

Esther Shallan

A Philosophical Re-evaluation of the Problem of Evil: Framing an Embedded Analytic Approach.

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree Doctor of Philosophy at Oxford Brookes University.

Abstract:

In this thesis I address the theological problem of evil, defining the concept of moral evil and morally-evil acts. I develop a specific method to address the problem, one I call the *embedded analytic method*. This method allows me to turn for evidence to the social sciences, the humanities and the exact sciences when these are relevant and allows me to listen to and incorporate the testimonies of both victims and perpetrators of evil acts in my analysis. I argue that evil acts are a distinct category from bad acts and describe their multi-layered consequences as event horizons, using a concept borrowed from astrophysics. I redefine moral evil as the predation of one person upon another and argue that instead of the choice between good and evil humans face a tripartite choice among good, bad and evil. My examination of both individual and collective evil acts had yielded the conclusion that *the dynamics of predation* underlies acts of moral evil. I further argue that evil is an uncommon and an unusual choice, addressing free-will arguments from the Augustinian tradition. I discuss the motivation for predatory acts and develop the concept of relational economies, the social and relational contexts within which both individual and collective evil acts take place. I conclude the thesis with a discussion of the relationship between God and evil acts and argue that neither one of the two choices available to God to prevent acts of moral evil from occurring is beneficial given its eventual consequences.

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Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof. Bev Clack and Dr. Mark Cain from the Department of History, Philosophy and Religion at Oxford Brookes University. Their continuing support, advice and guidance had been invaluable and without them this project would never have been accomplished.

I would like to express my gratitude to other members of the Faculty of the Humanities and the Social Sciences at Oxford Brookes, in particular to Prof. Christiana Payne, who in her role as Graduate Tutor offered continuous support and encouragement to me and my peers, to Dr Nicole Pohl, who as the Convener of the Faculty's reading group welcomed the discussion of this thesis as it was taking form, providing thorough and constructive criticism and assisting me with positioning of my research on the wide canvass of post-Enlightenment humanities.

I am particularly grateful to Dr T.J. Mawson of St Peter's College at the University of Oxford for allowing me to join his postgraduate course on the problem of evil and to present my work-in-progress there. His meticulous critique was influential in the development of my work and is profoundly appreciated.

Prof. Leonard Minkes (ret.) of Balliol College at the University of Oxford and Prof. Jerry Ravetz (ret.) formerly of Leeds University had both been extremely supportive of my work and helped me revise and broaden my argumentation in a series of conversations held in and around Oxford. I am profoundly grateful to them for their kindness, support and friendship.

The ongoing support, conversation and kindness of my fellow students at Oxford Brookes are greatly appreciated. I would like to thank Dr Dana Vilistere, Miss Annie Webster and Mr Istvan Zardai for their friendship and unfailing support over our years together at Harcourt Hill. I shall never forget nor cease to be grateful for their continuing discussion of my developing work, as well as for their unstoppable humour and good cheer.

I would like to offer my special thanks to Dr Dr Dominikus J. Kraschl, of Wurzburg University's Department of Catholic Theology, for his helpful and generous critique of my developing argumentation.

Introduction:

1. Research question and the state of current research:

This thesis offers an innovative treatment of the problem of evil, innovative in both its method and in its conclusions. Within the scope of this thesis I endeavour to re-examine the problem, develop a new approach and offer a number of redefinitions and clarifications of the concept of evil.

My research question is as follows: what is precisely the relationship between God, conceived as an omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient being, and the existence of moral evil?

It is a slight departure from the traditional formulation of the problem of evil, where the question is how it is possible for natural and moral evil to exist together with God. Following the publication of Alvin Plantinga's 1974 work *God, Freedom and Evil*¹ it was assumed by analytic philosophers of religion that the logical problem of evil, i.e., the problem of reconciling the existence of the God of traditional theism with the existence of moral and natural evil is less of a problem than was previously supposed. Even those who disagree² with Plantinga's claim to have solved the logical problem of evil hold that he offered sufficient grounds to accept that certain reasons, known or unknown to us, can exist that make it reasonable for God to create a world containing evil or to tolerate a world where evil occurs.

At the time of writing the attention shifted to the evidential and the experiential problem of evil, the possibility of balancing accounts of particular evils, such as acts of radical moral evil, with a benevolent God³. The topic of divine hiddenness, closely related to the problem of evil, had come to figure

¹Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*, (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 1974).

² See Marilyn McCord Adams, "Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God", in Marilyn McCord Adams & Robert Merrihew Adams, eds., *The Problem of Evil*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 209-222.

³ See Marilyn McCord Adams (1988), as well as Rowe, William L (1988) , "Evil and Theodicy", *Philosophical Topics*, 16, 119-132.

prominently in philosophical literature. Another related topic, the question of the culpability or otherwise of disbelief in God,⁴ also rose to prominence.

My thesis is to a great extent part of this new approach to the problem of evil, with its emphasis on the epistemology of religion, the religious experience and the nature of revelation. My own belief that the true problem of evil is the experiential one, as well as my conviction that a new method is needed for a realistic and fruitful engagement with the problem are to be seen in the context of the current debate in the field.

2. A note on method:

My method, which I call the *embedded analytic approach*, involves two important points of departure from previous treatments of the problem. The first is my appeal to the relevant social sciences and neuroscience in my investigation of the social and behavioural processes and dynamics involved in acts of moral evil. In this thesis I use materials from criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, historians and neuroscientists in order to create a coherent and workable definition of both individual and collective evil acts.

This appeal to the social sciences, while unusual in the philosophy of religion in general and in the field of the problem of evil in particular, is mainstream in other branches of philosophy, such as the philosophies of mind⁵, language⁶ and psychology. It would no longer be considered a mainstream approach for a philosopher working in either of these areas to develop argumentation without reference to the appropriate findings in neuroscience, linguistics or psychology; nor would such a philosopher be able to disregard the newest theories and discoveries made in these sciences. Therefore, although I break with tradition in the field of the problem of evil by making liberal use of the

⁴ E.g., see J.L. Schellenberg, *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) as well as J.L. Schellenberg, "The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (i)", in *Religious Studies*, 41(2), 201-215, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

⁵ E.g., Daniel Dennett, *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology*, Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford Books, MIT Press, 1977.

⁶ E.g., Maxwell Bennett; Daniel, Dennett; Peter Hacker & Searle, John, *Neuroscience and Philosophy: Brain, Mind and Language*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

theories and findings of those social sciences that are relevant to my investigation I am following common usage with respect to other core areas of analytic philosophy.

The theories and findings of the social sciences used in this thesis are used as a foundation of argumentation, not in lieu of it. It was my goal to develop a coherent, realistic and applicable definition of morally evil acts and to achieve this goal I needed to know how and why human beings act when intentionally harming others, in particular when they inflict lethal or extreme harm. Turning to the work of criminologists, sociologists and historians allowed me to discern the dynamics of predation which would remain inaccessible to me had I not had access to these sources.

For example, the findings of the criminologist Dennis Stevens⁷ in his work with serial sex-offenders incarcerated in the American prison system are used in Chapter Five in order to develop a theory of individual predation. I have decided to use Stevens' work specifically because he interviewed these offenders at length and over many years, eliciting first-person accounts about their motives and methods for predation, family histories and self-concepts, thus assembling unique sets of data and coming to unconventional conclusions that branch into both philosophy and theology.

Another work that was very helpful to me was the meticulously-researched archival study conducted by two German researchers, the historian Sönke Neitzel and the social psychologist Harald Welzer⁸, who had trawled through reams of recently declassified covert recordings of German POWs held imprisoned in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. Where Stevens allowed the perpetrators of individual violence to speak Neitzel and Welzer had made the voices of perpetrators of collective violence to be heard. This allowed me to discern the processes and reward systems of collective predation.

⁷ Dennis J Stevens(2001) *Into the Minds of Sexual Offenders: Predatory Rapists, Pedophiles and Criminal Profiles*, (Lincoln, NE.: iUniverse.com Inc, 2001)

⁸ Neitzel, Sonke & Welzer, Harald (2012) *Soldaten: Protokolle vom Kämpfen, Töten und Sterben*, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag.

This brings me to the second specificity of my method. In this thesis I have made my conclusions based on first-person accounts of both victims and perpetrators of violence. This usage is less unusual in the sphere of the problem of evil since the publication of Melissa Raphael's *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz*⁹ and her well-argued insistence that anyone approaching the problem of evil and of theodicy must be prepared to listen to the voices of victims rather than deal in abstract ideas.

I follow Raphael in listening to voices of victims of evil acts. Their accounts, incorporated into Chapter III of this thesis, allow me to develop the concept of event horizons, an events-arch that is unleashed by an act of predation and that includes the circularity of personal and collective trauma, losses and changes in the world around those affected by the act as they unfold through time.

I believe that it is time to reclaim first-person authority for our use. Those of us working on the problem of evil are particularly hampered when this evidence is not available to us. The history of philosophy shows that appeals to first-person authority can be used to establish claims about the contents of human minds. When we want to establish why perpetrators commit evil acts and how do victims experience evil acts perpetrated on them we must be prepared to ask them and to treat their responses as truthful.

When I attempted to establish the effect of evil acts on the lives of those victimised by them I found it indispensable to accept victim's testimonies. Rather than theorise about forms of suffering in the abstract I have read victims' testimonies in order to see what it was exactly that exposure to evil acts had done to them and their lives. Only by these means was I able to establish that the suffering inflicted by acts of predation is different from other kinds of suffering and to come to the conclusion that the most significant effect of such acts is not the suffering that they cause but the destruction that they inflict. By treating the destructive aspect of their actions as separate from the suffering this destruction causes I was able to establish the dynamics of predation and the crucial role it plays in the perpetrator's motivation.

However, I also listen to the voices of perpetrators. Since my goal was the development of a definition of an act of moral evil I had to hear the accounts

⁹ Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2003)

of those who had practiced it, in particular the serial perpetrators, specifically the populations addressed by Stevens and Neitzel and Welzer respectively. These testimonies, offered in an informal and low-threat setting, provided me with an unstinting description of motivation for the acts, the satisfaction derived from them and the rewards, overt or tacit, that followed it. It is on the basis of these narratives that I was able to form the concept of relational economies, those relational systems of reward and penalty from within which evil acts occur. Relational economies are social constructs that offer incentives and disincentives for various acts and choices. By examining predatory acts through them we can see how they occur and how they can be minimised.

My method had allowed me to conduct a realistic and earnest examination of acts of moral evil and to arrive at a novel definition of evil. This, I believe, vindicates my method. Had I not accessed these sources I would not have been able to arrive at my conclusions, conclusions that contribute to the discussions and debates surrounding the problem of evil.

3. Note on natural evil:

In this thesis I address moral evil rather than physical, thus prioritising one side of the traditional problem of evil over another. I do this for a number of reasons, the most important of which is that I assert that the term 'evil' should only be properly applied to acts of moral evil rather than to physical events; I shall elaborate on this position in the following paragraphs.

When we apply the term 'evil' to both moral acts and to physical events we tend to collapse the problem of evil into the problem of suffering. We no longer charge God with so designing people as to allow them to inflict intentional damage upon each other but rather charge God with having created a world which is imperfect because it contains maleficent physical events and the suffering that they cause. We charge God with having created us with impermanent and pain-prone bodies as well as with having created our planet subject to earthquakes, tidal waves, microbial and viral infestations and extreme temperatures. All these charges are qualitatively different from the charge of not preventing in some way the abusive actions committed by one person against another.

This substitution then allows us to confuse cause and effect, in turn charging God with our suffering, be it the outcome of human wrong or of a physical event. We fail to distinguish between the two kinds of suffering even though

they are distinct in both their causes and outcomes. I argue that it is misleading to group events from the moral and natural domain together on the basis that both cause us to experience suffering. This argument is against the reduction of the problem of evil to the problem of suffering is to be found in Chapter II of this thesis, claiming that evil acts and the outcomes they cause are unique and cannot be compared to any other events or outcomes.

Naturally-destructive acts, be they illnesses, epidemics, tidal waves or earthquakes are better described as tragedies than as evils since despite their destructiveness they are devoid of intent. We can speak of the instability of all physical structures, be they organisms or ecosystems, and of the terrible pain, damage and loss that is unleashed when their instability causes them to fail. We can use this as a *prima facie* argument against the goodness of God but we cannot treat this as an identical process to the processes unleashed by moral evil. The reasons for this are several: physical tragedies do not destroy human relationality in a way moral evils do. The traumas caused by the natural tragedies are different from those caused by moral evils and their event horizons are distinct.

By concentrating on moral evil to the exclusion of physical tragedies and related suffering I am able to address the important questions of what constitutes morally-evil act and what is the relation between God and such acts. In Chapter V I ask if God could have either designed us differently or created a system of miraculous intervention that would have frustrated evil acts from being committed. I answer the latter question in the negative and argument my conclusion by reference to neuropsychology and the theory of mindblindness developed by Simon Baron-Cohen¹⁰. I examine the neural adjustments needed for the creation of persons functionally unable to perform evil acts and argue that such adjustments will render these persons mindblind, unable to predate but also unable to help, cooperate and sympathise with others.

4. A note on tripartite moral choice:

In Chapter II of this thesis I diverge from the bi-partite variation of morally-significant acts traditional to theology and moral philosophy and argue that instead of the customary choice between good and evil we in fact have three

¹⁰ Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995)

morally-significant options to choose from: good, bad and evil. The categories of bad and evil are, I argue, qualitatively distinct and I introduce the dynamic of predation in order to distinguish the two.

I discuss the social and mental effects of human-on-human predation and explain why it differs from bad acts in its causes, dynamics and outcomes. I then use the tripartite variation of moral choices in order to argue against the free-will approach to the problem of evil. The dynamics of predation is then used to discuss the difference between the problem of suffering and the problem of evil and to argue against the merger of the two in Chapter Three of this thesis.

The tripartite variation of moral choices allows me to argue against the assertion that evil is necessary for the existence of the good, and that therefore God could not have created a world containing the possibility of moral good without creating a world containing the possibility of moral evil. I argue that such a world is possible, as it is possible to have a life of morally-significant choices by choosing between the options of good and bad. Moreover, I argue that most human lives in fact consist of just such choices; for most of us, the third option, that of choosing to perpetrate an evil act, is not normally a subject of consideration.

To summarise, this thesis offers a novel and realistic re-evaluation of the problem of evil. I hope that the arguments and insights offered here contribute to the discussion ongoing in the philosophy of religion, theology and moral philosophy. It is also my hope that my method promotes discussion on the applicability of first-person testimonies of both victims and perpetrators in the discussion of the problem of evil and related problems, such as the problem of moral responsibility.

Chapter I: Problem of Evil through the Lens of Three Approaches

The problem of evil, pithily stated by Boethius¹¹, question ‘si quidem deus, est unde mala?’ (‘If there is God, where does evil come from?’), asks us to account for the existence and origin of evil in the presence of an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent God. How can evil exist simultaneously with such a God? Elaborated by Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), a contemporary of Leibniz, the problem demands clear and unambiguous solutions from both the theist and the philosopher: ‘Either God is willing to remove evils, and not able, or able and not willing, or neither able nor willing, or both able and willing. If he be willing and not able, he is impotent, which cannot be applied to the Deity. If he be able and not willing, he is malevolent, which is generally inconsistent with the nature of God. If he be neither willing nor able, he is both malevolent and impotent, and consequently no God. If he be both willing and able, which is the only thing that answers to the notion of a God, from whence come evils? Or why does he not remove them?’¹²

It is worth noting that the problem of evil is a problem for a subsection of all theists¹³, for it concerns only those monotheists who hold God to be all-powerful, all-knowing and all-good. Those theists who believe in a multiplicity of equally powerful gods, some good and some evil, account for the presence of evil in the world by advancing a cosmogony in which evil is the result of a struggle between the good and the evil deities. Thus no problem of evil per se

¹¹ Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 1, Prose 4 (London: Penguin Classics, 1999). For a discussion of Boethius’ unusual solution to the problem of evil please see Dougherty, M V. (2004) “The Problem of ‘Humana Natura’ in ‘Consolatio Philosophiae’ of Boethius”, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 2004, 78(2), 273-292.

¹² Pierre Bayle, *Pierre Bayle's Philosophical Commentary. A Modern Translation and Critical Interpretation*, trans. Amie Godman Tannenbaum, New York: Peter Lang, 1987.

¹³ It is possible to treat the problem of evil as a non-theistic concern; however, this changes the formulation of the problem. A non-theistic treatment would ask why evil exists while treating evil as a human phenomenon.

exists for the Zoroastrians or the Manicheans¹⁴. Nor did it exist for the early gnostic Christian sects¹⁵ or the Cathars¹⁶, since these heterodox denominations saw the material world as inherently evil, a lesser order of creation in which God's goodness was present minimally. The problem of evil is therefore a challenge to the theist who believes in a God who is rational, moral and unchangeable; this confines it largely to the orthodox Judeo-Christian tradition¹⁷. Within this tradition the problem of evil has a long and rich history, benefiting from both theological and philosophical treatments.

Starting with the Biblical *Book of Job*¹⁸, the challenge posed by the problem evil was one of clarifying the relationship between God and the various kinds of ills and evils that humans and other sentient creatures experience in the course of their individual lives as well as in the course of their collective history. The traditional approach to the problem of evil, dating back to St Augustine¹⁹, is to divide the problem into a set of sub-problems, i.e. metaphysical, physical and moral problems of evil.

The metaphysical problem asks us to account for the possibility of evil and suffering, either moral or physical, in a world created by a perfect God, as well as for the ontology of evil. We ask if evil is real or merely a misunderstanding on our part, or an absence of the good. We also ask what part does evil play in creation when viewed from God's point of view. The physical problem of evil requires us to reconcile the belief in a perfect God with a plethora of non-

¹⁴ See F.F. Centore, *Theism or Atheism: The Eternal Debate*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004) for a discussion of the Zoroastrian cosmology and theodicies.

¹⁵ See Joseph Katz (1954), "Plotinus and the Gnostics", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15, 289-298, 10, April 1954, for a description of the gnostic views on the role of evil in a material world.

¹⁶ See Colish, Marcia L. Colish, "The Cathars", *Church History*, 71 no 1 Mr 2002, 181-184 for an introduction to Cathar dualism.

¹⁷ For an overview of the Judeo-Christian tradition's approaches to the problem of evil please see Edward L. Greenstein,, "The nature of man in the Judeo-Christian tradition", *Mishneh Todah*, 333-362. (Winona Lake, Ind : Eisenbrauns, 2009)

¹⁸ See Edward L. Greenstein, "The problem of evil in the Book of Job", *Mishneh Todah*, 333-362. (Winona Lake, Ind : Eisenbrauns, 2009)

¹⁹ St Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, Book I, (New York: Beloved Publishing LLC, 2014).

volitional ills and evils that we encounter in our lives, from natural disasters to illnesses and accidents. The problem of moral evil, perhaps the most intractable of all three, addresses malevolent volitional acts. Why does a perfect God allow us to hurt each other, often lethally? Thus it is possible to solve one or more of the sub-problems without solving the other or others. A comprehensive solution, on the other hand, will address all three sub-problems, ideally with an equal degree of success.

To make the problem even more intractable arguments have been made to the effect that the problem of evil can be insolvable altogether within the framework of traditional theism. Hume²⁰, J.L. Mackie²¹ and Antony Flew²² have all argued, as did Pierre Bayle before them, that the existence of evil in the world cannot be reconciled with the orthodox conception of God²³. Indeed, the problem disappears if we are willing to posit a deity who is either powerless or ignorant or malevolent, or one which does not exist. However, as Bayle noted, powerlessness, ignorance or malevolence are not features that are normally associated with a deity; a being that holds either one of these attributes can be argued not to be a deity at all. Bayle does not address the question of non-coercive power or divine persuasion because, as he sees it, the test lies in God's ability to coerce an evil-doer who will not be persuaded or influenced.

Therefore the challenge of the problem of evil is to reconcile, at least partially, the existence of evil with the existence of a God as perceived within the terms of orthodox Judeo-Christian belief; omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent. The problem cannot be side-stepped by changing or

²⁰ See James Tarrant, "Hume's fundamental problem of evil" (2014), *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy*, 89(350), 603-620, (London: Royal Institute of Philosophy, 2014)

²¹ J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 64, No. 254. (Apr., 1955), pp. 200-212, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955)

²² Anthony Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom." In Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. New York: Macmillan, 1955)

²³ David Werther, "Another Look at the Logical Problem of Evil: The Compatibilist Objection", *Philosophia Christi*, 5(2), (2003), 555-562 for an argument against Mackie and Flew's claims about the failure of classical theism to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of God.

significantly qualifying these attributes of God. The theist is therefore left with three possible avenues: a) arguing that evil does not exist²⁴, b) arguing that evil exists, but is in fact a species of good that is consistently misunderstood or is outweighed by some greater good²⁵, and c) arguing that although evil does exist God is not responsible either for its existence or for its ongoing control²⁶.

Having now delineated the terms of the problem of evil I shall in this chapter briefly survey these previous approaches, historic and modern, to this challenge before arguing that these approaches are neither helpful nor realistic.

I. The Augustinian Approach: Privation of the Good

a. Augustine²⁷:

St Augustine, the bishop of Hippo Regius, was cognisant of the problem of evil before his conversion to Christianity, and lists the problem as one of the reasons he has abandoned Manicheism. In his *Confessions* Augustine describes how an argument expounded by his friend Nebridius long ago at Carthage had reverberated through his mind at the time until it convinced him that the Manichean account of evil as the result of the struggle between two deities, one good and one evil, did not stand up to scrutiny. The importance of

²⁴ These arguments usually take the form of arguments from the privation of the good ('privatio boni'). See Brian Hebblethwaite "MacKinnon and the Problem of Evil", in *Christ, Ethics and Tragedy*, Kenneth Surin, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) for an argument for the centrality of such arguments in the Christian tradition.

²⁵ This category includes arguments from freedom of the will together with those that regard evil as a form of good. For an example of the former see Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974) and for an example of the latter see Richard Swinburne, (1998) *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

²⁶ This is the position taken by process theologians, in particular Charles Hartshorne. See Charles Hartshorne(1966). "A New Look at the Problem of Evil." In *Current Philosophical Issues*, ed. Frederick C. Dommeyer (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1966), 201-212.

