1998

Traditional theodicy: Christian and Hindu responses.

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Traditional Theodicy:
Christian and Hindu Responses

by

F. Stefan Polewski

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Religious Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1998

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0-612-52635-6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words can never adequately express the gratitude I owe to those instructors who so unselfishly and generously gave of their time and resources. They assisted me on a journey through unfamiliar waters, kept me focussed, challenged me, and lifted my spirits when I felt conquered. Thank you to Dr. Mahesh Mehta for directing (as well as for spiritual elevation and guidance), Dr. Barry Whitney (whose sense of humour was appreciated), and Dr. Ralph Johnson (whose refreshing sense of the lived reality was necessary) for unlocking some of the doors in my mind.
The purpose of this study was to examine the presence of evil in the world, as understood by two faith traditions—the Roman Catholic tradition, and the Hindu tradition. The format of approach was one grounded in a Christian understanding of God—more specifically the Thomistic understanding—and so sets out to examine how the place of evil in creation has been traditionally viewed.

The Christian section concludes with a refreshing view from the perspective of a thinker not well known in the Latin-based church—Irenaeus. The study then proceeds on to view the Hindu tradition, and examines three thinkers—two traditional (Shankara and Ramanuja), and one contemporary (Sri Aurobindo). In trying to come to an understanding of the role of evil's place in the universe, a profound similarity of thought was found between Sri Aurobindo, and Irenaeus.

Before we commence our examination of the thinkers of both traditions, what first must be identified and
examined are the definitions of "God" and "evil." First shall be studied is the understanding of God.

Christian belief inherited from Greek thought the idea of a God who was:
1) eternal/non-temporal
2) immutable/impassable
3) pure act
4) simple
5) necessary

In order to understand these more clearly, they should be examined more closely. The first aspect of God addresses God's existence in eternity. By this, what is meant is that God exists in a non-temporality. God dwells in an infinite presentiality. This is to be understood as a simultaneous possession of what would normally exist in human time of a past, present, and a future. It is all time, all at once. It is to be the flash of an instant that contains what would be normally divided into the past, present, and future, and as a result there is no sequential movement from one moment to the next.

The second is God's changelessness. Due to God's existence in eternity, there is no change because to
imply change would mean to move from a "before" to an "after."

The third - pure act - again is implied by non-temporality because to move from a "potential" state to one that is "actual" would be a change involving a sequence of time.

The fourth - simple - where what is predicated of God is in fact God's essence. There is no differentiation between the idea of God and the individual of God. God's essence is God's existence.

The fifth - God is necessary. God is eternal, that which exists eternally is necessary; hence, God exists necessarily.

These definitions mutually imply one another because saying that God is simple implies no change. God's knowledge cannot change, for this would imply a change in a state over time. This in turn would imply a change in God's essence. Each one of God's attributes is a part of God's being. There is no change, no separation of God's will, knowledge, love, or ability, etc.

Two more attributes have proven contentious over the course of time, but must be included. They are not implied by the first five, but imply them. They are
God's omniscience and God's omnipotence. By omnipotence is meant that God can do the "do-able." That is to say that God cannot do the contradictory--such as making a square circle.

The second term that must be looked at is "evil." Evil can be divided into two sorts--moral and natural. Moral evil is that which results from human choice. Natural evil (often referred to as "acts of God") is that which occurs when sentient life is affected by natural systems operating according to their own program (e.g. landslides, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons, etc.). While traditionally understood as occurring independent of human action, today this must be reconsidered in light of scientific discovery of how human activity DOES affect natural ecosystems and weather patterns.

Traditional Christian thinkers examined in this paper are Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine attributed the effect of evil as experienced by humans as punishment for sin. Augustine clarified the understanding of evil to be not as something created, but as the absence of a good that should be there. All creation was to be
regarded as good. When something lacked the good that was supposed to be present - that was evil.

Aquinas added to this saying that things that have been brought into existence, have been done so for a purpose. The purpose for existence was for a thing to maximize its potential, and in so doing, be all that it can be. Those beings without the capacity to reason, have been programmed with a natural instinct that they follow. Those gifted with the ability to reason are expected to choose how their lives would be live, and to what purpose they direct their means and abilities.

To account for the existence of evil, Aquinas suggested that natural patterns operate independently of humankind, and that evil arose as a necessary side effect from the pursuit of a good end. Evil is thus "permitted" to exist because its place in the grand scheme of things justifies its existence. Due to the limitation of the human mind, we may never be able to understand and accept such a response, but this may be because the human mind can never understand the mind of God, nor capture the vision of things as God does.
The problem with this response is that it removes from evil the genuineness of evil. It paints evil out to be a good in disguise.

A second way that Aquinas interpreted evil (specifically moral evil), was through his invention of the theory of double casuistry. In this theory, God is regarded as the "primary mover," and human beings are to be regarded as "secondary agents." Here, God provides the power to act, but is not to be held accountable for the consequences. God is to be understood as moving the human will, but how the task is actually executed is up to the secondary agent.

Critics have argued that because God is involved from the start, and knowing from eternity the course of action things would take, God must be held accountable--because God chose to create nevertheless! Critics have as well questioned the idea of genuine human free will, for if God's knowledge and will are the same, what God knows must be.

The strongest criticism (in my mind) is due to the fact that God is understood to be omnipotent, and therefore could have created any type of world with free creatures. It causes one to pause and question: why a
world was not created with beings, that while still free, would not choose to err, or make wrong choices.

The examination of Christian thinkers concludes with that of Irenaeus. Here, creation is presented not as something created perfect that chose wrongly, entered a state of sin, and has been struggling to regain favour with the Creator ever since, but as a young, innocent creation that is growing, maturing and moving towards perfection. The evil and suffering that we experience here on earth is to be viewed as part of our maturation process. It is part of our evolution.

It is at this point in the paper that the focus shifts to look at thinkers from the Hindu tradition. The first to be examined is that of Shankara. Shankara understood all creation as being an emanation of the Divine. He proposed the idea known as the Hierarchy of Truths. This is a system that explains reality as a growing awareness. It holds that truth, when discovered, governs our reality. When one believes something to be true, it is real. When a child believes in Santa Claus, that figure is real. When a greater truth is discovered, the previous reality is shown to be unreal—such as when the child realizes that there is no Santa Claus. Until
that moment of realization however, that reality is genuine.

Shankara suggests that while we live and operate in this world, everything we experience is genuine and real. When we come to that point of realization that enables us to view the world as an extension of God's self, we realize that it was just our ignorance that kept us from experiencing the bliss of union with God.

The second traditional thinker that was studied was Ramanuja. In contrast with Shankara, Ramanuja understood the world as a genuinely real product of God's spectrum of creation. It is created by God because the seed of evil is contained in the first creation. Due to human action it grows into the terrible reality we are familiar with. In the orthodox teachings, evil has a necessary part to play in the expression of the variety that constitutes society as a whole. All things (good and evil) are necessary, though not equally good. Ramanuja espoused a system of worship and behaviour known as bhakti, where in reaction to the view that all roles in society were necessary, a universal system of redemption now became possible.
When speaking of human redemption, one necessarily involves the idea of KARMA. Karma is the law that governs action, where every action is understood to have an effect. The effect is that which shapes a person. In the shaping of a person, what is affected is a person's consciousness. Good action helps a person develop a heightened consciousness, bad action blocks such development.

When the origin of evil is studied, it can be traced back to the first human action, because this is where the first karma was formed. Some Hindus feel that there is no start to karma. These refer to karma as beginningless. Others feel that evil was contained in that seed of potential contained within the first creation. It was created by God as a possibility that became actualized.

As such, evil has a presence in the phenomenal world. It is a part of creation. It is a part of the human condition. Whereas the Orthodox view of Shankara sees evil as necessary but beginningless, the view of Ramanuja is that evil is a reality that came into existence with the first human act, and must be overcome.
It is in the examination of the modern Hindu thinker Sri Aurobindo that the expanse between Eastern and Western thought has been bridged, I feel. Sri Aurobindo's vision of the world was one where all beings are to be seen as growing towards perfection. The world is viewed as an emanation from God's inner self, but continuing to exist within God's greater self. All creation is directed to maximize its potential for being, and in this way realize its divinity. Until we realize this, we shall continue to experience sensational suffering due to evil as a principle of our imperfection.

Similar to Augustine's thought of evil being a lack of good and therefore a lack of God, Aurobindo holds that evil has no place in God. Evil is to be understood as involved in our shaping as evolutionary beings. He maintains that due to the evolutionary program that we are on, evil shall be overcome eventually in this world. How? As evolving beings we will develop a consciousness that seeks fulfilment by attaining the greatest good. The highest good being God, in the end then, we will seek God.

In this end, all beings shall see themselves as extensions of God. All creation will be viewed as part
of one great being. It is at this point that divisions will be healed, and unity will be seen amidst diversity.

This is where the Christian response shows some parallel with Aurobindo’s vision. The transformation to happen is expected and anticipated by both faith traditions. Union with the Divine is sought and anticipated. Our lives here on earth are to be viewed, and understood as in a process of evolution towards perfection.

The Christian response maintains that there is only one terrestrial existence, during which each creature is called to be all that they can be. The Hindu tradition offers the possibility for a return to a terrestrial existence in the hope of an advance towards a higher/greater spiritual awareness. Both hold that the end goal is achieved at the end of a spiritual journey, that while on this earth is fraught with pain, frustration, disappointment, and hardship. All of this, however, is to be viewed as necessary for our development as mature spiritual beings, and in the end shall be overcome when we achieve the greatest satisfaction—reunion with our Creator. In Christian terms this is referred to as the Beatific Vision.
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Abstract

This paper attempts to trace how evil has been understood in the traditions of Thomism, and Hinduism. The Thomist tradition (having its foundation in the Greek fathers of Plato and Aristotle), built on the thought of Augustine. A school of Christian thought that has been largely ignored (or overlooked), that clearly characterizes the Greek Fathers (as distinct from the Latin), is the Irenaean. It, however, was not carried beyond the "relatively inchoate beginnings" of the Church in the third to the fourth centuries.¹

This examination of the problem of evil and human suffering then turns to examine answers offered from the Hindu perspective. In this section, the traditional thinkers (Shankara and Ramanuja) have been studied. The contemporary thinker (Sri Aurobindo) presents the idea of viewing suffering as a necessary step in the maturation of the human person.

Due to the interesting convergence (with striking shared similarity) shown in the thoughts of Irenaeus and Aurobindo, new ways of envisioning reasons for the existence of evil and the purpose of suffering are brought forth.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the family members and friends who have supported me in many ways during its long formation. It is dedicated to the memory of Tadeusz Polewski (my tat), Eleanor Mueller (my babunia), and Janina Polewska (my babcia), as well as Kerry McNamara and Michael Gertsakis (two of my dearest friends). They had gone to meet their God, before it was completed. Due to their untimely departure I have tried repeatedly to make sense out of senseless situations, and seek answers where a human answer must substitute for the voice of God. Our time together was limited, but precious beyond words. Thanks for the memories!
There is only one pure desire and that is to be one with the Divine, one with God. Its awakening is truly a second birth.

Sri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Life, must blossom like a flower, offering itself to the Divine.

The Mother

How is God to be defined? That which is not capable of being seen with the eye, nor captured with the mind, but only known with the heart.

S. Radhakrishnan
Introduction

The issue of evil (and its resultant suffering) has been a problem that people of every culture, in every part of the world, in every time period have had to confront. Cultures that maintain a belief in a supernatural power (i.e. a monotheistic God figure) are challenged to reconcile such a being with the persistent problem of human suffering. This paper shall examine how two religious traditions have responded to this problem.

In order to understand new philosophies, it is only natural that new information be related to prior knowledge. Having been schooled in the Roman Catholic Christian Church tradition, it is the one that is most familiar to me. In pursuit of the answer to the question: "Why do evil and suffering exist in the world if we have an all-powerful and loving God?" the first response that shall be examined is that of the Roman Catholic tradition, which is centred in Thomism. The enquiry then turns to look at a tradition long overlooked.

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The word religion is derived from the latin religio, -onis meaning a respect for what is sacred, or to care for in the sense of worship and tradition. It is a feminine noun that conveys religious scruples. Outgrowing from the verb religare (which means to bind to tie up, tie back, or fasten), the word religion is strongly influenced in popular thought as binding, in the sense of putting an obligation on something (World Book Dictionary, vol. II, Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1967, 1646).
by Christians from the Latin West—Irenaean thought. This tradition offers renewed hope in how the problem of evil and suffering may be understood. It is at this point that the examination pauses, and shifts focus to examine the Hindu religious tradition's understanding of the place of evil and suffering in the world.

Part I of this paper sets out to identify: the players (i.e. who is involved—humans and God), understandings of the terms "evil," "suffering," and "theodicy" (which shall be our working definition of the problem of evil and suffering in the presence of a good and loving God). The paper shall operate from the traditional Thomistic understanding, and as a result of this references shall be made to Christian ideas in the Hindu section.

Part II of the paper shall trace the development of Christian thought historically, examining the major thinkers of different ages, and ends with a refreshing look at the less familiar Christian tradition of Irenaeus. Part III of the work shall focus on the Hindu responses offered to this age old problem, through the reflections of two traditional thinkers and one modern.
Part I Preliminaries

Introduction

We dwell in this time and place; therefore we shall name ourselves as one of the "players" involved in this study. What shall be looked at are situations that each of us has, or may, find ourselves (or someone whom we know) involved in or with at some point in our lives. Outside of ourselves, the term "theodicy" bespeaks the presence (through active or passive involvement) of a "God-figure." Theodicy then, in its basic understanding, refers to reconciling the presence of evil and suffering with the existence of a loving God who is unlimited in power because this God is understood as able to prevent evil (and the suffering it results in) if that was what God desired to do. In the hope of better understanding this dilemma, let us first examine what shall be termed "God."

i. Defining God

The traditional, Western Christian understanding of the Divine is accorded certain attributes. The understanding of God in the traditional Christian mind is a synthesis of Greek and Hebraic ideas. Thomistic monotheism represents a
"statement of the essential core of traditional [mono]theism in general.""

God is said by Aquinas to be:  

1. Eternal, or Nontemporal. This means not only that God has always existed, but that God is not bound to the human notion of time. Human time is sequentially divided into past, present and future. Eternity is to be understood as the simultaneous possession of (what in human time is contained in) the past, present and future. It is not just infinite sequential time for it is the simultaneous presentiality of being. In eternity there is no flow of time between past, present and future. All exists in the present. It is all time, all at once.

2. Immutable and Impassable. These two terms are implied by nontemporality, for they mean that God cannot change. Change refers to a "before" state and an "after" state, which then of course implies a passage of time. Immutable refers to God being unable to change from within, (as in changing one's

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'The following list is taken from Griffin, where are included references to works by Aquinas, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province as revised by Daniel J. Sullivan. See Robert M. Hutchins [ed.], Great Books of the Western World (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), vols. 19 and 20.
mind), impassable refers to being unable to be affected from without (as say by some external force).

3. Actus purus. This means that in God there is no unrealized potency, all is actualized. This notion is again implies nontemporality (for to realize a state at one time that existed previously in potential would imply a before and after sequence), immutability (no change in God from one state to another), and impassability (for God cannot be affected from without).

4. Simple. This means that God's existence is God's essence. God is regarded as an "existing existence," for God to have received God's existence would imply that God is a creature. It involves God's attributes in that there is no division nor distinction between, for example, God's knowledge, will, intention, or power. This again is tied in with the nontemporalistic notion: God's knowledge to be perfect, it could not change. If a change in knowledge is to move from a lesser to a greater knowledge, such change does not occur in God. God's essence is God's existence, and so each one of God's attributes is part of God's being. There can be no change in God's knowledge for this would imply a change in the essence of God. God's being is to be understood as simple, compared to being a composite. By definition, humanity includes all that falls within the definition of being human.
Yet "humanity" and a "human" are not wholly identical, for one cannot point to a "humanity." Humanity is taken to mean the definition of a human in relation to the individual. In God there is no differentiation between the idea of God, and the individual of God, because the idea of God (i.e. supposita) is not separated by matter (i.e. suppositum). "Since, then, God is not composed of matter and form, He must be His own Godhead, His own Life, and whatever else is predicated of Him."

Being good and simple (where God's essence equals God's existence), God's essence is that of pure goodness. God is then "existent goodness." Pure goodness must be associated with pure love. Our God then, is one of pure love.

5. Necessary. God is eternal, and that which is eternal is necessary, thus God exists necessarily. If God is not necessary, than God would be contingent.

These five doctrines derive from Greek heritage and are all mutually implicatory. Two remaining doctrines that belong to Thomism are not implied by the previous doctrines, but do imply them. These are:

6. Omniscience. Here is held that God knows everything knowable. For humans as temporal beings, this would imply that

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6S.T. 3:3, (Pegis, 28-33); 6 (Pegis, 46); 6:3 (Pegis, 49).
God is aware of what, for us, belongs in our past, our present, and our future. God being eternal, knows all this in its presentiality because for God there is no past, present or future. God knows all things eternally because there is no succession nor change in divine knowledge.

7. Omnipotent. This title refers to the unlimited power of God to do the do-able. God cannot do the contradictory such as making a square circle. When something is said to be unable to be done by God, it is because this is not a feasible or possible thing.

Whatever implies contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility. Hence it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them.

8. Benevolent. A God who is pure goodness is one of pure love. Thus our God is one of benevolence, for without this there would be no problem with the existence of evil in the world.

Discussion

In God's simplicity, God's knowledge is the same as God's will. God being good, for God to will anything it would have

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7St. 25:3; Pegis, 231.
to be good as well. From a lecture given by Fr. Leonard
Kennedy C.S.B. at St. Peter's Seminary, London Ontario on
Monday March 15, 1993 I have gathered the following information
on the concept of "freedom," and "necessity."

The "perfection" of the freedom of choice may be
considered as omnipotence. Freedom exists on two levels. The
higher freedom would be that which one wants to do, and the
lower would be that which one can or must do. In regards to
freedom, the freedom of choice is actually a lower freedom
because it is only a means. The higher freedom is the freedom
of willingness. God then, would not have the freedom of choice
(a lower freedom) because God is simple, and God makes no
choice as to what to do. Being simple, God's will is the same
as God's being. For humans, we must make the choice to act so
that we will be happy, God makes no such choice--but wills it
to be, for God's intellect and will is the same as God's being.

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8S.T. 18:1; Pegis, 521: "because such as everything is, such
is the act that it produces."

9S.T. 19:2; Pegis, 194-5.
Humans possess the freedom of choice.14 What is meant by this is that we have the ability to think, discern, and choose or make a selection from the variety of options available to us. When speaking of "freedom," one must as well examine "necessity." It is sometimes thought by the general public that to be "free" to do whatever one wants is the ultimate good. It would, however, be better if one were "necessitated" to do only the good. To be free is good, but to be "necessary" is better. Necessity is an absolute perfection. To be absolutely necessary means that the predicate is part of the definition of the subject (e.g. God must be good, exist etc.).

To be necessitated means that something could not be otherwise. To be incapable of doing anything but good would be a perfection, because to destroy oneself or to cause harm would be less than good. As God contains all perfections, God cannot do anything but good; God's will then is necessitated, not free.15 God is free only in actions outside of God's immediate self. God being simple, any aspect of God's nature is necessary.

14St. T. 83 (Pegis, 368-375), 6:1; Pegis 478-481. "...those things which have a knowledge of the end are said to move themselves...for the term voluntary signifies that their movements and acts are from their own inclination. Therefore, since man especially knows the end of his work, and moves himself, in his acts especially is the voluntary to be found." Pegis, 480-481.

15St. T., 19:3; Pegis, 196-198.
Whereas the first six attributes are generally accepted, it is the doctrine of omnipotence that has caused controversy, and has resulted in a parting with traditional Thomist company. When one examines the idea of power, one must understand power as a relational term. One may have complete power, or one may be only one power among many. Complete power is control. When power is used in a controlling fashion, it can as well be called coercion.

Power is not a finite quantity. It is not to be understood as the more you have, the less I have. In the Thomistic account, God is to be understood as the supreme power, that which there is nothing stronger than. In a universe where there are many sources of power (each understood to be acting out their own desires, compulsions, or innate tendencies), difficulty has arisen in understanding how the one that may be called the greatest power is not as well omnicausal, and therefore responsible for everything that happens--good and bad alike. If God were to be understood as omnicausal, this would negate any sense of creaturely freedom.

If God is understood to be simple (what God knows, is what God wills, and what God wills, is), when evil exists, is God not to be understood as having willed that evil into existence? The answer must include God's benevolence. God is good. God

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*O.S.T.*, 25:3; Pegis, 230-231.
is pure love itself. A being that is totally good, could never will anything less than that which is good. From where then does evil and suffering arise?

The Thomistic response is that God is the primary mover, and creation has been granted power to act in a secondary fashion. An example that Aquinas uses is the limp found in a person's stride. The limp is not due to the motive power, but due to the curvature of the leg.\textsuperscript{1} God is understood as giving continued existence to the person (through conservation), and the motive power of walking. It is how that power is used is where the "evil" may reside. In the leg, the limp is due to the agent, not the motive power.

It is here that thinkers over the past few centuries (since Luther, Calvin, to Spinoza, Hick and Griffin) have had difficulty. They contest that the distinction between primary and secondary causation is devoid of any meaning.\textsuperscript{2} They hold that for a God who is omnipotent (where such omnipotence is as well omnicausal), the responsibility for all action must rest squarely on God's shoulders for there is no creaturely freedom. If a God exists whose divine simplicity means that God's knowledge is the same as God's will, and where God has eternal knowledge of what will transpire in human future time, then how

\textsuperscript{1}S.T. 49:3; Pegis, 275-276.

\textsuperscript{2}Griffin, 76.
can God's knowledge not necessitate (by God's will) human future events from occurring? If God knows all, and what God knows must be, where is any place for human contingent acts? Hence, they argue, if God is to be understood as having omnipotence, there is no creaturely freedom.

In order to discuss the knowledge of God, one must first discuss what is meant by knowledge. According to the Thomistic understanding, the intellect is immaterial, resides in the corporeal body, and is dependent on the material body to furnish it with information. That information is collected through the senses. In order for the known to enter the knower, the species to be known must be dematerialized. This information is then relayed to the intellect. "The intellect is a power," a potential; thinking is an ability. The functioning of this ability may be impaired. I may have the power (potential) to play piano, but I may not be able to because my functioning is limited.

The intellect, by definition, is a desire to know. Knowledge is a fact, it is possible. The intellect forms ideas by dematerializing individuals and forming universals." The

"S.T. 79:1; Pegis, 336-338.
world is composed of singulars for matter is the principle of individuation. Senses are geared to the singular. The senses specify the form known as it is present in the mind. The physical acts on the senses, the senses on the intellect." The object of the mind is the universal.

The senses are our channels through which we connect with the physical world. We sleep and dream because our senses must be turned off. If they were on, we would be thinking all night! Matter forms the limiting factor of the mind. In this way, our knowledge is not false, but imperfect because we must be aware of our limitation. We know things as they are not, for we know things as universals, and they exist as singulars. For the mind to know a tree, the tree cannot enter the mind, but the sense information that forms the idea of an oak tree is gathered, forming an idea of what constitutes an oak tree.

Aquinas states how "In God there exists the most perfect knowledge." He goes on to say how the more immaterial a being is, the greater is its cognition. This would be because as the intellect is immaterial, those beings whose intellect does not depend on the dematerialization of information in order for it to be received by the intellect, would have a higher place in knowledge. Hence, as "God is the highest degree of

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2. *S.T. 14:1; Pegis, 126-128.
immateriality,...it follows that He occupies the highest place in knowledge. God knows things other than God's self, "not in themselves, but in Himself.":

The perfection of knowledge is to possess all knowledge. In such a perfection, no new knowledge can be added. God's knowledge then is deemed to be non-discursive. Human knowledge is discursive, as we proceed through principles to arrive at conclusions. God exists in a simultaneity, where there is no such movement of moving from the unknown to the known. We understand simultaneously when we see the parts in a whole, or different objects in a mirror.

God's act of understanding is measured by eternity, and since eternity is without succession, comprehending all time, the present glance of God extends over all time, and to all things which exist in any time.:

God's knowledge is not one of vision as humans have. Vision is to see things that have a distinct being outside the seer, and so has relation only to things that are, will be, or have been.:

·S.T. 14:2; Pegis, 127-128.
·S.T. 14:5; Pegis, 134-135.
·S.T. 14:7; Pegis, 140-141.
·S.T. 14:9; Pegis, 143-144.
·S.T. 14:12; Pegis, 148-149.
The question then arises as to whether God sees future contingent acts. Included here would be the free acts that humans choose. God is able to see the future as present; therefore, divine knowledge does not necessitate them. If God saw them as future, then they would be necessitated. God sees what will happen, not that it is going to happen. On my way home I may pass a store. God sees my going in or not going in. To say that God knows what I shall choose to do is not philosophically knowable.

With respect to the loving aspect of God (i.e. benevolence), contemporary society has coined the term "tough love." What is meant by this expression is the idea that even though a person (typically a parent), has the ability to thwart dangerous consequences, the choice is made not to, because the "effects" are judged to be viewed as worth the price of teaching a lesson. Applying this idea to God's actions may be credible in certain instances, but obscene in others. Could there ever be a lesson learned that would justify the atrocities of WWII? It must be understood that God allows humans to act freely and experience the consequences of their choices.

Thomism maintains that it is outside the intention of the sinner that any good would follow from the sin. Aquinas illustrates this by saying how it was outside the intention of
tyrants that the example of martyrs would be regarded as glorious and praiseworthy.¹ Moreso then would it be for God, who by the nature of God's being, to be INCAPABLE of performing an evil action for the purpose of the good that might occur as a result secondarily.

It is maintained that in pursuit of a good end, some evil may accompany it. In pursuing one thing, another may become "corrupted." As in the case of a lion killing a stag—the lion does not kill for the act of killing, it is seeking food. The slaughter of the stag is what accompanies the acquisition of that end.² The idea of any evil, as understood in traditional thought, is that it is of a secondary nature. It arises in the pursuit of a good end.

If God would earnestly like the objects of creation to enjoy their existence, would God not do what God could do, to ensure creation's satisfaction? If God could not, what does this say about God's potency/ability? If God can, but does not, what does this say about God's love? Would God not want

¹S.T. 19:9; Pegis, 211.
²S.T. 19:9; Pegis, 211.
to avert trouble, as a parent would for their child.

ii. Understanding "Evil"

What can be, is meant by, and/or is understood as evil? For the initial purpose of this inquiry, evil shall be termed as that which leads to suffering. This definition shall be adjusted throughout the paper as a successively more comprehensive and definite understanding is developed. Gabriel Marcel and James Cone concur with respect to the thought that the observation of evil (that is to say objective consideration of evil) is not really evil. To understand evil, one must suffer. The sufferer seeks a way to deal with it, lessen it and/or overcome it. We have here a distinction between the theory of evil, and the practical situation of suffering.

Suffering is that which arises from evil. Involved in this definition would be not only physical suffering, for there

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The traditional answer is that of course God could stop things from happening that would result in pain or cause distress. Orthodox teaching upholds theistic finitism as that God cannot do the logically impossible, i.e. God cannot do that which is contradictory (Hick, 32). God however, chooses not to. It is the argument of relativity. If God were to eliminate the worst sufferings known to humans presently, they would be replaced on the list of bad to worst by the second worst. That which was not the worst, would now become the worst. The question would continue with, why not remove these troubles? This could continue on ad infinitum, until what we would be complaining about would be truly trivial.

could be emotional and/or spiritual agony as well. Our operating definition of evil will include any feelings of discontentment a person may experience. Included here would be any physical suffering accompanying physical ill health, depression, or anxiety. This definition would also have in it any situations where anguish is experienced by person(s) sharing the journey of that person who is experiencing the pain firsthand. Take for example the situation of a parent with an ailing child, the spouse of an ill partner, or individuals in a community whose lives become affected by the loss of that person (such as a community leader, or practitioner).

Death is a fact of life. Ultimately, questions of "Why?" arise when one is grieving. When one loses the companionship of a partner, spouse, friend, or child a person searches for a reason to help cope and hopefully make sense of a seemingly senseless situation by means of an understanding. Often there is cathartic relief when one can find a target upon which to affix responsibility and blame. The human condition is such that it searches for scapegoats. It does not change the reality of the situation, but it helps one deal with tragedy when one understands the reasons. It is a purgative method of grieving. Things seem easier to deal with when there is a clear-cut reason, or when it seems to make logical sense. It
does not take the pain away, but it is more easily borne through understanding.

In this paper we shall confine ourselves to the theory of evil as opposed to a pastoral approach that may deal with how to cope with suffering. In addressing this problem the approach will be monotheistic, in that the problem rests on reconciling a God figure with the evil that is created and permitted to exist in a world created and kept in existence by this same God. Our investigation shall then begin with the premise that God and evil both do exist. Our God is to be viewed as perfect, and who would then only desire that which is good. The problem arises in trying to understand how such a good and perfect God can be understood as being responsible for the existence of evil in the world. Being the creator of all, and thus the source from which all emanates, God pre-contains all perfections. We, as human creation, strive to acquire our own perfection, the ideal of which is contained in God. This is our human participation in God—our sharing in divine attributes.

The nature of the human will is to desire the good. In fact the will desires infinite goodness. This is to be found

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'S.T. 6:4 (Pegis, 49-50); 44:3 (Pegis, 237-238); 44:4 (Pegis, 239-240); 49:3 (Pegis, 277).

The understanding of "participation" in this paper shall be: to possess in a lesser degree.
in God. Humans are free. Due to the ability of reason, we can identify non-goodness, or a lack of goodness. Any good aside from infinite goodness (i.e. God) is imperfect and thus has a lack of goodness. Natural things have a natural inclination towards the good--"to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed to rest therein; but also to diffuse their own good among others so far as possible."\(^{11}\) We are necessitated by infinite goodness (i.e. God), but not necessitated by anything less than that, and have the freedom to choose or reject it.

A God that is pure love and pure goodness could not be capable of evil, because the notion of pure goodness would be incompatible with any situation that is not right or good. From the traditional Thomistic perspective, evil is to be regarded as the lack of what should be present. Traditionally, evil is understood as the absence of good,\(^{11}\) and therefore would have to be the absence of God. It is a deprivation of what should be there (as blindness can be understood as the absence of sight). Degradation is the loss of what was present as a good. To have the power to degrade oneself is not a

\(^{11}\)S.T. 19:2; Pegasus 194.

The absence of good is referred to as privation boni, but must not be confused with the Augustine teaching that was formulated to show evil's lack of substance, responding to Manichaean dualism. Prativio, -onis, derived from privare to deprive, free, release from (World Book Dictionary, Doubleday and Company, 1967, 1546).
perfection. God is incapable of sin, and therefore does not have the power to do wrong.

