CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Central to traditional theism is the idea that the world is created by a God who is all knowing, perfectly good and all powerful[2]. The problem of evil arises from the attempts to reconcile this proposition with the reality of evil in the world, especially in the form of undeserved suffering. Thus, when Philosophers clash over the logical and evidential arguments from evil[3], they are trying to reconcile the conflict between the reality of evil and the existence of God.

Now, by the principle of logic, these two propositions are inadmissible: (1) the world is created and controlled by a God who is all knowing, perfectly good and all powerful and (2) evil exists. It is either there is a God who is all powerful but not good so that he can, but does not want to prevent evil or there is a God who is good, but not all powerful such that he wants, but cannot stop evil. Few years ago, when this researcher was an undergraduate student of Philosophy in St Joseph Major Seminary, Ikot-Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, this problem, as articulated above was a nightmare to him. As a Roman Catholic seminarian then, his future and his life were defined by what he believed about God and if this was frost with unanswered questions as the problem of evil seemed to have shown, then his was going to be a life without meaning. In other words, he did not see the problem as most of his colleagues then saw it: a mere play on words. It struck at the very centre of everything he believed and was going to tier both his life and his faith apart if left unattended.

To resolve the crisis of faith which this problem generated in him, the researcher read books, asked questions in class, engaged in debate with fellow students and consulted with his lecturers and spiritual directors privately, but the more he searched for solution the more complex the problem became. Most of the lecturers and students with whom he consulted advised him to put the issue out of his mind. They told him that some problems, especially logical ones were not meant to be resolved, since even life itself was a bundle of contraries and contradictions. The researcher can still

remember this friend, a priest now, who was particularly pious then, telling him to be patient because all our unanswered questions would be answered on the last day when we shall meet Jesus.

However, he did not see the problem that way. It is true that some contradictions in life are insoluble and have to be left alone, but not when the contradiction touched the nucleus of his very existence and the meaning he place on life itself. Therefore, he was determined to continue his quest until he was able to resolve the problem. The event being narrated here happened in 2009, when the researcher was in third year Philosophy. The last straw that eventually broke the Carmel's back and forced the researcher to reconsider his single-minded commitment to solve the problem of evil occurred in 2010, in the researcher's fourth year Philosophy. It happened this way.

It was a bright Sunday afternoon. Meanwhile, the researcher had spent almost the whole of previous night, trying−without success− to figure out how there could be so much suffering in a world he was taught to believe, right from his childhood, was created and ruled by a God, who is both perfectly good and all powerful. His inability to work out any meaningful explanation that night has caused him much pain so much so that he resolved to meet his director the following day to discuss the matter. So, it was that he entered into his director's office that Sunday afternoon. After narrating the situation to him, the researcher sat back, waiting expectantly for some sort of explanation that would at least douse his doubt and bring the much needed solace to his troubled heart.

You can then begin to imagine how surprised and shocked the researcher was when his director left the issue just narrated to accuse him of atheism. Without mincing words, the director told the researcher that he has noticed some atheistic tendencies in him which for him explained why the research was so drawn to atheistic philosophers. Warning the researcher to desist from what would ruin his vocation, the director advised him to channel the energy he was wasting reading atheistic philosophers to studying philosophers like Augustine and Aquinas, who according to the director would help him to make a good priest and heaven at last.

After this sore encounter, it became clear to the researcher that he was already marked, shortlisted among those with atheistic tendencies and that continuing on the part he was going would cost him his vocation. Since, he sincerely wanted to become a priest; the researcher decided to suspend his quest for answers to this question that troubled his heart as nothing has ever done. To some extent, that suspension was for him suspension of 'active faith', because as he saw it then, unless he was able to understand the nature of God, every other thing he was doing, including his staying in the seminary would amount to building a house without foundation.

So, it happened that in 2011, after the researcher had left the seminary for good and enrolled for a masters degree program in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, he promised himself that he would pick up the quest from where he left it. This was not to be. The desire was superseded by a more pressing problem.

Now, the researcher began writing his master's thesis in 2012. This was the time terrorists and those fighting them got out of hands around the world. Individuals from both parties were not ready for anything less than having the heads of their opponents on a platter of gold. Meanwhile, the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in the United States of America were already down in the infamous 9/11 attack. Bin Laden and his warriors responsible for this heinous crime that killed thousands were not yet done. Threatening and spitting fire, they had continued to carry out attacks against American interests around the world. America in retaliation had invaded Iraq and Afghanistan and was threatening to attack North Korea. And being at loggerheads with Russia over Georgia was not helping matters.

Back here at home, the Boko Haram Islamic insurgency was already holding the Nigerian Government to ransom. The group had killed thousands, ceased swathes of lands and threatened to plunge the entire country into an unprecedented cataclysmic civil war.

It was the sense of urgency and alarm which these events generated in the researcher that compelled him to redirect and refocus the intellectual energy for that master's thesis from the problem of evil which it was originally intended for, to evaluation of

Martin Luther King junior's nonviolence theory in conflict management. Some of the recommendations he made in that thesis are still being adopted with much success around the world today. Now that the world, in the researcher's estimation, looks a bit calmer, he wishes to return to a problem that has been not just a nightmare but also a great obsession for him. To this end, he has chosen to use Alfred North Whitehead whose Process Philosophy though not perfect has come across to him during these years of intensive study as offering a more satisfactory explanation to the problem of evil than the more dominant Judaeo-Christian-Augustine inspired theism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Generally, Judaeo-Christian theists, following the Augustinian tradition offer two solutions to the problem of evil. Firstly, that evil has no substantial nature or simply, that evil does not exist and secondly, that God allows evil because he uses it to bring about his good purpose for the world.

A careful and existential examination of these two solutions would show that traditional theism is not so much after answering the logical and evidential question from evil as it is concerned about exonerating God from responsibility for evil as well as in demonstrating that God is still in charge of the world in spite of evil. It is the question begging nature of these answers whose premises assume their conclusions that is motivating us to ask the following questions in this dissertation: Is it possible to formulate a metaphysical theory that is able to deal with the seeming contradiction between the existence of God and the reality of evil in the world and whether Whitehead's Process Philosophy would help us to do this?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In the context of the rigorous search for an understanding of the idea of a good God who co-exists with evil, the purpose of this dissertation is to re-examine philosophically the possibility of the idea of a good cum all powerful God who co-exists with evil in order to respond to the salient questions of the atheists and thus encourage those who are experiencing unjustified suffering and solidify the faith of those who anchor their hope in God. It is geared towards transcending the Judaeo-

Christian solution to the problem of evil into a philosophical approach using Whitehead's Process Philosophy. Hence this dissertation is purposed to prove philosophically that the stark existence of evil in the world does not negate the existence of all powerful and good God. The argument advanced is philosophically based; therefore the researcher delves into an analysis of the works of Alfred North Whitehead in order to ascertain the viability of his process philosophy. In a nutshell, this study is an enquiry into whether the process approach to the problem of evil has an advantage over the Augustinian theodicy and, if so, in what way.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The various manifestations of evil in the world sufficiently justify the study of theodicy. A significant amount of work has been done on the subject, but the problem of evil is still a challenge to human thinking. Some sufferers are unable to reconcile their experience of suffering with the view of a loving God. Evil then is often seen as incongruous with all the doctrines of Christian theism. Not only is the atheist disturbed about the perplexing challenges of evil, but also the theist wonders at the rate at which evil gallops in the contemporary world and often questions the reality of the existence of God.

As already observed the major response to the problem of evil does not seem to be completely satisfying. Hence the study of this problem is an issue that, by itself, pleads for attention. Therefore, this study has a general significance but will be particularly useful to three categories of people. The first group are scholars to whom this work will be useful in two ways. It will add to an already existing literature on Whitehead's theodicy. In addition, it will refocus the attention of scholars on process theodicy, an approach to the problem of evil often neglected or dismissed out right as incompatible with Christian theology.

The second group that will find this work useful is made up of Christians in particular and theists in general especially those in this group whose faith in God is unsettled because of the problem of evil. This study will be of help to them in three ways. It will show that it is possible to think about God in a new way and thereby free those who

have been held in bondage by the orthodox Augustinian model. Furthermore, it will enable them to make sense of their suffering without losing faith in God.

Furthermore, disparity in faith of the various religious groups in the world, especially in their understanding of the nature of God is known to be at the root of most religious violence. The resurgence of radical Islam and the many wars between them and some Christian nations are good examples illustrating this. Coming to see God from Whitehead's vision which is acceptable not only to Christianity but also to other religions of the world will help to douse this tension among people of different faith.

Finally, this research will be of help to atheists, particularly those who became atheists because they cannot make sense of the reality of evil in a world created by a perfectly good and all powerful God. Our hope is that, through the vision of God that will be presented in this work, these people will not only come to accept the existence of such a God but would also express deep faith in him.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The problem of evil has aroused the interest of theologians, as well as philosophers, and has produced abundant literature. In this regard, some limits have been set to this study to keep it within reasonable scope. This research is particularly a philosophical attempt into the problem of evil within the circumference of Whitehead's metaphysics. The study specifically focuses on Alfred North Whitehead's Process Philosophy with particular attention directed to his book, *Process and Reality.* Secondary literature on Whitehead is also used.

1.6 Methodology

While traditional and electronic libraries are used as sources of information for this study, the method employed for data analysis is hermeneutics. This method which consists in textual interpretation is used here for two purposes: first, to furnish the understanding of *Process and Reality* bearing in mind that Whitehead couched this

work in one of the most difficult languages ever used by a writer. And second, to facilitate the evaluation of the logical coherence and probability of process philosophy in the model presented by Whitehead.

Nevertheless, to avoid a misrepresentation or a distortion of his ideas Whitehead is allowed to speak for himself. His arguments are presented in their own terms but in a shortened form with added interpretations to facilitate comprehensiveness. The textual analysis is tailored towards the outline of *Process and Reality*. This means that our discussion begins with free will, divine foreknowledge and sovereignty, and then evil. Any discussion of these elements—free will, divine foreknowledge, and sovereignty—is not an attempt to get involved with the ongoing philosophical and theological discussion on these issues. My sole intention is to use these elements to establish the structure of the authors' philosophical thought.

Applying this method in achieving the purpose of this study demands the following course of action. Chapter one shares a personal experience that motivated the study and states the problem that the study addresses. It also describes the purpose and scope of study and the research methodology that the dissertation adopts.

By logical sequence, a discussion of Whitehead's theodicy should follow immediately after the background. However, this sequence was set aside by the need to understand the positions of other scholars in the ongoing discussion on Whitehead's contribution to the problem of evil. Thus, chapter two embarks on rigorous review of the works of some seasoned Whiteheadean scholars. Adopting the thematic review method, the literature reviewed are classified according to the conclusion of each author on the Whiteheadean notion of God and evil.

In the same manner, assessment of the credibility of Whitehead's process theodicy cannot be done in a vacuum. Consequently, in chapter three, the Augustinian theodicy that has influenced theological and philosophical thought for decades is developed as the basis of our evaluation of the Whiteheadean model. The first step is to focus on

primary sources to describe Augustinian theodicy and then mention the problems associated with it according to scholars that make it unsatisfactory.

Chapter 4 attempts to describe and analyse Whitehead's process explanation of the problem of evil. The textual analysis is based on his *Process and Reality* and elements of his concept scattered elsewhere in his writings. The textual analysis of his model looks carefully at his explanation of free will, divine foreknowledge, the sovereignty of God in relation to evil, origin of evil, natural evil, and eradication of evil from the universe. The overall aim of the chapter is to present Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil in such a way that it can be juxtaposed with the Augustine inspired orthodox model.

Chapter five which is the evaluation and conclusion takes up the task of comparing and evaluating Whiteheadean theodicy on the basis of the result of the preceding chapters. The chapter investigates whether process theodicy avoids the tensions of the Augustine inspired Judeo-Christian model as described in chapter three. This evaluation makes it possible to extrapolate the meaning and purpose of the Whiteheadean concept. Furthermore, it makes possible the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the process theodicy and its contributions to philosophy. Finally, the chapter summarizes the findings of the study of the process theodicy as presented by Whitehead. In addition, it states the conclusion to the study and makes some recommendations.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Ordinarily, the responsibility of this section should be limited to simple and direct definition of the terms directly related to the title of the study. However the theme of this study imposes on it the obligation of conceptualizing certain concepts that though are not directly related to the title but whose operationalization are necessary for understanding the dissertation. Consequently, the normal subtitle 'definition of terms' for this subsection will be supplemented with 'operationalization of relevant concepts.

1.7.1. Operationalization of Relevant Concepts

Evil

It is quite clear and is easily accepted by almost everybody who has attained the age of reasoning that a very large portion of our lives is spent in the struggle against evil. What is not so clear however, is what evil actually is. Thus, philosophers and theologians have argued back and forth, debating both the meaning and the nature of evil. These debates have given rise to many understandings of evil. In spite of these many definitions however, evil can in sum be grouped under two traditions; let us call these the first and the second tradition.

While, the first tradition sees evil as a positive reality and thus a worthy opponent of all that is good, the second tradition holds that evil is the deprivation of some good. Supporting this broad categorization, Charles R. Meyer in article "God and the Problem of Evil", writes:

> Whether it is as some philosophers and theologians have opined, a positive reality and thus a worthy opponent for the battle or, as most have thought, just the deprivation of some good, evil is a force to be reckoned with in the life of absolutely everyone.[4]

Traditionally, the first category in these two conceptions of evil is associated with Greco-Roman philosophies, especially Manichaeism who see the world as a battlefield between two equal but opposing powers of good and evil. A form of this tradition that made its way into the early Church teaches that evil is not directly created by God but comes about through the actions of a fallen angel, Lucifer, and the weakness of human beings who succumb to his temptation to do moral evil.[5]

This first tradition still resonates today with people of different faiths who see the world, especially the spiritual life, as a battle between good and evil. For instance, Martin Luther King Jr., believes that one of the major differences between violence and nonviolence is that the aim of the nonviolent resister is to attack the forces of evil rather than the person responsible for evil. "It is evil that the nonviolent resister seeks

to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil."[6] In this case King saw evil as an empirical reality, often above and beyond the control of those it uses as instruments of its pernicious hold on other people. When that happens, both the subject and the object of an evil act are indeed victims of evil. In order words, King did not see the racial tension in America during his time as a problem existing merely between blacks and whites but struggle between the forces of good and evil.[7]

Majority of religious people are sustained today by their faith in the fact that in the end good will triumph over evil. King captures this in a telling manner in his Testament of Hope:

> The long tradition of our Christian faith, clearly affirms the stark, grim and colossal reality of evil in the world. However there is something at the center of our Christian faith which reminds us that Good Friday may occupy the throne for a day, but ultimately it must give way to the triumphant beat of the Easter drum. Evil may so shape events that Caesar will occupy a palace and Christ a cross, but one day that same Christ will arise and split history into AD and BC, so that even the life of Caesar must be dated by his name.[8]

The second tradition that sees evil as the deprivation of some good is exemplified in the Philosophy of St Augustine. Augustine expressed this in a typical formulation: "Everything that exists is good and so evil, the source of which I was seeking, cannot be a substance, because if it were, it would be good."[9] The argument in this quotation is very obvious. Augustine is simply saying that God is the creator of everything that exists. He did not create evil because he is absolutely good, evil therefore does not exist. On another occasion, Augustine makes this point even clearer: "There is no efficient cause for evil, it is a deficiency, a falling away from what is: seeking the cause is like trying to see darkness or to hear silence."[10]

As we noted at the beginning of this subsection, the constant struggle against evil is so real and evident in almost every aspect of our lives. What this means is that any solution to the problem of evil that begins by explaining away the problem as a

negation, especially in relation with a God who is perfectly good and all powerful, creates much more problems than it solves. In the light of this, our working definition of evil in this dissertation will be in line with the first tradition that sees evil as a positive reality.

Kinds of Evil

Scholarship usually classifies evil into three categories: metaphysical, Physical or natural and moral. Charles R. Meyer explained these categories in turns. He began his explanation by ascribing the three categorization of evil to those philosophers who view evil as a deprivation of the good. On metaphysical evil, he writes:

> Metaphysical evil is the lack of further perfection. The universe is actually not the best possible one we could think of. It is not perfect, but perfectible. Some might think it would be nice, for instance, if we did not have to breathe oxygen for our metabolic processes. We could then live without cumbersome equipment under water or on the moon or some other planet. But that simply is not the way we are built. [11]

Meyers' contention in this text is that metaphysical evil arises from the imperfection of creatures, which renders them liable to error and makes evil inevitable. Thus, metaphysical evil is inseparable from the nature of creatures as finite and imperfect beings. It is therefore inevitable, for no finite creature can be perfect.

Accepting Meyers elucidation on metaphysical evil, J. Omoregbe, submits that:

> The only alternative to the existence of metaphysical evil would be the non-existence of finite beings in the universe. God does not choose non-existence rather; he chooses existence of creatures, since it is better for creatures to exist in an imperfect form than not to exist at all. Another alternative is to create these creatures to be perfect. However, God cannot create another being to be perfect like himself otherwise such a creature will be infinite like God. In that case, there will be many Gods.

> This is not possible. Metaphysical evil is therefore inevitable. [12]

Physical evil is defined by Omeregbe as "the absence of a good where that good should be and which results in bodily pain or mental anguish for man."[13] He also gives a roll call of the examples of evil that come under physical evil including: the absence of sight in a human being, diseases, hunger, sufferings and natural disasters. Others are, fear, illness, grief and war.[14]

Continuing, Omeregbe explains that physical evil is evil because it is perceived to be so. For example, according to him, from a mouse's point of view, it is evil to be eaten by a cat. But for the cat, it is something good since it has to be provided with food to survive. In order words, for Omeregbe, physical evil has its basis in metaphysical evil. That is in the imperfect constitution of the universe.[15]

While Glenn thinks that "God indirectly wills physical evil, since he as such wills a good with which such hardship is bound up, and which can be attained only by enduring of hardship"[16], Meyer believes that physical evil presents the most vexatious problem for those who believe in a God who is loving and caring. On this, Meyer argues:

> Why, when God could prevent them as aberrations in the natural order as we see it, would God not prevent such things as hurricanes, earthquakes, horrible diseases like cancer and AIDS, and genetic defects in the human body like Down syndrome?[17]

Moral evil covers the wilful acts of human beings, such as murder, rape, etc. It is within this understanding that Meyer defines it as follows:

> Moral evil… is a lack of perfection in human behaviour, a deviation from the norms of thought and action that demands respect for the rights and dignity of others. Why could there not be a world where people could live without such atrocities as war, murder, rape, robbery, assault, terrorism and family strife.[18]

From the foregoing we can summarize that what philosophers categorize as metaphysical evil does not pose much practical problem to man, particularly, to the faith of those who believe in God. The problem specifically comes from moral and physical evil.

Process Theology

According to T. Whitney, "Process theology is a rethinking of traditional dogmatic structure."[19] The dogmatic structure Whitney speaks of here is traditional theism which according to him affirms determinism, objective knowledge and materialism. In order words, process theology is a vision of the world that considers things including God as dynamic, relative and relational.

David Griffin captures the same understanding of process theology when he explains that process theology is a recent trend in theology which is developed from the philosophy of the English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead with the primary purpose of tackling the problem of evil. He argues that traditional theism has an insoluble problem of evil because of its acceptance of the doctrine of creation ex nihilo.[20] Process theology therefore, has liberated Christianity from "Greek and Hellenistic notions that have distorted the essence of Christianity." It is also from this consideration that Ronald Nash explains that process theology offered an "…intellectually and emotionally satisfying reinterpretation of Christianity that is compatible with late-twentieth century ways of thinking."[21] On the whole, this dissertation will understand and use process theology in line with two Whiteheadian and process theology scholars, John Cobb and David Griffin who see process theology as a modern development in which a number of Christian theologians have adopted as their metaphysical framework the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead, especially in his treatment of the problem of evil.[22]

Theodicy

Under the background of study in this dissertation, we introduced the notion of the problem of evil. Now, in philosophy, the conceptual question raised by evil and

suffering are discussed under the subject theodicy. That is, theodicy and the problem of evil are used interchangeably in Philosophy.

Etymologically, the term "theodicy" was coined by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. He coined the term from two Greek words: θεός (God) and δίκη (justice). Leibniz used the word in his book *Esseis.* He used the word in two senses: to defend the justice of God in the face of the evil in the world and as inquiry into how the existence of a good God is compatible with the existence of evil in the world.

However, evil and suffering have long been a puzzle to humanity such that the quest to make sense of its reality with the existence of a God who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient goes beyond Leibniz. The earliest form of the question is attributed to the Greek philosopher Epicurus by Lactantius. Epicurus's question of the problem of evil is articulated in triad propositions:

> God either wishes to take away evils but is unable; or He is able but 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?[23]

Christianity in its early stages did not see this theodicial question as a challenge to the belief in God, but as a problem within Christian faith and therefore did not formulate a systematic response to the question.[24] Christians ascribed the cause of evil to fallen angels. The Apostolic Fathers, such as Clement of Rome and Ignatius, argued that these angels misused their free will, which resulted in alienating themselves from God and His government. The alienation led to a war between God and Satan. Satan, the chief prince of the fallen angels, influenced humans to misuse their free will, which

led to human sin as a cause of evil; however, the ultimate cause of evil is Satan and his angels.[25]

A well-defined approach to theodicy began with Augustine in the fourth century A.D. While he was aware of the conceptual difficulties of the triad propositions of the problem of evil, his approach to the problem was to wrestle with Manichean dualism.[26] Augustine adopted Neo-Platonic ideas in his definition and explanation of evil.[27] He proposed that God is eternal, immutable, infinite, and a perfect Being. He created *ex nihilo* and "…the things that He made He empowered to be, but not to be supremely like Himself. To some He communicated a more ample to others a more limited existence, and thus arranged the natures of beings in ranks."[28]

For these reasons, Augustine argued, evil is only a privation of good, which does not exist in itself but only as an aspect of an actual entity, a malfunctioning of good. According to Augustine, the cause of evil, both moral and natural, is the misuse of the will of a being that is changeable, which began first with the highest creature and then man. That is, free will is the cause of pain and suffering, but since all things occur in accordance with God's will, pain and suffering ultimately play a good role in God's plan.[29]

Augustine's approach to the problem of evil was very influential for centuries. Medieval theologians[30] adopted Augustine's approach in advancing theistic discussion on the problem of evil as did the Protestant Reformers.[27] The Continental rationalists René Descartes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz also adopted Augustine's approach in their explanation of the problem of evil.[31]

Although, the influence of Augustine's theodicy can be traced beyond Leibniz, with the Enlightenment the strategies adopted for the reflections on the problem of evil became anthropocentric and detached from any system of conviction based on divine revelation. The existence of evil was raised as counter-evidence against the belief in the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent, and Omni-benevolent God.[32]

In addition, a sharp turn in the influence of Augustine's tradition in formulating theodicy occurred with the repercussions of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment denied Christian theology its epistemological independence based upon the principle of the competence of human reason. The Enlightenment, to a large extent, created a secular society in which natural reason and social experience disposed the authority of Scripture. Religious beliefs, like any other theories, were evaluated by rational and scientific evidences. Specifically, discoveries of astronomers and geologists put to question the classical theistic interpretation of Gen 1.[33]

Theology, faced with the above mentioned critical challenges, adjusted itself to keep abreast with the philosophical and scientific developments. Consequently, the existing Augustinian theodicial paradigm[34] was seen as insufficient concepts, leading to the development of alternative theodicy, such as that of John Hick and Process theodicy.

After a careful study of all types of theodicy from the time of Augustine up to the eighteenth century, Hick sums them up as Augustinian tradition. He argues that Augustinian theodicy is "…so familiar that it is commonly thought of as *the* Christian view of man and his plight. Nevertheless it is only *a* Christian view."[35] He claims the Augustinian theodicy is based on Christian mythology, a pre-scientific view, that the modern world considers as incredible. It is without grounds in scripture or science and it is self contradictory.[36]According to him, defenders of the Augustinian theodicy "have become involved in ever more desperate and implausible epicycles of theory to save it."[37] Therefore, he suggests the need for an alternative theodicy that will be without contradiction and scientifically credible to the modern mind.

Hick finds in the writings of Irenaeus an outline of an approach to the problem of evil that will serve as an appropriate alternative to the Augustinian type of theodicy. On the basis of Irenaeus's concept of the image and the likeness of God, Hick argues that God's aim for humankind is to create, through evolutionary process, personal beings in relationship with their Maker. For God's intention to be realized without coercing

or infringing on genuine human freedom, He created humans with epistemic distance from Him.

His creation is not perfect, but it is a world that functions as an autonomous system and from within which God is not overwhelmingly evident. Human beings were created spiritually and morally imperfect, but as intelligent social beings capable of awareness of the divine within a dangerous and challenging environment. The imperfections in the environment are necessary aspects of the process through which God's goal for human beings is achieved. God intended evil to draw humans close to Him as they tussle through the challenges of the evils of the world. In this sense, argued Hick, moral and natural evils are compatible with the existence of a creator who is both unlimited in goodness and power.[38]

Barry Whitney indicates that Hick's theodicy has "awakened many of us from our Augustinian slumber."[36] However, critics claim it is a hybrid of Augustinian theodicy. It shares the Augustinian affirmation that suffering is planned by an omnipotent God who could, but will not take away the evils of the world. Furthermore, it denies the reality of genuine evil.[39]

The search of Hick to develop a theodicy informed by modern philosophy with the intention to satisfy the curiosity of the modern mind and reconcile the inconsistencies inherent in the Augustinian system did not yield an acceptable result. If this theodicy could not satisfactorily deal with the issues associated with the problem of evil, is there an alternative theodicy that does better? The next chapter reviews what Whiteheadian scholars are saying about Whitehead's solution to this question.