²⁷ St Augustine, the bishop of Hippo Regius (354-430 CE), an early Christian philosopher and theologian, a student of St Anselm of Milan and a Father of the Church.

this passage and the argument described there justifies its inclusion here in full:

*'As for the Manichees, O Lord, those frauds who deceived both themselves and others and, for all their talk, were no better than mutes because it was not your holy Word which spoke from their lips, I could answer them well enough by using the argument which Nebridius used to put forward long ago when we were at Carthage. We had all been deeply impressed when we heard it. He used to ask what the imaginary powers of darkness, which the Manichees always describe as a force in conflict with you, would have done if you had refused to join battle with them. If they answered that this force could have done you some harm, they would, in effect, be saying that you were subject to hurt and corruption. If on the other hand they said that the powers of darkness could not harm you, there would be no purpose in a battle which was supposed to result in some part or member of you, some offshoot of your own substance, becoming intermingled with opposing powers, whose nature was not of your creation, and being corrupted and degraded to such an extent that its bliss was turned to misery and it needed your help if it was to be rescued and purged of evil. This offshoot of your substance, they claimed, was a man's soul. It had been taken captive, made impure, and corrupted, while the Word of God, which was to come to its assistance was free, pure, and incorrupt.'*²⁸

Augustine returned to the problem of evil repeatedly in the course of his career. He grappled with the problem in both his early and his late work, re-engaging with it in his *Enrichidion*²⁹, *De Gratia Et Libero Arbitrio*³⁰, *De Trinitate*³¹ and *The City of God*³². He went on to develop a free-will theodicy in response to the problem's challenge, one which he was to hold, with minor variations,

²⁸ St Augustine & R.S. Pine-Coffin, trans., *Confessions*, Book VII, chapter 2, (London: Penguin, 1961), 135.

²⁹ The *Enrichidion* ('The manual') is often called 'On Faith, Hope and Charity' in its English translations. See St Augustine & Bruce Harbert, trans., *The Augustine Catechism: Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity*, (New York: New City Press, 2008)

³⁰ St Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, (New York: Beloved Publishing LLC, 2014)

³¹ St Augustine & Edmund Hill, OP, trans., *The Trinity*, (New York: New City Press, 2008)

³² ³² St Augustine & Marcus Dods, trans., *The City of God*, (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson Publishers, 2009).

for the rest of his life.³³ Augustine regards human freedom of the will, including the initial act of disobedience that had resulted in the Fall, as the primary cause of moral evil. Although a good in itself, free will is capable of going wrong, and so the resulting evil is a by-product of the original good. In addition, Augustine mitigates the moral status of evil by assigning it a reduced ontological status; evil for him is merely ‘the privation of good’, not a quality in its own right: ‘For evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name “evil”’.³⁴

Augustine argues in *De Gratia Et Libero Arbitrio*³⁵, his early work that since God can bring about good from evil the moral order of the universe remains perfect. If we doubt divine justice it is because we fail to observe how much the vicious do suffer and how much the virtuous are either spared suffering or are made to suffer beneficially.

Augustine sees moral evil, although significantly not physical evil, as a graduated privation of good. Speaking of his time with the Manicheans he laments: ‘I did not know that evil is nothing but the removal of good until finally no good remains.’³⁶ Since the main thrust of his defence is to absolve God of either the authorship of evil or the responsibility for its continuing presence in human history and experience, Augustine is eager to show that evil is not a substance in its own right but the emptiness left by the absence of one. If evil is not a substance then it has no real existence and therefore is by definition non-created, meaning that no one, including God, had or could have created it. Augustine accepts that God does not stand outside the rules of logic: ‘Anyone who says, ‘If God is omnipotent, let him make what has been done not to have been done,’ fails to see that he is saying, ‘If God is

³³ Augustine’s response to the problem is the original free-will defence and was later systematised and expanded by Thomas Aquinas, influencing approaches to the problem of evil up to own time.

³⁴ Augustine & Marcus Dods, trans., *The City of God*, Book XI, chapter 9, (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson Publishers, 2009), 310.

³⁵ St Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, (New York: Beloved Publishing LLC, 2014)

³⁶ St Augustine & R.S. Pine-Coffin, trans., *Confessions*, Book III, chapter 7.

omnipotent, let him make what is true to be false in the very way it is true.' ... God is not the adversary of truth.'³⁷ He adds later in the text: 'Now we do not say that God is omnipotent as if to believe that he is even able to die; or as if he should not be called omnipotent because he is unable to do that.'³⁸

What then is moral evil according to Augustine? He argues that since all that exists is good then evil is that which does not exist³⁹. He maintains that this non-substance is nothing but the wilful perversion of human will⁴⁰. On other occasions moral evil is merely an illusion, an erroneous belief held by us humans due to our post-lapsarian wickedness and foolishness⁴¹.

Augustine's account of physical evil is two-fold. He first argues that all nature is good since it is created by God and all that is created by God is good⁴². He then proceeds to argue that a flaw in a natural phenomenon is in fact a tribute to that phenomenon's excellence in design. Discussing the case of fallen angels in Book XII of *The City of God* he extrapolates: 'We call blindness a fault in the eyes, and that shows that it is of the nature of the eyes to see; we call deafness a fault in the ears, which shows that it is of the nature of ears to hear.'⁴³ Just as blindness and deafness are a proof, for Augustine, of the excellence of the faculties of seeing and hearing so is the malfunction of any divinely-created substance, be it human or angelic nature is a proof of its original, uncorrupted excellence.

³⁷ *Contra Faustus*, 26, 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Confessions*, VII, 12.

⁴⁰ *Confessions*, VII, 16.

⁴¹ *Confessions*, VII, 13.

⁴² According to Augustine evil does not exist for God and ought not to exist for us as well, at least once we gain a better understanding of the absolute goodness of God's creation. If we but could gain a God's-eye panoramic view of the causal workings of the universe we would know what the good purposes are of that we erroneously believe to be evils.

⁴³ *City of God*, Book XII, chapter 3, 1.

Augustine further argues, surprisingly, that although all created substances are endowed with existence by God, they are not endowed with it equally. An ontological hierarchy is thus postulated in which rational creatures, i.e. humans and angels, occupy the highest rank under God, whose own perfect nature is reserved for him alone: 'Hence he (God) gave existence to the creatures he made out of nothing; but it was not his own supreme existence. To some he gave existence in a higher degree, to some in a lower, and thus he arranged a scale of existences of various natures.'⁴⁴

So, for example, an irrational and unfree physical phenomenon such as the weather cycle, for example, is bound to be prone to disturbance because it is lower down on the ontological scale of being. Moreover, it lacks a free will and so cannot be rationally regarded as evil since its malfunctioning is not a result of a vice or corruption of its true nature. Therefore if an unforeseen storm destroys our harvest we cannot regard the storm as evil, no matter what suffering we experience due to the failure of our crops.

Augustine thus draws sharp distinction between moral and physical evils. The differentials are the faculty of free will and the degree of relative perfection of the God-given natures involved. When those of God's creations that have it, humans and angels, are capable of vice, a perversion of their wills and a corruption of their natures. Those creations that are lower in the hierarchy of existences, natural phenomena, are incapable of vice. While the argument that a flaw in the design serves to show the excellence of the design applies to both rational and non-rational creations, physical evils are not the result of vice or corruption of their true natures. They are merely working as best as they can.

Finally, Augustine addresses the personal experience of suffering as a result of either moral or physical evil. For him it is in fact a cause for rejoicing if and when seen under the aspect of eternity: 'A sentient nature, when suffering, is better than a stone which is quite incapable of suffering; and in the same way the rational nature, even in wretchedness, is superior to the nature which is bereft both of reason and sense and therefore cannot be the victim of

⁴⁴ *City of God*, Book XII, chapter 3, 2.

misery.⁴⁵ The propensity for suffering is, for Augustine, a small price to pay for being rational and free.

b. St Thomas Aquinas:

St Thomas Aquinas upholds the Augustinian view of evil as mere privation of the good. Like Augustine before him Aquinas is keen to avoid assigning ontological reality to either moral or physical evil as, like Augustine, he believes that this will commit him to defending the view that God could create evil as well as good. He expands this view and argues that God's knowledge of evil is circumstantial since it is impossible to know something which is the privation or absence of something else. Aquinas positions the discussion of evil within his metaphysics, addressing its ontological, experiential and cognitive components.

Aquinas addresses the atheological argument while presenting his five proofs for the existence of God in his *Summa Theologiae* (Q2, article 3). He quotes approvingly Augustine's summation in the *Enchiridion* (XI): "Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist, in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil."

In Question 49 of the *Summa* Aquinas discusses the question of causation: can good be the cause of evil? This question is answered affirmatively and followed by the following argumentation: 'It must be said that every evil in some way has a cause. For evil is the absence of the good, which is natural and due to a thing. But that anything fail from its natural and due disposition can come only from some cause drawing it out of its proper disposition. For a heavy thing is not moved upwards except by some impelling force; nor does an agent fail in its action except from some impediment. But only good can be a cause; because nothing can be a cause except inasmuch as it is a being, and every being, as such, is good. And if we consider the special kinds of causes, we see that the agent, the form, and the end, import some kind of perfection which belongs to the notion of good. Even matter, as a potentiality to good, has the nature of good. Now that good is the cause of evil by way of the material cause

⁴⁵ *City of God*, Book XII, chapter 3, 1.

was shown above (Question 48, Article 3). For it was shown that good is the subject of evil. But evil has no formal cause, rather is it a privation of form; likewise, neither has it a final cause, but rather is it a privation of order to the proper end; since not only the end has the nature of good, but also the useful, which is ordered to the end. Evil, however, has a cause by way of an agent, not directly, but accidentally.⁴⁶

This asymmetrical ontology allows Aquinas to argue that evil is not only causally dependent on the good but is normative, in the same fashion in which darkness is casually dependent on light and just as normative.⁴⁷

Writing in his tractate on evil, *De Malo*, Aquinas develops and then demolishes the argument from the reality of evil: ‘Everything created is something. But evil is something created, as is said in Isaias (5, 6-7) “I am the Lord making peace and creating evil”; therefore evil is something.’⁴⁸ But is evil a substance? Contradicting Isaias, Aquinas argues that evil is a non-substance, although it has a role to play in the great mystery of creation: “As the term good signifies ‘perfect being’, so the term evil signifies nothing else than ‘privation of perfect being’. In its proper acceptance, privation is predicated of that which is fitted by its nature to be possessed, and to be possessed at a certain time and in a certain manner. Evidently, therefore, a thing is called evil if it lacks a perfection it ought to have. Thus if a man lacks the sense of sight, this is an evil for him. But the same lack is not an evil for a stone, for the stone is not equipped by nature to have the faculty of sight.”

The explanation of Aquinas’ doctrine of privation is embedded in his metaphysical system. According to Aquinas in *De Principiis Naturae*⁴⁹, Aquinas’ introduction to Aristotle’s hylomorphic metaphysics, there are three principles of natural processes: matter, form and privation. These three principles are

⁴⁶ Ibid, Q.49, 1.

⁴⁷ In Chapter II of this thesis I shall argue that evil acts are non-normative as they constitute the violation of normative human relationality.

⁴⁸ St Thomas Aquinas & Richard Regan, trans., *The De Malo of Thomas Aquinas*, article 1.1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ St Thomas Aquinas, & Joseph Bobik, *De Principiis Naturae*, (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

further enhanced by two kinds of accidents, necessary and unnecessary. The nature of the substance is the one dictating what kind of accidents it will involve. For example, logical truths are necessary accidents while everyday occurrences are not. Since all matter involves privation, the latter is an accident, but evil, as a privation of good, is a necessary accident. Being necessary it has a role to play in our understanding of the world around us. Being accidental, it is outside of God's direct responsibility.

c. Alvin Plantinga:

I shall now discuss the work of Alvin Plantinga, an American philosopher who had generated much debate and interest in this topic by working on the logical problem of evil and proving, to the satisfaction of many in the field, that the existence of moral evil is not logically incompatible with the existence of the God of traditional theism. In his *God, Freedom and Evil*⁵⁰ and *Nature of Necessity*⁵¹ Plantinga did not only revive interest in a theistic solution to the problem of evil but offered a possible solution to it. The publication of these two monographs had brought the problem of evil to the centre of attention among analytic philosophers and theologians and the debate they generated had made many of those working in the field re-evaluate the problem of evil and the arguments from freedom of the will, either in agreement with Plantinga or as critics of his approach.⁵²

My reasons for discussing Plantinga's work are as following: a) he is representative of free-will theorists who regard freedom of the will as central to the discussion of the problem of evil and clearly positions himself in the Augustinian tradition (however, unlike Augustine, Plantinga is eager to avoid

⁵⁰Alvin Plantinga, Alvin, *God, Freedom and Evil*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975)

⁵¹Alvin Plantinga, Alvin, *The Nature of Necessity*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

⁵² E.g., J.L. Mackie's and Anthony Flew's critique of Plantinga's incompatibilist, libertarian view of free will and Derk Pereboom's summary of the objections from the evidential problem and from selective divine interference: Flew, Antony Flew (July 1973). "Compatibilism, Free Will and God". *Philosophy* 48 (185), London: Royal Institute of Philosophy, July 1973, 231–44, and J.L. Mackie,(1982) *The Miracle of Theism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Dirk Pereboom, "The Problem of Evil", in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*, William Mann, ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2004).

the non-committal 'middle way'⁵³ stance on freedom of the will, an attempt to reconcile a limited freedom with a notion of general predestination); b) he treats minor misdemeanours and major destructive acts as members of the same moral continuum and defines both kinds as evil, c) he treats evil acts as dispositional rather than relational and d) he addresses the logical problem of evil while paying little attention to the evidential one.⁵⁴

Plantinga emphasises the primacy of free will over the possibility of a world free from evil; this approach positions him as a libertarian, someone who holds an 'either-or' view of free will. For a libertarian free will cannot be truly free if it is subject to any limitation whatsoever. E.g., an argument that claims that God could have limited human free will in cases of the most gratuitous and sadistic evil acts while leaving it free to perform all other acts⁵⁵ would be rejected by a libertarian who would claim that the unconstrained free will in this scenario is no longer free.

Plantinga starts *God, Freedom and Evil* by addressing the counter-ontological argument as presented by J.L. Mackie. Mackie argues that theistic belief is inconsistent because one cannot reconcile the belief in an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God with the belief that evil exists: 'I think, however, that a more telling criticism can be made by way of the traditional problem of evil. Here it can be shown, not that religious beliefs lack rational support, but that they are positively irrational, that the several parts of the essential theological doctrine are *inconsistent* with one another.'⁵⁶ Plantinga argues that Mackie's

⁵³ This is the compatibilist position, i.e., a claim that God could somehow combine significant moral freedom with the degree of interference necessary to avoid evil acts, or at least acts of horrendous or gratuitous evil.

⁵⁴ The logical problem of evil is the problem of reconciling the existence of God with the existence of physical and moral evils; the evidential problem of evil is the problem of the quality and quantity of evils with the existence of God.

⁵⁵ This is an example of a compatibilist argument, one that is founded on the belief that free will and divine intervention to prevent evil acts are compatible rather than mutually contradictory. See Flew, Antony (1973), referenced in footnote 49 above, for a discussion of compatibilist positions.

⁵⁶ J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence", *Mind*, 64 (1955), 200. Quoted in Alvin Plantinga *The Nature of Necessity* (1975), 164. This form of the counter-ontological argument treats the existence of both moral and physical evils as *prima facie* evidence against the existence of God as conceived by traditional theism.

contention is technically incorrect since the three premises are consistent internally; all we have to do is to assume that God has reasons for allowing moral and physical evils to exist and the supposed *prima facie* argument from the existence of evil comes apart.⁵⁷

Plantinga then proceeds to make an important distinction between two types of theistic approaches to the problem of evil: a theodicy and a defence. A theodicy is a theory that attempts to tell us why does God allow evil to exist while a defense, more limited in scope, merely attempts to demonstrate that God may have reasons to allow evil and that the existence of evil *ipso facto* does not constitute a robust denial of the existence of God: 'A theodicist, then, attempts to tell us why God permits evil. Quite distinct from a Free Will Theodicy is what I shall call a Free Will Defense. Here the aim is not to say what God's reason is, but at most what God's reason *might possibly be*. (..) The theodicist tries to tell us what God's reason for permitting evil really is.'⁵⁸

A theodicy inevitably involves some degree of apologetics, it seeks to 'justify the ways of God to man', while a defence merely shows the logical consistency of a set of premises one of which affirms the existence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God and another that affirms the existence of evil. Plantinga claims that a free will theodicy, as opposed to a defense, 'goes beyond what is required'⁵⁹. While not disparaging a free will theodicy Plantinga maintains that a defence, with its economy of means and narrowly defined objective is the best way to proceed in addressing the problem of evil philosophically: 'No doubt the theist would rather know what God's reason is for permitting evil than simply that it's possible that He has a good one. But in the present context (...), the latter is all that's needed.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Although the theist may not know what reason God has to allow evil but that does not invalidate the consistency of this set of premises.

⁵⁸ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*, 28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 28.

Plantinga uses Kripkean semantics⁶¹, to argue that our moral natures, once sufficiently ingrained become in effect rigid designators, i.e., modal operators that are persistent and unchangeable across all possible worlds. Plantinga calls this new, morally significant rigid designator 'transworld depravity'. In chapter 7 of his *God, Freedom and Evil* Plantinga argues that moral nature, freely chosen and manifested in morally significant choices made over time, constitutes an essential property, a part of an individual's identity that will remain the same in all possible worlds where this individual exists. Discussing the character of Curley the bribe-taking mayor, his example of an evil-doer, Plantinga writes: 'Returning to Curley, we recall that he suffers from transworld depravity. This fact implies something interesting about Curleyhood, Curley's essence. Take those worlds *W* such as *is significantly free in W and never does what is wrong in W* are contained in Curley's essence. Each of these worlds has an important property if Curley suffers from transworld depravity; each is such that God could not have created or actualized it.'⁶²

Plantinga starts his free will defence by positing first the logical inconsistency of the premise that God can create a world containing free agents with the premise that these agents can be significantly free while being constrained from doing evil acts. In effect, Plantinga argues that God can no more produce a world containing creatures who are both free and constrained to do no evil than he can produce a world containing married bachelors or square circles: 'Now God can create free creatures, but He can't cause or determine them to do only what is right. For if He does so, then they aren't significantly free after all; they do not do what is right freely. To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, He must create creatures capable of moral evil; and He can't give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so.'⁶³

⁶¹ See Saul Kripke *Naming and Necessity*, (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991). In this work Kripke develops the modal semantics of possible worlds and claims that certain characteristics (names and the identities that they designate) remain stable in all possible worlds.

⁶² *God, Freedom and Evil*, 51.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 30.

The central argument made by Plantinga in *God, Freedom and Evil* can be summarised as following:

Premise 1: God exists and is omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect.

Premise 2: Evil exists

Premise 3: God could not have created a world containing moral good without containing moral evil.

Conclusion: Therefore the existence of moral evil in the world is consistent with the existence of a God who is omniscient, omnipotent and morally perfect.⁶⁴

In order to address a question of whether any world at all capable of being created by God could contain moral good but not moral evil Plantinga differentiates between a possible world and a state of affairs pertaining to this world, an argument that is important to Plantinga's goal to make free will a metaphysical necessity in any world containing good⁶⁵. A state of affairs is a situation that is contingent upon the freely exercised choice of a person or persons inhabiting a world. God, according to Plantinga, creates a possible world but not the states of affairs within it since those depend upon the free choices made by its inhabitants⁶⁶. Plantinga then addresses the question of whether God could have created a world containing solely moral good⁶⁷. To show that God's omnipotence does not enable him to create worlds containing moral good but not moral evil, and that therefore any possible world that God could have created that includes moral goodness will also include moral evil Plantinga introduces the concept of *transworld depravity*.

For Plantinga any kind of transworld identity, such as transworld depravity, is a rigid designator, an essence that remains a personal identifier across all possible worlds. Transworld identity⁶⁸ is that specific collection of essential

⁶⁴ This is a summary of the argumentation in chapters 6 and 7 of *God, Freedom and Evil*.

⁶⁵ Ibid, chapter 7.

⁶⁶ *God, Freedom and Evil*, chapter 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid, chapter 6.

⁶⁸ A problem with Plantinga's argumentation on the problem of evil is his use of transworld depravity as a rigid designator. Such usage goes against Kripke's own views on rigid designators and so falls under the usages Kripke defines as 'bizarre' and unjustifiable. Names and identities are uncontroversial rigid designators;

properties that keep Socrates recognisable in all possible worlds: '(...) we must have a criterion or principle that enables us to identify Socrates from world to world. This criterion must consist in some property that Socrates has in each world in which he exists – and it is to be sufficient to enable us to pick him out in a given world, distinguish him from other things, it must be a property that in no possible world is exemplified by something distinct from Socrates.'⁶⁹

Plantinga now argues that a person's moral status, once sufficiently entrenched and confirmed, constitutes a rigid designator, such a seminal attribute of his or her nature as to become a world-indexed property⁷⁰. Here is Plantinga's summation: 'And by now it is evident, I take it, that if an essence E suffers from transworld depravity, then it was not in God's power to actualize a possible world W such that E contains the properties is significantly free by always does what is right in W. Hence it was not within God's power to create a world in which E is instantiated and in which its instantiation is significantly free but always does what is right.'⁷¹

Plantinga concludes that the only way God can create a world containing moral good is by creating a world containing significantly free persons, persons free to act on their transworld depravities as much as on their desire to do good. In a world where every created being suffers from transworld depravity, i.e., a world where everyone would commit at least one morally depraved action in his or her lifetime, the conditions for freedom and moral goodness obtain. It then follows, argues Plantinga, that it is not in God's power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil⁷².

d. Discussion of the Augustinian approach:

however, can one's moral status, especially since it is embedded in a morally-literate and significantly free essence, be a rigid designator?

⁶⁹ *The Nature of Necessity*, 93.

⁷⁰ Plantinga builds on Saul Kripke's theory of modality.

⁷¹ *God, Freedom and Evil*, 36.

⁷² *Ibid*, 53.

The Augustinian approach regards freedom of the will as the supreme good. This creates a number of problems. The first problem is moral; if God regards freedom of the will as a supreme good then he must prefer the perpetrator's freedom, as exercised in the course of an evil act, to that of the victim, nullified in the course of an evil act. For example, explaining a case of murder from the standpoint of free will we have to say that God values the murderer's free will to the extent of allowing the murder to occur, even though this entails the end of the victim's life and with it of all capacity to choose freely again.⁷³

An additional problem is that such a solution normalises evil acts both morally and relationally. If free will is the supreme good, valued above all other values by God, then exercising it, even to the destruction of another, cannot be either wholly irredeemable or abnormal. According to this view human relationality incorporates evil acts as a normative dynamic. The relationality between God and humans is viewed as not impacted by the normalisation of evil implied by the free will strategy.