The problem of evil is such that evil appears to exist and results in suffering. A God who loves what has been created (by that same God), and has the power to do the do-able, would not want that creation to endure hardship or suffer and could stop the evil if that were what was desired and possible. Yet suffering persists. The question then arises: if God wills only the good, from whence does evil arise—Si deus est, unde malum?" The Thomistic response to this question is that God does not will evil for its own sake, but for the good it may serve. In this same way, God cannot be seen as willing anything evil directly because "evil is not of itself ordered to the good, but accidentally. He [God] in no way wills the evil of sin, which is the privation of right order towards the divine good."’ God never wills evil directly,” but permits or

"This old Latin tag may be perhaps based on Boethius in De Consolatione Philosophiae, i. 105-6. Taken from John Hick, Evil and the God of Love (New York: Harper and Row Publications, 1977), 11.

"Pegis, 211 (S.T. 19:9).

"...the form which God chiefly intends in created things is the good of the order of the universe. Now, the order of the universe requires,...that there should be some things that can, and sometimes do fail. And thus God, by causing in things the good of the order of the universe,...the order of justice belongs to the order of the universe; and this requires that penalty should be dealt out to sinners. And so God is the author of the evil which is penalty, but not of the evil which is fault," (S.T.
tolerates evil." God allows or tolerates all evil for the sake of a good.

It is on this point that severe criticism has erupted. Critics of traditional Thomism echo what Calvin did say:

They babble and talk absurdly who, in place of God's Providence, substitute bare permission--as if God sat in a watchtower awaiting chance events, and his judgement thus depended upon human will."

For "true to his intention to assert without equivocation God's total control of the world, Calvin rejects the distinction between God's 'willing' and 'doing' on the one hand, and God's 'permitting' on the other." Thomists maintain that one must not mistake the idea of "tolerating" to be synonymous/equal with "cooperating." God doesn't want evil for its own sake, but for the good it may serve.

When we look at something, what we observe are the attributes of that thing. They may be positive characteristics, or negative. Evil is to be understood as the lack of quality contained in something. It may be a choice

49:2, Pegis 275-6).


"Griffin, 117.
that was less than ideal by not being ordained' towards a good end. A gun is in itself not evil. There can be no doubt that a gun fired resulting in a fatal wounding, is truly a tragic event. But to what in the tragedy may be affixed the label "evil?" According to conservative Thomistic theological perspective, evil is always contained in something. It is called an accident. Like the colour red, it does not exist as an entity unto itself (there is no such thing as a red--save a hue), but it is that which is contained in something else. In a red apple or car, the colour red is contained in the object.'

Evil is then to be considered parasitic. The subject with the evil has goodness. Evil can be known as that lack of which is good as a quality; it is not a thing, or a substance unto itself. That which we view as evil must exist in a substance, but it is to be understood as the privation of what should properly be there. By inhereing in something it is an accident.' This is not evil as its own existent being, but an

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"The sense of the word "ordain" here is taken to be understood as established, ordered, or appointed. It is more than an "orientation" towards something, for it connotes that a purpose had been set out for which it should aim to achieve. It conveys a "built-in" disposition that had been geared to follow a specific target or course of action regarded as befitting its end.

'S.T. 48:3; Pegis, 267-8.

'Joseph Owens, An Interpretation of Existence, (Texas: Center For Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas, 1985), 77.
absence of what properly should be there. It is understood as negative, or considered a fault."

There is understood to be a difference in the amount of "good" that beings have. The more they approximate God, the better they are understood to be. God being pure goodness, any object of creation has less goodness than God. If privation is to be understood as the lack of what should be present, a creature's "goodness" can only be evaluated on the grounds of how good it is able to be. Animals are not meant to be like humans, and humans are not meant to be like angels. In the natural order (as well in the supernatural order), beings have been made on different levels. Those differences are not evil. They are only metaphysically evil. Having been created in the way that they are, is an affirmation that THEY WERE MEANT TO BE THAT WAY! More discussion is contained on this in the Theories of Creation--specifically the theories of plenitude and aesthetics.

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'"S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 272-4.

"Anything God makes will be less than God, it will have a lack, and due to this, it will have a "metaphysical evil." Evil is to be understood as a lack of a good that could be there. Boethius defined God is the simultaneous possession of all perfections. Could God create another God? The answer would be no, because any creature with received existence is inferior to one whose essence is existence. Could God create a stronger being than God? Again no, because to create, that which is bestowed on another in creation must be pre-contained in the creator.

"S.T. 5:1 (Pegis, 34-35); 47:2 (Pegis, 262-264).
There is no such thing as an "evil power." All powers are good, but there is the power to do evil. Powers may be used in an evil manner." A bad apple is no different metaphysically from a good apple. It is fulfilling its end. It is no different for the apple, it is doing its job. For us, as humans, it is that we PREFER a certain apple!"

iii. Types of Evil

In the first account of creation according to Biblical tradition (Gn. 1-2:4), we read how God created the earth before humankind was created. The natural universe was understood as operating according to certain rules that regulate its activity (i.e. natural law). According to Sylvester Paul Schilling, there are three types of nonhuman factors generating evil/suffering in the cosmic environment. These are:

1. natural forces (e.g. lightening, tornadoes, drought, floods);
2. physical and mental sickness; 3. spiritual malaise (i.e. a

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*S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 272-274.

*S.T., 48:3; Pegis, 267.
sense of meaningfulness), an unrelieved sense of failure, or unrealized dreams.'

**Natural evil** is that which affects peoples' lives in a negative manner. It is the popular term given to natural occurrences/disasters that affect peoples' lives. It merely demonstrates how in one system fulfilling its end, impact is felt on another system's operation. It is not actually evil according to our definition, because the rains that cause mud slides, and floods that wreak havoc across the globe, are actually **natural systems** operating according to the end they have been designed for and so are operating according to their nature. The fact that we build on flood plains, denude mountainsides, slash and burn hillsides, practice strip-mining, and erode our ozone layer, affects the natural patterns of operations in the world's ecosystems. The frustration, loss, or tragedy that we experience from such natural occurrences (often termed "acts of God") would be due to our inability to perceive/expect and prepare for such (or any) changes that result in the functioning/operations of these systems.

If we were to employ the ever-increasing wisdom and technology that we have been gifted with the ability to develop, we might be able to forecast changes in weather

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patterns, predict climate changes, and in doing so, avoid disaster. If people would accept responsibility for one another as members of the same human race, recognize that we share the same world, have the same needs requiring the same support, and so cooperate with one another, we could meet those needs. Then, we might see that in sharing the stewardship of this planet, there would be less atrocity existing in the human condition for survival.

According to this creation-tradition and supported by modern science humankind can be understood as having been created as a free being after the establishment of the natural and animal world. Despite severe criticism of traditional Thomistic belief in human freedom, Thomists maintain that humans have been created with the ability to choose how they would conduct themselves in the world. There are numerous instances in the history of the human race where suffering and cruelty have resulted from the choice of inflicting cruel treatment upon one another. The lack of co-operation in developing resources, territoriality, the lack of sharing resources, and selfishness with abundance has led to starvation, power struggles, and innumerable other human abuses. This is what may be known as the second genera of
evil: moral evil, about which Sylvester Paul Schilling writes."

The suffering that results from human action is due to moral evil. As a source of suffering it differs from natural evil. The latter results in undesirable experiences not due to human actions or choices, because natural suffering is due to the operation of the physical world, independent of human volition, or cause. Moral evil is the direct result of voluntary human action."

Beyond what is able to be controlled by humans or regarding the aid given to those in need, there are situations that are beyond reasonable human control or foresight. There is what appears to be the element of kismet, fate, or chance. Why, for instance, in a double occupancy maternity ward, would one mother be presented with a smiling and laughing healthy baby, while in the next bed, the mother be presented with a severely handicapped child? Why, if both mothers were careful and took no unnecessary risks? Why, in a classroom hit by a freak tornado, is one child's life spared, and another's is not? This is the question of dysteleological, surd or hard evil—which all point out the purposelessness of evil, or question if evil must be, why must it be so dreadful.

"Sylvester Paul Schilling, 17.

"Schilling, 24.
iv. Causes of Evil

When confronting what appears to be an evil, and knowing that Thomistic thought is to regard all things that exist (i.e. have "being" or existence granted to them') as good, one is impelled to ask if a "good" could be the cause of evil? Aquinas' response would be in the affirmative—a "yes,"": because only a "being" can be responsible for a cause.

A further explanation of the sense of "being" may clarify any confusion. In the case of a rock falling and crushing a toddler, the rock must exist, and therefore possesses the property of "being." The natural evil is the falling of the rock. This is a natural action. If it did not result in hurting the child we would not call this evil. It would merely be a rock that fell. It is due to the impact felt by the natural action of weight and gravity, and the unfortunate position of the child, that we call this occurrence "evil."

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'S.T. 18:1; Pegis, 521: "We must speak of good and evil in actions as of good and evil in things, ...in things, each one has so much good as it has being,...But God alone has the whole fullness of His Being in a manner which is one and simple, whereas every other thing has its proper fullness of being in a certain multiplicity...while so far as something is lacking in the fullness of its being, so far does this fall short of goodness, and is said to be evil."

"S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 272-274."
One must remember that in the Thomistic mind everything that exists has "being," and is good. As an existent being, it is charged with the mandate of being its fullest expression of that being. It is when it falls short of this that evil is said to exist—when something is lacking that should be there, e.g. eyes lacking sight.

Aquinas holds that evil itself is like nothingness. It has no existence on its own. As one gains more power, one's ability to do more evil, or more good rises proportionately. Evil has its cause by way of an agent—not directly—but accidentally. Evil is contained in the action, rather than in the effect. In action, evil is caused by reason of a defect in the agent i.e. the doer (e.g. a warped mentality), or the instrument (e.g. injury resulting from improper use of a knife, car, etc.).

According to Thomistic thought, it is understood that God is the primary cause of all activity. Human actions are due to humans—not God—only because God gave humans the power to act. Humans then become secondary causes. God moves the will, but only such that it remains a free action. This may be understood as God urging us, persuading us to use the abilities

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'S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 273.
'S.T. 6:2, reply to obj. 3; Pegis, 482
we have been gifted with and our discernment to act on the best possible choice.

God causes original existence, and the continued existence known as conservation. "God provides a creature with the power to attain its end. The end we work towards obtaining must be attainable else "the agent would never begin to act, because nothing moves towards what it cannot reach." If we were moved towards an end that was unattainable, we would be contrary beings. In this, the creature is empowered to carry out its actions. God enables things to be moved according to their nature. God does not determine the creature's actions. Due to the intellect, we have the power of deliberation. We are free to recognize a good, choose it, and act upon it.

Aquinas states that in a human action three things are involved: 1) the agent, the person who performs the action (created by God and so is to be regarded as a good thing), directed by human nature, which is good, to seek out an end; 2) the form, which is the action that had been granted existence by God, after having been willed by the agent who received the

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"Owens, 108.

"Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book III, Chapter 2; Pegis, 430."
power to act from God; 3) the end, which must be perceived as a good in order to be pursued."

In his *Summa*, Aquinas discusses goodness and malice in human acts. For a human action to be regarded as good, the following three aspects must be present. If one is missing, the evil of the act may vary according to degree. First, the object or species must be suitable. This is the primary determiner of the morality of the action. The end must be one of genuine good, not merely perceived as a good. The object is not the matter out of which something results (e.g. money—a thing desired), but the matter about which something is concerned (e.g. how the money was attained—earned or stolen).

Second, are the circumstances or the context in which the act is performed. These alter the quality of the act, but cannot make a wrong act a right act. When starving, does one steal 3 or 5 apples? The situation is what determines the circumstance (e.g. is one stealing apples because of dire hunger, or just for a thrill).

Third is intention. This is the "why." Is the act evil for a good reason (e.g. Robin Hood stole—an evil—for a good purpose), or for an evil reason (e.g. beating a cripple)? This

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*S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 273.*
third, even if performed for the most meritorious and noble of reasons, cannot make an evil act a good one."

It is the evil of the action that is wrong'. When a person chooses something other than that which would lead to God (the highest good), there is a lack of ordination to the will of God.'

All creatures act.‘ All actions are driven by the will. The will must be controlled by the intellect.‘ In order for the intellect to choose to do something, it must be perceived

'S.T. 18:1-3, 6, 10, 11; Pegis, 520-540.

"...we must know that evil is cause in action otherwise than in the effect." S.T. 49:1; Pegis, 273.

'This is where the freedom of human choice comes into play. God does not force us to conform to God's own will. God voice is believed to be discerned through conscience. In this way, God "speaks through silences." It is the tuning of the heart in times of question to listen to the murmurings of conscience that is believed to be opportunity to identify the way one should act, and follow "the will of the Lord." The surrendering of personal egoism, personal agenda, and selfish pursuit are all contained in the phrase: "Let thy will be done." Mary, the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, is revered, partly because of the surrender of her will, to what she believed was the will of God, performing in obedience what she felt was asked of her. Christian pedagogy has modelled this act of surrender as an example to be emulated. The Jesus narrative also cites Jesus' own acceptance of following what was discerned as the will of God, despite personal preference: "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Lk. 22:42).


'S.T. 8:1-3; Pegis, 495-497.

'S.T. 9:1; Pegis, 498-499.
as a good. It must be perceived as desirable." Metaphysically and for the purposes of this paper desire shall be considered a propensity, or a movement towards something. In order to convince the will, the intellect must interpret the bad as a good. An example of this would be how the taking of poison is understood as bad thing. Yet the idea of being out of pain forever (infinitely), could be perceived as a good. The intellect may override the intuitive understanding of poison as a bad thing, in order to convince the body's will to ingest poison in order to eliminate pain permanently (i.e. suicide), thus perceiving poison as a good thing. Here, only the action is evil. Hence, evil is a lack of ordination."

All creation was created for the fulfilment of some end. Its end is to be understood as its maximization of being. For Aquinas, everything starts out with its minimum being, and moves to its maximum being. Non-living beings basically stay the same, living beings change through growth and development. In this way one can understand how acorns have been ordained to

"S.C.G., Book III, Chapter 3; Pegis, 432-433.

"In Aquinas, (S.T., 49:1; Pegis, 272-4), the question is asked: can good be the cause of evil? Yes, because the rational creature is good, and only such a creature can act, the good creature can be the cause of an evil act, "thus good is the cause of evil."

"S.C.G., Book III, Chapter 2 (Pegis, 429-447); Chapter 48 (Pegis, 463-467).
grow into oak trees. Humans not only grow, but attain our final act where we are able to use all our powers. We move naturally to ends that perfect us.

Why do oak trees die? The earth would be full of oaks if they did not for one, and having fulfilled their end, Aquinas states that "a point can be reached beyond which the agent does not desire to go." Upon reaching that end, matter re-enters the environment for re-composition. Creatures desire their own good, completion, fullness, perfection. Every created thing is a participation in God. The seeking of perfection is a seeking for God, who contains all perfection. Participation is sharing in the fullness of God. Every seeking of goodness is thus a search for God.

v. Is God Responsible for Evil?

Having considered the question of whether "good" can be the cause of evil, we must now ask if the highest good (i.e. God) can be considered the cause of evil. Thomistic thought holds that because evil is understood as the defect of action, caused by a defect in the agent, and God being the highest

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'S.C.G. Book III, Chapter 2; Pegis, 430.
'S.C.G. Book III Chapter 16; Pegis, 434.
'S.C.G. Book III, Chapter 20; Pegis, 430.
'S.C.G. Book III, Chapter 17; Pegis, 435.'
perfection in which there can be no defect, evil cannot be reducible to God as its cause."

The next question that may follow is that if a creature is created the way it is by God, would God not bear some responsibility for the effects of that creation? The Thomistic response would be no, because God is to be regarded as the primary cause, and the defect resides in the secondary cause. Just as limping is not due to the motive power but due to curvature of the leg, so too the existence of a bad action is attributable to God, but the evil in it is due to the agent."

Aquinas maintains that God allows evil to exist--for a good end, and that the only reason God tolerates evil is for the good that would result."
When we perform the action, God allows it to happen. God gives existence to the agent (humans), and to the act. God is thus involved, but only in a limited way. Evil then, can be said to be willed by God in an indirect manner, for it is written:

"He does will, by willing the good to which such evils are attached...and in willing the preservation of the order of nature, He wills some things to be naturally corrupted.""
Similarly, the contemporary Thomist Abbe Charles Journet writes regarding pain and suffering: "...they are not willed by God directly and as such, but are indirectly willed by Him, or permitted, as unavoidable or accidental side-effects of the promotion of some great good.""'

This of course has been challenged. Hick argues that the idea of double effect, or double casuistry' does not remove blame from God. Hick argues that it is because God could have made a world with less evil but did not, God is ultimately to blame and therefore causes the evil we have, not only permits it to exist and occur."

vi. The Theodical Examination

The word theodicy is a conflation of the Greek words theos meaning god, and dike meaning justice. It is said to have been coined by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz because the first appearance of the word was in its French form theodicee, in his work Essai de Théodicée (Amsterdam, 1710)."" It had been used,


"Casuistry is the act or process of deciding right/wrong conduct, or duty.

'Hick, 103.

"Hick, 6.
and continues to refer to the attempt of defending God in the face of evil."

Operating on the basis of the world being created by God, the world judged by God as good, and humans having been created to enjoy the world and acting as stewards of creation, one may inquire as to the role of evil's place in creation. The following two theories shall examine the role that evil plays in world.

vii. Theories of Creation

Desire is the will to possess something we do not already have. When we do possess it, we rejoice in it. There is nothing that could be added to God's perfection. Why then did God create? Traditional Thomist belief holds that the only motive God had was generosity. It was goodness seeking to share itself. Having complete happiness (understood as the possession of everything that would make one deliriously joyful), what one could still hope to do would be to share it.


""Desire applies to a wish for something a person thinks or hopes he can get." (World Book Dictionary, Clarence L. Barnhart Editor-in-Chief, Toronto, 1967), with this understanding it is meant that something is not already possessed.

S.T. 19:1; Pegis, 192.
It is believed by monotheists that God created out of love. Out of God's abundance creation flowed, in order that others might share in the wealth that is contained within God's being. God did not need to create, for God needs nothing. God's completeness could never be added to. The only motive explaining God's act of creation would be God's aim to share, because GOODNESS SEEKS TO SHARE ITSELF! *Bonum est diffusivum est* (i.e. goodness is diffusive). It then follows that all things that are good share in that quality that is contained in its greatest fullness in God—Divine goodness:^1^ There was nothing that could ever add to God's fullness of being. God is plenum. All that flowed out of God, this emanation, was contained in God before it found its expression in creation.

To describe this, one shall use the expression as God's "pre-containment" of all that came to be as a created form. One might compare this concept to the situation of how a sculpture must "pre-exist" in the mind of the sculptor before finding its form in the clay.

**a) Aesthetic Theory**

God is to be viewed as perfect in every respect. As such, this God could only desire what is best for us. When we desire something, it may not be what is the best for us. Hence it may

^1^S.T., 19:2; Pegis, 194.
be understood that, when our desires are not fulfilled, it is because this is in our best interest. The idea of sacrificing immediate satisfaction, for the good of the whole, is rooted in the aesthetic theory. This aesthetic understanding derives from Augustine's revision of Aristotle's view of creation and the world's graded diversity as taught by Plotinus. Augustine received many aspects of his theodicy from Plotinus. It basically states that "though the parts may be imperfect the whole is perfect." Hick capsulizes this thought by stating it as: "From the divine point of view, then, each being ... each is in its own way good; and each in its proper place in the system contributes to the perfection of the whole." More fully, it reads:

... the world as a whole is good, and that evil is a necessary part of the perfect, overall harmony. What seems to be evil to us is in fact, from God's perspective, really a good, since it is either a

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'Aristotle, Metaphysics. VII; Pegis, 263 "Therefore, just as the divine wisdom is the cause of the distinction of things for the sake of the perfection of the universe, so is it the cause of inequality. For the universe would not be perfect if only one grade of goodness were found in things."


'Hick, 82.

'Augustine, True Religion, XL. 76, 77; Hick, 83.

'Hick, 84.
necessary part of a good whole, or...a necessary means to a good end."

Discussion

One critique commonly directed at such a Thomistic understanding of evil is that such a view of evil makes "evil" a "good" in disguise. This is denying the existence of evil as a terrible reality! It disguises evil's real and true unpleasantness, and undesirability by making the genuineness of the resulting suffering questionable. One might be moved to ponder if we, as the lady Hamlet's mother (Queen Gertrude) refers to "...doth protest too much."

The understanding of evil as lacking substance as an "evil entity" whose essential nature is evil arises from the belief that every existing thing is a good creation of a good God. Evil is a loss and lack, a deprivation of good. The privative doctrine, as Hick agrees, must be accepted as wholly sound, but was never intended by Augustine, Aquinas, or Leibniz, or

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"The source of this quotation is found in the work by Barry L. Whitney, Evil and the Process God (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 36, but in no way is meant to imply that the authors (Hick, and Whitney) endorse this view.

"The full quote from William Shakespeare's Hamlet arising as Hamlet confronts his mother regarding the lady she had portrayed in his play being: "The lady doth protest too much methinks." Act III, scene 2, line 242.

"Hick, 180."
others in the same tradition as a solution to the problem of evil. It was proffered only to rule out a dualist solution.

The problem with accepting the privation of good as accounting for the presence of evil is that if everything we perceive as an evil is actually a good, then we run the risk of not correcting what screams for change because we would fear disturbing a pre-ordained order. In this way what appears to be an improvement, or an attempt at lessening the human struggle (e.g. via medical research breakthroughs, humanitarian aid, etc.), would actually be working against the will of God! All that humans have done to ease human pain and misery would appear to have been contrary to divine intention! It is good however to alleviate suffering for as Fr. Peter Sullivan, assistant judicial vicar for the Albany Diocesan Tribunal says: "Bringing a person back to normalcy is always acceptable."

It is one thing to view suffering as an opportunity for one to extend charity, and so to exercise and improve one's capacity to do so, but it seems absurd not to completely eliminate suffering if one is able. Is it necessary for the existence of suffering to be protected so that one is guaranteed of some sort of charitable outlet?

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'Hick, 181.

In our lived experience one cannot deny the genuine experience of suffering and pain. To look at a child screaming in anguished torment and say: "Oh stop your complaining, it doesn't really hurt," would be cruel. What is meant by the "evil is a good in disguise" argument is that some pains are necessary to achieve a greater good. It is the end that must be kept in sight. An example of this may be the experience of a woman in the throes of childbirth. The suffering is real, the pain causing it is real. There is nothing that can dispute these facts. Yet, the good that results is to be viewed as worth the pain, for the end if not justifying the means, at least is so grand, that it is often viewed as "worth it."

A question that may be advanced is: "How can the privation of good come about in a universe that is created and ruled by a good God?"

Physical laws operate independently of human concern, as a result things fall, break, and we experience pain. Free will is our choice. We are not robots and so sometimes people suffer due to their own or others' choices. Why it is, that things are the way they are, when it seems they could have been better otherwise, and seemingly could have accomplished the same effect with less stress or discomfort, is shrouded in mystery. Thomistic teaching urges us to believe (an act of faith) that it could not have been otherwise. As such, it is
believed and accepted, that things are the way they are, because God—a God who is compassionate and loving—has allowed them to be this way.

In faith, one is forced to agree with Rudolph Otto when he states:

All evil is reconcilable with God's Providential will though His plan is clearly beyond Human comprehension.'

b) Principle of Plenitude

Another theory that accounts for the place of evil in creation is the Neo-Platonic solution of Augustine, contained in the principle of plenitude. This theme is neo-Platonic because it found its source in Plato (427-347 B.C.E.). Plato held the idea that all things are actually reflections (phantoms—like reflections in a mirror) of what he called "Ideas." These exist in another place known as the Eternal Realm. All that we see and experience is real and actual because it is a reflection of what exists in that Eternal Realm. Hence, all the good and bad we witness, experience,

'Whitney, E.P.G., 17.

"Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884-1953) explained how in Plato's universe there are: God (the cosmic Artisan), the Pattern (the eternal ideal corresponding to the Ideas), and the Receptacle (what we have referred to as the pure potentiality of prime matter). The actual world is caused by the union of the forms (or Pattern) with the Receptacle. Taken from E. S. Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, 339; Pegis, 32. See also Hick, 32."
etc., has actuality because it has a real existence in the Eternal Realm. The source of evil may then be not something willed or created by God, but an eternal aspect of God's nature."

Plotinus (205-270 C.E.) built on this theory as well. He stated that evil exists out of necessity. He argued that evil must be present, not for contrast, but for logical necessity. That which starts with the best in the spectrum of things at one end must have, at its opposite end, the worst that can possibly be (from the highest archangel to the lowest amoeba or virus"). The worst is that which has absolutely no residue of good in it. This is what may be termed evil. In this understanding, the Supreme being has poured out abundance into innumerable forms of existence. These beings of creation descend in their degrees of "being" and "goodness" until, creativity being exhausted, bordered upon the empty darkness of "non-being." This is what would be known as evil."

"Hick, 32.

"Hick, 189.

Discussion

Plotinus treated evil as both negative and passive, as well as positive and active. It is the former when used to explain the potency of evil's impact felt in human experience and the latter when the universe is looked on as the emanation of Perfect Goodness—God."

Plotinian matter is not that which we conceive of in today's scientific terms. It is Platonic matter—formless and measureless. Reality for Plato consisted of universal ideas or forms. The universal, not the particular, constituted the nature of Reality." Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) built on this thought, but to him ideas existed in substances—that is in form plus matter. What grew out of this became known as Aristotle's hylomorphic theory."

In Aquinas' thought prime matter (Greek-hyle) is pure potentiality which can become anything. It remains in that potential state until it becomes individuated and actualized by a substantial form. This substantial form (Greek-morphe) is

"Hick, 42.


"S.T. 44:2; Pegis, 235-236.
its nature. Natures alone are universals. The idea of an oak
tree is a universal. It includes all oak trees.

When a substantial form is received into prime matter, the
prime matter is individualized and restricted to that one
particular thing. When the idea of an oak tree is united with
prime matter, it becomes an actual oak tree. The two co-exist.

All beings in the natural world would then be hybrids, or
composites. Humans are composites for we are composed of the
two—a material body and an immortal soul. Traditional
Christian faith views that it is unnatural for the two to be
separated. The belief is held that after death, the soul
continues to exist and the two shall be eventually reunited due
to the resurrection of the body. Christian belief holds that
the soul alone is incomplete.

In Plotinian philosophy, evil represents the dead end of
the creative process. Plotinus' matter is the Platonic matter
to which the Eternal Ideas give form and so produce the
sensible world. By itself and apart from having been given
form by the Ideas, matter cannot even be said to exist.

"Matter has not even existence whereby to have some part in

This belief is found in the Apostolic Creed, composed near
the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. It
states a belief in "the resurrection of the flesh." It was
repeated again in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, composed
in 451 C.E. stating how all Christians "look forward to the
resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."
Good: Being is attributed to it by an accident of words: the truth should be that it has Non-Being."

Evil again here is understood as non-being; it is a lack, a privation, and a non-entity. One must understand the Platonic distinction between non-being (in the absolute sense of sheer nothingness), and the relative sense of that which has not yet realized its potential to become actualized and become some specific thing.

The Christian understanding of the hylo-morphic theory perceives all things that have "being" and "existence" as good. This is based on the biblical book of the Genesis account of creation where each day the Lord made something. When the Lord beheld creation, God said it was good. Thomist thought holds that because something has being (i.e. has had existence granted to it), it is to be regarded as a good thing. This principle maintains that creation, in its diversity, displays a small sampling of the variety of goods the Creator is capable of producing. It can be said that some forms appear to be inferior to others, but this is due to a value judgement we have imposed upon it.

A blind dog seems to have been somehow shortchanged when compared to a dog with sight. This is because we have placed a

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Enneads, i. 8, 5; Hick 41.

Hick, 42.
value judgement on sight, and view its absence as a flaw. What should be looked at here is one's "level of being." What is meant by this is that a dog may be said to have less "being" than a human, and a flea less "being" than a dog. To be an inferior creature is only to be a lesser good. It was created as it was, and we are to believe that God judged that it was good, created just as it is. Who are we to argue with God? Each element of creation is good and valuable in its own right.

Arthur Lovejoy suggests the idea that "evil" ought to be viewed as a "lesser good," based on the notion that "matter was not lacking to Him...to suffice for the production of everything conceivable by an infinite intelligence." This is to mean that all different kinds of beings must exist in order to express the infinite creativity of God. Similarly, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) says that when looking at creation, all is

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'This notion gave inspiration to the title: "Your Arms are Too Short to Box with God," a play that became a smash hit on Broadway, arguing against complaining about one's lot in life. It encouraged one to thank God for what has been given, and celebrate what one has.

'Arthur Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, (Harvard University Press, 1936), chap. 5. This citation found in Hick, 21.

'Baruch Spinoza, Ethics, trans. by R.H.M. Elwes, 'Bohn's Philosophical Library' (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), i, appendix, as found in Hick, 21.
good existing *as it is*, because each thing demonstrates
"different expressions of the infinite divine fecundity."

When examining the principle of plenitude it appears
closely related to the aesthetic theme regarding the perfection
of the universe when seen as a totality. Yet the principle of
plenitude is not in fact exemplified in the actual universe.
The universe as we know it, does not contain all possible
species. Unicorns do not exist, as do not chimeras, or flying
monkeys. One cannot explain this incompleteness without either
abandoning the principle of plenitude, or supposing a limit to
God's power. The discussion of the principle of plenitude, as
an aid to theodicy presupposes that evil is to be justified in
a holistic way.

**Summary of Part I**

Augustinian-Thomist theodicy accounts for the fall of
angels and humans as being due to the basic weakness of their
nature. The universe is diverse, and included in this
diversity are beings that can fail. Aquinas taught that:
"what can fail, sometimes does." As a result, natural and

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'Hick, 21.
'Hick, 189.
'S.T. 48:2; Hick, 190.
moral evil arise due to the inherent imperfection of the universe.

The strongest argument against the Thomist tradition is that although created beings have the potential to fail in attaining their ordained ends does not mean that they must inevitably do so. It would have been possible for God to create beings that although capable of failing, "are in fact co constituted and sustained that they never fail." One cannot blame the existence of evil upon a metaphysical necessity. When one maintains that a) a created being has a fallible nature, and b) that what can fail inevitably does, the blame for the existence of evil is laid upon the Creator. This is because God chose to make creatures who are bound to sooner or later act wrongly, knew that they would, and yet chose to make them anyway. This is the fatal contradiction within the Augustinian-Thomist theodicy.

It was the intention of Part I to present the thoughts dealing with the Thomistic idea of God, evil and consequent suffering, evil's origin, and the difficulty in reconciling God with evil that has resulted in the study called theodicy. As a problem that has existed for ages, it has been addressed with a variety of responses from within groups believing in God.

