in which open theists and Molinists may respond to the problem of moral luck.

(But first, a simplifying assumption: I assume here that God's judgment of us is determined by our moral profile. This assumption isn't essential—if "salvation is by faith alone," then the motivation for my thesis would flow equally well from, say, a parallel problem of fideistic luck.)

I. The Problem and the Open Theist's Reply

Nagel's seminal writing on moral luck includes (or inspires) examples like these:

A. Resultant luck: Two men attempt murder by shooting, but only one attempt succeeds—the other fails due to the unexpected intervention of a passing bird (61).

B. Constitutive luck: One man is an utter moral monster due to rampant abuse suffered as a child, while another, whose parents were model citizens, is a picture of pure virtue.

C. Circumstantial luck: A perfectly harmless German émigré to Argentina would have been a Nazi officer if his family hadn't left Germany while he was young (58-59).

In each case, Nagel says, our moral evaluation of the agent will turn on luck—i.e., on facts beyond the agent's control. Perhaps he is right. But libertarian theists, at any rate, certainly hope that *God's* evaluation of the agent won't turn on facts beyond her control. But what *does* it turn on?

I expect that the open theist's response will be something like this:

(a) Surely, God would not judge us on the presence or absence of a passing bird—the outcomes of the agent's behavior aren't what matters, but rather, the act of agency itself.

(So we needn't worry about resultant luck.) (b) And when it comes to evaluating the act itself, what matters is what you do with what you're given—from those who have been given much (e.g., virtuous dispositions instilled by virtuous parents), much will be expected, and from those who have been given little (e.g., nasty dispositions instilled by abusive parents), little will be expected. (So this mitigates the force of constitutive luck.) (c) Finally, there's no sense in talking about what someone would have freely done had she been in different circumstances—quite simply, no counterfactual assertions of that sort are true.[3] (So Nagel's example of circumstantial luck is incoherent). All God has to go by is what the agent does in the actual world, and the effects of luck in the actual world may be neutralized in God's evaluation of the agent along the lines mentioned in (b).

How shall we evaluate this reply?

I am happy to grant point (a) and ignore resultant luck for the rest of the paper. But I have severe doubts about the efficacy of (b) and (c).

First, note that circumstantial and constitutive luck, although distinguished by Nagel, can without confusion be treated as a single kind of luck—a more general kind of circumstantial luck. Let's say that, for any set of circumstances C, C includes the atom-for-atom arrangement of the world and the laws of nature, insofar as they participate in inclining forces on the agent.[4] Then C will include facts about what morally relevant actions are open to the agent (e.g., whether she has the opportunity to enlist in the Nazi army) and also facts about the agent's constitution (e.g.,

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[3] Some open theists might grant that there are true counterfactuals of freedom, but deny that those propositions are knowable by God. For our purposes, there is no pragmatic difference between denying that there are true counterfactuals of freedom and saying that their truth-value is unknowable by God—on both views, they are off limits when it comes to God's evaluation of us. For brevity's sake, I will just assume that open theists deny that there are true counterfactuals of freedom.

[4] This is a stipulation about how I intend to use the expression "set of circumstances C," not a substantive claim. Libertarians, at any rate (to whom Molinism and open theism may be live options), ought to be on board with this way of speaking.

whether or not she has nasty dispositions). The trouble with luck exemplified in cases (B) and (C) is that one's being in C is (often) beyond one's control, but that one's being in C nevertheless appears to play a role in determining one's moral profile.

Now, let's take a closer look at the open theist's strategy for addressing this problem. The agent's moral profile is determined by her behavior in just the actual world, but—according to (b)—it is sensitive to the difficulty involved in what she does, the resources given to her, etc. Call this the agent's "Behavior-Difficulty Index" (or "BDI"). In the spirit of Kant, we might guess that the moral monster in example (B) who struggles to do some small moral good has a higher BDI than the model citizen who does great moral good with ease. At any rate, there would be no absurdity in supposing so, and God, we may justifiably assume, is capable of measuring an agent's BDI with perfect accuracy. So, the open theist's response above is that the agent's moral profile is determined by her BDI in just the actual world, and that this is enough to neutralize the effects of luck on the agent's moral profile.

But note that the agent's BDI varies wildly from world to world. It does so in two ways. First (given libertarianism), there are worlds in which the agent's BDI differs from her actual BDI due to different choices that the agent makes in some C in which the agent is also placed in the actual world. (So, there are worlds in which I freely chose to murder my wife last night after coming home.) Call this "Type-A variance". Second, there are worlds in which the agent's BDI differs from her actual BDI due to choices that the agent makes in some C* in which the agent is *not* placed in the actual world. (So, there are worlds in which I have to make some morally relevant decision while being chased by the Yakuza, a decision which alters my BDI.)[5] Call this "Type-B variance".[6] Type-A variance poses no problem for us, since this kind of variance is not

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[5] Note: I have not been, am not being, and (I trust) never will be chased by the Yakuza.
[6] To complicate matters, there are worlds that suffer from both Type-A and Type-B variance. And there are worlds in which the different choices that the agent makes "cancel each other out" so that her BDI isn't altered from what it is in the actual world. Nothing is lost in the present discussion by ignoring these complications.

a matter of luck. (Put another way, we *make* worlds with Type-A variance non-actual through our free actions.) The problem is with Type-B variance. Since we don't (always) control the circumstances in which we are placed, and since our BDI varies in worlds in which we are placed in different circumstances, the concern is that we don't have a sufficient degree of control over our BDI, and hence, over our moral profile.

The open theist's response to this worry is expressed by (c) above. Let C* be some non-actual set of circumstances (i.e., some set of circumstances in which the agent is not placed in the actual world). According to the open theist, the following claim is not true:

1. Had C* been actual, the agent's moral profile would have been different.

(1) is not true on open theism because there is no true counterfactual of freedom pertaining to what the agent would have freely done in C*, and so there is no true counterfactual pertaining to what the agent's BDI, and hence, moral profile, would have looked like had C* been actual. So, any claim asserting that her moral profile would have been different if she were placed in C* is not true. So, while there is Type-B variance across possible worlds, it's an error to say that there *would have been* Type-B variance had the agent been placed in different sets of circumstances. And at first glance, this might seem sufficient for protecting the agent's moral profile from luck.

But this first glance is too superficial. For it follows from open theism that the following claim *also* is not true:

2. Had C* been actual, the agent's moral profile would have been the same.

After all, if there is no true counterfactual of freedom pertaining to what the agent would have freely done in C*, then any claim that she would have acted in a way that would *not* alter her BDI (and hence, moral profile) is not true. So, not only is there Type-B variance across possible worlds, but it's an error to say that there *would not have been* Type-B variance had the agent been

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placed in different sets of circumstances. So, we seem to be in a ticklish position. How are we to evaluate it?

Here's how. Since the agent's being in C is often something over which she has no control, the crucial question is *whether or not her being in C plays an ineliminable role in determining her moral profile*. If it does, then the open theist is impugned by the problem of moral luck. But now it should be clear that the mere fact that (1) is not true and (C) is incoherent on open theism is a red herring. On open theism, an agent's moral profile is determined exclusively by facts about the actual world—including the circumstances in which the agent acts. (After all, the circumstances in which the agent acts play a crucial role when factoring in the difficulty, etc. of the agent's behavior—the "D" in the agent's BDI.) The fact that, on open theism, (2) isn't true demonstrates that open theism has no way of inoculating her moral profile against the luck involved in the obtaining of C. It appears, then, that C *does* play an ineliminable role in determining her moral profile—and so open theism falls afoul of the problem of moral luck.

II. The Molinist's Reply

The Molinist, on the other hand, has a way of asserting both that (1) is false *and* that (2) is true, thus protecting the agent's moral profile from luck. All the Molinist needs to do is to adopt a standard solution to the problem of moral luck—or, at any rate, a particular version of that solution.

Michael Zimmerman and John Greco have each promoted a solution to the problem on which an agent's moral profile is determined not just by her actual moral record (or her actual BDI), but by a subset of the sum total of her moral behavior across worlds. What matters, they say, is not just what you in fact do in the circumstances you inherit, but also what you *would* do in all the different circumstances you could possibly inherit. The solution has an immediate

intuitive appeal. "Are you really a better person than Joe Shmo?" one might ask, pointing at some convicted criminal. "Well, how would *you* have acted had you been in Joe's shoes?" The question seems to be precisely the one we should be asking, the answer to which appears to play a crucial role in determining your moral profile.

