A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF EVIL AS THEY ARISE FROM EPISTEMOLOGIES AND WORLDVIEWS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Had this thesis been simply called *Evil,* it would of course have been far too broad. But if our concern is with ideas, perceptions or beliefs about evil and the origin of those beliefs, then we place evil within a more treatable range. If we then determine to examine those origins within a framework of theories of knowledge and worldviews, we then open up a fruitful field of study. The present study utilises just such a framework

The title of the thesis uses *Epistemology*, the more technical name for theories of knowing. By epistemology we mean, at base, a given thinker's theory about what can be known or believed to be true about existence. We will often refer to this as a theory of knowledge. By worldview, we mean the theory of belief about the world and humanity and reality itself that develops from the epistemological theory. Perceptions of evil, as here understood, refers less to the sense or intuition of evil than to developed ideas of evil, whether the perceptions or ideas involve the denial or the affirmation that evil exists. Of course, as the study proceeds, much more will be known about what is meant by epistemology, worldviews, and the perceptions or beliefs about evil that emerge from the former and the latter. Throughout the study the reader is asked to ponder whether any idea or belief about evil can even exist apart from an underlying theory of knowledge and consequent worldview.

The intent of this study is not such as to inquire which author or writing is right and which is wrong. However, the nature and accuracy of the study both require a critique, as we shall see, of any implied inconsistencies between an author's claimed perception of evil and the one that their epistemology and worldview implies. For example if an author personally

believes that good and evil exist, but advances an epistemology and worldview that rules out both, then our study is duty bound to bring such inconsistencies to light. Indeed, it is precisely such inconsistencies that add to the fascination and depth of an epistemological and worldview approach to evil.

It seemed advisable, owing to space and time, to limit the field of exploration to a select number of thinkers and writings. Most were chosen because of either an immense or substantial influence on western history and humanity itself, but a few were chosen for the viewpoints they espouse and their suitability or their insights for interesting contrasts.

The first section of this work compares and contrasts the perceptions of evil that arise from the theories of knowledge and worldviews advanced in Plato's Timaeus, in varied writings of Aristotle, and in the famous work on nature by Lucretius. Here we explore the attempts each thinker makes to mediate between the finite and the transcendent realm, and what views of good and evil, purity and corruption inspire these attempts.

In the second section, we explore relational epistemologies, the consequent worldviews, and the perceptions of evil that arise from them. What is meant by relational and non-relational theories will be explained at that time. We engage writers such as Martin Buber, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Samuel Hirsch, and the unknown narrators of Genesis and Job. Further, we contrast these thinkers with Immanuel Kant, the holder of a theory of knowledge and worldview that is strictly non-relational.

In Section Three, we explore the perceptions of evil that arose out of the enlightenment era. For at this time in history, the very idea of an external world gradually gave way to a theory of knowledge and a worldview that supposed the only certainty was *idea.* Here we shall meet with some of the key figures in this development; Rene Descartes,

John Locke, George Bishop Berkeley, and David Hume. We shall also hear from a determined opponent in the person of Thomas Reid.

In the final section, Section Four, we encounter perceptions of evil that arise from varied theories of knowledge and worldviews, particularly with regard to the idea of God and nature. Questions of the following kind are explored. If God exists, how does he act in history, and if he does act in history, how can he be kept pure of blame for the evil that occurs in history? If God exists, does evil have an end? Does God speak directly to man, or does he work indirectly through his mind and emotions, whether individually or collectively? How does this affect evil? How exactly does God act in history and what is his character and nature? How then does evil manifest itself? All these questions inquire after the relationship between the transcendent and the finite. How does the transcendent come into contact, or make itself immanent within the finite world? How does it influence or transform it. Such questions relate not only to theodicy, but to eschatology as well.

The themes and persons chosen will offer varied answers to such questions. Very central to this discussion will be the question not only of theodicy, but the relationship between it and eschatology. In this section we shall encounter Eschatology through ethics in Kant, and in Ricoeur through symbols of evil. In the final section we shall contrast thinkers such as John Hick with some of the stances and interpretations of evil and omnipotence in the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible, or as it is known to many, the Old Testament

It should be understood, as well, that evil itself, given the varied epistemological and worldview claims to be engaged, will assume many forms. Often traditional perceptions of evil may be viewed as the very core of evil itself when seen from some of the epistemological standpoints we will discuss.

On a careful reading of the contents of this thesis, it is hoped that the reader will be led to ponder the integral relationship between evil and the epistemological and consequent worldview claims we embrace. The hope is also that the present study will yield a range of insights useful to further explorations of this kind and to the vastly larger discussion revolving around the subject of evil itself.

SECTION I: DUALISM AND THEODICY AMONG THE GREEKS

Chapter 1: Plato's Dualism Between Good And Evil And Its Strengths

Before Plato

The Ancient Greeks believed in a knowable world outside the mind, whether of Gods or time or space. Zeus was the strongest of the Gods, but none were considered all powerful. *Hera* his wife, *Apollo* the son, *Athena* and *Aphrodite* the daughters all had their area of power and responsibility. There was apparently a minimum of fear between the worshipper and the Gods. Indeed the Gods themselves were called *Olympians*, and their home was *Mount Olympus.*[1] On a very regular basis mortals could pick and choose their Gods, whichever one was best suited to answer their varied requests.

The Gods of Greece and Rome were by no means free of evil. They were very much like mortals. They well fitted the thesis of Ludwig Feurbach to the effect that man is not made in the image of God, but God in the image of man.[2] Like mortals, the Gods were capable of goodness one day and evil the next. Zeus can be just, but he can also cheat on his wife with disturbing regularity.[3] In Homer's *Iliad* the favour or wrath shown by Gods towards mortals seems almost devoid of good or evil. What happens to mortals seems fated. This is evident whether the Gods empowered them or slew them. Even Zeus's frequent infidelities are merely described. Homer makes no effort to condemn or renounce the actions

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[1] Homer, The *Iliad trans.* by Robert Fagles (New York: Viking & Penguin, 1990), pp. 369-386, 67, 113 (See also Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena To The Study of Greek Religion*, New York: Meridian Books, 1955), pp. 2-12.
[2] Ludwig Feurbach, The *Essence of Christianity,* trans. by George Elliot (New York: Harper, 1957).
[3] *The Iliad,* Ibid., pp. 375-379. See also Ovid, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary Innes (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 72-73.

of Zeus or any of the Gods. He simply recounts their varied intrigues. Even before the time of the Olympian Gods, all talk of purifying sacrifices had nothing to do with the Gods, but rather with the chasing away of impure spirits and ghosts.[4]

So among these early Greeks there is a kind of loose dualism between the immortal and the mortal realm. The Gods are essentially super powerful mortals. It appeared, in one sense, a highly sustainable dualism, inasmuch as neither the Gods or the mortals were demanding much change from the other. Nor is any Greek of this era agonising as to why a just and perfect God like Zeus could allow evil in the world. Zeus was not a candidate for a theodicy anymore than the rest of the Greek Pantheon.

Socrates, Reason And The Good

Yet with the coming of thinkers such as Socrates and Plato the mortal immortal dualism of Mount Olympus quickly crumbled. No more could the Gods and men drink together the cup of the evil and the good.

But in Socrates and Plato the dualism between mortal and immortal is not broken. Rather it is revised, strengthened and tightened. Both viewed reason as pure, and therefore a God who reasons must be equally pure.[5] The former sharing of degrees of power and varied functions between tainted Gods and Goddesses, demons and ghosts is replaced by a philosophical and epistemological quest to extricate God from having any association with

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[4] Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena To The Study of Greek Religion,* (New York: Meridian Books*, 1955), see* her discussion in Chapters 2 and 5.

[5]*The Great Dialogues of Plato*, (Menon), trans. by W. H. D. Rouse, edited by Eric H. Warmington, and Phillip G. Rouse (New York: The New American Library, 1956), pp. 37, 38, 39, 42, 50, 51, 57, 66, 67, 68.

evil whatever.[6] Now *Theodicy Proper* could begin. Along with this, they viewed the souls of men as rational and therefore pure. Yet neither Socrates or Plato could deny the reality of evil in humanity and in the world. They therefore concluded that evil must in some way be connected to matter, or at least be the vehicle evil uses. However, if matter is only a vehicle, does not this imply that evil must come from something other than matter? Along with this remained the question, how can the pure ultimate source of reason ever create anything qualitatively unlike its own essence.

Plato's Epistemology And Consequent Dualism

It was Plato, not Socrates that answered this question in detail. Plato's answer to these questions came from his theory of knowledge, the rational for his famous worldview: a dualism involving a copy world and a perfect archetypal world of idea, reason, and goodness. In later life he wrote it down in a work that was to influence in large measure the entire history of western thought and the western world itself. He called it *Timaeus,* the name given to a speaker in a dialogue between him, the aforesaid, and Socrates and Critias. Before long Timaeus is the only speaker, an expert in astronomy[7] who then lays out before us Plato's perception of the world of Gods and of men.

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[6] Radaslov Tsanof, The *Nature of Evil* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), pp. 14-15.
[7] Plato, *Plato Timaeus and Critias,* trans. by Desmond Lee (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 39-40.

The Timaeus

Plato sets up a dualism between the perfect eternal world of *being* and the time bound shadow world of becoming. *The former* serves as the model for the latter. The creator from the timeless world of being is called either *God*, *Universal Father, Master Craftsman* or *Demiurge.* The Universal Father crafts this world to be as like as possible to the eternal world, sometimes called the *Perfect Living Creature Or Being*.[8] Yet here is where evil steps in, for the maker fashions the replica world out of pre- existent matter. It will, therefore, not be exactly like the eternal world because not only reason but also *necessity* comes into play.

Necessity arises out of the nature of matter. Before the maker arranged matter it was by nature chaotic. Even though the order brought to it by the maker prevents it from ever again becoming that chaotic, it is still not easy for the mortal soul to subdue it.[9] However, mortal beings that devote themselves to the high themes of reason can order matter sufficiently to eventually be free of the temptations with which it bombards them. After death their souls can go to the stars and live forever with the planets which are also Gods. Here no evil dwells.[10]

But it should be understood that this realm of the Gods is still a part of the creation modelled after the eternal world. So even when mortals are freed to be with the Gods they still belong to the copy world of becoming, not the world of being. Even the planetary gods do not escape the realm of space and time and motion.[11]

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[8] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.
[9] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid.*, pp. 42-43, 58-59. For a list of the names of the Gods see also the introduction to *Plato, Timaeus, and Critius,* by Desmond Lee the translator.
[10] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.
[11] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

For Plato perceives a world of idea, and a maker who makes this world in its likeness as much as possible. In the realm of the Gods and planets reason rules, so evil has no place. Though a shadow realm as well, it is in perfect harmony with soul and reason. But the realm where mortals dwell is not in every respect the same.

Just as with the Gods, the maker, from the remainder of matter, created an eternal soul for each mortal, even using the same bowl. But the ingredients are not quite so pure, for mortals will be subject to pain and pleasure and unruly desires. When he finishes creating mortal souls, he distributes them widely in earth, space, and the planets.

But he then relieves himself of responsibility for the evils he knows will arise by putting the Gods in charge of forming the bodies and the realm where mortals are to dwell. These pure and reasoning Gods deem it correct, and in accord with the Universal Father, to add to mortal souls, *necessary additions*.[12] These extra parts included terrible feelings, and pleasures inciting to wrong and pain and cowardice. The Gods then add two foolish counsellors, *obstinate passion* and *credulous hope.* The additions are then perfected by adding to the mix, *irrational sensation,* and desire which shrinks from nothing. All this is called indispensable equipment, thus allowing reason and necessity to make this world imitate the divine world as much as possible.[13]

Despite the differences, the Gods place in mortal heads, reason, the divine part of the soul originally sewn by the eternal Craftsman, the part free even of pleasure and pain. When reason prevails, the orbits in the mortal soul take on their true nature. Though created, they are of the same quality as those found in the planetary Gods and in the eternal world itself, that world composed of being, idea, and form.[14] So, despite all the differences, Plato allows

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[12] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 58-59, 96-100.
[13] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 96-100.
[14] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 60-61, 97, 118-119, 120-124.

a marked connection of likeness between the soul of man, the Gods of the Planets, and the nature of the soul in the eternal world.

Already, we see in Plato a theory of knowledge in which the world of the Universal Father is accessible to knowledge. Yet the world of becoming is a hindrance because it disorders the soul in man and causes it to focus on the sensory and the impermanent. The problem of focus is twofold. First the Gods set reason alone in the head. Courage is placed near the neck, emotions in the heart, food in the stomach, and genitals closer to the feet. This sets up a conflict in the soul leading to diverse evils. But added to this is a second conflict and it is anchored in Plato's view of motion. This is in turn governed by his theory of knowledge.

Motion And Evil The Second Conflict

Plato views the knowledge available in this world of becoming as uncertain and not quite real.[15] Yet in the world of becoming motion is the key ingredient. Plato observed two kinds of motion; things are either moved by other things, or they are moved by an inner motion. The inner motion is what Plato calls soul or reason. Soul is to him the prime reality that orders the world of becoming, the world of matter and change.[16]

In his Timaeus, Plato speaks of seven kinds of motion. But among the Gods the Universal Father designed and allowed only co-operative motion, the motion of *equilibrium* or forward motion. Forward motion is really a part of the prime motion, namely, equilibrium. Neither of these motions is ever in error. No evil can ever result from them.

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[15] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 40-41.
[16] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 46-47, 48-50, 59-60. See also Desmond Lee's introduction to *Plato Timaeus and Critias*. Lee rightly points out that Plato's view of motion and change is at the core of understanding the *Timaeus.* Here one has a basis for separating out what to Plato is myth and what is not).

But matter, by nature, has six other forms of motion including right and left and up and down. These forms of motion result in the sensory realm bombarding the head where reason is placed. This utterly disrupts the orbits of the mortal soul. Not only does it disorder reason in man, it creates disorder in the world which mortals inhabit. Yet even among mortals this matter and its motions can be rightly ordered. But how does Plato say this is done? First let us examine how this is ***essentially*** done.

How Essentially Does The Soul Order Motion And Matter?

Plato saw two essential elements in reasoning: *conjunctive, meaning* affirmative reasoning, and *disjunctive*, negation. When reason operates rightly, it correctly identifies the disjunctive, the *matter* of *difference,* or conjunctive, and the *matter* of *sameness*. So with respect to the world of matter and motion, it is either of the conjunctive or disjunctive kind.

When a soul moves away from evil it succeeds in rightly ordering the souls orbits of sameness and difference into their intended patterns. The soul can then subdue all the riotous and irrational feelings that have clung to the soul since its association with earth air fire and water.[17] This in turn allows the soul to bring for a time, some order and harmony even to external matter and motion. When reason fails to do this, the soul is plunged into greater and greater subjection to its own lower desires and to the disruption matter and its motions brings to the harmony of the soul. The soul that succumbs becomes increasingly wicked. But the soul that rightly orders sameness and difference becomes a person of virtue. Its passions and feelings are then under the control of the head where reason dwells, the highest and divine part of the rightly orbiting soul.[18]

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[17] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 58-59.
[18] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 66-62.

We have now seen, according to Plato, how reason can *essentially* order motion and matter. But how exactly does the reasoning soul do this? What actions on the part of mortals actually allow for the eventual proper functioning of their originally pure souls? For it is when this question is explored that we will see more deeply and substantially into Plato's epistemology and the role it plays in the entire logic and structure of his worldview. We shall therefore take some time to unwrap a fascinating statement from the Timaeus.

How More Exactly Does The Reasoning Soul Order Motion And The Soul?

In Plato's Timaeus, the character in a dialogue turned monologue declares:

> *If intelligence and true opinion are different in kind, then these 'things- in-themselves' certainly exist, forms imperceptible to our senses, but apprehended by thought; but if, as some think, there is no difference between true opinion and intelligence, what we perceive through our physical senses must be taken as the most certain reality. Now there is no doubt that the two are different, because they differ in origin and nature. One is produced by teaching, the other by persuasion; one always involves truth and rational argument, the other is irrational; one cannot be moved by persuasion, the other can; true opinion is a faculty shared, it must be admitted, by all men, intelligence by the gods and only a small number of men. [the elite in Plato].*[19]

Here Plato clearly expounds his theory of knowledge. Despite living in a world of *true opinion: the* irrational realm of sense and sensation, mortals, no less that Gods, can intuit intelligible forms if they so decide. For the Gods this is the norm, but not for mortals. As Plato points out, most mortals are only concerned about the sensory world, the world of matter which to Plato is by nature irrational, thus evil. It is also less real than the invisible world of idea, the intelligible realm.[20]

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[19] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 71, 70-72.
[20] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 40-42.

In another passage, Plato shows the world soul is engaged in a perpetual process of thought both about the sensible and intelligible realms.[21] Therefore, reasoned contemplation, the highest role of soul, involves both. But as Plato points out the sensible realm is rightly contemplated only when it leads to a deepening understanding of intelligible forms. It can rightly be said that the contents of the Timaeus are Plato's attempt to start from the likely story of the knowledge of the world of becoming *in* order to comprehend as accurately as possible the world of *being, i.e*. the eternally perfect creature, a world unchanging, without motion, composed of the intelligible, of form and idea. Yet reason must still examine the visible in order to intuit the invisible. In the Timaeus Plato makes a statement of a rather astounding kind. He says that Matter is simply the way form makes its reality known.[22] It is as if the function of matter is to point to the idea of invisible form.[23] The visibility and even the movement of ordered form reflects the reality of eternal forms and the world of eternal being. Yet the material form or image can only point to that which it truly represents. It is but a shadow pointing to the concrete reality.

In Plato the way the intelligible world makes itself known to the reasoning soul of mortals is through moving visible images. The created visible universe is a moving image, a moving shadow, as it were, of the perfect eternal world of intelligible beings.[24] Thus the highest form of contemplation takes place when mortals intuit the transcendent world of form and idea through the intelligible forms placed in this world. These forms are identical with

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[21] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 71-72, 46, 52.
[22] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 71-72.
[23] *Karl Jung* seems to allude to something similar when he speaks of the realm of the unconscious using archetypes and codes in the unconscious to communicate with consciousness. (See Karl Jung, *Memories Dreams and Reflections,* trans. by Richard and Clara Winston, New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 392, 182-184.
[24] This puts one in mind of *Paul Ricoeur*, and his work *The Symbolism of Evil.* Ricoeuer seems to suggest that the very structure of language involves the physical and the metaphorical as allies in articulating actual reality. He therefore suggests that a physical stain perceived metaphorically as an evil or sinful stain enables us to intuit the concrete reality of sin and evil itself. In Ricoeur it is almost as if the invisible world were making itself known in code. In Chapter Seven we shall have much more to say about him.

the world of idea, but can only be intuited by reason.[25] Plato reasons that such intuition is possible in this world because the Universal Father planted souls in this world. Although created, and despite the additions added by the Universal Father and the planetary gods, they are otherwise exactly like eternal uncreated soul. Human souls therefore have the capacity to intuit the invisible forms[26] in this world which are the same as those in the eternal world.

Now we are in a position to give as answer as to how reason located in the heart of mortal man orders the world of soul matter and motion. Plato seemed convinced that the more reasoning man focuses devotedly on the higher realm of intelligible forms, the more ordered his soul becomes and the more able to bring order to external matter and to motion.

But Plato qualifies this kind of knowledge. Men with this capacity must steadily free themselves from the hindrances of the sensory realm, as well as from emotions of the soul such as desire and envy and ambition.[27] Those who heed only the sensory world of true opinion and who succumb to desire and ambition and emotion fall more and more into lower life forms. Plato describes in some detail why the soul yields to this sensory world. The planetary gods, in obedience to the creator, purposely added parts to the soul located down from the head that would further disorder reason in mortals. The mortal were given terrible but *necessary* feelings: *pleasure* the chief incitement to wrong, pain, which frightens us from the good, *confidence* and *fear, two foolish counsellors*, *obstinate passion* and credulous hope. To this mixture they added *irrational sensation* and desire which shrinks from nothing, and so gave the mortal elements its *indispensable equipment*.[28]

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[25] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 120-121, 71-72, p. 47, 40-42.
[26] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 71-72, p. 47, 40-42. In the Timaeus, ideas are invisible in the sense that the forms are not physical, but they are definitely not invisible as *idea*, as what can be seen by the eye of the mind. So they appear to be real ideas, knowable by reason. The concepts underlying geometry math and number are all knowable. So are the concepts underlying music and the arts. These are all ideas, all examples of intelligible but non - physical realities. Yet, in Plato, they are conveyed through the senses.
[27] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 58-59, 120-121.
[28] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 96-97.

So, in Plato evil increases as mortal beings fail to contemplate eternal forms. Those who ignore this realm sink deeper and deeper into sensuality, passion, earthiness. They sacrifice the higher realm to emotions and passions found in the midriff, stomach and genitals.[29] Such mortals heed less and less the head where reason is located. Courage, though located in the neck close to the head, becomes less and less responsive to it, as does the heart where human emotion is placed. Due to implications we shall later examine, we should take careful note, that for Plato, Reason *is* the divine part of the soul. Emotions such as courage, affection, outrage at injustice are all inferior to reason.[30] In effect, Plato partitions off reason from courage, desire and emotion. But for now we are noting how Plato's theory of knowledge leads him to see the increase of evil in mortal souls as due in large measure to a neglect of the world of intelligible forms

Birth And Rebirth In Plato's Timaeus

To understand Plato's perception of evil with respect to an ascending and descending order of life forms, we must now examine his doctrine of The *Transmigration of The Soul.* Among living creatures there is a chain of being, from the highest to the lowest. Plato calls this shadow world a perfect world. It resembles *as much as possible* the eternal world of form and idea. Because the creator is good and has no envy, he wished all things to be *as like to himself as possible*.[31]

Here Plato seems to suggest that the maker and the divine living creature are either one and the same or that both are exactly like each other. Yet if both are exactly like to each other, are not they in fact the same?[32] Although Plato often distinguishes between the maker

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[29] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 97-100, 122-124.
[30] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 97-100, 122-124, 120-122.
[31] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 43, 124, 56-59, 55, 58-59, 51.
[32] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 42, 51.

and the eternal living creature, they may in the end be the same. But in either case everything in this world is to be as like as possible to the maker. Interestingly, this world, according to Plato, has the capacity to represent every form of life that intelligence discerns in the living creature: gods, birds, animals and fish.[33] In the final statement in the Timaeus Plato declares:

> *We can now claim that our account of the universe is complete. For our world has now received its full compliment of living creatures, mortal and immortal; it is a visible living creature, it contains all creatures that are visible and is itself an image of the intelligible; and it has thus become a visible god, supreme in greatness, beauty and perfection, a single uniquely created heaven.*[34]

So we see that this world is be filled with creatures such as gods, men, animal, bird and fish that are also said to inhabit as idea or form the divine eternal world. Must we therefore suppose a hierarchy of forms exists in the divine world, if in fact, this world is modelled after it? Or, could it be that because it is a perfect eternal world such forms exist, but require no hierarchy? After all, Plato said that this world would be only as like as possible to the divine eternal creature. Could the eternal creature have any inequalities in it, anything viewed as less valuable than another?

At least in the Timaeus, Plato never addresses this. What Plato sees as vital is that the divine world of forms in some way or other makes itself known in this world. It does so through living creatures, living images, and receptacles of matter[35] in this world that enable not feeling but knowledge, knowledge of the highest order. Yet, in the very expressed purpose of the divine being to fill all forms in this world that exist in the eternal divine and

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[33] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., p. 55.
[34] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., p. 123.
[35] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 67-70.

changeless world, a strange, and perhaps contradictory perception of evil emerges. This possibility we will now examine.

Exploring A Seeming Contradiction In Plato's Perception Of Evil In The Timaeus

It would appear, in Plato, that for this world to be as perfect as possible a replica of the world upon which it is modelled, it was designed to produce a high level of wickedness. For Plato reports that souls who do not rightly order motion and who do not contemplate the higher realms of reason, will succumb to the world of sense and become wicked.[36] They will thus be born as a lesser creature, perhaps a woman, or something lower in the scale. The most wicked receive the most mindless and brainless bodies. The scale is as follows in order of lowliness and level of wickedness: Woman, Animal, bird, reptile and worst of all fish. Fish contains souls of such irrationality and evil mindlessness that they are not even fit to breathe air.[37]

Yet even these lower forms are fulfilling the purpose of the Universal Father to fill this world with the totality of forms that exist in the divine world. It would seem then that without the aid of evil the Eternal Craftsman could not accomplish his purposes. For the gods assign the lower life forms when the soul becomes sufficiently wicked to deserve them. Therefore wickedness seems a necessary step in bringing this world into conformity with the divine. Does this mean that the divine being considers wickedness a necessary part of the perfecting of this perfect shadow world? Do wicked souls, whether man, animal, or fish in this world have wicked counterparts in the eternal world? Indeed, do souls increasing in

[36] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 58-59. 120-122.
[37] Plato, Timaeus, *Ibid*., pp. 120-124.

wickedness in each new rebirth have counterparts in the heavenly realm that also increase in wickedness? We will have more to say on this later when we discuss the weaknesses of Plato's dualism in Chapter Two. For the present, the difficulties are simply raised, not seriously addressed.

This concludes our sketch of the Timaeus with respect to its theory of knowledge, its worldview, and how Plato's perception of evil is integrated into both. In Plato, we see two forms of evil discussed. The first form, natural evil, is caused in general by the contradictory and disorderly motions that the Maker designed in this world for his own purposes. These motions affect not only the equilibrium of mortal souls, but also are responsible in large measure for the sickness, decay, misfortune, pain, anguish, and loss that mortals endure. But moral evil, the second form, is the product of minds that fail to contemplate and reason with respect to the higher realms, and who therefore succumb not only to the sensory world but to that part of them where foul ambition and evil desires dwell. For Plato then, the greatest moral cause of evil is a failure of focus, a failure to set ones mind on the heavens rather than on the earth.[38]

Assessing The Strength Of Plato's Dualism In The Timaeus

Every dualism has an Achilles *Heel*, a strength that is also its central and inherent weakness. For a dualism seeks to hold together in a harmony two ontologically or qualitatively different things. In the case of Plato the dualism is between permanence and change, matter and soul, idea and shadow, good and evil. Therefore, to survive, the dualism

[38] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 122-124, 70-72.

must contain ranges of commonality that can mediate between the differences. In Plato's case, there must then be ways in which mortals caught up in the realm of matter and change can identify with, understand, comply with, and imitate the world of permanence. Such a discussion will afford some insight as to why the dualism of Plato, despite revisions as early as Aristotle, enjoyed such immense influence and longevity. So let us now examine the effectiveness of the components of Plato's dualism. Let us then, in a sense, view his Timaeus, as a mediator. How successful is Plato in uniting the temporal and the eternal, in making a way for the eternal to reach into the understanding and the conduct of the temporal?

Mediation 1: The Commonalities in Soul Among The Eternal Living Creature, The Gods and Mortals

Perhaps the strongest form of mediation in Plato's Timaeus is found in his explanation as to the origin of soul. As we earlier noted, the soul, despite some differences, is qualitatively the same in the created world of the gods and mortals as it is in the eternal world of the living creature. This sameness allowed Plato to speak of a range of true and certain human knowledge of eternal things that essentially prevailed in the west till the era of Locke, Hume, Kant and Hegel.

It is clear from Plato's doctrine of death, rebirth and release of the soul that not only the Gods, but also mortals can experience the pleasure, through the reasoning soul, of ordering matter rightly. Both can experience in some degree the same kind of goodness, love, and rationality that is part and parcel of the archetypal world and the archetypal divine being. Mortals, though living in a realm where motion can confuse and go astray, can yet emulate the divine world, and the world of planetary gods whenever they make good and thus rightly reasoned judgements. In such cases, they like the planetary gods are rightly

harmonizing matter. So mortals too participate in making this world a moving image and likeness of the eternal world. There is therefore a close and even partly qualitative likeness between the moral conduct of mortals and the divine being himself who is wholly good. This implies as well that when mortals rightly order parts of the shadow world, to that degree it will conform to the archetypal world as much as is possible.

Mediation 2: The Knowing of God and Reality in Plato and The Timaeus

Another great strength of the worldview in the Timaeus is that it is not an absolute dualism epistemologically speaking. The Creator and divine living creature are knowable to quite an extent. Here some discussion involving Plato and Immanuel Kant's Critique *Of Pure Reason* should serve to underscore the mediating power of Plato's theory of the knowledge. In order to do this, we will first contrast Kant with Plato, and then focus on what they have in common. It is suggested by this author that what they have in common offers an irony of considerable proportions, but first the contrasts.

Contrasts Between Kant's Critique of Pure Reason And Plato's Timaeus With Respect To Knowledge About God And The Metaphysical Or Transcendent Realm

Plato allows for considerable knowledge of the divine being and the divine world. Kant says there can be none, because the intuitions of appearance such as time and space are only useful for life in this world and can reveal nothing of *things in themselves* as they really are. This means God is unknowable, as is, by implication, Kant's transcendent realm in general. The implications of Kant's own claim means that he allows for no mediation *at the knowledge level* between the finite and the transcendent realm. Unlike Kant, Plato does not

place God or the components of the divine world beyond finite categories.[39] Therefore the believer is able to have a cognitive reasoning faith and knowledge of the divinity and of the eternal world.

In Kant, on the other hand, an unknowable supreme being participates in human society through moral conscience, but has no definable place in human knowledge. He or it provides in himself no attributes to emulate, and no voiced or written teachings for mortals to pattern their lives after.[40] Kant claims that faith and knowledge of god and of the transcendent realm are not accessible to a world of appearances. Therefore, epistemologically speaking, god and the knowledge of reality are divorced from morality. For Kant, morality comes from a transcendent realm which gives an *ought* (conscience) to intuitions of appearance.

In reality, as Kant insists time and again in his *Critique of Pure Reason,* the intuitions of appearance are not really an appearance of anything in the sense of actually reflecting it. On the contrary, Kant knows that to speak of knowledge reflecting the thing in itself, in any degree whatever, would presuppose some true knowledge of the thing in itself. Since there can be no reflection in appearances of things in themselves, Kant uses the term *appearance* in a purely figurative way. It is really a misnomer with respect to the normal dictionary meaning of appearances. It cannot be taken literally without violating the nature of what Kant calls appearances, and what Kant calls the unknowable thing in itself.[41]

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[39] Immanuel Kant, Critique *of Pure Reason,* trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), pp. 88, 88-89, 648-650, 324, 483-484.

[40] This is said in respect to Kant's claim. Certainly Kant's disclaimer of knowledge about God does imply a split between knowledge, God, morality and belief. But the very nature of the critique seems to disallow Kant's claim of a dualism between knowledge and the transcendent. Kant does in fact, despite his claim, give us a knowledge of the divine and of metaphysics which lives can be patterned after, even a knowledge of things in themselves. For Kant in no way denies that the metaphysical realm is real and composed in the way he describes.

[41] Immanuel Kant, Critique*,* Ibid..*,* pp. 65, 125-126, 82, 172-173, 219-220, 265,278, 282, 346, 440.

Surprisingly, Kant's does hold that the moral nature of the universe necessitates the reality of God, but this in itself is not consistent with Kant's insistence that the world of appearance does not allow for our saying anything about God.

Thus far we have focused on the contrasts between Plato and Kant, the former allowing a generous knowledge of the divine realm, the latter claiming no such knowledge is possible. But now we will take note of what Plato and Kant have in common. It is here that we should be able to detect a great irony in Kant's theory of knowledge. It should serve also to underscore the strength and appeal not only of Plato's dualism but that of Kant's as well.

What Kant And Plato Have In Common

First neither Kant or Plato create an absolute dualism between the divine and the mortal, that is between the metaphysical and the finite realm. Although Plato shows the qualitative differences that do exist between the eternal and the created, there is still much room for knowledge of the divine, and for that knowledge to usher in appropriate conduct in imitation of it. Kant, for his part, allows for the Metaphysical realm to mediate at the practical or pragmatic level of practical reason. So both, by not setting up an absolute dualism allow for mediation to take place.

But now to the second area the two philosophers have in common. Here the irony, earlier spoken of, should unfold. But in order to show this area of commonality between Kant and Plato, Kant must first be challenged with respect to his claims based on his doctrine of appearances. Kant says that at the level of knowledge there can be no understanding of things in themselves, let alone of the divine.

But surely there are reasonable grounds for challenging this. Does not the very structure of the worldview articulated in Kant's Critique allow for a generous range of

mediation not only at the practical level, but at the knowledge level as well? Were Kant's dualism of knowledge truly absolute, then would not the very grounds of the dualism dissolve? Would it not even dissolve the rationale for practical conduct? For Kant uses as a rationale for moral conduct, the reality of the moral realm, even if he claims that realm is unknowable as it is in itself?

It would appear that if a dualism of any description claims that there really is no knowledge of the transcendent, in all consistency we can no longer speak of a dualism only of a monism whether of idea, matter, or energy. A dualism that really allowed the finite realm no knowledge of the divine is surely a contradiction in terms. Indeed, how could Kant's critique even be understood if nothing can be known about the divine part of the dualism?

Had Kant truly succeeded in separating out the knowledge of God and of the divine, would not the very appeal of his dualism diminish to nothing? For it is precisely the ***knowledge*** relations articulated so systematically in his Critique of Pure Reason, with respect to the realm of metaphysics and the realm of appearances, the realm of the finite and the transcendent, that constitutes the appeal and durability of Kant's famous critique.

Kant like Plato before him supplies a dualism, affording a generous knowledge of god and of the transcendent. This of course is in direct contradiction to the theory of knowledge he espouses. Ironically, it appears to this writer that the strength of Kant's dualism is precisely the knowledge it offers about the transcendent realm as it interacts with the finite realm of appearances. In this author's view any dualism between the divine and the finite that actually succeeds in consistently excluding a knowledge of the divine is more than just inherently weak; it is a recipe for the destruction of the dualism itself.

If consistency is to figure in the equation, can an absolute dualism with respect to knowledge of the divine ever even be stated? Ironically, Kant's dualism draws its strength and its durability precisely from the substantial knowledge it posits not only of the metaphysical realm, but of the supreme being as well.

Even if Kant could miraculously succeed in sustaining a dualism between knowledge and metaphysics, all the mediating powers of his dualism would perish. For then nothing could be said about the metaphysical realm in its relationship with the finite realm. So in an ironic twist, the strength of Plato in avoiding an absolute dualism between knowledge and the divine is illustrated in Kant as well. For in Kant, despite his claim, there does not appear to be an absolute dualism of knowledge between the transcendent and the finite. The relations posited in the critique between the world of the divine and the world of appearance are themselves the strongest refutation of such a state of affairs.

Now Kant might counter by saying that apriori categories involving a synthesis between the transcendent and the finite can be deduced, though not known directly. But all this is to no avail, since Kant explains all his deductions regarding the apriori in language propositions. But as Kant himself agrees, all stated propositions belong to the world of appearances. They are not supposed to be able to say anything with respect to the metaphysical realm.

Indeed if we take seriously Kant's doctrine of appearances, the entire critique is grounded in his doctrine of appearances, and therefore on a premise that refutes the entire dualism he erects.

We therefore see, as illustrated both in Plato and Kant, that a generous knowledge of the divine realm mediated to the finite realm is central to the strength of any dualistic worldview. We should also see that such is the test of strength of any dualism. The less

knowledge mediated between the divine and the finite, the weaker the dualism. Whatever forms of mediation that are made possible, whether practical or existential, must still find their justification in the knowledge level made available for mediation between the temporal and the transcendent realm. We now turn to yet another area of commonality between Kant and Plato which serves to accentuate the strength of their respective dualisms. Once again we shall begin by first contrasting Plato and Kant, before proceeding to that which they have in common.

Differences In Plato And Kant With Respect To Faith Reason And Morality

In Kant, unlike Plato, the human mind seems split three ways, almost as if there were three separate monism's in the human mind, reason morality and faith. Neither of the three can have any knowledge of the other two. So in Kant morality cannot involve any transcendent belief, belief cannot engage morality, and neither reason or belief can engage each other with respect to ultimate questions. For in Kant all knowledge is appearance, so too is any knowledge derived from deduction or induction, even if it claims to have its origin in apriori categories.

Plato, by allowing ranges of sameness and likeness between the finite and the infinite allows for religion and belief to fuse together mind, reason, feeling and belief as something that works in concert. Unlike in Kant, Plato implies no monistic like dualism in the mind between reason, faith and morality. But now we shall begin again to show the commonalties in Kant and Plato. We shall suggest why Kant, in full concert with Plato, despite his theory of knowledge, presents us a dualism that very much allows for a fusion of reason, faith, and morality.

Commonalties Between Kant And Plato With Respect To Faith, Reason And Morality

In the first place Kant does not really succeed in blocking out a knowledge of God. Indeed his refutation of God presupposes it. In fact, it may well be argued that no worldview is devoid of some perception of God. Even the claim that God is unknowable presupposes some knowledge about God. If this be so, then no philosophy or religion ever escapes from some idea as to the nature of God, even if it is concludes that there is no God. In order to deny God's existence, some perception of God must be present in order for that same perception to be dismissed.

In the final analysis what is truly attractive in Kant is precisely the kind of justifications he employs to fuse the realm of human knowledge with the divine. He does so from a quest to make practical and applicable the transcendent realm to everyday existence. Yet Kant seeks to do so precisely by setting up a cognitive (knowledge) dichotomy between the finite and the transcendent realm. He does this precisely in order to fuse them together in the practical realm and to make the entire dualism workable. Yet his very justification presupposes an extensive knowledge of transcendent and apriori categories. Were he consistent, he would have had to admit that the very fact that he frames his dualism in knowledge categories leads to the logical negation of the metaphysical realm he seeks to defend, and relegates it and God to the world of appearances.

By contrasting in such vast detail the finite realm with God and the metaphysical realm, Kant ends up saying a great deal about God. He even explains that our moral intuition points to the true existence of a supreme being, even though knowledge categories cannot. But here again, Kant again ends up placing a supreme being in knowledge categories, even to the point of his arguing that our moral intuitions imply a moral supreme being. In truth it is

only because Kant does connect morality to a higher being that he motivates his reader to be moral.

So in reality with respect to belief, morality, and reason, there is no real monism in the mind between the two. Reason, faith, and morality are all given justification in Kant's exposition of God and the transcendent realm. Like in any strong dualism there cannot be any real split between reason, faith and morality, only the claim of one. Ironically that very type of claim, namely that there is an unbridgeable knowledge gulf between reason, faith and morality, often provides in large measure the attraction of dualisms such as Kant's.

The difference between Kant and Plato lies in Kant presenting a different perception of God than Plato, not in Kant saying nothing at all about God. Indeed God is very systematically fitted into the system of knowledge Kant erects. God's attributes are duly noted, and he is thus integrated accordingly. It is precisely Kant's understanding of the nature of God that determines the positioning of God in his doctrine of appearances. But once again all this is in complete contradiction to his theory of knowledge in which nothing whatever can be said of the realm beyond appearances

Summary With Respect To The Contrasts And Commonalties In The Dualisms of Kant and Plato

So Kant ends up fortifying the effectiveness of Plato's Dualism. Despite his claims, the dualism underlying his Critique of Pure Reason, allow for a level of knowledge between the finite and the infinite rich in mediation. Again, despite his claims, Kant allows for religion and belief to fuse together mind, reason, feeling and belief as something that works in concert. This is only because Kant never really succeeds consistently in constructing a dualism between the knowledge of the transcendent and the finite, nor in splitting up the knowledge connection between faith, reason and morality. Indeed, it is because he did not

succeed that his dualism has held such attraction and still exerts great influence. As earlier explained, the actual strengths of Kant's dualism stands as a kind of ironic witness to the strength of Plato's. Both afford ranges of knowledge that allow for a powerful mediation between the finite and the infinite realms. As we have noted, the great strength of any dualism is the degree of know-ability and mediating power it allows between the divine and finite realms. Hence in Plato and Kant two particularly strong worldviews came into being, neither dualism can be relegated to the past, they still play a major role in the ongoing academic discussion as to the nature of ultimate reality. Hence we see how Plato testifies to the strength of the mediating powers of Kant's actual dualism, and Kant's to Plato's.

Mediation 3: A Reasonably Personal Deity Of Pure Reason And Goodness

While it should not be overstated, Plato's Universal Father is sufficiently personal to powerfully mediate between the two realms. If in another sense the eternal father is composed of the parts and wholes of a world ideas, he is still said to be able to love and care for what he has formed and fashioned.[42]

There need surely be no debate as to the attraction and mediating power of a personal God in a dualism. Almost the entire history of Western religions bears witness. Even in Hinduism its appeal is fully recognised. One of the major ways to enlightenment in Hinduism is to perceive of Brahma as personal. In Christianity even up to the present, it is characteristically the single most powerful reason for the staying power of the Christian faith. Its role in Islam and Judaism often testifies to a similar state of affairs.

[42] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 44, 51, 42.

However, the personal does not take on this intense attraction unless it is fused with the idea of a good and powerful God. As was earlier noted, Socrates and Plato with their idea of a god of reason and goodness eventually triumphed over the loose dualism between good and evil in the Gods of Olympus. In the Timaeus Plato does express a belief in the traditional Gods.[43] Desmond Lee suggests that the Creator may in fact be Zeus.[44]

While this should not be ruled out, it is noticeable in the Timaeus that the mortal realm is assigned to the planetary gods of reason. The Olympian Gods are acknowledged, but are given no role in the Timaeus. It was surely difficult for Plato to reconcile Zeus's sexual infidelities, and the back and forth bickering between Athena, Poseidon, Hera and the rest with the Universal Father, a god of pure reason and goodness.[45]

What must always be remembered is that Socrates and Plato arrived at a perception of God and goodness without rival in former Greek thought and history. Here is not a loosely held dualism between god and man, but a great divide between good and evil.[46] In Socrates, Plato, and later in Aristotle, good and evil are taken with unmatched seriousness and intensity. The very perceptions of goodness in Socrates and Plato maximize the understanding of evil and its horror like never before in Greek thought or history. Total divine goodness is now given great weight, as is mortal wickedness. Evil is not minimised but maximized. It is not acceptable or admissible among the planetary Gods, and it does not go unpunished in the realm of mortals.

Mortals participating in evil are no longer viewed simply as victims of fate or pawns of the gods; they are instead wicked souls who will continue to be reborn until they return to

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[43] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., p. 56.
[44] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 8-9.
[45] *The Iliad,* Ibid., pp. 369, 503.
[46] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 57, 72-73, 58, 120-122.

the original orbits of goodness and reason in their souls. Both the Universal Father and the immortal planetary gods decree retribution for evil.

Consequently, Plato's Eternal Father and the gods are both personal enough to be searchers of the human heart and conscience. Yet the Maker and the gods of the planets allow a range of independence for mortals from the Gods. Mortals can choose between the course that leads to wickedness and that which leads to peace and a home with the Gods.

Still, it should also be observed that the supreme God is not in any way directly approachable. He seems to leave all the details of dealing with mortals to the gods. He has done his part simply by sowing souls into the stars, the earth, and the planets. Indeed he does this precisely to absolve himself of blame for the evils he knows very well will be committed by mortals. So, although he is depicted as one who loves and cares for the world he has formed, there is yet an appreciable difference between him and mortals, allowing for no real intimacy.

On the other hand, the God, and the gods of the Timaeus are personal enough and involved enough to allow for a form of love which involves intelligent good will. The attraction of this kind of goodness should not be underestimated. While it does not speak of feeling and of intimacy between Gods and men, it speaks encyclopaedias with respect to kindness, duty, courage, and responsibility towards one's neighbour. For in Plato the Gods clearly approve of good government, good treatment of people, and just dealings at every level of society. Greeks adhering to the God of the Timaeus could know enough of the Universal Father to sense his love and care, and to comprehend their role in light of the commonalties in them and in the divine.

Still, perhaps the greatest range of relationship pointed out in the Timaeus, with respect to the personal, is Plato's depiction of mortals contemplating intelligible forms.

Here, without doubt, Plato perceived attributes of the divine, whether of love, justice, the harmony of numbers, the orderliness of art, beauty, and wise warfare. Here the mortal could share with the divine all that attached to reason, be it art, music, governance, or the orchestration of war.[47] Here the mystical and the cognitive fuse, and the outcome of the fusion is the practice of the good under the watchful eyes of the gods enlisted in the service of the eternal father.

In Augustine of Hippo, we see again a range of contemplation of higher realities that testify in all Clarity to the power, attraction, depth and influence of the Timaeus on him. This contemplation of the highest, despite the differences between the two men,[48] is time and again evident in Augustine's Confessions, his great work on the Trinity, and his Classic *Magnus Opus,* The City of God. Thus in the personal dimensions as well, Plato's Timaeus affords rigorous and well fortified ranges of mediation between the realm of being and becoming, between the good and between the evil.

Mediation 4: The Mediation Power Existing Between The Platonic Dualism Of Good And Evil

In Socrates and later in Plato the tension between good and evil is magnified far beyond the Gods of homer, and so too the evil. The very intensity of the conflict sets up a dialectical struggle with no precedent in Greek thought or religion.[49] But this very conflict

[47] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 64-65.
[48] Saint Augustine, Confessions, trans. by Henry Chadwick (() xford: Oxford University Press, 1998). See also by the same author: *The City of God,* trans. by P.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Trinity, trans. by Stephen Mckenna (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963).
[49] I am indebted to *Radaslov Tsanoff* for this insight. He states that with the coming of Socrates and Plato Greek attention was shifted to the problem of evil. In Plato, reason is pure and perfect. Evil cannot come from it.

can be seen to fortify the dualism and contribute to its attraction. We shall very shortly look at this in some detail.

But even apart from the conflict, Plato's realistic articulation of evil is convincing and thus attractive in itself. Matter and the human soul itself contain negative and destructive properties that can attain to goodness when ordered by reason, the divine part of the soul. Nevertheless the power of evil is formidable and tenacious. Even when a mortal soul escapes from the encasement of matter by rightly ordering it for a time, matter and motion separated from the human soul reverts back. At the death of the body it moves into disorder or decay. It returns to the world of the six motions where evil dwells. It ever retains its capacity to again mislead human judgement.

Plato's world, in concert with our own, did not lack either the empirical experience or the perception of vast ranges of natural or moral evil in the mortal world. Plato was so disgusted with the political evils that he rejected politics and saw philosophy as the answer to human evil and to a society ruled by justice goodness and reason. One notes in Plato's description of matter that evil is taken with great seriousness as well as the injustice and bewilderment it births. Neither does Plato give the impression that it is easy to overcome. On the contrary in Plato's view, the great mass of humanity will again and again succumb to it, only the few in every generation will contemplate the higher realms. To even begin to prevail, in Plato's view, normally takes many lifetimes.

Plato's realistic and convincing articulation, both of evil and its attraction is common to many of the major religions that have endured the test of history. The persuasiveness comes from different explanations, but even a cursory look at either Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam offers many parallels of the intrinsic attraction a convincing case for the reality of evil offers to any given dualism.

It is a near constant theme in Saint Paul, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and John Calvin. In Eastern thought it is detectable with no less difficulty in religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Even though Hinduism is in the end a Monistic Religion, the process to enlightenment involves a great battle with evil often lasting over many lifetimes.[50] In Theravada Buddhism, ultimately a Monistic Worldview as well, there is again a terrible struggle with evil and suffering. In Theravada Buddhism evil is located in the human ego and freedom is found in overcoming the equally evil illusion that the ego or the Gods are real.[51] All these religions are attractive not only for the hope they offer, but for their highly believable portrayal of evil. The solutions Plato and these other religions offer for evil would have little attraction if the case for evil was not made with such clarity and persuasion.

Of course the attraction is heightened all the more once the tension is set up between the evil and the good. Hence Plato's dualism between good and evil is heightened all the more by the struggle it promotes, and the hope that it extends. For in answer to the reality of evil Plato offers the world of the Universal Father, an everlasting home in the stars, and the hope of a final escape from the powers of death and impermanence.

As in all the major worldviews involving a dualism between good and evil, there is such a familiar ring with actual human experience, that faiths of this sort are perceived as strongly moored to reality. People are thus able to, in considerable measure, to explain their own experience of good and evil.

Not only this, for a solution is offered, a way out of the world of moral and natural evils. Plato's dualism is grounded in the practical, in the evils common to the mortal environment. In this respect it is very much in touch with the human condition. Few things

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[50] *Hinduism*, Edited by Louis Renou (New York: George Braziller, 1962), pp. 87-102.
[51] *Buddhism*, edited by Richard A. Gard (New York: George Braziller, 1962), pp. 106-124.

are more attractive to mortals who accept the reality of evil in themselves and in the world than the promise of a future where the goodness within them will one day win.

But not only is the final victory attractive. There is also the marvellous encouragement and allure of daily winning victories over evil, and of living a life where time and again one sees the good triumph over the evil. Even today this is still one of the greatest attractions of story, screen and stage.

One of the great literary classics of our time is *J. R. R. Tolkein's Lord of The Rings.* The book has such appeal that we may well conjecture as to whether it will ever go out of print. Tolkein portrays a highly convincing world of light and dark in which the light triumphs in the end. Though it is a world of Hobbits and Elves, the heroes undergo trials and sufferings, hopes and fears, very much like our own. Though the characters are in a world of story, they yet seem to break through into our world. We can so identify with them that were we to meet with them on the street, we should carry on a chat with them, hardly taking note of their hobbit feet or size. Take away the war between light and darkness hard won and heroically won by the creatures of the light, and Tolkein would surely have joined the rank of rejected publications, a three volume trilogy, gathering dust on Tolkein's private mantle.

Though Plato does not minimize the power of evil, or its natural tendencies, its power is still inferior to that of reason and goodness. The proof of this for the believer is the eternal world where harmony dwells, and evil has no place. In Plato, hearts are encouraged to turn towards heaven more than towards earth. They are invited as serious participants in a struggle between good and evil. Here, just as in the Lord of the Rings, good triumphs in the end. Plato's basic dualism between good and evil, despite many revisions and re-interpretations, continued almost undimmed in the Western World until the coming of David Hume. Even after Hume, and as early as Kant, a great choir of defenders have come to

Plato's aid. Therefore, the very reaction to Hume testifies to the strength of Plato's dualism to mediate between the divine and the finite, the good and the evil.

Mediation 5: Value Of The Individual Over Process And Progress

A significant and compelling attraction in Plato's dualism is in the role that matter plays with respect to the soul. Matter has no destiny of its own. It is really a device used by the Universal Father to decide the destiny of souls. There is no suggestion that matter itself is evolving into ever higher forms. Indeed, its sole role is with respect to the destiny of individual souls filling up all the forms resident in the world of the living eternal creature.

There is thus in Plato's dualism and his perception of evil an emphasis on individual souls. There is no character given to matter itself that will allow it to one day exceed the value of the human soul. He does not assign it a destiny and a potential that makes it autonomous and able to evolve higher forms of species that will one day transcend the soul. There is no danger in Plato of humanity being sacrificed for some future destiny of an evolving material universe.

The highest goal for the created world is for it and all its creatures to imitate the unchanging world of the eternal. Matter and motion is but a tool of the Creator or Maker to bring the kind of conflicts and motions into this world that will enable it to emulate the divine world as much as possible. Individuals have various stations in life, whether woman or slave, in which they are destined to remain till the next life. Therefore the journey of soul ever eclipses in value and worth the destiny of matter. The focus is always on living souls and their relationship to the eternal and on this worlds imitating the eternal as much as is possible. In the Timaeus human destiny is, in the final analysis, not to be found in this world, but in escape from its evils and in a final journey to the heavens.

