



JOHN HICK ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:
A CRITICAL STUDY

PASTOR BOONRAT MOOLKEO


A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Philosophy

Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion
Assumption University of Thailand

2006

**JOHN HICK ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:
A CRITICAL STUDY**

PASTOR BOONRAT MOOLKEO

A large, faint watermark of the Assumption University of Thailand seal is centered on the page. The seal is circular with the university's name in English and Thai. In the center is a shield with a cross, a star, and a sun. The shield is flanked by two figures holding a banner that reads 'LABOR OMNIA VINCIT'. Below the shield is the text 'SINCE 1969'.

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Philosophy**

**Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion
Assumption University of Thailand**

2006

DISSERTATION TITLE: John Hick on the Problem of Evil: A Critical Study

RESEARCHER NAME: Mr. Boonrat Moolkeo

DISSERTATION ADVISOR: Dr. Joseph I. Fernando

DISSERTATION CO – ADVISOR: Asst. Prof. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Ph.D.

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2006

The Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, has approved this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy.



(Asst. Prof. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Ph.D.)
Dean of the Graduate School of Philosophy & Religion

Approval Committee:




..... Chairman
(Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf)




..... Member
(Dr. Joseph I. Fernando)



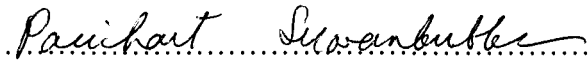
..... Member
(Asst. Prof. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Ph.D.)



..... Member
(Dr. Veerachart Nimanong)



..... Member
(Dr. John T. Giordano)



..... Member
(Dr. Parichart Suwanbubbha)

Dissertation Title: John Hick on the Problem of Evil: A Critical Study
Researcher Name: Mr. Boonrat Moolkeo
Advisor: Dr. Joseph Fernando, Ph. D.
Co-Advisor: Asst. Prof. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Ph.D.
Academic Year: 2006

ABSTRACT

For atheists, the problem of evil is one of the most convincing arguments that God does not exist. The argument is that an all-powerful and all-knowing being, Who was also supremely good, would not permit the occurrence of evil, because permitting evil would be contrary to His nature. For theists the question is, "How is it that God, Who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and supremely good, permits the occurrence of evil?" A Deity Who is all-powerful surely could have created a world without evil and could then have prevented evil from coming into that world. If that Deity were also good, it would seem that He would have done so. How, then, does one reconcile belief in a God holding these characteristics with the fact of natural and human evil in our world?

The problem of evil has always been one of the most important issues in the philosophy of religion. For centuries, "proofs" regarding the relationship between the presence of evil in the world and the nature of the divine have been used in arguments against the existence of God. God and evil, according to these arguments, cannot be coexistent; evil exists; therefore God does not exist.

This dissertation deals with three ways of solving the problem of evil. The first one is Augustine's theodicy. St. Augustine's response to the problem of evil is the

traditionally accepted one. He based his theodicy on two key events in the Bible: The Fall, recounted in Genesis 3, and the crucifixion of Jesus that wipes out the sin of the Fall, recounted in Romans 5:12-20. Augustine believes that a good God created the world and at the time of creation it was good. Evil, according to him is the “privation of good” not an entity in itself, as blindness is the privation of sight.

According to Augustine, evil was the result of the actions of angels who turned away from God, misused their free will and tempted Adam and Eve. This is the origin of moral evil. Since all human beings were “seminally present in the loins of Adam,” we are all born with original sin. Augustine describes natural evil as the punishment for sin or the “penal consequences of sin”.

The second theodicy is the theodicy of St. Irenaeus. He believes that there are two stages to creation. First, man was first created as an immature being that had yet to grow and develop. Then there would come a period of change, when man, through his responses to life situations, would eventually become a “child of God”.

Irenaeus argues that we were created imperfect, but are free and able to choose to become good and to turn to God. We were made at a distance from God. That is, an epistemic distance. Moral evil was the result of our having the freedom to grow and develop into a child of God.

Irenaeus sees the world as a “soul-making place”, where we can complete our development into children of God. Evil is necessary to aid this development. Natural evils, such as famines, have a divine purpose in moving us to develop qualities such as compassion. Irenaeus also sees evil as a necessary part of life, something that will eventually make us into better people. At death, some of us will proceed into heaven. Those who have not completed their development will continue their soul-making journey after death, but will eventually enter the kingdom of heaven.

The third theodicy is that of Process Theology. In order to reconcile the existence of evil with that classical notion of God, Process thinkers such as David Ray Griffin have altered the definition of God. God, in this view, did not create the world and is not all-powerful. Rather, He works within the forces of nature to maximize the amount of good over evil. He is limited by the laws of nature.

Process thinkers identify two types of good and evil. Good is harmony and intensity and evil is discord and triviality. God tries to ensure that harmony and intensity outweigh the discord and triviality in the world. God sees human life as worthwhile and works to try and outweigh its evil. Whitehead described God as “the fellow sufferer who understands”.

Hick is a passionate advocate of the Irenaeus type of theodicy. Hick claims that God is still working with humanity in order to bring it from undeveloped life (*bios*) to a state of self-realization in divine love and spiritual life (*zoe*). His assertion is that this life should be viewed as a “vale of soul-making.” Character development requires obstacles, that is to say, evils, and the opportunity to fail as well as to succeed. Hick maintains that to ask for a world without the challenges that evil, and freedom, confront us, is to ask for a hedonistic paradise in which every desire is gratified and in which we would be like God’s pets rather than autonomous agents. On the other hand, to accept the challenges of freedom, is to become co-workers with God in bringing forth the kingdom of God.

This researcher finds that Hick’s “soul-making” theodicy is logical. God’s ultimate goal for our lives on earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants us to grow spiritually and into the likeness of God. Taking on the likeness of God does not mean losing our personalities or becoming mindless clones. God created

us in our uniqueness and certainly does not want to destroy that uniqueness. Thus, taking on the likenesses of God is a transformation of life, not of personality.

God, in Hick's view, has a purpose behind every evil. He uses circumstances to develop our character. No one is immune to pain or insulated from suffering, and no one gets to skate through life problem-free. Life is a series of problems. Every time we solve one, another is waiting to take its place. Not all problems are big, but all are significant to the growth process that God sets for us. God does not expect us to be thankful for evil, for suffering, or for painful consequences in the world. Instead, God wants us to thank him that He uses our problems to fulfill His purposes.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with a deep sense of indebtedness and gratitude that I reflect on my academic training. It would be impossible to mention all those who have influenced me during these formative years. While expressing my thanks to all who in some way assisted me in my education, I can refer specifically only to the most significant influences.

This study is the result of many influences from my philosophical studies at the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion of Assumption University. I am thankful for the insights I received during my study there, being especially grateful for the opportunity to study under Assistant Professor Dr. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Dean of the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Dr. Veerachart Nimanong, Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf, Dr. Sebastian Vadassery, Dr. Joseph Fernando, and Professor Kirti Bunchua. They have greatly enlarged my understanding of the relevance of the philosophy.

I would like especially to express my appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Joseph Fernando and my co-advisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Warayuth Sriwarakuel for their valuable advice. Their encouragement and constructive suggestions have proved to be very beneficial.

I am very much indebted to Mr. Chum Hansakul for the invaluable assistance which was provided for me at times of need. I am also grateful for the encouragement, suggestions, advice, and assistance of my colleagues.

I am also grateful for scholarship grants from the Thailand Adventist Mission and from Dr. Nantje Twijnstra. The financial support of these two sources has been

indispensable to continuing my studies and has made the completion of this research possible.

I would like to express my gratitude to my wife, Mrs. Raveewan Moolkeo, whose patience and spiritual, moral and financial support has been indispensable, and to my children, Mr. Bovorn Moolkeo, Miss Benjawan Moolkeo for their support and encouragement. Without their support and encouragement this research could not have been completed.

My greatest source of inspiration has been the Lord Jesus Christ, who through His abundant love and grace provided me with the necessary strength, perseverance, patience and insight to complete the research.



CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Significance of the Study	1
CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 The Problem and the Terminology	11
2.2.1 “Good” and “Evil” as Philosophical Terms.	13
2.3 The History of the Problem of Evil	17
2.4 Schools of Thought on Evil	31
2.4.1 Augustinian Theodicy	31
2.4.2 Irenaean Theodicy	40
2.4.3 Process Theodicy	46
2.4.4 A Critical Analysis on the <i>Imago Dei</i>	58
CHAPTER III: AN ANALYSIS OF JOHN HICK’S RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL	63
3.1 Historical Background of John Hick’s Approach to The Problem of Evil	63
3.2 Hick’s View of the Problem of Evil	64
3.2.1 Physical Evil	74

3.2.1.1 Pain	74
3.2.1.2 Suffering	94
3.2.2 Moral Evil	106

CHAPTER IV CRITIQUE OF JOHN HICK'S RESOLUTION OF THE

PROBLEM OF EVIL 121

4.1 Introduction	121
4.2 Arguments in Favor of Hick's Theodicy	125
4.2.1 Critique of a World with Haphazard Suffering	125
4.2.2 Critique of the Function of Suffering, Part I	136
4.2.3 Critique of the Function of Suffering, Part II	139
4.3 Arguments against Hick's Theodicy	148
4.3.1 Critique of the Calamitous Feasibilities of Life	148
4.3.2 Critique of the Future Worlds of Being	158
4.3.3 Critique of the Fulfillment of God's Purpose	163
4.4 The Researcher's Viewpoint	175

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION 181

5.1 Hick's Responses to Critics of the Free Will Defense	181
5.2 Hick's Response to Critics of Soul-Making Theodicy	184
5.3 A Critical View of Researcher	188
5.4 Recommendations for Further Study	191

REFERENCES 192

BIOGRAPHY 203

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he able and willing? Whence then is evil?

Epicurus (341-270 BC)

1.1 Background and Significance of the Study

Evil is something that man is unable to avoid. Of course, he does not want to encounter evil and tries to escape it, but evil comes to everyone from time to time or throughout one's life. It is because man does not want to experience evil and wants rather to avoid it that the questions leading to the problem of evil have been raised: Where does evil come from? Why is it related to man even though he does not want it? How might man be able to escape evil? These questions need to be answered.

Evil is a problem for human existence. It is a complex problem with many dimensions. There is the concrete existential and personal dimension: How do I cope with evil and suffering? And then there is the intellectual dimension: Can we make sense of evil? Is suffering the sort of thing that can be explained? How? These two dimensions—the existential and the intellectual—are not totally separate; they are closely interrelated, because part of how I might cope with suffering is by explanations that make it meaningful (Kessler, 1999, p. 210.).

The researcher critically looks into the problem of evil. The problem of evil is the most serious of all problems concerning God's existence. If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil; if He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able

to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore either God is not perfectly good or He is not unlimitedly powerful and does not exist.

The researcher will look into how Hick handles the problem of evil and to interpret and react critically the Hickian reconciliation of evil with the existence of an all-powerful and loving God. The researcher will be specific regarding his own stance on the problem of evil.

In the book, *Evil and the God of Love*, John Hick tells us that traditional Christians believe in God as the unique infinite, uncreated, eternal, personal Spirit, absolute in goodness and power. That belief gives rise to problem of evil. This kind of theism has been objected by atheists. Even before the Christian era, the Greeks formulated the problem as a dilemma.¹ John Hick paraphrases, "If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil; if He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore either God is not perfectly good or He is not unlimitedly powerful." (Hick, 1977, pp. 5)

The assumption is that a good God would eliminate evil as far as it is possible. If he is omnipotent then all evil should be eliminated. However, evil exists. So, why does a good God allow his creatures, and even his children to suffer? This is the fundamental challenge of evil for theology.

Anti-theists often present the above as a dilemma for Biblical Christianity arguing that the problem of evil shows that theism is logically untenable. Anti-theists always say, "If God is totally good, omnipotent, and omniscient, why is there evil in

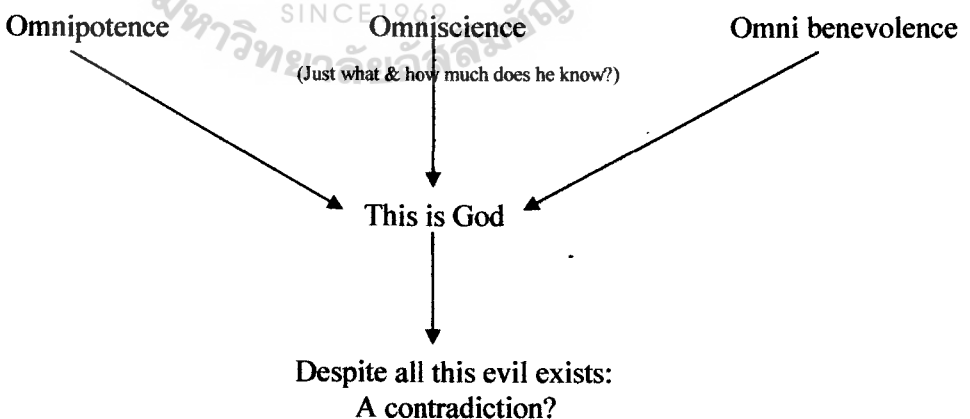
¹ The dilemma was apparently first formulated by Epicurus (341-270 BC), and is quoted by Lactantius (c. AD 260-c. 340): "God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? Or why does He not remove them?" (Fletcher, 1951, chap. 13).

the world? A totally good God would want to prevent evil if He could. An omniscient, omnipotent God certainly would have the ability to prevent evil. Therefore, there is no God who is omnipotent, omniscient and wholly good. That is why this dilemma is called the problem of evil, and both theists and anti-theists have debated it for many centuries.

Many philosophers believe that the existence of evil makes belief in God unreasonable or rationally unacceptable. David Hume, for example, holds that God is responsible for all the evils of man's existence, including those resulting from natural disasters. But Hume sees that evil still exists in this world. So he thinks that either God is not good because he does not prevent such evil, or that God lacks the power to prevent evil, no matter where it is found. Hume expresses the traditional problem well in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, when he has Philo say:

Is he (God) willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? (Hume, 1990, p. 363)

Let us consider the following diagram.



According to Hume, if God's power is infinite, then whatever he wills is executed; however, neither humans nor animals are happy; hence, God does not will their happiness. God has infinite wisdom and never makes mistakes; yet, the course of nature does not tend toward human happiness; hence, God did not intend man's happiness. Later on Philo says that misery does not come about by chance. Its cause cannot be God's intention, for God is benevolent. Misery, however, cannot occur contrary to God's intention, for He is almighty (Hume, 1990, pp. 363-365).

Various philosophers have proposed theodicies.² John Hick describes evil as "physical pain, mental suffering and moral wickedness." Two types of evil exist: 1) Natural evil is the evil that originates independently of human actions. This is suffering and death, of human beings and animals, as a result of natural causes such as disease-causing bacteria and natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. 2) Moral evil is the evil that originates with intentional beings, through, for example, human selfishness and inhumanity. Hitler's killing of Jews, homosexuals and Gypsies is an example of moral evil, as are such major scourges as poverty, oppression and persecution, war, and all the injustice, indignity, and inequality that have occurred throughout history (Hick, 1997, pp. 18).

According to Hick, there are three major strands of thought in the Christian response to the problem of evil, that of Augustine, that of Irenaeus, and, more recently, that of Process Theology.

The Augustinian response depends on the concept of the fall of man from an original state of righteousness. As Frank Thilly puts it:

² Theodicies are theories which try to explain the existence of evil while maintaining God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence.

In order to maintain the divine omnipotence, St. Augustine is driven to the position that God is the cause of everything; in order to maintain his goodness, he has to exclude evil from the world or to explain it away. The whole of creation is an expression of God's goodness; in creating the universe he was prompted by his infinite love, but—St. Augustine hastens to add, for fear of depriving the Deity of absolute power—he was not bound to create, his love inclined him but did not compel him; we should judge its value in relation to the divine will, not from the standpoint of human utility. If God has created and predetermined everything and is at the same time an absolutely good being, he will have willed everything in the best interests of his creatures, and even so-called evil must be good in some way. Like the shadows in a picture which contributes to the beauty of the whole, evil is indispensable to the goodness of the world. Evil is not good, but it is good that evil is. Or, evil is conceived as a defect, as a privation of essence (*privation substantiae*), as an omission of the good; according to the privative theory of evil, evil is the negation or the privation of God. Good is possible without evil, but evil is not possible without the good; for everything is good, at least in so far as it has any being at all. Privation of good is evil because it means the absence of something that nature ought to have. (Thilly, 1965, p. 180)

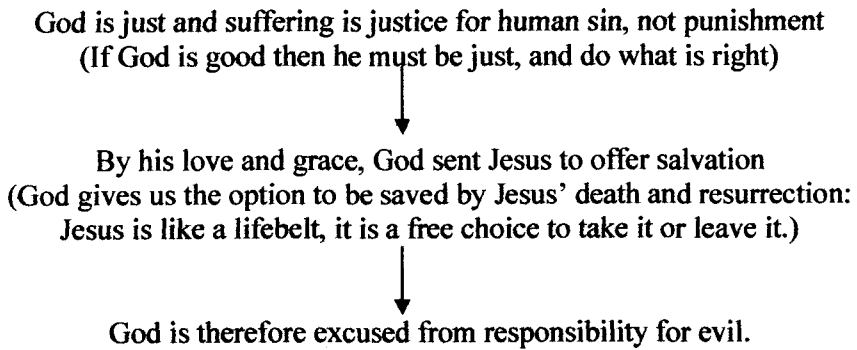
We may diagram Augustine's formulation as follows.

A good God creates a good world (he could not create a bad world)
(Genesis "...and God saw that it was good")

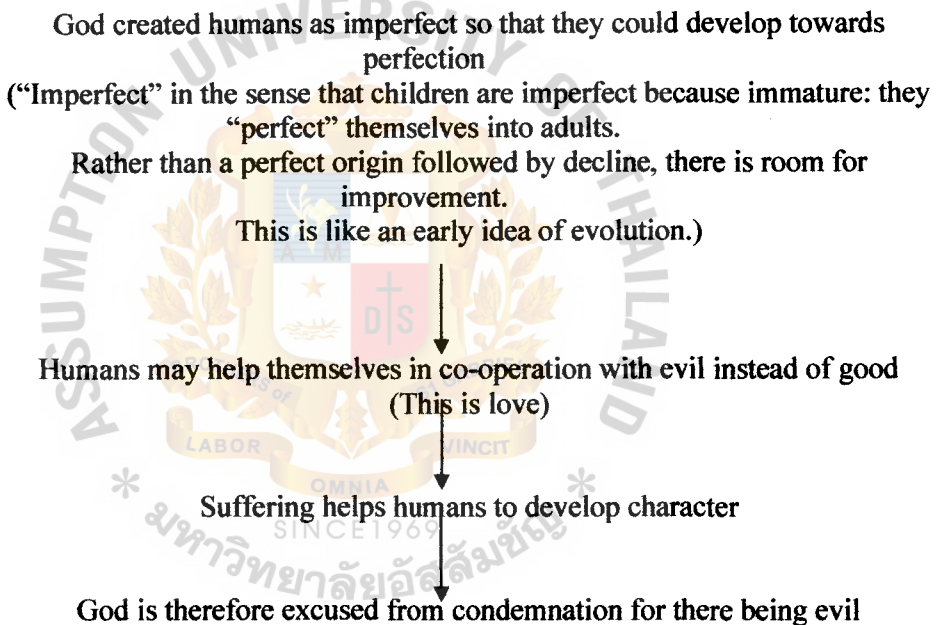


Evil came by way of entities that freely chose against God
(God did not stop them because he is good)





The Irenaean response depends on the idea of the gradual creation of a perfected humanity through living in a highly imperfect world. His formulation may be diagrammed as follows.



The third response to the problem of evil, that of process theology, bears some similarities to that of Irenaeus' in its notion of gradual development towards perfection, yet in the end it denies the omnipotence of God, holding that God is not, in fact, able to prevent evils arising either from human actions or through the processes of nature (Hick, 1990, pp. 40).

These approaches to the problem of evil will be explored more fully in the following chapters.

Among contemporary Western philosophers of religion, it seems that John Hick is the most prominent in dealing with the problem of evil. The researcher became deeply interested in Hick's work while researching in preparation for this dissertation. Many "greater-good" theodicies have been proposed, but none have been more influential in recent years than that developed by John Hick in *Evil and the God of Love* (1977).

Many philosophers, including, John Hick support what is called a "soul-making" theodicy. For Hick and others, any complete theodicy must account for both natural evil (suffering caused by natural events such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes) and moral evils (suffering that result from conscious actions of moral agents). Both sorts of evil, Hick argues, serve good. Evil provides an opportunity for human beings to develop themselves both morally and spiritually. If we lived in an evil-free paradise, then this good would be lost.

According to Hick, God's purpose in creating the world was to create beings who would enter into a personal relationship with Him. Love, trust, and faith are crucial to such relationships. Since these cannot be established through coercion, the created beings needed relative autonomy from their Creator.

Thus, God could not simply reveal Himself in His full glory. Doing so would destroy the possibility that His creatures would come to worship Him of their own volition. Then, God had initially to create human beings at a relative distance from Himself. Hick calls this "epistemic distance" (Hick, 1990, p. 45). This in turn means that they had to be placed in a less than perfect world.

Moreover, moral worth and character, by their nature, have to be developed. One who has come to perfection through struggling with and overcoming evil will have greater moral worth than will a primordially perfect being. He will also have acquired virtues such as courage, sympathy, fortitude and compassion along the way.

Thus, when it is asked how God can permit evil, Hick's answer is the same as that of Irenaeus. God made this world a place of soul-making and character building so that He may bring us to a state of love and trust in Him (Hick, 1990, pp. 47). Hick writes, "This world must be a place of soul-making. And its value is to be judged, not primarily by the quantity of pleasure and pain occurring in it at any particular moment, but by its fitness for its primary purpose, the purpose of soul-making" (Hick, 1990, pp. 47).

Has Hick solved the problem of evil? Our answer to that question will be worked out in detail throughout the remainder of this dissertation. John Hick has discussed Irenaeus' *Theodicy*, Augustine's *Theodicy*, Process *Theodicy*, the *Freewill Defense*, and other proposed solutions to the problem of evil.

In order that this project may be well regulated, the researcher has arranged its contents into five chapters.

Chapter One provides a summary of the two major traditional resolutions of the problem of evil: the traditional Christian view formulated by St. Augustine, and the soul-making view formulated by St. Irenaeus. Hick's own solution follows the soul-making view of St. Irenaeus.

Chapter Two introduces the terminology, derived from Hick, used in approaching the problem of evil. The intention of this chapter is to give the historical background of the problem of evil and to explore how it is that evil comes to be a

problem. This chapter discusses in greater detail the problem of evil and its solutions according to Augustine, Irenaeus and the Process Philosophers.

Chapter Three examines Hick's view of the problem of evil and explores his solution, which he presents as an adaptation of Irenaean theodicy. The chapter discusses the various kinds of evil recognized in Hick's system, such as physical evil and moral evil.

Chapter Four is the crucial part of the thesis. It presents a detailed critical evaluation of Hick's view of the world with its apparently haphazard suffering and of the role of suffering in the world. Hick's theodicy is defended in broad outline, while portions of it are found questionable. Many philosophers and theologians question whether calamities genuinely ennoble men, particularly those men who are killed. Similarly they question Hick's optimism for a long future of soul-making. The researcher finds that Hick's soul-making theodicy is critically important. While there are serious flaws in certain features of his solution, the researcher finds Hick's theodicy valuable in reconciling the apparent contradictions posed by the co-existence of God and of evil.

Chapter Five presents conclusions, summarizes the results of the present research and offers suggestions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil; if He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore either God is not perfectly good or He is not unlimitedly powerful.

John Hick (1968, p.5)

2.1 Introduction

In the final week of the year and into the beginning of the next, people worldwide celebrate the Christmas season and the New Year. In 2004 it was not so. On December 26 of that year, a disastrous tsunami swamped Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Thailand, ending any possible celebration. In Thailand, waves, at least five meters high, struck the Andaman coastal provinces of Phuket, Phangnga, Krabi, Trang, Satun and Ranong. According to the earliest reports, more than 1,000 people, many of them tourists, were hurt by falling debris. Foreign tourists pulled wounded friends and family members out of the wreckage. The injured were nursed on hotel poolside deckchairs, meters from debris-strewn beaches. Phuket was declared an emergency zone.³

The effects of tsunami deeply touched the lives of everyone in the global community. This is especially true for those who were personally affected by the catastrophe. Tourists, fishermen, hotels, homes and cars were swept away by walls of water. The death toll climbed throughout the day and grew even higher as more bodies were discovered. In Thailand there were finally over 5,200 confirmed dead,

³ Bangkok Post, Monday, December 27, 2004, p. 1.

44123 e-1

approximately 8,500 injured and 4,500 missing. In Indonesia there were more than 300,000 confirmed dead and thousands more missing.

As the world tries to make sense of Asia's tsunami disaster and its massive toll on humanity, clerics of all religions grapple with an age-old theological question which challenges even the most faithful believers: How could God have permitted this to occur?

The earthquake and ensuing tsunami showed no favorites, wiping out Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim villages alike in Sri Lanka, inflicting enormous casualties in mostly Islamic Indonesia, and devastating parts of strongly Buddhist Thailand, where Christian and Jewish tourists also perished. The catastrophe has revived a debate which raged in Europe after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, one of the 18th century's worst natural disasters and which led many figures of the European Enlightenment, such as Voltaire, to question the existence of a God who could allow such catastrophes to occur.

2.2 The Problem and the Terminology

The problem of evil is the problem of reconciling the fact of the evil that we observe in the world with the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent God. Among theistic apologists and theologians, the problem of evil is generally considered one of the stronger critiques of traditional Western theistic religions.

Why does God allow evil? If He is all-powerful, then He should be able to prevent it. If He is omnipotent yet does nothing then there is something wrong with His goodness: He would appear not to be fully good; perhaps He has an evil streak; perhaps He is even malicious and we are merely His toys, expendable and counting for nothing. On the other hand, if the Creator is all good and we still find evil in the

world, then there must be something wrong with His power: perhaps He is not all-powerful; perhaps there is some independent source of evil that He cannot control but against which He struggles. Or could it be that a lack of knowledge gives rise to limits on his power? How can evil exist in a world created by a God who is both all-powerful and all good? Must we say that a God who is both omnipotent and all good does not exist? This problem is the greatest challenge to the reasonable person who believes in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic God. If He is truly the Creator, then why did He make such a world (Yardan, 2001, pp. 1)?

The Bible includes the story of Job, who loses family and possessions to natural disasters. His sons die in a storm that collapses their homes around them. Lightning strikes Job's sheep and his shepherds. Job himself is covered with boils and scabs. Similar disasters occur today throughout the world. If we open our morning newspaper or turn on the television news we see destruction by tornados, earthquakes, floods and crippling diseases. We listen to the victims express their shock at having lost their earthly possessions. We see their grief at the deaths of loved ones, and, often, their gratitude for being still alive.

This is natural evil, the kind of evil that impacts human beings through the forces of nature. It is the kind of evil that we suffer because we are part of this mysterious, physical and biological universe.

Most consider the destruction and suffering that occurs in such disasters to be authentic evil. The breaking of bodies and the devastation of homes can hardly be considered anything but evil. Suffering resulting from such occurrences is felt by most to be unavoidable and to be expected in the world as we find it. Those who share this attitude may be considered as having scientific minds, accepting the laws of nature as

fundamental. They assume that natural evil is the origin of all destruction and suffering.

The acceptance of natural evil is rooted in an attitude that inclines one to accept the world as it is, and not to ask the further question, *why* things are as there are. Such persons, caught in a hurricane or a tornado from which they cannot escape, would see their own suffering as an inevitable and natural consequence of being alive. Those who deny that nature embodies a conscious mind have even a greater tendency to accept natural evil as inevitable, as a necessary part of the world we live in. Both kinds of thinkers would probably deny that human beings have any special right to be protected from natural evil.

2.2.1 “Good” and “Evil” as Philosophical Terms.

“Evil” belongs to a set of terms that must be defined in relation to each other. We begin with two pairs of terms: “right” and “wrong”, and “good” and “bad”. “Right” and “wrong” are moral terms, describing human volition and action. “Good” and “bad”, on the other hand, though they are often used as moral terms, also refer, in the context of theodicy, not to what we do but to the experiences that we have. “Evil” is used in theodicy as a wider, generic term, covering both the wrong and the bad. As it happens, in the language of philosophical ethics, “right” and “wrong” have been analyzed in many different ways. There are the motives and consequences of actions, intuited duties, and moral laws.

The fact is that given experiences are not always uniformly good or bad for everyone. We have varying likes and dislikes, hopes and fears, desires and aversion. There are experiences that we can accept and some we would refuse. The basic reference of “good” is to that which we like, welcome, desire, seek to gain or to

preserve, whilst “bad” refers to that which we dislike, fear, resist, shun and to which we feel unfavorably. As Hobbes wrote, “Every man, for his own part, called that which pleased, and is delightful to himself, good; and that evil which displeased him” (Hobbes, 1640, chap. 7, para. 3).

In the ancient traditions of human thought, one of the longest-lived philosophical doctrines is that that which we desire above all else and which, consequently, is the highest good, is happiness. “Happiness” in this sense is something more than pleasure and the absence of pain. Hick writes, “The full meaning of human happiness, as that which satisfies man’s deepest desires, must depend upon the character of reality as a whole, and the way to happiness is accordingly a secret bound up with that of the meaning and purpose of human life” (Hick, 1997, pp. 13).

Happiness is the formal cause of the good, and men desire it above all else because it is associated with the *philosophia perennis* of Greece and of the classically inspired tradition of Catholic thought. However, Aristotle does not agree with this view. When the question is asked, “What is the supreme good attainable in our actions?” Aristotle answers:

Well, so far as the name goes, there is pretty general agreement. “It is happiness,” say both intellectuals and the unsophisticated, meaning by “happiness” (*eudaimonia*) living well or faring well. But when it comes to saying in what happiness consists, opinions differ and the account given by the generality of mankind is not at all like that given by the philosophers. The masses take it to be something plain and tangible, like pleasure or money or social standing. Some maintain that it is one of these, some that it is another, and the same man will change his opinion about it more than once. (Thompson, 1953, book I chap. 4)

Aristotle believes that the supreme good for man is to seek for its own sake, and not as a means to anything else. He wrote,

Now happiness more than anything else appears to be just such an end, for we always choose it for its own sake and never for the sake of some other thing. It is different with honor, pleasure, intelligence and good qualities generally. We choose them indeed for their own sake in the sense that we should be glad to have them irrespective of any advantage which might accrue from them. But we also choose them for the sake of our happiness in the belief that they will be instrumental in promoting that. On the other hand nobody chooses happiness as a means of achieving them or anything else whatsoever than just happiness. (Thompson, 1953, book I chap. 4)

We may learn from this that the situation of the world impacts happiness. Particular longings and more proximate goals are determined by our understanding of the character of our environment. If we believe that in this world wealth leads to happiness, then we seek wealth. In the same way, if we believe that the esteem of our peers is a source of happiness, then we will seek that. Other longings are the same. Within the diversities of our desires conflicts can arise. For example, the longing for value sometimes functions as a brake upon the avidity for wealth by inhibiting us from seeking wealth in ways which would sacrifice value.

So it can be seen that our many desires interact and sometimes conflict with each other until they fall into a more or less stable pattern. This pattern reflects our belief of the true character of the world, as the view informing our search for

happiness. Thus, the distinctive way of life of an individual or group manifests unique thoughts, and life-procedures are elements in the supreme end of happiness.

When a man sets for himself particular goals, it frequently happens that he achieves them, but finds that achieving those goals does not provide the happiness that he had expected. Such experiences are impressive evidence of the elusiveness of happiness. Yet men continue to set and pursue goals on the assumption that attainment will bring happiness in this world.

Referring to the works of Aristotle, John Hick writes, "Aristotle suggests that the happiness of any kind of creature consists in its fulfillment of its own *telos*, or the realization of its given nature and potentialities" (Hick, 1997, pp. 15). According to Aristotle everything is formed for some end. To achieve means fulfillment of itself. The "end" of the sunflower seed is the full-grown flower. If the flower were conscious then it would feel happiness in its development into the perfect form of a sunflower. As such, it may be attractive to bees and humans. Thus, the happiness of a human being is the fulfillment of his needs according to his nature.

When we talk about "good" and "bad", "bad" means the opposite of "good." man does not need the bad, but rather needs the good. Whatever we dislike we avoid. We can apply this viewpoint by identifying the end of man with the need for happiness. Whatever is the opposite of happiness, then, a man would evade. Mostly, the opposite of happiness would be whatever brings misery, obstacles to fulfillment and whatever makes us feel frustrated. This confirms that happiness is supreme for man. For man, happiness is the fulfillment of his nature. The supreme evil for man is then, misery. Men want to attain the good rather than misery. Thus, we must understand the structure of reality, or the character of our total environment. Whether or not we attain happiness depends on how well we understand the character of our

environment. Now we come to see the importance and value of religion in discerning the true nature of the universe and the real purpose of life in relation to the needs of human nature in the search for happiness.

2.3 The History of the Problem of Evil

The idea of evil and the problem which it has posed for thinkers throughout history expresses precisely a great divide in men's outlooks on nature and on human experience. That is, the fundamental philosophical distinction between a natural-scientific viewpoint and a spiritual-religious viewpoint. Scientific naturalism has been concerned with description and explanation; on principle, it has been neutral to any fundamental evaluation. But religion, man's deepest response to the Highest, has been essentially and thoroughly evaluative.

From the religious perspective the concept of reality is suffused with the idea of perfection. From the first to the last, religion has maintained a primal and ultimate recognition of consummate perfection in all aspects of reality. Men have been convinced of the essential supremacy of their ideals and have proclaimed those ideals as of Divine origin, sanction, and final justification. The maturing development of ideas of God has been due to man's progress in evaluative insight and vision. The very growth in spiritual intelligence has emphasized and radicalized the problem of evil. In its devout convictions, religion has declared that truth is great and that truth will prevail. It is the same with the other supreme values. But do the facts of life really and finally sustain this belief in man's status in the universe? Is external nature really attuned to the highest values? Are those values "natural" to nature, or, in a sort of counter-religious, demonic, outlook, is nature actually evil? The confirmation of religious convictions hangs upon the resolution of these issues. The actuality of evil

demands reconciliation with the prevailing reality of the Divine. The problem of evil is imposed by experienced frustration of values, by the clash between what ought to be and what actually is. Religious reflection has not been able to avoid this problem. Even a brief consideration of the problem's treatment in ancient religions discloses its profound character. Modern philosophy and literature manifest the fact that secular thought is persistently embroiled in the issues of the traditional theodicies. The words of Charles Bernard Renouvier⁴ come to mind, "Life can concern a thinker only as he seeks to resolve the problem of evil" (Lasbax, 1919, p. 1).

Religious thought in India, both Brahmanic and Buddhist, began from a firm conviction that evil pervades the world of finite existence. But these two perspectives entertained different explanations of evil and different prospects for deliverance from it. Brahmanic pantheism understood the world and ourselves as manifestations of the Infinite Brahman. Everything whatsoever, in its inmost reality or soul, Atman, is one with the Infinite; but considered in their apparent multiplicity, things and persons are corrupt and illusory. Man's only hope is in his eventual saintly deliverance from the veil of illusion and the cycle of rebirth, in his absorption in Brahman. The Brahmanic sages were reluctant to confront resolutely the basic questions which embroiled their theodicy: Why should Brahman be manifested in this world of delusion and evil? Does not this propensity towards finite existence stain the perfection of the Infinite?

Buddhist reflection followed the more radical course of avoiding the pitfalls of theodicy by a fundamental atheism. It rejected all substantial existence as illusory, Brahman and Atman alike, infinite or finite. There are no real substances; there are

4 Charles Bernard Renouvier, 1815-1903, was a French philosopher born at Montpellier and educated in Paris at the *Ecole Polytechnique*. His system is based on Kant, as his chosen term "*Neo-criticisme*" indicates; but it is a transformation rather than a continuation of Kantianism. The two leading ideas are a dislike of the Unknowable in all its forms, and a reliance on the validity of personal experience.

only processes, but all of them are processes operating strictly by the law of retribution, Karma. The course of human existence is a wretched round of evils and miseries. This universal woe is due to men's deluded and futile attachment to the lusts and interests of their imagined soul or self. The deliverance from this evil state is possible only through the extinction of self-engrossment. To these three cardinal truths or convictions the Buddha added a fourth: his program of a life of progressive liberation from egoism, leading towards the utterly selfless blessedness of Nirvana.