Of course, the Molinist (but not the open theist) holds that there's a fact of the matter regarding what you would do in all those different circumstances. All the Molinist needs to do is to add a dash of libertarianism—in particular, the claim that all (actual or counterfactual) behavior relevant for assessing the agent's moral profile is libertarianly free behavior—and a second claim. The second claim is that, for any non-actual C* in which the agent can be placed, were the agent to be placed in C*, the truth-value of every counterfactual of freedom in which the agent participates would be the same as it is in the actual world. Both of these claims are already required by Molinism, and so they represent no additional burden that the Molinist needs to shoulder.[7]

The results are just what we were hoping for. My moral profile in the actual world is determined, not just by what I freely do in the actual world, but by what I would freely do for any set of circumstances in which I could be placed—i.e., by the facts asserted by true counterfactuals of freedom about me. In other words, it's not just my actual BDI which is relevant. My moral profile is determined also by my BDI in all of the worlds to which those true counterfactuals of freedom correspond—my BDI in all of the worlds in which I exist and which God can actualize. Further, had God actualized some *other* world, had I been placed in *other* circumstances, the very same counterfactuals of freedom would have been true of me (according to the second claim

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[7] The second claim is made by Plantinga ("Reply to Robert Adams" 376) and Freddoso in response to Adams' and Kenny's argument that counterfactuals of freedom are not possibly knowable prior to God's act of creation, since which counterfactuals are true turns on which world is the actual world, which in turn depends on what God creates. The reply—that God (so to speak) "inherits" the truth-value of every counterfactual of freedom prior to creation and can do nothing about it, regardless of what he creates—is the only available response.

above). So, had I been placed in some other set of circumstances, my moral profile would have remained the same. So, not only can the Molinist assert the falsity of

1. Had C* been actual, the agent's moral profile would have been different.

The Molinist can also assert the *truth* of

2. Had C* been actual, the agent's moral profile would have been the same.

And that is the result we needed.

The Molinist, of course, doesn't deny that there is Type-B variance in an agent's BDI across worlds. For that matter, she has no way of denying that there *would have been* Type-B variance had the agent been placed in different circumstances. (Suppose—to pick a number out of the blue—your actual BDI is 0.72. Would your BDI have been 0.72 had you been raised among the Bushmen of the Kalihari Desert?[8] To claim that it would have been is to make a wildly unsupported statement of faith.) But Type-B variance isn't the problem for the Molinist that it was for the open theist, for (on the Molinist suggestion I have offered) the agent's moral profile isn't determined by her BDI at just one world. So, an agent's BDI may (Type-B) vary among multiple worlds without her moral profile also varying among those worlds. That is the key to the solution to the problem, as articulated in the last paragraph. And since the open theist rejects counterfactuals of freedom, and so is forced to confine the agent's moral profile to her BDI at just one world (the actual world), this solution is unavailable to her. The Molinist, then, can succeed in addressing the problem of moral luck, while the open theist cannot.

III. Conclusion

I conclude that the original picture with which we began is mistaken. On Molinism, God can make use of the counterfactuals of freedom in the creation decision in order indirectly to

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[8] Note: I am assuming that the reader was not raised among the Bushmen of the Kalihari Desert.

manipulate the course of events. So, God exercises providential control over the course of history. But on the Molinist alternative I offered, God has *no* control over my moral profile. Further, my moral profile isn't subject to *anything* other than myself—the truth-value of the counterfactuals of freedom about me doesn't turn on the satisfaction of their antecedents, i.e., upon my actually being in some C.[9] Of course, it's also true that, on *open theism*, God does not have the ability (completely) to manipulate my moral profile.[10] Nevertheless, on open theism, my moral profile *is* subject to facts beyond my control, i.e., the obtaining of C. So, the Molinist may correctly claim that her position gives human beings *more* control over that in virtue of which God judges us than does open theism.[11]

Of course, none of this makes Molinism *true*. For it to be true, there would have to be true counterfactuals of freedom, knowable pre-volitionally by God, and many philosophers are unwilling to admit that there are such things. But we should abandon talk of the choice between Molinism and open theism as being a trade-off between the "competing" values of divine providence and human control. When it comes to which is the more *attractive* choice, the advantages slide in the Molinist's favor.[12]

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[9] No Molinist that I am aware of has claimed that we *make true* the true counterfactuals of freedom about us which have false antecedents. But the facts that they assert are facts about us—about our (counterfactual) exercise of libertarian freedom. So, while we don't strictly *make true* the vast majority of true counterfactuals of freedom, their truth is, in the sense that matters, up to us. Their truth certainly isn't up to anything (or anyone) *else*.

[10] However, there is some *mitigated* sense in which, on open theism, God may influence my moral profile, for there is some mitigated sense in which God controls the fact that I am in C (although my being in C is also subject, presumably, to the consequences of others' free acts).

[11] As noted before, I am fairly confident that the result will be the same even if God's judgment of us is in virtue of some feature other than our moral profile—e.g., our faith. A parallel problem of fideistic luck can be constructed, whereby it is shown that agents often have no control over whether they have the opportunity for faith, or the ease with which they can have faith. A parallel solution is also forthcoming: our fideistic profile might turn not only on our faith in the actual world, but how our faith would have turned out had we been placed in other circumstances. (Naturally, I'm assuming that the faith that matters is the product of libertarian action.)

[12] There may be another theological advantage to the Molinist solution to the problem of moral luck that I have just offered: perhaps it affords a novel way to make sense of original sin. Those who, to all appearances, *actually* do no wrong may nevertheless have a "sinful" moral profile.

One might think, on the other hand, that the Molinist suggestion I've offered carries a severe theological *cost*, in that it undermines the free will defense (which, of course, is the very purpose to which

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it was put when reintroduced to contemporary philosophical consciousness by Alvin Plantinga (…*Necessity* 164-96)). If God has all the evidence he needs to assess an agent's moral profile pre-volitionally, then he has no need to grant us the power to freely cause harm in order to judge us justifiably. This concern about the free will defense has merit, however, only if a highly implausible assumption is true, namely, that the only justifying value of libertarian freedom is the license it confers on God to judge us. Surely this is false, and so I doubt that my suggestion undermines the free will defense.

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THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF INTERDICT:

SOME MORE WARNINGS FROM HISTORY

Marshall Crossnoe

I would like to begin with a claim that I have heard or read in one form or another for almost thirty years. The claim is this: "Church history teaches that whenever Christian thinkers baptize philosophy, they compromise the Christian faith." That claim is the church historian's version of St. Paul's warning, "see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy." It is the church historian's answer to Tertullian's famous rhetorical question, "What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?" It is a "history of doctrine take" on the perennial conflict between faith and reason, a take that Adolph Harnack exploited to great and lasting effect in *History of Doctrine,* and the one that Etienne Gilson challenged in his famous little book entitled *Faith and Reason.*

The claim reminds me of interdict. Interdict is the censure that bishops of Rome have been using since the ninth century.[1] By means of interdict, popes interrupt participation in holy things. It typically takes the form of denying someone or some group access to the Divine Liturgy, the sacraments, Christian burial, or other means of grace. The claim regarding what church history teaches is a call to interdict philosophy. If church history teaches that whenever Christian thinkers baptize philosophy, they compromise the Christian faith, then we should have nothing to do with philosophy. We should withhold baptism from it.

I do not believe that is a good idea. T he interdiction of philosophy is a double-edged sword. It can, and in the past it has, cut both ways. We can protect theological investigation from contamination or compromise by prohibiting the use of philosophical tools of enquiry in

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[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1917), s. v., "interdict," www.newadvent.org/cathen/08073a.htm.

theological investigation. But such prohibition can also insulate theological investigation from constructive and creative engagement.

I. Paris in the Thirteenth Century

An instructive instance of such constructive and creative engagement occurred at the University of Paris during the thirteenth century. Several generations of academic theologians directed a bright season of theological and philosophical interplay, one in which philosophy served holy doctrine *(sacra doctrina).* Furthermore, during that same bright season others were busy trying to quarantine the faith from philosophical contamination. Between approximately 1190 and 1330, a handful of Parisian masters put Aristotle to work productively as a handmaiden to theology just when others sought to place Aristotle under interdict. The convergence of both treatments of philosophy by theology has something to teach us.

A. Philosophy Baptized

Three related trajectories of theological and philosophical interplay animated the arts and theology faculties at Paris during the thirteenth century.[2] Alexander of Hales (✝ c. 1245) led the first of the trajectories. In his theological *Summa,* which was compiled before 1245, Alexander posed the question, "Is theology a science?" He was probably the first academic theologian to ask that question, and he answered it in the negative. "Theology is not a science," Alexander wrote. "It is a 'wisdom.'" It is a habit or virtue of knowledge, and it is different from the habit or virtue of knowledge called science. Alexander and his contemporaries had received a particular understanding of science *(scientia)* from Aristotle and Boethius, and understanding that assumes science is the apprehension and articulation of universal truths by means of demonstration. By contrast, according to Alexander, Holy Doctrine seeks salvation, and it does so by apprehension

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[2] M.-D. Chenu's *La théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle,* 3rd ed. (Paris, 1957; 1st ed., Paris, 1942) is the classic study of this attempt to understand theology as a science. Also see Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Eugene, OR, 2001; 1st ed., Philadelphia, 1983).

and articulation of revealed truths and particular, historical truths. The means and ends of these two ways of knowing are different. Because the revealed and historical truths that theology treats are alluded to or found in Holy Scripture, the primary method of theology is not demonstration. Instead, theology employs the methods of textual analysis. As Alexander saw it, treat metaphors and imagery; they trace narratives, and use other strategies that are essentially literary.

At about the same time, other Parisian theologians were pursuing a related, but slightly different line of enquiry. This second trajectory eventually moved the discussion about whether or not theology was a science to another level. William of Auxerre (✝ 1223) initiated the second trajectory by thinking like one of Alexander's theologians, that is, by proposing an analogy. In his *Sentences* commentary, which might be the earliest *Sentences* commentary ever produced, William suggested that the articles of the Christian faith function in theology just as first principles function in philosophy. He was probably the first to propose this analogy. Where Alexander and his followers answered, "No, theology is not a science; it is something completely different," William and his followers answered, "Yes, there is one way we can consider theology to be a science, and that is by taking 'science' to mean the way of thinking that moves from first principles to conclusions by accepted rational means."