Yet it would be unfair to say that Plato has created a heavenly world to the neglect of the earthly, as it were, a pie in the sky world. For Plato was convinced that a contemplation of the higher realms would keep any philosopher king free of the temptations of this world. Unhindered by sensory temptations, he could focus on sweet reason and govern well. Desmond Lee, in his introduction to his translation of the Timaeus emphasises that Plato rejected politics because of the corruption he observed in its practitioners. He therefore saw the solution in a *Philosopher King*. It is the philosopher king and all others who rightly contemplate and focus on the higher things that can best run this world, best order it, best conduct warfare, and best conduct a world at peace. It is they who will not succumb to wickedness. For they are veterans in the contemplation of unchangeable intelligible forms. Plato would judge it as no more than a carelessly formed truism to claim that heavenly minded people are no earthly good. Indeed it is evident in both his perception of good and evil, that he held the contrary. He would regard it as a notoriously weak argument to suggest that the attraction and validity of his dualism is weakened by its focus on invisible realities. He naturally sees this focus of the heavenly as the best way to order the practical mortal realm and to erect a world of reason, goodness and justice. For Plato, he who succumbs to the desires of this world is least able to govern the more earthy the less earthly good. We therefore see in Plato's view of matter that it is of use only when it can be used as a vessel to liberate the human soul and assist in creating a world where individual human beings are treated with justice. The chief use of matter is to so order it that eventually every soul can rise above the world of desire and wickedness.[52]

Hence Plato's refusal to offer to matter and to process a destiny of its own apart from the human soul and human existence. Hence the tremendous attraction of Plato's dualism, as

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[52] *Plato, Timaues, ibid.*, p. 58.

it played out in light of his theory of knowledge as to the nature of matter, and the worlds of both being and becoming respectively. In Plato humanity is no longer a puppet of the gods. He has, instead, a destiny to dwell with the immortals. The soul seems so constructed that eventually every soul will finally find deliverance from the six motions of matter and rise to the stars. So in the end matter loses, the soul wins. Nor does matter ever change its essential tendencies nor its destiny which seem, in Plato, to ultimately serve as a spur to the good in man.[53]

Mediation 6: The Strength Of Plato's Theodicy.

With respect to the purpose of the Timaeus, the renowned Classicist Desmond Lee had this to say.

> *The primary purpose of the Timaeus is theological, that is to say, to give a religious and teleological account of the origin of the world and the phenomena of nature. In the laws Plato sharply criticizes those who account for the natural world and its processes in purely material terms, attributing them to necessity or chance, both of which share the common characteristic of excluding intelligence or design; the Creator in the Timaeus is in himself an assertion of the opposite view, that the power behind the universe is that of a divine purpose.*[54]

Desmond Lee rightly views the Timaeus as a theological work, but it also seems evident that theodicy was in large measure, the motive force behind the resultant Theology. It would appear that there is a small deposit, if any, of things that do not relate to exonerating God. Part of that exoneration involves not only showing God's non-involvement in evil, but also vindicating his purpose for creating man, as well as the methods chosen to perfect

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[53] It was the Stoics who popularised the idea of evil as a spur to the good, but Plato's doctrine of soul seems to at least anticipate this later development. For a discussion of the Stoic use of evil as a spur, see the previously cited work by Radaslov Tsanoff*, The Nature of Evil).*

[54] Plato, Timaeus*, Ibid*., pp. 7-8.

humanity and their world. Plato not only says that the Universal Father and the realm of the uncreated world is perfect, but also that this realm is perfect. In fact is seems to be perfect exactly because it is as close as possible to the eternal word. Plato's entire chain of being from the lowest to the highest is ultimately concerned with the plan of the Universal Father to liberate the human souls from evil and to imitate the divine world. This of course in turn vindicates the Maker's divine wisdom and goodness.

As has already been noted, Plato constructs his dualism out of his theory of knowledge. Yet nothing in the Timaeus seems extraneous to this goal, this total vindication of the Universal Father. The motive of The Universal Father is wholly good and untainted by evil in any way. Plato thereby sets before us not only a theology, but a theodicy in the form of an entire worldview that seeks to answer the question of evil. How can evil exist in a world created by a God of perfect reason and therefore perfect goodness? But it also offers a hope based on the goodness of this deity, not only of escape but of a good life here on earth. All this again vindicates the motives of the maker.

But in order to further assess the strength of Plato's theodicy and the way it fortifies the dualism, there is a need to examine the dualism in more detail. Any dualism where a Good and perfect God arranges and plans a world where evil has a place must give some answer as to its origin, and some explanation that will exonerate its pure and perfect maker.

It is evident from the very outset that the Universal Father is not the creator of matter, its chaos or its accompanying evils. Plato, by weakening the scope of the Maker's power and influence exonerates him. If Plato had made him the creator of matter, the Creator must of course take responsibility for its creation.

We note in the Timaeus that matter did not simply start off bad. Left on its own, it always is. When it is not being ordered by reason its ever reverts back. Of course this

tendency of matter will never again return to near to total chaos because the Maker used it all up in his framing his new world.' He ordered it anew and arranged that matter: earth, air, fire and water, all of which belong to the order of necessity, work alongside reason to make a perfect world. But Plato offers reasons as to why despite this alliance with matter and its accompanying evils, the Universal Father can remain pure and unaffected.

For the maker created a soul tailored to exist in the world of mortals, so even the conflicts placed within the soul are there for a good purpose. But that is where his involvement ends. Now it is left to the Gods to administer whatever else is necessary for a perfect world. This resembles in some measure the later deists who declared that God designed the world so perfectly that no further intervention was necessary. Even the details of carrying out the alliance between reason and necessity are not handled personally by him. All this is assigned to the Gods. So once again Plato protects the perfect goodness of the Universal Father.

Of course Plato must admit that the Eternal Craftsman did assign a necessary role to evil in bringing about the good. Surely by enlisting evil in the construction of a perfect world, the Maker is himself implicated. This especially appears to be the case in that the Universal Father actually designed emotions and desires in man that very naturally cause him to choose evil. Indeed the Maker is well aware of this, and for this very reason opts out of further direct involvement.

But Plato has an answer to this. Plato sees all this as part of a perfect work. Eventually every struggling soul seems bound to win out, no matter how many lifetimes he must first endure. After all, Plato said that the world of ideal eternal forms: ideal men, bird, beasts, and fish must all be represented in this world. Such is the chain of being and the chain of forms that must be filled in this creature realm in order for this world to be perfect.

But Plato can also argue that eventually the reasoning soul is so designed as to enable every mortal to finally make the right choices. Some will simply take more lifetimes than others to come to the full realization that wickedness is not the way to go. But in all creatures the orbits of reason will eventually align. Meanwhile even the wicked will serve their purpose, filling up through their various lifetimes all the necessary forms in the eternal world, thereby enabling this world to be as like as possible to the eternal world, and thereby a perfect world.

In all this Plato advances a highly plausible doctrine of free choice. It is never the Universal Father who does wickedness. It is mortals. But even if mortals choose wickedness, they will still serve the purposes of the Eternal Craftsman. You might say that they will serve as, to coin a phrase from Reformed Theology, temporary *vessels of wrath*. Therefore, even wickedness itself serves to perfect the world, but this in no way implies that the Maker in any way consents to the evil done. Not only this, even the evil done will not prevent him from creating *the best of all possible worlds*, to borrow a phrase from Leibniz. This world is viewed as perfect because it conforms as much as is possible to the eternal world. It cannot be further perfected. The Maker did not take note of imperfections in this world and start again from square one. He has done it right the first time. It cannot, therefore, be improved upon.

If for example the argument were launched at Plato that there is simply too much evil in this world for his account to be plausible. Plato can simply argue that even though there is in fact a great deal of evil, it is still the least amount possible. Evil has attained its maximum. It can neither be decreased or increased. All this makes perfect sense if, in fact, a divine creator has reasoned out all the angles ahead of time, leaving nothing unattended. Willing free choice, and taking every quantity of evil into account, the maker then arranges things in just such a way as to perfect this world. Indeed, taking note of the evil, he thus arranges

through it to fill up the world with all the forms existing in the eternal world of the eternal creature.

If it argued that God should not allow any evil a place in this world, Plato has already explained that God has his limitations, but that in ordering matter, he has arranged for it to serve his divine purposes. Had the maker left matter untouched, this world would be a place of far greater evil.

Further Plato can argue that we must not blame God for the evils in this world, the real cause lies in the heart of man, his desire for the lower and his disinterest in the higher world of intelligible forms. As Plato has explained, most mortals succumb to this world of sense and irrationality. So none can accuse Plato of not taking note of the real evils in this world. But Plato offers a great hope, for surely when mortals souls are finally at home with the Gods, they will surely view all such evils as nothing, compared to their eternal home with the Gods where peace is everlasting. Though it was Saint Paul, not Plato who said this (Romans 8:18), the eternal bliss hereafter in Plato would seem to strongly support the implication.

With respect to natural evils, once again it is due to the nature of matter, not to the Eternal Father that so much human misfortune occurs in storm, famine, sickness and untimely death. When all is said and done, Plato could argue that not even God can totally change the base nature of matter and motion towards disorder and therefore towards evil. Plato can even encourage the sufferer by reminding him that the suffering would be far worse if the creator had not ordered matter as much as is possible, and thus made this world perfect.

Hence a fair examination of the strengths of Plato's theodicy ought to engender at least a measure of admiration for his genius and for the massive appeal his worldview sustained in the world of men for centuries to come. The mediating powers of Plato's

theodicy, despite the weaknesses we shall later explore, reveal a level of reflection, systematisation, practicality, and identification with the human condition, in many respects, unparalleled by his predecessors in the Greek world. If Plato is allowed his basic premises, as to the nature of matter and of being and becoming, even today, in a good many areas, it may prove no small task to dissolve the plausibility of his theodicy.

Summary Of The Timaeus And Its Strengths

The mediating powers of Plato's dualism arise out his theory of knowledge. In essence it involved a theory in which only the motions of the soul can order matter. Natural evil results from the nature of matter, moral from the souls failure to contemplate the intelligible forms from the world of being. For these give order and meaning to the world of becoming. Out of his theory of knowledge arose the six mediation powers selected, which held together the dualism. Each was seen it itself to have great staying power and wide appeal.

Mediation one was his doctrine of the origin of soul, and the things it has in common with the eternal divine, therefore supplying a fixed point of reference in the divine for morals, art, music, literature and the affairs of state.

Mediation two involved the knowledge of God and the metaphysical realm, something absolutely essential, as we saw in our comparison between Kant and Plato, to the life of any dualism.

Mediation three was the reasonably personal nature of the Universal Father and the Eternal Living Creature. Here a highly significant range of intelligent good will stood in a place very close to what we today might call wise love.

Mediation four was the intensity and realism of the dualism between good and evil, a view of evil heavily fused with the reality of the human condition and the human need for hope.

Mediation five was a view of matter that exalts the individual soul and offers the best way to order the temporal realm. It also sustained the values of individual human beings over the sensory environment. It further declared that the best ordering of this world must come from those who contemplate the heavens and the eternal world of intelligible forms. Such as these will reason well with respect to the eternal and the temporal.

Mediation six was the compelling attraction and Plausibility of Plato's theodicy. Plato and Socrates were the first to conceive of a wholly good and perfect God of reason; hence they were the first to work at the construction of a theodicy in the Greek world. It is nothing less than astounding that a first effort would show such genius. It could well be argued that the first, at least in some respects, is still among the greatest.

Plato Dualism Knowledge And Evil

Now that we have examined the Timaeus, we must return to its core. It is a dualism rooted in a theory of knowledge in which reasoning human beings can have knowledge of the intelligible world, where art, music, math, geometry, and astronomy, belong even more to the eternal world than they do to ours. Evil is motion and matter out of order. Yet Plato has enough faith in the power of reason as it lodges in the Universal Father and the gods to believe that mortal souls and the goodness within those souls will finally prevail. These ordered orbit in the divine part of man, resemble the souls of planets and of the eternal world. Eventually they will allow every mortal to prevail over his own wickedness. Out of that theory of knowledge Plato erects a highly plausible dualism for his time, with strong

explanatory powers. There is little doubt that Plato's dualism was motivated not only by his intense thirst for knowledge, but also by his need to find an answer for the evil within himself and a populace ruled by corrupt politicians and rich exploiters.

In all this Plato's perception of evil and the scope of that perception should cause us to marvel. Here was a thinker influenced no doubt by the genius of Socrates his teacher, a genius who never wrote a single page of his own. For Plato, evil played a subordinate role. Despite its strengths Plato saw a world of ultimate vindication. Even amidst the temporary triumphs of evil, even the forms it takes in living creatures is part and parcel of a perfect order as like as possible to the eternal world. Though evil is never finally extinguished, in the final analysis all its necessities and recalcitrance cannot prevent it from filling out the agenda of the Universal Father. Owing to Plato's theory of knowledge and of the nature of the world of being and becoming, evil cannot be destroyed. Even is this world were ever to be destroyed, evil would yet remain. But while it cannot be destroyed, it now serves the purposes of the Universal Father, and thus in the end serves not itself but the good. Evil in Plato might be compared to a stubborn donkey that nevertheless carries the load assigned.

In Plato resides an epistemology where the apriori categories are very much intact. There is resident within the human soul a power to intuit intelligible forms that can never find an explanation in the world of sense data, or the world of being and becoming. Here resides the source of the human understanding of number, order, beauty and the good. Its neglect is the occasion for evil to increase. So Plato erects a world where all that is connected to reason is also connected to true beauty. But everything goes back to Plato's theory of knowledge. Everything in this world is ultimately orchestrated by that eternal world of order idea and form. This is the world to which the soul of mortals belongs. Evil dwells in the world of pilgrimage in which mortals are born only in order to finally pass the

test and thus receive their reward, eternal life.[55] What now remains is to move to the next chapter and to an examination of Plato's dualism in light of its weaknesses. Here we will observe how dualisms can alter into revised dualisms complete with their own perceptions of evil. Further we will note in more detail how a dualism can dissolve into s monism as well and undergo radical changes with respect to the perception of evil.

[55] What is conspicuously absent in Plato is any kind of personal devil.

Chapter 2: Weaknesses In Plato's Timaeus

For almost the full extent of this chapter we shall compare and contrast Plato and his Timaeus with two thinkers; first, Aristotle, then, Titus Lucretius Carus. At times, Aristotle will figure in comparisons between Plato and Lucretius. In engaging both thinkers, we will note some of the areas in Plato that constituted weaknesses from the perspective of the revised dualism of Aristotle, and the outright monism of Lucretius. But our central intent is to observe the interactions between the varied theories of knowledge and the perceptions of evil that each either yields in reality, or implies through his theory of knowledge and his consequent worldview. In each case before beginning the comparisons, the thinkers will be introduced. As commonly happens with comparisons and contrasts, a little overlap from time to time seems unavoidable.

Four areas of comparison and contrast have been chosen: ***evil,*** the ***material world,*** ***reason,*** and ***worldliness***. At the completion of this comparative approach, we shall then briefly cover a major weakness in Plato's doctrine of the transmigration of souls. The problem it poses was sketchily stated in Chapter One.

Aristotle's Theory Of Knowledge

The differences that slowly emerged between Plato and Aristotle stemmed from the theory of knowledge Aristotle gradually came to adopt.[56] We saw in the former chapter that, for Plato, reliable knowledge requires an alliance between finite movable forms and the

[56] *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, edited by Remford Bambrough, trans. by J.L. Creed and A.E. Wardman, see especially the introduction and in particular p. 20.

motionless forms of the heavenly world. This idea became completely unacceptable to Aristotle, an indigestible obstacle to true science, as he understood it.[57] Aristotle argued that the perceived world is essentially reliable. Therefore, through careful observation of particular things, true and even ultimate knowledge was accessible.[58] While Aristotle believed in universal first principles, and that all particular knowledge must align with these,[59] he saw no need for Plato's transcendent world or for his Divine Craftsman credited with creating a copy world. In order to accommodate his own theory of knowledge, Aristotle dismissed Plato's divine world and its divine God. He replaced it with his *Unmoved Mover*, a God whom he set directly in the world that Plato had called the shadow world.[60]

Evil Aristotle And Plato's Timaeus

Both Aristotle and Plato believed in good and evil. Aristotle is as ready to condemn immorality as Plato. Both were equally revolted by corruption of any kind. One need only lightly peruse the moral writings of both student and teacher to view this commonality. Both took evil seriously.

Nevertheless, there was a decisive difference in their basic theories of knowledge and, consequently, their essential view of matter and soul. Plato saw no real way to fully eradicate the intrinsic evil in matter. But given the implications of Aristotle's view of matter and form, evil seems to have no place. Form is given total power over matter.[61] All matter is guided by form, and form itself is guided by an *Unmoved Mover* who moves all things.[62] In

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[57] *Ibid., pp.* 49-52.
[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45.
[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-45.
[60] *Ibid., pp.* 126-127.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-124. Aristotle did not view matter as substance, but all finite substance was composed of it.
[62] *Ibid., pp.* 124-127.

Plato we noted that the universal father leaves the ordering of things to the gods, and is therefore exonerated from blame. But it is much more difficult to absolve Aristotle's unmoved mover. For the mover is made responsible for all motion. He controls all other forms as well as all motion and all matter. How then to rescue him from blame for the evils in this world?

Yet not only this, it would seem that there are no limits to the potential of matter, no barriers to its transformation. Matter seems to have a destiny of its own, indeed even to have the potential for transformation. For the totally purity of the unmoved mover confers on all it controls a kind of perfection.[63] By implication, matter enjoys perpetual perfection at every stage in which it is ordered by the unmoved mover. Given this perfect guidance, every thing is exactly what it is meant to be at every point in time. In Aristotle, all matter has a potential to reach its actuality, that which it is ultimately intended to become.[64] Indeed, evil at any time in the journey to perfection seems an impossibility. For all things, all ideas and all actions are set in motion by the pure and perfect Unmoved Mover. Therefore, the implications of Aristotle's view of motion and of God seems utterly at odds with his moral outrage at evil. For humanity cannot but conform to the Unmoved Mover.

Matter is thus given a status far beyond that which Plato allowed. It forfeits the autonomy it had in Plato, but by this very means its potential is magnified. Every particle of matter can now evolve not only in itself, but play a role in the evolution of the universe at large. In Aristotle, the seeds of the doctrine of evolution seem already sewn.[65] For the

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[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Karl Popper, *The Open Society And Its Enemies* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 5. Karl Popper sees the same evolutionary tendency in Aristotle, though he recognizes that Aristotle himself did not believe in the evolutionary theories of some of his contemporaries.

unmoved mover is both actuality and the source of infinite potential, responsible for all that is and all that happens.

How then are we to view the evils that beset this world? Given Aristotle's unmoved mover, should not these contradictions cause us to speak of balance rather than evil, or perhaps evil can still be affirmed as a necessary spur to effect an increase in the good? Neither of these explanations appear to work. For in Aristotle there are no real contraries to that *which is primary.*[66] So then, by implication, for Aristotle there is no real evil, only the outworking of the good, directed by the unmoved mover. Evil is then a subjective term for us mortals, but has no place in the real scheme of things. Following this logic through, the purges of Stalin, and the horrors of the Holocaust are all part of the good in process to the good becoming actual. We are left with a dialectical thought process, and a doctrine in which there is, at times, the appearance of evil, but never the reality.

Aristotle And Plato's Perception Of Material Things

We saw in Plato that the world of matter is, at best, a likely *story*; the world of sense data is highly untrustworthy. Not so in Aristotle. Aristotle has a very high trust in the first principles that allow for perception.[67] These are too necessary to be doubted. All knowledge is based upon it. So in Aristotle there is a level of interest in particulars exceeding even that of Plato. There is, perhaps, less interest in the harmony of numbers and more in the way that particulars operates in detail.[68] Hence, in Aristotle we see a great intensity to categorize, whether the rules of logic,[69] or living species.[70] Aristotle can pour himself into the study of

[66] *Philosophy of Aristotle*, Ibid., p. 131.
[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-48.
[68] *Ibid., pp.* 51-55.
[69] For categorisation of logic see the *Posterior Analytics Book 1* and *2.*
[70] See Aristotle's *Physics* for his biological categories.

the natural world and confidently move forward, dissecting every accessible and verifiable living thing.

While we should not fail to give Plato his due with respect to the study of material things, and of all things pertaining to the life of men, it was yet carried out with less confidence and less trust than was afforded by Aristotle's confident view of perception. This does not mean that Aristotle was careless in his analysis. On the contrary he subjected virtually everything he did to intense reflection and re-evaluation. But underlying it all was his confidence that the external world and its particulars were fully accessible to perception. Hence the material world was given a new intensity and status that could never find a partner in Plato.

Aristotle And Plato's Perception Of Reason

Both viewed reason as divine. Both saw it as the ways and means of rightly ordering the material world and of bringing order and harmony to the human soul. Both had a love of the arts and of the humanities and saw reason as the orchestrate of every good thing.[71] For Aristotle the unmoved mover brings all things into the appropriate order for the appropriate time. It was Aristotle and Plato's love of reason that led them both to contemplate the good. Both saw reason as that which frees the human soul from evil. Plato exalted the role of reason in number and math, and Aristotle celebrated its greatness in the formulation of his rules of logic.

Aristotle is confident than he can understand ultimate reality by means of reason alone. All it takes is the correct conclusions with respect to particular things and their

[71] See *Aristotle's Politics and Poetics*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett and Thomas Twining (New York: The Viking Press, 1957).

relationship to universals.[72] One can, through careful reasoning alone, prove the existence of God. Hence Aristotle arrives at his unmoved mover by a process of reason. It is not difficult to see how the thinking of Aristotle offers an autonomy to reason that gives no heed to transcendence or the supernatural. Even Aristotle's unmoved mover is not only the product of his reason, but is required to conform to it in every respect. This was what some later thinkers would come to view as arrogance, and seek to dethrone, thinkers such as John Locke, David Hume and Kant.

Worldliness Plato And Aristotle

Both Plato and Aristotle saw reason as divine. Aristotle even said that there was no higher form of science than the study of what moves all things, but is itself unmoved. It was in fact for him the science of the divine.[73] Aristotle reasoned that an unmoved mover exists who contemplates only the highest good, himself.[74]

Both believed in form, and that form in some way ordered matter. But for Plato there was a transcendent world of form. The movable forms of the shadow world allowed reason to recall true knowledge by means of its intuitive connection with the world of intelligible forms.[75] The outcome is that in Plato there is no doctrine of abstraction, such as existed with Aristotle. Knowledge does not derive from abstraction, but from the world of divine intelligible forms.

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[72] *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, Ibid., pp. 42-45.
[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45, 122, 126-127, 131-132.
[75] Plato's doctrine of reminiscence is articulated in the *Meno* and the *Phaedrus,* but in the *Timaeus* he provides a full metaphysical framework in which to fit his doctrine of reminiscence.

In Aristotle this transcendent realm of intelligible forms was abolished. He replaced it with his theory of abstraction.[76] For this to happen form and matter must be joined, not dichotomized into two different worlds. For Aristotle held that direct and true knowledge comes not from a world of immovable forms, but solely by way of perception. Perception became the only immediate source of cognition.[77] Then after immediate perceptions comes abstraction. He held that after an object is perceived its continuity, quantity, and emotion, enters the soul. But the matter (sensible matter) does not enter. By this means form and matter can be thought of as separate, even though in actual perception they are not.

With respect to mathematics, Aristotle uses the Greek term aphairesis, meaning abstraction. By this he meant that mathematical figures could be thought of as separate, but only in thought, not in reality.[78] His doctrine of abstraction was essential to the validity of all his work of categorisation, whether of the rules of logic or of biological species.

Therefore he heavily criticized Plato's perception of a copy world,[79] devoting most of Book 1 of the Metaphysics to a critique. The entire transcendent realm of Plato's Timaeus was committed to the proverbial flame. It was seen not only as an obstacle, but worse yet, as superfluous.

However, Aristotle's critique betrays an inconsistency. He strongly criticises Plato for speaking of a world of motionless forms that seem to have no real basis for affecting the world of motion. Yet, he claims that the unmoved mover moves all things, but is necessarily without motion. But how then can Aristotle with any consistency criticize Plato's doctrine of

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[76] *History of Ideas, ed.* by Phillip Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1968, 1973), pp. 1-2 In order to maintain his theory of abstraction, Aristotle claimed that matter and form could not be separable, but only thought of as separable. He believed that the emotions, the quantity and the continuity were transferred, but not sensible matter itself.
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, Ibid., pp. 48-55.

transcendent unmoving forms? For Aristotle can no more explain any direct scientific principle of causation between the unmoved mover and that which it moves than Plato can explain how movable forms can lead to the knowledge derived from motionless intelligible forms. Aristotle's explanation that all things are moved by their love of the unmoved mover is not a scientific explanation. Yet he requires that Plato supply one. Here, it would seem, Aristotle has not fully escaped the influence of his teacher.

But be that as if may, where the doctrine of forms is concerned, the enormity of the difference between Aristotle and Plato could not be greater or more opposed. For Aristotle operates with a *world* epistemology and a consequent dualism in which even the unmoved mover is a product of his theory of form motion and substance. Even the claim that the unmoved mover contemplates himself alone, is based on Aristotle's theory of knowledge as to the nature of form, substance, and motion.[80]

For Aristotle there is no primary divine world of motionless forms. All must make their home here in what Plato called the Shadow World. Despite its claimed transcendence, the Unmoved Mover cannot practically be liberated from the immanence of this world since his conduct is dictated by the same finite Aristotelian theory of motion matter and form. Apart from contemplating himself, he does no deed or action apart from this world. Everything Aristotle says about him and his nature is dependent on how Aristotle understood the particulars of this world.

Aristotle's dualism is between form and matter immanent in the world. He does not deny the immaterial realm, or that some aspects of it can exist apart from matter. Certainly his unmoved mover contains no matter whatever, but is called pure actuality.[81] He sees in

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 95, 101, 124, 126, 127.
[81] *Ibid., pp.* 122, 124, 126-127.

forms the ground of morality and art and beauty, but even here it is removed from transcendence, as is all that issues from movable forms.[82] Though form is viewed as the source of fulfilling every potential of matter, form seems to have no other purpose than fulfilling that destiny. In Plato matter played a role in perfecting the soul and in finally freeing it. But in Aristotle form seems a slave to fulfilling the destiny of every particular. Form seems to exist for the sake of matter, not the other way around. Therefore the doctrine of forms seems to be worldly in the extreme, the immaterial realm seems useful solely in bringing the world of particulars to perfection.

This is not really surprising. What Aristotle calls form could as easily be called matter. For example, the concept of a rectangle cannot even be thought apart from colour, whether grey black or some other. Is the form of a book any less material than the book itself? Aristotle thought so, but in common perception no such distinction exists. So Aristotle's theory of knowledge offered a view of reality in which, despite his efforts to differentiate, it is matter not immaterial form that will receive the attention from later renaissance and enlightenment thinkers. For such as these will not equate material with form. The consequence is that Aristotle opened the door to a concentration on particulars, all of which are composed of matter.

Yet, to a lesser extent Plato's dualism has its *this world* aspects rising directly from his theory of knowledge and motion. His divine world of forms are also in perfect conformity with his finite theory of motion and knowledge. To a very large degree, even the conduct of the universal father conforms to Plato's epistemological assumptions.

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[82] Ibid., pp. 124,126-127.

But when all is said and done Plato's dualism still leads to a contemplation of the heavenly realm, and Aristotle's primarily to a focus on this world. Where Plato distrusted the things of this world, Aristotle enthusiastically and confidently embraced them. He trusted this world to rightly reveal the origin of the gods and the nature of God himself.

Now in Aristotle's defence, his doctrine of abstraction certainly leaves room for an immaterial side of man. Indeed, it constitutes a formidable basis for evaluating the difficulties that adhere in empirical epistemologies. But as we earlier noted, to normal perception there seems no reason why form should be deemed immaterial in any way. What Aristotle did point out was the capacity of human beings to make generalizations, and categorize particular things. But how does this power consist in anything emanating from forms? That, in any case, is the question enlightenment and post enlightenment thinkers will later ask. When contrasted with Plato, Aristotle's doctrine of forms seems the epitome of worldliness. It was, after all, the prime motivation for Aristotle's abolition of Plato's heavenly world of divine forms.

Summary

It was perhaps inevitable that the more comprehensively the Christian world came to embrace Aristotle's theory of knowledge, the more *this worldly* oriented it would eventually become. For in Aristotle, far more so than in Plato, the connection between knowledge and the supernatural is lost. Where in Plato the central concern was the study of the transcendent, in Aristotle it seems almost inevitable, by implication, that the proper study for man would become man and his world. Viewed then from the perspective of Platonism and the Christian faith, Aristotle was in part at least, a forerunner of this *worldliness.* Despite his own highly moral stance, his theory of knowledge implies a perception of evil very different from that of

his teacher. Thanks to his Unmoved Mover, evil seems a non-entity. Matter takes on a new destiny of its own. Ultimate knowledge of reality is accessible to reason without any need of supernatural revelation.

With Plato knowledge had a supernatural source, and a revelatory source accessed through reminiscence.[83] Aristotle saw this alleged need for a supernatural access to true knowledge as a great obstacle to understanding the specifics of this world. But what Aristotle sees as essentially a useful view of form and matter, Plato would view as the very source of growing evil, a focus on the knowledge of this world for its own sake. Indeed Aristotle said that the highest form of knowledge is pursued for its own sake.[84]

On the other hand, the very things that constitute the strength of Plato's dualism is to Aristotle its greatest weakness, the substantial or total irrelevance of the transcendent realm to the acquisition of knowledge. However, Aristotle stopped short of calling Plato's doctrine of forms evil. He rather saw it as a costly mistake, and obstacle to scientific growth. How, asks Aristotle, and many who follow him, can a heavenly realm bear any relation to the practical knowledge of this world? Are not such ideas essentially too irrelevant, too other-*worldly* to be of any earthly good? Aristotle did not phrase in it in precisely that way, but he leaves no doubt that Plato's doctrine of forms along with his heavenly world is for him, at best, an unnecessary appendage.

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[83] *Dictionary of The History of Ideas, Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
[84] *The Philosophy of Aristotle,* Ibid., p. 43.

Titus Lucretius Carus And His Theory Of Knowledge

In and around 175 BC, almost a century after Epicurus himself lived and taught; Titus Lucretius Carus, a truly great Roman poet literally glorified him in a treatise wholly composed in Latin poetry. It was called *The Nature of the Universe,* and addressed to Gaius Memmius a distinguished Roman Statesman.[85] But Lucretius' real target was the wider audience of Rome itself. Like any consistent Epicurean, Lucretius deplored the path of politics and war, the normal career for a Roman Gentleman.[86] At the very beginning of Book 11 Lucretius speaks words that crystallize the very core of a truly devout Epicurean and the quiet detachment from the darkness of vain ambitions.

> *What joy it is, when out at sea the stormwinds [sic] are lashing the waters, to gaze from the shore at the heavy stress some other man is enduring! Not that anyone's afflictions are in themselves a source of delight; but to realize [sic] from what troubles you yourself are free is joy indeed. What joy, again, to watch opposing hosts marshalled on the field of battle when you have yourself no part in their peril! But this is the greatest joy of all: to stand aloof in a quiet citadel, stoutly fortified by the teaching of the wise, and to gaze down from that elevation on others wandering aimlessly in a vain search for the way of life, pitting their wits one against the other, disputing for precedence, struggling night and day with unstinted [sic] effort to scale the pinnacles of wealth and power. O joyless hearts of men! O minds without vision! How dark and dangerous the life in which this tiny span is lived away! Do you not see that nature is clamouring for two things only, a body free from pain, a mind released from worry and fear for the enjoyment of pleasurable sensations. … What matter if the hall does not sparkle with silver and gleam with gold, and no carved and gilded rafters ring to the music of the lute? Nature does not miss these luxuries when men recline in company on the soft grass by a running stream under the branches of a tall tree and refresh their bodies pleasurably at small expense.*[87]

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[85] Titus Carus Lucretius, *Lucretius on The Nature of The Universe*, trans. by R.E Latham (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1951), p. 28.
[86] *Philosophy of Aristotle, Ibid.*, p. 8. See also the comments of Renford Bambrough in the introduction with regard to Lucretius' reasons for writing his famous work on nature.
[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

Lucretius sees himself as an enlightened one, the first to bring the light of truth to the written page in his native Latin tongue. He is preaching no less than the *gospel*, [88] the word of truth. Time and again he acknowledges in the treatise that it is not his gospel, but that of the man of Greece, (Epicurus). In concert with Epicurus, Lucretius was confident that the senses could be relied upon. The external world was highly accessible to knowledge. With careful reasoning the ultimate nature of the universe could be understood. Ultimate knowledge revealed the truths of life. For Lucretius they were three in number: particles of atoms that never perish, infinite space and an infinite universe.

Lucretius' Perception Of Evil Versus Plato's

In Book 111 Lucretius praises his master, contrasting his glory with the darkness of the world. It is in this contrast that we are given a clear sample of Lucretius's perception of evil.

> *You, who out of black darkness were the first to lift up a shining light, revealing the hidden blessings of life-you are my guide, O glory of the Grecian race. In your well-marked footprints now I plant my resolute steps. It is from love alone that I long to imitate you, not from emulous ambition. Shall the swallow contend in song with the swan, or the kid match its rickety legs in race with the strong-limbed [sic] steed? You are my father, illustrious discoverer of truth, and give me a fathers guidance. From your pages as bees in flowery glades sip every bosom, so do I crop all your Golden Sayings-Golden indeed, and for ever worthy of everlasting life.*[89]

What is particularly fascinating in Lucretius is his perception of evil. Because the truth could be known about the nature of things, then evil was whatever prevented that true and saving knowledge from shining forth. Evil is wrong knowledge and therefore wrong

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[88] *Ibid.*, p. 171.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

action. Wrong knowledge brings terror and fear to the breast of man.[90] Evil is brought about by vain fears of retribution from the Gods, or fearful tales of an eternity in Hell as described by renowned poets such as *Ennius*.[91] Lucretius declares that the pure teaching of the Master frees the mind from such fears, fears that make this life the true Hell.[92]

But what exactly is this glorious good news, this wondrous revelation that sets men free from the oppression of mind and action? The good news is the nature of the atom and death itself. There is no Hell. There is no retribution from the Gods. Death ends it all.[93] Lucretius assures the one fearing judgement from the gods, that such will never come to pass.

In all this we see a great contrast and a clear opposition to the dualism of Plato. Both Plato and Lucretius view the contemplation of nature though reason as the answer to humanity's plunge into evil. But from then on they diverge completely.[94] Lucretius rejects the world of Plato where the Gods judge. For Lucretius there is only the atom, only the need to simplify the universe, to concentrate on mortal pleasures. Tales of Hell and judgement are for him great evils. The fear of Hell and punishment binds and darkens the heart of man. Only a rational study of things as they really are can liberate the breast where dwells the spirit and the mind of man.[95] The great Collective evil, for Lucretius, is the popular stance towards life where the transcendent intervenes. That is the great lie. The world of the Gods is a world of fear and superstition. Like Epicurus before him, he believes in and gives a place to the Gods, but that is a realm in the skies far removed from concern for mortal problems.[96] In essence they are irrelevant to mortal life, and in their state of eternal bliss,

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[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97, 131, 240.
[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 91, 219.
[95] Lucretius actually believed that the mind, and, in part, the spirit were directly located in the breast.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

mortal life is irrelevant to them. But they become dangerous indeed when thought of as standing in judgement over the physical world.

The other great evil is talk of a soul that survives death. In Book III of his treatise Lucretius seeks to logically explain why the mind and spirit of man dissipates at death. [97] What Plato sees as the highest hope of man, freeing the soul from the body, Lucretius views as a lie that brings great evil to man, the fear of Hell and of retribution. Nothing should bring greater joy than the great good news of eternal death, his Master Epicurus declared. When the body can fight no more, the mind and spirit leave the body and vanish apart from it.[98] So for Lucretius, Plato's dualism is a fiction, there is no immaterial spirit. The mind and spirit is composed of fine particles of matter in combination with air and heat.[99] All talk of an immortal soul is the very stuff that feeds the fears of man. Whatever challenges the truth about the nature of the real world is for Lucretius a restless evil, a darkness. Such a one needs to hear the glorious light of gospel, the simple truths about atoms, about space, and about the infinite universe. Lucretius, like his master before him, is essentially a monist. All that exists, even the Gods themselves are composed of atoms in combination. [100] If ever comes the times for the Gods to dissipate, all that will be left is invisible types of atoms. It is these atoms that bring both death and life anew. [101]

Evil, for Lucretius, is also the departure from the simple truths of life, entanglements that complicate life, breed luxury and end simple contentment.[102] Plato lauds, a good statesman, a good soldier. If such men contemplate eternal forms, they will be the best they

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[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-104.
[98] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.
[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
[100] *Ibid., pp.* 92-93*,* 175, 207-208*, 218*, 219.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
[102] *Ibid.*, pp 61, 123-125, 216.

can be at what they do. For such as these do not ignore the transcendent realm. But for Lucretius, these self same pursuits and mindsets are a road to darkness, illusion and the perpetuation of evil. On the other hand, To Plato, Lucretius would be a paradigm of evil. For his focus is the sensible world, without regard for the world of intelligible forms. The reduction of soul and form to mere atoms would be for Plato a journey into decadence, a dark assault on the high road of human existence. That high road was for Plato, the liberation from the trials of the body and a final home with the Gods.

The dualism of Plato is a dark evil to Lucretius, and the monism of Lucretius is to Plato the height of decadence. Despite his differences with Plato, Aristotle too would deplore Lucretius' demolition of the immaterial realm.

Lucretius Perception Of Material Things Versus Plato's

Both Plato and Lucretius see merit in the material world. The right motions of matter are for Plato the source of great art, literature, music and science itself. Indeed where matter is in right motion good things happen. Therefore joy is eternal among the gods of the stars, and among men there can be good government, virtue and true prosperity. For Lucretius matter is the source of death and life, but he judges that humanity ought to see this as a good thing. Annihilation brings peace, and room is then given for others to be born.[103] Even the sky and the planets themselves will one day perish, but this too, in the final analysis, is a good thing, for a new sky and planets will take its place.[104]

All that the atom does, is for Lucretius, the way of things, something to be embraced, not deplored. An understanding of the material world brings joy; it liberates from illusion

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43, 56, 59, 181-182, 189, 191-193, 196, 255, 256.

and the fear of Hell. It teaches one to seek out the simple joys where little or no monetary cost plays a part. A right understanding brings pleasure to life and the recognition that all that is really worthwhile in life is the increase of pleasure and a minimum of pain.[105] Hence the quiet peaceful life of modest pleasures best suits the pursuit of joy and contentment.

Indeed, the very nature of the atom, the extinction of the physical particles that combine to form the human mind and spirit herald the wonderful good news. He rejoices in the knowledge that after the atoms dissipate into their indivisible state, life is over and all that is left is the sweet sleep of eternal death.[106] So for Lucretius, understanding the atom brings light and joy, the fullest possible life, and freedom from the evils of transcendent gods and immortal souls. But for Plato matter in wrong motion is still the ultimate bad news, the continued bondage of the soul. Surrender to its illusions and deceptions brings only an increase in evil and destruction.

Lucretius' Versus Plato And Aristotle's Use Of Reason

Perhaps the strongest commonality between Lucretius and Plato is found in their mutual love of reason. For both, it is the ground of their respective theories of knowledge and consequent worldviews. Lucretius begins with the varied forms of atoms. He then reasons from that base in his attempts to explain matter and space, the movement and shapes of atoms, the life of the mind, the nature of the senses, cosmology and sociology, and even meteorology and geology. He tries by pure logic to explain the workings of all things, but a logic who's rational assumes the primacy of the atom in all its eternal forms, whether large, small smooth or rough.

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[105] *Ibid.,* pp. 60-61.
[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 105-106, 109, 110, 114, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122 , 123, 126.

Lucretius believed there were a great variety of indivisible particles or atoms, infinite in number.[107] They atoms can both build and destroy because space is a vacuum allowing for their mobility at greatly varying speeds.[108] All feeling and thinking derives from contact with the thin film of atoms coming off objects. The thin film is exactly like the external object. This thin film sends its image to our five senses and into our minds.[109] Even the reverse reflection in a mirror is approached logically. The reason why we see things in reverse is explained in the following way. First, the film coming off the surface of the human body is sent to the mirror. The mirror then reflects it right back to us without turning the film around.[110] When it hits our eyes we see the image in reverse. Even free will is explained by way of a swerve in the downward motion of atoms. Normally the motion of atoms is straight down, but when atoms swerve that means our free will is operative, breaking out of the normal pattern of moving directly downward.[111] Lucretius reasons that life is random and purposeless.[112] But what makes for variety is the great differences in the kinds of atoms that exist. For each type attach quite uniformly and regularly to different kinds of animate and animate things.[113] That is why dogs continue as a species, or men or woman for that matter. Certain kinds of atoms simply combine with certain kinds of particles, while rejecting other kinds of combinations. Yet we are assured that all this is still very much a random occurrence having no purpose or intent and no guiding providence behind it.[114]

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[107] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[108] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-42.
[109] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[111] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
[112] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77, 80.
[114] *Ibid.*

Plato uses reason and logic in much the same way, but for him the starting point is not matter, but the reality of intelligible forms intuited through the moving forms of the mortal world. He too sees the study of the laws of the universe as the way to peace. But Plato sees no way for matter, in itself, to create any true knowledge, only deception, uncertainty, and illusion. True knowledge comes from a study of moving forms that brings to mind the eternal world of immovable forms. This happens because mans reason comes from the divine. Reason in man is a non-organic capacity of the soul. Through reminiscence from pre-existence, and the application of reason and observation of the sensible world, man can experience true knowledge of immovable forms. Such is the only reliable knowledge.

All this, as we earlier learned, was grounded in Plato's theory of knowledge. His starting point is his reasoned conviction that matter is in eternal flux and can therefore, by itself, provide no true knowledge. But because this world is a moving image of the divine world, the moving images can point us to the real world through bringing reminiscence into play. So where reason is concerned, both Lucretius and Plato attempt to explain ultimate reality by means of it.

Nevertheless, the point where reason starts in Plato and Lucretius forms a great gulf between them. For Plato, even his best understanding is called a likely story; the nature of matter ever threatens to deceive. It is only of value when it can yield true knowledge, and that true knowledge is never possible in the world of sense data alone. For Lucretius, on the other hand, the world of sense is utterly reliable. Even the films that come off visible things and impinge on the senses are, as we noted, an exact likeness to the external objects from which they come.[115] The world of the atom is an utterly trustworthy world; even the varied

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 145-146.

angles of seeing are all part of its reliability.[116] Even when for sailors at sea, the sun seems to set in the waves, all this is as it should be, reliable in the full extent. [117]Reason and the world of sense is a sure guide. There is no knowledge beyond it. For Lucretius there cannot be knowledge that is a likely *story* versus true knowledge. So once again Plato would see Lucretius' breaking of the dualism between matter and eternal form as a journey into degradation and darkness, or else a life of triviality and mediocrity, an evil of a different kind.

But for Lucretius, Plato's great gulf fixed between sensory and true knowledge points to the irrelevancy of Plato's theory of knowledge. It is for Lucretius meaningless talk.[118] It is devoid of reason, and a prime obstacle to the knowledge that leads to peace and tranquillity of mind and spirit. It is an invitation to pain, and a blockade to the true pursuit of science and knowledge.

Here Lucretius echoes the same objection as Aristotle. For both Aristotle and Lucretius share a confidence in the reality of a highly accessible external world. Reason has no bounds. It is capable in and of itself. It requires no calling on the gods, or a divine world, to fully grasp the nature of ultimate reality.[119]

But even though Aristotle's view of form and matter gives the green light to immediate perception, Aristotle remains a dualist. He still sees the world as form and matter, as a synthesis of the material and the immaterial. But whatever physical object Aristotle might choose to point at, Lucretius would view both the form and the matter filling it as

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[116] *Ibid.*
[117] *Ibid.*, pp. 141-143.
[118] *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.
[119] *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 61, 91, 145, 218-219.

nothing more than a component of physical atoms in combination. He would not reason, like Aristotle, that the form can be abstracted from the matter.

Neither Aristotle or Lucretius is deterred from the study of the material world, whether of the animate or inanimate. Both can reason confidently and essentially trust the external world. For Aristotle, Plato is an obstacle. But for Lucretius, he is not only that, but also an ambassador of darkness, an emissary of fear, a transporter of Hell. He casts a shadow over true knowledge and true reason with his talk of immortal souls, and of knowledge accessible only through memories from a previous life. Only the light of true knowledge and true reason, and a return to the simple life can dispel the darkness Plato disseminates.[120] Then reason can do its work rightly and bring peace to the breast of man. For to Lucretius the breast is the actual dwelling place of the atoms that compose the mind and in part, it is also the dwelling place of the spirit.[121]

Plato And Lucretius' Perception Of Worldliness

Ironically, there is in Lucretius a perception of the eternal realm. It is nature itself and its eternal elements. For this reason he referred to his master as a God, the one who first discovered the rule of life that now is called philosophy. He even exults him above the God Bacchus and Cerus. Epicurus is for him, the rescuer of life from so stormy a sea, so black a night.[122] He is the one who delivers our hearts and minds from fear and the oppression fear brings. He then declares:

> *Therefore that man has a better claim to be called a god, whose gospel broadcast through the length and breadth of empires, is even now bringing soothing solace to*

[120] *Ibid.,* pp. 217-218.
[121] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[122] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

the minds of men. What inspired words he himself has uttered about the immortal gods, and how by his teaching he has laid bare the causes of things.[123]

He speaks poetically of his master as a conveyor of divine wisdom surpassing even that of the gods. Lucretius and Epicurus have their god, but theirs' is imperishable particles of atoms in an infinite universe of infinite space. Contemplation of these eternal realities is the highest thing for man. Lucretius declares: *Nothing has power to break the binding laws of eternity.*[124] It is in the understanding of the eternality of matter, space, and the infinite universe that is the lofty thing. In a very ironic sense, a failure to experience the tranquillity such knowledge brings is almost a kind of worldliness, though he does not use that term. But for him, such failure is a neglect of eternal verities.[125] But it should be understood that Lucretius does not consider the planets or the stars eternal, much less the heavens.[126] The only eternal things are infinite indivisible atoms, infinite space, and the infinite universe. It is the knowledge of these three things and how they order all things that is the source of peace and joy.

It is in a seeming strange way indeed that Lucretius ends his treatise. The last things he describes, and in morbid detail is a plague that brings vast carnage and destruction.[127] Then the book abruptly ends. Such a strange and negative ending to the work seems out of place, as if the work were left unfinished. Yet it all makes very good sense, if we consider the force and centrality of Lucretius' belief that death brings an end to all, and that, for him, that is solace indeed. It ends forever the idea that immortality can exist for mortal men. The stars, and the planets will themselves perish, as well as the whole earth, and all the

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[123] *Ibid.*
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[125] *Ibid.,* pp. 172, 217-219.
[126] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-256.

people on it. He thereby mounts a strong apologetic, a formidable defence for the good news of the Gospel that all will perish, even the Gods. There is therefore no Hell and no judgement to come. From Book 1 to Book V1 Lucretius not only declares, but seeks to prove that none can break the binding laws of eternity. Almost immediately after stating this in Book V, he speaks of the world itself as a product of birth, and composed, just like human beings, of a mortal body of its own. His logic is that it too must perish.[128] For Lucretius, as we have seen, death is good news, for it assures us that the fires of Hell and the punishment of the Gods are absurd notions. He explains that the Gods are so content they do not even give mortals a thought.

By showing that worlds die just like mortals, Lucretius brings home his gospel of good news. Death comes to all, eternal Hell to none. The revelation of final death is such a source of solace for Lucretius, such a relief from suffering, that Lucretius declares that we are *redeemed by death.*[129] He then comforts us further, telling us to rest assured that we have nothing to fear in death.[130]

He declares, *Once this life is usurped by death the* one who no longer is, cannot suffer. Neither can he *differ in any way from one who has never been born.* [131] The destruction of earth and sky and the heavens down into the eternal particles that made them, is, for Lucretius, not only a great source of comfort, but his own way of vindicating the eternal.[132] The message comes through like the high notes of an angel choir. He who is enlightened beyond the worldly rabble, who holds to lofty thoughts, is he who contemplates the highest truths. All mortal bodies composed of mortal atoms, whether sun moon or stars must

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[128] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.
[129] *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 122.
[130] *Ibid.*, pp. 122.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 124-125, 172.

perish.[133] Only the lowly thinker, the unenlightened, will fail to avail himself of the maximum of pleasure that comes to the man who possesses this lofty knowledge and is therefore content with simple joys. The abrupt ending where many die of a terrible plague is like the final argument, a sobering and convincing close to his treatise.

As paradoxical as it seems, his work is more than an exposition of the teaching of Lucretius, it is also an apologetic, defending the gospel of ultimate meaningless imperishable atomic structures. By showing that all must die, the supremacy of the imperishable source of life and death is defended by means of reason. The reasoning is founded on Lucretius' unshakeable belief that nothing can break the binding laws of eternity.[134] He sees himself treading *in the footsteps* of his master, *running arguments to earth* and *explaining the necessity* that *compels everything to abide by the compact under which it was created.* [135]

As we shall in a chapter to come, Lucretius is not that different from some of the thinkers of the enlightenment who saw themselves high and lifted up above the mortal rabble, deliverers, come to deliver humanity from the shackles of tradition and religion. Such as these saw themselves as viewing life from a high place beyond the vain and futile ditches from where most men see the world. They saw themselves in a manner quite in choir with Lucretius, seeing the world from a high perch. Some announced that men are no more than machines, others that the will and self identity itself are but fictions. But in so doing they pictured themselves as aiding humanity. Like Moses of Old they were leading the people out of bondage into the Promised Land that only reason can build.

As we shall see, the eighteenth century thinkers of the enlightenment had their vision of true progress. First, dissolve the values and reasoning of Classical and Christian

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[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 172-173.
[134] *Ibid.*
[135] *Ibid.*

thought.[136] Then let emerge from out of that dissolution, light and glory, a new world and a new way, formed and fashioned by reason, free of the shackles of the transcendent and its attendant illusions.

For Plato the greatest evil is found in thinkers like Lucretius. He would see in Lucretius a case where sunken deception is exalted to the heavens, and the heights of the eternal world are cast down and trampled in the dust. He would conclude that in Lucretius, the lowest form of humanity lurks. The beast lumbers forth. Sound reason is gutted like a fish and tossed to the ground where maggots feed. This is the humanity Plato deplored, slaves to evil, devoid of right reason and right knowledge. He who follows Lucretius follows a deceiver, one who disseminates deception, one who call evil good, and good evil, calls hell heaven and heaven hell. Here is one who has put self pleasure as the highest and disdains courage and duty. Now Plato always recognised that most mortals have neither the leisure or inclination to contemplate eternal things.[137] Yet here is Lucretius, one who has leisure enough to write and think, who devotes himself to reason. Yet he uses it to cast doubt on what is most important of all, both for this life and the life to come. He dares to disdain right contemplation where reminiscence can give voice to truth, and truth to the best kind of life and the best kind of knowledge, whether of war or government, or art. Therefore, from Plato's perspective Lucretius is a purveyor of worldliness, of all that gives to evil new nourishment and new power.