To Zarathustra (Zoroaster) of ancient Persia, the basic fact of existence was the universal opposition of good and evil. This radical conflict, evident throughout nature and in human life, indicated a cleavage reaching to the very roots of Being, a fundamental dualism. In Zoroastrian theology, the perfect creation by God (Ohrmazd), Ahura-Mazda, was countered at each turn by Ahriman's evil work: darkness against light, corruption and bane against all purity and health and life. The daily conflicts between good and evil in our character and in our careers are only incidents in the universal war between the two creative cosmic powers. True religion is in man's loyal co-warriorship with the Lord, Ahura-Mazda, struggling in every thought and word and deed to resist, defeat and destroy Ahriman's evil creation, through in industrious and productive labor, in pure conduct, truthful speech and saintly thought. This cosmic conflict, though immemorial, was regarded by Zarathustra as destined to end in the final overthrow and fiery destruction of Ahriman's entire evil creation. Thus the initial and basic dualism of good and evil in Zoroastrian theology reached its climax, not merely in an assured meliorism, but in the conviction of a finally perfect world order.

Greek thinkers were not like the sages of India. They did not seek deliverance from evil through escape from finite existence, but rather believed that their home was

in this world. At the beginning of the sixth century BC, philosophical reflection turned away from the traditional polytheistic mythology towards the ideal of an ultimate divine unity, contemplated as perfect and sovereign Reason. Most emphatically in Platonism, this rationalism was decisive in the theory of knowledge, in ethics and in metaphysics. Truth, perfection and abiding reality are all rational. There are error, evil and unstable multiplicity the material world and in processes of sense-impressions, desires, and impulses. Our human nature is a tangle of appetites and a dynamic drive of energies, but it also possesses intelligence and should be controlled and directed by rational judgment. In the words of Socrates, the unexamined, unintelligent, life is not worth living. Plato portrayed the process of rational mastery, aristocracy, as the right fulfillment and self-realization of personality. This positive Higher Naturalism of the Platonic philosophy of life did not quite silence the tragic note in his theodicy, but it would not yield to final negation. In human life and in finite reality there was always the drag of corrupt matter. Plato was no docile optimist; In the *Theaetetus* he declared, "Evils can never pass away; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good" (Jowett, 1892 p.176).

But he resolutely rejected any cosmic despair, while believing that God alone is absolutely perfect. Any finite world would of necessity have its strains and imperfections; corruption and evil are actual. Within the range of our rational powers, they must be recognized, confronted and overcome. In Greek ethics, this is the problem of reason and the passions. In the Greek philosophy of religion, we may note here a trend in theodicy which would find its concluding classical expression in the *Enneads* of Plotinus.

Between Plato and Plotinus, Greek philosophers, with one notable exception exalted reason as the mark of supreme and perfect reality. The exception is the

Epicurean view of the world process and of human existence as a materialistic scrambling and unscrambling of atomic configurations. So-called good and evil alike are to be found only in the mechanical contacts and reactions of our sense organs in pleasure and pain. Against this atomism, the Stoic sages of ancient Greece and Rome contemplated the material world itself as manifesting a hierarchical order, from the most rudimentary dust to the highest rational perfection of God. In this cosmic hierarchy, men may yield to the drag of lower desires and passions; but, resisting all evil lures, the sage would follow the lead of rational intelligence, in living the passionless life of godlike serenity, which alone is virtuous and truly good.

Before Epicurus and the Stoics, Aristotle pursued the course of realistic rationalism. He contemplated nature as the cosmic process of a hierarchical realization of potentialities: each type of existence is the Form, or fulfillment, of capacities of a lower order, and, in turn, has the potential to serve as the matter of a higher order of being. For Aristotle, God is Pure Form, or creative reason in eternal self-contemplation. In human nature and experience, the curve of perfection ascends from matter, bodily desires and inordinate passions towards realized Form and the harmonious fulfillment of our humanity in balanced rational expression. This Aristotelian distinction of the good and evil aspects and stages of human experience was positive, but also coolly objective, without the tragic overtones of reflection that mark ecclesiastical demands for a theodicy.

The increased solemnity of the problem of evil in monotheistic worship is evidenced strikingly in Hebrew religious development. Starting in the eighth century BC, the prophetic reformation initiated an advance from the tribal monolatry of the popular cults towards ethical monotheism and personal worship. This reformation was brought to mature fulfillment by the prophet Jeremiah in the days of the destruction of

Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile of the people of Judah. Religious maturity, however, also gave rise to grave perplexities concerning the traditional doctrine of men's covenant, or contractual relationship, with God (Tsanoff, 1971, p. 4). The Hebrews believed in a God of justice who rewarded the righteous with prosperity and other blessings and punished the wicked for their evil. The tragic facts of Hebrew life, however, were contrary to the confident statements of the first Psalm. Bad men as well as good escaped the horrors of national ruin. The people had no choice. Worshipers of Yahweh were driven into exile by the godless Babylonians. Why did God not protect His people from this tragic event? Did He have some particular purpose for allowing this kind of tragic event to happen to His people?

The quandary provided the setting for the Book of Job: the investigation of the problem of evil as evidenced in the undeserved misery and ruin of righteous men. The nameless poet of the Hebrew dramatic masterpiece proposes, in searching dialogue, alternate answers to the perplexing questions of theodicy. He portrays an outstanding, righteous and prosperous Job, who is laid low, stricken with loss of wealth and family and with personal illness. The longest passages consider the traditional doctrine, expounded by Job's prosperous friends, that God brings evil to men justly, as punishment for their sins, and that Job must therefore confess his hidden misdeeds and repent. Against their orthodox pronouncements stands God's own recorded praise of Job as his choicest worshiper. Are we, then, to follow Satan as an advisor in God's cabinet, and regard Job's sufferings as a testing of his righteousness, as gold is tested by fire? But no test is needed: Job's firm loyalty has already been declared by omniscient Deity. Or are the tribulations of the righteous a mystery in the vast universe of mystery? The poet of the drama offers no formulated solution of the

abysmal problem, but he does portray the right way in which men should confront it: in forthright integrity.

Christianity is fundamentally a gospel of the salvation of sinful men. The conviction that sin is the terrible evil in existence and that man is utterly incapable to overcome it, set the conditions of any orthodox Christian theodicy. In that orthodox view de-emphasis on the radical depravity of man, and, consequently, the elevation of moral self-reliance, are impious insults to the solemnity of Divine Grace. In thus concentrating its view of evil on sin, Christian theology devalues other ills as merely difficulties to be endured, or even welcomed, by the repentant and saintly soul, ready to suffer and be persecuted for righteousness sake. In this radical transvaluation and spiritualizing of all worth, the problem of evil becomes a problem of interpreting sin: its essential nature, its origin and ground in God's perfect creation, the blessed redemption from it for a saintly minority, and the everlasting damnation of countless unsaved multitudes.

According to Saint Paul, the essential evil, sin, is in man, who has strayed from the straight path of righteousness into the wrong way of the flesh (Romans 3:10-18). Paul was classically educated, but we are not to regard his contrast of the spiritual and the carnal as a mere rephrasing of the Greek dualism of reason and matter. Nor are we justified in interpreting the Christian ideal, contempt of this world in favor of love of Christ, as explicitly ascetic. The sinful life, in its detailed execution, is worldly and carnal, but sin essentially is man's perverse scorn of God's will.

In sufficient measure, radical immorality devalues even what is good when it is set above what is better and of greater value. "He that loveth father and mother *more than me* is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). While ascetic saintliness did become exalted in Christian monasticism, the basic early Christian idea was not a

stark antithesis of the spirit and the flesh. The antithesis was rather directional and gradational; the good was always in the upward reach, the evil in the downward drag. While in nowise asserting this as a rigid formula, we may yet recognize that while asceticism did gain ascendancy in traditional Christian devotion, the fundamental Christian idea is not a reduction of the evil to the carnal. Whether manifested in sensuality or in vain pride or ambition, the basic evil, sin, is always in the depraved straying of man's will from the higher to the lower. So we find it affirmed by the two pillars of orthodoxy. Saint Aquinas declared: sin is essentially *aversio*, man's turning or straying from the immutable Good to some mutable good. Already, centuries before him, Saint Augustine, in his *City of God*, had given the finest expression to this Christian conviction, "When the will abandons the higher, and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil—not because that is evil to which it turns, but because the turning is perverse" (Tsanoff, 1971, p. 6).

The recognition of the fundamental nature of evil, of man's sinful bondage, and of his only hope of redemption through Divine Grace, accentuated the other demand of Christian theodicy, to explain this evil depravity of man as in nowise compromising the absolute perfection of man's Creator.

Augustine's theology reflected his strong reaction against the Manichaeian heresy, to which he had been attached for some ten years prior to his conversion. Manichaeism, fusing the Zoroastrian antithesis of good and evil with the Greek dualism of reason and matter, ascribed the evil strains in human life to man's inherently corrupt bodily nature. Against Manichaeism, Augustine upheld the Christian truth that God is the sole creator of all existence, creator of the material world, and that everything in nature, as the above quoted passage maintains, is essentially good in its place and in its role within creation. Evil is in the will's

perverse misdirection of choice. But Augustine rejected also the opposite Pelagian heresy, that our will, though inclined to sin, has also the capacity to choose the good. Between these two opposing doctrines, Augustinian theodicy places the source of evil in Adam's original disobedience to God's will. The possibility of Adam's evil choice was allowed by God; else it would have lacked the quality of a free and morally responsible act. But that choice, that original sin, once made, involved in its dire consequences all of us, the tainted children of Adam. Left to its own resources, our will is bound to sin, leading to its ruinous retribution. Our only possible refuge, wholly unmerited, is in God's grace.

The cloudless noon of philosophical optimism came in the early eighteenth century. Its leaders were Leibniz and Shaftesbury; the latter comes close to an unqualified praise of all existence. In contrast to his optimism was the darkening outlook on life which marked later eighteenth-century thought, and the systematic pessimism of some nineteenth-century philosophers such as Schopenhauer and Hartmann, and most desolate of all, Julius Bahnsen.

Shaftesbury's optimism led him to situate the particular apparent evils and woes of daily life in a universal system in which they are transcended, elements within the cosmic perfection. Evils and woes are like shadows that by contrast with light participate in the beauty of the whole picture, or like the discords which emphasize the fuller harmony of a composer's masterpiece.

Leibniz was less rhapsodic but no less assured in his philosophical theodicy, which he would justify on rational grounds. He distinguishes three principal kinds of evil: physical evil, or suffering; moral evil, or sin; and what he calls metaphysical evil, that is, the imperfections which are inevitable in finite existence. He minimizes the gravity of bodily aches and woes as less common and severe than grumblers claim

they are, as largely avoidable or as due to intemperance or other vices, that is, to moral evil. The problem of moral evil involves Leibniz's theodicy. He cannot regard moral evil as an imperfection staining the Creator's own activity, but prefers to interpret it as due to metaphysical evil, the imperfections characteristic of all finite existence. Leibniz's appeal here is to his principle of the "compossibility" of God's attributes. God in His omniscience recognizes what we ourselves must understand, that any created world must include imperfection. In His infinite goodness he has chosen the least imperfect world, and by his omnipotence has created, "the best of all possible worlds."

Leibniz' theodicy has been judged problematical in its theological implications. If our woes and sins are basically due to our essential imperfections as God's creatures, we cannot complain of the Creator; but then can He rightly condemn us for being such as He has created us? Leibniz' reduction of the moral antithesis of good and evil, to a metaphysical antitheses of infinite and finite, has been criticized as compromising ethical judgment and all basic valuation, human or divine. And has Leibniz' optimistic intention been realized? Voltaire's irony may be recalled here: "If this is the best of all possible worlds, what must the other be like?" (Tsanoff, 1971, p. 10).

The exemplary systematic doctrine of pessimism of the nineteenth century was Schopenhauer's philosophy. In sharp opposition to rationalism, Schopenhauer regarded nature as irrational at its core, as a blind drive or urge or craving which he called the "will-to-live". The will-to-live, in Schopenhauer's system, is manifested at every level of existence. In human life it is active as insatiate desire. All our experience is a form of craving concerned with attack or defense; our intelligence is a tool of the will-to-live; it is analogous to the dog's keen scent or even to the snake's

venom. In all his greed and lust man is ever wanting, insatiate and ungratified. The distress of unsatisfied desire may occasionally be allayed by the pleasure of some fulfilled want, but only to be re-aroused by a new greed. Thus our life is a continual round of frustration; selfish, ruthless, wretched, and futile, it is a bankrupt enterprise.

Schopenhauer's pessimism is not absolute. He indicated out two means of escape from the miserable snarl of will-driven existence. One of them is in the disinterested contemplation of aesthetic experience. In creating or in beholding art, intelligence regards or reveals things as they are and not as objects of our desires. However, this artistic emancipation from selfish craving is not lasting. A more radical denial of the will-to-live is achieved in the morality of compassion. Evil conduct is most usually due to selfishness. Less common but more wicked is evil intent, which is not merely unconcerned to the pains of others but actually gloats over them. Only virtue and good conduct can control these vices, through justice, which is willingness to bear our own burdens, and through humane loving kindness, which moves us to relieve the woes of others. But having this benevolent sympathy, the moral saint is led to recognize the fundamental evil in life, the will-driven craving itself. He may then proceed to an ascetic negation of all desires and ambitions, to the selfless extinction of the will-to-live, Nirvana (Schopenhauer, 1907).

This proposed aesthetic, moral and ascetic deliverance has been criticized as inconsistent with Schopenhauer's metaphysics. If the ultimate reality is the will-to-live, how is the desireless contemplation of art possible? If man is by nature a tissue of selfish and ruthless desires, how can he ever act with genuine compassion? How can the ultimate will-to-live be denied, in ascetic saintliness? Schopenhauer's successors have had to face the inconsistency of these two sides of his pessimism.

In the most prominent modification of the philosophy of the will-to-live, Eduard von Hartmann⁵ maintained that neither the irrationalism of Schopenhauer's metaphysics nor the rationalism of Hegel have adequately explained the complexity of nature, which includes both unconscious urges and the capacity for consciousness and intelligence. In interpreting human nature we must recognize the tangle of will-driven greed, but also the positive values attainable by intelligence, the genuine logical, aesthetic, moral and religious values that mature throughout our development. Hartmann described himself as an evolutionary optimist, but the dark pessimistic tone prevailed in his account of the human quest for happiness as a deluded and futile misdirection. He distinguished three stages of what he calls Man's Great Illusion. In classical antiquity, men sought happiness in their own lives on earth. Disenchanted in this vain pursuit, men turned to the Christian gospel of immortality and possible happiness after death. The modern advance of knowledge, however, disabused belief in life after death, and, with that, the longing for personal happiness after death could not be sustained. Modern men pinned their faith on a new ideal of social progress and well-being in the future. But the course of history once more disillusioned. We are bound to face the grim truth: while we may and should promote the values of civilization, a ripe intelligence leads us to abandon the delusion of attainable happiness, and to recognize the essentially tragic course of human existence. Hartmann even entertained the ideal—today we regard it as a constant menace—of the eventual self-extinction of humanity.

5 Eduard von Hartmann, 1842-1906, was German philosopher whose *Philosophy of the Unconscious* appeared in 1869 (tr., 3 vol., 1884; new ed. 1931). By the unconscious, Hartmann meant the inexplicable forces of nature which activate the world process, whether in atoms or in organisms. Influenced by Schopenhauer and Hegel, he saw the world process as a struggle between blind impulse and reason. In ethics, he overcame an early pessimism founded on the irrational characteristics of life and later formulated a qualified optimism based on the evolutionary forces of reason.

The brief survey of the thought of classical antiquity shows that the basic ideas of good and evil were expressed in various ethical theories. Ethical reflection tended to concentrate on the problems of the moral standard and of the highest good. One doctrine that should be noted, and that gives a seemingly straightforward account of good and evil, has had widespread development in modern times: a critical revision of Epicurean hedonism. Reaffirming the reduction of good and evil to pleasure or happiness on the one side and to pain or displeasure on the other, modern utilitarianism answers the old question, "whose pleasure?" altruistically: The good is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. There has been disagreement regarding another disturbing question: what kind of pleasure or pain? Jeremy Bentham, seeking a quantitative valuation, proposed a hedonistic calculus of pleasures and pains as a guide in moral deliberation and choice. John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of distinguishing the quality of pleasures and pains in evaluating the good and evil of various proposed actions or experiences, "Better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." This radical revision affected the entire basis of strictly hedonistic valuation, for as Mill recognized, the qualitative appraisal depended on intelligent judgment.

The argument between optimism and pessimism, signaling the fateful importance of the right choice of values, and thus of the basic role of intelligence in valuation, leads us to recognize a related and more general issue which has affected our basic ideas of good and evil. The history of thought repeatedly manifests a correlation of optimism with rationalism, and of pessimism with irrationalism and skepticism. This correlation is not hard to explain. One side of the argument is expressed in Hegel's magisterial pronouncement, "The Real is the Rational, and the Rational is the Real" (Tsanoff, 1931, p. 12).

In our day, existentialism has reaffirmed the quandaries of rational intelligence, but in its search for alternatives has followed different paths. Against all rationalistic reliance on theology, dogmatic or philosophical, Kierkegaard emphasized existential dialectic, living truth expressed in the unique reality of his own spiritual crisis, which he did not merely know, but which possessed him in consecration, in life and death. He would face God in self-penetrating encounter, and would not merely be doctrinally conversant about God.

This surrender of rational proof to the demands of living conviction has been reaffirmed as repossession of orthodox verities by the pious fiat of unquestioning devotion, itself due, not to any wisdom or merit of ours, but to the working of God's grace in us. Thus, according to Karl Barth, we are raised from the evil vanity of rational self-reliance to the godly refuge of faith and consecration.

The evaluation of the principal versions of the idea of evil inclines us to a gradational view. Value judgments are seen as forming a hierarchy which consists of choices which are not on a balance, but are lower or higher. In the choice between them, good and evil are rightly conceived as directional, and at every level of experience men may consider fully the prospect of a higher attainment, but also face the hazard of degradation. In philosophy and literature this conception of good and evil has found reasoned or imaginative utterance. Religious meditations have not better expression this conviction than the passage from Saint Augustine's *City of God* cited above, which may well be recalled here: "When the will abandons the higher, and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil- not because that is evil to which it turns, but because the turning itself is perverse" (Tsanoff, 1931, p. 15).

2.4 Schools of Thought on Evil

2.4.1 Augustinian Theodicy

In discussing the problem of evil, it is generally accepted that Augustine set the benchmark with his freewill defense, and most subsequent thinkers have either affirmed or refuted his ideas. To begin looking at Augustine's theodicy one needs first to place his thought within the context of two major influences on his life. The first is Manichaeism (founded by in Mani AD 216-76), which Augustine followed for a time. Manichaeism was a Gnostic religion that emphasized the duality of darkness and light. This duality was expressed in two eternal principles, matter and God, each opposed to each other, with escape from the former being the aim of humanity. Augustine became disillusioned with Manichaeism and as result moved away from the notion that evil or matter is an independent and corrupt substance.

The other key influence was the Neo-Platonic teaching of Plotinus (AD 204-70) who emphasized the goodness of the Supreme Being and hence of creation, and the chaotic nature of evil as the absence of being. Hick writes:

Evil represents the dead end of the creative process in which the Supreme Being has pored out its abundance into innumerable forms of existence, descending in degrees of being and goodness until its creativity is exhausted and the vast realm of being borders upon the empty darkness of non-being.

(Hick, 1977, p. 46-47)

St. Augustine believes that the eternal God created the temporal world. (*City of God*, 11.4) God is the source of everything who created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) through the Divine will. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). St. Augustine states that, "unless this meant that nothing had been made before, it

would have been stated that whatever else God had made before was created at the beginning” (*City of God*, 11.6). And not only was nothing made before this, but what was made was created from nothing. We can say that creation cannot be out of God’s substance, because God is eternal in His essence, and creation is temporal. Even Adam was created from nothing, for “though God formed man of the dust of the earth, yet the earth itself, and every earthly material, is absolutely created out of nothing.” Even man’s soul, too, God created out of nothing, and joined to the body, when He made man” (*City of God*, 14:11).

Therefore, human kind is the pinnacle of God’s earthly creation. Although humans were “made a little lower than the angels” (Hebrew ii: 9), nonetheless they are higher than the animals. They were made male and female in “God’s image” (Genesis i: 27). For Augustine, humankind is a special creation of God. Humans are uniquely made in God’s “image” and likeness (Genesis i: 27), which is said of no other creatures. Only humans are in the image of God, and this image includes “male and female,” extending to Adam’s children, for “when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God” (Genesis v: 1).

According to Augustine, it means that everything in the world is created good, perfect, including human beings. Although there is an abundance of variety in the world, that abundant variety is ordered in degrees according the fullness of each creature’s nature. Augustine writes:

There is no Creator higher than God, no art more efficacious than the Word of God, no better reason why something good should be created than that the God who creates is good. Even Plato says that the best reason for creating the world is that good things should be made by a good God (Augustine, 1958, book XI, chap. 21).

This is in direct contrast to Plotinus teaching that the further one descends from goodness (the Divine source) the further into evil one falls, and to Mani who taught that all matter is evil. As far as Augustine was concerned all creation is good, despite appearances to the contrary: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). There is no independent evil substance to resist the Divine Will as with Plato’s Demiurge in the *Timaeus*. Yet despite being created good, the world, because it was created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), is capable of becoming corrupt, or of being corrupted; it is a secondary and contingent realm. For example, matter is not eternal.

Central to Augustine’s theodicy is the notion that evil is to be understood as the *privatio boni* (privation of good) which occurs when a being renounces its proper role in the order and structure of creation and follows its own desires. Augustine writes:

Thus does Divine Providence teach us not to be foolish in finding fault with things but, rather, to be diligent in finding out their usefulness or, if our mind and will should fail us in the search, then to believe there is some hidden use to be discovered, as in so many other cases, only with great difficulty. This effort needed to discover hidden usefulness either helps our humility or hurts our pride, since absolutely no natural reality is evil and only meaning of the word “evil” is the privation of good. (Augustine, 1958, book XI, chap. 22)

Thus evil does not exist as a separate entity but is parasitic on the good. As God only brought into being good things, it is impossible for a totally evil being to exist. All evil must have at least some good in it. Hick writes:

What, after all, is anything we call evil except the privation of good? In animal bodies, for instance, sickness and wounds are nothing but the privation of health. When a cure is effected, the evils which were present (i.e. the sickness and the wounds) do not retreat and go elsewhere. Rather they simply do not exist any more. For such evil is not a substance; the wound or the disease is a defect of the bodily substance which, as a substance, is good. (Hick, 1977, p. 53-54)

According to Augustine, then, to exist is to partake of goodness (Being) and where there is a lack of goodness there is also a lack of being. Yet it seems that in saying this he is blurring a distinction between being (in the sense of qualitative degrees of existence) and Being (as in the sense of existence itself). It is not logical to say that a good person has more Being (existence) than an evil person for it is clear that there have been some extremely real and powerful people in history who were corrupt. Yet as John Hick points out Augustine does accept that to exist is to possess the generic good (measure, form and order) and that to possess these in a high degree leads to great good whereas to possess them in a low degree leads to lesser good. It may be that Augustine is thinking in terms of qualitative rather than quantitative degrees of Being, although an absence of measure, form and order would lead to a totally evil being—which could not exist.

From the example of illness given above it does seem reasonable to conclude that evil does not exist in itself but is merely the absence of something good. Yet if this is accepted one needs to ask where evil as corruption first came from? As far as Augustine is concerned evil entered the world as a result of the wrong choices of free beings (free in the sense that there was no external force necessitating that they do

wrong). Thus corruption occurred as a result of, “A willful turning of the self in desire from the highest Good, which is God himself, to some lesser good” (Hick, 1977, p. 66). However, it is not the act itself which makes a being evil but the premeditated desire, or motive, to do wrong. When Adam ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3), this was not due to the temptation of Satan but to an already corrupted heart (“for when the will abandons what is above itself, and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil—not because that is evil to which it turns, but because the turning itself is wicked” (Hick, 1977, p. 66). Augustine writes:

He created man with a nature midway between angels and beasts, so that man, provided, he should remain subject to his true Lord and Creator and dutifully obey His commandments, might pass into the company of the angels, without the intervention of death, thus to attain a blessed and eternal immortality. But, should he offend his Lord and God by a proud and disobedient use of his free will [he would become] a slave to his appetites, he would have to live like a beast and be destined to eternal punishment after death. (Augustine, 1958, book XII, chap. 22)

Now, within the Divine order of things, the angels in heaven partake of the highest degrees of goodness. Yet Augustine believed that some of these revolted against God before the creation of humanity. Augustine writes:

Thus, we are compelled to believe that the holy angels never existed without a good will, that is, without the love of God. But what of those angels who were created good and became evil by their own bad will for which their good nature is not responsible except in so far as there was a deliberate defection from good—for it is never good, but a defection from good, that is the cause of

evil? These angels either received less grace of divine love than those who persevered in grace, or, if both were created equally good, then, while the former were falling by bad will, the latter were increasingly aided to reach that plenitude of beatitude which make them certain that they would never fall.

(Augustine, 1958, book XII, chap. 9)

Thus there exist two rival camps in the heavens and on the earth, one seeking to follow the ways of God (the City of the World). Here we have the foundation of Augustine's theodicy. God, although omnipotent, omniscient and all-good, and despite creating the world and everything in it good, is innocent when it comes to the presence of sin and evil in the heavens and on the earth, as sin and evil are the results of God-given freedom of choice for both humanity and the angels. Furthermore, God's love is shown in that although all of humanity stands guilty before God (Romans 5) God will bring some to salvation, despite the fact that no one deserves this act of grace.

The issues we have been discussing so far relate to moral evil brought about by human sin. What are we to make of the seemingly vast amount of natural evil that is present in the world: earthquakes, tornadoes, disease and the like. In later, Reformed, theodicy such evil was related back to the sin of Adam. Genesis 3 teaches that physical disruption, as well as corruption came into the world as a direct result of human disobedience. However, for Augustine this issue was resolved by adopting the Platonic view of the creation of the heavens and the earth called "The Principle of Plenitude".

The Principle of Plenitude speaks of the universe as exhibiting great diversity. We can all look around us and see tremendous differences in the quality and character

of the beings around us. Yet the question is why there is such diversity and why is it that amongst the creatures God has created there seems to be such inequality and unfairness, with some living short and harsh lives whilst others live long and pleasant lives? (c.f. Ecclesiastes 8:14). Furthermore, if human beings were created with the capacity to sin, and thus to break the relationship with God and to bring about moral corruption, why were we not created perfect? Or, as Hick puts it, “Why...is there a world rather than only the highest of heavens?” (Hick, 1977, p. 77). If in the scheme of things the higher creatures, humans and angels, are close to God, having spiritual capacity, why did God bother to create lower forms of life? Taking his lead from Plato’s *Timaeus* Augustine believed the higher and lower creatures were both brought into being so that, “the whole range of Eternal Ideas should become incarnated in the world of sense.” (Hick, 1977, p. 79). Thus, without his creative act, the heavens and the earth would be imperfect and the fullness of God’s creativity would not be expressed. Hick writes:

If all things were equal, all things would not be; for him multiplicity of kinds of things of which the universe is constituted—first and second and so on, down to the creatures of the lowest grades—would not exist. (Hick, 1977, p. 81)

However, the problem here is how this emanationist view of creation, unconscious in the case of Plato’s Demiurge but conscious in the case of Augustine’s God, fits into the Christian worldview. Contemporary Christian Green Theodicy is unhappy to place human beings at the top of the creative “tree” at the expense of recognizing intrinsic value both in the environment and in non-human species. An anthropocentric view of the heavens and the earth is generally shunned in today’s ecologically sensitive

society, especially as Christianity has been implicated in the current Western ecological crisis⁶ and as we no longer see the world as simply the “servant” of humanity. A further problem is that if the world is an expression of Divine creativity in all its fullness, only limited by what God can logically do or has conceived of doing, then, if this world is perfect, “we have no recourse left but to despair” (Hick, 1977, p. 87), for we can imagine a significantly better world than this. Thus, it seems that either the world is not perfect or that God has limited ability or vision. However, although he was probably unaware of these problems, they are answered within the context of Augustine’s scheme of thought.

Augustine believed that the world looks imperfect to us because we look at things from a limited (or distorted) perspective. From the standpoint of God, things are good and the apparent evil in the world contributes to bringing about the perfection of the whole. In other words, all degrees of good and evil have a place within the Divine Will. Our concerns about imperfection and evil are merely relative to our own viewpoint, but “the universe with its sinister aspect is perfect” (Hick, 1977, p. 90). If this were not so, then God’s sovereignty would have to be questioned, for events would have transpired to bring about that which is beyond God’s control or outside God’s Will. For Augustine this would be anathema, and his theodicy is designed to protect not only God’s sovereignty but also God’s perfect goodness. As far as the natural order is concerned, then, although it displays imperfection, the universe is ordered in such a way that the transitory, impermanent, nature of things is part of the natural process of bringing forth new life. Augustine writes:

Since, then, in those situations where such things are appropriate, some perish to make way for others that are born in their room, and the less succumb to the

6 See White, 1967.

greater, and the things that are overcome are transformed into the quality of those that have the mastery, this is the appointed order of things transitory. Of this order, the beauty does not strike us because by our mortal frailty we are so involved in a part of it that we cannot perceive the whole in which these fragments that offend us are harmonized with the most accurate fitness and beauty. (Augustine, 1958, book XII, chapter 4)

However, if despite the appearance of evil the universe is in fact perfect, does evil then exist? Augustine's response would be "Yes". Furthermore, moral evil, although brought about by the corruption of our will, does not upset the moral order of creation, as sin will always be punished. Thus, "A universe in which sin exists but is precisely cancelled out by retribution is no less good than a universe in which there is neither sin nor punishment" (Hick, 1977, p. 93) This means that although sin is a blemish on God's creation, the fact that it is punished means that it is also used by God to further God's own purposes. However, this brings us to the notion that if God has pre-ordained sin to be a part of the world, and of human experience, then God is responsible for the presence of sin and moral evil in the world. Furthermore, despite that fact that within Augustine's theodicy God is sovereign, and that God has chosen, hence predestined, some of humanity to be saved, the fact remains that the vast majority of humankind is damned and will remain a blemish on God's (Romans 3:10-12) creation forever. So although Augustine denied that sin has an independent existence apart from God, and is merely the privation of good, it would appear in the end that evil does exist apart from God after all.

Augustine's theodicy has been largely adopted by Western Christianity, and has become the touchstone of orthodoxy with regard to addressing the problem of evil

and suffering. But despite this it is not without its problems. For example, in critiquing Augustine, John Hick questions whether an innately good creature would ever actually sin: “If the angels are finitely perfect, then even though they are in some sense free to sin they never will in fact do so” (Hick, 1977, p. 69). If a perfect being sins, then it must not have been created perfect in the first place, and God as its Maker, is to be held responsible. In response to this challenge Augustine adopted the view that the fall of the angels, and subsequently the fall of humanity was predestined. As far as Augustine is concerned God created us in the full knowledge that humanity would fall (sin) even though it was not God’s desire for us to do so. So although God is our Maker, and the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and although God knew we would fall, God is absolved from blame. As far as the angels are concerned Augustine is clear that God simply predestined some of them to fall, “their blessedness was designed to come to an end” (Hick, 1977, p. 70). Thus it was never God’s intention that all the angels remain in a state of perfection. Yet if this is so, then, as we discussed earlier, God is therefore responsible for the presence of evil in the world, for, on the one hand God created beings He knew would sin, and on the other, chose only some of the angels to remain good. Even more problematic for Augustine’s theodicy is that if God desired to keep some of the angels good, and did so, why didn’t God desire all of them to remain good. Similarly, if God decided to save some of humanity, and does so, why doesn’t God save all of humanity? The fact that God can do this for some invites us to ask why He has not done it for all.

2.4.2 Irenaean Theodicy

Saint Irenaeus was born around the year AD 130, a native of Asia Minor. While very young, St. Irenaeus became the pupil of St. Polycarp in Smyrna. St.

Polycarp is one of the Apostolic Fathers, having been a pupil of the Apostle St. John. St. Irenaeus became a priest of the Church of Lyons during the persecution of Marcus Aurelius. Under this persecution, priests suffered imprisonment and execution for the faith. In AD 177, Irenaeus was sent to Rome. During his absence, the Bishop St. Ponthinus suffered martyrdom at the hands of the persecutors in Lyons. St. Irenaeus returned to Lyons to occupy the vacant Bishopric, by which time the persecutions had ceased.

Almost all of writings of St. Irenaeus were directed against Gnosticism, a heresy that was spreading throughout Gaul and elsewhere. He produced a brilliant set of five books called *Detection and Overthrow of the Gnosis Falsely So-Called (Against Heresies)* refuting their doctrines and exposing their errors. These powerful teachings were quickly copied into Latin, and were widely circulated. As a consequence, Gnosticism ceased to be a serious menace to the Catholic Church. Irenaeus writes:

Besides those, however, among these heretics who are Simonians, and of whom we have already spoken, a multitude of Gnostics have sprung up, and have been manifested like mushrooms growing out of the ground. (Irenaeus, book I, chap. XXIX)

It is believed that St. Irenaeus died around the year AD 202, but the facts surrounding his death are not clear.

Irenaeus' theodicy followed Augustine in tracing evil back to free will, however he differs because he states that God did not make a perfect world and that evil has a valuable role to play in God's plan for human beings. Irenaeus identified two stages in God's creation of human beings. In the first stage, God made human

beings as rational animals and bequeathed to them capacity for enormous moral and spiritual development. Human beings, then, were created “imperfect” or, perhaps more accurately, immature. They are not at this stage not like the pre-Fall Adam and Eve of Augustinian theodicy. They are rather immature creatures ready for the process of growth. In the second stage, human beings are able gradually to be transformed, through their own free responses, from human animals into “children of God”. Irenaeus himself described the two stages as humanity being made first in the “image” of God and second in the “likeness” of God. Irenaeus writes:

For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the Spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God...The man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God. But 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 (in plasmate), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit. (Irenaeus, book I, chapter VI)

Irenaeus argues that God is partly responsible for the presence of evil. His responsibility extends to creating an imperfect humanity, and making it their task to develop moral perfection. This idea is based on Irenaeus interpretation of Genesis 1:26 where it is stated “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Irenaeus

concluded that at the beginning we were created in God's image and only later would we develop into his likeness. To be human requires intelligence, morality and personality yet these lacked completion and would only be gained through transformation into his likeness. Irenaeus claimed that this transformation occurred through the means of evil. Hick writes:

He (Irenaeus) distinguished two stages of the creation of the human race. In the first stage human beings were brought into existence as intelligent animals endowed with the capacity for immense moral and spiritual development. They were not the perfect pre-fallen Adam and Eve of the Augustinian tradition, but immature creatures, at the beginning of along a long process of growth. In the second stage of their creation, which is now taking place, they are gradually being transformed through their own free responses from human animals into "children of God." (Hick, 1990. p. 44)

In the Irenaean view, man is not seen as having fallen from a great a height of original righteousness to a profound a depth of depravity as in the Augustinian view. Rather, in the Irenaean view man indeed fell in the early stages of his spiritual development, but that simply means that he now needs greater help than would otherwise have been required in carrying through the development.

If human perfection must come through a process of development, then human beings have to have been created imperfect in order to go against God. A perfect being, who was already in God's likeness, would never have gone against Him. Human beings had to decide for themselves, from an "epistemic distance", a distance in the dimension of knowledge. The argument being that if God was present, then human beings would be overwhelmed by His presence and expectations and thus

would always obey God, not of their own volition, but because He was overseeing their every move. If the world were a paradise, human beings would not be free, because every human action would result in happiness and the same outcome. Everyone would follow God's rules because there would be no difficulties in doing so. Qualities such as honor, courage and love would all be impossible. As a result there would be no opportunity to develop in God's likeness. Thus, God's purpose would not be fulfilled in a world free from suffering; the world must therefore contain natural laws that can produce suffering. Thus, Irenaeus' theodicy can be used to explain why some natural evil is essential as well as moral evil. Hick writes:

Augustinian theology sees our perfection as lying in the distant past, in an original state long since forfeited by the primordial calamity of the fall, but the Irenaean type of theology sees our perfection as lying before us in the future, at the end of a lengthy and arduous process of further creation through time. Thus, the answer of the Irenaean theodicy to the question of the origin of moral evil is that it is a necessary condition of the creation of humanity at an epistemic distance from God, in a state in which one has a genuine freedom in relation to one's Maker and can freely develop, in response to God's noncoercive presence, toward one's own fulfillment as a child of God. (Hick, 1990, p. 45)

Irenaeus still has to explain why evil is necessary and why God did not simply create human beings perfect to begin with. Irenaeus states that goodness could not be bestowed on human beings but could only be the result of human development through willing co-operation. Willing co-operation requires genuine freedom; we cannot willingly co-operate with something if we are forced into it. Genuine freedom

requires the possibility of choosing evil over good. God's plan therefore requires the genuine possibility that our actions may produce evil.