Endnotes

1. William Grassie has given his opinion this difficulty involved in understanding Whitehead in the following captivating manner:

> Decoding the abstract terminology of Whitehead's metaphysics is a real challenge. Whitehead not only uses common and philosophical language in idiosyncratic ways, but he also invents a series of neologisms, including terms like appetition, concrescence, comformal, formaliter, ingression, prehension, regnant society, and superject. This obtuse style is frustrating to even, trained philosophers, let alone the unwary graduate student. The language is a nonstarter for most literally minded scientists, even though Whitehead aspires to a literal general description of reality. Whitehead's unusual nomenclature becomes a kind of secret language to those initiated in the discourse. This creates an in-group and out-group phenomenon, which has hampered the exploration of Whitehead among philosophers, theologians, scientists, and the general public. This is particularly tragic in the case of *Process and Reality*, because Whitehead's other books and essays are generally accessible, witty, and profound. I keep quite a file of Whitehead quotes for ready use in papers and conversations.

2. These two problems are together called the problem of evil in philosophy. To this end, when we refer to the problem of evil in this dissertation, we have the two problems in mind.

3. The logical argument from evil is an argument whose premise says that God and some known facts about evil are incompatible. The evidential argument from evil is an argument that asserts that the evil in the world is evidence against the existence of God. Thus, according to Feinberg, the "issue with either the logical or evidential problem is whether that theological position is logically coherent or probable" (John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil*: *Theological Systems and the Problem of Evil*, rev. and exp. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004, 75, 21, 297).

4. Charles R. Meyer, “God and the Problem of Evil”, Chicago Guides (1995), p. 189.
5. Philip A. Pecorino, “Philosophy of Religion”, https://www.al-islam.org/about-us, (31-08-2016).
6. Martin Luther King, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, M., James (ed.), (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1991), p. 249.
7. Martin Luther King, *Strength To Love, (Glasgow: Collins, 1989), p.* 51.
8. Martin Luther King, *A Testament of Hope, p.* 140.
9. Augustine, *Confessions*, Trans, Maria Boulding, (New York: Vintage, 1997), p 136.
10. Augustine, *City of God*, Trans, Henry Bettenson, (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 480.
11. Charles R. Meyer, p. 189.
12. Joseph Omeregbe, A Simplified History of Western Philosophy, Vol. II, Modern Philosophy, (Ikeja: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 1991), pp. 38-39.
13. Omeregbe, p. 39
14. Omeregbe, p. 39
15. P. J. Glenn, A Tour of The Summa of St. Thomas, (Illinois: Tan Books and Pub. Inc, 1987), p. 23.
16. Charles R. Meyer, p. 199.
17. Meyer, p.199
18. Lactantius, “*On the Anger of God”,* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 271.
19. T. Whitney, Theodicy, p. 135.

20. David Ray Griffin, "Creation out of Choas and the Problem of Evil", in Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy, rev. ed., Stephen T. Davis (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 114.
21. Ronald Nash, ed. Process Theology (Grand Rapid, Ml: Baker Books, 1987), p. ix.
22. John Cobb and David Graffin, Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).
23. Stanley Hauerwas, *Naming the Silences*: *God, Medicine, and the Problem of Evil*(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 49-53.
24. See Clement *Epistle to the Corinthians* 51 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Edited by Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, (1:19) and Ignatius *Epistle to the Ephesians* 13 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Edited by Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers,, 1:55).
25. Mark, Larrimore, ed., *The Problem of Evil*: *A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell), p. xxvii.
26. Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*: *A History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), pp. 124-150;
27. Augustine, *City of God* 12.2 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Edited by Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004 2:227).
28. Augustine, *City of God* 10.6 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Edited by Philip Schaff, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004, 1: 183-184).
29. Whitney, *Theodicy, An Annotated Bibliography on the Problem of Evil 1960-1991*, (Bowling Green, OH: Philosophy Documentation Centre, 1998), p. 14.
30. The Protestant Reformers believed evil is the result of sin. However, since God is omnipotent and sovereign, He is responsible for evil. They claimed everything happens according to God's sovereign will. Thus, He wills both good and evil, but ultimately all evils are good because whatever God does is good. John Calvin strongly suggested that God carries out "his judgments through Satan as the minister of his wrath, God destines men's purposes as he

pleases, arouses wills and strengthens their endeavors" (John Calvin, *Calvin Institutes of the Christian Religion* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936], 1.14.1-9, 2.4.3).

31. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles*: *The Devil in the Modern World* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 85-86.
32. Niels Christian Hvidt, "Historical Development of the Problem of Evil," in *Physics and Cosmology*: *Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Natural Evil*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Robert John Russell, and William R. Stoeger, S. J. (Vatican City State and Berkeley, CA: Vatican Observatory and the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 2007), 1:26-27.
33. James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*: *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 6, 17;
34. Augustianian theodicy is a technical term for theodicies that follow Augustine's tradition.
35. John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 207-208.
36. Hick. 287.
37. John Hick, "An Ireanaean Theodicy," in *Encountering Evil*: *Live Options in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen T. Davis (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2001), pp. 38-52.
38. Whitney, *Theodicy*, p. 115.
39. Roland Puccetti, "Loving God: Some Observation on John Hick's *Evil and the God of Love*," *Religious Studies* 2 (1967): pp. 255-268.
40. Whitney, *theodicy, P*. 116.
41. Whitney. 117

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Following things in proportion, this chapter is supposed to review an equal volume of literature on Whitehead's and Augustine's solutions to the problem of God and evil since the dissertation is a hermeneutics on the problem of evil in both thinkers. Nevertheless, as elucidated in Chapter One, the contentious literature that concerns this work is on Whitehead. Augustine's theism is only employed as a foundation and template for understanding and testing the viability of Whitehead's proposal. To this end, relevant literature on Augustine will be reviewed in Chapter Three where it will be used to show the shortcoming of Augustine's position and the need for Whitehead's solution. Consequently, only literature related to Whitehead is reviewed in this chapter. The traditional Judeo-Christian Augustine-inspired theism looms in the background providing the framework for the review.

It was documented in the foregoing chapter, that Whitehead employed an extremely technical diction in composing his 'Philosophy of Organism.' As would be expected, such esoteric composition has resulted not just in myriads of interpretations but also in multiplicity of authorial conclusions on the Whiteheadian concepts of God and evil. Bertrand Russell, an ex-student and colleague of Whitehead, who also co-authored *The Principia Mathematica* with him actually went as far as saying that he does not know what Whitehead was talking about in *Process and Reality*. If Professor Russell, who collaborated with Whitehead for very many years, could say this of his friend, one wonders what an ordinary student would say.

Whatever be the case, the present chapter does not want to be detained in trying to decode who is and who is not qualified to give a valued opinion on Whitehead's metaphysics. The chapter rather is dedicated to a rigorous review of some preselected literature on Whitehead. On the one hand, the intention is to circumscribe what could, in a way be described as the basic conclusions scholars have come to in their effort to comprehend and interpret the Whiteheadian concepts of God and evil. On the other hand, in reminiscence of the Socratic method, it is hoped that by prompting and

helping these authors to draw the conclusions inherent in their arguments, we would be able to discover something that is lacking in the existing Whiteheadian literature and thus channel our energy in making provisions for such lack.

Consequently, this chapter has been designed to evolve in the following four major thematic orders: the charge that the Whiteheadian system like traditional theism rationalizes evil and a rebuttal of this charge, the accusation that Whitehead's God is a derivative God and therefore impersonal, criticism that Whitehead's God is weak and undeserving of worship and the rejoinder to these charges. Other themes include the charge that Whitehead's glorification of the persuasive nature of God at the detriment of his coercive nature is both metaphysically false and logically inconsistent with his system and the responses to these charges.

Harold M. Schulweis is one of the many scholars who in recent years subjected Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil with the charge that it does not allow for the actuality of genuine evils. In his famous book−*Evil and the Morality of God*−that attracted the attentions of many Whiteheadian scholars, Schulweis employed two arguments to show why all evils must, in Whiteheadian view, be judged as merely apparent.

In his first argument, Schulweis submits that all the evils in Whitehead's world must be viewed as apparent because God perceives every evil as a means to perfect the world. Whitehead's God, he contends, views every evil as a stepping stone which is necessary for, and justified by, the production of a more beautiful world. In Schulweis' own words:

> The sufferings of discord may be seen as sacrifices to harmony. The intermingling of evil and beauty is metaphysically necessary and justified by an appeal to imperfection which aims higher than the lower levels of perfection. Progress, in God's eye, is based upon the experience of discordant feelings.[1]

Thus, according to Schulweis, Whitehead conceives of a world in which "storms and barbaric invasions, in themselves admittedly destructive, may be seen as contributory values to the adventures of ever new and increased perfections."[2]

To be sure, Schulweis is aware of the unfortunate ethical consequences this view, if accurate, would have for Whitehead's notion of God and evil. Hence, he writes that even though "…it would be furthest from Whitehead's mind to consider that such a metaphysical theodicy could readily serve as a rationale for the repressiveness of totalitarian regimes", the ideas in Whitehead's theodicy nevertheless "lend themselves too easily to such use."[3]

It must be observed here that if Schulweis were correct, Whitehead's theodicy would indeed lend itself "too easily" to the support of oppressive regimes. In this case it would not be wrong to charge Whitehead, even if indirectly, as an apologist of totalitarianism.

Schulweis' second argument concerns God's fulfilment of the divine experience rather than God's fulfilment of the world. The argument consists in the contention that all the evils in Whitehead's world must be viewed as apparent because God utilizes every evil as a means to perfect the divine experience. "The consequent nature of God," writes Schulweis, "…salvages what appears to us as evil by transmuting its discordance into divine enjoyment."[4] Therefore, "Whitehead's aesthetic theodicy informs us that what is evil for us is not evil for God."[5] Schulweis contention on the whole, is that in Whitehead's system, God's "harmony of beauty is used to justify the sufferings of the innocence…."[6]

Agreeing with and lending support to Schulweis' second argument, Stephen Lee Ely in "The Religious Availability of Whitehead's God: A Critical Analysis", argues that it is rather unfortunate that in a philosophy that purports to solve the problem of evil, what is evil for humanity is not evil for God because God sees pain, grief, and frustration "in such a way that they are valuable for him."[7] What this means is that the

Whiteheadian God "enjoys himself by making mental additions to one's pain and grief and frustration." Therefore for Ely, it follows that:

> No matter how evil - that is, how ugly - the world is, God somehow manages to utilize it as an aspect of the beautiful picture he is eternally painting for himself. . . . Whitehead's view of evil is a variant of the old conception that evil is an illusion of our short-sightedness; given the long view and the broad view−God's view−what seems to us evil is really not evil.[8]

Consequently, Ely criticizes Whitehead for eliminating the idea of a personal deity especially the Christian God, who would identify with those who are suffering and meet each of his creatures at the points of their needs.

By and large, the conclusion Ely comes to is that the God of Whitehead's,

> Metaphysical analysis is not the God of religions. Whatever religious value Whitehead's God may have depends upon aspects of God that lie beyond reason−The primordial nature of God−aspects that Whitehead either intuits, guesses at or has faith in.[9]

Similarly, Madden and Hare in their Evil *and the Concept of God*, suggests that "Whitehead's God is willing to pay any amount in moral and physical evil to gain aesthetic value. . . "[10] According to their reading, for Whitehead, "…what appear as gratuitous evil are really just the makings of aesthetic value in the Consequent Nature."[11]

The point Madden and Hare are trying to communicate in the passage just quoted is that Whitehead's usual argument that God ideally perfects every event in His consequent nature demonstrates that the Whiteheadian God has devised ways of enjoying what seems evil to us. "Evil, in this sense", according to them "is apparent rather than genuine."[12] Thus:

> God conserves and produces values that He alone enjoys from the events of actualities, no

> matter how ugly they are. Suffering, pain, difficulties, and pleasures of finite beings are material for God's consequent nature. The maximization of intensity and the complexity of experience necessarily include an amount of discord and conflict only to obtain novelty.[13]

This hypothesis as Madden and Hare see it is Whitehead's solution to the traditional problem of evil.

However, the problem with this solution according to Madden and Hare is that salvaging of evil by transmuting its discordance into divine enjoyment does not benefit the sufferer; God's feelings alone are considered important. In order words:

> This aesthetic explanation does not solve the problem of evil any more than the theodicy which Whitehead and his disciples have criticized. It is indifference toward human good; therefore, it is another model of the classical conception that evil is an illusion of our short-sightedness: What seems evil to us is really not evil in the sight of God. As a matter of fact, it is another form of the classical free-will solution to the problem of evil.[14]

In the same vein, David Bentley Hart in *The Beauty of the Infinite* argues that any theodicy which, like Whitehead's, attempts to justify God on the basis of the goodness of the final result fails the test of Ivan Karamazov. The test Hart speaks of is this:

> If the universal and final good of all creatures required, as its price, the torture of one little girl, would that be acceptable? The moral enormity of this calculation is not mitigated if all creation must suffer the consequences of God's self-determination.[15]

Hart believes that such conclusion is totally against our sense of justice. It follows according to him that the beautiful end state of the cosmos in a Hegelian or Whiteheadian system is no excuse for the innumerable cruelties suffered along the way.

Refusing to accept that there is a 'Mind' that works behind the scene to ensure that good comes out of every evil as Hart does here is often what inspires most scholars to accept atheism as a better solution to the problem of evil. Surprisingly, Hart is not an atheist. He suggests though that evil, rather than being the necessary by-product of a process aimed at ultimate good, is meaningless and marked for absolute overturning by God. As the title of his book suggests, he shares with Whitehead an aesthetic vision of the world redeemed by beauty, but his vision is ultimately founded on the dogmas of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, rather than the Whiteheadian sense of philosophical reconstruction.

Recalling the 2004 Indian Ocean Boxing Day tsunami Hart writes:

> Suffering and death, considered in themselves, have no ultimate meaning at all. I do not believe we Christians are obliged—or even allowed—to look upon the devastation visited upon the coasts of the Indian Ocean and to console ourselves with vacuous can't about the mysterious course taken by God's goodness in this world, or to assure others that some ultimate meaning or purpose resides in so much misery. Ours is, after all, a religion of salvation; our faith is in a God who has come to rescue His creation from the absurdity of sin and the emptiness of death, and so we are permitted to hate these things with a perfect hatred.[16]

For Hart therefore, Whitehead's concept of God is in need of revision because it is insufficiently soteriologically oriented, and his philosophy gives evil too much credit by calling it the "contrast" that makes the beautiful more beautiful.[17]

However, if the question is asked: how does a purposeless suffering square up with the Christian doctrine of a God who is not just perfectly good but also limitlessly powerful? Only Hart knows. He does not tell us and the nature of our discourse here does not allow us to pose such question to him.

Marilyn McCord Adams agrees with Hart that most theodicy, including Whitehead's, fail the "Karamazov test," when they attempt to effect,

> *Global* aesthetic solutions that rest content with defeating horrors via their organic relations to 'higher harmonies' of cosmic wholes… What I conclude (tipping my Platonizing hand) is not… that aesthetic concerns are irrelevant, marginal, or of dubious propriety, but that it is wrong to make the global context the primary, much less the only frame of evaluation when it comes to horror's challenge of the Goodness of God.[18]

By insisting that global harmony should not be used as the ground for judging the morality of events, Adams is calling attention to the personal nature of morality. This means that the judging of the morality of events should be based first not just on their future outcomes but most importantly, on the qualitative nature of the event in question. Adam's believes that Whitehead's futurists and collectivists approach to the problem of evil did not take into cognisance the personal experiences of the individual involved in these experiences. Whitehead's inability to look at these important implications makes his solution to the problem of evil inadequate not just philosophically but especially for religious minded people who see the deity as a personal God.

Like Hart, Adams feels that the philosophical question of theodicy is too often bogged down by being carried on at too high a level of abstraction. By agreeing to focus on…. "Restricted standard theism," both sides avoided responsibility to a particular tradition.[19]

Her recourse, like Hart, is to attempt to bridge this gap by focusing on the ways that specifically Christian traditional doctrines may be able to answer the questions of theodicy that are not available to non-sectarian attempts, like Whitehead's. At the same time by bringing the lived religious experiences that lead to the creation of those Christian dogmas to bear on the problems of theodicy.

The failure of Adams and Hart to formulate an alternative solution to the problem of evil that would by their own admission, circumvent all philosophical doctrines by simply focusing on the lived experience of Christians makes it difficult to ascertain

how sincere the two are in their criticism of the Whiteheadian model. Irrespective of this shortcoming, what Hart and Adams are doing is exactly in line with Whitehead's call to rationalize religion by ever testing its applicability: "Christianity must engage with the problem of evil if it is to contribute positively to the societies it inhabits." It is precisely on this that Adam and Hart need to be commended and appreciated for their efforts and courage.

The charge that Whitehead's system does not allow for genuine evil has not gone unanswered by Whiteheadian scholars. Particularly, in "Whitehead and Genuine Evil," Maurice R. Barineau defends Whitehead on the issue of apprehension of evil for aesthetic purposes. Setting out his argument to show that this attack ignores the complex nature of Whitehead's concept of evil, Barineau concedes, with the critics, that a process God apprehends every evil as a means toward the perfection of the world and God. However, he argues that the fact that God uses every evil for the foundation through which He perfects the world and himself does not make evil apparent.[20]

Hence, for Barineau, what should be at issue is not that the Whiteheadian God prehends evil but whether he prehends every evil as morally necessary and justified for novelty. He replies to these issues by asserting that actual entities' inevitable failure to conform to God's aim creates genuine evils; God prehends these evils negatively. Although He extracts all the possible good from such evil, He preserves them as objects of immediacy, not as future envisagement.[21]

Barineau's point here is that although Whitehead's vision rationalizes evil, it does not do so in the sense of traditional theodicy, according to which all actual evil is said to be necessary for the greater good. It only rationalizes evil by claiming that some events classified by humans as evil must not be considered as genuine evil because they are necessary, and for those that are not necessary, their possibility is necessary.[22]

Aware that this line of argument is vulnerable to further accusation that the Whiteheadian system has not "…succeeded in salvaging a valid meaning of the goodness of God in the face of genuine evil", Barineau submits that,

> Process theology is evolutionary, it is non-dualistic and non-anthropocentric. The divine persuasive purpose promotes harmonious intensity of experience in general. Hence, the designed creation is not for human beings in particular and the aesthetic purpose does not mean everything must work together for human good. The indifferent and malevolent characteristics of creaturely creativity do not cast doubt on God's creativity. His creativity is always accomplished in responsive love. More prominently, His consequent nature proves He is unambiguously good.[23]

In Barineau reading therefore, Whitehead's system allows both for genuine and apparent evil. Nevertheless, its recognition of the reality of genuine evil doesn't in anyway mitigate the goodness of God. The fact that actual entities are free to accept or reject the initial aim envisioned by God for the best outcome allows room for genuine evil without indicting God with responsibility for evil.

Another aspect of Whitehead's concept of God and evil that has attracted the attention of scholars is the idea of an eventual ultimate triumph of good over evil. Ronald, O. Durham investigates this case in his "Evil and God: Has Process Made Good Its Promise?" Durham argues that, "In the Whiteheadian system, all actualities perish; even God, an actual entity, is not exempted in the process system. What hope can suffering humanity gain from God-in-process theodicy?"[24]

Durham's contention here is that the fact that in the Whiteheadian system, actual entities, God and people included, suffer and die; there is no evidential power to redeem humanity from such loss of values. Although Whitehead makes provision for the consequent nature of God which suffers with other actual occasions as it tries to create harmony in spite of evil, however, Durham maintains that the doctrine of the consequent nature of God by itself is not adequate, in the light of manifold and

demonic evils, to allow many to accept that the process God will ultimately bring good to victory.

After exploring other options, Durham seems to believe that Whitehead's system doesn't provide for any firm hope that good will prevail over evil in the end. According to him:

> The addition of belief in an afterlife allows process theodicy to consider potential forms of victory over demonic evils. However, belief in an afterlife does not mean individuals turn their desires to fight evil. Furthermore, the idea that every increase in the capacity for good is also an increase in the possibility of evil makes it likely that the amount of good and evil in the afterlife realm will be proportionate or evil will be greater than good. Therefore, there is no hope, that an afterlife realm would be a realm in which good abounds more than evil.[25]

Durham also concedes that an aspect of Whitehead's vision allows for object immortality in God. This notwithstanding, he was still insistent that:

> Even objective immortality in God alone is not sufficient to answer the question of the ultimate meaning of life. Only with life beyond the present is there a morally trustworthy ground for hope in the ultimate victory of good over evil.[26]

An additional bone of contention for scholars on Whitehead theodicy is the charge that the Whiteheadian God is a derivative God who is religiously inadequate and therefore undeserving of worship. William L Reese, makes this case in his *The Hartshorne Festschrift: Process and Divinity,* where he strongly argues that "The concept of God in Whitehead's philosophy is categorically contingent, systematically necessary and existentially contingent." [27]

By "categorically contingent," Reese means that "the categorical scheme permits but does not require the concept" of God. "Systematically necessary" refers to the crucial role that the concept plays in Whitehead's system. And by "existentially contingent"

he means that the proposition "God exits", if true at all, is not necessarily true, but only contingently true.[28]

By and large, Reese's case against Whitehead is that it is possible to have a Whiteheadian system without God. Consequently, Reese believes that Whitehead only brought in the idea of God to fill a void without which it would have been difficult for him to complete his metaphysical schema. What this clearly demonstrates according to Reese is that the Whiteheadian God is not psychologically and emotionally satisfying and deserving of the kind of worship that Christians offer to their God.

Another scholar who feels that the use of the term "God" in Whitehead's system is misleading and that its function might better be served through more pluralistic vision of aesthetic good is Donald Sherburne. In "Decentring Whitehead" Sherburne argues convincingly that Whitehead has not solved the problem of evil. For him:

> Although Whitehead's God acts only as lure for value and not as an omnipotent Father, nevertheless, our own experiences of pain, evil, and suffering belie the existence of even this more constrained God. [29]

Accordingly, Sherburne sketches out a vision of the universe that retains many elements of Whitehead's system without retaining God.[30]

Bringing up similar argument against Whitehead in relation to God's power is David Basinger's Divine *Power in Process Theism.* Basinger informs us that in Whitehead's metaphysics, God does not have unilateral, coercive control over everything in the universe. Therefore, it follows according to him, that the Whiteheadian "God cannot override a person's freedom, nor perform miracles that violate the laws of nature, nor perform physical actions such as causing or halting a flood or an avalanche."[31]

Extending this attack to the Whiteheadian notion of the superiority of persuasive power over coercive power, Basinger's elucidates that Whitehead's system offers a too severely diminished conception of God's power. This conception, on his account, diminishes divine power to such a degree that God is no longer worshipful.[32]

This is not all for Basinger. He believes that Whitehead's arguments in favour of persuasive power are inconsistent. Whitehead claims, David Basinger argues, that coercion is metaphysically inappropriate, yet in criticizing the concept of God in Augustinian theodicy, both Whitehead and his disciples argue that a being that could coerce should at times do so. This is, contends Basinger, an explicit dilemma in the process theists' concept of persuasive power. On the one hand, the use of coercive power is morally superior, justifiable, and demanded in some human cases. On the other hand, coercion is metaphysically impossible. The question is,

> Why would God allow human coercion in some matters but He would not coerce in any way? There is no reason for assuming that God consents to human coercion in some cases and that He would not coerce in this manner even if this were possible. One of the beliefs must be dropped or modified. [33]

After a long rebuttal of process explanation of persuasive power, he concludes that the process idea that God cannot coerce in any way is doubtful and their perception on divine omnipotence is no more adequate than the view affirmed by classical theism.[34]

Agreeing with Basinger, Nancy Frankenberry, in "Some Problems in Process Theodicy," stipulates that Whiteheadian thinkers ignore a range of power between the two extremes of power, coercion and persuasion. In addition, he argues that their understanding of persuasive power is limited. The process rendition of persuasive power puts emphasis only on one side of God's nature. He is always showing "mercy never wrath," "loving never judgment," "freeing never confining," and "blessing never cursing."[34] For Frankenberry, this Whiteheadian concept of persuasion lacks the mutual respect for the individual's rational dignity that accompanies morality of persuasion.