But the later admirers of Lucretius will see him as he saw himself, a lofty, if not original thinker, one above the shallow buzz of human activities, detached like the gods. For

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[136] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of The Enlightenment*, (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951). Cassirer sees this dissection, dissolution and new production as the core mind set of enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth century. See especially p. 13.

[137] See the *Great Dialogues of Plato*, *Plato's Republic* Book V1, 282-284, edited by Eric H Warmington & Philip G Rouse, trans. by W.H.D. Rouse (New York: The New English Library Limited, 1956), pp. 282-283.

thanks to his master, he now knows the truth, and thus like the Gods he basks in the life of simple pleasures, quite detached from the fears that are in the bosom of the mass of mortal men.

Yet, in the final analysis it is certain that Lucretius bids us focus on this world, its temporality. He tells us to enjoy it while we can, for that's all there is. No matter how high and exalted Lucretius might view the knowledge itself, it nevertheless leads to a life whose only focus is this worldly. There is pleasure, nothing more. Once the high and exalted revelation is understood, he and we must descend again. For all man has is expressed in the well known expression. *Let us eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.*

Comparisons And Implications With Respect To Plato, Aristotle And Lucretius

We have now viewed the dynamics that ensue as theories of knowledge, and their attendant worldviews interact and arrive at their varied perceptions of evil. We have seen in some detail that what the initial dualism of Plato regarded as a great evil, became, in the revised dualism of Aristotle, a great good. We saw too that for Lucretius, the monist, the very core of evil was the teaching that anything other than the atom, empty space, and the universe was eternal. Virtue was to embrace death and live for simple pleasures, till death comes. We also took note of implications and what perceptions of evil these implied, especially in the case of Aristotle.

Yet, whether Plato, Aristotle, or Lucretius is in view, all their varied perceptions of evil, or implied perceptions arose from their respective theories of knowledge, and their consequent worldviews. We noted that in each case a sense of virtue and enlightened understanding accompanied their respective perceptions of evil. In Lucretius this sense of

virtue, of deliverance, of lofty thought, of light, truth and joy was magnified by the poets' art. What now remains is to examine a central flaw in Plato's Theodicy

An Actual Weakness In Plato's Theodicy: The Problem Of Dialectical Fullness

A central and telling weakness in Plato's dualism is the difficulties inherent in his doctrine of transmigration of souls. By speaking of this world as totally modelled after the divine, Plato left himself open to a vast range of criticisms. But there is one implication in particular that threatens the stability of Plato's theodicy**.**

We recall, from the former chapter, Plato said that our world contains all the forms of the divine world. Consistently speaking, that must include not only all living creatures that are good but also those that are evil. Here we of course refer to Plato's own idea of good and evil.

As we noted, Plato asserts that every living creature on this world, whether man, beast, bird, reptile or fish, is not here by accident. For again as we earlier noted, the Timaeus claimed that the world of living creatures must eventually fill up all the forms in the divine world. The Divine Craftsman, through creating an alliance between reason and necessity succeeded in duplicating every living creature existing in the eternal world of ideas. But this seems to imply that all the tyrants, murderers and killers in human history have their duplicates in the divine world of the Demiurge. So then Plato's ideal world must be as tainted as this one, in fact, even more tainted. For in Plato's world the best is always there, the perfect form. With respect to living creatures in the finite world, there is always found an archetype in the heavenly world. Of course none of these forms could be physical in the

divine world. Therefore the most evil man in this world, and the collective evils in this world must have archetypes in the eternal world. There must therefore be the ideal evil man, and the ideal collective evil. Rather than diminishing evil, this escalates it. What could be more horrid, given Plato's own view of evil, than a world that houses the idea of every kind of good man with the idea of every variety of evil man. Not only does this illustrate Plato's failure to note the implications of his doctrine of transmigration of souls, but it also makes it literally impossible to consistently extricate either the Divine Craftsman,[138] or the world of forms from participation in evil.

Summary

We have now completed our comparative study of Plato, Aristotle and Lucretius and our brief analysis of a central weakness in Plato's Theodicy. It now seems evident that all three thinkers share a common inconsistency. In the case of all three, there appears a perpetual conflict between their personal ideas of evil, and the implications of their respective theories of knowledge and consequent worldviews. Plato is not alone. With Aristotle the implications of his unmoved mover denies the very evils Aristotle attacks in his ethical writings. Lucretius' passionate protest against great evils and great lies seems utterly at odds with his claim that the universe is a purposeless mass of atoms.

Yet in Lucretius there seems yet another inconsistency, this time between his perception of evil and the implied determinism of his theory of knowledge. We earlier noted that Lucretius attempted to defend free will by referring to Epicurus' theory of diverging

[138] The other difficulty Plato faces is the fact he tells us that the Divine Craftsman mixed evil tendencies in the soul, and the gods added even more evils . How then can either the Divine Craftsman or the gods be absolved?

atoms. Even so, in no way does the defence imply or preserve the idea of either the evil or the good. All it defends is volition itself in a random purposeless universe.

But even Lucretius' defence of free choice is countered by the very theory of perception he defends. Lucretius, in conformity with Epicurus, explained that all knowledge and thought arises from films of matter bombarding the senses. This implies that all human thought and actions are wholly determined by the sensory atoms that bombard them. In view of this determinism, Lucretius' talk of great evils and of darkness seems as out of place as his protests against evil in a purposeless universe.

In the case of each of the three thinkers, evil was affirmed as a reality, but denied by implications in their respective theories of knowledge and consequent worldviews. It must not be thought that Plato, Aristotle, and Lucretius are unique in regard to the contradictions implied by their theories of knowledge and their personal perceptions of evil. We shall find that similar contradictions are found in the thinkers that will make their appearance in section three, especially Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant.

SECTION II: RELATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND EVIL IN GENESIS AND JOB

Chapter 3: Relational Knowledge, Evil, And Genesis

Relational Knowledge Explained

In Section I we examined several Greek theories of knowledge, worldviews and perceptions of evil that assumed the existence of an external world. They had two things in common. First, each was formulated from a finite starting point. Secondly, the worldviews that emerged and the perceptions of evil embraced or implied were essentially arrived at by reason and observation. Even Plato, for the most part, reasoned out his theory of knowledge from mortal observations as to the nature of matter spirit and motion.

But in this section, and the two chapters which comprise it, we shall sample a very different theory of knowledge. For purposes of this thesis, we shall call it *Relational Knowledge.* As with Aristotle, Plato, and Lucretius, in a relational theory the existence of an external world is never in serious doubt. But with relational theories of knowledge, reason by itself can never arrive at ultimate reality. Instead, an intelligent and personal creator with a plan and purpose for humanity makes both himself and reality known. Yet this must be slightly qualified. Some aspects of God might be knowable through the created order alone, but never his purpose or intent.

Under this theory of knowledge, it must not be thought that reason and observation are shunned. On the contrary, when a given person is in a right relationship with the creator,

reason and observation become ever more attuned to reality. For the believer views himself or herself as drawing on the knowledge and understanding revealed by the creator. Things formerly thought irrational may now become both reasonable and sound. Things formerly thought rational could now be seen as nonsense. For reason itself is privy to new understandings not accessible to normal human reason. But this new knowledge is conditional. It requires a right relationship with the creator. Further, this right relationship always involves an adequate measure of right faith and right conduct.

Selected Examples Of Knowledge Theories: Two Relational And One Non-Relational

In keeping with the modest restrictions of this thesis, two ancient books involving relational knowledge were chosen for this section, namely *Genesis* and *Job.* Genesis is the focus of this chapter, and will also share the stage with Job in *Chapter Four.*

The present chapter will compare three sample interpretations and interpreters of Genesis. Immanuel Kant will represent enlightenment thought, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christian and Samson Hirsch, Jewish. But contrary to the other two interpreters, Kant holds to a non-relational theory of knowledge and therefore a non-relational interpretation of Genesis. It is hoped that through such a contrasting approach, a deeper understanding of relational knowledge will emerge than would otherwise be the case. We begin with Kant, transition to Bonhoeffer and culminate with Hirsch.

Kant, Genesis, Reason And Evil

Despite the uniqueness of his metaphysical dualism, Kant's interpretation of *Chapter Three*, in large measure, typifies the philosophy of history common to the thinkers of the Enlightenment Era[139]. Here, at least, Kant is not particularly interested in what the text of Genesis actually claims as a whole. He simply treats the sequences from creation, to temptation, to banishment as an allegory of human experience. His is essentially a naturalistic interpretation.[140]

Nevertheless, Kant held that the Genesis account of beginnings squares with human experience. He saw it as vividly illustrative of the beginning of the historic conflict between culture and nature. It was truly representative of the origins and reasons for human struggles, and human evils.[141] Kant is careful to point out that he is concerned only to conjecture as to the nature of human beginnings. Hence the title of his article: *Conjectural Beginning Of Human History*.[142] He is not trying to mount a documented philosophy of human history. Still, it is fascinating to see how Kant uses Genesis in two specific ways. First, in large measure, he seeks to validate his own perception of history. Second, Genesis is used to illustrate his theory of knowledge, his consequent dualistic worldview, and the perception of evil it implies.[143] But a fuller treatment of these elements in Kant's thought is reserved for a later section.

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[139] Immanuel Kant, *On History,* edited and trans. by Lewis White Beck (New York: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc. , 1963), see the editor's introduction.
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.* See the editor's introduction.

Genesis: The Beginnings Of Evil Nature And Culture

When approaching Genesis, Kant feels one safe assumption can be made. Human actions in the beginning were no better or worse than they are now.[144] Kant calls this excursion into Genesis a mere pleasure trip.[145] Despite such precautionary beginnings, it is nevertheless clear that much of Kant's Philosophy of History is, in his mind, evidenced by the happenings in Genesis. As he says, *we will see in Genesis that authentic human experience conforms to Holy Writ (Gen 2:6).*[146]

In Kant's theory of knowledge, God is unknowable in any sense at all.[147] Therefore, Kant rejects the idea that Genesis should be interpreted literally. In truly allegorical fashion Kant represents the voice of God in the garden calling out to Adam as the *voice of instinct. (3:2-3).*[148] The voice stands for the simple innocent state of humanity before reason intervened. Here a time is signified when man could scarcely be differentiated from animal.[149] All is well at this stage, human life is untroubled, following simple basic impulses that are wholly natural. [150] But soon man will take four steps, each step more telling than the former, as concerns human destiny.

Kant: The First Step: The Forbidden Fruit (3: 5-7)[151]

Reason awakes. Humanity partakes of the fruit. For the first time man behaves in a *non-instinctive way.* It is a way that is beyond the bounds of instinctual knowledge. For

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[144] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[145] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] See this author's discussion in Chapter 1.
[148] *Ibid.,* p. 55.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[150] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
[151] *Ibid.*

awakened reason aided by imagination creates artificial desires.[152] Not only are these desires unsupportable by means of instinct, they are, in fact, directly contrary to it.[153] Reason now takes man and woman beyond the limits not only of instinct but of nature itself. Sexuality itself, aided by the imagination moves into labyrinths and mazes where nature never ventures, nor can it.[154] *Pandora's box is open*. Under such conditions, it is inevitable that evil will increasingly flourish and diversify. The eyes of man are opened.[155]

Kant: The Second Step: The Fig Leaf (Genesis 3:7)[156]

Kant sees an even greater manifestation of awakening reason when man and woman seek to conceal their nakedness with an apron of fig leaves. In the case of the fruit, step one, impulse and imagination were at the fore. But in step two, the man and the woman self reflectively attempt to conceal their embarrassment with a covering of fig leaves. In this self reflective, self aware act, Kant sees the awakening of, and the basis for, true sociability.[157] For the man and the woman seek to conceal *all that which that might arouse low esteem.* [158]

When one enters into the realm of social concealment, the *merely sensual*, and the *merely instinctual* begins to yield its ground to *spiritual attractions.*[159] Instinct begins to move towards the desire for love and acceptance.[160] Merely agreeable sensations begin to evolve into a taste for beauty. At first, only the beauty in man is noticed, but later, that in nature itself.[161]

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[152] *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.
[153] *Ibid.,* p. 56.
[154] *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.
[155] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[157] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[158] *Ibid.*
[159] *Ibid.*
[160] *Ibid.*
[161] *Ibid.*

Thus begins man's exodus from the purely instinctual and the purely sensual into the spiritual and into sociability. Kant even announces that these *small beginnings* are more important than *the whole immeasurable series of expansions of culture* which subsequently spring from it.[162] It is more than fascinating that Kant would see in the fig leaf incident, an illustration of the form of consciousness which spawned the beginnings of civilisation itself.

Third Step. Man Will Work By The Sweat of His Brow And Woman will have pain in Childbearing. (Gen 3:13-19)[163]

The predictive nature of the curse in Genesis is taken by Kant to illustrate an even greater step, namely humanity progressing to a *conscious expectation of the future.*[164] This great human attribute enables that great advantage man has over all creatures, the power to prepare for, and even glimpse the distant future.[165] But it brings in its train worries and concerns alien to the animal kingdom. Living beyond the instinctual present of the animal kingdom brings great hardships: concern for home, family, and future Children.[166] Woman foresees the troubles nature brings to her sex.[167] Looming beyond and above all these fears reason has awakened, comes the fear of death.[168] Despite all this, Kant sees the third step as even more momentous for human progress than the former two.[169] Again, God plays no real part, he is just a character in a story of origins that illustrates early forms of awareness in the history of mankind

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[162] *Ibid.*
[163] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] *Ibid.,* p. 58.
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] *Ibid.*
[169] *Ibid.*

Fourth Step: God Makes A Covering Of Animal Skins For Adam And Eve (Gen: 3:21)[170]

In the Genesis account God sees the inadequacy of the apron of fig leaves to cover man's nakedness. He therefore clothes them with garments made of animal skins. For Kant, this animal garment illustrates the fourth step in human consciousness.[171] In using animals as mere objects*, man came to see himself [however obscurely*] as the *true end of nature.* From that day forward humanity is considered *superior* to animals.[172] In effect, man then says to animals: Nature *has given your skin for my use, not for yours.* Kant declares that the first time man ever took that skin and put it upon himself, he became aware of the privileged state nature had assigned him. This act, and this realisation raised him above all the animals. [173] He then looked upon them no longer as fellow creatures, but as mere means and tools for whatever end came to mind. [174]

In a sense, man becomes a collective ***WE***, no longer an isolated ***I***.[175.] For all men share this superiority over nature. They are equal participants in this gift nature has given them. This was the insight which would gradually lead to social restraints and regulations imposed by man on other men.[176] Kant sees such restraints as far more essential to the growth of civilisation than inclinations such as love and affection. Thus man, Kant announces, enters into a relation of equality with all rational beings whatever their background.[177]

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[170] *Ibid.*
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] *Ibid.*
[174] *Ibid.*
[175] The expressions *We* and *I* are this authors but are intended to vividly capture the implications of Kant's interpretation of man as an end in himself.
[176] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
[177] I*bid.*, pp. 58-59.

Hence this last step of reason is at the same time man's release from the womb of nature - an *honourable condition*, but one *fraught with danger*.[178] For nature now had driven him from *the harmless state of childhood - a garden - into the wide world* of *troubles cares* and *unforeseen ills*.[179] In his toils and trials man will yet dream of the garden, of paradise, but his restless *reason will interpose itself, irresistibly impelling him to develop the faculties planted within him.*[180] It will not permit him to return to that crude and simple state from which it had driven him to begin with. It will make him forget death itself, because of all those trifles which he is even more afraid to lose.[181] So, in Kant, God driving man from the garden is an allegory. In fact, God himself plays the role of man's own reason banishing him forever from his instinctual state, and compelling him towards sociability and spirituality.

Kant's Concluding Reflections on Genesis

After completing his allegorical interpretation of Genesis, Kant then reflects upon the meaning and implications. Genesis illustrates the beginnings of human progress, the faint beginnings of the ways and means by which humanity will finally conquer its own evils through reason and culture.[182] Reason's birthing of new and deeper evils is a necessary state, a necessary tension, that which paves the way to the fulfilment of human destiny and a lasting peace between all peoples and all nations. [183]

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[178] *Ibid.,* p. 59.
[179] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[180] *Ibid.*
[181] *Ibid.*
[182] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[183] *Ibid.*

Man moves from *bondage to instinct*, to *rational control*, from the *uncultured* to the *state of humanity*, from the tutelage *of nature* to the *state of freedom.*[184] Winning or losing is now a *mute question.* Now the goal is nothing *less than progress towards perfection.*[185] Yet, Kant asserts that this progress is not possible for the individual, but only for the race. For the awakening of reason also means the awakening of great and imaginative evils in man. For this reason Kant cannot fairly be accused of holding a naïve or superficial view of evil. On the contrary, he sees these new artificial vices and imaginings reason invents as formidable obstacles to human progress. He takes evil so seriously as to declare that real hope and change lies only in future generations.

> *…when reason began to set about its business, it came in all its pristine weakness, into conflict with animality, [sic] with all its power. Inevitably evils sprang up, and (which is worse) along with the cultivation of reason also vices, such as had been wholly alien to the state of ignorance and innocence.*
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> *Morally, the first step was a fall; physically, it was a punishment, for a whole host of formerly unknown ills were a consequence of this fall. The history of nature therefore begins with good, for it is a work of God, while the history of freedom begins with wickedness for it is the work of man. For the individual who in the use of his freedom is concerned only with himself – this whole change was a loss, for nature whose purpose with man concerns the species, it was a gain.*[186]

In Kant, human accountability for evil is amazingly strong. Indeed true future progress absolutely requires that individuals take the blame for their own evils. It is pivotal to true spiritual and moral growth.

Man must take the blame not only for his own faults, but for all the evils which he suffers. Yet, Kant thinks that as a member of the species we must admire the whole process, and the wisdom and purposefulness of its arrangement.[187] Consequently, Individual human life counts for little, and is on the whole quite impoverished with respect to the hope and

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[184] *Ibid.*
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] *Ibid.*
[187] *Ibid.*

comfort it affords. Still, Kant reflects, in fulfilling his purpose each man contributes his part to future generations.

In his allegory on Genesis, Kant sees the source of evil itself as birthed by the conflict between nature and morality. This unresolved conflict between man as a natural species and as a moral species is the cause of all the evils which oppress human life and all the vices that dishonour it.[188]

But a caution here, Kant says it is not that the natural impulse is always evil. The real trouble is that culture progressively interferes with its natural function, by altering the conditions to which it was suited.[189] On the other hand, Kant concludes that natural impulse will inevitably interfere with culture until such time as art and its accompanying beauty become strong and perfect enough to become a second nature. [190] Kant envisions this as the ultimate moral end of the species.

> *Providence has assigned to us a toilsome road on earth. But it is of the utmost importance we should nevertheless be content, partly in order that we may gather courage even in the midst of toils, partly in order that we not lose sight of our own failings. These are perhaps the sole cause of all the evils which befall us, and we might seek help against them by improving ourselves, but this we should fail to do if we blamed all these evils on fate.*[191]

Summary

In his decidedly allegorical interpretation, *Kant* views Genesis as true to human experience. Its story illustrates the awakening in man of reason and the first brave but shaky steps that transformed man's world and destiny. It illustrates the conflicts and evils which

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[188] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[189] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[190] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[191] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

emerge when awakened reason is used to give birth to even greater evils. Yet Kant is confident that the right use of reason will one day extinguish evil itself.

For Kant, the Genesis Story of the banishment of man from the garden is merely a symbol of mans own self realisation: first of a future transcending nature and instinct, and secondly of himself as the chief end of history itself. Evil derives not only from natural human selfishness and unsociability, but also from the new artificial vices reason invents. In Kant, as in a great host of enlightenment thinkers, saving knowledge, as well as saving action, is dependent on man himself.

Bonhoeffer, Genesis Chapter Three and Shame

Shame, Nakedness, Shattered Relations

Bonhoeffer knew of Kant's view of shame, and argued that Kant failed to perceive the *fundamental significance of shame for human existence.*[192] *Kant,* as we earlier noted, interpreted the concealment of shame and embarrassment in the first couple as an awakening of *social awareness.* It was a modest but decisive step out of instinctual behaviour towards *sociability.* He was content to leave God out of the Genesis narrative as having any real import as to what shame in fact is.

Not so Bonhoeffer, Concealment and Shame, far from denoting sociability, signifies mans alienation from God, himself, and his fellow man. For Bonhoeffer, the shame referred

[192] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics,* trans. from the German by Neville Horton Smith (New York: The Macmillan Company, *1955),* p. 21.

to in Genesis Chapter 3 can only produce forms of sociability that stand as perpetual obstacles to true humanity and true human destiny.

> *Instead of seeing God, man now sees himself, 'There eyes were opened' (Gen. 3.7). Man perceives himself in his disunion with God and with men. He perceives that he is naked. Lacking the protection, the covering, which God and his fellow man afforded him, he finds himself laid bare. Hence there arises shame. Shame is mans ineffaceable recollection of his estrangement from the origin; It is grief for this estrangement, and the powerless longing to return to unity with the origin.*[193]

Shame, Bonhoeffer argues, is always a revelation of man's disunity with God, with himself, with creation, and with others of his species. It discloses the fact that humanity is no longer at one with its origin, God himself. Therefore, he can no longer understand the destiny appointed by God.[194]

Shame: Ethics As Evil

Consequently, because of his state of shame, he can only ponder his own *possibilities* towards either good or evil. He now knows himself only as something *apart from* God. This means he knows only himself and no longer knows God at all.[195] For, declares Bonhoeffer, he can know God *only if he knows only God.*[196] The knowledge of good and evil is therefore separation from God. Only against God can man know good and evil.[197]

This was Bonhoeffer's base for viewing all human ethics with its strictly human perceptions of good and evil as anti-God and anti-true humanity. Ethics, in this sense, are the

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[193] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[194] *Ibid.,* pp. 20-2I, 17.
[195] *Ibid.,* p. 18.
[196] What Bonhoeffer means by this is somewhat puzzling, though one gets a sense of what he means. But it is difficult to see how if man knows God, he knows only God and not what God has created.
[197] *Ibid.*

very rationale and motivation for keeping God at arms length. Human perceptions of good and evil that take no account of God can only perpetuate and obviate man's disunity with himself, with God, and with others. He was therefore prompted to the following conclusion:

> *The knowledge of good and evil seems to be the aim of all ethical reflection.* [see Bonhoeffer footnote 1] *The first task of Christian ethics is to invalidate this knowledge. In launching this attack on the underlying assumptions of all other ethics, Christian ethics stands so completely alone that it becomes questionable whether there is any purpose in speaking of Christian ethics at all. But if one does notwithstanding, that can only mean that Christian ethics claims to discuss the origin of the whole problem of ethics, and thus professes to be a critique of all ethics simply as ethics.*[198]

Election, Thievery, And Knowledge In Reverse

Human Ethics arise out of a state of alienation from God. Therefore they can only perpetuate that alienation. For man no longer knows God as the origin, but himself as that origin.[199] In support of his contention, Bonhoeffer quotes Genesis 3:22. *This man has become as one of us, knowing good and evil.* In attributing to himself the origins of good and evil, man steals a secret from God which proves his undoing.[200] In taking the forbidden fruit, man knows good and evil. This does not imply new knowledge, but rather the complete reversal of his knowledge.[201] He now knows what only God himself can and should know. This secret of the knowledge of good and evil has been stolen from God by man in his desire to be an origin on his own account.

> *Instead of knowing himself solely in the reality of being chosen and loved by God, he must now know himself in the possibility of choosing and of being the origin of good and evil. He has become like God but against God.*[202]

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[198] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[199] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[200] *Ibid.,* p. 18.
[201] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[202] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Man's perception of good and evil tears him *loose from life* itself, that is to say from *eternal life*, *which proceeds from the choice of God.*[203]

Bonhoeffer then quotes Genesis 3:22-24 in support, where man is not permitted to take of the tree of life, and is driven out of the garden. Man now knows good and evil *against God*, against his origin, godlessly and of his *own choice,* understanding himself according to his own *contrary possibilities.* Consequently, he is cut off from the *unifying reconciling life* with God, and delivered over to death.[204] Bonhoeffer claims that it is only with extreme reserve that even the Bible indicates to us that God is the one who knows of good and evil. This is for Bonhoeffer the first indication of the mystery of predestination, an *eternal choice* and election in him in whom there is *no darkness, only light.* To know oneself, rather than God, he announces, is to know oneself as the origin of good and evil, as the origin of an eternal choice and election.

Shame: Nakedness, The Solution. The Covering God supplies

For Bonhoeffer the only way free of shame is the covering provided by God and Christ. Shame, Bonhoeffer declares, can only be overcome when the original unity is restored, when once again man is clothed by God, *in the other man, in the house which is from heaven, the temple of God (11Cor. 5:2).* [205] Shame can only be overcome through the forgiveness of sin, and by that Bonhoeffer means the restoration of fellowship with God and man. [206] Mans' shame must be clothed with the forgiveness of God, with the new man that he puts on, with the Church of God, with the house which is from heaven. This, Bonhoeffer

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[203] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[204] *Ibid.,* pp. 19-20.
[205] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[206] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

offers, is illustrated in the line of the Leipzig hymn of 1638: Christ's *blood and righteousness, that is my adornment and my fine rainment [sic].* For Kant the animal skins represented the great fourth step in human progress, man's realisation of himself as an end in himself. But for Bonhoeffer the only true progress in perfected humanity is reconciliation with God through the covering he provides us in Christ.[207]

Bonhoeffer, Kant, Individual and Collective Evil

Bonhoeffer Versus Kant

In Bonhoeffer we see a truly antithetical interpretation of Genesis to that of Kant's. Indeed to Bonhoeffer, Kant's four steps do not typify cultural and spiritual advance, but the beginnings of humanity's increasing evils and alienation from his creator. What Kant viewed as starting points for progress, Bonhoeffer sees as perpetual death. For Bonhoeffer, men such as Kant with all their talk of honour and duty are really agents of dehumanisation. For man apart from reconciliation with God is not truly man at all. Only Christ and those who belong to him can image humanity as God intended.

For Bonhoeffer, true progress, and true spirituality is impossible unless man is born again through Christ's atoning death. Without that, duty, ethics, and culture are a triad of evil. Whenever and wherever this triad prevails, they make of history a theatre of death.[208]

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[207] Bonhoeffer may have intended all this as an interpretation based on God covering the first man and woman with animal skins. He may see this as a foreshadowing leading to his comments on the clothing Christ provided. While he may have intended to intimate this, in this context, he did not clearly say so.

[208] The expression "theatre of death" is this authors, but is intended to capture Bonhoeffer's meaning.

Kant's trust that the tension between culture and nature will bring the triumph of the former is not shared by Bonhoeffer. For Culture and nature apart from God bear the same fruits. Both can only intensify human evil, human alienation, and the human shame that trumpets the reality of man cut of from himself, his fellow man, and God.

Indeed, for Bonhoeffer, Kant's failure to understand the meaning of shame is indicative of the lost. In fact, Kant's very interpretation of Genesis embodies the precise spirit and attitude Bonhoeffer attributes to the man of shame. For Kant cuts himself off from God, and by so doing from himself and his fellow man. Kant actually does disown God in any relational sense, and he makes no secret of this. He does, practically speaking, make man his starting point and his ending point. He does see the solution in man alone, and a God who intervenes directly in this life is for him the great obstacle. For man must do it all himself and depend on no other. Perhaps the statement made by Kant that would most fully identify him with Bonhoeffer's man of shame is the one we recently mentioned:

> *Nature has willed that man, should by himself, produce everything that goes beyond the mechanical ordering of his animal existence, and that he should partake of no other happiness or perfection that that which he himself, independently of instinct, has created by his own reason.*

For Bonhoeffer, such declarations are not declarations of life and hope, but its absence. They mightily nurture that mortal rebellion of heart and mind that ever blocks the promise of peace between God and man. For men such as Kant compose their own idea of good and evil, and seek by such, to enter the garden of peace once again. Bonhoeffer would no doubt consent, that for this reason the cherubim's of Genesis are still there, and the sword yet flashes every which way, keeping the way of the tree of life, and allowing no entrance to men of Kant's persuasion.

Kant Versus Bonhoeffer

In all that has been said, it would be most unfair say that Kant does not understand the Genesis narrative. He is simply not concerned with its relational message. He is concerned with it only as a vehicle confirming what human experience confirms. For his part, he would see Genesis itself, relationally interpreted, and Bonhoeffer's interpretation in particular, as indicative of ideas of God and man that will always stand as weighty hindrances to human progress. Kant represents a way of thinking in which progress and perfection arise from human ethics having a transcendent base, but no transcendent intervening God who communicates with humanity. For all human perceptions are bound to a world of appearance. Yet people are driven to do the good and the dutiful by a transcendent providence that leaves it all up to them, and yet stirs them to duty and to the abolition of evil in themselves and in the world.

Here people succeed only by fleeing from relational knowledge, fleeing from the idea of a God who actually directs them and personally intervenes in human history. For man himself must receive the full glory for his own accomplishment.

In taking such a stance, Kant is attuned not only the enlightenment era, but to many philosophers past and present. The harmony is sustained wherever a personal God who speaks to man is discarded either in theory or in actual conduct. Under this persuasion, if truth is ever to be found, humanity will find it. If healing is ever to come, humanity aided only by humanity will accomplish it. The great evils in history are whatever obstacles stand against the truth that man will eventually perfect himself, and thus prove that humanity is an end in itself. Bonhoeffer's Christian idea of a knowable God who requires the atoning blood of Christ to do for man what man cannot do for himself must be viewed by Kant as a

besetting evil. For Kant himself declares that whatever prevents man from believing he can progress on his own is an evil and keeps him in the realm of evil.

For Kant there is a transcendent realm, and a natural realm. Even the natural realm is fused with the infinite. Despite the determinism inherent in nature, the realm of moral constants does not lack in Kant. Man, by drawing on that realm, can overcome through time and conflict, every range of evil that yet plagues his heart and conscience. Humanity therefore, must not give in to the evil that a mediator or any kind of divine intervention is necessary. Such an idea universally adopted brings all progress to a halt. Man would then be bound to evil forever. Given Kant's faith and perspective, it is surely hard to imagine a greater evil. Kant holds true to his faith that eventually everything will reach fruition and humanity will one day form a league of nations that will bring an end to the battle between mans sociability and unsociability. The seeds of success nature planted will one day prevail.

> *Such a justification of nature-or better, of Providence, is no unimportant reason for choosing a standpoint toward world history. For what is the good of esteeming the majesty and wisdom of Creation in the realm of brute nature and of recommending that we contemplate it, if that part of the great stage of supreme wisdom which contains the purpose of all others –the history of mankind- must remain an unceasing reproach to it. If we are forced to turn our eyes from it in disgust, doubting that we can ever find a perfect rational purpose in it and hoping for that only in another world.*[209]

In Kant's vision therefore, the day must come when the work of providence will finally reach fruition. There will then be unity between man and man. It is difficult to understand how Kant can assign such plans to a providence that seems utterly devoid of intelligence, and yet so very resourceful as to how to effect its final goal. Yet for Kant there

[209] Immanuel Kant, *On History,* Ibid., p. 25.

is never any need for unity between a personal God and man. Neither is there any thought that unity between man and man first requires unity between man and a personal God.

Samuel Hirsch Genesis 3 and Evil

Man Animal and The Voice of God.

Unlike Kant, Samson Hirsch, an early nineteenth century Jewish Scholar does not view the voice of God in the garden as the voice of basic animal instinct. For him it is the true external voice of God. It is only in obedience to this external voice and counsel of God that man learns not to do evil. [210] Conscience is that voice of God breathed into man by which he knows shame and is warned in *general terms* to do good and *shun evil*. But precisely which acts are good and evil, he can only learn from the mouth of God speaking to him from outside himself. [211]

Despite man's battle with his physical appetites, Hirsch insists that nowhere, and under no circumstances can man ever be an animal. For man was not placed in the garden to satisfy his physical appetites, but to work it and guard it for the Lord. Hirsch draws an interesting contrast with animal life. He declares that it is enough for animals to form their judgements on their *individual nature* because a given animal exists only for itself.[212] Man however exists for God and for the world and must gladly sacrifice his own individuality to

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[210] *The Pentateuch*, Hebrew translation and commentary by Samson Raphael Hirsch , edited by Ephraim Oratz, translated from original German into English by Gertrude Hirschler (New York: The Judaica Press Inc, 1990), p. 17.
[211] *Ibid.*
[212] *Ibid.*

this higher calling.[213] Hence, Hirsch declares, it is not from his own *individual nature*, but through his lofty calling that he must learn *what is good and evil for him.*[214]

Hirsch describes some interesting ideas with respect to the temptation to take of the tree of knowledge. He envisions man as for the first time encountering animal logic, and its most *subtle exemplification: the serpent.* [215] In concert with such logic, no animal can possibly remain indifferent to the best, the most beautiful and appealing physical delights. How asks the serpent can anything so beautiful and pleasurable be wrong? The very tone of the serpent, Hirsch declares, shows that this encounter with the tree is between a human being and an animal. Hirsch maintains that the same animal logic still speaks to us today. It not only allows the few things forbidden to us to rule over what is morally permissible, it portrays God's moral law as an enemy of all physical pleasures. In man, such animal logic breeds deception, and deception breeds evil.[216] Man ceases to listen to the external voice of God. In his disobedience he becomes naked before God.

Shame, Nakedness Body And Spirit

Hirsch interprets the nakedness and shame the first human pair experience as rooted in their awareness that they have betrayed their true calling.[217] He sees in their conduct a mirror of our own. We, like them, seek to conceal what we know is alien to what we should be.[218] As long as man serves God, Hirsch explains, he has no reason to feel ashamed of his physical aspects. Bodily charms are Godly and pure as long as they are used to fulfil God's

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[213] *Ibid.*
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] *Ibid.*
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[218] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Holy purpose. But once this physical relationship between the physical and the Godly self is reversed, then we, like them feel ashamed of our physical attributes. Our conscience then reminds us that we are not meant to be animals. For we, like the man and woman in the garden sense the conflict between body and spirit.[219] For this reason Adam and Eve make aprons in a futile quest to cover their nakedness which is, in essence, that very contradiction.[220]

The Meaning of The Serpent

For Hirsch, whenever the serpent strikes the heel, it typifies man's failure to win against his physical passions. Yet Hirsch is confident that human beings are capable of overcoming these serpent passions. Whenever they do so, they are said to strike the serpents head. Hirsch sees no yet to be fulfilled prophecy in all this, only a statement of the two options open to man, a way out or a way into continuing nakedness and shame.[221]

For Hirsch, the garden account gives no hint that man is fallen, or is permanently alienated from God. He is perfectly capable of overcoming the serpent, with the help of God, should he so choose.[222]

Hence, Hirsch challenges any interpretation of the curse in Genesis as in any way permanent or affecting mans lofty calling. He insists that the only real curses contained in the divine judgement are directed at the ground and the serpent.[223] There is no curse against man as such. Only the external conditions have changed, and even this happened for man's

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[219] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[220] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[221] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[222] *Ibid.*
[223] *Ibid.*

own good. [224] Man's mission as such, his Godly calling, and his God given ability to fulfil it have remained unaltered. For Hirsch holds, in keeping with one of the most basic concepts in Judaism and in Jewish living, that every new born infant springs forth from the hand of God in the same state of purity as did Adam. *Every child comes into the world as a pure angel.*[225]

A Great And Miserable Lie

What Hirsch truly regards as a great and miserable lie and therefore an evil is the Christian doctrine of original sin. Hirsch declares:

> *But what a miserable lie has been concocted from this historical account, a lie that undermines all the moral future of mankind! We are referring to the dogma of "original sin" against which … it is the duty of the Jew to protest most vigorously, with every fiber of his being. It is true that on account of the sin in the Garden of Eden all of Adam's descendants have inherited the task of living in a world that no longer smiles at them as once it did, but this is so, only because this same sin is still being committed over and over again. However, the express purpose of the present conflict between man and the physical world and of man's resultant "training by self denial" is to guide man towards that state of moral perfection which will pave the way for his return to a Paradise on earth. But as for the doctrine that, because of Adams sin all mankind has become "sinful" that man has lost the ability to be good and is compelled to go on sinning, and that man's return to God and the restoration of Paradise on earth requires something other than a revival of devotion to duty, an effort within the capacity of every human being- these are the notions against which Judaism must offer its most categorical protest. Man needs no intermediary dead or resurrected to return to God.*[226]

In this statement we see Hirsch viewing the garden account in a way remarkably in concert with Kant. The mention of duty, and of man's capacity to move towards a state of moral perfection without the need of any Christian atonement radically separates Kant and

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[224] *Ibid.*
[225] *Ibid.*
[226] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

Hirsch from Bonhoeffer's Christian interpretation. As we have seen, both Kant and Hirsch see this limitation on man as a serious evil, if not the most serious lie of all.

God's Initiatives On Behalf Of Alienated Man

For Hirsch, *Chapter Three of Genesis reveals* not only the alienation between God and man, but also the initiatives taken by God to restore the relationship. Indeed, Hirsch claims that some of the main events that obviate the alienation between God and man are at the same time provisions made by God for man's restoration and lofty future destiny. Chief among these are the banishment from the garden, man tilling the soil by the sweat of his brow, and finally the meaning of the fig leaves and the animal garments God uses to cover Adam and Eve.

It is therefore worthwhile to examine Hirsch's interpretation of these events. First, Hirsch claims that no real curse fell upon man, only a blessing in disguise. For man had to till the ground by the sweat of his brow. But this brought the great blessing of agriculture.[227] Agriculture in turn gave birth to culture, and culture is the first major step in bringing forth the day when paradise and moral perfection will come again to the earth. For this reason Hirsch views the fig leaves and the garment made by God as humanity's first cultural possessions.[228] But what of the banishment from the garden? How can this be a positive thing in any sense?

While for Bonhoeffer this signified an alienation only repairable through Christ's atonement, for Hirsch, it denotes not only alienation, but also a provision of God. For Hirsch, the Cherubim and the ever returning sword represents the two elements by means of

[227] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[228] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

which God preserves for mankind the path to the Tree of Life and guides man back to it. The Cherubim that guard the way of the tree of life are seen as timely experiences, revelations and instructions that will lead man back to the tree of life. The tree of life is the Torah itself.[229]

First comes culture, then Torah,[230] then restoration and a future destiny where man and God will live on earth in perfect peace.[231] Both Kant and Hirsch thus see man as perfectible through his natural spiritual endowments of reason and moral conduct. He needs only time and the right exercise of both. Both view the doctrine of original sin as a great encumbrance to human fulfilment. For Kant, man must do it all on his own. Providence must leave man to his own resources. In Hirsch, man needs no mediator, all that is required is for culture to fully wed itself to torah, torah being the instruction of God. When culture conforms to torah, then culture and torah will be one.[232]

Kant, Bonhoeffer, Hirsch And Evil

Despite their differences, Kant and Hirsch both see culture and social wisdom as the products of human co-existence on the earth. Bonhoeffer's interpretation embraces these as well, but only in light of a new humanity transformed through Christ. Hirsch and Kant's joint confidence that the resources of perfection lie in man himself is for Bonhoeffer the prime evil, the besetting obstacle to Gods intent for culture, for civilization, and for true

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[229] *Ibid.*
[230] In essence, Torah for the Jew means instruction from God. It sometimes used of parts of the Canon, and sometimes of the entire Jewish Canon itself, often called the Hebrew Bible.
[231] *Ibid.*
[232] *Ibid.*

humanity. For Hirsch a culture that is devoted to morality constitutes the first stage of man's journey towards perfection. In Kant, culture and art constitute not only the beginning stage but also the final.

Both Kant and Hirsch recognize evil as the great barrier to true humanity. But for them the constant blockade, the arch evil, seems to be the idea of an intermediary to do for humanity what it can never do for itself. Yet Kant's rejection of relational knowledge is for Hirsch as great an evil as the Christian doctrine of original sin. For the only destiny for culture apart from Torah and apart from God is decadence and dehumanisation. So for Hirsch, Kant's rejection of relational knowledge, and Bonhoeffer's talk of atonement and a mediator, stand as irrevocable obstacles in the path of true human destiny and a lasting peace between God and man, and man and man.

Bonhoeffer, no less than Hirsch, sees a great evil in collective man seeking to create its own world following its own perceptions of good and evil, while ignoring the voice of God. Here Bonhoeffer and Hirsch unite against Kant. No matter how vehemently Kant might insist that his idea of good and evil comes not from himself but from a transcendent unknowable God, it would not convince Hirsch or Bonhoeffer. For Kant rejects what is for them the only true source of good and evil, a knowable and intimate personal creator. So in their view, whether Kant thinks so or not, in reality, however unwittingly, he has devised his own idea of God and his own perception of good and evil. As a consequence, for them, Kant represents the stance of decadence, the abolition of true culture, true civilization and true humanity.

But for Kant, relational views of God lead only to dogma, controversy and illusion. For Kant, as we noted in some detail, the prime intent for providence is for man to succeed himself without any help from the Gods whether one or many. Kant represents a way of

thinking in which progress and perfection arise from human ethics having a transcendent base, but no transcendent knowable God. All human perceptions are bound to a world of appearance. Yet they are driven to do the good and the dutiful by a transcendent providence (nature)[233] that leaves it all up to man himself. In truth, it stirs him to duty and to the abolition of evil in himself and in the world.

Here man succeeds only by fleeing from relational knowledge, fleeing from a God who actually directs him and personally intervenes in human history. Man must trust in providence, and set his course in practical improvements in this world, grounded in the transcendence that underlies practical reason. From this will come culture, art and civilization. Evil will finally runs its course in some future generation. The nations will find lasting peace and the resolution of every obstacle in the way of human destiny. Man will then be seen to tower above nature, as an end in himself.

Therefore, for Kant, the greatest hindrance of them all is relational theories of knowledge, such as those represented in Hirsch and in Bonhoeffer. The implications of such beliefs are for Kant a besetting evil, a prime obstacle to a world of goodness, a formidable evil, a foe of providence itself.

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[233] In this world of appearances providence must be called nature. Yet Kant says that in its mechanical course we discern a higher cause *which predetermines the course of nature and directs it to the objective final end of the human race.* In this sense nature is seen as subordinate to providence. This profound wisdom of a higher cause is the ultimate providence, it would seem. Kant only uses the term nature or providence because it is *more fitting to* the limits of human reason. (*On History Kant ,* pp. 107-108).

Chapter 4: Perception Of The World And Evil In Relational Theories Of Knowledge

In this chapter, we probe further into relational[234] epistemological perceptions of the world, the self, God and gods, and the images of evil that emerge. With this in mind, we shall examine four renderings: Martin Buber's in his work entitled Good and Evil, collective evil in Genesis, and finally evil and suffering in the Book of Job.

Buber: Genesis, And The Evil And The Good In God And Man

The Knowledge Of Good And Evil Respecting God And Man In Avestic And Vedic Texts And Therefore In Genesis

For Buber, the knowledge of good and evil spoken of in Genesis is virtually identical with the idea of a *cognisance of opposites* found in ancient Avestic (Persian) and Vedic (Hindu) texts. Buber describes this idea, as involving an *adequate awareness of the opposites latent in creation*.[235] Therefore, with a view to understanding Buber's interpretation of knowing good and evil in the Genesis account, we shall now examine Buber's treatment of these ancient texts, and how he relates these to Genesis.[236]

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[234] Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction To The Old Testament As Scripture*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). As Brevard Child emphasises throughout his work, Genesis and Job are part and parcel of a canon which claims that each narrator, each participant in the canon, received his understanding from God himself.[234] Both the narrator and the canon itself marks Genesis and Job off as having and originating in a relational theory of knowledge. The God centred worldview it embraces is the source of its understanding of evil, of the world, and of reality, whether individual or collective.

[235] Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), pp. 73-74.

[236] See also Jeffery Burton Russel's discussion of Persian perceptions of knowledge and evil in the Avesta and other ancient texts in his work, *Prince of Darkness.* .

The Knowledge Of Good And Evil Respecting God And Man In Avestic And Vedic Texts And Its Connection With Genesis

In one very ancient Avestic myth, Buber explains, *Ahura Masda,* the supreme God, gives birth to twins. One twin is good, the other evil. For both good and evil are present in Ahura Masda. But in this version Ahura Masda is not content with the evil side in him or in humanity. The plan in giving birth to the twins is to find a way through human history to finally overcome evil.[237]

Nevertheless, as Buber explains, this early version of the Persian Myth was unacceptable to many. For how could it be that Ahura Masda, *the Good*, could also encompass evil. For Buber claims that in the early Persian versions good and evil were at utterly opposite poles, and neither assisted, let alone balanced the other.[238]

Buber thus refers us to an ancient *West Iranian* revision. To rescue Ahura Masda from being part evil, the Myth of *Zurvan* is created. In this rendition Zurvan awakens from a primal sleep and sacrifices in order to obtain the good son Ahura Masda. This good son will later create the world. But there is a problem, for Zurvan sacrifices in a state of doubt and unbelief. Hence, Zurvan experiences *indecision*. Indecision, Buber explains, is *evil itself.* Zurvan thus voices the evil query; perhaps *being is not.* It is precisely this evil that brings the fall of Zurvan. For now, not only the good twin Ahura Masda is born, but unexpectedly, a purely evil wicked spirit. [239]

In this story, Ahura Masda is no longer a primal God encompassing good and evil, but a good God only, the only good one among all the gods.[240] This of course solves the

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[237] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[238] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[239] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104
[240] See the excellent discussion on *Satan* and Persian Religion in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. (* edited by James Orr, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1939).

problem of Ahura Masda encompassing good and evil in the earlier tradition. His twin brother, Angra *Mainyu* (Ahriman) is his exact antithesis. In this way Ahura Masda emerges fully good. Yet, it should be noted that his power is diminished. He now shares creation with a totally evil brother.[241]

On all this Buber makes an interesting observation. He declares that in this myth good and evil in their true nature are viewed as unveiled. Only the good is *knowledge.* It alone is belief in being. Evil is the denial of being as being truly is.[242]

However, Buber explains, some in the community could not tolerate a doctrine of the fall of Zurvan. For Zurvan is, after all, a deity. Therefore, a third tradition developed in which Zurvan was seen as a balanced mixture of good and evil. But in this deviant tradition good and evil are no longer opposed to each other. This new myth, Buber declares, amounted to an abandonment of the former Iranian tradition.[243] Zurvan seems fully able to orchestrate both good and evil in perfect harmony including the birth of the good and the evil twin. Thus, owing to the persistent questions theodicy poses, three distinct origins for good and evil arose in these ancient myths of origins.

There yet remains another myth that Buber relates to his treatment of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis. It is found in the Avestic texts, the myth concerning *Yima*. Buber describes Yima as a kind of subordinate supernatural deity who serves Ahura Masda the creator, and does it well. While not accepting Ahura Masda's offer for him to promote religion, he accepts the commission to rule the world and keep all the evil demon world in check. He does this well at first, but later, after obeying Ahura Masda's instructions to preserve the best and most beautiful of all living things, Yima falls into evil. He then

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[241] *Ibid.*
[242] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[243] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

embraces the lie. For he praises himself as *ultimate being*, and views himself as the origin of all things.[244] His evil is not just verbal, Buber explains, for it is *a sin against being itself.* He saw himself as the creator of all things through himself, as well as himself as the source of all immortality. Yima even credits himself with the sway over demons.[245] The identical idea, Buber remarks, is found in the Veda. It is called a *lie against being*. In the Veda, this is called the game of hide and seek in the obscurity of the soul. The single human soul evades itself, hides itself from itself.[246] In essence then, Buber writes, Yima gives himself over to being as *non-being*. Yima becomes in reality false being, but in his delusion asserts that he is true being.[247]

He no longer suppresses the demon world but becomes their ally. For *Yima Lauds and Blesses only himself.* He is therefore punished for his evil by Ahura Masda. All his beauty leaves him in the shape of a raven. He then becomes a mere mortal and a wanderer over the earth.[248] Eventually the demons saw him in pieces with a many toothed saw. He is thus the first to die. Then all mortals die after him. For he deemed himself the super power over nature.[249]

Applying The Vedic And Avestic Texts To Genesis With Respect To The Nature Of Yaweh's Knowledge Of Good And Evil

Buber sees the God of Genesis as mirrored in the Zurvan of the third Persian myth. For Buber asserts that Yaweh or *Elohim*, like Zurvan, peacefully encompasses within himself

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[244] *Ibid.*, p. 107-109.
[245] *Ibid.,* p. 110.
[246] *Ibid.,* p. 111.
[247] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[248] This in interesting in its resemblance to the fate of Cain, the rebel who also became, for a time, a wanderer over the earth. Such was supposed to be his destiny.
[249] *Ibid.,* pp. 108-109.

both good and evil. But, Buber cautions, we can only reach a complete understanding of the Hebrew God if we remember that despite the fact of the nearness of God, and man made in his image, there is yet an *immutable difference and distance…(Psalm 73.29).* [250]

This applies in no less degree to the radical difference between the divine and human experience of good and evil. What for man is a *magical attainment* through taking of the tree is for God an intrinsic state of his being. God, Buber says*, knows the opposites of being which stem from his own act of creation.* He encompasses them, *untouched* by them. He is absolutely *familiar* with them.[251] This, Buber states, is obviously the original meaning of the Hebrew Verb *Know*,[252] and is in full alignment with the understanding of good and evil housed in the Avestic texts. For God is in direct contact with both good and evil, as well as their function as *opposite poles of the world of being*. For as such, Buber says, God created them.[253] Buber supports this interpretation by referring us to Isaiah 45 which he interprets in such a way as to declare that God creates or authors good and evil in the ontological sense.[254] Hence the knowing of good and evil denotes Yaweh's primordial *familiarity* with both.[255] So the Knowledge of good and evil in Genesis refers to the same idea present in the ancient Avestic myths, the co-incidence of opposites. But, according to Buber, this co-incidence of opposites not only applies to the nature of God and God's knowledge of good and evil, but also to man's. To this we now turn.

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[250] *Ibid.,* p. 74.
[251] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.
[252] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[253] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[254] It should, however, be noted that even though an ontological interpretation is admissible, it is not necessarily required by the text. The Hebrew word for evil also denotes the idea of trouble. It would then denote no more than that God brings good to good conduct, and trouble to conduct that opposes the good. Under this rival interpretation there is no suggestion that God is the author of ontological evil, or that God incorporates it within himself.
[255] *Ibid.,* p. 75.