Surin argues correctly that such a strategy, particularly when applied to gratuitous evils, positions God as both sadistic and religiously irrelevant. He agrees with both Jurgen Moltmann⁷⁴ and Nikolay Berdyaev⁷⁵ that the only morally appropriate response to such a God would be the one made by Ivan Karamazov, the response of the protest-atheist who refuses to be a willing party to such callousness. In a note on *The impassability of God and the problem of evil* (1989) Surin argues that the response of the protest-atheist like Karamazov is coherent and cannot be invalidated by eschatological promises of recompense in the afterlife: 'We seem to be implying here that the protest atheist 'hands back his ticket' because the suffering and freedom in the universe are not worth the joy that is meant to be a recompense for earthly suffering when we attain to the eternal life. The question arises: how can it be known that they are not worth it? We would say, in reply, that the question of

⁷³ See Aleksandar Santrac, *An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defense: Whether our Power to Do Bad is Something Good*, (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008) for an elaboration of this approach.

⁷⁴ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The God of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 1973), 214-215.

⁷⁵ Nikolay Berdayev, *The Destiny of Man*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937) 45.

knowing this does not, or should not even arise for the protest atheist, because for him it would be wrong even to look for a reward in a post-mortem existence, let alone to try and ascertain its worth. The ground of this refusal is ultimately the sense of moral outrage, the sheer injustice, felt by the protest atheist.⁷⁶ However, it is not only the protest atheist who can argue against a free-will theodicy; so can a protest theist. A theist who expects God's morality to be not as significantly different from her own as to exclude God from the community of moral beings will also feel uncomfortable with a free-will theodicy⁷⁷.

Another problem inherent in the Augustinian approach is its valorisation of free will and the implicit biases involved in this position. By prizing freedom of the will above all else human potentialities the supporters of the Augustinian approach privilege the masculine model of selfhood over the feminine one. Writing of the implicit gender bias within the Augustinian approach in the context of the Holocaust, Melissa Raphael notes that '(...) in the holocaustal context, Jewish women typically invested their dignity as subjects less in freedom than in the degree to which they were needed and bound to others by ties of love and obligation.'⁷⁸ Prioritising freedom of the will over relationality in the context of the historical and evidential problem of evil assigns suffering caused by free will a second place after the free wills of the agents who get to exercise it: 'I want to suggest that that the post-Holocaust free-will defence (especially Eliezer Berkovits's⁷⁹) is primarily concerned with the ways that masculine agents' wills, both human and divine, are imposed upon history; so that their wills might condition history but not be conditioned

⁷⁶ Kenneth Surin, *The Turnings of Darkness and Light: Essays in Philosophical and Systematic Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 257, note 17.

⁷⁷ Santrac pursues this argument to claim that God's morality cannot be significantly different from ours, certainly not to the point of allowing gratuitous evils. See Santrac (2008), 23.

⁷⁸ Melissa Raphael, "The Price of (Masculine) Freedom and Becoming: A Jewish Feminist Response to Eliezer Berkovits's Post-Holocaustal Free-Will Defence of God's Non-Intervention in Auschwitz" in Anderson, Pamela Sue and Clack, Beverley, eds., *Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 139.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits (1908-1992) a Jewish theologian, the author of *With God in Hell: Judaism in Ghettos and Deathcamps* (1979), New York: Jewish Publishing Company, a free-will theodicy drawing on Orthodox and Chassidic theologies.

by it. It is only secondarily concerned with the suffering of which that agency is the cause.⁸⁰

Another grave problem that has to be confronted is that free-will theodicies tend to treat both ordinary misdemeanours and horrendous evils as a single category. Often a free-will theodicy or defence will disregard horrendous evils altogether.⁸¹ The unwillingness to treat horrendous evils as a *prima facie* argument against both the existence and the goodness of God invalidates much of the impetus of free-will theodicies. Writing in his 1989 essay Theodicy? Surin lists this unwillingness as one of the primary reasons for a theodicy's failure: 'Another reason why attempts to formulate a viable theodicy are apt to end in disappointment can be found in the abstract conception of evil used by the theodacist. The use of an abstract, depersonalised conception of evil is the unavoidable concomitant of regarding theodicy as an undertaking with exclusively theoretical implications'.⁸² Free-will theodicies are not the only ones to fail to either separate between ordinary misdemeanours and gratuitous or horrendous evils or to engage with the latter category with the gravitas and realism that it deserves. The same charge can be applied to the Irenean tradition of theodicy I shall now discuss, a tradition that views evil as a strategy of soul-making.

⁸⁰ Raphael, Melissa (2004) , "The Price of (Masculine) Freedom and Becoming: A Jewish Feminist Response to Eliezer Berkovits's Post-Holocaust Free-Will Defence of God's Non-Intervention in Auschwitz", in Anderson, Pamela Sue and Clack, Beverley (eds.), *Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, p. 139, Oxford: Routledge.

⁸¹ E.g., Alvin Plantinga, whose free-will defence is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Even Augustine and Aquinas avoid referring to gratuitous, horrendous or systemic evils despite the fact that both thinkers have lived in times of political upheaval and violence.

⁸² Kenneth Surin, "Theodicy?", *The Turnings of Darkness and Light* (1989), 76.

2. The Irenaean Approach: Soul-making in a soul-breaking world.

a. Irenaeus:

Irenaeus⁸³ seeks to construct a theodicy which not only exonerates God from being responsible for the existence of evil but also assigns evil a positive role in the universal order. This makes his theory a reductionist theodicy according to our earlier classification. Irenaeus starts with two premises. The first is that evil can be put to good uses, and the second is that God had indeed intended evil to be used for a good purpose, namely the fostering of the human moral sense. While rejecting the doctrine of predestination Irenaeus regards the original sin as the inevitable error of immature individuals, not as Augustine would later, as a wilful rebellion against God's order, with cosmic consequences for humankind.

According to Irenaeus humans are ipso facto immature, just as Adam and Eve were at the Garden of Eden. At birth an individual is endowed with both an image (*imago, eikon*) of God and a potential for the likeness of God (*similitude, omoyosis*). We thus start with an imprinted goal and go through our lives striving towards likeness; likeness could not have been granted at origin due to our innate immaturity. Irenaeus is using the example of the feeding of the growing infant to illustrate his point: 'For as it is certainly in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, (but she does not do so), as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it is possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this (perfection), being as yet an infant.'⁸⁴ The implication is that if a mother were to give solid food to her infant before the infant was old enough

⁸³St Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202 CE), native of Asia Minor, bishop of Lyons, theologian, Greek Father of the Church.

⁸⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iv, xxxix, i. The text is quoted from the online edition of the 1885 English translation of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* (c.180 CE): Translated by Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut. From *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Available from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103.htm>.

to be able to benefit from it the infant's health and future growth would be severely jeopardised. We would see the mother in this example as either neglectful of the infant's wellbeing or simply incapable. Since God is neither neglectful nor uninformed and never will be it is an indication of his care and compassion that this knowledge is not thrust onto a humankind not sufficiently developed to cope with it.

Human experience of good and evil is therefore a didactic process for Irenaeus. The contrast between the two, as well as the direct experience of that difference, constitutes our moral education: 'how, if we had no knowledge of the contrary, could he (Adam) have instruction in that which is good? For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinction of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God... But if any one do shun the knowledge of both kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.'⁸⁵

We are thus involved in a lifelong process of trying to progress from our inborn image of God to the attainment of likeness. Exposure to evil is a teaching device, an inoculation that is necessary for successful further development. We have to earn our goodness rather than be granted it, not merely so as to deserve it but so as to *recognise* and *value* it⁸⁶. According to Irenaeus it would be as wrong for us to flee the experience of evil as it will be to deny the difference between good and evil. By undertaking either evasion we are risking the loss of our humanity. This jeopardy is an important point of Irenaeus' argument since for him the volitional, lifelong striving to goodness is the path to a communion with God. According to Irenaeus life's mix of good and evil is a divinely appointed environment for human development towards that perfection which God intended for him. A tacit premise in this argument is the

⁸⁵ *Against Heresies*, iv, xxxix, i

⁸⁶ *ibid*, xxxvii

non-destructive nature of evil. Although morally evil acts and physically evil events can maim and kill the body they lack the power to damage the human soul. Irenaeus therefore places a limitation on the destructiveness of evil.

b. John Hick:

In his influential book *Evil and the God of Love*⁸⁷ Hick attempts an Irenaean theodicy with a difference. Having compared and contrasted the Augustinian and the Irenaean theodicies, Hick finds that the Irenaean one, with its tolerance towards the original sin and the acceptance of God's omni-responsibility, provides a wider framework for both a personal deity and personal growth through an encounter with evil. Hick's Irenaean approach, described by him as the 'vale of soul-making' theodicy, seeks to assign both moral and physical evil a constructive role as the unique and indispensable facilitator of moral and spiritual growth: 'The picture with which we are working is thus developmental and teleological. Man is in the process of becoming the perfected being that God is seeking to create. However, this is not taking place – it is important to add – by a natural and inevitable evolution, but through a hazardous adventure in individual freedom.'⁸⁸ This developmental process is strictly individual, confined to the lifespan of a given individual; Hick compares it to a pilgrimage whose outcome, while supremely important to the individual, does not affect the moral state of others or the moral status of the world at large. It is this reduction of moral development to the individual lifespan, rather than to the generational or universal one, that allows Hick to claim firstly a continuous moral progression and secondly a moral progression that is fundamentally dependent upon the experience of evil.

Approaching the problem of evil from an orthodox Christian perspective Hick's challenge is not merely to defend God's goodness against the fact of evil and to establish possible good consequences to both moral and physical evil but

⁸⁷ John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1966).

⁸⁸ Hick (1966), 292.

also to preserve the mystery of evil⁸⁹. He asks: ‘(..) how can we reconcile a serious facing of evil *as evil* with a full acknowledgement of the absolute sovereignty and hence the ultimate omni-responsibility of God?’⁹⁰. Hick’s response to this challenge is the lynchpin of his Irenean theology, the assertion that pain and suffering, two concepts he takes to refer to physical and mental anguish respectively, are necessary for the world to act as ‘the vale of soul-making’. In this scheme the world, with its moral and natural evil, acts as a moral and spiritual crucible through which an imperfect but potentially perfectible individuals travel at their own rate of progress.

The problem with Hick’s account is the failure of its credibility vis-à-vis extreme or horrendous evils. These profoundly destructive events cannot be described as soul-making given their undeniable soul-breaking outcomes. Nor can Hick account for the question of why should God use evil as a means of assisting us to make our souls when it is so painful for us to endure; the moral character given to God by this account veers on the irrational⁹¹ and the sadistic.⁹²

c. Marilyn McCord Adams:

In her books *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology*⁹³ and *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*⁹⁴ advances a pointedly Christian

⁸⁹ This is the orthodox Christian claim that evil has some divine purpose to it, known to God but not to us. It is echoed by Santrac in his attempted solution to the problem of evil

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.388.

⁹¹ As William Rowe puts it, ‘it not only seems obvious to us that evil occurs far in excess of what an omnipotent being would have to permit for soul-making; it also seems obvious to us that evil occurs far in excess of what an omnipotent being would have to permit for us to be rational in believing that excess evil occurs.’ Rowe, William L. (1991), “Paradox and Promise: Hick’s Solution to the Problem of Evil,” in *Problems in the Philosophy of Religion: Critical Studies of the Work of John Hick*, ed. Harold Hewitt (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), p. 116

⁹² See Kenneth Surin, “The impassability of God and the problem of evil”(1985) in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light* (1989) 65.

⁹³ Marilyn McCord Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

theodicy that, although Irenean in origin, is centred on the person and presence of Christ in the persons and situations that constitute moral evil. Adams, unlike Hick, does not shy away from extreme evils; her Christology is in fact confined to extreme evils, those she terms horrendous. She includes historical acts of mass violence as well as individual histories of traumatic violence and systemic violence. It is during those horrors that the presence of Christ within the individual participants and the situation itself is most pronounced.

Crucially for her argument Adams groups instances of moral evil, such as acts of genocide and sadistic interpersonal violence, with accidents, e.g., being the unwitting instrument in the death or injury of a loved one. This grouping allows her to blur the divide between those 'horrors' that result from intent and those that result without intent.⁹⁵ Indeed Adams avoids a moral distinction between victim and perpetrator even when discussing moral evils such as genocide or rape, preferring to speak of a generic 'participation in horrors'.⁹⁶ Adams justifies her wilful blurring of the divide between moral evils and disastrous situations involving no ill intent: 'I do not equate horrors with outrageous injustices (...) because not all horrors are injustices. ... Nor do I confine the horrendous to the massive collective sufferings of war, genocide, slavery and severe classist economic oppression, because I want to include the excruciating torment of individuals – e.g., Bible's Job, those with cerebral palsy, schizophrenics, victims of Tay-Sachs disease – whose societies are in general peaceful, prosperous and relatively just.'⁹⁷ Adams therefore simplifies her task by talking of generic 'horrors', allowing moral evils in only insofar as they involve some degree or other of extreme suffering: 'Rather, the heart of the horrendous, what makes horrors so pernicious, is their life-ruining potential, their power *prima facie* to degrade the individual by destroying the possibility

⁹⁴ Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)

⁹⁵ Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (2006), 33.

⁹⁶ Ibid, and throughout the text.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.34.

of positive personal meaning.’⁹⁸ According to Adams Christ shares the experience of horror with the sufferer; in the case of moral evil the experience is shared with both the victim and the perpetrator. It is the metaphysical and indeed psychological nature of Christ to be an active presence in a situation of extreme suffering, including evil⁹⁹. The horror itself is a background upon which the interaction between Christ and the individual participant, either victim or perpetrator, unfolds. The victim is guided towards healing and compassion, the perpetrator towards repentance; both are eventually guided to a closer union with Christ. Adams sees Christ as the guide whose aim is to assist the participants to come to terms with their experiences psychologically and gain from them spiritually. If at times humans are undone by their experiences of evil to the point of personality disintegration and are therefore unable to complete either the psychological or the spiritual course offered to them by Christ, it is the fault of our constitutional frailty.

According to Adams it is only a sub-faculty of our animal nature that is destabilised by the experience of evil, not our spiritual one. Significantly, she places the individual personality construct within the animal nature and therefore the damage accrued by human personality as a result of an evil act is classified at this lower rung. Problematically Adams uses the examples of human new-borns and feral children who have never developed one to argue by inference that human personality is not primary for human individuality¹⁰⁰.

This allows her to argue that the psychological impact of a horror as strong as to destabilise a human personality is (a) not such a great loss, and (b) cannot impede our spiritual state or relationship with Christ. Spiritually, therefore, victim and perpetrator, along with a sufferer of any kind of morally-neutral ‘horror’, progress developmentally.

d. Discussion of the Irenean Approach:

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, chapters 4 and 5. A large part of Adams (2006) is dedicated to the development of the author’s Christology. This is not reflected in this brief review of her work since it is concerned with Adams’ philosophical arguments regarding the problem of evil.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.153.

There are a number of problems with the arguments that treat evils as a soul-making process. Firstly, soul-making theodicies treat the spiritual domain as independent from the cognitive/experiential process of personality formation and maintenance. This view lacks support from neuropsychology, trauma studies and the study of human cognition. The evidence from these disciplines conclusively points at a mutually dependent perceptual and cognitive system, anchored by a robust self-concept¹⁰¹. If this self-concept is damaged by severely traumatic experience the individual will lose the ability to successfully process cognitive and perceptual input.

The best response to the soul-making theodicies is made by Surin. While supportive of a *theologia crucis* that addresses the problem of evil compassionately and realistically, Surin is critical of those who construct theologies that predicate joy, either that of the victim or of God, upon the suffering endured by the victim: 'I want to argue now that God's redemptive promise of eternal joy cannot be conceived as offering an appropriate response to affliction. This much can be established from the acceptable element in the 'inverted theodicy'. For when suffering is conceived as the outcome of human freedom and finitude, it cannot be regarded as part of a divine scheme of things which inevitably results in eternal joy.'¹⁰² If we could, argues Surin, we would follow Ivan Karamazov in rejecting any rewards offered to us in recompense for the suffering we endured: 'Hence if we were free we could, in effect, say to God that we would rather be rid of our present suffering; although this would involve giving up the eternal joy promised as a reward for the 'soul-making' qualities we cultivated in the face of such suffering'.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ E.g., see Naomi Sadeh, Miller, Mark W. Miller, Erika J. Wolf, ;Kate L. Harkness,"Negative emotionality and disconstraint influence PTSD symptom course via exposure to new major adverse life events", *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, Vol 31, Apr, 2015, 20-27. Emotional trauma often tends to cause persistent negative emotions and deterioration of impulse control, as in this sample of battle veterans. These are personality-destabilising factors that, as shown in this study, put the sufferer at risk of further adverse life events, thus entrapping him or her in a vicious circle of damage and deterioration.

¹⁰² Surin, "The impassability of God and the problem of Evil" (1985) in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light* (1989), 64.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 64-65.

In addition, to suggest that God shares the experience of the sufferer does not answer the question of why there should be suffering, and in particular horrendous and gratuitous suffering, in the first place; Surin argues forcefully that the soul-making claim pales when tested against Auschwitz¹⁰⁴. Together with Surin I argue that to suggest that God allows this victimisation as a method of communion with him is to postulate a God who is both sadistic and morally irrelevant to the victim and to describe the victim as a willing masochistic participant in her own degradation.¹⁰⁵

3. The Relational Approach:

In this section I shall discuss Plotinus¹⁰⁶, 3rd-century CE Neo-Platonist whose approach to evil is surprisingly modern in its emphasis on human relationality as the proper realm for the investigation of the origin and persistence of evil acts as well as the work of a two of modern thinkers, Kenneth Surin¹⁰⁷ and Melissa Raphael¹⁰⁸, whose approaches to the problem of evil were instrumental to the development of my own. I would like to note neither thinker traces his or her philosophical lineage back to Plotinus. I group them together with Plotinus as followers of the relational approach because, like Plotinus, both Surin and Raphael seek the origin of evil acts in the mental and relational dynamics of the perpetrators and, together with Plotinus, treat evil as a fact of cosmic significance for both theology and philosophy.

a. Plotinus:

¹⁰⁴ See Kenneth Surin, "The impassability of God and the problem of evil", (1985) in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light*, 69.

¹⁰⁵ See Kenneth Surin, *ibid*, 65.: '(...) we can, to put it strongly, refuse to be the masochistic accomplices of such a sadistic God'.

¹⁰⁶ Plotinus (204/205-270 CE), founder of Neoplatonism, native of Lycopolis in Egypt, interpreter of Plato and author of *the Enneads*.

Plotinus' interest lies in the metaphysical problem of evil. He has to find out the nature of evil and assign it an appropriate place in his neo-Platonic metaphysics. The divinity Plotinus postulates is monist and all-good, but is non-personal and uninvolved with the affairs of the material world. Thus Plotinus' approach to the problem of evil is free from apologetics and is concerned with deciding the ontological status of evil, not with God's involvement with it. This metaphysics consists of an ontological and functional hierarchy in which the top slot is occupied by the One, the impersonal Platonic godhead and the universal Good, the second by the Intellect, the realm of Platonic forms, the third by the World Soul and the fourth and lowest by the emergent physical world.

Plotinus starts his discussion of evil in the first book of his *Enneads* by an examination of the nature of good since, as he explains, to know what evil is we have first to have clear knowledge of what is good¹⁰⁹. The Good is, for Plotinus, a source of reality for the universe; evil, therefore, is a species of non-reality or false/misleading pseudo-reality that is the material domain and the interrelations that occur within it. For Plotinus evil exists within the dimension of the physical world, but its operations are reaching out into the higher domains of the Soul and the Intellect. If we succumb to evil we severely impair the ability of our individual souls to recognise and strive towards the universal soul. Evil, as all matter, is formless and ultimately unintelligible.

Plotinus provides a history of evil in which the beginning of evil was the primordial splitting of the Intellect from the One. Although ultimately caused by the One, this obfuscation of the ultimate reality leads to the situation of constant conflict that characterises human existence. We exist in a perpetual state of conflict between our bodies and our souls; this conflict results in the constant craving of material goods. However, we can avoid this by turning to our souls: 'The Soul, then, in us, will in its nature stand apart from all that can cause any of the evils which man does or suffers; for all such evil, as we have seen, belongs only to the Animate.'¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁹ Plotinus & John Dillon, trans., *Enneads*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1991) I, 8, 1.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, I, 1, 9.

Evil, argues Plotinus, takes place when we think through our base nature. Here is Plotinus' psychology of evil: 'When we have done evil it is because we have been worsted by our baser side – for a man is many- by desire or rage or some evil image: the misnamed reasoning that takes up with the false, in reality fancy, has not stayed for the judgement of the Reasoning-Principle; we have acted at the call of the less worthy, just as in matters of the sense-sphere we sometimes see falsely because we credit only the lower perception, that of the Couplement, without applying the tests of the Reasoning-Faculty.'¹¹¹

To avoid doing evil then we must reject emotional reasoning, the thinking from within the Couplement, using Plotinus' terminology and endeavour to reason from within the Reasoning-Faculty, or at the very least submitting the conclusions derived emotionally to the judgment of reason. And if we become the victims of physical or moral evils then

b. Kenneth Surin:

In his 1986 book *Theology and the Problem of Evil* the theologian Kenneth Surin is sharply critical of theodicies and their authors. Surin takes issue with a variety of assumptions and intents inherent in theodicies, some tacit and others overt.

According to Surin, contemporary authors of theodicies – Swinburne, Hick, and Plantinga – labour under a number of false premises. Firstly, the concept of God, the legacy of the tradition of 17th-century philosophical theism they employ is philosophical and is therefore non-canonical to all monotheistic religions. The 'God of the philosophers' is a strange construct that no religion can claim as its own.¹¹²

The contemporary theodicist fails to recognise that this concept changes the problem, making reliance on previous, pre-modern sources, profoundly problematic. Surin claims that neither Plantinga nor Hick can legitimately claim

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Kenneth Surin, *Theology and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 4.

to locate their respective theodicies in either the Calvinist or the Irenaean traditions. Macintyre is right to suggest that the pre-modern formulation of the problem of evil and the modern one are in fact significantly different.¹¹³

Surin is right in noticing the change of emphasis and the challenge to theology and philosophy brought on by the Enlightenment's commitment to individual self-definition and rationalism. In terms of the problem of evil the culture of the Enlightenment has shifted the focus of thinkers from divine motives to human ones. This led in turn to the secularisation of the problem of evil. The post-Enlightenment thinker, regarding the universe as a well-ordered and rational Newtonian mechanism in which evil and resultant disharmony had no place where the pre-Enlightenment thinker would be content to regard the cosmos as chaotic and mysterious and thus allowing of evil and disharmony.¹¹⁴

The game-change generated by the Enlightenment is unprecedented in the history of the problem of evil: 'The Enlightenment, as our cursory discussion indicates, poses a daunting intellectual agenda for the theodist. After the Enlightenment, and as a consequence of the penetration of social and cultural phenomena by the irrevocable and irreversible process of rationalization sponsored by Enlightenment thought, a hegemonic ideological force is created which throws into question the very possibility of doing theodicy.'¹¹⁵ The principle of cosmic order, a necessary condition for doing theodicy, can no longer be sustained. A theodicy is no longer tenable in the post-Enlightenment world as it is deprived of its *prima facie* plausibility and intelligibility.¹¹⁶ In addition, the cotemporary theodist is often guilty of unduly abstract formulation of the problem of evil, guilty of avoiding the evidential problem in favour of the logical one.