To be sure, from a broad perspective, Frankenberry agrees with the Whiteheadian suggestion that coercion is morally repugnant and incoherent in the metaphysics of social process; however, he argues that permission of degrees of freedom in their

philosophical framework makes degrees of coercion necessary. According to him therefore,

> On empirical grounds, the process theists' notion of persuasive power fails. In some situations, persuasion alone is morally inappropriate. Any reasonable person requests of God whatever mixture of coercion and persuasion is suitable in a situation.[35]

It goes without saying therefore that, Frankenberry, sees creatures as exercising the ontological power of self-determination. In everyday life, he avers, individuals pass on their pulsating creative energy without threatening another's autonomy, but rather make achievements possible. That is, we energize each other without impinging on self-determined freedom. Creative freedom is not transmitted without form, yet there is a succinct distinction of the form it takes. Thus, declares Frankenberry, there is a distinction between energizing another and inclining another in a certain direction without infringing on genuine exercise of freedom. In order words, the problem with Whitehead's metaphysics is that it affirms a relational system, but emphasizes persuasion at the expense of imparted energy.[36]

Some Whiteheadian scholars have gone out strongly to defend Whitehead on the dual Charge that his vision weakened the omnipotence of God and emphasizes the persuasive nature of God at the expense of his coercive power. Defending Whitehead on the charge by Basinger who claims that Whitehead's idea of the persuasive nature of God is not only inconsistent with his system but is also not a true representation of reality, Lewis S. Ford in "Divine Persuasion and Coercion," claims the criticism disappears when coercion and persuasion are examined in the context of Whitehead's worldview. In his view, the Whiteheadian theists' understanding of freedom is in the context of self-creation, not in the traditional worldview in which God unilaterally determines everything; hence it is impossible for process exponents to embrace the idea of a coercive God.[37]

Furthermore, Ford explains that the denunciation of Basinger does not stand up to scrutiny because he neglected to see the distinction between the human body and soul. In process metaphysics, he continues, coercion can occur only by means of instrumentalities and by things with bodies. It can be exerted on the body but not on anything that initiates activity, such as the soul. God has no divine body which could be used to exert coercion.[38]

Again, Ford points out that the dichotomy between two powers that critics refer to is based on the psychological meaning of the terms instead of the metaphysical meaning. Metaphysically, he emphasizes, the distinction between the two powers is "none" and "some"; there is an absolute difference between the two terms. Coercion in a metaphysical sense occurs only if the efficient cause totally determines the effect, but if a causal relation is completed with the effect of making a self-determining response, no matter how trivial it may be, it is an example of persuasion.[39]

J. E. Barnhart also maintains that the criticisms against Whitehead's notion of divine persuasion are based on a wrong concept of persuasion. In his "Persuasive and Coercive Power in Process Metaphysics," Barnhart argues that this is the case because in process metaphysics, actual entities possess freedom of conceptual innovation. Therefore, God cannot coerce in a sense of encountering evil, and the outcome of persuasion is based on finite entities' choice rather than the strength of persuasion.[40]

Employing the idea Whitney, a process theologian who embraces the concept of God exercising both coercive and persuasive powers, Barnhart intensifies his effort to show that those who criticise Whitehead's notion of divine coercion are mistaken. He observes that Whitney's concept of coercion differs from the critics' notion of coercion, which thwarts our desires. According to him, Whitney speaks of coercive power only in the sense of God establishing the laws of nature or providing initial aims. This power is coercive because it is beyond our control and consent.[41]

To buttresses his arguments against the mixture of coercion and persuasion and to show why Whitney's model is a better representation of Whitehead's metaphysics Barnhart makes a distinction between genuine individuals and mere aggregates. Genuine individuals are unity of experience; they exercise only persuasion amongst them because they have the ability to respond to received data, but mere aggregates exercise coercion because they are unable to respond to their environment. However, genuine individuals may coerce by virtue of the body; in this indirect sense, some coercion may be regarded as divine activity.[42]

Another scholar who believes that the attacks on Whitehead's concept of divine power are based on the misunderstanding between persuasive and coercive power is David Ray Griffin. In his well-celebrated work, God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy, set demonstrating that the Whiteheadian concept of persuasive power is metaphysically superior to its antithesis; coercive power. He began this massive book with the observation that First, power is a relational concept. It is not exerted in a vacuum, but always by some entity, over some other entity. As such, Griffin believes that power requires analysis of both the being exerting power, and the being that power is being exerted upon.

> To suppose that an entity A (in this case, God), can always successfully control any other entity B is to say, in effect, that B does not exist as a free and individual being in any meaningful sense, since there is no possibility of its resisting A if A should decide to press the issue.[44]

Mindful of this, Griffin makes several important distinctions between different kinds of power. The first distinction, according to him is between "coercive" power and "persuasive" power.[45] Coercive power is the kind that is exerted by one physical body over another, such as one billiard ball hitting another, or one arm twisting another. Lifeless bodies (such as the billiard balls) cannot resist such applications of physical force at all, and even living bodies (like arms) can only resist so far, and can be coercively overpowered. While finite, physical creatures can exert coercive power

over one another in this way, God—lacking a physical body—cannot exert coercive control over the world.[46]

The point Griffins is striving to make here is that persuasive form of power is superior to the coercive form. In fact, he argues that "…coercive power is actually a secondary or derivative form of power, while persuasion is the primary form."[47] Thus, even the act of self-motion (of an arm, for instance) is an instance of persuasive power. The arm may not perform in the way a person wishes it to—it may be broken, or asleep, or otherwise unable to perform the desired action. It is only after the persuasive act of self-motion is successful that an entity can even begin to exercise coercive control over other finite physical bodies. But no amount of coercive control can alter the free decisions of other entities; only persuasion can do so.[48]

Finally, Griffin employs a catchy demonstration to drive his point home. Taken for example, according to him:

> A child is told by his parent that he must go to bed. The child, as a self-conscious, decision-making individual, can always make the decision to *not* go to bed. The parent may then respond by picking up the child bodily and carrying him to his room, but nothing can force the child to alter his decision to resist the parent's directive. It is only the *body* of the child that can be coercively controlled by the body of the physically stronger parent; the child's free will remains intact. [49]

Thus, while Griffin argues that God does not have coercive power, he was insistent that God has supreme persuasive power, that God is always influencing/persuading us to choose the good.

One classic exchange over the issue of divine power is between philosophers Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth and the Whiteheadian scholar David Ray Griffin. Although, Sontag and Roth's arguments are extensively developed in their book, we shall only limit ourselves in this review to their arguments as set out by Griffin in his "Creation Out of Chaos and the Problem of Evil." Before deploying his

argument against Sontag and Roth, Griffin had first summarized the aspect of their argument he was going to contest and set aside. According to him:

> Sontag and Roth argued that the process God's inability to, for instance, stop the genocide at Auschwitz meant that God was not worthy of worship, since there is no point in worshipping a God that cannot save us from such atrocities.[50]

Griffin's response was as follows:

> One of the stronger complaints from Sontag and Roth is that, given the enormity of evil in the world, a deity that is merely doing its best is not worthy of worship. The implication is that a deity that is not doing its best *is* worthy of worship. For example, in reference to Auschwitz, Roth mocks my God with the statement that "the best that God could possibly do was to permit 10,000 Jews a day to go up in smoke." Roth prefers a God who had the power to prevent this Holocaust but did not do it! This illustrates how much people can differ in what they consider worthy of worship. For Roth, it is clearly brute *power* that evokes worship. The question is: is this what *should* evoke worship? To refer back to the point about revelation: is this kind of power worship consistent with the Christian claim that divinity is decisively revealed in Jesus? Roth finds my God too small to evoke worship; I find his too gross.[51]

What Griffin underlines in this quotation is that those who cling to the idea of God's coercive omnipotence are defending power for power's sake, which would seem to be inconsistent with the life of Jesus, who Christians believe died for humanity's sins rather than overthrow the Roman Empire. In the end, Griffin argues that it is actually the God whose omnipotence is defined in the "traditional" way that is not worshipful.[43]

Also, entering the discussion to answer the critics of Whitehead's concept of divine power is Bob Mesle in his "Relational Power." Mesle begins his contribution to the argument by making the very important distinction between the ideas of "unilateral" power versus "relational" power.[52] unilateral power, according to him,

> …. Is the power of a king (or more accurately, a tyrant) who wishes to exert control over his subjects *without* being affected *by* them. However, most people would agree that a ruler who is not changed or affected by the joys and sorrows of his subjects is actually a despicable ruler and a psychopath.[53]

Mesle thus stresses that God's power is relational; rather than being unaffected and unchanged by the world, God is the being *most* affected by every other being in the universe. As Mesle puts it:

> Relational power takes great strength. In stark contrast to unilateral power, the radical manifestations of relational power are found in people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Jesus. It requires the willingness to endure tremendous suffering while refusing to hate. It demands that we keep our hearts open to those who wish to slam them shut. It means offering to open up a relationship with people who hate us, despise us, and wish to destroy us.[54]

In summation, Mesle argues that the Whiteheadian conception of God's power does not diminish God, but just the opposite. Rather than see God as one who unilaterally coerces other beings, judges and punishes them, and is completely unaffected by the joys and sorrows of others, Whitehead's metaphysics sees God as the one who persuades the universe to love and peace, is supremely affected by even the tiniest of joys and the smallest of sorrows, and is able to love all beings despite the most heinous acts they may commit. God is, as Whitehead says, "the fellow sufferer who understands."[55]

In their *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*, John B. Cobb and David R. Griffin arrive almost at the same conclusion with Mesle. These renowned Whiteheadian scholars began their analysis by delineating some of the basic doctrines that are unique to Whiteheadian metaphysics.

> The Whiteheadian God is co-creative with all other creatures, including blooming flowers, singing whales, and insect architects. The source of power and creativity is ontologically distinct from God. Both God and finite beings draw on the same source of creative energy. This precludes the idea of God as the source of all power and creativity and gives finite beings and nature as a whole an independence and autonomy of their own. There is no beginning to creation; God and the universe are co-eternally creative. Whitehead does, however, have a concept of cosmic epochs which appears compatible with an oscillating "big bang" cosmogony. Process creation is creation out of chaos, not *creatio ex nihilo*. There is precious little biblical support for the latter; but more importantly, the ultimate implication of *creatio ex nihilo* is the imputation of all evil to God.[56]

After adumbrating this fundamental but very important relationship that the Whiteheadian God shares with other creatures, Cobb and Griffin moved ahead to draw the implications necessitated by these initial enumerations.

The first implication is that the Whiteheadian God *shares* the same power source with finite beings. God therefore does not have absolute *coercive* power but only has *persuasive* power. Consequently for both Cobb and Griffin "Although Alfred North Whitehead was not a confessing Christian, he believed that the best expression of divine persuasion was found in the life and teachings of Jesus."

> The brief Galilean vision of humility flickered throughout the ages, uncertainly....But the deeper idolatry, of fashioning God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian, and Roman imperial rulers was retained. The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar. The traditional idea of divine power reflects a worship of raw power, the power of the state and of the authoritarian father.[57]

Furthermore, Cobb and Griffin also argued convincingly that the Whiteheadian Metaphysics offers, with its innovative view of God's power and knowledge, cogent solutions to the problems of free-will and evil, as well as supports the ultimate reality and intrinsic value of individuals. Now:

> If, as some orthodox Christians claim, God is ultimately the sole source of value in the universe, then how can we possibly be praised for the value that some of us apparently create in our lives? In the orthodox view, it seems that God gets all the credit for the good that happens, but we are left unfortunately with all the responsibility for evil (even for natural disasters which are supposed to be God's punishment for our sin.) This is simply a disguised form of a divine totalitarianism which no self-respecting, rational human being should accept. Such a God is not truly God, but simply a projection of a form of social and political authoritarianism.[58]

After an extensive effort to buttress their contention that the Whiteheadian system offers satisfactory explanation especially in those areas where traditional theism failed woefully, Cobb and Griffin further elaborate that as natural theologians, process theologians place great weight on God's general revelation in nature. This according to them includes not only the marvellous order and structure of external nature, but also the fantastic workings of "inner" nature, culminating in the human mind and its use of reason. Consequently,

> God did not give human beings a rational faculty in vain; he surely did not mean for us to reject our most unique possession in an irrationalist betrayal of creation itself. Therefore if human reason is to be truly liberated in theological thinking, it must ultimately reject "God as Cosmic Moralist...God as Unchanging and Passionless Absolute....God as Controlling Power....God as Sanctioner of the Status Quo....God as Male....Whiteheadian Metaphysics denies the existence of this God.[59]

We began this chapter with clear and well defined objectives: to highlight the major bones of contention and in so doing delineate the basic trends in the interpretations and conclusions of some selected Whiteheadian literature on Whitehead's concepts of God and evil. The purpose of doing this, as we pointed out, was to enable us see whether there is any missing link in existing Whiteheadian literature in order to channel our energy towards making provision for such lack.

So far, we have been able to identify not just the major bones of contention but also the structure of the basic things authors are saying about Whitehead's concepts of God and evil, including the charge that evil is apparent in the Whiteheadian system, that Whitehead's God is contingent, derivative weak and therefore, undeserving of worship etc. In the same token, we have also received major rebuttals of these charges from very popular Whiteheadian scholars.

What is obvious in this review therefore is that scholars have used different complex and sophisticated philosophical apparatus to arrive at different and often contrasting interpretations of the Whiteheadian concept of God and evil. Nevertheless, what this investigation has revealed in a typically interesting manner is that the literature reviewed in this chapter, both the ones criticising and the ones defending Whitehead, all tried to view the Whiteheadian metaphysical system within a preconceived Christian idea and to argue from there why his system should either be accepted or discarded.

None of the scholars we reviewed made any serious effort to rigorously and comprehensively interrogate the Whiteheadian system with a view to finding out how it compares rationally with traditional theism in solving the problem of evil. Furthermore, besides some scholars who tried to forcefully impose Whitehead on Christianity or Christianity on Whitehead, none of the scholars tried to adapt the Whiteheadian system to meet some of the challenges still arising from the problem of evil. The desire to meet these two shortcomings is what justifies our determination to continue with our investigation in this study.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE AUGUSTINE'S APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

As noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation explanation of the problem of evil has been a perennial challenge in Christian theology and philosophy. The increased intensity of natural and moral evils through the centuries, especially in the form of wars have even exacerbated the problem. A number of theological and philosophical moves including Augustine's traditional theism have been made with a view to tackling the problem. The purpose of this chapter is to explore Augustine's seminal solution.

3.1. Augustinie's Theory as the Traditional Christian Approach

As noted already, the first systematic articulation of the problem of evil and what in the main is the inspiration behind other solutions is the Augustinian traditional Christian approach. Thus, although the problem of evil did not originate with Augustine, his resolution of it has become so authoritative in Christendom so much so that all Christian answers to the problem after Augustine have come to be regarded as Augustinian. In fact, because of the seminal role Augustine played in formulating and answering the problem, one can and rightly so, call the problem of evil a core problem Augustine's philosophy.

It goes without saying then, that no theological or philosophical articulation of the problem can be done with much achievement without reference to Augustine's benchmark attempt. The intention here then is to set out Augustine's solution as foundation towards understanding Whitehead's own contribution. Nevertheless, it should be noted that our intention here is not just to reconstruct Augustine's argument in relation to the problem of evil. Rather, we propose to focus on the principles upon which his solution is developed with the aim of not only to describe, but also to explore the arguments raised against these principles. The critical discussion focuses on issues such as the nature of evil, free will of human beings, sovereignty and

foreknowledge of God in relation to evil, and God's victory over evil. These issues are of much concern, for they are pertinent to the subject of this dissertation.

3.2. Augustine's Theodicy

Augustine, the bishop of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), was the greatest of the Latin fathers.[1] After espousing Manichaean philosophy for about ten years, Augustine became a Christian. He recognized that the Manichaean solution to the problem of evil, specifically the concept of the nature of God, is "shocking and detestable profanity, that the wedge of darkness sunders not a region distinct and separate from God but the very nature of God."[2]Against Manichaeism, Augustine affirmed the goodness of God and His sovereignty over the universe. In reality, the God who is self-sufficient, infinite in goodness and beauty, eternal, immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, and a supreme being became the core of his explanation to the problem of evil.[3]

On the basis of this understanding of the nature of God, Augustine argued that God created the universe out of nothing.[4] The omnipotent and the only perfect God created all things that need to be. Out of divine love and goodness, He deliberately called into existence every conceivable kind of being.[5] He put all creation in rank according to their utility or order of nature. On the order of nature, Augustine stated that:

> …those beings which exist, and which are not of God the Creator's essence, those which have life are ranked above those which have none; those that have the power of generation, or even of desiring, above those which want this faculty. And, among things that have life, the sentient are higher than those which have no sensation, as animals are ranked above trees. And, among the sentient, the intelligent are above those that have no intelligence …above cattle. And among the intelligent, the immortal, such as angels, above the mortal, such as men.[6]

When it comes to the ranking according to utility, he indicated that there are varieties of standards of values so that at a given point individuals prefer some things that have no sensation to some sentient beings. Such preference is so strong that sometimes we

wish to eradicate some things in the scale of being.[7] Thus, each form of existence has its own place in the hierarchy of being.[8] There is no level of the scale of being that is evil. All creation, from the highest to the lowest on the scale, is good. Therefore, he states, "No nature, therefore, as far as it is nature, is evil; but to each nature there is no evil except to be diminished in respect of good."[9] While the lower forms of existence, perceived in isolation, appear to be evil, they are necessary links in the scale of being. The fragments perceived as a whole are harmonious, well-ordered, beautiful, and a perfect creation of God. They adequately and perfectly express the goodness of God's creation.[10] However, all creatures are capable of being corrupted because they lack the immutability of the Creator.[11]

Augustine notes that the harmonious and perfect world is infested with pain and suffering as a result of sin. Among all the conceivable creatures of God, he remarks, there are living beings endowed with the gift of free will. The world would not have been perfect without free will. Unfortunately, some of the free creatures went wrong in exercising their free will. The first misuse of the will is turning to the will itself instead of God; turning away from the mode of being that is proper to a creature in God's creative intention is sin. Sin is the origin of evil that began with angels and continued afterwards with human beings.[12] The will is one of the good creations of God, but became evil only as it desired something inferior, contends Augustine. That is, evil originated from a good substance, the act of turning away from something incorruptible to that which is mutable is the issue of sin.[13] On the other hand, there is a motive which leads the rational being away from the Creator, and that is pride—"craving for undue exaltation."[14] This act of rational beings affected the entire creation.

In addition, Augustine indicates that

> …nature could not have been depraved by vice had it not been made out of nothing. Consequently, that it is a nature, this is because it is made by God, but that it falls away from Him, this is because it is made out of nothing.[15]

Hence, God is not the originator of evil.[16] From his analysis of the misuse of the free will, Augustine attributed evils to sin and its consequences, both moral and natural, to the wrong choice of free rational beings, with the exception of evils that are considered as punishment for sin. "Free will is the cause of our doing evil and that is why just judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequence."[17] In his view, God punishes sin in order to bring moral balance to the universe,[18] death, which was the punishment for the first humans—Adam and Eve who first sinned—is now the natural consequence for their progeny. [19]

Therefore, evil is not a substance.[20] It "has no positive nature," but is a defect of created good; "the loss of good has received the name 'evil.'"[21] It is, therefore, a privation of good, a parasitic nonessential, the absence of good from a thing which can and ought naturally to possess it.[22] "It is an evil, solely because it corrupts the good. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God. For that which is evil is contrary to the good."[23] Hence, evil and good are antithetic, but they co-exist. Good can exist without evil, but evil cannot exist without good.[24] Evil is connected with the created nature of the subject who has become evil—so that it would annihilate itself if it exterminates this nature. It arises from the fact that it does not derive its existence from itself or from the essence of God, but it is nothing.[25] As a result, Augustine argues that, evil has no efficient cause but only deficient cause as the will itself is defection from the Supreme Being.[26]

Augustine mentions that God was not ignorant about what rational beings will do with their will. God foresaw that they will abandon Him for inferior substance, yet He did not deny them freedom, for He foreknew the good He can bring out of evil.[27]

> God would never have created any, I do not say angel, but even man, whose future wickedness He foreknew, unless He had equally known to what uses on behalf of the good He could turn him, thus embellishing the course of the ages, as it were an exquisite poem set off with antitheses.[28]

God allows all these evils in the world to demonstrate how He can make good use of them. In this context, many good will disappear without evil.[29] Augustine continues to insist "What is evil, when it is rightly ordered and kept in its place, commends the good more eminently, since good things yield greater pleasure and praise when compared to the bad things."[30]

Augustine argues that God's purpose for permitting evil is to bring good out of it; only by saving the justly condemned race according to His grace. Yet, he remarked that God overcomes sin and evil by predestining some to eternal life and condemning others to eternal destruction.[31] "Therefore they were elected before the foundation of the world with that predestination in which God foreknew what He Himself would do; but they were elected out of the world with that calling whereby God fulfilled that which He predestined. . . . Those whom He predestined, called and justified, them He also glorified; assuredly to that end which has no end."[32] Augustine's contention here with regard to the origin of evil is that God does not create evil. Nevertheless, he actualizes his purpose in spite of evil. He does not allow evil to compromise his plans for the world.

3.2 Critical Discussion of Augustine's Theodicy

Augustine's theodicy served as the Christian explanation of the problem of evil for several centuries and generated impressive theological and philosophical literature. Notwithstanding its exceptional influence, scholars from both within and without theological circles have deliberated on its credibility, especially looking at the logical consistency, the nature of evil, and free will and its relation to evil.

3.3 Logical Consistency in Augustine's Theodicy

Philosophers such as David Hume, John L. Mackie, Anthony Flew, and H. J. McCloskey, just to mention a few, have reiterated Epicurus's formulation[33] of the problem of evil in many ways, claiming the theist explanation of the problem of evil is incongruous. They maintain that the existence of evil in this world suggests that an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God does not exist.[34] From Mackie's

viewpoint, free will theodicy−Augustine's solution− "…strongly suggests that there is no valid solution of the problem which does not modify at least one of the constituent propositions in a way which would seriously affect the essential core of the theistic position."[35] The problem of evil arises when God is conceived as all-good and all-powerful.[36]

Alvin Plantinga replies to these criticisms, specifically the criticism of John L. Mackie and Anthony Flew,[37] which holds that there is logical inconsistency in the free will theodicy propositions that God is omnipotent and wholly good and that evil exists.[38] According to Plantinga, all that is needed in responding to this criticism is a proposition that is consistent with an omnipotent, omniscient God who co-exists with evil; and the proposition needs not to be true.[39]

Hence, Plantinga argues that every possible free person contains the property "free to perform at least one morally wrong action." Therefore, for God to create a world containing moral good, He must create significantly free persons, and He can do that only by instantiating free possible persons. Every free possible person performs at least one moral wrong action. Thus, no matter what free possible person God actualizes, the resulting persons, if free with respect to morally significant actions, would always perform at least some wrong actions. That is, it is not within God's power to create a world containing moral good without evil. Consequently, an omnipotent, omniscient, and all-good God's existence is consistent with the reality of evil.[40]

Nelson Pike contends that Plantinga's argument does not do justice to the issue: How can an omnipotent, omniscient, and all-good God create possible persons as subsets of a set including the property "freely-performs-at least-one morally-wrong-action" rather than subsets of the sets including the property "freely-performs-only-right-actions"? Plantinga fails, argues Pike, to see the distinction between making someone do something and creating someone who God knows in advance will do something.[41]

From William Rowe's point of view, Plantinga's shift from free will to unfettered will refutes Flew's critique. But he does so only to weaken his argument because his defense is based on the claim that human freedom and some evil are better than no moral evil and no human freedom.[42] Rowe claims, furthermore, that Plantinga's reply to Mackie's squabble is valid, but the argument raised does not require the premises he used. In his view, there is a need for a clearer definition of the proposition that God is omnipotent before free will defense can controvert the criticism of Mackie and others.[43]

Plantinga, in responding to the criticisms, specifically to Pike, argues that his proposition is not necessary but contingent. It is logically possible that God can instantiate free persons who perform only morally right actions, but it is contingent upon free choices that these possible persons would make.[44]

In his article "Compatibilism, Free Will and God," Flew again analyses Plantinga's refutation and poses the question: "If [theodicy] is to be developed in incompatibilism terms, then the first problem is to show how these are to be squared with what so many classical theologians have taken to be essentials of theism."[45] And according to him this was primarily the question that neither Augustine's solution nor Plantinga's solution has been able to resolve.

Nevertheless, Plantinga's proposition, argues Stephen T. Davis, successfully rebuts the logical inconsistency problem in the free will theodicy. He confidently affirms that God cannot create a world with moral good without possible evil. However, the cost-effectiveness of the evil allowed in the world cannot be met with a philosophical solution.[46] If one were to take Davis by the content of his contention, what his argument amounts to is that the problem of evil, especially the logical one does not and cannot lend itself to any solution beyond the one the Saintly Bishop of Hippo formulated over 2000 years ago. While many scholars have at one point or another harped on Davis contention, the position as a closer inspection reveals that it is unacceptable because it fails to provide to millions of those who believe in a good and all perfect God around the world answers to the reason why they suffer.

Although scholars could not agree as to the logical merit of Augustine's solution to the problem of evil, what is clear from their discussions is that Augustine's solution itself lacks the inner logical coherency that would have made it a credible solution to the problem.

3.4 Nature of Evil in Augustine's Theodicy

We examine here Augustine's understanding of the nature of evil by investigating scholars' arguments on the ideas of privation, aesthetic, and plenitude principles found in his theodicy.

3.4.1 Privation

Augustine's answer to the problem of evil as we have seen revolves around the concept of free will. Consequently, his solution and the solutions of those scholars who followed his footsteps are often referred to as free will theodicy.