Applying The Vedic And Avestic Texts To Genesis With Respect To The Nature Of Mans Knowledge Of Good And Evil

Interestingly, Buber, in his interpretation of Genesis, does not view the decision to take of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as one between good and evil**.** He rather refers to this as an experience of *otherness.*[256] Buber sees this moment of decision as a kind of dream state.[257] What comes into Adam and Eve's experience is not good and evil itself, but rather a world of opposites. This includes both the fortune and misfortune humanity both experiences and frequently causes. [258] The same meaning, Buber declares, is present in the Avestic texts. In modern thought, Buber suggests, it could be termed an adequate awareness of opposites inherent in all being within the world, and that, from the Biblical viewpoint, means adequate awareness of the opposites latent in creation.[259]

But unlike God, Buber explains, man does not acquire this adequate superior familiarity with evil that enables him to encompass its opposites. Consequently, he is battered about by them. In him these opposites can never *temporally co-exist* as they do in God.[260] Further, by his taking of the fruit, the evil which in God remains only potential, becomes *actual, factual* in man. Evil thus becomes truly existent.[261] Man only knows true evil when he sees it as a transgression of God's command. Thus the man and the woman in the garden know they are naked, as a point of *actualised evil*. The eyes of both are *opened.* They had not been ashamed of one another before, but now they are ashamed not merely before one another, but *with one another before God (3.10).* Overcome by the now natural feeling of opposites they experience their natural state without clothes to be an ill, or an evil,

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[256] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[257] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[258] *Ibid.,* p. 73.
[259] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[260] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[261] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

or rather both at once, and more besides. By this very feeling they make it so, but as a *countermeasure* they *conceive* it, *will* it, and thus *establish the good of clothing*.

One, Buber declares, is ashamed of being as *one actually is,* because one now recognises this *so-being* in its opposing nature, as an *intended shall be.* Clothing, or being unclothed have nothing intrinsically to do with good and evil. They only become such when the idea of opposites in man labels them good or evil. This is for Buber a *magical act* of man, the lamentable fact of becoming like God.[262]

Applying The Vedic and Avestic Texts To The Three Processes Buber Sees In Man's Knowledge of Good and Evil

With respect to man's knowledge of good and evil as mirrored in Genesis, Buber believes there are three processes, and he sees these processes again reflected in the ancient Vedic and Avestic myths.

The First Process

In what Buber also calls the first stage, a process is unleashed. It is mirrored in the story of Adam and Eve's taking of the fruit. Yet Buber is emphatic that in this first stage man *does not choose, he merely acts.* [263] Evil is still actualised at this stage, but whatever *mistakes are committed, their commission is not a doing of the deed but a sliding into it.*[264]

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[262] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-77.
[263] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[264] *Ibid.*

The first process is reflected in mans attempt to say yes to the self he truly is. This is the same as acknowledging the good, or more precisely what is therefore true. Consequently a conflict arises in him due to his new knowledge of good and evil.[265]

In the first Persian Myth Ahura Mazda gave birth to two twins, one pure good the other pure evil. In the second myth Zurvan doubts and therefore gives birth not only to Ahura Mazda the good spirit but also to Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) the evil one. Buber sees man's struggle with the knowledge of good and evil as mirrored in the two twins of either myth. For man houses good and evil in himself.[266]

We have already seen Buber describe the world of contradictions, (*the coincidence of opposites)* man encounters. Amidst this perpetual encounter, he experiences near to infinite possibilities to do the good as well as to do the evil. *Thus* Buber declares, *human* life is *a specific entity which has stepped forward from nature with the experience of chaos as a condition perceived in the soul.*[267] For man is the *only* creature, Buber remarks, for whom the real is *continually fringed by the possible.* [268]

In what Buber calls the fist process, a plenitude of possibility floods over man's small reality and overwhelms it. This plenitude of possibilities, Buber calls *Phantasy*, and this in turn he describes as the imagery of possibilities which in *the Old Testament, Buber remarks, God calls evil.* [269]

But why is it evil? Buber responds, it is evil because it distracts from the heavenly divine reality and plays with potentials. It thereby imposes the form of its *indefiniteness* on the *definiteness* of the moment. The *substantial* threatens to be submerged in the potential.

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[265] As is true of traditional Jewish believers, Buber does not believe in original sin. *Ibid. , p. 79.*
[266] *Ibid.,* p. 101-104.
[267] *Ibid.,* p. 125.
[268] *Ibid.*
[269] *Ibid.*

Swirling Chaos, confusion and desolation has forced its way in (Gen. 1:2), a chaos of possibilities bombard the mind.[270] This then is the first process. Here man experiences what Buber calls *a lack of direction,* a condition characteristic of the *vortex revolving within itself.*[271] *He sometimes refers to this as the first of two possible stages in the human path.*[272] Buber says that we may compare this first stage to an *eccentric whirling movement.*[273]

The Second Option Or The Second Process In The Knowledge Of Good And Evil

In highly poetic style Buber describes the soul driven around in a dizzy whirl. The self must not remain fixed in it; it must strive to escape. *If the ebb that leads back to familiar normality does not return*, two possibilities open up. First, man can *clutch at any object, past which the vortex happens to carry it, and cast his passion upon it.*[274] In this case man has exchanged the good for an undirected reality in *which it wills what it wills not to do- the preposterous, the alien the evil.*[275] Man therefore remains in the first stage, remains in the vortex. Yet, Buber remarks, man has another option. He can also respond to a prompting that is still *incomprehensible to itself*, *wherein the soul sets upon the audacious work of self unification* [276] In essence, the self says yes to the good. That good is the truth. *It is precisely the truth that the self in a vortex knows to be the true self and the true good.*[277] Buber calls this, the *possibility of choosing the good*, the choosing of the *yes,* the true intrinsic good in God's design.[278] In this case, man chooses to reject undirected reality and chooses directed

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[270] *Ibid.*, p. 125-126.
[271] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[272] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[273] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[274] *Ibid.*, p. 127.
[275] *Ibid.*
[276] *Ibid.*
[277] *Ibid.*
[278] *Ibid.*

reality instead. *Undirected plenitude* is thus *given up in favour of the one taut string, the one stretched beam of direction.*[279]

For Buber, there is only one true direction that will free the soul from its undirected stance towards evil and its myriad of possibilities. This *taut string, this stretched beam of direction*, Buber calls *the audacious* work of self *unification.* To the extent the soul achieves unification, it *is aware of true direction and of itself as sent in quest of it.* To that extent it comes into the *service of the good* or into *service for the good.*[280]

But Buber does not view this state as one of arrival. *The struggle with images of possibilities for good and for evil continues in man. Again and again the* surge of enticements *persist. Time and again, the* universal temptations *common to man emerge and* overcome the power of the human soul. [281] Yet again and again*, Buber declares,* innate grace arises from out of its depths and promises the *utterly incredible*: you can become *whole and one.* But always there is no left and right*, only the* vortex of the chaos and the spirit hovering above it (Gen 1:2).[282] *In this state two paths are open, but the first stage is in* actual fact, setting out upon no path, *either the good or the evil. This says Buber is evil itself. Evil is precisely this* indecision.[283] This is the evil in man mirrored in Zurvan the deity, who, due to *indecision and doubt*, gave birth not only to the *good son*, but the *wicked son* as well. Zurvan then, is a mirror of the human evil of indecision that plagues humanity inwardly. This evil looms whenever man knows the good and the evil, but chooses neither decisively. [284] *True decision, Buber declares, can only be taken by the* whole soul. [285] *It must leave the*

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[279] *Ibid.*
[280] *Ibid.*
[281] *Ibid.*
[282] *Ibid.,* pp. 127-128.
[283] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[284] *Ibid.,* pp. 128-131.
[285] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

direction to which it was turned or inclined *in the situation of temptation, and must enter wholly into the right direction, otherwise* our answer to evil is nothing but a stammer, a pseudo answer, a substitute for an answer.[286]

Evil then can be overcome, Buber says, not as a partial and thus a pseudo decision, but only with the whole soul. Evil cannot be done with the whole soul; only good can be done with the whole soul.[287] Buber sees this as aligned with the Talmudic interpretation of the Biblical pronouncement of God *concerning* imagination over the evil urge. The whole vigour *of this* urge must be drawn into the love of God in order to truly serve him.[288] So, for Buber the urges for unreal possibilities of indirection must all be fused together in a wholeness of energy directed fully towards the good. This then defuses the urge to envision the evil possibilities.

The Third Process

If neither the first or the second process are embraced by the soul, Buber describes yet another option or stage, or what he calls the third process. This option or stage was expressed in the myth of Yima. Buber explained, committed the lie against being. He chose to see himself as the creator of all things as well as crediting himself for his sway over the demon world. For Buber, Yima symbolises man rejecting his own true self. In the Vedas, Buber earlier remarked, it is the avoidance of the self and the recasting of the self, the game of hide and seek in the obscurity of the soul. The single human soul evades itself, hides itself from

[286] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[287] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[288] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

itself. Yima, Buber explained, gave himself over to being as non-being. True being was relegated to non-being and non-being being to true being. The lie was made reality. The soul, following in the train of Yima, falls victim to non-being through the lie.

This is what happens to a man, Buber says, who cannot readjust his self knowledge towards the good, cannot face his true self and the true yes of life which is the only true direction for the soul. Therefore the intrinsic yes or no of creation is abandoned, for the pseudo yes and no of the man who goes to this third stage in the knowledge of good and evil. [289] Here the authentic self is no longer acknowledged as it truly is in its struggle with good and evil.

Now, in this second stage or third process, he *must render affirmation independent of all findings*, of all truth about himself and reality. This man chooses himself not as he is intended to be *by God-indeed the image* of the true self must be *totally extinguished*; such a one resolves to *intend himself.*[290]

Thus, Buber explains, the Yima *like soul proclaims himself his own creator.*[291] Here, Buber explains, Yima is like the legend of Satan.[292] This is the nature of what Buber calls the third process. Reality has nothing to do with it, nor it with reality. *One need no longer look for being, it is here. One is what one wants and one wants what one is.* [293]

At this stage man begins to typify the Satan of legendary motif. His pact with the legend, Buber explains, is *as Prudentias reports of Satan,* he *who has achieved self creation will be ready to assist men to it.*[294] The wicked spirit in the third stage is yet faced with a

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[289] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-138.
[290] *Ibid.,* p. 137.
[291] *Ibid.*
[292] *Ibid.*
[293] *Ibid.*
[294] *Ibid.*

choice. He must choose between himself or the affirmation of the order which has been established *and eternally establishes good and evil*. If he *affirms not himself but the order*, he must work toward the good and thus deny and *overcome his present state of being*.

> ***But if*** *he affirms himself he must deny and reverse the order to the yes-position, which 'good' had occupied, he must bring the principle of his own self affirmation, nothing else must remain worthy of affirmation than just that which is affirmed by him; his Yes to himself determines the reason and right of affirmation. If he still concedes any significance to the concept 'good', it is this: precisely that which I am. He has chosen himself, and nothing, no destiny can any longer be signed with a No if it is his.* [295]

This, Buber says, is *why Yima's defection is called a lie. By glorifying and blessing himself as he own creator he commits the lie against being, he wants to raise it, the lie to rule over being*. For now truth can no *longer be what he experiences as such, but what he ordains as such.* [296]

Buber spoke of three processes, but he also spoke of two stages. In the following quote Buber compares the first stage, the eccentric whirling movement, to the third stage. Here we recall, Buber says that man merely slides into evil. The second stage has reference to what Buber also calls the third process. But this second stage is no mere slide into evil, but intentional evil.

> *In the second stage evil grows radical, because what man finds in himself is willed; whoever lends to that which in the depths of self- awareness was time and again recognised by him as what should be negated, the mark of being affirmed, because it is his, gives it the substantial character which it did not previously possesses. If we may compare the occurrence of the first stage to an eccentric whirling movement, the process of the freezing of flowing water may serve as a simile to illustrate the second.*[297]

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[295] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.
[296] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[297] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

In so saying, Buber illustrates in graphic imagery, the eccentric whirling movement as the struggle with the self, and the freezing of flowing water, as the end of the struggle for the true self. All resistance freezes into the adoption, the finality of embracing the non-self and calling it the true self. Buber sees this stage mirrored in the revolt of men after the flood. *Let us build a tower. Let us make a name for ourselves the builders cry.* Buber calls the tower a *great magic.* In parenthesis he puts (a great 'name' action) against heaven.[298] This is identical with the third process, and could be aptly called the Yima Stage.

Myth, The Intuition Of Evil, And The Reality Of Human Inner Workings

Buber speaks of a definition of good and evil found only in human experience. The images of good and evil correspond *to certain anthropologically apprehensible occurrences in the life path of the human person.*[299] He says we learn to comprehend this anthropological definition of good and evil as it is revealed to the human person's *own introspection*, *his cognisance of himself in the course of the life he has lived.* We learn, Buber asserts, to *comprehend this anthropological definition as similar in nature to the Biblical tales of good and evil*, whose *narrator must have experienced Adam as well as Cain in the abyss of his own heart.*

In Buber, myth comes very near to acting the part of intuition in Immanuel Kant. For Kant, intuition represents our inescapable experience of reality as mortals can know it. Intuition cannot be refuted because it is the basis for all refutation. Buber sees myth as

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[298] *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.
[299] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

revealing dimensions of human experience that can only be dismissed by means of projected illusions housing fantasy as a safeguard against reality. But evil in its true nature, Buber declares, is accessible only to self introspection and to confirmation in others who can sees the same realities in their own introspection.[300] Buber reflecting on this maintains that evil, in its materialisation and actualisation can only be apprehended *introspectively, not empirically*.[301] They are thus *accessed* and expressed in cosmogonies, in myths of origin such as the Persian and Hebrew that we have just explored through Buber's interpretations.[302]

Buber sees this realm of verification as requiring a perception of reality quite alien to reductionistic psychologies which seek either to skirt around or dismiss this introspective realm.

> *Whoever has learnt to dispose of the matter to his own satisfaction within the more or less dubious spheres of so-called values, for whom guilt is merely the civilised term for tabu [sic], to which corresponds no other reality than the control exercised by society, and attendant upon it, of the' super-ego' over the play of urges, is naturally unfit for the task in hand here.*

A few short sentences later Buber adds:

> *What we are dealing with here is generically different from what is called self analysis in modern psychology. The latter...is concerned to penetrate behind that which is remembered, to 'reduce' it to the real elements assumed to have been repressed. Our business is to call to mind an occurrence as reliably, concretely, and completely remembered as possible, which is entirely unreduced and undissected. [sic]*[303]

Buber explains that despite obstacles, a man can accomplish this *if*

> *the confrontation with himself, in the essential compass of the past, has proved to be one of the most effective forces in the process of ' becoming what one is.'* [304]

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[300] *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.
[301] *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.
[302] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-120.
[303] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[304] *Ibid.*

So for Buber only the man concerned with authentic humanity and thus with authentic destiny will view myth and the history it conveys as a mirror or the reality not only on human experience, but of what human life is ultimately about. Those who ignore this sphere will spend their lives projecting fantasies as to the nature of man, evil and reality that ever keep them from self-authentication. Thus Buber states:

> *If the questioner seeks to apprehend the common denominator between the self-knowledge thus acquired and the analogous self- knowledge of others which has become known to him, he will gain an image of the biographically decisive beginnings of evil and good which differs notably from the usual representations and provides and important confirmation of those Old Testament tales from the dawn of man.*[305]

Reality, Illusion And Collective Evil In Genesis

The Hebrew Bible, and Genesis in particular portrays a dualistic worldview. Our concern is not to treat the story in terms of actual history, but simply as a story that conveys a perception of God, and the world, and consequently a perception of the evil and the good. It starts with a creator and his originally good creation in which God man and nature are at peace. But then both the man and woman heed the serpent and acquire the knowledge of good and evil. The outworking of this new and evil form of knowing is built upon, and its implications expanded through the entire Genesis narrative.

[305] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The First and Second Death: And now, lest they take of the tree of life and live forever (4:22-23)

It is a knowledge of good and evil that utterly alienates humanity from its creator. Early in the narrative, we encounter man and woman's inability to confess or face the evil in themselves. Adam blames Eve for his condition, and Eve the serpent *(3:11-13).*

So, as Genesis portrays the human condition it is one of self deception and the denial of the need of the counsel of any creator. As we shall see, it is also a perception of good and evil that leads to greater and greater alienation of human beings from their creator, creation, others and themselves. Those who embrace this knowledge behave like God only in respect to exercising their own idea of good and evil. But the conduct and the perception of good and evil are both anti-God. They become rebels against God, banished from the garden and bound to two new experiences, first spiritual, then later, physical death (3: 2,19,22-24). It is spiritual death because they are cut off from God, physical because now in this fallen state their lives will come to an end. They are not allowed to take from the tree of life and thus live forever in this state of alienation. It would seem that Genesis portrays such an eternal state as the greatest evil possible. But we will have more to say of this later in the chapter.

Collective Evil: None Call Upon God's Name Cain and Enoch (Gen 4: 9-24)

Immediately after the banishment from the garden, Genesis portrays not only man's further alienation from God, but from his fellow man as well. It starts with Cain murdering Abel. Then Cain rejects God's protection in the wilderness (4: 8,12,15-17). But as *Jacques Ellul* points out in his work entitled the *Meaning of The City*: In place of obedience and in

place of God's protection, Cain builds a city.[306] Ellul is convinced the name assigned by Cain to the city is highly significant. For Cain calls the city Enoch, after his son. As Ellul points out, the word means dedication or initiation of something new. He thus sees the name given to the city as a purposeful intent on Cain's part to initiate his own new beginning, a new beginning, a new creation that owes nothing to God.[307] There is much to support Ellul's contention. First it is thought that the root meaning of the word means to mark or brand. It is hard not to see in this the idea of a brand or mark of ownership.[308] This then would be Cain's defiant declaration to God that this city belongs to him. It is of Cain's own making.

It is also well established in Hebrew tradition that when a Hebrew believer called a name over something, it signified ownership. Though Cain did not call the city by his own name. The semantic sense of ownership and perpetuation of the city through his son should not be ruled out. This idea is further supported by the fact that the name given a child often incorporated the future hopes of the parent for that child.[309] Enoch then would continue what Cain has started. He would further that new beginning.

Whether Ellul is right about the name or not, it is certainly clear from the text that the building of the city constituted disobedience, for now Cain was no longer the wanderer he was commanded to be. He started something new, the city he built.[310] The generation of Cain is a part of a collective, a rebellion that further alienates man from man and man from God. Immediately after the naming incident occurs, the descendants of Cain himself and his son Enoch are mentioned. There follows a listing of his descendants, their accomplishments,

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[306] See Jacques Ellul's early discussion of evil in Genesis in his work, *The Meaning of The City*, especially Chapter 1.
[307] *Ibid.*
[308] Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament suggests that it refers to a *mark to distinguish,* but makes no mention of brand or ownership. Yet the whole idea of mark or brand is not alien to the idea of a distinguishing mark, especially in an agricultural setting such as is evident in this story of Cain and Abel.
[309] *Ibid.*
[310] In his *Meaning of The City*, Ellul sees every city in Genesis, whether built by the descendants of Cain or not, as under the wrath of God.

and the warring nature of many in that civilisation. The entire list and the exploits of the Sons of Cain and Enoch amount to a description of a civilisation emulating the rebellious spirit of Cain, and Enoch (4:18-24). This generation of Cain and all its evils is the consequence of their *becoming as God, knowing good and evil*.[311] It is clear from Genesis that the knowledge of good and evil alienates man from man, and God from man. But in another sense it collectively unites man against God. For the narrator makes clear that the generation of Cain is united by one central thing; none of them call upon the name of God (4:25-26).

The Narrative portrays this knowledge as bringing upon humanity not only a state of alienation from every created thing (4:19-20), not only a radical transformation in nature itself, but also a rapid and accumulating plunge into chaos, into a lost state, into a milieu of murder, deviation and destruction (4:19-24, 6:1-10).

All this carnage is ironically combined with an increase of the arts, of technology, of productivity. But despite Kant's hope in the future of the arts, Genesis portrays the creators of art and technology as part of the collective generation of Cain that never calls upon the name of the Lord. Hence in Genesis, under this new knowledge of good and evil, art and technology leads to an ever deepening collective horror coupled with an increasing alienation from God. Man's use of art and technology in this rebellious state offers no hope of the civilisation Kant envisioned nor of those enlightenment thinkers who agreed with him. So long as alienation from God persists, no amount of time or cultural conditioning can arrest the evil.

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[311] Buber also sees how the Genesis account uses the original taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the pivotal causality for the spread of evil for every evil recorded in Genesis. See Buber's discussion of Cain in this regard. (Martin Buber, *Good and Evil,* Ibid. pp. 81-89).

What is of considerable note in Genesis is that another son named *Enoch* is brought into the world. Unlike the Enoch of Cain, this Enoch walks so closely to God, that the text says simply that God took him (5:21-24). The one Enoch is a son of rebellion in the line of Cain, and the other a son of obedience in the line of Seth and Enosh (4:25 - 5:1-21). This would appear to be more than a co-incidence, and thus form an incident in the story where the narrator of Genesis seems intent on accentuating the juxtaposition between them.

Seth, Enosh, Abraham: Those Who Call Upon The Name

There appears to be a clear intent in the Genesis narrative to fully contrast those who call upon the name of the Lord and those who do not. No sooner has Genesis recorded the generation of Cain and their exploits and the evils of that civilisation, then Adam and Eve give birth to Seth. Seth then has a son called Enosh. The name of this son who stands in utter antithesis to the generation of Cain means, in Hebrew*: humanity.* Then it is stated*: At that time men began to call upon the name of Yahweh (author's translation 4:25-26).* The implication of this statement appears unmistakable. Ever since the death of Abel, neither Cain nor any of his sons have called upon the name of God. This does not happen at all till the birth of Enosh. Seth is born as a replacement for the murdered Abel, and the birth of Enosh signals the time when men began again to call on the name of God.

Almost Immediately after this statement there follow a long list of the sons of Adam and of Seth, and of Enosh. The list does not finish until it mentions the sons of Noah: Shem Ham and Japheth. Immediately after the birth of Shem Ham and Japheth in Noah's five hundred years, the story of Noah's Ark begins (5:3-32).

The narrator announces that Noah was the only good man of his time. He alone, it is declared, lives in fellowship with God. Everyone else with no exceptions is found evil in God's sight (6:1-10). Though the expression is not used here, it is clear that the people in Noah's time are a people like those of the generation of Cain, a people who *no longer walk with God*, no longer call *on his name*. Here it is even said that God is grieved that he ever made Humanity at all (5:6).

Shem, Ham and Japheth, are the sons of Noah and are allowed to enter the ark. Nevertheless, the narrator leaves no doubt that they too are caught up in the same all pervasive collective evil as the rest of humanity. In this way the narrative makes clear that in time, even the descendants of Seth soon entered into wickedness and that this same wickedness is transmitted on through Noah's sons. For immediately after the death of Noah there is once again a list. This time it recounts the descendants of Shem Ham and Japheth. This is very instructive indeed. For in the first genealogical list Shem, Ham, and Japheth, as we noted, were the last mentioned names.

Immediately after this came the story of Noah and the wickedness of his generation. Then comes the mention of Shem, Ham and Japheth and that it was their descendants that were scattered at Babel (9:19). Then immediately after the death of Noah the line of Shem Ham and Japheth is first mentioned, the famous table of nations (10:1-32). Immediately after this list, comes the story of the Tower of Babel.

Genesis depicts these descendants of Shem Ham and Japheth as coming together in a solidarity, a unity of intent to erect a tower to the heavens that will signify in its very building that the builders are rejecting the name of the lord and making a name for themselves (11:1-4). The Genesis narrative depicts the Babel incident as a rebellion again God, and it those very descendants of Shem Ham and Japheth that compose the rebellion. It is made clear that

this new beginning for humanity that began with Noah has once again turned from its creator. Once again Humanity ceases to call upon the name of the Lord, ceases to walk with God. In response to the evil heart of the builders, and their potential to accomplish whatever they wish, God confuses their language. As a consequence they cease to build the tower, and God scatters them across the earth (11:5-9).

Immediately after the Babel story, there again follows a long list, this time of the scattered generations of Shem (11:1-26). But there is no mention of any *who call upon the name of the Lord.* Genesis has not used the phrase since using it to definitively contrast the generation of Seth and Enosh with Cain. But then, after the death of his father Terah, God appears to Abraham who goes to Bethel (12:4-7). There he builds an alter to the Lord. We then hear again the identical phrase in Hebrew. Abraham *calls upon the name of the Lord* (12:8). Abraham therefore stands in the narrative as a clear antithesis to the collective evil of the builders of Babel. They wanted to make a name for themselves, but Abraham calls upon the name of the Lord. He is as much in Antithesis to them as is Enosh the son of Seth to Cain and his generation.

Humanity Genesis And Evil

The Genesis narrative's continual contrast between two types of humanity is very carefully structured into the story. It does not appear at all accidental. Even from the very outset it is clear that Genesis is a book about humanity. At the very time of man's creation God declares, Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness (1:26, In Genesis Chapter 5 it declares God created them male and female *and he called their name Adam (man* or Humanity*,* author's translation, 5:1) This statement comes immediately after the

mention of Enosh and those who began again to call upon the name of the Lord (4: 25-26). Therefore it does not appear to be a co-incidence that the name of Enosh means *humanity*. In the Genesis narrative, Enosh and Abraham both represent Humanity with whom he is pleased. The Generation of Cain, corrupted by the knowledge of good and evil, are thus set in continual contrast with the humanity of faith. As we earlier noted, this same sharp contrast is made between Shem Ham and Japheth and their descendants versus Noah and Abraham.

Again we see Humanity as the focus when after the flood Humanity is portrayed as starting afresh. A new covenant is made (9:1-17). Indeed a new human population comes from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But the family tree of Noah, as already noted, goes the way of Cain. The Tower of Babel was the result. Like the generation of Cain before them, a new thing is started, a conscious intent where gathered humanity says: *Shem Nu; Let* us make a name *for ourselves.* The builders conduct themselves after the manner of Cain, after the manner of humanity that does not call upon the name of the Lord (11:4).

Then after the nations are scattered, a man finds favour with God who will resonate in the narrative till the final story where Jacob and Joseph end their days in Egypt (12: 1). In contrast to the inhumanity of the descendants of Shem Ham and Japheth, the man *Abram* comes. He is told to leave the land of his father *Terah* (12:1). Later in the story God gives Abram a new name: Father of Many Nations (17:3). Abraham, the one who calls upon the name of God was told even at the outset, that through him, all the nations of the earth will be blessed (12:2-3). He receives promises that through his descendants God will restore a human population that will find favour in his eyes (12:2,17:3-8). Hence God initiates peace between himself and man through a promise and a covenant given to Abraham.

Throughout Genesis the humanity who walks with God, who calls on him is set in strict juxtaposition to those who do not. Those who do not call upon the name carry on in the acquired way of knowing good and evil perpetuated by Cain, and the children of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Interestingly, it is in the exploits and deeds of Cain and his descendants that the narrator of *Genesis* begins to reveal the full implications of what this new knowledge of good and evil means, as well as the horrors it will build into human conduct (4:8-24, 6:1-5, 11:1-8).

In the Genesis story the knowledge of good and evil consistently brings about one common denominator response in its evil adherents, namely that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is to have no part in their life decisions. He is, as it were, cut out of the equation. The narrator of the story portrays the hope of true humanity as found only in those who call upon the name of the Lord. Here men of faith, trust, and obedience manifest love for God, and thereby despite their own evils, and their own struggle with the sins stemming from that same knowledge of good and evil, yet find favour with God.

Genesis As Theodicy: Extricating God From Evil.

Now that we have examined collective evil in Genesis, and the contrast between two kinds of humanity, we are in a position to note a sometimes unnoticed theme in Genesis, the narrator's concern with *theodicy*. In the story of Abraham's bargain with God over Sodom and Gomorrah, the narrator's concern is very direct and very pronounced. Through the mouth of Abraham we hear the anguished half question half statement, surely *the Judge of all the earth will not destroy the righteous with the wicked* (18:25 NIV).

In many respects, however indirectly, the entire book of Genesis reads like a kind of theodicy. It does so by contrasting the collective evil of humanity with God's mercy justice love and kindness. The narrator of Genesis seems devoted to vindicating God from blame or unjust actions of any kind. We are told by the narrator of Genesis that evil is caused by man's faithlessness, and that this has been going on ever since he took the fruit and experienced the knowledge of good and evil. The narrator of Genesis is ever concerned to show that it is not God, but the individual and collective actions of humanity that brought death and evil into the world.

The narrator does not portray God as indifferent, as one who cannot be hurt by fragile insignificant mortals, but rather as one who grieves at the evil in man (3:11-13, 4:10, 6:1-8,18:20). The narrator emphasizes God's sorrow over the collective evil that seizes humanity, and his gracious steps taken to save man from his own destruction. Genesis portrays a God who wants to be close to man. The story says that the distance between man and God is humanity's own fault. But to those who obey and trust him, God comes near and confides in them.

He is portrayed as God who in concerned with the whole of human existence and who searches the hearts and conscience of every person he has created. He sees them in such intimacy that he knows the thoughts and motives of their hearts and minds. He is seen as the creator of heaven and earth, but not as a creator who wills to control every human action. In this respect he resembles the prominent perceptions of the Persian God Ahura Mazda. He is seen as sorrowing over human evil and deception, but is not in any way held responsible for this. This is humanity's own doing and causes him great sorrow.

We are told as well that God is at work from Noah till Joseph fulfilling his promise to Abraham to bring into being though his descendants, a new humanity, a people for himself.

In Genesis a theodicy is advanced that provides both an individual and collective hope for a new and better world now and to come. The Genesis story offers an origin for human evil, and whatever its origins, the narrator is eminently concerned to show that it is not in or created by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Clearly the narrator of Genesis has more than Theodicy in mind, but it would appear to be more than a trivial error to suppose that the treatment of evil in Genesis is only concerned with theodicy in a trivial way.

Reality, God, Evil And The Book Of Job: A Relational Theory Of Knowledge

There is contained in the Hebrew Bible, or what Christian's call the Old Testament, an epic Hebrew poem composed of poetic dialogues structured between a short prologue and a short ending written in Prose.[312] It is referred to simply as *The Book of Job.* It begins with a description of the wealth and the character of a man called Job who is later called the greatest man in the East (1:3).

In the first verse, a highly pivotal one, Job is called a perfect, complete or a good man, one rightly disposed towards both God and man. But however the Hebrew word is translated, it does not convey the idea of total freedom from sin.[313] In the same verse he is also called a man who fears or reverences God, an upright man, a man of integrity who turns,

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[312] This thesis simply takes the text as it appears in the Canon and assumes either a narrator, compiler, poet or editor. For convenience the term narrator, poet or author are used interchangeably. For further discussion regarding the prologue, poetic dialogues and ending section see the following : Derek Kidner, *An Introduction To Wisdom Literature, The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, (* Downers Grove, Illinois 60515*:* Intervarsity Press*, 1985*), Francis I. Anderson*, Job An Introduction and Commentary,* (London: Intervarsity Press, 1976), John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job,* Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1988), Keil-Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Job,* trans. by Francis Bolton*,* Grand Rapids Michigan*,* William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company*, 1973).* See also the introduction in H.H. Rowley's commentary on Job.

[313] See Keil-Delitzch's commentary on the prologue of Job.

or stays away from evil. It is these qualities of Job that are time and again displayed in the prologue, the poetic dialogues, and even the final encounter between God and Job.

The poetic dialogues take the form of a debate between Job and the friends who come to visit him: Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad (2:11). The dialogues between mortals end with a speech from a bystander called Elihu (32:2). Then comes an appearance from God out of the storm (38:1). After enquiring of Job and asking a myriad of questions Job cannot answer, God awards the debate to Job, declaring that unlike Job, his friends have misrepresented him (42:7).

The narrator or author of Job makes clear that it is precisely because of the true worship and the true integrity of Job, first spoken of in the first verse of the prologue, that Job speaks rightly of evil and of God. This is in utter contrast to the perception of God and the causality of evil championed by his friends, and finally by Elihu. The character of Job is either highlighted by contrast with his foolish friends, or expressed in the content of Job's own life and words. Our concern is to explore this connection with respect to the perceptions of God, good and evil that emerge as the story proceeds. In so doing the intent is to exhibit the relational theory of knowledge that virtually saturates the book of Job and is intimately fused with the perception of God, reality, and evil conveyed in the character, Job.

The Intent Of The Narrator: Job Is Right About The Nature Of God And Evil All Along

Throughout the book of Job the narrator of the prologue, the poetic dialogues and the prose ending leaves the reader in no doubt of one central reality. Job is at all times the same Job God bragged about in the beginning to Satan and the Celestial host when he said. *Have you ever really watched my servant Job* (author's translation, 1:8)? The character, God

(Elohim), after saying this, even repeats the very same description of Job's character given in the first verse that we earlier noted. In fact, the Hebrew noun and verb forms are identical and follow the exact same sequence.[314] This underscores how very important the character description given in the prologue is to the entire work. God too declares that Job is a blameless or complete man, one who truly reveres God, a man rightly disposed towards God and man. Throughout the story, Job is the man of integrity who turns from evil.

Throughout the work, the author or narrator shows that Job's worship of God is not based on what God gives him. For it is all taken away, including his health (1:3-21, 2:7-8). Yet Job remains a servant of God, albeit it one who pleads and wrestles with God and his friends through the entirety of the poetic dialogues. The final chapter, where God appears to Job, leaves no doubt that Job is approved by God. This is so, despite some level of humbling of Job occasioned by God's appearance in the storm, and his enquiries to Job that make clear that Job really knows very little of God's purposes. But none of this changes the fact that Job is still the one God brags about, still the one who must sacrifice for the sake of his friends who stand under God's displeasure and anger for their embrace of evil and illusion. Job, on the other hand, is portrayed as one who faces reality and the bewildering questions it raises both with respect to man and to God. But amidst the trials, the dialogues show that Job's trust in God ultimately deepens into the conviction that God, who truly is just, will vindicate him in the end (13). This, of course, is just what happens despite the doubts he later entertains after having said this (29,30).

[314] See *Biblica Hebraica*, fourth edition, edited by Rudolph Kittel.

One Who Reveres Or Fears God, The Concept Of Intimacy In Job

The narrator of Job is intensely concerned with the theme of intimacy. Indeed the very reason God agrees to allow Satan the Adversary to afflict Job is his accusation that Job merely serves God because of what he can get out of him (1:9-10, 2:4). In modern idiom the text conveys something of the following sense: "*Small wonder he serves you"* or "*Wow" big surprise he serves you with all the goodies you load him up with. Who wouldn't serve you? You hedge him in; protect him like a mother hen.*

But even amidst the sarcasm of the adversary, the narrator uses the character *The Satan* (adversary) to point to a depth intimacy, a motive for loving God based completely on adoration of God himself. This ideal love is devoid of any motive, save gratitude and acknowledging God as creator, and man as his creature. This same intimate love of God is expressed in Job's refusal to curse God despite the loss of everything he possessed and cherished. All Job retains is his less than encouraging wife who advises him to curse God and have no more to do with his maker.[315] (2:9).

In Job we see a God who is portrayed as having great concern for the motives of the heart. The narrator is intent to show that God's boast over Job has everything to do with what God sees in the heart of Job. It is portrayed as the very reason God allows the first and later the second range of afflictions to come upon Job (1:12, 2:6). Indeed, the narrator continually conveys to us that God's boasting over Job is due to the inner workings of Job's heart and mind as they find expression in his speeches.

[315] The adversary in Job in some respects resembles the serpent in Genesis. Both are accusers and original troublemakers. It is the adversary who suggests that God's brag about Job, as one who turns from evil and who is perfect in his love towards God and man, is a vain illusion.

Clearly the narrator intends us to see that it this kind of intimate and devoted love to God that leads God to brag about him. Throughout the narrative we see the depths of Job's intimacy with God. Instead of cursing God in his anguish and pain, as Satan predicted, Job spends more time than ever focusing on God and the ultimate questions of reality (1:11, 2:4).

Job's anguished cries to God denote nothing less than his intimacy with God. Through the entirety of the narrative we are shown that true intimacy, reverence, and integrity is found in this man Job who shakes out from his being every range of anguish and inner chaos, every species of questioning rage, and presents it to God. It is this very transparency before God that displays Job's uprightness and integrity. For as previously noted, at the tales end the narrator conveys God's continuous approval of the life, character, and wisdom of Job. As Brevard Child observed, the book of Job has about it the intimacy and the anguish of the Psalmist and the Psalms.[316]

The Compassion And Empathy Of Job

The narrative is concerned to show us that at the time before Job's trial his love for God and man was fully intact. He thus gives us through the mouth of Job a recounting of Jobs wondrous kindness to the poor and the needy, and a visual poetic recounting of the wisdom and respect accorded job by all the people till Satan Struck (29:1-25). Job emulates in every way the kind of man the prophets pleaded for Israel to become. In actual fact collective Israel is portrayed in the prophets as turning to evil and being in themselves vehicles of horrid oppression and hardness of heart (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah) The evils of Israel that led to the destruction and predicted destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar

[316] Brevard S. Childs, *Ibid.*, p. 536.

is easily documented. It requires only the most cursory type of reading of Kings, Chronicles Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or of the post exilic psalms and prophets.

In each of the dialogues, the poet intentionally conveys the evil and shallowness of Job's friends and their increasing verbal cruelty. Conversely Job's dialogues and interspersed monologues illustrate the depths of his anguish for the human condition that seems to have no clear answer. The poet or narrator often uses Job's frequent rebukes of his three friends to convey the compassion of Job. (6, 19, 21). The author is concerned to show us from the beginning the correct posture of compassion towards those who weep and mourn. This is well portrayed in the conduct of Job's friends when they first arrived and saw Job's misery. Their dutiful silence over seven days conveys with great intensity the right kind of compassion befitting friends and men who worship God (1:11-13). This incident and the timing of it mightily accentuates the humanity of this great epic poem and the inner sentiments of its author towards God and man. So too does the contrasting behaviour displayed in the friends as soon as Job began to speak. The frustration in the friends increases with each dialogue and with each increasingly impassioned cry from the suffering Job. The callousness of the friends is portrayed as escalating in proportion with Job's anguish. The cutting speech's of Job' friends hurl Job into even deeper bouts with hopelessness and despair. Job rebukes them for their hardness of heart. He calls them miserable comforters (16:1). The narrator conveys through Job's rebukes that were things reversed Job would offer true comfort and friendship (16:4-5, 31). Job would not endorse the thinking of his friends who assumed the universal premise, that if a man is suffering, he must have done something wrong (6:1:5, 6-30). Neither would he enjoin upon them the

abandonment and loneliness and rejection that has come upon him ever since the time of his misfortune and the beginning of his physical anguish (30).

In one of the earliest dialogues of Job, there is an exquisitely vivid portrayal of the cruelty of the friends (6:15-20.) He compares their words to dried up streams that, in the end, bitterly disappoint him just as they do the thirsting caravans in the desert who so desperately sought them. The reality of Job's empathy and compassion resounds through the depth length and breadth of this immense master work, and along with it the reason for God's boast concerning him.

The False And The True Knowledge Of God And Of Evil

In the story of Job the narrator is concerned to contrast two different perceptions of evil and of God. Sequence after sequence conveys with unmistakable clarity the depths of evil and cruelty that arises in the hearts of men when illusion is embraced in place of reality. That cruelty and that evil is particularly embodied in the friends of Job. Theirs is the traditional view of the people buttressed with the traditional reasons. If Job is suffering, they calculate, it is because God is punishing him for turning to evil (4, 5, 7, 11, 15, 18, 20, 22). Such a one will naturally be capable of committing virtually every form of injustice and evil. But Job need only confess the evil and God will restore his former state of blessedness.

When this theory of knowledge is not seriously threatened, the narrator or poet has even its adherents manifesting a level of sensitivity. This is illustrated in the initially compassionate approach of Job's friends to his suffering (1:11-13). But when Job's words and actions begin to threaten their perception of God, evil and reality, things change. Job repeatedly assures his friends he has not turned from God or from justice, or from love (6:30, 10:2, 13, 16:17-22). But his very claim to innocence amidst his suffering stands in utter antithesis to their theory of the nature and conduct of God and of evil. The friends respond

with ever increasing boldness, ever escalating cruelty and bluntness, ever heightening self deception and illusion. In the final analysis, even God must fit into the mould they have afforded him. As intended by the author, Job manifests, amidst his anguish, an integrity towards God and reality that confirms the accuracy of God's boast respecting his character.

In Job reality is embraced, in his friends, it is suppressed. The false view of reality of God and of evil is magnified with ever greater intensity in the friends of Job. In Jobs case everything they say about God is wrongly applied. For their basic premise is always that Job is getting just what he deserves, because deep down in his heart he has rebelled against God and become an evil man.

Throughout the poem, the narrator is concerned to display to us the ever growing desperation of the friends. They burrow themselves ever more deeply in their false knowledge of God, a God made in their image. They embrace an illusion whose maintenance requires the forsaking not only of God as he truly is, but also of one who has been their close and faithful friend. For now Job is the threat, the monster, the one who seeks to portray himself as innocent of their charges and thereby to utterly destroy their most cherished perceptions of God. For they must all justify their own well being in the face of Job's wretchedness. Were the story of Job to be acted upon the stage, the intent of the narrator to contrast the health and wealth of Job's friends with Jobs loss and agony might be even more graphically conveyed.

In one incident in particular the friends of Job mirror the conduct of Buber's interpretation of Yima.[317] For as was the case with Yima, Reality for them must be made to conform with their illusion, to their own projected reality. Whatever cruelty is required to

[317] See Buber's earlier discussion of *Yima* in the early part of this chapter.

sustain the illusion, they seem ready to embrace. The Narrator conveys this Yima like behaviour of the friends with marked depth when, through the mouth of Job, the friends are told that they would cast lots over orphans, and bargain over their friends (6:27) We then learn the potential for evil in these friends of Job. We are thus made aware that once their illusory view of God, reality and evil is sufficiently threatened, not only Job their friend is expendable, but so are orphans, and by implication, everything else, including truth and reality.

Some commentators are quite easy on the friends, seeing them as well meaning, but mistaken in Job's case. But the narrator of Job is less charitable, he fashions them as truly sinister beings, worthy of the anger God shows towards them in the final encounter. But this is surely to be expected, because the friends represent a theory of the knowledge of God and of evil that is the very target of the book itself. But they are more than targets, they are also the artful contrasts, that enable the narrator to convey not only their shallowness, but more importantly the depths and wisdom of the man Job and of his perception of God and of evil.

There is one place in particular where the shallowness and self deception of Job's friends is amplified and vivified by the narrator. Where this occurs, we find the friends continuing their incessant harangues, demanding that Job produce one instance where the house and fortune of an evil man still stands. At the end of his response, Job exposes their suppression of reality. He asks them why it is that the wicked live to a ripe old age and increase their power (21:7). Job is used by the narrator to point out what should be empirically evident in any age. *Who tells an evil man to his face the crimes he has committed,* Job asks. Next he inquires as to why such wicked men, even in death are mourned by masses, and buried in tombs where so rich a guard is posted (21:31-33). The

speech concludes with Job telling his friends that all their talk about the wicked always getting punished amounts to nonsense (21:34).

Job And The General Question Of Suffering

Job may not have been written during the exile, buts its contents would have offered great encouragement to many a faithful Israelite suffering along with everyone else, whether before or after the exile. If Job himself is not an allegory for Israel, at least in a personal sense Job asks the question asked by the remnant faithful then and even now.

Faithful Israelites were as bewildered at their suffering as was Job in his personal exile of pain and suffering (Psalm 44, 22, 31). They could understand why the wicked suffered death, or the loss of all they had. But it was very difficult to understand how, even amidst their faithfulness, suffering, loss, oppression and the reproach of their enemies came upon them.

There is one psalm in particular that asks the same question Job asks.[318] The Psalmist of Psalm 44 recounts how the faithful men of God in the past were always delivered and blessed by God, so long as they were faithful. But then the Psalmist then asks, why is it that despite the faithfulness of himself and other Israelites, God does not deliver them? Instead he permits them to be lambs for the slaughter.

It is of more than minor interest that an early Christian leader quotes this psalm in a letter to the church at Rome (Rom. 8:36).[319] His interpretation of the psalm is highly instructive. For he holds up the suffering of the writer of Psalm and his faithful fellow sufferers as a paradigm of the truly blessed follower of Christ. The Christian writer, whether

[318] Peter Craigie, *Word Biblical Commentary, Psalms 1-50,* (Waco Texas: Words Book, Publisher, 1983).
[319] See also I Corinthians 4: 9-13, 8:32

Saint Paul or some other writer, views the Psalmist's state of suffering as a foreshadowing of a new way that God will deal with his faithful. He will make them suffering servants. The very signifier of their blessing and their devotion will be the suffering they bear for the sake of God and the New Israel. But this is a Christian understanding of the psalm, the Psalmist himself only asks the question, he has no answer of his own.

The narrator of the Book of Job does not answer the question as to why there is evil and suffering. But on the other hand, the narrator confronts the question of suffering and provides a way to view it as something other than punishment for forsaking God and embracing evil.

Job is tested by God, forsaken and left to suffer in the dust. He remains bewildered. He never learns why his suffering came. In one sense, Job appears to be an anti-theodicy offering no answer for suffering. But in another sense Job answers the question of evil with a depth that may have few if any parallels in the ancient or the contemporary world.

In Job the concept of evil undergoes a transformation. For Job teaches that affliction, oppression, evil and suffering is compatible with a life of genuine faith and devotion. It need not signal punishment from God. The narrator of Job makes very clear that Job suffers these things not because of his faithlessness, but because of his faith. He suffers because he serves God out of love and loyalty, not for what he can get out of him. In Job, his very suffering and patience is like a sounding trumpet announcing the reality of his faith and devotion. He is a suffering servant of God.

Even the fact that Job receives no answer can be viewed as a source of encouragement and partial verification that one is dealing with God. For one seeming essential for mortals in encountering an intelligence greater than one's own, is some degree or other of bewilderment, at least from time to time. For if the believer can figure out

everything God is doing, he should find little security in this. For how then can this being he or she is worshipping be God? How then are his ways of any greater import than one's own?

The Book of Job offers the comfort that God will be with the believer who disdains the life of self deception vivified in Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Seen in this way, Job's happy ending need not be seen as something disjointed or inappropriate. Some would argue that God's vindication and rewarding of Job at the end with a new family and double blessings seems to confirm not Job's stance but the stance of his friends.

But the point of the narrator is not to show that God never rewards the sufferer, but that in this world the faithful servant of God may suffer the loss of everything. He, in sharp contrast to the average evil rich and prominent of this world, might indeed be buried in an unmarked grave. Job Chapter Twenty One makes clear that the double temporal blessings Job received in the end carries no guarantees.

The speeches where God questions Job are often viewed in a very negative vein, but for faithful Israel and for Christians, they can be viewed not as a source of a bullying God, but rather as a proper stance for the man of faith serving an infinitely wise God. In the context Job does not take it as bullying, he simply responds, I spoke of things I did not understand. Many Christians and Jews would see in this a highly appropriate response. It may be that the narrator places in the mouth of Job the response he deems right for a believer, whether Job be written before or after the exile.

As Brevard Childs recognises, Job's placement in the Canon amidst the wisdom literature has a reason. It speaks of anguished contemplation in the midst of existential bewilderment, but a contemplation set on integrity, thus allowing faith to wed itself to reality. It sees great evil in a faith that cannot abide a believer in pain, that disdains and abuses the suffering servant. It sees a believer of this sort as bordering more on unbelief, more as one

who worships God with the lips, but whose heart is far from him. Such a one knows the right phrases, has chewed and digested the standard doctrines, but will leave the sufferer by the wayside. For after all, such a believer reasons, *is not this just what he deserves? Far be it from me to interfere with the destiny God has assigned him.*

After many an anguished view of the suffering masses of India, Mahatma Ghandi concluded that India could not endure the continuance of the doctrine of Karma. One wonders whether the narrator of Job in his own reflections on Israel's stance towards the oppressed sufferer saw many things the eyes of Ghandi later saw. It would not be difficult for an Israelite to reason that sufferers deserved to suffer, and thus even augment their suffering in the name of God. It might even open the door for the mistreatment of widows and orphans. Israelites who think like Job's friends could view it as their just punishment, just as it could be viewed in India, as their just Karma.

It would surely be an interesting thesis to trace the repercussions of this mindset wherever it becomes prominent. This Karma like doctrine is perhaps responsible for far more oppression and far more injustices in the world, that would first meet the eye. We might even speculate that it had more to do with the destruction of Israel under Nebuchadnezzar than is usually thought.

In any case, the narrator of Job does not view it lightly. This great masterpiece from the Hebrew canon, perhaps without any parallel for poetic genius, seems devoted to exposing the evil of this teaching. But even more than this, the narrator seems devoted to declaring that true wisdom and understanding are relationally based, requiring a life where all that is thought and understood is done not apart from God but in the awareness of him, whether cries of gratitude, or anguished bewilderment.

This same view of knowledge characterises Buber, and the respective narrators of Genesis and Job. It was Soren Kierkegaard who declared that Truth is Subjectivity.[320] By this he meant that the believer must be in a deep and intimate relationship with the author of the truth and the good. Only then can reality be understood, only then can the world be seen from a true perspective. For the perspective held comes from the one who knows all and understands all. For Kierekegaard and for those who hold a relational theory of knowledge, a deep and intimate relationship requires what Buber described, the whole soul moving towards the good. If this path is not taken, then, in the big picture, all that is left is a life lived in illusion. Therefore one embraces a life of autonomy from the good. For the believer in a relational theory of knowledge, this species of illusion and autonomy is both the actuality of evil and the potential for increasing evil.

[320] Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientfic Postscrpit,* trans. by David Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) p. 169-224.

SECTION III: EVIL, THE PRIMACY OF IDEA AND EXPERIENCE AND THE DEMOTION OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Chapter 5: The Decline And Demotion Of The External World

In the *Enlightenment Era*, their very belief in the existence of an external world became a kind of an embarrassment to Rene Descartes, and John Locke. But with Bishop George Berkeley, matter and the external world became a mere fiction and with David Hume, an unverifiable mystery. Matter and the external world suffered this demotion due to a theory of knowledge which came into being. Thomas Reid, a strong opponent, referred to it as the *Doctrine*, or sometimes as the *Theory of Ideas*.[321] This theory led to, what we shall term, the *Primacy Of Idea,* and thereby to the demotion of the external world. Our concern in this chapter is to observe the dynamics that ensued between these four men's respective theories of knowledge, their world views, and the perceptions of evil actually believed or more importantly, implied.

Descartes

Rene Descartes – 1596-1650, French Philosopher and Mathematician was born in *Lahaye, France.* He completed his studies at the *Jesuit* college of *La Fleshe*, then went on

[321] Thomas Reid, *Essays On The Intellectual Powers of Man*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. xii, 136-137, 171-187, 191-192.

to study law at *Poitiers*, graduating in 1616. For the next few years Descartes continued travelling in Germany, Holland, land Italy, and France. In 1628 he left Paris to return to Holland where he lived quietly in the countryside for most of the remainder of his life. But it was in 1619 in Bavaria, while closeted in *his famous stove heated room* that Descartes conceived his mission, one that shook and altered the philosophical world even to this present day. But what was the nature of that mission. First, tear down the classical pillars of *philosophy past* and then build from utterly new foundations, philosophy *future*. In 1641 Descartes published his famous meditations – *Meditationes de Pima Philosophia.* In page after page we witness his mission, both of demolition and renewal.