¹¹³ Ibid, 9.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 43. Here Surin also emphasises the process of change in the history of the problem of evil as it moved from the theistic (pre-Enlightenment) to deistic (Enlightenment) and eventually the atheistic (post-Enlightenment) formulation.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 44.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 47. Surin goes to note that, despite this epistemic shift, theodicy still remains a pressing and significant problem – but it has to change in order to regain both plausibility and intelligibility.

Surin traces the intellectual pedigree of this avoidance to what he names as the Cartesian-Kantian view of knowledge, an epistemology that privileges the subjective and the cognizing subject over the objective and the social. This view, claims Surin, degrades history and historical awareness: 'The emphasis on the subjectivity of the individual which characterizes the Cartesian-Kantian view of knowledge has the unavoidable consequence of promoting an understanding of knowledge effectively premised on a denigration of history. *Since this approach is moored to the abstract self-reflexivity of the thinking subject, the objective social configurations that are determinative of human subjectivity become hopelessly occluded.*'¹¹⁷

Therefore, claims Surin, the post-Enlightenment theologian must reclaim the historical and the social and find the means to incorporate this non-Cartesian approach into a rational discourse. Such a stance would go against the approaches taken by Plantinga, Swinburne and Hick, theologians who embrace the Cartesian-Kantian epistemology of a-historic, a-social subjectivity:

'Theodicy might be first and foremost a form of rational discourse about the phenomenon of evil, but the theodacist cannot afford to overlook the fact that rationality itself has social roots, and that occurrences of evil and suffering, and human responses to these occurrences, are likewise located in quite specific historical and material configurations.'¹¹⁸

To be relevant, theodicies must not be purely theoretical and scholarly exercises, for no philosophical or theological discussion occurs in a timeless, a-historic and a-social void: 'The philosopher and the theologian do not reflect and discourse *in vacuo*: it is their responsibility, therefore, to ask themselves, continually, what particular praxis their work mediates.'¹¹⁹ An additional challenge is the attempt to use rational discourse to address a problem where a number of concepts that cannot be resolved by the application of rational principles. Surin quotes Ricoeur, who says that to attempt to explain gratuitous

¹¹⁷ Ibid; italics are mine.

¹¹⁸ Ibid,.48. Surin proceeds to name the philosophical traditions associated with Vico, Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche as emphasising the social history of human consciousness, as opposed to Descartes, Hume and Kant.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 50.

suffering is to risk the failure to explain it away.¹²⁰ By 'ethicizing' God the theodist risks merely putting more words into the mealy mouths of Job's comforters, creating a comfortable theology that pales away at the magnitude of the suffering it endeavours to explain.¹²¹

How then should a philosopher or a theologian wishing to address the problem of evil proceed? Such a thinker, advises Surin, should start by distinguishing theoretical and practical aspects of the problem. The following checklist should be addressed by anyone endeavouring to work on the problem:

1. Can evil itself be rendered intelligible?
2. Is the existence of God logically compatible with the existence of evil? Alternatively, is the existence of God logically compatible with the varieties and the profusion of evil?¹²²
3. Does the existence of evil constitute evidence that counts against (or reduces the possibility of the truth of) theism?

The practical aspects of the problem of evil are as follows:

4. What does God do to overcome the evil and suffering that exist in his creation?
5. What do we (qua creatures of God) do to overcome evil and suffering?

Further, suggests Surin, if we uphold the traditional distinction of evil into moral and natural subcategories then we have two more questions to address:

1a. Can human evil in itself be rendered intelligible?

1b. Can physical evil in itself be rendered intelligible?

¹²⁰ Ibid, 54-55.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, 59-60.

In his essay *The Impassibility of God and the Problem of Evil* (1989), Surin suggests that those of us working on the problem of evil address the question of the relationality of God, challenging the thesis of impassibility, the belief that God, being immutable, experiences no feelings.¹²³ Surin believes that *both philosophy and theology should adjust their methods* in order to allow the voices of survivors of historic and personal evils to be heard. Following Surin's rejection of the Cartesian-Kantian individualism these methods should be expanded to allow the consideration of evidence from the social and human sciences.¹²⁴

Surin's critique of theodicies offers, I believe, an adequate and helpful programme for the treatment of the problem of the problem of evil. In this thesis I shall respond to Surin's request for a new method, one that avoids the Cartesian-Kantian framework and the rejection of narrative or historic evidence. Implementing Surin's programme, in this thesis I develop and adopt a method that incorporates narrative evidence from both victims and perpetrators of acts of moral evil, as well as the application of empirical evidence from social sciences such as psychology, sociology, criminology and history when such evidence can assist me in forming definitions of evil acts and of the relational dynamics that motivate them.

Surin's insistence on clear definitions of what constitutes both physical and moral evil and on an investigation of how intelligible these processes can be rendered by investigation is also extremely helpful to my project. Many of those working in the field conceptualise moral and physical evil in significantly differing ways, yet these different concepts are not always clearly stated. E.g.,

¹²³ Kenneth Surin, "The impassibility of God and the problem of evil", in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light: Essays in Philosophical and Systematic Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 57-72.

¹²⁴ Surin uses Ivan Karamazov, Dostoyevsky's 'atheist' character from his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, in his consideration of the limits of theodicies in both *Theology and the Problem of Evil* (1986) and in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light* (1989). The 'practical' theodiscists quoted by Surin, Dorothee Soelle and Jurgen Moltmann, use both literary sources and accounts of survivors in their work.

Plantinga¹²⁵ speaks of moral evil as a general category of intentional misdeeds in the formation on his free-will defence, yet in fact addresses only mild kinds of misdemeanours, such as the taking of bribes or the telling of lies. Marilyn McCord Adams speaks of horrendous evils, a significantly different concept, yet in her criticism of Plantinga's defence she at times appears to assume that he and she share the same definition.

In this thesis I shall define moral evil as the process of predation, placing it in the psychic and relational dynamics of both normative and non-normative human interaction. This in turn allows me to make a clear distinction between evil and bad acts, not placing McCord Adams' horrendous evils and Plantinga's mundane misdemeanours on the same moral, behavioural or social continuum.

In addition, Surin's rejection of the Kantian-Cartesian individualism and the insistence that evil acts be considered in their communal context assists me in my discussion of collective evil acts and their dynamics.¹²⁶ By developing the concept of relational economies and expanding it to group dynamics I discuss how genocide acts of collective evil, in this case, are motivated and facilitated by the structures and socialisation processes of the organisations, in this case bureaucracies, that plan and perpetrate them.

c. Melissa Raphael:

In this section I discuss the work of the Jewish feminist theologian Melissa Raphael. Her approach to the problem of evil with its emphasis on the crucial importance of the experience of victims to the understanding of human evil, in particular the Holocaust and the systematic atrocities of Auschwitz-Birkenau, had influenced my own approach, although I argue, unlike her, that the experience of the perpetrators is equally important. I also adopt her Levinas-

¹²⁵ Plantinga, discussed earlier in this chapter, addresses the problem of evil in two books, *God, Freedom and Evil* (1975) and *The Nature of Necessity* (1974).

¹²⁶ Collective evil is discussed in Chapter IV of this thesis.

inspired theology¹²⁷ of the face-to-face encounter; in this theology the recognition of the face of God in that of another human and the care for this face and its dignity are both acts of sacrality,¹²⁸ though unlike her I relate this theology to the Kantian categorical imperative¹²⁹.

It is imperative to note that Raphael does not engage in theodical reasoning, an approach taken by most, though not all, post-Holocaust Jewish theologians and philosophers.¹³⁰ She explores the relationality between God and the Jewish women who found themselves consigned to the genocidal realities of the Nazi concentration camps and the role of God in the relationalities established by these women among themselves.

Melissa Raphael develops a relational theology of systemic evil and redemption in her book *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz*¹³¹. She is critical of post-Holocaust Jewish theologies for following textual precedent to exclude women and their experiences from their accounts of the Holocaust: 'The cultural exclusion of women from the tradition is reproduced in and by its texts, including those of the Holocaust which, as themselves narratives of isolation, deportation and disappearance, subject women to a double invisibility; that of their historical annihilation and that of their subsequent theoretical erasure. It is not only that post-Holocaust theology has been a thoroughly masculine discursive space; it has also been markedly androcentric

¹²⁷ Raphael's source is the French philosopher and theologian Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas' discussion of the face-to-face relation please see Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 95, 98, 119.

¹²⁸ Raphael (2003), 73.

¹²⁹ I argue that it is wrong to treat humans, made in the image of God, in certain specifically destructive ways. See Chapter II of this thesis. This argument was previously advanced by Irving Greenberg in his "The Voluntary Covenant", *Perspectives # 3*, (New York: National Jewish Resource Center, 1982), 14.

¹³⁰ See Zachary Braiterman, *(God) after Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in post-Holocaust Jewish thought*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 4-5 for a discussion of this anti-theodical shift in Jewish thought.

¹³¹ Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2003).

in its outlook.’¹³² Thus the ritual exclusion of women from male congregational and textual spirituality continues in theologically-significant accounts of the Holocaust, despite the wide availability of women’s testimonies.

According to Raphael, the privileging of free-will arguments is another approach to the problem that marginalises both the holocaustal experiences of women and their native relational orientation. Writing in her response to Eliezer Berkovits’s free-will defence, Raphael claims that a feminist reading of the free-will defences of God’s non-interference in the Holocaust renders an implicitly androcentric perspective with worrying overtones of the masculinisation of the divine person as well as of marginalisation of women’s relational selfhoods and experiences of victimisation: ‘The post-Holocaust free-will defence of God negotiates the (re)distribution of power between a male God, male Jewish subjects, and Nazi Germany as itself a locus of hyper-masculine and apparently absolute power; it replays a struggle between men and God over who at any one time is to be sovereign L/lord of history.’¹³³

Not only are women’s specific experiences are disregarded by many mainstream post-Holocaust theologians, but the very vision of divinity and their expectations of it are gendered: ‘To be faithful to the actual and particular suffering of all persons during the Holocaust and to the covenantal presence of God in the midst of that suffering, Jewish theology must reflect on the gendered variety of Jewish experience before or instead of its resolution of a set of formal (theo)logical problems whose framing is itself gendered.’¹³⁴ Raphael argues that a feminist reading of the Holocaust and a feminist theology are needed not only to challenge and reverse the exclusion of women’s narratives and the masculinist vision of God but also to provide an alternative, maternalist theology of the Holocaust. The key to the difference in the experiences of men and women during the Holocaust, argues Raphael, is

¹³² Ibid, 21.

¹³³ Melissa Raphael, “The Price of (Masculine) Freedom and Becoming: A Jewish Feminist Response to Eliezer Berkovits’s Post-Holocaust Free-Will Defence of God’s Non-Intervention in Auschwitz”, in Pamela Sue Anderson and Beverley Clack, eds., *Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Critical Readings*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 139.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p.109.

that while the men where processing their experiences through an androcentric paradigms of tradition, rabbinic authority and moral leadership and the goal of stoic, defiant death women were facing a crisis of relationality, maternity and femininity.

The challenge of Auschwitz for women was the loss of their children, argues Raphael, the profanization of themselves as women and the destruction of their relational networks and relational capacities. It is in women's resistance to Auschwitz that we can glimpse a different model of divine presence: 'Whenever women gathered together in the mutually supportive pairs or groups which I will interpret as a form of sacred assembly, parts of the camp then constituted a morally separate enclosure whose even temporary boundaries marked women's fundamental opposition to the profanity of their situation, beset as they were by moral evil, filth, disease and death.'¹³⁵ Raphael recognises divine presence and the maintenance of the covenant in the care women have given each other, in the act of cleaning the eternal filth of the camp off another woman, sharing with her the little food one had, or befriending her. Even self-care, the determination to maintain whatever little cleanliness was possible under these degrading conditions was an act of sacrality: 'In Auschwitz, any gesture towards the bodily well-being of self and other could keep women from descending into the blank-eyed, expressionless stare of the 'Muselmanner' in whom the divine spark had been extinguished.'¹³⁶

Raphael's methodology of listening to the testimonies of victims and treating them as evidence of not only subjective experiences but of cognitive, spiritual and relational dynamics common to female victims as a class allows her to draw conclusions that no analytic philosopher working with the problem of evil could or, indeed, would. In treating relationality as a dynamic central to the female victims' gender, their experience of sacrality and as a basis for a relational theology of the Holocaust, Raphael creates a paradigm for approaching the problem of evil. Where previous theorists had treated the

¹³⁵ Raphael (2004), 71.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 68.

problem as a challenge of theodicy, a problem of justifying God against the accusations of powerlessness, non-existence or lack of care, Raphael makes it the challenge of discerning God and God's *modus operandi* in the experiences and actions of the victims.

According to Raphael, maltreating others is an assault on God, a way to make God disappear by attacking the sacrality of the other: 'Yet the physical debilitation, agony, and very often death wrought by punishment in Auschwitz de-faced and dis-appeared the divine image in women.'¹³⁷ God is vulnerable through the vulnerability of humans to abuse and degradation. Therefore, claims Raphael, the Nazi Final Solution was a mission to defeat and destroy not only the Jewish people but God as well. God's presence is a relational process, made all the more intense in extreme circumstances: '... I want to attend to a different, non-expiatory, non-heroic relationality which brings God and humanity together by the operations of ordinary self-giving love in circumstances which made non-ordinary demands on that love.'¹³⁸ God, for Raphael, belongs in the nexus of the reciprocities of care, a maternal dynamic that excludes the external heroics of the battlefield in favour of a nurturing relationship of presence and compassion.

Raphael's approach is quintessentially Jewish and this is particularly important in understanding her refusal to postulate a suffering God, as do the post-war Christian theologians who interpret the Holocaust and other instances of horrendous suffering in terms of a theology of the Cross. For Raphael God is intimately involved in the nurturing relationships of Auschwitz's female inmates but does act as a redemptive focus for either victims or perpetrators. For Raphael the problem of divine hiddenness is a problem of the failure of the Covenant and of the human-divine relationality, not a divine commitment to the preservation of human freedom to act: 'While theological discourse may construe the absence or hiddenness of God as that which preserves human freedom, in actuality, numberless Jews would have experienced the absent God as not-God in Auschwitz. Divine self-restraint in the name of human

¹³⁷ Ibid, 66.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 86.

becoming may have been experienced as divine desertion of post; the silence left by his absence would have been taken as a licence for Nazi atrocity.¹³⁹ She makes it clear that her exposition of God's role in Auschwitz is firmly anchored in the Jewish vision of God as both the Lord of history and an intimate, everyday presence in the lives of Jews: '(...) divine presence and absence are the central tropes by which Jews both understand and contest God's holocaustal will and responsibility. Because hiddenness encompasses God's presence and God's absence, trust in God and in a Jewish future can be sustained at precisely the same time as protesting God's role in the Holocaust.'¹⁴⁰

Raphael is, however, a feminist theologian as well as a Jewish one. This leads her to position the testimonies of Auschwitz's victims at the centre of her holocaustal theology. Had Raphael not relied on the testimonies of victims of Nazi persecution and been prepared to examine the specifics of female victimisation and survival this conclusion would have been impossible for her. Her methodology is vindicated by the presentation of a startling and innovative response to the challenge of divine hiddenness during the Holocaust. Raphael's methodology can and should serve as a template for philosophers seeking to engage with the problem of evil. It is extremely helpful to me in my approach as evidenced in this thesis. Her insistence on conceptualising the experience of victims as gendered rather than as generic allowed me to address the dynamics of individual evil through the lens of female experience.¹⁴¹ Her emphasis on relationality had led me to consider if evil is a relational, and if so if it is a form of normal or abnormal relationality. By conceptualising morally evil acts as involving a very different relational dynamic from all other moral acts I was able to describe them as rooted in and motivated by anti-relational dynamics, qualitatively distinct from all others, abnormal and atypical.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ I address individual evil in Chapter IV of this thesis. There I examine the narratives of both victims and perpetrators of rape and sexual assault.

Her theology made me ask what is the nature of the relationality between God and the humans who are either victims or perpetrators of evil acts.

D. Discussion of the relational approach

I believe together with Surin that it is not enough to conceptualise God as sharing in the suffering of victims to address the problem of evil adequately we must ask what is the role of God in the effort to defeat evil and suffering.¹⁴² Like Plotinus, Surin and Raphael I seek the essence and context of evil acts in the psychologies and relationalities in which these acts occur. I agree with Plotinus that evil acts involve an abandonment of normative human states in favour of mental states and behavioural dynamics that humans share with non-human animals, namely the psychology and the dynamics of predation¹⁴³. Together with Surin and Raphael I believe that previous attempts to address the problem of evil have suffered from significant faults; together with them I believe that the very task of theodicy became tainted and dangerous.

In terms of my method, I follow Raphael her commitment to including the testimony of victims as primary evidence in all deliberations about the nature of evil and its theological significance. I also follow Surin in adopting his suggestion that evidence from social sciences and the humanities be incorporated in the discussion of the problem of evil. In addition I adopt his rejection of theodicies and shall endeavour to produce in this thesis an anti-theodicy, not an attempt to reconcile God with the existence of evil but an exploration of the nature of evil and God's relationship with it.

In addition to accepting the testimony of victims of evil acts as does Raphael and in considering evidence provided by relevant social sciences and humanities that address the experience and the dynamics of both victims and

¹⁴² Speaking in the essay *The impassability of God and the problem of evil* (1985) Surin states: '(...) it is not enough to say that that we can resolve the theodicy-problem by conceiving of God as a suffering God who identifies with the victims of suffering to the point of death. Is not enough to suggest that God, in identifying with the victims of Auschwitz, himself becomes a powerless victim of the place.' Surin, K (1989) *The Turnings of Darkness and Light*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 71-72. This argument, described by Surin there as a criticism of the Moltmann and Soelle strategy of depicting God as a fellow-inmate of Auschwitz is equally critical of the strategy adopted by process theologians in addressing the problem of evil.

¹⁴³ The definition of an evil act as an act of predation is discussed and defended in Chapter II of this thesis.

perpetrators as is recommended by Surin I shall also accept the testimony of the perpetrators of evil acts. In this thesis I shall analyse the testimonies of serial sex offenders and WW2 war criminals¹⁴⁴, both military and civilian, in order to clarify the relational dynamics of evil acts.

¹⁴⁴ These narratives are discussed in chapters III and IV of this thesis.

Chapter II: Good, Bad and Evil

In this chapter I shall discuss the metaphysical assumptions underpinning this thesis, then develop my arguments in favour of a tripartite theory of morally-significant acts, arguing that good, bad and evil constitute qualitatively different acts on the basis of the sharp relational difference between bad and evil acts. I shall conclude this chapter with a discussion of the interpersonal dynamics of predation.

1. A note on the metaphysics of necessity and probability in relation to intentional morally-significant action:

In this thesis I argue that evil acts are intentional acts of predation. This opens a number of metaphysical concerns, in particular regarding types of actions, necessity and probability. In this section I would like to describe my metaphysical commitments and to respond to several objections to these commitments.

While there are several theorists of action that deny that actions can be grouped into action-types, notably Davidson¹⁴⁵, Goldman¹⁴⁶ and Jennifer Hornsby¹⁴⁷, whose old view stated that there are kinds of actions rather than types, it is the general consensus in the field that actions can be grouped into types. I group morally-significant actions into three distinct types, good, bad and evil and argue that evil acts differ qualitatively from either bad or good acts on the basis of their normativity and relationality.

¹⁴⁵ Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

¹⁴⁶ Alvin I. Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

¹⁴⁷ Jennifer Hornsby, *Action*, (Oxford: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980)

I argue as well that predatory acts are always intentional. The perpetrator acts for a reason and means to act that way. According to Anscombe¹⁴⁸, acting for a reason is closely related to intentionality while according to Davidson¹⁴⁹ the two conditions are identical. My definition of intentionality is Davidsonian and is supported by both Goldman¹⁵⁰ and Mele¹⁵¹. I argue against Knobe and Kelly¹⁵² who claim that it is possible to act intentionally without performing an action as an end-in-itself or as a means to further end. Since I argue that the behavioural dynamics of evil acts are qualitatively distinct from other morally-significant acts I believe that I have plausible grounds on which to assert that evil acts are a specific type of action.

My account of action is functionalist and, together with Davidson, I make a distinction between the mere rationalisation of action and its explanation. This is why I believe that in order to explain an action one has to ascertain that the actor had acted because of his or her intention. This ability to explain the action based on its motive or motives indicates, I argue with Davidson, a causal connection. This position is disputed by Abelson¹⁵³, who argues for a non-causal interpretation of action.

I make wide use of empirical evidence from the social sciences as well as from neuroscience. I believe, together with others, that the type of explanation of behaviour provided by science is sufficiently similar to the causal Davidsonian action-explanation. Both answer the question of why an actor acted as he or

¹⁴⁸ G.E.M. Anscombe, *Intention*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957)

¹⁴⁹ Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons and Causes", *Journal of Philosophy*, 60, no. 23, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 685-700.

¹⁵⁰ Alvin Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970)

¹⁵¹ Alfred Mele, "Acting for a Reason and Acting Intentionally", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 73, no. 4, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 1992) 355-374.

¹⁵² J. Knobe, & S. Kelly, "Can One Act for A Reason Without Acting Intentionally?" In Constantin Sandis, ed., *New Essays on the Explanation of Action*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 169-183.

¹⁵³ Raziell Abelson, *Persons: A Study in Philosophical Psychology*, (London: Macmillan, 1976)

she did.¹⁵⁴ I am aware that this position is disputed by other theorists of action, in particular those associated with the hermeneutic theory of action.¹⁵⁵

I avoid making arguments from potentialities, preferring instead to confine my argument to observable actions and their causal motives. When I argue that evil acts can be minimised by communities that are evil-aware I am not claiming that it is a potentiality of human communities, but rather that it is the likely outcome of a situation in which the rewards of an evil acts are low and the drawbacks are high.