Thomas Aquinas (✝ 1274) is the best-known theologian who embraced William of Auxerre's analogy. Aquinas exploited the full explanatory power of the analogy, and in doing so advanced understanding of the process of theological thinking. He acknowledged the necessity of revelation and its operation in theological thinking, which was a standard approach that went all the way back to Augustine. For Aquinas as for Augustine, the articles of the Christian faith are revealed, and they correspond to a "revelatory receptivity" in human beings. As revealed, these articles become the first principles of the faith. But Aquinas advanced the discussion by suggesting that this mode of knowing makes room for questions. He combined Augustine's view of revealed knowledge with William of Auxerre's analogy to science and produced a compelling

definition and justification of the Parisian theological project. Because revealed articles of the faith could be reasoned from like first principles, active reflection on collections of articles of the faith such as Peter Lombard's *Sentences* could generate further truths, derivative truths, new truths. And so students of theology in universities across Europe composed commentaries on Lombard's *Sentences* for the next 500 years.

The conception of science as a body of truths or conclusions derived from first principles by means of demonstration is a philosophical conception. Alexander of Hales and company said that theology is not ordered according to that conception, but William of Auxerre and Thomas Aquinas and others said it is. The operative difference is that members of the second group believed theology and philosophy started from different principles, and that they ended at different propositions. *Summas, Sentences* commentaries, and collections of *quodlibetal* and other disputed questions produced around 1250 reveal Parisian theologians sorting out the vagaries and contradictions attendant on the claim that theology is a way of knowing that is similar in some important ways to the philosophical way of knowing called science.

A third and related trajectory also opened up at mid-century. Contemporaries of the younger Aquinas, or perhaps a few theologians who immediately preceded him, began to ask the next logical question. Some of those who accepted the analogy between theological knowing and the knowing of science accepted the related distinction between types of knowing, and then explored the distinction's implications for theology. *Summas, Sentences* commentaries, and collections of questions produced at Paris between 1250 and 1330 contain the question, "What kind of science is theology?" And the answers they give to this question are philosophical answers.

The range of possible answers to the question "What kind of science is theology?" was never very wide. The number of possible answers was limited from the very beginning, and it was

limited for philosophical reasons. Theology was either speculative or practical. The ancient Greek division of knowledge into theory and praxis ruled the thirteenth-century investigations. Masters and scholars at Paris during the third and fourth quarters of the century opted for one or the other of the two positions. Some answered that theology is a speculative science, because its highest occupation is contemplation of God alone. It seeks no other object but knowledge of the divine. Others argued that theology is practical, because its end is practice. It is an intellectual habit intended to change the theologian's behavior. Thomas Aquinas is the leading figure of a group who sought a middle position by answering that theology is both speculative and practical. Of course, Aquinas leaned to the speculative side; he wrote that theology as speculative is the more noble endeavor, for as such it is concerned with divine truth.

The ancient philosophical division of knowledge helped thirteenth-century theologians at Paris to understand their own academic discipline, and their use of that division opened up new possibilities. Franciscan theology masters following Bonaventure (✝ 1274) offered a third answer, one that bypassed the dominant binary of theory and praxis. They argued that theology is neither speculative nor practical, but affective. It is a way of knowing that transforms the desires, that restructures and redirects the affective life of human beings. I am working on a manuscript of a Victorine master from the early fourteenth century who posed the question this way: "Is theology speculative, practical, or affective?" He answered that it is speculative, but his articulation of the question and his summary treatment of all three possible answers are instructive. They testify to the way in which the original binary approach to the question, which was thoroughly philosophical, opened up a third option that produced theological insight.

B. Philosophy Interdicted

At the same time that academic theologians were following these three fruitful trajectories of philosophical theologizing, others at Paris were attempting to interdict philosophy. In 1210, a

church council forbade the public or private reading of Aristotle's natural philosophy and commentaries on it.[3] In 1215, papal legate Robert de Courçon issued a series of statutes for the University of Paris that renewed the earlier prohibition.[4] The statutes specified the minimum age and training requirements for university masters. They also specified the style and color of robes that masters could wear when teaching, and they prohibited masters from wearing fancy shoes under their robes. More important for our concerns, the 1215 statutes directly addressed the issue of teaching philosophy. They specified a list of treatises on logic by Porphyry, Aristotle, and Boethius that could be taught by members of the arts faculty. Only senior regent masters could teach these texts, and only during what were called "regular lectures." Non-regents and advanced students were not allowed to lecture on the logical treatises in the informal afternoon sessions called "extraordinary lectures." Moreover, the regents could only teach the logical works. The *Metaphysics* and the treatises on natural philosophy were explicitly proscribed. They were not to be taught or read, and anyone found doing so had fifteen days to publicly and permanently correct his ways. If he did not, excommunication procedures were started. Aristotle's metaphysics and natural philosophy were effectively placed under interdict.

The story did not end in 1215. Perhaps as few as two decades later, university masters at Paris were lecturing on the very works of Aristotle that the 1215 statutes prohibited. We have known for some time that the statutes did not regulate university practice for very long. Another document issued in 1255 makes that clear.[5] Evidently, at some point after 1215, Courçon's statutes were either officially rescinded, or they were unofficially ignored. The 1255 document

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[3] The authoritative Latin edition of this university document (and those considered below) is the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis,* eds. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain (Paris, 1889 – 1897); hereafter abbreviated *CUP*. The 1210 prohibition is edited in *CUP,* vol. 1, p. 70; an English translation is available in Edward Grant, *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Cambridge, MA, 1974), p 42.

[4] *CUP,* vol. 1, p. 78; an English translation is available at www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/courcon1.html.

[5] *CUP,* vol. 1, p. 277 – 278; English trans: Grant, *A Source Book,* pp. 43 – 4. Also see Jacques Verger, *Les universités au moyen âge* (Paris, 1973), pp. 94 – 95.

lists the texts that were taught in the arts and philosophy faculties, and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Physics,* and other works of natural philosophy are on the list. A number of scholars around the world are currently working on this development, and they have made some interesting discoveries. They are filling in the gaps between 1215 and 1255. We now know, for example, that an anonymous master in the arts faculty lectured on Aristotle's *Concerning the Soul* at Paris during the mid 1240s.[6] Rega Wood is single-handedly rewriting the history of natural philosophy at Paris, arguing from strong manuscript evidence that masters were lecturing on Aristotle's *Physics* by 1231.[7]

What accounts for this change? Was the 1210/1215 interdiction of Aristotle officially lifted? If so, why? The jury is still out on these questions, and several possible answers are being debated. Comparing the 1210 prohibition and the 1215 statutes, scholars have noted that the latter tacitly permitted private reading of the works that had been prohibited. A papal decree of 1231 allowed the prohibited works to be corrected by a committee of scholars.[8] So there was movement, but a full and compelling explanation of the movement is still pending. It will doubtless include the fact that a new generation of masters and students was at work during the 1230s, a new generation of younger theologians who had better access to and thus better understanding of Aristotle. All of Aristotle's works were recovered and reconstructed by mid-century, so more of Aristotle's writings were available in more complete and more accurate editions than ever before. That means the younger theologians were in a position to understand Aristotle better than their predecessors. The fact that they moved beyond the earlier prohibitions and statutes makes sense in that context.

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[6] See Robert Pasnau's description of "Anonymous (Arts Master), *Sententia super II et III De Anima* (Paris?, c. 1246 – 1247," available at
http://spot.colorado.edu/~pasnau/research/danotes.html.
[7] Rega Wood, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall. In Physicam Aristotelis. Britannici Medii Aevi XVI* (Oxford, 2004).
[8] *CUP,* vol. 1, p. 543 – 544; English trans: Grant, *A Source Book,* pp. 45 – 50.

Others reasserted prohibitions of philosophy near the end of the thirteenth century. In 1270, the bishop of Paris Etienne Tempier published a condemnation of thirteen radical Aristotelian teachings attributed to Averroes (✝ 1198). Seven years later, in 1277, he published a list of 219 propositions that were not to be taught at the university, under the same possible penalties as in 1210/1215.[9] Most of the 219 prohibited propositions, or "errors" as they were called, were claims about natural philosophy taken from Aristotle. Teaching about the eternality of the world, the unicity of the intellect, the possibility of rectilinear motion in space, and other philosophical ideas were prohibited on pain of excommunication.

The story of the 1277 prohibitions is well known, and one assessment of its effects is famous and controversial, at least among historians of medieval science. Pierre Duhem argued that the masters at Paris who were prohibited from teaching Aristotle entertained other explanations of natural and physical phenomena, and thus were precursors of the Scientific Revolution.[10] Duhem celebrated those early fourteenth-century masters who could no longer teach what Aristotle taught about the movement of bodies in space, and the space that they moved in, because of the prohibitions. Instead, they began to entertain possibilities of rectilinear motion and empty space, possibilities that paved the way for modern physics and astronomy.

This "Duhem thesis" has been roundly debated, and most now agree that it was exaggerated.[11] It is too much of an historical stretch to claim that the prohibitions contributed directly to the rise of modern science, no matter how sweet one finds the irony. But the 1277 prohibitions did motivate new philosophical speculation. The manuscript record is unequivocal on that point. Bishop Tempier's attempt to interdict philosophy provoked further philosophizing,

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[9] Verger, *Les universités au moyen âge,* pp. 96 – 100.