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'Hick, 191.'

'Hick, 191.'
Although all Christian denominational churches stem from
the same source of tradition, it would be unfair to view all
Christian churches today as part of a homogeneous tradition.
Today's Christian church is splintered. These facets separate
themselves due to differences in an interpretation of the
faith, and as a result of this, what the lived expression of
that faith should resemble. They do not all uphold the exact
same view on many points of faith. They do share a common
history of theological thought, and so a common source of
wisdom. It is this source that shall be referred to in Part II
in the examination of traditional thought. Traditional Roman
Catholic teaching is Thomistic, and is still widely maintained.
It is in this vein that the following section shall approach
the issue of how God and evil have been defined, and how God
has traditionally been reconciled with the existence of evil in
this world.

Hindu practice seems quite different from Christian
practice. Yet the understandings of God are surprisingly
similar. Theodical concerns have never made as great an impact
on Indian culture as they have on Western theology because of a
leavening factor known as karma. This shall be examined, as
well as traditional and contemporary Hindu thought in Part III.
Part II Traditional Christian Responses

Introduction

Over the centuries there have been a variety of Christian thinkers that have responded to the problem of evil. None of their works has ever attained the status as an official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. This section shall attempt to examine those thinkers whom I have chosen because of their contribution to the development of an understanding of the theodical question. This examination shall start with the early church fathers, and refer to traditional Roman Catholic teaching. It shall involve a discussion of the human person, how God is to be understood and the relationship between the two. Contemporary thinkers have indicated problems perceived with these understandings, and although I do not adjudicate their arguments, I include them to present opposing voices.

Chapter 1 Augustine

This response is known as "Augustinian Theodicy," after the Christian theologian Aurelius Augustine (354-430 C.E.), Bishop of Hippo (the northern coast of Africa across the Mediterranean from Italy, modern day Tunisia). Here the theodical solution originates in its basic form: God is not responsible for evil, human beings are, for the choice to
responsible for evil, human beings are, for the choice to follow a lesser good was first started by Adam and Eve. St. Augustine claims: "all evil is either sin, or the punishment for sin." Augustine lays the foundation for Christian naturalism, which "rejoices in this world...instead of fleeing from it as a snare to the soul, [and] seeks to use it and share it in gratitude to God..." Through his teaching, we are to view all creation as good, and know that all creation was created for a certain purpose. That "purpose" is referred to as its "end," or "telos." In pursuit of this end all beings are to follow "natural law," which is understood as the built-in disposition for self-preservation and procreation.

Augustine contends that there is no evil in creation, even at the lowest end of the spectrum. By evil, he is referring to some sort of "created evil" which would have its only purpose of making creation suffer. To be a lower being on the evolutionary scale in the hierarchy of created beings is merely to be a "lesser good." The concept employed here represents a "scale of beings" descending in their level of goodness, with God at the apex. Moving downwards, would be a lessening level of the attributes and qualities contained in their greatest fullness in God. Following God would be the nine orders that

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Hick, 45.

Hick, 40-41.
compose the celestial hierarchy: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels. These constitute the supernatural order. In descending level of placement, the natural order is composed of: humans, animals, vegetal life forms, and mineral life forms.

Traditionally, God is believed to be immutable. We do not possess this, and so are mutable. Being mutable, we are susceptible to corruption. Augustine adapted Plotinus' idea and holds that evil is contained in a malfunctioning of the creation which, in itself, is good. Evil is contained in the corruption of a mutable good.

"Evil enters...when some member of the universal Kingdom, whether high or low in the hierarchy, renounces its proper role in the divine scheme and ceases to be what it is meant to be." Evil may as well enter when something ceases to function and operate in the way it was destined and designed to work. This is what can be known as the absence of "proper being" in a creature. Evil, then, has no positive (i.e. real) nature, but

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"Hick, 46.

"Hick, 47."
is regarded as a loss of a good. It is a lack or a privation, of what should be there. Evil is thus parasitic, for it has as its host that which is corrupted.

Metaphysically, this is how evil is to be perceived and understood, because in the real, lived experience, there can be no doubt concerning the horror of evil's genuineness. In developing his stance, Augustine has taken a backward-looking notion of looking at our lived reality, and trying to figure out how we got here. It is patterned on the fall-redemption scheme.

**Natural Evil**

According to the world-view of his day, and so affecting his vision and understanding, the natural world was believed by Augustine to have been created before humans. It was to have been an Eden-like world of pure harmony. One can imagine it to be an idyllic land, where gentle rains sooth a parched earth, and where soft breezes coolingly caress fertile plains. It was when man became expelled from this Eden of bliss our present-day condition began.

Natural occurrences such as earthquakes and hurricanes are good in themselves because they follow the end they have been designed and created for. Due to the original sin of the first human creatures, we have upset an original harmony that is
believed to have been present and continue to be affected by this. We call this "evil" because we view it as undesirable. When we call this suffering, we do so because our harmony is upset."

Animal pain is a part of the natural order. Natural order is based on the primacy of species. The lesser must succumb to the greater, the weaker to the stronger. It must be remembered that ANY form of suffering would be against the will of a loving God. These were simply viewed as the consequences of being thrust from paradise. Yet suffering is to be regarded as only transitory. For just as morning follows night, we are to understand that in the same way suffering will cease. It is the appointed order that birth yields life, life ceases with death, and decay follows. These are the processes that occur naturally in creation. The functioning of our universe is to be viewed as one big organism involved in a process of continual growth, development and change."

Moral Evil

What separates the moral universe from the natural is the ability of sentient creation to reason. With reason, natural law is still followed. Humans however do not operate only by

"Hick, 58.

"Hick, 86."
instinct, for it is by our ability to reason that we are able to discern and make choices. With every freedom comes responsibility, and so with the freedom of choice comes the responsibility to be accountable for the consequences that arise as a result of our choices and actions. We are capable of discerning and choosing which course of action we shall follow. We are to be held accountable for the results of those choices and actions. If one chooses to do evil, one must therefore suffer the consequences of just judgement.

Augustine viewed evil as the penalty for sin.\footnote{Hick, 59.} He understood sin as originating in the person's wilful act of turning away from God (the highest good), to follow a lower good. Augustine understood humans as being fallible creatures who are "non posse, non peccare" (i.e. not able \textit{not} to sin). God knew creation's will, character, and disposition, because God knew what God created. Yet, knowing this, "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than not to permit any evil to exist."\footnote{Augustine, \textit{Enchiridion}, VIII. 27, translated by J.F. Shaw; David Ray Griffin, \textit{God Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy}. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 71.}

There are echoes of Aristotle's aesthetic theme and the Plotinian principle of plenitude which had been mentioned earlier. To review these generally held that the universe is
wholly good, and the evil in it contributes to the perfection of it as a whole. It is to be understood as in a painting, dark hues must exist as well as the bright--if only for contrast. In sum, it can be said that though the parts may be imperfect, the whole is perfect.

If one is to view the world as Augustine does where all happens by the will of God, AND WE COMMIT SIN--who is to be held responsible? It would seem that if I sin, and God foreknew that I would, God is involved and must bear some degree of responsibility.

Augustine's reply to this would be that there are TWO wills: the Eternal, and the creaturely. The Eternal refers to God's, the creaturely to that of humankind. In the end, the Eternal is that which will prevail because in the grand scheme of things, people come and go but God exists forever. People shall follow the creaturely will, which is believed to be INSPIRED by God. Based on inspiration, it may or may not happen, depending on the choices we make. These are dependent on whether our hearts are tuned to the voice of God.

It is not only our hearts that must be in the right place, but our wills as well, for although we may sense the right thing to do, we may choose to do otherwise. It is not God's will that we "harden our hearts," turn away and follow another voice (i.e. our selfish concern, be seduced by the temptation
to follow a lesser good, etc.). Our will is included in the Eternal will because the "greater good" is that which comes from both evil and good, rather than from good alone. Evils are to be viewed as permitted because it was good that they exist, so that from them a greater good may come.:

Augustine attributes all evil (both moral and natural) to the wrong choices of free rational beings that began with the first choice of wilful wrong action resulting in the fall, and continues today. This happened first in the case of angels, and then was repeated in man.:

When Augustine abandoned Manichaeism and embraced Christianity, he was taught "that free will is the cause of our doing evil and that thy [God's] vast judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequences.":

This is the heart of Augustine's theodicy. It was when the original creature's will turned away from focussing on the Good (i.e. God), to a lesser good, that evil came to be. It was not because the lesser good was evil, for it is just what it is called--A LESSER GOOD! It was the WILFUL

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Enchiridion, viii. 23; Hick, 59.

TURNING AWAY FROM GOD that was the evil act. This is believed to be traceable to the heavenly host, which became the premundane fallen angel, and continues to be the source of sinfulness in man's nature today.

The theodicy that has developed based on this belief in an angelic fall and continues in humans today, has its source in two pillars of doctrine: 1) that God created all, and all was good, 2) that there was nothing externally pushing nor pulling the soul to do wrong—it was the misuse of the freedom given by God, and from the wilful act of not keeping our gaze directed at God that resulted in all the evils we know of—even natural evils.

God's foreknowledge meant that God knew that humans could choose to use their free will to sin. God created beings that were able to sin due to their finite perfection. Having chosen a good other than God, creation after the first (i.e. after

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"Hick, 60.

"Compare this with the biblical example of the angel leading Lot and his family from the city of Sodom as it was about to be destroyed (Gn.19:1-28). Lot's wife, disobeyed the order given to them as they fled Sodom. Looking back (presumably to see with her own eyes that which had been foretold would happen to the city regarding its destruction), she was turned into a pillar of salt. Many teachings can be drawn from this story. One is to discourage the witness and pleasure of another's destruction. Curious that the woman was never named, and that she was turned into a pillar of salt—a very dear commodity in the culture of the time.

"Hick, 62.
Adam and Eve are in a state of sin, and are thus *non posse, non peccare.* Being so, it was inevitable that succeeding creation would sin—save the notable exceptions such as the parents of Mary (the mother of Jesus of Nazareth) for she was conceived immaculately, and Mary's son Jesus, who is held up as an example of a life lived without sin.

Recalling the three Thomistic elements governing the morality of human action, one can see that a wrong action can never be made right. After the decision to commit the act, only the degree of how wrong that act is, can be affected. One might argue that if evil and suffering are punishment for sin, the sin was dreadful, for our situation is dreadful. Had the sin not had such a high degree of wrongness, then perhaps our present situation might not be so bad.

**Discussion**

Seeking how to evaluate Augustine's privative doctrine of evil, one must be aware that it is part of his total metaphysical understanding of the universe. In this understanding, as has already been discussed, all creation is good. Evil arises in the "corrupting of a good substance." In the Judeo-Christian tradition is the idea of a good and

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"Hick, 69.

"Hick, 59."
omnipotent God that creates ex nihilo. Evil is nothing substantial, it is only a loss of natural measure, form, and order—a malfunctioning of something that is in itself good.

Evil was not created, but consists in the first creatures' voluntary turning away from the perfection they were created to follow—the highest good being God. In the end, it is understood that all creation is directed towards God.

The point of Augustine's doctrine is the metaphysical claim that evil has not been created by God. It is to be viewed as parasitic. Where does this corruption then come from? In rejecting the Neo-Platonic view that evil is a metaphysical necessity, Augustine attributes all evil to the wrong choices of the first free rational beings. All others (i.e. their progeny) lives in non posse, non peccare. What would be the cause of the motivation carried through to the willed action of the first sin? Hick suggests that Augustine's doctrine holds that evil willing is a "self-originating act," and as such is veiled forever in the mystery of the finite freedom possessed by humans. Hick cites in Augustine's

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Hick, 54.

Hick, 54-55.

Hick, 59.

Hick, 60.

Hick, 61.
Ecclasiasticus (x. 13.) that the motive within the sinner which leads him astray is pride: "pride, which is the beginning of sin." This theme shall be again touched upon as one of the cornerstones in the Hindu response contained in section III.

The "basic and inevitable criticism is that the idea of an unqualifiedly good creature committing sin is self-contradictory and unintelligible." Hick continues on to say:

If the angels are finitely perfect, then even though they are in some important sense free to sin they will never in fact do so. If they do sin we can only infer that they were not flawless—in which case their Maker must share the responsibility for their fall, and the intended theodicy fails.

This paper is not here to defend the stand of Augustine, expand on the interpretation of why a finitely perfect creature may indeed sin, and whether or not blame should be cast on an omnipotent, omniscient Creator when such an act does occur. This purpose of this paper is not to adjudicate, but merely to present thinkers' arguments and why in light of directed criticism, weaknesses are perceived.

The problem that I perceive with Augustine's metaphysical solution is that our lived experience—the empirical—does not become more tolerable, less painful or traumatic, by describing evil impersonally as a loss or lack of goodness. Evil is

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Hick, 61.

Hick, 62-63.
experienced as real, genuine, powerful and positive. One cannot simply apply a metaphysical concept to an empirical reality! Augustine's proposal that the suffering experienced as a result of evil is genuine and traceable to a "wilful turning of the self in desire from the highest good, which is God Himself...," to me hardly seems an adequate or acceptable justification as to why I should suffer, or why babies should die.

To account for suffering as just or appropriate punishment acceptable in God's sight is a statement of moral auditing, and juridification. In such a situation sin becomes a quantity rather than a breach of personal relationship."

To describe evil as the absence of a good, is really only applicable when it touches on sentient life. When we read of a volcanic explosion and witness its spectacular eruption on a deserted mountain where there is no threat to animal or human life, it is photo-documented as a wonderful display of a natural occurrence. The quality of "evil" is not attributed to such physical actions. When any action affects our perception causing undesired pain and suffering, we call this evil.

To describe evil as negative or an absence, is contrary to our lived experience. To witness the "dynamic malevolence

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"Hick, 60.

"Hick, 195."
merely the absence of some good, is utterly insufficient...Cruelty is not merely an extreme absence of kindness but is something with a demonic power of its own."

The focus of this paper is theoretical not pastoral. It does not intend to ease the pain of one who suffers existentially by explaining theoretically that their predicament originated with the premundane angelic fall.

Chapter 2 St. Thomas Aquinas

There has been no "official" dogma proclaimed by the Christian church that reconciles the way God has been traditionally understood (i.e. omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent), with the human condition on earth (i.e. fraught with pain, anxiety, torment, and suffering). In fact Leo E. Missinne states:

...in the theological works of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius of Loyola, there is no mention of the problem of suffering as we see it today. Suffering seemed to be accepted in other times as a part of life. It had been taught in the Bible since the beginning of Humankind that we are surrounded by the voices of suffering. Christians were then seen as "homeless people" in a secular world--always on an exodus, enduring the demands of hope, and uttering the cries of suffering because their final destination was heaven, and earthly life was only a

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\(\text{Hick, 56-57.}\)
passage...Christians must understand that it is through suffering that our lives are redeemed."

What had been hoped for, was a method of finding meaning in suffering. Fr. Missinne continues on saying that "We all suffer because we are human beings knowing what it means to be happy." He tells us that the only thing we can do when we see others suffer is cum pati—suffer with them. He continues on to say that when we are immersed in suffering, we must try to be an inspiration for others. St. Thomas Aquinas however DID address the question of "why is there evil?" and "what is the source of evil." He is regarded as a fundamental voice of wisdom in the Roman Catholic church.

Living ca. 1224-1274, he was canonized by Pope John XXII in 1323. In 1567 Pope Pius V pronounced him the Angelic Doctor. In 1880, he was named Patron of Catholic Schools by Pope Leo XIII. In the fifty or so years that St. Thomas lived he affected thought for generations to come. He is cited as authoritative on many subjects. It is here that the Christian church was able to reflect on the wisdom of the Greek fathers, for it is said that through him Aristotle was "Christianized."

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"Missinne, 4.

"Missinne, 7, 8."
Translations of the Greek philosophical works used by Aquinas, that we have today, had been translated from Greek into Arabic and then into Latin. Aquinas, however, would have been able to use direct Greek-Latin translations because in that period, "Greek and Arabian philosophy was just entering the Latin world." The *Summa Theologica* is a classic of Christian thought. Due to his death it was left unfinished. It dates from 1256-1272.

St. Thomas' writings are a mirror, reflecting the religious, intellectual, and scientific life of his age. He was heir to the Greek, Arabic and Jewish philosophical legacy left to him by masters in their fields.

Thomist teaching follows Augustinian closely. Aquinas, in his *Summa*, explains why God is to be viewed as simple (rather than a composite). Being so, God is simultaneously existence and being (an existent being), and one whose will is the same as one's knowledge. Due to this, what God knows, is what God wills. What God wills then, must necessarily happen.

The inevitable question then arises: if God foreknows all things (due to God being the perfection of knowledge), with

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"*Pegis, xi.*

*Though tradition has honoured the use of the name *Summa Theologica*, the correct title of the work is either *Summa*, or *Summa Theologicae*, as indicated in Pegis' introduction.*
God's knowledge being the same as God's will—does God not share in the responsibility for what happens?

As has already been discussed in this paper, Aquinas answers this query by distinguishing between primary and secondary causation. By way of review, these ideas shall once again be examined. "Primary causation" as the first mover is God. "Secondary causation" is the agent that puts an action into effect—i.e. humans. With this understanding, one can see how God provides the POWER to the agent (i.e. humankind) to act, and it is a defect on the part of the agent that the action contains sin. Recall the example of the gun. God gave an inventor the capacity to imagine such a creation. A gun is not an evil thing in itself. It can however, be used in an evil manner.

Aquinas specifies that there is no such thing as a purely evil being, nor can evil ever be desired (or intended) because desire always seeks the good! In order for desire to pursue evil, it must be convinced that the evil is a good. An example of this would be that while theft is a known evil, the object of having much money is a desirable good. Hence the desire must focus on the good of possessing money, rather than the circumstance of how it is obtained.
Natural Evil

Hick cites the contemporary Thomist Charles Journet.\textsuperscript{14} Following Aquinas, Journet insists that God was under no kind of obligation or need to create. He continues saying (unlike Leibniz\textsuperscript{12}) that God is not \textit{bound} to produce the "best possible universe." Journet maintains that "Whatever world he [God] decides to make, what will be manifested of his [God's] infinite fullness, will never be equivalent to what remains to be manifested."\textsuperscript{15} Journet continues on, considering if the world would be better \textit{had} God intervened so as to obviate its worst horrors. "Would the world as a whole be better?"

\textsuperscript{14}Hick, 98.

\textsuperscript{12}G. W. Leibniz maintained that by reason of God's infinite goodness, God is bound to create the best of all possible worlds, and that it is the best in every respect! He uses "world" here in a comprehensive sense which may be enlarged to designate "universe." "The best possible world is that which permits a maximization of being. This maximum is defined in terms not only of quantity but also of variety...the divine purpose in creating was to manifest God's goodness beyond the borders of God's own being and is served by the production of a richly varied realm, rather than of only a single type...the Creator had to choose one particular coherent set of possibilities upon which to bestow existence. His choice was made from an infinity of different universes which were present in idea to the divine mind. Each constituted a complete possible history from creation onwards, and each formed a systematic whole such that to alter the least feature of it would be to change it into a different universe. It was these comprehensive possibilities that God surveyed, and from among which He summoned one into existence by His Creative power." (Hick, 154-5).

Perhaps...but if God creates, what is he [God] bound to do in virtue of his [God's] justice, wisdom and infinite goodness? He [God] is bound to make a good world in which evil cannot ultimately prevail over good."

Evil is to be viewed as permitted/tolerated and not willed, for the reasons of plenitude and aesthetics. One must always keep in mind that toleration is not the same as co-operation. "Natural evil," he says, "impinges upon mankind as part of the appointed punishment for man's sin.""

Regarding evils other than sin (pain and suffering—whether borne punitively by mankind or non-punitively by animals), Journet "replies that they are not willed by God directly...but are indirectly willed by Him, or permitted, as unavoidable or accidental side-effects of the promotion of some great good." Here again is repeated the idea that God permits evil because it is inseparable from the greater good that is intended and willed.

With respect to pain and suffering, they are to be viewed as the consequences of double effect. Aquinas was the originator of this principle. It holds that when an action is

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"Hick, 100.

"Hick, 99.

performed for a good cause and there are secondary or side
effects which are undesirable, the agent is not morally
blameworthy for these side effects. Due to this principle of
justification, unfortunate secondary effects do not nullify the
justice of the action as a whole." Thus suffering in nature
may be justified as an unavoidable secondary effect of creating
a rich and varied universe.

Moral Evil

God wills the order of the universe. If humans suffer
pain, it is intended indirectly as a side-effect of something
that is willed for a greater good. If not, God could be
thought of as a torturer. Aquinas maintains that in the case
of human suffering, it is ultimately punishment for sin. In
this case punishment is to be viewed as injury, self-inflicted
by a "rebel against an order which, being divine, could never
be upset by a creature." This is an appeal to what Augustine
called the principle of moral balance, where the balance is not
impaired so long as sin is fully cancelled out by punishment.

The experience of animals, and the degree to which we say
that they suffer is only conjecture on our parts. We have no

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"Hick, 101.

Journet's Meaning of Evil, eng. trans., 75; Hick, 105.
knowledge of any experience aside from the level of self-consciousness. We tend to project our human form of experience onto creatures whose life is lived at a different level.

Discussion

In mentioning God's willing and permitting of evil's existence, it seems to make sense regarding free rational beings. When such beings make decisions contrary to the Good (i.e. God), it can be said that their decisions are tolerated, but not willed. In a universe planned and created by an omnipotent being, there is no question of toleration or permission because it could have all been otherwise had God desired it to be so. Could not the sum of suffering then, have been less? Indeed, it certainly must have been able to be. There was choice involved in the creation of this particular universe coming to be exactly the way it is.

There is a division between theological themes (creation is good, suffering is due to sin), and philosophical themes (evil's non-being, metaphysical evil as fundamental held by the aesthetic and plenitude conceptions of the universe's perfection). Hick states that to regard suffering as punishment for sin is a very ancient and natural theory. He

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Hick, 169.

Hick, 173.
continues on to say that it "is liable to appeal to both the conscience of the sufferer and to the judgement of the onlooker...but so far as observation can reveal the truth to us it is not in general the case that a man’s sufferings are proportioned to the degree of his sinfulness." To continue to suggest that the sufferings endured by humans today are to be traceable to a single original pair is contrary to scientific evidence available in the last century. The Genesis story is not history but myth. Hick summarizes his critique of this by saying: "We cannot speak of a radically better state that was; we must speak instead in hope of a radically better state which will be.'

Another question arises when the issue of punishment for sins is examined. One of the sources that informs Christian belief is the Bible. It contains both the New and Old Testaments. Our current understanding of God, depicted as loving and forgiving in the New Testament, is different from the God of punishment and wrath as seen in the Old Testament. We are urged through the writings of the New Testament to understand God as one who is compassionate, forgiving, and gives prodigally. We are taught to emulate this God in our way

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"Hick, 173.

"Hick, 175.

"Hick, 176.
of life. The New Testament presents to us a vision of God as one who forgives sin and urges the sinner to sin no more.

Teaching stemming from this is that humans are to live their lives as close to the ways of God as is humanly possible. If God forgives, we are impelled to do the same. When the question is raised as to how many times a transgressor is to be forgiven, the response given is: as many times as you would like to be forgiven yourself. No one would ever want a grudge held against them. Everyone appreciates pardon—especially if punishment is deserving. The answer then is to forgive as often as it is necessary (cf. Mt. 18:21-23).

Why then does suffering persist, if it is to be understood as the punishment for sin? Must all humanity bear the weight of actions, for which we as individuals, are personally not to blame? When will the penalty be collectively be paid? When can we all move forward, without having to face the consequences of our ancestors' actions/decisions?

In the description of God it was stated, that for God to have a power and not use it, would mean it would not be worth having. For God to create fallible creatures who are able to sin, and do not, is without sense for the same reason. What would be the point of having a power and not use it? Journet responds saying, that to choose not to sin displays a choice of goodness, voluntary love, and to God, such acts are so
precious, that they outweigh the terrible wrongs that might be committed by free beings!"

"If we ask why God has created dependent and fallible creatures, the answer is that 'To be able to sin and actually not to sin presupposes an act of free preference and voluntary love. And such acts are so dear to God that in his eyes they justify the whole world of creation, especially that of free beings.'"

Is choice actually an option? Critics of traditional Thomism cite the doctrines of God's omniscience and simplicity as being the foundation for pre-destination which eliminates the choice of free action. Luther and Calvin maintained that due to God's knowledge of what will definitely occur in human time, coupled with God's knowledge being the same as God's will, what God knows will necessarily be. Some have been predestined for salvation, others have not. The operation of God's grace is a major factor in their theologies, to which I shall not devote any attention, but felt it necessary to mention in passing.

For a universe to be created with the variety of beings including some that are corruptible and those that are not, is maintained in the idea of plentitude. Due to the fact that creation includes those beings that are able to fail, does this mean that they shall fail? Hick raises this question by

"Journet, 151; Hick, 107.

"Journet, Meaning of Evil, 147; Hick, 107.
asking: "Is this an empirical generalization reflecting our observation that things that are capable of failing sooner or later do so?". If a free creature can be expected at some point to fail, or that a certain percentage on average will, then either: a) "the Being who created him [them] must at least share the responsibility for his [their] failure," or b) it becomes just an observable fact that free beings choose to act wrongly, and by this nothing is explained, and no responsibility can be affixed. God is then viewed as the author of the evil which is penalty (for penalty is the order for justice, and justice is the order of the universe), but not the evil which is fault." Our God is a just God, and justice is the order of the universe as well as that which directs the moral universe. Our God then is to be understood as fair in the distribution of penalty that is deserved, but due to the understanding of creation as free, the fault which merited the penalty is due solely to creation.

Chapter 3 Irenaean Thought

A strand of thought that co-existed with the Latin or Western Fathers, was that of the Hellenistic (Greek) or Eastern

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Hick, 96.

Hick, 96.

Aquinas, S.T. 49:2; Pegis, 274-276.
Fathers. The period of time between the work of the biblical writers (near the end of the first century), and that of Irenaeus (near the end of the second century), was a time of great fluidity. There were few, if any, established dogmas. It was a time of great freedom to interpret and speculate, by those who were closest to the life and teaching of the Nazarene called Jesus.

Irenaeus (ca. 130-202 C.E.) was the Bishop of Lyons, and author of the Church's first systematic theology. It is here that a distinction was drawn between biblical references to a person's "image" and "likeness." A person's image was that which was to represent the human as an intelligent creature, capable of fellowship with God. A person's likeness was that which was to represent a person's final perfecting by the Holy Spirit. For,

"Hick, 211.
"Hick, 211.
if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such
is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal,
shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the
image [of God] in his formation, but not receiving
the likeness through the Spirit:"

Thus the human person is to be viewed as "only at the
beginning of a process of growth and development in God's
continuing providence, which was to culminate in the finite
'likeness' of God." Irenaeus presented the human person as an
immature being. Hick describes how Irenaeus understood that
"within God's providence man is being taught by his contrasting
experience of good and evil to value the one for himself and to
shun the other." Irenaeus writes:

...if we had no knowledge of the contrary, could he
[man] have had instruction in that which is
good?...for just as the tongue receives experience of
sweet and bitter by means of tasting,...so also does
the mind, receiving through the experience of both
the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious
of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God."
Hick then indicates how in Irenaean thought "we must, then, accept in trustful gratitude all that comes to us from God's hand." This approach to the problem of evil stands in marked contrast to the Augustinian and Thomistic type of theodicy. One finds here that instead of a doctrine of a perfect creature who destroys that ideal state and is plunged into sin and misery, Irenaeus presents the situation of a being created imperfectly, an immature creature, who is to undergo moral development, growth, and finally be brought to perfection.

The world was to be a place mingled with good and bad as a "divinely appointed environment for man's development toward the perfection that represents the fulfilment of God's good purpose for him [the human person]."

**Natural Evil**

The world is to be seen as a necessary mix of good and bad from which humans would learn and grow. The world was to be understood as not having been created perfect, although it could have been: "God had power at the beginning to grant

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*Hick, 214.*

*Hick, 214.*

*Hick, 215.*
perfection to man." Thus, natural evil, that which causes humans to suffer due to the fact that natural patterns operate according to their own program, and the results of genetics, viruses, and disease affect man in an unwanted manner, is to be accepted as a fact of an environment created to bring us to maturity.

**Moral Evil**

"Image," is to be understood as pertaining to the human bodily form; "nature" is to be understood as that aspect of the human regarding the person as an intelligent creature capable of fellowship with God. It is in this capacity that soul of man exists. This is what separates us from animals. Due to our intelligent nature we have moral freedom, and as with every freedom—responsibility. "Likeness" is to be a person's final perfecting by the Holy Spirit. At birth the person can only be said to be the image of God. As such the person is only potentially the perfected being whom God is seeking to produce. Our lives are to be understood as a place where the processes of physical and moral growth and development take place. "The world in which we find ourselves is the 'vale of soul-

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*Irenaeus, Against Heresies, IV. xxxviii. 2.; Hick, 212.*
making'. " The end product is to be the finished "likeness" of God. Irenaeus pictures Adam and Eve as children in the garden.

According to this understanding, evil is from God. It is part of the "soul-making" process intended by God. It is part of the order of creation. In the maturity that each person is to attain, there will be moments where we shall recognize our inability to do what we intend, and we shall experience failure. This is natural. It is in these moments that we shall recognize a power greater than ours, and shall lift up the voice of an anguished heart in prayerful address. In times of success and triumph, we shall sing praises of thanks to this same God. The "sin" of Adam and Eve is not so much something as a damnable rebellious act against God warranting their expulsion from the garden, as a "calling forth of God's compassion due to their weakness and vulnerability."

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"Hick, 211, 212.

"Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III. xx. 1. Translation in the Ante-Nicene Library. Cf. Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, Chap. 12, 'But the man was a little one, and his discretion still undeveloped, wherefore also he was easily misled by the deceiver.' (Trans. by Joseph P. Smith, S.J., Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. XVI, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952.); Hick 212."
Discussion

After Irenaeus, these thoughts were echoed in the expressions of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 220 C.E.). He describes human nature as being adapted for virtue, because from birth it lacks perfection. Adam was not created perfect, but adapted for improvement. That mythological figure in fact COULD NOT have been created perfect for then there would not be any room for freedom. Creation is the Alpha moving towards the Omega.

An alternative to the Augustinian-Thomistic type of theodicy existed in the early Hellenistic Fathers, but remained undeveloped. In the West it was overshadowed by the church structure, the church's presence in politics, the insistence of clergy to remain in power, the consecration of power, the idolization of power, and the emphasis on the fall, guilt, and means of redemption.

Two thinkers should be made note of regarding Irenaean thought. These two men shall now be briefly looked at.