The Thinker, Certainty And God

For Descartes, certainty lay in thought and reason. Therefore any evidence for the external had to be built upon the certainty of the inner world of mind and idea. Descartes was neither a true sceptic nor an atheist.[322] His thought, in his Meditations, was that if reason started at the right point it could arrive at certainties. The right starting point, for him, was the awareness that he could think: *Cogito Ergo Sum*.[323] This was Latin for, I *think, therefore I am.* The strongest certainties could be found in the thinker himself. Every idea as clear and distinct as Cogito Ergo Sum, could, as a general rule, be taken as certain. Having established the certainty of the thinker, Descartes reflects.

> *After this, I considered generally what in a proposition is requisite in order to be true and certain; for since I had just discovered one which I knew to be such, I thought that I ought also to know in what this certainty consisted. And having remarked that there was nothing at all in the statement* ***I think therefore I am*** *which assures me of having thereby made a true assertion, excepting that I see very clearly*

[322] *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, edited and translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane, and G.R. T. Ross (London: Cambridge at The University Press, 1911), p. 8.
[323] *Ibid.,* pp. 1-8, 101.

> *that to think it is necessary to be, I came to the conclusion that I might assume, as a general rule, that the things which we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true- remembering, however, that there is some difficulty in ascertaining which are those that we distinctly conceive.*[324]

For Descartes, reasoning verified and founded on clear distinct ideas always yields truth. Therefore the certain existence of the thinker and sound reasoning also made certain the existence of God. For God, he reasoned, was the highest and most perfect rational thought possible. He is therefore as clear and distinct an idea as *cogito ergo sum.* Therefore he must exist and he must be perfect. [325]

Descartes calculated that once the certainty of the thinker and God was established, from that base, the verification of the external world could proceed.[326] Any idea that possessed the same clarity and distinctness as the thinking self, and God, could be deemed certain. But Descartes attempts to verify the external world fared less well. For in so exalting mind and its certainties over the external world, it is not surprising that Descartes theory of knowledge contained claims that would arrest his intent to verify it.

The External World

Despite directly opposite intentions, Descartes plays a pivotal role in the demotion of the external world, that is to say, to a growing distrust in its very existence. In his theory of knowledge he made three claims: first, body is divisible but mind is not, [327] second, ideas and

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[324] *Ibid.*, p. 101-102.
[325] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
[326] *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 104-106, 107-118.
[327] *Ibid.,* pp. 141, 246, 221, 101, 103, 104, 190-192. Descartes saw distinctions in the mind, but all distinctions are composed of mind, not divisible into anything else such as body.

modes of thought are not identical with the external world, but resemble or represent it,[328] third, that true knowledge should be certain knowledge

It is not too difficult to see how each of his claims places the existence of the external world in jeopardy. First, if mind is indivisible how can it mediate between itself and the divisible external world. Second, if ideas and modes of thought such as figure, extension, and motion, merely resemble the external world, how is one to know that even a resemblance exists, or even that the external world exists. Finally, if everything must be completely certain before it can be believed, given Descartes epistemology, how is one to believe in the external world.

Descartes was too astute a thinker not to realise that his personal belief in an external world could hardly be justified given his three claims.[329] But he argued that God would not deceive us and make us think it is really out there, when it is not.[330] But given Descartes theory of modes, and his distinction between mind and body, he is not able to prove that God exists outside the mind at all. For if there is no real way to show that ideas actually represent something outside the mind, then how could Descartes be certain that God was more than a mere idea? Descartes attempt at establishing even the reasonable certainty of the external world failed, due to the actual claims and implications of his theory of knowledge, and its implied worldview.

Descartes And The Question Of Evil

With respect to the question of evil, the same question must be asked, as was asked with respect to God. Given Descartes theory of ideas, evil itself, or for that matter good,

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[328] *Ibid.*, p. 221
[329] *Ibid.*, p. 255.
[330] *Ibid.,* p. 171.

must, if true, be a completely *certain distinct idea*? But if one cannot know for certain that good or evil exists outside the mind, how are we to arrive at this certainty? If evil exists only in the mind, then it has no real importance for human life, so why believe in it at all. Did not Descartes say that anything worth believing ought to be certain? After Descartes, an uncanny insistence on certainty placed a question mark over not only the evil and the good, but reality itself.

Given the implications of Descartes theory of knowledge, evil can be viewed as merely a convention of the mind, having no more or less verifiable reality than the world of dream. We can as readily deny the existence of real evil as affirm it. If everything is mere idea, as if mind were a kind of indivisible seamless web, then one is left with a monism in which every good and every evil idea are part of consciousness or mind. If evil and good are a seamless web, then neither actually exists as a true opponent of the other. As a consequence good and evil become one. What seems evil is really good, and what seems good is evil, if it does not allow evil its rightful place.

Nothing could be further from Descartes own Christian belief. Personally speaking, both he and Locke were content to view the external world as reasonably certain and let the matter rest. [331] But, as we shall soon see, neither Berkeley or Hume were so inclined.

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[331] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

John Locke 1632-1704

John Locke was born in a Sommerset family of minor gentry. In 1647, he went to *Westminster School* and in 1652 to *Christ Church Oxford*, then under Puritan Control, and a centre for much scientific research. Robert Boyle, one of the leading scientists in England, was committed to an empirical and experimental method. Locke shared Boyle's belief in corpuscular philosophy. This philosophy claimed that most changes in physical objects could be explained by the re-arrangement of the basic particles of matter. At about the same time Locke's interest in philosophy was re-awakened, and largely through his conscious opposition to the writings of Descartes. As a consequence, Locke sought to fuse scientific empiricism with his own philosophy of empiricism. Locke's answers and critique of the writings of Descartes, supplied the basis for much of the thinking of Hume, Berkeley and Kant. His thought became the very foundation for British empiricism. His two most important philosophical works were first published in 1690: First, The *Essay Concern Human Understanding,* and second, the two treatises concerning government.

Idea Experience Perception And Reflection

Both Locke and Hume were heavily influenced by Descartes' distinction between mind and body.[332] Yet there was a major difference. For Descartes held that reason and intelligence require innate ideas prior to experience. Neither Locke or Hume believed that human experience supports Descartes contention.

[332] Though Descartes created a dualism between mind and body, he did say that the two are so closely joined together that they form, so to speak, a single thing. But his theory of modes makes this statement an unverifiable assertion. Further how can a qualitative distinction between mind and body ever amount to them being one thing? Descartes ends up saying, they are two, but they are also one. This would legislate against Descartes own cherished regard for the law of contradiction.

Locke held that the simple ideas in the mind are the products of external sense data bombarding the mind. Until then, as far as ideas are concerned, the mind is like a blank sheet of white paper. All our simple ideas are the consequence of this bombardment. [333] Locke added to this his theory of, what he called, internal *sense*. While Locke did not believe in innate ideas, he did believe in a kind of inner sense data which causes appearances in the mind in much the same way as external sense data. This becomes clear when we see the very important distinction Locke made between external simple ideas, received from the external world of sense data, and the more complex experience of ideas that he calls reflection. This was for Locke the second and only other source of human experience and knowledge.

> *Secondly, the other fountain from which experience furnisheth [sic] the understanding with ideas is, -the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without. And such are* ***perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing****, and all the different acting of our own minds; which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves , do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses.*[334]

On first observation it would seem that Locke's theory of ideas yields up an innate reflecting reasoning self. But here great caution is urgent. A careful scrutiny of his words seems to imply the very absence of such an innate thinking volitional self. We must first take note that Locke has already told us that reflection involves the *perception* of operations in the mind. That means the operations are already going on before they are noticed, or reflected upon. Inner sense appears to be just as *machine like* in its effect on the brain as what Locke calls sensation, i.e. outer sense. Reflection, therefore, seems to consist in the experience of

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[333] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p. 121.
[334] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the *idea* of willing, thinking, doubting, not the reality. Internal sense forces the same kind of irresistible bombardment of the mind, and experience of idea as did external sense data. The only difference is that the ideas of internal sense data take the mind beyond simple ideas to complex. Locke himself is concerned that we view them as very similar indeed. With respect to reflection he adds this observation.

> *This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called* ***internal sense****. But as I call the other Sensation, so I call this* ***REFLECTION****, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself. By reflection then, in the following part of this discourse, I would be understood to mean, that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason, whereof there come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding.*[335]

In other words, the operations are going on. The ideas are formed before they are ever experienced through reflection. They are thus independent of reflection itself. Unlike in Descartes, thinking in itself, does not equal a real immaterial thinker. What is really available to reflection is only the *idea* of a willing or thinking subject, not the reality. Internal sense is just what Locke calls it, sense data that originate from within the mind.

But this does not mean that Locke did not believe in the reality of a thinking volitional innate being, for it must be remembered that Locke believed that all ideas of externality in the mind are representative of the real world outside ideas. Therefore the idea of an immaterial thinker is still representative of a true thinker outside the mind.

But this is exactly what Locke has such difficulty in proving. This is because Locke also maintained that the only knowledge we can actually experience derives from either internal sense data or external sensation. All experience can yield is idea. The only

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[335] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

knowledge available to man is experience as idea. How then can Locke establish the existence of something that is outside experience and knowledge when knowledge, according to Locke himself, is inseparably bound to idea? What Locke calls representations of reality can only be ideas. This leaves no way to verify any actual referent in reality outside the mind. Such a theory of knowledge, despite Locke's intention, eternally disqualifies the reality of an actual living soul, or an actual living thinker existing as more than idea.

Even if Locke were somehow to prove that this innate being really exists outside the mind, every action of that being would still be determined by the ideas that bombard his or her mind. He or she would still be as disconnected as ever from anything other than a world of idea. This innate being would not be able to escape the monism of mind that Locke inadvertently erects via his theory of ideas and experience.

Far from his intention, Locke erects not only a monism of mind, but via his theory of knowledge, a monism in which reality itself is devoid of anything other than idea. As we shall soon see, Berkeley will embrace that very monism of mind that Locke does not intend, and thus seek to rescue the soul of man, that very innate thinking volitional self Locke has trapped in a world of idea and appearances.

Primary And Secondary Qualities And The External World

We have learned that Locke held that all the materials of thinking come from experience. Experience involved observations employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our mind perceived and reflected on by ourselves.[336] Both kinds of observations involved mixtures of what Locke called *Primary and Secondary Qualities*.[337] The immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding,

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[336] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[337] *Descartes Philosophical Works*, Ibid., p. 49. Descartes, before Locke, had spoken of primary notions which Descartes considered to be even more intelligible than geometric axioms. But only careful attention and reasoning could

Locke called idea. Qualities, on the other hand, were the powers that existed in either internal sense or outer sensation to produce ideas in the mind. For example, a snowball has the power to produce in the mind the ideas of white, cold and round.[338]

The primary qualities, invoked in the mind were really very similar to those of Descartes involving *modes of extension, figure, solidity, number, rest and motion.*[339] Both believed that these ideas were representative of something very similar existing in the external world. [340] Secondary qualities were things like colour and smell and taste. Locke and Descartes both maintained that such qualities did not exist in the external world at all, only as experiences in the mind.[341]

The Primacy Of Idea And Its Implications For Evil In Locke And Further Implications In Descartes

Locke, like Descartes, believed in the Christian faith, but almost the same implications for evil exist for him as for Descartes.[342] For if all we can be aware of are representative ideas of the external world, how can we even evidence that the idea of evil is truly representative. For all we can ever actually experience is the idea of external reality, or the idea of evil. Locke himself insisted that the real substance that impinges on the mind is an unknown. If the external world is no more than an unknowable, why should evil be regarded as anything more?[343] Once everything just appears to be, nothing is real other than

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afford primary notions the distinctness and clarity they possessed. Once such careful attention is given, primary notions yield up both certainty and truth.

[338] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[339] *Ibid.*, p. 169-170.

[340] *Ibid.*

[341] *Ibid.* As we shall soon see in this present chapter. Berkeley and Hume both took Locke to task for making what they felt was an indefensible distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

[342] John Locke, On *The Reasonableness Of Christianity, (*Chicago: Henry Regnery Company [no copyright date given but it was issued *in 1695]) pp. vii, xi, xxv, xxvii, 1.*

[343] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Ibid.* , pp. 391-392.

appearance or idea. Implied in Locke's theory of knowledge is a denial of evil as anything other than idea.

But, in Locke, another opening for evil appears. For there is no logically consistent room for the inner man. Locke's theory of experience, despite his intention, dispenses with the existence of the innate thinking subject. For Locke, as far as experience is concerned, there is no *Cogito Ergo Sum.* All we can experience is the continuum of sensations that impinge on the brain and form ideas. We are thus, by implication, no more than stimulus response organisms. The very idea of an innate thinking, reacting, willing inner self has no place. Locke was the first to use the term *idea* in this incredibly broad sense. For Locke, idea included perception, hearing, feeling, touching and tasting. All knowledge, according to Locke, involves primary or secondary qualities, and all qualities produce in us ideas and nothing else. So, by implication, the very idea of outer substance impinging of the mind is no more than idea. It cannot correspond to reality at all, since all that is knowable is idea.[344] There is therefore, by implication, no actual thinking being to commit evil, only the idea of such a being.

Even if Locke had been able to verify the reality of an innate thinking subject, it would still be saddled with appearances, (whether from his internal sense or outer sensations) that are still only ideas of reality, not reality itself. So given Locke's doctrine of ideas, the thinker is still not able to encounter real evil, only the idea of it. The same lack of encounter applies to real good as well.

It would appear, in Locke's theory of knowledge, that external or internal sense date are solely responsible for what the individual organism thinks or does. This combined with

[344] As we shall see Berkeley picked up on this implication and thus formulated his own alternative theory of ideas.

Locke's Newtonian machine view of the world renders, by implication, all the justice systems of the world hypocritical. For then, in fact, no crime can ever be committed by a thinking subject, since there is no such thing. Human evil itself becomes no more than an appearance in man as does man himself. Not only is evil itself rendered an appearance, but the very idea of a perpetrator. Given this implication, even the hypocrisy of the justice system is itself not truly hypocritical. For hypocrisy requires a perpetrator, but since there is, by implication, no such thing as an actual perpetrator, hypocrisy itself is mere idea, mere appearance.

For Descartes, the implications of Locke's inadvertent annihilation of the inner thinking subject, and thus of reason itself, would no doubt constitute an intolerable evil. Yet Descartes own embrace of the theory of ideas as representative of external reality, does not really allow for an actual thinking subject, any more than Locke. In effect, it cancels out what he calls his first principle, *Cogito ergo sum,* not to mention God himself, who is equally only an idea, an appearance. Sadly, even the idea of representation itself can only be idea of external reality outside the idea, not external reality itself. Distinct ideas in themselves cannot then point to the certainty of things as they really are, only to the idea of certainty. The irony is that both Locke and Descartes would view the full implications of their own theories of knowledge as a great evil. Neither of them intended to make evil or good mere idea, or to extinguish the reality of the soul or the innate inner being who is real and precious to the God and Saviour in whom both believed. Neither seemed fully aware of the perception of evil implied by their respective theory of idea. A brilliant young Bishop by the name of George Berkeley, saw the implications only too clearly.

George Berkeley, 1685-1753

George Berkeley, who was to become Bishop Berkeley was an Irish philosopher of English Descent. He was born in Kilkenny Ireland, educated at Kilkenny College, and Trinity College, Dublin. Berkeley was Very young when his most important philosophical works were published. *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision,* appearing in 1709, and *Principles of Human Knowledge in 1710*, In 1713 he published his three dialogues, all featuring a conversation between two characters, Hylias and Philonous. He used these dialogues as a means of articulating his ideas in a more popular fashion.

Berkeley And Locke

Berkeley was a committed Christian, who sought to bring an end to the rapidly growing scepticism caused by Locke and Descartes. He saw himself as the defender of the common man against the irreverence and vanity of the elite among the scientists and philosophers.[345] But despite this, it should be understood that Berkeley felt that, in the future, science, despite its great limitations, could still be of service[346] once it came to the solid ground on which he sought to set it.[347]

In Bishop Berkeley we view a direct contemporary of Locke, who saw what he deemed the Godless and evil implications of Locke's theory or knowledge. Berkeley, like many Christians of today and of his own time, saw the abuse of science as a great evil, particularly when it conjures forth a dark and deadly scepticism that threatens not only to

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[345] George Berkeley, The *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1963), p. 10.
[346] *Ibid.,* pp. 24-25. J. G. Warnock points out that despite the concessions to science allowed in Berkeley's Principles *of Human Knowledge*, his *Dialogues*, and in his later writings, he never ceased to contend that science is never true, only useful.
[347] *Ibid.*, pp. 252, 253.

extinguish God's creation, but God himself. He was thus alarmed and dismayed at the emerging popularity of what he viewed as Locke's misguided theory of ideas. He knew that many of the principles Locke Described in his famous work, An *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, were taken from standard scientific text books of the day. J. G Warnock, in his extensive introduction to Berkeley, reports that the Bishop was particularly upset by the *corpuscularian* [sic] mechanistic view of the universe invented by scientists and popularized by, among others, Locke himself.[348] Berkeley, Warnock explains, believed that the *general weakening of religious conviction* was *directly attributable* to it.[349] The whole idea of God's creation as a mechanism was as repulsive to the Bishop as is was fascinating to Locke.[350] Indeed, the whole case of mind that would embrace such a philosophy was to Berkeley, Warnock reports, disagreeable.[351]

Berkeley, never suggested that Locke himself was not a Christian. Nevertheless, the Bishop actually came to despise Locke's mechanistic epistemology.[352] In his own work The *Principles,* Berkeley launched a devastating and incisive critique. But he did not stop there. He then sought to answer Locke with his own theory of knowledge and reality. As we shall see, his solution to Locke was a categorical rejection of the external world and of matter itself. The result was a monism in which all of reality was no more than perceived idea.

Berkeley's Solution To Locke: Idea And The Demise Of Matter And The External World.

It occurred to Berkeley that all the trouble was being caused by the fact that the world of idea did not correspond to the real world. So Berkeley's solution was to reject the

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[348] *Ibid.*, p. 16. (See also, as referenced by Warnock: A. A. Luce, Life *of Berkeley (London: Nelson Publishers, 1949).*
[349] *Ibid.*
[350] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[351] *Ibid., p.* 20.
[352] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 149, 150.

existence of an external material world altogether.[353] There would of course still be the idea of an external world, but not an actual physical external world outside the mind. Berkeley reasoned, that if the existence of a material world was done away with, then the world of idea would in fact be the real world.

For all Berkeley was doing, in his mind, was to say that what appears to be a material external world is really an internal world of idea that includes seemingly external things composed of idea, such as the sun and the moon. Here we see Berkeley's surrender to Locke's claim that we can only experience ideas, and nothing outside of them. Berkeley's answer is that Locke is correct, because nothing exists outside of them at all. Ideas are not mere representations of the external world; they are in themselves the real world.

In the second chapter of his *Principles of Knowledge* Berkeley begins to advance the idea that whatever cannot be perceived cannot exist. When asked, then, how anything exists that cannot be perceived by man, Berkeley answers: God perceives all things. Therefore, nothing is lost merely because it goes out of our perception, for God is still perceiving it.[354] Yet Berkeley, quite inconsistently, insists that the world of spirit is more than idea, and that there is a facility in us that is able to detect it.[355]

In presenting this solution Berkeley was confident that in a single blow he had solved the problems of Locke, arrested the great evil of a machine world view, and shown that, in reality, the world is not a machine, but a place of mind, idea and spirit.[356] Berkeley actually believed, that in all this, he was defending common sense and the common man.[357] For

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[353] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75.
[354] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-68, 77-79, 80-82.
[355] *Ibid., pp.* 139. 140-141, 222, 246.
[356] *Ibid.,* pp. 67,68, 255-259.
[357] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11, 30-31, 34, 150, 236, 258-259.

now, all one needed to realise was that what is called matter and the external world is really mind and idea.

But in reality, by saying this, he was really implying that the common man's view of things was mistaken.[358] But he reasoned, that once this is realised everything is the same as before, and no less real. The common man will still perceive the world in the conventional way, and use conventional language, as if the external world of matter really did exist. Therefore, he concluded, no harm is done.[359]

But this was not how Berkeley's readers tended to view him. For Berkeley had denied the existence of a world outside of mind and idea. Despite his claim to defend common sense, it was evident to those who read him, as it would be to any normal perceiver of our time, that he was not doing so.[360] Warnock records: Some *thought he was insane, … others that he was corrupted by an Irish propensity to paradox and novelty. Almost no one took him seriously.* Ironically, Berkeley himself could now be viewed as one of those arrogant haughty opponents of common sense, that, in his own mind, he was combating.

What is paradoxical in Berkeley, as we shall later see, is equally paradoxical in David Hume. Both pictured themselves as crusaders defending against the darkness of haughty intellectuals who manifest a vain and overarching disdain for the common man. Yet, both present a view of reality so removed from common perception, as to make one wonder how they could ever have seen themselves in such a role.

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[358] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
[359] *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106, 255-259.
[360] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 34, 265-266, 268, 269.

The Implications of Berkeley's Monism

Locke had said that all that can come into human experience are ideas. The implications of Locke's claim implied a monism in which all reality is idea. But unlike Locke, George Berkeley's monism was not one by implication, but by stated claim. At the time Berkeley wrote his work on the principles of human knowledge, he was still only twenty-five. In the naivety of his youth, this brilliant young thinker supposed he had solved all the metaphysical difficulties. This is very evident in the confidence and overly simplified conclusions he, at times draws. Berkeley's own view of good and evil, like Locke and Descarte's, conformed pretty much to the accepted orthodox Christian faith of the time. But the implications for evil with regard to Berkeley's theory of knowledge and consequent monism is another matter. In order to defend the reality of human experience Berkeley made three essential claims with far reaching implications regarding this matter of evil.

First, we recall, was the claim that cause came only from agents. All other apparent causes were not causes at all. Consistency required that claim, because he had already claimed that reality was composed of ideas, and ideas could not exist unless they were perceived. This meant that as soon as an idea was no longer perceived, it would have to perish immediately. He felt he had rescued himself from this attack by saying that God perceives things even when we do not.

Unfortunately, this defence was as weak as the defence offered by Descartes and Locke to defend the external world. For here Berkeley was assuming that God is external to us, and yet his ideas sustain the world we perceive. But Berkeley had already claimed that there was nothing external to mind or consciousness. Berkeley, if consistent, would have to admit that the very idea of God is only a perceived idea. Therefore, by implication, God is simply an idea in the mind of the perceiver and can only exist so long as perceived. He

cannot then be separate or external from human consciousness or human ideas of him. It was Berkeley himself who had insisted that a world external to the finite mind was mere fiction. Therefore, consistency requires that the claim of God being external to the human mind is a fiction as well. Were God to actually exist outside human perception, he would be one of those abstractions that Berkeley inveighs against in Locke.[361]

Second, Berkeley had said that one idea can never be the cause of another. So if God is mere idea, and ideas cannot cause one another, how then was God able to cause the universe? God then, was, by implication, in the same predicament in which Berkeley had placed human perception. For according to Berkeley causation is really just an illusion. No idea or thoughts actually connects one cause to another. Further, if something is only real when perceived, then every time an individual perceiver stops thinking about God, God would have to perish until such time as he was thought of again.

Thirdly, Berkeley challenged the very idea of abstracts existing outside of ideas. Therefore not only does this mean that abstractions such as expansion or solidity are rendered impossible, but God himself cannot be thought of in the abstract. Berkeley, in order to do away with the claim of abstractions claimed that ideas are never infinitely divisible.[362] For that would mean something existed that could not be perceived as idea. So the idea of infinite divisibility would allow for abstractions to be real.

For Berkeley every thing perceived is just idea. If it is not perceived, it does not exist at all. All ideas are individually perceived and no one idea, can cause another. This would mean that, contrary to naïve appearances, nourishment really has nothing to do with the growth of a child. For both are separate ideas. Growth becomes no more than a continuum

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[361] See Berkeley's discussion of abstraction in the first chapter of his work, Principles *of Human Knowledge.*
[362] *Ibid.*, p. 130-133.

or sequence in which no part of the continuum or sequence causes any other. Therefore the idea that vitamins and cells cause growth is rendered fiction, for no idea can cause another, and all that exists is simply perceived idea. Further it only exists so long as it is perceived. We have now unfolded some of the implications of Berkeley's monism, now we shall see what they imply with respect to evil, even while bearing in mind that these very evils would in practice be abhorred by Berkeley himself.

Evil And The Implications Of Berkeley's Monism

In review, Berkeley made three claims, first, only agents cause anything, second, no idea can ever be the cause of another, and third, abstractions are fictions if they are thought to exist outside perception But here, our concern is only with the first two claims. What specifically, then, are the implications of Berkeley's monism, and his first two claims, with respect to evil.

First of all evil can cause nothing, because evil is not an agent, and only agents can do anything. But there is yet another reason why evil can cause nothing. Berkeley claims that no idea can be the cause of another. So evil itself is a separate idea from an evil caused. Even if one perceives an evil motive, the motive could still not cause the action. For the motive is still a separate idea from the idea of the action performed.

Second, since no idea can be the cause of another, even agents can do no evil. For the idea the agent wants to perform would always be distinct from the idea of the action itself, and therefore could not be its cause. Of course even the idea of the action could never be more than an idea. For the idea of an evil action and the actual performance of that action would require the very causal link Berkeley rejects.

Thirdly, the idea of cause itself is not an agent, and can therefore cause nothing, evil included. Therefore cause itself can never be more than an idea, never a reality. But there is yet another reason that cause can only exist as an idea. For once again, the idea of a cause and the idea of the action performed are again separate disconnected ideas.

Fourth, neither God or persons or any other agent can do either good or evil actions. For the idea of good or evil and the idea of a good or evil act are separate ideas which can never be linked. Of course it may appear that God and man can do things since each separate idea perceived follows immediately after the one perceived before it. Therefore God's command: *Let there be light*, could come before actual light, as long as is never supposed that the idea of a command in any way actually caused it.

Summary Reflection On Berkeley And Evil

So Berkeley, in his attempt to rescue the world from scepticism, by implication, proposed a theory of knowledge and a consequent monism in which evil itself can never really exist except as idea. Like all reality, and every separate and finitely perceived part of it, evil becomes an island separate and apart from every other idea. So, of course, does all reality itself when perceived as idea. But in appearance it could be thought that evil really occurs, for the sequence of ideas that are perceived separate from each other, ideas of murder for example, followed by the action of murder, actually appear to be linked, one to the other.

Therefore given Berkeley's three claim regarding causality, the appearance of evil is everywhere in evidence, but never the reality. Not only did Berkeley, by implication render evil innocuous and goodness impotent, he also rendered them as meaningless as he rendered human life itself. For perception itself is no more than idea, and the thoughts that just happened to follow after the perception merely give the impression that life has meaning.

But for life to truly have meaning, one idea must truly be linked to another. In Berkeley no such links exist.

Given Berkeley's assumptions, the inner self of man is as disconnected from life and meaning as everything else. Man can have the perception of love, but never in fact love. The appearance of courage is there for man, but never the reality. He attempted to rescue God and the common man from the evils of science and philosophers. But like Locke before him, by implication, he extinguished not only human evil, but human goodness, and to all intents and purposes, the individual himself. For in Berkeley, will, reason, and moral action become no more than disconnected sense data. The human self became no more than a bundle of disconnected ideas, and human identity, a meaningless fiction. Not only this, he also opened the door for David Hume to fully exercise the implications of both his theory of knowledge and a monism of his own making. As we shall see, the implications for evil that Berkeley never intended, Hume would largely unfold, and in some measure embrace.

David Hume: 1711-1776

David Hume, historian and man of letters, was a much loved and universally respected leader of the Scottish Enlightenment. He was born and died in Edinburgh. Through copy money from his various publications, Hume, the second son of a minor laird, accumulated a modest fortune. This was in turn supplemented by periods of well rewarded employment. He survived just long enough to hear of the long foreseen and welcome news of the American Revolution.

Hume's Major Philosophical works were The Treatise of Human Nature. Book One and Two were published in 1739, and Three in 1740. The book when first published was not well received, falling dead-born from the press. Hume salvaged what he could in his later work, Enquiries *(sometimes rendered Inquiry) Concerning Human Understanding*, published in 1748. Some of Book Three was recovered in Hume's 1752 publication, Enquiries Concerning The Principles of Morals.

About the same time Hume also started work on his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Hume was too cautious to publish it during his lifetime. He made some final revisions in his deathbed, that were faithfully included by his nephew who saw to it that the entire work was published in 1777, shortly after his death.

Theory Of Knowledge And Implied Worldview

All the aforementioned works of Hume had one thing in common. Each brought out the implications of Locke's theory of knowledge, especially his claim that all human being can experience are ideas, not the source from which ideas come. For in all his major writings, Hume is concerned to show the limits of human reason and human experience.

Impressions Sentiments And Ideas.

In Hume's early Treatise on Human Understanding, and his later Enquiry, he spoke of impressions that come before ideas form. Then kind of midway between impressions and ideas were what Hume called sentiments. The way Hume distinguished the sentiment of memory from the sentiment of belief and belief from ideas was the degrees of the liveliness or vivacity of the sense data impinging upon the mind. Ideas were always less vivid or lively than either impressions or sentiments. For Hume there was no secondary qualities, only what

he called sense *impressions* from which ideas are derived. Hume, like Berkeley, despite Locke's defence, soon discovered that secondary could not really be distinguished from so called primary qualities. For they behaved in exactly the same way.[363]

The Innate Abstract Thinker As Fiction.

All of what Descartes called abstractions and innate ideas were to Hume fictions, including even the existence of the self. For Hume, experience offered only a self composed of bundles of distinct sense impressions that were, for whatever reason, followed by less vivid, but still distinct ideas. Impression, sentiments and ideas[364] were the sum of what could be experienced.[365] One could have the idea of an innate self, or human identity, but never the reality. With Hume, unlike Berkeley, ideas, whether of individuality or anything else, could not convey reality, only appearances. Hume, like Locke, was a thorough going empiricist. He perceived that if all man is, derives from impressions that form into ideas, then all talk of an innate reasoning self has no justification in human experience. By this criteria, the thinking reasoning self is merely a projection, a fiction, an accidental conception, as it were. The fictional projection is caused by the bombardment of exterior impressions that convey the notion of an innate reasoning soul. Neither can experience sustain such a thing as a thinking subject who has free will. Only the impression or idea of such is experienced, not the reality. For Descartes the innate reasoning soul was paramount. It was the basis for belief in God and for reason itself. For Hume, opposed to what he saw as the arrogance and naivety of Cartesian thinkers, reason itself, at least as normally understood, was a mere fiction.

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[363] *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.
[364] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 1-7.
[365] David Hume, Enquiries, Ibid., pp. 18-22.

Therefore, Hume moved vigorously in the opposite direction of the Cartesians, all of whom had emphasised the innate intelligence of man. Hume flatly denied that experience could ever sustain the reality of innate intelligence. Where innate human reason is concerned, he appears an iconoclast of sorts. In some respects Hume's attack on reason bears some resemblance to that of Martin Luther's, the fiery reformer.

Hume and Substance

As with Locke, impressions and ideas came from a substance of some kind, but the thing in itself from which they came was not accessible to experience. Here Locke and Hume agreed. There was no way to determine the nature of that substance. We are back to Locke's know *not what*.[366] Things in themselves could not be known by experience. One could not say whether the substratum of all substance was matter or mind or a combination of the two, or something else altogether different. Even reason itself is simply an expanded combination of some kind of substance that bombards the human organism and yields impressions, sentiments, or ideas. But Hume is more consistent than Locke. For Hume recognises there is therefore no way to verify that ideas in the mind are even representations of that external substance or substratum. He therefore rejected such representations. In his bid to refute the argument that common sense intuitively perceives an external world, Hume responds.

> *But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and object.*[367]

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[366] *Ibid.*, pp. 150-155.
[367] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

It is clear from the above statement that Hume rules out accurate or even partly accurate representations of the external world. Nevertheless, it implies that Hume presupposed some unknowable external substance or substratum which conveys these images to the senses. But if Hume were being more careful in his wording, he would likely not have said that images were conveyed to the senses. This would presuppose that the images already existed in the external world before they entered the senses. What Hume normally says is that something external comes into contact with the senses, and from this contact images and perceptions are formed. For if Hume holds that images exist in the external world before being conveyed, he is already presupposing a knowledge of the external world that he claims is impossible, because it lies outside experience, that is outside impression, sentiment or idea.[368]

Cause And Effect In Hume

Hume was determined to show that human experience affords no real place for cause and effect. In seeking to illustrate this fact, Hume employs the game of Billiards. He maintains that without prior experience we could have no idea that the motion of one Billiard Ball could affect the Billiard Ball with which it collides.[369]

Even after having seen it for the first time, the perceiver could have no idea that the same thing would happen again. It is only after a sufficient number of similar experiences that the observer will come to i*nfer* that there is a cause and effect connection between collisions and the direction a Billiard Ball takes. But Hume then goes on to argue that inference is itself a stimulus response reaction having nothing to do with real cause or

[368] As we shall see in the next chapter, Thomas Reid will take Hume to task for speaking of images coming through the inlets of the senses.
[369] *Ibid.,* pp. 27-32.

effect.[370] Hume calls inference to cause and effect, not reason, but custom or habit.[371] For all ideas in the mind are formed after the experience of vivid initial impressions. Then, after enough similar impressions impinge upon the brain, there is a sufficient conjoining of impressions, sentiments and ideas for inference to take place. In every inference, conjoined disconnected ideas, impressions, and sentiments are mistaken for actual causes.[372] The perceiver actually thinks that one Billiard Ball can cause the motion of another.

Hume believed that all of life and wisdom depends upon the regularity of these inferences.[373] Nevertheless, Hume continued to argue that the nature of initial vivid impressions and later ideas convey no real discernible causality, only a *conjoining*[374] of impressions or idea. That is to say they are co-incidentally spatially close to each other. These conjoined ideas, or impressions, being similar, and often sequential lead us to infer things. We, for example infer, that if we strike a Billiard Ball diagonally, it will move in a diagonal direction. But all this is, as Hume repeatedly said, really custom or habit, not reason.[375]

Hume, is not talking just about Billiard Balls, but of ideas whether initial impressions or later ideas that follow after the initial impressions. One could easily substitute marbles for Billiard Balls, and make the same points Hume is making.

With Hume there are impressions, sentiments and ideas, not simply ideas. But no impression, sentiment or idea can cause or affect another impression, sentiment or idea. It can only appear to do so. In this respect Hume, for different reasons, ended up with the same

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[370] *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 34.
[371] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
[372] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[373] It must not be supposed that Hume was sceptical about the value of these inferences. He sees them as sensory stimuli necessary to the preservation of social order and progress.
[374] Hume also uses the expression *contiguous.* It carries the same sense for Hume as *conjoin* (spatially in sequence).
[375] *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

rejection of causality as Berkeley, except that Hume would say that not even human agents cause things, only that the inference is customary.[376]

Hume had no objection to the idea of an innate thinker, so long as no one supposed that the thinker could actually think, or for that matter exist. It was equally okay to have the idea of such a thinker doing something, so long as no one was ever fooled into thinking the thinker ever actually does anything. Doing and thinking are ideas that may occur in sequence, but to suppose a connection is what Hume called inference.

Hume uses the same kind of argument with regard to the human will. He argues that there is no knowable real connection between our ideas and our will, anymore than there is between Billiard Balls and their diverse motions. Hume declared:

> *When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connection; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the* ***outward senses****. The mind feels no sentiment or* ***inward*** *impression from this succession of objects: Consequently, [Hume's Punctuation] there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion. [sic].*[377]

All the human mind really is, according to Hume's theory, is a receptor of impressions or sentiments from which more complex ideas derive.[378] As ideas grow in complexity, they multiply our inferences with regard to cause and effect. But in fact there is no real discernible cause, only conjoined similar ideas, whether one has in mind physical or moral conclusions. We may infer, that if a man has never stolen money after twenty years of

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[376] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
[377] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[378] Hume does admit that there are rare exceptions where simple ideas are not derived from any correspondent expression. One wonders how Hume can consent to such exceptions and still sustain his claim. For if the ideas do not come from without, they must come from the thinker himself. This would seem to completely dissolve Hume's claim, not simply be an exception to the rule.

life, that he will probably never do so, all things being equal. But all our inferences are, for Hume, nothing but orchestrated reactions from original impressions or sentiments that lead us to believe certain things, and thus act in certain ways. All this, for Hume, was really very mechanical.

Hume's Doctrine Of Moral Liberty And Necessity

Where the great Isaac Newton is concerned, all of Hume's scepticism appears to vanish.[379] He almost seems to forget his insistence that all that can be known is a world of appearance. Owing to this great allegiance and regard for Newton, one sees in Hume a great fidelity to the deterministic and mechanistic implications of Newtonian physics.[380]

For Hume, the inferences drawn from what can be loosely called cause and effect, are no more than mechanical operations as inevitable in morals as in any form of physical causation, whether between Billiard Balls or atoms. In the interests of tying all this together, we choose this statement from Hume's pivotal discussion in his inquiry under the heading: Of Liberty and Necessity. The statement occurs just after Hume has explained how seeming irregularities in nature are only so in appearance. He thus concludes:

> *Thus it appears, not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause an effect in any part of nature; but also that this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute, either in philosophy or common life.*[381]

So for Hume these same impressions, sentiments, and ideas, that form our expanded ideas of the physical world, are also impressions or sentiments that determine our moral

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[379] Indeed, where Isaac Newton is concerned, Kant himself seems to entertain little doubt.
[380] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[381] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

character and decisions. So it is that Hume's theory of knowledge, governs all his perceptions as to the nature of morals and ideas of motives and volition.

In the second half of his inquiry Hume devotes his energies to illustrating in great detail how every moral decision is a product of necessity. No decision moral of otherwise is ever made without first making inferences from conjoined sentiments, whether those sentiments refer to justice, or some other societal fixture. Moral sentiments, ideas and inferences are all part of an unknown causal nexus admitting of no notion that things can be otherwise than they are.

Hume never said that cause did not exist, only that no real causality was a part of knowable human experience. But Hume did seem to have faith that a cause for human experience actually existed. He never believed that such a thing as free will existed, but he did believe that all things that are and happen are necessary. By implication, Hume could say the same thing as Leibnitz*: This is the best of all possible worlds.*

In the realm of morals, we see Hume's same theory of causality at work. He claimed, that though, humanity continually reasons from a notion of cause and effect, in reality, reason can only infer things from conjoined, not from truly connected events. For Hume, we recall, things could conjoin, that is happen in such close sequence that one even actually appears to be linked to another. The frequency of the experience of the conjoining of similar things formed a kind of uniformity. This close sequencing of events leads to the illusion of causality, allowing for a moral framework in society. But it must never be forgotten that for Hume all impression vivid or less vivid that come into human consciousness, whether

experienced by scientists, philosophers, or the common man are still either impressions or ideas. Neither, by their very nature can ever be the actual cause of anything.[382]

So in the final analysis moral sentiments are simple sense data, impressions of varying degrees of vivacity. But moral sentiments, belief and memory in Hume are more vivid than complex ideas or thoughts. Memories and belief are more like impressions and thus very vivid, until they later take the form of ideas. Ideas are always less vivid than either impressions, or memory. Belief is attached to memory, so it is closer to a sentiment or impression than full blown ideas, which are of course always less vivid than either initial impressions, memory or belief. [383]

There is no will that actually forms its own ideas, let alone a separation of mind and body such as we have in Descartes. An inward will that thinks reasons and decides or forms rational arguments for the existence of God is disallowed. For as far as Hume was concerned, Descartes began at the wrong end. Thus Hume remarked:

> *It would seem, indeed, that men begin at the wrong end of this question concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the understanding, and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of the body and of brute unintelligent matter; and try whether they can there form any idea of causation and necessity, except that of a constant conjunction of objects, and subsequent inference of the mind from one to the other.*[384]

All this is part and parcel of Hume's doctrine of necessity. All that happens must happen. But for Hume, the fact that there is no moral thinker or doer, does not prevent morals at all. The sentiments of love or kindness that we feel are not for that reason less real,

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[382] Yet Hume still claims that ideas are derived from impressions. This would seem to imply causation.
[383] *Ibid.*, p. 48-50.
[384] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

nor any less important to the well being of the world. Hume is content to embrace the uniformity of sentiments that, in his view, forms our moral characters, as well as the impressions that give us a uniform understanding of the physical world as it impinges on our brain. For, given Hume's hypothesis, we can experience it in no other way.

Moral Sentiments And The Supreme Being.

Hume's writings on morals suggests that even human experience can detect a kind of benevolent universality found in all cultures. Even though Hume describes in great detail the relativity of moral concepts across cultures, he yet speaks of an undercurrent of sameness that will always be there. [385]

> *It may be esteemed, perhaps, a superfluous task to prove, that the benevolent or softer affections are estimable; and whenever they appear, engage the approbation and good-will of mankind. The epithets* ***sociable, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent****, or their equivalents, are known in all languages and universally express the highest merit which* ***human nature*** *is capable of attaining. Where these amiable qualities are attended with birth and power and eminent abilities, and display themselves in the good government or useful instruction of mankind, they seem even to raise the possessors of them above the rank of human nature, and make them approach in some measure to the divine.* [386]

Hence we see in Hume a belief in universal moral and aesthetic sentiments. In his work on morals, Hume wrote that both reason and impressions involving taste or sentiment function in accordance with the *will of the Supreme being*.[387] He declared that all such impressions, whether of reason, or the sentiments of taste, whether of animal or human, are all arranged by the supreme will *into the several classes and orders of existence*.[388]

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[385] Along with Hume's over-all treatment of moral relativism, see especially his dialogue beginning on p. 325 on his essay on morals.
[386] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[387] *Ibid.*, p. 294.
[388] *Ibid.,* p. 294.

But underlying all this diversity Hume still speaks of a ground of moral sameness. Every society is still governed by three constants, namely qualities ***useful*** *or* ***agreeable*** *to the* ***person himself,*** *or to* ***others.***[389] These in Hume's mind were the constants of morality, the constants that allowed the sentiments of man, guided by the illusion of cause and effect, to introduce true collective and individual virtue into human existence.

But what seems wholly absent in Hume is the matter of human choice. The impressions he distributes to the human mind seems to allow no real entrance for any volitional human involvement. How could there be? For with Hume, experience yields no innate thinking acting subject. Without this, determinism or necessity is not simply an option. No act or thought is actually avoidable; all that happens to man and society is pre-orchestrated and ordained by the *Supreme Being*.[390] The supreme will allots to all as he wills. What exactly Hume meant by a supreme being will be further explored in the next chapter.

Impressions, Sentiments, Idea And Evil

So it would appear than in Hume, everything is as it should be. Cultural and moral relativism is as much a part of the fabric as is the requirement for those dimensions of human conduct that require moral inflexibility.[391] It would appear then for Hume that all is as nature or God designed, and that evil has no real place. At least, not evil in the sense that things happened to men that should not. Evil then, in Hume's perception, is relative.

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[389] *Ibid.*, p. 268.
[390] Hume points out that this does not mean that God is the direct interventionist and actor in every individual impression. Rather he is the master planner and designer who tailors all conduct beforehand to his purposes.
[391] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

Though choice is no more than an appearance, it is proper for man in the way he was designed to protest against evil and deception and stand for the truth. Therefore men who do not obey moral principles can on a human level be judged evil or to lack integrity. All this accords with providential design. So too, however, do the evils that are part and parcel of the pattern and purposes of moral relativism. In certain cultures for example, Hume points out that it was considered virtuous to dispose of one's children in order to spare them a life of hunger and suffering. No culture can judge another according to Hume.[392] When Hume addressed a hypothetical second objection of his own in which it would appear that God himself orchestrates evil, Hume simply dismisses this by saying that such things are too hard for mortals, better that mortals pay attention to the matters of every day. Hume puts it in the following way:

> *The Second objection admits not of so easy and satisfactory an answer; nor is it possible to explain distinctly, how the Deity can be the mediate cause of all the actions of men, without being the author of sin and moral turpitude. These are mysteries, which mere natural and unassisted reason is very unfit to handle; and whatever system she embraces, she must find herself involved in inextricable difficulties, and even contradictions, at every step she takes with regard to such subjects.* [393]

We see in this statement of Hume's a distrust in natural unaided human thought seeking to solve the problem of evil. In his Dialogues Concerning Natural religion, Hume, as we shall see in the next chapter, articulates in depth the reason for this distrust.

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[392] *Ibid.*, p. 334.
[393] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Hume, Berkeley, Monism and Evil

Hume's theory of knowledge and his machine world view justifies everything that is and everything that happens. Any perception of evil whatever is accorded acceptance in that it is as inevitable as everything else is. Nothing can ever happen that is out of accord with the designer, the one who orchestrates the universe of men and things. Therefore, evil itself is rendered no more than an appearance. For if all is in accord and harmony with the creator, then evil is no more than a subjective feeling experienced by human beings who fail to comprehend the underlying harmony of all that is.

But this same harmony is not implied if we omit Hume's belief in a supreme will from his theory of knowledge and implied worldview. In order to allow Hume to be consistent with his own theory of knowledge, it appears we must make this omission. For Hume's belief in a supreme will cannot be derived from his theory of knowledge, let alone his claim that the supreme being orchestrates every impression, sentiment and idea that impinges on the human mind. For Hume is faced with a problem similar to that of Berkeley.

Berkeley's epistemology, by implication, allowed the idea of God, but not the reality. For Berkeley claimed that ideas can only exist when perceived. So it ended up, given his theory of ideas, that God could exist only as an idea. Hume is faced with this same kind of dilemma. For impressions, sentiments, and ideas, only allow for the impression, sentiment, or idea of God. Locke and Hume agreed that beyond impression and idea, is the unknowable substance of which we can have no idea whatever. W saw Hume express his belief in a supreme will who orchestrates sentiments, ideas, and impressions, but who is himself more than idea. But in so doing, Hume is completely at odds with his own theory of knowledge. For outside of impression, idea, and sentiment, lies only the unknowable.

Hume also shares a dilemma similar to Berkeley with respect to God and causation. Berkeley's view of idea combined with his theory of causation, by implication left him with only the idea of God, and with no way in which God as idea could create or do anything. Hume, for his part, has explained that seeming connections do not involve true cause and effect. For Human beings can experience no such thing, only conjoined ideas and the inference of cause and effect. There is therefore no way for human experience to speak of the kind of actual connection Hume makes between God and the orchestration of human impressions, sentiments, and ideas. Like Berkeley, he is trying to maintain an external God that is disallowed by his own theory of knowledge, and causation in particular.

Hume also claims that ideas and sentiments actually derive from impressions, or that impressions are actually caused by an unknown substance impinging on the mind. This too is inadmissible, given his theory of causation. Here there is no intention to say whether Hume is right or wrong, only to require that he be consistent with his own claims. If we are to discern the implications of those claims with respect to evil, a measure of consistency seems necessary. With Hume, no less than Berkeley, evil can cause nothing, because evil and the action and events that conjoin with it are disconnected impressions, sentiments or ideas.

Like Berkeley, by implication, Hume proposed a theory of knowledge and a consequent monism in which neither God or humanity could ever be the cause of either good or evil. As with Berkeley, human evil can never really exist except as idea. Like all empirical reality, human evil, for Hume, is an idea, and thus an island unto itself. For in Hume, by implication, every idea is an island unto itself. But as with Berkeley, in *appearance,* it could be supposed that evil really occurs. For the sequence of ideas that are

perceived separate from each other (for example, the idea of a bullet leaving a gun, and a soldier pulling the trigger) actually *appear* to be linked, one to the other.

Therefore, as with Berkeley, given Hume's claim regarding causality, the appearance of evil is everywhere in evidence, but never the reality. So Berkeley bequeathed to us a world of spirit and idea that admitted of no matter and no external world, and Hume a world where one is bequeathed only the unknowable.[394]

In Berkeley, perception itself was no more than idea, and the thoughts that just happened to follow after the perception merely give the impression that life has meaning. In Hume, despite some differences in his theory of ideas, the same meaninglessness prevails. For life to truly have meaning, one idea must truly be linked to another. In Hume as in Berkeley no such links exist. Therefore if no meaning exists, then the very idea of evil shares in this same meaninglessness.

Hume renders evil as innocuous and goodness as impotent as does Berkeley. As with Berkeley, man himself is rendered meaningless. Given Hume's theory of knowledge, and his monism, the inner self of man is as disconnected from life and meaning as is everything else. In Hume's attempt to rescue God and the common man from the evils of Cartesian thought, Hume extinguished not only human evil, but human goodness, and to all intents and purposes, the individual himself. For in Hume and in Berkeley, will, reason, and moral action become no more than disconnected sense data. The human self is no more than a bundle of disconnected ideas and human identity, a meaningless fiction, in which evil is suspended in the realm of idea and appearance. It would appear that the more the external

[394] Quite often Hume speaks of matter, as if it were real. But it would appear that Hume, in such cases, is just using language in a common sense manner. For Hume's agreement with Locke regarding the knowable nature of substance must always be kept in mind. Thomas Reid, in his comments on Hume, rightly understands that Hume leaves substance as a **not knowable.**

world is demoted by thinkers such as Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, evil itself dons the garb of mystery and anonymity, and becomes itself like Locke's substance, a *know not what.*

Chapter 6: Hume Reid Idea And Evil

In this Chapter we explore another dimension of David Hume's thought. Then we will proceed to one of his contemporaries, *Thomas Reid,* a fellow philosopher and Epistemologist who was a contemporary of Hume. Reid was the originator of what came to be known as the *Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense.*

Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

We now turn to Hume' s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Dialogues or The Dialogues,* for short. [395] This time we are concerned to understand Hume's personal perception of evil, not only the perception of evil implied by his theory of knowledge. However, this does not mean that his theory of knowledge is irrelevant to understanding Hume's personal perception of evil. As we shall see, it is in fact pivotal.

Hume's Posthumous Dialogues

Despite the counsel of his friends, among them *Adam Smith,* Hume made certain that his Dialogues were published after his death.[396] It consists of twelve dialogues on the nature of God that a minor character, *Pamphilus,* relates to an even more minor character Hermippus. The major characters, Philo, Cleanthes, and Demea, come into play in the dialogues themselves. It is assumed in this discussion that Philo is Hume in every respect,

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[395] A debt is owed to *Norman Kemp Smith* for forcing this author to research at further length statements from Hume which at first seemed trustworthy.
[396] David Hume, Dialogues *Concerning Natural Religion (New* York: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc, 1947*).*

whether advancing sophistic arguments, or when stating his true beliefs. The reason for this position is the substantial agreement found between Philo's theory of knowledge, and that advanced in Hume's Enquiries *Concerning Human Understanding And Concerning The Principles Of Morals*, discussed in Chapter Five.

Yet Hume does not hesitate to introduce some of his beliefs and his arguments through Cleanthes, when it suits him. While it appears true that Philo does consistently represent Hume's form of argumentation, as well as his actual beliefs, the reader must wait till the twelfth dialogue to see the character Philo confess them, supposedly free of what he calls the mere cavils and sophisms he uses before this to confound both Cleanthes and Demas. But here there needs to be caution. For the sincerity of Philo[397] can seldom be trusted. He is more than fond of deceiving Cleanthes as to his true position. This of course, as we shall see, was typical of Hume himself. For Hume, what followed before the twelfth dialogue was far more than mere cavils and sophisms as we shall see.