Irenaeus explains that human beings did choose evil, which is why the Fall occurred. Even though evil makes life difficult it nevertheless ensures that we are aware of what good is: "How, if we had no knowledge of the contrary, could we have the instruction in that which is good." He continues to argue that if God took away evil, He would thereby take away people's humanity. For being human entails having freedom, yet if God took away this freedom and intervened as each individual act is committed, there would be no freedom to commit evil.

The Irenaean theodicy also differs from the Augustinian in its view of the purpose of the world. The Irenaean account sees the world as a place for "soul-making," an environment in which the human personality may develop and grow. Nature, as an environment for man, has its own autonomous laws, which man must learn to obey. If God had created a world in which natural laws were continually changed to fit human desire, then there would be no opportunity for human beings to grow through subordinating their desire to external laws. There would be no occasions in which human beings could do any evil or harm, and consequently there would be no occasions for moral choice. In this view, the making of such choices is the primary means by which human growth, the growth that God intended this world to be the arena for, is made. Therefore, it was necessary that God create the world and human beings in such a way that human beings would be faced with moral choices in order that human beings might develop the moral virtues. Hick writes:

According to the Irenaean theodicy, however, God's purpose was not to construct a paradise whose inhabitants would experience a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain. The world is seen, instead, as a place of

“soul-making” or person making in which free beings, grappling with the tasks and challenges of their existence in a common environment, may become “children of God” and “heirs of eternal life.” (Hick, 1990. p. 46)

2.4.3 Process Theodicy

According to John Hick, Process Theology is a modern development. Many Christian thinkers have adopted as their metaphysical framework, for example, the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead (1861-1947) (Hick, 1990. p. 48). There are many reasons why theological thinkers have adopted Process Theology into their metaphysical framework, but the fact of evil in the world is one of them. Process theologians do not believe that God is limitless in power but that He is interactive with a universe which is not created by Him. However, He is able to influence it. As Hartshorne puts it:

It has become customary to say that we must limit divine power to save human freedom and to avoid making deity responsible for evil...His power is absolutely maximal, the greatest possible, but even the greatest possible power is still one power among others, is not the only power. God can do everything that a God can do, everything that could be done by “a being with no possible superior...In another manner of speaking, we may say that deity is the absolute case of social influence; but even the absolute case of such influence is still-social. This means, it takes account of the freedom of others, and determines events only by setting appropriate limits to the self-determining of others, of the local agents. (Hartshorne, 1976, p. 138)

Even though many Process theologians have offered some suggestions toward a theodicy, Hick feels that only in *God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy* by David Griffin has a systematic version become available. Griffin writes:

My solution dissolves the problem of evil by denying the doctrine of omnipotence fundamental to it. Of the various ways of denying the deity's essentially unlimited power to effect its will, mine is to hypothesize that there has always been a plurality of actualities having some power of their own. This power is two-fold: the power to determine themselves (partially), and the power to influence others...All that is necessary to the hypothesis is that power has always been and necessary is shared power, that God has never had and could never have a monopoly on power, and that the power possessed by the non-divine actualities is inherent to them and hence cannot be cancelled out or overridden by God. (Davis, 1981, p. 105)

Thus we can see that the theodicy of Griffin and the theodicies of Augustine and Irenaeus are explicitly at odds. Traditional Christian belief holds that God is the Creator and Sustainer of entire universe, which is created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). The ultimate power of God over the creation is unlimited. But Process thinkers hold that God withholds the exercise of unlimited Divine power in order to allow for the existence and growth of free human beings. God is seeking the free response of the creatures. He does not use His controlling power over the free will of human beings. As Hick puts it:

Process theology likewise holds that God acts noncoercively, by “persuasion” and “lure,” but in contrast to the notion of divine self-limitation, holds that

God's exercise of persuasive rather than controlling power is necessitated by the ultimate metaphysical structure of reality. (Hick, 1990, p. 49)

Thus, God has limitations imposed by the laws of the universe. In this case, God does not create the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), but rather the universe is an uncreated process which includes the deity. Examining passages in the writings of A. N. Whitehead, John Hick concludes that Whitehead seems to believe that the ultimate metaphysical principles were originally established by a primordial Divine decision.

A process thinker Charles Hartshorne holds that these ultimate principles are eternal necessities, not matters of Divine fiat. They are laws of absolute generality, such that no alternative to them is conceivable; as such they fall outside the scope even of Divine Will. Griffin follows Hartshorne. He writes, "God does not refrain from controlling the creatures simply because it is better for God to use persuasion, but because it is necessarily the case that God cannot completely control the creatures." (Griffin, p. 276)

Hick suggests that ultimate reality according to Process Theology is creativity continually producing new unities of experience out of the manifold of the previous moment. However, creativity is not something additional to actuality, but it is the creative power within all actuality. Every actuality, or "actual entity," or "actual occasion," is a momentary event, charged with creativity. It puts forth some degree of power. It puts forth power first in the way in which it receives and organizes the data of the preceding moment. This is a power of selection, exercised in positive and negative "prehensions"⁷ of the data of which it thus becomes the unique

⁷ The act by which an occasion of experience absorbs data from other experiences is called a "feeling" or a "positive prehension". The act of excluding data from feeling is called a "negative prehension". (Griffin, 1976, p. 283).

“concrecence.” Thus, each wave of actual occasions, constituting a new moment of the universe’s life, involves an element of creativity or self-causation. An actual occasion is never completely determined by the past. It is partly so determined but partly a determiner of the future, as the present occasion is itself prehended by succeeding occasions. As part determiner of the future it is again exercising power. This dual efficacy is inseparable from being actual, and so every actual occasion, as a moment of creativity, necessarily exerts some degree of power (Hick, 1990, p. 50).

John Cobb claims that Process thought sees the Divine creative activity as based on responsiveness to the world. Since the very meaning of actuality involves internal relatedness, God as an actuality is essentially related to the world. Since actuality as such is partially self-creative, future events are not yet determined, so that even perfect knowledge cannot know the future, and God does not wholly control the world. Any Divine creative influence must be persuasive, not coercive (Shatz, 2002, p. 76).

Hick asserts that since God has already delegated power to finite actualities, they do not exercise power. But because to be part of the universe is to exercise creativity it therefore does have power. To be actual is to be creative, thus to exercise some degree of power. For God to hold monopoly on power is then not possible. By nature, every actual occasion is partially self-creative as well as partially created by previous actual occasions which were themselves partially created. Therefore the power of God over each occasion is necessarily limited, and the reality of evil in the world is the measure of the extent to which God’s will is in fact thwarted. As each occasion creates itself, it is continually offered the best possibility by God. The consecutive occasions are free. They do not have to act according to the plan of the

Divine. Hick quotes Whitehead, “So far as the conformation is incomplete, there is evil in the world” (Hick, 1990, p. 50).

Hick continues to explain that according to Process Theology, there are two kinds of evil contrasting with two kinds of good. An actual occasion is a moment of experience. The values, which that experience can embody, are harmony and intensity. The growing together of a multiplicity into a new complex unity may be more or less richly harmonious and more or less vivid and intense. But when the new complex unity fails to attain harmony, it manifests the evil of disagreement. According to Whitehead, this disagreement is the feeling of evil in the most general sense, namely physical pain or mental evil, such as sorrow, horror, and dislike (Whitehead, 1993, p. 330). Hick clarifies this as meaning that when a moment of experience fails to attain the highest appropriate intensity, it exhibits the other form of evil, which is needless triviality (Hick, 1990, p. 50).

However, harmony and intensity are in conflict with one another because a higher level of intensity causes increased complexity and this can be dangerous to harmony. So some form of evil, either discord or needless triviality, is virtually inevitable within the creative process. Greater complexity makes possible greater richness of experience; it also makes possible new dimensions of suffering. Human beings, therefore, can have qualities of enjoyment beyond the capacity of lower forms of life. But at the same time human beings are subject to moral and spiritual affliction beyond what the lower animals can bear. Human beings can even be driven to suicide.

For Hick, the evolution of the universe as a whole and of life on this planet means that God has an impact in continually maximizing harmony and intensity in each present occasion. And God also creates new possibilities for yet greater harmony and intensity in the future. This impact of God is justified on the ground that the good

that has been produced and is yet to be produced, outweighs and renders worthwhile the evil that has been produced and that will yet be produced. Actually, God could have left the primal chaos undisturbed instead of forming it into an ordered universe evolving ever-higher forms of actuality. Therefore, God is responsible for having initiated and continued the development of the finite realm from disordered chaos toward ever-greater possibilities of both good and evil (Hick, 1990, p. 51).

In facing the fact of evil, Hick believes that even a limited deity requires a theodicy justifying God's goodness. Hick quotes Griffin's statement, "God is responsible in the sense of having urged the creation forward to those states in which discordant feeling could be left with great intensity" (Hick, 1990, p. 51) The Process Theology proposal of theodicy is that the good created in the way of the world process could not have come about without the possibility and actuality of all the evil that has been inextricably intertwined with it. The goodness of God is justified in that the risk-taking venture in the evolution of the universe was calculated to produce and has produced a sufficient quality and quantity of good to outweigh all the evil that has in fact been involved of that might have been involved. The alternative to the risk of creation was not sheer nothingness, but the evil of needless triviality in the primordial chaos.

Hick notes that Griffin emphasizes that God is directly involved in the risk of creation, for the quality of the Divine experience depends in part on the quality of the creatures' experiences. God shares not only human joys, but also our human sorrows and our subhuman pains. The whole weight of earthly sorrow and agony, wickedness and stupidity passes into the Divine consciousness, together with the glory of all earthly happiness and ecstasy, saintliness and genius. God alone knows the total balance of good and evil. He finds that risk was worth taking, and this fact should

help us to accept that the evil is in fact outweighed and justified by the good. Hick quotes Griffin as follows:

Awareness of this aspect of God as envisioned by process thought not only removes the basis for that sense of moral outrage which would be directed toward an impassive spectator deity who took great risks with the creation. It also provides an additional basis, beyond that of our own immediate experience, for affirming that the risk was worth taking. That being who is the universal agent, goading the creation to overcome triviality in favour of the more intense harmonies, is also the universal recipient of the totality of good and evil that is actualized. In other words, the one being who is in a position to know experientially the bitter as well as the sweet fruits of the risk of creation is the same being who has encouraged and continues to encourage this process of creative risk taking. (Hick, 1990, p. 52)

This kind of theodicy is appealing in two main ways. The first is that it avoids the traditional problem arising from the belief in Divine omnipotence. God is not the all-powerful creator of the universe, but is a part of the universe itself. He is unable both to vary its fundamental structure and to intervene directly in its changing details. Therefore, God does not have to be justified for permitting evil, since it is not within His power to prevent it. It is manifest that Griffin's position is consonant with this point. According to Griffin, God could have refrained from "luring" the universe into the evolutionary development which has produced animal and human life with all its pain and suffering. The second appeal is that it includes a stirring summons to engage on God's side in the never-ending struggle against the evils of an intractable world. This was the moral appeal of earlier forms of belief in which a finite God claims our

support in the ongoing battle of light against darkness, as in ancient Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism.

However, Hick understands well that despite its appeal, Process Theodicy has been severely criticized.⁸ One basic claim is that it involves a morally and religiously unacceptable elitism. The majority of people in most ages have lived in hunger or the threat and fear of hunger. Oftentimes, they have been severely undernourished and subject to crippling injuries and debilitating diseases, so that only the fittest could survive infancy. They have inhabited conditions of maltreatment or of slavery and persistent states of unreliability and concern. Hick cites Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos' survey of the human condition, *Only One Earth*:

The actual life of most of mankind has been cramped with back-breaking labor, exposed to deadly or debilitating diseases, prey to wars and famines, haunted by the loss of children, filled with fear and the ignorance that breeds more fear. At the end, for everyone, stands dreaded unknown death. To long for joy, support and comfort, to react violently against fear and anguish is quite simply the human condition. (Hick, 1990, p. 53)

Hick says that Process Theodicy does not propose that it is their own individual fault that unnumbered human beings have been born and have had to undergo such situations. The high intensity of physical and mental suffering that is possible at the human level of experience is just part of the actual process of the universe. Hick cites the Process Theodicy of Griffin in which the same complex processes which have produced all suffering have also produced the cream of the human species (Hick, 1990, p. 53).

8 See also, for example, Madden & Hare, 1986, Chapter 6.

Yardan has claimed that David Griffin challenges the traditional idea of God's omnipotence while agreeing with the powerful traditional emphasis on the value of truly free human action. God intends that we have an increasing capacity for value realization. Great values are not possible without the risk of great suffering. If we had the freedom of chimpanzees or cats, creatures with a lesser freedom, then we would realize the types of values these creatures enjoy. With a lower degree of freedom we would have the capacity to realize far fewer values. We humans have a tremendous capacity for enjoying an enormous range of values, but along with this goes the capacity for hurting others. Most people, seeing the choice between dangerous human beings, or no human beings would prefer the former (Yardan, 2001, p. 141).

According to Process Theology, as we have noted, the sorrow and agony on this earth passes into the Divine consciousness. In Whitehead's words, God is "the fellow sufferer who understands." (Whitehead, 1929, p. 497) However, God is explicitly pleased that this great mass of human suffering has been endured.

Within Process Theodicy, it would be quite wrong to state that unfortunate beings have suffered deprivation *in order* that the fortunate may enjoy their blessings. It is not good that some be deliberately sacrificed for the good of others. As presented by Griffin, the Process doctrine is rather the possibility of creating the degree of human good that has in fact come about. In accord with this theodicy, the good that has occurred renders worthwhile all the wickedness that has been committed and all the suffering that has been endured (Hick, 1990, p. 53).

Of course, it may be asked whether the God of Process thought is equal to the God of the New Testament. The God of the New Testament is the Creator who values all human creatures with a universal and unprejudiced love, and the contemporary God of liberation is the God of the poor and the oppressed, the enslaved and all those

against whom the structures of human society discriminate. But, according to Hick, Process Theodicy can be criticized for making God into the God of the nobility, the great and successful among humankind. God is apparently the God of saints rather than of sinners, of geniuses rather than of the dull, retarded, and mentally defective, of the cream of humanity rather than of the anonymous millions who have been driven to self-seeking, violence, greed, and deceit in the desperate struggle to survive. This is not the God of those millions who have been crippled by malnutrition and have suffered and died under oppression and exploitation, plague and famine, flood and earthquake, or again of those who have perished in infancy (Hick, 1990, p. 54).

Hick also points out that even though the God of Process Theodicy is not the ultimate Maker and Lord of the universe, He is nonetheless responsible for having drawn human existence out of the earlier stages of life, risking the enormous oppressive burden of human suffering and the harmful power of wickedness, for the sake of the morally and spiritually successful in whom God rejoices. On this point, Griffin suggests that, on balance, God may indeed find the entire display of human life through the ages to be good, because God's entire experience includes the suffering of those who suffer and the deficiency of those whose human potential remains undeveloped outweighed by the happiness and achievement of the fortunate.

Hick argues that it is very hard to expect that the starving and the oppressed, the victims of Auschwitz, the human wrecks who are irreparably brain-damaged or mind-damaged would agree with this point of view or would praise and worship such a God. Such a world and such a God would not be good to those unfortunates, but only for the others. Griffin's theodicy, Hick suggests, is reminiscent of the laissez-faire capitalist theory of the nineteenth century, that held that even though the weak

may go to the wall, the system as a whole is good because it also produces those who are spiritually and culturally rich.

Some have suggested that Griffin's Process Theodicy is elitist and that it contradicts the basic Christian conviction of God's love for all human creatures. Some complain that the ultimate principle of Process Theodicy is aesthetic rather than ethical.⁹ Some may believe that this approach is appropriate, while some may not.

To be fair, however, with the process thinkers, we need to consider the re-envisioning of the notion of the Absolute of Hartshorne, called, "Surrelativism, also Penentheism." Hartshorne is not satisfied with both classical theism and pantheism. He thinks that both schools consider God in monopolar terms. Monopolar terms means to accept God only one pole. Only one attribute of God is being accepted, but the contrary attribute is to be disregarded. Srievarakul says that:

While the classical theist considers God as abstract, absolute and transcendent, the pantheist considers God as concrete, relative and immanent. According to Hartshorne, both classical theism and pantheism could not arrive at the most comprehensive concept of God. (Srievarakul, 1996, p. 23)

On Hartshorne's view, when we say that God includes the world it does not mean that God and the world are equal. But it means that God is being superior or greater than the world. God of theist, for Hartshorne's view, has two sides. The first side is God as abstract and the second side is God as concrete. According to Hartshorne, divine absoluteness appropriately contributes to both, abstract and concrete. Hartshorne puts it:

⁹ Aesthetics is the study of the feelings, concepts, and judgments arising from our appreciation of the arts or of the wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime. Ethics is the study of the concepts involved in practical reasoning good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom, rationality, and choice.

If “pantheism” is a historically and etymologically appropriate term for the view that deity is the all of relative or interdependent items, with nothing wholly independent or in any clear sense nonrelative, then “panentheism” is an appropriate term for the view that deity is in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items. Traditional theism or deism makes God solely independent or noninclusive. Thus there are logically the three views: (1) God is merely the cosmos, in all aspects inseparable from the sum or system of dependent things or effects; (2) He is both this system and something independent of it; (3) He is not the system, but is in all aspects independent. The second view is panentheism. The first view includes any doctrine which, like Spinoza’s, asserts that there is a premise from which all facts are implied conclusions....Panentheism agrees with traditional theism on the important point that the divine individuality, that without which God would not be God, must be logically independent, that is, must not involve any particular world. (Hartshorne, 1976, p. 89-90)

Thus, even though theism is challenged by the problem of the evil, there are many ways to solve the problem. Some solutions may be sufficient to convince believers that there is no intellectual need to forsake belief in God, though no amount of intellectual justification can hope to soothe the actual pains and sorrows and sufferings of the human heart.

2.4.4 The Nature of the Image (*Imago dei*)

Augustine and Irenaeus have cited two words “Image and Likeness” from Genesis 1: 26, “Let us make man in our image [*b’salmenu*], according to our likeness [*cidmutenu*].” The distinction between these two words needs to be clarified. The clarification of this distinction has been presented by various critiques. According to the Bible, man and man alone is the very image of God (*imago Dei*). (Reymond, 1998, p. 425) In the early Christian thinking, a distinction was drawn between the two terms in Greek words, (*eikona kai homoiōsin*, “image and likeness”). Irenaeus and Tertullian saw the word image in Hebrew (*selem*) as referring to bodily traits and the word likeness (*d’mut*) to the spiritual nature of man. In rejecting this understanding of the issue, Clement of Alexandria and Origen urged that “image” denotes the characteristics of man *qua* man, while “likeness” refers to qualities not essential to man’s “manness” but which may be cultivated or lost. In their own time, Augustine, Athanasius, Ambrose, and John of Damascus were persuaded to believe that the latter view was corrected. In the Middle Ages, many scholars continued to urge this distinction between the nouns. They included the image with the intellectual powers of reason and freedom, and the likeness with original holiness and righteousness (*dona superaddita*).

According to Roman Catholic theology, in and by the fall man lost the “likeness” while still retaining as man the image of God. This means that the fallen man is essentially deprived of the “super-additional gifts” of holiness and righteousness but not morally depraved throughout the whole man. Man is not, in deed, even in the state of sin but only in the state of a tendency to sin. Luther disagrees with this concept. He believes that the image of God is the original

righteousness and was entirely lost in the Fall. Calvin disagrees with Luther and claims that the image is lying primarily in the understanding or in the heart, that is, in the soul and its powers. For Calvin, the image included both natural endowments and the spiritual qualities of original righteousness (knowledge, righteousness, holiness). He affirms that the whole image has been affected by the Fall, but only original righteousness being completely lost. The Reformers accept this kind of the explication of the image, even though they reject the distinction between the two terms of the image and the likeness of God as Catholic theologians believe.

Today, it is quite common to see the image defined formally in terms of personality (rationality, emotion, and moral responsibility) and materially in terms of a true knowledge of God. The great weakness in the image such as liability to error in thinking, depression in emotion, and misjudgment in moral responsibility and a serious distortion of the likeness were brought by the Fall.

While there is general agreement among scholars today that no distinction should be drawn between “image” and “likeness,” there is no such agreement regarding what the “very image” is or means. The suggestion of some scholars such as Buswell state that the image in human beings is his dominion over the creation. But Genesis 1: 26 seems to indicate that dominion was to be a bestowment upon God’s image bearer, an investiture grounded in and contingent upon the fact that man is God’s image. In verse 28, dominion is made a reality by its actual bestowment upon man. In verse 27, man is created and already stands before God and the world as God’s image. In other words, it is because man is God’s image that God bestows dominion over the world upon him.

But some scholars, such as Bath for example, urge a Christological construction of the image. They cite Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4, where

Christ is referred to as the *eikon tou theou* (image of God), they teach that Christ is the true man, the real man, and that his humanity is the “original” and that ours is the “derivative or unoriginal.” We participate in his humanity, not in Adam’s, and not he in ours. Barth writes:

Man’s essential and original nature is to be found....not in Adam but in Christ....Adam can be interpreted only in the light of Christ and not the other way around. Human existence, as constituted by our relationship with Adam...has no independent reality, status, or importance of its own...[And the relationship between Adam and us is] the relationship that exists originally and essentially between Christ and us. (Barth, 1968, p. 29-30)

Charles Hodge contends that (*epignosis*, “knowledge”) refers to (true) knowledge of God, since the word has this sense in Colossians i: 6,9, 27-28; ii: 2-3, that (*dikaiosyme*, “righteousness”) refers to moral rectitude toward one’s neighbor, that is, justice, and that (*losioteti*, “hoiness”) refers to the Godward relation known as piety toward God. (Hodge, 1954, p. 265-66) This means that these three “renewed image virtues” are not religio/ethical abstraction, but rather are indicative of right relationships with God and neighbor. This in turn affirms that the image must be defined both in terms of *entis* and also in terms of *relationis*. God created man in his image, that is, with a creaturely but true knowledge of God, with justice toward his neighbor (which virtue originally expressed in Adam’s relation to Eve and vice versa), and piety (covenant faithfulness) toward God. When Adam fell, though he still retain the image in the formal sense that man is still *homo religious/ homo sapiens*, the material image which he was to “mirror” by justice toward neighbor and covenant faithfulness toward God became terribly marred both in him and in his posterity. The

material image is principally restored only through salvation in Christ, the antitypical and ideal “image of God.”

Dr. Norman Geisler¹⁰ says that, “This image of God includes both moral and intellectual characteristics”. (Geisler, 2003, p. 451) Geisler has suggests several things which are implied in the concept of “image and likeness” that can be enumerated here.

Image includes intellectual likeness to God. As we know, God is an intelligent Being and all-knowing (Psalms 139:1-6). However, even though human beings are finite, they are like God in that they have intelligence. St. Paul speaks of being “renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians iii: 10).

Image includes moral likeness of God. God is holy and love (Isaiah vi:1-3; 1John iv:16). In fact, God has more moral attributes. Thus, humans are expected to share God’s moral characteristics since they were created like God.

Image includes volitional likeness to God. Moral responsibility implies the ability to respond, if not on our own, at least by God’s grace. Essential to morality is volitionality; like God, humans have free choice. God gave Adam an option, saying, “You are free” (Genesis ii: 16), and then held him accountable for this freedom. Likewise, all who have sinned since Adam are held accountable for their sins (Ezekiel xviii: 18-20; Romans xiv: 12).

Image includes the body. Some Christian theologians have commonly limited the image of God to the soul. But their doctrines are opposite to the Biblical teachings. According to the Scripture, mind and body are a unity. Matter is good and reflects God’s glory (Genesis i: 31; Psalms xix:1). Both male and female are in God’s image (Genesis i: 27). Killing a body is wrong because it is included in God’s image

¹⁰ Dr. Norman L. Geisler is Christian theologian and fromer president of Southern Evangelical Seminary n Charlotte, North Carolina.

(Genesis vi: 6). Christ in incarnation body form is called the “image of God” (2 Corinthians iv:4). Resurrection of the body reveals that it is part of the whole person made in God’s image. (Geisler, 2003, p. 450-452)



CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF JOHN HICK'S RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Man, created as a personal being in the image of God, is only the raw material for a further and more difficult stage of God's creative work...that is the finite likeness of God.

John Hick

3.1 Historical Background of John Hick's Approach to The Problem of Evil

John Hick was born in the year 1922. For many years he was Professor of Theology at the University of Birmingham in England. Until his recent retirement, he was Professor of Philosophy at Claremont Graduate School. His 1966 book, *Evil and the God of Love*, is considered one of the most thorough treatises ever written on the problem of evil. There are two different types of theodicy, distinguished by how they justify the ways of God given the fact of evil. The first type of theodicy is the theodicy of St. Augustine. Augustine believes that God created humanity without sin and set it in a sinless, paradisaal world. However, humanity fell into sin through the misuse of free will. But God is the God of love and he plans to save humanity by His grace if human beings believe in Him and accept the grace offered by Him. Those who do not believe in Him and accept his grace will perish everlastingly.

The second type of theodicy stems from the thinking of Irenaeus (AD 120-203), of the Greek Church. The Irenaean tradition views Adam not as a free agent rebelling against God but as a child. The Fall is humanity's first faulty step in the direction of freedom, and God is still working with humanity in order to bring it from undeveloped life (*bios*) to a state of self-realization in divine love and spiritual life

(*zoe*). Human life is viewed as a “vale of soul-making”. Hick favors this version and develops his own solution to the problem of evil from it.

3.2 Hick’s View of the Problem of Evil

As mentioned, Hick favors the theodicy of Irenaeus in solving the problem of evil. Hick sees the Irenaean type of theodicy as more consonant with modern knowledge, freer from mythology and more fully cleansed of morally repugnant ideas. The Irenaean type of theodicy, in its developed form, accepts God’s ultimate omniresponsibility and seeks to show for what good and justifiable reason He created a universe in which evil was inevitable. It is more purely theological in character than the other type of theodicy and is not committed to the Platonic or to any other philosophical framework. Hick writes:

According to the Irenaean type of theodicy, man has been created for fellowship with his Maker and is valued by the personal divine love as an end in himself. The world exists to be an environment for man’s life, and its imperfections are integral to its fitness as a place of soul-making. (Hick, 1997, p. 263)

Hick believes that the “vale of soul-making” theodicy is the better way of solving the problem of evil. Western Christendom, both Catholic and Protestant, have been dominated by the Augustinian tradition. Hick recognizes the Augustinian tradition as a majority report and the Irenaean tradition as a minority report. But Hick asserts that the Irenaean tradition is both older and newer than the Augustinian tradition because it has flourished again in more developed forms during the last hundred years (Hick, 1977, p. 289).

According to Hick, Irenaeus understood man as still in process of creation. He did not agree that man had been created by God in a finished state, a finitely perfect being fulfilling the divine intention for our human level of existence who then fell disastrously away from this finished state. Irenaeus makes a distinction between the “image” and the “likeness” of God referred to in Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Hick, 1977, p. 290). The view of Irenaeus is that man, as a personal and moral being, already exists in the image of God, but has not yet been formed into the finite likeness of God. But the question may be asked: what kind of likeness does Irenaeus mean? How can man obtain this likeness? When will man be able to obtain the likeness of God? Hick writes:

By this “likeness” Irenaeus means something more than personal existence as such; he means a certain valuable quality of personal life which reflects finitely the divine life. This represents the perfecting of man, the fulfillment of God’s purpose for humanity, the “bringing of many sons to glory”, the creating of “children of God” who are “fellow heirs with Christ” of his glory. (Hick, 1977, p. 290)

From above, we can see that man was created as a personal being in the image of God only as raw material. This raw material is prepared for a further and more difficult stage of the creative work of God. Men was created as relatively free and autonomous persons and placed in a world in which they could deal with their own lives, moving toward a quality of personal existence that is the finite likeness of God; “the features of this likeness are revealed in the person of Christ, and the process of man’s creation into it is the work of the Holy Spirit” (Hick, 1977, p. 290).

In regard to likeness of God, St. Paul writes, “And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness (*εικων*) from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 4: 18) Again St. Paul writes, “For God knew his own before ever they were, and also ordained that they should be shaped to the likeness (*εικων*) of his Son” (Romans 8:29). St. John suggests that moving from the image to the likeness of God is the transition from one level of existence to another and higher level. This may be taken as the transition of animal life (*Bios*) to eternal life (*Zoe*) (1 John 3:2). The later transcends the first. Irenaeus sees that the creative process stage of eternal life makes it seem that the fall of man is a failure. Why is it called a failure? The answer would be that the path that God has made for leading mankind to the likeness God could have been uncomplicated. But the “failure”, that is, the Fall, multiplied the risks and made the journey on which God is seeking to lead mankind more complicated.

Hick claims that in the light of modern anthropological knowledge, some form of the two-stage conception of the creation of man, has become almost inescapable for Christian belief. At the least we must recognize as two differentiable stages, first, the fashioning of *homo sapiens* as a product of the long evolutionary process, and, second, his abrupt or continual spiritualization as a child of God. In the first stage, however, we may include the development of man as a rational and responsible person who is capable of a personal relationship with the God who created him. To our anthropomorphic notions, the first stage of the creative process would have been easy for Divine omnipotence.

Hick recounts the creative process through which a creature had been made conscious. Hick writes that the through exercise of creative power, God caused the physical universe to exist. Within this physical universe, the creative power God

continually worked to bring forth organic life. Eventually, organic life became personal life. Thus, when man appeared through the evolution of the forms of organic life, he, as a creature, had been made conscious and had the possibility of fellowship with God.

The second stage of the creative process is different from the first stage. This second stage of the creation of man cannot be performed by omnipotent power. Essentially, personal life is free and self-directing. Humanity cannot be perfected by the command of God. Rather perfection can come only through the unforced responses and the willing co-operation of each human individual, “in their actions and reactions in the world in which God has placed them” (Hick, 1977, p. 291) When men have undergone these experiences, they may become perfected persons; the New Testament calls them “children of God.” Therefore, they cannot be ready-made creatures.

When a person has undergone sufferings and been able to manage those sufferings, it means that he has attained to goodness. He has made the right, responsible choices in what Process philosophers call actual occasions. Hick writes:

The value-judgment that is implicitly being invoked here is that one who has attained to goodness by meeting and eventually mastering temptations, and thus by rightly making responsible choices in concrete situations, is good in a richer and more valuable sense than would be one created *ab initio* in a state either of innocence or of virtue. (Hick, 1977, p. 291)

Hick asserts that human beings are capable of morally achieving goodness of life through their own strength in overcoming temptations, their firmness in accumulating truthful choices and the positive and responsible character that comes from the

investment of costly personal effort. This position is reasonable, Hick maintains, while acknowledging that it cannot be proved that human goodness, which is valuable in the eyes of God, is gradually built up through the long process of the moral effort of human individuals. Hick writes:

I suggest, then, that it is an ethically reasonable judgment, even though in the nature of the case not one that is capable of demonstrative proof, that human goodness slowly built up through personal histories of moral effort has a value in the eyes of the Creator which justifies even the long travail of the soul-making process. (Hick, 1977, p. 292)

It may be seen that this kind of work is developmental and teleological because it is involved with the process of achieving human perfection. In order to create perfected human beings, God must work through this kind of process. Again, however, it is important to understand that this process does not take place through natural and unavoidable freedom, but through a hazardous adventure in individual freedom; this is a pilgrimage within the life of each individual, not a racial evolution. The progressive fulfillment of God's purpose does not entail any corresponding progressive improvement in the moral state of the world. Unquestionably, a development in the ethical situation of humanity from generation to generation is being effected through the building up of individual choices into public institutions. But this involves an accumulation of both evil and good. Therefore, the moral environment of human life many years ago and in the present day is probably the same. However, during this period of time, unnumbered souls have been through the experience of earthly life and the purpose of God has gradually moved towards its fulfillment within each one of them.

Hick insists that God has His aim in creating the world. His aim is “the bringing of many sons unto glory...through sufferings” (Hebrews ii: 10) To the question, “What kind of the world has God created?”, the answer would be that His aim would naturally determine the kind of world He has created. Mostly, anti-theistic writers assume a concept of Divine purpose which is contrary to the Christian conception. They assume that the purpose of a loving God must be to create a hedonistic paradise. To them, if the world is not hedonistically pleasurable, then God either is not loving enough or is not powerful enough to create such a world. They think of the relationship between God and the world as like that of a man building a cage for a pet animal. They argue that if God were a human being, certainly, he would want to make for his pet a pleasurable and healthful place. But if the cage is unpleasant, unhealthful or unsafe, that is evidence of either limited benevolence or limited means, or both. Those who think of the world in this way are those who use the problem of evil as an argument against belief in God. David Hume is one of among these. He writes that if an architect plans to build a house he will build a house that is as comfortable and convenient as possible. If we find anything about the house that causes discomfort, then the architect was not skillful and is not suited to the craft.

Hick writes:

If we find that “the windows, doors, fires, passages, stairs, and the whole economy of the building were the source of noise, confusion, fatigue, darkness, and the extremes of heat and cold” we should have no hesitation in blaming the architect. It would be in vain for him to prove that if this or that defect were corrected greater ills would result: “still you would assert in general, that, if the architect had had skill and good intentions, he might have formed such a plan of the whole, and might have adjusted the parts in such a

manner, as would have remedied all or most of these inconveniences.”
(Hick, 1977, p. 293)

As we all know, there are two stages to being human. The first stage is the biological life of man (*Bios*). At this stage man is immature. He is only in the image of God, still an unperfected creature. The second stage is the personal life of eternal worth (*Zoe*) which we see in Christ. Man at this stage is mature, in the likeness of God, a perfected man of the type we see in Christ. Therefore, God purpose for man is to lead him from the biological life of man (*Bios*) to the personal life of eternal worth (*Zoe*). If we think this supposition is correct, then we need not ask such questions as: “Would an all-powerful and infinitely loving being not create a world of hedonic pleasure and an adorable environment for his human pets?”, or, “Would the architect of the world not create the most pleasant and convenient possible world?” We would rather ask: “Is this the kind of world that God might make as an environment in which moral beings may be fashioned, through their own free insights and responses, into ‘children of God’?” (Hick, 1977, p. 293).

Hick argues that the purpose of God, in our general conception, is not a paradisaal world, but rather a panorama of history in which human possibility may be formed towards the pattern of Christ. Hick finds Hume’s critique of heaven confused. For Hume, heaven ought to be an environment for perfected beings, and this world ought to be an environment for beings who are in process of becoming perfected. Hick continues to argue that we cannot compare men with pets. The environment of a pet is to be made as agreeable as possible. But the environment of men is to be made as one for human children, “who are to grow to adulthood in an environment whose

primary and overriding purpose is not immediate pleasure but the realizing of the most valuable potentialities of human personality” (Hick, 1977, p. 294).

Hick continuously maintains that the characterization of God as the Father in heaven at the heart of the Christian faith is not a merely random illustration, but an analogy that Christians truly believe to be so. When Jesus was on this earth, He portrayed the attitude of God to man, as like the attitude of human parents at their best towards their children. This analogy is the uppermost and sufficient way for us to think about God. The question may be asked: How does the best parental love express itself in its influence upon the environment in which children are to grow up? Hick writes:

I think it is clear that a parent who loves his children, and wants them to become the best human beings that they are capable of becoming, does not treat pleasure as the sole and supreme value. (Hick, 1977, p. 294)

There is no question at all that most of us seek the best things, including pleasure, for our children. Whenever we secure the best things for them, we take great delight in obtaining it for them. However, we do not want them to have only pleasure. Even more we want them to develop moral integrity, unselfishness, compassion, courage, humor, reverence for the truth and above all the capacity for love as they mature. We do not take pleasure as the supreme value. If pleasure conflicts with to some of the above values we had better allow our children to miss some pleasure. There would be no point at all if our children gained pleasure but failed to come into possession of, and to be possessed by, the finer and more precious qualities that are possible to the human personality. Such a child would not be likely to become a virtuously mature adult or an attractive and happy personality. Hick argues that most parents want the

character of their children to be fostered with quality and strength, rather than to fill their lives at all times with the utmost possible degree of pleasure. He writes:

If, then, there is any true analogy between God's purpose for his human creatures, and the purpose of loving and wise parents for their children, we have to recognize that the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain cannot be the supreme and overriding end for which the world exists. Rather, this world must be a place of soul-making. And its value is to be judged, not primarily by the quantity of pleasure and pain occurring in it at any particular moment, but by its fitness for its primary purpose, the purpose of soul-making.