[10] Pierre Duhem, *Etudes sur Leonard de Vinci,* 2 vols. (Paris, 1906 – 1913).

[11] An evenhanded and helpful assessment of the "Duhem thesis" is available in Reijer Hooykaas's article, "The Rise of Modern Science; When and Why?", available at www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL_Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780631236 306/001.pdf.

and some of the new ideas generated by that further philosophizing were picked up later and developed in the modern conception of a mechanistic universe governed by natural laws. And, we should hasten to add, the 1277 prohibitions were annulled in the fourteenth century.

II. Warnings from Church History and a Possible Application

Academic theology at Paris during the thirteenth century has some warnings for us. It warns that efforts at interdicting philosophy are not always effective in the long term. Members of the next and smarter generation tend to ignore such efforts. Also, attempts at interdicting philosophy often provoke unanticipated consequences. They motivate further philosophizing, which can create conditions more dire than the original conditions that motivated the interdiction in the first place.

These warnings suggest a contemporary example with which I shall close. Anglicans have historically recognized three sources of authority for Christian faith and practice: the Holy Scriptures, Christian tradition, and human reason. In a way that resonates with the aspirations and achievements of the thirteenth-century theologians, the early Anglican theologians chose to not interdict philosophy. Unlike the continental reformers who cried *"sola scriptura,"* and unlike their Roman counterparts who relied too optimistically on tradition, the Anglicans included the human intellect as a third and mitigating determinant of faith. They insisted that reasoning operates in living dialectic with the Holy Scriptures and tradition as a gift and guide to the faithful. They affirmed a careful trust in human rationality as a resource for better understanding and articulating their faith.

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing until his death in 2004, Jacques Derrida pursued and perfected a philosophical critique of writing that decentered the "presence," the source, the objective referentiality of written language.[12] Derrida's philosophical critique

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[12] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's preface to her translation of Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris, 1967) is still a very helpful introduction to deconstruction. Spivak,

undermines textual authority, an outcome that would naturally be threatening to an Anglican who affirms the authority of Scripture. But perhaps that same Anglican should not rush to interdict deconstruction. Maybe he or she should instead join others who are engaging deconstruction's philosophical challenge to textual authority.

The thirteenth-century theologians we have considered might be helpful in such engagement, for Derrida, like Aristotle, might offer some philosophical assistance for our theologizing. Engagement with deconstruction might lead one to conclude with Alexander of Hales that, "No, this is not an acceptable approach to the textual authority of the Holy Scriptures." But continued conversation with deconstructionists in the effort to construct an adequate and compelling account of how texts function as authoritative could lead elsewhere. Scholars have been engaging deconstruction and its import for Biblical criticism in particular, and for Christian faith in general, for some time.[13] As William of Auxerre showed, a fruitful analogy to some dimension of deconstruction might yet arise out of the engagement. Or, as in the case of the thirteenth-century debates about what kind of science theology is, further conversation might generate a creative way to surpass the binaries of deconstruction. I think of the binaries of the present and the absent, or of the important and the apparently secondary. Derrida asserted that the essential nature of written language demands the inversion of the important and secondary, but engaging that inversion could cause a third way to open up just as continued engagement with Aristotle and the broader philosophical tradition cause affective theology to open up as a possibility at the end of the thirteenth century.

"Translator's Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gaytari Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore; corrected edition, 1997), pp. ix – lxxxvii.

[13] Episcopalian New Testament scholar A. K. M. Adam engages deconstruction in this way in *Faithful Interpretation: Reading the Bible in a Postmodern World* (Minneapolis, 2006), and in *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* Augsburg Fortress Press's Guides to Biblical Scholarship, New Testament Series (Minneapolis, 1995). On deconstruction and the Christian faith more generally, see Mark Taylor, *Deconstructing Theology* (Minneapolis, 1982); and *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (Chicago, 1984). Also see J. Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh, *Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Westmont, IL, 1995).

I'll stop. You catch my drift. Interdiction of deconstruction would make such potentially fruitful conversation very difficult.

THEODICIES, UTILITARIANISM, AND RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Jeffrey M. Freelin

I. Introduction

Responses to the problem of evil are attempts to show that the existence of evil is

consistent with the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God. Theodicy

responses are attempts to justify the ways of God before humankind; the main claim behind most

theodicies is that God has an overriding reason to allow certain types and/or certain amounts of

evil, and that this reason, if properly understood, shows that it is not morally wrong for God to

allow evil. I wish to claim that theodicies of a particular class (what I shall call 'greater good'

theodicies, hereafter referred to as 'FTGG' theodicies), if made in the Christian tradition to

establish that the existence of evil is consistent with the existence of a '3-O' God must fail. If

FTGG theodicies have it right, then God allows some people to suffer in order to bring some

other good about (the popular choices are moral sympathy, moral empathy, courage, and the

like); if this is the case, then it also seems as though at least some of the people who suffer are

allowed to suffer to produce goods for others. If this is the case, I shall argue that the people God

allows to suffer to produce goods for others are not being treated as ends in themselves, but rather

as means to an end. Thus, FTGG theodicists are in the position of claiming that God does not

respect individual persons.

Two things to note before I proceed: 1) I wish to make no claims regarding the existence

of God. My only purpose is to show that FTGG theodicies are inconsistent with Christian

tradition and with respect for persons, and thus fail even from a theistic perspective on those

grounds. 2) I will limit my discussion only to a certain class of theodicies; namely, those which

claim that God allows suffering such that greater good results, and that this fact shows that the existence of evil is consistent with the existence of an omnibenevolent God.

To these ends, I will first briefly specify what I take the problem of evil to be. I will then briefly explain FTGG-type theodicies. Finally, I will present my argument as to why such theodicies must fail, and consider some possible responses to my argument.

II. The Problem of Evil.

There are at least two ways to understand the problem of evil. The so-called 'logical' problem of evil arises when we consider the consistency of the following claims, which I will call set **A**:

> **A:** 1) God is omniscient.
>
> 2) God is omnipotent.
>
> 3) God is omnibenevolent.
>
> 4) Evil exists.

Some explanation is, perhaps, needed here. **A**1) above is often (although not always) taken to mean that God knows all true propositions past, present and future; **A**2) above is often taken to mean that God can do anything that is logically (or metaphysically[1]) possible; **A**3) above is normally taken to mean that God never does anything that is morally wrong.

A4) above is also possibly in need of elucidation. I will take 'evil' for the remainder of this paper to include (although possibly not be limited to) suffering, either emotional or physical, either as the result of the activities of moral agents ('moral' evil) or of natural phenomena ('natural' evil). It is **A**4) above that generates a possible contradiction. That is, of the four propositions in set **A**, on the logical statement of the problem of evil, only three of them can be

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[1] This view is held by Peter Van Inwagen.

true at the same time. If God is omniscient, then God would presumably know how to prevent evil. If God is omnipotent, then God would be able to prevent evil; if God is omnibenevolent, then God would have reason to prevent evil. Yet evil exists. So, God must not be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent (i.e., is either not omniscient, not omnipotent, or not omnibenevolent).

A second way to characterize the problem of evil is sometimes known as the 'evidential' problem of evil. Once one has granted that it is plausible to claim that God allows evil in order to promote some greater good or to prevent a greater evil, the question may arise: what if the evil people suffer under is disproportionate to the amount of good produced? If there is too much evil (or more evil than is necessary), then God still permits (some) evil to no good end, and we are arguably back to the 'logical' problem of evil.

I must confess that the question about the existence of gratuitous evil holds no interest for me[23]; neither is the amount of evil God allows germane to the argument I wish to give in my critique of FTGG theodicies. If I am right, then FTGG theodicies contain a fundamental flaw to which the amount of evil occurring is simply not relevant.

III. FTGG Theodicies.

Theodicy responses to the problem of evil can take a number of different forms. One type of theodicy is the attempt to show that evil is the result of the free will granted by God to humans and other beings (e.g., angels, demons, etc.). The claim here is that the possession of free will is of great value, and so God has a morally sufficient reason for not preventing evils that are the result of the exercise of free will on the part of created creatures. Another type of theodicy is

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[3] I think that the question of gratuitous evil is fundamentally unanswerable for humans; I am quite content to claim that we are not in an epistemic position (and may not be able to get there) that is appropriate to judge the question of the existence of gratuitous evil.

less friendly to the major theistic religions; some have argued that God must necessarily be limited (i.e., God either has limited knowledge, limited power, or is not entirely good); others have argued that all evil is the result of (not necessarily human) free will[4]. However, for the purposes of this paper, the type of response in which I am most interested is the 'for the greater good'-type response. Theodicists of this type wish to claim, roughly, that God has some overriding reason to allow the existence of evil, showing that the propositions in set **A** are not inconsistent; this takes the form of claiming that God allows at least some evil in order to either produce some greater good or to prevent a greater evil. The resulting principle would be something like

> **G^2: God legitimately allows some evil E iff either a) the occurrence of E is necessary for the production of some good G, and the advantages of G are greater than the disadvantages of E, or b) the occurrence of E is necessary for the prevention of some evil E', and the disadvantages of E are not as great as the disadvantages of E'.**

One of the more influential examples of what I take to be an FTGG theodicy is offered by John Hick.[5] Hick starts from a view of humans in the Irenaean tradition:

> Instead of regarding man as having been created by God in a finished state, as a finitely perfect being fulfilling the divine intention for our human level of existence, and then falling disastrously away from this, the minority report [i.e., the Irenaean tradition] sees man as still in process of creation…. (Brackets added.)