I do not believe that arguments from the *metaphysics of powers*, also known as *dispositional essentialism* and *causal structuralism*, affect my claims for the validity of empirical evidence of human behaviour. The metaphysics of powers holds the view that properties or propensities are the essential source of other physical properties.

My own metaphysics is broadly Humean and is close to the positions of logical empiricism. The challenge offered by the metaphysics of powers to the validity of modal claims concerning empirical data obtained via observation at a given space and time is that according to that view the relation between properties and the properties they produce is essentialist. Instead of the patterns of contingent regularity as seen by Humean metaphysics, the metaphysics of powers posits that a qualitative character of a property type determines the casual role this property type plays, as well as the causal relations of that property's tokens towards each other.

The metaphysics of powers poses an additional challenge to modal claims with its theory of time and temporal causation. According to Michael Esfeld¹⁵⁶, 'The

¹⁵⁴ This is supported by W.D. Gean, in "Reasons and Causes", *Review of Metaphysics*, 19, 667-688, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1965), and by Raimo Tuomela, *A Theory of Social Action*, (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company 1977).

¹⁵⁵ E.g., W. Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) and R.P. Abelson "Script Processing in attitude formation and decision making", in J.S. Carroll & J.W. Payne, eds., *Cognition and Social Behavior*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1976), 33-46.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Esfeld, "Humean metaphysics versus a metaphysics of powers", in Gerhard Ernst & Andreas Hutterman eds., *Time, Chance and Reduction: Philosophical Aspects of Statistical Mechanics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7, 119-135.

metaphysics of causation in terms of powers is linked with the view of an intrinsic direction of time. The connection between a token of F and a token of G is a causal one if and only if the F produces the G. One can argue that causation thus is the basis for the direction of time: the G, being produced by the F, lies in the future of the F. Causal processes are the first and foremost example of irreversible processes: the relationship between a cause and its effect cannot be reversed. There hence is a direction of time because there are causal processes.'

However, I believe that my adherence to a broadly Humean theory of causality is defensible. I believe that the metaphysics of powers is unsuitable for the explanation of the phenomena described by the social sciences which are ipso facto modal. When for example, social science claims that adolescent males who practice competitive sports have a higher tolerance of physical violence than those who do not practice competitive sports it describes a state of affairs that can easily be different should any of the underlying conditions be different. Therefore it is possible for us to imagine a point in the future where the socialisation of young males had changed to such an extent that practice of competitive sports no longer causes them to become tolerant to physical violence. Therefore broadly Human metaphysics with its claim that what exists in the world exists due to causal equivalence, not to intrinsic or essential properties is better suited to social sciences with their descriptions of human behaviour.

2. Good, bad and evil: a redefinition of moral freedom and of the concept of evil:

I shall now address the redefinition of the concept of evil as recommended by Surin. My account of evil acts as acts of predation of one person upon another stands in clear contrast to both the Irenean and the Augustinian approaches. This definition means that I disagree with arguments from the freedom of the will that arise from the Augustinian tradition and with arguments from soul-building that arise from the Irenean tradition.

Those who argue from freedom of the will claim that God allows evil because to disallow it would undermine human ability to choose freely from two morally significant opposites, good and evil; those who argue from soul-building argue that evil acts, when they occur, are ipso facto didactic in a way other morally-significant acts are not. Arguments from both approaches presuppose a dualist moral choice, one where good and evil are the only options available and in which the one is the opposite of the other. I argue that this dualist view of options available to us is a misconception that is founded on the failure to distinguish the different mental and volitional processes involved in everyday bad choices and choices to commit an act profoundly destructive of another. These processes are qualitatively different and only by accounting for them could we define evil acts in a way that fully includes radical and gratuitous acts in all their ramifications.

Let us examine the everyday variety of morally-significant choices we undertake normatively and routinely. For example, we receive a call from a friend in need; our choice is between helping her and withholding help. To help her is, non-controversially, a good choice; to withhold help is bad but, according to my argument, not evil. Let us examine another example: on the street we are approached by a collector for a local charity. Our choice is between giving a donation and withholding it. To give a donation would be good; to withhold it would be bad but not evil.

However, occasionally some of us would make a choice that can justifiably be described as evil. Let us adjust the first example above: I receive a call from a friend in need; instead of offering to help her or declining to do so I exercise a third choice. I decide to make use of her vulnerable state in order to steal from her. In the second example, let us imagine that instead of deciding whether to give money to the charity collector or to decline to do so I decide instead to defraud the charity.

In both of these examples a third choice is being made, one that involves inflicting damage upon the person or organisation of whose vulnerability I am informed by their appeal for my help. In both of these examples I want to benefit myself at a cost of inflicting loss on another person or persons and in both cases I am using my awareness of their vulnerability, manifested by their

appeal to me for help, in order to harm them. In both cases I am going to use their appeal for help as a means of gaining access to them with the aim of harming them.

The three relational specifics described above: an awareness of vulnerability generating a decision to harm the petitioner rather than help her, the intent to benefit myself at the cost of a loss to another rather than benefit another and the use of deception as a means of obtaining my ends should alert us to the abnormality of this choice. It is abnormal by being both unusual and qualitatively different from all other relational processes. It is unusual in the statistical sense because most individuals do not make this choice most of the time and it is deviant because normative human relationality is built upon the norms of reciprocity and cooperation, not maltreatment and deception.

Let us look at another example in order to elucidate the difference between bad and evil acts: my elderly neighbour asks me to cut the grass for her. My normative, everyday choice is between good and bad, between agreeing and cutting her grass and refusing and letting her do it on her own. If I were to choose between good and evil I would be faced with a choice between a good act (cutting the grass for her) and an evil act (murdering her). The evil choice is one neither I nor the majority of human beings would ordinarily make.

I argue that instead of two morally-significant options we humans have three choices of three kinds of morally-significant acts from which to choose. I argue that evil acts are not a mere extreme form of bad ones but are in a class of their own, distinct in terms of motivation, thought processes and relational dynamics. I further believe that evil is a superfluous and abnormal option, not a normative one.

Let us now formalise the differences between these options:

- a. Good act: an intentional act that contributes to the thriving of their recipients.
- b. Bad act: an intentional act that does not contribute to the thriving of their recipients.
- c. Evil act: an intentional act of *predation* of one person upon another.

By predation I mean a dynamics of identification, pursuit and divestment that obtains between a hunter and the hunted, a perpetrator and a victim. Just as a hunter identifies a prey, choosing the easiest to pursue, pursues it and divests it from an object of value the hunter desires such as the life or property of the victim so does the predator. Later in the chapter I shall discuss the difference between human and animal predation and argue that while predation is licit among non-human animals it is neither licit nor normal among humans.

Let us now look at some examples of good, bad and evil choices so as to make clear the qualitative difference between them:

- a. To care for a child is a good act because it promotes the child's thriving.
- b. To fail to offer comfort a distressed person is a bad choice because it does not promote this person's thriving.
- c. To steal someone's car is an evil choice because it involves predation upon the car owner.

Choice (a) involves intentional helping behaviour. Choice (b) involves non-helping behaviour. Choice (c) involves a dynamic of victimising another person in order to benefit ourselves. Predation is the process of one individual victimising another; unlike the bad choice above, it does not involve a decision not to help but a decision to pursue and inflict harm. We can now say that the category of bad choices and the category of evil choices do differ significantly because they involve different mental and relational processes. An evil act is not a privation of good; the bad act is. An evil act is an intentional infliction of harm. Unlike Augustine's claim that evil lacks substance and is a mere absence of good, an act of intentional infliction of harm upon a person possesses a variety of factors that distinguish it from other acts, e.g., the behavioural dynamic of predation.¹⁵⁷

However, a proponent of the view that evil is nothing but a privation of good would argue that to inflict harm upon a person is also a form of depriving them

¹⁵⁷ I argue that predation is an extraordinary and abnormal mode of human relationality. See chapters V and VI of this thesis for further argumentation.

of good, albeit somewhat extreme. Since harming is clearly not helping it too should be classified as privation of good. To this my reply is that to deprive someone of good is a relational choice; e.g., when I decide not to help my friend or not to donate money to the charity I do not exclude these petitioners from the sphere of relational partners. I merely decide that I am unable to answer their request at the time when it is made. I may be able to help my friend next week or donate to the charity when I receive my salary; I do not exclude them from the sphere of objects of my interaction, respect and concern. When I choose to predate on them, however, I do exclude them so. I no longer think of my friend as a friend when I make up my mind to steal from her; my act will destroy our friendship but I do not care for this. I no longer think of the charity I plan to defraud as a legitimate organisation which has a call on my help; my action will ensure that I will never again care about this charity or help it. In both cases I do not deprive the friend and the charity of good; I inflict *irreversible*¹⁵⁸ harm and destroy the very possibility of doing them good. Bad acts are therefore relational; evil acts are not. If anything, they are anti-relational since they reverse and violate the very dynamics of human relationality.

I argue that harm resulting from evil acts is irreversible on a number of counts. Let us examine a case of theft to illustrate the ways in which the harm from it fails to be undone. Let us imagine that a street pickpocket steals the wallet of a woman out on a Sunday stroll with her family. For the sake of the argument let us imagine that the pickpocket is apprehended by the police and the woman's wallet is restored to her that same day with all its contents intact, so there is no material loss. On the face of it the return of the wallet should act as reversing the act of theft. However, the damage done to the woman is centered on the fact that she was attacked by another person, attacked at a time when she believed herself to be safe, perhaps her favourite time of the week, Sunday afternoon when she was out with her children. She is now aware

¹⁵⁸ I describe the inflicted damage as irreversible because a) I believe that it cannot be undone despite any healing the victim may undergo as her vision of the world had been changed in ways that cannot be undone and b) because I believe that evil acts inflict damage on the cosmic level as well as on the personal, negatively affecting history and damaging the relationship between humans and God.

that at the very time that she was at her ease another human being followed her, picking her out from a throng of Sunday strollers precisely because she was at ease, because her attention was centred on her children and not on her surroundings. The knowledge of predation of which she was made the victim changes the way she sees the world and the way she interacts with it. This knowledge cannot be undone and will remain with her for the rest of her life. This is why a common victim reaction to an assault against the person is to mistrust the outdoors and the strangers that inhabit them, with a significant proportion of persons victimised under these circumstances becoming reluctant to venture out of doors.¹⁵⁹

Evil acts of greater severity fracture the bond of trust between the victim and his or her God. The failure of God to protect the victim becomes a stumbling stone in their relationship and often becomes impassable. Loss of faith by the victim of a horrendous evil is another irreversible consequence of an exposure to an evil act.

Let us now look at bad acts and their consequences. Bad acts differ from evil acts by the absence of the dynamics of predation. There is a variety of ways in which we can maltreat or fail each other that are non-predatory. Many of these do have or can have disastrous consequences, so the category of bad acts cannot be described as light or inconsequential. In many cases the withholding of aid can have tragic outcomes; e.g., a person stricken with heart attack or stroke can easily die if no timely aid is forthcoming. The lack of financial support can stop a charitable enterprise from delivering much-needed famine relief, etc.

I argue that bad, good and evil acts belong to qualitatively different moral categories and that bad acts are therefore not a subset of evil acts but a class of acts in their own right. That is not to say, however, that bad acts and evil acts cannot co-exist or not be causally related. For example, I may engage in a bad act (to refuse to donate to a deserving charity a sum I can easily afford to

¹⁵⁹ In Chapter III of this thesis I quote and discuss at length the experiences of two victims of rape, Patricia Weaver Francisco and Patsy Kalven. The narratives of both include intense post-traumatic agoraphobia. See pp. 95-99 of this thesis.

give) after being prompted to do a good act (to donate to this charity) and proceed to an evil act (to decide to defraud the charity in question now that it was brought to my attention). A bad act can, in a variety of situations, act as a precursor to an evil act. Let us consider another example to elucidate this causal relationship and a situation that may give rise to this causality.

Let us imagine an exhausted parent unwillingly caring for a special-needs child. At some point the parent starts making bad choices, choices that do not contribute to the child's thriving, perhaps ignoring the child's calls for help or disregarding their manifest needs. As the parent's unwillingness and exhaustion accumulates so does the probability that an evil act will follow a succession of bad acts, such as hitting or actively neglecting the child. A succession of bad acts towards the child had accustomed the parent to disregard the child's thriving and so an evil act may follow. This, however, does not make bad acts a subset of evil ones. The crucial distinction here is the presence of the dynamics of predation in an evil act and its absence in a bad act.

However, there are various kinds of bad choices. These are negative relational tactics, some of which have the potential to result in injury, death or widespread destruction: failure to give aid to those in need, non-predatory hurtfulness, e.g., rudeness or hostility, inattentiveness, negligence (most forms), avoiding one's fair share of work or duty, non-predatory untruthfulness, lack of concern and care where concern and care are due.

Of the varieties of bad choices listed above negligence is particularly infamous for its potential for tragic outcomes. Untruthfulness and hurtfulness are both the cause of much misery and can occasionally slip into the causation of injury or death. Lack of concern and care is responsible for much pain and loss; we can think of old people left to lie in their beds by those whose job it is to care for them, of children left unwatched and untended by teachers or nurses, and coming to harm. Therefore we can conclude that a world in which the only choices available to us are those of good and bad would not be a world in which we are denied morally-significant choices. We do not need to have the third option, the ability to choose evil acts, in order to have morally-significant

options from which to choose freely. Therefore, conceivably God could have created a world containing only good and bad choices but without the evil ones and still have passed the test of providing us with a world that contains significant moral freedom.

However, predatory negligence, i.e., negligence committed with the intent to harm, is an evil act. Let us look at another example to further elucidate the difference between bad and evil choices.

In our first example, a father in charge of his small son turns a deaf ear to his son's appeals for attention. When the child eventually falls asleep the father goes away, locking the door on his small son as he catches a train to faraway destination. The first act, the denial of the child's appeals for attention, is bad. It does not contribute to the child's thriving and is in fact antithetical to it. However, it is the calculated act of abandoning the child without the possibility of escape or an appeal for help that constitutes an evil act. The process of predation is there, even if at first glance we find it hard to see it since both acts are clearly negative in their consequences and both qualify as child maltreatment. The father must have planned his escape while being aware of the child's dependence and inadequacy of resources to resist. Therefore, the second act qualitatively differs from the first. This example shows us additionally that not all evil acts are acts of commission; certain ones are acts of omission¹⁶⁰.

In our second example a nurse caring for terminally ill patients in a hospital is rude and unhelpful to some of the patients on her ward. One day she puts poisonously high medication dosage into their intravenous drips. The first act, that of rudeness and unhelpfulness to the patients, is bad. The second one, the act of poisoning them, is evil. The first act does not manifest the dynamics of

¹⁶⁰ Evil acts involving omission rather than commission usually are those where an action of care or support is not done by the perpetrator in order for the victim to come to harm. E.g., a stage hand failing to spread a safety net in time for a dangerous stunt, causing the actor to crash to the ground. In cases of collective evil, discussed in Chapter V of this thesis, these are acts of administrative or bureaucratic collusion with an oppressive or genocidal regime; e.g., the failure of the Estonian city councils to destroy their residency records as the 2nd corps of the German army advanced on Tallinn in August of 1941. Destruction of residency lists would have made it harder for the invaders to round up Estonia's Jews.

predation while the second does. Again, it may be hard to see the difference in kind between the two acts as both are negative in their outcomes and intentions.

Let us now discuss the power dimension inherent in evil acts. In both examples above an evil act occurs against the background of a relationship of care gone wrong, one in which the power of the participants was significantly unequal from the outset. Clearly, the power imbalance allows for the ease with which the two predatory acts to be committed. However, I argue that evil acts themselves create a power imbalance between perpetrator and victim. In the two cases above they have widened an already unequal relationship.

In another case, that of a mugger attacking a passer-by he had singled out for being an easy prey, the relationship moves rapidly from being equal – two persons who are passing each other in the street- to being profoundly unequal as soon as one of them attacks the other. An evil act, I argue, involves the creation of *an illicit and unjustifiable power relationship* between two or more individuals. It is a power relationship unjustified by any benefit to the victim and is not dependent upon her consent, i.e., it is destructive and non-consensual. Since human communities have developed a variety of power relationships, it is important that we distinguish between licit and illicit power relationships. A licit, justifiable power relationship has to fulfil a number of criteria.

1. It has to benefit the dependent party as well as the dominant one.
2. It has to be free from abuse
3. It has to involve the consent of the dependent party (and allow her to leave the relationship at a time of her choosing).
4. It is justified by the needs of the dependent party, efficiency in a temporary situation (war, work, sporting event), consent and exit routes, benevolence by the dominant party, trust by the dependent party.

It is my argument that the dynamic of predation is a unique and deviant form of a human interaction, not replicable in any other relational context. This

dynamic creates an illicit and unjustifiable power relationship between victim and perpetrator in which the power imbalance is used to the detriment of the victim. The dynamic is both abnormal (in the sense of being both deviant and uncommon) and perverse (in the sense of reversing the licit and normative processes and purposes of human relationality).

Let us examine the claim I make for the abnormality of evil. Evil acts are abnormal in two senses. The first is that they are relationally abnormal; human relationality is built on the norms of reciprocity and cooperation¹⁶¹ and a predatory act violates these norms. The second sense in which these acts are abnormal is the statistical; because human relationality is based upon reciprocity and cooperation most morally-significant acts are non-predatory.¹⁶² An additional limit upon predation is the multitude of disincentives that a peacetime human society¹⁶³ provides, including both social and legal censure.

I have shown that it is possible to discuss evil acts with the profundity and full engagement that they deserve while discussing the problem of evil. I have argued against Plantinga that it is possible to have a world that contains significant moral freedom but excludes evil acts. I have followed the recommendations of both Surin and Santrac for a redefinition of the concept of evil in way that is inclusive of radical evils. I have also proposed and defended a novel ethical theory, one that regards bad and evil choices and acts as qualitatively distinct rather than grouping them along a single continuum in order of severity.

¹⁶¹ The argument that humans have evolved to cooperate and reciprocate is mainstream in both evolutionary psychology and anthropology. Together with many other evolutionary psychologists Michael Tomasello relates both human cognition and language to the norms of a reciprocal, cooperative culture. See the following: Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008) and Michael Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014)

¹⁶² I make this claim in full awareness that for many of us predatory acts are a daily reality. This is the case for both victims and perpetrators of enduring abuse, slavery and warfare. However, all these situations are ipso facto violations of human relationality as they are violent, non-reciprocal and non-cooperative.

¹⁶³ I make a distinction between a peacetime and wartime societies because it is often the case that disincentives for evil acts are eroded in human societies undergoing warfare and civil anarchy.

Chapter III

Properties and Dynamics of Evil Acts.

In this chapter I shall follow on the suggestions made in Chapter One of this thesis and expand the discussion of the differences between good, bad and evil categories of moral choices. I also seek to distinguish between the problem of evil and the problem of suffering and argue that the former must not be reduced to the latter. I shall discuss the uniqueness of evil acts and end the chapter by introducing a concept borrowed from astronomy, event horizon, to describe their unmatched and often irredeemable destructiveness.

In Chapter Two I argued that good, bad and evil acts and their attendant volitional choices constitute separate and clearly defined categories. I have argued against the traditional philosophical perspective that pairs good and evil choices as natural moral and ontological opposites and argued that the opposite of a good act is a bad act while evil has no such natural opposite.

In this chapter I shall define all three categories and discuss in detail the qualitative difference between the categories of bad and evil acts and choices.

If we posit that an evil act is merely a particularly severe kind of a bad act we then place it at the extreme end of a moral continuum that starts with negative but relatively mild acts and choices. The common feature all the acts and choices on this continuum have in common is that they are negative in their impact on others. Not all acts and choices that are negative in their impact share the same motivation and process for the agent or outcomes. It is within the sequence of negative act or choice that, I argue, lays the fundamental difference between the distinct categories of bad and evil acts.

Let us now turn to the task of defining the categories of good, bad and evil acts and choices. Following this I shall discuss the qualitative distinction between the category of evil and the category of bad. I shall look at a number of other definitions of evil and compare them to the definition presented in this

chapter. I shall then discuss the difference between evil and suffering and their attendant problems. With this accomplished. The end of this chapter will look at the dynamics of predation.

1. The Moral Psychology of Evil Acts: Definitions and Arguments.

In Chapter II I have described an act of predation by one human against another as an evil act.

To qualify as an evil act an act has to meet that meets the following conditions:

- a. The act is predatory, i.e., involves a perpetrator in a process of preying upon the victim with the intention of plunder, i.e. the expropriation of a victim's natural attribute(s): life, freedom, bodily integrity, property, etc.

An evil act may be either aggressive or non-aggressive and may be overt or tacit. Aggressive acts are those involving violence, be it physical, sexual or emotional; non-aggressive acts are those where the intention of plunder is achieved by means of fraud, deceit or neglect. An overt act involves the removal of those natural attributes the victim already has; a tacit act involves the removal of those attributes that are due to the victim. An example of the former would be defamation, an attack on an individual's good name; an example of the latter would be an act of child neglect or child abandonment.¹⁶⁴

- b. Is intentional.

¹⁶⁴ To neglect or abandon a person who is entitled to our care, either by nature of their state (young, ill, vulnerable) or by nature of his or her relationship to us (being in our care, trusting us with his or her provision) involves the withdrawal of natural attributes that are due to the victim but have not yet been granted, such as care and maintenance.

I argue predation to be the essence of an evil act for the following reasons:

When one individual intentionally acts in a way that is harmful and destructive of another it involves a specific relationality between the subject and the object of this action. In order to harm another we have to choose this individual, distinguishing him or her from all others. E.g., in the case of robbery the choice is made on the basis of vulnerability; the old, the young and the infirm are at greater risk from a robber than others. Having chosen our intended victim we now have to follow or stalk him or her in order to increase the chances that our attack bears fruit. When we are most confident of our success we strike, plundering our victim in the attribute we are after. These steps, I argue, are the stages of predation.

Predation is a process that involves perpetrator and victim in a particular relational dynamic that stands sharply against the normal relational processes involved in communal human life. Predation does not have to be either violent or personal. Many instances of predation involve no violence and are perpetrated upon persons who are strangers to the perpetrator. This avoids a narrowness of definition that would encompass a particular kind of destructive interpersonal dynamic (e.g., violence or large-scale atrocity) to the exclusion of others.

In Chapter Two I have in addition defined good and bad acts in order to place my discussion of my evil-as-predation definition into the context of a moral theory. I shall now discuss and enlarge these definitions:

I define a good act is as following:

*A good act is any act that is intentional and that promotes the thriving of its object.*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ I limit the definition to human relations, but not out of lack of concern for the human interactions with non-human animals. My rationale here is that relationships between humans impose obligations that interactions with non-human animals do not. Our moral obligation toward non-human animals is to treat them kindly and it emerges from the strictly non-symmetric relationships we have with them. On the other hand, human relationships are symmetric and involve the recognition of others as fellow humans, rather than as sentient beings.