(Hick, 1977, p. 295)

It can be seen that what we have been speaking about is the nature of the world simply considered as the environment that God has given to man. And it is the kind of world in which Irenaeus and the Protestants have been interested. Hick argues that such a way of thinking is in danger of becoming anthropocentric. The Augustinian and Catholic tradition have been protected by a sense of the relative insignificance of man within the totality of the created universe. The countless hosts of angels and archangels above man make of him a midget in the medieval world-view. Unfallen and rational natures rejoice in the immediate presence of God, reflecting His glory in the untarnished mirror of their worship. In our modern world, however, that vision has lost its hold upon the imagination. As a humbler of men, its place has been taken by the immensities of outer space and by the material universe's unlimited complexity transcending our present knowledge. Hick argues that while the spiritual environment visualized by Western man has diminished, his physical horizons have accordingly expended. Where the human creature was formerly seen as an insignificant addition to

angelic world, he is now seen as an equally insignificant organic excrescence, enjoying a fleeting moment of consciousness on the surface of one of the planets of a minor star. Thus Hick writes:

The truth that was symbolized for former ages by the existence of the angelic hosts is today impressed upon us by the vastness of the physical universe, countering the egoism of our species by making us feel that this immense prodigality of existence can hardly all exist for the sake of man—though, on the other hand, the very realization that it is not all for the sake of man may itself be salutary and beneficial to man! (Hick, 1977, p. 296)

Hick does not want us to oppose the interests of God by understanding man and nature as adversaries. Rather we would better emphasize the solidarity of man as an embodied being with the whole natural order in which he is embedded. “For man is organic to the world; all his acts and thoughts and imaginations are conditioned by space and time; and in abstraction from nature he would cease to be human” (Hick, 1968, p. 296). Therefore, we may say that God as the Creator, in His creative act, has embraced man together with nature. He wills and values the beauties, sublimities, and powers, the microscopic intricacies and macroscopic vastnesses, the wonders and the terrors of the world and of the life that pulses through it. God has destroyed the veil between Himself and His creatures by using the matter of the world in making man in His own image. It can be said that nature has permanent significant. Why? Hick continually maintains that God has set man in a creaturely environment. Even in the new heaven and new earth, God will take the form of an embodied life in order to that our nature in relation to Him will be finally fulfilled. In the present age, man moves slowly towards that fulfillment through the pilgrimage of his earthly life.

During the pilgrimage, man has to go through pain and suffering until one day he will be set free from them.

The permanent significance and the value of the natural order should be fully acknowledged. We have to recognize that the special character of man as a personal creature was made in the image of God. Thus, “our theodicy must still center upon the soul-making process that we believe to be taking place within human life” (Hick, 1977, p. 297). Hick is trying to make us to understand the relation between the realities of suffering and the perfect love of an omnipotent Creator. He claims that a theodicy that starts in this way becomes increasingly apparent and must be eschatological in its ultimate bearings. Hick persuades us that a theodicy should not look to the past for its clue to the mystery of evil, but to the future. Hick believes that only faith can look to this ultimate future. God’s intention is to lead man to the perfection of God, the “likeness” of God, which is being beyond human time, through human time (the soul-making process). Our theodicy should be something that helps us to understand that evil is part of the process of soul-making toward the likeness of God. In the whole process, evil leads us to the good; this good is the kingdom of God which is yet to come. This kingdom will be full of glory and permanence. Only a man who has obtained the likeness of God will be able to enter into this kingdom.

3.2.1 Physical Evil

3.2.1.1 Pain

Hick asserts that before the modern scientific study of pain, philosophers thought of pain and pleasure as opposites to the soul. Those philosophers thought of pain as a psychic state rather than as physical sensation. Pain and pleasure were, then, was thought of as standing at opposite ends of what has been called the hedonic scale.

But Hick maintains that the polarization of pain and pleasure is now seen to have been mistaken. Instead, Hick thinks that pleasure is a psychic condition and pain is a physical sensation with its own nerve structure. In this sense, pain has no opposite and is a simply unparalleled, irreducible mode of sensation. Hick proposes that suffering is a psychic state which he calls unpleasure, such as discomfort, distress, anguish, and negative hedonic tone. Suffering, then is the opposite of the psychic state of pleasure. The relationship between pain and suffering is that pain gives rise to suffering. But Hick does not fully agree that suffering is no more than reaction to physical pain. Physical pain is not the most horrible. It is our reaction to many kinds of events and circumstances. For example, “we may suffer also from fear, anxiety, remorse, envy, humiliation, a sense of injustice, the death of someone loved, unrequited affection, personal estrangement, boredom, and frustration of many sorts” (Hick, 1968, p. 329). In point of fact, emotional suffering is quite disconnected from physical pain, but it can grasp us more inwardly and encroach more inexorably upon the center of our personal being. Physical pain is, then, more endurable than emotional suffering.

Hick has clearly shown that there is a distinction between pain as a physical sensation and the psychological reaction to it. With variations of terminology, that distinction appears in most medical discussions of pain. Hick quotes from the textbook *The Relief of Pain* written by Harold Balme: “it is important to remember that there is a vast difference between suffering and pain, either of which may exist without the other, though both are often intimately associated” (Hick, 1977, p. 329). He also quotes from *Studies in Neurology* by Henry Head, MD: “it is necessary at the outset to distinguish clearly between ‘discomfort’ and ‘pain’” (Hick, 1977, p. 329). Pain is a distinct sensory quality equivalent to heat and cold. The intensity of pain can be roughly graded according to the force expended in stimulation. On the other hand,

discomfort is that feeling tone which is directly opposed to pleasure. However, the word “pain” is normally used to cover both the physical stimulus and the associated emotional reaction. This is the most ordinary usage of the word “pain”. Dr. J.D. Hardy has suggested a terminology that incorporates this ordinary usage. Hardy distinguishes between “pain sensation” and “pain experience”. Mostly, the suffering that is normally produced by physical pain and the affective state of distress are included in the pain experience (Hick, 1968, p. 330).

Hick makes the notable point that we cannot actually define pain. It is the same with the other basic sensations, such as those of color or sound. But there is the exception that if the pain is ostensive it can be defined. For example, when a pin is stuck in your flesh or when heat above about forty-five degrees Celsius is applied to your skin, you feel it. That is the sensation of pain. Hick points out that scientists studying pain about a hundred years ago found out that pain was an overloading effect caused by the over-stimulation of any of the sense organs, such as too much heat, cold, pressure, or noise. However, this theory has been generally abandoned in the light of accumulating evidence for the existence of specific pain-receptor nerves, distinct from those that mediate the sensations of touch, heat, and cold. These pain nerves exist virtually all over the surface of the body, but still at definite points which can be mapped by applying a very fine bristle or a minute point of radiant heat.

The pain system is excited by mechanisms that involve direct impact upon the receptor-nerve membrane. This receptor-membrane causes the excitement. But indirectly, it occurs through the effect of intermediary chemical substances which are produced or released from tissue cells surrounding the receptor.

Pain is purely a physical and neurological event. This kind of pain is not yet pain as we actually experience it. Pain as we experience it normally includes an

emotional reaction of suffering, but suffering is not attached to pain in an exact and unchangeable proportion. The pain sensation that causes us to suffer vary immensely both from person to person and from time to time for the same person. When physical pain occurs, a diversity of factors can obstruct the normal feelings of distress. Hick continues to explain that within the human anatomical, even though pain is still felt but it is no longer felt as distressing after a pre-frontal lobotomy in which the nerve connections between the receptor areas of the brain and the frontal lobe are severed. Patients who have had a pre-frontal lobotomy feel pain, but they do not suffer. The pre-frontal lobotomies are performed on patients who have an emotional response to pain and to the associated anxiety and anguish. The suffering and emotional response is reduced, but pain is not reduced. This demonstrates that pain sensation and pain experience are evidently different. Explicitly, “there are separate anatomical pathways for the experience of pain as a sensory quality and the affective awareness of its unpleasantness” (Hick, 1977, p. 331).

Hick notes that distraction and emotion can block pain. In war, soldiers sometimes ignore wounds and injuries and in an athletic contest, athletes sometimes ignore their wounds and injuries. It is the same with martyrs¹¹ when they are sentenced to death. They do not feel the pain when they are persecuted with diverse torments. Psychologists may use hypnotic methods to prevent pain in patients. Medical doctors often use placebos¹² to minimize pain. Humanly speaking, a person whose pain sensation is experienced as being pleasant is a person who has the

11 See the second-century document *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, which says of certain Christian martyrs of that time that “they reached such a pitch of magnanimity, that not one of them let a sigh or a groan escape them; thus proving to us all that those holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when Lord then stood by them, and communed with them” (*Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. 1, chap. 2, cited in Hick, 1968, p. 332).

12 A substance containing no medication that is given merely to humor a patient and used as a control in an experiment.

abnormal masochistic state of mind. Another factor that makes man has less sensitive to pain is the difficulty of life. Wherever civilization has not progressed and people are under the difficult situation, those people are not sensitive to pain. On the other hand, wherever civilization has progressed and people are under comfortable situation, they are sensitive to pain. Hick quotes the writings of the French surgeon *The Surgery of Pain*: “Physical sensibility in men of to-day is very different from what it was in our ancestors.” The same author professed to have found differences of physical sensibility to pain among different nationalities (Hick, 1977, p. 333).

The question may be asked, “Has pain a biological value?” After long observation, Hick has found out that the pain-receptor system is less sensitive than the other sensory systems. Pain is caused by stimuli powerful enough to damage the body. J.D. Hardy writes, “Pain results from noxious stimulation which indicates the beginning of damage to the pain-fiber ending” (Hick, 1968, p. 333). Hick quotes two views of pain from Sauerbruch and Wenke. Firstly, pain is produced by a strong stimulus; strong stimuli disorganize the tissue and are deleterious to living things and their organic functions. Secondly, pain stimuli are those which in the event of their intensification would soon have deleterious and destructive effects threatening the tissue.

According to the Hick’s studies, the pain-receptor system is in contrast to the other organs in term of its reaction to diverse forms of stimulation. For instance, while the ears are sensitive only to sound, pain nerves are sensitive to every kind of environmental infringement upon the organism that is violent enough to inflict damage. So it is suggested that pain has biological value because it functions as a warning signal. Hick quotes from the medical text, *The Relief of Pain* by Balme:

In the first place, pain serves as a means of alarm, drawing our attention to injury or disease of which we might not otherwise be conscious...It is the symptom of all others which induces a patient to seek the expert advice of a physician or surgeon. Its demands are clamant, and of a nature that cannot usually be ignored...In the second place, pain acts as an invaluable deterrent, preserving us from experiments of a dangerous or injurious nature...In the third place the sense of pain helps to create that condition of voluntary immobilization of an inflamed or injured part which the peripheral sympathetics are attempting to secure, and which is so essential a factor in bringing about a cure. (Hick, 1977, p. 334)

According to this standard medical text, it can be seen that pain greatly has a biological value. For some diseases or sicknesses that man has, the symptoms might sometimes not be consciously felt. It may be too late when we feel the pain. Hick quotes two classic statements of this position which were made by Sauerbruch and Wenke:

Pain, the great torturer of all living things, serves nevertheless as the preserver of life, and we could not do without it. It must therefore be regarded as a benefactor to all living things. Pain is one of those protective arrangements which exist in all organisms, and gives the alarm in times of danger, thereby setting the defensive mechanism in operation. (Hick, 1977, p. 334-335)

Hick claims, however, that the above principle can be stated too extensively and unthinkingly. In general, even though pain is invaluable as a warning sign and the species probably could not survive without it, the severity of pain is by no means

always proportional to the gravity of the danger to which it relates. Hick argues that pain does not always indicate a serious threat to life. For example, a toothache can produce a violent pain, but a toothache involves no serious and imminent threat to life or limb. In contrast, sometimes pain, caused by very grave and even fatal disorders, comes only when the disease is far advanced. These diseases include, for example, cancer, peritonitis, coronary thrombosis, and sclerosis of the blood vessels. For such diseases when the “warning” of their existence comes it is no longer functional as such. In protesting against the commonly accepted doctrine of the protective value of pain, Hick Dr. Rene Leriche’s, *The Surgery of Pain*:

Reaction of defense? Fortunate warning? But, as a matter of fact, the majority of diseases, even the most serious, attack us without any warning. Nearly always, the disease is a drama in two acts, the first of which is played secretly in the silent depths of our tissues, every light extinguished, and not even a candle lit. When pain develops, nearly always the second act has been reached. It is too late. The issue has already been determined, and the end is near. The pain has only made more distressing and more sad a situation already long lost...If nature had any consideration for us, if she had the kindly attributes which we ascribe to her, it is not when a renal calculus can no longer be passed by the natural channels that she would warn us, but rather at the stage when it is not more than fine debris, and could easily be got rid of. One must reject, then, this false conception of beneficent pain. In fact, pain is always a baleful gift, which reduces the subject of it, and makes him more ill than he would be without it. (Hick, 1977, p. 335)

What can be understood from this quotation is that Leriche is evidently thinking of pain in its relation to organic disease. In Leriche's view, pain may be ambivalent. Pain sometimes constitutes the most useful warning sign. When a person has pain in his abdomen, it can be the warning sign of appendicitis; a stomach-ache may warn of indigestion and cause a temporary healthful abstention from food; an ear-ache may indicate an infection of the inner ear, toothache an abscess, and so on. But there are many cases in which pain serves no useful warning function. Further, even when it does, sufferers were unable to profit from the warning before the days of modern medicine and surgery, and even now is of use only in those parts of the world where these are available. Even though the pain mechanism may be considered a warning system relating to disease, it is generally clumsy and inefficient. Regarded solely from this point of view, it is questionable whether pain does more good or more harm.

As the matter of fact, the human organism is well adapted to survive. Hick claims that pain, perhaps, has biological value in a different sphere and only incidentally. Possibly the primary function of pain relates to the normal state of health rather than to the exceptional state of disease. Instead of with the internal condition of a diseased organism, it perhaps has primarily to do with the healthy animal's management of itself within the external environment. Pain is able to help mobile animals, including man, to be able to observe certain basic procedures of self-preservation which have been learned in large part. Hick writes:

We have found it painful to have our bodies collide at speed with large, hard, solid objects, such as rocks and trees, or walls and doors; or to go close to a burning fire; or to fall from a height on to a hard surface; or to let a limb be cut a sharp edge or torn by strong teeth. All this, and much more, is invaluable knowledge of the pre-verbal dispositional kind which is common to man and

the lower animals...The cat avoids going too near the fire because it has been conditioned by the pain of excessive heat to remain at a proper distance. We are careful with sharp knives because at some time we have been cut by them and have found this painful. In these elementary and primitive ways we have all learned how to guide our movements successfully within our material environment. (Hick, 1977, p. 336-337)

Hick claims that our capacity for pain is biologically defensible. Disease is not the normal state of the living things. Pain as a warning system would be something of a biological luxury, but movement about the material world is our daily occupation. Therefore, pain is a necessity for the living things that live among this movement because it gives them a capacity of self-preservation. The body has been adapted by evolution for survival as a vulnerable fleshy organism living amidst a firm and inflexible world. We find that the pain system that has developed to meet this basic need is partly useful but partly merely distressing when the body is diseased.

In part XI of his book *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, David Hume has formulated another challenge to the view that our capacity for pain has a positive biological value. Hume makes four “complaints” about the role of pain in the world of sensible creatures. The first complaint is the occurrence of pain as well as of pleasure in motivating creatures to action. Hume’s position here has been questioned by Hick. Hick asks, “why should we be moved by a diminution of pleasure instead of being driven by pain to those actions that are necessary to our survival and well-being?” In *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* Hume writes:

Now pleasure alone, in its various degrees, seems to human understanding sufficient for this purpose. All animals might be constantly in a state of

enjoyment; but when urged by any of the necessities of nature, such as thirst, hunger, and weariness; instead of pain, they might feel a diminution of pleasure, by which they might be prompted to seek that object, which is necessary to their subsistence. Men pursue pleasure as eagerly as they avoid pain; at least, they might have been so constituted. It seems, therefore, plainly possible to carry on the business of life without any pain. Why then is any animal ever rendered susceptible of such a sensation? (Hick, 1977, pp. 338-339)

Hick feels that this statement seems to be practical as it is benevolent. However, Hick finds that there is a flaw in it. As we know, the modern scientific investigation of pain has shown that there is a distinction between physical sensation and psychic pain experience, with its affective quality of suffering. We need to remember that the psychological phenomenon of hedonic tone is relative and variable. A given experience does not have an absolute place on the hedonic scale. Its position consists in its relation to other experiences that are more pleasant or less pleasant than itself. Moreover, even this relative position varies with circumstances. When one has become habituated to a primarily unpleasant situation, one will feel less unpleasant than it was at first; so his experience may rise in the hedonic scale.

Hick argues that if we visualize the hedonic scale by putting the pleasant at the top, the unpleasant at the bottom and the hedonically neutral at the mid-point, then Hume's suggestion would be to cut off the lower half of the scale. But given to the purely relative character of the scale, this cannot be done. We could not cut off the lower half of the scale and leave the upper half as it was. All that we should be doing is to reduce by half the range of contrast. The lower half of the remaining scale would

now be the unpleasant, and the upper one half the pleasant; but the pleasant would no longer be as pleasant as it was, nor the unpleasant as unpleasant as it was. We might decrease the scale of hedonic values, but we could only prevent it from being a scale of more pleasant and less pleasant by contracting it down to a single point of hedonic neutrality. Hick has suggested that in order to fulfill the function of what was formerly called pain or discomfort, it must be sufficiently unpleasant to drive the organism to eat, for example. There must be sufficient contrast between the greater pleasure which has been lost and the lesser pleasure remaining, to drive organisms to take the action to remedy the situation.

How are pain and the structure of the world related? What Hick discusses here is Hume's ideas of the general structure of the world. This is Hume's second complaint. Hick quoted from Hume:

A capacity of pain would not alone produce pain were it not for the second circumstance, viz., the conducting of the world by general law; and this seems nowise necessary to a very perfect Being...If everything in the universe be conducted by general laws, and if animals be rendered susceptible of pain, it scarcely seems possible but some ill must arise in the various shocks of matter and the various concurrence and opposition of general law.

(Hick, 1977, p. 340)

In this view, animal organisms are part of the material world and subject to its general causal regularities. These involve that two solid objects cannot occupy the same region of space at the same time, and that a certain degree of heat destroys the tissues of the body. But in a world of fixed structure, animals are liable to collide with solid obstacles, to be submerged in water or burned by fire, to fall on hard ground or to

become entangled with projecting branches and be injured. But animal organisms naturally have a protective sensitivity to pain; it prompts them to avoid or retreat from dangerous situations in order to live out their lifespan. Inevitably, this mechanism will be used; and in the course of their lives, they will experience not a little pain (Hick, 1977, p. 341).

Hume argues that if God is omnipotent then he could presumably have created a world in which such collisions would be systemically prevented by special adjustments to the course of nature, instead of having created a world in which pain is produced. In this kind of world, animal organisms would not have to learn to move about circumspectly, because all serious hazards would be obviated by a complex system of avoidance or transformation. Within such a world each living creature would be individually watched over by a miracle-working guardian angel charged with a protecting the creature from pain. For example, the heat of fire normally gives us vital warmth, but also burns us if we put our hand in it. In Hume's imagined world, fire would lose its heat whenever it was about to cause pain. Water has certain properties in virtue of which it can both sustain life by slaking our thirst and destroy life by suffocation. Water would lose these properties whenever someone is in danger of drowning. Knives can cut both bread and flesh and but when about to cut flesh, would become blunt rather than to cause hurt. Food is pleasant to taste but hard to digest, alcohol warms and cheers us, in excess, make us drunken sots and dangerous drivers.

It is apparent that the density and hardness of things make it possible to walk and to build houses, but we can be killed or injured by a flying stone or a swinging stick. In Hume's world those qualities would be continually adjusted for the avoidance of pain. Thus, life would no longer be carried on in a stably structured

environment whose laws we must learn on penalty of pain and death. But it would be life in an environment that responded to our own desires.

Hick argues that such a reordering of nature would throw off the whole process of evolution in which the forms of life evolve under the pressure of the struggle to survive within a relatively stable environment. In a world which lacked a stable relationship of natural law that inflicts pain upon individuals and extinction upon species that do not adapted to its demands, the evolutionary process could not have progress beyond its earliest stages. This means the world would be only inhabited by jellyfish.

Thus, Hick continues his argument, if we want to retain man in our reordered world we must suppose that these pain-avoiding suspensions of natural law come into operation only after man has emerged from the long evolutionary struggle. And if man did not encounter such struggles, then in such a rearranged world there would be no need to comprehend nature or to learn to predict and manipulate its movements. In a world that continues to provide special providences, the laws of nature would have to be extremely flexible. For example, sometimes gravity will operate, sometimes not, sometimes an object would be hard and solid, sometimes not, and sometimes boiling water would be hot, sometimes cool, and so on. There could be no science, for there would be no enduring world structure to investigate. The human story would not include the development of the physical sciences and technologies. There would be no exercise of man's intelligence and man's adaptive resourcefulness would not be drawn out. In a painless world man would not have to earn his living by the sweat of his brow or the ingenuity of his brain. If we dismiss all pain we also dismiss severe hunger and thirst and excessive heat or cold. Man would not have to do anything for his living. Human existence would involve,

no need for exertion, no kind of challenge, no problem to be solved or difficulties to be overcome, no demand of the environment for human skill or inventiveness. There would be nothing to avoid and nothing to seek; no occasion for co-operation or mutual help; not stimulus to the development of culture or the creation of civilization. The race would consist of feckless Adam and Eve, harmless and innocent, but devoid of positive character and without the dignity of real responsibilities, tasks, and achievements. By eliminating the problems and hardships of an objective environment, with its own laws, life would become like a reverie in which, delightfully but aimlessly, we should float and drift at ease. (Hick, 1977, p. 313)

Hume argues the undesirability of a world specially designed and administered for the avoidance of all pain. Hick argues that such a world would not be desirable. He argues that each life's evils may perhaps be necessary to obtain a greater good. Our liability to pain teaches us to live successfully in an objective material environment. There is no doubt that our creaturely vulnerability has been the spur to human culture and civilization. Hick wants his readers to consider the general aim or purpose which motivated the act of creation of an omnipotent Creator. The question should be asked whether the world could have been better in relation to that purpose. In order to formulate our conception of the Divine intention, we must set aside the naturalistic assumptions of Hume, in particular the assumption that the good is the maximum of pleasure with the minimum of pain. We should rather adopt the view that the Divine purpose behind the world is soul-making.

Now it is time to discuss animal pain. The question may be raised: does an all-powerful and infinitely loving Creator permit the pain and mass killing of animal life?

John Stuart Mill wrote, “If there are any marks at all of special design in creation, one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals. They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments necessary for that purpose; their strongest instincts impel them to it, and many of them seem to have been constructed incapable of supporting themselves by any other food. If a tenth part of the pains which have been expended in finding benevolent adaptations in all nature, had been employed in collecting evidence to blacken the character of the Creator, what scope for comment would not have been found in the entire existence of the lower animals, divided, with scarcely an exception, into devourers and devoured, and a prey to a thousand ills from which they are denied the faculties necessary for protecting themselves!” (Mill, 1998, p. 58)

Hick suggests that the subject of animal pain must remain largely a field for contemplation and theoretical interpretation. He holds that we cannot proceed into the consciousness of the lower species, and that we cannot even prove that they have consciousness. However, Hick gives us sufficient evidence of some degree of consciousness and of the experience of pain in animals. This evidence makes it very difficult to deny that animals too have the problem of pain. Hick has introduced some evidence. Firstly, it can be observed that the common evolutionary process of man indicates that man’s brain and consciousness differs from that of the animals only by degree instead of absolutely. It would be surprising if only man experienced pain. Secondly, when a higher animal is in the same situation in which a human would feel terrible pain, it behaves in ways similar to which a human would behave. It cries out and struggles to escape from. This means that an animal can pass through the experience of pain the same as can as a human. Evidently, some of the higher animals

not only experience physical pain but also a degree of non-physical suffering, such as loneliness, fear, jealousy, and even bereavement. Thirdly, the physical structure, especially the sensory and nervous systems, of the other vertebrates is basically similar to that of man. Some mammals have nervous appliances. Human beings also have these appliances which are known to mediate the sensation of pain. This evidence is sufficient to show that mammals do feel pain. Fourthly, the higher vertebrates can be taught to react to both pleasure and pain. Experiments in which certain actions bring rewards and other actions bring electric shock have shown that pain plays a role in the learning process. Thus, adaptation to the environment constitutes the biological justification of pain (Hick, 1977, p. 347). Hick confidently states:

For everything said above about the survival value of the pain mechanism in man applies to those of the lower animals that have a sufficiently developed nervous system to be able to feel pain. Neither the human nor the sub-human animal could survive if it did not quickly learn, under the insistence tutorship of pain, how to guide itself as a vulnerable bodily creature moving about in a relatively hard and rigid world of matter. Given that there are animal organisms with a degree of individual spontaneity, and inhabiting a common environment governed by causal regularities, the liability to pain must be a part of their equipment for survival. (Hick, 1977, p. 347)

What about the lower vertebrates, such as fish and insects, do they feel pain? Some very different answers have been given to this question. On one extreme it has been claimed that even the beetle feels pain the same as a giant feels pain. On the other

extreme, it has been claimed that the lower vertebrates feel no pain. Hick quotes the naturalist Theodore Wood:

When a crab will calmly continue its meal upon a smaller crab while being itself leisurely devoured by a larger and stronger; when a lobster will voluntarily and spontaneously divest itself of its great claws if a heavy gun be fired over the water in which it is lying; when a dragon-fly will devour fly after fly immediately after its abdomen has been torn from the rest of its body, and a wasp sip syrup while laboring, I will not say suffering, under a similar mutilation; it is quite clear that pain must practically be almost or altogether unknown. (Hick, 1968, p. 120)

Hick does not agree with Wood's conclusions, even though the illustrations may be quite accurate. He argues that the fact that a crab has a built-in apparatus for divesting itself of its claws as an escape mechanism does not mean that crabs do not have the capacity to feel pain in other circumstances. For example, when one tries to catch a crab it will protect itself by using its claws to snap at one's hand. This indicates that it fears being hurt. While insects are intently doing some instinctive operation, such as eating or carrying food, they may be insensitive to what is happening to them, but they may not be similarly insensitive at other times. Thus it is dangerous to conclude that the lower vertebrates have no sensations of pain, even though their sensations of pain may be only obscure or momentary. Lower invertebrates, such as the sea anemone, have no central nervous system at all, so it is improbable that they have conscious experiences.

Hick maintains that the problem of pain in the lower vertebrates and higher vertebrates cannot be denied. Hick claims that these lower animals do feel pain. This

feeling of pain occurs within the general system, whereby organic life is able to survive by reacting to its environment through a nervous system which steers the individual away from danger by means of sensations of pain.

As being able to feel pain, the situation of animals is different from the situation of men. Most human beings die because their bodily fabric and its function eventually wear out. But most animals are violently killed and devoured by other species preying upon them. The animal kingdom forms a vast self-sustaining organism in which every part becomes food for another part, directly or indirectly. Good and evil for animals is exclusively a matter of the present moment. In general, the animal lives from instant to instant, either healthy and presumably active or in a pleasant state of slow movement. We can imagine that fear and pain in animal life is quite unjustified. In comparison, we mostly project human qualities of experience into creatures of a much lower and simpler order. Thus, death is not a problem to the animals, as it is to us.

It is obvious that the significant question for theodicy is not why animals are liable to pain as well as to pleasure, but rather why these lower forms of life should exist at all. Within its own presuppositions, Christian theology can help us to understand why the human creature exists. The reason is that man is a rational and moral being who may freely respond to the love of his Maker and become a child of God and heir to eternal life. But this does not include the lower animals because they are lacking a rational and moral nature. So the existence of those animals remains a problem.

Hick draws us back to Augustine and how he resolves this problem by means of the principle of plenitude. Hick writes:

The infinite divine nature expresses itself in the creation of very grade of dependent being, from the highest to the lowest, and accordingly the created world includes not only man but also monkeys and dogs and snakes and snails and germs. Each level of life makes its own valid contribution to the harmonious perfection of the whole; and the preying of life upon life is a proper feature of the lower ranges of the animal creation, where individuals are but fleeting ripples in a flowing stream of animate life. Thus the sub-human animals exist because they represent possible forms of being, and therefore of goodness, and because their existence is accordingly necessary to the fullness of the created world (Hick, 1977, p. 350).

Hick finds that modern theologians have been more troubled than were the ancients by the evil of animal pain and by the spectacle of nature. In recent developments within the Augustinian tradition, the suggestion has been made that both the natural order and the realms of animal life have been affected and perverted by the fall of man and the prior fall of the angels. This has caused the various species to attack and to devour one another (Lewis, 1940, p. 106).

If we are not satisfied with these theories, is there any preferred way to relate sub-human life to the creative activity of God? For the Christian theologian, we may start from the purpose of God for man as revealed in the person and life of Jesus Christ; and then try to work outwards from this center towards an understanding of animal life. Another possible approach is the concept of epistemic distance, that man's embeddedness within a larger stream of organic life may be one of the conditions of his cognitive freedom in relation to the infinite Creator. In relation to animals, man sees himself like those animals, made of the dust of the earth. But man's

awareness of God is not forced. He has freedom to respond to his unseen Maker. Hick states that, "Protestant theology has generally affirmed that the animals exist for the sake of man, but has interpreted this in terms of man's rule over the lower creation" (Hick, 1977, p. 351). Another, more fundamental, approach considering Divine purpose, is that sentient nature supports and serves its human crowning point by helping to make up an independent natural order within which man is organically related freely to God who has bestowed upon him the autonomous status of a person. Man needs this help because he exists at an epistemic distance from God.

According to St. Paul, man has the hope of eternal life. St. Paul writes, "Because the creation itself will be delivered from its bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans viii: 21). The question is, what is the meaning of this eschatological hope and can it contribute a Christian theodicy in respect of animal pain? To Hick, it does not seem that eschatological new heaven and earth, with a new animal creation, would relieve the problem of animal pain since sentient life first appeared; no future state of the universe could be relevant to the pains that these creatures have already undergone. Hick is extremely doubtful whether a zoological paradise filled with pleasure and devoid of pain, could be rewarding for creatures that do not have conscious memories to carry past experiences with them.

Hick maintains that the problem of animal pain is indistinguishable from the problem of animal existence alluded to above. From the point of view of the divine purpose, soul-making, animal life may be linked with human life as the latter's natural origin and environment. Because of these, an origin and environment exist which contribute to the epistemic distance by which man is able to exist as a free and responsible creature in the presence of his infinite Creator. If the animal kingdom plays its part in this indirect way in forming man into a child of God in this "Seven

days of creation”, the process must be justified by its success. The animal is thus subordinate to that of human sin and suffering and a theodicy in respect of these evils requires for its completion a positive Christian eschatology (Hick, 1977, p. 352).

3.2.1.2 Suffering

In defining the words so as to mark an important distinction within human experience, Hick differentiates between “pain” on one hand and “suffering” on the other. Pain is a specific physical sensation; suffering is a mental state which may be as complex as human life itself. The persistence of pain is sometimes an ingredient in suffering, but not on every occasion or even normally.

Hick has persuaded us that affliction is a quality of experience which is not easily and clearly described to someone who has never undergone it. In fact, we are able to conceive of personal creatures that have always been entire free from affliction. As human beings, nevertheless, we are not just a species and so we have no difficulty in communicating with one another about the forms of human misery. Hick has suggested that suffering is a state of mind; if it were possible we would want to be in a situation in which there were no suffering at all. Such a state of mind involves memory, and anticipation. The characteristic elements of human suffering are relationally complicated and include high-level modes of consciousness, such as “regret, remorse, anxiety, despair, guilt, shame, embarrassment, the loss of someone loved, the sense of rejection, of frustrated wishes, and of failure” (Hick, 1977, p. 354-355). These are different from physical pain at the least in that they refer beyond the present moment.

It is a crucial tenant of the Christian faith that suffering is a function of sin. It is because we allow ourselves to become involved in sin that our human experience can

become an experience of suffering. It would not be excessively difficult to be free from anguish and affliction if we were fully conscious of God and His universal purpose of good. By recognizing this, we would be able to accept life in its entirety as God's gift. We can also say that self-centeredness and other-centeredness cause suffering. My own interests and the interests of others are different. Interests may spring from self-concern or from sympathy. This characteristic is relevant to the theological question whether Christ, as one who was sinless, can have experienced suffering. Hick suggests that, in general, our human sufferings are self-regarding; we wish for our own sake that our situation were otherwise. But Christ's suffering was other-regarding anguish. For example, Jesus Christ wept in sorrow over Jerusalem on account of others. Christ was God incarnate. That does not mean that He did not suffer, but he did not selfishly suffer as we suffer.

Our concern with suffering here is: What is the cause of suffering? Is it possible that pain is the cause of suffering? If the answer is yes, then how can it become the cause? If the answer is no, then what is the cause of suffering?

It seems that Hick does not give a definite metaphysical determined answer to these questions. But he gives an existential answer. He says that more often than not, pain occurs in interplay with other factors. We have learned that pain can sometimes be such as to cause the pain itself to become enduring. In war, a wound may release a soldier from intolerable strain and danger. It offers peace with honor, rest, comfort and home. Hick states:

The excitement of adventure, the zest of new experiences, the joy of discovery and achievement, the pride of triumphing over difficulties, may be able to absorb a good deal of pain from minor injuries, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, tired limbs and aching muscles, and the other hazards and hardships of the climb

or the hunt or the voyage or expedition. If this were not so, adventurous people would not climb the world's greatest mountains, or sail solo across the Atlantic, or explore the polar regions and the parched deserts, or undertake any of the thousand and one great and small designs that are attempted every day for the sake of the sheer adventure of the attempt and the special satisfaction of the accomplishment. (Hick, 1977, p. 336)

Hick believes that the greater part of human misery transcends physical pain. He argues that pain itself does not cause suffering, but other elements in the situation, such as fear of permanent disability or death, anxiety about one's family, or finances, or career, the frustration of one's plans, or the humiliation of helplessness and of dependence upon others. What makes misery severe is the fear of future. The lives of people in various developed countries are darkened by the fear of an uncertain future. This is one of the reasons why many of the "richest nations in the world have highest rates of suicide, drug addiction, alcoholism, divorce, and juvenile delinquency."¹³

Hick emphasizes more his argument that physical pain cannot drive men to take their own lives, but more complex spiritual causes such as anxiety, fear, and remorse, failure in personal relationships, or a terrible, engulfing inner emptiness and despair. Hume agrees Hick on this point, in emphasizing the sufferings of the soul as much as the threats of surrounding nature. Hume writes:

13 For a number of reasons, precise comparative figures measuring human misery are difficult to obtain. Nevertheless a general correlation is evident between high standards of living and a high incidence of the symptoms of unhappiness mentioned above. For example, the highest divorce figures for 1948 (number of divorces per 1,000 marriages in the preceding decade) were: U.S.A., 248.1, France, 207.2, Denmark, 193.3; England and Wales, 138.5; Sweden, 115.2 (Woytinsky, 1953, pp. 187 f.). Other figures are likewise very high for the wealthiest communities. For example, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica Year Book*, 1963 (p. 671), "Benjamin Pasamanick's study of an urban population has indicated that one person in eight at a single point in time suffers from a psychiatric disorder." In another field, *The New York Times* reported on 30 November 1964, that in highly affluent Westchester County in New York State there were 23,000 alcoholics under treatment (Hick, 1968, p. 356-357).

The disorders of the mind, though more secret, are not perhaps less dismal and vexatious. Remorse, shame, anguish, rage, disappointment, anxiety, fear, dejection, despairs; who has ever passed through life without cruel inroad from these tormentors? How many have scarcely ever felt any better sensations? Labor and poverty, so abhorred by everyone, are the certain lot of the far greater number: And those few privileged persons who enjoy ease and opulence, never reach contentment or true felicity.' In this point it seems Hume speaks the truth, but when he continues this talk, it looks like he turns away from that truth. Hume continues to say, 'All the goods of life united would make a wretch indeed; and any one of them almost (and who can be free from every one?), nay, often the absence of one good (and who can possess all?) is sufficient to render life ineligible. (Hume, 1990, p. 106)

Hick argues that it is a great mistake to undervalue the degree of human suffering because it exceeds our imagination. But, he maintains, it is also a great mistake to underestimate the degree of human pleasure and happiness and hope.