> His view was that man as a personal and moral being already exists in the image, but has not yet been formed into the finite likeness of God. By this "likeness" Irenaeus means something more than personal existence as such; he means a certain valuable quality of personal life which reflects finitely divine life. This represents the perfecting of man, the fulfillment of God's purpose for humanity,

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[4] Alvin Plantinga seems to support this view.

[5] The following discussion is taken from Hick's *Evil and the God of Love*, Harper & Rowe, 1977, pp. 253-261, reprinted in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, 3rd edition, Louis Pojman, ed. Wadsworth 1998.

the "bringing of many sons to glory", the creating of "children of God" who are "fellow heirs with Christ" of his glory.

And so man, created as a personal being in the image of God, is only the raw material for a further and more difficult stage of God's creative work. This is the leading of men as relatively free and autonomous persons, through their own dealings with life in the world in which He has placed them, towards that quality of personal existence that is the finite likeness of God.

…[O]ne who has attained to goodness by meeting and eventually mastering temptations, and thus by rightly making responsible choices in concrete situations, is good in a richer and more valuable sense than would one created *ab initio* in a state either of innocence or of virtue. In the former case, which is that of the actual moral achievements of mankind, the individual's goodness has within it the strength of temptation overcome, a stability based upon an accumulation of right choices, and a positive and responsible character that comes from the investment of costly personal effort.

The crucial quality of the world for this end is not the amount of pleasure the world affords us, but 'its fitness for its primary purpose, the purpose of soul-making'. The main idea seems to be that evil does not serve any hedonistic end, the end being aimed at is the proper development of moral personality. However, this seems to me a clear (although subtle and sophisticated) instantiation of G^2 above. God allows evil (or suffering) in order to promote some (admittedly non-hedonistic) end such that the end (the moral

development of humans) outweighs the suffering that is necessary for it, and we as

humans are thus all the better for the suffering we undergo in the 'vale of soul-making'.

IV. The Christian Tradition and Respect for Persons.

The principle G^2 above is a fairly obvious example of a consequentialist-type justification. Consequentialism is the view that what makes actions morally right are the

consequences of the action; roughly, an action is morally acceptable iff it produces on the whole at least as much good (or less evil) as any alternative action available to the agent at that time. Of course, how one defines 'good' (and 'evil') will determine what kind of consequentialist one is, and FTGG theodicists do not provide (across the board) a unified account of the good. I think the most plausible way to take theodicists like Hick would be as a sort of welfare utilitarian (at least regarding the justification of evil *vis-à-vis* God's omnibenevolence). The principle here would be something like 'an action is morally acceptable iff it produces at least as much welfare for the persons affected by the action (or the least anti-welfare) as any action available to the agent at the time'. So, the resulting picture would be: God legitimately allows certain types of evil in certain amounts because allowing those types and amounts of evil produces at least as much welfare (or the least anti-welfare) for all persons affected by the action as any other action available to God at the time.

If the above account is true to the spirit of FTGG theodicies, then it seems as though FTGG theodicists open themselves to a common objection to consequentialist thinking. Consequentialism by its nature enjoins moral agents to maximize[6] some good that is external to the moral action itself; in the case of FTGG theodicies, the existence of evil is taken to be necessary for the production of some good (the development of moral sympathy, empathy, the moral progress of the individual, the moral progress of humankind, etc.). However, it has often been noted that consequentialism is insensitive to considerations of individual rights and justice. That is, as long as no moral agent finds out, individual rights and justice considerations could be violated (in some cases, it might be morally required to violate such considerations) as long as an appropriate amount of the good in question is produced by such actions. Consequentialism in its

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[6] Some forms only require us to satisfy some threshold amount of whatever good it is (e.g., pleasure, preference satisfaction, welfare, etc.) at which we are supposed to be aimed. This type of consequentialism is usually referred to as a 'satisficing' consequentialist theory. I think my objection to FTGG theodicies will tell against either 'maximizing' or 'satisficing' versions.

pure form does not scruple regarding *how* the good is produced, as long as the good is produced in the appropriate amount and outweighs the evil produced.

In the case of FTGG-type theodicies, if the greater good to be produced is produced for someone other than the one who (must) suffer to produce the good, then one who suffers is being treated as a means to the production of the good. For example (and this is a claim that, I think, many FTGG theodicists would endorse), if an earthquake in Indonesia resulting in the deaths of ten thousand people raises the moral and practical consciousness of the rest of the world (great outpourings of support and aid, perhaps improvements in earthquake detection heretofore largely ignored, and an overall net worldwide increase in sympathy and empathy), then arguably the good produced outweighs the evil suffered by the victims of the earthquake, and thus on FTGG theodicy terms, the suffering was justified. However, one must ask: are not the people who died in the quake being used as a means to the production of such goods? Using people as a means to some end is to violate respect for the persons being used; that is, to use someone as a means is to treat that person not as an autonomous being, but as a thing to be used. This consideration generates, I think, the following argument:

B: P1) If one accepts an FTGG theodicy as justificatory for the existence of evil, then one accepts that God allows some evil to exist in order to produce a greater good or to prevent a worse evil.

P2) If one accepts that God allows some evil to exist in order to produce a greater good or to prevent a worse evil, then one is committed to the view that, inevitably, some people will be used (i.e., undergo suffering) by God to produce goods for others.

P3) If one is committed to the view that, inevitably, some people will be used (i.e., undergo suffering) by God to produce goods for others, then one is committed to the view that God does not respect (some) persons.

P4) From a religious point of view, one should not be committed to the view that God does not respect (some) persons.

∴C) From a religious point of view, one should not accept an FTGG theodicy as justificatory for the existence of evil.

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In other words, an FTGG theodicy is designed to show that the existence of evil is consistent with the existence of an omnibenevolent God. However, a bedrock of many Christian views of morality is the notion of the intrinsic value of the autonomous person. FTGG theodicies undermine this notion by appearing to sanction the using of such persons as mere means to some end, and thus should not be acceptable to theists.

One twist in argument **B** above is that God would use someone as a means (and thus not respect their personhood) if they were used to produce goods *for others*. On the line of thinking I am developing, if God allows A to suffer to produce some good for B (or for people in general), then A is being used as a means and thus is not being respected (this is what I tried to capture in P2). However, if God allows A to suffer to produce some good for A herself, then arguably God has not used A as a means, but as an end (e.g., God allows A to suffer to teach A something). The latter case does not clearly show that A is being used as a means; the former case, I think, does. If, in the course of evils that we have empirically observed, there have been some cases in which a person suffers (say, a sudden and painful death) in a way that does not redound to their benefit at all, even if it does produce goods for others, then I would want to say that the sufferer has been used as a means only, and thus not respected. Note that there is no need in the context of an FTGG theodicy to wrangle about the amount of evil allowed compared to the amount of good produced. Any amount of evil allowed in such cases would undermine the justification for evil offered by FTGG theodicies. If such cases have happened, then FTGG theodicies seem to offer no comfort to the theist.

V. Possible Replies.

1) One possible reply to argument **B** is that even on FTGG theodicies, God never simply uses someone to promote some good for others, because even those who suffer and die and thus

get no benefit themselves in this life will be rewarded in the next life. So God does respect them after all by rewarding their sacrifice, and thus P2 in argument **B** above is false.

However, being rewarded in the afterlife does not seem to make it the case that the person was not initially still used as a means. Suppose that A lies to B so that C benefits. After the fact, A recompenses B for her time and trouble. While A may have made amends, it still remains a fact that A has used B for C's benefit, and no amount of reward will justify A's treatment of B. So it seems as though afterlife rewards, while nice, will not justify suffering for another's benefit.

2) What about cases in which the sufferer herself benefits, or cases in which there is a 'split' benefit (e.g., the sufferer benefits in some way from suffering which provides benefits for perhaps many others)?

I would reply that, in cases in which the sufferer benefits as well as others that arguably the sufferer has not been used as a mere means, and thus has (possibly) been respected. However, it certainly seems that there have been cases in which the sufferer does not benefit (at least in the way many FTGG theodicists would wish to claim) in this life. In cases in which someone suffers and dies without reaping any of the greater goods (i.e., if the sufferer is an infant, or dies quickly enough that there is no time for any moral benefit), even if others obtain such goods, I would maintain that that person has been used in just the way I specified earlier.

3) One could claim that God has a 'higher morality', and thus we cannot judge God's actions in a moral context. Thus, FTGG theodicies can still be acceptable to theists because we simply cannot judge the morality of God's apparently using people as a mere means from our standpoint.

From a religious standpoint, if God has a higher morality, then that would seem to leave humans in dark about moral law. It certainly would be odd to claim that what we would normally

call 'bad' (e.g., treating people as things to be used rather than as persons) God would call 'good'. At this point, one might wonder what evidence we would have to call God 'good'. I think this would be unacceptable to most theists.

4) I think the most promising response might go something like this: when we think of God's using someone we are thinking about the relationship between humans and God in the wrong way. The best way to conceive of the relationship between God and humans is as that of parent to child. Thus, God's allowing humans to suffer from time to time is analogous to a parent allowing a child to make their own mistakes in order to learn; or, God allows us to suffer in order to teach us how *not* to live. For example, if I see my two-year-old reaching for an electrical outlet, I may slap his hand (especially if he is persistent in trying to get to the outlet), thus actively causing (some) suffering in order to prevent some greater evil (grievous injury). He may not understand why I did such a thing, and he may even be resentful for a while, but it is I that knows best in this case. Analogously, it is God that knows best; the suffering that God allows really does have some reason, although we may well not know what that reason is.