Hume's Attack On Moral Attributes And The Design Argument

In these dialogues, as in his earlier works, *The Treatise*, and *The Enquiry*, Hume allows for no way to arrive at the nature of God through apriori or aposteriori reasoning. He only allows for experience to infer that there is a *remote analogy* between the universe and intelligence.[398] This he allows only so long as we do not assume there is only one designer, or that the designer must be composed of mind rather than matter. But when it comes to the moral attributes of God, Hume, through the character Philo, disallows any knowledge whatever, even when experience is taken into account. In Dialogue X1 Philo reasons:

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[397] For the many deceptions and insincerity's in Hume's writings, see Norman Kemp Smith's introduction to the dialogues.
[398] *Ibid.,* p 227.

There may four hypothesis be framed concerning the first causes of the universe: that they are endowed with perfect goodness, that they have perfect malice, that they are the opposite and have both goodness and malice, that they have neither goodness or malice. Mixed phenomena can never prove the two former unmixed principles. And the uniformity and steadiness of general laws seem to oppose the third. The fourth, therefore, seems by far the most probable. What I have said to natural evil will apply to moral, with little or no variation; and we have no more reason to infer, that the rectitude of the supreme Being resembles human rectitude than that his benevolence resemble the human. Nay, it will be thought, that we have still greater cause to exclude from him moral sentiments, such as we feel them, since moral evil, in the opinion of many, is much more predominant above moral good than natural evil above natural good.[399]

Philo argues that whoever seeks by means of experience and unaided human reason to establish the moral benevolence, attributes and feelings of God will find that the actual events in this world make it more probable that God has none of these, at least in the way that we understand them. Hume considers it hard enough to argue from experience that the universe itself is good, let alone that God has moral attributes. But what are we then to make of Philo's statements in Dialogue Twelve? At the very outset, and immediately after the departure of Demas, (a sort of Cartesian dogmatist), Philo makes a candid confession to Cleanthes.

I must confess replied Philo that I am less cautious on the subject of natural religion than on any other; both because I know that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of any man with common sense, and because no one, I am confident, in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions. You, in particular, CLEANTHES, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy; you are sensible that notwithstandng [sic] the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed upon his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of nature. A purpose, an intention, or design strikes everywhere the most careless thinker; and no one can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it.[400]

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[399] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[400] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Before the departure of Demas, Philo continually refuted all the arguments both of Demas and Cleanthes that sought to prove the existence of a benevolent and immaterial creator. But in this address to Cleanthes, everything seems to change. Philo now admits to his profound adoration of a divine designer which he says is obvious even to the most careless of thinkers. He assures Cleanthes that his earlier arguments arose from his love of argument, and in no way expressed his true belief.[401] Not even a page later there then comes from Philo an admission that the findings of science testify to the creator and his purpose filled creation. Philo not only admits to a creator, but one worthy of human worship and piety which true science ever reveals

> ***That nature does nothing in vain*** *is a maxim established in all the schools, merely from the contemplation of the works of nature, without any religious purpose; and from a firm conviction of its truth, an anatomist who had observed a new organ or canal, would never be satisfied till he had discovered its use and intention. One Great foundation of the COPERNICAN system is the maxim, that nature acts by the simplest methods, and chooses the most proper means to any end; and astronomers often without thinking of it, lay this strong foundation of piety and religion. [The same thing is observable in other parts of philosophy.* This statement in brackets is added by Hume on the margin.*] Thus all the sciences lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent Author; and their authority is often so much the greater, as they do not directly profess that intention.*[402]

Philo adds to the force of this certainty of a first intelligent designer, a description of the structure of the human body. Philo, in light of such wonders, remarks, to *what pitch of pertinacious*[403] *obstinacy must a philosopher in this age have attained, who can now doubt of a supreme intelligence.*[404]

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[401] *Ibid.*
[402] *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[403] Pertinacious, meaning malicious.
[404] *Ibid.*

Philo even declares that this creator by his very natural abilities is morally perfect, the very source of true right and wrong.

> *For, as the supreme **Being** is allowed to be absolutely and entirely perfect, whatever differs most from him departs the furthest from the supreme standard of rectitude and perfection.*[405]

In light of Philo's candid confession to Cleanthes, there seems to be a contradiction between dialogue twelve, and the eleven dialogues that came before. The first eleven have Philo claiming that neither apriori or aposteriori reason can prove the existence of a moral immaterial designer. Now we seem to have Philo saying the opposite.

The Key To The Seeming Contradiction Between Dialogue Twelve And The Rest

Hume gives us a kind of clue as to what he is doing, when he says that only the most stubborn malicious form of reasoning could resist such striking *appearances* as science reveals. But the key word is appearances.[406] In the first eleven dialogues Philo argues that there can be no causal proof whatever of an immaterial benevolent designer. In the twelfth he argues that, although there can be no proof, reasoned inference gives an unmistakable sense of a divine creator, and the universe he made, emits an appearance of purpose that is very difficult for anyone to resist, except the very stubborn. It will be recalled that Hume claimed that the universe we encounter is one of appearance, a world composed of impressions, sentiments and ideas. What Philo is referring to is not a true causal universe, but a universe of appearances devoid of cause and effect, in which causes can never be proved, but everywhere inferred. In other words Hume is really restating the theory of knowledge he expressed in his Treatise on Human Nature, and in his Enquiry.

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[405] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

It will be recalled that in Chapter Five Hume claimed the supreme will orchestrated all the impressions, sentiments, and ideas, of humanity. In speaking of his belief in a divine orchestrate, Hume was really expressing his own experience of the striking *appearances* of the universe. In full consistency, he expressed his belief in a divine will that orchestrates all things. He also made clear, that despite the relativity of morals, that there was yet a ground of moral sameness, qualities useful or agreeable to the person himself or to others. These in Hume's mind were the constants of morality, the constants that allowed the sentiments of man guided by the illusion of cause and effect to introduce true collective and individual virtue into human existence. So in Dialogue twelve, nothing has really changed. God can still not be proved, but reasoned inference and the appearances it experiences through impression, sentiment and idea, makes it appear that a benevolent designer truly exists. In fact, as Philo earlier said, the appearance is so striking, that only *pertinacious obstinacy* can resist.

So even in the twelfth dialogue, where reason is concerned, appearance still rules. There is only the appearance, the idea of a benevolent creator, and the appearance of an ordered world of purpose. Therefore Hume has not compromised his theory of knowledge one iota. Unaided human experience can yield no more than this, a world of appearance.

Hume's Perception Of Evil

The evil Hume combats is unaided human reason seeking to prove God. The first eleven dialogues, the treatise, and the Enquiry all combat what Hume views as the arrogance and impiety of such a claim. In dialogue twelve Philo calls such, the *haughty dogmatists that*

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[406] *Ibid.,* p. 215.

think by the mere help of unaided reason and philosophy to erect a complete system of theology.[407] Certainly Descartes and the Cartesians are as much the object of attack in the dialogues as they were in the inquiry. Had not Hume published his Dialogues after his death, it is clear they involved a great risk. The nature of that risk is well articulated by Norman Kemp Smith in his introduction to the dialogues. But in essence Hume lived in a time where an author could pretty much write what he wanted as long as he included the customary insincere praises of the Holy Scriptures and made no direct attack on the Christian faith. Not to include these was to risk persecution by the Christian State and Clergy. But Smith explains how The Dialogues were different, for these constituted a direct attack on the Christian faith.

> *But it is in his **Dialogues concerning Natural Religion** that the problem of expressing his mind freely, while yet not to greatly violating the established code, meets Hume in its most difficult form. For in the dialogues he is doing precisely what was above all else forbidden, namely to make an attack upon the whole theistic position.* [408]

Hume knew just what he was doing when he responded to Cleanthes. He was aping the typical form of stating the argument from design. Here we shall simply reproduce a small example of that form. We view it in Hume's response to Cleanthes where he seems to be giving his full consent to the design argument. *A purpose and intention of design strikes everywhere the most careless the most stupid thinker; and no one can be so hardened in absurd systems as to reject it.*

Therefore, in the dialogues Hume argues in a somewhat disguised way, the same theory of knowledge contained in his Enquiry and his Treatise. But now he uses that theory of knowledge to take direct aim at the hallowed and state enforced argument by design. The

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[407] *Ibid.,* p. 227.

consequence is a world of appearances where nothing is epistemologically certain, not even the existence of good and evil itself.

But before we can leave the inquiry, we must briefly discuss another evil that Hume attacks in the dialogue, religious and clerical Evil. In the final dialogue, Philo claims to believe in scripture and revealed revelation, and to be a Christian philosopher. But there seems little doubt, given a careful reading of statements in that twelfth dialogue that Hume had no use whatever for the doctrine of election, or of the afterlife as expressed in scripture with its teaching of Heaven and Hell. Here is one the clearest disavowals of the orthodox Christian faith Hume makes anywhere.

> *And were that divine Being disposed to be offended at the vices and follies of silly mortals, who are his own workmanship; ill would it surely fare with the votaries of the most popular superstitions. Nor would any of the human race merit his favor, but a very few, the philosophical theists, who entertain, or rather indeed endeavour to entertain suitable notions of his divine perfections: [sic} As the only persons entitled to his* ***compassion and indulgence*** *would be the philosophical sceptics, a sect almost equally rare, who, from a natural diffidence of their own capacity, suspend, or endeavour to suspend all judgement with regard to such sublime and such extraordinary subjects.*[409]

In this statement Hume rejects the entire idea of election, or even that God would personally bother with the vices and follies of silly mortals. God is made to be as indifferent to human affairs as were the Gods believed in by Lucretius and Epicurus.[410] Hume makes clear that, in his view, God does not have passions. He is not directly concerned with our daily welfare or our vices and follies. There could be no clearer statement that God is not concerned with human sins, let alone the hope for an afterlife. This is but a slightly veiled rejection of the doctrine of grace election and atonement in Christ.

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[408] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[409] *Ibid.*, p. 226.
[410] See Chapter 2

Not content with this Hume hypothetically entertains the idea that God is concerned with human vices and virtues. In a kind of tongue and cheek manner he speaks of the elect few, including, no doubt Cartesian thinkers, who suppose themselves capable by mere reason to arrive at the perfection's of God. It is clear that this is all insincere, an ill disguised form of jest. Just a page before Hume spoke of the cruelty of a doctrine and a deity who will allow the damned to exceed the number of the elect. In the final statement Hume speaks of the indulgence of God towards the sceptic. Here Hume is essentially saying, that at least the sceptic will find a bit of charity on God's part, for a sceptic of this kind at least suspends all judgement when it comes to the nature of God. Thus is a somewhat amused fashion Hume includes himself among the indulged. But here Hume states quite directly that the proper stance towards the idea of God is one of permanently suspended judgement.

For Hume, the real enemy of God, as he understands God, is once again the arrogance of philosophers and clergy. It is they who formulate doctrines which terrify human hearts with fears of Heaven and Hell, and who do so by granting reason and authority a place neither can ever deserve. In Hume's view, the consequences of this haughty, allegedly reason based dogmatism is a clergy who suspends human freedom and disallows a man like himself to state his true beliefs and his true objections.

The Dialogues were Hume's after death assault on a system of power he opposed, a system that in his view embraced a theory of knowledge that was destructive of all natural human goodness. He saw it as a kind of religiosity that disposed every believer to a countenance of morbidity.

But here, in the twelfth dialogue, we are also close to what Hume really cherishes and what he also sees as being trampled upon by religiosity and the epistemological assumptions sustaining its folly. Hume sees man, before being tormented by religious fears, as having a

naturally kind and pleasant nature. After admitting that both hope and fear enter into religion, Hume speaks of a better state, of man in the absence of religion.

> *But when a man is in a cheerful disposition, he is fit for business or company or entertainment of any kind; and he naturally applies himself to these, and thinks not of religion. When melancholy, and dejected, he has nothing to do but brood upon the terrors of the invisible world, and to plunge himself still deeper in affliction.*[411]

Norman Kemp Smith is by no means surprised to see Hume speak in this way, raised in, and surrounded as he was by a highly oppressive and morbid form of Calvinism in his youth.[412] Hume, in viewing all this morbidity remarks:

> *I shall venture to affirm, that there never was a popular religion, which represented the state of departed souls in such a light, as would render it eligible for humankind, that there should be such a state.*[413]

Hume is essentially saying that all the regular models of the afterlife, Christian doctrine included, seem totally unfitted to accommodate human beings as they really are, with the congenial happy nature natural to them. Then Hume gives the reason why. In the why, Hume's perception of a great evil is laid bare.

> *These fine models of religion are the mere product of philosophy. For as death lies between the eye and the prospect of futurity, that even is so shocking to nature, that it must throw a gloom on all the regions which lie beyond it; and suggest to the generality of mankind the idea of Cerebrus and Furies, devils of torrents and fires and brimstones.*[414]

Hume is implying that even philosophers all to easily and naturally think of it as a heaven or a hell. No doubt Hume would agree, at least in part, with Lucretius who came to

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[411] *Ibid.,* p. 225.
[412] *Ibid.*, See Smith's introduction for a sketch of Hume's Calvinist Upbringing.
[413] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[414] *Ibid.*

the conclusion that the true Gospel was the good news that death was a final end of the body and the mind, not an entrance into the monsters and torments of the ancient Greek Hell.

Here we see very clearly Hume's real attitude towards the Church of his time and the epistemological assumptions that enforced it. It would appear that for Hume, the natural disposition free of religion was most truly man. But was Hume, as Norman Kemp Smith suggests, really a naturalist, one who sees God as bound up in nature itself. It well may be seeing as Hume rejects all attempts to arrive at God through reason. But there may be yet one thing that Smith overlooked. For it is not clear that Hume would entirely reject the idea of God, were it to be based, not upon reason, but faith.

But here we would not be referring to faith or God as normally understood, but at least to a God who in the final analysis may turn out to truly love humanity, yet in a way and through a process of time and trials that humanity could never hope to understand. But where does such a hope appear in the dialogues? Dare we see a kind of believing eschatology in Hume. I refer the reader to a statement from Cleanthes, and Philo's reply.

Beyond Appearances

The realm beyond appearances receives its clearest statement in the twelfth dialogue where Cleanthes cautions Philo not to let his zeal to refute false reasoning cause him to lose sight of genuine theism. Cleanthes speaks of a God who loves and protects us, implants *in us immeasurable desires for good*, prolongs *our existence to all eternity,* and who will in love try our faith.[415] Philo replies:

> *These appearances, said Philo, are most engaging and alluring; and with regard to the true philosopher*[416]*, they are more than appearances. But it happens here, as in*

[415] *Ibid.*, p. 224.
[416] Some might argue that Hume uses the term true philosopher disdainfully here, but nothing in the context suggests this. Indeed it argues strongly that true philosophy and what Hume calls *True Religion* are at one.

the former case, that, with regard to the greater part of mankind, the appearances are deceitful, and the terrors of religion commonly prevail above its comforts.[417]

Philo's careful use of the word appearances is an epistemological statement right out of Hume's theory of knowledge. All humanity can encounter through unaided human experience is appearances formed through impressions, sentiment and idea. But Philo is now saying that this protective benevolent God of Cleanthes is more than just an appearance, more than just a sentiment, more than just an idea, to the *True Philosopher.* This would make Hume more than the naturalistic sceptic Kemp Smith envisions, devoid of any eschatology. Here in the dialogues, as in the Enquiry, we see Hume through Philo consenting, by faith to the true religion and true theism just articulated by Cleanthes. He is saying that appearances of this kind, precisely because they are more than appearance, are true to reality. Philo is saying that beyond the appearances of unaided human experience there is a God. He is the God of genuine theism, not Christian theism as with Cleanthes, that the True Philosopher can know as more than just an appearance. Beyond appearance, Philo acknowledges, lies this God of Cleanthes, a God who loves and protects us, implants in us immeasurable desires for good, and will prolong our existence to all eternity, and who will in love try our faith.

It would almost seem then that Hume never ruled out that the appearances that come to us through impression, sentiment, and idea could at times be identical to the world or deity as it truly is. But he does maintain that what is beyond appearances is not detectable by reason, impression, sentiment or idea. But this must not be taken to far. Hume does speak of faith and God, but we must apply Hume's own qualifications to this God he seems to

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[417] *Ibid.*

embrace, but cannot prove by reason or by appearances. The following statement from the dialogues may shed some light.

The Realm Beyond Appearance, The Realm Accessible To Faith

In the eleventh dialogue Philo asserts that beyond the human experience of what appear to be avoidable and unnecessary evils, there is yet hope that God is truly benevolent.

> *Shall we say, that these circumstances are not necessary, and that they might easily have been altered in the contrivance of the universe? This decision seems too presumptuous for creatures so blind and ignorant.*[418]

Philo maintains that even though human reason cannot extricate God from the charge that he creates unnecessary evil, that is still only from the standpoint of human reason. It may still be that all these things are necessary, but as Philo implies, beyond the faculties of human reason to comprehend.[419] This then must be taken in trust. Indeed, in the tenth dialogue Philo says to Cleanthes.

> *But there is no view of human life, or the condition of mankind, from which, without the greatest violence, we can infer the moral attributes, or learn that infinite benevolence, conjoined with infinite power and infinite wisdom, which we must discover by the eyes of faith alone.* [420]

In Dialogue Ten Philo takes Cleanthes to task for insisting that divine benevolence is impossible if Philo is right about man being unhappy and corrupted. Philo responds:

> *But allowing you what will never be believed; at least what you never possibly can prove, that animal, or at least human happiness, in this life exceeds its misery; you have yet done nothing: For this is not, by any means what we expect from infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness. Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance surely. From some cause then. It is from the intention of the Deity. But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, so decisive; except we assert, that these subjects exceed all human capacity, and that*

[418] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[419] *Ibid.*, p. 205.
[420] *Ibid.*

> *our common measures of truth and falsehood are not applicable to them; a topic on which I have all along insisted on, but which you have from the beginning rejected with scorn and indignation.*[421]

Philo challenges Cleanthes experiential argument seeking to make the world less evil. He argues that reasoning from normal experience, it seems unworthy of an omnipotent almighty God that any evil exists at all. But here, we must remember Philo is simply showing the fallacy from Cleanthe's starting point, not that God is in fact unworthy, or that no explanation for evil exists, that would still rescue God from participation in evil.

But more importantly, Philo is also saying that we cannot but trust the mysterious benevolence of the ultimate authority, for there is no human way to explain the contradictions of this life, or the presence of even the slightest misery. So faith, Philo is telling us, must see beyond appearances. If Philo is Hume, Hume is far from the first thinker to believe that the greatness of a faith is established when it stands against mere human reason, and what seems reasonable to man.

But in all this, we must still remember that the sincerity of Hume is ever a matter for guardedness. Norman Kemp Smith warns that Hume uses Pierre Bayle's way of undermining religion.[422] Hume, Smith reports, was well aware what that method was. To bring down religion simply emphasise the utter futility of reason to arrive at God, while at the same time emphasising the mystery of faith. If Hume is simply using this device, then his real goal is to bring down all religion. But this does not seem to adequately explain Philo's positive response, or his declaration that Cleanthe's talk of a God who loves and cares is more than appearance.

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[421] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[422] Pierre Bayle was widely read. His works were well known to Hume and famous for their scepticism.

Philo's response to Cleanthe's simple statement of a God, who loves humanity, does not appear to be a mere formal confession of faith to protect him against the clergy. It seems far too subtle for that, with its veiled reference to appearances. If it is taken at face value, its means that Hume believed in a God of love who in his own sovereign and mysterious way will, in the end, do well by the universe and the universe of man. While despising the doctrine that the damned will outnumber the elect, it is not clear that Hume would entirely reject the hope that some day all humanity will find a place in the heart of deity. In fact, he seems well disposed to that from what we have already heard him say regarding the saved and the lost.

Can we take seriously Philo's agreement with Cleanthe's about a realm beyond appearances? If so, then even Hume with his mysterious God and unorthodox view of the afterlife, believed by faith that some day true religion will prevail and a place for souls will be found fit for mortals. Hume would then be found sincere in saying that evil has no answer in reason, or argument, only in the eyes of faith. It would appear that some trace of Hume's Calvinist upbringing remains in his epistemological assault on the Cartesian style God. For in some ways he seems to be attacking those who would dare challenge the mystery and the sovereignty of God. God, not according to the haughty philosophers, and the clergy, but as understood by Hume himself.

Thomas Reid, Knowledge Reality And Evil

In the forward to Norman Daniel's work on Thomas Reid's inquiry, Hilary Putnam remarks:

> *This amazing idealist consensus in philosophy of course fell apart after World War 1. The impressive thing is that one epistemologist [sic] of the first rank opposed this*

> *consensus at its very origin and published incisive critiques of the arguments by Berkeley and Hume upon which this consensus came to be based. That epistemologist was Thomas Reid*[423]

During the consensus years of idealist thinkers, Reid was not regarded very highly after his initial impact in his own time.[424] But the work of Reid has come into a *modest vogue*[425] among analytical philosophers in the last third of the twentieth century. With respect to the era of Hume Berkeley and Reid, Norman Daniels' remarks,

> *The Scotsman Thomas Reid and David Hume were only a few years apart in age, but the publication of Reid's first major work, The Inquiry Into The Human Mind in 1764, twenty five years after Hume's Treatise on Human Nature, marks the beginning of a new philosophical generation. It inaugurates a full blown anti-sceptical, anti-idealist critique of Berkeley and Hume*.[426]

As Putnam reports, twentieth century analytical philosophers began to appreciate Reid because they understood that Reid had anticipated a number of highly contemporary ways of arguing. This led to a new recognition of Reid, and new editions of his major works.[427] Reid wrote two other major works following the *Inquiry:*[428] Essays *on the Intellectual Powers of Man* and *Essays on the Active Powers of Man.* Our discussion will focus on the former and on the Inquiry. For in these two works the emphasis is on his critique of what he called the *Theory of Ideas* and its prime exponents. Reid makes mention of others such as Malebranche. We however will only explore Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. But as Hume was Reid's prime target, he will receive greater attention. We shall also learn of Reid's own epistemological stance, his own perception of evil, and the evils he

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[423] Norman Daniels, Thomas *Reid's Inquiry* (New York: Burt Franklin and Company, 1974), p. ii.
[424] *Ibid.*, pp. vi-vii
[425] *Ibid.*, p. i.
[426] *Ibid.*, p. ix. Those who followed Reid's lead were later to be known as the *Scottish School of Common Sense*
[427] *Ibid.,* p. i.
[428] With regard to Reid's scientific Genius, Daniels and others credit him with the discovery of non-Eucledian Geometry long before its acceptance in the scientific community. See Daniel's, footnote 1.

saw in the ruling epistemologies. In his case, however, we will learn these things somewhat indirectly amidst Reid's critique and general sketch of the men he viewed as the perpetrators of these evils, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume.

General Sketch Of A Growing Epistemological Evil

Reid first laments over what he views as the absurdity of the virtually unanimous epistemological victory of Descartes and Locke.

> *Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke have all employed their genius and skill to prove the existence of a material world; and with very bad success. Poor untaught mortals believe undoubtedly, that there is a sun, moon, and stars; and earth which we inhabit; country, friends, and relations, which we enjoy, land, houses, and moveables [sic] which we possess. But philosophers, pitying the credulity of the vulgar, resolve to believe nothing not founded upon reason. They apply to philosophy to furnish them with reasons for the belief of these things, which all mankind have believed without being able to give any reason for it.*[429]

Not content with accusing Descartes and Locke of self deceptive absurdity, he assigns Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* to the realm of sophistry and nonsense.[430]

> *Zeno endeavoured [sic] to demonstrate the impossibility of motion; Hobbes, that there was no difference between right and wrong; and this author'*[431] *that no credit is to be given to our senses, to our memory, or even to demonstration. Such philosophy is justly ridiculous, even to those who cannot detect the fallacy of it. It can have no other tendency, than to shew [sic] the acuteness of the sophist, at the expense of disgracing reason and human nature, and making mankind Yahoos.*[432]

Reid was here appealing to the common sense wisdom of Humanity and pitting it against what he viewed as the weighty absurdities arrived at by philosophers. But he does

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[429] Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry Into The Human Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 11-12.
[430] The Treatise was Hume's earliest work composed in his early twenties, between age 21-25, published in 1740.
[431] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
[432] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

not simply judge this theory of reality as mistaken or absurd, but also a harbinger of despair, lost-ness, and vacuous malignant evil.

> *But if indeed thou has not power to dispel those clouds and phantoms which thou hast discovered or created, withdraw this penurious and malignant ray: I despise philosophy, and renounce its guidance; let my soul dwell with common sense.*[433]

Reid feels certain that if Descartes, Locke and Berkeley had realized the implications and thus the peril of the theory of ideas, as clearly as Hume, they would have taken far greater care.[434] But at they did not do so, Reid compares them to the victims of ancient Troy.

> *The theory of ideas, like the Trojan horse, had a specious appearance both of innocence and beauty; but if those philosophers had known that it carried in its belly death and destruction to all science and common sense, they would not have broken down their walls to give it admittance.*[435]

Reid is, far more gentle with Descartes, and Locke than he is with Berkeley. Yet he is considerably easier on Berkeley than on David Hume. He charges Berkeley with *undoing* the whole *material world*, but Hume with undoing even the *world of spirits*, *leaving to nature nothing but ideas and impressions*, and these in place of a human being with a mind, heart and soul.[436] Indeed, in quite poetic fashion, but with serious intent, he charges Hume with the ultimate evil, comparing his transgression to the partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, leaving in its wake, the very dissolution of meaning and the human soul itself.

To illustrate, Reid portrays himself partaking of that tree himself.

> *It is surely the forbidden tree of knowledge; I no sooner taste of it, than I perceive myself naked, and stripped of all things, yea, even of my very self. I see myself, and the whole frame of nature, shrink into fleeting ideas, which, like Epicurus' atoms, dance about in emptiness.*[437]

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[433] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[434] As we shall soon see, Reid credits Hume with seeing the implications of the theory of ideas far more clearly than either Descartes, Locke, or Berkeley.
[435] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
[436] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[437] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

It is statements of this kind that reveal the gravity of the evil Reid saw in the growing triumph of the theory of ideas, especially as expressed by David Hume. Reid concluded that the implications of Hume's theory of knowledge rendered life both illusory and meaningless. Such declarations help us to understand why Reid committed so much of his life, time, and writing, to a refutation of David Hume, and Berkeley to a lesser extent. For Reid recognized that unlike Hume, Berkeley, despite the disastrous implications of his theory of knowledge, had at least by means of it intended to protect and preserve the human soul and spirit.

But it must be remembered that Reid is not attacking the personal faith of either Descartes, Locke, Hume or Berkeley. Rather he is drawing out what he judges to be the evil implications and nonsensical consequences of their theory of knowledge and implied worldview. Further, we must not suppose from this that Reid sees Philosophy or Science as an evil in itself. On the contrary, he employs both in his critique of the theory of ideas.

Neither should it be imagined than Reid supposes Hume an idiot. In fact, Reid credits Hume with exposing the implications of the theory of ideas with a consistency surpassing Descartes, Locke and even Berkeley.

> *The modern scepticism, I mean that of **Mr HUME**, is built upon principles which were very generally maintained by Philosophers, [capital his] though they did not see that they led to scepticism. Mr. Hume by tracing, with great acuteness and ingenuity, the consequences of principles, commonly received, has shewn [sic] that they overturn all knowledge and at last overturn themselves, and leave the mind in perfect suspense.*[438]

Had Hume been content to simply show what Reid viewed as the dangerous implications of the theory of ideas in Descartes Locke and Berkeley, and not advanced his

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[438] Thomas Reid, Essays *On The Intellectual Powers of Man* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. 461-462.

own, Reid would have likely have had nothing but commendations for him. Neither would he have felt the intense need to devote a very considerable portion of his academic life to exposing what he viewed as Hume's absurdities.

From Reid's perspective, all these evil theories of knowledge were based upon two epistemological errors. First, the embrace of a theory of ideas based solely on philosophical tradition, and second a failure to observe first principles. With respect to these errors, Reid's rationale will unfold as we observe first his philosophical and finally his scientific critique.

Reid's Philosophic Critique

First Principles

Is this the philosophy of human nature, my soul enter thou not into her secrets.[439]

For Reid, those who tried to prove *First Principles* entered the forbidden realm. For God had so designed man that he could never even evidence them. Such principles were the very basis upon which proof or evidence must always be based, and as such, could not in themselves be evidenced.[440]

The existence of a world external to mind, and composed of a substance different than mind or idea, was for Reid a first principle. It was of the same kind as the mathematical axiom that five plus five equals ten, or one minus one equals zero. Reid was convinced that Descartes' primary error was to allow *his love of simplicity to apply the whole force of his mind to raise the fabric of knowledge* upon only one First Principle*, namely, cogito erg sum,*

[439] Thomas Reid, The *Inquiry,* Ibid., p. 18.
[440] Thomas Reid, The *Intellectual Powers*, Ibid., pp. 39-41.

rather than to seek a broader foundation.[441] Reid was, in effect, saying that Descartes made the error of putting all his eggs into one basket.

In so doing, Reid charged that Descartes placed in a state of uncertainty first principles long accepted by the common man. Reid wonders why Descartes did not see that the embrace of the external world is as much a first principle as, *Cogito ergo sum?* Why, for example, did Descartes not comprehend that *I am moving*, or *I am touching,* is as much a first principles as *I am thinking.*[442] The Consequence of the theory of ideas held by Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume was that universal and primary principles common to all men were rejected and eventually labelled, *naïve realism.* It was Reid's contention that any philosopher who denied the common sense external world soon finds himself in the same condition as a Mathematician who should undertake by the axioms vital to mathematics to demonstrate that there is no truth in the axioms of mathematics.[443]

The Theory Of Ideas Newly Modelled In Descartes.

Aristotle and the Schoolmen (Peripatetics) had taught that we can know the external world only because images from the external world impinge upon our senses and imprint themselves on the mind. Descartes himself had refuted them. Reid points out that Locke, Reid, and Hume equally rejected the ancient theory as well. Yet Reid points out that they had rejected it only in part.

This is the reason, Reid explains, that even philosophers like Descartes and Hume keep slipping back into the same language as the ancients. In particular, Reid points out Hume's slippage in the *Enquiry*. There Hume uses expressions very similar to the

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[441] *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[442] Thomas Reid, Inquiry, Ibid., p. 10.
[443] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

schoolmen. [sic] Hume wrote: *that the senses are inlets for images from the external world.*[444] Reid knew that this was very close to how Aristotle and the *Schoolmen* would phrase it.

Reid explains. *If the images were let in by the senses, as Hume declares, they must exist before they are perceived, and thereby have a separate existence.*[445] But this simply meant that Hume was sliding back into the image philosophy of Aristotle and the Schoolmen. Reid knows that when Hume is being careful in his language, he simply says that in some *way* sense data impinges upon the mind creating impressions, sentiments and ideas. Reid knows Hume does not believe, for example, that images come in through the ears, or images of sound through the eyes.

Nevertheless, Reid was correct in seeing that Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume all supposed that the very source of ideas came from something external to the mind. This Reid argued, was not very far removed at all from the theory of ideas held by the Aristotle and the Schoolmen. Reid then explained why, in his judgement, it was so easy for the philosophers like Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume to revert back into the language of the old debunked theory.

> *To what cause is it owing that modern Philosophers are so prone to fall back into this hypothesis, as if they really believed it. For of this proneness I could give many instances besides this of Mr. Hume; and I take the cause to be, that images in the mind, and images let in by the senses, are so nearly allied, and so strictly connected, that they must stand or fall together. The Old system consistently maintained both: But the new system has rejected the doctrine of images let in by the senses, holding nevertheless, that there are images in the mind, and, having made this unnatural divorce of two doctrines which ought not to be put asunder, that which they have retained often leads them back involuntarily to that which they have rejected.*[446]

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[444] Thomas Reid, *Essays On The Intellectual Powers,* Ibid., p. 180.
[445] *Ibid.*
[446] *Ibid.*

Reid's point is that if you are going to reject images let in by the senses, and yet maintain that the images in the mind are caused by sense data impinging the mind, you are really trying to divorce two doctrines, in which one absolutely requires the truth of the other to maintain itself. Now Reid would allow that the idea could either resemble the thing from which it derives, (as with Locke) or not be proven to resemble it at all, (as with Hume), depending where a given thinker stood on the issue. But what could not be avoided is that in the case of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, something exterior to the mind is assumed to encounter the senses.

In this Reid seems to have a point. By positing something exterior, one has already allowed a certain amount of imaging. For one cannot, given the theory of ideas, think of externality at all, without forming some image of the external itself, and of it impinging upon the senses. It is therefore easy to see how closely connected the two ideas are, and why Reid says that Hume sometimes slips back into talk about images entering in through the inlets of the senses. In either the ancient or Descartes' revised version of the theory of ideas, two things are held in common. First, ideas come to exist in the mind, and two, they have their origin in a world external to the mind, impinging upon it. The only difference between the two appears to be the means and degree in which the external world is represented by the mind, and the way in which this transpires.

Authority Reason And Verification

Reid asked a further question, with respect to the theory of ideas, that few others seemed to be asking. Reid asks. Is this new and growing consensus among these philosophers built upon reason, or are Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and other

adherents simply relying on a long unquestioned philosophical tradition? Reid was convinced the latter was the case.

In this Reid seems entirely correct. Descartes, Locke, Hume and Berkeley seem to treat the theory of ideas almost as it were itself a first principle, even though they do seek at times to support it. They each make revisions with respect to the origin of the ideas, but they all seem to reason from the basic presupposition that the mind is indeed capable of only an intermediary perception of the external world. For them there can be no direct perception of the external world without the middleman of ideas, or in Hume's case impressions and sentiments as well. With respect to this dependence on old ideas, Reid asserts:

> *The last reflection I shall make upon this theory, is, that the natural and necessary consequences of it furnish a just prejudice against it to every man who pays a due regard to the common sense of mankind. Not to mention that it led the Pythagoreans and* ***PLATO*** *to imagine that we see only shadows of external things, and not the things themselves, and that it gave rise to the Peripatetic doctrine of the sensible* ***species,*** *one of the greatest absurdities of that ancient system, let us only consider the fruits it has produced since it was new-modelled [sic] by* ***DESCARTES.*** *That great reformer in philosophy saw the absurdity of the doctrine of ideas coming from external objects, and refuted it effectually, [sic] after it had been received by Philosophers for thousands of years; but he still retained ideas in the brain and in the mind. Upon this foundation all our modern systems of the powers of the mind are built. And the tottering state of those fabrics, though built by skilful hands, may give a strong suspicion of the unsoundness of the foundation. It was this theory of ideas that led* ***DESCARTES*** *and those that followed him to think it necessary to prove by philosophical argumentation, the existence of material objects. And who does not see that philosophy must make a very ridiculous figure in the eyes of sensible men, while it is employed in mustering up metaphysical arguments, to prove that there is a sun and a moon and an earth and a sea: Yet we find these truly great men,* ***DESCARTES, MALEBRANCH, ARNAULD****, and* ***LOCKE****, seriously employing themselves in this argument.*[447]

To Reid, there was a great paradox in these otherwise progressive thinkers. Here were four giant minds all heavily inspired by Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton, four men

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[447] *Ibid.,* p. 186.

highly critical of the classical traditions and the circularity of classical forms of argumentation. Yet, here they were, appealing to authority. Reid's conclusion is that not one of the arguments advanced with respect to the theory of ideas could bear serious examination, and precisely because each thinker relied upon tradition, authority and sophism.[448]

A Few Reflections

We cannot help but notice how very different were the perceptions of evil, epistemologically speaking, in each of these men. Descartes was defending humanity from the evils of a future devoid of scientific certainty and rational foundations for living. Locke fought against what he perceived as certain arrogant form of rationalistic certainty that separated reason from human experience. Berkeley fought against the evils of a machine worldview threatening to destroy the human heart, and spirit, and a life lived under the direction and providence of God. Each was motivated to overcome an evil, and the means used to overcome the evil, became for others the very evil that needed overcoming. Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume all used the theory of ideas to combat this evil. Now here we are at Reid, one who sees in the theory of ideas itself, the source of a very great evil, and David Hume as its most able and devastating exponent.

Too Many Voices, Too Many Ideas Of Ideas

As well as critiquing its unscientific appeal to authority Reid questions the sheer number and diversity of theories as to how ideas are formed in the mind, and move from simple perception into the realm of thought. Reid wonders how something supposed to be

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[448] *Ibid.*

so certain and beyond question should invite not unanimity, but the extreme diversity and debate that prevailed.[449] In this regard Reid advances some observations. *Some have held the* ideas *to be self existent others* find them *in the Divine Mind, others in our own minds, and others in the brain or sensorium [sic].* [450]

> *Some philosophers will have our ideas, or a part of them, to be innate; others will have them all to be adventitious: Some derive them from the senses alone; others from sensation and reflection: Some think that they are fabricated by the mind itself; others that they are produced by external objects; others that they are the immediate operation of the Deity; others say, the impressions are the causes of ideas, and that the causes of impressions are unknown: Some think that we have ideas only of material objects, but none of minds, of their operations, or the relation of things; others will have the immediate object of every thought to be idea: Some think we have abstract ideas, and that by this chiefly we are distinguished from the brutes; others maintain an abstract idea to be an absurdity, and that there can be no such thing: With some they are the immediate objects of thought, with others the only objects.*[451]

Now Reid recognizes that science and controversy are necessary to discovery and progress. But he is vehement that any challenge to anything as basic and universal as common sense and common perception requires a unanimity of argumentation and agreement of the highest order. But Reid sees no such unanimity.

> *If ideas be not a mere fiction, they must be, of all objects of human knowledge, the things we have the best access to know, and to be acquainted with, yet there is nothing about which men differ so much.*[452]

Berkeley, in defending his stance, explains that the common man, the vulgar crowd as they were sometimes called, are often found wrong, because mere appearance is often confounded by science. Scientists today make this very point. Bertrand Russell, in

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[449] *Ibid.,* p. 184.
[450] *Ibid.*
[451] *Ibid.*
[452] *Ibid.*

particular, was fond of this argument advancing it in works such as his History *of Western Philosophy.* But Reid would be very quick to point out, that even science itself cannot function apart from first principles. Science is able to discover things that men can never know through common sense, earth revolving around the sun, magnetic attraction, and so forth. But Reid was aware that precisely such discoveries required first principles, in particular the trust in the reality of an external cause *and effect world.*[453]

Criticism Of Hume's Theory Of Degrees Of Vivacity

With Hume, as we recall from the former chapter, the difference between impression, memory, sentiment, and ideas was to be decided by their degree of vivacity or liveliness. Reid called this theory both *loose and unphilosophical* [sic].[454] He argues, that initial perceptions or observations of things, and thoughts about them, are clearly two different things. That is, they are two different functions of the mind. To differ in species, he said, is one thing, to differ in degree is another. *Things which differ in degree only must be of the same species.* [455] Perception, Reid said, is one species. Thought is another. Each are clearly different functions of the mind. Further, he argues, it is a *maximum of common sense*, admitted by all men that *greater and less do not make a change of species*. Therefore, to say that thought and perception differ only in degrees is to *confound a difference of degrees with a difference of species* which every man of understanding knows how to distinguish.[456]

So Reid suggests that Hume's attempt to use his theory of degrees with things of a completely different kind (kind meaning species) is wrong headed. He argues that Hume

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[453] Thomas Reid, *Inquiry, Ibid., pp.* 1, 3, 8, 9.
[454] Thomas Reid, *Essays On The Intellectual Powers of Man,* ibid., p. 33.
[455] *Ibid.*
[456] *Ibid.*

commits the very same error when he seeks to distinguish things as different as belief, memory and imagination by his theory of degrees. Hume, Reid said, claims that belief could be distinguished from memory, imagination, and idea, by its *degree of faintness* as compared with imagination, which is slightly fainter.[457] But Reid asked a question. How can it be that belief and no belief should *differ only in degree?* For this is in reality is to say that *something and nothing differ only in degree*, or that *nothing is a degree of something.*[458] Reid points out that Hume even seeks to explain by degrees, contraries such as pain and pleasure, hate and love. To seek to explain contraries of this kind or any other by degrees, was to Reid, absurd.

Another concern was Hume's contention that belief is accompanied by memory, but not idea. How, Reid asks, can one have a belief without first having an idea of what one believes?[459] Reid points out that in his later writings Hume admits that the term vivacity does not adequately explain the differences in belief and varying degrees of memory, but Reid knew that Hume still held that belief is no more than a modification of an idea. *Hardly a retraction*, Reid remarks.[460]

Power And Mystery Of The Thinker

Reid believed that humanity will always be at a loss to know how we perceive different objects, remember things past, and finally, how we imagine things that have no existence. Ideas in the mind might seem at first to account for all these operations. Perception, remembrance and imagination, Reid explains, are all, by means of their *ideas*

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[457] *Ibid.,* pp. 287-292.
[458] *Ibid.*, p. 292.
[459] *Ibid.*
[460] *Ibid.*

reduced to one operation: [461] to a kind of feeling*, or immediate perception of things present, and in contact with the percipient*, and feeling *is an operation so familiar, that we think it needs no explication, but may serve to explain other operations*.[462]

But Reid points out that this feeling, or immediate perception, is as difficult to comprehend as the things which we pretend to explain by it. Two things may be in contact without any feelings of perception. Reid reasons that there must therefore be in the percipient a power to feel or to perceive. How this power is produced, how it operates is, in Reid's judgement, quite beyond the reach of our knowledge.[463] Nor can any man pretend to prove, that the Being, who gave us the power to perceive things present, may not give us the power to perceive things that are distant, to remember things past, and to conceive things that never existed.[464]

Some philosophers, Reid notes, have endeavoured to make all our senses to be only different modifications of touch. Reid saw this as a theory which serves only to confound things that are different, and to perplex and darken things that are clear. In his view, the theory of ideas was a classic example of this. For it reduced all the operations of the human understanding to the perception of ideas in our own minds. In opposition to Hume, Reid declares that the contiguity (or conjoining idea in Hume) of the object contributes nothing at all to make it better understood.

> There *appears no connection between contiguity and perception, but what is grounded on prejudices, drawn from some imagined similitude between mind and body; and from the supposition, that, in perception, the object acts upon the mind, or the mind upon the object. We have seen how this theory has led Philosophers to confound those operations of mind, which experience teaches all men to be different, and teaches them to distinguish in common language; and that it has led them to*

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[461] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[462] *Ibid.*
[463] *Ibid.*
[464] *Ibid.,* p. 185.

> *invent a language inconsistent with the principles upon which all language is grounded.* [465]

In this statement we see Reid's complete rejection of a middle-man as no more than an imagined similitude. Once perception is freed from the middle-man of idea, it is also freed from the concept of contiguity (conjoining). For Reid, perceptions require no mediation, or middle-man, of ideas. Perception, for him is direct, and the world perceived is the real external world composed of material things. How perception actually occurs is to Reid, inexplicable, simply outside the power of human understanding. Perception of the external world is a first principle, and like all first principles, can never be proven, nor explained.

The Demise Of Human Identity And Hume's Theory Of Causality

Reid, as we earlier noted, gave Berkeley some credit for at least trying to defend the self mind and spirit. But no such concession is given to Hume. Reid observes:

> *Mr HUME, adopts the theory of ideas in its full extent; and in consequence shews [sic] that there is neither matter nor mind in the universe; nothing but impressions and ideas. What we call a* ***bod****y is only a bundle of sensations, and what we call the* ***mind*** *is only a bundle of thoughts, passions, and emotions, without any subject.*[466]

Reid well recognizes the implications of Hume's theory of impressions and ideas for the human self. He observed that it *does not even leave* Hume a *self to claim* the *property of his* own impressions and *ideas.*[467] Neither Hume or anyone else is left with a human self. Reid viewed this not only as the annihilation of the human self, but also as a complete determinism in which every act is no more than the act of a stimulus *response* mechanism or machine. There is no real acting subject.

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[465] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

The doctrine of Hume that most implied the annihilation of the human self was Hume's doctrine of causality. Reid recognizes this fact. What follows is Reid's understanding of Hume's causality. It is an understanding of Hume's causality from his Treatise more or less identical with what we related of Hume's theory of causality, from Hume's Enquiry, in Chapter Five. Reid also noted Locke's influence upon it.

> *Mr Hume adopts Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, and from the principle infers, that we have no idea of substance corporeal or spiritual, no idea of power, no other idea of cause, but that it is something antecedent, and constantly conjoined to that which we call its effect; and, in a word, that we can have no idea of anything but our sensations, and the operations of mind we are conscious of.*
>
> *This author leaves no power to the mind in framing its ideas and impressions, and no wonder, since he holds that we have no idea of power, and the mind is nothing but that succession of impressions and ideas of which we are intimately conscious.*
>
> *He thinks, therefore, that our impressions arise from unknown causes, and that the impressions are the causes of their corresponding ideas. By this he means no more but that they always go before the ideas, for this is all that is necessary to constitute the relation of cause and effect.*[468]

For Reid, a theory of knowledge of the self and causality that, by implication, excludes God and annihilates the human mind and heart could scarcely have a rival in evil. Reid understood, that at best, in Hume's epistemology, God, humanity, and even cause and effect itself[469] could be no more than an impression, sentiment or idea. All human beings are is a bundle of impressions which provide for us the false illusion that we are capable of performing actions, whether useful, good, or evil. So if Hume were correct, Reid understood that humanity neither does or thinks anything. We are no more than a product of impressions and ideas which arise from *unknown causes* [470]

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[466] *Ibid.*, p. 162.
[467] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[468] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[469] Reid refers to Hume's theory as an inference itself. In so doing Reid is launching a somewhat disguised attack on Hume. For if Hume's whole theory accords with his own definition of inference, then Hume's theory, by implication, explains nothing. For then his theory of cause and effect is no more than inference. This was no accidental reference to inference on Reid's part.
[470] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Reid considered all these findings of Hume as utterly contrary to common sense, an encroachment, a denial of what every man experiences as real. Thus Reid remarked in his *Inquiry.*

> *In this unequal contest betwixt common sense and philosophy, the latter will always come of both with dishonour [sic} and loss; nor can she ever thrive till this rivalship [sic] is dropped, these encroachments given up, and a cordial friendship restored.* [471]

Reid adds to this claim, his warning that common sense has no need of Philosophy. Rather, Philosophy is rooted in common sense. *When severed from its roots, as in the theory of ideas, its honours [sic] wither, its sap is dried up, it dies and rots.*[472] Thus for Reid, the rise of the theory of ideas, was the rise of the era of dry rot, a great evil, a time where God, humanity and science were all stripped of honour. In Hume, the rot was greatest, so too the scope of the dishonour.

Language, Common Sense, And The Theory of Ideas

One of the most interesting thing in Reid are found in his rather different way of attacking the theory of ideas, by means of his philosophy of language. But in so doing, he does not imagine that his arguments, in this case, are logical as much as intuitive. What he intends them to do, Reid well articulates in this following statement from the *Inquiry.* Here *Reid* was making a second point with regard to first principles.

> *Secondly we may observe that opinions which contradict first principles are distinguished from other errors by this: they are not only false, but absurd. And to discountenance absurdity, nature has given us a particular emotion, to wit, that of ridicule, which seem intended for this very purpose of putting out of countenance what is absurd, either in opinion or in practice. This weapon, when properly applied,*

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[471]Thomas Reid, The *Inquiry,* ibid., p. 13.
[472] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

> *cuts with as keen an edge as argument. Nature has furnished us with the first to expose absurdities, as with the last to refute error.*[473]

Therefore in the language attacks Reid launches, we will see him using the force of forms of mild ridicule which arise out of First Principles. His hope is that we, the *readers* will intuitively see the absurdity and falsity of the theory of ideas, as illustrated in the very kind of language statements it makes or implies. But before we have Reid illustrate this, a few statements about Reid's understanding of language might prove helpful.

> *The structure of all languages is grounded upon common notions which* ***Mr. HUME'S*** *philosophy opposes, and endeavours [sic] to overturn. This no doubt led him to warp the common language into a conformity with his principles, but we ought not to imitate him in this, until we are satisfied that his principles are built on a solid foundation.*[474]

Reid's statement makes two things clear. First Reid believes that language, by the very understanding of reality it conveys, houses within its structures first principles that have stood the test of time, thus making possible all the understanding first principles sustain. Second, that should the day come that Hume is proven right, then Reid is aware that language itself must change in order to correspond to reality. But, since, in Reid's view, Hume had not been proven right at all, he is convinced that those very first principles language points to will have sufficient intuitive power to show the absurdity of Hume's theory, and the theory of ideas in general. With this in mind, we are now ready to sample the kind of language attacks Reid makes against Hume and the theory of ideas in general.

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[473] *Ibid.*, p. 462. Of course Reid sees ridicule as useful not only with respect to language arguments with their underlying first principles, but for defending first principles in general by exposing absurdities.
[474] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

a. So Much With So Little

The overarching criticism Reid launches at Hume through his language attacks target's Hume's attempt to try to do so much with so little. Reid observes that if Hume's terms of explanation are inserted into language, many absurdities will follow and great abuse will be heaped upon the nature of language itself. For Reid takes full note that Hume is actually seeking to explain the entirety of human behaviour by means of terms Reid judges are inadequate to the task. For Hume seeks to explain all human experience by the terms, impression, sentiment, and idea. For him, all three of these represent different kinds of perception, and nothing else.

b. Perception

In Hume, we learn, Reid remarks, that our passions and emotions are perceptions.[475] I believe, Reid declares: *that no English writer before him [Hume] ever gave the name of a perception to any passions or emotions.*[476] Reid relates some of the absurdities that arise. Suddenly we have the *perception of anger*, of memory. We might as well, Reid continues, speak of *the hearing of sight* or the *smelling of touch. For surely, hearing is not more different than sight, or smelling from the touch, than perceiving is from remembering or imagining.* Other absurdities that arise are the *perception of anger*, or of *memory*.[477]

[475] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[476] *Ibid.*
[477] *Ibid.*

c. *Impression*

Reid thinks that when we love, hate, or will there must be an object of that love, hate, or will. He takes a simple example, love of country. Reid is aware that Hume calls love of country an impression. In respect to this claim Reid made the following comments.

> This says **Mr. HUME** is an *impression. But what is the impression? Is it my country, or is it the affection I bear to it? I ask the philosopher this question; but I find no answer to it. And when I read on all that has been written on this subject, I find this word impression sometimes used to signify an operation of the mind, sometimes the object of the operation; but for the most part it is a vague indetermined [sic] word that signifies both.*[478]

Reid questions the very suitability of the term impression. He suggests that to give the name of an impression to any effect produced in the mind is to suppose that the mind does not act at all in the production of that effect. So if seeing, *hearing, desiring, willing, be operations of the mind, they cannot be impressions.* If they be impressions, Reid continues, *they cannot be operations of the mind.*[479] In the structure of all languages, Reid concludes, seeing*, hearing and desiring are considered as acts or operations of the mind itself, and the names given them imply this.* To call them impressions, Reid argues, is therefore*, to trespass against the structure, not of a particular language only, but all languages.*[480]

d. Consciousness

Hume uses the term consciousness to refer to the idea, but not the reality, of the present, past and future. In this, Reid sees a distinct abuse of language. Consciousness, he argues, refers only to things present that we are conscious of. To apply consciousness to things past

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[478] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[479] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[480] *Ibid.*

is to confuse consciousness with memory. Such confusion of words, Reid states, ought *to be avoided in philosophical discourse.*[481]

It is likewise to be observed, Reid continues, that consciousness is only of things in the mind, and not of external things. It is improper to say I am conscious of the table before me rather than I perceive the table before me.[482] Now of course there is a sense in which being conscious of something can be used legitimately, as when we cannot actually see something with our eyes, yet we are conscious someone is in the room. But here Reid is saying that this term cannot be rightly used for direct perception. I perceive a table, I do not consciousness a table. Reid explains:

> *That consciousness by which we have a knowledge of the operations of the mind, is a different power from that by which we perceive external objects, and as these different powers have different names in our language, and I believe in all languages, a Philosopher ought carefully to preserve this distinction, and never to confound things so different in nature.* [483]

e. *Accountability*

Reid held that the kind of abuses of language perpetrated by Hume in particular, as well as other adherents such as Locke, exhibited an unprecedented transgression not only of common sense, but of academic privilege.