Life can be grey and grim; but it can also contain great and wide pockets of light and happiness, of beauty and charm. There are many joys within the world of persons, love and courting, parenthood, the fun of family life, friendship and loyalty, the service of stirring human causes. There is the world around us, the trees and clouds, mountains and lakes and valleys and seas and flowers and grass and animals; and the kind of day that is so saturated with warmth and beauty. (Hick, 1977, p. 358)

Many kinds of deep satisfaction and fulfillment can make one thankful for being alive in the world as it is. We have to believe that the sum of contentment and happiness is greater than the sum of misery. Indeed, misery will be ours if we think that life is not worthwhile. It is important to be certain that even when we live amidst pain and distress there is hope of a better future. However, even if we agree that there is more human contentment than human misery, that would not solve the problem of evil. The basic problems of theodicy would arise even if the sum of man's sufferings were only half or less than the sum of his happiness and contentment.

Still the question will be asked: is a world not possible where there would be no suffering at all? If we are seeking to understand human misery in the context of theodicy, we need to ask rather whether a world with no suffering would serve what we suppose to be God's purpose: soul-making. Man was created by God in the "image" of God through a long evolutionary process. We know this well. But the question is: can man grow toward the finite "likeness" of God without suffering? In fact, man brings suffering upon himself and upon his fellows through his own selfishness, greed, cruelty and lovelessness. Thus, if man needs to be endowed with freedom in relation to God, he must come to Him with unforced faith and love. He must initially be set at an epistemic distance from the Creator. But when man is so circumstanced, it is very difficult for him not center his life upon himself rather than upon God. He would mostly put himself at the center. In order to draw himself back to the personal infinite, the price of fallenness has to be paid. Thus the sinfulness from which man is must be redeemed and the human suffering which flows from that sinfulness have, in their own paradoxical way, a place within Divine providence. This place is supposed not to exist but rather to be abolished. Sin and its attendant

suffering, as responses to God's plan, are not to contribute any value intrinsic to themselves.

However, we have already seen that a world without pain would lack the stimuli to motivate hunting, agriculture, building, social organization and developing the science and technology which have been essential foci human civilization and culture. Hick writes, "if we now expand into the future the notion of a painless world into one in which there is no suffering of any kind, we shall find that the integral character of the present order entails that more would be lost even than civilization and culture" (Hick, 1977, p. 360).

In his second complaint concerning the universe, David Hume makes two suggestions, one more and one less radical. The more radical suggestion is this: Might not the Deity exterminate all ill, wherever it were to be found; and produce all good, without any preparation or long progress of causes and effects (Hume, 1990, p. 116)? In other words, might not God directly intervene in the workings of nature to prevent any occasion of suffering and to produce a maximum of pleasure and happiness (Hick, 1977, p. 360)?

It may be answered that even though God is omnipotent, He could not. Hick urges us to think carefully about Hume idea. In a world in which God intervenes in every occasion of possible suffering and to produce a maximum of pleasure and happiness, wrong actions could never have bad effects, and no carelessness or ill judgment could ever lead to harmful consequences. For example, if one man were to try to murder another, his bullet would melt harmlessly into thin air, or the blade of his knife turn to paper. Misrepresentation, deceit, criminal plans and betrayal of one's country would not, somehow, damage the structure of society. If a man were to drive a car at breakneck speed along a narrow road and hit someone walking on that road,

miraculously the victim would be unharmed. Or if someone fell from the tenth floor of the building, gravity would be partially suspended and he would float gently to the ground, and so on.

It is evident, again, that in this kind of the world, moral qualities would no longer have any point or value. There would be, Hick holds, nothing wrong with stealing, because no one would ever lose anything by it, there would be no such crime as murder, because no one could be killed. There would be no morally wrong or morally right action. It would be, Hick continues, a world without need for the virtues of self-sacrifice, care for others, devotion to the public good, courage, perseverance, skill or honesty. It would indeed be a world in which such qualities, having no function, would never come into existence (Hick, 19677: p. 361).

It is significant that the most important of all, the capacity to love, would never be developed, except in a very limited sense of the word, in a world with no suffering. The family is built from the most mature and valuable form of love in human life, that between a man and a woman. This love can grow into a jointly facing the tasks of creating a home together and bearing of one another's burdens through all the length of a lifetime. We can express this kind of love more fully through the mutual giving, helping and sharing in times of difficulty. Hick says that, "Such love presupposes a real life in which there are obstacles to be overcome, tasks to be performed, goals to be achieved, setbacks to be endured, problems to be solved, and dangers to be met" (Hick, 1977, p. 362).

Hick argues that there could never be such world, a ready-made Utopia.¹⁴ From the human point of view, we have seen that our world is a world with rough edges, a

¹⁴ Plato's Republic depicts the perfect State, an imagined society embodying the principles of justice. It is frequently spoken of as utopian, and indeed, Plato himself acknowledges that his ideal state

place in which man can live only by the sweat of his brow, and which continually presents him with challenges, uncertainties and dangers (Hick, 1977, p. 362).

Hume's less radical suggestion is this: That God would not interfere in the workings of nature to such an extent that no objective order remains, but would intervene only secretly and on special occasions to prevent exceptional and excessive evils (Hick, 1977, p. 363). Hume continues:

A fleet, whose purposes were salutary to society, might always meet with a fair wind. Good princes enjoy sound health and long life: Persons born to power and authority be framed with good tempers and virtuous dispositions. (Hume, 1990, p. 117)

This suggestion is noticeably more plausible than the first suggestion; yet, it is not free from difficulty. Hick suggests that particular evils can be exceptional only in relation to other evils that are regular or normal. If God secretly eliminated only the worst of evils, what of those that remain? In Hick's example, if God's providence eliminated Hitler when was still a baby then we might point instead to Mussolini as an exemplification of a human brute whom God ought secretly to have excised from the human race. Or, if there were no Mussolini, we would point to someone else. Again, if God secretly prevented the Second World War, then what about the First World War, or the American Civil War (Hick, 1977, p. 363)? What Hick means here is that the range of evil would be reduced if God secretly prevented exceptional evils and there would be nowhere to stop. Moral responsibility would be eliminated; the drama of man's story would be reduced to the level of a television series. If we knew that

could never be fully realized in any actual society; the most that can be hoped for is an approximation to the utopian ideal (Thilly, 1965, p. 93).

severe events would not occur, there would be little point in fighting for righteousness and human dignity, because they would be unrealistic.

Now let us consider the Hume's third complaint. He holds that man is too sparsely endowed with power and, in particular, with the capacity of being steadfast.

To support this point, Hume writes:

In order to cure most of the ills of human life, I require not that man should have the wings of the eagle, the swiftness of the stag, the force of the ox, the arms of the lion, the scales of the crocodile or rhinoceros; much less do I demand the sagacity of an angel or cherubim. I am contented to take an increase in one single power or faculty of his soul. Let him be endowed with a greater propensity to industry and labor; a more vigorous spring and activity of mind; a more constant bent to business and application...Almost all the moral, as well as natural evils of human life arise from idleness; and were our species, by the original constitution of their frame, exempt from this vice or infirmity, the perfect cultivation of land, the improvement of arts and manufactures, the exact execution of every office and duty, immediately follow; and men at once may fully reach that state of society, which is so imperfectly attained by the best-regulated government. (Hume, 1990, p. 118)

At first glance, according to Hick, this seems to be an enlightened and constructive proposal. But at the same time, there is a flaw in this statement. It is not quite wrong to say that if every man were endowed with double dose of industry and perseverance then men would labor twice as hard to achieve their goals. But the same time evil men would work twice as hard as for evil ends. At the result, criminals would be more

diligent and the police would more active in their efforts to frustrate them. The world, as a result would be in an even more dangerous state than it is now.

Hume's fourth complaint of Hume concerns the various elements of the world order, which in themselves, are good, such as wind, rain, heat. Hick also feels that this complaint has raised unsolvable problems. For example, Hume writes:

The winds are requisite to convey the vapors along the surface of the globe, and to assist men in navigation: But how often, rising up to tempests and hurricanes, do they become pernicious? Rains are necessary to nourish all the plants and animals of the earth; but how often are they defective? How often excessive? Heat is requisite to all life and vegetation; but is not always found in the due proportion. On the mixture and secretion of the humors and juices of the body depend the health and prosperity of the animal: But the parts perform not regularly their proper function. (Hume, 1990, p. 120)

The Divine purpose, soul-making, must be considered here. In order to serve God's purpose, the environment cannot be a permanent hedonistic paradise but must offer to man real tasks, challenges and problems. Having come to this point, some questions should have been raised. Does the world need to contain the more extreme and crushing evils which it in fact contains? Are not life challenges often so severe as to be self-defeating when considered as soul-making influences? Man has to do his farming by the sweat of his brow, but what of enormous famines in which millions of people perish miserably? Supposing that man must labor on the earth's surface to make roads, and dig beneath it to extract its coals and minerals, need there be volcanic irruptions burying whole the in a single night? Supposing that man must face the

harsh bodily consequences of over-indulgence, need there also be such fearful diseases as typhoid, polio, cancer, angina (Hick, 1977, p. 366)?

We can see that sometimes the direct calamity can make the calamity itself worthwhile. A person who has selfish spirit can be moved to be a kind-hearted person, a person who is unthinking can find the depths of life and become a profound thinker, a person who has a proud spirit can learn to be humble and a person addicted to self-gratification can be made strong in the fires of diversity. Hick affirms, “all this may happen, and has happened; but it may also fail to happen, and instead of gain there may be sheer loss” (Hick, 1977, p. 367).

In confirming the theory of a soul-making world, Hick insists that the problem of suffering remains in its full force. But the problem is not the occurrence of pain and suffering as such. A world in which pain and suffering exist in only moderate degrees may well be a better environment for the development of moral personality than would be a sphere that was sterilized of all challenge.

It is evident that Hick does not agree with the traditional theories that would rationalize the incidence of misery. The traditional theories hold that the suffering of each individual represents just punishment for his own sins. These sins were committed either in this life or in a past life. This theory is a theory that the world is in the control of evil powers, so that the dysteleological surplus of human misery is an achievement of demonical evil. Hick confesses that he does not have any preferred theory to offer that would make clear in any rational or ethical way why men suffer as they do. There only choice left is the appeal to mystery or unfathomability. But this choice, acknowledging that we cannot rationally understand human suffering is not necessarily negative. It may be that the very mysteriousness of this life is an important aspect of its character as a sphere of soul-making. In order to make this plausible we

may apply the method of *counter-factual hypothesis*.¹⁵ An imaginable world, Hick argues, may not be entirely free from pain and suffering, yet would contain no unjust, undeserved or excessive and apparently dysteleological misery. Although there would be sufficient hardships and dangers and problems to give spice to life, there would be no utterly destructive, unforgiving or vengeful evil. The suffering of men would always serve the constructive purposes of moral training.

The confusing problem of excessive and undeserved suffering leads for solution to a plainspoken appeal to the positive value of mystery. The mystery of dysteleological suffering is a real mystery, impenetrable to the rationalizing human mind. Hick feels that extremely confusing, alien, destructive and meaningless suffering is a challenge to the Christian faith. At the same time, detached theological reflection can note that this very irrationality and this lack of ethical meaning contribute to the character of the world as a place in which true human goodness can occur and in which loving sympathy and compassionate self-sacrifice can take place. H. H. Farmer writes, “thus, paradoxically, the failure of theism to solve all mysteries becomes part of its case” (Farmer, *Towards Belief in God*, p. 234). Therefore, Hick concludes that this world may, after all, be what the Irenaean strand of Christian thought affirms it to be: a divinely created sphere of soul-making. A vale of soul-making making persons of the desired quality may, perhaps, be justified by this result.

15 Counter-factual hypothesis: Though the “world is not designed for the maximisation of pleasure and the minimisation of human pain, it may nevertheless be rather well adapted to the quite different purpose of “soul-making” (Hick). God refrains from intervening in order to allow us to develop. The challenges we meet allow us to approach perfection. Obviously, then, suffering and evil have to occur.

3.2.2 Moral Evil

For Hick, moral evil, in the religious concept, is sin itself. Sin covers the domains of two basic ethical ideas, that of wrong action and that of bad moral character. All men everywhere are and have always been in varying degrees self-centered rather than God-centered. They are concerned for their own private welfare rather than for fulfillment of God's greater purposes for mankind. According to the story of man, it is true that man is illumined by heroism, self-sacrifice, love, and compassion. But these have been distorted and replaced by human-centeredness from which have flowed a great many forms of man-made evil. Atheism practices evil things, such as cruelty, greed, lovelessness, ruthless ambition and narrow suspiciousness, with the immense production of human misery. The major part of human suffering is due either wholly or in part to the actions or inactions of other human beings. In the scientific achievement paradigm, "the mass evils of undernourishment and poverty, various forms of social injustice and exploitation, and the ancient scourge of war and the grave distortions of man's common life due to preparations for war, are all man-made ills" (Hick, 1977, p. 300).

It is evident that right at the center of the being of man there is the disorientation of sin. This happens where man stands in relationship with the Source and Lord of his life and the Determiner of his destiny. Thus the sinfulness of man expresses itself in various kinds of broken, distorted, perverted or destructive relations to his fellows and to the natural world. Sin belongs to man's own innermost nature, and is at the same time the source of many forms of evil. This constitutes the heart of the problem of evil and determines the final form of the question theodicy that theodicy attempts to answer: If God is an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely good and loving Creator, why does He allow sin into His universe?

According to Hick, this question has been addressed by both Augustinian and Irenaean types of theodicy. The answer has always been centered upon man's freedom and responsibility as a finite personal being. Recently, the free will defense has been critically discussed philosophical journals.¹⁶ For example, Mackie writes, "It is sometimes suggested that evil is necessary as a counterpart to good, that if there were no evil there could be no good either, and that this solves the problem of evil" (Rowe, 2001: p. 80). The great value to come from this discussion is a clarification of the issues involved. Three types of the free will defense have been identified.

First is the argument is that God's omnipotence does not imply He can do everything. For example, God cannot make square to be round. God will never make a four-sided triangle. That doesn't mean that He cannot make it, but because of the meaning of the word "triangle" it will never be correct to call four-sided figure a triangle. This, then, does not involve any limitation upon God's power. It does not mean that if God had greater power He would be able to accomplish this what is logically impossible. Hick feels that this first argument is undoubtedly reasonable and accepted by contemporary philosophical critics of the free will defense.¹⁷

Secondly, Hick identifies a type argument claiming that personality and moral freedom are connected. For example, the creation of personal beings would be self-contradictory if they did not have the freedom to choose wrong as well as to choose right. Therefore, it does not fall within the scope of divine omnipotence. Hick explains that if a man is created with the capability for a personal relationship with his Maker, and he is not to be only a puppet, he must be endowed with the uncontrollable gift of freedom. The one crucial thing that makes us personal rather than non-personal

16 For example: Mackie, 1955; Flew, 1955; Grave, 1956; Farrel, 1958.

17 See Mackie, 1955, p. 203, and Flew, p. 145.

beings is freedom, including moral freedom. As Hick writes, “in order to be a person man must be free to choose right or wrong. He must be a morally responsible agent with a real power of moral choice” (Hick, 1977, p. 302). A question could be asked: could God create a kind of being which has no freedom to choose? For Hick, the answer for this question will be “Yes.” God could have created a kind of being with no freedom of choice and therefore no possibility of making wrong choices. However, God is the God of love. He has chosen to create persons instead of non-persons. All we can do is to accept this decision as basic to our existence and treat it as a principle of our belief. Hick affirms this second type of argument being truly reasonable like the first type. This argument is not challenged by contemporary philosophical critics of the free will defense.

Our discussion centers on the third type of argument. Hick introduces the discussion on this type of argument by asking: Could God not have made men such that they would always freely do what is right? Hick raises this question because if God would make finite persons and not just puppets, and if those persons must be genuinely free, there should have been the possibility of freely doing only the right. Hick argues that even though human persons have been endowed with some degree of freedom and responsibility, they are clearly liable to sin. Hick continues his argument that human persons possess both the freedom which is the ground of moral responsibility, and the basis of liability to praise or blame, in other words, they have also the inclination to sin. It might be true that a morally perfect person has the logical possibility of sinning, yet will never do so because he has no inclination to sin and is so strongly oriented towards the good that he always masters such temptations as he meets. In this world, according to Christian belief, that moral perfection is compatible with a liability to temptation is established by the fact of Christ, who “was in all

points tempted as we are, yet without sinning” (Hebrews iv: 15). When our discussion reaches this point, it seems that Hick understands that God is omnipotent. He creates this world *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. He determines exclusively, by His own monarchical will, both the nature of the beings he creates and the character of the environment in which He places them. Could not, Hick asks, such a God if He so wished, produced perfect persons who remain forever sinless even though they are free to sin and even perhaps tempted to sin?

On this point, Hick refers to the writings of two contemporary philosophers who have pressed this attack upon the free will defense, Antony Flew and J. L. Mackie. These philosophers argue that God could have made His human creatures so that they would always in fact freely choose the right. Flew begins his argument by defining a free action as one that is not externally compelled but flows from the nature of the agent (Flew, p. 149-51). Flew claims that the word “free” is ordinary used to mean that actions flowing from the nature of the human being himself. For example, a young man has the freedom to make his own choice of the girl he wants to marry. This is a free decision. “It is simply his own choice, arising out of his own nature, and arrived at without outside compulsion” (Hick, 1977, p. 304).

Hick continues to explain Flew’s next move pointing out Flew’s belief about free action. Flew believes that free action is not incompatible with being caused to act in the way in which one does act. On the contrary, we are always caused to act as we do, but we are caused by our own nature considered in its entirety. If we were different people we would act differently; but being precisely the people that we are, we act as we do. Thus, it would seem that God could have given us a nature that would always freely issue in right actions since He originally gave us the nature out of which we behave as we do. So, Flew contends, “Omnipotence might have, could

without contradiction be said to have, created people who would always as a matter of fact freely have chosen to do the right thing” Flew, p. 152. Hick affirms that this quotation is the essence the argument. Still, Hick wants this concept concentrated into a single question, and restates Flew’s point as, “If God made us, why did He not make us so that we should always want to do what is right?” (Hick, 1977, p. 304).

Hick questions Flew’s definition of free will, arguing that the Christian conception of divine purpose for man requires as a postulate the stronger notion of free will as the capacity for choice whose outcome is in principle unpredictable. Hick makes every endeavor to show by internal criticism the insufficiency of the arguments of Flew and Mackie, and of how that insufficiency points to the need for a larger conception of freedom. But before he goes on with his argument, Hick quotes J. L. Mackie:

If there is no logical impossibility in a man’s freely choosing the good on one, or on several, occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with a choice between making innocent automata and making beings who, in acting freely, would sometimes go wrong: there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always go right. Clearly, his failure to avail himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being both omnipotent and wholly good. (Mackie, 2001, p. 86)

In a consequent reply to his critics, Mackie noted a progression of three questions that arise. Hick is sure that it is be useful to discuss the problem in the same three stages.

Hick writes:

The first question is this: Granted that it is logically possible that one man should on one occasion freely choose the good, is it also logically possible that all men should always do so? Is there, in other words, any logical contradiction in the idea of all men always acting rightly, and doing so of their own free choice, without external compulsion? (Hick, 1977, p. 305)

For Hick, the answer is clear enough. The Christian theologian must conclude that this is logically possible, since it belongs to the expected fulfillment of God's purpose for human life. Hick comes to the second stage:

A second question now arises: Granted that it is logically possible that men should always freely choose the good, is it also logically possible that they should be so constituted that they always freely choose the good? In other words, is there any logical contradiction in the idea of men being by nature such that they always spontaneously want to do the right thing, so that of their own free desire they live morally flawless lives? (Hick, 1977, p. 305)

In responding to this question, Hick reviews the most interesting items in the recent discussion of the question in the journals. In one journal Ninian Smart (1964) characterizes the claim that men could have been created wholly good as "the Utopia thesis". Smart attacks the thesis on the ground that "The concept good as applied to humans connects with other concepts have no clear application if men are built wholly good" (p. 188). Smart's claim here is that the notion of goodness would be emptied of content if there were no such experience as temptation and therefore no occasion to choose good as distinct from evil. Hick quotes Smart as follows:

I think that none of the usual reasons for calling men good would apply in such a Utopia. Consider one of these harmless beings. He is wholly good, you say? Really? Has he been courageous? No, you reply, not exactly, for such creatures do not feel fear. Then he is generous to his friends perhaps? Not precisely, you respond, for there is no question of his being ungenerous. Has he resisted temptations? No, not really, for there are no temptations (nothing you could really call temptations). (Hick, 1977, p. 192)

Hick quotes Smart's conclusion in order to make his position complete:

That the concept good is applied to beings of a certain sort, beings who are liable to temptations, possess inclinations, have fears, tend to assert themselves and so forth; and that if they were immunized from evil they would have to be built in a different way. But it soon becomes apparent that to rebuild them would mean that the ascription of goodness would become unintelligible, for the reasons why men are called good and bad have a connection with human nature as it is empirically discovered to be. Moral utterance is embedded in the cosmic status quo. (Hick, 1977, p. 192)

It is quite obvious here that Hick finds Smart's argument persuasive. However, even though this argument is of assistance to the free will defense, it should not be exaggerated. Smart attempts to show a morally untemptable being could not properly be described as "good", as this term is normally used in ethical discussion. A creature which is not ever tempted by fear, lust, envy, panic, anxiety or any other demoralizing condition, would no doubt be innocent but could not justifiably be praised as being morally good. Hick agrees that to possess positive goodness men must be creatures

that have been tempted by at least some form of temptation. This is a valid conclusion. Nevertheless, the Flew-Mackie challenge recurs: Why did God not realize this possibility in His initial creation of mankind? Why did He not make men so that they would, out of their own God-given moral resources, always overcome temptation and freely act rightly?

At this point let us move to the third set of questions identified by Mackie. Granted that it is logically possible that men could be so constituted that they always freely choose the good, is it also logically possible that God could make them so? Here Mackie's argument is very simple: "If their being of this sort is logically possible, then God's making them of this sort is logically possible" (Mackie, 1962, p. 157).

According to Hick, Mackie's conclusion is logically sound. However, Mackie fails to take into account an aspect of Christian belief. For Christianity, the God's purpose for men is not only for them to freely act rightly toward one another but that they should also freely enter into a filial personal relationship with God himself. In other words, there is a religious as well as an ethical dimension to this purpose. Therefore, in order to say that it would be logically possible for God to make men such that they will always freely act rightly toward each other, a certain further question need to be asked: "Is it logically possible for God so to make men that they will freely respond to Himself in love and trust and faith?" (Hick, 1968, p. 308)

Hick answers, "No." To make his answer clear and understandable, Hick makes an analogy with post-hypnotic suggestion, which Flew also uses in this connection (Flew, p. 161). In the hypnotic process, the subject is given instructions. For example, he may be told to go at a certain time to a certain shop and to buy a certain item. At the same time he is told to forget that he has been given the instructions. When the hypnotic session is over, the subject comes out of the hypnotic

trance or half-conscious state. Though he has no explicit recall of the instructions, he feels an imperative desire to go to the shop to buy the certain item that as instructed during the session. Others can reason about whether or not he “really” wants to follow the hypnotist’s suggestions, but subject feels that he acts of his own free will and for his own sufficient reasons. By analogy, Hick argues that a free act is not externally compelled but flows from the character of the agent. He continues to argue that the actions of one who carries out post-hypnotic suggestions are free actions, that the subject is a free agent in his performance of them. Nevertheless, Hick believes that the subject who was in the hypnotic trance is not free as far as these particular actions are concerned in relation to the hypnotist. The subject is a kind of puppet or tool. If the subject is very highly suggestible he will agree with the hypnotist in everything, even in controversial matters. The subject would trust him or love him or devotedly serve him. But it would be inauthentic trust, love, or service. Hick writes:

They would be inauthentic in the sense that to the hypnotist, who knows that he has himself planted directly these personal attitudes by his professional techniques, there would be an all-important difference between the good opinion and trust and friendship of the patient and that of someone else whose mind had not been conditioned by hypnotic suggestion.
(Hick, 1977, p. 309)

Hick explains that attitudes such as trust, respect and affection are essential to the nature of a fiduciary person and must arise in a free being as an uncompelled response to the personal qualities of others. If trust, love, admiration, respect and affection, are produced by some kind of psychological manipulation which by-passes the conscious responsible center of the personality, then they are not real trust, love etc. Thus,

authentic fiduciary attitudes are such that it is logically impossible for them to be produced by manipulation.

In short, Hick has summarized a proposed counter-argument to the Flew-Mackie challenge. Without contradiction, God can be comprehended to have authorized men such that they would be guaranteed always freely to act rightly in relation to one another. But he cannot, without contradiction, be comprehended to have authorized that they could be guaranteed freely to respond to Him in authentic faith, love and worship. Hick writes, “the imagined hypnosis case reveals this contradiction as regards the relationship between two human beings, and by analogy we apply the same logic of personal attitudes to the relation between God and man” (Hick, 1977, p. 311).

However, Hick urges us to carefully consider the possibilities of an “unfallen” being exercising creative freedom in an “unfallen” environment. Normally, the basic choice open to man is between God-centeredness and self-centeredness, obedience and disobedience. If man fails in his battle against temptation, his failure is an act of creative spontaneity which is permitted, but in no sense ordained, by God. He will thenceforth be an enemy of God, a sinner deserving punishment, and for him the only hope is in the mercy of God. This concept accords with the traditional free will defense. It raises the question: In the pre-fallen state, in what way and to what extent would the free creature be immediately conscious of God? There are two choices available to the traditional free will defense. Both choices raise difficulties.

First, consider the supposition that man dwelt in the immediate presence of God. Hick points out the difficulty is that when we think of a created being living face-to-face with the Creator, who is infinite, all-powerful, and all-good and loving, it seems impossible that such a being could even imagine rebellion against his Maker. If

he is conscious of God, how could he plan to reject the sovereignty of God who is omnipotent? Why should he desire to reject the Lordship of the infinite Love in which he rejoices more than anything else? Hick argues that if one could dwell consciously in the presence of God, but still have the desire to be under temptation, he must already have been possessed by a pride that draws him into enmity against the Almighty.

We cannot, Hick says, leave out the possibility that finitely perfect and blessed angels who are living in a direct unhindered consciousness of God would fall into sin. It is true that a fall of human beings living consciously in the presence of God might be motivated by some temptation that is not conceivable to finitely perfect creatures (Hick, 1977, p. 315).

Secondly, we might suppose that the unfallen creature does not exist in such close proximity God, but rather in a human world in which the Divine reality is not unambiguously manifest to him. The loving and powerful Creator would be continuously evident to His creatures only by acts of faith through which they become aware of Him. From a traditional view, the difficulty here is that the situation is weighted against the creature. Instead of being firmly situated within the divine Kingdom, "he is placed in a natural environment in which some positive effort on his own part is required if he is to be aware of God and rightly to relate himself to him" (Hick, 1968, p. 316). In such situations, should the responsibility for failure be shared? If God chooses not initially to reveal Himself to His creature, can His creature be altogether blamed if he fails to worship his Maker with his whole being?

This is the dilemma or the difficult choice. It might be possible or impossible to excuse the fall of the creature. It does not seem possible that the creature would be in a perfectly neutral position. He would be either conscious of God as held in God's

presence or not be conscious God's presence. Self-centeredness rather than God-centeredness is a very natural possibility for which the creature hardly warrants the virtually unlimited guilt attributed to him in the traditional free will defense. Men cannot be thought of as finitely perfect creatures, because they fail to obtain the full glory and blessedness of God's Kingdom. Sin is self-centeredness rather than God-centeredness. It places creatures an environment other than in directly the Divine presence. Only in this kind of environment may creatures have freedom in their relationship with God.

God creates finite human beings to love and be loved. As such He must endow them with a certain relative autonomy over against Himself. But the existence and power of a finite being and the quality of its being depend on the infinite Creator, how can he possess any significant autonomy in relation to that Creator? Hick would answer that the only way we can conceive is that suggested by our actual situation. God has to set man at a distance from Him, from which he can then voluntarily come to God. Nevertheless, God is infinite and omnipresent, how can anything be set at a distance from Him? The distance we are talking about here is not spatial distance and it has nothing to do with this kind of distance. The kind of distance between God and man that would make room for a degree of human autonomy is epistemic distance. That is to say, the reality and presence of God must not be borne in upon men in the coercive way in which their natural environment forces itself upon their attention. To man this world must be as if there was no God. God must be a hidden deity, veiled by His creation. He must be knowable, but only by a mode of knowledge that involves a free personal response on man's part. This kind of response must be in an uncompelled interpretative activity whereby we experience the world as mediating the

divine presence. In order for it to be possible for man to have secure freedom, cognitive freedom, in relation to God, this faith-response is needed.

This basic human freedom is depicted in the biblical creation myth. For man is not like an angelic being dwelling in heavenly places and rejoicing in continuous awareness of God's environing presence. Rather man is a frail and an uncertain creature living in his own world, which God occasionally visits. Thus, we may say that man was created at an epistemic distance from God. Hick writes:

God summoned man out of the dust of the evolutionary process He did not place him in the immediate consciousness of His own presence but in a situation from which man could, if he would, freely enter into the divine Kingdom and presence. And the creation of man in his own relatively autonomous world, in which the awareness of God is not forced upon him but in which he is cognitively free in relation to his Maker, is what mythological language calls the fall of man. Our present earthly existence is described in the myth as man's life after the fall. Man exists at a distance from God's goal¹⁸ for him, however, not because he has fallen from that goal but because he has yet to arrive at it. (Hick, 1977, p. 319)

According to Hick, it is evident again that man lives in relation to the world rather than in relation to God. God Himself causes man to evolve in this way out of lower forms of life by placing His human creature, away from the immediate divine presence, in a world which is contained with laws that man must follow. But at the same time man has full freedom to be against his Creator. Since the natural world is

18 God's goal for man is to develop him to reach a certain valuable quality of personal life which reflects finitely the divine life or the likeness of God (Hick, 1997, p. 290).

the first object of man's knowledge and interest so he exists in close relation to it. However, the human creature can become conscious of God's presence if he is willing to know himself as subordinate to a personal Mind and Will infinitely superior to himself in worth as well as in power. Thus man's basic cognitive freedom in relation to God is established.

There are two different schools of thought to be considered. The first holds that man's spiritual location is at an epistemic distance from God. This makes man to virtually inevitably organize his life apart from God and in self-centered competitiveness with his fellows. Of course, how can he be expected to center his life upon a Creator who is yet unknown to him? Therefore, he centers his life upon himself, even though he then immediately feels the pressure upon his spirit of his unseen Creator. Hick writes:

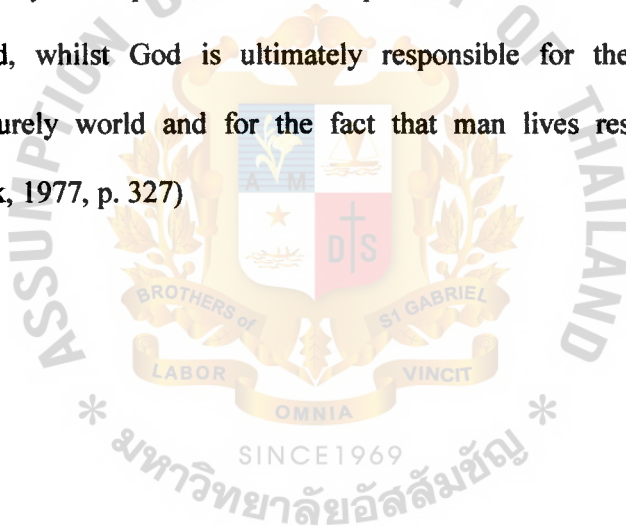
Man as he emerged from the evolutionary process already existed in the state of epistemic distance from God and of total involvement in the life of nature that constitutes his "fallen-ness". He did not fall into this from a prior state of holiness but was brought into being in this way as a creature capable of eventually attaining holiness. In Irenaeus' terminology, he was made in the image but had yet to be brought into the likeness of God. (Hick, 1977, p. 323)

The second school holds that the divine saving power makes it possible for man to reach self-consciousness at an epistemic distance from God. Man has the freedom to accept the gracious invitation of God and to come to Him in uncompelled faith and love. Those who are not for Him are against Him. Man will be able to belong to God by morally being independent of Him. Sin is self-centered alienation from God. In order for man to be saved from sin, man has to depend on God's salvation. It is a

crucial decision of man to come to heaven through the only way, that is the path of redemption from sin.

When we speak of God as ultimately responsible for the existence of evil, we employ a particular definition of responsibility. There are differences and similarities between the sense in which men are responsible and the sense in which God could be said to be responsible. Hick argues that human responsibility occurs within the context of an existing moral law and an existing society of moral beings. But God is Himself the source of the moral law and the Creator of all beings other than Himself. Hick writes,

Divine and human responsibilities operate upon different levels and are not mutually incompatible. Man is responsible for his life within the creaturely world, whilst God is ultimately responsible for the existence of that creaturely world and for the fact that man lives responsibly within it. (Hick, 1977, p. 327)



CHAPTER IV

CRITIQUE OF JOHN HICK'S RESOLUTION

OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

If there is no logical impossibility in a man's freely choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion.

J. L. Mackie

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we saw how Hick attempts to explain how belief in the infinite power and goodness of God may be reconciled with the fact of evil and suffering in the world. Hick limits himself to discussing the problem from a Christian perspective, but in fact, it is a problem for all theistic religions. He begins his discussion of Irenaean theodicy by insisting that any proposed theodicy must be internally coherent, consistent with the religious tradition on which it is based and consistent with its contemporary world. This latter point requires a theodicy to be faithful both to the scientific enterprise and specific facts of moral and natural evil, that it presupposes the evolutionary development of humanity and the notion that evil exists and is the cause of real pain and suffering in human beings.

In its response to evil and suffering, traditional Christianity has focused on an Augustinian theodicy. This is the belief that originally God created humanity and the world good. Human beings were endowed with the capacity to exercise moral choice with regard to God's Laws. But humanity chose to disobey God, and that disobedience had consequences of pain and suffering, not only for those individuals

but also for the world.¹⁹ This kind theodicy is a variety of what is known as the free will defense. From this perspective all evil and suffering is the result of a misuse of human freedom.

In developing an alternative theodicy Hick obviously rejects this kind of free will defense. He does so for the following reasons. Firstly, the notion that humanity and the world were created good yet subsequently fell is understood by most people to be myth rather than history (Hick, 1977, p. 323). Secondly, this view is not backed up by the scientific enterprise which teaches that humanity evolved and developed morality from primitive states. There is no evidence to place the unexplainable in the lap of the gods or to explain it as “acts of God”. Thus, although an Augustinian free will defense may be logically coherent, it is in fact implausible, and discredited in the modern age.

Hick’s Irenaean theodicy takes as its starting point the notion that far from being a single act of creating a good world and a good humanity, the act of bringing forth humanity into the world is, in fact, a two-stage process. First humans evolved into beings capable of social interaction, moral behavior and reflection on their environment. However, this development did not appear suddenly overnight but evolved through a long process of struggle against a hostile environment. It is this which forms the backdrop for what Hick sees as the second stage in human development in which, through their own free will, men take on the Divine “likeness”. In other words, human beings are in the process of being created into children of God. Thus perfection, rather than lying in the past, lies in the future.

19 C.f. Genesis 2-3.

Despite seeming to be an attractive option for theists, one must ask why humans have evolved in this way. Why are we not already perfect as God intends us to be and automatically conscious of God? Hick writes:

Man as he emerged from the evolutionary process already existed in the state of epistemic distance from God and of total involvement in the life of nature that constitutes his “fallenness”. He did not fall into this from a prior state of holiness but was brought into being in this way as a creature capable of eventually attaining holiness. In Irenaeus’ terminology, he was made in the image but had yet no be brought into the likeness of God. (Hick, 1977, p. 323)

Thus, in order that we may act naturally and not be overwhelmed by the reality of God, there needs to be an epistemic distance maintained between us and God. Furthermore, the world needs to be religiously ambiguous. Only in this way can there be the possibility of human beings coming freely to know and love their Maker.

However, one may well ask, despite the epistemic distance between us and God, why are we not created perfect? In answer Hick writes:

A moral goodness that exists as the agent’s initial given nature, without ever having been chosen by him in the face of temptations to the contrary, is intrinsically less valuable than a moral goodness which has been built up through the agent’s own responsible choices through time in the face of alternative possibilities. (Davis, 1981, p. 44)

To struggle for moral righteousness is infinitely more valuable and valued than merely to be given it. In the light of this, salvation, understood as the goal of struggling humanity, is the turning from self-centeredness to Reality (God)-

centeredness. From this we see that, for Hick, pain and suffering caused by human selfishness, are the results of the actions of morally and spiritually immature people.