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- Paul Evdokimov, L'Orthodoxie (Paris: Delachaux et Niestle, 1959), 84; Hick, 217."
a) Schleiermacher

It may be said that the Irenaeian approach to the problem of evil lay dormant in Western Christianity from the time of Augustine until it was resuscitated by the Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Hick notes that:

It does not appear that Schleiermacher was influenced by Irenaeus, or that he was consciously renewing and continuing an approach to the mystery of evil whose foundations had been laid in some of the earliest thinking of the Christian Church. We are thus dealing not so much with a continuous Irenaean tradition of theodicy, as with a type of theodicy, or a manner of theological approach to the subject.\(^\text{17}\)

He was the first modern, Western, Christian theologian to write that the world was not to be seen as created "perfect" where everything was ideal, but rather as the "perfect environment" for soul making. He exhibited a radical insight and demonstrated a boldness in writing how "original perfection" should be understood as the suitability for accomplishing the purpose for which God made something.\(^\text{17}\) In the tradition of Schleiermacher, it has been said that the Supernatural is known through the natural.\(^\text{17}\) As embodied beings

\[^{\text{17}}\text{Hick, 219.}\]


\[^{\text{17}}\text{John Olman, The Natural and the Supernatural, (Cambridge: University Press, 1931); Hick, 220.}\]
we become aware of our condition of absolute dependence. Dependence on what? Our dependence on that which we need to live and be happy--air, water, food shelter, and a sense of purpose. A later theologian in the Schleiermacherian tradition, John Oman, expressed the thought that if we need these things to live, and that we have been born without them, then we MUST acquire them in some way. We are not self-sufficient, and we are dependent on God for remaining in existence. Oman called this our conscious relationship with God. The "perfection" that we have been created with is the ability to achieve a God-consciousness. In human modality, this would refer to the lower beings' awareness of the higher, or the inferior beings' awareness of a superior. The world's "original perfection" is that suitability in humans to develop a consciousness of God.:

The world's perfection is not some lost state, but a reference to its potential character, possible in all its states. It is 'original' in the sense of being fundamental, or contained from the very beginning. It thus has within it the sense of an unrealized, dormant potential. It can still occur! It is waiting to be actualized! It is not something lost but part of the human condition. It is contained in human nature

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1. Hick, 220.
2. Hick, 221.
(i.e. what it means to be human). For humans, a "God-consciousness" is possible. Humans have an innate religious receptivity. A person's "original" or basic "perfection of nature" is what is meant by this ability to develop a God-consciousness."

The sense of sin is then to be understood as due to ANY interference in the movement towards God-consciousness."

Since we are embodied beings in a material world, one of our greatest tendencies is to fall prey to the temptation of becoming too greatly involved in the world. This results in a "world-consciousness" as opposed to a "God-consciousness." Due to the developmental process according to which humans move, man becomes "body-conscious" before maturation is achieved for a "God-consciousness." This is the tension, resulting in the demands of the flesh versus those of the spirit or mind, that we experience as "sin.""

It is this "tension" that gives us "sin-awareness." If the development of spirit-mastering-body were smooth, it would be not be such a major issue for the person to let go of bodily


"Hick, 224.

"Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, 274 (para. 67, 2); Hick, 224.
demands in search of something higher. The transition is not smooth however, because old habits die hard. Just as a child must be weaned from the breast, the human person must realize there are greater things than bodily satisfactions. It is only when the mind is capable of perceiving something more that it abandons bodily satisfactions and pursues something greater.

What is searched for is happiness. When happiness is attained, what one desires is for that happiness to last. What then is actually searched for is an infinite, lasting happiness. In our present terrestrial existence, all satisfactions are fleeting. God is understood as eternal, and the source of all joy. After death, one hopes to experience immortal life. In that immortal existence is believed to be the lasting satisfaction of an everlasting joy that will arise from the beatific vision.

Until that happens, we are cursed to walk the face of this earth. "Dissatisfaction" is by definition a state where one has failed to have been satisfied. As a sign that things are not as they could/should be, sin disquiets the soul. It propels the soul to seek out rest, and find peace. Hence the

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"Hick, 224.

"Aquinas, S.C.G., Chapter 25 (Pegis, 442-447) and Chapter 37 (Pegis, 453-454).
expression of St. Augustine: "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

"Original sin" is to be understood as the consciousness that things could/would be better if they were otherwise. This is inevitable in creatures that develop a body-consciousness before a God-consciousness.** Original sin is a universal. It is compatible with original perfection because it is in God's plan, and so, IT IS GOOD!** Each individual is born into a society that has original perfection (i.e. perfection in potentia from its inception), but must grow into it, realizing it fully. Thus, there is the need for universal redemption.**

The world is thought of as being an autonomous system, where God isn't overwhelmingly present. Humans are at an epistemological or epistemic distance from God. God, being omnipresent, is present everywhere. This cannot then be a spatial distance. It is a cognitive distance. God is shrouded in mystery. In this is a non-awareness of God cognitively.**


"Hick, 224.

"Genesis i. 31; Cf. Schleiermacher Christian Faith, 235 (para. 57, 2); Hick, 226.

"Hick, 224-230.

God creates children out of human animals. Human development is a product of challenge and response because the world we live in operates according to its own laws (i.e. physical, natural, biological, scientific) and we have to explore and learn how to work within the laws of this world.

By evil, Scheiermacher refers to those aspects of our material environment that we experience as obstacles and unwanted situations. He cites death, pain, disease, etc. Life is to be understood as a transient mode of existence and the pain and eventual death we encounter and experience is not evil in itself, because it is simply "the mode of creatureliness which God in His love has appointed for us, but that it becomes evil through the sinful fear and anxiety of our self-centred reactions to it."

Scheiermacher regards natural evils as "at most an unavoidable imperfection, and the operation of natural forces which impede the efforts of men as but incentives to bring these forces more fully under human control." Hick states: "This situation can be expressed in more traditional language by saying that the evil suffered by mankind is a punishment for

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Hick elaborates on Schleiermacher's proposition stating that this does not mean that God specifically sends suffering upon us, but that God's good world becomes evil to us as the result of our own sinful way of living in it and responding to it. Further, it does not mean that the evil suffered by each individual is proportionate to the degree of his own personal guilt. Evil is brought by the [human] race as a whole upon itself, and the varying extents to which different individuals participate in the resulting evil is accidental.

In the case of natural evils the connection with the sin of humans is indirect, in that "as man, were he without sin, would not feel what are merely hindrances of sensuous functions as evils, the very fact that he does so feel them is due to sin, and hence that type of evil, subjectively considered, is a penalty of sin."

Pain is useful. If there were no pain, there would be no distinction between that which is agreeable and that which is harmful. In a different moral world, where no action would be judged as morally reprehensible, there would be no value to move from selfish animal behaviour to self-giving, sacrificial love.

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"Hick, 227.

"Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, para. 77; Hick 227.

"Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 319 (para. 76, 2); Hick, 227-228.

"Davis, 47-48."
b) Hick

According to John Hick (who constructed the first systematic Irenaean theodicy), heaven must be regarded as a necessary feature of our existence as developing beings. Few here on earth would reach perfection, and so there must be a place to continue our soul-making process. Creation was brought out of non-existence for a purpose. Surely, after the limited time of experience we have here on this earth, if we have not attained our maximum potential we would not be taken out of existence (i.e. annihilated)! It is believed that the Lord, our God and Creator, does not bring things into existence to only remove them from existence at a later time! Creation was brought into being for eternal fellowship with the Lord."

Heaven, the eschaton, is not to be viewed as a "compensation" for the earthly realities that have brought on suffering (for nothing could ever be deemed as adequate compensation). It is to be understood as the opportunity for continued spiritual growth. In heaven, those who have suffered the most, may be the most spiritually advanced.

"Hick in Davis, 51.

Barry L. Whitney, What are They Saying About God And Evil? (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 44.
It is a known fact of our lived existence that humans undergo suffering. If one were to term the cause of suffering as "evil," then one could indubitably say that evil exists. Evil may be classified as being one of two types—moral and natural. Each finds its origin arising from a different source. Moral evil may also be referred to as social evil. Sin has traditionally been regarded as the severing of a relationship. If moral evil is to be regarded as the result of human activity, and the human person is to be regarded as a child in the process of maturation, as a child grows it will do the wrong thing at times. We call this sin.

Natural evil finds its origin of generation in the natural world. It is a fact of our physical environment. We react to changes in our physical environment to the degree that our lives are affected by it. As human animals, pain and death are a natural part of our lives. Because the nature of our constitution is directed at self-preservation, we experience fear and anxiety when we are threatened. We view threats to our accustomed way of living as evil. Change is a scandal to the intellect! The mind has to find a reason for it. It must be explained away. In our method of interpretation, we often view threats (such as pain and death) as sinful.
Discussion

In his discussion of Schleiermacher, Hick affirms that it must be seen as an "inescapable conclusion that the ultimate responsibility for the existence of sinful creatures and of the evils which they both cause and suffer, rests on God Himself." Hick continues on:

the entire situation within which sin and suffering occur exists because God willed and continues to will its existence; and we must believe that from the first He has known the course that His creation would take.

"Schleiermacher argues that the distinction between divine causing and divine permitting, behind which Christian thought has traditionally sheltered itself...is untenable." Schleiermacher links sin with redemption. He explains how sin should not be viewed as a punishment, because our situation becomes evil as a result of our sinful way of living in the world. He continues on to say that it may be understood that the only reason for the continued existence of sin was because REDEMPTION was inevitable. Redemption is promised! It is a necessity. There must be such an act of God, because from the first God knew what direction creation would take, and God knew

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'Hick, 228.

'Hick, 228.

'Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, 338 (para. 81, 4); Hick, 228.'
that creation could be perfected. This is a developmental view of humanity. Humans are in a process of maturation. This is consistent with contemporary thoughts on evolution.

When the human person does not develop God-consciousness, this is what is known as the consciousness of sin. Schleiermacher views sin as the pre-condition necessary for the reception of redeeming grace. Sin is when one does not use one's resources to move towards a God-consciousness and actualize their spiritual potential. Sin can then be viewed as being ordained by God as a necessary means to redemption. In this way, sin can be interpreted as instrumental. It serves the good purpose of God. Sin was from the start a part of the "created picture." It was necessary for grace to germinate.

Hick revolutionized the idea of the developmental view of the human, with the human struggle as an aid to spiritual maturity. In this way God maintained the omnipotence, traditionally attributed to God. Whereas Aquinas held that God indeed was omnipotent, but somehow humans were small sources of independent power, Hick maintains that God is the greatest

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'Hick, 227-9.

'Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, 337 (para. 1, 3); Hick, 231.

'Hick, 231.

'Hick, 232.
power, but chooses not to use it. According to Hick, the world is a "perfect" environment for soul-making.

According to the Irenaean tradition, Schleiermacher and Hick overcome Augustine's moral, scientific, and logical problems of viewing the problem of evil as a punishment for sin, by viewing all evil and consequent suffering as part of a developmental process that the human person is undergoing."

Summary of Part II

From what has been said, it can be seen that the perception of God, and the perception of why the human condition is as it is, has changed over time. Starting with Augustine, it was maintained that since God cannot be held responsible for evil, humans must be. This is because God is understood as pure goodness. If all evil is either sin or a just punishment for sin, we have brought all evil and the suffering we experience from it upon ourselves in either case. According to this view, the world was created good. We are simply not living properly in it. As a result, we experience the consequences, of such actions. Properly, we are getting our just deserts.

This thought was heavily influenced by the prevalent understanding of God that was held by the church at that time.

Hick, 228-234.
The church, moving from the position of being persecuted to an organization that commanded power, envisioned the object of its adoration as having the highest degree of those qualities admired, prized, and respected, at that time by its community of faithful. As such, God was likened to a parent: powerful, capable of punishment due to caring love, and forgiving. Justice was not questioned. A God who sees all, knows all, and is good would be a God whose justice is correct. If some malady befell someone, it could be certain that it was deserved. This is also a carry-over from traditional Judaic thought, where the Lord was believed to show approval in the form of earthly wealth and prosperity, and showed disapproval via misfortune (e.g. the Jewish party known as the Sadducees).

It was necessary for Augustine to present an idea of evil's lack of substantial being as a response to the Manichaean sect.\footnote{Hick, 38-39, where is described "...This eclectic faith, which had been founded by Mani (c. A.D. 215-76) about a century and a half earlier, dealt directly and explicitly with the problem of evil by affirming an ultimate dualism of good and evil, light and darkness. When Augustine renounced Manichaeism and became a Christian the Manichaean solution now seemed to him utterly and dangerously mistaken, above all in the conception of God that it entailed."} Evil was to be regarded as a malfunctioning of that which is in itself actually good. It was to be understood as the lack of what should be there. This was the privatio boni response. Augustine had never intended to deny...
the presence of evil, nor its virulent power. However, this
metaphysical understanding (of the way evil is to be viewed as
present in the world) does not and cannot be expected to make
our empirical lived reality more bearable.

Viewed as a just punishment for our sins, coupled with the
idea of God knowing that we would sin, yet judging it better to
bring good out of evil than to not have evil at all, all evil
(both natural and moral) could be traced back to the first
wilful act of turning away from God. This could be traced to
the pre-mundane fall of the angels, and continues in man today.
Reflective of the belief system held at that period of time, it
was sufficient.

Centuries later, Thomism's idea of "the good whole"
reflected the aesthetic theory. Evil is to be tolerated
because of the good it may serve, or because the good (which
generated evil as its by-product) was so magnificent, it would
outweigh any evil. Again, this thought is difficult to accept
due to the outrageous evils that exist in the world. If all
works for the good, then the reality of evil is denied. Evil
becomes a "good in disguise." This is the instrumental view of
evil, where evil becomes an instrument to achieve a good end.

This has been the traditional Thomist belief of God, and
God's relationship with the world and the human person. The
traditional reply not gone uncontested, and was not
uncontroversial. It was accepted and taught, because of the power of the church, the influence of Catholic teaching, and an unquestioning reverence for tradition. As recently as the middle of July 1998, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church has declared that is necessary for followers of the "Latin-rite" and "Eastern-rite" to assent to "church teaching that has not been proclaimed as divinely revealed but has been taught as belonging to the Catholic faith and its unbroken tradition."

In the 1960s entered John Hick's groundbreaking work. The tide of reform has not swayed over the general public because of tradition's entrenchment, and the revisioning that would be necessary.

It was also accepted because there were no alternatives available! It was "process" philosophical and theological thought however (inspired primarily by Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne), that have opened windows offering a fresh breeze of refreshing thought. Process thought and the Irenaean tradition are now being recognized and spoken about more as viable alternatives to the traditional answers.

Whitehead began writing philosophy in the 1920s and continued through the 1940s. Hick began writing theodicy in the 1960s. Work of more recent date are the writings of David

Griffin (1976), and John Hick's brief description of process thought in the third edition of his *Philosophy of Religion* (1983).

The idea in Thomism of humans being free due to their nature as "secondary agents," with God being the "primary mover" is one that has been disputed. If God is to be regarded as "all powerful," then how can humans continue to be regarded as free? If humans are to be regarded as small centres wielding power of their own, God would have to surrender or abdicate some power resulting in being the greatest power among many. Plotinus identifies that this might involve a situation of providential power where providence is not thought of as "everything" but one who "presides over" something else.:

"This is a relational concept--providential power can only be exerted over other beings with some power of their own.":

David Griffin poses the question that if the problem of evil arises in a malfunctioning of the secondary agent, and this agent is the work of God's creativity, isn't the responsibility for the defect to be held by the manufacturer? If the evil is in the effect of the agent, and the agent is

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---Griffin, 49.
created by God, then God should be held responsible for the activity of the agent.\footnote{13} The contingency defense in Thomism asserts that although God is all powerful, knows everything, and is the primary cause, we are still somehow free.

The idea that a free being is created with the ability to sin and would not exercise that option at some point, is hopeful. The idea of evil being the resulting side-effect of an act (i.e. evil being the secondary result of a good primary act), and so explaining evil as a necessary means to a good end (cf. moral rule of double effect), presupposes the limited power of the agent (e.g. a person, who when attacked kills in self-defense, or a surgeon who saves a woman's life, but must terminate the life of her unborn child). In such a case, the agent is \textit{not} blameworthy because they had no way of not allowing the secondary evil to happen.

However, if the agent \textit{did} have the power to avoid the secondary evil and DID NOT exercise that option, they would then be held to blame. In the case of an omnipotent creator, God's power by definition is not limited. God \textit{could} have created a better world, but chose to create this one, with all its faults. God then \textit{is} to be held responsible and accountable for its problems because they \textit{could have been avoided}.

\footnote{13}{David Ray Griffin, \textit{God, Power, and Evil}, 81-82.}
\footnote{14}{Hick, 104.}
Hick maintains that although the ultimate responsibility for evil and suffering is to be attributable to God, "The sinner cannot shed any of his guilt upon his Maker. We remain responsible for our sins and subject to God's condemnation and revulsion." "The ultimate divine responsibility for the existence of a 'fallen' humanity does not cancel, or even diminish, our individual human moral responsibility." It is because "God's saving purpose continually sets before us the possibility of repentance and a new life." Hick maintains that what we experience as suffering "must be coloured...by the conviction that...'in everything God works for good with those who love him'."

With the Thomist view maintaining God's omniscience, there is criticism aimed at human freedom for if God knew that humans would err, and God nevertheless chose to create us, we were then created unable not to sin (recall being created non posse, non peccare). If God is to be understood as omniscient, and God's knowledge is perfect, how are we free--we have no choice but to sin.

Further criticisms related to God's knowledge, are directed towards God's immutability (i.e. inability to be

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"Hick, 360.

"Hick, 360.

"Hick, 360, quoting Romans 8:28."
changed from within) and God's impassibility (i.e. inability to be affected from without). The original source of thought to demonstrate God's unwavering stability was from the book of Malachi (2:4), showing that God does not break covenants. The notions of immutability and impassibility are not in accord with a God who is to be loving, caring, compassionate, concerned, and involved in our lives, for love is based on mutual interest. If the God we adore is to be imagined as unaffected by our prayers, pleas, and petitions, this God is as well incapable of mercy. This God is then neutral, and we have regressed into despotism.

Neutrality does not imply loving concern. Love, properly understood, is not only giving, but being able to receive and respond as well. God would have to be able to respond to all contingencies in perfect love, justice, knowledge, and power.

Another criticism is directed at the idea of God's simplicity. If God's knowledge is to be understood as the same as God's will, and God's will is what is carried out in

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"Griffin, 36.

"Whitney, Evil and the Process God, 67-68.

"Whitney, EPG, 68.
actuality, then if God knows human sinful acts, are they not as well caused by divine knowledge? If that which is known by divine knowledge is not what is caused, does this not contradict divine simplicity?

Schleiermacher holds no difference between the cause of evil, and its permission. He and the Protestant theologian Luther admit this. I take issue with this, for if there were no difference, the same word would be employed. The name of something is a representation of that reality. There must be a shade of difference between the two, a nuance of difference that causes a separation in the way they are used. Causation is the direct action of an agent. Permission, even when knowledge of what will transpire, should not involve another as an accessory in the action. Is one to be held equally as responsible as the direct agent of an action by "allowing" something to happen by not taking any preventative measures to stop it? We are trying to pronounce judgement upon God without all the facts. We do not have sufficient information to make

---cf. Aquinas, S. T. 19:4 "...the will of God is the cause of things,..." (Pegis, 199); 19:6 "Since, then, the will of God is the universal cause of all things, it is impossible that the divine will should not produce its effect." (Pegis, 204); 19:8 "...if God wills a thing, it must necessarily be,..." (Pegis, 209).

---Griffin, 81-92.

--- Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 338 (para. 81, 4); Hick, 228.
an informed decision. It would be arrogant on our part if we were to do this.

It is Schleiermacher who introduces the terms First and Second Adam, to replace the "image" and "likeness" images of Irenaeus. The First Adam is what we all are: possessing in potential the ability to obtain a full and perfect God-consciousness. The Second Adam is what we all hope to become. We know this is possible because it was done in the historical person of Jesus. In Jesus, this potentiality has become actualized. It has become realized. Jesus lived his humanity to the fullest, and so is held to be a model of humanity's fullest expression. In his faith-community, Jesus is known, worshipped, and glorified as the Christ, son of the only living God. This community holds that through the Christ, all people can be drawn into a God-consciousness.

Due to the unresolved issues concerning the nature of God, the revisioning of the traditional understanding of God, and despite the answers of hope presented by Process and Irenaean alternatives to traditional thought the theodical question shall now be explored through the Hindu lens.

Hick continues on saying that it is not for the human mind to know the mind of God, for "We do not know in what ways or in what scale of time God is bringing future good out of present
evil." It is a matter of faith to believe in a good and loving God that is doing so. Hick states that this is precisely why we can "commit ourselves wholly to His providence" as the practical outcome of our faith.  

If we are to understand our sufferings as somehow able to bring about some good, what about atrocities such as the holocaust of W.W.II? Hick asserts that they could never have been willed by God, nor righted. He is sure that God's purpose for the world was retarded by such acts, and the power of evil in the world increases due to them. He cites the example of Jesus (who some believe to be the Christ) as setting the example for Christians to follow. First, by his example of his self-giving which should lead Christians to be willing to risk their own lives to help another, and second by neutralizing the impulse to meet hatred and cruelty with the same. Christian faith holds that hatred begets hatred. Through the sacrificial life of Christ, the satisfaction of vengeance is renounced.  

Christian faith holds that we participate in God's on-going creative purpose "secure in the knowledge of His final triumph." We are urged to consider the world as that which

---Hick, 360.
---Hick, 361.
---Hick, 362.
---Hick, 362.
"God has willed for a good purpose" and that in it "evil, with its demonic quality, arises." It is to be understood that God has ordained a world which contains real evil "as a means to the creation of the infinite good of a Kingdom of Heaven within which His creatures will have come as perfected persons to love and serve Him, through a process in which their own free insight and response have been an essential element."
Part III: The Hindu Response (See Appendix I)

Chapter 1  God

Introduction

Human conceptualization of God is confined to how we imagine God to be. The human mind attributes to God those qualities that are deemed worthy/necessary for God to possess. Truth and reality may be quite different from our imagined ideals, for human conceptions are limited. Human conceptualization is often guilty of an anthropomorphism, and as a result we often "make God in our own image." In our desire to conceptualize God, we must be aware of these limitations. Humans can be certain of what God is not. When we speak of God then, what we say is not necessarily wrong, but may be deficient.

Due to human nature, the mind is capable of knowing concretely something only as a subject. This is actual knowledge. To know something else, is to know it as secondary knowledge. This is habitual knowledge. We will never be able to comprehend God, for this is to know something fully. We will only be able to know God, which is to understand in a more limited way. We are able to know ABOUT God. All creation is a reflection of God, and a participation in God. Participation is a lesser possession of the attributes, which God possesses in a greater way.
The Indian word for quality or attribute is *guna*. There are two schools of thought as to how God should be conceived of in Hinduism. To limit God, and state the qualities contained in God is to refer to God as *sa-guna*. As a response in the search for a way that does not limit God's infinity arose the concept of a God without qualities. This concept is referred to by the title *nir-guna*.

How do we know God? We can know God through negative concepts: immaterial, infinite, eternal; relationally, such as being the cause of goodness, and intelligence; substantively, by saying that God is the good; or through positive concepts such as saying that God is good, powerful, and intelligent. We can only name God as we know God (i.e. imperfectly), and in a limited manner because the act of naming is a limitation. We know God from creation, but this does not name God's essence.

Can we know God? Yes, through philosophy. To base one's understanding of God on faith alone would be fideism. This is a heresy, for God CAN be known by reason. God cannot create for any purpose other than God's own satisfaction. Why would a God create a being who could not find God? The question we are pursuing is theistic. We can know God—as much as is allowed by our nature. By way of review, let us re-examine those aspects of God (identified in the previous section that formed an operating understanding of God) from the Hindu perspective.
1.1 Omnipotence

In the Western and Hindu understanding of God, God can do whatever is do-able. God cannot do the contradictory, such as making a square circle. To propose something contradictory then, would not be a limit on God's abilities. It is in this sense that God is subject to certain rules of operation. A sa-guna Brahman (i.e. a God regarded as being with qualities) is understood as being as subject to the unseen principles of karma and samsara in the cosmic universe as the human is."

1.2 Omniscience

Taken in its most literal sense of the term, omniscience is to know accurately all details of every aspect of existence. The Pali Canon invests Buddha with "selective omniscience." This would be whatever is essential to salvation. Whereas "strict omniscience" is more along the lines of what is meant by the Judeo-Christian understanding. In the Judeo-Christian view, two dilemmas potentially arise. First, if God knew the future, God could stop the evil. If God did not know the future, God would not be perfect. This dilemma does not arise in Hinduism because the liberated soul (jivan-mukta) and God are not bound to time's events, thus events in time are of no

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"Herman, 237."
concern. In particular this refers to FUTURE EVENTS, and so has been philosophically ignored (especially by Vedantins).”

Second, if God is to be omniscient, the problem of human will comes up. God is simple. God's essence is existence, otherwise God would have a received existence. This could not be, because God is the source of all. Where would God have received anything from? If God is understood to be simple, God's knowledge is the same as God's will. Thus what God knows, is. God's knowledge causes things. Coupled with God's will, things come to be. Where does this place the fruitfulness of human will? Are we deluding ourselves with the notion that we have some actual affect on things?

Does God have knowledge of evil things? Knowledge is a perfection, and so God knows every evil. It is not evil to know evil.

1.3 Benevolence/Ethical Quality of God

This refers to the singular goodness of God. If God is to be understood as sa-guna (possessing all characteristics and qualities), then this God MUST also possess good and evil. Does the ability to do evil make God wicked? If God does not possess evil, is God perfect? The question reverts back to the unsubstantial nature of evil. If evil is to be regarded

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"Herman, 240-241."
primarily as privative in nature, then there is no such thing as evil per se. Metaphysically, evil is a lack of what should ideally be there, and so ultimately evil has no existence. From the point of human lived experience, what of the suffering, waste, terror, and fear that truly does exist?''

Chapter 2 Creation

Creation is understood as that act of self-diversification of the one reality (i.e. God).'' It results from the One's desire to be many.'' In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (I. 4. 3.) is written that in the beginning there was Being only, one without a second. This being had no delight because "he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second."''' The creation of the universe by Brahman may be likened to the way a spider spins a web--emanating out of its own self. Just as in the spinning, the spider does not cease to be a spider, so too Brahman does not cease to be Brahman. Yet creation that is brought forth does not bring about a second that stands outside Brahman. Brahman remains non-dual. The relationship of Brahman to diversity is that of the wave to the sea. The wave

''''Herman, 244-247.

''Bowes, 170.

''Rg Veda X 90, X 129, as cited in Bowes, 170.

belongs to the sea as a small form distinct, but not separate from the sea."

Recalling the notion of panentheism, one can see that all that exists immaterially and phenomenally is said to be of God, and remain within God. There is a difference on the phenomenal level between God and the human person, but no separation from the point of view of the ultimate. In the Vishnu Purana, Vishnu is affirmed to be both the material and efficient cause of the world. Vishnu is understood to be all--from inanimate matter to divinities in heaven."

The development of all creation was due to the involution of God, the emanation of God, the self-limitation of God to form limited beings. Creation is viewed as ex nihilo because creation arose from nothing outside of God's self. Creation may be viewed as all arising from the clay that is God, not as a potter fashioning a creation out of clay, where the clay is a separate entity from the potter himself.

The Hindu perspective holds that in all that finds its being in phenomenal existence, is a built-in "date of expiration" because all things must come to an end."

Bowes, 170-171.

"Bowes, 171.

"Bowes, 167.
process of reabsorption. The end is a transfer or return to potentiality once more. This can be understood as a separation of form and nature (e.g. in the burning of wood, the "tree" form is no longer present, but the material that composed the tree is now transformed into the substance identified as ash). With the transformation of a being, there is a return to the ultimate being. At that stage, it may be said to be a reabsorption into pure spiritual energy. In creation, energy is "differentiated" into different forms—physical, vital, psychic, etc. When a created being experiences the destruction of its phenomenal form, its matter becomes recycled or reused in the creation of another. This upholds the law of conservation. What becomes destroyed is that "finite manifestation" of the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality is neither destroyed nor depleted due to its infinite and inexhaustible potentiality for being.

2.1 The Human Person

Human nature can be said to be composed of two factors: purusha which is the principle of consciousness, and prakriti which is known as the mind-body complex. The functioning of the mind and body are due to the material nature of the

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'Bowes, 169.

'S'Bowes, 169.'
physical body, and the mind's dependence on the brain that is contained in the physical body. Our mental functioning is what we experience as our thoughts, feelings, volitions, impulses, and drives. This is what our minds are capable of performing. This can be differentiated from the autonomous principle of pure consciousness (Atman), by which the mind itself experiences the objects of its perception.

This can be compared to a movie which, in order to be viewed by a person, needs light to illuminate the film. That which sees, is the Self. The image which it sees, is the world. The light illuminating this film is consciousness. When the Self becomes conscious of itself (in the illustration, the viewer of the film becoming conscious of that light illuminating the film), then the mind becomes aware of its own consciousness or spiritual self. In the psyche, mental functions occur. We are not aware of them until the principle of consciousness is reflected in them. All the while, we do, we act, we experience, and these things leave impressions on us. These are known as psychic deposits. They are created with every passing moment as a record of every experience.

At death, the body is returned to its basic elements, but this "psychic bundle" of deposits/residue cannot turn to

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*Bowes, 175.*
nothing. Due to the inherent energy and desire for fulfilment, a new body must be found. This means a new birth occurs. The new body inherits a psychic constitution. Now there are new possibilities of suffering and enjoyment, resulting from the interaction of this constitution with its new environment."

The "principle of consciousness" (the Atman) is not subject to birth or death. It is constant. When the immaterial Atman is united to matter, we have the individual person (recall Aristotle's idea of the immaterial form being united to matter in the hylo-morphic theory). This is when purusha is united with prakriti. We all have our particular prakrtic constitution. This makes us individually WHO WE ARE! It individuates us. The purusha element is not individually unique. It is known as that element of the Divine within us. It is something we all share! In us, it takes on the specifications due to our prakrtic constitution. Purusha is universal because God is universal. This universal, in its's individual appearance as a person, is known as the jivatman.

The jivatman is that individual containment of the universal purusha, operating under that limitation of that individual medium, known as the human being. What the person feels as their "own identity," is actually the nature of the principle of pure consciousness showing through prakrtic

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"Bowes, 176."
nature. Returning to the film-illustration, what the person feels as their own identity is the light of the Self, shining through their physical self.

The human person understands themselves as a spiritual being—a jivatman. Therefore, they possess a soul as well as a mind and a body. This particularized universal, this individual, is in a medium that is not everlasting (i.e. the corporeal body). When the individual realizes their "oneness" with God a breakthrough known as liberation is achieved. This is called enlightenment.