Now, the concept of privation in free will theodicy claims that evil is the absence of a good or a quality that normally would be present in a thing. Nonetheless, some leading scholars reject the theory on the basis that it is a denial of the reality of evil or an attempt to circumvent the problem of evil.[47]

Stanley G. Kane, in his analysis of the theory, affirms that the rejection of the concept of privation arises from misunderstanding.[48] The basis of this confusion, Kane asserts, is the failure to see the function of the theory in the free will theodicy. The concept is not intended to explain away evil or alleviate pain or deny the assertion that evil is caused by some active agent. A superficial reading of the statements on the theory is the cause of the misunderstanding. On the contrary, the idea of privation advocates a vivid sense of sin. No doubt, he declares, it does not portray any intention of explaining away evil. As defined by Augustine and Aquinas, Kane concedes, the theory recognizes evil as negative but not as non-existent. It is negative in a sense that its existence depends on the nature of another thing. The theory only describes the nature of evil. [49]

On the other hand, Kane affirms, that even with a correct understanding, the theory of privation has a deficient elucidation of the problem of evil. He claims the concept fails to answer the problem of evil, for not all evils are privation. Some evils are positive in nature and others are real but are privative. First, its account for pain is not plausible. A paralyzed leg can be considered a privation, but a leg aching with pain as suffering cannot be privation of good health. It is an experience different from a paralyzed leg. It is not a lack of feeling or function.[50] Secondly, the concept does not recognize the distinction between a sin of omission and a sin of commission. According to him, "On the privation theory we would have to say that both sorts of sin are equally evil, and that as evil there is really nothing in the hateful or murderous acts beyond the lack or privation of love and right action. This . . . is a *reduction ad absurdum of* the theory." Privation does not explain all the gradations of evil in the world.[51]

Bill Angling and Stewart Goetz, in their article "Evil is Privation," argue that Kane's rebuttal does not negate the efficiency of the privation theory. They assert that pain is a privation in the sense that it entails some absence in a normal state of consciousness and an indicator of an absence of physical well-being. In the same manner, privation handles a sin of commission adequately. A Sin of commission embraces the lack of executing some duties, just like a sin of omission. However, a sin of commission is a greater evil than a sin of omission inasmuch as it involves greater privation, "…a greater deviation of the will from the dictates of conscience and thus a greater lack of psychic harmony."[52]

According to John Hick, from the point of view of the modern logical theory,[53] "there is no basis for the hypostatization of non-being. The situation is simply that we have the generally useful habit of presuming an entity of some kind corresponding to a noun; but sometimes the language generates words that have no denotation—and non-being is a case in point."[54] Thus Hick condemns the use of privation of good in Augustine's theodicy. The crucial issue with the problem of evil, Kane and Hopers argue, is not whether evil is positive or negative, but if there is enough reason for God to allow the occurrence of evil in the world. According to them, evil as a positive

reality is not incompatible with God's omnipotence; if God, according to free will theodicy, uses evil to accomplish His purpose, then the positive or the negative reality of evil does not matter; for God has control over evil. Rendering evil as negative does not give sufficient moral reason for the permission of evil in our world.[55]

P. M. Farrell argues that the idea of privation is like "the passing of colour from the decaying rose," hence, in free will agents privation becomes a necessary by-product, "a very nature of a contingent being."[56] Wallace I. Matson also suggests that the theory of privation points to metaphysical evil. "Evil . . . considered in itself, is mere non-being, the deprivation of reality, whereas being and perfection are synonymous. Insofar as anything is real, it is perfect and good. But everything, except God, is and must be finite, hence everything, except God must be evil to some extent."[57] Quoting from Augusinus Magister, Hick explains that the principle of privation does not only make evil metaphysical but also makes grace a metaphysical force.[58]

> By this definition of evil as non-being St. Augustine threw into the process of theological reflection a principle which was to lead to a particular conception of grace, salvation, the Christian life, and the Church. In effect, if sin is a privation, the sinner is deficient. Consequently the grace which saves him will fill up this deficiency, and will be an irresistible grace [*un don de force*]. The instrument of this infusion of supernatural life will be the sacrament. The Church will have the treasury of these sanctifying graces at its disposal and will distribute it by means of its priests.[59]

Kane proposes that the idea of relating the inevitability of some physical evil to the concept of privation is not accurate; it is rather the principle of plenitude that makes evil a necessary consequence of contingency. The privation theory of the nature of evil, he contends, is not true experientially and does not safeguard any of the beliefs of theism. There are no "extra-theistic" or "intra-theistic" grounds for accepting the theory.[60]

3.4.2 Plenitude

As mentioned earlier on, the principle of plenitude in the free will theodicy assumes a world that includes all forms of life in a hierarchy that descends from the highest form of life down to the lowest. This principle has not gone without being challenged.

According to Mackie, the theory of plenitude as a solution to the problem of evil makes good and evil necessary counterparts. They exist in the same way as "quality and its logical opposite."[61] In addition, Hick asserts that the idea of plenitude leads to a despairing view. The understanding that is derived from the principle is that God cannot create good without evil, which is not in accordance with an orthodox understanding of God. [62]

If the principle of plenitude is accepted, grant Edward H. Madden and Peter H. Hare, then any possible universe entails both good and evil; God, as an omnipotent being, should be able to impose a just distribution of evil no matter what possible system He chose to create. In addition, any solution to the problem of evil that relies on the principle of plenitude has shortcomings. The principle leads to a paradoxical result, they claim. On the one hand, God's creation in rank, which includes all kinds of things, is good. On the other hand, the mutual interference of the creatures in rank causes most physical evil.[63] In his article "The Defense from Plenitude against the Problem of Evil," Robert F. Burch argues that the principle solves the problem of evil. According to him, the concept of plenitude is plausible in itself. For a world with free agents that do go wrong is better than a world without free agents.[64] According to Madden and Hare, the absurd result of the principle of plenitude is solved with the aesthetic theory.[65]

3.4.3 Aesthetic

In the free will theodicy, the aesthetic concept maintains that God has created a good world. Individual parts of the world may appear evil to the human mind, but, from the standpoint of God, those evils are ugly patches that make the whole picture beautiful. In Mackie's opinion, the aesthetic principle in free will theodicy presupposes a causal

law. Therefore, if God needs evil as a means to a good end, then He is subject to causal laws. Unfortunately, he stresses, this is incongruent with what theists mean by omnipotent.[66]

Furthermore, the principle implies, explain critics, that as evil contributes to the ultimate good, so does good equally augment the ultimate evil, but this is not always the case. Some evil may turn to a good result, but the price is still high, critics explain. A natural catastrophe such as an earthquake, flood, and hurricane may kill thousands of people, destroy properties, but also provide opportunities for service. However, the opportunities are not worth the price. Evil does not always serve as a means to good ends. Therefore, it is absurd to assume that the suffering of creatures is a necessary side-effect of a world which is good as a whole.[67]

In the view of John Hospers, if the best universe that the designer, God, could bring about is one where pain and suffering lead to good ends, "…perhaps he should have refrained from universe designing and chosen instead some activity in which he had greater competence."[68] He continues: "If evils such as are experienced in the world are good in God's perspective, then such a moral being does not deserve worship. God is not like a physician who introduces pain in order to help a patient. He is a God who does not need means such as agonizing pain to achieve a purpose. Such procedure is needed by creatures.[69]

3.5. Free Will and God in Relation to Evil in Augustine's Theodicy

The free will theodicy contends that evil is to be ascribed to the independent free will actions. On the other hand, contends Mackie, the notion of freedom in free will theodicy makes the solution inadequate.[70] This is because free will theodicy upholds a compatibility view of free will. In this context, compatibility means that free will is coherent with causal determinism—everything has a causal antecedent. Hence, theological compatibility or determinism holds that an "action is free, whether or not it was causally determined, provided only that it was done by an agent whose faculties were operating normal, and was done because the agent chose it."[71]

According to Robert F. Brown, the compatibility view gives credit to God for the good of creation; however, it attributes the fall to inherent weakness which creatures possess by virtue of being created out of nothing. The cause of evil, he claims, is shifted to something that fallen humanity cannot ascertain.[72] In the free will theodicy, therefore, decisions are predicted from other factors and actions are predetermined by a God who knew all causes; this makes free will an illusion.[73] Hartshorne stresses that the explanation that "God permits us to make our own decisions but, . . . He so influences us that we make exact decisions He decides upon for us, and so He is responsible for our acts, even though they are truly ours, . . . is a mere verbiage, and that no one knows what it means."[74] David Basinger joins the discussion by arguing that, for the Compatibilism view to preserve the goodness of God, the free will theodicy must conceive all evil to be non-gratuitous. However, this assumption cannot hold because the proponents of the theodicy affirm that moral agents commit some action, sin that God does not desire; this is to say, the theodicy exhibits a dilemma which cannot be escaped.[75]

Augustine's affirmation of free will is not compatible with an immutable omniscient and omnipotent God, argues David R. Griffin. Immutable omniscience in Augustine means God's knowledge does not increase or decrease in content and it also implies God foreknew the order of causation including the human will being the cause of human actions. But this nature of God, which belongs to His essence, does not make humans responsible as free will theodicy requires.[76] Therefore, an "immutable omnipotent God . . . would be unjustified in condemning any one to punishment for sinning, for . . . a person's life could not have been one iota different from its actual cause." According to Hick, even if Augustine's theodicy is granted, God cannot be defended from being responsible for evil, since He chose to create beings whom He foreknew would actualize sin and evil, when created.[77]

The exposition on free will, continues Griffin, allows autonomy, but it is illusionary, for omnipotence in Augustine suggests that "the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them."[78]

This, Griffin contends, negates creatures' freedom and responsibility, making God's justice for punishing sinners questionable.[79] Free will theodicy is self-contradictory[80] and makes all evils instrumentally good. Thus, there is no genuine evil; even evil which is considered intrinsically evil is not genuine evil but apparent, for, according to Augustine, the universe is better with sin than without sin.[81]

The above observation and others in this chapter have explicitly shown that there are irreconcilable difficulties in Augustine's answer to the problem of evil. They therefore, bring to bear the need to examine another theodicy for its feasibility.

The chapter began by offering a summary and scholarly critical analysis of the Augustinian traditional Christian attempt to reconcile the belief in one God and the reality of evil in the world. The purpose was to provide a necessary context to see whether Whitehead's theodicy is necessary and if it is, its feasibility and contribution as a solution to the problem of evil. From the brief discourse in the chapter, it seems possible to draw the following conclusions:

Augustine's theodicy is part of a belief system that serves to maintain religious meaning in spite of evil and suffering, yet according to the analysis, it fails to deal adequately with all the problems it attempts to solve. Feinberg seems right when he remarks the following about Augustine's theodicy: "An acceptable solution to one problem of evil isn't nullified because it doesn't solve any or all other problems."[82] However, in Feinberg's opinion, every given defense or theodicy must be internally coherent and espouse plausible views.[83] When one approaches Augustine's theodicy from the background of Feinberg's analysis one discovers that the solution is internally incoherent.

First, it is apparent from our discussions above that Augustine's solution incorporates Neo-Platonic principles of privation, plenitude, and aesthetic. Thus, inheriting the presuppositions and errors of the Neo-Platonic principles and these have led to irreconcilable difficulties.

Second, Augustine's solution suggests that evil is an inevitable consequence of free will. In a way, it is necessary for some teleological purpose of God which will eventually lead to future harmony. However, why a good God demands gratuitous evil and so much innocent suffering for the achievement of His teleological purpose, whatever that may be, was insufficiently elaborated upon.

Third, it is explicit that Augustine's answer does not provide the groaning world with a clear ground of certainty for the assurance of victory of good over evil. From the scholars' discussion, it appears that the glimpses of hope that this solution provides is illusive. Accordingly, in addition to predestination, Augustine affirms that by divine fiat God will bring future harmony; a kingdom of God will be realized and all evils will be seen as actually resulting in good. The question of why it is necessary that this harmony must be achieved by an omnipotent and omniscient God at the cost of such unimaginable human suffering is never addressed by Augustine.

Finally, Augustine's traditional solution could not reconcile the nature of a good God with the reality of evil. It only portrays a good God who uses evil to serve His purposes. Augustine describes an incompetent God whose providential purpose is being served by certain horrifying experiences of His creatures. It finds it difficult to reconcile human free will and God's nature. It runs into a paradox in affirming the concepts of human free will—determinism and the nature of God. Thus, Augustine's theodicy is unable to deal with these issues: how the actual amount and distribution of evil can be reconciled with a God who is good, without making God the cause of evil; how to reconcile human free will and the nature of God; and the certainty of the victory of good over evil.

This implies that, though Christianity has a traditional response to the problem of evil, this response displays total insufficiency for providing a viable explanation to this problem. Hence, one may conclude from the scholarly evaluation of the traditional Christian responses to the problem of evil that an adequate Christian response to the problem of evil must of necessity bear three characteristics: (1) it must not explain evil away; (2) it must provide an eschatology that gives the assurance of a complete

victory over evil; and (3) it must respond to the problem of evil without making God the cause of evil. These three characteristics will become significant in assessing the credibility of Whitehead's Process Philosophy in the next chapter (Chapter Four). In other words, the next chapter analyses the Process theodicy of Whitehead, with the view of ascertaining whether it is capable of reconciling the existence of a good God and the reality of evil without the difficulties that Augustine's traditional theodicy encountered.

Endnotes

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2. Augustine, *Against the Epistle of Manichaeans Called Fundamental*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, NPNF, First Series, 4, Edited by Philip Schaff. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), p. 140.
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4. Augustine *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 1 (NPNF First Series, 4: 351).
5. Augustine *City of God* 12.5 (NPNF First Series, 2: 228-229).
6. Ibid, 11.16 (NPNF First Series, 2:214).
7. Loc. Cit.
8. This idea of creation, the diversity of creation is ordered in rank, is called the principle of plenitude. See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 76.
9. Augustine *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 17 (NPNF First Series, 4:354).
10. Augustine *City of God* 12.2, 4, 11.16-22 (NPNF First Series, 2:227-228; 214-217); idem, *Enchiridion* 3:9-11 (LCC 7:341-343); *Soliloquies* 1.1, 2 (NPNF FirstSeries, 7:537); idem, *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 3, 8, 16 (NPNF First Series, 4:352-354).
11. Augustine *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 10 (NPNF First Series, 4:353).

12. Augustine *City of God* 11:11, 13, 15, 20, 32-33; 12:1, 9; 14:11; 19:4 (NPNF First Series, 2: 211-216, 223-224; 226-231; 271-272; 401-403); Also *On Free Will* 1 (LCC, 1:113-134).
13. Ibid. 12:6 (NPNF First Series, 2: 229).
14. Ibid., 14.13 (NPNF First Series, 2: 273).
15. Ibid. 14.13 (NPNF First Series, 2:273); On *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans*, 10 (NPNF First Series, 4:353); On *Enchiridion* 4:12 (LCC, 7: 343-344).
16. Augustine *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 33 (NPNF First Series, 4:358); On *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus Called Fundamental* 38 (NPNF First Series, 4:148-149).
17. Augustine *Confessions* 7.3,4,5 (LCC, 7:134-156); *On Free Will* 3.17.48 (LCC, 7:200).
18. Augustine *Concerning Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* 9 (NPNF First Series, 4: 353).
19. Augustine *City of God* 13.3 (NPNF First Series, 2: 246).
20. Augustine *Confessions* 12.18 (LCC, 7:148).
21. Augustine *City of God* 11.9 (NPNF First Series, 2: 210).
22. Augustine *Enchiridion* 4 (LCC, 7: 343-346); idem, *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus Called Fundamental* 35 (NPNF First Series, 4:147).
23. Augustine *City of God* 12.3 (NPNF First Series, 2:227-228).
24. Ibid.
25. Augustine *Enchiridion* 4.12-13 (LCC, 7:343-344).
26. Augustine *City of God* 12.7 (NPNF First Series, 2:230).
27. Ibid. 12.22; 22.1 (NPNF First Series, 2:241; 480).
28. Ibid. 11.18 (NPNF First Series, 2:214-215).
29. Augustine *Enchiridion* 4.11 (LCC, 7: 342-343); idem, *City of God* 12.22, 14.11, 22.22 (NPNF First Series, 2:241, 271-272, 499-500).
30. Ibid. 4.11 (LCC, 7:342). This idea, evil complements the good of creation, is known as the aesthetic principle. See Hick, *Evil and the Love of God*, 88.
31. Augustine *City of God* 22: 1, 2, 22; 21:12 (NPNF First Series, 2: 480, 499-501; 463).
32. Augustine *On the Predestination of the Saints* 34 (NPNF First Series, 5:515).
33. As stated above in the introductory chapter.

34. David Hume, *Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion* (New York: Hafner, 1948); John. L Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," *Mind* 64 (1955): pp. 200-212; Anthony Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom," in *New Essay in Philosophical Theology*, ed. Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM, 1955), 141-169; H.J. McClosky, "God and Evil," *Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1960): 97-114; Curt J. Ducasse, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion* (New York: Roland Press, 1953), chap. 16
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49. Kane, "Evil and Privation," 52.

50. Ibid., 49-51.

51. Ibid., 52. See also Wallace I. Matson, *The Existence of God* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 142-143; John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 462; M. B. Ahern, *The Problem of Evil* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 18-17.

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54. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 193.

55. Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, 211; Kane, "Evil and Privation, 54-55.

56. P. M. Farrell, "Evil and Omnipotence," *Mind* 67 (1958): 400-401.

57. Matson, *The Existence of God,* 142.

58. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 199-201.

59. Augusinus Magister, *Communications Du Congres International Augustinien*, vol. 2 (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1954), 1055, quoted in John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 201.
60. Kane, "Evil and Privation," 47.
61. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 204.
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64. Robert F. Burch, "The Defense from Plenitude against the Problem of Evil," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 12 (1981): 29-37.
65. Madden and Hare, *Evil and the Concept of God*, 68.
66. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 205
67. Flew, *God and Philosophy*, 55; Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, 313; Ducasse, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, 364.
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73. John Randolph Lucas, *The Freedom of the Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 27-29; Walter T. Stace, "The Problems of Morals," in *The Problem of Fre Will*, ed. Willard F. Enteman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 77-78; Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," 202-203.
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75. David Basinger, "Human Freedom and Divine Omnipotence: Some New Thoughts on an Old Problem," *Religious Studies* 15 (1979): 492-493.

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80. Ibid., 65.
81. Ibid., 66.
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83. Ibid., 29.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING WHITEHEAD'S THEODICY

By the logical ordering of this dissertation, this chapter requires a presentation of Whitehead's Process theodicy. Hence, the chapter furnishes information that forms the treasure trove on which the next chapter draws to defend the central claim of the study, namely, that Whitehead provides a more satisfactory answer to the question of theodicy than its Judeo-Christian counterpart.

As earlier indicated, reading Whitehead's metaphysics is somewhat like learning a new language and anyone who has learnt a new language as an adult knows what an uphill task it could be. To mitigate this difficulty, the present chapter engages in textual, intra-textual and inter-textual conceptualization of Whitehead's ideas. This means that to understand a particular idea in Whitehead−especially the difficult ones−the chapter will embark on analysis of the idea in question in three stages: within the context of Whitehead's own solution to the problem of evil, within the framework of his metaphysics in general and finally, within a broader perspective of those philosophical problems and movements that inspired and were inspired by his Metaphysics.

The intention is to avoid reading these Whitehead's ideas in isolation but to read them in relation to the problems he tries to address and thus reduce the risks of misinterpretation that has dogged Whitehead's metaphysics. While giving no assurance that this approach will solve all the problems associated with understanding Whitehead's esoteric metaphysics, it is hoped that it will reduce the danger of misinterpretation as well as offer a clearer picture of what Whitehead has in mind while penning down his ideas.

The chapter commences with an attempt to locate Process Philosophy within the general context of the history of metaphysics. The inspiration behind this is to situate the problem Whitehead tries to solve, the philosophers he shares kindred spirit with and those he antagonized in order to achieve his purpose. The chapter then navigates

from this foundational issue to Whitehead's cosmology dovetailing and discussing in the process details of his concept of the origin and constituents of the universe, his ideas of the nature of God, nature of evil and the relation between God and evil. The chapter closes with Whitehead's notion of God's final victory over evil.

Once again, the general aim of the chapter is to demonstrate that Whitehead presents a solution to the problem of evil that is emotionally more satisfying and logically more coherent than the Augustine inspired Judeo-Christian solution.

4.1. Process Philosophy

In Chapter Three, Augustine's theodicy was explored as the background to Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil. However, a proper understanding of Whitehead's theodicy cannot be realized without a general appreciation of the metaphysics and science (the two are indistinguishable at the beginning) that inspired Augustine. To a large extent, Whitehead's theodicy, as we shall see, arises within the context of his attempt to correct or rather to undermine the metaphysics behind Augustine's worldview.

A peep into the history of Western scholarship shows that dominant metaphysical/scientific visions of reality have always influenced and determined theological ideas. The first major metaphysical attempt of this nature with corresponding theological impact in western thought occurs in the form of conflict between Heraclitus and Parmenides. While Parmenides avers permanence or absolute monism, insisting that the world consists of one, unchanging static reality, Heraclitus is adamant that change is the ultimate nature of things. "Everything is in flux and nothing is at rest"[1], is the motto of Heraclitus philosophy.

With time, it was Parmenides' vision that won the ancient and metaphysics from then to the 19th century, bears the signature of Parmenides' static vision of reality. Thus, whether you are endorsing the irreducible atoms of Democritus, Plato's immutable forms or Aristotle's substance, you are one way or the other assenting to the vision of reality postulated by Parmenides.

No doubt, in principle, Plato and Aristotle rejected Parmenides' absolute monism, but in reality they still accepted the axiom that the highest reality or the real things must be something unchanging. Even Democritus, the father of modern atomic theory, held that atoms, though they moved in infinite space, were still indivisible, immutable bits of matter−small Parmenidian "ones." And Aristotle's concept of substance as the unchanging substrate of change dominated philosophy up till the time of Kant, and this substance metaphysics (also to be called classical or Greco-Roman metaphysics in this study) dominated physics till the early 1900s.

It was medieval scholars who incorporated this Greek concept of reality, pervaded by Parmenides' vision into Christian theology. Since then, God in Christianity is presented in the categories of changelessness, absolute, omnipotence and omnibenevolence. He is the immovable mover that is perfect in terms of every conceivable positive quality. Within this vision too, reality is duality: form and matter, mind and body, change and static etc. and while changelessness is associated with God and therefore good, change is bad and associate with evil. It is a worldview characterized by the dichotomy and rivalry between good and evil inhabiting the same world. It is therefore easy to see why the problem of evil arose in the first place and why classical Christian effort to solve the problem was focused on absolving God from responsibility for evil.

Although, the astonishing strides of modern science questioned some of the conclusions of classical thought, the overall concept of God imposed on the western mind by Parmenides has continued to endure. In fact, the culmination of the Parmenidian idea and by extension, the medieval concept of God and evil was in what is generally known as Newtonian Physics. Newton established a mechanistic concept of reality with its attendant understanding of God as a perfect creator and the world as a perfect and static system (a machine) almost to the point of dogma.

Parmenides and Newton and the theology they inspired ruled (and still rule) the academic world for centuries. This concept of reality started having problems following the inroads in science by Einstein, Schrödinger and Bohr; including

Darwin's theory of evolution. These new discoveries which presented reality as a dynamic process are to be sure a comeback and an essential victory to Heraclitus. Whitehead was aware of this when he acknowledges that Heraclitus' concept of "…the flux of things is the one ultimate generalization around which we must weave our philosophical system"; and that "…mathematical physics translates the saying of Heraclitus, 'All things flow,' into its own language. It then becomes, 'All things are vectors.'"[2]

The Physicist Werner Heisenberg quite agrees with Whitehead's assessment of Heraclitus. He approvingly endorses that:

> Modern physics is in some ways extremely near to the doctrines of Heraclitus. If we replace the word 'fire' by the word 'energy' we can almost repeat his statements word for word from our modern point of view. Energy is in fact that substance from which all elementary particles, all atoms and therefore all things are made.[3]

Specifically, these scientific breakthroughs call to question the ability of substance metaphysics and the theology it inspires to furnish humanity with true knowledge of reality. A new metaphysics and corresponding theological vision that would be in line with the innovations in science is required.

The point here is that the19th century introduced a perspective that was radically new to the understanding of the world: the dynamic and evolutionary point of view. As we have seen, classical metaphysics responded to the world in a constructed state. Latest scientific discoveries, in turn, imposed the view of a dynamic world continually in process. To understand the general properties of this new world described by the recent scientific discoveries, classical or Cartesian-mechanistic metaphysics was not enough. Many thinkers including Henry Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead noticed this trend. Because of this, the philosophy of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was full of attempts to create a new metaphysics; the metaphysics of a new image of the world born out of science. One of the trends of this new philosophy was made up of vitalism. In effect, the world up to this point was understood from the

point of view of a static, dualist Greco-scholastic philosophy or from the scientific paradigm of the machine of the Newtonian or Cartesian-mechanism. It was urgent to build an understanding of the world from an organic paradigm of life in evolution. This gestating vitalism was present throughout Europe. Whitehead therefore formed part of a movement of the times that was clearly following the trend of vitalism.

Thus, at the start, Whitehead's process philosophy was largely a polemic against Newtonian science. The proximate catalyst for its emergence was the breakdown of Newtonian thought late in the nineteenth century. Whitehead saw the impact of the breakdown of this all-encompassing world-view very clearly. Lucien Price records Whitehead as saying:

> We supposed that nearly everything of importance about Physics was known. Yes, there were a few obscure spots, strange anomalies having to do with the phenomena of radiation which physicists expected to be cleared up by 1900. But in so being, the whole science blew up, and the Newtonian physics, which had been supposed to be fixed as the Everlasting Seat, were gone. Oh, they were and still are useful as a way of looking at things, but regarded as a final description of reality, no longer valid. Certitude was gone.[4]

Hereafter, Whitehead's philosophy focuses on determining where substance metaphysics and Newtonian Physics are mistaken and then creating a new system that avoids the same mistakes. In doing this, his "…endeavour is to formulate a conception of the ultimate facts of physical science, and specifically of metaphysics, such as would be consistent with experience, and free from the inner contradictions of the older theory."[5]

Whitehead describes substance metaphysics with the scientific and theological conception of reality it engenders as "scientific materialism." This notion of reality has two extremes. The first is connected with the understanding of God presented by medieval scholars that has been the dominant view of God in Christendom. As hinted, the original problem of medieval scholars was how to reconcile the content of

Christian revelation with the findings of Greek scholarship. This was the age long conflict between faith and reason. A decisive resolution of this problem popularly known as the 'great medieval synthesis' was achieved by medieval thinkers, especially Thomas Aquinas. In a nutshell, the medieval resolution upholds that there is no intrinsic conflict between faith and reason. Thus, the truth of revelation is also within the reach of reason since God is the author of both faith and reason. Obviously, the medievals followed Parmenides to ascribe perfection and immutable qualities to God.

The problem with this view is that it created the problem of evil which does not allow the formulation of a coherent and logically consistent idea of a perfect God that is compatible with the existence of evil in the world. We shall see how Whitehead tackled this problem by tampering with some of the Parmenidian ideas of God−omnipotence− imported from Greek thought by medieval thinkers.

The second extreme concerns the dismissal of religion and adoption of science and the scientific method as the authentic source of true knowledge. Now, one of the consequences of the scientific revolution that followed the wake of the Enlightenment and its attendant rationalism is an attack on the medieval synthesis. What was once thought established, came under serious criticism by enlightenment scholars like David Hume and Immanuel Kant. Breakthroughs in organic evolution and the field of mechanics convincingly established science for many as the only valid source of knowledge. For Hume and the Positivists, any knowledge that does not conform to the method of science and the mathematical logic that go with it is mere verbiage and should be consigned to the flames. Because religion does not conform to this way of acquiring knowledge, science was seen as incompatible with religion and religion was dismissed as nonsensical.