But why has God decreed that this development of humanity towards a perfect state, should take place in a world which is dangerous (for example, with the natural hazards of earthquakes and floods) and where the fragility of the human body can quickly and easily fall prey to illness, pain and suffering? Hick's response is that moral and spiritual development does not take place in a static environment, but comes as the result of challenge and struggle. Because we live in a world where pain and suffering is real, our actions have real moral consequences, both for both ourselves and for others. Any world where this was not the case would be one in which the distinction between right and wrong could not be made. If the situation was such, how would one could develop moral responsibility both towards others and oneself?

Although Hick has addressed some of the issues raised by a world in which there is pain and suffering, he yet may be accused of belittling some of the excesses of human depravity, such as, for example the Holocaust. His response is that our judgments of what constitutes excessive are relative. In other word's, what we consider to be excessive today may not be considered so by others, say in fifty or a hundred years time. "In a world in which there was no cancer, something else would then rank as the worst form of natural evil" (Davis, 1981, p. 49). But what of the fact that calamity strikes indiscriminately, in that the good are often afflicted with pain and suffering whilst the bad seem to enjoy a long, healthy and happy life? Hick's response is:

Let us suppose that instead of coming without regard to moral considerations, it was proportioned to desert, so that the sinner was punished

and the virtuous rewarded. Would such dispensation serve a person-making purpose?...God has set us in a world containing unpredictable contingencies and dangers, in which unexpected and undeserved calamities may occur to anyone; because only in such a world can mutual caring and love be elicited.

(Davis, 1981, p. 50)

Finally, Hick recognizes that despite the fact that human beings are moving towards God in the person-making process of moving from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness it is evident that this is completed by a few in this life (such as, for example, Mother Theresa). Irenaean theodicy, then, requires that there be a continuation of life after death whereby this process can be completed. Ultimately, the process will be completed in all. As Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee" (Davis, 1981, p. 52). Furthermore, according to Hick, "Only if [salvation] includes the entire human race can it justify the sins and sufferings of the entire human race throughout all history" (Davis, 1981, p. 52).

4.2 Arguments in Favor of Hick's Theodicy

4.2.1 Critique of a World with Haphazard Suffering

The objection here is that there should be not such an evil as haphazard suffering. As far as we can tell, evil that is randomly related to one's past actions or to future soul-making is useless. Haphazard suffering seems to fall upon men according to no pattern, undeservedly, in excessive amounts and without any apparent constructive purpose.

John Hick argues that a world without haphazard or apparently pointless suffering would not be a better world than the present one. It would rather be a world

of behavior modification in which a person is controlled, rather than one in which he is a freely responding agent. There would be no separation between vice and punishment, or between virtue and its reward. Persons would be strongly influenced, at each moment trying to avoid some punishment or to attain some reward. They would not be inclined to do what is right simply because it is right, to act out of a purely good will. Hick writes:

It is, in particular, difficult to see how it could ever grow to any extent in a paradise that excluded all suffering. For such love presupposes a “real life” in which there are obstacles to be overcome, tasks to be performed, goals to be achieved, setbacks to be endured, problems to be solved, dangers to be met; and if the world did not contain the particular obstacles, difficulties, problems, and dangers that it does contain, then it would have to contain others instead. The same is true in relation to the virtues of compassion, unselfishness, courage, and determination –these all presuppose for their emergence and for their development something like the world in which we live. (Hick, 1977, p. 362)

Hick is influenced by Kant's requirement that a morally good act should proceed from a good will and that one does not act morally if one is motivated by fear or the hope of a reward. We need not accept this Kantian view that a person acts non-morally when he acts according to his inclination or out of fear. And yet, we can agree that the person who does something because it is right, even though it demands a sacrifice of his own immediate interests, performs an act of greater virtue than the man who acts for his own advantage. We see time and time again persons suffering inconvenience and sacrificing time, money, and even health because they are devoted to admirable

ideals. Hick maintains that a world such as our own, in which many innocent persons suffer without cause and many good persons receive no apparent reward, is a better world than would be a world constructed on a behavior modification model. It encourages us not to look for reward or punishment, and thereby leads us to a more perfect kind of morality. Hick writes:

And instead of the Augustinian view of life's trials as a divine punishment for Adam's sin, Irenaeus sees our world of mingled good and evil as a divinely appointed environment for man's development towards the perfection that represents the fulfillment of God's good purpose for him. (Hick, 1977, p. 221)

Hick's criticism is consistent with traditional theology, in which a person acting out of a pure good will is thought to be acting out of the highest type of love, in which the loved object dominates. The self is downplayed and all good is wished for the beloved. If one looks upon doing what is right as an act of love for God, who is her highest good, then she is not looking for a reward or for the relief of suffering. A world in which human beings live and love in a relatively selfless sense is a better world than a world in which one is ever on the lookout for what she can get and what evil she can avoid. To fault God for not bringing about a world in which we see clearly why we suffer is, then, unjustified. It is a weak objection.

Hick also claims that a world in which suffering was always seen to work for the good of the sufferer or for the punishment of his misdeeds, would not provide the occasion for the true compassion, massive generosity and self-giving, kindness and good will which are among the highest values of a person's life. If we know that the suffering person is getting his just punishment or stands to profit greatly from his inconvenience or pain, we are not inclined to be deeply sympathetic to him. Nor are

we inclined to sacrifice greatly for him, or to organize others to relieve him of his distress (Yardan, 2001, p. 122).

Hick's theory of soul-making is criticized by Edward Madden and Peter Hare. Madden and Hare note that it is possible for a husband to feel intense compassion for his wife who is undergoing labor pains, even though the pains are a necessary means to a desirable end. Also, one might feel compassion for a criminal as he is punished for a crime. Madden and Hare write:

It is quite possible to feel intense compassion for someone even though his suffering is understood to be an unavoidable means to an end, desirable both to the sufferer and to oneself. A husband may feel convinced that his wife's labor pains are a necessary means to a highly desirable end and at the same time feel great compassion. One can even feel compassion for the pain suffering by a criminal being punished in a way that one thinks is deserved. (Madden & Hare, 1998, p. 185)

Michael Martin (1989, p. 424) notes that parents often feel great compassion for their child's suffering even though the suffering is necessary to correct misconduct. Nurses show great sympathy for patients who are suffering from needed operations. According to these authors, even though some evil might be a necessary ingredient in the development of compassion, the quantity should be lessened.

This researcher feels that the objections miss the main point. In fact, haphazard suffering gives rise to a kind of compassion that can hardly be compared with the compassion in the examples. The husband's compassion for his suffering wife would be immensely increased if there was no reason why she had to suffer, if the operation was botched, or if, while recovering, those taking care of her did not

monitor her pain medication properly. The parents' compassion would be much more intense if their son was being punished unjustly and excessively by school authorities. A nurse's sympathy would be markedly different if she knew that the patient's operation was unnecessary, or that the patient was dying from AIDS contracted in a blood transfusion.

Let us note the way we are inclined to feel when someone has gone through a painful ordeal necessary for acquiring a huge sum of money. Our heart goes out to him in only a limited degree. Would we feel intense sorrow for the person who, in an effort to become a millionaire, invests the totality of his assets in a highly speculative enterprise that fails? Our intense compassion would go out to his wife and children who had no say in the matter and would then suffer unjustly, but not for him. Likewise, we do not grieve for the millionaire ballplayer who, separated from his family and living out of a suitcase nine months out of the year, is insulted by rude spectators and knocked on his backside by opponents from time to time. We have a good idea that his financial rewards are well worth the inconvenience.

On the other hand, we tend to feel deeply for the young mother who is taken as hostage by bank robbers and is incapacitated for life in the ensuing shoot out. She just happened to enter the bank as the robbers were leaving, and in the fracas she is struck in the spine and paralyzed. For her we feel a profound personal sympathy, a deep compassion, an unusually intense kindness and a willingness to sacrifice something for this innocent victim of fate. Our response is a reasoned one, in that it would be significantly dissipated and decreased if we were convinced that she really deserved what she got, if, for example, she was the bank robber who had just shot dead two young girls, or she was a prostitute with AIDS who did not care how many men she infected.

G. Stanley Kane also objects to Hick's soul-making theory. According to Kane, soul-making and virtue can be developed without extreme and haphazard suffering. For example, courage, perseverance, and persistence in the face of difficult obstacles could be developed in a freely chosen difficult project, such as writing a doctoral dissertation or training for the Olympic Games. (Kane, 2001, p. 123)

Yet, it is evident that a significantly deeper degree of virtue is needed in someone who has no choice, who has to tolerate a debilitating disease, a terminal illness, or in someone who has just lost a spouse in an accident. The courage of the athlete is manifested for a season, but the man with a terminal illness is in a game that never ends. No athlete today competes in a game that ends only with death. No athlete is forced to live like a person who struggles with a terminal illness. After the game, an athlete takes a shower, goes out for a good meal with his friends, re-lives a victory or tries to forget an embarrassing defeat. A person with a progressive illness cannot easily shower it off; he takes it with him wherever he goes. There is no "minor difference in value" between the virtue required of those who freely take on difficult tasks and those who have no choice but to bear the burdens of disasters, accidents, and diseases.

If a doctoral candidate succeeds in the writing of his dissertation, he can enjoy the fruits of his work. But if the time runs out and he cannot finish the writing of his dissertation he still goes on living, even though he may sometimes feel disappointed and at other times at peace. It is not the same with the person who is a victim of terminal cancer. He is confronted by a disappointment that does not allow him to pick up and go on living. The situation he has faced is identical with a death sentence. Let us carefully consider two women who have faced a similar situation. One woman is the wife of a failed doctoral candidate and the other a woman who has just lost her

husband in a car accident. The disappointments of these women cannot precisely be compared.

Let us imagine a world in which everyone knew that he was getting the suffering he deserved as punishment or was experiencing evil as a means to a generous reward. Would that not be a cold world in which people would have less incentive to care for anyone else? Everyone would be taken care of in such a world, so why should I worry about others. There would be no need for intense feelings for the person who suffers. For these reasons, we cannot easily dismiss attempts to justify evil in the world on grounds that it intensifies our appreciation of life and calls us to greater virtue. We cannot be sure that in a world lacking unavoidable suffering, human beings would develop with a comparable amount of virtue to what we find in the present world. We emphasize Hick's view that suffering must be unmerited, iniquitous, pointless and incapable of being morally rationalized if it is to arouse and evoke the truly great human virtues mentioned above. Hick writes:

It seems, then, that in a world that is to be the scene of compassionate love and self-giving for others, suffering must fall upon mankind with something of the haphazardness and inequity that we now experience. It must be apparently unmerited, pointless, and incapable of being morally rationalized. For it is precisely this feature of our common human lot that creates sympathy between man and man and evokes the unselfish kindness and goodwill which are among the highest values of personal life. No undeserved need would mean no uncalculating outpouring to meet that need. (Hick, 1977, p. 370-371)

There is an argument that God should have made a world in which He cogently convinces men of his existence and tells them clearly of his policies. Hare and

Madden demand that God should force His existence upon man as clearly as does the existence of the natural environment, that God should be unhidden and unveiled, that nature should constitute unambiguous evidence of God's existence. If God does not do so, then He should not expect to get effective intelligent co-operation from His subordinates. In this analogy, God is the top executive who fails clearly to inform all his employees of his policies. He is, then, either a fool or powerless because he does not know how to deal with people. Or, he is a rascal because he is able but not willing to give guidance, allowing them to do evil. It is no wonder that men do not do His will. Surely, God should have made a better world (Madden & Hare, 1986, p. 114).

The analogy is fundamentally flawed. The primary aim of a business enterprise is to make money through providing goods and services. But the goal of God in creating the world is different. God allows His creatures free development and free choice in order that they may return to Him. Human beings are not forced. In this screenplay, God would not be a rascal or a fool for failing to inform humanity.

A world created by the Christian God would, according to Madden and Hare, be a world in which human beings would never abandon God and be taken up with the world itself. A person would be unable to put God out of his mind or to act as if God did not exist. John Hick doubts that such a world would be better and defends the present world with its present type of human knowledge. Hick claims that it is fitting that the world both veils God and reveals Him at the same time, and does not unambiguously lead man to God.

Richard Swinburne gives us another reason why it is better that the existence of God is somewhat veiled. If God were as clearly present as our father or spouse, then a person would not have a genuine choice of destiny. God would be too close for human beings to work out their destiny. God would be too evident, a member of the

community (Swinburne, 1989, pp. 211-212). If the potential evildoer saw God face to face, he would have every reason for conforming to God's will and His freedom would be lessened. He would suffer as he hurt someone, for he would be very much aware that God was present. If God were as present to us as was the person in front of us, we would be in the position of the child who cannot get away from his parent. As we have said, if a child, deliberately and in front of his parent does something clearly forbidden, his action would be an outright manifestation of contempt.

Hick maintains that the possibility of our considering the world to be such that there is no God allows man to come to God by a mode of knowledge that involves a free interpretative response. That the world veils God and reveals Him at the same time is as it should be, for man's mind should be able to rest in the world itself without passing beyond it to its Maker. There should be epistemic distance between God and man. We should be able to consider the world "as if there were no God."

Hick writes:

The world must be to man, to some extent at least, "as if there were no God". God must be a hidden deity, veiled by His creation. He must be knowable, but only by a mode of knowledge that involves a free personal response on man's part, this response consisting in an uncompelled interpretative activity whereby we experience the world as mediating the divine presence. Such a need for a human faith-response will secure for man the only kind of freedom that is possible for him in relation to God, namely cognitive freedom, carrying with it the momentous possibility of being either aware or unaware of his Maker. (Hick, 1977, p. 317)

A world in which human beings have the freedom to become aware of God, to acknowledge God or to reject Him through a free interpretative act which we call faith, is the better world. Thus, a world with a place for faith is a better world than one in which faith is unnecessary in such a quest. We can go this far with Hick. Surely, we need a kind of faith as we go about our daily lives. Faith is helpful when we are inflicted with haphazard suffering. It is not unreasonable to think that it is better to know God's existence, while maintaining a certain freedom to deny it. The value of acknowledging God's existence would be considerably lessened if His presence were as evident to us as is, for example, the material world.

Another argument that has some force in the defense of a world of haphazard suffering concerns gratitude. Outwardly, suffering which is called meaningless suffering or haphazard suffering usually provokes the virtue of gratitude. We cannot predict random and haphazard suffering so well as to understand the reason for such suffering once it has occurred. An accident is an unexpected incident that can occur at any time. Therefore, we may feel profound appreciation if we have done many things successfully and according to our plans. If all suffering were deserved as punishment or always seen as a necessary means toward something good for the sufferer, then we would lose the sense of being the recipient of benefits we might not really deserve. The world would lose a significant quantity of warmth. We might be grateful for our own existence, but in the day-to-day life of the world everything else would be cut and dried, a reward, a punishment, or a means to our own perfection. It is possible to conceive of a person being uneasy, bored and perhaps bitter when confronted by a world in which one has no chance to freely accept or reject the meaning of what was happening to one. On the other hand, suffering that is a mystery challenges us and allows us the freedom to develop or to fail.

A world in which everyone knew why he was suffering each particular evil would be one of less intense feelings for one another. Apparently, gratuitous evil intensifies our appreciation of life. This points to an important poetic aspect of good and evil. It is significant that good and evil are correlatives. If there were no evil, then we could not appreciate the existence of good. Charles Hartshorne, one of the Process philosophers, has been concerned with a kind of impoverishment of the world which would result from man not being able to appreciate what “good” means. Hartshorne asks, “But could ‘good’ mean anything in a world in which any contrasting term would be totally excluded by omnipotent power?” (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 82). It can be seen that if there were no evil, man would be oblivious to the dichotomy of good and evil, hence could not appreciate either. St. Thomas Aquinas’ writings mirror Hartshorne’s concern. He maintains that evil has to be experienced. For instance, sick people who have experienced sickness will much more appreciate how great good health is. They know the good better than those who have no experience of sickness because they experience evil or bad health and more easily see one in the light of the other. Our desire for good grows more zealous as we continue to suffer evils. (Aquinas, 1956, vol. III, part I, p. 71). If a person never experienced moral evil, if a person never was betrayed or treated unjustly, then how could he appreciate the full meaning of good and evil?

We have faced with too many difficulties with imagined better worlds. God is expected to provide humanity with much deeper and clear knowledge about reality. In fact, a world in which we had ore knowledge of ourselves and the world would not necessarily be better. Such knowledge is something we have to work for and the effort is part of our destiny. Part of our goal is to look into mystery to find out why evils happen to us, how we can overcome them and how we can bring good out of them;

the effort gives our lives tremendous value. We might recall John Hick's idea that apparently pointless suffering leads to the stimulation to virtue, and the role of "epistemic distance" in the human life. A significant and intense experience of evil offers us the opportunity of appreciating adequately the reality of what is good.

4.2.2 Critique of the Function of Suffering, Part I

The objection here is that some people are crushed or destroyed by evil, and so the Creator cannot be both good and omnipotent. The question has been raised: Is human suffering so great that it at times overwhelms and crushes us? John Hick acknowledges that instead of ennobling a person, evil can break a man's spirit and drive out whatever virtue he possessed. Hick writes:

It is true that sometimes—no one can know how often or how seldom—there are sown or there come to flower even in the direst calamity graces of character that seem to make even that calamity itself worth while. A selfish spirit may be moved to compassion, a thoughtless person discover life's depths and be deepened thereby, a proud spirit learn patience and humility, a soft, self-indulgent character be made strong in the fires of adversity. All this may happen, and has happened. But it may also fail to happen, and instead of gain there may be sheer loss. Instead of ennobling, affliction may crush the character and wrest from it whatever virtues it possessed. (Hick, 1977, p. 366-367)

J. Glenn Gray is representative of this objection. He claims that suffering does not make a person morally strong. The majority of people are not benefited by it, but rather are harmed in character and in will. Those who are benefited by suffering were

already strong, and had consciences that were already aware. They do not require to be made more sensitive. Gray thinks that suffering has limited power to purge and to purify (Gray, 1967, p. 218). We cannot deny that many people are not helped to greater virtue by evil, but are overwhelmed and destroyed by it. Enormous evils, such as disease and natural calamities, are not necessarily constructive to character training and the development of virtue, but in some cases they are dangerous obstacles that put an end to moral progress. Hick questions this in *Evil and God of Love*:

Man must (let us suppose) cultivate the soil so as to win his bread by the sweat of his brow; but need there be the gigantic famines, for example in China, from which millions have so miserably perished? Man must (let us suppose) labor on the earth's surface to make roads, and dig beneath it to extract its coals and minerals; but need there be volcanic irruptions burying whole cities, and earthquakes killing thousands of terrified people in a single night? Man must (let us suppose) face harsh bodily consequences of over-indulgence; but need there also be such fearful disease as typhoid, polio, cancer, angina? These reach far beyond any constructive function of character training. (Hick, 1977, p. 366)

Moreover, in some cases, it can be said that more evil comes from such evil than good. The factors mentioned above raise questions: How can we claim that evils lead to the development of moral virtue? Why should we endure the suffering that is thrust upon us? How can we call the Creator of such a world good and all-powerful?

To be destroyed by evil is to be morally crushed. When a person suffers from evil it may make him discouraged and drive him to give up; finally, his moral virtue might collapse. For instance, suppose that a man is told by a medical doctor that he is

dying. He has terminal cancer, and will die within six months. The man feels discouraged. He goes out to get drunk and do other things that help him to forget his own real situation. A woman whose husband was suddenly killed in a tragic accident may become promiscuous and neglect her children. An old man who has many kinds of disease may become bitter, pessimistic and cranky, making life difficult for those around him. A person who is spurned in love may take his own life.

Many prisoners died in the Bergen-Belsen²⁰ concentration camp during World War II. Many of the prisoners may be said to have been crushed by evil, because they were surprised and shocked by the spiritual and moral decline around them. A. J. Herzberg writes:

Everyone stole, even the deputy manager of one of the biggest Dutch banks. The wife of an industrial manager stole jam from a baby's crib. A nurse would go through the beds and take sugar. The chief buyer of an international company stole bread rations from an acquaintance. In her diary, a young woman wrote of incredible cases of selfishness and ruthlessness. She claimed that she saw the desecration of corpses, prostitution, egoism, and all kinds of wrongdoing. (Herzberg, 1969, pp 517-520)

It is quite significant that in some cases it is not easy to judge the degree of moral collapse. Some people have the tendency to act immorally because of a lack of nourishment or because of physical deficiency. It is true that a person who is injured may continue to make sound judgments, to accept his fate, or bitterly to reject it, to

²⁰ In April 1943 the Nazis built Begen-Belsen in lower Saxony near the city of Celle. As a transit center, Bergen-Belsen was never officially given concentration camp status. But the second commandant, SS Hauptsturmführer Josef Kramer, completed the transformation of Bergen-Belsen into a regular concentration camp. By 1945 thousands of prisoners who had become too weak to work were shipped there, to die slowly by starvation and typhoid. In the one month of March, more than 18,000 succumbed (www.auschwitz.dk/Bergenbelsen.htm-20k).

care for others or to become locked up in himself, to grow or to decline in virtue. And yet, it is not unusual that physical forces injure a human being to the extent that his judgment is clouded or impaired. High fever makes a person delirious. A concussion can leave one confused. In such cases, moral responsibility can be severely lessened or destroyed.

4.2.3 Critique of the Function of Suffering, Part II

John Hick maintains that God's purpose in creating the world is soul-making. Therefore, our task is to develop virtue life in a very unparadisaal world. This kind of world challenges us with extreme, potentially crushing, and apparently meaningless evil (Hick, 1977, p. 395). The objection to Hick's idea is that we could develop a virtuous life in a world without the kind of suffering from disease and disasters to which we are exposed in this world. Such suffering is useless and would not be permitted by a good and omnipotent God.

However, Hick insists that the powerful but apparently meaningless suffering that we find in the present world function as a necessary means to the development of virtue in our soul (Hick, 1977, p. 371). Our actions would be of lesser value if we knew of every suffering we undergo that it was a punishment for our mistakes or a necessary means to moral development. We would develop the tendency act only for reward or to avoid punishment. Hick disagrees somewhat with Kant here, in holding that a meritorious act can also be pleasant and agreeable to the agent. Still, we must admit that an act done because it is right, even though it demands sacrifice of the agent's own immediate interests, is an act greater value.

In *The Failure of Soul-Making Theodicy* G. Stanley Kane criticizes Hick by maintaining that virtue or soul-making can occur in other ways that do not involve

such great suffering. Kane claims that courage could be developed without physical evil in a freely chosen, difficult and demanding, long-range project, such as writing a doctoral dissertation or training for the Olympic Games. Such a project would demand steadfastness, perseverance, persistence in the face of difficult obstacles and strength of character. The virtue cultivated, according to Kane, would be of the same sort as would be required to face up to illness, natural disaster, and similar adversity. The spouse of a doctoral candidate develops just as much patience, fortitude and strength of character as someone who cares for a child through a long and serious illness. Members of an athletic team a sense of cooperation the same as those who organize to help tsunami victims. Some may argue that courage developed in the face of evil is of higher moral value than what could be developed in a world without evil, yet, in Kane's eyes, virtue developed in either way is similar in character. Kane thinks that the theist would have difficulty here, for he would have to hold that a minor difference in the value of virtue outweighs the disvalue of all the pain that comes with natural evils (Kane, 2001, p. 3-4).

Kane's objection is suspect. The key is the various degrees of courage, which suggests a major rather than a minor difference in value. The present researcher would argue that courage manifested on the athletic field is for a short time, but the person who has a terminal illness is in a game which ends only in death. An athlete may be willing to compete at any time, but the sick person does not have the option of playing for another season or retiring, but must cope with unavoidable pain that does not cease. For the athlete, when the game ends, he can relax with friends and forget a humiliating performance. But a person who has a progressive debilitating illness takes it with him wherever he goes. A winner at the Olympic games is rewarded with much money. The sick person is rewarded with nothing but pain and suffering. He becomes

ever poorer and poorer. It is very difficult to see as minor the difference in courage between a person who loses at the Olympic games, and one who has just lost his wife and children in a tragic fire. We cannot compare the failed doctoral candidate with a person who lives with terminal cancer. These people have difference degrees of suffering.

Some people like to compare life to a game. Let us suppose that life is a game and that in this life we will never get hurt unless we choose to expose ourselves to evil; such a life would be empty and aimless for more people than with life as it actually exists. When we confront reality we confront forces contrary to our own will. When we confront the realities of death, illness, the need to work and to cooperate with our fellow human beings, we are reminded that we are involved in more than a mere game. We become aware of the possibility that danger can act as a cathartic force which makes a person more than human. We have seen that the consequences sufferings sometimes force us to live at a deeper level of experience. It is obvious that our present world demands a great deal of us, but it is not so clear whether such a world is not better than a world in which too little is demanded.

Another objection might be put this way: God could have created a world in which severe suffering was not forced upon us but could be freely accepted by us if we so desired. Would not courage in the face of difficult circumstances which were freely chosen would be of greater value than that manifested in the face of what we humans cannot control? Would it not be better if God saw to it that no unwanted evils afflicted us? Would it not be better and better in accord with the value of freely chosen evils if the world had no disease, no floods, no earthquakes, no famines, no injustice and the like?

As we take a first brief look to this objection, it seems to have some strength; but it is actually not powerful. Even though it is true that opportunities to practice virtue freely chosen make our actions more valuable, it is highly doubtful that human beings would choose to be challenged by suffering if it were not forced upon them. How many people would choose to go through the suffering which is worked by natural disasters and disease? Of course, few people would be willing to undergo them. On the contrary, our choice would be in the opposite direction. Moreover, when we try to avoid such evils we feel that we have been doing the right thing. We can say that most of us would choose a world without the need to respond to such powerful challenges, to be courageous, faithful and the like. Natural evil, and evil which is inflicted on us by others, challenge us to develop virtues that we might otherwise neglect. The suffering occasioned by natural disasters gives us opportunities that we would never have chosen for ourselves. This suffering forces us to choose or to reject virtue and that advances us toward perfection.

In his book *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis has given us another possible reason why it is better that we be exposed to unwanted suffering. Lewis claims that without pain, man would be concealed in himself. For a person who is concealed in himself, there is nothing that could break through and call him to his proper destiny. For Lewis, our true of life is the knowledge of God. Those who have been trapped by happiness and worldly prosperity may not be able to obtain this true end of life. Excessive enjoyment in a world without trouble may take away all one's attention and leave no time for his true end or to turn his life toward God. We have a tendency to turn to God only as a last resort, when all other things in life fail to please us, or when our worldly goods and pleasures are taken away. According to Lewis, this is wrong; we should not use God merely as a parachute. C. S. Lewis writes:

Everyone has noticed how hard it is to turn our thoughts to God when everything is going well with us. We “have all we want” is a terrible saying when “all” does not include God. We find God an interruption. As St. Augustine says somewhere, “God wants to give us something, but cannot, because our hands are full—there’s nowhere for Him to put it.” Or as a friend of mine said, “We regard God as an airman regards his parachute; it’s there for emergencies but he hopes he’ll never have to use it.” Now God, who has made us, knows what we are and that our happiness lies in Him. (Lewis, 1940, p. 76)

It has been seen that the suffering we are forced to undergo because we are part of this natural world, shakes us up, reminds us of a greater calling, and prepares us for our only true end. When we die, we will leave all earthly possessions, friends and status. In reality, what will be left to us are ourselves and our relation to God. As we have seen, pain and suffering is a challenge to correct our orientation in life, a challenge that could hardly occur in a world of no natural evils. It gives us the opportunity to purify our intentions and to focus our intentions and to focus our attention on our true goal.

There is another reason in the defense of a world in which humans face unavoidable suffering. That reason is the questionable possibility of a world without natural disasters and evils. In fact, it is impossible that a world could exist without earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and the like. Those who argue for such a world must give us a proposal in comprehensive detail of how the unwanted evils could be eliminated. As far as we know, nobody has made significant progress in re-writing the laws of nature so that there would be no natural disasters. It may be said that the

simple claim that an omnipotent God would be able to bring about such a world is a piece of unjustified mysticism. Yardan puts it:

In the present world suffering is a natural consequence of man's place in nature, for nature operates on the principle of the building up and breaking down of organic and inorganic elements. We humans, as bodily creatures, are part of nature. We are related to the realm of the physical world, even though by means of our intellectual dimension we go beyond it. There is no reason why we should be immune to the characteristics of such a world. Hence, humans are exposed to suffering and pleasure just as every other sensitive bodily creature. (Yardan, 2001, p. 171)

What Yardan means here is that we are part of the world. We are not higher than the other creations in every respect. Some creations may be better than us in some aspects. For example, a lion is stronger and a dog can run faster than we, a rock is more lasting, certain types of atoms are more powerful etc. Thus, we cannot affirm that we are able to avoid suffering when we come to contact with some of the others.

In the view of the theist, the creatures mentioned above manifest the Almighty and the greatness of God in a more perfect, in some respects, way than does man. Those creatures may have more limitations than we have and we may have many perfections and potentialities that stem from our vastly more powerful intellect. But those creatures have a kind of right to maintain their existence even though sometimes they are obstacles to human projects, because, as we have seen, a rock manifests stability and a lion manifests great power. Most of the creatures that hurt us when we confront them in the wrong way or at the wrong time have a different role to play in the universe. Whenever we encounter those creatures, their superior power or stability

must be victorious. The theist sees God as a rich source of existence and sees that to know Him is part of our destiny. Thus, the extreme complication of this exciting and dangerous world gives us a life that is more perfect.

In general, process philosophers agree that in God's sight creatures have a special status *vis-à-vis* human beings. The creative power of the universe aims to promote the genuine good of experience itself. Some combination of harmony and intensity of experience, which is the aesthetic criterion of the good, is within the capacity of nonhuman animals. As we have seen, Griffin asserts that God is concerned about all creatures. Many of those creatures have been endowed with a type of freedom that allows them to act according to their nature even though they sometimes cause humans to suffer (Griffin, 1991, p. 168).

It is true that when evils confront us against our will, the will is inspired to tremendous achievement. Natural disasters confront us with the greatest of all challenges. Even though a disaster may kill our bodies, we will not allow it to kill our spirit, and that is recognized as an action of great value. Meeting the challenges to sacrifice for and show effective compassion toward our neighbors, to make the world a more loving place, is an important step in our own soul-making. A person who overcomes tremendous odds to conquer disease or to pull himself out of poverty deserves our admiration.

The existential psychiatrist, Peter Koestenbaum, has put this way: the meaning of life is found in the conquest of suffering (Koestenbaum, 1976, p. 54-61). When man faces a time of crisis he is challenged to go beyond himself in order to move to a higher level of existence and to a level at which he sees himself as never before. This deeper insight into human existence is all-important. The existential way of seeing things is based on the idea that in our deepest pain we can also find our deepest

meaning. Death puts us into contact with the real. Koestenbaum says that if He were a good and omnipotent God, He would create a world in which the existence and the overcoming of evil would be the fundamental program of nature (Koestenbaum, 1976, p. 54-61).

In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl sets forth his view that the attitude we take toward suffering, the attitude in which we take our suffering upon ourselves is what truly matters in the life of a person. Frankl's significant claim is that, "our main concern is not to gain pleasure or avoid pain; our primary motivational force is that which leads us to find meaning in our life." He urges that one important way to achieve this is to accept the challenge of unavoidable suffering. If one takes on the challenge to endure evil bravely, then life has meaning up to the last moment, and one actualizes the highest value (Frankl, 1965, p. 178-181). Koestenbaum agrees, "Suffering ceases to be suffering once man sees that it has a purpose" (Koestenbaum, 1976, p. 54-61). If a person has a reason, then he can endure any kind of evil, while a person with little purpose in life would find even a life of pleasure boring and undesirable. We should accept courageously the suffering that is inevitable (Frankl, 1965, p. 178-181). Significantly, these writers hold that a person should make his or her own destiny whenever possible and bear with it when necessary. When a person lives in this way, that person balances the pursuit of freedom with the exercise of courage.

Looking at in this way, our duty is to answer responsible each day when we are questioned by life. It does not matter how great the suffering that confronts us, we still are free to find a meaning for it or to refuse to see it as a challenge and a chance to grow in virtue. The meaning is there to be found, but we have to be disposed to find it.

It is quite right to say that suffering is equivocal. It does not necessarily bring about either virtue or moral collapse; it is rather an opportunity which is accepted by some and rejected by others, an obstacle to increased dignity that can be overcome by some and that effectively stops others. How it functions is really up to us. We can stand tall or break down in the presence of evils thrust upon us.

However, if we persist on talking about the better worlds which God might have made, then a reasonable candidate would be a world in which persons have the opportunity freely to choose to rise to the challenge of the greatest of evils in order to maintain their spirit, and to bring good out of such evils. This kind of world would be a better world than a world in which human beings are not challenged by suffering.

As we have seen a significant feature of C. S. Lewis' view is his focus on the signal character of unavoidable suffering. For him, suffering can clearly be seen as a sign to us where our true values should lie: outside the material possessions of this life or somewhere beyond our present life. When we die, we will leave all earthly possessions, friends and status. The only realities left will be ourselves and our relation to God (Lewis, 1940, p. 95-97). Death and suffering are forced upon us. Because of suffering and death we are forced to be separated from things that we truly desire. When we suffer while we are still alive, we experience loss. But at death we experience the ultimate earthly loss. Suffering is preparation for the moment of death that all of us must face. Every person must die, but how one looks at death and how one dies is in a very real sense a personal question. Like Frankl, Lewis focuses on the need to be willing to face the unpleasant realities challenging us from time to time.

In his book *Where Is God When Bad Things Happen?*, Luis Palau articulates the view that from our perspective, tragedies look meaningless, senseless and chaotic, but God knows how to take tragedies and bring good out of them. He writes:

I do believe that He has a purpose in allowing painful events to occur. Nothing that happens is a mad, meaningless accident. We may not understand what His purposes are, but we can take comfort in the fact that they exist. God specializes in taking evil and bringing good out of it. (Palau, 1999, p. 76)

4.3 Arguments against Hick's Theodicy

4.3.1 Critique of the Calamitous Feasibilities of Life

As it has been shown, Hick follows what he calls an Irenaean approach, deriving his theodicy from St. Irenaeus and from Schleiermacher. According to Hick, Irenaeus distinguished between what he called the “image of God” and “likeness of God”. This distinction gives rise to a two-stage conception of the Divine creation of humanity.

In accordance with the best of nineteenth century evolutionism, Hick builds on this conception by claiming that it took many hundreds of millions of years of biological evolution to produce humanity as the *imago dei*, humanity's nature as rational, moral and religious. This understands the creation of humankind through the evolutionary process as an immature creature living in a challenging and therefore person-making world. Thus, existence “in the image of God” is potentiality for knowledge of, and relationship with, one's Maker rather than such knowledge and relationship being given in a fully realized state (Rowe, 2001, p. 267-268).

Hick maintains that the creation of humanity entailed what he calls an “epistemic distance” from God. This is a conceptual means of preserving humanity's existence within and as part of a world which functions as an autonomous system and from within which God is not overwhelmingly evident. It is a world, in Bonhoeffer's phrase, *etsi dus daretur*, as if there were no God. Or rather, it is religiously

ambiguous, capable both of being seen as a purely natural phenomenon and of being seen as God's creation and experienced as mediating his presence. In such a world one can exist as a person over against the Creator. One has space to exist as a finite being, a space created by the epistemic distance from God and protected by one's cognitive freedom, one's freedom to open or close oneself to the dawning awareness of God which is experienced naturally by a religious animal. (Rowe, 2001, p. 269-270)

The Irenaean version of Christian theology suggests that the complex process whereby man is created as a personal being in God's image makes possible his cognitive freedom in relation to his status as a relatively free being over against the infinite Creator.

Epistemic distance is responsible for the moral ills of existence. The evolution of life entails certain problems. The life of this being has been a constant struggle against a hostile environment, with the capability for savage violence against fellow human beings, particularly those outside the immediate group. This being's concepts of the divine were primitive and often bloodthirsty (Rowe, 2001, p. 268). Similarly, non-moral evil, such as pain and suffering which is caused by the "natural world", is explained as "the matrix within which God is gradually creating children for himself out of human animals" (Rowe, 2001, p. 273). The development of human personality and religious and ethical responsibility takes place against the background of a world of exertion, choice, struggle and danger. In a world devoid both of dangers to be avoided and rewards to be won we may assume that there would have been virtually no development of the human intellect and imagination, and hence of either the sciences or the arts, and hence of human civilization and culture.

When come to this point, however, a person might object that in the notion of the development of civilization and culture, Hick is introducing another value which is not covered by his claim that fulfillment is to be had in terms of a loving relationship with God and other human beings. For now, person-making entails also the development of the various cultures which have graced the world. It is one thing to argue for the world which is being structured to yield horrific consequences to human activity (such as ecological crisis), but quite another to argue for the moral usefulness of non-moral conflict. For example, can one legitimately argue that the music of a Mozart, the paintings of a Picasso, the plays of a Shakespeare and developments in genetics justify the deaths of thousands upon thousands of people through the contingencies of erupting volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, forest fires, famine? Can the wailing voices of parents over the death of a child through even one of these natural calamities be comforted by the fact that we can build beautiful buildings? Hick argues that persons should be seen as ends in themselves and not as means. His argument takes human fatalities as means to furthering the creativity of life.