Both Christian thought and Hindu thought share the notion of how in creation, the universal (i.e. God) becomes individualized (i.e. the person). The idea of all existing within God and all sharing in God's being, is common to Christian as well as to Hindu thought.

Common to Hinduism, regarding the state of the soul before attaining enlightenment, and the Christian understanding of the soul's immortality, is that the soul desires to be united with a body. According to Christian belief, after death the soul understands itself to be incomplete and longs for that reunion known as the Resurrection of the Body. In Hinduism, the unliberated, disembodied soul waits for another embodiment until the moment of liberation. This is because the non-liberated person identifies their Self with the psycho-physical
being--the self (i.e. purusha identifies too closely with prakriti).

Where the two diverge is in how the state of the soul after death is understood. Upon death, there is the separation of the soul from the body. Christian thought believes in the continuation of that individual soul's existence as an independent entity. This is because the soul is viewed as having been created as a separate being to exist within God's cosmic being, and is thus proper to continue existing in this manner.

In Christian thought, the soul is united to matter and the two form one unit. The unit is a hybrid, and is known as a composite. It is believed that after death, the soul is incomplete because it is separate from the body, and will be reunited at the end of time. Final and lasting happiness will be reached when one is able to experience a face to face encounter with the Creator known as the Beatific vision. Here, a "separateness" is maintained.

In Hindu thought, the state of the liberated soul after death and its separation from the body are viewed differently by separate schools of thought. In this paper two schools shall be examined: the absolute non-dualistic (kevaladvaita),
and the qualified non-dualistic (visistadvaita). Further discussion on these two schools shall follow in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 Towards an Indian Theodicy

Introduction

To review, the theodical problem being explored is how God can be reconciled with the situation of evil's existence in our world and its resultant suffering. It is an existential problem.

The goal is to overcome the problem of evil and suffering. We should not despair because it can be resolved. Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, all hold on to the hope that it can be overcome.

In the Brahma Sutra (II. 1. 34-36), the question is raised as to why there is so much inequality among souls (i.e. human persons). Why so much pain and suffering? The immediate response is that all inequalities are due to the merit and demerit earned by creatures. Any inequality experienced in life is not due to God. Each creation is responsible for their

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1 "A. L. Basham, 328.
2 O'Flaherty, 2.
own situation in life as a result of their (accumulated) karma. The question then arises regarding the first karma. The first creation should be without karma. Where and when did the first creature go wrong? The answer must be that the first wrong act is contained potentially in the created being.

Theodicy can be broken down into three categories: a) cognitive, b) psychological, c) theological". The cognitive is where we are faced with the problem of injustice. The psychological is where we search for comfort. In the theological situation we confront the problem shared by all monotheists. There is a symbiosis of cognitive religious thought and affective religious expression when karma is involved. Cognitive religious thought is expressed by the philosophy of karma. Here, as in a mathematical expression, logic rules that every action has an equal and appropriate reaction. Affective religious expression is seen in the devotion that is paid to Gods. The symbiosis occurs when it is believed that karma can be overcome by such devotion."

It is due to morality that there is an expectation of justice in life. Cognitive religious thought operates on the understanding that good action merits a reward, and bad action

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"The term "theological" shall be understood as referring to the term "theology" meaning philosophy plus revelation.

"O'Flaherty, 15.
deserves punishment. When sin is de-emphasized, irrationality is introduced to life. Karma is the effect of justice. Due to an expected balance in life, we view our situation(s), and are led to believe that things are justified if we have earned them as a reward or punishment. People hold on to the hope/belief that there must be something that they can do to overcome karma. There is the belief in those who "work outside fate," such as ghosts, saints, or gods. Devotion has gained power strong enough to operate as a penance."

Christian theology distinguishes between moral, natural, and metaphysical evil. Metaphysical evil is to be understood as that lack of something that could or should be there. God, being perfect, contains all in complete fullness. All creation then, being less than God, can be said to be metaphysically evil. Moral evil would be those deeds committed by humans, and natural evil would be those that occur without human involvement.

In Hindu thought, the Sanskrit term PAPA denotes both physical and moral evil. "There has often been a false distinction between religions that refers to those that concentrate on dispelling natural evils as "primitive," and those that concentrate on personal repentance (due to some

"O'Flaherty, 1-16.

"O'Flaherty, 6."
notion of "sin" as "higher." In Hindu thought, these two are distinguished, but regarded as aspects of a single phenomena. According to the Hindu schema, evil is not mainly what we do, it is as well what we don't want done to us! Evil that we do is due to delusion (Moha), or deception (Maya).

3.1 Why Evil?

In the Christian perspective, it appears as though God was necessitated to admit the possibility of humans committing moral evil--either to allow the choice for the development of human reasoning (for reasons of plenitude, aesthetics), or so that we would not all be perfect robots.

In both the Hindu and traditional Christian mind it is understood as much better to produce free beings that would willingly not choose to do evil, given the choice. It may be

The world is to be regarded as involved in Moha. The word designates an attraction to, and/or a fascination for something wrong. It is a misplaced goal, a delusion. It is a misplaced obsession. It is when one is attracted to something not feasible. It is on account of this that we are centred on a fruitless fascination, a hollow goal, and waste our time and energy devoting both to a pointless endeavour. Moha is regarded as one of the 6 deadly sins. The others are: kama-passion, krodha-anger, lobha-greed, mada-egotism or vanity, matsara-envy. Moha is regarded as planted in the very nature of creation, in the self, so that God can remain relatively uninvolved. This is the desire for self-preservation. It is the innate urge that Rudolph Otto calls the "urge towards freedom," and Sri Aurobindo calls the "impulse towards perfection."

"O'Flaherty, 6-7."
said that "because God recognizes evil is necessary, God creates it willingly." The "good" can then be viewed as that much more valuable when it is contrasted with "evil." This contrast solution echoes the aesthetic theory. In order for there to be purity, there must exist its contrast--impurity. It may be understood that goodness cannot be known without its contrast, so evil MUST exist.

In Hindu thought there is the idea of God purposely incorporating evil into the world in order to make apparent, by contrast, that which is good. Day becomes distinguishable by its opposite--night; lightness, from that which it is not--darkness; dharma, distinguishable from adharma. These pairs of opposites: happiness/unhappiness, truth/falsehood, exist because one would be unknowable without its corollary.

In fact, it is said that the Creator was very pleased with the mixed nature of creation (that is, with the plenitude that it provided). Thus, both good and evil come from God, as in the quote: "That portion of Visnu...caused...a small seed of adharma..." the seed of evil is planted in the first creation in whom it increased. That is the FIRST act of planting avidya (i.e. ignorance). This was the first karma. Human evolution

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'O'Flaherty, 47.
'O'Flaherty, 47.
'O'Flaherty, 48.
is to be viewed as though it were on a passage from ignorance to a full knowledge of God. It is as if one could trace humanity's development according to the biblical metaphor of moving from the tree of life to the tree of knowledge.

By definition of the universe (i.e. that which contains every sort of being--a plenitude), there must be the presence of evil as well as that of good in creation. In our lived situation, evil is a fact of our creation. Understanding that all creation emanated from God, it would appear as though God created evil consciously. God was not forced to involve evil in the world, God chooses to place the potential for the development of evil in the universe. The consequent suffering that results, is permitted. God should not be viewed as a sadist who enjoys seeing people suffer. The fact is that evil, like good, finds its being in God."

Philosophically speaking, all creation shows the diversity that is God. Creation is plenitude, of which evil is a part. God created the two extremes--good and evil. These are the manifestations of the creative process. The potential for evil is contained in the self. Many selves compose the world. When these small fragments interact they affect one another positively and negatively. The negative affects can be said to cause harm, and suffering is experienced. Each one is to be

"'O'Flaherty, 49, 50, 139."
understood as being a small centre of power, free to use its own faculties of action. These actions have affects that leave an effect on the subject as well as the object. This effect is known as the karmic residue, to which we will now turn our attention.

Chapter 4  Karma and Reincarnation

Introduction:

The theory of karma is the immediate response of the Indian thought in regard to the presence of evil and its consequent suffering. Due to this, the question of "Why is there suffering?" has not perplexed the Indian mind to the degree it has in the West. Any sense of unfairness re: differences/apparent inequalities in life, differing situations and life circumstances due to birth, placement in family, social structures, geographical location, etc., are all accepted as due to one's karma.

When the notion of karma is mentioned, the concepts of reincarnation and rebirth also appear. Karma is a system where action bears consequence, to which the popular expression: "as you sow, so shall you reap" applies very well. Karma is a system that involves the bearing of the "fruit" of one's actions.
In its purest sense, karma means "action." Traced to its Sanskrit origin *karma* is derived from the verbal root *kr.* Karma is the singular, neuter, nominative case of the word *karman,* meaning an act, action, performance or deed. In grammatical usage, karma refers to the direct object of a sentence. Karma *in itself* carries no implications regarding the nature of the action, nor implications arising as a result of the action. The idea that karma is linked immediately with the notion of reincarnation is an extension of its literal meaning. There is no association of karma and reincarnation in the Vedic older literature."

Many traditions have been cultivated over time trying to engage karmic effect, such as *ahimsa* (i.e. non-violence), and *bhakti* (i.e. selfless devotion to the idea of a Personal God). Regardless of the method, the aim of these traditions is the transformation of human action from ways rooted in ignorance (lit. *avidya*) that brings on suffering, to a way of living that overcomes and eliminates centering on the self (lit. *asmita*), our attractions (*raga*), and our repulsions (*dvesa*) in regard to worldly objects and affairs.

It is by the idea of karma that the dissatisfactions and vicissitudes of life have been explained. Karma has become

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understood as not just including the action--physical, verbal, or mental--but to include as well the consequences of those actions. Karma must be understood as having two aspects--subjective and objective. In every action there is the subject (that which performs the action), and an object (that which is acted upon). In every action there is understood to be an effect experienced by the subject as well as received by the object. The object is outwardly affected by that which is done to it, the effect suffered by the subject is internal. In the subject, after an action is performed there is, what may be called, a residue that becomes part of the subject's psyche. Due to this understanding, it may be said that every action leaves behind a residue in the performer of the action.

An example to illustrate this may be seen in a child speaking inappropriately to an adult. The adult becomes offended, and the child fortifies their rudeness. It is a human trait that with repetition, actions become easier to do. This applies for bad as well as good actions. For a child to sneak a treat before meal time is easier the second time because they did not get caught the first time. The child reasons: "No bolt of lightening struck me down as punishment." The only thing they may have experienced was a slightly guilty conscience. In time too, the stirrings of the conscience can be quieted.
In Christian terms, this is ascribed to the moral light. When the stirrings of conscience quiet, it may be said that the moral light has become dim. It is held that every person possesses an intuitive knowledge that distinguishes between right and wrong. For a wrong action to be repeated, the moral light does not see as clearly, and so is more easily misled. In Hindu terms, each act produces a samskara—an activator—that allows by precedent of experience, habits to form. This samskara is the residue. 

This residue is the mental impression left on the psyche by the action. It is the subliminal activator that resides in the subconscious. It is this accumulation of residues that colours a person's disposition, and creates in a person tendencies. By unrequited passions, unfulfilled desires, and hurts suffered, a person at death is left with a variety of shapings. These may be referred to as the personal set of psycho-physical characteristics. This is all a part of karma.

The psycho-physical characteristics that are due to karma form a psycho-physical structure. It is a continuous process. The karma of one moment has an affect on the next, because each action leaves behind a residue that affects the existing psycho-physical characteristics of the structure. At the end

"Bowes, 174."
of a lifetime, there is a "net result". This is what is reincarnated.

4.1 Reincarnation and Rebirth

Both of these terms involve the idea of karma. In common parlance the terms reincarnation, rebirth, transmigration, and metempsychosis are used interchangeably. In Hinduism and Buddhism, the idea of karmic effect is held in common, but there is a difference that separates the Hindu idea of reincarnation from the Buddhist idea of rebirth.

"Rebirth" is the common translation of the Sanskrit term punarjanma. Literally translated it means "born again." It refers to a previous, present, and future life. It is associated with punar mrityu, which means "death again." These two terms constitute the idea of samsara which shall be discussed in a later section. Rebirth is often confused with reincarnation as if the two were interchangeable and synonymous.

Reincarnation is to be understood as the idea of a personal "soul" moving from one life to another. This would be the Atman, the unchanging "Self." It is the presence of the Divine Being within. The Atman is that identity achieved through the underlying and unchanging presence of the self-

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"Bowes, 166."
consciousness. Metaphorically, if God were a brilliant flame, the Atman could be said to be an individual spark taken from that flame.

In Hinduism (and Jainism) this Atman becomes co-joined to the karmic, subtle, or psychic body. What separates the Hindu/Jaina view from that of the Buddhist is that in the Hindu conception of the person, the physical body animates whatever karmic residue exists, plus that of the unchanging, neutral Atman. In the Buddhist understanding this concept of an Atman is not present.

In the Buddhist idea of rebirth what is understood to pass from one life to another is a set of psychophysical characteristics (i.e. the karmic residue) that are causally

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"In Theravada Buddhism there is no soul. There is the notion of a "self" that is impermanent. What exists are elements of being. These possess a dependence that comes to exist in the new form of a being. The cohesiveness of these elements into a single being is not transmigrated into a new entity, hence no "entity" exists. According to Theravada Buddhist thought, what causes the new existence is consciousness. Here, the ego, self, individual, and person are all names for a "multitude of interconnected facts." These "facts" continue in a stream that is divided off into "arbitrary samtanās" (i.e. clusters), that demarcate individual existences. What causes the continued formation of this consciousness is desire and ignorance. Desire is what perpetuates the act of being through unceasing want, and/or unrequired need. Ignorance is first, an ignorance of this fact, and second the weakness or shortcoming of memory—the inability to retain all that one has experienced as an accumulation of experience. This then explains the frustrating cycle of having to repeat experiences (e.g. having to practice piano, reread lines in order to commit them to memory, etc.), as well as experiences of "deja vu." Taken from Arthur L. Herman, The Problem of Evil and Indian Thought, 162."
continuous. When there is no re-entry into life again, it is because the previous life did not produce an effect-set (i.e. karmic residue) requiring yet another life to work itself out.

The terminus (for Hindus and Buddhists) is the stoppage of the reincarnation/rebirth cycle. In Jainism, it is known as kaivalya, for Hindus—moksha, Buddhists—nirvana. Hindu thought on the soul's state of existence AFTER attaining freedom from karmic bonds shall be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2 Development of the Concept of Samsara

This term has been translated as transmigration, reincarnation, metempsychosis, rebirth, and the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Evidence (by implication) of a "samsara doctrine" has been said by Arthur Herman to exist in the Vedas. By doing so, he stands in opposition to such scholars as Robert Ernest Hume, S. Radhakrishnan, and A. L. Basham. He states that it is in the


One of the legacies of the Aryan expansion into India was the body of literature known as "the Veda." This is a composite literature that had four periods of growth. The first was the "period" of the four Vedas: a) Rg, b) Artharvaveda, c) Yajurveda, d) Samaveda. The second was the period when the Brahmanas were added. This was followed by the third period known by the addition called the Aranyakas. The fourth period was the time of the composition of the Upanishads. The Vedas are a revealed literature and are thus revered as sacred.
Vedas that can be detected for the first time a notion of the "mobile soul" locus."

In the early Rg Veda, all the souls of the dead were said to go to "the land of the Fathers." There is no distinction drawn between what happens to the good compared to the wicked. In the later Rg Veda, a distinction is made between a place for the righteous--heaven, and a place for the wicked--hell."

By the time of the Vedas (i.e. ca. 1,500 B.C.E.), it can be said that there existed the notion of a "soul." That is, there was the idea of something that could exist separately from the corporeal body. By the time of the Brahmanas (ca. 1,200 B.C.E.), this idea had developed such that it included the soul being born into this world again just as "spring...comes into life again out of winter..."

The Upanishads (ca. 800 B.C.E.) herald the start of a Hindu Doctrine of Reincarnation. It is here that the thought

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"Herman, 153.

"Herman, 147.

"Satapatha Brahmana I.5.3.14; Herman 148, fn. 297.
of transmigration is originated and formulated." In this doctrine is an understanding that after death the soul moves on and would be re-embodied in: a) the Brahma World, if one knows faith and worship truly, b) the returners, if one practices charity, austerity, and sacrifice, or c) those of the lower animals and insects."

In the Chandogya Upanishad, the determiner of where one exists after death is conduct. Good or bad conduct determines

``Bhad-aranyaka Upanisad IV. 4. 3. "Just as a leech (or caterpillar) when it has come to the end of a blade of grass, after having made another approach (to another blade) draws itself together towards it, so does this self, after having thrown away this body, and dispelled ignorance, after having another approach (to another body) draw itself together (for making the transition to another body). Taken from S. Radhakrishnan's The Principal Upanisads, 271. In the introduction he also describes how when a person dies and is born again (cf. B.U. IV. 3. 37-38; IV. 4. 1-5 and 9. 7. See Katha I. i. 5-6). The example given is that of a grass hopper, when it has come to the end of a blade of grass, finds another place of support, and then draws itself towards it, similarly this self, after reaching the end of this body, finds another place of support and then draws themselves towards it (115).

``Herman., 150."
how, when, and where reincarnation will occur. Conduct becomes the Upanishadic criteria evaluated in the doctrine of samsara. The moral conduct of a person is what sets one's fate. In the Bhagavad Gita, the notion of "conduct" becomes broadened, including intellectual knowledge (jnana) and devotional practices (bhakti). There still remains others, such as the priestly-sacrificial.

The earliest mention of the idea of reincarnation is found in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. This would be contemporary with the rise of Buddhism. Dating would place it near the

When one involves conduct, what is being referred to necessarily are the deeds of a life. When one refers to a "karmic payback" one is referring to the notion of karma. In this sense, "karma" operates as a law, but it is actually an heuristic device (i.e. a method capable of justification, that serves to aid or help one discover something) so widely accepted, it is regarded as a truth. Jains, Buddhists, the Samkhya and Mimamsa systems, all regard the principle of karma as impersonal, mechanical and autonomous. It is regarded to operate independently of God, whereas the Nyaya-Vaisesika hold that God guides and administers it. The Rg Veda holds that there is a cosmic order known as Rta. This is what allows the world to take its regular course (i.e. day following night, season succeeding season), (Basham, 236). The Nyaya-Vaisesika states that God controls our adrsta (i.e. the unseen workings of justice). Sri Aurobindo states that for our beings (believed to be spiritual) karma must be only one of the factors that determines our evolution. This is because our soul, the Self, is greater than karma. The soul/Self uses karma for the purpose of soul-development. If karma were to be greater than the soul, then Atman, the Self, would be a slave or automaton in its hands. He therefore concludes saying that God controls karma (Herman, 225-7).

"Herman, 150-152.

"Chapple, 3.
year 486 B.C.E. "... In these were described certain acts (karma) that could be done to secure certain fruits (phala) in the form of future births (janma). The doctrine of karma played an important role in the concretizing of the caste system at the hands of the priestly class—the brahmans."

It became understood that through the practice of proper behaviour, through yoga (discipline), an improvement in successive future incarnations could be attained. Each yoga maintains that the negative view of bondage to this life and this world must be overcome.

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Chapple, 3.

"Chapple, 3.

"It is not easy to define yoga...In general the word yoga is used to distinguish every technique of asceticism and every method of meditation." Taken from: Mircea Eliade, <i>Patanjali and Yoga</i>, translated by Charles Lam Markmann, New York: Schocken Books, 1975, 3. In a popular understanding, it is the integration of body, mind and spirit. It can involve torturous gymnastic physical positions which are a primary practice of the exercise. These, combined with exercising the mind becomes a completely psycho-physical union exercise. From yoga one can derive: 1. physical exercise, 2. breathing practice, 3. relaxation—both physical and mental, 4. meditation (mental). The yogas are paths to spiritual freedom. Four types are 1. Dhyana or Raja—Royal/Kingly Yoga which centres on developing a one-pointedness of mind, or attention without tension, this can involve Hatha Yoga which is a way of body discipline that eventually will affect the mind; 2. Jnana Yoga—the way of knowledge, which is an intellectual, rational process seeking liberation by way of the intellect, reason, and critical reflection; 3. Karma Yoga—the way of selfless, altruistic action; 4. Bhakti Yoga—the way of devotion to a personal God.
In the development of the theory of reincarnation, the idea of how what was done in a person's life became understood as being able to affect a future reincarnation. The focus of attention through history has been: a) in the Vedic approach (1200 B.C.E.) the focus was on ACTION. In the Rg Veda, action became linked to SACRIFICE and the creative powers that are unleashed in such performances. Through sacrifice, it was

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Chapple, 7.

Sacrifice is viewed here as necessary for the movement of a culture. In the order of creation, the progress may be charted as starting with non-existence, to existence, entrance of sacrifice, and concluding with the attainment of total vision. In fact, Chapple states that this line of progress actually never ends because the total cultural movement needs the sacrifice of particular perspectives to keep the whole cultural body alive. This continued movement is responsible for the Indian tolerance of multiplicity. For the Vedic sage there is no "ultimate experience," only the surrender of perspective to allow for the emergence of new experience and renew culture. Dogmatism and inactivity are the greatest impediments to human freedom. These must be overcome through sacrifice (yajna). The prime function of sacrifice is to generate heat (tapas) in the body of the performer. This heat arises out of action. Tapas is the act of transforming the thoughts and intentions of the sacrificer into heat, which is absorbed totally into, or by the object of sacrifice. Then, through the performance of ritual, tapas is generated that allows the sacrificer to achieve the desired goal. The process unleashes a creative force that leads to a cultural unity, and a revitalizing vision. Through the application of tapas a creative intention is cultivated that has the power to link the microcosmic world of the sacrificer with the macrocosm. This gives him/her the power to determine or alter circumstances, and bring forth new worlds, replete with new possibilities. In the sacrifice's objective is a unity of the sacrificer with the powers represented by that, or to whom, the sacrifice is offered from one of the various gods of the Vedic pantheon. Through the performance of sacrifice, the sacrificer gains access to a "creative power" that is simultaneously microcosmic and macrocosmic. The sacrifice BECOMES the HUMAN VEHICLE for emulating the "creative powers" of Prajapati. The creative powers of Prajapati are universal human abilities manifested through desire, and the fulfilment of desire through intentional acts (Chapple, 11-14.).
understood that desired goals would be fulfilled, and chaos overcome.

By the time of **b)** the Upanishads (700 B.C.E.), it was understood that beyond the fulfilment of mundane desires the higher truths of Atman/purusha could be found. In search of these, the seeker must understand the creative process of action, obtain control over the manifest world and the practices that led to its destruction. When this was accomplished, a FREEDOM IN ACTION could be attained." In this, the person would gain the ability to move through life with a freedom found in a detachment of action.

Being able to do this, a person could move through life using what is needed, but be able to "avoid the pitfalls and broken dreams inherent in attachment." By the time of the Later Upanishads, the human mind was regarded as the source of worldly action and also of liberation from action. Knowledge was sought to free the mind from compulsive, self-centred action.

By the time of **c)** Epic Literature (300 B.C.E.-300 C.E.), the cultivation of EFFORT as a means to transform one's thinking and thereby one's actions, was noted. This was a

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"Chapple, 7.

"Chapple, 7.

"Chapple, 30.
voluntarist philosophy that affirms action as a VEHICLE for purification. In the Mahabharata and Yogavasistha (from the teacher Vasistha), the approach to karma is seen as one of reconciling worldly activity with higher spiritual values. In the Gita this voluntarism is seen in how when one surrenders attachment by performing actions selflessly, one becomes FREE from the binding influences of past karma.\textsuperscript{14}

4.3 The Process of Reincarnation

Writer and thinker Alan Watts pursued the question: "Why and how does the first reincarnating individual first go wrong?"\textsuperscript{15} Presumably, in order to have the loss of a Golden Age (see Appendix III), there must have been a Fall. This would necessarily involve a: 1) beginning of human actions, 2) first wicked act, 3) previous period in which God had created everything in perfection.

The Indian response to this has traditionally been the

\textsuperscript{14}Chapple, 8.

\textsuperscript{15}Chapple, 17.
myth of the four ages of the human person. In this myth, the universe proceeds through cycles of definite duration. The ages decrease in goodness. Humans presently live in an age of degeneration. The problem with this response is that the problem of the ORIGIN of evil is not solved. It merely says the problem happens over, and over again.

The Hindu cosmology holds that the cosmos passes through cycles within cycles for all eternity. The basic cycle is the kalpa, or a "day of Brahma." Each "day" is 4,320 million earthly years. A night is of equal length. 360 days and nights constitute a "year of Brahma" and his life is 100 years long. Brahma is said to be in his 51st year. The largest cycle is 311,040,000 years long, after which the whole universe returns to the ineffable world-spirit, until another creator god is evolved. In each cosmic day the god creates the universe and again absorbs it. During cosmic night he sleeps, and the whole universe is gathered up into his body, where it remains as a potentiality. Within each kalpa are fourteen secondary cycles, each lasting 306,720,000 years, with long intervals between them. In these periods the world is recreated, and a new Manu appears, as the progenitor of the human race. We are now in the seventh secondary cycle of the kalpa. Our Manu is known as Manu Vaivasvata. Each of the secondary cycles contains 71 Mahayugas or aeons. One thousand of these form the kalpa (day of Brahman). Each aeon is divided into four yugas (ages). They are: Krita (4,800 god years) where all is good, Treta (3,600 god years) where there is three parts morality and one part immorality, Dvapara (2,400 god years) where there are two parts morality to two parts immorality, and Kali (1,200 god years) where there is one part morality for every three parts immorality. Each god year is 360 human years. Each yuga represents a progressive decline in piety, morality, strength, stature, longevity, and happiness. We are presently in the Kali-yuga. It is believed to have started in 3102 B.C.E., the year of the Mahabharata war. This would mean that the end of this age is due to arrive in the year 428,898 (taken from Basham's The Wonder that Was India, 320-321).
One's desires are believed to lead to the desired world. The mind structures the world that is experienced. This means that we see what we want to see. In this framework, we are responsible to a great degree for being where we are, and who we are. We bring ourselves to where we want to be by deciding how we react, proceed, and manage what are our "choices" in life.

What becomes necessary is the cultivation of a specialized form of knowledge (jnana). This is not a knowledge of phenomena, but a knowledge of the "Self" that is unchanging. In Upanishadic literature much instruction is given about the self (purusha, Atman, consciousness). Later traditions saw the development of philosophical systems designed to "communicate the experience of this s[S]elf and the means by which it could be attained." Early in the Common Era there was a classification of the various schools of thought, and they became known as the six main schools of orthodox Hindu

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Chapple, 17.

Chapple, 22.
thought.²⁴

Hindu religious philosophy looks upon the created realm as a space of perpetual self-becoming.²⁴ It is said that: "...all forms are continuous, being manifestations of the energy of the ultimate as pure consciousness (Spirit, Self), which by a process of involution, and self-limitation becomes the physical, the vital, the mental and the self-conscious (as in man) in ascending scales of being until it goes back to itself in its fullness in the self-realization (as Self) of a liberated man."²⁴

The reincarnation of the person is a reprocessing of energy that is going on in all creation. This same energy is present in all development over time with new creation. The energy is simply remoulded, and/or transformed.

Each time this energy is reprocessed, it realizes a greater fullness of the power and potency from which it came. In human form, the process fulfils itself in Self-recognition.

The six systems of salvation became known as the Six Doctrines. They became a regular feature of Hinduism. These six schools of thought were of different origin and purpose, but all were brought into the scheme by being treated as equally valid ways of salvation. Divided into three groups of pairs they are: 1) Nyaya and Vaisesika; 2) Samkhya and Yoga; 3) Mimamsa and Vedanta (Basham, 323-7). In Samkhya is explained how creation emerges, and how the creative processes can be arrested in order to obtain liberation. Instead of calling for actions to be undertaken for the satisfaction of desires, it calls for the neutralization of action through intensive reflection (Chapple, 22-23).

"The diversity of expression in the recycled material before the jiva (life force) becomes a human is 8,400,000. The breakdown is as follows: 2,000,000 as a plant, 900,000 as an aquatic, 100,000 as an insect, 100,000 as a bird, 300,000 as a cow, 400,000 as a monkey (Bowes, 172)."

"Bowes, 172."
Being Self-conscious allows one to reflect on one's own nature and realize experientially one's identity with the Ultimate. This identity is everywhere, but humans are the only beings capable of realizing it.

Such realization is known as moksha. This is a realization of the full potentiality of our being. Where reincarnation is the enjoyment of our "finite beingness," in the end our desire for such enjoyment is exhausted. Liberation is the realization of one's identity as Atman (Self), with Brahman (Ultimate Reality). To transcend "desire" the individual life force must satiate all of its desire for phenomenal existence. It is then, that one would be able to say that there is no longer any thing that attracts the person, and that something more is needed!"

The driving force between phenomenal existences is desire. Upon death, what continues on is the desire for pleasure. This desire is what becomes reconstituted in another form, during another existence (see Appendix V, Soul Theory). This "continuing process" is the law of reincarnation. Karma's functioning is part of a more comprehensive functioning operating according to a law known as dharma. Dharma operates

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"Bowes, 173."
through a cause-effect relationship. This is also known as Rta in the Rg Veda."

Dharma can be understood as the "built in" pattern of operation that guides a being in that which it seeks out and performs. In Christian terms, this may be compared with what Aquinas called Natural Law. It is the inner drive that propels a life force. In animals, being bereft of reason, it can be understood as instinct. For a mother to care for her young could be regarded as a built-in disposition of "proper behaviour." To operate according to such "proper behaviour" is to operate according to the law of dharma. For one to help another in a time of distress would be another such illustration. For one to have the drive to live, and overcome obstacles despite hardship, is yet another."

There exists what is known as a "cosmic dharma." It is made up of all the "individual dharmas," which are in relationship with one another. As each thing functions according to its own nature (svabhava), and each thing interrelates with every other thing that is doing this same thing, such interrelations form what can be known as the larger

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"Bowes, 174.

"In Christian terms, this is to follow "natural law." The greatest sin, according to Christian teaching is despair, for it is then that the will to live is lost.

"Bowes, 174."
"cosmic dharma." Due to the nature of each thing affecting another and being affected by another, the cosmic dharma is played out. In the universe each thing exercises, as best as it can, its ability to be what it is supposed to be. In doing this it is acting according to its natural order, or its ordained sense of purpose.

It is operating according to the way it had been designed to be. This is the law-governed nature of the universe. In such a universe, things seek the maximum fulfilment of their inherent potentialities in interdependence with other things! Humans, as well as following their own dharma, have the freedom to choose how they will act. It is with this freedom that they possess the ability to reflect, discern, and select an option of how they will act, from the variety of choices that are presented.