Whitehead presented R. Dawkins as one of the proponents of this position. According to Whitehead, Dawkins has argued that religion is blight on humanity, and that religious experience is a fundamentally flawed perception of the world. Basically, this view, sees nature as senseless, valueless, and purposeless. "It just does what it does

do, following a fixed routine."[7] To be fair, Whitehead concedes that Dawkins allows that the universe is beautiful from the perspective of humanity, but as he points out this is a "theory of psychic additions." Nothing in Dawkins' universe is good or bad but human thinking makes it so.

Against scientific materialism Whitehead presents an alternative hypothesis best known by the name 'process philosophy.' Whitehead himself calls it, much more adequately, "philosophy of organism" [8] first, because he was impressed with the developments in twentieth-century physics that made events and not particles the fundamental units of reality. And second, because he took the dynamic processes of biological organisms as a clue to the nature of reality. Basically, then Whitehead's metaphysical project is a search for a new system of general ideas in terms of which we can interpret all our experiences. As he puts it:

> Speculative Philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of "interpretation", I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme…. It will also be noticed that this ideal of speculative philosophy has its rational side and its empirical side. The rational side expressed by the term "coherent" and "logical." The empirical side is expressed by the terms "applicable" and adequate."[9]

One factor that motivated Whitehead to shift his emphasis is his belief that classical Physics was built on a questionable metaphysical outlook which consists in what he called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness; a fallacy committed when one mistakes an abstraction for the concrete. He was aware that developments in twentieth-century physics cast doubts on this principle. However, he was concerned not only to develop a metaphysics that would fit in with contemporary science, but one that would also heal our sense of alienation from nature that began with the rise of the modern outlook. Hence, he also attacked what he called "the bifurcation of nature." This results from the distinction that substance metaphysicians and scientists made between

(1) the world of immediate experience, a world consisting of sounds, scent, colour, tastes, celebrated by the poets, and (2) the world of science in which "nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, meaninglessly.[10] This dichotomy results, according to Whitehead from "fallacy of misplaced concreteness,"[11] the fallacy of taking abstract entities of science and mistaking them for what is most concrete and the real. After quoting the romantic poets Whitehead says:

> We forgot how strained and paradoxical is the view of nature which modern science imposes on our thoughts…. Is it not possible that the standardised concepts of science are only valid within narrow limitations perhaps too narrow for science itself.[12]

Consequently, an adequate philosophy overcomes the dichotomies of mind-matter, subjective-objective, and human experience-science by recognizing that "the red glow of the sunset should be as much a part of nature as are the molecules and electric waves by which men of science would explain the phenomenon.[13]

To be sure, for Whitehead, scientific materialism is "not wrong if properly construed."[14] Elsewhere, he writes, "I assume as an axiom that science is not a fairy tale."[15] Whitehead's point, in other words is that if we constrain our explanations and descriptions to certain portions of experience, we can generate perfectly functional theories on the basis of scientific materialism. However, when pushed to its limits, scientific materialism ultimately collapses and begs off the final explanation of meaning and being as not proper subjects for inquiry. Nevertheless, if it is possible to construct a theory which can account for more of our experiences without stripping away either the values that make practical life possible or the scientific insights that have revolutionized the human experience, and without being a mere chimera of the two, then practical reason suggests we investigate it thoroughly. From Whitehead's perspective then, a successful cosmological scheme should aim to exhibit itself "…as adequate for the interpretation of…the complex texture of civilized thought."[16] To this end, the cosmologist's central motivation must be to construct a system of ideas which brings the aesthetic, moral, and religious interests into relation with those concepts of the world which have their origin in natural science.[17]

Already an important difference can be marked between contemporary scientific cosmology and Whitehead's more philosophical approach. Whitehead sought nothing less than the integration of our artistic, religious, and scientific intuitions into one general scheme of thought. The typical aim of the modern scientific cosmologists, even when they claim to be pursuing a "grand unifying theory," or "theory of everything," is obviously far less integral in scope: only the empirico-mathematical features of the physical world are given systematic treatment, while everything else, no matter its importance to civilized human life, is, at best, bracketed as irrelevant, and at worst, explained away as illusory. The specialized instrumental methods of contemporary scientific cosmology have allowed it to precisely measure and carefully dissect much of the known world, but the materialistic ontology providing its imaginative background has lead it to "…exclude itself from relevance to the ordinary stubborn facts of daily life."[18] For example, average law-abiding citizens must go about their day under the assumption that they bear some responsibility for their actions, despite the fact that materialistic interpretations of neuroscience leave no room in the brain for anything remotely resembling consciousness, much less free will. Scientific materialism leaves us in the impossible position of having to deny in theory what we have to affirm in practice.

Whitehead had little doubt that the technological applications of modern science would continue to transform civilization. Technologically speaking, science is only becoming more intensely relevant to daily life. It cannot be denied that the increase in physical power which has resulted from rapid techno-scientific advance has afforded civilization the opportunity for social betterment; but it has also brought us perilously close to destroying ourselves.[19] "It may be," says Whitehead, that civilization will never recover from the bad climate which enveloped the introduction of machinery…The world is now faced with a self-evolving system, which it cannot stop.[20]

Modern techno-science has excelled at transforming and controlling what it has not adequately understood and cannot morally or aesthetically appreciate. The scientific presupposition that "…matter in motion is the one concrete reality in nature," such

that “aesthetic values are irrelevant addition,” has proven itself to be an error of disastrous proportions.[21] It is precisely this materialistic ontology and its accompanying instrumentalist epistemology that Whitehead’s cosmological scheme endeavours to re-imagine. Instead of pursuing science in abstraction from the values of earthly life, Whitehead’s cosmology seeks to replace the traditional scientific conception of mechanism, along with the traditional religious conception of deism, with a novel conception of organism. With mechanistic substance as its foundational concept, modern science’s bifurcation of nature into objective natural facts and subjective human values is inevitable. With a conception of organic process as his starting point, Whitehead is able to articulate a cosmology whose details elucidate, rather than eliminate, the common sense values of civilized life, such as moral responsibility, aesthetic appetition, veritable knowledge and the existence of God.

Thus, instead of following conventional philosophy to see the abstraction of science as the comprehensive measure of human knowledge, Whitehead, defined philosophy as the “critic of abstractions”[22], and describes his own speculative metaphysics as a series of “working hypotheses” crafted with the goal of functioning as a framework with which to interpret every element of our experience.[23]

As such, one of Whitehead’s goals was explaining the ways in which prior philosophies failed to account for aspects of experience due to the application of mistaken abstractions. And this consists primarily in “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” in which the casual assumption of a substance ontology causes an endless variety of perplexities and incongruities. As Nicholas Rescher describes it, the difference between process ontology and substance ontologies is that whereas substance ontologies must posit both events (like waves crashing on the shore) and substances with properties (like water that is blue), process ontology is “a one-tier ontology of process alone,” with “an internally complex monism of activities of varying, potentially compounded sorts.”[24] In other words, in a Whiteheadian philosophy, the world is not a collection of static substances with inhering properties but a dynamic process of “creative advance into novelty”[25] in which “every actual thing is something by reason of its activity.”[26]

Along with this antagonism to the dualism of substance and event, Whitehead also opposes the dualism of fact and value. Whitehead's system is ultimately an aesthetic system of values. In *Science and the Modern World*, he approvingly quotes Tennyson's verse, "'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run,'" as a critique of the mechanistic framework of modern science and philosophy.[27] Such systems may attempt to reintroduce value as a constituent of experience but do so in such a way that value is ultimately an extraneous appendage on an otherwise complete system, merely awaiting its pruning off by an ambitious nihilist.

In contrast, according to Whitehead, aesthetic value enters into the universe in its minutest elements and thoroughly permeates all levels of experience. Value is "the intrinsic reality of an event"[28] and "the outcome of limitation." That is to say, "…whether we are speaking of an electron which is limited in experience to orbiting a proton or a human being choosing one action over another, on every level value is the actuality that results from the event of productive engagement with limits."[29]

This vision of a philosophy which is general enough to apply to both the electron and the human being reveals the other distinctive aspect of Whitehead's philosophy and part of his motivation for calling it "the philosophy of organism." For Whitehead, reality follows the same principles at every level with only differing degrees of complexity and integration, rather than qualitatively different substances, as in Cartesian mind-body dualism. As he writes, "It is a matter of pure convention as to which of our experiential activities we term mental and which physical."[30] Of course, there is a difference between matter and mind, but it is only a difference of the "routes" that give rise to their occasions. In either case, a bit of mind or matter is just "a route whose various occasions exhibit some community of type of value."[31]

The ultimate justification for Whitehead's unitary view of nature is that, "there is but one nature, namely the nature which is before us in perceptual knowledge."[32] In order to avoid any mistaken bifurcation of nature, Whitehead posits a philosophy that is a holographic system at the highest level of generality in which each part exhibits the structure of the whole. At the same time, Whitehead does not attempt to reduce our

concrete experiences to expressions of the abstract laws of physics, as contemporary scientific materialists might. To the contrary, the job of philosophy is "to explain the emergence of the more abstract things from the more concrete things,"[33] not vice-versa. This also squares up with what Whitehead sees as the way of doing metaphysics. He believes that metaphysics is to first start with a system of concept that seem illuminating for some region of experience and then, using this "free imagination" and logical criteria, see if these concepts can be generalized and used to coherently interpret the other regions of experience.

> The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and again lands for renewed observation and rendered acute by rational interpretation.[34]

In the main therefore, what Whitehead tries to do in his philosophy of organism is to concretize and harmonize those elements of our experience that scientific materialism distorts through its process of abstraction. He is of the view that if we can have an accurate picture of what goes on in the flow of experience we can have a window to the larger world of which it is a part. He believes that most of the problems we have in philosophy, including the problem of evil are as a result of abstractions from our experience. Thus, if we can pay a close attention to our experience and interpret them as they are most of our problems would be solved.

4.2. Origin of the World

Every cosmology to be complete has to, one way or the other, deal with the problems of the origin of the universe. In the previous chapter we saw how this problem was dealt with by the main Christian tradition inspired by Augustine. In the main, the tradition taught that God created the entire universe out of nothing. Thus, "God" for Augustine "…supremely exists, and therefore he is the author of every existence; nothing could exist in any way, if it had not been created by him."[35] To "supremely exist" as Augustine composed it in this quotation does not just mean to precede every

other existence in terms of generation and perfection but it also means to be the very ground of all other existence.

Th. Aquinas, on his own says that in the proper sense of the word, only God creates.[36] He explains that to create is to bring something from nothing, and this is possible only for the deity. [37] This is the famous doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, or creation from no pre-existing material.

There are implications to this traditional doctrine of creation. The first set of implications is the ideas that God's creative act and God's knowledge of the world are non-temporal. Augustine, for example, in the *Confessions*, considers it nonsensical to ask what God was doing before the creation of the world. God, in creating the universe, brings time—and with it, relations of before and after—into existence; thus, it is no more meaningful to ask what came before the first moment of time than it is to ask what is north of the north pole.[32] The way this point is connected with the problem of evil is that in assuming that God in knowing that man would choose wrongly but still goes ahead to create him free implicates Him with responsibility for evil.

A second set of implications within this traditional view of creation is that God's power over creation is unlimited. Seen this way, the orthodox Christian approach to the origin of the universe is connected to the problem of evil in two ways. On one hand, if God is the creator of everything that is, as Augustine avers, then he is the originator of evil and is therefore responsible for it.

D. Schleiermacher in *The Christian Faith*, actually attacks Augustine on this point. His basic criticism is directed at Augustine's idea that a universe which God has created with absolute power, so as to be exactly as God wishes it to be, containing no evil of any kind, has nevertheless gone wrong. According to Schleiermacher, it is true that the free creatures who are part of the world are free to fall. However, since they are finitely perfect, without any taint or trace of evil in them, and since they dwell in a finitely perfect environment, they will never in fact fall into sin. Thus, he argues that the very idea of a perfect creation going wrong spontaneously and without cause is a self-contradiction. It amounts to the self-creation of evil out of nothing![38]

It is significant that Augustine himself, when he asks why it is that some of the angels fell while others remained steadfast, has to conclude that:

> These angels, therefore, either received less of the grace of the divine love than those who persevered in the same; or if both were created equally good, then, while the one fell by their evil will, the others were more abundantly assisted, and attained to the pitch of blessedness at which they have become certain that they should never fall from it.[39]

The basic criticism, then, is that a flawless creation would never go wrong and that if the creation does in fact go wrong the ultimate responsibility for this must be with the creator.

As we saw in Chapter Three, Augustine was aware of these questions and approached them from various perspectives. First, he denied substantial existence of evil. "There is no efficient cause for evil, it is a deficiency, a falling away from what is: seeking the cause is like trying to see darkness or to hear silence."[40] Second, he placed responsibility for evil on rational creatures' abuse of their free will. "Free will is the cause of our doing evil and that is why just judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequence."[43]

Although, Whitehead offered no systematic program to account for the origin of the universe, scattered remarks in his cosmology can be pieced together to build up his position on the matter. In the first place, Whitehead takes a contrary view that time is the process of creation or that the universe has a beginning. For him, there is no eternal act of divine creation that fixes the world in existence and there is no eternal perspective from which the universe can be considered a finished product. Consequently, the "creative advance," as Whitehead calls the universe, is inherently open-ended and growing, like a line to which tiny segments are continually being added. Where Augustine would liken God's prescience to a man viewing a caravan of travellers from a high tower, Whitehead would say "There is not (either now or eternally) a fixed totality of travellers for God to survey, but a new totality each moment."[44]

Secondly, contrary to mainstream Christian account of origin, the universe, including God for Whitehead is an uncreated process. Both God and other beings that make up the universe are involved in an ever dynamic and organismic evolutionary process geared towards the realization of harmony. Whitehead thus, denies that God is transcendent to the world. "God" he contends, "is not before all creation, but with all creation."[45]

God for Whitehead then is not the ultimate creator who creates *ex nihilo*. He is rather, co-creative with all other creatures. The source of power and creativity is the creative process itself and thus ontologically distinct from God, such that both God and finite beings draw on the same source of creative energy. This precludes the idea of God as the source of all power and creativity and gives finite beings and nature as a whole an independence and autonomy of their own. Whitehead sums up this vision with these psalmic antistrophes:

> It is true to say that God is permanent and that the World fluent as it is to say that the World is permanent and God fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that in comparison with God, that the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World as that the World creates God. God and the World are the contrasted opposites in terms of which creativity achieves its supreme task of transitory disjointed multiplicity with its diversities in opposition into concresent unity with its diversities in contrasts.[46]

The points then is that there is no beginning to creation; God and the universe are co-eternally creative.

Nevertheless, Whitehead does, have a concept of cosmic epochs which appears compatible with an oscillating 'big bang' cosmogony. His concept of creation is

creation out of chaos, not the orthodox *creatio ex nihilo*. Interestingly, there is pretty little biblical support for the latter; but more importantly, the ultimate implication of *creatio ex nihilo* is the imputation of all evil to God.

4.3. Actual Occasions and Actual Entities

Closely related to the problem of the origin of the world and perhaps even of more metaphysical significance is the question, of being. Down the history of western scholarship, this question has received different formulations (why is there something instead of nothing, what is being, what is there, what is the basic stuff of which the world is constituted, etc.) and is by far the most fundamental question in philosophy. Efforts to tackle this problem is both the motivation and driving force of what we know today as metaphysics. Thus, metaphysics right from its origin was, is and will always be the quest for the meaning and nature of what the world is made of.

The Ionians, credited as the initiators of the philosophical project were the first group of investigators to confront this problem. They thought that the being of the universe consists in some kind or kinds of stuff. Thus, Thales, argued that everything was essentially water, for Anaximenes everything was a form of air and Anaximander, was convinced the 'stuff' in question was indeterminate, so that it could transmute into the various determinate stuffs such as water, air earth and fire.

Atomists such as Democritus and Leucippus took similar positions when they argued that those determinate particular objects they called 'atoms' were the basic realities of the universe. Also, Benedict Spinoza encapsulate this doctrine of being in his pantheism where he argued that God and the universe are one and the same substance. Leibniz tolled the same line with his theory of monads. According to him, the monads (whether created or uncreated) are the basic constituents of all existence. Descartes postulated similar vision dividing reality into mind and body. Emmanuel Kant's a priori psychology also falls within the dimension, for according to Kant,

> It is only by understanding the world as possessing enduring spatio-temporal objects, which enter into causal relations with each other (that is, it is only by applying the categories of substance and causation) that we can have intelligible experience. Substances—that is, a framework of stable, enduring objects—are essential, but the source of this necessity lies not how the world is in itself, built in the framework which we are obliged to impose.[47]

However, as we saw already, the first systematic attempt to formulate a comprehensive answer to the question on being and the formulation which eventually won the day was that made by Parmenides. According to Parmenides what is, is being which for him, is one, eternal and unchanging. Reality is one and not multiple. It is only in appearance that reality seems to be multiple and changing and this is due to the illusion of the senses. Plato fellows Parmenides in thinking that reality is eternal and unchanging. The Changing things we see around us, for Plato, are not realities but only reflections of realities. While there are varieties of beings for Plato, He still identifies the form of Good as the ultimate and source of all realities. Aristotle, Plato's disciple in his concept of Being qua Being or the prime mover identify God with Being insisting that since metaphysics is the study of being the right object of metaphysics is the study of the Being of God.

It is from this background that medieval scholars ably represented by Augustine and Aquinas identify Being with God. For Augustine, the ultimate reality is God and since God is good, the whole of creation is good. Thus, evil cannot be anything but privation of good. Aquinas in like manner maintains that God is Being per excellence while creatures are beings in analogical sense.

Important to note here is that in appropriating Greek concept of being, medieval scholars carried over those Greek qualities of being including, one, unchanging, perfect and almightiness into Christian theology. As we shall see, Whitehead believes that the problem of evil lies in these attributes of Greek despot or Roman emperor that medieval scholars inadvertently imported into Christian thought.[48]

In approaching Whitehead's account of being, one must bear in mind that there are two problems he is trying to solve. The first problem, already noted, is associated with classical metaphysics and its bifurcation of reality. The second problem concerns the failure of Newtonian Physics to account for the dynamic nature of reality. For Newton influence by classical metaphysics had thought of reality as mechanistic, unchanging and guided by inexorable laws. Thus, Whitehead seeks to draw out the implications of recent developments in quantum physics, theory of relativity and evolution.

In contrast to the emphasis on substance in the history of philosophy, Whitehead starts with the conviction that process is the fundamental feature of all reality. "To be actual," he says, "is to be in process." Things that appear permanent and unmoving are really abstractions from basic reality. Though reality is a temporal process, it is not one, indivisible flow. Whitehead in his account of being, develops a novel form of atomism. Nevertheless, his units of reality are not bits of matter of scientific materialism or substance of classical metaphysics, but are events or momentary happenings. They differ from atoms of Democritus and Newton's in two ways, namely, in their content and in their relation to each other. To emphasize this, Whitehead discards the word atom because historically this term meant that the content of atom is hard, lifeless matter and that being hard, atoms never penetrated each other, and hence their relations to each other are always external. In place of atoms, Whitehead substituted the term "actual occasions" or "actual entities". Even God is to be understood in terms of this basic category. "God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space."[49] Actual entities then are:

> The final real things of which the world is made up comprise the flux of energy continuous throughout nature and are the fundamental building blocks of the universe: they are ontologically undifferentiated in essence, distinguished only in form or by the mode in which they appear.[50]

This is why Whitehead says there is only one genus of actual entities. In essence, "each actual occasion is in truth a process of activity." Unlike lifeless atoms,

Whitehead's actual entities "are chunks in life of nature." They never exist in isolation but intimately related to the whole field of life that throbs around them. Whereas atomistic materialism gives us a mechanical view of nature, Whitehead's actual occasions permits us to view nature as living organism. As such, whether we speak of God or "the most trivial puff of existence", there is the same principle of life in all things, for "actual entities are the final real things of which the world is made up."[51]

Unlike classical physics and metaphysics which insist on a continuous, homogeneous substance that remained the same as it underwent change, actual occasions do not exist they happen. The difference is that to merely exist implies no change, whereas to happen suggests a dynamic alteration.

Whitehead declares, in contrast to Democritian metaphysics, that there is no such thing as empty space: the entire "extensive continuum" is "filled" with actual occasions coming into being momentarily and then "perishing." Also, in contrast to the classical view, in which the basic elements were inert bits of matter externally related to one another, Whitehead's actual occasions are internally related to each other. Instead of the universe being analogous to a machine, it is now analogous to an organism. The elements of an "organic" universe actively "take account" of ("prehends") their neighbours in the same way that parts of the human body take account of other parts. This means that even the hydrogen atom is an organism in that the single proton takes account of the electron and vice versa. The atom is a miniature environment, an interrelated system, a "society" of actual occasions.

Whitehead uses 'concrescence' and 'prehension' to describe the nature and how actual entities relate with their environment and with one another. Concrescence is derived from Latin words that means "growing together" and "becoming concrete". It is used by Whitehead to describe how a new actual occasion emerges out of the immediate past and creates a new form out of the ingredients of its past experience. When the new form is fully realized, the new actual entity has achieved "satisfaction." However, nothing is static in the universe, and as soon as the present moment is achieved, it immediately gives itself over to its offspring, hence the creative urge within

everything to thrust itself into the future as a cause of further events. Then, while presenting itself as an objective datum for the next occasion, the event fades into the past and perishes. However, the past is never completely dead and gone, for it has made a difference in the universe and in this way everything that happens achieves what Whitehead calls "objective immortality."

Concrescence characterizes the life span of every temporal event, including the most trivial physical event as well as the moments within our own stream consciousness.[52] On the whole, Whitehead coined the term concrescence to refer to the "production of novel togetherness" resulting from the completed satisfaction of each occasion of experience.[53] By way of concrescence, a particular actual occasion's many prehensions of other occasions becomes one, thereby adding one more realized unity of experience to the ongoing creative advance of the cosmic community: "The many become one, and are increased by one."[54]

For Whitehead, prehending is pure activity; the basic way that actual occasions apprehend ("or take account of") one another. It may be understood as a process of seizing, absorbing, and synthesizing the elements of the surrounding into an internal unity or organized emotional pattern. That is why Whitehead says "To be an actual entity is to have self-interest. This self-interest is a feeling of self-valuation; it is an emotional one." Thus, feeling becomes the expression of an actual entity's subjectivity. This is because an actual entity is tantamount to an occasion because it is an instance-an "event," "stream," or "throb" of experience arising out of data[55] subsequently appropriating elements from its environment and making it part of its internal structure.

Whitehead's doctrine of "prehension," is drawn from a criticism of the great idealist philosopher, George Berkeley. As Whitehead states: For Berkeley's mind, I substitute a process of prehensive unification."[56] Prehension in order words, is a cosmic form of perception extrapolated from the data of human experience and consciousness.

However, it is important not to think of prehension resulting in an actual occasion "having" experience of other occasions, as though an occasion were "the unchanging subject of change."[57] This would inevitably lead back to the classical, bifurcated conception of mental subjects qualified by their private representations of supposedly public material objects. "If this be granted," argues Whitehead, "…there is no escape from solipsism."[58] It was only by arbitrary recourse to the goodness of an omnipotent God that Descartes was able to re-establish any meaningful epistemic connection between ideas in the soul and matters of fact in nature.

For the philosophy of organism, an actual occasion is not a pre-existent subject qualified by its representations of ready-made objects; rather, an occasion is better characterized as a dipolar "subject-superject."[59] The "subject" phase of a concrescing occasion emerges from the prehensions of antecedent occasions which it unifies, while the "superject" phase the occasion, having attained satisfaction as a unified drop of distinctly patterned experience, immediately perishes into "objective immortality," such that it can be prehended by subsequently concrescing actual occasions. Whitehead expresses the perpetual perishing of subjectivity into objective immortality in terms of his "principle of relativity," such that "it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.'"[60]

Actual occasions, then, are describable in two ways, as "being" and as "becoming." These ontological designations are not independent, since, according to Whitehead's correlative "principle of process," an occasion's "being" arises from its "becoming": "how an actual occasion becomes constitutes what that actual occasion is."[61] The description of an occasion according to its genetic "becoming" provides an account of the occasion's own subjective aim (its final cause), while the description according to its extensive "being" provides an account of its superjective effect as prehended by other occasions beyond itself (its efficient cause). By conceiving of the basic constituents of the world as unified prehensive processes of causal inheritance and conceptual anticipation, rather than static, isolated substances qualified by accidental predicates, Whitehead is able to preserve the unique identity of each individual

organism without exaggerating their separateness that continuity with the larger ecosystem of other organisms is broken.

Through his doctrine of actual occasions, Whitehead is able to show that nature is not inert or static substance, but rather a dynamic array of transactions constituted as actual agencies that respond to and express themselves in the flow of inter-relational activity that comprises all reality. Thus, this enables Whitehead to account for the relation of body and mind and for the presence of feeling and purpose in the universe.

Democritus had not satisfactorily described how it is possible to have sensation, feeling, thinking, purpose, and life in the universe consisting solely of lifeless material atoms. Nor could Descartes ever join together his two substances, thought and extension. Leibniz did recognize that from lifeless matter it was impossible to derive life, and so he described nature as consisting of monads, which though they resembled the atoms of Democritus in some ways, were thought by Leibniz to be individual "souls" or centres of energy. Although, the Leibnizian monad was somewhat more satisfactory concept than the atom of Democritus, Whitehead considered it inadequate. Leibniz had described the monad as "windowless", meaning thereby that each monad was completely closed or locked up within itself, that its relation to the other monads was purely external, that its behaviour was determined by a pre-established harmony, and although the monad was thought to undergo change, this change did not signify any truly novel process, no evolution, no creativity, but only running of its pre-established course.[52]

By contrast, Whitehead's actual entities have no permanent identity or history. They are always in the process of becoming. They feel the impact of other actual occasions and absorb them internally. In this process, actual occasion come into been, take on a determinate form or character and having become actual occasion, perish. To "perish" signifies that creativity of the universe moving on the next birth and that in this process an actual occasion loses its unique nature character but is preserved in the flow of the process. "Perishing", says Whitehead, "is what we mean by memory and

causality, that with the passage of time something of the past is preservation in the present."[63]

We do not ever experience a single isolated actual entity but only aggregates of these entities an aggregate of actual entities Whitehead calls either society or nexus in which the entities are united by their prehension. So prehension also describes how the elements of actual entities are related to each other and how these entities are further related to other entities. Nothing in the world is uncreated, in a sense, every occasion is abound or is related to the whole universe. Actual entities are brought together by the creative process into sets or societies or nexus.