I think that this response, if appropriately developed, may eventually lead to a response to the criticism of FTGG-type theodicies. However, any response along these lines will have to account for situations in which one suffers in order that another (or humans in general) may benefit. Continuing the above analogy, FTGG theodicies would seem to endorse a situation in which I punish my six-year-old in order to improve my two-year-old's behavior. To make the analogy even more to the point, suppose I punish my six-year-old in such a way as to benefit my whole family minus my six-year-old (he doesn't receive any benefit, although everybody else does). In both of the above cases, even though I may know a *lot* more about the consequences than anyone else in my family, I still seem to have used my six-year-old as a means, and have thus wronged him, even if the benefits for the rest of my family are great. It would be wrong of me, no matter how much I know about the consequences and no matter how little my son knows

about them, to use him in such a way. If an FTGG theodicy would sanction such behavior on God's part, then I would say so much the worse for theodicies of that type.

5) Another possible reply could be based on an alternate account of what it means to use a person as a means. On this account, to use someone as a mere means would be to treat them in a way to which they would not (or could not) in principle consent. If A, for example, steals B's property, and B does not or would not consent to being the victim of A's plans to obtain more wealth, then A has used B as a mere means. If A asks B for some money (and perhaps even admits that he cannot pay B back), and B still freely gives A the money, then A has not used B as a mere means. This account yields something like the following principle:

M^2: For any person S, S uses person P as a mere means if S treats P in a way to which P would not or could not consent.

Note that the 'consent' condition is sufficient for treating someone as a mere means, but is not necessary.

This may generate an objection to my account of FTGG theodicies in the following way. One may claim that, when God allows a certain amount of evil to either produce a greater good or to prevent a greater evil, even if a person who suffers for the good of others does not consent to undergo such suffering (and thus, on my account, is being treated as a mere means), perhaps such a person *should* consent to being treated in such a way. The 'should' in the previous sentence could be taken in at least two ways. First, one could claim that one who suffers for the good of others is somehow morally lacking if they would fail to consent to suffer for the good of others. Alternatively, one could claim that one who does not consent to suffer for the good of others is simply not in an epistemic position to withhold rational consent (presumably 'rational' consent would require the consenter to possess a certain amount of knowledge of the consequences of consent versus the withholding of consent). The first sense would be the 'moral' sense; the

second the 'rational' sense. I will, given space considerations, only deal with this objection in the moral sense.

Holding to the moral sense in the context of FTGG theodicies would yield the something like the following principle:

$G^2(M)$: God treats a person S as an end if God treats S in a way to which S should (morally) consent, even if S does not or would not in fact consent.

The insight of this objection is, I think, this: God doesn't really treat someone as a mere means when the person does not *actually* consent to suffer; the person's non-consent is actually a moral failure on the part of the sufferer herself. She *should* consent; if she doesn't, she has shown herself to lack certain virtues.

What are we to say about this objection? The point of the objection seems to be that, morally speaking, we are required to suffer in order to produce goods for others. In other words, a person is morally *obligated* to suffer, at least in some cases. This account seems to blur the distinction between obligation and supererogation, and is counter to the intuition that the moral requirement of such self-sacrifice is to put too heavy a moral burden on the moral agent. Further, how would this principle fare if universalized? If it is true that I *should* (morally) consent to suffer in any case in which my suffering would result in the production of greater good or the prevention of greater evil, then a theory that embraces this has already given up on respect for the individual. Secondly, if God is omniscient, then God would presumably already know who would consent to suffer and who would not. To treat someone in a way to which they should consent, but actually would not, still does not seem to be respecting that individual as someone who is autonomous and responsible for their own decisions.

In short, this line of defense amounts to saying that God morally requires self-sacrifice for the production of greater good. However, in a case in which one does not consent to suffer to

produce that good, even if it indicates a moral failing on the part of one who does not consent, would still not respect the non-consenter. Further, any theory that requires such self-sacrifice seems to have already given up the claim that we ought to respect persons. I suppose that one could argue that we ought to either a) give up the claim that respect for persons is a fundamental intuition that any moral theory ought to observe, or b) that God really does hold to a higher morality. Both options are, however, fraught with peril.

VI. Conclusion.

I have argued that FTGG theodicies are consequentialist in nature, and as such should be unacceptable to theists because FTGG theodicies seem to justify the using of persons as mere means to the production of some good for others, which seems to undermine the religious notion of the value of a person. If I am right, FTGG theodicies should be unacceptable to theists on religious grounds, and thus do not offer the justification for the existence of evil that they claim

GOD: SAVIOR, BUTCHER, OR OBLIVIOUS ARTIST?
THE THEODICY OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

Laurence Rohrer

This paper is a critical examination of Alfred North Whitehead's attempt to solve the traditional problem of evil, and the correlative claim made by some process theologians who build on Whitehead, that Whitehead's theodicy is reconcilable with traditional Western theologies. Whitehead's conception of evil is crucial to his process cosmology because it is integral to his notion of creation in which evil is understood as part of the larger dynamic of God's creative activity. While Whitehead's process theodicy is interesting, he fails to successfully escape between the horns of the problem of evil as it is currently conceived as a trilemma. Instead, Whitehead's approach rejects at least two horns of the trilemma, and his solution to the problem of evil is ambiguous, and lends itself to at least two different interpretations, each resulting in the denial of at least one relation of the trilemma. Moreover, these interpretations raise serious concerns for traditional theology. In the first part of my paper I briefly discuss the features of this trilemma in relation to Whitehead's conception of evil, and discuss a possible inconsistency with Whitehead's notion of the role that it plays in his metaphysics. In the second part of the paper I address two different ways of viewing God relative to the concept of evil that Whitehead elucidates. Whitehead is often criticized for treating evil as merely apparent. While some process philosophers, notably Maurice Barineau, have defended Whitehead from this charge it can be shown that this is an implication of at least one interpretation of his approach. On a second interpretation of Whitehead's approach I show that Whitehead's remarks about God's relation to evil can be interpreted in a manner that escapes the charge that evil is not genuine, but contrary to the hopes of subsequent process theologians, not in a manner that is reconcilable with the traditional theistic conception of God's omnibenevolence.

Whitehead's approach is an attempt to solve the problem of evil with a rational theodicy. By "rational theodicy" I mean the attempt to account logically for the relationship between God and human suffering that avoids inconsistencies and paradoxes. In the traditional problem, evil is commonly thought to be inconsistent with either God's omnibenevolence or God's omnipotence, thus involving a destructive

dilemma. However, some contemporary philosophers, such as Barineau, prefer to represent the problem as a "trilemma" that occurs any time that three propositions are asserted to be true at the same time: evil occurs, God is omnipotent, and God is omnibenevolent.[62] Whenever we try to resolve the problem by denying any of the three the propositions, we run into consequences that seem inconsistent with the traditional conception of God.

> P1   If evil occurs, then either God is not omnibenevolent or not omnipotent (the traditional dilemma).
>
> P2   If God is omnibenevolent and evil occurs, then either God is not omnipotent, or evil is only apparent (genuine evil does not really exist).
>
> P3   If God is omnipotent and evil occurs, then either evil is merely apparent, or God is not omnibenevolent.

The common way to resolve the trilemma without denying any of the propositions is by qualifying, i.e., redefining or supplementing one or more of the major terms. This has been the choice of a number of contemporary philosophers.[63] Some have asserted that the alleged contradictions involved in the trilemma depend on the meaning assigned to the terms involved.[64] For example, perhaps the most popular way traditional theologians attack the problem is by arguing that while God allows evil despite his omnipotence and goodness, evil is necessary for some greater purpose of God's providence. Thus, there are some logically necessary evils that serve a greater good. Since God could not will it otherwise, and accomplish this greater good, God must allow these evils in order to be omnibenevolent. In the most common approach God tolerates these evils in order to allow for human freedom, which it is assumed requires that men must be able to disobey God's will in order to be truly free, thus making moral evil a necessary possibility.

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[62] Barineau, Maurice, *The Theodicy of Alfred North Whitehead*, University Press of America, 1991, p. 5.
[63] Ibid, p. 9.
[64] Ibid, pp. 8-9.

Another common way to attack the trilemma is to simply deny one of the propositions, e.g., that evil does not actually exist. In this approach it is argued that all evils are merely apparent and that genuine moral evil does not exist. Even though we may experience evil as genuine, if we had access to an omniscient vantage point, we would see that these apparent evils are actually consistent with the greatest good. It is sometimes added that humans do not have the intellectual capacity to understand the relationship between God and evil, and thus we continue to experience evils as genuine.[65] The problem that is commonly pointed out with this approach is that it seems to make God oblivious to the individual sufferings of humankind. Thus, the free-will approach discussed previously has been the more popular approach in traditional theologies. Finally, other less traditional theodicies have attempted to solve the problems by either denying God's omnipotence or omnibenevolence. All attempts to grasp the bull by the horns of the traditional dilemma present serious concerns for traditional theologies.