The universe is believed to function smoothly if all follows this built-in performance director. At times, "interference" enters and causes disharmony. This is what is known as adharma. Such interference is due to creation itself. It is believed that eventual cosmic destruction occurs due to such "interference." Adharma is the interruption of the natural order of the universe. How we live, depends on what we do with the dual possibilities of: (a) living according to the

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Bowes, 174.
natural mode of designed functioning/behaviour, or (b) living according to the choices we make, which sometimes affect the functioning of the law that governs our natures. It is then that we must cope with any consequences that result from disorder:"

Our impulses come from our samskaras (tendencies) and vasanas (desires)." Every person is born with a configuration of these, and so they are viewed as "inherited." These are our DRIVING IMPULSES. They make up our tendencies and desires. Choices undertaken directed by these lead to action. Action resulting from choices builds a "repertoire of experience." As we grow in experience, we gain wisdom and familiarity. With this comes a greater awareness. As experience builds, repetition becomes easier (e.g. practising a song on the piano). With wisdom also comes an awareness of consequences, and an insight as to their probability. This "accumulated wisdom" creates a "psychic bundle" of samskaras and vasanas, for every action leaves a residue:"

Reincarnation enables people to experience diversity. The search for experience continues as long as there is unquenched

"Bowes, 174.
"Bowes, 174.
"Bowes, 175.
"Bowes, 175.
desire. This experience can be gained through existence in a number of different beings. The "end" is when the only desire remaining is to be **united with Brahman.** In this way, the person (an individual form of Brahman), finds their way back to the universal reality. "The soul is an individual and unique reflection of the ultimate reality--Brahman. It is here that the universality of reality is given individual shape."

What is reincarnated is the **suksma sarira,** or subtle body. This is the "psychic bundle" that had been formed by/through the desires and actions of a person's life. This **subtle body** acts as a seed for continued growth and development in another life/personality. The "soul" or Atman (the spiritual element) becomes "limited" by a person's mind/body complex for outside of the mind/body complex the Atman is non-spatial and non-temporal."

What a person's previous life determines is a certain "range of possibilities" within which a life will be lived. The question of which of these "possibilities" shall be realized depends on what one does **now.** What we call "fate"

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"Bowes, 178.

"Bowes, 177, 178.

"Bowes, 179."
then, is really an act in conjunction with human will
(purusakara).""

Karma states that human beings are not equal in their
qualities. This is not due to some grant or gift bestowed by
some external agency (i.e. God). All qualities and states in
life are the consequences of the choices, desires, and actions
of a previous life. Reincarnation according to karma justifies
diversity and an unequal society. It is a way that explains
differences in character, and levels of enjoyment or suffering,
as things for which we ourselves are responsible. These are
not due to the whims or caprices of an almighty "dice player."
In a philosophical sense it means "that suffering does not
happen in an arbitrary fashion."

"Bowes, 181.

"Reference is made here to Albert Einstein, who upon
discovering the laws of relativity was known to explain the lack
of "chance happening" in the universe by logical reasoning. The
expression: "God does not throw dice," is attributed to him. It
would mean that the apparent randomness in the world is due to our
inability to have yet uncovered the truth, for organization
underlies chaos.

"Bowes, 183.
Chapter 5 Traditional Indian Thinkers

Section 5.1 Shankara and Maya

The dominant figure of classical Vedanta\footnote{Upon completion of the Upanishads a new and powerful religion (often called Vedanta) was formed. The vedanta is based on a distinctive kind of mystical experience and on a belief in the underlying unity of all reality. Its belief in an all-inclusive unity carried with it the problem of reconciling the complex world spoken about in the Upanishads, and the universal, undivided, all-inclusive Brahman. Efforts were made to summarize (in sutra form) the Vedanta teaching. The earliest of these writings (called brahmasutras) is the Brahmasutra of Badarayana, (ca. 200 C.E.). These were very terse and need the help of a commentary to be understood. The oldest full presentation of the Vedanta system is a commentary on the work of Badarayana by Shankara (ca. 800 C.E.). Vedanta philosophy (also called Uttara Mimamsa, or Later Mimamsa) is the most important of the six systems. It has produced the characteristic features of modern intellectual Hinduism. Shankara founded the Advaita (non-dualistic) school of Vedanta thought (Niels C. Nielsen, Jr. et al., Religions of the World, 1988).} is the philosopher Shankara (ca. 788-820 C.E.). He was an orthodox brahman from the southern India, who wrote extensive commentaries on the Brahma sutras and the chief Upanishads, travelled all over India preaching and disputing with Buddhist monks, who as well founded an order of Hindu monks. He viewed Vedic literature as sacred and true. Filled with many paradoxes, he tried to harmonize them.\footnote{Basham, 327-328.}

He was aware that on an everyday level of truth, the world can be said to have been produced by a Creator, a Lord he called Isvara. This same Lord may be addressed as Brahman, but
must not be confused with the Absolute Brahman, for the Absolute defies description.

He taught that the world went through the evolutionary process as taught by the Samkhya school. On the highest level of truth, the phenomenal universe (including Gods), is unreal. The only reality that truly exists is the Absolute Brahman. The world we live and operate in, is an illusion--Maya. All that we see and experience is but a dream, a mirage, or a figment of our imaginations.

It appears to be real to us, and for the present time, it is. While we are unaware of our misapprehension, all that we see and experience, is genuine. It has an objective reality. When we become aware of the true nature of something, then that which appeared to us as real at a previous time, is made known to us to be unreal.

Shankara refers to this as the hierarchy of truths. In this hierarchy are three levels. The average human operates on the middle level. Operating on this level, we can see the lower level. The lower level is that which appears to us as patently and obviously false. Due to the maturity of our minds, and our judgmental ability, we are able to detect a falsehood there. An example of this would be the act of a magician. The magician has an insight as to the deception of a trick. The magician knows that, despite the appearance of the
trick, it represents a false reality. A young child may think not. As a result, when the magician pulls a coin from behind the child's ear, the child remarks: "I didn't know that was there!"

The level above the middle (or "empirical") level is the level of "transcendence." When a person enters this level of awareness, all that appeared as real and genuine on the empirical level, will be revealed as false, or illusory. While operating on the empirical level, all that we experience has an objective reality, but after transcending it will be revealed as unreal in the light of that higher experience.

Ultimately, the only reality is Brahman. Brahman defies all description; Brahman is ineffable. Shankara taught that "the ultimate reality is an undifferentiated unity beyond all positive predication." The only way to talk about Brahman, is in negative terms—by saying what it is not. In describing Brahman, all that one can say is to repeat the words of the Upanishadic sage Yajnavalkya: "Neti, neti." Translated, this means "not this, and not this." All descriptions of Brahman (the One), use language. The very nature of language is limiting because it is used to identify and classify so as to differentiate one thing from another. As such, it is inappropriate to try to use it to describe that which defies

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Gary E. Kessler, *Voices of Wisdom*, 238.
description—even using the most inclusive terms! Brahman is so much more than could ever be contained in a description, and is so much more than is capable of being conceived of by the human mind!

Any attempt at describing the undescrivable, is an attempt that can only be partially successful. Due to the limitations of human language and the human mind, any statements can be viewed as true, but incomplete. They may describe Brahman partially, but never fully, adequately, or totally.

Shankara's Brahman bears a resemblance to the Nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism. As a result, he is often labelled a crypto-Buddhist. Due to his brilliant dialectic, he reduced all apparently self-contradictory passages of the Upanishads to a consistent system that has remained the standard philosophy of intellectual Hinduism. Shankara's contribution to Hinduism may be compared to that of St. Thomas Aquinas' to Roman Catholicism. Shankara's doctrine is also known as advaita—allowing no second (i.e. monism, absolute non-dualism), or kevaladvaita (i.e. strict monism).''

5.2 Absolute Non-Dualism (Kevaladvaita)

One of the remarkable qualities of Hinduism, is found in its ability to regard a problem from two or more separate

''Basham, 265, 328.
viewpoints simultaneously. In knowledge, there are many paths to understand the same context. Hindus feel that there exist what can be termed higher truths and lower truths. The highest truth would be knowledge of the unperishing. A lower truth would be anything else. Non-dualism is viewed as a higher truth than panentheism, because though God seems divided in God's being God is not. 'God is simple, whereas Creation displays multiplicity.'

Shankara holds two understandings of Brahman. One may be referred to as the higher—that of param the absolute, the supra-cosmic, the ineffable. It is here that NO description, nor title can be applied—similar to the semitic reverence for the name of God Yahweh—but more than mere reverence because no title could EVER be applied. A title is used to distinguish something from that which it is not (e.g. day indicates that portion that is not night). In the higher understanding of Brahman, the totality of all that is real and unreal is contained in Brahman—plus more! Therefore no title, no word

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'O'Flaherty, 370.

'Multiplicity was the matter of struggle for Parmenides in 5th c. Greece. He emphasized a conception of reality as absolute and eternal, in contrast to the Heraclitean conception of eternal change. We understand how if everything is a "being," what distinguishes one "being" from another is its "nature." If "A" is a being, and "B" is a being as well, is A=B? No, not necessarily. This is what would separate humans from animals—human nature and animal nature.
created or invented by the human mind, could EVER be applied to God.

Another may be referred to as a lower understanding of God. It is a-param. Here God may be appropriately addressed with titles such as the Divine Creator, Isvara, etc. This is the God who is involved with Maya. It is to this conceptualized understanding of God that prayers are addressed, invocations sent, etc. When a person moves to a higher level of conscious awareness, it is realized that this God does not exist. Reality as it is perceived presently is revealed as an illusion. What appeared to be real and genuine, becomes to be understood as a false-reality.

This does not undermine, nor take away, the feelings one experienced while under the false impression. All the passion, pain, and joy, is genuine! They are part of the reality that was lived in. Moving to a higher reality does not take those experiences away, but in the light of higher thinking, experiences that had generated those reactions are shown to be what they truly are—unreal. Shankara's concept of maya holds that there is no such thing as creation. The world is NOT a real manifestation of Brahman. The world is avairta, i.e. an illusory modification.

This concept may be compared to the situation of entering a room, and being startled to see a snake curled up in the
corner. Upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that the
snake is not real but merely a rope curled up on the floor.
Such is the way of the world and our perception of it. This is
understood in contrast to a genuine modification or substantial
change—parinama (e.g. milk turning into yogurt, or a gold
nugget being fashioned into a piece of jewellery).

In this way, it can be understood how Brahman is regarded
as never really having been transformed into the world. The
world (i.e. all creation) is really only an illusory
appearance, with Brahman providing his own being as the
substance of the illusion. If the world we perceive is a
series of images played out on a screen in front of our eyes,
the Atman is the light illuminating our vision. The screen
with its images are the world. All this is taking place in a
darkened theatre. All of this is understood by the mind which
is in our brain. It is as if at one moment we wake up and
realize all that we had been witnessing, becoming emotionally
involved with, the theatre, everything that we were sure was
genuine and real—is revealed to have been false, unreal, an
illusion.

The problem with this idea is that there is a subject
perceiving the illusion—the person. If the world is an
illusion and all creation is unreal, then I as the
person/viewer, am unreal as well! I am an illusion, perceiving
an illusion. How can the subject perceive itself as an object? As in a dream, I am not really present, but the fears/anxieties I experience seem real to me; so too it is with the my experience in the world.

In the philosophy of Shankara, one reaches the point of realizing that what has been separating oneself from the Absolute Brahman was merely an illusion (maya). That realization, that awareness is itself the point of enlightenment. The screen of illusion is rent, and reality is shown as it always has been.

The mind's conception of itself as an independent soul (a jiva) is metaphorically referred to as a mirror. This "mirror" is a reflection of the Atman. The mirror is an illusion, and the jiva continues to believe in the genuineness of the illusion until ignorance is replaced with the truth. The jiva does not have an existence independent of Atman. The individual consciousness (the jiva) is not so much a reflection of Atman, but a partial understanding of the true identity of Atman. By understanding it as such, it is an incorrect view of totality. By mistaking this myopic concept for a larger one, it is an unconscious limitation of Atman. This is the limiting condition of ignorance." As long as ignorance persists, one

perceives themselves as separate from others and the Absolute Brahman. This is limitation of Infinity by finitude, Unity by multiplicity. In doing this, we see the "Infinite, by, and through, limitations or conditions that do not properly belong to the Infinite."\(^{31}\)

The maya that is referred to is the illusory reality that we mistake for genuine reality. Any thoughts, perceptions, any distinction between subject and object, is where maya is present. Maya is when we mistake the real for the Real (the Absolute Brahman), and thus in this manner place limitations on Brahman. Maya is when we fail to recognize Brahman. It results when we mistake the phenomenal world for Reality.

This does not mean to say that what we experience is non-existent. In a dream, what appears to be real and causes terror, pleasure, anxiety, or excitement is genuine at that moment. It is illusory, but has existence. Another distinction must be drawn here: who/what is the actual cause of the illusion? It must not be understood as though the Absolute were to disguise its actual being as the phenomenal world. Brahman does nothing of the sort. It would then appear as though Brahman was playing a trick on us leading us to believe something, or deceiving us in some way. The Absolute Brahman would never do this. The illusion is our own.

\(^{31}\)Deutsch, 53.
misapprehension. The illusion exists in our minds. The fact that the One appears to be many is the result of our avidya or spiritual blindness, our ignorance.

Shankara is a proponent of the Advaita ("allowing no second," i.e. monism) Vedanta tradition or kevaladvaita (lit. strict, absolute, pure non-dualism), and so espouses liberation (i.e. moksha) as due to the mental-spiritual discipline of Jnana Yoga. In this way, liberation is through gnosis or knowledge. In short, the Absolute Brahman defies description, as all description issues from the limited human mind, and the human mind bases all cognition on phenomenal experience. Yet the human mind aspires to somehow communicate with God!

How can this be done? By limiting God and being aware of what is done in doing this, God is addressed as Isvara, or the Creator Brahman. In this way the Impersonal becomes a personal Lord. For more one this, let us turn now to Ramanuja.

5.3 Ramanuja and Lila

Ramanuja, a brahman, was one of the great Dravidian theologians who succeeded Shankara. He taught in the great temple of Srirangam. He is said to have lived from 1017 to 1137. Like Shankara, he taught in many parts of India, and claimed to base his doctrines on earlier sources. He wrote

"Plato described this as "knowing things as they are not."
lengthy commentaries on the Brahma Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads.

Vedantists have proposed the solution by comparing the acts of God to those of a kind of play or sport (cf. "But as with men at times, so with God, creation is a mere sport"). Creation is to be viewed here as "a kind of playful overflowing of His [God's] joyful inner nature...". Creating the world, maintaining it in existence, and its eventual dissolution are all part of God's sportive nature: "...There is no objection to the view that sport only is the motive prompting Brahman to the creation, sustentation, and destruction of this world which is easily fashioned by his [God's] mere will." However, this does not offer a solution to the theodical problem, for the idea of God's sportive activity, lila, is merely a description of the act and cannot be used to justify any consequences resulting from the act.

Ramanuja admitted the usefulness of Shankara's doctrine of salvation through knowledge. He held however, that the BEST means of salvation was through DEVOTION. The best yoga was

"Brahma Sutra II. 1.33.; Herman, 267.
Herman, 267.

The Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana, with the Commentary of Ramanuja, Trans. by George Thibaut, Part III, SBE, XLVIII, 477; Herman, 268.
Herman, 269.
bhakti-yoga, where the devotee realized that one is but a small fragment of God, and totally dependent on Visnu—the Supreme Being. Yet another means of salvation could be prapatti, a complete surrender, also known as "the abandonment of self." This is where one places one's soul in the hands of God, trusting and waiting for God's grace.

Orthodox Hinduism holds the view that all roles (good and evil) are necessary for the infinite variety that constitutes society as a whole. This is the doctrine of svadharma. Each individual contributes, in some manner, to the totality of human possibility. All roles are equally valid and equally necessary, though not equally good. This can be seen to follow the theme of the principle of plenitude.

This idea was challenged by Buddhism, the Upanishads, and the bhakti cults, which substitute the individual, a universal morality, and a single goal (liberation) for the svadharma, relativism and variety of the orthodox view. The individual was now able to free oneself from karma, by consciously changing one's life.\footnote{O'Flaherty, 377.}

In a society dominated by the orthodox Hindu doctrine of svadharma, good and evil had their proper roles to play. Proper behaviour respected this by preservation of the status quo. Bhakti proclaimed a universal availability of release
from the cycle of reincarnation. In BOTH cases, Gods are seen as **being responsible** for the creation of evil in its seminal state of potential. The Orthodox view sees evil as necessary and therefore good. In the bhakti mindset this is because God wishes to descend to the level of evil, participate in it, and help (i.e. free) humankind from it.:

In the svadharma view, the pluralism inherent in the social system of caste (where a goal was the preservation of social and moral balance) is denied by bhakti's invalidation of the caste system. It is due to bhakti's support of a more universalistic system, where the goal of universal salvation is attainable.:

In Hindu writings, the problem of evil disappears or is disregarded. The early texts (Brahmanas) brush it aside in favour of ritual solutions. Orthodox texts reconcile good and evil. Buddhism (and some Hindus) avoid the problem by saying a beginningless (anadhi) karma is the only cause of good and evil. This leads to an infinite chain of earlier and earlier causes that approach, but never solve the problem. Later texts (those which were influenced by Buddhism, the Upanishads, and bhakti), see evil as necessary, desirable, and intended by God,

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1 O'Flaherty, 378.

2 O'Flaherty, 378.
while at the same time indicate that the goal humans should work towards is to **overcome evil**, and seek the good."

Ramanuja's God is a personal being. This God is full of grace and love for creation. In order to reach a lost soul, this God could even **override karma**! This idea stands in contrast to the impersonal, Absolute Brahman.

According to Ramanuja, the individual soul is an emanation of God's own self. This bears a similarity to Christian thought. It is understood as existing **in** God. It is a portion of God's own essence that has been given a being (i.e. given phenomenal existence) by God. Upon death, this being returns to God, and lives forever in full communion with God **without** losing its individuality. The personal soul continues to maintain a separateness from God. If God is to be compared to the ocean, and the person is a glass of water drawn from that ocean, upon death, that glass is **not** poured back into the ocean to merge and become one in the same being as God. It returns to its source of emanation, but maintains its individuality. Returning to the ocean image, the water may be returned to the ocean, but not as a glass poured back into it, but as a sealed bottle of that same water allowed to float in the ocean.

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"O'Flaherty, 379."
The soul after physical death and separation from the body is always conscious of itself as an "I." It exists for eternity, by virtue of its sharing in God's being. It is one with God, yet separate. This system, of which Ramanuja is the leading proponent, has been termed *visistadvaita* or "qualified non-dualism." Ramanuja is not regarded as brilliant a metaphysician as Shankara, but Indian religion owes more to him than his predecessor. This is because after his death, his ideas spread all over India and became the starting point of many of the devotional sects in later times.

5.4 Qualified Non-Dualism (*Visistadvaita*)

Two schools have developed in Hindu thought regarding the state of the soul after liberation. These would be the absolute non-dualistic, and the qualified non-dualistic. In the absolute view, the individualized soul considers itself as a separate being from that which gave it existence, only due to misapprehension. This is understood to be a spiritual blindness. It is a mistaken view of reality and is known as avidya. It is believed by such non-dualists that once truth is realized, and reality is understood as it genuinely is and

*Basham, 332-3.*
always has been, there is a re-entry (or merging) of the individual into that universal which was the source of its origin (i.e. God).

When liberated, the confusion ceases. From that point onwards, one continues to live dispassionately and without attachment to anything—not even clinging to life itself—for life in this body is no longer viewed as worth clinging to! Such activity is neither based on desire, nor aversion. These would be the normal springs of action that a person still in attachment to the world would operate under. As a result of liberation and non-attachment, no new "bundles" of psychic forces (psychic deposits, or "residue") are generated.

It is precisely this "bundle" that would take on a new life. In the liberated person there continues no notion, concept, idea, or understanding of a separate existence from God, because there is no sense of separate identity. In liberation, the jivatman (the individual soul) realizes the identity of their Atman or Self, with the Universal Brahman. The created form (i.e. the material body) goes back to the source from which it arose (i.e. through decaying it returns to the earth). The Self has fulfilled all possibilities as a "finite being" through a long chain of continuous being and becoming.
That, which at one stage of "being" is pure unity in unmanifest potentiality, has become manifest diversity! In that becoming; it gains particularity and individuality. In time, this diversity merges back into the unity of the unmanifest. In time, it may reappear. We must remember that the whole while, the entirety of the manifest universe is contained in the UNMANIFEST, UNDIFFERENTIATED Brahman. We are each to find our places here.

What separates qualified non-dualists from the aforementioned, is that qualified non-dualists believe that it is better to maintain the separation between the individual entity of the person and God. The Indian proverb describes why: it is better to be the honey taster, than the honey itself.

Buddhist and Christian belief systems have what may be called a qualified non-dualistic philosophy. Ramanuja calls this Visista (lit. qualified) Advaita (lit. non-dualism). It is here that Ramanuja centres attention on the relation between God and the world. He holds that God is real, and individual souls are real as well. Unlike Shankara, Ramanuja taught that the world and our separate identity from God is not an

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1: Hence, the common expression: TAT TVAM ASI, meaning: THOU ART THAT, or AHAM BRAHMA ASMI meaning: I AM BRAHMAN. What is to be understood here, is that the part is contained in the whole, or that which makes up the whole and the part, are the same.
illusion. As a such, he agrees with the continued individual existence of liberated souls. He states that while the world of matter and the individual soul have a real existence of their own, neither of them is essentially the same as Brahman."

Brahman is understood as being free from imperfection, matter is unconscious, and human souls are subject to ignorance and suffering. Matter and the human exist as phenomenal expressions of Brahman. The soul and inanimate nature, while existing because of Brahman's bestowal of existence to them, are essentially different from Brahman. They exist with the purpose of serving Brahman. Ramanuja's theory is an advaita (a non-dualism) though with a qualification that admits plurality. It is understood as the Supreme Spirit subsisting in a plurality of forms as souls and matter.

The separation of God as Creator from creation is that of a lover and the beloved. Having been created, we are now separate from our Creator. In our Creator we have the fullness of being, and long for that fullness once more. Through many existences, we work our way back to one in being with God, but not one in substance. When we are reunited with

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S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 661.
our Creator, but maintain our otherness. This is what is desired.

5.5 Discussion

The philosophy of Shankara is based upon the idea that to look upon the "temporal process" apart from the "eternal," is a mistake. This is because the world is not APART from Brahman, although it may appear to have its own independent existence. The world is not self-sufficient, self-explanatory, nor is it meaningless or unintelligible. Shankara holds that the Absolute is not in time, for time is a product of our minds, and so is phenomenal. One cannot speak of the Absolute and time as though they have any relation to one another. One may speak of The Creator God--Isvara--and time, and say that Isvara is time as well as eternity.

To look upon the world as the ultimate reality is to be caught in maya. The world is not eternal, but there is the eternal underlying it as its true reality. Thus, the temporal is not to be identified with the Eternal."

Shankara specifies that the Eternal is understood to be non-dual. When we "objectify," we place a mystery in a form to be apprehended by the mind. Concepts and categories are our

ways/means, of understanding "being," or the "reality" of this world. They form an objective part of our existence. Our objective universe consists of name, form, and action. These support one another, but are really one. To be perceived is to be objectified. To be such is to forfeit the ultimate reality which is unity. Time is a fundamental form of the objectification of human existence.¹²

In this view, in the waking (as well as in the dream state), worlds are objectified. They are then unreal in the metaphysical sense because they involve duality. This is not to reduce a waking experience to be equal to that of a dream state. This is not to say that the entire manifold universe is illusory in its essence. The tangible objects which we see around us are not the objects of our imagination. They do have an existence INDEPENDENT of our consciousness of them, and so exist independently of their intramental presence (i.e. that presence they have in our minds). The intramental presence is not the object of our knowing, but a means of knowing.

Our perception of things does not make them real. The world has a type of existence outside of our minds. Our physical make-up is such that we are directed to receive stimuli. We are sensors. The world exists to be sensed. The fact that we perceive them, means that they have become

¹² Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sutra, 137.
dematerialized, and they have immaterially left an impression on our minds. They have thus become objectified, and so have become metaphysically unreal or illusory due to their perceived duality. They have apparently become separate from the Divine.

The maker of the illusion is not the perceiver, but the Lord Isvara. What we experience in this world appears to us as real because it is what we are familiar with. As a result, we do not doubt its authenticity or genuineness and its reality. Upon gaining a higher spiritual awareness, we realize that what had appeared to us previously as reality, was not truly real.

Shankara and Christian teaching both regard the world as necessary for human beings to realize their destiny. According to the sampling of Christian thought that I have selected, the world was created for two reasons. The first was to show the splendour of God's generosity, the second was for the world to provide for humans what they would need as they pursue their ends. The human end is the pursuit of a lasting happiness. If such a happiness was to be found in this world, then at death, what would be left? What is sought is an eternal happiness. This would be found in God. Our end then, is to pursue God.

"Mayam tu prakrtim viddhi mayinam tu mahesvaram," when translated approximates: The world is maya, but the Supreme Lord is the possessor of maya. Originally taken from the Upanishads (S. U. IV. 10.), found in Radhakrishnan's Brahma Sutra, 138.
Shankara identifies the idea that "the world is to help human beings realize their destiny...Our temporality (giving) us a chance of knowing the eternal." By this, Shankara identifies "the world" as the passage from existence in ignorance, to a realization of true reality. This is a place of "becoming," not "actual being." This world is to be regarded as a "lower form of being" compared to the Supreme Being. All things that exist here (materially and immaterially, e.g. our thought processes) are reflections that exist first in the Supreme Being. They exist in our minds and we experience them physically in a more limited way, as compared to the way they exist in God (which would be in a much larger way).

The "objective universe" is not the "subject," but is derived from it. The world that we dwell in is not the "absolute reality," it is an emanation of it. It is not an illusory appearance. It is actual in the sense that it does not lack "existence," but may be termed "non-authentic." In this way, the final triumph is to be seen as the annihilation of the non-authentic objective world, by the realization of our authentic being. By doing this, a person realizes existentially rather than objectively. In Shankara's view,

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this is regarded as the purpose of human life; because the human person has Spirit, one must become an incarnate Spirit.

God the Creator, is regarded as the power that rules the cosmic energies. God's thought was: "I am one, let me be many." God's will then, is the meaning of the world. Creation is the manifestation of energy in Brahman that can be called Isvara. This God, who is the Creator, saw that the world should become an ordered beauty. That which exists and is real, is as it should be--manifest, and actualized.

That which is unmanifest (lit. avyākta) is called the subtle cause. This is as well the primal state of the universe. This subtle power abides in God. We, who abide in avyākta, also live in maya, avidya, or blindness. We believe that we have a grasp on authentic truth. This blindness is destroyed by the knowledge we gain as emancipated beings.

Until that time, we are doomed to rebirth because we are caught in this web of delusion."

In Shankara's understanding of the world, the Creating God (Isvara) created this universe (as opposed to any other) out of nothing. It was created ex nihilo. It is dependent on God for it to remain in existence." God was not "necessitated" to

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"S. Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sutra, 142.

"In Christian terms this is known as "conservation."
create this world, nor was God limited by the existence of any "pre-existent matter" that had a beginninglessness."

The support or conservation of the blindness is as well found in Brahman. We dwell in Brahman. We find our true selves in Brahman. The real nature of our true selves IS Brahman, but as long as we are surrounded by avidya, we do not realize our true nature. There is nothing but God. All acts of creation are acts of God's sacrifice of God's Self. The end of this cosmic process is a return to the Spirit. The world is not to be understood, nor viewed as a completed act, but something that is in the process of completion.

This Spirit is present as a four-fold reality. First there is the Absolute--Brahman. Second, there is the Personal God--Isvara. Third, there is the world soul that seeks expression in the world--Hiranya-garbha. Fourth and last there is the world--virat svarupa. Spirit and matter are aspects of Brahman, from which all creation flows. It is the third (the world spirit) that exists in the human spirit seeking a consciousness of itself. This consciousness is attainable, for if it were not, we would be contradictory beings. 23

Rabindranath Tagore offers this metaphor: A river has its boundaries as its limitations. We don't define a river by

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23 S. Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sutra, 142.
24 S. Radhakrishnan, The Brahma Sutra, 143.
these limitations. Its purpose is not shown by its limitations or the boundaries that restrain it. Its purpose is seen in its MOVEMENT! So too with human lives, the struggle of human existence is the movement towards PERFECTION!"

For Shankara, God is the Absolute. A quality identified in something is a description of something. In order to describe that something, it must be limited. It must be contained as to what it is, to differentiate it from that which it is not. As such, it is defined. The Absolute for Shankara is not able to be limited and defined. Qualities cannot be affixed, because they would limit the Absolute. It is true, all limitations ARE contained in the Divine Being, but that limitation is contained and surfeited! The limitation is contained, AS WELL AS all that is not included in the definition! For Shankara, God is free of all restrictions.

For Rabindranath Tagore, the mere fact that we can imagine an ideal is PROOF that there exists an ideal. This is what we strive for—perfection. This ideal becomes the "idea of the possible." By holding this in our mind's eye, we walk with the hope and expectation that it is attainable. This hope is the presence of the infinite within us.

Ramanuja's vision of the Divine, is such an ideal. It is a repository of all the qualities we value and admire! Whereas

Shankara's vision of the Divine Being was one of non-duality, of one where there is no difference between subject and object (of an Absolute). Ramanuja's, was one that arose as a reaction to Shankara. It is a vision of Brahman that possess every quality, and has a personality that we have been modelled after. For Shankara, in the end the world is unreal. IT IS REAL WHILE WE LIVE IN IT, and as such has a tentative reality. However, in Shankara's final analysis, there is only Brahman, the Absolute.

According to Ramanuja, all creation shares actual, real, being with Brahman. This is what it receives from the Divine, whose very being, whose essence is existence. The question arises again: "If the world that I perceive and experience as real is in the end unreal, and the pain and suffering that I experience while I find myself in an illusory reality is genuine—where does all this arise from?" The problem is ontological. ALL is an emanation of Brahman hence, ALL evil emanates from Brahman AS WELL AS all good.

The fact that God is perceived in two ways is a way circumventing the problem. For God to be perceived as nir-guna (i.e. without qualities), is beyond all predication. According to such a view, God is that which the mind cannot comprehend. God is the noumenal reality behind all phenomena. As such, there is no real relation between God and the empirical or
phenomenal world. While we do experience in a very real way the pain, pleasure, disappointment, and sadness of our existence, from the absolute perspective (i.e. that of God as Brahman) these are appearances that we are deluded into believing that we are experiencing as real, due to the limitation of our spiritual blindness (i.e. our avidya).