And Hick further argues that human beings, and therefore their having to endure suffering, cannot be treated as a means toward the fulfillment of some later developing being, for such would devalue those persons who suffer. And yet, Hick implies that the pre-human creation's struggles and pain over millions of years, were precisely means to the human end, the creation of human beings in the "likeness" of God (Hick, 1968, p. 243). Does this mean that God does not value any non-human creation apart from its value as a means of human development? Such a thought would shock ecological theologians. Moreover, what was the need of the painful and slow evolution of the *homo sapiens*, when the important need for a freedom built

through the fires of suffering lies in the second, the likeness of God, and not in the first, the image of God, stage? As David Griffin asks,

why this natural environment had to be created through a long, slow, pain-filled evolutionary process? Hick's God, being essentially omnipotent, could have created the environment in the "twinkling of an eye". But Hick provides no reason why God should have wasted over four billion years setting the stage for the only thing thought to be intrinsically valuable, the moral and spiritual development of human beings. And the high probability that hundreds of millions of years of that preparation involved unnecessary and useless pain counts against Hick's defense of the omnipotent God's total goodness.

(Davis, 1981, p. 53)

Furthermore, if Hick intends to argue that natural calamities have a morally pedagogic function then it is difficult to understand how. How is moral development served by the devastation of a densely inhabited metropolis through an exploding volcano? As McCloskey argues, "Natural calamities do not necessarily turn people to God, but rather present the problem of evil in an acute form; and the problem of evil is said to account for more defections from religion than any other cause" (McCloskey, 1972)

Thus if God's object in bringing about natural calamities is to inspire reverence and awe, He is a bungler. Equally important, the use of physical evil to achieve this object is hardly the course one would expect a benevolent God to adopt when other, more effective, less evil methods are available to Him. Similarly, disasters do not necessarily bring communities closer together in mutual sympathy and co-operation.

What is the purpose, at this stage, of epistemic distance? Hick argues that this is only the raw material for the second stage of the creative process, which is the bringing of humanity, thus fashioned as persons in the Divine image, into the finite likeness of God.

The latter stage represents the fulfillment of the potentialities of our human nature, the completed humanization of man in a society of mutual love...for the creatures who have been brought into existence in God's image are endowed with a real though limited freedom, and their further growth into the finite divine "likeness" (*similitudo*) has to take place through their own free responses within the world in which they find themselves. (Hick, 1977, p. 290)

Thus human existence is teleologically and eschatologically orientated. "The final meaning of man's life lays in the future state to which, in God's purpose, he is moving," and "The finite creature is able to come as a (relatively) free person to know and worship God because his embeddedness in nature has initially set him at an epistemic distance from the Divine Being" (Rowe, 2001, p. 279)

There is an "autonomous natural order" in which "man is not compelled to be conscious of God", but in which there is to be a free awareness of the Divine in faith, and consequent free acknowledgement and worship and therein a rejection of moral evil's selfishness and of treating others as means to one's own end. It is this which represents the fulfillment of human development, the full realization of human potentialities in a unitary spiritual and moral perfection in the Divine Kingdom.

Therefore, in his evolutionary approach Hick rejects the notion that human beings could have been created morally perfect and yet free such that they would always in fact choose rightly. Hick agrees, against the free will defense in theodicy,

that a perfectly good being, although formally free to sin, would in fact never do so; yet he argues that this is an unacceptable argument, in the sense that it undercuts a necessary theodicy. Hick appeals, in his answer, to the principle that virtues, which have been formed within the agent as a hard won deposit of his own right decisions in situations of challenge and temptation, are intrinsically more valuable than virtues created within him ready-made and without any effort on his part (Davis, 1981, p. 56).

Mawson agrees with Hick:

If we suppose one's depravity to be constant between the cases, one would not be as free to run a red light if one knew that a policeman was sitting in the front passenger seat of one's car as if one thought oneself alone and unobserved; and if one knew that one's other passengers were the Bishop of Oxford and Richard Swinburne, one's freedom to run the red light would be reduced still further. If this sort of thought is correct, then it seems we may extrapolate from it and say that if one knew that one had an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly just God figuratively speaking in the car too, one's freedom to run the red light would be eliminated entirely. We need "epistemic distance" in order to have a free choice between good and evil. Or rather, we need a suitable balance to be struck between our epistemic distance and our depravity. Thus, 'the more uncertainty there is about the existence of God, the more it is possible for us to be naturally good people who still have a free choice between right and wrong. (Mawson, 2004, p. 31-32)

Much of this picture receives a bombshell directed at the concept of a necessary correlation between epistemic distance and the anthropological becoming of creatures

freely giving worship. Sontag, for instance, asks why Hick needs to postulate an original epistemic distance:

Why so many, perhaps a majority, were put so far away that they do not even see this world as a divine training ground...If God wants finite persons to come to know and love him in their own freedom, why did he create so many obstacles in our way?...If he wants us to freely love him, most humanity simply responds...God is too good, or else he is unfair, at playing hide and seek. (Davis, 1981, p. 56)

Roth agrees with Sontag, arguing that, "If our epistemic distance from God were less, we might understand more" (Davis, 1981, p. 63). The analogy to the child, who knows her mother while yet remaining free (but not understood in the neutral sense) to develop and deepen, is appropriate. Consequently, Hick's rejection of an Augustinian type approach is not as well grounded as it might seem.

It seems that what Hick is attempting to preserve an understanding of freedom in its strongest terms as something neutral and indeterminate. Certainly, he admits that we are not indeterminate and free in relation to our creation. For in one's own degree of freedom and responsibility, the human does not choose one's own origin; that is a given and immutable reality. Nevertheless, one can choose one's destiny. To choose or not to choose, that seems to be Hick's question when discussing theodicy. Hick intends to argue something rather different in relation to universal salvation, and apparently unrecognized approaches to the nature and content of freedom creates tensions in Hick's thesis.

The question has been raised: Has eschatological progress actually been made? Hick cuts the cord of verifiability, recognizing that the "destructive, self-

indulgent exuberance of...Promethean optimism” has been ruptured and displaced forever by “the depths of demonic malice and cruelty which each generation has experienced, and which we have seen above all in recent history in the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jewish population of Europe”. (Rowe, 2001, p. 276-277). According to Hick, humanity does not evolve fully in this life, and therefore Hick admits a necessary tragic component of human potential: most advance a little, but many hardly advance at all and, some on the contrary, regress. With Erich Fromm, Hick argues that “living is a process of continuous birth. The tragedy in the life of most of us is that we die before we are fully born” (Rowe, 2001, p. 279).²¹

The tragic interpretation he understands as a consequence of humanism (Hick, 1994, p. 161). For, here, the universe of human suffering will never be justified in the only morally acceptable sense of this word, and thus humanity’s situation as a whole appears as a tragic scene involving an immensity of unredeemed and unredeemable suffering and of unfulfilled and unfulfillable potentiality. This is a world in which “calamity strikes indiscriminately. There is no justice in the incidence of disease, accident, disaster and tragedy. The righteous as well as the unrighteous are struck down by illness and afflicted by misfortune.” Indeed, one should add, this is a world in which the good can often suffer horrendously and unjustly whereas the wicked often prosper.

Hick cites Russell’s picture of humanity’s situation explicitly pessimistic. Life on this planet is doomed sooner or later to extinction, and the values which have been developed in the course of history will become extinct with humanity. In some, a like

²¹ Still, Hick argues that this is not the case with a few figures, for example saints, “who have attained to sanctification, or mocha, or nirvana on this earth.”

thought has engendered the despairing sense of meaninglessness which Hick discovers expressed at many points in modern literature.

Hick notes that others have reacted more serenely to the humanist vision, seeing that within the context of cosmic purposelessness the individual's life can nevertheless be purposeful, yielding deep joys and satisfactions, and can thus be acceptable as a whole despite its unavoidable brevity. Humanity may be but an accidental and fleeting phenomenon in the infinite vastness of space and time, nonetheless, human love, friendship, loyalty and goodness, the endless beauties of the natural world and of human artistic creation and the achievements of human thought and science, are all self-justifying and their value is not diminished by the humanist understanding of man's ultimate situation. Further, it is possible that before this planet ceases to be inhabitable humanity may succeed in immigrating to another home in the solar system, and may indeed go on forever finding new worlds on which to live as the former ones cease to support him. Thus, the race may prove to be immortal, successive generations endlessly arising to enjoy the values of human existence. Such vastly enlarged views of humanity's future, in which the planet earth has long since ceased to play any part, have been made familiar to our imaginations by contemporary science fiction.

Therefore, while there is a general humanistic pessimism as to the possibility of survival, and certainly no room for personal survival or immortality, the psychological outlook of those living does not have to be one of pessimism or despair at the meaninglessness and instability of existence. For example, Hick cites Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, as "being-towards-death" (*Sein-zum-Tode*), as a way of living authentically under the constant shadow of death without being reduced to anxiety (Hick, 1994, pp. 97-100). Sartre summarizes Heidegger's teachings with, "It

is by projecting itself freely towards its final possibility that the *Dasein* will attain authentic existence and wrench itself away from everyday banality in order to attain the irreplaceable uniqueness of the person.” Sartre is cited as an opponent of this conception of *Dasein*, for, according to him, this is an optimistic idea which forgets that death deprives life of the only kind of meaning that it might conceivably have had. Death is not the completion of a known span, but comes possibly unexpectedly and arbitrarily, and therefore denying life of its completion and consequently also its meaning. Even if death does not unexpectedly intrude to terminate an incomplete life, the knowledge that it may at any moment do so blights our lives with final meaninglessness.

Hick cites a number of others who take an optimistic perspective on the meaninglessness of existence, a tradition which he traces back throughout the modern period to David Hume. For example, there is what Hick terms “the biological approach”, which sees death as a necessary part of the process of evolution. If new members of any species, including humanity, were continually being born without this recruitment being balanced by a continual loss by death, the earth would soon have neither space nor sustenance for them, and the species would exterminate itself through overcrowding. It is thus essential that each generation in its turn be removed to make room for the next. From the beginning of life there has to be a continual succession of new individual members of the species, for it is through the small random differences occurring in each generation that the species has been able both to improve its adaptation to, and to respond to changes in, its environment. Seeing herself, then, as a member of the human species, which she values for the simple but sufficient reason that she is a part of it, a humanist may be able to accept her own future demise with equanimity as a contribution to the on-going life of the race. For

when the individual has contributed adequately to the stream of life the purpose of being an individual has been served.

However, it seems quite arbitrary to argue that the second stage shows no signs of progress, and in fact does not need to, but yet the first stage—that of the evolutionary preparation of intelligent beings of the potentiality for the second stage does.

4.3.2 Critique of the Future Worlds of Being

The hypothesis of the calamitous potentiality of existence does not suffice for Hick. Indeed, “Without such an eschatological fulfillment, this theodicy would collapse” (Davis, 1981, p. 51). According to Kant, immortality is a postulate of the practical reason, that the union of virtue and happiness in morality cannot be achieved in this world requires an immortal state in which they can be united (Thilly, 1965, pp. 441-442). While broadening the content from ethics to human fulfillment, Hick borrows heavily from a common element in the religious traditions of both East and West, of which living morally is a substantial part. Hick argues that the totality of human existence is not to be understood in tragic terms, but rather much more optimistically in terms of the eventual—over a number of lifetimes—fulfillment of existence. Hick can argue, with Buddhism, that “such fulfillment is not to be attained in a single earthly life. Our earthly life is not enough” (Davis, 1981, p. 51). He recognizes, with the major world religions, that if the human potential is to be fulfilled in the lives of individual men and women, those lives must be prolonged far beyond the limits of our present bodily existence. The self that is to be perfected must transcend the brief and insecure career of an animal organism. There must, in short, be some form of continued personal life after death (Davis, 1981, p. 51).

The Irenaean type of theology sees the Divine creation of personal life as taking place through a long and slow process which extends far beyond this earthly scene.

For the Irenaean type of theology rejects the thought that men are at death distributed to an eternal heaven or hell. It thinks instead in terms of continued responsible life in which the soul-making process contributes in other environments beyond this world. Thus it speaks of an intermediate state between this present life and the ultimate heavenly state—the traditional catholic doctrine of purgatory being itself an approach to this idea. Further, in attempting to envisage such an intermediate state, even though necessarily only in very general terms, it postulates many worlds or spheres of existence in addition to this physical world, and envisages the progress of the soul through them towards a final state of perfection in completely fulfilled relationship both to God and to finite beings (Davis, 1981, p. 41).

Life is understood to be a pilgrimage, a soul-making process, with death forming a comma between one clause and another, or a frontier between one land and another.

Justification of this is not sought in recurring memories of return, or in parapsychological evidence, although these things do, Hick believes, strengthen the case at hand, but morally.

Hick understands the idea of future lives as aiding in “a solution of the theological problem of human suffering.” This “solution” is carefully sculpted so as not to deny the “reality of suffering”, but rather to suggest “how it is to be justified or redeemed.” Hick recognizes Ivan Dostoyevsky’s complaint that, “if all must suffer for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it...? The situation which causes

Ivan to ‘hasten to give back my entrance ticket’” to heaven (Larrimore, 2001, p. 280). Consequently, his method of justification is not an attempt to suggest the necessity of suffering in a way which would cover the pains of present suffering in utilitarian fashion, the notions of the “acceptability” and “worthwhileness” of someone’s suffering are highly ambiguous: acceptable or worthwhile from whose point of view? Surin thinks that Hick is exactly the classic example of the type of “soul-making” theodocist...that human suffering constitutes the means by which eternal joy is ultimately attained: suffering is a *conditio sine qua non* of attaining such joy.

Although there certainly are instances of this type of position in *Evil and the God of Love*, Hick argues in *Death and Eternal Life* against the hypothesis that human pains are justified in the eyes of one’s Creator because “God wishes to create such beings, to observe their lives and to enter into personal communication with them.” However, what Hick here seems to be rejecting is the notion that the struggles and sufferings of individuals are intended to create a fulfilled humanity, which is both future and distinct from the ones involved in the building process. That is, that ones’ sufferings are not justified because they produce some other fulfilled person in the future, thus leaving the pains of the one suffering unabated. For, as Ivan argues, surely I haven’t suffered simply that I, my crimes and my sufferings, may manure the soil of the future harmony for somebody else. I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when every one suddenly understands what it has all been for (Larrimore, 2001, p. 280).

Following the line of thought developed here, Hick argues that the acts of savage and sadistic immunity which Dostoyevsky describes, and which can certainly be matched outside the pages of a novel, can be taken as showing the cruel character

of the power which has created a universe in which such things happen. But they can also be taken as showing the tremendous importance which that power attaches to our character as free and responsible moral agents. Hick cannot here be interpreted as suggesting that evil is in any way necessary for the growth and development of fulfilled humanity. Rather, his suggestions have more in common with what has been termed the “free will defense”. The point is that God created human beings with a freedom which does not permit coercion, and evil is the result of the misuse of that freedom. Thus, Hick argues that each particular evil experienced by human beings was specifically necessary for bringing about fulfillment. Hence Hick speaks of contingency, the “specific misuses of freedom”, and that it is not necessary that man should move, through the exercise of freedom, to an eventual full humanization and perfection. But it was necessary that there should be genuine human freedom, carrying with it the possibility of appalling misuses; and all the inhumanities of man to man are part of the contingent form which the story of human freedom has in fact taken.

Thus the only morally acceptable justification of the agonies and heartaches of human life must be of a kind in which the individuals who have suffered themselves participate in the justifying good and are themselves able to see their own past sufferings as having been worthwhile. This “worthwhile” is not understood as compensation in the form of a future happiness enjoyed to balance past misery endured, but rather as the very different idea of the eventual all-justifying fulfillment of the human potential in a perfected life. There has always been something morally unattractive about the compensatory joys of heaven. It suggests a comparatively low level of ethical insight centered upon the notion of justice as exact reciprocity, a certain quantum of pleasure canceling out a certain quantum of pain. The individual is

treated as if he were a creditor in a hedonic bank, whose needs are adequately met by ensuring a mathematical balance. But surely the individual would be much more truly valued for his own sake, as a living end in himself, by a justification of the pains and sorrows through which he has passed in terms of a fulfillment which is a state of his own self and of the human community of selves of which he is a part.

This moral argument for at least a second chance of life after death naturally leads Hick to reject the idea of the inalterability of the soul at bodily death. For it is evident that the varying circumstances of human birth and environment make it much easier for some and much harder for others to come in the course of their lives into a right relationship with God. There are, as one may perceive, inequalities in birth, genetics, social environments etc.

The positive side of this is the need for more than this present life if the Divine purpose of person-making through the human being's free responses is to continue through to completion. For it is evident that the great majority of men and women, perhaps all, come to the end of their present life without having attained to perfect humanity. It follows that the responsible life must continue after bodily death.

Hick argues that any morally acceptable justification of the sufferings of humanity is bound to postulate a life after death, a life in which there are the possible conditions for one to undergo further personal growth and development. If it were to be objected that Hick's premise here is faulty, that the idea of moral justification is problematic then Hick would respond by arguing that this fails under the criterion of universal love.

Hick has problems in the understanding of the love of God. Given the fact that the equation of universal love with God is not universally shared, one may conclude that here Hick is leaning rather heavily on his Christian heritage without any explicit

rational effort at a support or defense. Why conceive of God as love rather than as anything else? Why should God desire to save everyone? Rejecting an incarnate, personified, paradigm has made it more difficult for Hick to justify this position, given the divergent plurality of approaches in many of the world's religions. Indeed, when Hick writes, "My tentative conclusion...that in their central witness the great faiths of east and west permit, and by their convergent permission even point towards, a common conception of human destiny", one feels that East and West have been interpreted from the standpoint of a Western scholar seeking universal agreement.

To the objection that the need for endless lives is unnecessary since there could be instant perfection at death, Hick responds by arguing that this would lead to a discontinuity of the person, "God would have de-created X and created a new and very different person in his place." Therefore, the experience of temporal existence would serve no necessary purpose, for God would be recreating infants as well as those who die in old age.

4.3.3 Critique of the Fulfillment of God's Purpose

Hick's postulation of universal salvation appears to be forced. According to Hick, the doctrine of hell is morally intolerable, a theme pervasive in Western theology particularly since the seventeenth century. According to Hick, the existence of hell would entail that God's good purpose had been externally frustrated, leaving the eternal evils both of sin and of punishment intact. Hick makes an important point when he argues that Jesus' discourses about hell have an existential, rather than predictive and descriptive function. Nevertheless, as with the notion of successive lives, Hick's rejection of the doctrine is made on ethical grounds: for a conscious creature to undergo physical and mental torture through unending time would be is

horrible beyond words, and the thought of such torment being deliberately inflicted by Divine decree is totally incompatible with the idea of God as infinite love. The absolute contrast of heaven and hell, entered immediately after death, moreover does not correspond to the innumerable gradations of human good and evil. Justice could never demand for finite human sins the infinite penalty of eternal pain and such unending torment could never serve any positive or reformatory purpose precisely because it never ends. The doctrine of hell, finally, it renders any coherent Christian theodicy impossible by giving the evils of sin and suffering an eternal lodgment within God's creation.

Certainly, Hick is not thorough in his explicit summary and consequent rejection of the doctrine of hell, although he does acknowledge, without comment, that contemporary theologians who do not accept the doctrine of universal salvation usually speak of the finally lost as passing out of existence rather than as endlessly enduring the torments of hell-fire. Nevertheless, Hick's concept of the schematics of justice as repentance, forgiveness and restoration, and of the nature and strength of God's resolve in saving all, rules out any revised concept of eternal damnation or destruction.

Hick argues that it is far from impossible to reconcile the supposed antimony of divinely universal love and human freedom, and indeed that it is obligatory that we reject the claim that we are not entitled to make the positive affirmation that all will eventually be saved and affirm instead with certainty the future salvation of all.

Hick admits that if we are to remain free personal creatures it is clear that God cannot coerce us into saving faith, either by a direct force overcoming our wills or even by the hidden operation of the Holy Spirit working in the depths of our unconscious selves. So long as we are free beings standing responsibly before our

Maker there must be the possibility of our opposing and refusing Him. However, he does not agree that so long as there is this possibility it cannot be known in advance that all men are indeed going to be saved. Hick does this by questioning the premise upon which the argument rests: that God can only ensure that all men will eventually be saved if He is prepared if necessary to coerce them, however subtly.

Rather, the Christian doctrine of creation offers an alternative route to the universalist conclusion. For it authorizes us to hold that in creating our human nature God has formed it for himself, so that our hearts will be restless until they find rest in Him, in other words, God has so made us that the inherent gravitation of our being is towards Him. We have here the notion of an inner *telos* of human nature, a quest of man's whole being for his own proper good, a Divine structuring of human nature, through the forces by which man has been made, for a relationship with God which is the basis of man's own ultimate good. This capacity for God is the image of God within us.

Thus God does not have to coerce us to respond to Him, for He has already so created us that our nature, seeking its own fulfillment and good, leads us to Him. The notion of Divine coercion is set aside by the fact of Divine creation. There is an openness of human nature towards the reality to which the religions of the world are responses.

Hick has a non-competitive view of the relationship between Divine and human freedom. Consequently, in keeping with the theme of non-coercive self-disclosures aiming at personal persuasion, Hick describes Divine persuasion as analogous to the relationship between psychiatrist and patient, in which the former is seeking to free the latter from inner blockages and inhibitions which are preventing her from confronting reality and from being and doing what she really wants to be and

to do. Hick does not rule out the possibility of even more direct operations of grace, as with psychiatric hospitals' chemical and electrical shock treatments.

So long as the Divine saving activity does not negate or undermine our freedom, so long as we remain responsible beings in relation to God, we can only rejoice that He is so working that we shall eventually attain to the perfection of our nature in His eternal kingdom.

According to Hick, God will continue at this work until He is done. How many lives does the process take? As in the case of saints, Hick does believe that final heavenly state can be attained in this world. However, this is rare. Hick argues that we do not know how many worlds and lifetimes are needed, the number and the nature of the individual's successive embodiments will presumably depend upon what is needed for him to reach the point at which he transcends ego-hood and attains the ultimate unitive state, or Nirvana. Rightly criticizing J. A. T. Robinson, T. F. Torrance argues:

All that Dr. Robinson' argument succeeds in doing is to point to the possibility that all might be saved in as much as God loves all to the utmost, but it does not and cannot carry as a corollary the impossibility of being eternal lost. The fallacy of every universalist argument lies not in proving the love of God to be universal and omnipotent but in laying down the impossibility of ultimate damnation. (Torrance, 1949, pp. 312-313)

As indicated above, Hick attempts to reconcile human freedom with God's universal saving will. By defining freedom in relational terms, rather than in strong incompatibilistic or libertarian terms, Hick sidesteps some of the problems otherwise associated with a strong claim of universal salvation.

However, has Hick attempted to prove too much? Hick is aware that universal salvation could be affirmed in this strong sense if freedom is understood as excluding the possibility of a choice against God. According to Hick, this is a denial of freedom as he understands it. In relation to theodicy, in the tradition of the free will defense Hick argues that it is logically impossible for God to make people in such a way that they will be certain to respond freely to himself in love and trust and faith. So how can God guarantee that all will choose Him? Hick's conception of the creation of humanity at an epistemic distance from God sits uneasily alongside the argument that all have an inclination towards God. Griffin argues that:

For Hick, the future life or lives will not differ qualitatively from this one in terms of the relation between God and soul; it will only differ quantitatively, i.e., it will be much longer, but this raises the question as to why God did not simply make our earthly life-spans much longer, so that we could reach the goal on earth, or at least get much closer to it, this would have been very easy for an omnipotent God and would have made Hick's theodicy a little more plausible. (Davis, 1981, p. 55)

The John Hick's argument concerning the freedom of humanity for God forgets the significant factor of the irrationality of sin in its egocentricity. Hick explicitly rejects any Augustinian conception of the thought of being so turned in upon oneself that one can reject grace. But is his position any more coherent? In place of the doctrine of hell Hick offers us a reformed doctrine of purgatory. What this means is that the unrepentant sinner in this life goes on getting more and more chances to repent after death until he eventually sees the point. Leaving aside the question of whether this bears much relation to the traditional account of purgatory, according to which it is

believed that the fundamental choice of good and evil is made in this life, and that purgatory is a matter of cleaning up defects and turning to the highest pitch a character which is basically orientated toward the good, we may wonder whether Hick is offering us an intelligible account of responsibility and habit. What Hick is saying is that however evilly we choose to behave in this life, we cannot be wholly corrupted. No evil habit can become so much a part of our character that we can be morally destroyed. What seems to be lurking in the background here is a kind of Plotinian doctrine that the whole soul does not descend, that there is something about human beings that transcends their own choices. Obviously, Hick is reacting to predestinarians who believe that the doctrine of the Fall means that our original nature was totally destroyed and has to be totally remade by God. But in seeking to defend man's possibility of leading a good life he goes to the opposite extreme of asserting that this possibility is a practical certainty. So over against the thesis of inevitable sin we now have inevitable salvation. Altogether, the dignity of man as more than a cosmic puppet can hardly be said to have been safeguarded.

If God ordained a world within which His creatures would come as perfected persons to love and serve Him, through a process in which their own free insight and responses have been an essential element, then it would take special pleading to theoretically rule out any possibility of rejection. Given that people refuse God in this life even when faced with His grace, there seems no necessary condition which would lead one to argue that all will therefore be saved.

Is his optimism in the future firmly enough secured in order to permanently keep the hungry wolves from the door? Hick's thought is founded on the same intentional fallacy as those encountered earlier: that one can predict the future. Hick builds not on the notion of Biblical, or any other source of revelation of the future, but

rather uses a combination of many emphases. The debate would then be whether to believe Hick's picture or that of the supposed source of Divine revelation.

Consequently, the religions, on the other hand, say that our human situation is not ultimately tragic, because it is leading to a universal fulfillment of such worth that, in relation to it, all human suffering will be rendered manifestly worthwhile. Interestingly, Hick approves of that of which Steiner complains: that Christian faith asserts that our life has its meaning within the great *Divina Commedia* of the creation of the perfected finite spiritual life, and that it is good not only because it is in process towards a universal fulfillment of limitless value. The Christian faith is finally an optimism because it sees the human story in its relation to God, God who is *agape*, love.

The problem of easy talk becomes more acute when it is remembered that Hick, even at this stage, rejects a Christological paradigm. Rather, he analyses and combines the various insights that are presented from parapsychology and Eastern religions as well as from the Christian tradition. If one were to recall Hick's image of the king, the blind men and the elephant, one could say that Hick stands in the place of the king, able to perceive what the blind men were only groping around after, and therefore only partially conceiving. Hick's is a "designer" religion reflecting contemporary market-society politics, and yet this is combined with the totalitarian modernism of the liberal imperialistic age. With Surin, one could argue that Hick's is a logic which irons out the heterogeneous precisely by subsuming it under the categories of comprehensive and totalizing global and world theologies. Here we have closure, the arrival at the one universal truth and the negation of all other possibilities.

Is Hick in danger of subsuming all that is complex and too untidy to fit a neat synthesis and categorization into precisely a form of an over-arching and over-simple,

indeed, over-simplistic, thesis? If so it is a coercive pluralism, doing exactly what he is reacting against in the Christian tradition's exclusivist perspective. To use the language of Donovan, Hick, and the like, have been only too ready to suggest what must be the truth of the matter, and have attempted to manufacture agreement on that truth by carrying out radical surgery on the traditions.

Consequently, Roth argues that Hick's theodicy is too good to be true (Davis, 1981, p. 61). Evil's being overcome, our evolution into fulfilled creatures and our eschatological perception of suffering's divinely just purposes all strikes Roth "as pie in the sky by and by; a whole one, not just a slice. This theodicy is nice" (Davis, 1981, p. 63). Roth argues:

Some hardship and pain may make persons stronger and better, but Hick sees the world too much as a schoolroom when it is actually more like a dangerous alley. In the Holocaust persons were ruined and destroyed more than they were made or perfected. Auschwitz is waste, the very antithesis of providential design and purpose in God's economy. (Davis, 1981, p. 61)

Again, "John Hick finds it not enough to justify calling God's love and goodness limitless. The sheer amount and intensity of evil's waste make me demur" (Davis, 1981, p. 63). Roth argues, therefore, that "a wiser course is to admit that some facts cannot be reconciled with God's limitless love" (Davis, 1981, p. 62). Hick's

trans-Christian eclecticism has been well documented, and there are distinct leanings in *Death and Eternal Life* towards this late method. However, in that book he remains professedly within the context of Western Christianity, and it is this that provides the link with the Christian eschatological reflections of this chapter. Hick's own particular Western Christian eclecticism in *Death and Eternal Life* constitutes, for instance, a

fusion of elements from a Leibnizian approach to teleological development with a Kantian ethical approach to immortality, which postulates that achieving of the goal is postponed until “another” or “next” life, all coming to focus in what Hick terms the “Irenaean” approach to existence. Hick’s reflections on the next life’s means of progress seems more influenced by Eastern teachings on reincarnation and Origenism than with Christian conceptions of purgatory, and, rather amazingly and with very little effort, the eastern concepts of God and Nirvana come to look very like the Christian concepts of God and heaven, respectively.

Hick does not intend to stray too far into the grounds of unwarranted speculation, for fear of projecting one’s hope too much into the future. Hence Hick tentatively expresses what a possible eschatology, as opposed to pareschatology,²² might look like. And yet, it must be admitted, in attempting to spell out his belief in a pareschatology Hick appears to know rather a lot. Methodological eschatological agnosticism has not filtered adequately through into his pareschatology.

Much Hick’s pareschatology would appear to need to be revised in the light of his more recent development. In *An Interpretation of Religion*, Hick has replaced his rather Christian sounding God by “Ultimate Reality”, a Reality beyond knowing (Hick, 1968, p. 272-273).

Hick does introduce a note of agnosticism and an appreciation of the problems associated with theological speech, especially that which attempts to encompass all the world’s religions. Hick not only suggests that the *eschaton* may be beyond the anticipations of any of our “earthly religious traditions” (including his own pluralism!) and possibly “beyond the range of our imaginations”, “the inexperienceable and indescribable ground of the range of human religious experience

22 The time between death and reaching the final state.

in so far as this is more than purely human projection”, but also that it is at least theoretically possible that perhaps one may have been correct all along. In 1981, Hick was able to claim that,

A theologian is not obliged to know the answer to every question. There is a place for trust in the goodness of God beyond our understanding...Such a theodicy does not expect to be able to see in detail how all things work together for good for God’s creatures, or how it can be that by wrestling with evil we are ultimately being created through it. (Davis, 1981, p. 68)

However, one seriously wonders whether this agnosticism has played a prominent enough part in Hick’s eschatological speculations and therefore whether this claim to agnosticism functions more as a deflection of serious criticism. Has Hick not already seen too much? Or rather, given the ease of his reflections, has he not seen enough? If he had, then perhaps his discourse would be imbued with a more tentative character.

What does transcendental agnosticism do to Hick’s pareshatology? It would appear necessary for Hick to abandon thoughts of humanity coming to fulfillment in relation to the God of love who will save all, after all, not knowing who or what the Real is, its status toward us, etc., would seem to entail eschatological agnosticism. And yet Hick still wants to retain the notion of the religions as responses to the Real which inadequately, albeit “really”, captures various aspects of the truth of that Real. Thus he argues that this process moves towards, “a limitlessly good fulfillment of the human project of human existence.” He continues to affirm that “all shall be well” (Davis, 1981, p. 65).

Alas, it is part of the very nature of freedom to have the power not to do what one has a very good reason to do. So, while this researcher fully agrees with Hick that

epistemic distance from God is necessary to cognitive freedom in relation to God, the researcher can find no good reason in Hick's writings to support his further claims that epistemic distance from God is necessary for the very existence of human persons, for their being free to develop morally, and for their being free with respect to coming to love God. And, if the researcher is right about this, one must wonder what good is served by our of epistemic distance from God. Rowe has something to say about this as he concludes:

Although Hick seems to have provided a reasonable explanation of why an omnipotent, perfectly good Being would permit the existence of moral and natural evils, human pain and suffering, he has not explained why such a Being would permit the amount of evil, or certain particular evils that exist in our world. (Rowe, 2001, p. 104-105)

Consequently, it may be argued that Hick finds it all too easy to justify evil and suffering, and his talk resembles the chattering that is all too often a problem for those who should be silent in the face of the horror of catastrophe. This particular problem is one which theodicy is alleged to have generally. This is because suffering and evil are justifiable for Hick, relativizing it in the process. Even the appearance of an excessive amount of suffering does not pose too much of a problem for Hick, for he argues that,

Our judgments of intensity are relative. We might identify some form of natural evil as the worst that there is, the agony that can be caused by death from cancer, and claim that a loving God would not have allowed this to exist. But in a world in which there was no cancer, something else would then rank as the worst form of natural evil. If we eliminate this, something else will

happen to replace it; and so on. And the process would continue until the world was free of all natural evil. There could not be a person-making world devoid of what we call evil; and evils are never tolerable, except for the sake of the greater good. (Davis, 1981, p. 49-50)

Therefore, Hick argues that we cannot know what would be an excess of suffering from our limited perspective, and consequently have to agree that what we have is for the best. Simply stated, according to Hick, proportionate punishment or suffering cannot serve a person-making function. As Hick puts it:

For it would be evident that wrong deeds bring disaster upon the agent whilst good deeds bring health and prosperity; and in such a world a truly moral action, action done because it is right, would be impossible. In other words, the very mystery of evil, the very fact that disasters afflict human beings in continent, undirected and haphazard ways, is itself a necessary feature of a world that calls forth mutual aid and builds up mutual caring and love. Therefore, even amidst the tragic calamity and suffering we are still within the sphere of his love and are moving towards his kingdom. (Davis, 1981, p. 50)

However, is this resolution of the seemingly infinite²³ argument coherent? The question posed by critics is exactly: why could God not have created a less hostile world in order to permit human development? Moreover, Hick's argument, according to Davis, "appears to cut the other way too: it seems to imply that human suffering could get infinitely worse than it is now and still be compatible with the existence of a perfectly good and omnipotent God" (Davis, 1981, p. 52). Hick refutes any

23 Or, for Hick, until the soul-making project had dispelled all suffering.

questioning of either the goodness of God or of the worthwhileness of one's present sufferings, by denying the possibility the form of such questions, continually referring to the fact that God is good and omnipotent, and that therefore our sufferings are all for our own personal development and benefit.

A further consequence, according to Roth, "is that Hick must defend evil, and he cannot do so without conditioning—even if only inadvertently or unintentionally—what happened to its victims" (Davis, 1981, p. 62). Roth argues that all Hick's "excuses, I fear, defend evil too much" (Davis, 1981, p. 63).

4.4 The Researcher's Viewpoint

This research is a critical exploration and presentation of John Hick's attempts to find a solution to the problem of evil. We have seen that Hick offers a theodicy intended to justify the ways of God in the light of the fact of evil in the world. Hick's theodicy is in contrast to the Augustinian type of theodicy in which present evil is represented as a fall from a pristine, original state of the world. Hick's theodicy rather follows Irenaeus, a Bishop of the ancient Church. The Irenaean tradition views Adam not as a free agent rebelling against God but as a child. In this view God is still working with humanity in order to bring it from undeveloped life (*bios*) to a state of self-realization in divine love, spiritual life (*zoe*) (Pojman, 1998, p. 165).

Thus, Hick views our world as a necessary stage in the evolution of a relatively immature creation into a more mature state. He views this life as a "vale of soul-making". In this view spiritual development requires obstacles and the opportunity to fail as well as to succeed. Hick declares that those who maintain that an all-powerful and good God would not have created a world of obstacles and challenges, would rather have a hedonistic paradise in which human beings are

essentially God's pets rather than autonomous agents. On the other hand, those who accept the challenge of freedom consider themselves co-workers with God in bringing forth the kingdom of God (Pojman, 1998, p. 165).