Good acts promote human thriving by a multiplicity of means. They may involve such motives as duty, love, group membership or empathy. Some of these acts are relational and take place among persons united by social or familial ties or by the ties of time and place. Others are acts that are non-relational, i.e., they exist outside the scope of personal relationships¹⁶⁶. Good acts can be both individual and systemic¹⁶⁷.

I define a bad act as follows:

A bad act is any intentional and relational act that fails to promote the thriving of its object.

Bad acts are acts that affect the object negatively but which do not manifest the dynamics of predation.

For example, let us imagine that I am about to board a train to attend an important interview. Just as the train pulls into the station a fellow-passenger, a middle-aged man, cries out in pain, clutches at his chest and slumps to the ground. I, trained in first aid, have good reasons to suspect that he is suffering a heart attack and is in danger for his life. I now face two choices: I can either give aid to the man and miss the train or withhold aid from him and board the train instead. If I give aid to the ill man then my act is to be classified as good. If I board the train instead and withhold aid from him then my act has to be classified as bad, albeit not evil. Let us look at the reasons for this classification:

Assessing the giving of aid as good is uncontroversial. While one may argue about whether the action lacked all traces of egotism or not¹⁶⁸, it is significantly beneficial to its recipient. The fact that it involved a significant loss to me – I would miss my important interview and all possible benefits contingent upon it – should go towards assessing my action as predominantly selfless. However, the moral status of my alternative decision to hurry to the

¹⁶⁶ Acts intended to benefit whole humanity or future generations fall into this category.

¹⁶⁷ Organisations and hierarchies that promote human thriving.

¹⁶⁸ E.g., Schopenhauer defines good acts as only those that are free from all egotistic motives; see Mannion, Gerald (2003) *Schopenhauer, Religion and Morality: the Humble Path to Ethics*, Aldershot: Ashgate. Other ethicists may allow a degree of egotistic motivation in an act they classify as good, for example the utilitarians.

interview and withhold aid from the stricken man is more complex. In this case I do nothing to the man on the ground yet my decision and its attendant non-action clearly have a moral status since both involve morally significant decision-making and consequences.

If we assume that there exists a universal obligation to grant aid whenever it is feasible to do so then I clearly violate it. The consequences of lack of aid are clearly severe since the ill man may die if left without assistance. Yet I shall not classify this decision as evil because, despite its severe consequences, it does not involve me and the ill man in the dynamics of predation.

Let us now change the train-station scenario and imagine that, as the train stops at the station and I contemplate the stricken man, now insensate on the ground, I do not board the train right away but rather approach him, bend over him as if to assist, while using his helpless state in order to reach into his jacket pocket and pull out his wallet. I then board the train to my interview with the stolen wallet.

Now my act can be classified as evil. I have involved myself, now the perpetrator, and the ill man, now the victim, in the dynamics of predation. I have identified and assessed him as a possible victim; this assessment was triggered by the very fact of his vulnerability. Seeing him become ill and fall down made me note him as possible prey; had he remained well that would not be the case. Having identified him as an easy victim – prone on the ground, unconscious and therefore unable to either resist me or identify me later – I then proceed to stalk him by bending over him, pretending to render aid. This is a deceptive action that brings me into contact with my victim while misleading any possible observer as to my actions. My next step is to attack the victim. On this occasion the attack involves no violence since the victim is unable to resist; however, it does involve a violation as I open his jacket, reach into the inner pocket for his wallet and appropriate it. Now all that is left for me to do is to make my escape; I accomplish it by boarding the train.

The dynamic of predation is clear to see. I and the victim have gone through the three stages of predation: a) victim identification, b) pursuit and c) attack.

It is this dynamic that qualifies my act as evil while its absence qualifies my decision to withhold aid in the previous scenario as bad but not evil.

In addition to withholding aid other categories of bad choices concern lack of cooperation with others when such cooperation is called for. Bad acts can be by both omission and commission. A passive bad act is one that involves the denial of aid or cooperation when these are called for; an active bad act is one where refusal of cooperation is generic and is made before a particular request for cooperation is made. For example, a person who is generally rude and hostile in her demeanour is acting badly. She does not predate upon others but is hostile and unwelcoming of them, causing pain and disappointment to those who come into contact with her.

Bad acts can have significant and tragic outcomes. In the scenario above the stricken man risks death due to absence of timely aid. Hostile and uncooperative actions cause widespread pain and misery. It will be wrong of us to regard them as insignificant or as lacking in emotional or cognitive depth since such acts involve both premeditation and the full continuum of emotions from indifference to burning aggression. In the following section I shall compare my definition of evil with those preceding my formulation while providing relevant argumentation.

2. Comparison of evil-as-predation with other definitions of evil:

The definition of evil offered in this chapter is novel. Let us see how it compares with previous definitions in the treatment of the problem of evil.

The definition of *Evil as a privation of the good stems from Aristotle* and is reiterated by St Augustine¹⁶⁹, St Thomas Aquinas¹⁷⁰ and Maimonides¹⁷¹. In

¹⁶⁹ St Augustine & J.F. Shaw (trans.), *Saint Augustine of Hippo: The Enchiridion*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012) 'There is good reason, therefore, to praise an uncorrupted thing, and if it were indeed an incorruptible thing which could not be destroyed, it would doubtless be all the more worthy of praise. When, however, a thing is corrupted, its corruption is an evil because it is, by just so much, a privation of the good. Where there is no privation of the good, there is no evil.'

¹⁷⁰ See *Summa Theologiae*, I, 49. Available from www.newadvent.org/summa/

¹⁷¹ See Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 2000), 10, 22.

contemporary literature it is adopted by Simon Baron-Cohen who, in his book, *Zero Degrees of Empathy* (2012)¹⁷² suggests exchanging the 'unscientific' term 'evil' for the supposedly more 'scientific' 'empathy erosion'.

There are two variants of this argument: one is that an evil act is manifested by the deprivation of the good by the perpetrator from the victim. For example, we can describe one man striking another as depriving his victim of the respect or kindness that are due to him ipso facto. This version of the argument from deprivation of the good allows us to recognise that the way in which the victim was treated by the perpetrator is wrong and that the victim is entitled to feelings of pain and grievance following the attack. However, this argument does not allow us to distinguish between the action of one man striking another and one man refusing the other's request to help him carry a heavy load, for example.

The other version of the argument from the privation of the good involves claims that the privation of the good inherent in an evil act does not exist only in the interaction between perpetrator and victim but in the perpetrator himself¹⁷³. This version of the argument claims that this privation of the good or the proper in the mind or behaviour of the perpetrator is the cause of the evil act. According to this argument the perpetrator lacks the prerequisites for goodness and therefore deprives others of the good treatment they should have.

When adherents of this view defend their position they tend to depict evil acts as deriving from some emotional or cognitive deficiency, a lack of some fundamental human faculty, be it moral reasoning or mental health. This reductionism does not account for a variety of evil acts performed by persons not deficient affectively or mentally.

¹⁷² Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Understanding of Cruelty and Kindness*, (London: Penguin, 2012)

¹⁷³ See Mary Midgley, *Wickedness*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2001), 2, 17.

Ethicists debate the nature of empathy as well as its role in moral reasoning, education and behaviour. Those who believe empathy, most commonly defined as the ability to identify with the feelings and concerns of others, in particular with their concerns as to their fundamental well-being, argue that empathy is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for sympathy, the ability to identify to feel concern and mercy towards others. Sympathy is widely regarded by ethicists¹⁷⁴ as a pre-requisite for helping behaviours¹⁷⁵.

The debate among ethicists is between those who regard empathy as morally significant and those sceptical of the value of empathy as a condition of either sympathy or moral conduct. For example, Simmonds (2014)¹⁷⁶ defends the status of empathy as a necessary and sufficient condition for sympathy, as well as its value in the development of moral character. From among the sceptics Stocker (1996¹⁷⁷) argues that empathy is neither necessary nor sufficient for sympathy, a point supported by both Goldie (1996)¹⁷⁸ and Nussbaum (2002)¹⁷⁹.

Among the psychologists, Baron-Cohen¹⁸⁰ (whose work on autism is discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis) attempts to reduce cruel and sadistic behaviour to psychopathy, a psychological disorder formally known as the Anti-Social Personality Disorder (ASPD),¹⁸¹ characterised by the apparent inability of the

¹⁷⁴ See Aaron Simmonds, In "Defense of the Moral Significance of Empathy", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 17, 1, 97-111, (New York: Springer, 2014).

¹⁷⁵ Where empathy is the ability to imagine what the other feels and experience these feelings vicariously, sympathy is concern for another, with or without vicarious experience. E.g., I can imagine the pain felt by a wounded deer and so feel empathy for it and I can pity the wounded deer without imagining its pain.

¹⁷⁶ Aaron Simmonds (2014) "In Defense of the Moral Significance of Empathy," above.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Stocker, *Valuing Emotions*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

¹⁷⁸ Peter Goldie, *The Emotions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

¹⁷⁹ Martha Nussbaum, M (2003) *Upheavals of the Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁸⁰ Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Understanding of Cruelty and Kindness*, (London: Penguin, 2012).

sufferer to feel empathy for others¹⁸². Baron-Cohen even claims that Nazi doctors who had used Jewish and POW concentration camp inmates as subjects in their experiments were primarily motivated not by cruelty but by scientific rigour and a kind of generic humanism prevalent among scientists who hope that their work will eventually benefit humanity¹⁸³; they were not cruel, they merely lacked empathy.

Describing hearing during a lecture on human physiology that nearly all data on human adaptation to extreme temperatures was collected by Nazi scientists at the Dachau concentration camp where they performed immersion experiments on prisoners, forcibly immersing them in vats with freezing water, Baron-Cohen writes: 'These examples are particularly shocking because they involve educated doctors and scientists (professions we are brought up to trust) performing inhumane experiments or operations. We have to assume these doctors were not being cruel for the sake of it. I (generously) assume the scientists doing the immersion experiments wanted to contribute to medical knowledge, to know, for example, how to help victims rescued after being shipwrecked in icy seas. Even the Nazi doctors who had sewn poor Mrs Goldblatt's¹⁸⁴ hands back to front were not (I assume) motivated to do cruel things for cruelty's sake: they too were presumably following their scientific impulse, wanting to understand how to test the limits of micro-surgical procedures.'¹⁸⁵

Baron-Cohen does not consider that cruel acts can be committed for reasons others than for cruelty's sake; he seems unaware of the fact that the Dachau

15 The epidemiology of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) in the general population is between 2 and 3%. See Moran, P (1999), "The Epidemiology of Antisocial Personality Disorder", *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, (New York: Springer, 1999) , 34(5), 231-42.

¹⁸³ Baron-Cohen (2012), 2.

¹⁸⁴ The mother of an ex-girlfriend of Baron-Cohen's father, mentioned on the previous page of *Zero Degrees*: 'He had been introduced to the mother and was shocked to discover that her hands were reversed. Nazi scientists had severed Mrs Goldblatt's hands, switched them around and sewn them on again so that, if she put her hands out palms down, her thumbs were on the outside and her little fingers were on the inside.' Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Zero Degrees*, 2.

doctors he depicts as misguided humanists animated by a form of Enlightenment humanism were veterans of the Action T4¹⁸⁶, the German euthanasia programme, and were responsible for the mass assassinations of both children and adult patients of German and Austrian mental wards, and the disabled years before they came to Dachau. He equally seems to be unaware of the history of abuse in the medical profession.¹⁸⁷

Both his argument and those of the ethicists who regard empathy as the touchstone of non-abusive behaviour do not address those destructive and cruel acts performed by perpetrators who evidence both empathy and sympathy for those they attack. When we hear of such cases we find that many of our closely-held assumptions about the motivations for human actions and the relationship between feelings and actions are challenged. For example, when we hear of a mother who killed her child before taking her own life we find it hard to reconcile the killing with the accounts of her as a caring mother. We believe that a relationship as permeated with empathy as that between a mother and her small child should be a guarantee against destructiveness, not an arena for it. Yet such assumptions are wrong; it is possible for an act of predation to occur where a perpetrator does experience intense empathy for his or her victim, yet proceeds to hurt them despite it.

To further pursue this point, let us examine a case of a WWII war crime involving many participants, one in which the perpetrators wept as they shot down their victims in a clearing outside a forest.

The crime in question is a massacre committed at dawn of 13 July 1942 outside the village of Josefow, 60 miles south of Lublin, in occupied Poland. It was

¹⁸⁶ A secret programme of eugenically-motivated forced euthanasia in Nazi Germany, in operation from September 1939 until May 1945. Casualties are estimated at upward of 270,000 persons. For more information see Proctor, Robert N. (1988). *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*, Harvard, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 191.

¹⁸⁷ E.g., Frances Blunden & Jo Nash, (1999). "Tackling abuse of patients and clients - the work of POPAN". *The Journal of Adult Protection* 1: 42; and Britton, Ann Hartwell (1988). "Sexual Abuse in the Professional Relationship". *Hamline Law Review* 11: 247–80. All such abuse involves the betrayal of trust between patient and medical professional as well as the abuse of power within this unequal relationship.

carried out by Reserve Police Battalion 101, commanded by Major Wilhelm Trapp, affectionately called by his men 'Papa Trapp' for his kindness to them. Major Trapp was in tears when he explained that the battalion's assignment was to execute all the Jewish women, children and old men of the village after men of working age were shipped off to a labour camp. During the ensuing massacre Trapp was seen in tears by multiple witnesses. He fulfilled his promise, relieving of duty those of his men who said that they could not carry on with their task. Many of them were in tears as well. However, by 9pm that day all the approximately 1500 Jews remaining in Josefow were executed.¹⁸⁸

The perpetrators of this massacre had evidenced not merely empathy for their victims but sympathy as well. They had little enthusiasm for their task and were singularly ill-prepared for it since they had neither the training, nor the experience nor the ideological fervour of the SS. Neither were they career soldiers accustomed to violence. They were mostly middle-aged¹⁸⁹, married and fathers to children¹⁹⁰.

In the course of the massacre many perpetrators evidenced extreme distress: 'I then run into the woods, vomited and sat down against a tree. (...) My nerves were totally finished.'¹⁹¹ Says another perpetrator: 'I myself took part in ten shootings, in which I had to shoot men and women. I simply could not shoot at people anymore...'¹⁹² Many men intentionally shot past their victims, forcing their sergeants to administer the killing shot. Upon return to their barracks one reserve policeman stated: 'I'd go crazy if I had to do that again.'¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ See Browning, Christopher R. (1992), *German Memory, Judicial Interrogation and Historical Reconstruction: Writing Perpetrator History from Postwar Testimony*, in *Saul Friedlander, ed., Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution* (1992), (Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 1992), 22-24.

¹⁸⁹ Average age for this battalion was 39 years. Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Some men have used their status as fathers and husbands to ask to be relieved of their duty in the course of the massacre.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

It is clear that whatever caused these reserve policemen to massacre the Jews of Josefov was not a lack of either empathy or sympathy. I suggest that it was rather the motivation provided by the relationships among the men, their commanding officer Major Trapp and their identification and general acceptance of the goals and beliefs of their country and its army.

The dynamics of military male bonding is evident in the accounts of the event. For example, once the massacre was in process group dynamics pitted those who have participated in the shooting against those who had not: 'It could not be avoided that one or another of my comrades noticed that I was not going to the executions to fire away at the victims. They showered me with remarks such as "shithead" and "weakling" to express their disgust.'¹⁹⁴ The dynamics of male bonding and the control mechanisms inherent in those dynamics took over, to ensure that those reservists who refused to participate were given the extreme penalty of contempt from their friends and comrades-in-arms. When several hours into the massacre another reserve battalion company was called in to assist with the shooting and Second Company shooters were told to accompany the new detachment into the woods and join them, one of the sergeants once again repeated the offer to relieve of duty those men who wanted it. This time no one took his offer.¹⁹⁵ To do so would let the Second Company down, making them appear to be weaklings in front of the Third Company.

The strong bond of trust and even love that united the men to their commanding officer, a man they affectionately and tellingly nicknamed 'Papa', was another important motivator. The massacre was commanded by him; when he assembled the men earlier to give them their orders he had tears in his eyes and spoke in a choking voice. He was as upset by this unpleasant assignment as they were and this made the men sympathise with him and not

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 25.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 24.

wish to let him down. Trapp was a legitimate source of authority, a leader accepted by the group long before the events in Josefow.

Neither should one discount the importance of ideology. Giving his speech to the battalion, Major Trapp told his men that, if it were to make their unpalatable task easier for them to perform, they should contemplate that in Germany bombs were falling down on women and children, that Jews had instigated the American boycott against Germany and that the Jews of Josefow supported the partisans.¹⁹⁶

The men of Police Reserve Battalion 101 did not arrive to the woods around Josefow free from the relationality that bound them to their nation, its war effort and its extremist ideology¹⁹⁷. It is therefore highly probable that one of the motives for the massacre was the men's agreement with the statements expressed by Major Trapp in his briefing to them, statements reflective of the standard Nazi propaganda. The men did not disbelieve the claims that Jews were waging war against Germany, that it was their fault that bombs were falling on women and children at home and that the Jews of Josefow have given help to the partisans. If they had they would have challenged Trapp; under these circumstances their silence and acquiescence to Trapp's orders signifies belief.

Eventually, as is the case with many massacres perpetrated by military or quasi-military units, the Josefow massacre became a powerful bonding experience for the men who participated in it, an induction into the hyper-masculinism of a genocidal war¹⁹⁸. Police Reserve Battalion 101 went on to participate in the Final Solution for many months to come.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 22.

¹⁹⁷ Genocidal ideologies tend to be paranoid, preparing the ground for acts of violence against the target groups by claiming that the group is attacking, or is about to attack the perpetrators. Such was the case with the anti-Tutsi Hutu propaganda in Rwanda as well as with the anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda. See Philip Verwimp, *Peasants in Power: The Political Economy of Development and Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Springer, 2013) , 8.

Having noted that the Josefow perpetrators did not suffer from a lack of empathy towards their victims, let us now consider if it is be appropriate to describe the massacre itself as a privation of the good. I would argue that to describe it as a mere privation of the good is both a profound understatement and a category error.

To say that the Jews of Josefow have died due to an absence of the good or to describe the deaths themselves as an absence of the good is a severe understatement. To argue that the genocidal violence that claimed their lives was an absence of kindness or goodness would be tantamount to claiming that the slaves on the cotton plantations of the ante-bellum American South had suffered from racial discrimination. To argue that the deaths themselves were a privation of the good is an understatement on an equal scale.

In addition, the claim that these deaths were caused by absence of some form of good would be to deny the causal relationship between the components of the massacre and its outcome. That which allows a predatory act to occur is part of the dynamics of predation; in this case it was manifested by the ideology held by the men, their identities, their feelings of trust and love for this commanding officer, peer pressure and the social mediation of extreme violence; these are not absences of good quality but rather negative and dangerous facts that, taken together, formed the dynamic of mass predation that had culminated in the massacre in the forest.

For these reasons I do not regard evil as the privation of the good, be the good in question good treatment by others or inherent goods such as life. In my classification it is bad acts, rather than evil ones, that involve privation or withholding of the good. I also reject arguments from empathy or the lack of it

¹⁹⁸ For a discussion of the hyper-masculinism of the Nazi regime and its consequences for the Final Solution see Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2003) p. 40. See also Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, (London: Basic Books, 1988), 20.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 25.

as a sub-species of the argument from the privation of the good, as simplistic and failing the test of real events and their relational dynamics.

An evil act impacts upon the world in a different and much more active fashion than the mere withholding of the good; it is destructive in a way that a mere withholding of the good cannot achieve *ipso facto*. When we classify evil acts as extreme examples of the bad we fail to account for their radical destructiveness and explain why acts at the lower end of our imaginary continuum of negative acts do not bear the imprint of extreme destructiveness while those on the higher end do.²⁰⁰

Claims that evil acts stem from either a form of ignorance or a form of egoism have a long pedigree in philosophical literature. The argument from ignorance is the first attributed to Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias* where Socrates forcefully argues that no one willingly chooses to do evil. This definition is offered by Kant in his discussion of radical evils. According to him it is possible to do evil by subordinating moral law to self-interest²⁰¹. There are a number of modern variants of this argument²⁰².

Such arguments fail to address the intentional and rational character of many evil acts as well as their relationalities and their give-and-take, a process that I name relational economy and discuss later in this chapter. Faced with the apparent rationality and coherence of perpetrators and their reasoning as well as with the complex relationalities with which evil acts are embedded, advocates of this view find themselves trapped in an informal fallacy of having

²⁰⁰ E.g., the continuum model fails to account for why telling a lie about my whereabouts last week is not radically destructive of others while an act of killing or wounding is.

²⁰¹ Religion By The Bounds of Mere Reason

²⁰² Modern proponents of this definition are Mary Midgley and Hannah Arendt. I address Arendt's arguments in Chapter Four of this thesis. For Midgley see Midgley, Mary (2001), *Wickedness: A Philosophical Essay*, London: Routledge.

to refine further and further that elusive epistemic faculty that the perpetrator is alleged to lack.²⁰³

The argument that evil acts arise from selfishness is confronted with the category of undeniably intentional and destructive acts that have selfless motives²⁰⁴. For example, Major Wilhelm Trapp, the officer commanding over the Josefov massacre mentioned earlier, explained to his men that the unpleasant task they were about to carry out will benefit their country. A terrorist or an anarchist may carry out a bombing, including a suicide bombing, while sincerely believing that the act is benefiting the cause he or she believes in and therefore stands above the judgement of his or her individual conscience or the moral standards of others. A father administering harsh physical punishment to his son may believe that he is doing it for the boy's own good.

This brings us to the question of whether or not an evil act can be perpetrated unawares. I argue that this is impossible since the intentionality required for an evil act precludes lack of awareness in the perpetrator. Since the education for cooperation and non-destructiveness forms such an early and fundamental part of human upbringing across human cultures we cannot escape either intentionality or awareness of our acts when we commit an act of predation against another person. What is often taken for a lack of moral awareness or moral 'stupidity' are the justifications offered by the perpetrator or others on his or her behalf after the act of predation. For example, perpetrators of genocide and other administrative evils often claim that they merely followed orders from above in the chain of command, while rapists claim that the victim wanted to have sexual intercourse with them and burglars claim that they

²⁰³ This is known as the 'No true Scotsman' fallacy, an ad hoc attempt to retain a universal claim ('no Scotsman would do such a thing') when challenged by a counter-example by modifying the subject of the assertion rather than rejecting the original universal claim or denying the counter-example: ('No true Scotsman would do such a thing'). See Anthony Flew, *Thinking about Thinking: Do I Sincerely Want to Be Right?* (London: Collins Fontana, 1975), 47.