To view God as sa-guna (i.e. with qualities) is to understand God as a personal Lord—Isvara. This is the personal deity that is the efficient, material, and sustaining cause of phenomenal existence.

To view God as the Absolute, there is no talk of God being responsible for sending an unequal distribution of good and suffering to affect humans. This perception is due to our myopia. When God is perceived as phenomenal but impersonal, there is no divine goodness to be brought into question. When God is regarded as the personal deity, creation is the playful expansion of the Lord. It is the purposeless sport of God. Being purposeless, it is not intentional action, hence God can bear no moral responsibility for the effects of the evolution."

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Chapter 6  Sri Aurobindo

Introduction

Sri Aurobindo was born in Bengal, and was educated at Cambridge University in England. He returned to India and took part in a nationalistic movement that resulted in his imprisonment in 1910. While confined, he had a mystical experience. Upon his release, he took refuge in the French enclave of Pondicherry. Sequestering himself in a hermitage he wrote, practised yoga, and meditated. He wrote in the English language, although he abandoned all other styles of Western living. He maintained quarters in an upstairs room, from which he did not once descend for the last twenty-five years of his life.

In brief, his vision of the world was that of one where all beings are in a process of evolution. First, the universe is to be understood as a manifestation of the Divine Being. Second, the divine life is to be understood as the culmination of the evolutionary process. As such, it is what all creation is directed towards and where all creation will experience its fullness of being.

However, it is until we reach that stage of awareness that we see ourselves as less than divine. We understand ourselves

as "undivine imperfection." Evil and the sensational suffering that we experience is due to this general principle of imperfection. How are we to be certain of this? Two reasons: first, it is because our minds can conceive it that it must be possible to be better (i.e. to be perfected); second, because we can understand our limitations as those things/abilities that would be more fully contained in God. If we can conceive of such a state of perfection, desire it, and work towards it, yet are incapable of achieving it--we would be contradictory beings. Another possibility would be that because we can conceive of it, we perhaps once did experienced it but have since fallen from it. Aurobindo's philosophy upholds the former--perfection is where we are heading through a process of evolution.

It is to be understood that evil has its place. We must be aware of the role that evil (and the suffering resulting from it), play in our journey as evolutionary beings. According to Aurobindo evil is to be understood as having three aspects; a) its relation to the Absolute, b) its origin and place in the universe, and c) its place in the individual. It must be understood from the outset that evil has no place in

God—the Supreme Reality. He writes: "There is nothing there that has this reality." 

6.1 The Nature of Evil

In order to understand this, one must be aware of how evil is understood by Aurobindo. Panentheistically, God contains all that exists, and so all "absolutes" must exist in the Divine before they can be placed in creation (that is to say they must pre-exist in the Divine). Evil is referred to here as a privation—as a lack of something that should be there. It is without substance. It is a non-entity. In this sense, the notion of evil in the universe bears a striking similarity to the Aesthetic Theory of contrasts where things are known by their contrast. Evil appears to exist as the opposite of that which is good. If everything can be regarded as having an opposite, that which exists must pre-exist before its negative can be conceived of. Truth must exist prior to the concept of a falsehood, knowledge before the idea of ignorance, good before evil.

The negatives of falsehood, ignorance, and evil only exist in relation to their corresponding positives. Outside of this duality, THEY HAVE NO EXISTENCE! Falsehood and evil are the results of ignorance, and therefore "cannot exist where there

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"Aurobindo, Life Divine, 532."
is no Ignorance.""" They have no self-existence in the Divine Being."""

6.2 The Nature of Knowledge and the Mind

Ignorance disappears when knowledge is present. This is because knowledge brings on a right consciousness. Evil and falsehood are the fruits of an unconsciousness, and a wrong consciousness. There can be no "absolute" of falsehood, or evil. They are "by-products," not "existences" in themselves. They are the "flowers" that have their roots in the black soil of "the Inconscient.""" Truth and good have no such obstacle. Their "absolutes" exist in God. The relativity of truth/error, good/evil is a fact of our experience. We are sensory creatures that rely on knowledge supplied to our minds via our senses. As a result, we cannot know things directly but only indirectly. When we approach something in order to understand it, we can only draw conclusions that are partial, speculative, or constructed. The truth does not get its full value in the senses. As a result it can never be totally true (i.e. complete and authentic) because it remains a statement ABOUT things. Just as in the way a cloth draped over a figure may

"""Aurobindo, The Life Divine, 533.

"""Aurobindo, 533.

"""Aurobindo, 533.
allude to the shape but is not the shape itself, so too the statement is not TRUTH ITSELF "BODIED," but only a description of it. This is where error may enter. Error may be due to the mind's misinterpretation. It is not part of the substance of truth.

To have an "identical vision" is to have first hand experience. This is the true nature of knowledge, and is "self-existent within the being." Our minds however, are not programmed to know this way. The human mind operates by derivation, indirect knowledge, and its knowledge is therefore inauthentic. Error arises in deviation from a truth! Falsehood is a distortion of a truth, its contradiction, or its denial. Ignorance exists due to a limitation, or absence of knowledge. Knowledge then, can exist in the human mind only partly due to the limitations of the mind.

Recall that "good" is understood as existing by true consciousness, "evil" by wrong consciousness. In an unmixed true consciousness then, only good would exist. Evil is regarded as a privation, a lack of what should be there, and so is not capable of having its own existence. Only good is capable of having existence. What was at one time called "good," at later date may be called an "evil," and vice versa.

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"Aurobindo, 534."
This is relativity. Aurobindo holds that when what we call "evil" yields a good result, this may be ascribed to the active working of the Divine. (Please note: I am not ready to accept this unqualifiedly as I feel that it requires discussion on the methods, modes, and/or manners that employed by God in God's workings—which I shall not focus on in this paper).

Physical evil (e.g. pain, bodily suffering, etc.) occurs independently of right knowledge, or ignorance. It is to be regarded as a fact of physical nature. Aurobindo holds that we would not experience physical pain or discomfort if we had a clearer, untainted picture of the Divine Consciousness. He ascribes most of our pain and suffering as due to the result of an insufficient "consciousness" which makes a person unable to deal rightly with the self and nature, or unable to harmonize (i.e. assimilate) oneself with the "Universal Energy."

He says that we must realize that we are evolving beings, propelled to attain the highest goals, maximize our potential, and thus become as good as is conceivable in every respect. As limited finite beings, we search for that which we can conceive of as "the ultimate." We are propelled forward by an "impulse to the infinite."

In this journey of our earthly lives, we must come to understand the nature of reality. The relation of truth to

"Aurobindo, 555."
falsehood, and well-being to unwell-being is not one of mutual
dependence, but of contradiction. It can be compared to the
relationship of light to shadow. Shadow depends on light, but
the reverse is not true for light does not depend on shadow.
So too, it is this way with anything contrary to the Absolute.
Negatives are not fundamental aspects of the Divine. Falsehood
and evil have no fundamentality, no eternal being, no self-
existence, no authenticity of any sort of original inherence.
It is only when the notion of a reality exists, that its
opposite becomes conceivable (e.g. once truth exists, falsehood
becomes a possibility). Aurobindo states that "wherever there
is an affirmation, its negation becomes conceivable."

All possibilities push towards actuality until they reach
it. Opposites may find their existence as "implied absolutes,
but having been conceived of, they have then been given an
existence and are therefore inseparable from all cosmic
existence. Prior explanations of evil's existence have stated
that: as all that is must pre-exist in God, and due to the
universal nature of God containing the plenitude of all
possibilities--the inclusion of the presence of evil AS WELL AS
that of good in God is necessitated; or, as all existences must
pre-exist in God, and the idea of God being wholly good, could
not be reconciled with the containment of evil. Thus, the

"Aurobindo, 535."
existence of evil NECESSITATED the expulsion of evil from God.

Evil then, had to find a place in the created realm—which is not outside of God's total self, but at least outside of God's immediate self. Aurobindo's explanation of the existence of evil is that while negatives DO pre exist in God, they don't come to be as PRIMARY EXISTENCES. They are, what can be known as: resultant derivations.

It is to be understood then, that first came the good. Then, as its corollary must as well have an existence AND all that is MUST find its place in the Divine, so too these negatives came to exist in God. It must be remembered that although they find their place of existence in the Supreme Being, they were not primary in the metaphysical chronology of creation. They came to exist only by implication, in relation to something that had prior existence. As such, they exit in God as potential. When manifested, they become actualized possibilities. "They cannot pre-exist in the timeless being, for they are incompatible with the unity and bliss that are its [God's] substance."14

In the world, evil finds its existence as a "limitation of a good." It exists where too do the breakdown of truths and goodness into partial and relative forms, the breaking up of

14 Aurobindo, 535.
the unity of existence and consciousness into separative
consciousness and separative being. However, just because
separateness arises, does not mean the inevitability of evil's
entrance, nor of wrong consciousness, knowledge, will, feeling,
action, reaction etc. There can be a harmony and sovereignty
of truth, if there is sufficient mutuality in the absence of
oneness.

From whence then does evil first arise? Wrong will and
evil exist originally in the mind, becoming actualized only
when the mind enters the obscurity of the Inconscient. By
their existence in the supraphysical, and their becoming
actualized by their "material manifestation," recalls the
Platonistic notion of that inherent evil of the material world.
The divergence in thought is, where Plato conceived of
liberation from the evil of this world as possible only through
death, Aurobindo reminds us of the evolutionary program we are
on, maintaining that eventually evil shall be overcome in this
world. How this shall occur, will be due to the workings of a
greater consciousness.

Working against the mind's progress to the realization of
universality Aurobindo acknowledges powers that are opposed to
ANY progress of a soul's advance, towards divine consciousness
and divine existence. These "beings" are traditionally held to
be those who have their root-nature attached to all the causes
and consequences of that which we call evil.

God is beheld to be that cosmic Self and Spirit who
upholds the universe and all that it contains. This cosmic
Force moves all things. Many cosmic Forces act and depend on
this central Force. These are the central Force's powers, or
arise as forms of its universal action. As there are powers of
knowledge, so too there are powers of ignorance. The work of
the powers of ignorance is to prolong the reign of Ignorance
and Inconscience. Similarly, the forces of Falsehood work
against the forces of Truth. This is the operation of the
Cosmic Invisible.

It is from this that we have derived symbols of Good Gods
and Bad Gods, Powers of Light vs. Powers of Darkness. In the
Vedas, this is seen as the Vedic Gods vs. the sons of Darkness
and Division (the Titan-Asura, Giant-Rakshasa, Demon-Pisacha).
In the Zoroastrian belief system there is Ahura Mazda (the
highest God, a.k.a. Ormazd--Sovereign Knowledge) vs. Aura
Mainyu (the principle of evil). In Judaism, this is seen as
the opposition between God and the angels vs. Satan and the
fallen hosts. All these make up the invisible Personalities
and Powers. They are powers that either draw humans to the
Divine Light, Truth, and Goodness, or lure humans into
subjection under darkness, falsehood, and evil.
Humans are to be regarded as embodied souls. Our lives start with our entrance onto this terrestrial existence. From that point can be traced the evolution of good and evil. In evolution, we move from the mental to the spiritual. We are in a process of moving towards the Absolute (i.e. God). As we experience an increase in the intensity of light, power, peace, ecstasy, etc., there is a resulting loss of our limitations, of a resultant increase in freedom and of an awareness of universality.

Pain and evil are bound to limitation. They are parasitical. If they were to attain towards absoluteness, they would kill their host. For example, if pain would become too intense, the host would be driven to exorcise the pain, and so would destroy the relationship shared between host and feeding parasite. The parasite would "end itself, or ends that in which it manifests..."\textsuperscript{1} If evil became sole and immeasurable, it would destroy the world—or that which bore and supported it. It would collapse into itself and through this disintegration, become non-existent.

Evil and the powers that work with it, seem or appear at times to grow larger and more powerful. They seem to be able to reach such immensity, that they appear to be infinite! Yet they are not absolutes, nor infinite. Anything parasitical can

\textsuperscript{1}: Aurobindo, 539.
only be as large as its host. In regards to evil, the maximum it would be able to reach is that which is the Inconscient. Self Existence, whether in essence or by participation in an eternal inherence in the Self-Existent (i.e. God), is the condition of absoluteness. Error, falsehood, and evil are cosmic powers relative in their natures—not absolutes in themselves! They depend, for existence, on the perversion or contradiction of something so as to find their "being" as something's opposite. This is quite the opposite from the way truth and good exist. Truth and good are self-existent absolutes. They are inherent aspects of the supreme Self-existent (i.e. God), and so share in God's being!

Accepting the existence of entities embodying the dark opposites (be they powers, or forces...) on the supra-physical (i.e. angelic realm), or pre-physical (i.e. potential, yet to be realized) level, would lead one to wonder if they have a pre-existent existence in God? The answer would be "no" because they exist only in the lowest of the supraphysical life-planes. They are not of the primal powers of the cosmos. They are creations of Life. They came to be when life--more specifically the mind--came to be. Evil finds its place as a realized actuality when the conscience evolved and merged out of the Inconscient. Falsehood, error, wrong, and evil, all

"Aurobindo, 539."
find their home in the Inconscient. They are normal to belong there." In order to understand this more fully, we shall now trace the order of evolution.

6.3 The Orders of Evolution

It must constantly be kept in mind that everything that is, exists in the Lord. This being said, it must be understood that things emanate from the Lord, and that not all things are equal. This thought is echoed in Judeo-Christian belief where there are differing orders of beings, (e.g. purely spiritual--angelic, the partly spiritual/partly material--human, purely material--animal, the vegetal--plants, and the mineral--rocks). These are beings that while they do exist IN God, they do not have the immediacy of God's existent being, for they have their own. It may be said that they participate in God's being. Their existence is maintained and supported BY God, but they enjoy their own existence.

So too, in Hindu thought, all that is, is in God. But that which emanates from God is understood to have been granted its own existence. Combining this idea with the evolutionary idea of all that exists being in a process of evolution coming to realize its ideal, and that ideal as coming to realize its absoluteness--the Absolute being God. That which exists in the

"Aurobindo, 540."
Hindu mind outside of God's immediate being, yet still finding its existence in God, exists in the Inconscient. It is from the Inconscient (which is the most base, most ignorant of all creation), all creation emerges.

The first to emerge from the Inconscient is matter.""\(^1\) Matter is not inherently evil. In matter, we find no psychological organization, no system of conscious action or reaction. Matter is neutral. It is in how we are affected by matter, through its use, or contact with us that we judge it to be helpful or harmful. In this respect, it can be seen that an earthquake or a mudslide is, by itself, neither positive nor negative--it is in how it affects us that we condemn it and lament over it as a tragedy or simply view it as an epic natural phenomena. In the world of matter there is no duality of good or bad. These values do not exist, material nature is irresponsible.

Any form of duality must begin with consciousness. It emerges with the development of the mind. In animal life there is the fact of evil, and this fact causes suffering (e.g. violence, cruelty, etc.), but there is no moral evil. In the animal existence there is no "sense of sin," just as there is none of "virtue." All is neutral, and so permissible. All operates on the level of the preservation of life--hence the

\(^1\)Aurobindo, 540.
popular expression: "dog-eat-dog." Sensation does exist generating feelings of loss or pain or pleasure, but any mental response (in the form of a moral choice) belongs only at the human level."

With the development of the mind, comes the development of desire and sensation. Here is found the creation of what we call evil--both the sense of evil, and the fact of evil. In the progress of evolution, there comes a time when the mind becomes "aware" of the values of good and evil. This is an awakening. We become aware of their importance, and come to realize the value of their existence.

In coming to this awareness, there is a point where the good is chosen over the bad. What can this be due to? Amidst the mental processes of creating justifications, rationally deducing, etc., there is an innate sense of pursuing that which is right, just, true, pure, and beautiful. This can be called the spiritual or psychic witness--the voice of intuition. The embodied being becomes aware of and eventually tires of the ephemeral joy and transitory nature of this world. It searches for a longer lasting fulfilment. It seeks out absolutes. There comes a realization that what is sought out and searched

"Aurobindo, 541."
for is a supreme good. Sights become fixed on the everlasting, unchanging good. The gaze becomes directed on God.\textsuperscript{1}

This "awakening" is a necessary step in the evolution of the self. It is a step out of Ignorance into the truth of divine unity. It is an evolution of divine consciousness. By the "soul-personality," the "psychic-being" turning towards Truth, Good, and Beauty, it grows in stature. The opposites of what it seeks are necessary parts in its formation and of its experience. The soul's delight in life is to seek out the divine in all of its contacts. It revels in seeking and finding that "divine sense and essence." It is through the variety of life experiences that the mind grows out of Inconscience, and directs its future sights on a supreme consciousness.

The mind seeks to move from the "divisions" of Ignorance to a unity of consciousness and knowledge. The mind continues this movement and grows from darkness to light, from falsehood to Truth. The mind realizes that evil and falsehood are natural products of the Inconscient, and becomes more aware of them as it grows out of Ignorance.\textsuperscript{2}

For the person, two stages are identifiable. In order for the mind of a person to develop there must exist a drive. The

\textsuperscript{349}Aurobindo, 543.

\textsuperscript{349}Aurobindo, 544.
first stage then, is the development of this drive. This drive is a compulsion, a desire, a motivation, or some force that propels a person onwards. This force is what drives the person through the layer of ignorance that may be called the Indeterminate which is that ill-formed stuff of vital and physical consciousness. Here, intuition is the driving force. Over time, the result of the intuition accumulates and this is termed "automatic instinct." This is what the mind draws on whenever similar conditions are encountered, signalling a similar situation."

This instinct is unerring. It is automatically correct, yet it can err if it: a) is ill-developed, or b) operates according to an established pattern and encounters a changed situation. Under the second situation, resorting to inappropriate behaviour would be the mistake because any new situation would require a reconditioning of appropriate reaction.

The second stage occurs when the consciousness of the mind has surface contact with the world outside. It is here that is found the cause of conscious sensation, and sense perception. Through these contacts develop a history of experience, that help the development of intelligence. It is through this contact with the material world that the immaterial mind

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350 Aurobindo, 544.
collects data, receives information, and comes to know its environment. It is through this surface response that our senses dematerialize, and transmit information to the mind. It is "the contact [that] stimulates a response [from] the being...".

It is in this way that a "surface consciousness" emerges. This is an awareness of that which exists other than itself. It is then that the subject becomes aware of the object. In the animal, there is a development of a heightened awareness, where through growth and development the self becomes aware of what is being sensed, can identify, associate, recall, and then respond to the stimulus. From a very rudimentary form this, over time, develops into mind. In time, the mind evolves into a thinking intelligence.

If the soul (the intellect) were able to perceive directly, awareness would be direct resulting in direct knowledge. This is impossible for humans because our intellect is encased in matter. Any information that is to enter the mind must be dematerialized and relayed by the network surrounding the mind. Aurobindo explains this as how the Inconscient obstructs the consciousness-force (soul,

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351 Aurobindo, 546.

352 Aurobindo, 546.
intellect), and how as a result, the mind must rely on imperfect renderings forwarded by sensory perception.

In short, this may be summarized as:

1) there is a consciousness, or life-force
2) vague sensational perception develops
3) response impulses develop
4) these, over time, develop into a mind
5) the development of the mind moves from satisfying simple, mechanical, practical needs and desires of the lower mind functions to
6) higher, executive functioning, such as observation, invention, device, intention, and execution of purpose

It is when these subtler and finer operations develop that the conscious will and intention are developed. Here, the following of automation and instinct is decreased. Intuition is often "over-ridden" by mentalization. Intuition becomes coloured and becomes a "mental-intuition."

Intuition by itself is often unheeded, regarded as base instinct, and so not trusted. The mind becomes accustomed to processing information and computing. Answers that are not a product of this mental activity are disregarded because they are not the product of arduous labour, scrutiny, and mental anxiety. It is because the mind is now a thinking, rationalizing, intellectualizing being that there is an increase in the capacity of error. Aurobindo says that the

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27: Aurobindo, 547.
"evolving mind trails error as its shadow" and this shadow grows as consciousness and knowledge grow. 

Aurobindo maintains that if intuition were allowed to rule, error would not be possible. He holds that intelligence should be subservient to intuition. However, it is not so. The intellect has taken (or been awarded) the dominant position because what can be rationally arrived at seems more noteworthy, trustworthy, and believable than what arises from an unknown source. This is the way of the mind. When someone asks you to believe them regarding an issue, we would be most likely to believe someone who could prove to us that they are right, rather than someone who just says "because I believe I am right." To believe without proof is an act of faith. We now live in the age of reason, when it seems EVERYTHING can be proven by fact.

Very often we opt for a choice that seems logically credible, rather than the choice made on a "hunch." We have grown to be very untrusting of our "hunches," yet these are tugs of the intuition, and often prove to be correct. Following hunches, it seems, is often a lot like gambling. We place our chips on what "seems" to be the right selection. Life, however, seems to be too serious to be ruled by

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"Aurobindo, 547.

"Aurobindo, 547."
"hunches," and we value the stakes too highly to risk "gambling
them away."

Aurobindo echoes this when he says: "...for some reason,
we believe more what we can rationally explain and understand
rather than what we are led to believe for a reason unknown and
inexplicable." The mind substitutes its incomplete but better
grasped clarities, for the unaccountable inner intimations. It
is all a part of the progress of evolution. From pure
inconscience, one is moved to fading ignorance, which leads to
a mixture of partial knowledge, culminating in the knowledge of
pure truth. This is the place of truth consciousness. Our
imperfect mental intelligence is a necessary stage of
transition. Error is a necessary accompaniment in the
development of knowledge."

The processing of dematerialized information relayed to
the mind is by the means of a figure/sign, image/vibration
created by sensory contact with the object. Perceived by the
senses, this information is forwarded to the brain. The mind
tries to make sense of it by interpreting it, associating it
with prior knowledge--some corresponding idea or figure already
stored in the brain. Things experienced and mentally known,
have to be related. New information has to be observed,

"Aurobindo, 548.

"Aurobindo, 549.
discovered, catalogued, referenced, and filed. At each step, and with every judgement, association, and reference error is possible. Consciousness proceeds from the known, to the unknown. This is how knowledge is acquired."

Despite these problems of imperfection, a structure of thought is built. All the while, intuition is at work. It operates as a "truth-urge" correcting the intelligence when, despite appearances and mathematical correctness, something just doesn't "seem right." It is this that pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous. Due to the dominance of the intellect, the intuition must garb itself in a "mental disguise" in order to be received. Mind-intelligence, however, should be a tool to be used in assisting the intuition."

The search for self-knowledge and truth is hampered by the "mind-intelligence," but also by the ego. The ego, by its disposition, is fixated on self-affirmation. As the mind develops, so does mental individuality—with its own agenda, drive, and temperament. This is a "surface mental individuality." It is "ego-centric." As a result, it does not see universals, but sees only individuals. It uses the observation of individuals to construct the concept of

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"Aurobindo, 549.

"Aurobindo, 550.
universals. The mind is capable of seeing the world only as things in the world, and how the world's happenings relate to and affect the mind.

All observation, judgement, and decisions are determined/affected by this mind-personality in terms of how they suit the needs of the ego. Even if the mind were to attempt to police itself and make an impartial observation—this would be impossible because EVERYTHING that is perceived is taken in through this lens. What is deemed worthy of note is noted, what is regarded as irrelevant is dismissed. "Even the most trained, severe and vigilant intellect fails to observe the twists and turns it gives to truth in the reception of fact and idea, and the construction of its mental knowledge." Truth enters as well as distortion—all by the mind's pleasure!

Whatever type of limitation the mind possesses due to its disposition, it is necessary for that individual at that given point in its evolution. For this particular being, in this time, this is its dharma."

The psychic entity is that inmost consciousness that gives suggestions to action, against action, etc. The surface consciousness develops habits of operation that follow a

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"Aurobindo, 551.

"Aurobindo, 552.
different will, and so the surface consciousness often rejects these suggestions. It instead may choose to follow instead unenlightened mental suggestions. This natural vital element, if left unchecked, operates at a very primitive level. It is not concerned with truth, right consciousness, or right action. It is concerned with self-affirmation, life-growth, possession, and satisfaction. It operates on the selfish level of satisfying its own needs. In its search for the satisfaction of its own needs, it takes no account of right or wrong—only the fulfilment of desire. It is driven by its nature, not only to aim for self-preservation, but life-affirmation and satisfaction."

"Evil is due to this "wrong consciousness." The self at this level is governed by the life-ego. This limited consciousness grows out of nescience (i.e. ignorance). This however, is only a step in the evolution of the self."

The life-ego (drive to live) is born of the subconscient, and results in a conscious being. The conscious being is the emergence of this secret Self breaking through the surface of consciousness. Separated by ignorance from its inner Divinity, it substitutes this conscious being for its true Self. In its need to find a unification in the perceived diversity, the Self

"Aurobindo, 553-554.
"Aurobindo, 554.
tries to find its rightful place in the world of materialism and sensation."

In its evolution it is propelled by desire. This desire seeks to expand experience, to possess, be possessed, and so to grow, become enriched, affirmed, etc. Whatever is perceived as that which will give satisfaction and be useful, is sought out and pursued. It does these things not for any notion of interchange, mutuality, or desire for unity--but due to its own selfish agenda. It is motivated by its own search for selfish pleasure, benefit, and aggrandizement.

As a result, discord, disharmony, and conflict arise. The products of these are what we call evil. Yet they are the necessary circumstances of evolution, and are necessary for the growth of the individual. They remain the products of ignorance. Evolutionary intention works through these evils as well as through good.

This is why it can be said that there is never any evil that does not result in some good. Evil is necessary! Our standards are mutable, hence what was once derided as an evil in one age, is praiseworthy in another (cf. the custom of bathing in Edwardian England, and how it is regarded today, or the process of female bodily depilation). Similarly, what was

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"Aurobindo, 555."
once acceptable, becomes at another time unfathomable (cf. slavery, concubinage, etc.).

The inborn sense of "fair-play" and of good and evil has its purpose in evolution. It has been implanted in our design by God, as we are evolving creatures. It is so that we are able to determine what is "right" from that which is "wrong," and pursue that which is deemed good "...until out of good and evil [the human] can emerge into some Good that is eternal and infinite."

The question then arises: "How is this evolutionary intention in Nature to arrive at a selection process that correctly determines what goods are to be followed?" The answer: "Morality." The mental control over our desires, instincts, personal and social action, creates a standard by which we guide ourselves."

Our life is a "becoming." This points to our final purpose. There is something which we should become and be. This is the call of the Infinite and Supreme. We must discover the "right way" for ourselves. Rules and lawbooks, offer advice--but no adherence to any set of laws imposed from outside leads to the heart's answer."

"Aurobindo, 556.

"Aurobindo, 556.

"Aurobindo, 557.
"Religion" has often imposed itself on humans as a divinely enjoined morality, and so a religious code of conduct emerged. It was understood as the law of God determined by human inspiration. It was meant as a directional. However, unless there is personal insight, unless a "sight" is developed from within, it remains mere rule-following."

Ancient Indian spiritual thought held to the lived practice of truth, virtue, right will and right doing. It was maintained that through these one may attain spiritual realization. Spiritual realization was a stepping stone to a greater consciousness. It was not an end in itself. With a heightened consciousness one would be aware of the Infinite and Eternal."

It is the intuition that leads us from this world-oriented nature of "relative goods" to the TRUE GOOD, which is ABSOLUTE! It is by adherence to rules that we find ourselves revolving mechanically, or feel ourselves caught in an artificial groove. We need a change of consciousness. It is then that such adherence to rules and the restriction of similar artificial device becomes unnecessary to impose. When consciousness emerged from the Inconscient, it developed the ego. This first separation of the self from that which gave it substance

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"Aurobindo, 557.

"Aurobindo, 557."
resulted in the awareness of itself as other than that which was other than itself. This was the awareness of subject (the self), and object (all else). At this early stage the self is geared to operate in terms of ego-centricity, egoistic self-affirmation, with basically all focus centering around the ME! ME! ME! It is here that wrong and evil FIRST arose!"

What must be targeted for, is the transformation of the individual, egocentric self. That self that is bent on self-preservation, must be transformed into the true self. This self would see a unity with itself and all else. That early rupture that separated itself from all that surrounds it, must be healed."

6.4 Discovery of the True Self

The question then arises as to how a person is to come to a more enlightened position; how a person is to come to that realization. Many paths have been trod in search of the answer. There have been those who, in search of higher wisdom have despised the glories of a worldly existence and have denied themselves worldly pleasures and riches. There have been those, who believed that such insight might be gained through despising the body, and have engaged in a mortification

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"Aurobindo, 558.

"Aurobindo, 559."
of the flesh. Altruism is another alternative, but through such acts of charity runs the risk of developing such a pleasure in performing acts for others, that this is what then becomes the drug.

Aurobindo believes that it cannot be through any denial, mutilation or immolation of the flesh that such a sense of "connectedness" with the world can be found. He maintains this on the grounds that if the effect is disrespectful or harmful to the body; it cannot be positive. It cannot be true that God would want us to harm our bodies, or ourselves in order to gain wisdom. This is not to say that sacrifice and self-giving are not good! There certainly is merit to be gained through these practices. It is, however, that they be practised with the correct attitude. They are good true and necessary because we cannot affirm ourselves rightly without sacrifice or self-giving to something larger that ourselves!"

When these practices are carried out, they must be done so with the right consciousness. This means that they must be done with correct motivation and intent, founded on true

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*Aurobindo, 559.*
knowledge. It is encouraged that one develop a *sattvic* quality and so foster attitudes of understanding, balance, harmony, moderation, sympathy, good-will, kindness, control, and empathy. As a device, this is meant to give guidance for the right constitution to develop. Having acquired such a disposition is a stage, or a means to attaining such a goal. This is not to be considered the final goal in itself."

The end comes when we see all beings as a part of our self, as extensions, and deal with them as if they were our other selves. It is then, that the division is healed. At that point there is no longer any perceived difference between subject and object.

Christianity proclaims this belief as well. It urges its believers to act in a spirit of universal compassion, to love

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"In the psychology breakdown of Sankhya, there are identified three types of mental individuality: 1) tamasic, 2) rajasic, 3) sattvic. The first, tamasic intelligence, is centred in the physical mind. Here, repetition and regular routine is a form of security. New ideas are accepted from authority figures. The second, rajasic intelligence is centred in the *vital mind*, and may be of two sorts: a) that where there is a defensiveness, violence, and passion in protecting all that it holds to. This same mind then, is aggressive to all that challenges, or appears contrary to it; b) that which is full of energy, enthusiastic for change, movement, adventure. This mind is not fixated or unyielding, but seeks out challenge, and thus goes wherever sparks are seen to fly. The third is the intelligence eager for knowledge. It is careful, considering, seeks a balance, and so does its homework. This type of personality checks for verification, tests, and examines options.