> *Disputes about words belong rather to Grammarians that to Philosophers; but Philosophers ought not to escape censure when they corrupt a language, by using words in a way which the purity of the language will not admit.*[484] *I find fault with Mr. HUME'S phraseology in the words I have quoted, First because he gives the name of perceptions to every operation of the mind. Love is a perception, hatred a perception. Desire is a perception, will is a perception; and by the same rule, a*

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[481] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[482] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[483] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[484] With his use of the term purity, Reid would likely find himself in difficulty with contemporary experts in Language study. The idea of purity in language hardly fits with what is now known of language morphology and semantics.

doubt, a question, a command, is a perception. This is an intolerable abuse of language, which no Philosopher has authority to introduce.[485]

Science and Verification

We now leave Reid's philosophical attacks on the theory of ideas, and on Hume in particular and turn to his scientific critique. Reid was acutely aware of Newton's methodology for verification of facts, and tended to follow it with great fidelity.[486] With respect to Hume's theory of impressions, we saw him earlier point out even Hume's inability to explain just what perception involves. He asked Hume to explain how impressions make themselves become hearing, memory, belief, the idea of will, and all the varied emotions.[487] If Hume cannot explain the mechanics of how such transitions occur, then, Reid asks, how it is possible for a true scientist to credit his explanation?[488] The widespread acceptance of the theory of ideas did not seem to impress Reid in the least.

Reid is not content to accept unanimity, if unanimity is grounded in tradition, and in a fragile authority, and if there is no sound means of verification, such that it shows itself worthy to usurp the place of first principles. Nor should it be thought that Reid was devoid of his own scientific accomplishments. Daniel, in his study of Reid's theory of vision, calls Reid a scientific genius, arguing that Reid discovered non-Euclidean geometry long before it was ever taken seriously by the scientific community. While space does to permit us to

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[485] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[486] *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 261, 456, 457, 51-52, 78-79, 121.
[487] *Ibid.,* pp. 283-285, 227-228, 478-480.
[488] *Ibid.*

detail Reid's finding, if Daniel's is correct, it tells us something about Reid's epistemology. Non-Euclidean geometry requires that a true living subject with active powers of the mind is necessary to all true perception. It is clear in any case that Reid holds that human beings have an active power of the mind that makes decisions, sees thinks, and reflects. If Reid is correct, then idealism of the sort expressed by empiricists who deny the existence of a thinker with a mind and a will must fall. But so must the theory of innate ideas that require no experience. For Reid also held that the inner powers of the man must experience the world of sense before they can function. There is a required alliance between the inner powers of man and the external world. In some respects Reid's theory of perception squares with that of Noam Chomski. Hilary Putnam, in the forward to Daniel's work explains:

> *Reid's argument against identifying what we perceive with the images on our retina is an earlier version of what is today Chomsky's argument against Quine's notion of stimulus meaning. Quine today assumes that what a subject perceives can be read off in some way from the stimulations [sic] of his surface nerve endings- in the case of vision, this would be just from retinal images-whereas Chomsky, like Reid argues that conceptualisation plays such a large part in perception that there is no hope of determining what a person sees simply from what is on his retina or nerve ending.*[489]

In some respects, Reid's theory of perception anticipates Kant. For both thinkers require that perception is a synthesis of innate powers within the self that yet require aposteriori experience to acquire perception. But unlike Kant Reid has no middleman of ideas. His theory of perception allows for a direct perception of the external world in which the external world is held intact and seen to actually be the way it appears to be in common perception. Reid believed that in the end the common perception of man would triumph over the elite eccentricities of philosophers such as Hume.

> *It is no wonder that sensible men should be disgusted at philosophy, when such wild and shocking paradoxes pass under its name. However, as these paradoxes*

[489] Norman Daniels, ibid., p. vi.

> *have, with great acuteness and ingenuity been deduced by just reasoning from the theory of ideas, they must at last bring this advantage, that positions so shocking to the common sense of mankind, and so contrary to the decisions of all our intellectual powers, will open men's eyes to the decisions of all our intellectual powers, will open men's eyes, and break the force of the prejudice which hath held them entangled in that theory*.[490]

While empiricism is still far from dead, Reid's prediction, as earlier noted, was essentially correct. The Old Idealism of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume fell from its unquestioned throne after World War 1.[491] It is not hard to imagine that the horrors and evils of World War One did much to discredit this fashionable theory of ideas. How could all the death and slaughter of the war be referred to, as the philosophic fashion had thus far required, as a war and a world of mere *impression and appearance*. The seeming absurdity of such a requirement was no doubt sufficient to cause many a thinker to sever their former ties with the enlightenment theory of ideas. Like Reid himself, such thinkers began to view its rejection of the external world as a formidable evil.

[490] Thomas Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Ibid., p. 187.
[491] Norman Daniels, Ibid., p. ii.

SECTION IV: TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

Chapter 7: Immanence, Transcendence And Evil In Kant And Ricoeur

Any given theory of knowledge and consequent worldview must either reject a transcendent realm altogether, or find a way to mediate between it and the world we actually see, observe, hear, touch and feel with our five senses. In the first chapter we noted that in Plato's Timaeus mediation was possible between the transcendent world of intelligible forms and the copy world. This was because the eternal world was immanent in the fashioned, and therefore, temporal world. This implantation of the eternal took at least three forms: divine reason in the head of man, intelligible forms in the temporal world, and forms of motion in matter that were flawless, yet mixed in with forms of motion that created evil. Not only did this allow for a mediation between the transcendent eternal world and the temporal, but for a contrast between the eternal world and the temporal world.[492] The unruly forms of matter in the temporal world allowed for evil to be viewed as real, as concrete, and as the very antithesis of reason, intelligible forms, and right forms of matter in motion. Therefore Plato's theory allowed for real mediation and for evil to be viewed as something concrete. The overcoming of evil therefore became a matter of practical concern.

In the present chapter we have selected two renowned philosophers, Immanuel Kant and Paul Ricoeur. Kant will be our first focus, and in particular his famous Critique of Pure Reason. Then we shall turn to Ricoeur's work entitled The Symbolism of Evil. Like Plato before them, that which is central to both works is a theory of knowledge and a worldview

that seeks to understand and mediate between the transcendent and contingent world. Both works share at least five things in common with the Timaeus. First, like the Timaeus, they claim that transcendent processes are immanent and integrated into our mortal minds. Second, Both argue that transcendent processes are immanent in humanity. Third, both painstakingly articulate the tension between the transcendent and the contingent and thereby vivify the reality and pervasive presence of evil in the world and in human consciousness. Both attempt, like the Timaeus, to mediate between the contingent and the transcendent in an intensely practical way. Five, both sustain the hope, that because the transcendent is immanent in, and at work in human consciousness, evil will first diminish and then end at least for the individual. Here they differ a little from the Timaeus which can only hope for souls to be free from evil, not for evil to end entirely.[493]

Kant's Critique Of Pure Reason, An Attempt At Mediation And A Practical Approach To Knowledge And To Evil

Ever since Descartes claimed that reason could prove the certainty of the human self, of God and the perfection of God, he found himself facing stiff opposition. His opponents claimed that Descartes had given reason a place of authority it neither deserved nor could maintain. Therefore in Kant, as in Hume before him, we encounter a prolonged and devastating critique of reason. Neither, thinker allowed reason any access to God or the self through direct knowledge or by any process of direct or even indirect verification. Not only

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[492] See Chapter One on Plato's Timaeus.
[493] See Chapter One on the recalcitrance of matter.

could reason not access the self or God, it could not access reality either.[494] Descartes' arguments for the existence not only of the self, but of God, were dismissed.[495] Hume, for his part, stripped reason of causality leaving it unable to account for or verify anything. In place of reason, he set inference and a world of appearance.[496]

But Kant, despite the limitations he places upon reason, does give it a real existence, place and function. While it cannot verify either God or the reality of the human self, it belongs to a synthetic causal world. In this synthetic world true science, a *re-defined* objectivity is possible. This is the case even though all proposition based knowledge is synthetic, and therefore renders forth a world of appearances only.[497] But in this empirical world of appearances, reason functions well. It is well able to expand human knowledge through the medium of science and empirical investigation.[498]

In Kant, the machine world of Newtonian Science was confidently accepted.[499] But Kant judged that in such a mechanistic external world, there could no place for choice if that world was in fact the world as it really is, not as framed by human consciousness.[500]

Kant judged that this would make man a mere mechanism, and that the whole realm of choice and freedom, so precious to Kant, would have to give place. For this reason, among others, Kant claimed that the world of experience is only a world of appearance. Indeed the world of objects as we perceive them is not what it seems, an external world outside our minds. Rather, the object world is created by the human mind. A fusion takes

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[494] Immanuel Kant, *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), p. 22.*
[495] *Ibid., pp.* 332, 337, 378, 507, 495-524, 595, 625, 638.
[496] See Chapters V and V1.
[497] See Kant in Chapter One on appearances.
[498] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.
[499] *Ibid.*, p. 25 n.
[500] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

place between those realms of the mind a priori (prior to experience) and those aposteriori (within human experience).

But let us examine Kant's own rendering.

> *Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to expand our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them* ***apriori****, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the task of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge*[501]

The world of appearances we observe was therefore for Kant not the real world, only the world as human consciousness framed it. For this reason, Kant said that man can never know the thing in itself.[502] But because the world of appearances is perpetually the product of a fusion between the apriori and aposteriori in human consciousness, man is free. For the apriori realm of the mind is unconditioned, and prior to the conditioned or contingent realms of human consciousness, whether we have in mind individuals or collective humanity.[503] This apriori realm was for Kant a transcendent realm of freedom, and is in fact the true director and synthesiser of all contingent forms of perception and intuition. Because it is prior to experience, it partakes of the transcendent, and therefore of freedom. Man is thus a free agent, able to make real choices and exercise real freedom. But for Kant this would not be possible, if the world of objects was not a synthesis of the conditioned and the unconditioned, of the transcendent and the temporal, of a dimension of man prior to experience made immanent in human experience.[504] The object world, the world of knowing, Kant therefore called synthetic knowledge.[505] Without this synthesis, Kant

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[501] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[502] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[503] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.
[504] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31.
[505] *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 76, 80, 85, 237-238, 243.

reasoned that the external world and man himself could only be contingent, part of a mechanistic causation admitting of no freedom.

Transcendence, Contingency, Morality And Duty

With Kant's synthesis of the transcendent and the contingent, not only freedom was protected, but a rational was provided for morality and duty. For the world of contingent experiences could then be propelled and directed as it were by the transcendent realm of human consciousness. From this transcendent realm, Kant argued, our sense of duty and morality has its origin. For from that transcendent realm comes a species of reason quite distinct from the speculative form of reason that is concerned with prepositional statements and with what can be known in the world of appearances. This transcendental form of reason is not concerned with knowing about the world of objects, the world of appearances, but with changing man himself for the better,[506] morally and ethically.

Kant calls this form of reason, *Pure Reason*, as opposed to speculative reason. Kant argued that whenever speculative reason tries to arrive at the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, it yields nothing but contradictions.[507] It simply cannot operate in this realm. But pure reason can. However Kant does say that the speculative realm of reason still partakes of freedom, even though the popular model of a mechanistic universe itself, allowed of no freedom whatever. There is therefore a practical dimension even to speculative reason. For what Kant meant by *practical* was *everything that is possible through freedom.*[508]

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[506] *Ibid.*, pp. 632-636.
[507] *Ibid.*, pp. 605-610.
[508] *Ibid.*, p. 634, 636.

But Kant claimed that speculative reason is useless in the moral realm. It has no power to verify either freedom itself, the immortality of the soul, or the existence of God. Nor can this realm yield forth laws that are pure, determinant and completely apriori. Only pure reason can do this. With respect to the laws derived from pure reason, Kant remarked:

> *Laws of this latter type, pure practical laws, whose end is given through reason completely a priori, and which are prescribed to us not in an empirically conditioned, but in an absolute manner, would be products of pure reason; and these alone, therefore, belong to the practical employment of reason, and allow of a canon.*[509]

But it must not be thought that Kant is saying that pure reason involves any kind of intuitive *knowing,* as is the case with speculative reason. Pure reason, Kant explains, is concerned with *freedom, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God,* not as seeking to verify them, but rather to set them all in action.[510] They refer us to what we ought to *do if the will is free,* if *there is a God,* and if there is *a future world*.[511] As this concerns our attitude to the supreme end, Kant declares: *it is evident that the ultimate intention of nature in her wise provision for us has indeed, in the constitution of our reason, been directed to moral interests alone.*[512]

It is this transcendent form of reason, this pure reason then, that ultimately directs the phenomenal world of experience in which we live and move and employ speculative reason with its limitations. Kant sees the human will itself fused to this transcendent pure reason. He sees our will not as one composed of empirical animal impulses,[513] but as one determined

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[509] *Ibid.*, p. 632.
[510] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[511] *Ibid.*, p. 632.
[512] *Ibid.*, pp. 632-633.
[513] *Ibid.*, p. 633.

independently of sensuous impulse. Its motive form comes from pure reason and is therefore free and therefore practical as well.[514] This leads Kant to conclude the following.

> *Reason therefore provides laws which are imperatives, that is, objective laws of freedom, which tell us what ought to happen-although perhaps it never does happen-therein differing from laws of nature, which relate only to* ***that which happens****. These laws are therefore to be entitled practical laws.*[515]

The Two Questions and Pure Reason

Kant said that Pure Reason creates a canon of conduct, and that in such a canon we have to deal with only two questions. One, is there a God, two, is there a future life. Now it should be understood that Kant is not saying that pure reason proved the existence of freedom, the immortality of the soul, or the existence of God. It simply functions as if all three were real. Kant asserts that the truth or falsity of such questions belongs to speculative knowledge, but that when one is dealing with the practical realm of pure reason, such *speculative reasoning can be left aside.*[516] In Chapter Three of his critique, Kant argued that speculative knowledge cannot supply an answer to the reality of freedom, immortality of the soul, or the existence of God.[517] Nor did Kant think it could deal with the part of man that asks what it *ought* to do, or what it may hope.[518]

But Kant explains that even though the ought in man comes within the scope of pure reason, it is still not transcendental, only moral, and cannot therefore be a proper subject for his Critique of Pure Reason. [519] Why he says that something can be moral, but not transcendental, he soon made clear. For Kant then posed a third question which he combined with the *ought*, he just finished excluding from transcendence. He phrases the

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[514] *Ibid.*, p. 633.
[515] *Ibid.*, p. 634.
[516] *Ibid.*, p. 634.
[517] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[518] *Ibid.*, p. 633.

third question in the following way. *If I do what I ought to do, what may I then hope?* [520] He then begins to discuss it and treat of it in some detail. We may therefore assume that this third question, unlike the second, has a transcendental dimension, and is therefore a proper subject for his critique.

Kant suggests that the practical dimension of this question leads to the theoretical, and the theoretical to the speculative. Kant therefore concludes:

> *For all **hoping** is directed to happiness, and stands in the same relation to the practical and the law of morality as **knowing and the law of nature** to the theoretical knowledge of things.*[521]

The Practical laws derived from the motive of happiness, Kant termed pragmatic (rule of prudence). But Kant said, it is *moral laws*, that tell us how we must behave in order to deserve happiness. Practical laws must take empirical situations into account, for only by means of experience can one know which desires there are which call for satisfaction and what natural causes can satisfy them.[522] But moral laws (which have a practicality of their own) take no account of desires and the natural means of satisfying them. These latter laws take no account of experience and *can therefore be based on mere ideas of pure reason, and can be known a priori.*[523]

The Future and Pure Reason

Kant cautions that a totally moral world is at present only a mere idea, albeit a practical idea, (practical as having to do with every freedom) a goal, a hope, but this, in itself,

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[519] *Ibid.*, p. 635-636.
[520] *Ibid.,* p. 636.
[521] *Ibid.*, p. 636.
[522] *Ibid.*
[523] *Ibid.*

entitles us to call this a moral world.[524] For this reason, Kant argues that in their practical meaning, thereby their moral employment, the principles of pure reason have objective reality.[525] This moral world seeks to bring the actual world into conformity with itself. This is what makes the moral world an objective reality, the goal which it is seeking. Kant puts it this way.

> *The idea of a moral world has, therefore, objective reality, not as referring to an object of an intelligible intuition (we are quite unable to think any such object) but as referring to the sensible world, viewed however, as being an object of pure reason in its practical employment, that is, as a corpus mysticism of the rational beings in it, so far as the free will of each being is, under the moral laws, in complete systematic unity with itself and with the freedom of every other.*[526]

Therefore, Kant understands that universal happiness proceeds from the application of pure reason to duty and morality. But this very same Kant who claims that God is not knowable in a world of objects declares.

> *But such a system of self rewarding morality is only an idea, the carrying out of which rests on the condition that everyone does what he ought, that is, that all the actions of a rational being take place just as if they had proceeded from a supreme will that comprehends itself in itself, or under itself, all private wills.*[527]

But due to human evil and its characteristic disregard for what it ought to do, or should do, Kant concludes:

> *The alleged necessary connection of the hope of happiness with the necessary endeavour to render the self worthy of happiness cannot therefore be known through reason. It can be counted upon only if a* ***Supreme Reason****, that governs according to moral rules, be likewise posited as underlying nature as its cause.*[528]

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[524] *Ibid.*, p. 637.
[525] *Ibid., pp.* 637-638.
[526] *Ibid.*, pp. 637-638.
[527] *Ibid.*, p. 638.
[528] *Ibid.*, pp. 638-639.

Here then, we see that, for Kant, pure reason requires a supreme reasoning intelligence as its object, its guide, and its determiner. But that does not mean that this supreme source of reason is knowable to us. How then shall we proceed, given Kant's theory of knowledge? First Kant posits a supreme good; it is, for him, an intelligence that causes all the happiness in the world, that is the happiness that has morality as its cause. Then Kant says:

> *Now since we are necessarily constrained by reason to represent ourselves as belonging to such a world, while the senses present to us nothing but as world of appearances, we must assume that moral world to be a consequence of our conduct in the world of sense (in which no such connection between worthiness and happiness is exhibited) and therefore to be for us a future world. Thus God and future life are two postulates which, according to the principles of pure reason, are inseparable from the obligation which that same reason imposes upon us.*[529]

Therefore, it should be remembered that with Kant, it is pure reason, not reason tied to the empirical realm, that constrains us to assume a moral world. Kant then offers a reason for the existence of God. His reason is simple. Only a wise and perfect God can accomplish the work of pure reason. Without such wisdom, it could never happen. What Kant has done is to introspectively examine the way pure reason functions, and then posit its only possible fulfilment in an all wise God. Only an all wise God could counter what Kant freely calls human depravity. Kant thus declares:

> *Morality by itself constitutes a system. Happiness, however, does not do so, save in so far as it is distributed in exact proportion to morality. But this is possible only in the intelligible world under a wise Author and Ruler. Such a Ruler, together with life in such a world, which me must regard as a future world, reason finds itself constrained to assume; otherwise it would have to regard moral laws as empty figments of the brain, since without this postulate the necessary consequence which it itself connects with these laws could not follow. Hence also everyone regards the moral laws as* ***commands****; and this the moral laws could not be if they did not connect a priori suitable consequences with their rules, and thus carry with them promises and threats. But this again they could not do, if they did not reside in a*

[529] *Ibid.*, p. 639.

necessary being, as the supreme good, which alone can make such a purposive unity possible.[530]

So, in Kant, a completion of pure reason in a perfect future is a necessary reality, but one that must operate amidst the freedom of human moral choices. We can now understand why Kant said that, by itself, the ought in man is practical, in the scope of pure reason, but not transcendent. It is because even morality itself must be tied to a future hope to be transcendent. Pure reason without a future hope has no operative cause that relates to transcendence, but with it that operative cause relates to the world of appearances, finding its final fulfilment in what the transcendent has reasoned out and determined, despite the obstacles of human freedom, and its accompanying depravity. If in fact, as Kant said, morality in itself, and the practical in itself is not transcendent, then transcendence for Kant must mean that the apriori realm makes itself immanent in the world of objects, and conditions the object world, towards not only the future, but even towards a finality. Therefore, Kant was led to the following reflection.

> *It is necessary that the whole course of our life be subject to moral maxims; but it impossible that this should happen unless reason connects with the moral law, which is a mere idea, an operative cause which determines for such conduct as in accordance with the moral law an outcome, either in this, or another life, that is in exact conformity with out supreme ends. Thus without a God and without a world invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious ideas of morality are indeed objects of approval and admiration, but not springs of purpose and action. For they do not fulfil in its completeness that end which is natural to every rational being and which is determined a priori, and rendered necessary, by that same pure reason.*[531]

So, in the final analysis, Kant insists that God is not knowable through empirical forms of reason, but the very nature and function of pure reason makes him absolutely

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[530] *Ibid.*
[531] *Ibid.*, p. 640.

necessary. All that now remains is to reflect upon Kant's theory of knowledge, especially his theory of pure reason, and note how Kant's view of evil lies ever, just beneath the surface.

Kant And Evil

Outside of Kant's mention of human depravity,[532] there is scarcely a direct mention of evil in the entirety of his famous Critique. But in some works, the very thing which receives no mention is the most pervasive. It should be remembered that Kant undertook the labour of his famous critique in order to preserve metaphysics from Hume's aggressive assault on the very idea. Whether or not Hume believed in God personally, he did not allow any transcendent metaphysics into his theory of knowledge. At the level of empirical verification, evil survived only as an idea bearing no necessary relation to reality. Like Kant himself, Hume, spoke of preserving faith from reason.[533] With respect to reason, both Hume and Kant judged it wise to put reason in its place.[534] Hume did so by giving it no real place, and Kant by assigning speculative reason to the realm of appearances. So as far as empirical knowledge and experience was concerned, Kant rendered evil as a mere appearance. Reason itself fared better. Kant conferred upon it not only causality and freedom, but the power to verify the world of appearances. He thus labelled the world that reason examines, objective in an epistemological sense, despite it being composed only of appearances, not of things as they are in themselves.

But even the reason Kant gives for rejecting the external world relates to his view of evil. For Kant, a real external world not fused with the transcendent, spelled total determinism. It left no place at all for choice or freedom. In his mind, by positing a world of

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[532] *Ibid.*, p. 637.
[533] See Chapter 6
[534] *Ibid,*, p. 29.

appearances, Kant gave both goodness and evil a real place. In reality, Kant saw man as depraved, but not beyond hope.

We will recall in Section Two, Kant interpreted Genesis, and concluded that Genesis aptly portrayed the evil in man, an evil so deep and comprehensive as only to offer hope for a race of men far distant from his own life and time. Yet Kant would rather see a world where choice and therefore evil is present, than a purely mechanistic world where neither good nor evil is possible. Therefore the very structure of Kant's Epistemology with its fusion of immanence and transcendence seeks to conserve the good, and thus by defending the reality of the good, to fend off the evil.

The very concept of ought in man is for Kant an eschatological hope. It is an ought that can only be fulfilled when evil has run its course, and it cannot be fulfilled, unless pure reason itself is guided by a supreme intelligence who has ultimately determined that evil will come to an end. But for Kant pure reason must work its ends through man himself. As we learned in a former chapter, a great evil for Kant would be a form of grace that is given but not deserved.[535] Nothing seems more important to Kant than that man himself, independently of God or anyone else, combats the evil in himself. Yet the very nature of pure reason led him to posit the necessity of a supreme being who can so orchestrate freedom and pure reason through the circumstances and events of human history as to one day bring the finality of evil and usher in a world of total peace and order.

What Does Kant's Theory of Knowledge Imply With Respect to Evil?

In order to preserve choice, Kant posits a world of appearance. In so doing, he still ends up with a world where evil cannot be known to be real. That is, it cannot be

[535] *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

experientially evidenced. For if synthetic knowledge yields only representations, we are in the same dilemma as we were with Locke's unknowable substance, and Hume's world of idea and impression. By implication, Kant, no less than them, renders evil a non-entity. For with Kant what appears to be evil cannot be real evil, precisely because it is only an appearance. Hitler's slaughter of the Jews, Josef Stalin's Purge, and the slaughter of Rwanda, cannot even be regarded as ambiguous evil, only as perceived interactions. For what is an appearance, in Kant's sense, is never the real thing.

The implication of Kant's distinction between analytical and synthetic knowledge renders evil equally innocuous. For Kant says that all propositional statements are synthetic. Well then, everything Kant proposes in his critique is rendered synthetic, even his defence of metaphysics, and of pure reason itself. Kant even turns analytic knowledge into synthetic. For when Kant explains the distinction between analytical reason and synthetic, he can only do so in propositional form, that is, only through making a truth claim. Therefore, the entire critique and Kant's attempt through pure reason to fend against evil, and posit its final end, by implication, and even by logical consistency, is rendered illusory. For Kant's entire Critique is composed of propositional statements and claims as to the nature of reason, and of man's place and destiny in the universe. If all we have is a world of appearances, Kant's eschatological hope for evils final day is as illusory as the Supreme reasoning intelligence he posits. For both the hope and the God that makes the hope possible are subsumed by a synthetic proposition, and confined to a world of appearances, so too, the idea of evil itself.

Paul Ricoeur, Evil and the Coming Kingdom

We noted in Kant a theory of knowledge and a dualistic worldview in which the world of appearances is nevertheless moving towards a finality, an end of evil. Ricoeur observed that in later German idealism, such as in Hegelian and Post-Hegelianism, the perennial theme is eschatological.[536] We noted that Kant's perception of objectivity was related, not to knowledge of the perceived world, but the destiny of that world as directed by a fusion of the apriori and aposteriori in human action and experience.

For the remainder of this chapter we shall take a journey into symbolism and eschatology through the insights and philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. Like Kant, Paul Ricoeur sees in human consciousness an apriori realm, as well as the presence of the transcendent. Ricoeur parallel's Kant's view of transcendence with his own in the following important respect. Expressed in the words of Ricoeur himself:

> *Transcendental deduction in the Kantian sense consists in justifying a concept by showing that it makes possible the construction of a domain of objectivity. Now if I use the symbols of deviation, wandering, and captivity as a detector of reality, if I decipher man on the basis of mythical symbols of chaos, mixture, and fall, in short if I elaborate an empiricism of the servile will under a guidance of mythology of evil existence, then I can say that in return I have* ***deduced*** *–in the Transcendental meaning of the term - the symbolism of human evil. In fact, the symbol, used as a means of detecting and deciphering human reality will have been verified by its power to raise up, to illuminate, to give order to that region of human experience, that region of confession, which were too ready to reduce to error, habit, emotion, passivity, in short, to one or another of the dimensions of finitude that have no need of symbols of evil to open them up and discover them.*[537]

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[536] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 272-273.*
[537] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

Ricoeur holds that the world of symbols opens the door to the apprehension of reality as to the nature and destiny of humanity itself, not only as an individual but collectively. Transcendence and objectivity, as in Kant, is ultimately eschatological. As with Kant, the dimension of freedom is paramount. Ricoeur's term, the *servile will*, refers to man's self imposed bondage.[538] The contradiction between freedom and bondage sets off both and existential and reflective struggle against the evil in the self, manifested in the symbolism of defilement, sin and guilt. This, in turn, triggers the inward struggle and hence the move towards objectivity, an objectivity related to becoming, to eschatology. So in Ricoeur, as in Kant, objective and transcendental refer to the same eschatological movement of existential becoming and finality. Yet, in Ricoeur, unlike in Kant, we do not see the rejection of the external world or the incapacity of human knowledge to detect reality. Ricoeur even says that symbol is a detector or reality and even a means of deciphering it.[539] The extent of its power to detect reality will unfold as we follow Ricoeur's further elaborations of symbol and myth.

We will restrict this venture into Ricoeur to the insights he advances in his work entitled *The Symbolism of Evil*, as it is sufficient for our project. In that work Ricoeur makes abundant use of Hebrew and Greek symbolism. Our primary concern, however, will centre on the use of Symbolism resident in Ricoeur's treatment of what he terms, *The Adamic Myth*. But before we turn to it, we shall first take some note of how symbol relates to Ricoeur's theory of knowledge, and to his worldview of symbol.

How, exactly, does Ricoeur propose to fuse together myth and symbol in such a way as to attain to a transcendental deduction, with its differences and similarities to Kant?

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[538] *Ibid.,* pp. 154-155.
[539] *Ibid.,* pp. 353-355.

Ricoeur answers this in one word, *hermeneutics.* The researcher cannot be without presuppositions. Therefore, Ricoeur says he must utilise his presuppositions in a hermeneutic approach to myth and symbol. For Ricoeur, this contains two poles and a kind of circularity. Ricoeur submits that the study of symbols cannot be that of a disinterested spectator. True exegesis requires the participation, the empathy of the researcher with the symbols he encounters. For the world of symbol is not a tranquil and reconciled world, every symbol is iconoclastic in comparison with some other symbol. [540]

The researcher must be prepared to participate in the dynamics of the tensions in which, in Ricoeur's words, *the symbolism itself becomes a prey to a spontaneous hermeneutics that seeks to transcend it.* It is only then, Ricoeur declares*, that comprehension can reach the strictly critical dimension of exegesis and become a hermeneutic.*[541]

As paradoxical as it would appear, Ricoeur is saying that in the world of symbol, the critical dimension of exegesis can never attain to a hermeneutic, or to understanding, until the role of the disinterested objective spectator is abandoned.[542] In other words to approach symbol and myth with cold objectivity, is to derail any hope of achieving any objective understanding. The encounter with being, and with the realities the journey of symbol bequeaths, requires that the researcher fuse together his presuppositions of belief with his empathy. This is necessary in order to even begin the journey. In order to do away with the posture of the disinterested objective spectator, *one must believe in order to understand.*[543] However, Ricoeur submits, one must also *understand in order to believe*. Such is the

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[540] *Ibid.*, p. 354.
[541] *Ibid.*
[542] *Ibid.*
[543] *Ibid.*

circularity of the hermeneutics the study of symbolism requires if the researcher is ever to experience symbol as that which verifies and deciphers reality.

Now Ricoeur holds that the hermeneutic understanding of the Adamic myth sets forth reality in such a way that all other myths can be appropriated, at least to a certain point.[544] But it is not enough, Ricoeur says, to run around in the *neutrality of a hermeneutic circle*. Indeed the very nature of the hermeneutic circle of believing in order to know, and knowing, in order to believe, tears the philosophical researcher out of neutrality into a wager that transcends the neutrality of a hermeneutic circle.[545] The means of transcendence, Ricoeur explains, is a wager.

> *I wager that I shall have a better understanding of man and of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings if I follow the **indication** of symbolic thought. That wager then becomes the task of **verifying** my wager and saturating it, so to speak with intelligibility. In return, the task transforms my wager: in betting **on** the significance of the symbolic world, I bet at the same time **that** my wager will be restored to me in the power of reflection, in the element of coherent discourse.*[546]

So far then, we see that in the work under discussion, Ricoeur intends to do two things. He intends to objectify the symbolism of evil through a hermeneutic circle, as well as to transcend the hermeneutic circle. He intends to do so by wagering that the interpretation of myth and symbol holds the truest available understanding of man and being itself.

What is clear from all this is Ricoeur rejects a Cartesian view of the world, where the thinker can understand himself and his world apart from engaging the world of external things. For Ricoeur, this engagement with the world of internal and external symbols is essential to any self understanding, as he said very early on in the work under perusal.

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[544] *Ibid.*
[545] *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.
[546] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

> *To manifest the **sacred on** the **'cosmos**" And to manifest it in the **psyche** are the same things. … I express myself in expressing the world; I explore my own sacrality in deciphering that of the world.*[547]

Myth And Symbol In Ricoeur

One further understanding of Ricoeur is necessary before we can begin our trek into his symbol based interpretation of what he calls the Adamic myth. What does Ricoeur mean by myth, and demythologisation and how does it differ from symbol? Ricoeur admits this is not an easy distinction. But Ricoeur understands symbol as primordial at base. The primordial apriori realm fuses with the aposteriori. But along with this action, it possesses analogical [sic] meanings.[548] For example, the symbol of stain or defilement is never purely physical, it always points to something beyond itself. It is therefore *equivocal,* meaning *fertile,* capable of erupting into multiple and rich ranges of symbol and counter symbol. Such analogical [sic] meanings are spontaneously formed and are immediately significant. These symbols are on the same level, for example, as water to threat, and as renewal in the flood and in baptism.[549]

He therefore regards myths as a:

> *…species of symbols, as symbols developed in the form of narrations and articulated in time that cannot be co-ordinated [sic] with the time and space of history and geography according to the critical method. For example, exile is a primary symbol of human alienation, but the history of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise is a mythical narration of the second degree, bringing into play fabulous personages, places, times, and episodes. Exile is a primary symbol and not a myth because it is a historical event made to signify human alienation analogically; [sic but the same alienation creates for itself a fanciful history from Eden, which, as history that happened in illo tempore, is myth.*[550]

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[547] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[548] *Ibid.,* p. 18.
[549] *Ibid.*
[550] *Ibid., p.* 18.

For Ricoeur, myths are not fables, but a traditional narration which relates to events happening at the beginning of times. They are the ground for *ritual actions* now and then, establishing all the forms and actions and thought by which a man understands himself and his world.[551]

But in his Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur is concerned with myth as respects the symbolic function, that is to say, its power of discovering the bond between man and what he considers sacred.[552] Ricoeur explains that when myth is demythologised, it is elevated to the dignity of a symbol in the dimension of modern thought.[553]

For Ricoeur, myth is not history in any scientific sense. Nor should it be viewed as *etiological,* that is as the actual explanation historically speaking.[554] In order to be of service, it must be demythologised.[555] It must not then be thought to apply to reality in any scientific sense. On the other hand myth points the human self understanding to things that are real, that is, *analogical [Ricoeur's term]* to human experience. It is because symbol, and often myth, are analogical that they are productive of new symbols.[556] It is not difficult to relate actual human experience to mythical Hebrew History. But can we make this even more specific? How exactly does Ricoeur view the Hebrew Bible? Ricoeur tells us himself, in no uncertain terms, of his wholehearted agreement with C. H. Dodd, whose view he then quotes.

> *Thus the stories with which the Bible begins may be regarded as adaptations of primitive myths by writers who used them as symbols of truths learned in history. Nominally, they refer to pre-history. In fact, they apply to the principles of divine action revealed in the history of particular people to mankind at all times and all places. They universalise the idea of the word of God which is both judgement and renewal."*[557]

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[551] *Ibid.,* p. 5.
[552] *Ibid.*
[553] *Ibid.*
[554] *Ibid.*
[555] *Ibid.*
[556] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[557] *Ibid.,* p. 115.

The Adamic Myth And Objectivity Eschatologically Speaking

We are now ready to encounter Ricoeur's treatment of, what he calls, the Adamic Myth. Once this journey through symbol, is completed, we shall better understand why Ricoeur claims that Kant and German Idealism are among the most solid adherents of eschatology and how all this relates to the symbolism of evil.[558] Further, we shall more concretely understand some of the central properties Ricoeur attributes to symbol.

Ricoeur illustrates how In Theogonic Myths, such as the Titans in Olympian Myths, the origins of evil are anterior to man, found in the Gods and other cosmogonic forces and entities.[559] But in the Adamic Myth, which he sees as starting in the garden and ending in the collective redemption of the world, we encounter a myth that is strictly anthropological**.** For the Adamic Myth starts with the evil of humanity not the evil of the Gods.[560]

Ricoeur considers that the theory of a fall of Adam and Eve, is, in one sense, foreign to the Genesis account. He submits that when we trace the roots of this myth to the more fundamental symbolism of sin, we shall see that the story is a myth of deviation, or going astray, rather than a myth of the fall.[561] Therefore, he does not call it the myth of the fall, but the Adamic Myth. But with that much understood, he still, with some regularity, refers to the event as a fall.

A Symbolically Charged Promise As The Road to Eschatology

Ricoeur submits that the Adamic Myth is never separate from the reflections of Israel on their real exile after the fall of Jerusalem.[562] He suggests that prophetic reflections led to

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[558] *Ibid.*
[559] *Ibid.*, p. 232.
[560] *Ibid.*
[561] *Ibid.,* p. 233.
[562] *Ibid.*, p. 240-241.

the Adamic Myth and its development. In Adam and Eve humanity defiles itself, and creates its own bondage.[563] But the call to Abraham already sets the stage for pardon and for a way out of this self-inflicted bondage.[564] For Abraham, as the Adamic Myth continues, is called righteous. He is thus pardoned. But more than this, the pardon is implied in the promise to Abraham. But in this act, Ricoeur declares, a history directed by a promise exists and a moving towards fulfillment, even before eschatology.[565] In this promise to Abraham, then to Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, a historical schema is set forth (mythic history not critical history) sufficiently charged with symbolic meaning to support a whole series of symbolic transpositions which step by step could lead to eschatological images and figures.[566]

One of the major players in symbolic transpositions, is time. Ricoeur submits that the wealth of interval between promise and fulfillment, is such that the *end in itself changes its meaning*.[567] He says that the meaning of the promise made to Abraham, **all the nations shall be blessed** had not been exhausted in the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. Ricoeur called this a stalemate. He declared that the experience of this stalemate was to *eschatologize [sic]* the promise in a decisive manner[568]. Israel rose and fell. In that fall, Israel lost its political independence. The eye of hope, Ricoeur submits, became an eye that turned away from the past, from *Urgeschicte* and *saw the meaning of salvation coming from the future toward the present.*[569] From now on, the promise will express its tension through the mythical images of

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[563] *Ibid.,* p. 233-234.
[564] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[565] *Ibid.*
[566] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[567] Ricoeur credits G. *Von Rad for* this insight.
[568] *Ibid.,* p. 263.
[569] *Ibid.*

the end.[570] Those images and the figures in which they will be crystallized will supply the true answer to images and figures of the beginnings of the myth in Adam.[571]

Eschatology, Eschatological Symbols and Judgement

Ricoeur quotes J. Hering's definition of eschatology.

> *… the ensemble of the thoughts that express religious hopes concerning the coming of a world regarded as ideal, that world being habitually presented as one which must be preceded by a Judgement (which implies destruction of the present world or the powers that dominate it)*[572]

In Ricoeur's interpretation, the idea of evil and judgement is inextricably tied to Eschatology. This will be evident as we view Ricoeur's step by step exposition of the Adamic myth, beginning with the eschatological figure of King and Kingdom. But it should be understood that Ricoeur is bringing together into a unity, scattered symbols related in one way or another to eschatology.

The King As Eschatological Symbol

In Ricoeur's estimation, the move from the past idea of promise to true eschatology is obviated in the transposition that takes place in Israel with respect to King and Kingdom. The King and Kingdom of a ritual culture little by little becomes the King and Kingdom to come. This happens, Ricoeur explains, as the eschatological *type* possesses itself more completely of the images deposited by the ritual cultural type of King and Kingdom.[573] Ricoeur

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[570] *Ibid.*
[571] *Ibid.*
[572] *Ibid., p.* 264.
[573] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

observes that the Israelite King still charged with earthly and political hopes begins to be eschatologized in Jeremiah 23:1-8, Ezekiel 34:23, and 37:20 and above all in Isaiah 9:1-6.[574]

In Isaiah, Ricoeur says, the King, the Shepherd, The Son of David is in no wise a mysterious personage coming from heaven**,** like the Son of Man in later eschatology's.[575] Here, in Isaiah, Ricoeur maintains, eschatological dos not mean transcendent, heavenly, but final. The important thing, Ricoeur declares, is that the representation of a *reconciled cosmos,* which accompanies this image of the coming Reign, in no way expresses regret for the loss of a golden age. Rather, Ricoeur says, it conveys the expectation of a perfection, the like of which will not have been seen before.[576]

Servant Of Yahweh As An Eschatological Symbol

While the Messianic King figure is becoming eschatologized, another important figures appears, Servant *of Yahweh.* Ricoeur submits that *Second Isaiah* celebrates the sorrowful servant in four upsetting songs. (42:1-9, 49:1-6, 50:1-11, 52: 13, 53:12). Ricoeur remarks, that, in many of its traits, this theme is original in relation to the ideology of the King. It needs, he says*, a new ear* in order to understand the song of the suffering servant *who gives himself for the remission of sins.*[577] In illustration, he quotes from Isaiah 53. *Surely he hath borne our grief's carrier our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*[578] Ricoeur maintains, in light of this new symbolism of a suffering servant, we can no longer use the *ideology of the King* to understand the *role of disciple,* or

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[574] *Ibid.*, p. 265.
[575] *Ibid.*
[576] *Ibid., p.* 265.
[577] *Ibid.,* p. 266.
[578] *Ibid.*

that of the inspired *sage,* or the *wretched appearance,* the *absolute patience, the non resistance to the wicked of the Ebed* [579]*Yahweh.*[580]

Ricoeur says**,** although it is true that the eschatological symbolism is weak in the servant, yet it is said that this slave of tyrants will restore the survivors of Israel, and be the light of the nations so that salvation may reach to the ends of the earth**.**[581] Further, he judges, it is noteworthy that this canticle speaks, without being able to say who this servant of Yahweh is, or even whether he is a people taken in a body, a remnant, or an exceptional individual.[582] Despite this enigma, Ricoeur submits that we need the symbol of the servant to lead us to the idea of pardon, one who *substitutes* his suffering for our sins- *that pardon may be announced.*[583]

For Ricoeur, pardon does not appear in the servant as a wholly inward change psychological and moral, but as an interpersonal relation to that immolated personality, (whether the servant be individual or collective).[584] This interpersonal relationship rests on the reciprocity of a gift (*in place of, for our sins*) and an acceptance (*we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted*).[585] Further, this alliance supposes that the substitutive suffering is not the simple transfer of defilement to a passive object, such as the scapegoat. Rather, it is the voluntary *gift* of a suffering taken upon himself and offered to others.[586]

Ricoeur then quotes again from Isaiah Fifty Three.

> *Yet it was our sufferings that be bore, our griefs with which he was laden…. Having given his life as a sacrifice for sin, he will see a posterity and prolong his days, and the work of the Eternal will prosper in his hands. Because of the travail of*

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[579] *Ebed* is Hebrew for Servant.
[580] *Ibid.*
[581] *Ibid.*
[582] *Ibid.*
[583] *Ibid.*
[584] *Ibid.*
[585] *Ibid.*
[586] *Ibid., p.* 266-267.

his soul, he will see and be satisfied; through his knowledge my servant will justify many men and he will take their iniquities upon himself. [587]

Ricoeur holds that expiation through the voluntary suffering of another, however mysterious the Ebed Yahweh may be, is an essential key to the idea of pardon. In due time we shall see Ricoeur fuse the *ebed Yahweh* with the eschatological figures to come, such as the *Son of Man.*

Son Of Man As Eschatological Symbol

Ricoeur then turns to what he calls the profoundly other apocalyptic figure, indicated in (Daniel 7:13 and in the extra- canonical apocalypses (Book of Ezra, Ethiopian Book of Enoch). *Figure 1,* This figure of heavenly origin the *Son of Man* represents the saints of The Most High. He comes, Ricoeur says, to assemble the holy people of the end of time and to share his reign with them.[588] This figure, Ricoeur observes, is the most distant from an earthly King. Yet he leads us back to *Man*, to *Anthropos.* In fact he offers that the Son of Man is man, but a man who is coming, not the first man, and yet he is the replica of the first man created in the image of God.[589] Ricoeur describes this figure as drawn towards the most ultimate future through his twofold function of Judge of World and the King to come. The symbols of the first Man, *King, Son of man, the man to come* are now fused with those of *Judge and King* to come.[590] Further, this last judgement in Apocalyptic literature features a man who is not only proclaimed King, but receives the power and glory and Kingship over all nations. Here then, Ricoeur shows the fusion of symbols through the collective component in the figure of the son of man.[591] Ricoeur thus sees the true meaning of present

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[587] *Ibid., p.* 267.
[588] *Ibid.,* p. 267.
[589] *Ibid.*, p. 268.
[590] *Ibid.*
[591] *Ibid.*

humanity is revealed in the light of what lies ahead. The focus is now turned towards the future where a second creation will surpass the first in the very act of completing it.[592] All this fusion was made possible through the *rich and powerful*, and integrating properties of the symbolism resident in the idea of The Son of Man.[593]

The Figure Of Jesus As The Convergence Point

Turning to the New Testament, Ricoeur sees Jesus as the convergence point between the servant of and the son of man, making Jesus both judge and advocate. In the Gospels, Ricoeur remarks, Jesus makes the theology of glory follow the road of the theology of the cross.[594] As to the historical truth of this, Ricoeur calls it a problem for theology not for philosophy. This is because Ricoeur is concerned only with the enrichment of the symbols, not the truth of the claims.[595] But on the other hand, Ricoeur is persuaded that the remoulding of fundamental images in the Synoptic Gospels all converge in Jesus. This allows for a reporting rich in symbol, one drawing to itself a host of other figures, along with the Son of Man. Indeed, the son of man is now fused with the person of Jesus, as is King and suffering Servant.[596] But Ricoeur observes that Jesus comes as one who both pardons and heals. These actions in Jesus signify the *eruption of the new regime into the Old. The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins. (Mark 2:10).* What is yet more striking to Ricoeur is that the power of pardon issues from the eschatological focus constituted by the cosmic judgement.[597]

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[592] *Ibid.*, p. 268-269.
[593] *Ibid.*
[594] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[595] *Ibid.*
[596] *Ibid.*

Man As Eschatological Symbol

Ricoeur submits that the heavenly figure of the son on man, when fused with the idea of suffering servant is precisely Man; even more, the *identity of the one man with men taken in a body.*[598] Thus Ricoeur agrees with the *view of Theo Preiss who Ricoeur says made much of this.*

> *…the identity of the Son of Man and men is the great* ***mystery*** *revealed in the prophecy of the last judgement upon the sheep and the goats; the verdict is based on the attitude of men towards the lowly, who* ***are*** *the Son of Man. Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethern, [sic] you have done it unto me. (Mathew 25:40).* [599]

Ricoeur announces that this mystery is augmented by yet another one. For in the figure of the Son of Man in the Gospels, the Judge becomes also intercessor**;** the substituted victim**.** *The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45).*[600] This, Ricoeur declares, expresses completely the fusion of two figures: the servant of the Eternal and the Son of Man, as well as the relation between a single figure of mankind and the whole of mankind, between one and many.[601] Ricoeur notes, at the same time this fusion introduces a new note of tragedy: How, it is written of the son of Man that he must *suffer many things* and be at nought. (Mark 9:12). The new note of tragedy is that the King is the Victim, must (dei) be the victim. That is the mystery of Jesus.[602]

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[597] *Ibid.*, p. 270.
[598] *Ibid.*
[599] *Ibid.*
[600] *Ibid.,* pp. 270-271.
[601] *Ibid.,* p. 271.
[602] *Ibid.*

The Pauline Figure Of The Second Adam.

Ricoeur is aware that Saint Paul speaks of *a Second Adam,* but never uses the term Son of Man. But Ricoeur reasons that, if Son of man means man, and if Adam also means man, then Paul's Second Adam symbolically consecrates all the preceding figures including the Son of Man.[603] Ricoeur also concludes, that Jesus as the Son of man adds a decisive trait to the figures, first the fusion of the two figures, the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant, as well as the relation between a single figure of man and the whole of mankind, between the one and the many. [604]

He submits that in the new meaning that St. Paul gives to the comparison of the Two Adams, the second Adam is decisive for a retrospective understanding of the whole series of the earlier eschatological figures. This is the case, whether King, Kingdom and Suffering Servant, Son of Man, or Jesus.[605] What particularly interests Ricoeur is the following.

> *… that, in Rom. 5: 12-21 the comparison between the first and second Adam not only establishes a similitude, (**As the fault of one brings condemnation upon all men, so also the justice of one procures for all a justification that gives life, Rom. 5:18)** but the apostle, by means of the similitude, brings to light a progression. **But not as the fault, so also the gift. For if by the fault of one many died, how much more the grace of God and the gift conferred by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ have abounded unto many (5:15).** This **how much more** which overturns the **as … so also**, gives to the movement from the first to the second Adam its tension and temporal impulsion; it excludes the possibility that the **gift** should be a simple restoration of the order that prevailed before the **fault,** the gift is the establishment of a new creation.***[606]***

In transcribing the movement from the *old man to* the *new man* in Adamological [sic] terms, Ricoeur concludes that Saint Paul opened the way to all the ***progressivist*** theologies of

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[603] *Ibid.*
[604] *Ibid.*
[605] *Ibid.*
[606] *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

history. *Even if they go considerably beyond the intentions of the first Christian Theologian*, they are manifestly *prolongations* [sic] of *his how much more, and his, in order that.*[607]

Of course, Ricoeur sees Kant and German Idealism as prime examples of these eschatological prolongations [sic]. In this context Ricoeur is led to declare that the very greatness of the Redeemer is also the greatness of new creation. He therefore sees less error in the interpretation of the myth given by German idealism than in all the dreams of a return to an earthly paradise.[608] He remarked, for example, that Kant understands the fall, free and fated of man, as the painful, but progressive road of the ethical life *that is of an adult character on an adult level*. Therefore, Ricoeur observed that Kant, like Paul, requires a progress in man, a newness which will be authenticated completely only when man and the universe is free of evil. [609] Thus the fall is turned into growth, into progress, and finally into *finality*, the goal of eschatology itself. Ricoeur judges that Kant and German idealism, however knowingly or unknowingly, embraced the fused symbolism of the Adamic myth and its final triumph over evil. They too partake of the meaning of Paul's *How much more*, and *in order that.* Ricoeur is therefore led to the following observation.

> *... Salvation evolves a history; in symbolic terms: the second Adam is* **greater *than*** *the first Adam, the first Adam is* ***with a view*** *to the second Adam. We must go this far in order to understand that the Bible never speaks of sin except in the perspective of salvation that delivers from sin. This pedagogy of the human race makes the pessimism of the fall abound in order that the optimism of Salvation may super-abound.* [610]

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[607] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[608] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[609] *Ibid.*
[610] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Conclusion

We have now examined two renowned thinkers. We have witnessed their way of mediating between the transcendent and the finite. We have thus seen the way in which the transcendent is made both immanent and objective in the Kantian sense, that is eschatological. We have seen their differing epistemologies and worldviews, and yet their similar eschatological hope, an end to evil. Kant sees the end of evil when pure reason at some very distant time accomplishes its ontological mission. Till then the dialectical struggle between good and evil must proceed, but never without freedom of choice.