Thus, for Whitehead, emotional feeling is the basic characteristics of concrete experience. Even in the language of physics it is appropriate, according to Whitehead, to speak of feeling, for physical feelings are the physicist's idea that energy is transferred. Both physical feelings and conceptual feelings are possessive, prehension, or internal relations of the elements of actual entities. The distinction between physical and conceptual feelings does not imply the old dualism of body and mind. It is of course meaningful to use the term body and mind but Whitehead insists that to assume that these terms have basic metaphysical difference as Descartes said existed between his terms, thought and extension is to commit again the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Both body and mind are for Whitehead societies or nexus−They are set of actual entities. The only concrete reality is an actual entity but actual entities can be organized into different kinds of societies such as body and mind. But in each case, the actual entities possess the same characterizations, namely the capacity for prehension, for feeling internal relation. Body and mind are both abstractions in the sense that their mode of existence, their reality is dependent upon the peculiar organization of the actual entities, hence body and mind are not permanently or ultimately different.[64] Whitehead was insistent that "The final facts are all alike, actual entities and all these are capable of being interconnected in a stream of experience."

4.4 Eternal Objects

One might ask at this point how Whitehead accounts for the underlying process of reality, the process of creativity, which brings actual entities into being and organises them into societies and preserves what to our experience appears as endurance of things. Here, Whitehead's thought displays a strong Platonic influence. "What makes an actual entity what it is," he says, "is that the entity has been stamped with a definitiveness of character by certain eternal objects."[65] These eternal objects or potentials resembling Plato's forms are uncreated and eternal, they are patterns and qualities, such as roundness or squareness, greenness or blueness, courage or cowardice. An actual occasion acquires a definite character because it selects these eternal objects and rejects others. Hence, an actual event is constituted by the togetherness of various eternal objects in some particular pattern.

In order words, according to Whitehead, eternal objects are possibilities which like Plato's form retain their identities independence of the flux of things. The relation between the eternal object and the actual entities is described as ingression, which means that once the actual entity has selected an eternal object, the latter ingresses, that is, stamps its character upon actual entities, whereas complex eternal objects give definiteness or statics of facts to societies or nexus.

Thus, Whitehead recognizes that "the interfusion of events" constituting cosmogenesis participates in eternity as much as time, being infected as much by the values of actual nature as by the ghostly traces of "colours, sounds, scents, [and] geometrical characters…required for nature and…not emergent from it."[66] In spite of this, only actuality has value, but in order for "actual value" to find its metaphysical definition, some reference to the adjacent possibilities provided by ideality is necessary. Each actual occasion of experience realizes itself as a complex unity of valued patterning; this patterning displays itself as a subjective harmonization of the prehended superjective values achieved in the occasion in question's causal past. The experiential achievement of some more or less complex unity of patterning is only felt as valuable to the occasion which realizes it because this occasion simultaneously feels, via the

divinely envisaged gradation of the infinite set of eternal objects as they are relevant to its unique situation, those definite possibilities which remain abstract because unrealized in its concrescence.

Each occasion becomes what it is by not being what it isn't. Here, Whitehead is able to avoid a dualism between actuality and ideality by showing how the realization of definite concrete values requires the ingression of what "is not" alongside the prehension of "what is." In this sense, the prehension of actuality and the ingression of possibility cannot be defined in isolation.[67] Each must require the other if a coherent account of both the solidarity and the disproportion of the universe is to be articulated. Eternal objects have a "twofold role," in that they both relate occasions to each other (allowing the creative many to become the one created universe) and unify occasions for themselves (allowing the one universe to become many again). The open-ended creative advance of the actual universe in this way depends on both conjunction and disjunction, both unification and differentiation.[68]

With the doctrines of actual entities and eternal objects Whitehead's philosophy of organism rejects the bifurcation of nature, as well as any type of arbitrary ontological dualism. Nonetheless, it must be admitted that the widespread acceptance of dualism during the modern period implies that, as an abstract scheme, it can prove elucidatory of the texture of experience in some instances. For instance, Whitehead criticizes Descartes' mind/matter dualism for its incoherence due to excessive abstraction, but adds that "[his] system obviously says something that is true."[69] Whitehead appropriates much from the modern natural philosophical tradition, all the while keeping in mind that "the chief error in philosophy is overstatement."[70] By way of his method of imaginative generalization, he is led to experimentally construct an alternative cosmological scheme that is ultimately rooted in creative process, rather than static substance, and whose fundamental categories are actual occasions, prehensions, and eternal objects, rather than minds, representations, and matter.

The dualistic Cartesian problematic is not thereby eliminated or explained away; rather, it is transformed.[71] The relationship between actual occasions and eternal

objects is no longer one of duality, where neither kind of entity requires the other in order to exist, but of polarity, such that the being of eternal objects cannot be grasped in abstraction from the becoming of actual occasions, or vice versa. Whitehead avoids the modern bifurcation of nature (which restricts experiential value only to the human sphere and relegates everything non-human to the status of "vacuous actuality") by recognizing that every organic occasion or ecosystem of occasions–whether it be an electron, a bacterial colony, a sequoia, a bottle-nosed dolphin, a human civilization, a star, or stellar society (a galaxy)–is constituted by both a physical pole inheriting the feelings of realized actual facts and a mental pole anticipatory of realizable eternal possibilities.

As for the special significance of the human sphere, the conscious mental pole of "high grade" organisms like Homo sapiens is said to be so advanced in degree that it appears also to become different in kind. Whitehead is able to preserve what is elucidatory in the binary theocosmic or cosmoanthropic formulations of reality while at the same time jettisoning the substantialist ontology that would draw them back into the modern bifurcation dissecting the living body of the cosmos straight down the middle.[72] The philosophy of organism avoids having to invoke incoherent accounts of the emergence of mind from matter, or value from vacuity, by recognizing that conscious human experience is only a special case of a more general, or cosmic, mode of experience. For Whitehead, to exist at all is already to experience, and to experience is to value: "Realization is…in itself the attainment of value…Aesthetic attainment is interwoven [with] the texture of realization."[73]

While the orthodox materialistic natural philosophy begins by assuming the two independently existing substances, mind and matter–where material objects are modified by external relations of locomotion, and mental subjects are modified by internal (or private) cogitations representative of external (or public) objects–Whitehead's philosophy of organism begins with "the analysis of process as the realization of events disposed in an interlocked community."[74] Actual occasions, as the final realities of which the universe is composed, are self-creating buds of experience, each one uniquely itself even while it remains internally related to every

other occasion in the creative community of the universe. Occasions are interrelated by way of the pattern of eternal objects characterizing for each of them the qualitative aspects of the other occasions in their community. Eternal objects "interpret [occasions], each to the other,"[75] such that they come to find themselves related to one another in an extended space-time continuum according to certain invariant geometric principles.

"The solidarity of the universe," writes Whitehead, "is based on the relational functioning of eternal objects."[76] As relational entities, eternal objects cannot themselves cause actual occasions, they can only characterize the how of prehension. "[Eternal objects] are adverbial, rather than substantive," according to Whiteheadian interpreter Steven Shaviro, in that "…they determine and express how actual [occasions] relate to one another, take one another up, and 'enter into each other's consitutions.'"[77] Each actual occasion is, in this sense, nothing but the multiplicity of prehensions of other occasions which it unifies. But in another sense, as a self-unifying creature, an occasion not only prehends and reiterates the realized spatiotemporal pattern of the settled past, it adds a new value (itself) to the ongoing evolution of the universe.

4.4.1 GOD

Before taking up our discussion of Whitehead's notion of God, it is good to note that his theological method is neither a *via negativa*, in which God's attributes are derived from the created world by negative inference, nor is it a *via analogia*, in which, for example, God's love is to its objects as our love is to its objects. Both of these methods result in equivocation and ultimately lead to the end of meaningful talk about God. Whitehead's theological method is *via eminentia* in which terms about the divine nature are used univocally. God is an actual entity just like any other, and therefore its being is defined by the same eternal objects as all other actual occasions. But since He is the most powerful being in the universe, he is able to fulfil "predicates" and express qualities in an eminent way.

Although many of the aspects of nature can be explained by the categories introduced thus far, Whitehead believes something is still missing. There must be a principle of order. If all actualities exercise some degree of freedom, their unbridled creativity would produce a tumult of random occurrences without any direction or coherence. For this reason, Whitehead introduced a version of the teleological argument (argument from design). The harmony in the world is explained by the activities of God. "The imminence of God gives reason for the belief that pure chaos is intrinsically impossible."[78] To achieve a definite form, the emerging actual occasion must draw on the real of possibilities (eternal objects). But possibilities are abstract and provide agency for introducing themselves into the actual world. God is the agency that mediates between the sphere of possibilities and the process of the world.

Whitehead's God is very different from the God of traditional theology. As noted previously, in assimilating Greek prejudice, traditional Christian theism held that God was radically different from the world, for he was thought to be completely independent, fully actualized, and, therefore unchanging. Whitehead, however, says that God has the same metaphysical principles as any other entity. "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[79]

4.5 The Nature of God

God's nature is dipolar consisting of two aspects: the primordial and consequent natures.

4.5.1 The Primordial Nature

As we have already seen, there must be eternal objects, otherwise the universe would have no permanent form or structure. But eternal objects cannot simply be free-floating forms that accidentally find expression here or there. There must be an entity that is not only the actual locus for these eternal possibilities, but that is also the agent that orders the eternal objects and places them in a definite relationship to one

another. This cosmic ordering agent is God and the aspect of God which performs this function is called God's "primordial nature"

This aspect of God is eternal, fully complete, unchanging, and the ground of all possibilities, the realm of eternal objects, exists in the sense that it is comprehended by God as part of his nature. Hence, God "…does not create eternal objects; for his nature requires them in the same degree that they require him."[80]

4.5.2 The Consequent Nature of God

But Whitehead says that if the primordial aspect was the whole of God's nature, then he would be static, wholly apart from the world, and unable to value, to love, or to interact creatively with a changing world. Classical Christian theism would agree that the world is in process and that God relates to it, but at the same time it would hold onto God's immutability and independence. According to Whitehead, however, this is a contradiction, for to relate to something is to be affected by it. Hence, in knowing the world and loving it, God is affected by it and changes as it changes. Hence, the God of Whitehead is immanent within the world's process and intimate with it. This temporal, relative, dependent, and changing aspect of God is what Whitehead calls God's consequent nature.

To say that God has an unchanging primordial nature and changing consequent nature is not to say that God is divided into parts. The fact is to explain that God and the world are interactive which means that "it is as true to say that God creates the world, as that the world creates God."[81]

Whitehead says that the consequent nature of God is enriched by his prehensions of the temporal world. He is the repository of all value achieved in the world. No event is ever totally lost even though it perishes into the past, for every event achieves "objective immortality" by contributing to God's being. "The consequent nature of God is his judgement on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life."[82]

In the main, the primordial nature is one aspect of the divine nature in process theism which is most compatible with traditional theology. It represents simply a version of how Augustine took Plato's eternal forms as "ideas" in the divine mind. Plato separated the realm of forms from the creative agent (the demiurge). Although Whitehead's God differs from other actual occasions in that it is an everlasting actual entity (it cannot be an "occasion" unless it perishes), yet it is like all other AOs in that it is "dipolar." It has "mental" pole and a "physical" pole. The mental pole of the divine entity is the primordial nature and its physical pole is the "consequent nature."

It is here that Whitehead's God breaks with tradition. For traditional theology, following Plato and Aristotle, God essentially takes over the characteristics of the Parmenidian one. God is an absolute unity, timeless, motionless, immutable, and impassive. St. Anselm expresses this well: "Thou art compassionate in terms of our experience and not compassionate in terms of thy being."[83] The orthodox God is externally related to his creation, because nothing which happens in the universe can affect his being−he is complete in himself. By contrast Whitehead's God, by virtue of the consequent nature, participates fully and completely in the actuality of the universe. Furthermore, the consequent nature serves as a divine depository for everything that happens. Therefore the consequent nature of God is continually in process, it grows and experiences world as we experience it in all of its value beauty as well as disvalue and evil. Like a great artist God harmonizes all disvalue according to the Platonic ideals of the One, the Good, and the Beautiful.

Hence for Whitehead, God is transcendent, but not in the radical way envisioned by classical theism. The primordial nature of God transcends the world in the same way that we, in our mental activities, transcend our bodies and surroundings. Completing the analogy, the consequent nature of God is always immanent: the universe is essentially the body of God. Rem B. Edwards phrases this idea well:

> Hartshorne conjectures that we human beings are related to God in something like the way the cells of our bodies are related to us. Our cells are themselves localized units of feeling with some

> measure of autonomy. We cannot wilfully control their actions in most cases, and they cannot wilfully control our actions. But the whole and the parts do interact and influence one another. As the localized cells of my body are injured and suffer, I suffer, and I enjoy their well-being....We are all members of the body of God, autonomous parts of that divine whole in whom we live and move and have our being....[84]

Strictly speaking, Whitehead's view is not theism, for he denies that God is transcendent to the world. "God is not before all creation, but with all creation."[85] Nor is his view pantheism−the claim that God and the world are identical. In contrast to pantheism, Whitehead's God is an independent entity that interacts with the world. His philosophy is a metaphysics of real individuals and therefore definitely precludes the dissolution of true individuality that occurs in pantheistic systems. Hartshorne uses the term "panentheism" to stake out a middle path between classical theism and pantheism. This is the view that God include the world in his being (since he is affected by every event within it) at the same time that he is more than the events in the world (God has his own unique aims and actions). Thus, we can consider the world "God's body."

4.6 God and the World

Whitehead provides a unique account of how God causally influences the world. A key feature of Whitehead's position is the conviction that God cannot violate the integrity or freedom of other entities. He cannot impose the eternal objects upon actual entities, for then every occasion's actions would simply be God's action. This is because process God shares the same power source with finite beings. He does not have absolute coercive power but only has persuasive power.

Making God an internal agent, one subject to the same cosmic experience as all other actual occasions, leads Whitehead to break with orthodox Christianity on many points: God is limited in power and God suffers. This is the "patripassianism" (lit. "father suffers") that was condemned by the early Church. But patripassian Whitehead insists

that God "is the great companion−the fellow−sufferer who understands."[85] For Whitehead God is not a supranatural being beyond space and time, not a distant and impassive absolute, ontologically cut off from the world.

Whitehead thus, proposes that instead of controlling events through brute force, God allows the world to feel his influence through persuasion. God presents these possibilities as lure of what might be. Persuasion, not compulsion characterizes his creative activity. "He is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness."[84]

As an actual entity is being formed, God presents to it those possibilities or eternal objects that are relevant to its situation and that will maximize the realization of its potential. In this way, there is both order and spontaneity in the changing world as a result of God selecting and presenting possibilities for each entity to realize. In doing so, each emerging actual occasion "…receives that initial aim from which its self-causation starts."[85]

That God always presents relevant possibilities is no guarantee that actual entities will select them. When God's persuasive lure is accepted, the result is order, harmony and novel advance. When it is rejected, the result is discord and evil. God is the ultimate principle striving towards actualizing of all relevant all relevant possibilities. What we experience as the stable order in the world and in our intuition of permanence rightness of things shows forth God's "consequent nature". "God's role" says Whitehead "lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. He does not create the World, he saves it; or more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty and goodness.[86]

Although Whitehead was not a confessing Christian, he believed that the best expression of divine persuasion was found in the life and teachings of Jesus.

> The brief Galilean vision of humility flickered throughout the ages, uncertainly....But the deeper idolatry, of fashioning God in the image of the

> Egyptian, Persian, and Roman imperial rulers was retained. The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar.[87]

Whitehead believes that the traditional idea of divine power reflects a worship of raw power, the power of the state and of the authoritarian father.

When this Whiteheadian idea of God's power is juxtaposed with the trilemma that make up the problem of evil, we begin to catch a glimpse of his solution to the problem. It is neither that evil does not exists nor that God lacks in benevolence to put an end to evil. It is simply that God does not have the power to stop evil. For unlike in traditional theism where our God is in heaven and does whatever he wants, Whitehead's God is one with other actual occasions and therefore does not have the power to determine or control their individual decisions. But this does not mean that God stands aloof to the suffering of his creatures. For Whitehead, he is not just a fellow suffer but we suffer in a very limited way compared to the suffering of God's consequent nature, which must participate in everything that happens in the universe.

> God experiences every actuality for what it can be - its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy - woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve in individual joy, in individual sorrow, in the introduction of needed contrast, is yet saved by its relation to the completed whole.[88]

P. N. Gouda summarizes the relationship of Whitehead's God with regards to other actual occasions:

> Whatever we think about God, we think in images. People have often experienced God as far removed from their trials because they imagined him/she as the heavenly ruler who from his infinite splendour above looked down on us, poor mortals below. They felt God was like a wealthy pit-owner in London who never even bothered visiting his mines in Wales, let alone go down into the pit to see, first hand, what the miners had to endure 2000 feet below ground. We can

> now revise that image and replace it with another. God is much more like Alexander the Great, who was not only a good general, but who always personally led his troops into battle. When a fortress needed to be stormed, Alexander pressed forward among the front line, scaling the walls with them. His soldiers adored him for that reason. `He really knows our life', they would say. `He shares our hardships.' It was in assaulting the city of Multan in 326 BC that Alexander was pierced in the side by a javelin. The wound never properly healed. He died two years later.[89]

Whitehead's idea of divine foreknowledge also differs remarkably from traditional view. God's knowledge is of temporal events, except that this again is an eminent knowledge based on a universal comprehension of everything that happens. But like human beings, God does not know the future. God knows it as possible in a way that is beyond us, but true knowledge is always based on actual states of affairs. For Whitehead then, God is omniscient in the full sense that God knows all that can be

known. Process thinker Lewis S. Ford explains:

> God knows all there is to know, but if the future is genuinely open-ended, awaiting contingent, creaturely actualization, it is not yet `there' to be known. God knows all actualities as actual and all possibilities as possible, but to `know' a future possibility as if it were already actual would be to know something which is not the case and this would be to know it falsely.[90]

Augustine as we saw, believed that God is omnipresence. The process God, on the other hand, is omniscient but not omnipresence. He knows all there is to know but will not know the future until it is actualized. It is therefore Whitehead's opinion that traditional ideas of divine foreknowledge equivocates about the meaning of knowledge and close off the freedom of the future as something not yet happened.[91] In connection to this, Rem B. Edwards' critique of Augustine is worth quoting:

> Even from a divine point of view, the notion of the simultaneity of past, present, and future is nonsense....

> What is the difference between saying that God perceives the future as present and saying that God perceives the square as round?[92]

By and large, what is obvious from the foregoing is that contrary to traditional theism with idea of God that is not only incompatible with the latest discoveries in science and above all with our individual and collective experience of suffering, Whitehead constructed an idea of God that does not only factor into the latest findings of science but that offers the most satisfactory explanation to the problem of evil.

4.7 The Nature of Evil

Every metaphysical system that postulates God's existence must come to terms with the problem of evil. Contrary to Augustine and Irenaeus, Whitehead does not try to explain the problem away by saying that evil is only "apparent" or that it is always a stepping-stone on the way to a greater good. For him, evil is an irreducible real presence in the world.

In *Religion in the Making*, Whitehead examines the phenomena in which evil appears; "…evil is exhibited in physical suffering, mental suffering, and loss of the higher experience in favour of the lower experience."[93] He further states that we must focus on the suffering of sentient being. Thus, Whitehead has an affective notion of evil: evil is found in the painful experiences or experiences of loss of sentient beings. While some approaches to the problem of evil distinguish between natural and moral evils, Whitehead argues that while evil is experienced with all the varied modalities of being, this does not mean that there is a different type of evil for every modality. Furthermore, he asserts that while evil is only found in the phenomena of suffering, the latter is not predicated on any notion of a Metaphysical or primordial evil, such that the world is evil due to its temporal and finite nature, or that there is destructive agency involved etc. Likewise, he rejects the notion of evil as privation of the good. Evil is real, tangible, and affective because human suffering is real.

However, if evil is real but does not exists as an actual occasion which is the fundamental unit of existence, as Whitehead argues, the question could be asked, what

actually constitute evil, what is its nature? According to Whitehead, God is continually enticing the world to fulfil his purpose, which always involves producing greatest intensity of enjoyment, value and harmony. However, as discussed, finite actualities are not compelled to conform to his will. Thus, each entity, from a human being to a biological cell, has the freedom to resist God's persuasion and can fail to conform to his aims. "So far as the conformity is incomplete the result is destruction and thus, there is evil in the world."[93]

Here, Whitehead distinguishes between two species of destruction, chaotic discord, and dominance of discord which leads to complete destruction. According to Whitehead some degree of discord is necessary for the introduction of change and novelty in the world. For this purpose destructive discord is necessary. If creation did not involve change, the world would be static and not dynamic. This chaotic discord is not evil in itself: rather evil occurs only if there is a dominance of discord. The resultant destruction is evil in the ultimate sense. The problem is, a greater capacity for good is always correlated with a greater capacity for evil. If there were no conscious beings, there would be no suffering in the world. However, such a world would be of minimal value compared to ours. When God seeks to maximize the good by supporting his creatures' capacity for freedom and creativity, he risks that they will use their power to resist his desire for harmony.

Whitehead proposes that God in his primordial activity somehow reconciles all things for the better. He calls this the "subjective aim of God." In this role God is the care-taker of the temporal world that picks up the pieces of human tragedy from the wreckage of the world that is consequent upon chaotic discord. In the larger scheme of things, God is able to salvage the world and keep it harmonious. Whitehead states:

> The wisdom of the subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system – its sufferings, its sorrows, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy – woven by rightness of feeling into the harmony of the universal feeling, which is always

> immediate, always many, always one, always with novel advance, moving onward and never perishing.[94]

In other words, God is not the passive spectator of the world, he is a God in process. "God is the great companions−the fellow sufferer who understands."[95] He is actively involved in his creation and is working with us to increase both his and our fullest satisfaction. However, "…there is no totality which is the harmony of all perfection."[96] There is always more for God and us to do, and there will always be values that have not yet been realized.

One of the greatest advantages of process theology is that by revising the concepts of divine power and knowledge, two of the most inveterate problems in the philosophy of religion, freedom and evil, can be solved on a rational basis. Each actual occasion is *causa sui* and therefore determines itself within the limits set by the initial aim. Most actual occasions fall short of achieving the ideal that God sets for it, and it is in this falling short that the basic ontological meaning of evil is to be found. The ethical implications of the general failure of ideal satisfaction are found of course only in human beings, who are offered the most freedom to choose, but more importantly, are aware of the choices they make. As Cobb states: "Every agent is free but not every agent has consciousness.[97]

In contrast to traditional theology, in which God's will is conceived as truly and definitely being done, Whitehead's persuasive God can only urge his creature to fulfil the conditions of creative love. To put it another way, Whitehead agrees with the existentialists that human existence precedes any preordained human essence, and therefore the future is open for what Whitehead called the "creative advance" into new forms of experience and human interaction.

Nevertheless, human freedom for Whitehead is not as radical as that which we find in existentialism. It is not *ex nihilo* and not hostile to the past nor to natural and social limits. We called the process doctrine of free-will a "teleological compatibilism," a view which holds that determinism and free-will are compatible if we see efficient

causation as an incarnation of the cause in an effect which is a self-determining agent. Each concrescing actual occasion is inescapably a product of its past and surroundings, but it is also able to synthesize that data according to a *telos* of its own.

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CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARING AUGUSTINE'S AND WHITEHEAD'S THEODICIES

The preceding chapter and the one before it presented Augustine and Whitehead's theodicies. In the course of that presentation, especially in Chapter Four, limited comparison is made between Augustine and Whitehead's concepts of God and evil. That comparison was necessitated by the technical nature of Whitehead's ideas which we explained could not be understood outside the context of the problems Whitehead was trying to solve.

This initial but limited comparison notwithstanding (because this dissertation is on Augustine and Whitehead), the present chapter offers a deeper and more detailed comparison between the two scholars. Nevertheless, in order to keep the dissertation within a reasonable scope, the comparison we are about to undertake does not detail all the areas where Augustine and Whitehead are comparable. The focus is on three major areas which do not only particularly concern this dissertation but which are also where we think Augustine and Whitehead's theodicies share remarkable framework for comparison. The first area of comparison concerns what scholars have come to call free will theodicy. Augustine and Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil fall within this category and is a good place to begin the comparison. The second area is the view of the two scholars on the nature of God, and the third area concerns their understanding of God's power.

The remaining part of the chapter cumulatively compares these three ideas in the two scholars. Once again, the general aim of the chapter is to demonstrate that Whitehead presents a solution to the problem of evil that is emotionally more satisfying and logically more coherent than the Augustine inspired Judeo-Christian solution.

5.1. Free Will Theodicy

Before discussing free will theodicy and the kindred spirit between Augustine and Whitehead on the concept, let us first underscore that we are using Augustine here as a generic concept. That is, when we say Augustine we are talking of the orthodox Christian response to the problem of evil. The reason for this as already explained in

Chapter One, is that although the problem of evil does not originate with him but Augustine's resolution has become authoritative so much so that, all Christian answers to the problem of evil (With just few exceptions) after him have come to be regarded as Augustinian.