'Aurobindo, 559.
your neighbour as yourself, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, to feel the joy and grief of others as your own.

No person is able to do this if they live in their own ego. It is only when others are known and felt as intimately as one's own self that this shall become a natural, and spontaneous reaction. It is then that the idea of HOW one should be, becomes how one actually is! It is then that a universal compassion becomes a lived reality.

This is the call to a greater spirituality. Heeding this call is to take precedent over all other claims--be they ethical, social, or intellectual. All others belong to Ignorance. In spiritual change all other goods are housed.

In the call to developing spiritual knowledge are three steps. The first is the discovery of the soul, which is the divine element within us. It is when the mind, life, and body take their true place as instruments of the soul that we become aware of what is available to us as strengths to draw upon in our journey towards spiritual completeness. We then realize

"With the idea of universal compassion, one may recall the poem by John Donne:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls it tolls for thee.

"Aurobindo, 560."
truth, good, delight, and the beauty of existence. It is then
that God's law, not the law of the human mind that controls the
heart. This step is the enthronement of the soul in place of
the ego.

The second step is when one becomes aware of the "eternal
self," the Atman. This is that part of us that is an unborn,
eternal being. This being shares the same essence and
substance as that present in all beings. This is the part of
us that universalizes.

The third step is when we come to know the Divine Being.
It is then that we know who is our supreme transcendental Self,
the Cosmic Being, the foundation of our universality, the
Divinity within our psychic being, the true evolving individual
in our nature, who is the spark of the flame growing into the
eternal Fire from which it was originally lit. We are to
become aware of the Divine and the Master of our being and
action. We then learn to become channels of Brahman's Shakti
(i.e. the feminine divine, consort of Shiva, the creative
energy, vital force). We then become the Divine Puissance--
which is power, might, force, strength--and act according to
those dictates and allow them to rule within us."

Our action then shall not be ruled by our own vital
impulse, but by that which is known to the supreme knowledge

"Aurobindo, 561."
and demanded by the supreme will in the universe. This "liberation of the will" follows as a direct consequence of the liberation in knowledge. It is such a knowledge that purifies, and its truth liberates.

Evil is the fruit of spiritual ignorance, and disappears with the advance of the growth of a spiritual consciousness and the light of spiritual knowledge. Once the division between ourselves and all other beings is healed, we must heal the division that separates us from the Divine. An eternal Truth-Consciousness must possess us and remould us, transforming us. Our natural bodies must be sublimated into those of God's own.

Conclusion

The question of why there is evil in existence is the same as why there is imperfection, or, in other words, why there is creation at all. We must take it for granted that it could not be otherwise; that creation must be imperfect, must be gradual, and that it is futile to ask the question, Why we are?

Rabindranath Tagore

This paper has attempted to survey responses to the problem of evil and its resultant suffering, as it has been understood in the Thomist and Hindu traditions. As with any problem, people have sought out answers that solve the problem

"Aurobindo, 562.

to the best of their ability at the time. The problem has been one trying to reconcile a God who is unlimited in power, knowledge, and love with tragic situations.

When tragedy strikes a person, the knee-jerk reflex is to wonder "what could have merited this?" The question of "Why?" reverberates, and propels the mind to seek out answers that, if not justifying the situation (for there are situations that can never be justified), then at least make the situation easier to bear. A person in the unfortunate situation of being connected with tragedy examines their conscience to see if somehow they might have brought it upon themselves (e.g. drinking and driving), but if no direct cause/effect relationship is discernable, the idea of a universal principle of justice that invokes some sort of punishment/reward system is contemplated.

From the traditional Thomistic response of a God who creates ex nihilo, is benevolent, omniscient and omnipotent, the answer is lacking in what is required for a satisfactory response.

The traditional understanding of God to be all that has been described (see "Defining God") relates to God's existence outside of human temporality (i.e. God being eternal, immutable and impassable, pure act, simple, and necessary), as well as omniscient, and omnipotent.
If evil is to be understood as the absence of good, a privation, and God is to be pure goodness, then evil is the absence of God. This is to dispel the notion that there is such a thing as "created evil." This was developed by Augustine in order to counter Manichaean dualistic thought.

All creation is understood (in both Christian and Hindu thought), to be an emanation of God. All that finds existence—whether immaterially, or materially—is understood to have its origin in God. This has often been referred to as all creation being "pre-contained" in God. The illustration of how a sculpture existing in the mind of the sculptor before finding its form in the clay is used to represent this. All that has been created, all that has been granted existence, is to be understood as having some "good," because to exist is a better thing than to not exist. Although all beings have been granted existence, not all things have been created equally because there are differing levels of being. An immaterial being is to be regarded as having a higher level of being than a material being. The more a being approximates God, the better it is regarded to be.

Some things have been granted the power to act. Natural systems operate according to their pattern of operation. Vegetal life forms follow their natural course of growth, propagation, and death. In life a plant overcomes obstacles to
the best of its ability. A plant's life force is programmed to be geo-trophic and photo-trophic. That is to say that roots are attracted to grow downwards in search of nutrients and moisture, whereas the remainder of the plant is programmed to grow upwards in search of sunlight and air. Often, it can be seen that this programming is what is responsible for the survival of a plant when an obstruction is encountered, such as when during a storm a mature tree falls upon a sapling. The sapling will continue its upward growth, though crippled by the weight of its burden. The life force continues in its struggle for survival.

In animals, instinct provides a motivation to achieve life's ends. In non-rational animals there is no "consciousness" as a decision making power. Such a power exists in the human being. Power is a good thing, yet power can be used in a bad way. Creation is understood as having been created and empowered with the ability to achieve certain ends. Achieving that end, the being is said to have maximized its potential of being. If that being falls short of reaching its end, this may be called an evil.

When evil arises, it may result in suffering. What can this be attributed to? The traditional Thomistic response is that evil may arise as the secondary result of a good being pursued (e.g. the pain of childbirth, tooth extraction, etc.).
This evil can be regarded as a natural consequence of living in the natural world.

It is difficult to say that natural forces (i.e. earthquakes, tornadoes, drought, floods) are free from humankind's involvement due to the influence of human operations on the earth's ecosystems. It may be found in time that many "natural disasters" (mudslides, dead lakes, shortages and overabundance in natural wildlife populations) and climatic changes are attributable to the effect of human activity. Humankind has had a profound effect on global warming, air quality, the ozone layer, etc.

The fact that this world was created as it was, with the patterns of operations in it is attributed to God. A fact of our existence is that sometimes one system's operation appears to affect another with negative impact (e.g. a deer perishing in a forest fire). When and if such conflicts arise, these may be said to have been foreseen by God (for God knew from the very beginning what the turn of events would be). Coupled with God's omnipotence, God is believed (by traditional Thomists and Hindus) to possess the power to have made fewer conflicts if that was what God had desired to do. God is believed to have the power to do anything possible, but may choose not to exercise that power.
Differing from natural evil (the so-called "acts of God," i.e. birth defects, incurable diseases and natural disasters), is moral evil. Moral evil is due to choices made by rational creatures to choose a lesser good. It is the lack of ordination of an act to its proper end. Knowing this, one must remember that beings differ in the amount of "good" they possess. God, being pure goodness, may be understood to be at one end of the spectrum of goodness in existence. The more creation approximates God, the more goodness they possess. We can only be as good as we are able to be.

Traditional Christian and Hindu understanding holds that God created humans as free creatures. Thomistic thought does not agree with the idea of predestination. It is believed by Roman Catholics and Hindus that creation has been given the ability to use its power to act. The power is not evil, but the power enables one to act in an evil manner. As such, evil is contained in the action rather than in the effect.

This is where the Thomistic understanding of a hierarchy in the responsibility for action enters. God is to be regarded as the primary mover. God is to be understood as the primary cause of all activity. This is because God creates all, and maintains the existence of all through conservation. God gives

all beings the power to act. God moves the will, but only such that it remains a free action.

Aquinas maintains that God allows evil to exist for a good end. Thus God is involved, but only in a limited way. God cannot be thought of as cooperating with the evil act. In the case of an unfortunate natural happening, it is to be understood as the natural system operating according to its own course, and we are undesirably affected. In the case of human action, this is the result of moral evil.

The traditional Thomistic response (that it is not God's will that there be suffering, but that God permits suffering to occur) is highly contested for the reason that if God had wanted there to be less suffering, and creating ex nihilo, God was not constrained by any "pre-existent" limitations. God chose to create exactly what is, precisely the way it is. Due to this, God may be said to be ultimately to blame, and causes the evil we have, not only permits it to exist and occur.

This is where theories of creation may enter the discussion. Two that have been examined are that of aesthetics, and plenitude. The Thomist justification for evil's place is that a "greater good" is being served. This allows for evil's existence as an unfortunate but necessary, unavoidable, secondary side-effect of the pursuit of a good. This argument holds that in order to achieve an end, there are
certain consequences, and if this results in some inconvenience then it is an unfortunate result.

The aesthetic theory of creation holds that evil MUST be present, for things are known by contrast: lightness must be distinguished by contrast with that which it is not--darkness, goodness--evil, etc. The principle of plenitude holds that creation shows the spectrum of things in their gradation from one extreme to the other: the best and brightest descends to the worst and darkest. By demonstrating in creation the fecundity of the divine imagination there comes to exist a richness of variety.

These creation arguments may attempt at explaining the existence of the lived condition, but do not justify why it is the way it is. The aesthetic is a cold reasoning of justifying why a child is born crippled: only so that those children who are not may rejoice in their ability. The plenitude argument falls short because there must be more in the divine imagination than exist immaterially (e.g. in our minds such as mermaids and griffins, dragons and unicorns) and materially (i.e. all the things of our physical universe). To use the Thomistic reasoning of evil being a necessary part of a good's attainment distorts evil's genuine badness and calls the outrage of suffering unenlightened. It perverts evil into some
sort of disguised good, and any resultant suffering appears as though it should be tolerated for some sort of greater purpose.

The strongest criticism targeted at the Thomist-Augustinian tradition is that even if a created being is created with the ability to act wrongly, it is not necessary that it actualize that potential at some point. The possibility may exist but lay dormant and never be actualized. Many women have the possibility to conceive a baby, but choose not to act on that ability. The faith community of Christians maintain that Jesus is the one human being who lived his life to the fullness of his humanity, and did not actualize his potential for sin.

In creating, God knew that the choice would be made to act wrongly at some time, and that God saw it better to bring good out of evil, than not to have evil exist. The faith community known as Christians holds that God knew the direction creation would take (God existing in eternity, where human sequential time of past, present, and future exist as simultaneous presentiality), that a redeemer would enter creation, and that creation would be shown a way to live that would eventually transform the way it lives.

Traditional Thomistic thought regards God as the author of the evil which is penalty (because moral order requires a punishment as penalty), but not the evil which is fault.
Understanding God's essence as simplicity (all God's attributes are one), that which God knows is what must be, for "God's will is always fulfilled and cannot be hindered by a defect in a secondary cause." Aquinas states that "everything in so far as it is good, is willed by God." In this must be understood that whatever God wills antecedently is good. However, that which comes to pass may not contain the "good" as originally intended by God.

It is necessary for all things to work towards the good. In God are these two wills. This allows for creaturely freedom. God, being the universal first cause, wills all, and all must be as God wills it. This is where hope in the final resolution of overcoming evil is found. "Thus it is clear that whatever God wills absolutely takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place." This is not to say that there is any change in God, but that God wills final ends, and that creaturely freedom may hinder it in "its effect by deficiency in the secondary cause."

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"Aquinas, S.T. 19:6; Griffin, 81.
S.T. 19:6; Pegis, 204.
S.T. 19:6; Pegis, 205.
"S.T. 19:6; Pegis, 205.
S.T. 19:6; Pegis, 205.
It is in this thought of final ends (where good prevails necessarily, and by God's knowledge of what shall be absolutely, demonstrating a teleological eschatology) that bears a striking similarity to the idea of evolution as found in Irenaean thought and Aurobindo's developmental progress of humans towards perfection. In Irenaean thought, "...the perfecting of [the human, [represents] the fulfilment of God's purpose for humanity..."

All humans are called to live their lives to the fullest expression of their humanity. We are called to be all that we can be. What leads us to experience our perfection "is the work of the Holy Spirit." The human person is "in the process of becoming the perfected being whom God is seeking to create."

It is to be understood that God's final end for the human person is this perfection. The only reason for the continued existence of sin was because redemption was inevitable. God knew before creating the direction this creation would take, and knew as well that it could be perfected.

According to Aurobindo, the universe is to be understood as a manifestation of the Divine Being, the divine life is to

"Hick, 254.
"Hick, 254.
"Hick, 256.
"Hick, 227-229.
be understood as the culmination of the evolutionary process, and as a result of this, all creation is to be understood as directed towards this as its end. Until perfected, all creation is to understand itself as undivine imperfection. It is in this imperfection that evil is understood to exist.

Similar to Augustine's view of evil, Aurobindo views evil as privative. Echoing the ideas of plenitude and aesthetics, Aurobindo understands evil as the opposite of good. The qualification that Aurobindo points out is that "the good" must sequentially exist first. A negative can only exist in relation to its corresponding positive. Evil is a resultant derivation. It comes to exist only by implication. Once existing, as all else, it exists in God. He holds that evil is the fruit of a wrong consciousness. In an unmixed true consciousness only good would exist.

In unravelling the process of creation, if all is on the road to perfection (having been created imperfectly), that source of imperfection is the root of sin, the root of evil. The first wrong act lies in the seed of potential created and contained in that creature. Therein lies the first karma. The creature's identity of self as opposed to its Self leads to the proliferation of evil. The notion of evil (and the suffering it results in) is due to the notion of self (ahamkara) because in its struggle to preserve itself, and satisfy its selfish
needs and desires, it loses the understanding of its connection to its source—the Ultimate Reality.

Aurobindo holds that human suffering is a fact of our physical nature. It is because we are not at our maximal potential for conscious awareness, that we experience pain and suffering. Emanating from God's immediate being, all creation is thrust into the dark soil of the Inconscient. In developing its potential, a being grows from the Inconscient towards luminous perfection.

In the order of evolution, the first to emerge from the Inconscient is matter. Duality enters with the development of the mind. It is here that the mind becomes aware of good and evil. In its pursuit of the good, due to a recognition and avoidance of that which is not good, a realization that what is ultimately strived for is a lasting, infinite satisfaction. It is realized that this can only be found in the highest good—God. Anything short of this is fleeting, transient. This is the evolution of divine consciousness.

The search for Self-knowledge and truth is hampered by the ego. Evil is due to a "wrong consciousness." The self is concerned with its ego, its "I-consciousness." This is a necessary movement in the evolution of the self. The conscious being emerges when the Self breaks through the subconscient and the surface consciousness. The surface consciousness is what
is mistaken for the true Self. The self is separated by ignorance from its true inner Divinity. The conscious being tries to seek a unity amidst the diversity that surrounds it in the world of singulars. It tries to find its rightful place in the world of materialism and sensational satisfaction.

The driving force that moves the conscious being in the self seeking out its identity as a Self (Self-recognition) is desire. Aurobindo maintains that as one evolves, evils disappear. Evils are experienced and are necessary. What guides a person's evolution is a developing and growing sense of morality. This is what dictates which actions are to be followed. The heart is where the voice of intuition resides. Aurobindo intimates that the voice of intuition is a flawless guide possessed by the consciousness. It can be likened to a "homing-device" that knows the journey leading to reunion with the Divine.

What the above shows is the capturing of an insight that, difficult as it may be to accept at times, nevertheless responds well to the question of "Why is there evil and suffering if there is an omniscient, omnipotent God who is love?" The incredible similarity of thought shared by different thinkers, shaped by different cultures, separated by time and geography makes one pause and wonder if it may be accounted for by more than sheer coincidence. Two common
Indian idioms express this. The first is: "Truth is one, the wise speak of it in many tongues." The second is: "Truth is like a diamond," which means that an idea may appear differently depending from which angle it is viewed. Upon further inspection, it is revealed to be the same truth but approached differently. When identified as a truth, it reveals itself as a common idea shared, because truth is eternal.

One may conclude that evil is a reality that affects human life in terrible, genuine ways. Its manifestation is found in both the natural world when things occur that are beyond human control, and as a result of human activity. It would be difficult to prove that humans operate without any freedom. We experience our existence as free; we sense no restrictions in effecting our choices if they be realistic. To say that when a man kills his mother was predestined is unacceptable. Each thinking being acts according to their motive. God cannot be expected to police our thoughts and so affect our activities, nor can we expect God to intervene to eliminate our worst horrors.

Yet it is believed that our pleas do not fall on deaf ears. God is believed to be a God of compassion. According to Hindu thought, once thrust from Divine immediacy we enter the Inconscient. From there we grow, mature and develop into beings who recognize our oneness with the Divine. This
progresses over a series of existences. A similar, yet more abbreviated way is found in Catholic thought, where the maturation process is lived and experienced in one lifetime on this earth. In both traditions pain is to be understood as a passing, albeit terrible reality.

From both the Christian and Hindu perspectives, the evil and suffering experienced is seen as a necessary part of the human struggle towards perfection. A ray of hope, from which one may hope to glean some strength and purpose, is that in the struggle of enduring a difficult situation, the suffering one experiences is impermanent. It will cease. To suggest that what can be gained from suffering justifies its existence would be unhelpful and cruel. Each individual must accept the reality of their situation, and live with it in satisfaction, joy, or complacency—or rally and fight against it. The Christian idiom of "picking up your cross, and walking towards your own Calvary" expresses this.

A Christian pastoral approach has been to know that you do not walk alone. God is compassionate, shares your struggles, feels your pain and walks with you. It is in times of stress and disappointment that Christians are urged to turn to their God and ask for strength to endure what must be lived through. Popular teaching holds that one is given only as much as one can bear. The crushing weight of illness, tragedy, or
difficult circumstance—whether lived through first-hand, or shared with another—for some is too much. Suicide rates reflect this, as do admissions in hospital and clinical treatment centres. It is incumbent on each one of us to do what we can to better the situation of creation collectively.

In perceiving the unity of God's creation, we recognize not our distinctiveness, but our shared divinity. In pursuit of our own potential perfection, we must expect to experience trial, difficulty, and suffering. We are natural creatures in a natural world. These are, however, to be viewed as necessary steps on our path towards spiritual maturity. When we become aware of our progression on this path, we shall indeed achieve a "liberation in knowledge." It is then that we shall be free and experience a unity with the source of our being.
Appendix I

The following has been taken from:


The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad is perhaps the earliest Upanishadic text. In it we find several creation accounts. The first (I.2) begins with Death desiring a self. Death produces water, earth, and then performs *tapas*, producing fire. Then, he divides himself into three parts: fire, sun, and wind. He then transforms parts of his body into regions of the world. Out of desire, Death creates more, and then creates sacrifices, humans, and cattle. Creation is thus completed, and Death performs *tapas* once more. It is here that his vital breaths leave him, and his body swells into the form of the horse. This cosmic horse is found also in the Vedic horse sacrifice *asva-medha*.

A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), 42.

The period of 900-500 B.C.E. saw the development of the sacrificial cult. Much of the Brahmana literature was devoted to instructions for the meticulous performance of new royal sacrifices not mentioned in the Rg Veda. Most famous and significant of all these was the *asva-medha*, or horse sacrifice.

Here, a specially consecrated horse was set free to roam at will for a year, followed by a chosen band of warriors. Chieftains and kings on whose territory the horse wandered were forced to do homage and accept the owner of the royal horse as their sovereign lord, or fight. If it was not captured by a neighbouring king, it was brought back to the capital and sacrificed at the end of the year. It was the ambition of every important king to perform a horse-sacrifice, even though the negative effects of the sacrifice on were felt on inter-state relations.
Appendix II


Indian Literature:

Vedas (ca. 1500-800 B.C.E.)
Brahmanas and ArthaVeda (ca. 872-772 B.C.E.)
Upanishads (ca. 800 B.C.E.-onwards)
Sutras (ca 500 B.C.E.-500 C.E.)
Epic Literature
   Ramayana (ca. 400 B.C.E.-200 C.E.)
   Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita (ca. 400 B.C.E.-400 C.E.)
Dharmasastras (ca. 200 B.C.E.-onwards)
Mimamsa(Enquiry)-sutra (ca. 200-450)
Pancatantra (ca. 300-500)
The Puranas (Ancient Stories)
Early Puranas (ca. 300 B.C.E.-500 C.E.)
   Brahmanda
   Markandeya
   Matsya
   Vayu
   Visnu
Middle Puranas (ca. 500-1000)
   Tantras
   Kurma
   Linga
   Varaha
   Agni
   Bhagavata
   Saura
   Skanda
   Devi
Later Puranas (all others) (ca.1000-1500)
Vedantasara (1400-1500)
Modern Hindu Text
Appendix III

Traditional Indian writings holds that in humans there is an original tendency to sin, and that if man is not born with "original sin," then over time the impulse to sin develops. Human beings are caught up in the process of time, and are inherently, naturally inclined to fall prey to evil."

The Golden Age

In the Hindu traditional view, there was a "Golden Age," in which creatures were innocent, unsullied, and pure. They were not human, though they dwelt on earth. They were not a part of time (as we know it). For them, karma did not exist. They were beyond good and evil. The "fall" consisted in passing from eternity to time. Once caught up in the flow of time, they were no longer immune to evil. In the Hindu myths the human person is understood as created good originally, but subject to the evil passions that inevitably appear. There is an INABILITY to explain the loss of the Golden Age."

There is an association of procreation with sin. There is thus an implication that sexual creation is the epitome of sin. There is no connection in the Hindu belief between eroticism and fertility. The idea of a rise in population is directly linked to shortages of food. The Indian idea of food and death is necessarily linked to sexual reproduction. The result of the Hindu fear of overpopulation, is that if too many people are born, some must die. If death is feared, birth must be feared. Too many people equals a food scarcity."

The symbol of paradise is a self-creating source of food known as the magic tree. Magic trees were meant to be eaten. When the trees disappeared, sin appeared because hunger was born. The pure original creatures had no lust or hunger. Only humans have this. When we arrived, so did doom."

The closest concept to "Eden" was this idyllic state, where humans remained virtuous. It is only when the source of food is threatened that humans becomes evil. Thus, the link

"O'Flaherty, 27.
"O'Flaherty, 28.
"O'Flaherty, 29.
between hunger and sexual desire is forged. The satisfaction of the hunger would be considered the cure of evil. The "hunger" is the human person's sinful condition. Temporary satisfaction merely masks the flaw. The NEED is what is originally responsible for the human fall! It is true that when seeking an "original" or past cause of sins, the answer is deflected. Underlying the doctrine of individual karma is the deeper necessity of the karma of the universe! It must be understood and believed that the way things are now, are the way things must be for the cycles of the world to continue. The Kali age must take pace for the Golden Age to follow. God may appear to intervene, but in order for the cycle to continue on, what is, must be.

"O'Flaherty, 31.
"O'Flaherty, 34.
"O'Flaherty, 44-45.
Hindu Mythology

In Hindu mythology, creation is the process of the dismemberment of the Creator (Brahma). From the Vedas we read that it is an act of true and literal self-sacrifice. With the destroying of God's own body, the four classes of humankind were born. From God's mouth issued the Brahmans; from God's arms the warrior class—the Ksatriyas. From God's thighs arose the Vaisyas or peasants; from the feet came the serfs or Sudras. In the Brahmanas, we find seeds of the belief that evil originated in the body of the Creator and was dispersed from God."

There is the belief that God does not wish to have evil arise in the first place, but having its existence, it must be "rightly ordered." By this, what is meant is that for God to remain wholly good, God must not contain any evil. It exists, and so it must be placed somewhere. Evil then is transferred to mankind.

The Transfer of Evil

Evil affects humankind. According to the mythologically based belief, evil has been planted in Creation by God. More precisely than "planted" in Creation, it has been "transplanted." This is because it has been transferred from God. Had evil remained in God, God would not be wholly good. We then, are contaminated with evil in order to keep God purely good. God must make us evil, in order to remain good. Our evil is proof that God is good."

It is because evil is not our fault, our sense of sin is misplaced! We are outraged because WE HAVE BEEN SINNED AGAINST! This evil has been thrust upon us! In order to remain a being of pure goodness and containing all that is, God had to purge/expel the evil that was within God from the beginning (the alpha)."

In Indian thought, there is a stream that appears to deflect the problem of evil's origin by saying it was "beginningless." In the panentheistic understanding (where all creation existing in God), evil then, by leaving God's

"O'Flaherty, 139-140.

"O'Flaherty, 142.

O'Flaherty, 142.
immediate being, is given to creation. While not existing in
the immediacy of God's being, evil still exists within god,
because it is said that nothing exists outside of God!
Everything that exists, is in God. This would include evil!

Discussion

Evil in India is not a moral problem. It is a problem of
power. It is understood that it is not sin that would negate
divinity, but it is the loss of power that would. The acme of
failure is death. Death can be taken as the quality that
distinguishes God from man. Hindus have always regarded death
as the epitome of evil. In Indian mythology there is the
notion that in the absence of death, the earth would become
overpopulated and people would have to die. The origin of evil
is inexorably linked then with sexual desire and hunger. Any
increase in population would have to be corrected through
death.'

Due to the situation we find ourselves in, we try to find
reasons of explanation, and understanding. The Indo-European
response has been to see power, and then colour its effect as
good or bad. This is a dualistic mode of thought. It is basic
to the Indo-European linguistic and perceptual processes. It
is reflected in tradition. Tradition reflects thought
patterns, it does not make them.'

The human mind seeks causes to effects. In lieu of
finding a provable cause, one can be invented. This is the
role of mythology (hence the expression: Mythology describes
what is imagined to have been'), and faith in a belief system.
Time is an illuminating factor. Over time, scientific method
and discovery have enlightened the dark moments of our
understanding. In this respect we seek out attribution of
effect to some "cause." In this instance we try to affix blame
on some "reason."

This is a coping mechanism which helps us deal with our
pain and helps us in being able to see why it had to be so,
rather than otherwise. We seldom spend as much time pondering

'O'Flaherty, 143.
O'Flaherty, 212.
'O'Flaherty, 363.
'Taken from the preface of Lord Alfred's Lover, by Eric
Bently.'
the causes of our "good fortune." We simply smile and skip along our path. When bad things happen however, we need to pinpoint an explanation. Our human condition is causally-orientated. We aim to "give credit where credit is due," and as well desire the satisfaction of justification through scapegoat-fixation.

We find an unjustified amount of suffering in the world. It appears things could and would be better if they were otherwise. We imagine it to be due to some "event." We envision a "better time and place." Something, somewhere along the line has gone terribly awry. We search for reasons, and try to affix blame. We view our situation as the visible effects of inexplicable causes. The Hindu mind views situations as things that can be accepted, or challenged."

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"O'Flaherty, 364."
Appendix V

Soul Theory

The soul is understood to be composed of a pure immaterial substance known as purusa. When this immaterial form informs matter (prakrti) then an individual has its being. Purusa is not dependent on prakrti, nor is prakrti dependent on purusa. A universe is conceivable without any souls. Intelligence, personality, and mind are not parts of the soul. Yet the soul has in some way become involved in matter, and salvation lies in the soul's realization of its own uniqueness, and difference from all that it is not—i.e. matter, the world, etc. Thus, purusa can be said to be "in bondage" because the spirit is "entranced with nature." Purusa becomes identified too closely with prakrti, and confuses itself as being the same as prakrti. It is from this that it needs liberation. The bondage is the confusion.

What we understand as the world around us, creation, is not due to the machinations of a divinity, but to the inherent nature of prakrti in evolution. From prakrti develops the will, Mahat (buddhi, or the Great Principle), which is the intellect. From this issues ahankara. This is the I-principle, or ego. It is by this that the self is individuated. Note here that the self is not purusa, the Self. What transmigrates is this "self" composed of intellect, individuation, plus five subtle or primary elements.

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"Basham, 324.

"Herman, 170.

"Herman, 171.

"Continuing on in the evolutionary scale, what emerges through self-consciousness are the five subtle elements (tanmatra). This is invisible matter in its most subtle form. These would be 1) ether, 2) air, 3) light, 4) water, and 5) earth. From these subtle elements emerge the material elements (mahabhuta). Working on this material the Self-conscious produces the five organs of sense (jnanendriya): 1) hearing, 2) touch, 3) sight, 4) taste, and 5) smell and the five of action (karmendriya): 1) speech, 2) grasping, 3) walking, 4) evacuation, and 5) procreation (Basham, 324).
This is what constitutes the subtle body. Each subtle body continues to exist from first evolution to the final dissolution. It migrates because it is void of experience and can only gain experience when connected with a body." The driving force to gain experience is DESIRE.

To have the concept of rebirth, there must be some sort of vehicle that is maintained from life to life. This vehicle would contain identity, individuality and also personality. The main such vehicle for John Locke was memory. He viewed memory as equaling self. However, if everyone were to lose their memories upon death, in the after-life (be it a heaven, hell, or somewhere in-between), would we all be as a tabula rasa, a clean slate?"

Thus the continuative self is not to be identified with consciousness, or memory, or life, or body, but DESIRE! From the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad we read: "as one desires, that one acts, and that one becomes." One way then of identifying a person is in terms of the desires one possesses. Unlike John Locke, Indian thought identifies the person, not with memories (because the memory fades), but with DESIRE! If the memory fades, are we the same person? Desire on the other hand is POTENCY. My "self" is composed of my desires (actual as well as those that wait in a potential state) waiting to be realized through karmic shaping by experience.

Desire is what goes on, and would seem to go on until it is extinguished, depending not as to whether this desire is a substance, a "being" of some sort (the Hindu understanding), or immaterial patterns (Buddhist understanding)." Sri Aurobindo questioned where the soul is understood to go immediately after death. Is it to go to another body directly, or to some unknown space (a heaven, or hell)? What is understood as remaining with the soul as it rises to higher and higher planes of existence is the "essence of personality", because personality = desire. Two elements of self-identity are memory and dynamic potential (i.e.desire). In the end then, what remains after death is what has been--memory, and what is left unfulfilled--desire."

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Herman, 170.

Herman, 190,191.

Herman, 194.

Herman, 197.
Select Bibliography


Vita Auctoris

Steve Polewski was born in Windsor, Ontario on May 6, 1964. He attended Assumption High School, and graduated in 1982, completing his O.A.C. requirements in 1983. Upon graduation, studies were continued at the University of Guelph, which offered the opportunity to study at L'Université de Montréal, and the University of Windsor. That program of study was completed in 1989 with an honours degree in Landscape Architecture. While working on that undergraduate thesis, a spark of interest was prompted which led to a degree in Asian Studies, completed at the University of Windsor in 1990. A Bachelor's of Education degree was completed in 1992. Following a year of study in London at St. Peter's Seminary, and King's College at the University of Western Ontario, a Master of Religious Education degree was completed in Windsor, at Assumption University in 1997.