In examining Whitehead's process theodicy we must pay close attention to the way he defines both evil and the attributes of God in his process metaphysics. Two difficulties are immediately encountered when interpreting Whitehead's definition of evil. First, many of his remarks are somewhat vague and highly abstract and must be contextualized and cross referenced in order to build a coherent picture, and these remarks span several of his major works written over the course of his long career. Nowhere do we get a succinct statement of his view. This has lead to many divergent readings of his work.

In *Religion in the Making*, Whitehead examines the phenomena in which evil appears; "evil is exhibited in physical suffering, mental suffering, and loss of the higher experience in favor of the lower experience."[66] Whitehead further states that we must focus on the suffering sentient being and he does not distinguish between natural evil on the one hand and moral evil on the other hand. Thus, Whitehead has an affective notion of evil: evil is found in the painful experiences or experiences of loss of sentient

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[65] Ibid, p. 9.
[66] Whitehead, Alfred North, *Religion in the Making*, New American Library, 1926, p. 92.

beings. While some approaches to the problem of evil distinguish between natural and moral evils, Whitehead argues that while evil is experienced with all the varied modalities of being, this does not mean that there is a different type of evil for every modality. Furthermore, Whitehead asserts that while evil is only found in the phenomena of suffering, the latter is not predicated on any notion of a Metaphysical or primordial evil, such that the world is evil due to its temporal and finite nature, or that there is destructive agency involved etc. Likewise, Whitehead rejects the notion of evil as privation of the good. Evil is real, tangible, and affective because human suffering is real.

After determining the phenomena in which evil occurs, Whitehead attempts to generalize from the various modalities, what he calls the "common character of evil." He states that "the common character of all evil is that its realization in fact involves that there is some concurrent realization of a purpose towards elimination. The purpose is to secure the avoidance of evil."[67]

In this way, Whitehead locates all evil in a single fulcrum point between the sentient being who suffers, and the two purposes involved in the phenomenon at hand, including the goal of the perpetrator of the action or the cause of the suffering. He explains this rather cryptic and ironic reference with an abstract allusion to an act of moral evil. From the standpoint of the person who inflicts evil, the action is not evil, rather it is good in as much as it accomplishes his purpose, hence Whitehead states, "evil triumphant in its enjoyment, is so far good in itself; but beyond itself it is evil in its character of a destructive agent among things greater than itself."[68] Thus, while evil may be subjectively perceived, the destructiveness of the evil inflicted is an objective fact. Based on these remarks it would seem that evil is not relative in Whitehead's view. However, evil always appears in comparison to what could be and what is greater than itself. Whitehead states that "in the summation of the more complete fact it [evil] has secured a

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[67] Ibid, pp. 92-93.
[68] Ibid, p. 93.

descent towards nothingness, in contrast to the creativeness of what can without qualification be termed good…evil is positive and destructive; what is good is positive and creative."[69]

The next general trait of evil, according to Whitehead is that it contains an internal contradiction. It is "unstable." While this is implied in the remarks we just examined, this notion of instability is not clearly spelled out. Though in and for itself evil is good, in so far as it is destructive, it eventually destroys even its own forms of attainment. Thus, evil is self-destructive. Whitehead states that it "promotes its own elimination by destruction, or degradation, or by elevation."[70] By elevation Whitehead means the elevation of the agent of evil at the expense of others or of things greater than itself.

A third trait of evil is that it is a purely relational and relative concept at the metaphysical level in process cosmology. It is this notion that we must most carefully examine and inquire whether it logically coheres with his previous remarks regarding the objectivity of evil. Whitehead states that "it must be noted that the state of degradation to which evil leads, when accomplished, is not in itself evil, except by comparison with what might have been."[71] Hence evil is to be understood as a relation between what potentially could have been, and what the destruction, called evil after the comparison, and brought about. The medium of the relation is potentiality and the loss of creative potential and realized good remains of those evil for others. The "evil lies in the loss of social environment," according to Whitehead.[72] When we take these three general traits together we can infer that for Whitehead evil is a positive function of material annihilation. In terms of his cosmology, in the process of creation and re-creation, evil is the function of change via destruction, in contrast to the good which is positive and creative.

It should be clear from the remarks we have now examined that while Whitehead insists that there are genuine evils from the standpoint of sentient beings, and that these same actions actually are also ironically good in themselves, taken independently of the sufferer. While I think this is perhaps an apt

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, p. 94.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

description of what we would normally associate with the suffering caused by accidents and natural hazards, such as tornados and earthquakes, that is, of natural evils, I am not convinced that this approach presents a consistent picture of moral evils. How is an action such as torture, to be considered good for the perpetrator? If the answer is that he takes pleasure in it, then first, it seems to imply a purely hedonistic and relativistic approach to evil, and second, it seems certain that such acts will simply further the moral deformation of the perpetrator, and this in itself is not good as Whitehead's remarks seems to suggest.   Moreover, because Whitehead's cosmology involves evil as a function of change, this suggests that at the metaphysical level, evil is merely apparent, since no greater stages of perfection could be reached without such change. If so, then there seems to be an inconsistency in Whiteheads thinking about evil between the metaphysical level, a God's eye view of evil, and the human experience of moral evil.[73] However, in order to address the fairness of this criticism we also must examine the way God operates in Whitehead's metaphysics, since God is the nexus of all change in Whitehead's cosmology.

Whitehead describes God as a wholly immanent supratemporal being. God is an entity that enters into each moment of creation and who "prehends" every actuality and the totality of all actualities of existing things prior to their emergence into the actual occasions. Through this prehension God bridges the gap between the eternal order of pure potentialities and the concrete actualities of the world. "The abstract forms are thus the link between God and the actual world." God is the creative force and term of relation that brings potential being into fruition as concrete realities.[74] It is important to note that God is not transcendent in the traditional sense in Whitehead's view. God is supratemporal, but not independent of His creation. Temporal things arise by their participation in the things which are eternal and the process in which this takes place requires a definite entity, namely God. However, God is not found in the temporal order among things. Rather "God is the ground for concrete actuality."[75] Thus, God is the Being who is the ground of all particular beings, and is not equivalent with any particular being, but is not

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[73] Barineau, p. 111.
[74] Whitehead, Alfred North, *Religion in the Making*, p. 150.
[75] Whitehead, Alfred North, *Science and the Modern World*, New York, McMillan Publishing Co., 1925, p. 178.

as Aquinas and others argued, the ground of Being itself. God is an instance of creativity, like all other

actualities, but is not identified as creativity itself.   For traditional theism, creativity is unified and

transcendent, for Whitehead and the subsequent process theists, it is pluralized and wholly immanent.[76]

Whitehead further postulates that God has three natures which are bound together in a single

unity; God's primordial nature, consequent nature, and superject nature.[77] God is primordial and

prefigures everything that becomes what it is by containing within Himself all eternal objects. In this

primordial nature God is infinite, however God is, like all of creation, in process, and thus God is not

complete. This marks another important difference between Whitehead's view of God and that of

traditional Western theology. This is a point sometimes overlooked in subsequent works about

Whitehead.

By consequent nature, Whitehead means that God is an actual entity, that is, the temporal world

has an actual effect on God. In so far as creation is rooted in God, God shares in the experiences of the

world. The consequent nature begins in the sentient experience derived from the world which then

acquires synthesis in the primordial side of God's nature. Each actual occasion of the world is thus

confronted with its own greatest potential.   However, God does not determine which potentials will be

fully realized.   In terms of human occasions, this means we are free to act on any of the potential

directions we can conceive.   This notion of God's consequent nature is one of the more controversial

points in Whitehead's metaphysics. Again, by actual entity we cannot assume that Whitehead's God is a

personal God. God's metaphysical actuality is merely entailed by Whitehead's claim that God is wholly

immanent. But "God" in Whitehead's sense is not an entity in the complete sense; rather God is

represented as the "principle of concretion," whereby actual processes in reality take their rise. God is

more like the glue that holds everything together as well as the source of the urge for everything that

exists to come into being, and their formal causation. But God does not create individual entities. It is in

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[76] Ford, Lewis, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, Vol. 44, Philosophy and Christian Theology, 1970. Section III: Process Philosophy, pp. 141-151.
[77] Whitehead, Alfred North, *Process and Reality*, New York, McMillan Publishing Co., 1929, pp. 134-135.

this sense that God does not provide efficient causation in Whitehead's system; rather God and actual entities change together in a kind of symbiotic relationship.

In so far as God is non-temporal, God's nature is superject. By this Whitehead seems to mean that God's envisagement of the potentialities for the world becomes an object for the prehension of emerging creations. In this way all things follow from the prehension of God, but God's role is not in Whitehead's view, that of material causation. Rather, Whitehead sometimes speaks of God "persuading force" in creation. Hence, it is due to God that a moral agent is presented with the choice between a truly generative, creative act and a destructive creative act that may cause suffering, but God is not responsible for the agent's choice.

With these three natures in mind, we can see that in Whitehead's theodicy evil occasions can not take place outside of the God's envisagement but must emerge, like all other occasions, as part of what is prehended by God. At first blush this view seems to commit Whitehead to one of the relations of the trilemma: If God is omnibenevolent, then why does He not envisage and prehend the world in such a way that excludes the destructive element of evil? Since God does not, God is either not truly omnibenevolent or God lacks the power to do so. Thus, it would seem that Whitehead can either deny one of these propositions, or qualify them in some way. Whitehead already has qualified the notion of evil, and he attempts to make a corresponding change in regard to the notion of omnipotence. God is all powerful only in his primordial role as prehender of the forms, but God is incomplete in his consequent nature. He considers that if "God be an actual entity which enters in every creative phrase and yet is above change, He must be exempt from the internal inconstancy which is the true note of evil."[78] But we should ask how God is exempt from this internal inconsistency in this view? How does God enter into all events in which evil occurs and provides even the possibilities for such evils among all possibilities, and yet be the entity who prehends things in their totality to their formal possibilities only?