Ricoeur sees the end of evil through an epistemology of symbol as it fuses with myth and collective human consciousness. He sees humanity itself as fulfilled, and even defined by the Adamic Myth. He embraces a hermeneutic of risk, and of faith. He sees in the scattered symbols of Hebrew History, symbols of pardon, of guilt, of dread, a war with evil, that begins as primordial defilement.[611] For Ricoeur, as with Kant, the transcendent is the apriori, and it fuses with the aposteriori to bring a final end to evil. As Ricoeur was quick to declare, the Adamic myth is the truly anthropological myth, one which attributes the evil in man not to the Gods, but to man himself. It is one in which every collective symbol related to pardon and defilement finds either its solution or its answer in the symbol of man.[612] Yet not man as in the beginning of the myth, but man as the second Adam, where evil finds its abolition in the hope of the Second Adam, a collective humanity to come. For Ricoeur the outward mythical history of symbol, fused with history itself and the apriori that is within man all play their part in defining both humanity and the meaning of human existence. But

[611] For an elaboration of defilement, see Part I, Chapter 1 of Ricoeur's The Symbolism of Evil.
[612] In the work under discussion Ricoeur also speaks of a form of evil and tragedy that leaves a measure of evil existing prior to man. See especially Part II, Chapters I and 2.

every part of the fusion is the immanent and the transcendent which works itself out in human consciousness, human experience, human emotion and human reflection. As Ricoeur earlier said, we must believe in order to understand, and we must understand in order to believe, ultimately to believe, there is an end to evil.

Chapter 8: Theodicy: Delivering God From Evil

The discussion to follow employs only a working definition of theodicy. It does so only because the definition is useful to the discussion to follow and the kind of contrasts it employs, especially with respect to perceptions of evil and omnipotence.[613] In what follows we shall have occasion to use the word canon and canonical literature. While it is true that there are varied interpretations of what constitutes the canon and when it was finished, for the purposes of this discussion we employ canon simply as the normally accepted books in the orthodox Jewish and Protestant Canon. This suffices for our purpose. We will be drawing from scripture texts in both faiths, but this does not mean that contrary strands cannot be found in other parts of either the Jewish or Protestant Canon. The ones we employ are used only for purposes of selected contrasts related to perceptions of evil and of omnipotence. Finally, there is no attempt to appeal to the authority of the canon. This is a purely contrastive study.

Theodicy poses a problem of knowledge and consequently a way of viewing the world. The religious thinker asks: does what we know or do not know about God allow us to trust in God's unlimited love and goodness? Can we still trust or at least hope in God despite the presence of deep rooted and pervasive evil in man and in his environment.

A theodicy, as here understood, must seek to vindicate God from God's accusers, from those who either see a dark side or conclude that the very presence of evil means God has no side at all. That is to say, God simply does not exist. Yet, in this study we shall feature one exception to our working definition in the person of John Roth, as we shall see.

[613] To insist on one's own definition for theodicy would be to commit the definitional fallacy.

Theodicies, Evil And Omnipotence

Every theodicy supposes some kind of knowledge of God, and of evil. Our working definition of a theodicy holds out the hope that there is a way to show that a God of limitless goodness, love and power can still be real, despite the existence of evil in people and in nature. In what remains of this chapter we shall perform a comparative analysis. We will allow some prominent traditions in the canonical writings of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to react against and evaluate three contemporary theodicies, with respect to the perception of evil and omnipotence advanced in each of them in turn.

This seems fair inasmuch as the great majority of theodicies are seeking to defend either the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament perceptions of God and evil. Now the canonical writers are not here with us, but their perceptions and beliefs are. All we shall be doing is to give voice once again to some pervasive strands of their thoughts and beliefs as we encounter contemporary perceptions of good and evil in the theodicies about to be treated.

It is hoped that such an approach will lead to further reflection on our part with respect to popular premises and conclusions used either to protect or attack theodicies in general. There is a bit of an irony here, because all three authors of the theodicies about to be discussed are confident, that at least in some respects they are assisting the view of God expressed in the canonical literature as well as the perception of evil and omnipotence contained within its pages. In many respects it may turn out that they are, but if they were doing so in all respects, this discussion would have no point or contribution to make.

Though only three theodicies will be sketched, the perceptions of evil and of omnipotence in each are largely paradigmatic of theodicies in general. This is not to say however, that the form of the theodicies themselves are typical.

As we employ the literature of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in the manner explained, we should ever be mindful that both of these canons express ancient experiences and perceptions of God. To many philosophical and theological thinkers of today, these understanding often appear foolish and against normal human experience. But writers such as Paul The Apostle would no doubt reply: This is as it should be, for *the foolishness of God is wiser than man*, and the *wisdom of men is foolishness* in the sight of God (I Corinthians1:18-21).

The writers of the canon seem to have one thing on their side. If God always reasons and does things just as we expect, how then do God's reason and approaches to the world transcend our own? What good is a god of this sort who can take us no further than human reason and offer no different solutions? In the canonical writings, we hear testimony time again that the ways of God are infinitely higher and wiser than the ways of human beings.

A Theodicy And Eschatology Defending All The Attributes Of God

John Hick presents a theodicy of a God unlimited in power, love, knowledge and wisdom who is also limitless good.[614] He rejects the Augustinian model of human free choice, and consequent fall, for one fashioned after the Patristic Father, Irenaeus.[615] The key

[614] *Encountering Evil,* edited by Steven T. Davis, (Atlanta: Georgia, John Knox Press, 1981), p. 40.
[615] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

feature of Irenaeus that attracts Hick is the two stage process in human history. The first involves *man in the image of God*, followed by the second stage, *man in the likeness*. Hick revises Irenaeus' meaning of the image and likeness and uses it as a model for two stages in the evolutionary progress of the human race. He knows that Irenaeus never intended his two stage process to take the form of a theodicy, but Hick, nevertheless, fashions it into one.[616]

Hick supposes that the idea of a fall from grace, involving a banishment by God enforced my angels, is highly implausible to the modern world. Much more attractive to the scientific mind of today is the model of a God unlimited in power, knowledge and love, who first creates lower forms of life.[617] This is the image of God stage. Next, God uses this evolutionary milieu to start the second and culminating stage, *man in the likeness of God.* It is at the end of this advanced stage that evil is finally extinguished and humanity perfected.[618]

Hick's Theodicy is of considerable interest and manifests a large measure of ingenuity. His eschatology is comparable in many ways to that of Kant. For Kant, (already discussed in Chapters One, Three, and Seven) sees the perfectibility of humanity occurring in a long distant future where the recalcitrant pervasive evil in the human frame is finally put to rest in some perfected future alliance of humanity. Both Hick and Kant see the final state unfolding very gradually, as humanity grapples with nature and its own passions.[619] Hick, like Kant, sees all this occurring through human freedom.[620] But where Kant considers it a kind of outright sacrilege for God to even assist humanity in its quest to overcome evil, Hick sees God using evolution as a kind of sanctification process.[621] Every range of human

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[616] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
[617] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
[618] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42, 52.
[619] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
[620] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42. 52.
[621] *Ibid.*

experience through time and history is orchestrated by this God of unlimited power and love, but without sacrificing human freedom.

In some respects both eschatology's resemble Plato's Timaeus where the divine craftsman takes a raw mixture of good and evil matter and forms it into man and woman. The Gods of the Stars are then put in charge and directed to add contradictory passions of love and selfishness to the mix. Despite the clear differences between Plato, Kant and Hick, all three believe in the necessity of the dialectical struggle in the inward person. People must struggle with their own passions, as well as the raw forces of nature in order to finally emerge triumphant over evil.

But unlike Kant and Hick, the Timaeus offers no final eschatology, only a recurring struggle in which each individual soul will finally escape from the cycle of death and rebirth and go to live with the Gods. But from the standpoint of canonical literature, what commends all three thinkers is their recognition that evil is not easily conquered. Only a very long and complex historic struggle will spell its end in the human heart. But in Kant, there seems no hope for the individual who perishes before or after that great day. For such individuals there is not only no taste of this wondrous future, but no hint of an afterlife. Now if it be true that God has not promised the human race a continuing existence, he can choose to extinguish it without any participation in evil, just as we humans feel no sense of evil when we dispose of food or eat meat. So Kant may have succeeded in absolving God, but little solace is found for us. Individual men and woman who live before this state of *Kantian* perfection seem truly expendable, part of a process that is far more important than they are.

In Hick's theodicy, however, God's promises of eternal life are kept intact for every human being who leaves this earth. Hick argues that though God is limitless good and does not do evil himself, God is still responsible by virtue of having created people and the

universe in the first place. Therefore, Hick reasons, God will not allow any human soul to perish. So, in Hick, we see a theodicy in which human life is preserved forever. But more than this, Hick believes that no one now or in the future will ever reach perfection in this life. *He says* instead, *that an Iraenean theology presupposes some form of bodily death, and further living and growing towards that end state* in other lives yet to be lived[622] He then concludes: *Without such an eschatological fulfilment this theodicy would collapse.*[623] This of course is markedly different from Kant's eschatology where hope is restricted to some future generation on this earth.

In Hick we also find a large measure of traditional Christian strands with respect to the process of sanctification. James, for examples encourages the church by saying, count it not sorrow when testing and trials come upon you, for such are for the strengthening of your faith that you may grow into the mature believer in Christ. (James 1:12-13). Evolution, for Hick, is a kind of refiners fire, much as the Holy Spirit in traditional theology refines the believer (I Peter 2:5, I Corinthians 2:14, John 17:19, Romans 15:16). Not only the character of humanity is transformed in Hick's model, but culture and civilisation as well. Great art, great music, advanced culture and civilisation are, for him, the harvest of the evolutionary struggle.[624]

While in the Christianity of the first century, no evolutionary theory was involved in sanctification, it is clear even in scripture, that God used the external environment and its circumstances to test and refine his people. Nor is this idea of testing confined to the New Testament. Time and again God tells how God will test and refine his people, put them through the fire, as it were. In the Hebrew Bible, testing very frequently refers to a refining

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[622] *Ibid.,* p. 51.
[623] *Ibid.*
[624] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

process, such as the testing of metal. (Exodus 16:14, Deuteronomy 8:2, Jeremiah 9:7, Zechariah 13:9)

Some might argue that Hick's God is weak because he works through a long process of history and time to accommodate human freedom. But, one can also argue that a God who can accomplish ultimate purposes, while never interfering with human choice, is far mightier than one who uses moral coercion, or rules out choice altogether. To a large degree Hick creates a very plausible defence of God, while preserving, in large measure, all the traditional attributes of God, omnipresent, all wise, all knowing, all powerful, all loving, all good.

But despite the overall impressiveness of Hick's theodicy, there is one criticism that might be lodged from the standpoint of canonical literature. For it is questionable whether, in one respect at least, Hick is consistent is his defence of the canonical omnipotence of God (John 1:1-5, Hebrews 1:1-5, 2:8-14). For Hick argues that in order for human beings to be truly free, they must sustain an *epistemic* distance from God.[625] We must be placed in an ambiguous world of nature which in one way *points towards God,* and in another seems to *deny his existence.* He suggests that without this epistemic distance people cannot be free to grow and develop on their own.[626] For then people would be too conscious of God to retain their freedom or separate identity.[627] In fact, Hick declares that we would not exist as independent autonomous persons.

But is this really a reason that is in keeping with a God of unlimited power and love? Is Hick truly upholding certain canonical perceptions of God's omnipotence, as he intends?

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[625] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[626] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[627] *Ibid.*

In effect, he is saying that, under any circumstances, it is impossible for a given individual to have a full awareness of God and still retain his or her self awareness and self identity? This would seem to greatly limit both God and people, not to mention the depth of any relationship between them.

But supposing this were the case; this would mean that when individuals finally develops to their full extent and full consciousness of God, they can no longer exist as autonomous independent persons. For then the epistemic distance would no longer be there to protect their freedom or identity. Following Hick's logic, our freedom and self-identity would then decrease in direct proportion to the loss of our epistemic distance, and God could do nothing about it. This does little for the canonical hope of writers like Paul who say that the day will come when we will fully know God, even as we are fully known (Corinthians 13:12).

According to Hick the total lack of epistemic distance would neither allow Paul to know God or himself. He would not know himself because lacking an epistemic distance; God would not be able to prevent Paul from losing his separate identity as a person. Without that separate identity as a person, Paul would not be able to know God since he would not be able to have a personal identity to distinguish from that of Gods.

It all comes down to this. If in the first place God could not preserve human identity and personality without an epistemic distance to begin with, how will God be able to do so later when humanity has reached perfection? For now human beings will be more aware of God than ever before and of his unlimited love, power and goodness. Such epistemic proximity to God, given Hick's assumptions, would surely extinguish human identity forever.

Now if Hick were to allow that God is quite capable of creating a creature requiring no such epistemic distance to be in relationship with God, things can be different. For then we can hope that at some future date, when humanity reaches its full development, and the loss of its epistemic distance, its collective and individual identity will not be forfeit. But in allowing this, Hick would be faced with yet another dilemma. For if Hick allows for people to retain their freedom and identity without an epistemic distance, then his most important reason for God's keeping distant from humanity in the first place is forfeit.[628] He is thus left without any way, at present, to explain why God would create an evolutionary model and an evolutionary distance in the first place. This of course leaves him without any valid rationale for erecting an evolutionary theodicy based on an epistemic distance.

The inconsistency discussed in Hick's view of omnipotence should not be allowed to conceal the many canonical writings and texts that are in harmony with Hick's explanation for evil and its solution. Hick's theodicy is such that it also gives a very plausible explanation for non-moral evils that beset man, whether disease and storm, earthquake or floods[629] Neither can Hick be accused of forgetting the inner man, for he does not simply see the human race being moulded by external forces, but also by a growing inward conscience. In this, he upholds many popular canonical perceptions of man as well. In this respect, he cannot be accused of what much of the canonical literature would view as the superficiality of seeing evil only in the environment, not in human nature itself (Matthew 34, 15:11).[630]

He manifests a deep and reflective awareness of human suffering and confers on it all, a longing and substantial hope for eventual healing of humanity and the Cosmos.[631] In

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[628] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[629] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-49.
[630] *Ibid.*

[631] *Ibid.*

this he is very much in harmony with many prominent strands in the canonical perception of evil and suffering. But what is most impressive in Hick, so far as the theme of this discussion is concerned, is the balance he keeps between evil as it manifests itself, and the difficulty of uprooting it.[632] In neither respect does he substantially minimise evil. In this respect he seems very much in harmony with large ranges of canonical literature (John 3:16, Isaiah 1:2-18, Isaiah 53:4- 12, Acts 8:28-33, Romans 8:18-28, Matthew 23:37), Like much of canonical literature, Hick acknowledges evil's horror and pervasive presence, as well as the immense difficulty of finally uprooting it from the human heart and the future of reality.[633] Neither the Hebrew Bible or New Testament seems to give much room to the idea that human evil and suffering are easily resolved, even for God, whether we have in mind the evil without or within.

Finally, what is equally supportive of large portions of canonical literature is his concept of omnipotence. Here, the unlimited power of God is made manifest by accomplishing his purposes in history without destroying authentic human volition. The canonical literature time and again resounds with the theme of human culpability for evil and God's longsuffering in the midst of it. In Hick's theodicy, God does place humanity in circumstances of testing, but people themselves choose whether to do the good or the evil. This is a prominent theme in all of the Major Prophets. One thing is certain in Hick, unlike in Hume. Evil is for him far more than an appearance.

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[632] *Ibid., pp.* 104-107.
[633] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

David Griffin takes a page out of Persian rationale, for he seeks to defend the Love and Goodness of God, by limiting God's power. But the limits Griffin places on God's power far exceed that of Persian dualism. In Griffin's version God is limited by pre-existent *actualities* that God did not create.[634] These actualities extensively interfere with God's power. According to Griffin, they so permeate the universe that God cannot stop a bullet speeding towards a human heart, or halt the progress of a hurricane. Neither can God prevent disease. Acts of human cruelty towards others can only be suppressed through *persuasion.*[635]

With Griffin's theodicy, God could not even create the universe without using Godly powers of persuasion on everything this same God created.[636] It would seem from this that God actually has to persuade things to take certain forms. Like the divine craftsman of Plato, who had to negotiate with the necessary actual evils in matter, Griffin's God has to negotiate with these eternal actualities of which he speaks. In the Timaeus, the eternal actualities were matter. With Griffin, it is not entirely clear of what these actualities are composed. We know only that they have two inherent powers, the power to in part determine themselves, and in part to influence others.[637] These actualities are not only present in humanity, but to a lesser degree in everything else.[638]

In some respects Griffin's theodicy agrees with that of Hick. Griffin too sees God using evolution as a prime means of sanctifying humanity. As with Hick, Pain and suffering toughen humanity and cause them to evolve into the kind of beings possessing what Griffin

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[634] *Ibid.*
[635] *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 112.
[636] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[637] *Ibid.*
[638] *Ibid.*

calls higher value experiences.[639] Earned moral and earned higher values are of much more worth than those that are simply there already.[640] Like Hick he would challenge Hume's words in the dialogues, spoken through the character Philo, that a truly benevolent God would not allow evil and suffering to exist.[641] Griffin argues that God might indeed have created a world without pain and suffering, but such a world could never contain highly developed beings with higher value experiences. Humanity would never reach such heights as it has reached, were this to be true. The aim Griffin submits is to produce good.

> *That is, the aim is first of all to produce the good, not to avoid suffering. If the moral aim could be adequately expressed as the intention to avoid suffering, then moral adults would never have children-that would be the way to guarantee that they would never have children who would suffer or cause suffering. Analogously, a moral God would simply avoid bringing forth a world with creatures capable of any significant degree of suffering*.[642]

Griffin does not accept the argument that the prime moral aim for God ought to be to avoid human suffering. To avoid suffering and trial, Griffin argues, is to settle for a world without significant high value experiences. Surely, he argues, this cannot be our idea of what a perfectly moral being would do. Rather the truly moral God will create whatever conditions allow for the greatest good, while minimising the evils.[643]

Griffin implies in all this, that if God does not let the suffering go on that is necessary for a truly significant world, then God would be immoral. Trials refine and mature humanity. With respect to this whole matter of suffering and pain, Griffin and Hick argue very similarly indeed. Where they differ is that in Hick's case God sets up this evolutionary process of trial

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[639] *Ibid.,* p. 108.
[640] *Ibid.*
[641] *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.
[642] *Ibid.*
[643] *Ibid.*

and refining on the basis of God's unlimited goodness, love and power. With Griffin, God does so on the basis of limited power and unlimited love.

There are many interesting insights in Griffin we cannot cover. Our main concern is to examine his perception of omnipotence as well as that of evil. Let us first attend to omnipotence. It is clear that Griffin does not believe in an omnipotent God, but it is precisely by his using God's lack of omnipotence to defend him, that he reveals a concept of omnipotence very much at odds with that in much of canonical literature.[644]

For, in Griffins view, if God were truly omnipotent, this same God could not be excused for the evil resident in this world. For this reason he denies the doctrine of creation ex-nihilo. For him, the doctrine of creation ex-nihilo makes everything contingent, and thus God is without excuse.[645] If everything is contingent, he reasons, God can easily dispose of evil. By positing pre-existent actualities, Griffin endeavours to absolve God of blame.

But this assumption about contingency seems in fact to limit God's omnipotence, as it is understood in much of the Bible. The prologue of the Gospel of John for example, or the first chapter of the Hebrew refer to God as the maker of all contingent things. That and many other texts of scripture imply that an omnipotent God can simply will the eternal continuance of contingent beings with their free choice intact. There seems no need for Griffin's pre-existent actualities, and the existence of such actualities would be seen by the writers of many biblical texts as an extreme impoverishment of the omnipotence of God. Even logically speaking, why does it necessarily follow that an omnipotent being cannot allot accountability to contingent things? Is it logical to say that it is impossible for an almighty

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[644] *Ibid., pp.* 104-105, 117.
[645] *Ibid.*, p. 104-105.

God to create contingent things that can act on their own and be held responsible for their actions?

This suggests that Griffin, in this respect, has a concept of omnipotence very different from that of Hick. Hick, reasoning from the standpoint of God's omnipotence, has a rather flexible view of the limits a deity can impose upon itself. In agreement with many ranges of the canon, Hick argues that God can retain unlimited power, and yet permit human choice. Kant also argued in this fashion, despite the fact that, for him, the world of appearance was wholly determined.

Griffin, on the other hand, arguing from the standpoint of a severely limited God, seems totally inflexible in his perception of omnipotence, insisting that an omnipotent God would never be able to incorporate human choice, or human evil. For Griffin, an omnipotent God who creates the world, given the state of this world and the immensity of evil in it, has had a day in court, and the verdict is guilty.

From the standpoint of much of canonical literature, not only does Griffin display an inflexible and highly limiting view of omnipotence, he views the difficulty of evil in a manner very differently as well. For in Griffin's reading, the presence of evil in this world has a very easy solution, the omnipotence of God. Griffin reasons, if God is limitless good, and omnipotent over all, evil cannot exist. But such a cursory dismissal of the problem of evil finds no favour in Kant, or Plato or a host of other western and eastern thinkers. Plato along with many eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism teach that the quest over evil finds an answer only after many deaths and births in a world of suffering and pain.

Certainly in the New Testament, Griffin's perception of how omnipotence deals with individual and collective evil finds little support in the suffering of Christ or the tears Christ sheds for humanity. Utterly alien to Griffins perception is the lament of Christ whom

scripture portrays as Lord and God, and who cries out: *Oh Jerusalem, how I would have gathered you under my wings, like a hen gathers her chicks. But you would not (Mathew 23:37).* Nor is this confined to New Testament examples. For both Jewish and Christian prophetic writings speak of a suffering servant who will redeem Israel, whatever individual or collective being, the servant is thought to represent. In Chapter Seven we witnessed Paul Ricoeur explore the symbol of the son of man and the suffering servant. With respect to the end of evil, Ricoeur perceives the final answer as the suffering and death of the suffering servant.[646]

In Christian canonical literature the suffering servant is Jesus (Matthew 17:12, Luke 22:15, 24:46, Mark 8:31, Acts 3:18, Hebrews 2:10, Revelation 1:9) the God man. (John 1:1, Hebrews 1:1-5, 2 & 3, Colossians 1:15-20, Philippians 2:6-9). In Isaiah 53 it was a servant who would bear the sin of others because of and for the sake of the transgressors.

In both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament the depth of sacrifice and suffering involved in ending evil is fully recognised. The prophetic literature is filled not only with humanity's laments towards God, but Gods toward humanity. In the first chapter of Isaiah God laments to Israel. God describes their inward bruising and asks them why they persist in their inward destruction of their very beings. God cries out to them. *Come let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow (Isaiah. 1:2-20).* Some suggest that the anguish of God before the launching of Noah's ark, laments of God in the prophetic literature, and the weeping Christ, are mere personifications and that the true deity has no such feelings. But why then are the personifications, if they are personifications, there in the first place. Clearly, in the believing community of Judaism and Christianity, evil

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646. Paul Ricoeur, The *Symbolism of Evil, Ibid., p. 324-326.*

in man and the problem it posed for a God of love were not so easily dismissed as they are in Griffin.

There are many philosophers and theologians like Griffin, who minimise evil, claiming that if God is omnipotent, God would be able to deal with it in short order. For in their perception, God would allow no opposition. Such thinkers normally reject the argument that God wills to not interfere with free choice.

Yet these same kind of thinkers presumably claim to value human freedom. Normally speaking, these thinkers themselves probably regard few things as more evil and more tyrannical than the one who seeks to squelch that freedom? They likely regard the leader who enables us to live in freedom as the truly strong and wise leader. Yet when it comes to God, the allotment of freedom to humanity renders God weak in the eyes of these same thinkers.

Is this not ironic? When ever some human being manages to secure the reigns of near to total power, it characteristically means less and less freedom for humanity and more and more of bondage. It would appear, from the standpoint of canonical literature, that many religious and philosophical conceptions of omnipotence and how it should conduct itself, is, at least in some respects, more reflective of how humanity characteristically handles power and position, than of true omnipotence wed to almighty love.

Griffin views omnipotence as unlimited in what it can do. This again seems based on a very human perception of power and of divine power specifically. If it be true that God is unlimited in what God can do, then God can lie or cheat or commit some other evil and still be almighty? Well then, if this be so, mortal evil also reflects divine power and character. But in fact, canonically speaking, evil in man is seen as weakness, not as strength. God in much of canonical literature does no evil precisely because God is not some weak human

being who succumbs to evil. If the parts of scripture that portray human evil in this way are agreed upon, it would seem that the only way to retain God's omnipotence is to limit God in a great many ways. In fact, we must so limit God that God is incapable of doing any of the evils in which humanity habitually participates. It is only by so limiting God that God can emerge as truly almighty, since we are presently viewing evil as inherently finding its source in weakness, not in strength. Evil is rooted not in reaching out to others, but in the incapacity to do so, or to be so inclined.

Therefore for God to be almighty, the weakness inherent in evil must not touch God. To speak of a God capable of doing everything is to speak of a God who is a composite of light and darkness, such as found in thinkers such as Karl Jung as well as in Monistic religions. The prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible, as well as the writers of the New Testament, speak of the total Holiness of God. In the First letter of John, God is depicted as having no darkness at all (I John 1:5). It is also reported in the canonical literature that it is impossible for God to lie. For if God were to lie, God's omnipotence and Holiness would be at an end (Psalms 5:6, Numbers 23:19, John 8:44).

Therefore, seen from the standpoint of much of canonical literature, the essential flaw in many theodicies, such as Griffins, is that only one concept of omnipotence is embraced, the idea that an omnipotent God can do all things. But by implication, these kind of theodicies automatically implicate God in evil. God is then nearly indistinguishable from a monistic perception of God and the universe.

If the purpose of a theodicy is to absolve God from evil, the *God can do all things* perception of omnipotence is defeated before it begins, that is if we take it in an utterly literal sense. It would therefore appear that our own human disposition and perceptions are part and parcel of essentially culturally derived, or intuitive finite perceptions of omnipotence and

evil. These very perceptions tend to insist that a truly almighty God will by definition, trample human freedom into powder. But it is precisely such perceptions that are foreign to vast ranges, if not the entirety of the canon. For such perceptions imply that omnipotence is so constituted that it has no heart to weep for humanity. Therefore, Griffin concludes, God simply cannot be omnipotent and weep at the same time.

A Theodicy And Eschatology Defending The Omnipotence Of God

In Roth we see an attempt to defend the omnipotence of God by finding a way to protest against God's dark side, indeed to ask of God, better things and better conduct. What Roth offers in his article, as earlier mentioned, does not conform to the working definition of theodicy here employed For Roth does not defend the perfect goodness of God. For purposes of this essay, we shall allow Roth this concession in definition. After all, ours is only a working definition in any case. In other circumstances, Roth's particular definition is as workable as the one here employed.

There is much in Roth that is compelling. He refers us to Job's laments to God, though *he slay me yet will I trust him*.[647] He suggests that in order to truly be for God, we must be against God. We must stir God's heart to do better by our very protests over the unnecessary waste God has created. Man is culpable as well for evil, but God must also take *his share of the blame*.[648] Roth sees no way whatever to absolve God from the excesses of evil that stand as witness against God. His only plea is that God will do better in the future.

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[647] *Ibid.,* p. 15-16.
[648] *Ibid.*

Man must work on the good side of God, and God, touched by the pleas of humanity for love and justice, may be moved to do better.[649]

From the standpoint of canonical literature, Roth shows a perhaps unrivalled minimisation of evil by calling a God who will not squelch human freedom, ineffectual and hardly worth bothering about. From the standpoint of much of canonical literature, Roth's idea of an omnipotent God is weak and anaemic, and this, for at least two reasons. First, simply because his God is not free of evil, and secondly because Roth's God seeks to accomplish his purposes via the destruction of volition and conscience.

Roth criticises God for only occasionally doing great things such as delivering Israel out bondage, or dying on a cross to redeem humanity. He argues that such instances are much too infrequent to combat the terrible waste evil has inflicted on humanity. Roth reasons, that if God had the power to raise Jesus from the dead this same deity also had the might to prevent the Holocaust. The fact that God so infrequently uses these useful powers of deity makes God even more culpable in Roth's eyes. [650]

Roth declares that a theodicy of protest assumes the reality of an omnipotent God. God is thus bound only by God's will. Nothing except it determines what God shall do or become. Roth holds that God can do all things, therefore the supreme deity could have created differently than the deity did. This world is contingent, only one of many possible worlds.[651] Although Roth's deity could intervene, this same deity lets history work through human choice. Therefore, Roth concludes, ultimately *he has virtually no plan for history at*

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[649] *Ibid.,* p. 17.
[650] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[651] *Ibid.,* p. 16.

all.[652] This lack of *planning,* Roth maintains*, releases the worst and best in us, his presence therefore may feel like the absence of all gods.*[653]

It would appear that Roth, from his finite standpoint is criticizing omnipotence for not dealing with evil the way Roth thinks best. But inasmuch as Roth acknowledges that an almighty God exists, then a position such as Roth adopts ought to be thought slightly precarious. For Roth, everything hinges on the proposition that God possesses enough power, but fails to use it well enough to intervene decisively at any moment, and thereby to make *histories course less wasteful*. What then does Roth mean by almighty? When it comes to might of mind, it would appear that Roth's mind is mightier than Gods. But if Roth's mental reasoning is mightier than God's, how then can Roth speak of an almighty God at all? [654]

Thus, in spite of, and because of his sovereignty, Roth continues, God *is everlastingly guilty and the charges against him range from gross negligence to murder.*[655] He admits that God's guilt can be reduced by lack of power, but lack of power, he declares, makes God ineffectual. Roth therefore reasons, that for God to be truly almighty, God must not hesitate to do evil when necessary. What do you want, Roth asks, an innocent ineffectual God, or a *guilty but effectual* God?[656] Roth's conclusion then, is that a God innocent of evil is ineffectual. Should we not then run the risk, Roth asks, of a God who is *not perfectly good, but nevertheless effectual.*[657] This position would require that Roth is able to judge how much evil is necessary for God to be effective. Then he can talk of waste. But is Roth so

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[652] *Ibid.*
[653] *Ibid.*
[654] *Ibid.*
[655] *Ibid.*
[656] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[657] *Ibid.*

farsighted and so in touch with the universe and its workings that he can safely accuse an omnipotent God of neglect and poor planning? It appears a rather precarious position for one to take who believes, as he does, in an omnipotent God.

Suffering

Roth asks how Christ's life death and resurrection could lead to Auschwitz? But many a New Testament writer might reply to this, *how could it not?* Does not much of New Testament canonical literature teach that it is inevitable that the fight between good and evil will intensify with the coming of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion resurrection and ascension? One need only light peruse First Peter, Revelations, or First and Second Thessalonians to encounter and sense this inevitability.

Roth's contention that there is far more evil in the world than was necessary would find a ready acceptance among many Christians, but not because they share Roth's contention that God miscalculated and was therefore wasteful. Rather they would argue that this created world, as evil as it is, is the best of all possible worlds. In light of human choice God has already done everything for every human being that ever could be done. It is not like God would say: *I will try again and see if I can do a little better.* God, they would argue, did the very best that is divinely possible in light of the limits he imposes on his own being, where human choice is concerned.

But those very limits inevitably leads to God's sorrow over those who could have come to their creator, but chose not to, even though the spirit of God continually prompted them. Christians of this persuasion might refer to where Jesus says the following. *The only*

reason people do not come to me is because they love the light, more than the darkness. (John 3:19-12)

Consequently, humanity's unwillingness to choose light over darkness means that far greater evil will be in this world than God wills. Nevertheless, they would reason, God will still have a chosen people, and in the end, all evil will be extinguished or placed in a setting where it can do no further harm to a world in light. *Then, they can say with Saint Paul, the sufferings of this present world are as nothing compared to the glory which is to come*.

Such people might well say to Roth. Do you really think evil such a simple thing to extinguish, if so, you will never understand the saying of the writer of the Book of John*: God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)* To such believers as this, divine sorrow and tears mirror not the world of the finite, but the very meaning of an infinite, all wise, all knowing, all loving, and almighty God.

Chapter 9: Final Reflections On The Thesis And What Yet Remains

We have now explored varied perceptions of evil in a selected range of thinkers and the theories of knowledge and worldviews from which they drew or implied those perceptions. Henceforth we shall at times refer to this as the *study* or the *project.* We have covered only a limited range of thinkers and sources, chiefly from the time of Plato to Kant. In Chapter Seven and Eight we introduced four twentieth century thinkers: Ricoeur, Griffin, Roth and Hick. We sought for the most part to examine the varied thinkers in light of specific works. For our concern was not primarily with the thinkers in themselves, but to observe the way the varied thinkers perceived or implied evils from the standpoint of their epistemological and worldview stances.

But even given these limits and the modest intentions of the thesis, much was nevertheless learned about the dynamic interactions between evil, epistemologies and consequent worldviews. Our concern in this project was never to verify the reality of the evil or the good, but to note how inseparable developed perceptions of evil are from the theories of knowledge and worldviews that spawn them. Can any perception of evil be justified rationally apart from its underlying theory of knowledge and worldview? It would seem difficult indeed, since every developed perception of evil must seek its support by referring back to the theory of knowledge and consequent worldview that sustains it.

The Role of Earlier Experiences and Impressions

What was of considerable interest was that all of the thinkers were motivated to construct their elaborated epistemologies and worldviews because of an earlier experience of

the evil and the good. But here we will simply illustrate this in some of the thinkers covered in whom it seemed a little more transparent, such as Kant, Plato and Hume.

Kant had first to experience the *ought* in himself and in humanity before he could begin to frame his conception of its workings, argue for its validity and see the greatest evil in the human race as the rejection of that ought. To Kant this was the sublime. The ought of duty in man was the summit of the good and the beautiful.[658] But if we were to ask Kant to prove this to be the case, what then could Kant say? Does he have access to every range of the sublime in existence? How then can he prove that disinterested duty or the ought in people is indeed the summit of true morality? Here we see in Kant a prior, understanding. It is that very ought which he systematically seeks to verify in his elaborated theory of knowledge and worldview.

In Plato, we appear to witness something very similar. Did not his elaborated conceptual formulations and perceptions of evil find impetus in an earlier stage of knowledge and understanding? We witnessed a theory of knowledge that presupposed a pure realm of reason in which reason itself is deified. Even the Demiurge is only the Demiurge because it is pure, permeated by reason. All the forms and shapes of the Timaeus' eternal world find their beauty in their purity, form and orderliness. While Plato's Timaeus does not reduce purity and goodness and justice to number and form, it is quite evident that there was never a great divide between them. Indeed at times, they appear as twins.

But did not even Plato first have to experience the beauty of form and order, and the ugliness of matter in chaos before setting out on his sojourn for a reason based understanding of the mortal and the finite, and a way to mediate between them? Was it not these prior

[658] See also on Kant's idea of the ought in man Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason.*

experiences that led Plato to see a life lacking contemplation of forms as futile and a catalyst for evil?

In Hume, as well, we see this same kind of thing. In his final dialogue, we found a declaration of the inherent goodness of natural human sentiments. It was this sense of the natural good in people that was part of the motive for Hume's attack on orthodox Christianity and its doctrine of Hell. But in the context under discussion, he seems to employ those very sentiments to validate his attack. Hume simply says, in effect, that too much religious fervour causes people to forfeit their natural good natures. But this is hardly a systematic proof of anything. It is rather a deep sentiment in Hume. It surely tells us a good deal as to why he began his attack on Descartes and the Christian clergy of his time in the first place. It also provides us with at least one major reason why Hume constructed his theory of knowledge and consequent worldview. It was to combat Cartesian thought or any other that minimised the importance of human sentiment, human emotion, and human impressions, as he understood them. So Hume's developed idea of the evil and good, at base, seems to be grounded in prior impressions,[659] even though those base feelings could not be supported without recourse to his reasoned out epistemology and worldview.

Indeed, such prior impressions seem unavoidable in humanity at large. The proof that something is evil seems in the final analysis to be tied to that earlier understanding. It is these earlier understandings or experiences that theories of knowledge and worldviews often seek to sustain, and which even our developed perceptions of evil cannot seem to fully relinquish. Ricoeur, in his work, *The Symbolism of Evil,* understood intuitive primordial feelings and raw conceptions of evil to be the very forge of the philosopher's art, the prime

[659] Here we are using impression in the normal sense, not Hume's, except as an ironic pun.

catalyst of metaphysical thought.[660] While here we are not concerned, at this time, to go back to the bare primordial intuitions, it would be difficult to think them wholly absent from later impressions of good and evil or from the perceptions of evil that arise out of developed theories of knowledge and worldviews.

Even developed perceptions of the evil and the good grounded in elaborated theories of knowledge and worldviews seem to owe their beginning to this at least partly intuitive, partly unlearned sense of the evil and the good. Why else does so much of humanity cry out against child abusers, child killers, mass murderers, ethnic cleansing? Does humanity really feel a need to support their claim that such things are evil? Does not the near intuitive outrage itself seem to serve as the verification for punishments inflicted on offenders of this kind? Does not this very reaction, at least for many, itself signify the horror of such crimes? It was Thomas Reid who spoke of a kind of common sense in people that takes the form of ridicule, thus enabling society to fend off many an evil. But what we are here discussing is only related to, not exactly equivalent to what Reid meant by common sense.

Mind, Emotion, and Evil

It is especially clear from Plato that epistemologies, even in their beginning stages, may include a feeling or sense of evil. In Plato for example, beauty is seen in mathematics and order, evil in disorder. But for Plato the mind and reason were rooted in the good and in the divine itself, where even feelings like courage and affection were greatly subordinated to it. This subordination was due to Plato's sense of the evil and the good. This separation between reason and emotion was well illustrated in Plato's model of *man* where reason, the *divine* in *man,* is placed in the head, and feelings such as *courage* and *love,* somewhere either

[660] Paul Ricouer, *The Symbolism of Evil,* Ibid.

in or below the *neck.* Then we have Hume, who sees in this very emotion and feeling oriented part of humanity, not an evil, but the noblest qualities, those from which issue natural altruism and benevolence, even more so than chaos and disorder. The fusion of such prior feelings, emotions, and conceptions towards the good or the evil can in many ways govern the developed theory of knowledge that issues from these earlier states of mind and emotion.

Evil, Belief and Action

It would appear that epistemologies and consequent worldviews can never be devoid of the element of faith or belief. Further, almost any perception of knowledge and its consequent worldview tends to develop into a philosophy for human existence, not only for the present but for individual and collective human destiny in the future. We witness this phenomena in the Timaeus. Plato's doctrine of forms and transmigration of the soul enables *man* to finally escape the cycle of rebirth and find an eternal home with the Gods in the stars. We see this is Aristotle as well. With Aristotle the universe itself has a destiny, which by implication could eventually eclipse even humanity itself. In Genesis a collective destiny for the good and the evil awaits. In Kant, pure reason and the *ought* in people offers hope that on some great future day evil will come to an end. With Ricoeur, the symbolism of evil finds its extinction in a final day of forgiveness, pardon, redemption and renewed humanity.

But tied to the belief was action as well. All of the thinkers examined advanced theories of knowledge and worldviews in which future hopes, required, or implied, acting out that very future in present conduct. None of the thinkers studied advanced either epistemologies, worldviews or perceptions of evil that left us with the impression that they themselves were perfectly content to affect nothing. None seemed at peace with simply imparting pie *in the sky* concepts with a destiny never exceeding armchair reflections. In

every case their writings and reflections were rooted in the quest to change either people, or their environment or both. For example, Hume concluded that traditional absolute ideas of good and evil are no more than customs and preferences. But he nevertheless believed that this very realisation would usher in what is truly best for the human race, and deliver it from servitude to wrong conceptions.

Belief is never far away, even if a given thinker sees the best for humanity is simply to believe nothing. That, in itself, is a belief, and is therefore a rather ironic contradiction in terms. Once we ask any given individual what he thinks is good or what he thinks is evil, his answer seems always to require at least some theory of knowledge and underlying worldview. If he or she is honest, neither can say: *I am no philosopher. I do not involve myself in such things. I just live my life come what may.* In reality, nobody can just live their life, it will always involve their reasons why they suppose life to be good, or bad, or suppose it wise and good never to breach the question of good and evil at all. Always they will have to refer to what they believe to sustain their reasons. As soon as a given individual tells us what he or she believes about reality, the good and the evil, we are once again in the midst of what this study has been all about, the dynamics that ensue between theories of knowledge, worldviews, and evil.

Varied Perceptions Of Evil And Ethics

It is evident from our study that perceptions of evil take many forms beyond what many families and single people in the western world traditionally regard as evil. Yet, we saw in Kant's Critique of Reason, a retaining of a traditional idea of right and wrong, which for him found its deepest fulfilment in the ethics that arise out of practical reason, and a sense of duty. In Hume, however, traditional perceptions of evil were jettisoned and substituted

with cultural relativism. Yet we will recall Hume still spoke of a ground of moral sameness that allowed the sentiments of man, guided by the illusion of cause and effect, to introduce true collective and individual virtue into human existence. The Cartesian disregard for such feeling oriented benevolent human sentiments was for Hume, a great evil, an assault against nature and providence itself.

For Hume, another great evil was to violate those natural sentiments in persons with clerical sermons on Hell and Damnation, or with a religious fervour that short-circuited what he viewed as the naturally amiable and benevolent disposition of the common person. So even Hume amidst his rejection of the traditional Christian ideas of right and wrong of his time yet retained as a virtual absolute*: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.* For Hume, a belief almost identical with the golden rule, governed human conduct through sentiments, impressions, infused within us by the supreme being himself. If, in this project, we had covered some of the major religious thinkers in Eastern religions, we would very will likely find parallels closely resembling the divergent approach to ethics we find in Kant and Hume. No doubt the same kind of essentially antithetical approaches would be found in a western study involving thinkers such as John Dewey or William James versus, say, C. S. Lewis and T.S. Elliot.

Polarized Perceptions of Evil

What was of considerable interest in our study was how the theory of knowledge, worldview, and perception of good and evil embraced by one thinker becomes, in part or in whole, a great evil from the standpoint of thinkers coming from very different theories of knowledge and consequent worldviews. We saw this frequently. This kind of polarisation was present, in part, in Aristotle and Plato, where the eternal world of form in Plato was

opposed by Aristotle. We saw this also in Epicurus' and Lucretius' opposition to the Greek doctrines of supernatural wrath and punishment in the after life. It is evident in Section XI of Hume's Enquiry, that his own dislike of the doctrine of Hell and Judgement found much of its impetus in these ancient thinkers.[661] We noted that what for Bonhoeffer and Hirsch was a wonderful thing, the help of God, was for Kant, a prime evil. For God's assistance, in Kant's mind, would thus deprive man of his greatest duty, to overcome the evil in himself and society, unaided by God. The theory of impressions and sentiments that was for Hume the great good, that which liberated humanity from the dogmas of Descartes and the rationalists, was for Reid a source of supreme dehumanisation. It portended the very loss of the human self, the turning of man into a stimulus response organism with neither mind nor will.

The Value Of The Present Study And What Yet Remains To Explore

Is it not ironic that the very initial starting points humanity employs in the pursuit to know reality leads to conclusions about knowing and reality that give birth to perceptions of evil that bring it into conflict. Yet both sides appear to share the common desire to know what is real and what is not, what is knowable and what is not, what is good and what is not, what is evil, if anything, and what is not. It is for this very reason that theories of knowledge and worldviews are often the very motivations for war, and violence. For in such cases, the view of reality held by the opposition is viewed as a great evil, and therefore the great good is to oppose it. Therefore, the study of theories of knowledge worldviews and perceptions of evil is more than theoretical. For it is a study that inquires into some of the deepest motivations for human conflict, such as the viewing of the opposition as evil. But this cannot be solved simply by saying. *If only people could live together and understand that evil is just*

[661] See Hume's defence of Epicurus in his *Inquiry section XI.*

a matter of opinion. In the first place that very sentiment is viewed by a great many human beings, as itself a great evil.

Yet any study that inquires into the very origins of human perceptions of evil can serve to foster understanding of human motivation at a deeper level than immediate motive and circumstance. Such understanding, when rightly researched and expanded upon, will surely find ample application. This study has inquired into theories of knowledge, the resultant views of reality, and the consequent developed perceptions of evil that emerged. What we have noted is that in the case of every thinker examined, the developed perceptions of evil expressed were the direct result of the theories of knowledge and worldviews embraced.

The value of such a study for human understanding and betterment is also illustrated in the very study itself. For amidst the study we noted time and again the very good intentions intended by all of the thinkers examined. We noted in all of them deep convictions, and a strong conviction against whatever they viewed as harmful to humanity. In this, all of the thinkers studied were at one. When applying this methodology to other thinkers or disciplines, these same kind of benevolent motivations will be encountered and allow for a greater understanding of why humankind can so oppose each other due to polarized perceptions of evil. All this should serve to deepen human understanding in general and allow for at least somewhat wiser conduct in future relations.

A project of this kind will afford, at least some of the readers, room for self introspection. For example, a reader may have started the study supposing himself enlightened and certain that every viewpoint is valid for the person who believes it. Such a person might therefore be intolerant and inhospitable to others who regard the evil and the good as more than just a matter of differing tastes and needs.

Indeed, if he or she looks carefully at his own theory of knowledge and worldview, they may discover that they are advancing a worldview that others, not in agreement, will see as extremely dogmatic, exclusive, and to some degree unexamined. He or she may then come to understand that their own view was not really inclusive, but unavoidably exclusive, as are all differing worldviews. Yet, the confession of such differences and such exclusivity is commendable and honest, not reprehensible. It is this very realisation, that every differing view is exclusive, that leads to a true dialogue with those with whom we differ on this matter of good and evil, meaning and reality. But it is submitted by the present author that a true and tolerant dialogue, in the sense here advanced, must also involve a willingness to be persuaded by the other side, should one decide that one's own position can no longer stand the test of truth. As here understood, toleration allows for a true and constructive dialogue to take place, even though one may be engaged in a conversation with a person or persons whose epistemology, worldview, and a perception of evil is absolutely antithetical, indigestible and even repulsive to one's own.

Yet, it should be borne in mind that toleration can never require that we view all theories of knowledge and worldviews as equally valid. Such a requirement or definition of toleration seems to obliterate any meaning to the very idea of toleration. Toleration must surely assume that though regarding opposing beliefs as mistaken and wrong, I can still live with those differences and treat the adherents of such views humanely and fairly. Neither should we assume that toleration is always a good thing, as for example, in the case of child abuse, child killers, or mass murderers.

Further applications of the present study should foster true toleration, not forced agreement with differing perceptions of the evil and the good. An incident is recalled by the author that models the understanding of toleration here advanced. A Muslim and a Christian

were deep in conversation. The Muslim informed the Christian that he was bound for Hell, as did the Christian the Muslim. The Muslim then said to the Christian. *I like you because you didn't spout nonsense to me. You did not try to tell me that deeper down we really both believe the same thing.* The Muslim then invited the Christian for a coffee, which invitation the Christian happily accepted. The two became fast friends and enjoyed many a dialogue together in which the one quite regularly informed the other of his need to repent and thus escape the fires of Hell.

On the other hand, it is precisely an in depth study of theories of knowledge, worldviews, and perceptions of evil that can reveal views in which toleration, as here recommended, is itself the great evil. For persons committed to ethnic cleansing, the only solution for the evils perceived is to forego all toleration. But understanding these kind of motivations is also important in a study of this kind. For then, naivety with respect to human conflicts is avoided as well.

Indeed naivety with respect to where other nations or persons are coming from has led to great horrors. If, for example, someone had early on, fully examined the theory of knowledge, worldview, and perception of evil embraced by Hitler, his approach to the pinnacle of power might never have happened. Therefore a study that penetrates to depth motivations must seek to arrive at truths that enable responses grounded in reality, not in the failure to rightly understand the motivations of the opposition, or even that they are in opposition.

A study of this kind, if it is to be useful, must avoid striving to be either negative or positive. This is one of the dangers of the doctrine of approaching everything with a positive attitude, or being positive about everything. There are times when such positive thinking, grounded in a naivety as to the range of human motivations, brings great suffering upon

individuals and humanity itself. When for example, one encounters a view of reality and perceptions of good and evil in which only strength is respected, any promise of concessions might trigger the very war that awareness could have prevented. Therefore any extended range of the present study requires that things be viewed as carefully, fairly, accurately and realistically as is possible. This must be the case whether one applies this project to a wider range of western or eastern thinkers, or to other fields such as the fine arts.

Suggested Future Ranges For This Study.

The approach used in this study is only the beginning of what could be helpfully utilised in the exploration of a large range of thinkers, writers, and disciplines. Here only four will be touched upon in brief discussion: criminology, psychology, other western thinkers, and Eastern thought. After Eastern thought we will simply make mention of areas beyond.

We begin then with criminology. While it is true that more immediate motivations for crime tell us a great deal, so can the underlying worldviews that dispose individuals and groups toward a life of crime. It is for example well known that many criminals justify their crimes with references to the Bible or to God. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* lays some groundwork is this regard, as do many of his other writings such as *Brother's Karamazov*. He understood that philosophies of life and perceptions of good and evil are very often the core human motivations or rationale for many or all of the particular crimes committed.

Second we consider psychology. Scott Peck in his work The *People of The Lie*[662] draws attention to the reality of evil in human conduct. He wrote the work precisely because, in his experience, the field of psychology tends to ignore this matter of evil, despite the fact that evil appears to manifest itself daily and continuously through human history and human kind. Behavioural psychology, for example, tends to ignore evil, and focus on shaping new behaviours. But surely an understanding of human motivations for evil and for the good, wherever they may be found, should be of great help in seeking to frame new behaviours, or even in seeing a part of humanity, and self delusion, that is not so easily transformed.[663] Therefore, a study of motivations for human behaviour seen from an epistemological and worldview approach may serve to further assist the psychological community in considering this matter of evil, especially where the motivations for behaviour derive not only from immediate desires and patterns, but from underlying perceptions of the evil and the good.

Lastly we come to Eastern thought and beyond. Eastern thought would surely be a range of great profit. No doubt we would encounter thinkers that would in many ways be near counterparts, in some respects, to those found in western thought. We are liable to observe this, both in their perceptions of evil and in the means chosen to fight a perceived evil. Such a study promises to make a genuine contribution by nurturing some mutual understandings between East and West. Many of the same elements, inconsistencies, and ironies found in the western thinkers studied will likely find some near sequels.

Throughout the chapters and sections of this study we have noted time and again the pivotal importance of theories of knowledge and worldviews to virtually any perception of

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[662] Scott Peck, *People of The Lie*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983)
[663] See especially Section 11 with respect to self delusion and avoidance of the evil in the self as articulated by Buber, Bonhoeffer, and the Genesis narrative.

evil, whether held or implied. It would appear that developed perceptions of evil are consistently the outworking of developed theories of knowledge and consequent worldviews.

The intent of this study was paradigmatic rather than comprehensive. It was paradigmatic in the sense that the understandings and nature of the interactions that were here explored, can in very large measure, find continuous application, with similar, as well as completely new interactions in a more extended study of this kind.

Beyond the formal fields of philosophy and religion proper, still unexplored in this regard, are anthropology, comparative religions, the vast ranges of classical literature east and west. Equally unexplored is the business world, political science, and science proper, each with their own perceptions of evil, and each sustained by diverse epistemologies and consequent worldviews.

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