This researcher's position is that the soul-making theodicy is correct in that through undergoing the soul-making process we develop the traits required for true friendship with God in the only way that is suitable for human beings. If human beings are created in God's image, and called to friendship with Him, it is to be expected that they will have an important share in this enterprise. The central role in every human life of the struggle against evil bears this out. The battle is fought within each of us: the foremost challenge we face is that posed by our own sinfulness, which is overcome when we acknowledge that control of our destiny lies finally with God, and give up our false claim to ourselves. In the wake of repentance there should be a gradual transformation of the individual, in which the damage wrought by sin is repaired, and the character traits appropriate for friendship with God are nourished. Remorse, anger and bitterness have to be replaced by gratitude, peace and hope, attitudes of failure must be supplanted by a sense of worth, rationalization has to give way to self-understanding. Above all, man has developed such virtues as humility, patience, courage, and concern for others: to give up selfishness in favor of charity. Hick calls this process "soul-making." In it, the individual is transformed into a being suited for full friendship with God, because through the achievement of virtue he is made over into God's likeness. Much of the process takes place through our learning to deal with natural evil, with pain, sorrow and deprivation, in ourselves and others. By having to cope with our own suffering, we develop peace, humility, perseverance, and trust in God. We also learn sympathy for others who suffer, and by working to improve their lot we establish mercy and justice, in ourselves and in society. Indeed,

much of human fellowship and solidarity is founded upon the support and comfort we lend to each other in times of need, and in the common enterprises by which we seek to secure ourselves and one another against the depredations of natural evil. As Peterson puts it:

Hick views the world as a necessary stage in the evolution of a relatively immature creation into a more mature state. God seeks to bring forth mature moral and spiritual beings that are capable of freely exercising faith in him and love toward their fellows. Hick discusses the main features of an environment that would be conducive to bringing about these results, such as the world's not making it clear whether god exists and our being mutually vulnerable to one another. Also, Hick believes that the divine program of soul-making will culminate in the afterlife, which Hick believes must involve "universal salvation." (Peterson, 2001, p. 301)

Of course, not all find this theodicy satisfying. One common objection goes like this: Let us grant that intrinsically valuable spiritual and moral qualities (such as courage, compassion, charity, etc) develop out of a process of challenge and obstacles into people before birth—just as God puts eye color or musical talent into a person before birth. If people were simply born with these desirable qualities, then nobody would ever have to suffer or confront hardship, and the world would be a much more comfortable place. Surely a perfectly good God would prefer to bring about goodness and spiritual development in the most painless way, and this would be to simply build into people at birth along with eye color and the genes for things like male-pattern baldness. Since the higher moral and spiritual qualities are not built in at birth, we cannot be the creation of a loving and all-powerful God.

If the objection is correct, then the Higher Qualities theodicy fails to explain why God would allow hardships, suffering and challenges of this world. However, defenders of Soul-Making theodicy have given the following argument as a necessary truth: A person cannot come to have the higher moral and spiritual qualities unless he or she actually experiences and overcomes hardships and challenges. In other words, the higher moral and spiritual qualities are logically connected to various sorts of lived experience, and it is therefore a logical necessity that they can only develop through experience. It is a category mistake to suppose they could be directly built into the human soul before birth by divine fiat. As Hick puts it:

With no interaction with a challenging environment there was no development in its behavioral patterns. And I think we can safely say that the intellectual development of humanity has been due to interaction with an objective environment functioning in accordance with its own law, and environment which we have had actively to explore and to cooperate with in order to escape its perils and exploit its benefits. In a world devoid both of dangers to be avoided and rewards to be won we may assume that there would have been virtually no development of the human intellect and imagination, and hence of either the sciences or the arts, and hence of human civilization or culture. (Peterson, 2001, p. 309)

The researcher has affirmed and supported this claim and has drawn our attention to consider that a person cannot possibly come to be compassionate, or even to know what compassion is, without first confronting and then responding to a case of need. For it would not make sense to call a person compassionate, if the person had never confronted or responded to a case of need. The same sort of thing can be said for each

of the higher qualities mentioned above. These are not qualities like color that can simply be programmed into a person at birth. Rather, they only develop over time as a person freely experiences and confronts the perils and suffering of a world such as this.

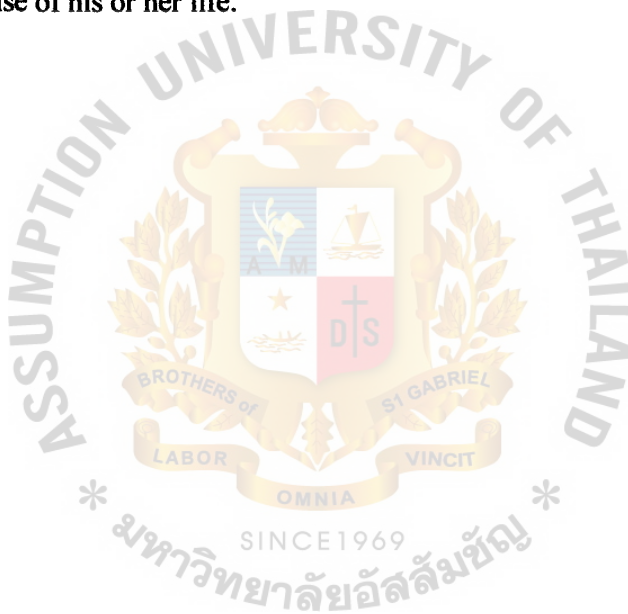
However, many philosophers, such as Edward H. Madden, Peter H Hare, and G. Stanley Kane, etc,²⁴ argue that most theodicies are flawed by the real problem of quantity of evil, not its mere existence. These philosophers argue: Suppose we grant the theist that suffering and hardships are necessary for moral and spiritual growth. Perhaps some suffering and some challenges are necessary, but how about the Holocaust, cancer, the Asian tsunami? Why is there so much suffering? Couldn't an omnipotent God have accomplished His ultimate purposes with the occurrence of far less suffering? Why does God allow the huge quantity of evil that we see all around us? If there is omnipotent God, isn't much of it avoidable, unnecessary, superfluous?

Some will see in this idea nothing more than Divine neglect: A father who stands by and watches while a horrible tragedy destroys his child, whether or not the tragedy could have been avoided by better choices, is a neglectful father. These folks may say: A God, who watches while His creation disposes of thousands of innocent people as if they were just pieces of waste, is a cosmic monster, not a loving God.

Others will see in this God's respect for freedom of the creature: God so respects human choice that He allows it even when the consequences are this bad. Such a theist may conclude that the end result of this experiment in freedom must somehow be something immensely great, something magnificent beyond our imagination, if the creator allows the occurrence of something this awful along the way.

24 See, for example Madden & Hare, 1998, and Kane, 1975.

Nevertheless, there are many positive arguments for the existence of God. In the opinion of this researcher, these arguments make a substantial case for the claim that God exists. Philosophers such as Richard Swinburne argue that although the argument from evil counts against belief in God, the many strong arguments in favor of belief outweigh the negative case so that the total evidence, when considered fairly, still makes it reasonable to believe in God. Let us think of a court case, one piece of evidence might count against the defendant, but once the total evidence is considered, the defendant may be found innocent. Ultimately, a reflective, critical-thinking individual needs to balance the arguments and decide what viewpoint makes the best overall sense of his or her life.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In order to be a person, exercising some measure of genuine freedom, the creature must be brought into existence, not in the immediate divine presence, but at a “distance” from God. This “distance” cannot of course be spatial; for god is omnipresent. It must be an epistemic distance, a distance in the cognitive dimension.

Michael Peterson (2001, p. 305)

5.1 Hick’s Responses to Critics of the Free Will Defense

Irenaeus was the first to propose a free will defense. His ideas have been recently popularized by John Hick. Irenaeus sees two stages in human creation. All human beings are created “in the image of God”. This does not mean that they are created perfect; rather it means that they are immature creatures capable of spiritual and moral growth. The second stage requires the free actions of those creatures. Through their own free actions they can be transformed into the children of God; that is they can attain the “likeness of God”. In both Augustinian and Irenaean theodicy, much emphasis is placed on the idea of free will. According to Augustine, human freedom results in the Fall. According to Irenaeus, human freedom is necessary if human beings are to become the kind of creatures God wants them to be. The free will defense thus tries to remove the blame from God for the presence of evil, by focusing on the “willful” turning away from good to evil by free human agents. Some scholars have gone further; if human freedom is to be a reality, evil is a necessary part of the moral universe, for it presents us with real choices about how we are to live. Just as we can freely choose to do what is good, we can use our freedom to do evil.

As the researcher has said, Hick has popularized Irenaeus ideas of free will. Hick seeks to sustain the free will defense of belief in a wholly good and omnipotent

God in the face of evil. Hick is particularly concerned to reply to those who claim that God need not have allowed evil since he could have created humankind so that all would freely choose to do good. For Hick, the free will defense falls into three stages.

The first stage establishes the conception of divine omnipotence. It argues that God's being all-powerful does not imply that He can do anything whatsoever, if "anything" includes self-contradictions such as making a round square, or a horse that has none of the characteristics of a horse, or an object whose surface both is and is not red all over at the same time. The self-contradictory, or logically absurd, does not fall within the scope of God's omnipotence; for a self-contradiction, being a logically meaningless form of words, does not describe anything that might be either done or not done. As Aquinas comments, "it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them" (Brown, 2001).²⁵ Thus, for example, God will never make a four-side triangle. However, this is not because He cannot make figures with four or any other number of sides, but merely because the meaning of the word "triangle" is such that it would never be correct to call a four-side figure a triangle. Clearly this does not involve any limitation upon God's power such that if He had greater power, He would be able to accomplish these logical absurdities. Not even infinite might can adopt a meaningless form of words as a program for action (Brown, 2001, p. 147).

The second phase of the argument claims that there is a necessary connection between personality and moral freedom such that the idea of the creation of personal beings who are not free to choose wrongly as well as to choose rightly is self-contradictory and therefore does not fall within the scope of divine omnipotence. If man is to be a being capable of entering into personal relationship with his Maker and

²⁵ Aquinas, Part I, Q. xxv, art. 3. Aquinas's entire discussion of this point is classic and definitive.

not a mere puppet, he must be endowed with the uncontrollable gift of freedom. For freedom, including moral freedom, is an essential element in what we know as personal as distinct from non-personal life. In order to be a person man must be free to choose right or wrong. He must be a morally responsible agent with real power of moral choice. No doubt God could instead have created some other kind of being, with no freedom of choice and therefore no possibility of making wrong choices. But in fact He has chosen to create persons, and we can only accept this decision as basic to our existence and treat it as a premise of our being. It is upon the third phase that discussion centers. Granted that God makes finite persons and not mere puppets or automata, and granted that persons must be genuinely free, could not God nevertheless have so made men that they would always freely do what is right? For human persons, though all are endowed with some degree of freedom and responsibility, nevertheless vary markedly in their liability to sin. The saint, at one end of the scale, of whom we can say that it is logically possible but morally impossible for him to sin, and the depraved and perverted human monster at the other extreme, of whom we can say that it is logically possible but morally impossible for him not to sin, are both persons. They both, we are supposing, possess the freedom which is the ground of moral responsibility and the basis of liability to praise or blame. And accordingly it would be true of a morally perfect person that it is logically possible for him to sin and yet that he would never in fact do so, either because he has no inclination to sin or because he is so strongly oriented towards the good that he always masters such temptations as he meets. His whole nature would be perfect, even though it might contain the tension of temptations overcome. Accordingly the actions flowing from such a nature would constitute perfect responses to his environment (Brown, 2001, p. 148). Hick argues that,

If God had so fashioned men's natures that they always freely act rightly, He would be in a relationship to His human creatures comparable with that of the hypnotist to his patient...He alone would know that our actions and attitudes, whilst flowing from our own nature and its environment...It would be logically possible for God so to make men that they could be guaranteed freely to respond to Himself in genuine trust and love. The nature of these personal attitudes precludes their being caused in such a way. Just as the patient's trust in, and devotion to, the hypnotist would lack for the latter the value of a freely given trust and devotion, so our human worship and obedience to God would lack for Him the value of a freely offered worship and obedience. We should, in relation to God, be mere puppets, precluded from entering into any truly personal relationship with Him. (Brown, 2001, p. 149)

5.2 Hick's Response to Critics of Soul-Making Theodicy

Soul-making theodicy gives meaning to suffering. As a man is not only an animal, one's character needs to be developed beyond that of the animal. The actual challenging difficulties encountered in the course of life are necessary for the final pleasure acquired. For example, in the evil situation of famine, one can develop moral character through helping others and learning not to be selfish. Without the reality of the evil situation, the moral character may only be a matter of discussion on the theoretical level. Similarly, without the difficulties of practice and the challenges of actually playing a ball game, no one could feel the actual pleasure of winning a ball game. Is a world with evil but a greater quantity of moral virtue better than a world with a lesser quantity of moral virtues? Hick writes:

With no interaction with a challenging environment there was no development in its behavioral patterns. And I think we can safely say that the intellectual development of humanity has been due to interaction with an objective environment functioning in accordance with its own laws, an environment which we have had actively to explore and to cooperate with in order to escape its perils and exploit its benefits. In a world devoid both of dangers to be avoided and rewards to be won we may assume that there would have been virtually no development of the human intellect and imagination, and hence of either the sciences or the arts, and hence of human civilization or culture. (Basinger, 2001, p. 309)

The assumption behind Hick's argument is that there is a God who has a special purpose for the lives of men. The ultimate meaning of suffering, soul-making, the ground of Hick's theodicy, is ineffective if God does not exist. It may be open to debate what amount of suffering (of the three kinds of evil) is optimal for soul-making. It may seem that the amount of the suffering is too much. The critics who deny the existence of a good and omnipotent God often claim that the amount of evil in the world is too great. They question how a world with such waste, suffering and immorality could be the product of such a God. David Hume also thinks that there was so much evil that we would have to say that God botched the task of creation. Hume, however, would settle for a world in which man was more industrious, used his mind more, and applied himself with greater diligence (Hume, 1990, p. 104-106). John Hick admits that it is a mystery, but necessary for the "development of God's children". In the opinion of the researcher, a wise and kind God is the ground of

providing the optimum amount challenge, or evil, for His soul-making purposes.

Yardan supports that idea:

The claim that there is too much evil in the world gives rise to some important basic questions. What is meant by too much? How must we go about making such a judgment? Why do we make such a claim? Is it possible that some are in a better position to make the judgment than others? Are some people better necessary and sufficient to enable someone to make an accurate judgment on the amount of evil in the world? What is the function of an optimistic or pessimistic personality on such a judgment? We know that there are those who see a glass as half full and others who claim that it is half empty. Can we really justify a pessimistic attitude toward life? Could it be that I alone decide whether to become an optimistic or a pessimist? (Yardan, 2001, p. 93-94)

It may be also argued that some people may not gain anything and may even fail through suffering. For example, there is the suffering from famine in Africa, and there was suffering from the tsunami in Southeast Asia. John Hick responds that there is no “total failure” or “total loss” at the end of the game. Finally, it is argued that much evil is gratuitous. It is responded that soul-making by God provides the meaning of the suffering. All evil still has meaning.

Richard Swinburne’s theodicy supplies a good illustration of this kind of approach. According to Swinburne, evil is necessary for the creation of the “greater good” (Rowe, 2001, p. 241). This greater good may be defined in two complimentary ways. The main emphasis lies with the will of God. God wants human beings to know and love him freely. In order for this to happen, we have to be confronted with the

choice between good (God) and evil (that which is not God). Human freedom lies in the ability to choose between God and that which is not God. Freedom is the crucial issue here. For Swinburne, there has to be real risk involved if human beings are to learn to act responsibly. If God simply created human beings who were free but incapable of evil actions there would be no real responsibility. If I crash a virtual car in a computer game, no one is injured and there is no cost for my mistake. Swinburne argues that in order for us to become mature and responsible adults we have to be in a position to see the results of wrong actions. Connected to this point is Swinburne's account of the relationship between evil and virtue. According to Swinburne, evil and suffering give human beings the opportunity to perform at their best (Rowe, 2001, p. 250). A world without evil would be a world without forgiveness, compassion, bravery and self-sacrifice (Feinberg, 1993, p. 84). In order for there to be such virtues there have to be evils which prompt people to behave in altruistic ways. In Swinburne's words, "Evils give men the opportunity to perform those acts which show men at their best" (Rowe, 2001, p. 253). Thus evil is necessary for the exercise of goodness. If human beings are to develop as persons, they must come into contact with evil and act against it. It is by acting against evil that goodness is generated. Evil itself thereby becomes good, simply because without it there is no good. Such a conclusion is based upon a misunderstanding of the connection between suffering and goodness. Swinburne appears to be arguing that good can come out of human suffering. Swinburne is right; often people will look back on the difficult times as the "formative years" of their lives. However, some forms of suffering defy such categorization. It is difficult to see what good came out of Hitler's butchering of six million Jews during the Second World War. Any good that comes out of such extreme suffering should not be understood as causally connected to the evil which preceded

it. A causal connection would suggest that in order for there to be good there had first to be suffering. Perhaps we would be better advised to think of the good which comes out of such situations as a by-product of the initial experience—not as something that arose because of the suffering, but something that arose despite the suffering.

Like Swinburne, Hick argues that human beings move through suffering and moral struggles toward perfection. The kind of goodness which...God desires in his creatures, could not in fact be created except through a long process of creaturely experience in response to challenges and disciplines of various kinds. The world is thus a place of “soul-making”, an arena where we have the opportunity to become the “children of God” (Rowe, 2001, p. 276).

However, unlike Swinburne, Hick accepts that the outcome of suffering is not always predictable and the experiences of life may sometimes be soul-breaking, rather than soul-making. How then, can the idea of God as creator of a system with this kind of suffering be justified? Hick argues that if the work of creation is to be completed, the process of soul-making must continue beyond the grave in a realm where the person is “subjected to processes of healing and repair which bring it into a state of health and activity. In such a higher harmony, we will grow and develop; moreover, we will understand the meaning of the suffering endured in ‘this’ world” (Peterson, 2001, p. 313).

5.3 A Critical View of Researcher

According to Augustine, the power of free choice is part of humankind having been created in the image of God. Adam and Eve were commanded to multiply their kind and to refrain from eating the forbidden fruit. (Genesis ii: 16-17) But humankind disobeyed God. Because of their disobedience, they became spiritually

dead. (Genesis ii: 17) This means God's image in Adam was effaced but not erased by the Fall; it was corrupted (damaged) but not eliminated (annihilated). Indeed, the image of God (which includes free will) is still in human beings. The researcher believes that Augustine accepts the idea of Clement of Alexandria and Origen that "image" denotes the characteristics of man qua man, while "likeness" refers to qualities not essential to man's "manness" but which may be cultivated or lost. (Reymond, 1998, p. 426) By the fall, man lost the "likeness" while still retaining as man the image of God. Thus, fallen man is essentially deprived of the "superadditional gifts" of holiness and righteousness but not morally depraved throughout the whole man. As the result, man experienced seven effects of the Fall. First, our first parents lost their regal/moral innocence and original righteousness and found themselves the subjects of real guilt and moral corruption. Second, the image of God, reflected originally both by Adam and Eve as individuals and by the human community which they comprised in terms of a true knowledge of God and concern for justice for one's neighbor, was immediately fractured and distorted. Third, fellowship between God and man was broken. Fourth, man's environment was cursed, and nature's productivity accordingly became impaired by thorns and weeds. Fifth, the man and the woman were judicially condemned and accordingly punished. Sixth, by Adams first transgression, all mankind are under God's wrath and curse and are made liable to the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever. Seventh, man's greatest and most immediate need is now divine grace. God would provide a Redeemer who would destroy Satan's kingdom of evil.

John Hick sees the image of God as refers to bodily traits and the likeness of God to the spiritual nature of man. Man was created as the image of God and immature and not in state of the likeness of God yet. Man has to develop the state of

the likeness of God. During this development, man has to pass through sufferings and pains.

The researcher sees the difference of these two schools; but at the same time he can see the similarity of both. Augustine believes man lost his likeness of God at the Fall. Therefore, man needs to be able to be restored back to this likeness of God. But the nature of man is sinful. He cannot do this by himself. He can do this only through the grace of God. His likeness of God can be restored only by the grace of God. When man is justified he becomes righteous. But this state of righteous person is the beginning of restoring back the likeness of God which is just immature righteous. He just gets into the state growing in developing likeness until he can reach the full likeness of God.

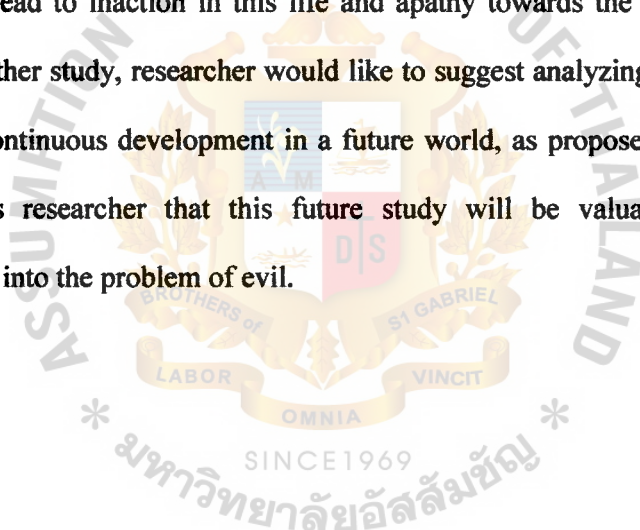
In sum, the researcher feels that the similarity and the difference of these two schools are for the benefits of both theists and atheists. Sufferings and pain develop our characteristics. In allowing sin to occur, God accomplishes His own higher purpose. God also gives freedom, permitting the potential for us to produce evil, so that we can grow and learn responsibility. When we choose the wrongly and fail, we endure the consequences of our error; God uses our failures to strengthen us and to bring us from immaturity and incompleteness into spiritual adulthood. The writer of Hebrews saw this: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews xii: 11)

Furthermore, God can produce a greater good by allowing sin or evil. St. Paul realizes that God permits evil to produce superior results. St. Paul says that, "We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us,

because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans v:3-5) St. James has the same insight, “Consider it pure joy, my brother, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James i:2-4)

5.4 Recommendations for Further Study

According to Hick, the presence of evil in this world is justified by the righting of wrongs and the erasure of suffering in a future world. The question is that: if evil is to be righted in the future, why fight against present evils in the here and now? Such a view might lead to inaction in this life and apathy towards the suffering of others. Thus, for further study, researcher would like to suggest analyzing the justification of a person's continuous development in a future world, as proposed by Hick. It is the hope of this researcher that this future study will be valuable for continuing investigation into the problem of evil.



REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Hick, J. (1964). *The problem of philosophy*. London: Collier-McMillan Limited Press.

Hick, J. (1964). *The existence of God*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Hick, J. (1964). *Classical and contemporary readings in the philosophy of religion*.
Mexico: Prentice-Hall De Mexico Press.

Hick, J. (1966). *Faith and the philosophers*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Hick, J. (1968). *The many-faced argument*. London: McMillan and Co. Ltd. Press.

Hick, J. (1975). *God and the universe of faiths*. London: The Macmillan Press.

Hick, J. (1977). *Evil and the God of love*. UK: Macmillan and Co Ltd.

Hick, J. (1985). *Problems of religious pluralism*. New Hampshire: The Macmillan Press.

Hick, J. (1986). *An interpretation of religion*. London: Macmillan Academic and Professional Press.

Hick, J. (1988). *The myth of Christian uniqueness*. London: Billings and Sons.

Hick, J. (1990). *Philosophy of religion*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Publisher.

Hick, J. (1994). *Death and eternal life*. Kentucky: John Knox Press.

Hick, J. (2001). *Dialogues in the philosophy of religion*. New York: Palgrave.

Secondary Sources

Aquinas, T. (1959). *Summa contra gentiles* (Vernon Bourke, Trans.). Garden City: Doubleday.

Augustine. (1958). *The city of God*. New York: A Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

- Balthasar, H. U. von. (1981). *The scandal of the incarnation*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
- Basinger, D. (2001). *Philosophy of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bath, Karl. (1968). *Christ and Adam*, trans. T.A. Smail (1957; reprint, New York: Macmillan.
- Barth, Karl. (1961). *Church Dogmatics*. translated and edited by G.W. Bromiley. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Brightman, E. S. (1940). *A philosophy of religion*. New York: Prentice-Hall. Inc.
- Brody, B. (Ed.) (1972). *Readings in the philosophy of religion* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Brown, S. (2001). *Philosophy of religion: An introduction with readings*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Craig, E. (1998). *Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Davis, S. T. (1981). *Encountering evil: Live options in theodicy*. Georgia: John Knox Press.
- Farmer, H. H. (1943). *Toward belief in God.* New York: The Macmillan Co.
- Farrer, A. (1961). *Love almighty and ills unlimited*. New York: Doubleday.
- Feinberg, J. (1993). *Reasons and responsibility*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Frankl, V. (1965). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Geivett, D. (1985). *A critical evaluation of John Hick's theodicy*. Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms International.

- Geivett, D. (1995). *Evil and the evidence for God: The challenge of John Hick's theodicy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Gilson, E. (1960). *The Christian philosophy of Saint Augustine*. New York: A division of Random House.
- Glenn, P. J. (1938). *Theodicy: A class manual in the philosophy of deity*. New York: B. Herder Book Co.
- Graham, G. (2001). *Evil and Christian ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gray, J. G. (1967). *The warriors, reflections on men in battle*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Griffin, D. R. (1991). *Evil revisited—responses and reconsiderations*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Griffin, Ray. (1976). *God, power, and evil*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Griffin, D. R., & Cobb, J. B. Jr. (1976). *Process theology*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.
- Hartshorne, C. (1953). *Philosophers speak of God*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hartshorne, C. (1967). *Natural theology for our time*. LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court.
- Hartshorne, C. (1976). *The divine relativity: A social conception of God*. London: Yale University Press.
- Hartshorne, C. (1984). *Omnipotence and other theological mistakes*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hasker, W., & Basinger, D. (2001). *Philosophy of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hebgin, D. S. (1961). *St. Augustine on the Psalms*. Longman: Green and Co. Ltd.

- Hobbes, T. (1994) *Human nature and de corpore politico*. New York: University Press, 1994
- Hodge, Charles. (1954). *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*. Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Hume, D. (1990). *Dialogues concerning natural religion*. London: The Penguin Group.
- Irenaeus. (1992) *Against heresies* (Dominic J. Unger, Trans.). New Jersey: Paulist Press.
- Keele C., & Smith, R. (1962). *The assessment of pain in man and animals*. London: Livingston.
- Kessler, G. E. (1999). *Philosophy of religion: Toward a global perspective*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Koestenbaum, P. (1976). *Is there an answer to death?*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Larrimore, M. (2001). *The problem of evil: A reader*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Leaman, O. (1997). *Evil and suffering in Jewish philosophy*. Cambridge: The University Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (1940). *The problem of pain*. London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd, Glasgow.
- Lyotard, J. (2000). *The confession of Augustine*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Martin, M. (1989). *Atheism—a philosophical justification*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mathis, T. (1985). *Against John Hick: An examination of his philosophy of religion*. New York: University Press of America.

- Mesle, R. C. (1991). *John Hick's theodicy: A process humanist critique*. London: Macmillan.
- Mill, John S. (1998). *Three essays on religion: Nature*. New York: Prometheus Books Press.
- Minton, A. J. (1990). *Philosophy paradox and discover*. New York: Youngstown State University.
- Mitchell, B. (1971). *The philosophy of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (2002). *Beyond good and evil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Palau, L. (1999). *Where is God when bad things happen?*. New York: Doubleday, a division of Random House, inc.
- Perry, J. (1999). *Introduction to philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Peterson, M. (2001). *Philosophy of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plantinga, A. (1974). *God, freedom, and evil*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Plato. (1998). *Theaetetus* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Pojman, L. P. (1996). *Philosophy the quest for truth*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Pojman, L. P. (1998). *Philosophical traditions: A text with readings*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Pojman, L. P. (2001). *Philosophy: The pursuit of wisdom*. Canada: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Pojman, L. P. (Ed.). (1998). *Philosophy of religion: An anthology*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Quinn, P. (1997). *A companion to philosophy of religion*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

- Ricoeur, P. (1967). *The symbolism of evil*. New York: Harper and Row Publisher.
- Roth, J. K. (1988). *The questions of philosophy*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Rowe, W. L. (2001). *God and the problem of evil*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Rowe, W. L. (2001). *Philosophy of religion*. Toronto: Nelson/Thomson Learning Press.
- Schopenhauer, A. (1907). *The world as will and idea* (R. B. Haldance & J. Kemp, Trans., 6th ed., 3 vols.). London: Everyman Paperback Classics.
- Sharma, A. (1995). *The philosophy of religion and Advaita Vedanta*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State university Press.
- Shatz, D. (2002). *Philosophy and faith: A philosophy of religion reading*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Sontag, F. (1988). *The questions of philosophy*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Sriewarakul, Warayutha. (1996). *Hartshorne on God: A Defense*. An Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- Swinburne, S. (1989). *The existence of God*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Taylor, R. (1970). *Good and evil*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Thilly, F. (1965). *A history of philosophy*. Allababad: Indian Universities Press.
- Tsanoff, R. A. (1931). *The nature of Evil*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1929). *Process and reality*, Cambridge: Oxford University Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1978). *Process and reality*. New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Whitehead, A. N. (1993). *Adventure of ideas*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Woytinsky W. S. (1953). *World population and production*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund.

Yardan, J. L. (2001). *God and the challenge of evil*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication.

Articles in English

Anderson, B. W. (1996). The kingdom, the power, and glory: The sovereignty of God in the Bible. *Theology Today*, 53, 5-14.

Castillo, N. (1996). The metaphysics of the ethics of evil. *แสงธรรมปริทัศน์ (Saengthamparithad)*, 20(3), 1996. 65-79.

Castillo, N. (1997). The metaphysics of the ethics of evil. *แสงธรรมปริทัศน์ (Saengthamparithad)*, 21(1), 93-100.

Castillo, N. (1997). The metaphysics of the ethics of evil. *แสงธรรมปริทัศน์ (Saengthamparithad)*, 21(2), 47-57.

Castillo, N. (1997). The metaphysics of the ethics of evil. *แสงธรรมปริทัศน์ (Saengthamparithad)*, 22(1), 39-46.

Castillo, N. (1998). The metaphysics of the ethics of evil. *แสงธรรมปริทัศน์ (Saengthamparithad)*, 22(1), 112-121.

Clark, S. RL. (2004). Rogress and argument from evil. *Religious Studies*, 40(2), 181-192.

- Crowley, P. G. (1997). Rahner's Christian pessimism: A response to the sorrow of AIDS. *Theological Studies*, (58), 286-307.
- De Witte, S. (2002). Defining evil: Insights from the problem of "dirty hand". *The Monist*, 85(2), 210-38.
- Domning, D. P. (2001). Evolution, evil and original sin. *Putting the Puzzle Together*, 185(15), 14-21.
- Draper, P. (2001). Richard Swinburne, providence and the problem of evil. *Nous* 35(3), 456-474.
- Elshtain, J. B. (1998). Why Augustine? Why now?. *Theology Today*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Farrel, P. M. (1958). Evil and omnipotence. *Mind*, July 1958.
- Fletcher W. (Trans.) (1951). On the Anger of God. In *The Writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Vol. VII). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmann.
- Flew, A. (1955). Divine omnipotence and human freedom. In A. Flew and A. MacIntyre (Ed.). *New essays in philosophical theology*. London: SCM Press.
- Garcia, E. V. (2002). A Kantian theory of evil. *The Monist*. 85(2), 194-209.
- Garrad, E. (2002). Evil as an explanatory concept. *The Monist*, 85(2), 320-336.
- Grave, S. A. (1956) On evil and omnipotence. *Mind*, April 1956.
- Herzberg, A. J. (1969). Tweestroomenland. In J. Presser (Ed.), *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* (A. Pomerans, Trans., pp. 517-520). New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Highfield, R. (1995). The freedom to say "No"? Karl Rahner's doctrine of sin. 56, 55-8.
- Hunt, D. P. (2001). Evil and theistic minimalism. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. 49(3), 133-154.

- Kane, G. S. (2001), The failure of soul-making theodicy, in J. L. Yordan (Ed.), *God and the Challenge of Evil* (p. 123). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication.
- Kane, G. Stanley. (1975). The failure of soul-making theodicy. *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, 6, 6-7.
- Layman, C. S. (2003). Moral evil: The comparative response. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 53(1), 1-23.
- Lowry, R. (1998). The dark side of the soul: Human nature and the problem of evil in Jewish. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 35(1), 88-100.
- Mackie, J. L. (1955). Evil and omnipotence. *Mind*, April 1955.
- Mackie, J. L. (1962). Theism and utopia, *Philosophy*, April 1962.
- Mackie, J. L. (2001). Evil and omnipotence., in W. L. Rowe. *God and the problem of evil*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Madden, E. (1966). The riddle of God and evil. *Current Philosophical Issues*. Springfield, Illinois: C. C. Thomas.
- Madden, E., & Hare, P. (1986). *Evil and the concept of God*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.
- Madden, E., & Hare, P. (1998). A critique of Hick's theodicy. In L. P. Pojman (Ed.), *Philosophy of religion: An anthology*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Mawson, T. J. (2004). The Possibility of a free-will defense for the problem of natural evil. *Religious Studies*, 40(1), 23-42.
- McCloskey, H. J. (1972). God and evil. In B. Brody, *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion* (2nd ed. pp. 273-91). Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.

- Miller, G. (2002). Maintaining hope in the face of evil. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(4), 503-506.
- Myers, D. B. (2003). Exclusivism, eternal damnation, and the problem of evil: A critique of Craig's molist soteriological theodicy. *Religious Studies*, 39(4), 407-419.
- Perret, R. W. (2002). Evil and human nature. *The Monist*, 85(2), 304-319.
- Rigby, C. L. (1996). Free to be human: Limits possibilities and the sovereignty of God. *Theology Today*, 53, 47-62.
- Schott, R. M. (2003). Introduction to feminist philosophy and the problem of evil. *Hyptia*, 18(2), 152-4.
- Seigfried, Hans. (2001). Good and evil under the swastika. *Philosophy Today*, 45(4-5), 349-356.
- Smart, N. (1964). Omnipotence, evil, and superman. In N. Pike (Ed.). *God and evil*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Sokol, M. (1999). Is There a "halakhic" response to the problem of evil?. *Havard Theological Review*, 92(3), 311-23.
- Stackhouse, J. G. Jr. (1998). Can God be trusted?. *First Things* (88), pp 55-8.
- Stackhouse, J. G.Jr. (1998). Can God be trusted?. *The Christian Century*, 115(1), 5-14.
- Stecher, Carl. (1998). Looking for God in all the long places. *The Monist*, 58(3), 25-30.
- Swinburne, R. (2000). Providence and the problem of evil. *International Philosophy Quarterly*. 40(1), 115-17
- Thomson, P. (2002). The evolutionary biology of evil. *The Monist*, 85(2), 239-59.

Torrance, T. F. (1949). Universalism or election. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, (2)3, pp. 310-318.

Wainwright, W. J. (2001). Theological determinism and the problem of evil: Arminians any better off?. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 50(1-3), 81-86.

Waitlethwaite, S. B. (1995). Virtual reality Christianity. *Theology Today*, 52, 225-5.

White, L., Jr. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science* 155(3767), p. 1203-1207.

Articles in Thai

Janoo, W. (2002). Metaphysics and the problem of evil and sufferings. *Suthiparithadl*, 15(47), 88-98.

Sirikarn, P. (2003). The Penalty of destroying nature. *Rajabanditsathan*, 28(4), 1004-1005.

Sriwarakuel, W. (1998). The problem of evil and the existence of God. 22(2), 91-105.

Electronic Sources*

Lasbax, E. (1919). *Le probleme du mal*. Paris. From www.etext.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi/id=dv2-19.

BIOGRAPHY

Pastor Boonrat Moolkeo was born in Chiangmai Province, Thailand on May 12, 1948 and completed high school at Wat Sraket School, Bangkok. He received the Bachelor of Ministry Degree from the Southeast Asia Union College in Singapore in 1988 and the Master of Pastoral Theology Degree at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines in 1997.

From 1975 to 1978, after completing the two-year training course at Bangkok Bible Training School, Pastor Boonrat Moolkeo worked as a chaplain at Bangkok Adventist Hospital and was a teacher at Phuket Thep-Amnuay Wittaya School in Phuket from April 1978 to May 1979. He was a pastor at Bangkok Adventist Hospital Church from 1980 to 1981 and at Ekamai Thai Church in 1982. He served as a chaplain at Phuket Adventist Hospital from 1983 to 1985. He was an editor for Thailand Publishing House from 1988 to 1991. In January 1991 he was ordained into the Gospel Ministry. From January to December of that year, he served as a pastor of Chiangmai Seventh-day Adventist Church and from 1992 to 1999 was Department Director and Executive Secretary of the Thailand Adventist Mission. From 2000 to the present (2006), he has served the Thailand Adventist Mission in the capacities of Secretary to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Thailand (SDA Foundation) and Director of the Sabbath School/Personal Ministry and Stewardship Department.