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[78] Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, p. 95.

The usual move here, which Whitehead tries to avoid, is to simply say that all evil is merely apparent, or that it is necessary for some greater good etc. Instead, Whitehead further modifies his idea of evil. He distinguishes between two species of destruction, chaotic discord, and dominance of discord which leads to complete destruction. According to Whitehead some degree of discord is necessary for the introduction of change and novelty in the world. For this purpose destructive discord is necessary. If creation did not involve change, the world would be static and not dynamic. This chaotic discord is not evil in itself: rather it is evil only if there is a dominance of discord. The resultant destruction is evil in the ultimate sense. Whitehead proposes that God in his primordial activity somehow reconciles all things for the better. He calls this the "subjective aim of God." In this role God is the care-taker of the temporal world that picks up the pieces of human tragedy from the wreckage of the world that is consequent upon chaotic discord. In the larger scheme of things, God is able to salvage the world and keep it harmonious. Whitehead states

> The wisdom of the subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system – its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy – woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling, which is always immediate, always many, always one, always with novel advance, moving onward and never perishing.[79]

At this point, it is important to consider what has happened to the concreteness of Whitehead's initial definition of evil, which he characterized as being very much a matter of the concrete experiences of sentient individuals. This being the case, we should ask, what then of the victims of radical moral evil, the tortured and murdered, the raped or oppressed? While Whitehead seems to console us by assuring us that all things are prehended in such a way that things work out for the best, this abstract, metaphysical solution does not address the individual lives and experiences that are destroyed by the dominance of destruction of moral evils. Things work out for the best only in the totality of creation, not in the salvation of individuals. In fact, sometimes Whitehead refers to the status of individual creations as

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[79] Ibid, p. 525.

"trivial."   It is at this point that Whitehead's theodicy completely loses connection with traditional theologies.   He further states that such events are not preventable by God, but maintains that God can nonetheless transform the world to greater ends by absorbing the extrinsic ends these evils accomplished into His prehension of a perfectible world.

> The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve in individual joy, in individual sorrow, in the introduction of the needed contrast, is yet to be saved by its relation to the completed whole. The image – and it is but an image – the image under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost.[80]

Regardless of this mere image of tender care, because all evil rests in the necessity of discord, destruction and elimination are the concrete products of obstruction met within the unfolding of temporal reality, thus not all things can be saved.   All that God can save, He saves. God does what He can in Whitehead's theodicy "with infinite patience."[81]   This points to the last element of Whitehead's theodicy I wish to address. God is all-powerful only in a qualified sense. God cannot do the impossible, i.e., change nature and what proceeds from it. This is because God is not fully transcendent in Whitehead's metaphysics, as discussed previously. God's nature is wrapped up with all of creation which is governed by logical and material conditions. Thus, God is also not omnipotent in the classical sense.   God saves the totality of the world in the primordial sense but, since the possibility of evil is unavoidable, God cannot prevent the occurrence of specific evils, and God's tender care does not seem to have any conserving force that offers hope to individuals.   In fact, such evils, like all actualities are prehended in God's creative activity. Moreover, we must keep in mind that in Whitehead's metaphysics, God's prehension does not involve efficient causation, so in a way God saves the totality of the world in a purely conceptual sense—so the totality is always good relative to God's creative development, but specific evils continue to occur and seem to be part of the process of change that God can only indirectly influence but not prevent. This is an

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

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issue once addressed by process theologian Robert Neville.[82] Neville points out that while God does not limit human freedom or any other finite occasion's creative activity, it is still difficult to entirely free God from responsibility for the evils that actually arise in the world, since in Whitehead's system God is responsible for contributing to the original concrescence of value that orients the subjective aim of every occasion. While human beings as such occasions may later modify these aims according to their own emphasis, God is an external limit on human freedom, just as other external things limit our freedom. As Neville states, God appears as a mammoth Jewish mother, structuring all possibilities and continually insisting on values of her own arbitrary choice, i.e. out of the plethora of her own creative largess. Even the specific evils, while not efficiently caused by God, must be possibilities that are commensurate with God's prehensions and unfolding design.

Two points of Whitehead's theodicy fail to fully escape the horns of the traditional problem of evil. First, by not distinguishing between moral and natural evils, and treating all evils as a species of destruction, generically considered, Whitehead fails to consider the peculiar features of *moral evil*, namely human volition and responsibility. Since Whitehead's God at least possesses omniscient foreknowledge of all possible evils that will ever occur, and is a factor in the actuality of all such occurrences, this would seem to imply that God affirms at least the joy that the perpetrator experiences even while he torments his victim. Similarly the negative effects of the evil are also useful to God in the unfolding of creation since they are a species of necessary change. What consolation does Whitehead offer to the victims? God salvages what He can, albeit not in the life of the individual victim, but in the persistence of the universe, its harmony and development. In relation to this, it is not clear that Whitehead's distinction between omnipotence within the bounds of logical possibility works in this context. The qualification of God's power in this manner seems to imply merely an even more lurid and complicated version of the trilemma. Since God is wholly immanent and prehends everything that occurs but does not have the power to prohibit chaotic discord from occasioning real destruction, then this

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[82] Neville, Robert Cummings, *The Impossibility of Whitehead's God in Christian Theology*, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Vol. 44, Philosophy and Christian Theology, 1970.

implies that God's prehension is also suspect, since this discord must be among the possibilities that God

conceives.   Secondly, if God's nature unfolds in reality in the manner that Whitehead suggests, it is

therefore difficult not to question God's omnibenevolence.   It would seem that God's activities are

intimately involved in the subjective aims of the perpetrators of evil, and the suffering of their victims, in

order for the best possible world to actually unfold consummate with God's nature.   This leaves us with

two possibilities in the manner we understand Whitehead's notion of evil. If evil is real, and not merely

apparent as Whitehead insists, then based on this analysis, it is difficult, if not impossible, to view God as

wholly good. God is wholly good only in the primordial sense—but real evils, especially moral evils, are

bound up with God's consequent and superject natures. This seems a specious and merely verbal

distinction. God's nature should be treated as a uniform identity if God is an actual entity as Whitehead

insists. God cannot be omnibenevolent in one part of His nature, while morally ambivalent in other parts

of His nature.   If on the other hand we interpret Whitehead to be suggesting that evil is merely apparent,

(and at least part of Whitehead's theodicy does seem to imply that evil is merely apparent), then we seem

to be confronting a God who has no stake or role in the wake of human suffering.

Thus, Whitehead's theodicy leaves us with two possible impressions of the nature of God– on the

one hand God is perfect and omnibenevolent—but only in God's primordial nature from which all

potentialities are perfectible. God is nonetheless not potent enough to manage to save individuals. This

idea is clearly at odds with the traditional doctrine of salvation. On the other hand, there is the God who

in consequent and superject natures is wholly immanent and unfolds in the course of history— and if evil

is real, but ultimately useful in ongoing creation, then this God looks much like the one that makes a

notorious appearance in *Hegel's Philosophy of History*, in which individuals are sacrificed on the

butchering block of history.[83] The world in its totality

may be saved per hypothesis, and even tend toward perfection in the process of God's imagination, but

the salvation of even one sufferer is forever a "mere image", a pleasant fiction of the human imagination,

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[83] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, Dover Press, New York, 1956.

that is never consummated in Whitehead's system in any way that could be meaningful to human religious experience. Secondly, if we assume that human choice is independent entirely of God's causal agency, and we are entirely responsible for all finite occasions of evil as Whitehead insists, then this would imply that the course of human history is irrelevant to God's moral character. Put more precisely God would be amoral and human behavior would be of no concern to God's pursuit of perfection, since God is only capable of saving the totality of the process of creation, but can not prevent and does not compensate for the suffering and loss of individuals. This goes against the traditional view that our actions matter to God and that God is good in every way, rather than moral goodness being a metaphysical coincidence of God's arbitrary creative nature. This is completely at odds with the concept of sin, for on such a view, the idea that we need to atone for some purpose relevant to God's plan would be pointless. On this view God might be better imagined to be a creator who creates solely for creativity's sake—while humanity uses the ideas that God prehends for its own ends, even for evil and destructive purposes. God responds by continuing to paint and sculpt, using the suffering of humanity in His art, but is oblivious to the moral import of the individual suffering that actually results from such efforts. If we read Whitehead this way, God appears to be an amoral, oblivious artist.

In closing, if we read Whitehead with the emphasis that all evil is ultimately, merely apparent, then Whitehead's approach is merely another instance of attempting to address the trilemma by denying one of the propositions, and this does not cohere with traditional theology. If we interpret Whitehead emphasizing his insistence that specific evils are nonetheless real, then we seen to be left with two possible images of God. At worst Whitehead's God seems to be either a master butcher, or at best an oblivious artist. Neither of these two interpretation of Whitehead's theodicy is reconcilable with traditional theologies either, but both images seem to me be more appropriate to Whitehead's notion of God, than the image of the tender, caring savior that is, moreover in Whitehead's view, merely a crude metaphor, "a mere image."