²⁰⁴ I would argue that even an act apparently selfless such as of the suicide bomber who lays down his life in the service of her cause has strong relational rewards, in this case identity creation and a strong sense of self-righteousness, however brief their duration.

were driven by poverty. Such claims are often made in good faith and should be examined for the role they play in the intentionality of the crime.

When we commit acts that go against our moral norms and which, by their committal, jeopardise our positive moral status and self-regard we tend to activate psychological defence mechanisms whose aim is to protect our conscious minds from the consequences of our actions. The main defence mechanisms, first described by Sigmund Freud, are denial, displacement, projection, repression, intellectualisation, rationalisation, sublimation and compensation. For example, a murderer may bring himself to believe that his intended victim is angry with him and intends to kill him. This belief allows the murderer to maintain his positive self-regard since an act of ultimate violence is now transformed into an allegedly legitimate act of self-defence.

Perpetrators of genocide often use intellectualisation and rationalisation to justify their acts. For example, the historian Saul Friedländer²⁰⁵ discusses what he calls 'redemptive anti-Semitism' in evidence in Germany during the 19th and early part of the 20th century as a main motivation behind the persecution and eventual genocide of the Jews by the Nazi regime.²⁰⁶ This was a widely-held conviction that Jews were damaging Germany by infusing its culture, gene pool and politics with a foreign and inferior influence, a conviction that was adopted and promoted by influential intellectuals of the time.²⁰⁷ Therefore, argues Friedländer, the Nazi persecution of the Jews had tremendous popular appeal

²⁰⁵ Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and The Jews Volume I: The Years of Persecution 1933-1939*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997)

²⁰⁶ 'Redemptive anti-Semitism was born from the fear of racial degeneration and the religious belief in redemption. The main cause of degeneration was the penetration of the Jews into the German body politic, into German society, and into the German bloodstream. Germanhood and the Aryan world were on the path to perdition if the struggle against the Jews was not joined; this was to be a struggle to the death. Redemption would come as liberation from the Jews – as their expulsion, possibly their annihilation.' (Friedländer, 87).

²⁰⁷ Friedländer names the philosopher Eugen Dühring (1833-1921), the orientalist and Biblical scholar Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891) as well as the Bayreuth circle of intellectuals and artists led by the composer and polemicist Richard Wagner (1813-1883) as the main sources and promoters of a 'völkish' ideology with its potent combination of anti-Semitic rural Romanticism and anti-Judaic redemption theology (Friedländer, 87-88).

and was accepted with equanimity by wide swathes of the German population of that time.

Let us examine the credibility of this 'redemptive' outlook. According to Friedlander the Jewish population of Germany never exceeded 3% and most emancipated Jews were profoundly patriotic. Given this the 'redemptive' outlook is clearly irrational and therefore is, in all probability, a collective, culturally-specific defence mechanism that had emerged in 19th century Germany in response to the hardship of rapid industrialisation and the emancipation of Jews. With the rise of the Nazi party to power this defence mechanism deepened to justify persecution and eventual destruction. Let us recall, in this context, the rallying speech given by Major Trapp to Reserve Police Battalion 101.²⁰⁸ The ridiculousness of the assertion that the women, children and old men of Josefow deserved to die because bombs were falling on Germany and the American boycott of German goods must have been initiated by the American Jewish community is immediately apparent. The only reason it was so avidly adopted by both Trapp and his men is because they all urgently wanted to believe it. They were about to commit an act of mass murder and they sincerely needed a reason to make it palatable.

Therefore I believe that it is important not to be misled by the justifications offered by the perpetrators into asserting that such beliefs have deprived the perpetrator of either agency or intentionality. Hence Simon Baron-Cohen is wrong to describe the doctors of Dachau as misguided humanists and Hannah Arendt is wrong to describe Nazi bureaucrats as unthinking order-followers.

Let us now look at the argument that evil consists in the degradation of one person by another, advanced by Marilyn McCord Adams²⁰⁹, encounters challenges of a different nature. McCord Adams uses it in the sense of destruction of the human personality occasioned by cruel and inhumane

²⁰⁸ See p. 73 of this thesis.

²⁰⁹ This argument is discussed in greater detail in Chapter I of this thesis, starting on p.37.

treatment²¹⁰ and this usage does capture certain evil acts, in particular those involving direct, personal acts of destruction. However, it too leaves outside its scope acts that can be profoundly destructive yet are neither sadistic nor personal, such as acts of systemic evil described in Chapter IV of this thesis.

In addition, degradation is a highly subjective concept that fails to capture the context in which a given act is perpetrated. There is a category of cases that involve degradation that will not be regarded as non-controversially evil. For example, a convict sentenced to long-term imprisonment for crimes against humanity may claim that being put in jail for a long period of time is degrading to him as a person, yet given the context of his imprisonment (a socially-mandated penalty for a proven crime) most of us will be unwilling to put this case in the same category as an unprovoked and unmerited degradation he had visited on a concentration camp inmate over whom he had formerly held the power of life and death. A bishop publicly denounced for covering up cases of child abuse in his diocese may too claim that such exposure and the unrestrained public censure carried in its wake are degrading to him as a person. However, most of us will regard such public exposure as both merited and appropriate and will not put this case in the same category as the degradation inflicted upon the children in his care by abusers whom he knowingly failed to stop.

The definition suggested by Claudia Card, evil as atrocity²¹¹, suffers from a number of limitations. Card has two factors that distinguish evil acts from other wrongs: a) the presence of foreseeable intolerable harm and b) culpable wrongdoing by the perpetrator. The examples used by Card - mass rape in wartime, domestic violence and situations in which victims are deliberately made to perform evil acts upon others, such as in a concentration camp where

²¹⁰ McCord Adams uses examples where the outcomes for the victim are drastic: insanity, such as cases of prolonged sexual abuse and imprisonment and death, in cases such as genocides. Her concept of degradation is relational as it includes both the destruction of the victim and the cruel and unusual treatment by the perpetrator. See McCord Adams, Marilyn, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (2006), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²¹¹ Claudia Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

some prisoners are made into guards over others – all involve evil acts that are interpersonal in nature, involving face-to-face contact of victims and perpetrators.

Card's definition discounts the perpetrator's motives and intentions²¹² in favour of the concept of culpability and wrongdoing. We know nothing of the perpetrator's relationality, the reasons for the atrocity he or she performs. Given that the evil act is initiated by the perpetrator and is preceded by the decision to commit the act (the act would not occur were it not for the perpetrator and his decision to commit it) such omission is profoundly problematic. The perpetrator is the originator of the atrocity; unless we know what caused the perpetrator to commit it we remain in the dark about why the atrocity happened and what could have been done to prevent it.

All the categories quoted by Card involve classes of perpetrators who have undergone processes that taught them to dehumanise the victims they were yet to encounter.²¹³ The intention to harm predates the encounter with the victim, often by many months or years. That in itself should alert Card to the need to account for the perpetrator's thought processes, in particular the formation of the intention and readiness to harm. In addition, the absence of intentionality will seriously affect any claims of culpable wrongdoing since the intent to harm is at the basis of culpability.

Having reviewed rival theories of evil I shall now return to my defining of evil as the process of predation and present the arguments to support it.

3. Evil as predation: arguments and antecedents.

²¹² Ibid, p. 98.

²¹³ Soldiers in wartime are often trained to dehumanise the enemy, including enemy civilians; concentration camp guards will be trained likewise, more thoroughly than soldiers. Men who commit acts of domestic violence usually harbour misogyny long before they encounter their victim and often belong to social networks of men who either justify or disregard domestic violence committed by the perpetrator.

a. Implicit Kantian Antecedents:

Clear philosophical pedigree is discerned in my definition of evil. My understanding of the moral relationship that binds individuals is Kantian in nature. If evil is the predation of one human upon another then it is a specific, extreme violation of the categorical imperative²¹⁴. The first version²¹⁵ of the categorical imperative enjoins us to act only if we believe that the maxim of our action should become a universal law. In my account the perpetrators are clearly in violation of this principle, since they are treating victims in a way that they themselves would refuse to be treated. The second version²¹⁶ of the categorical imperative tells us to avoid treating people as means to an end, but only as ends. It is evident that in my definition the perpetrator treats the victim as a means to an end.

Let us note that in the course of regular human relationships we often treat those to whom we are not bound by bonds of intimacy or trust as means to some or other end. When a patient visits a dentist the latter is merely the means to an end for the patient and vice versa. The patient's aim is the maintenance of dental health and that of the dentist is the maintenance of his or her dental practice through its income. The fact that the relationship is means-oriented, however, involves neither predation, nor dehumanisation nor the despoliation of one person by another.

At certain stages certain intimate relationships can have a means-only orientation for one of the participants. During the early years of the mother-child relationship, for example, the child regards the mother as the provider of food, comfort and warmth rather than as a person in her own right; indeed

²¹⁴ Kant, Immanuel, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), Mary Gregor & Jens Timmermann, trans., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²¹⁵ Ibid, 5.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 21.

research and theory in developmental psychology suggest that during the first years of its life the child does not perceive the mother as a being separate from itself²¹⁷.

However, as the very specific nature of these relationships illustrates we do not routinely treat those around us - either those we are intimate with or perfect strangers - as means to an end. Nor do we routinely regard those around us as inhuman, devoid of such entitlements and protections as their status implies. Therefore when one individual engages in an evil act against another the categorical imperative is violated in the following fashion:

- a) The perpetrator treats the victim as solely a means towards an end
- b) The perpetrator predates upon the victim.
- c) The perpetrator inflicts damage upon the victim.
- d) The end the perpetrator wishes to obtain can only be gained by despoiling the victim of a natural attribute(s).

Hence an evil act, defined as predation, violates both versions of the categorical imperative.

b. The Necessity of Meta-Ethics:

Since any discussion of the problem of evil will necessarily engage us with meta-ethical concepts such as good, evil, justice and value, it is important that we start by defining our concepts. This meta-ethical task is necessary, even though it is often omitted by the writers on the problem of evil, because only coherent and clear definition will allow us to appreciate the problem fully and provide us with a gauge with which to assess proposed solutions for it.

The role of meta-ethics is often obscured in contemporary treatments of the problem of evil through either unquestioning acceptance of commonly accepted uses of the terms involved or through concentration on normative

²¹⁷ This is the central claims of object relations theory. Please see J. Greenberg, & S. Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983) for an overview of this theory and its development of this assumption into a theory of personality formation.

ethics. However, the meta-ethical issues of the problem are evident, particularly when we consider that the problem of evil may have its roots in a misstatement or misunderstanding of the relations between God, good and evil.

4. The problem of evil and the problems of suffering:

There are several traditional usages of the term 'evil' and we will do well to start our meta-ethical examination with these. Commonly used the term 'evil' is used to designate a) physical events that cause human suffering, and b) intentional human acts that cause human suffering. The first usage includes events such as natural calamities, illnesses and accidents. The second usage will include volitional acts such as violence, deception, aggression and betrayal of trust. The first usage is generally known as 'physical evil' and the second as 'moral evil'. These common terms have been used by both philosophers and theologians in their treatments of the problem of evil. By using the term 'evil' to refer to both physical and moral act common usage does us a disservice because it confuses two significantly different phenomena, one non-moral and non-volitional and the other both moral and volitional. This dualist usage is, I believe, rooted in a reduction of evil to mean 'whatever makes people suffer'.

The traditional usage is therefore conflating the problem of evil with the problem of suffering. In philosophical terms, however, these are separate, although related problems. The philosophical distinction is valid because while evil causes human suffering, a variety of other causes cause human suffering as well.

The presence of evil, as commonly defined, is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for the experience or indeed the causation of human suffering.

The experience of suffering is well known to have causes beyond physical catastrophes, either public or private, and the acts of moral depredation by others. One can think of the pangs of frustrated love, unfulfilled desires, loss of previously held religious faith, loss of loved ones from natural causes, pain of

loneliness, the torments of depression, and more. All those experiences can, and often do, result in intense suffering by those who experience them. However, none of these causes can be classified as either physical or moral evils.

By collapsing the problem of evil into the problem of suffering we avoid addressing the crucial question that would have allowed us to address the reasons for moral evil: why should one individual treat another in ways that are clearly destructive?²¹⁸ Why do groups of individuals engage in acts of violence, pillage or exploitation against others?²¹⁹ When we ask this question we find ourselves confronted with the rationality behind evil acts.

As we have noted, different causes can have identical effects. Suffering may be caused by an experience of evil but it can equally be caused by an experience of tragic circumstances, mental and physical ill-health or simply the failure of the world to accord with one's needs and desires. Therefore we must conclude that any theory of evil as encompassing both volitional moral acts and non-volitional physical acts that result in destruction cannot hold.

One can well understand the seductions of dualist theory of evil, particularly from within the framework of a theodicy. If we can reduce all evil to causes that result in suffering then we practically reduce the problem of evil to the problem of suffering. Since suffering is a universal experience while moral evil is not we can easily appeal to its universality if we wish to posit a theodicy in which evil plays some mysterious or even positive part.

However, this appeal to the universalism of suffering disregards the fact that all suffering occurs in context. Once we incorporate this observation we will realise that different individuals experience suffering differently and that there are indeed different categories of suffering, some of which, due to their context, may well have positive outcomes.

²¹⁸ When we avoid asking this question and focus instead on the experiences of the victims only

²¹⁹ I address the dynamic of collective predation in Chapter V of this thesis.

For example, the suffering that accompanies childbirth takes place in a very different context than the suffering caused by third-degree burns. Even if we were to compare the two kinds of suffering in terms of the exact amount of physical pain involved and found them to be the same it is the context that makes the first kind of suffering qualitatively different than the second.

Nor can we assume that all suffering is always a negative experience. It fails to account for the range of human experience in which suffering, either voluntarily undertaken or merely endured, has served as a prime catalyst of moral and spiritual development.

Let us consider another example. An individual who has committed several evil acts suddenly experiences remorse for his actions. This remorse causes him profound suffering, as pangs of guilt and shame pursue him repeatedly. He experiences frequent flashbacks of the events, seeing himself now as the perpetrator now as the victim. Even in his sleep he finds no rest. However, since this suffering occurs in the context of remorse and redemption the penitent is unlikely to regard it as evil despite its unremitting intensity. He may well regard it as a valuable good, the price to pay for a process of personal and spiritual transformation.

Having distinguished between the problems of suffering and evil, let us now examine the definition above and see if it brings us closer to an understanding of evil acts. I have defined an evil act as an act that is a) predatory and b) intentional.²²⁰

The first challenge to this definition is that it concentrates upon acts of predation and excludes other intentional, unprovoked acts that result in the infliction of suffering.

A sub-group of evil acts cause no suffering to the victim. An assault on a patient lying in a deep comatose state in a hospital is one such. Another would

²²⁰ See page 66 of this thesis for the expanded definition.

be a theft from someone who will never find out that he or she had been robbed and so will not experience any suffering as a result of that act; for example, a person suffering from advanced dementia. Another example of such an act is the desecration of a grave. The acts in this sub-group are, however, damaging in a different fashion. They destroy that network of human relationality that maintains human communities and which, through the force of custom and various honour codes grants protection to the most vulnerable, such as the ill, the old and the deceased.

By concentrating on the origin of an evil act, on the mental processes of the perpetrator(s), our definition allows us to treat evil in its full psychological, physical, social and even political aspects. By making a definition of evil contingent upon the post-facto effects upon the victim we will not merely unnecessarily confuse the problem of evil with the problem of suffering but reduce the problem to its psychological manifestations.

However, later in this chapter I will argue that when an act of evil does result in suffering it produces a suffering qualitatively different from other kinds of suffering caused. So the victim's post-facto mental processes are not neglected, they are merely not included in the definition. They are treated as a secondary identifier, not a primary one.

A topic worthy of note with regards to my definition of evil is my attempt to avoid the challenge of relativism in my exposition. While predation is objective (it can be traced and determined with little controversy) suffering per se is subjective. What one person may legitimately regard as suffering another would not. Therefore my definition of an evil act avoids the inclusion of suffering as an identifier.

To sum up, our definition of evil is sufficiently operative for us to be able to apply it to a variety of events and yet sufficiently narrow to allow us to determine the source and structure of an evil act and to concentrate our attention upon it.

By using this definition we will be able to better see both the relationship between God and evil and the relationship between humankind and evil. Further in this thesis I will argue that our previous, confused understanding of evil and these relationships has caused the creation of the problem of evil as a philosophical category and investigate the causes of such confusion.

5. Event horizons: consequences of evil acts:

In this section I would like to introduce an unorthodox view to conceptualise the cumulative effects of evil acts upon human life spans and communal histories.

When we examine an evil act either through the legal or the moral perspectives we tend to concentrate on the act itself even when we recognise that the act has far-reaching destructive consequences. A legal process would hold a perpetrator responsible for the original destructive act, e.g., an act of bodily harm or a murder, not for the causally-related cascade of loss and damage caused to the victim, her family or her community. An assignment of moral responsibility for such an act usually regards the causally-related consequences as either accruing less blame than the original act or no blame at all. I would like to break with this view and to suggest that we adopt the concept of *event horizon*, borrowed from astrophysics, to assist with our discussion of the entire arch of consequences of an evil act.

Astrophysics defines event horizon as the boundary created in space-time around a black hole, within which the gravitational pull is so strong as to make escape of light or radiation impossible. An event horizon is created simultaneously with the birth of a black hole and expands as the black hole grows, pulling in all objects around it:

‘The event horizon of a black hole marks the dark region in space where the escape velocity is higher than the speed of light. This region is typically considered the “black hole”. Nothing can escape it, both photons and matter is inevitably pulled into the singularity.

Ergosphere is a region outside the event horizon, where gravitational forces start to influence objects movements. Objects here can no longer remain stationary in space. *Depending on the distance between object and to the event horizon, the influence can be extremely strong or very weak.* Close to the event horizon, where escape velocity is nearly the speed of light gravitational will rip objects apart and eventually draw most of their material in. Far away the effects are virtually non-existent. *Objects in the Ergosphere can escape the forces of a black hole if their speed is higher than the appropriate escape velocity.*²²¹

I would like to apply this model of causally and temporally interrelated dynamics to the personal, social and historical outcomes of an evil act. I argue that, just as a black hole creates an event horizon expanding outwards from it through space and time so does an evil act. Just as objects that find themselves within the event horizon cannot remain where they were so do people engulfed or affected by the consequences of a predatory act, I argue. And just as escape is near impossible for those objects close to the event horizon but possible to those away from it, so it is with people, according to my argumentation.

a. Individual event horizons:

When an evil act is perpetrated against an individual the life path of its victim is qualitatively and irrevocably changed. In addition such life paths are thrown off course, sent in a radically different direction. In the course of such a life others, the family members and loved ones of the victim, will enter its ergosphere and be victimised in turn.

Those traumatised by an evil act will not only act differently but think and feel differently in its aftermath. Previous routines and goals are abandoned, old

²²¹ This definition is from www.astronomysource.com and available from:
<http://www.astronomysource.com/tag/event-horizon-definition/>

personality traits vanish and new develop in their place, new, protective behaviours are developed.²²² Unlike physical trauma, emotional trauma is circular rather than linear in its prognosis. According to Judith Hermann, a therapist specialising in work with survivors of emotional trauma, the damage inflicted by their experiences is radical: 'Traumatised people suffer damage to the basic structures of the self. They lose trust in themselves, in other people, in God... The identity they have formed prior to the trauma is irrevocably destroyed.'²²³

Let us examine a case of a physical trauma: a broken arm is most damaged and most painful at the time of fracture and soon afterwards. However, as the broken bones are set and left to heal the damage is progressively repaired and the pain is lessened. A year after the fracture was sustained the pain is gone and the arm is operational again. The bones have set, damaged tissues and nerve endings have re-grown. The dynamics of a physical trauma, therefore, is linear. We can confidently expect time to be benign: the more time passes from the moment of trauma the better is the prognosis.

A case of mental trauma is different. Its healing trajectory is such that the survivor can be in greater anguish years after an assault than in the assault's immediate aftermath. At various points in the survivor's life, she will be re-traumatised by the appearance of specific triggers, such as danger, pain, physical sensations, sounds or scents reminiscent of the assault. The times of feeling better and of feeling worse will alternate. In this sense we cannot speak of a 'recovery' from a mental trauma in the same way we speak of recovery in the wake of a physical one.

In her autobiographical memoir, *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery* (1999)²²⁴, the American writer Patrician Weaver Francisco describes the circular pattern of her reaction to the trauma of a violent rape. Her narrative of persistent, ongoing effects is punctuated with testimonies of re-traumatisation at various junctions of her life.

²²² See Herman, Judith (1992), *Trauma and Recovery*, New York: Basic Books.

²²³ Ibid, p.24.

²²⁴ Patricia Weaver Francisco, *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

Among the after-effects she describes is the state of constant alert, persisting for years after the attack: 'I pass the time in a state known as "hypervigilance", listening, scanning, adrenaline pumping up my breath, poised literally on my toes for an invisible and therefore tricky, tricky opponent. I emerge exhausted by the effort as if I'd truly had a brush with danger. This is one of the aspects of post-traumatic fear that is hardest to convey. Imagine how tired you'd be if you defended your house from intruders every night or survived a car crash each night for a year.'²²⁵

Francisco describes other consequences of that attack to her and her family. Her event horizon stretches across many years, encompassing her friends, parents, sister, husband and a son born years later. She describes how, months after the assault on her, she goes for a walk in the park with a visiting friend: 'On a muggy weekday afternoon late in her visit, we set out to walk to Lake Harriet. A summer storm hangs over the lake, and just as we reach a hillside park overlooking the water, the rain begins. A picnic shelter under a vaulted roof open on all sides is a dry and reasonably comfortable place to wait out the cloudburst. We enter, laughing with that reckless ecstasy that endures from childhood, but within a minute, I turn silent. We have been joined in the huge open space by a stranger. He appears without our noticing, suddenly there, hanging out on the opposite side of the round shelter.'

Francisco finds herself unable to bear the presence of the stranger. She reacts with escalating anxiety, incomprehensible to her friend. The following excerpt, recounted in the third person, is worth reading in full despite its length:

'She stops talking. She watches him. He rocks back and forth on his heels, looks out toward the lake, then right at her and away again. His eyes are hooded, his body lean. He has no age, no reason to be here. Why is he here? He crosses to a different picnic table, slightly closer to them. Why doesn't he leave? Anything could happen, so everything starts beating – a heart that can outrun a bear, ears turned inward to catch jumbled and impossible warnings, eyes to see just slightly into the future, into the next moment when the man will cross over to them, pull a knife, shoot, speak.'