Back to free will theodicy. As we see in our discussion of the two scholars, both Augustine and Whitehead see evil, especially the moral evil of human wickedness as a result of human or actual occasion's free will. To be a person or an actual occasion, according to the two scholars, is to be a finite centre of freedom, a (relatively) self-directing agent responsible for one's own decisions. This involves being free to act wrongly as well as rightly. There can therefore be no certainty in advance that a genuinely free moral agent will never choose amiss. Thus, for Augustine as well as for Whitehead, the possibility of wrongdoing is logically inseparable from the creation or existence of finite persons, and to say that God should not have created beings who might sin amounts to saying that God should not have created at all.

In other words, Augustine and Whitehead agree that God is not the originator of evil. Evil occurs in the world because worldly entities have freedom to choose from multiple options that involves the possibility of choosing wrongly. However, the two scholars are miles apart in their understanding of how the freedom of human beings or actual occasions come about. How they differ on this is contained in their difference concepts of the nature and power of God. We shall take and discuss these items in turns.

5.2. Comparing The Nature of God in Augustine and Whitehead

As noted above, both Augustine and Whitehead agree that worldly entities enjoy free will and that this freedom is the source of evil. They disagree on how to explain the nature and origin of this free will. Now, there are two possible explanations. It is either God is limited so that he cannot control the choices that individual worldly entities make or that God is all powerful and the source of everything in which case actual occasions cannot be free unless God wants them to be.

Augustine's solution and that of the tradition he has come to represent is the second option. For Augustine then, God is not just all powerful but he is supremely the source of everything that is. In order words, according to the main Christian tradition, God is the creator and sustainer of the entire universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), and God's power over the creation is accordingly unlimited. However, in order to allow for the existence and growth of free human beings, God withholds the exercise of unlimited divine power, thereby forming an autonomous creaturely realm within which God acts non-coercively, seeking the creatures' free responses.

Whitehead concedes that God acts non-coercively, by "persuasion" and "lure," but in contrast to the notion of divine self-limitation, he holds that God's exercise of persuasive rather than controlling power is necessitated by the ultimate metaphysical structure of reality. God is subject to the limitations imposed by the basic laws of the universe, for God has not created the universe *ex nihilo*, thereby establishing its structure, but rather the universe is an uncreated process which includes the deity. The laws that control the universe are laws of absolute generality, such that no alternative to them is conceivable; as such they fall outside the scope even of the divine will. Accordingly, as one process philosopher puts it: "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."[1]

It is particularly on this idea of the nature of God that Whitehead and Augustine disagree. And it is especially on it that Whitehead criticises Augustine and traditional theism. Augustine's God, as Whitehead represents Him, is "sheer absolute perfection."[2] He is defined as "…completeness or maximality of value, such that nothing conceivably could be added to it."[3] He is the "pure actuality," which contains no potency whatsoever. He is the "cause of all," "which is in no aspect of its being the effect of any."[4] He is the "changeless," which is in no aspect changing;[5] the "static," which is in no aspect dynamic.[6] the independent, which is in no aspect dependent, the one which is in no aspect many. In brief, He is the all perfect, infinite, immutable, transcendent, self-subsistent, "static Absolute."

These Augustinian attributes of God, Whitehead believes, are arrived at by abstraction, a process which is "…nothing else than the omission of part of the truth,:[7] The notion of complete or maximum perfection, for example, cannot be conceived except by abstracting from, or omitting from consideration "all mutual exclusiveness' among values," and also "every aspect of process."[8] For it is evident that perfections of diverse types are discordant. The perfection of a Gothic Cathedral, for example, is not the perfection of a nightingale. Since, then, "…there are possibilities of harmony which produce evil in joint realization, or are incapable of such conjunction,"[9] there can be no "totality which is, the harmony of all perfections."[10] It is also evident that God and the whole are constantly evolving, and perfections which are incompatible in one set of circumstances may occur together in a later stage of process.[11] Hence at no epoch in the creative advance may God be "absolute perfection."

Another reason advanced by Whitehead for rejecting the attributes of infinite perfection in God is that finite good could not exist if there were any being which is the "infinitude of all perfection." For to affirm the existence of an infinite good external to and distinct from the world, and at the same time, to affirm the existence of finite good, is a patent contradiction.[12] It is conceived by abstracting from consideration the interrelatedness of all things, including God.

A similar abstractedness, or one-sided view of reality is involved in the Thomistic concept of God as the "immutable" being and as "pure actuality." Immutability omits activity. It is the extreme notion of being as static in opposition to being as dynamic. Dynamic is the qualification "…which has been most sadly lacking in the tradition."[13] "Pure actuality" is one-sided for it omits potentiality. That it cannot be ascribed to God is clear from the consideration that potentiality could not exist if there were any being who was "pure actuality.[14] Also, since God has not produced all the effects He could produce, He contains potentiality.[15]

The concept of God as wholly independent of the world, as a "…cause of all," "which is in no aspect of its being the effect of any" is another idea arrived at by abstraction, or omitting part of the truth.[16] Every actual entity is both cause and effect. Further,

there can be no cause without an effect. Again, "no God is conceivable who would not depend for part of his value on the actions of creatures." Also, "the doctrine of radical and complete independence of God from the world represents an extreme position," the opposite of which is the doctrine of "his complete identity with it."[17] But extreme positions never represent the truth. "There is no entity, not even God, which requires nothing but itself in order to exist."[18]

Such are Whitehead's reasons for rejecting the Augustinian conception of God. Also, Whitehead asserts that all of the attributes of the Augustinian God represent mere abstractions, similar to the ideas in Plato's realm of forms. Thus Whitehead affirms:

> The simplest doctrine about types of being is that some extreme type exists independently of the rest of things. For example, Greek philosophers, and in particular, Plato, seem to have held this doctrine in respect of qualitative abstractions, such as number, geometrical relations, moral characteristics, and the qualitative disclosures of the higher sense perceptions. Later, it transformed the Hebraic elements in Christian theology. This notion of the value of timeless forms leads to rhetorical question-begging phrases, such as 'self-sustaining,' 'completely real' 'perfection.'[19]

The notions, of immutability and self-subsistence, in Whitehead's view, were derived from the Greek notion of mathematical forms. "Each number, each ratio, each geometric form exhibited a static attainment. These ideal forms are motionless and self-sufficient." Accordingly, ultimate reality was conceived in the guise of a "static Absolute." And "the static Absolute has been passed over to philosophic theology, as a primary presupposition."[20] Augustinians, then influenced by the Greeks, have set up in the place of the concrete God, a false abstraction. In Whitehead's words, they have fallen into the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" – "the error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete." [21]

Another reason given by Whitehead for rejecting the traditional notion of God is that, in his view, it is based on an erroneous science and an erroneous cosmology. He asserts:

> The phrase, Prime Mover, warns us that Aristotle's thought was enmeshed in the details of an erroneous physics and an erroneous cosmology. Today we repudiate the Aristotelian physics and the Aristotelian cosmology. In the place of Aristotle's God as Prime Mover, we require God as the Principle of Concretion.[22]

The erroneous theory of cosmology which regards the laws of nature as imposed, is, according to Whitehead the basis of the traditional concept of God as First Cause.

> [The theory which conceives the laws directing the universe as imposed] requires a transcendent God as imposer. God made his appearance in religion under the frigid title of First Cause, and was appropriately worshipped in white-washed churches.[23]

An erroneous theory of science, combined with Christian theology, combined with ancient despotism, produced the classical concept of God, according to Whitehead.

> The notion of God as 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle. The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favourite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys, is the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and of Mohametanism. The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar.[24]

Whitehead therefore calls for a change in the traditional notion of God in line with the new scientific advance. Science suggests a cosmology and whatever suggests a cosmology suggests a religion.[25] "The great point to be kept in mind is that normally an advance in science will show that statements of various religious beliefs require

some sort of modification.''[26] And religion should learn to "…change face in the same spirit as does science."[27] "In the origin of civilized religion, Gods are like Dictators," Whitehead tells us. When the religious thought of the ancient world from Mesopotamia to Palestine and from Palestine to Egypt, required terms to express that ultimate unity of direction in the universe they could find no better way to express themselves than by borrowing the characteristics of the touchy, vain, imperious tyrants who ruled the empires of the world."[28] But "the old phraseology is at variance with the psychology of modern civilizations.[29] Accordingly, it is Whitehead's belief, which a *new* idea of God founded upon the new physics and upon the new democracies must be given to twentieth-century mankind.

In the foregoing presentation, Whitehead is contesting a number of claims in traditional theism. One of such claims regards the notion of creation *ex nihilo*, as going hand-in-hand with the idea that the relations between God and the world are one-way relations. God creates, but the creatures lack all creative power, the one wholly uncreated, the other wholly uncreative. It is not within the ability of any creature, according to this view, to make a difference to God. Aquinas's way of expressing this asymmetry is to say that the relation from God to the creatures is real (for it makes a difference, all the difference, to them) whereas the relation from the creatures to God is rational, or in the mind only (for the existence of the creatures makes no difference to the being of God).[30] Aquinas borrows, and places in a Christian context, Aristotle's terms of "pure act" and "unmoved mover" to apply to God. To say that God is pure act is to say that anything God could be, God already is—there is no potentiality in God for any type of change. To say that God is the unmoved mover is to say that the divine moves others but is unmoved by another—this includes the idea that God is impassible, literally, without feeling or emotion.

For Whitehead, the denial of real relations in God renders classical theism paradoxical to the point of incoherence. According to classical theism, God has perfect knowledge of a contingent and changing world, yet nothing in God could be other than it is. The one condition, however, contradicts the other. If any event is contingent then it could be otherwise—for example, this bird at this place and time is singing rather than

sleeping; but if the event could be otherwise, then God's knowledge of the event could be otherwise—knowing this bird at this place and time as singing rather than as sleeping. The contingency implied for God's knowing is not that God might have been ignorant of something but that the thing that God knows might have been different. An infallible knower necessarily knows whatever exists; it does not follow, however, that what exists is necessary unless one adds the premise, taken from classical theism, that nothing in God could be other than it is. Whitehead jettisons the premise that there is nothing contingent in God.

The denial of real relations in God also has paradoxical consequences for the concept of divine goodness. If God is unaffected by the creatures, then God is impassible, not moved by their suffering. Anselm, in *Proslogion* chapter VIII, asks how God can be compassionate towards the creatures without feeling sympathy for them. His answer—in effect a kind of theological behaviourism)—is that the creatures feel the effects of divine compassion but that God feels nothing.[31] This leaves unanswered how non-sympathetic compassion is possible. Divine love is more than beneficence; it includes sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of the beloved. This idea is expressed in Whitehead's depiction of God as "the great companion—the fellow-sufferer who understands."[32] Hartshorne points out that Anselm's God can give us "…everything except the right to believe that there is one who, with infinitely subtle and appropriate sensitivity, rejoices in all our joys and sorrows in all our sorrows."[33]

Perhaps the most disastrous consequences of the denial of real relations in God, as far as Whitehead is concerned, are the problems that it poses for free will and creaturely suffering. The creative or causal relation flows one way only, from God *to* the world. The world and its creatures are products of a unilateral divine decision that things should be one way rather than another. Whitehead counters that multiple freedom (whether between God and the creatures or among the creatures) implies the possibility of wills coming into conflict or being in harmony. Thus, "risk and opportunity go together, not because God chooses to have it so, but because opportunity without risk is meaningless or contradictory. If this is true, then it must be possible for the will of the creatures to be at cross purposes with the divine will.

We have already seen that Augustine and Whitehead agree that God wills the good of the creatures. Human beings, however, do not always will their own good, or the good of other people. In those cases, on the Augustinian view, God brings it about that people freely decide not to will the good of others. Whitehead argues that this makes God responsible for evil and suffering in a way that contradicts divine goodness. On the Augustinian view, for example, the crimes that disfigure human history are the fault of human beings, but they are also God's doing.

Classical theists are not without responses to these criticisms. One well-known reply, used by Augustine is to invoke the distinction between divine permission and divine causation of human wickedness and suffering. On this view, the evil in the world is permitted by God in order to bring about a greater good. For example, the Exultet of the Easter Vigil, sometimes ascribed to Ambrose of Milan, speaks of the sin of Adam and Eve as a blessed fault (*O felix culpa!*) that made possible the sacrificial death of Christ. Whitehead's contention on this is that there can be no distinction between permitting and causing in a being that creates the universe *ex nihilo*. On the principles of classical theism, whatever is divinely "permitted" is also divinely created to be as it is. Thus, on Whitehead's view, the idea that God allows human decisions to occur which conflict with the divine purpose is no more meaningful than saying that God allows the outcome of a game to be decided by chance, by a roll of the dice, but that God loads the dice. Albert Einstein is reported to have said that God does not play dice with the universe. Although he was not a classical theist, his view on this issue is in accord with that philosophy.

When we say that the Augustinian view denies relativity in God, one might suppose that the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation of God in Christ would temper disbelief in divine relativity. The trend, however, was to argue that these doctrines do not conflict with the denial of real relations in God. Claims of revealed truth aside, the core doctrine has been that God, to be God, must be in all respects absolute and in no respects relative. As goes the contrast between absolute and relative, so go other metaphysical contrasts. Augustinians traditionally held that God is in all respects creator, active, infinite, eternal, necessary, independent, immutable,

and impassible and in no respects created, passive, finite, temporal, contingent, dependent, mutable, or passible. This view can be interpreted either as a doctrine about the nature of God or as a thesis about the parameters of responsible discourse about God.

Whitehead as we have seen complains that, on either interpretation, traditional theology is guilty of a "monopolar prejudice," placing God (or talk about God) on one side of polar contrasts and the world on the other. It is *monopolar* insofar as deity is characterized by only one side of each pair of contrasts; it is prejudicial insofar as it holds to the invidious nature of the contrasts. One pole of each contrary is regarded as more excellent than the other, so that the supremely excellent being cannot be described by the other and inferior pole.

Whitehead is not persuaded that it is best to signify God by only one pair of the metaphysical contraries. If one is willing to concede that God should not be conceived as immutable in the bad ways that creatures are unchanging, why may not God be conceived as changeable in the good ways that creatures are, with the proviso that God's excellence necessarily surpasses all else? It is Whitehead's believe that ordinary language provides scanty support for and abundant evidence against the superiority of one pole over the other. We have already seen that Whitehead finds positive value in God's love being active as well as passive; it is as important that God wills the good of the creatures as that God is affected by their joy and suffering. Here is how one of Whitehead's disciple summarises it:

> The venerable dogma, 'agent is superior to patient', is not derived from the study of knowledge. Indeed, it is not derived from any careful examination of ordinary cases. To speak is to be agent, to listen is to be patient, and those who want to show their superiority by speaking without listening are not trustworthy authorities in the theory of value.[35]

The point here is that the pairs of metaphysical contraries are not related as superior to inferior, but that there are admirable and deficient manifestations of both sides. For example, rather than saying that God is in all respects active and in no respects

passive, the alternative is to say that God is active in some respects and passive in other respects, each in uniquely excellent ways. In other words, it is more meaningful to see God as the supreme embodiment of each pair of metaphysical contraries. The most elegant statement of dual transcendence is in the closing pages of *Process and Reality*, which we have already quoted reads like a litany:

> It is as true to say that God is permanent and the world fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God.[36]

5.3. Divine Power and the Problem of Evil

The idea Whitehead has been criticising and the idea which shows a remarkable difference between him and Augustine in our discussion so far is the idea of attributing omnipotence or almightiness to God. His central contention is that the problem of evil is aggravated by this flawed accounts of omnipotence commonly assumed by Augustine and the theists after him. Accordingly, Whitehead remarks that some medieval and modern philosophers got into the unfortunate habit of paying God "metaphysical compliments"—that is to say, attributing properties to God that seem to make the divine more worthy of devotion but that are contrary to sound metaphysical reasoning.[37]

In line with Whitehead, Griffin, warns against what he calls "the omnipotence fallacy." This is the fallacy of assuming that if a state of affairs is logically possible—that is, its description involves no contradiction—then an omnipotent being could single-handedly bring it about.[38] Griffin represents Whitehead's position in considering it a fallacy, for it is Whitehead's contention that there are logically

possible states of affairs that no being, including God, could bring about by itself. For example, a contractual agreement between two individuals or parties is impossible unless each agrees to keep the conditions of the contract. This is expressed colloquially in English by saying, "It takes two to tango." The example of making contracts is especially relevant since it is a theme in Jewish Scripture that God enters into numerous covenants with the creatures. The emphasis is invariably on the divine initiative in making the covenants and on God's reliability in keeping a promise; nevertheless, when "covenant" is not simply shorthand for God's promises, the agreements are two-sided affairs, including God's blessings and demands and human obligations. Arguably, the logic of contracts, agreements, and covenants, does not change when one of the parties is divine. These examples are evidence that there are logically possible states of affairs that require something more than the decisions of God.

Whitehead's view on this can be presented as follows. Suppose *X* and *Y* are agents who make decisions *A* and *B*, respectively. The conjunction, *AB*, is something that neither *X* nor *Y*, individually, decided, *even if one of the agents is God*. Suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that this reasoning does not apply in the divine case. According to this view, if *X* is God, then it is possible for *X* to decide not only *A*, but also *AB*. We can imagine that *A* represents God loving an individual and *B* represents the individual freely accepting God's love. If God decides *AB* then God must also bring it about that *B*, that the individual freely accepts God's love, for this is part of *AB*. Whitehead is of the opinion that this view divorces the concept of decision making from any meaningful connection with lived experience.

Numerous analogies have been discussed in the literature for how free creatures might be related to a deity that makes their decisions—the creatures as God's marionettes; as androids programmed by God; as subjects hypnotized by God; as objects of God's dreaming; as characters in God's novel. Each analogy faces the dilemma that either the decisions of the person are not fully determined (e.g., the hypnotism case) or the person is not an actual individual (e.g., the fictional character case). In ordinary language, an individual that tries to control a relationship is called manipulative,

overbearing, or colloquially, “a control freak.” Doubtless, it was considering this kind of analogy that led Whitehead speaks of the idolatry of fashioning God in the image of imperial rulers: “The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar.”[39]

The denial that an individual’s free decisions can be totally determined by another is what is behind the slogan—found in Whitehead—that God acts by persuasion rather than by coercion. Whitehead attributes this idea to Plato’s later thought, in the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*, and calls it, “one of the greatest intellectual discoveries in the history of religion.”[40] “Coercion,” in the sense intended by the slogan, is the ability of one actual being to unilaterally bring about the decision of another actual being. Contrary to Augustine who holds that God wields this type of power, Whitehead believes that no individual possesses this ability.

It is basically on this ground that Whitehead’s solution to the problem of evil is different from Augustine’s solution. For while both scholars believe that God is good and that worldly entities enjoy freedom to make their choices, Whitehead disagrees with Augustine that God has the supreme power to impose his will in the lives of temporal actual occasions. In order words, while Augustinians in effect, have continue to fault Whitehead for not attributing to God the power to prevent gratuitous suffering. Augustinians on the other hand, attribute this power to God but are obliged to argue that God is not at fault for not using it or for using it in ways that we find utterly baffling.

The question then is which of these two Gods are more emotionally satisfying and logically consistent with our experiences: is it Augustine’s God who has all the power in the world but would not use it even in the face of unimaginable human suffering or Whitehead’s God who though limited in power still does not abandon his own but suffers with them while ultimately working to remedy to situation?

Endnotes

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CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In the build up to this final chapter, we have consistently underscored the difficulties scholars face in understanding Whitehead, particularly the way he defines evil and the attributes of God in his philosophy of organism. As highlighted, these difficulties derive from the fact that many of Whitehead's remarks are somewhat vague and highly abstract and must be contextualized and cross referenced in order to build a coherent picture. Beside the fact that Whitehead does not only develop new expressions but used old expressions in a special way, many of his remarks on God and evil span several of his major works written over the course of his long career. Nowhere, do we get a succinct statement of his view and this has led to many diverge readings of his work.

Consequent on this, the penultimate chapter commenced with a promise to engage in both textual, intra-textual and inter-textual conceptualization of Whitehead's ideas. While we leave our audience to decide whether that promise is kept, we shall begin this chapter with a schematic summary of Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil discussed in the last chapter. This is not only in line with our overall admission of the esoteric nature of Whitehead's metaphysics but also of our promise to carry our audience all the way as we transverse the difficulties. Above all, the summary will form a background for the evaluation and conclusion in the chapter.

6.1 Evaluation

Whitehead's approach is an attempt to solve the problem of evil with a rational theodicy. By "rational theodicy" we mean the attempt to account logically for the relationship between God and human suffering that avoids inconsistencies and paradoxes. In the traditional problem, evil is commonly thought to be inconsistent with God's omnibenevolence and God's omnipotence, thus involving a destructive trilemma. The problem is usually presented as a trilemma that occurs any time that three propositions are asserted to be true at the same time: evil occurs, God is

omnipotent, and God is omnibenevolent. Whenever we try to resolve the problem by denying any of the three propositions, we run into consequences that seem inconsistent with the traditional conception of God.

P1 If evil occurs, then either God is not omnibenevolent or not omnipotent.

P2 If God is omnibenevolent and evil occurs, then either God is not omnipotent, or evil is only apparent (genuine evil does not really exist).

P3 If God is omnipotent and evil occurs, then either evil is merely apparent, or God is not omnibenevolent.

The traditional Christian attempt to resolve the trilemma without denying any of the propositions is by qualifying, i.e., redefining or supplementing one or more of the major terms. For example, through St Augustine, credited as the initiator of the traditional solution, a number of approaches that try to defend the existence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God in spite of evil have emerged.

The first approach attacks the problem by arguing that why God allows evil despite his omnipotence and goodness is because evil is necessary for some greater purpose of God's providence. Thus, there are some logically necessary evils that serve a greater good. Since God could not will it otherwise, and accomplish this greater good, God must allow these evils in order to be omnibenevolent.

In Augustine's view, God tolerates these evils in order to allow for human freedom, which he assumes requires that men must be able to disobey God's will in order to be truly free, thus making moral evil a necessary possibility. This is the famous free-will solution. In consonance with it, Christian thought has always seen moral evil as related to human freedom and responsibility. To be a person is to be a finite centre of freedom, a (relatively) self-directing agent responsible for one's own decisions. This involves being free to act wrongly as well as rightly. There can therefore be no certainty in advance that a genuinely free moral agent will never choose amiss. Consequently, according to the strong form of free-will defense, the possibility of wrongdoing is logically inseparable from the creation of finite persons, and to say that

God should not have created beings who might sin amounts to saying that God should not have created people.

As discussed in Chapter Three, thesis has been challenged in some recent philosophical discussions of the problem of evil, in which it is claimed that no contradiction is involved in saying that God might have made people who would be genuinely free but who could at the same time be guaranteed always to act rightly. To quote from one of these discussions:

> 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.[1]

This argument, as can be seen, has considerable power. On the whole, it shows that the omnipotent proposition is not compatible with the free-will argument.

Another common way the Augustinian approach tries to tackle the trilemma is to simply deny one of the propositions, e.g., that evil does not actually exist. Here the argument usually is that all evils are merely apparent or privation of the good and that genuine moral evil does not exist. Even though we may experience evil as genuine, if we had access to an omniscient vantage point, we would see that these apparent evils are actually consistent with the greatest good. It is sometimes added that humans do not have the intellectual capacity to understand the relationship between God and evil, and thus we continue to experience evils as genuine. The problem that is commonly pointed out with this approaches is that it seems to make God oblivious to the individual sufferings of humankind. Thus, the free-will approach discussed previously has been the more popular approach in Christian theology. Obviously,

previous attempts to grasp the bull by the horns of the traditional dilemma present serious concerns for traditional Christian theology.

What is obvious is that in the traditional Christian solution to the problem of evil all effort is made to preserve the Parmenidian categories imported into Christianity by the Medieval. Thus, while Augustine was ready to temper with the idea of evil, describing it as privation, he could not imagine the possibility of Christianity where the omnipotent and omnibenevolent nature of God is questioned. This is the reason why traditional Christian theology is helpless as long as the logical and evidential problem of evil is concerned.

Contrary to this, Whitehead was ready to review all three categories; traditional theology attributes to God. As discussed, while he accepts the reality of evil and the benevolent nature of God, he believed that the problem of evil is premised on traditional theology's attribution of omnibenevolence to God. This is the category he questions and denies and that is what constitutes his solution to the problem of evil.

Thus, for Whitehead, God is unlimited in power but interacts with the process of the universe which God has not created but is nevertheless able to influence. In other words, in the main Christian tradition, God is the creator and sustainer of the entire universe *ex nihilo* and God's power over the creation is accordingly unlimited. However, in order to allow for the existence and growth of free human beings, God withholds the exercise of unlimited divine power, thereby forming an autonomous creaturely realm within which God acts non-coercively, seeking the creatures' free responses. Whitehead likewise holds that God acts non-coercively, by "persuasion" and "lure," but in contrast to the notion of divine self-limitation, Whitehead holds that God's exercise of persuasive rather than controlling power is necessitated by the ultimate metaphysical structure of reality. God is subject to the limitations imposed by the basic laws of the universe, for God has not created the universe *ex nihilo*, thereby establishing its structure, but rather the universe is an uncreated process which includes the deity. Accordingly, as Griffin says, "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."[2]

In order words, finite actualities do not exercise power because God has delegated it to them, but because to be a part of the universe is to exercise creativity and hence power. Indeed because to be actual is to be creative, thereby exercising some degree of power, it is impossible for even God to hold a monopoly of power. Every actual occasion is, by its very nature, partially self-creative as well as partially created by previous actual occasions which were themselves partially self-created. Thus, God's power over each occasion, and in directing the stream of occasions as a whole, 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. God continually offers the best possibility to each occasion as it creates itself, but the successive occasions are free not to conform to the divine plan. And, as Whitehead says, "So far as the conformation is incomplete, there is evil in the world."[3]

However, this particular conception of a limited deity still requires a theodicy, a justification of God's goodness in face of the fact of evil. Whitehead's response is that God does not only suffer with hurting actual occasions, but he as well guides all occasions with tender care towards greater harmony and satisfaction. However, because all evil rests in the necessity of discord, destruction and elimination are the concrete products of obstruction met within the unfolding of temporal reality, not all things can be saved. All that God can save, He saves. God does what He can in Whitehead's theodicy "with infinite patience."[4]

Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil appeals in two main ways. One is that it avoids the traditional problem arising from the belief in divine omnipotence. God is not the all-powerful creator of the universe, responsible for its character, but is a part−though a uniquely basic part−of the universe itself, unable either to vary its fundamental structure or to intervene directly in its changing details. Thus God does not need to be justified for permitting evil, since it is not within God's power to prevent it. The other appeal consists of the 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 a finite God who claims our support in the

ongoing battle of light against darkness or in the thought of John Stuart Mill, who wrote:

> A creed like this . . . allows it to be believed that all the mass of evil which exists was undesigned by, and exists not by the appointment of, but in spite of the Being whom we are called upon to worship. A virtuous human being assumes in this theory the exalted character of a fellow-labourer with the Highest, a fellow combatant in the great strife.[5]

However, despite its appeal, Whitehead's solution to the problem of evil has been attacked on many grounds. Nevertheless, it is not our intention here unpack all these grounds. We shall only limit our investigation to three of these attacks that concern this dissertation: the charge that Whitehead's theodicy makes evil apparent (that evil does not exist), the claim that his solution is elitist that justifies the innocent suffering of a large portion of humanity and the charge that by stripping God of his almightiness, he makes the Christian God both un-worshipful and religiously unsatisfying.

