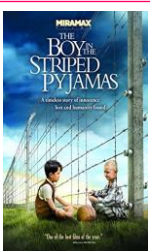
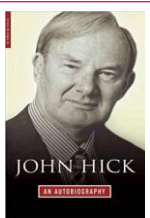
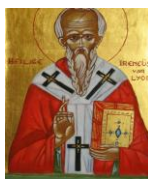


Paper 1: June 4th 2019 Morning: The Problem of Evil

Evil and suffering, part of the fabric of the world, seem to be the greatest challenge to religious belief. Some reject the existence of a theistic God. Evil is usually divided into **moral evil** (the result of free actions of humans or human choice/agency eg murder, rape) and **natural evil or non-moral evil** (evil that comes from nature that humans cannot stop eg earthquakes, famine, drought, hurricanes and illness). **Sometimes these evils overlap when human activity causes natural evil.** The consequence of evil is pain, harm or suffering. **Dysteleological evil is evil with no purpose.** The amount/nature/ quantity of suffering and **innocent suffering** is often the problem. *Is Natural Evil a bigger issue?*

The Logical Problem Of Evil: Evil is a logical problem because it **challenges the all-loving and all-powerful nature of God.** As **Epicurus stated in the 3rd century:** *“If God was omnipotent, God could stop evil and if God was omnibenevolent, God would want to stop evil.”* **The Inconsistent Triad** states that either the omnipotence of God, omnibenevolence of God and existence of evil must not be true. **John Mackie: God cannot be both all-loving and all-powerful.** It is an objection to a certain kind of God in Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (**theism**).

The Evidential Problem Of Evil: Evil is evidentially a problem **seen in the evidence/ experience of people’s (innocent) suffering and so much suffering.** Natural disasters kill, displace and injure. Moral evil causes unthinkable acts. Animals kill other animals. If God knows everything why did God create a universe knowing these extreme examples would occur? This argument is a posteriori. **JS Mill gave the example of nature that is a cruel murderer.**



Responses to the Problem of Evil: **1. Question the existence of evil as an entity.** Church of Christ Scientist (not Scientology)- evil is an illusion. **2. We need darkness to appreciate the light.** **D.Z. Phillips said this heartless response adds to the evil in the world by being callous to others.** **3. D.Z. Phillips: Instrumental evil is the sign of a corrupt mind. It cannot justify the screams of the innocent and makes God a moral monster.** He says it is like telling a sex worker to address their poverty by charging more money or saying the Good Samaritan wanted to find the man beaten up on the road. He does not agree with a macho god who “sorts the men out from the boys” as he puts it. **4. Hans Kung stated God suffers through Jesus Christ.** But this assumes things about Jesus though. **5. Process Theology** states God is not omnipotent and suffers with us. Compromises power. **6. God has a bad side** eg Shiva – the destroyer God in Hinduism. **7. Aquinas: Natural Evil might only be our perception.** A cat eating a mouse is not evil from the mouse’s perspective. Aquinas: death gives motivation to humans. **8. Aristotle’s God does interact with universe, is very impersonal.** **9. John Mackie: Why does not God create people who always choose good.** **10. Freedom not worth it.** **11. Richard Swinburne: a World without evil would be a toy world where nothing mattered and God would be an over-protective parent. Evil teaches. Death comes when suffering great.** **12. Part of big picture.** **13. Evil is a test/ lesson/mystery.**

Theodicies are attempts to justify God's righteousness faced with evil. Some question these saying, for example, "God is the wound not the bandage" (Dennis Potter, writer)

Bishop Augustine: The Augustinian "Soul-Deciding" Theodicy God is perfect and can only create a perfect world. God created the world (as Genesis states) "and saw it was good." By definition, God can only create the good. Everything is created perfectly in its own way, for its own purpose (the scale of goods). A flower is good for a flower. So, evil is not a thing in itself but a privation or lacking of good (privatio boni). Darkness is an absence of light. Evil is a falling short of good. Things fall short of this perfection due to the The Fall of both humans and angels. Angels, made perfect, misused their free will, led by Lucifer They fell from God's grace and hell was created. The harmony of creation was disturbed. In the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and gave in to temptation. Their harmonious relationship with God was broken. All evil in the world stems from this disobedience. People continue to fall short and this leads to moral evil. This causes natural evil too. Evil is caused by sin or is the punishment for sin. All humans are punished for the Original Sin and continuing sin. We were seminally present in Adam's loins and are descended from Adam. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden and humans suffered the pains of work and childbirth. Despite our wickedness God does not stop loving us and offers redemption for those who seek it through Jesus Christ. Augustine's theodicy is soul-deciding. We decide if we obey God or not. We have a will (voluntas) and can decide / choose what we do. Free choice is essential to being truly good. A world with evil and free will is better than a world without choice. Augustine said a runaway horse was better than a stone that always stays in place by itself because the stone has no movement or perception. A sinful creature using free will better than one that does not sin because of no free will. God cannot interfere as God is fair and just. God sent Jesus to earth as a sign of God's grace to give opportunity for people to go to heaven. God's benevolence does not abandon humans. Like a picture is improved with shadows, so evil is part of the natural balance of the universe. The universe is beautiful and balanced.