As already discussed in Chapter Two the charge that Whitehead's theodicy denied the existence of evil was made by a number of his opponents. For instance, Schulweis submits that all the evils in Whitehead's world must be viewed as apparent because God perceives every evil as a means to perfect the world. "The consequent nature of God," writes Schulweis, "salvages what appears to us as evil by transmuting its discordance into divine enjoyment."[6] Therefore, "Whitehead's aesthetic theodicy informs us that what is evil for us is not evil for God."[7] Another scholar that makes similar accusation is Stephen Lee Ely. He argues that it is rather unfortunate that in a philosophy that purports to solve the problem of evil, what is evil for humanity is not evil for God because God sees pain, grief, and frustration "in such a way that they are valuable for him."[8] This argument may be summarized as follows: all evils in Whitehead's worldview must be judged as apparent because God utilizes every evil as a means to perfect the world and the divine experience.

Before addressing this general complaint, however, an important technical problem in the argument advanced by Schulweis deserves attention. This argument rests upon a misrepresentation of Whitehead's theory of evil. Schulweis writes that in Whitehead's theodicy the "intermingling of evil and beauty is metaphysically necessary and justified."[9] If Schulweis were correct, then indeed evil would have to be judged as merely apparent. Schulweis, however, uses the term "evil" in an unequivocal sense and equates this sense of evil with Whitehead's notion of destructive discord. But that which is unequivocally evil for Whitehead does not simply refer to destructive discord; rather it refers to the dominance of destructive discord.

Whitehead's most definitive treatment of discord as it relates to evil is found in *Adventures of Ideas.* In his chapter on "Beauty," Whitehead initially characterizes discord and the destruction it entails as evil. He contends that perfection excludes feelings of destructive discord, and he describes discord as "…in itself destructive and evil."[10] Yet Whitehead immediately informs his readers that destructive discord can have beneficial consequences. Destructive discord can overcome anaesthesia, allow insights into newer forms of perfection, and provide an impetus for the attainment of higher values.

In light of the extrinsic benefits of destructive discord, Whitehead realizes that he must clarify his position. He writes:

> The doctrine has been stated that the experience of destruction is in itself evil; in fact that it constitutes the meaning of evil. We find now that this enunciation is much too simple-minded. Qualifications have to be introduced, though they leave unshaken the fundamental position that "destruction as a dominant fact in the experience" is the correct definition of evil.[11]

Whitehead realizes that a measure of discord may be so extrinsically beneficial that the discord, when considered in relation to the whole, must be judged good rather than evil. Though evil in itself, discord must be referred to as good if the extrinsic benefits outweigh the internal destruction. This is why Whitehead finds the enunciation that

discord "constitutes the meaning of evil . . . much too simpleminded." The qualifications which Whitehead introduces for this enunciation do not alter the supposition that destructive discord, if considered intrinsically, is evil. The qualifications do, however, alter the supposition that destructive discord constitutes the meaning of evil. The qualifications alter the supposition that discord must be labelled evil in all circumstances. The qualifications, in other words, allow for the possibility that discord, in view of its extrinsic benefits, can be, on the whole, good.

Whitehead cites as his "fundamental position that 'destruction as a dominant fact in the experience' is the correct definition of evil." When the "Destruction of the significant characters of individual objects . . . dominates the whole, there is the immediate feeling of evil. . ."[12] An experience is unequivocally evil when destructive discord dominates the whole experience, not merely when destructive discord is present within the experience.

Whitehead apparently conceives of the dominance of destructive discord as both extrinsically and intrinsically evil. The domination of destructive discord brings with it "the anticipation of destructive or weakened data for the future" and therefore derogates from the promotion of Beauty extrinsically as well as intrinsically.[13] Hence, the dominance of destructive discord, but not destructive discord in itself, is evil in an absolute or unequivocal sense.

Schulweis therefore misrepresents Whitehead's thought when he equates discord in itself with that which is unequivocally evil. Accordingly, when Schulweis contends that "the intermingling of evil and beauty is metaphysically necessary and justified" in Whitehead's cosmology, he distorts Whitehead's position. Whitehead certainly does admit that a measure of destructive discord can be metaphysically necessary and justified. But when the measure of discord is, in fact, metaphysically necessary and justified, one cannot unequivocally refer to the discord as evil. Such discord may be intrinsically evil, but it cannot be evil on the whole. Thus, the idea that evil, in an absolute sense, is required and justified in Whitehead's cosmology is mistaken.

Schulweis could write that Whitehead finds occasions which are intrinsically evil to be necessary and justified for the attainment of higher perfections, but he should hasten to add that such occasions must be referred to as "good" in light of the whole. For the extrinsic benefits of such occasions outweigh any intrinsic evil. The squabbles which are justified in relationships make the relationships more valuable. The measure of destructive discord which is required for and beneficial to creative advance must, all things considered, be referred to as good. Schulweis, then, could simply write that White-head finds goodness to be necessary and justified for creative advance, and such a statement would be less misleading.

Aside from the more technical problem in Schulweis's argument, there remains the general complaint that Whitehead's God prehends all evil as apparent because God utilizes every evil as a means toward the perfection of both the world and the divine experience. Ely, Madden, Hare and Schulweis are correct, at least in one sense, that Whitehead's God prehends every evil as a means toward the perfection of the world and God-self. Every evil−and every good as well−provides God with a basis or a foundation upon which God formulates both the perfection of the world and God-self. Whitehead's God prehends every actuality, evil or good, in terms of its contribution, negligible or significant, to God's constantly changing envisagement of benevolent potential; and God, in Charles Hartshorne's words, "does wring some good" out of every evil.[14]

But the fact that all the evils of the actual world are used by God as a foundation upon which God perfects the world and God-self does not mean that the evils are merely apparent. If the term "apparent evil" applied simply to that *prima facie* evil which, from an ultimate perspective, contributes to a better future, then the term would be so broad as to include every historical evil. For as the past forms and informs the future, so the evil of the past forms and informs any future perfection. Even the most revolting evils make some contribution to the future. The future must be built upon Auschwitz, and even Auschwitz teaches valuable historic lessons. If apparent evil were characterized merely by the quality of providing a foundation for or a

contribution to the attainment of higher values, all evil must be judged as apparent in nature.

The proper definition of apparent evil, however, is *prima facie* evil which when judged from an ultimate frame of reference is that in the place of which no other realistically possible occurrence could be better.[2] "Apparent" evil is not only a means to perfection, but also a morally necessary and justified means. Apparent evil not only provides a foundation for and a contribution to perfection, but is also the ethical *sine qua non* for the emergence of a higher perfection which justifies the evil's reality.

Apparent evil and genuine evil are not distinguished by whether or not they serve as a ground upon which future values are built. Both types of evil provide such grounding. Rather the difference between apparent and genuine evil consists in the fact that apparent evil is morally necessary and justified while genuine evil is neither. Apparent evil makes possible, in a way that no other occurrence could, the attainment of higher value; genuine evil thwarts the attainment of the highest value which is realistically possible at any given moment. "Apparent" evil refers to *prima facie* evils which are ultimately judged to embody the best of all realistically possible alternatives; "genuine" evil refers to occurrences which embody those alternatives which are less than the best of all realistically possible occurrences.

The question, then, of apparent evil is not whether Whitehead's God builds upon every evil in the attempt to perfect the world and God-self. The question is whether Whitehead's God prehends every evil as the best that can be, as a morally necessary and justified means for the attainment of a higher perfection. If we wish to know whether Whitehead's cosmology transforms all *prima facie* evils into apparent evils, we should ask, "From the divine perspective, is there evil that without which both the world and God could be better?"

Assuming the Omni-benevolence of Whitehead's God, in order for all evil to be merely apparent, there has to be an absolute conformity between God's will and what transpires in the actual world. For if the actual world fails to conform to God's aim,

then actualizations will have occurred in the place of which other actualizations would have been better. If the actual world fails to conform to the will of God, God will prehend genuine evil, not merely apparent evil.

Whitehead rejects the idea that there is or can be a complete conformity between God's will and what is actualized in the temporal world. After describing the character of God as "a character of permanent rightness," Whitehead observes, "it is not true that every individual item of the universe conforms to this character in every detail. There will be some measure of conformity and some measure of diversity. . . . So far as the conformity is incomplete, there is evil in the world."[15] Every event, according to Whitehead, leaves the world with an impress of God, but the impress can be "deeper" or "fainter."[16]

While God implants an ideal into the process of reality, the "…ideal is never realized, it is beyond realization…."[17] "For example, there is an ideal of human liberty, activity, and cooperation dimly adumbrated in the American Constitution. It has never been realized in its perfection; and by its lack of characterization of the variety of possibilities open for humanity, it is limited and imperfect."[18] The divine ideals mould the form of what is realized, but there is always that which would have enabled the ideal to be more completely realized.[19] The vision which God presents to the actual world is, therefore, a vision of "something whose possession . . . is beyond all reach; something which is . . . the hopeless quest."[20]

If the world inevitably fails to conform to the aims of God, then the world inevitably contains actualizations in the place of which others could have been better. To rephrase one of Whitehead's sentences quoted above -- so far as the conformity is incomplete, there is genuine evil in the world. Occasions which, in Whitehead's words, disregard "the eternal vision" of God must be viewed by God as genuinely evil.[21]

Accordingly, Whitehead suggests that God cannot justify every evil by reason of its contribution to God's beautiful envisagement, for there are evils whose contribution is

negligible. Although God wrings some good from every evil, "the revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts."[22] The temporal world contributes only "such elements as it can to a realization in God free from inhibitions of intensity by reason of discordance."[23] Although God operates with "a tender care that nothing be lost" or a tender judgment "which loses nothing that can be saved," there are clearly elements whose contributions to higher perfections are too meagre to justify their perpetuation in God's envisagement for the future.[24]

Whitehead's cosmology in general and his solution for the problem of evil in particular do not transform all evils into merely apparent evils. Griffin is correct when he argues that process theodicy does not deny the reality of genuine evil.[25] Charles Hartshorne concurs: Although God, 'with infinite resources,' makes the best of what happens, it still is not entirely good that tragedies happened as they did. Something better could have happened.[26]

The critics should be aware that Whitehead rejects two theodicies which have the effect of transforming all evil into apparent evil, and his rejection of these theodicies is wholly consistent with an implicit concern to avoid the consequences which result from such a position. After contending that "no religion which faces facts can minimize the evil in the world," Whitehead approvingly cites the book of Job as a "revolt against the facile solution, so esteemed by fortunate people, that the sufferer is the evil person."[27] A theodicy of deserved suffering turns all suffering into a just fulfilment of the divine will. From an ultimate frame of reference, the suffering inflicted by a just God must be the best for the one who suffers. Such a theodicy, Whitehead implies, conveniently turns fortunate people away from the concerns of the unfortunate.

Whitehead also rejects the theodicy of Leibniz. "The Leibnizian theory of the 'best of possible worlds' is an audacious fudge produced in order to save the face of a Creator constructed by contemporary, and antecedent, theologians."[28] Leibniz affirms the omnipotence and omnibenevolence of God to such a degree that he must ultimately

hold to the theory that every evil is merely apparent, and Whitehead indicates that he has no interest in supporting such an idea.

Whitehead, then, was aware of the manner by which solutions to the problem of evil can minimize evil as a way to make it compatible with the reality of a just and omnipotent God. Whitehead certainly intended to avoid the minimization of evil, and this dissertation finds that he succeeded in doing so. Thus, the Whiteheadian is not put in the precarious position of explaining how the Holocaust or Stalin's collectivization program are merely apparent evils as they critics claim. These are genuine evils; they are occurrences in the place of which others could have been better for both the world and God. Nor does the Whiteheadian support a solution to the problem of evil which functions as a consistent prop for quietism, oppression, and masochism. The genuine evils of a Whiteheadian cosmology receive a negative valuation which demands that they be eliminated, diminished, and avoided.

As we have mentioned before, both Whitehead's view of God's power and his explicit rejection of God's omnipotence have elicited many critical reactions. Thus, the second and last attack against Whitehead's theodicy which we will discuss in this dissertation is the charge that he made God so impotent that his God is not only not worthy of worship but is also religiously unattractive. In making this case Basinger claims that in Whitehead's metaphysics, God does not have unilateral, coercive control over everything in the universe. Therefore, it follows according to him, that the Whiteheadian "God cannot override a person's freedom, nor perform miracles that violate the laws of nature, nor perform physical actions such as causing or halting a flood or an avalanche."[29] For Basinger, these are the exact qualities in which our idea of God is coached−qualities which do not only make God religiously attractive but also worshipful. To strip God of these qualities is to make us lose the concept of God.

Nancy Frankenberry on his own stipulates that Whitehead in attributing persuasive power to God ignores a range of power between the two extremes of power, coercion and persuasion. In addition, he argues that Whitehead's understanding of persuasive power is limited. The rendition of persuasive power puts emphasis only on one side of

God's nature. He is always showing "mercy never wrath," "loving never judgment," "freeing never confining," and "blessing never cursing."[30] For Frankenberry, this Whiteheadian concept of persuasion lacks the mutual respect for the individual's rational dignity that accompanies morality of persuasion.

An examination of these reactions shows that many theologians deem Whitehead's view inadequate because, as they see it, only an omnipotent God can guarantee a victory over evil. And indeed, such guarantee seems to be one advantage of the omnipotence view.

However, on a closer inspection, that advantage turns into a disadvantage as soon as the model is confronted with real life experience which tells us that victory fails to occur. It is precisely on account of the universal presence of suffering that, God, if omnipotent, should be accused of failing to interfere at least occasionally. Thus, what seems to be an advantage of the traditional 'omnipotence' concept turns into a disadvantage so important as to seriously favour an atheist option. In fact, this existentially religious disadvantage is what prompts Whitehead to reject the idea of God as omnipotent, and as Lewis Ford rightly observed, for Whitehead this classical idea of God's omnipotence was beset by difficulties so insuperable as to keep him from being a 'theist' for as long as he did not see a possibility to dissociate the idea of God from that idea of omnipotence.[31]

Thus, while it is true that Whitehead denies the omnipotence of God in order to escape the horns in the dilemma to the problem of evil, it is wrong to accuse him of making God religiously unattractive and not worshipful as his critics claim. An appreciation of the concept of omnipotent will help us to understand that Whitehead's position on this.

An examination of the conceptual history of 'almightiness' shows that each of the three classical languages in which the concept was expressed—successively: Hebrew: *sebaoth* and *shaddai*; Greek: *pantokrator*; and Latin: *omnipotens*— respectively involved a shift in meaning. Those shifts were painstakingly described by Gijsbert van

den Brink in his monograph on divine almightiness.[32] What follows is a condensed summary of the very complex processes of translations and shifts in meaning.

The Greek term *pantokrator*, chosen in the Septuagint (250-50 BCE) as translation of the Hebrew words *sebaoth* and *shaddai,* presents in this Old Testament context primarily God's power as sovereign dominator, creator, lord, authority, governor, the one who is in control of all that happens in nature and history.[33] It denotes God as universal power over all things. Later on, as used in the early Christian literature, the term *pantokrator* increasingly also describes God as preserver and sustainer of all things: God who by his loving care holds the whole universe in existence.[34]

When, in the Vulgate (400 CE), the term is translated into the Latin *omnipotens*, a new shift in meaning occurs. Next to the old meanings for which it is used as the Latin equivalent, the word *omnipotens* (with the Latin *posse* meaning 'to be able') favors an emphasis on God's ability: God's ability to create and to preserve. Along the way, however, the meaning of *omnipotentia* hardens into the concept of God's ability to do anything possible, with all the philosophical puzzles this elicits.

However, in the context of a discussion of the topic of almightiness, one must also pay attention to the shift in meaning of the *prefix 'all'* (Greek: *panto*; Latin: *omni*) and to the effect this shift has on the composite concept 'almighty.' In combination with the verb *kratein* (to govern, to control or to sustain), 'all' refers to everything that factually exists or happens in past, present and future, so that *pantokrator* then expresses the idea that all that exists in past, present and future falls under God's governance and sustenance, that it owes its existence and its conservation to God. However, in combination with 'to be able to' (*posse*), 'all' refers primarily to everything possible, so that *omnipotence* accordingly expresses that God is able to do everything possible. Thus, with the translation from pantokrator into omnipotence, not only the power component of the word shifts (from governance and sustenance to ability or capacity) but also the object of God's power shifts, viz. from 'all things existing' to 'all things possible.' There is no doubt therefore that, historically,

pantokrator and *omnipotence* evolved into two quite different concepts, although both are signified in English by the same term 'almightiness.'[35]

And so it came to be that the Latin *omnipotence* stood predominantly for 'the power to do everything possible,' including the capacity to unilaterally bring about what normally occurs through worldly causes. This meaning is rendered by the (German) expression *absolute Alleinmacht* (absolute sole power), which in the end means that all power would belong to God exclusively, i.e., that nothing except God would have power. The Greek term *pantokrator* on the other hand, expresses indeed that everything falls under the dominion of God's governance and sustenance, but without the connotation of *absolute Alleinmacht*. Even a sovereign ruler must rely on others for the realization of his plan.

It is to the idea of God as 'the one who all alone can do everything,' that Whitehead objects. Thus, the fact that God in Whitehead's view is not omnipotent, is not something that 'unfortunately' follows from his conception. On the contrary, Whitehead wanted it that way. Whitehead's rejection of God's omnipotence has to a large extent its reason in the problem of evil:

> If this conception be adhered to in which metaphysical compliments such as omnipotence are paid to God, there can be no alternative except to discern in Him the origin of all evil as well as of all good. He is then the supreme author of the play, and to Him must therefore be ascribed its shortcomings as well as its success.[36]

It is important to notice here that Whitehead disavows God's omnipotence and coercion, not because the latter is always morally worse or less effective than persuasion, for that is evidently not true, but because the implication of a divine omnipotence would be that in the end all suffering and evil must be ascribed to God. The only acceptable solution therefore is that God cannot coerce, that God as sole agent cannot realize a factual state of affairs, and therefore, in that sense cannot be said to be omnipotent.

All this makes it all the more important to point out that it would be a mistake to think that Whitehead discarded *everything* that is related to the traditional idea that makes God worshipful. On the contrary, Whitehead's philosophy retains essential elements of the *pantokrator* concept, though without using its terminology. There are three such elements that should be mentioned here.

The first element is that, by arousing the desire to the relatively best possible as the novel occasion's initial aim, God in fact originates that occasion as occasion. In this way, "God is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness."[37] Thus, Whitehead sees God's primordial nature as directing and creating and inspiring with regard to all occasions in all places and at all times. In this sense, it depicts God as All-governor.

The second element is that Whitehead's concept of God also describes God as All-preserver. His concept of God's consequent or receptive nature presents the idea that God preserves and so rescues from meaninglessness all that can be saved. It depicts God as the indestructible 'treasuring' of realized value[48], and therefore as All-preserver, operating by "a tender care that nothing be lost."[49] Moreover, though it is true that Whitehead's notion does not entail the guarantee that whatever God is luring toward will also happen, it does entail the guarantee that no particular counterforce can overcome God forever. Because God is the only everlasting entity, God is the only entity whose influence is everlasting, and that is the reason why Whitehead can say that God has more causal influence than other actual entities.

Here, for the sake of clarity, God's influence may to some extent be compared with the influence of gravity on earthly affairs: In the long run, the persistent influence of the gravitational force is decisive, if never in an absolute sense. Consider dancing snowflakes. Some may go up under the influence of air turbulence, but because of gravity, they all fall to the ground at some time or other. This need not be their definite end point: a child may come by and use it to make a snowball which it throws up into the air, but eventually the snow will always end up on the ground. Or consider a robust object standing upstairs in a house. We do not immediately perceive any

force that moves it downward (even though that force is there permanently). Centuries later the house will have perished and the object will lie on the ground. Again this need not be its end point: someone may pick it up and put it on top of a shelf in a museum. Thus the force of gravity is constantly opposed by counterforces, particular counterforces that may be temporarily victorious. But, on the whole, the force of gravity is the most influential, due to its persistence.

In Whitehead's view of God there is something akin to this image of an influence that, though it can never call the shots all by itself alone or with absolute definiteness, it is in the end 'superior' because of its incessancy. Whitehead expresses this by speaking of the patience of God by which God leads or persuades the world, and he describes this patience as "the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization."[40] Thus, in Whitehead's view, God's operation is creative, overpowering, all-governing and all-preserving: it comprehends all times and places, it never gives up, it never ceases. All these elements are essential and classical aspects of God as *pantokrator.*

5.2 Conclusion

More than anything else, the appalling depth and extent of human suffering, together with the selfishness and greed which produce so much of this, make the idea of a loving and all powerful Creator seem implausible. Thus, rather than attempt to define "evil" in terms of some theological theory, this dissertation seems it better to define it offensively, by indicating that to which the word refers. It refers to physical pain, mental suffering, and moral wickedness. The last is one of the causes of the first two, for an enormous amount of human pain arises from mankind's inhumanity. This pain includes such major scourges as poverty, oppression and persecution, war, and all the injustice, indignity, and inequity that occur in human societies. Even disease is fostered, to an extent that has not yet been precisely determined by psychosomatic medicine, by emotional and moral factors seated both in the individual and in his or her social environment. However, although a great deal of pain and suffering are caused by human action, there is much more that arises from such natural causes as

bacteria and earthquakes, storm, fire, lightning, flood, and drought. This is what philosophy calls theodicy or the problem of evil.

As a challenge to theism, the problem of evil has traditionally been posed in the form of a trilemma: if God is perfectly loving, God must wish to abolish all evil; and if God is all-powerful, God must be able to abolish all evil. But evil exists; therefore God cannot be both omnipotent and perfectly good.

The classical Judaeo-Christian Augustine inspired solution sees evil either as the consequences of the abuse of the free-will of rational creature or denies the substantial existence to evil altogether. However, this solution is both experientially and logically unjustifiable not only because the reality of evil is compelling but also because a God who is all powerful, should be able to create free beings who cannot sin or be able to intervene in the face of unjustified human suffering.

The fundamental claim which we have defended in this dissertation is that Whitehead offered a more compelling and rationally satisfying solution to the problem of evil. While Whitehead retained the propositions that evil is real and God is all loving, his solution primarily consists in redefining or qualifying the classical claim of almightiness. For Whitehead, Each actual occasion is *causa sui* and therefore determines itself within the limits set by the initial aim. Most actual occasions fall short of achieving the ideal that God sets for it, and it is in this falling short that the basic ontological meaning of evil is to be found. In other words, evil occurs not because God chooses to be silent but because by the cosmic nature of things, God does not have power to control evil.

Does this mean that God is entirely powerless in the face of evil? Not at all. God's power lies in his ability in luring actual occasions away from evil and hence achieving his purpose for the world in spite of evil. In addition God does not stay aloof in the face of suffering, rather he becomes the co-sufferer who understands. This was why Whitehead placed great emphasis on the importance of the historical Jesus and his teachings. He believed that the essence of Christ's teaching was that God's power is

persuasive (not coercive) and that this divine power was revealed in the tenderness and subtleties of creative and responsive love. Jesus' message dwelt upon the "tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love."[41]

Finally, Whitehead's solution supports the ultimate reality and intrinsic value of individuals. If, classical theodicy claims, God is ultimately the sole source of value in the universe, then how can we possibly be praised for the value that some of us apparently create in our lives? In the classical view, it seems that God gets all the credit for the good that happens, but we are left unfortunately with all the responsibility for evil (even for natural disasters which are supposed to be God's punishment for our sin). This is simply a disguised form of a divine totalitarianism which no self-respecting, rational human being should accept. Such a God is not truly God, but simply a projection of a form of social and political authoritarianism.

God did not give human beings a rational faculty in vain; he surely did not mean for us to reject our most unique possession in an irrationalist betrayal of creation itself. Therefore if human reason is to be truly liberated in theological thinking, it must ultimately reject concept of God as almightiness, "God as Cosmic Moralist...God as Unchanging and Passionless Absolute....God as Controlling Power....God as Sanctioner of the Status Quo....God as Male....Process theology denies the existence of this God."[28]

In the end, this dissertation agrees with Whitehead contra Augustine-inspired traditional theism that God is neither the cause of evil nor does he has the power to stop evil. Nevertheless, like the patient poet, God is gently but steadily and constantly leading the world to the state of ecstatic harmony. When this state arrives, there will be no more evil. Although actual entities will still be autonomous their wills will be in consonance with God's will. This for Whitehead is the perusia or final victory over evil that Christianity expectantly awaits and for this researcher, it is a better solution to the problem of evil than the one offered by traditional theology.

Endnotes

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