Positives : 1. This relates to our experience of the world with emphasis on freedom / humans. 2. It asks whether life would be worthwhile if we were robots. 3. Privation supports God's goodness. We do have expectations of things. H. McCabe a bad deckchair not the same as a bad grape. 4. It is internally coherent. 5. Evil means we not God have fallen short.

Negatives: 1. We do not punish the entire family for crimes by a family member. 2. People do not read Genesis literally. 3. Theory of evolution challenges this as species adapt / progress not regress over time. 4. How can Adam and Eve know they were disobeying God if the world created perfect. 5. Did Adam and Eve have genuine freedom? 6. How can we be seminally present in Adam's loins –does not fit with biology. 7. If God made things perfectly, why did they go wrong? God is partly to blame. 8. If we have a natural inclination to sin after The Fall can we be responsible 9. How do angels cause plate tectonics 10. Innocent babies have original sin said Augustine. 11. Does not help sufferer. 12. Free if we have to follow God? What about those who don't know Jesus? 13. Only response is silence.

For Augustine, evil was a punishment, but Irenaean Theodicies see evil as an opportunity for soul-making. *Evil and suffering helps us develop characters and are part of God shaping the world.* In Genesis, it says God creates us in God image and likeness. Irenaeus believed we are made in God's image and grow through history in his likeness to be mature and self-directed, like God. *True likeness is chosen not given. Evil is part of this process in the course of our lifetimes but in the course of history. Evil serves a purpose. We learn through experience, goodness and repentance through evils. Virtue requires effort. Worthwhile things are gained in difficulty.* Adam and Eve were immature children who disobeyed a simple rule. *This was part of growing up not a catastrophe. For Irenaeus, humankind matures over a lengthy time, like to a baby building strength. Christ is sent to help this learning process. We are clay moulding in the hands of the potter or God. We do not make God, God makes us. We offer our heart to God in a soft/mouldable state. If we are hard, we lose God's guiding hand and our life. The soul-making will carry on in the next life. Those who do not co-operate with God's plan will be sent to Hell. John Hick up-dated Irenaeus' Theodicy in the 20th century and said the world was "a vale of soul-making" (Keats). Hick believed free will must be complete and genuine so we have a complete and genuine relationship with God. The only genuine relationship is freely chosen requiring all choices and consequences. God presenting himself to us would undermine this. We cannot be forced to love someone. True love is freely chosen. Hick believed we are created at an epistemic distance (a gap in knowledge) from God, unable to know God fully and given space to use freedom. If there was a world with no possibility of pain, it would not be good for soul – making. The world is instrumentally good for the purpose of our development into God's likeness. The world is a vale of soul-making – a place whose purpose is to make souls.* We try to come to a fuller knowledge of God overcoming epistemic distance. *Our response to suffering develops virtues such as compassion and charity. If there was a world without pain, it would be empty with no one caring or showing generosity, love, patience, courage, charity.* A cricket match where no one is ever out is of no interest or fun. What would be the point of such a dull life? If God was always interfering there would be no self-chosen activity or regularity in nature/science. *A knife could not become sharp one minute and blunt the next. It helps us grow as people. Hell contributes to the problem as there is no good in a place of eternal suffering.* Purgatory is a place of cleansing or further soul-making before humans go to heaven. *Everyone will go to heaven (universal salvation) after further opportunities to develop into the likeness of God.*

Strengths: 1. Overcomes weaknesses of Augustine. 2. God anticipates evil. 3. No seminal presence. 4. Developmental aspect links to evolution. 5. Genesis not literal. 6. Takes suffering seriously as a thing in itself. 7. Recognises Jesus. 8. Virtue developed not given. 9. God loves all. 10. Gives purpose.

Negatives: 1. Why is the epistemic gap so great? Why not less evil. 2. Does not consider animal suffering. 3. God could have created a world where people choose good. 4. Evil unbalanced. 5. Hick's universal salvation removes freedom. The point is? Undermines Jesus. 6. Evil uses as means to an end meaning God is "a moral monster" (DZ Phillips). Could God not use other methods? 7. Babies born with illnesses cannot use evil developmentally. 8. No life after death. 9. Only response is silence.