²²⁵ Francisco, *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery*, 82.

Let's go, she insists. Her friend looks stupidly unaware of any danger, gazing off to a seagull circling.

Go? Her friend gestures to the downpour, sheets of rain now, the plashing, pounding height of the storm. Her friend laughs, actually turns away, as if this conversation is casual.

We can't stay here, the woman hisses, gesturing with her head toward the man who is definitely watching them, definitely listening. The look on her friend's face is memorable, as if some devastating news has just registered. The woman interprets this as agreement and only later realizes that her friend was devastated by her, by the realization that fear had escalated to paranoia and is about to drive them out into the pouring rain.

They bolt out of the shelter, slipping on the wet grass, scaling the hill, running, running, until, dripping wet, they reach the safety of commerce, the neighborhood stores a block away. Later, as they walk home, she tells her friend that something important has happened. She has never been this far into the territory that shadows her. She did not know she could go this far. And more importantly, this is the end. She cannot live this way anymore.²²⁶

This passage exemplifies a generalised post-traumatic reaction whose ramifications go well beyond the clinical. Francisco's world has changed radically since her rape. While before she would have reacted to the scene in the park similarly to the way her friend did, not regarding the arrival of the solitary male walker as anything out of the ordinary, now she reacts to his arrival with mounting and eventually uncontrollable panic, a panic so intense that it frightens her ('She cannot live this way anymore.'). Her world had gone from a safe place which she had felt confident to negotiate to a place of ever-

²²⁶ Ibid, 87-88. The italics are the author's.

present danger in which she felt unprotected and frightened. Unfortunately this is only an early stage of the event horizon emanating from her rape.

Years later, believing herself to be 'recovered' from the effect of the attack on her, Francisco is traumatised again by a hard labour that brings with it flashbacks of the rape: 'Early in labor I began to have flashbacks to the experience of rape. I remember less of the movielike quality than the term flashback suggests. I remember visceral panic – cellular, I might say – an eerie sensation of being two places at once. It made no sense, and I was unwilling to give it any room, discounting its occurrence until years later.'²²⁷ She describes the loss of her sexuality and of the ability to tolerate physical intimacy for long periods of time, soon after the assault and again after the difficult birth of her son. This in turn will bring about the collapse of her marriage, traumatising her yet again. The event horizon that had opened on the night on which she was assaulted had spread through time and space, engulfing her and those close to her.

Another rape survivor, the British writer Abi Grant, author of the memoir *Words Can Describe* (2009) writes how, after the initial period of depression and alcoholism following the rape she was re-traumatised when, years later, her attacker was apprehended and charged. Having to testify against him in court and be cross-examined led to another period of depression.²²⁸

The American writer Jamie Kalven describes in his book *Working With Available Light: A Family's World After Violence* (1999) the aftermath of the violent rape of his wife, the photographer Patsy Kalven. After the assault she finds herself unable to work in her darkroom, a place where she previously worked for hours on end without concern: 'Now this sanctuary has become a frightening place. "It's a big problem. It's like working in a broken eggshell. I have to force myself to go." The solitude she used to savor is now unnerving – "an aloneness within a larger aloneness." The darkness in which she looks

²²⁷ Ibid, p.131. Six years after the traumatic birth of her son Francisco consults Lynn Madsen, a psychotherapist specialising in the treatment of women facing birth trauma. She told Francisco that hard, traumatic labours are common in survivors of rape and incest. See Lynn Madsen, *Lynn, Rebounding from Childbirth: Toward Emotional Recovery*, (New York: Praeger, 1994).

²²⁸ Abi Grant, *Words Can Describe*, (London: Picador, 2009).

deeply into her images now seems a condition of blindness: she can't see out, can't see threats approaching. The quiet that used to console her is now edged with tension: she listens for the ominous sound that will break the silence.²²⁹

The event horizon unleashed by the attack on Patsy affects the couple's children. Kalven describes how his daughter and son, aged 4 and 6 years respectively, develop sleeping difficulties. The daughter needs constant reassurance: 'She gets up again and again in the night. Her feet pad rapidly across the living room floor, our bedroom door opens and a voice urgently whispers: "I can't sleep. I'm scared. Come tuck me in." One of us gets up, walks her back to her room, tucks her in, and, having extracted a promise that she will stay in bed until morning, kisses her yet again. Within a few minutes, she is back. "This is the last time, I promise."²³⁰ Of his son he writes: 'One day, over breakfast cereal, he told me, "Last night, when you came in my room, you looked like a bad guy."²³¹

Event horizons that encompass individuals and families are circular and enduring not only because of the circular nature of emotional traumas but because of the transformations they force upon those caught in them. Those caught in the event horizon have to learn to live with a world in which everything can happen, in which human malice is an eternal threat. The feeling of safety, of familiarity with one's environment has been shattered.

Kalven describes Patsy's new awareness of the dangers around her and of the isolation this knowledge brings. Like Patricia Weaver Francisco Patsy no longer feels safe in a world she previously used to navigate without fear. This awareness separates her from her friends who, un-traumatised by violence, see the world the same way she did before the attack on her.

'When she looks at large houses like the Morrisons', she sees not security but vulnerability. She thinks not of thick walls that enclose and protect but of how

²²⁹ Jamie Kalven, *Working With Available Light: A Family's World After Violence*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 103.

²³⁰ Ibid, 106.

²³¹ Ibid. 107.

isolating those walls would be if she were attacked within them; no one could hear her scream.

She is aware that others experience the world differently. While she works in the Morrisons' basement with a knife close at hand, people in houses around her, many without alarm systems, go about their lives feeling secure. When Kate Morrison is at home alone, she doesn't see any need to turn the security system on.

"I feel so safe in this house," she once told Patsy. "It makes me sad to think you feel the way you do."²³²

b. Communal event horizons:

We have seen that event horizons affect the lives of the victims' families and social circles. Where entire communities are victimised such changes manifest themselves by transgenerational transmission of trauma. Such second and third-generation trauma is itself caused by the fact that descendants of traumatised communities grow in environments shaped by the original trauma, with its specific emotional and behavioural patterns. A literature review conducted by N.P. Kellerman suggests that the clinical offspring population tends to present a specific 'psychological profile' that, among other traits, includes a predisposition to PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), difficulties around separation and individuation and a particular profile of responding to stress.²³³ Other studies indicate that children of holocaust survivors tend to suffer a variety of effects specific to them as a group, ranging from health complaints to post-trauma adaptation strategies.²³⁴

²³² Ibid, 117.

²³³ See N.P. Kellerman, "Psychopathology in children of Holocaust Survivors: A review of the research literature", *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, (Tel Aviv: Israel Psychiatric Association, 2001,) 38(1), 36-46.

²³⁴ See Yehuda, Rachel Yehuda, Janine D. Flory, Linda M. Bierer, (2011): "Maternal Exposure to The Holocaust and Health Complaints in Offspring", *Disease Markers*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: IOS Press, 2011), Vol. 30 Issue 2/3, 133-139 as well as Yael Danieli, Fran H. Norris, Jutta Lindert, Vera Paisner, Brian Engdahl, Brian & Julia Richter, (2015): "The Danieli Inventory of Multigeneration Legacies of Trauma, Part I: Survivors' Posttrauma Adaptation Styles in Their Children's Eyes", *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier, 2015), Vol. 68, 167-175.

Communal victimisations have historical consequences that often manifest themselves a long time after the initial act of victimisation, a massacre or genocide, took place. Let us look at the event horizons of such large-scale victimisations.

Sergio della Pergola, a demographer of the Hebrew University, had calculated that, consequent to the population losses sustained in the Holocaust, the Jewish populations worldwide are missing anywhere between 12.5 and 18.5 million persons. According to his calculations had it not been for the Final Solution there would now be anywhere between 26 and 32 million Jews living instead of 13.5 million.²³⁵

Della Pergola uses two models, one assuming continuing post-war poverty, low family sizes and high assimilation rates and the other assuming post-war prosperity, larger family sizes and lower assimilation. Both models calculate the number of those killed, the projected numbers of their children, and those of their children's children²³⁶.

This number of missing persons is bound to increase exponentially as time goes by. This, I believe, is one example of an event horizon generated by a genocide. The loss is multi-layered: lives not lived, social fabric made the

²³⁵ See the press release by the Hebrew University [If not for the Holocaust, there could have been 32 million Jews in the world today](http://phys.org/news159623702.html), Apr 22, 2009, available from <http://phys.org/news159623702.html>. The research paper was published in Hebrew in the journal *Bishvil Hazikaron* of International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Va-Shem, Jerusalem, 2009.

²³⁶ Della Pergola explains that the high level of damage to population figures is due to the pre-war Jewish populations of Eastern Europe, the main victims of the Final Solution, being relatively young and having large family sizes. See Ofir Ilani, (2009), "How Many Jews would there be If not for the Holocaust?", *Haaretz*, (Tel Aviv: Amos Schocken, 2009) dated April 19, 2009. Available from <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/how-many-jews-would-there-be-if-not-for-the-holocaust-1.274315>.

poorer by the absence of these missing persons, culture and history altered by their absence.²³⁷

6. Dynamics of Predation:

When I speak of an act of evil as being predatory by nature I mean that the relationship between perpetrator and victim becomes one of predator and prey. The perpetrator preys on the victim, regarding him or her as an object that exists solely in relation to the perpetrator's designs. This feature of instrumental objectification is important because it involves the dehumanisation of the victim in the perpetrator's mind. In the purse-snatching case above the mugger's relation to his victim is identical to the relation of a natural predator to its natural prey.

In the previous section where I have discussed communal event horizons and used the example of the ever-widening circle of losses inflicted by the Holocaust. The dynamics of genocide are the dynamics of collective and systemic predation and involve the political echelon that gives the orders that set off the process of predation, bureaucracies that organise and facilitate it and individuals who, either as functionaries of bureaucracies or as individuals engage in genocidal acts. The dynamic, I argue, is the same in both individual and collective acts of predation; the differences are in the greater complexity and formality of systemic action as compared to the simplicity of individual initiative.

It is my argument that while such a relation is both licit and normative in the natural world, it is illicit and abnormal among human persons.

²³⁷ Some of these losses are discussed by Michael Freund in his blog post titled "What if we were 32 million strong? But we aren't", Jweekly.com, May 14, 2009, available from:

<http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/38083/what-if-we-were-32-million-strong-but-we-arent/>

This interpersonal dynamic, despite its impersonal and often anonymous nature, is a fundamental designator of an act of evil. Under no other conditions will this dynamic occur in human relationships. It is therefore important that it is recognised and included in our definition of evil. It is the argument of this thesis that the process of predation of one person upon another, with its psychological, practical and spiritual outcomes, lies at the heart of acts of evil and distinguishes them qualitatively from all other intentional acts. Below are the reasons for this view.

It is an uncontroversial fact that in our interactions with our friends, families and wider communities we do not, in the ordinary course of events, predate upon them or regard them as objects fit for predation. Therefore it can be argued that normative human relations exclude predation and are, by their nature, non-predatory.

Following on from this observation we can further state that when we interact with others normatively and non-predatorily we treat these others as fully-fledged persons, entitled to the protection of their basic human attributes such as life, bodily and mental wholeness, property, good names etc. Even in situations in which we experience anger we are not thereby normally moved to acts of predation upon the targets of our anger.

It is therefore coherent for us to conclude that predation stands outside the realm of normative human relations in which participants treat each other as fully human, i.e., as subjects not available for predation.

If an act of predation, thus, stands outside the bounds of normative human relations then when predation does occur it must involve the dehumanization of the victim by the perpetrator of the act.

When the perpetrator of a predatory act relates to his or her intended victim the perpetrator views the victim as a subject available for predation, i.e. as someone not fully human. The victim is, as far as the perpetrator is concerned, a non-person, someone who stands outside the bounds of normative human

relations and the protection they afford. In the predator's social circle there are people who are regarded as fully human and who are therefore safe from this individual's predation. These may be members of the predator's family, circle of friends or associates. The victim stands in sharp contrast to those because he or she does not belong to the predator's 'inner circle' and is therefore not hold the same fully-human status as do its members.

It is therefore the presence of predation that is seminal to the nature of an act as an act of evil. Only this act involves a sharp differentiation between those the perpetrator regards as fully human and those he or she does not. This process is not present in any other human interaction. It is particular to an act of predation. It is the essence of an evil act.

A predatory act starts an event horizon that, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, progresses through space and time, affecting not only the victim at the point at which the act is committed but the victim through the rest of her life and possibly others related to her. The rate of damage they will sustain is related to their closeness to the victim. Many events horizon will affect several generations and some, in particular the communal ones, will have no end point, extending into infinity, as in the case of genocides.

In the following chapter I shall introduce and discuss the concept of relational economy, a relational interchange that introduces incentives and disincentives for a variety of acts and that, when reversed into providing incentives for predation and disincentives for the avoidance of predation, serves as a powerful motivator for evil acts, both individual and systemic.

Chapter IV

The Exceptionality of Evil

1. Introduction:

In this chapter I shall examine systemic, organisational or political evil. This involves predatory acts that are committed by the state or by specific parts of the state apparatus against target groups or individuals. I shall discuss genocide and the bureaucracies that perpetrate genocidal policies, their decision-making processes, motivation and relational dynamics. Systemic evil is important to my thesis because it shows the complexity of relationalities, rewards and decision-making that are involved; while it can be argued that an act of individual evil can be easily prevented it is less easy to imagine a miracle that would prevent many individuals and organisations from engaging in coordinated acts of mass predation. In Chapter Six of this thesis I shall discuss why miracles of this kind do not happen. I also want to dispute the widely-held yet erroneous argument from the banality of evil, an argument that originated with Hannah Arendt in the wake of the Eichmann trial.²³⁸

In this chapter I argue against Hannah Arendt's thesis of the banality of evil and endeavour to demonstrate that the reasons for individuals to engage in acts of systemic evil are more complex than the failure of reflection she postulates. I address Arendt's arguments about the nature of collective evil acts because it represents a misunderstanding of the motives, individual dynamics and group processes that animate genocidal bureaucracies.²³⁹ I argue against her to claim that genocides and other acts of collective predation are performed by fully cognate and conscious individuals who are fully aware of the moral significance of their actions, not by unreflective 'organisation men' who suffer from a system-induced lapse of reflection. This in turn will help me to make the

²³⁸ Arendt asked the New Yorker magazine to send her to report on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. For more on Arendt's reports from the trial (1961) please see Deborah L Lipstadt, *The Eichmann Trial*, Tel Aviv: Schocken Books, 2011).

²³⁹ I do not argue against all of Arendt's premises and conclusions in her discussions of totalitarianism (Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Schocken Books, 1951) but only against the thesis of the banality of evil.

argument regarding the relationality of evil acts and the reinforcement dynamics that support them, arguments that are developed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

I hope to demonstrate that political or systemic predation follows the same mechanism and relational incentives as individual evil but is made more complex by the inter-related structures, relations and incentives of its systemic perpetrators.

The state apparatus is an inter-related network of the legislative and executive arms of the state. While the legislative branch comprises the parliament and the judiciary the executive branch is the more numerous and structured of the two, and is made up of central and local government, the armed forces, the police and the welfare agencies.

When discussing systemic evil much attention is focused on the legislative branch. Yet it is the administrative branch, either when enforcing the decisions of the legislature or when acting on self-generated campaigns that deserves the attention of those wishing to investigate the processes that lead to destructive outcomes for a multiplicity of victims.

Without the compliance of the executive the legislative arm of the state could never enact oppressive policies. It is the various branches of the executive that ensure that the oppressive regime or the genocidal process is put into action and maintained. Therefore we should examine the executive, its structures, processes and relational economies in order to understand how an oppressive regime or indeed a genocidal one takes place. While Arendt did discuss totalitarian regimes²⁴⁰ she had failed to examine their intentionality or reward structures and it is here that our investigation of acts of collective evil should lead.

2. Arendt's Thesis of the Banality of Evil:

a. Evil as a form of cognitive closure:

²⁴⁰ *Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publications, 1951).

In her 1962 reflective and controversial report on the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem Hannah Arendt offered a number of claims regarding the peculiarity of the crime of genocide and the personalities of its perpetrators.

Her oft-quoted remark about the alleged banality of evil related to her belief that the accused, Adolph Eichmann, was a disconcertingly ordinary man, quite unlike the evil genius many expected to see on the witness stand. She was impressed by a quality she had described later²⁴¹ as thoughtlessness and the peculiar mode of speech affected by the accused: 'The only specific characteristic one could detect in his past as well as in his behaviour during the trial and the preceding police examination was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but a curious, quite authentic inability to think'.²⁴²

Arendt was impressed by two alleged factors exhibited by Eichmann on the witness stand: lack of critical thinking and obsessive following of orders from above²⁴³. She assessed these perceived qualities as genuine rather than feigned for the sake of the accused man's defence: 'When confronted with situations for which such routine procedures did not exist, he (Eichmann) was helpless, and his cliché-ridden language produced on the stand, as it had evidently done in his official life, a kind of macabre comedy. Clichés, stock phrases, adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality, that is, against the claim on our thinking attention that all events and facts make by virtue of their existence.'²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture", *Social Research*, (New York: The New School for Social Research, 1970) no. 38/3 (Fall 1970), 417.

²⁴² Arendt, however, was aware to the show element in such a historic trial: 'It was precisely the play aspect of the trial that collapsed under the weight of the hair-raising atrocities. A trial resembles a play in that both begin and end with the doer, not the victim.' (Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, London: Penguin Books, 2006).8-9.) It is therefore of importance to note that Arendt did not seem to be aware to the possibility that Eichmann, facing the probability of capital punishment, was playing a part.

²⁴³ Those who had met Eichmann earlier, either during WW2 or shortly afterwards, formed a very different assessment of his personality and critical facilities. E.g., see S. Shield, *My Encounter With Eichmann (an unpublished manuscript)*, (Washington, DC: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009)accession number 2010.403.

²⁴⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind - Thinking - Willing* (London: Harvest, 1978), 4.

Arendt extends this 'cognitive closure'²⁴⁵ model to the entire Nazi bureaucracy, and claims that the bureaucracy was swept up in a peculiar group dynamic, one that robbed its functionaries of their critical and moral capacities. While under the influence of this dynamic the functionaries of a genocidal bureaucracy supposedly become committed to the process of mass murder rather than aware of its ultimate goals. The apparent thoughtlessness of the man on the witness stand exemplifies the dynamics of the entire bureaucracy: 'It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us — *the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-denying banality of evil.*'²⁴⁶

In her later writings Arendt insisted that her concept of the banality of evil is not a metaphysical theory: 'Behind that phrase (*banality of evil*), I held no thesis or doctrine, although I was dimly aware of the fact that it went counter to our tradition of thought — literary, theological, or philosophic — about the phenomenon of Evil.'²⁴⁷

Instead it is a *modus tollens* explanation-by-default of evil acts when all other explanations prove insufficient: "... the phenomenon of evil deeds, committed on a gigantic scale, which could not be traced to any particularity of wickedness, pathology, or ideological conviction in the doer, whose only personal distinction was a perhaps extraordinary shallowness."²⁴⁸

That is to say, after we have eliminated explanation from personal aggression or attachment to an oppressive ideology²⁴⁹ and have identified the perpetrator

²⁴⁵ I adopt the notion of cognitive closure from Colin McGinn; see Colin McGinn, *Problems in Philosophy: The Limits of Inquiry*, (New York: Wiley, 1993), 31. For McGinn cognitive closure is the inability of humans to solve the problem of consciousness, i.e., to look into themselves. I adapt this concept to the supposed inability of bureaucrats to recognise the moral consequences of their actions.

²⁴⁶ Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 252.

²⁴⁷ Arendt, *Life of the Mind*, 3.

²⁴⁸ Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," *Social Research*, no. 38/3 (1970), 417.

²⁴⁹ There are good reasons to believe that ideological conviction should not be dismissed as lightly. Please see the discussion that follows for evidence for the importance of ideology in evil acts.

as a consistently thoughtless person, according to Arendt, proceed to point to that very shallowness as the reason for the perpetrator's actions.

Her prescription for the avoidance of evil acts is, unsurprisingly, to think things through. Morality is a matter of philosophical maturity, the maturity of practical reason rather than ethical or spiritual commitments, or proper feeling. To avoid doing evil acts we must become willing to become radically self-reflective: "The presupposition for this kind of judging is not a highly developed intelligence or sophistication in moral matters, but merely the habit of living together explicitly with oneself, that is, of being engaged in that silent dialogue between me and myself which since Socrates and Plato we usually call thinking."²⁵⁰

b. Arendt's philosophical commitments:

The philosophical background of Arendt's concept of evil draws most prominently upon Karl Jaspers, Arendt's philosophy tutor at Heidelberg. Jaspers' notion of 'border situations', a condition of existential openness and incompleteness when faced with that that is not the self, and develops it to stand for a task of radical reflection and self-reflection²⁵¹. Another important antecedent for Arendt is Kant with his concept of radical evil. While Arendt adopts the Kantian emphasis on reason as the mainspring of ethical commitments she does not equate her thesis of the banality of evil with his concept of radical evil. Like Kant, she distinguishes between reason and intellect. A perpetrator can be highly intelligent yet shallow, failing to reason if

²⁵⁰ Hannah Arendt, "Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship", *The Listener*, August 6 1964, (London: BBC, 1964), 205.

²⁵¹ Arendt's 1948 German essay, *Was ist Existenz-Philosophie*, is dedicated to the Jasperian notion of the 'border situation'. See Jonna Bornemark, "Antinomies and Transcendence in Karl Jaspers' Philosophy", *Nordic Journal of Philosophy*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006) Vol. 7, No. 2, also available from www.academia.edu/2059731/Limit-situation_Antinomies_and_Transcendence_in_Karl_Jaspers_philosophy, retrieved 10/10/14.

not to think. This failure is not caused by underlying wickedness; rather the failure of reason causes the wickedness.

Arendt's ultimate task is Augustinian: it is to show that evil is a privation of the good rather than a process or a substance in its own right. She is at pains to deny evil profundity and substance. Later on, Arendt would say that the reverse of thoughtlessness, radical reflection, is a necessary condition for the prevention of evil.²⁵² Arendt went on to develop the notion of the banality of evil in her later work, at pains to argue against critics that it did not imply a meta-ethical or metaphysical concept.²⁵³

3. Problems with Arendt's analysis of evil:

There are a number of problems with Arendt's analysis of reasons for acts of systemic evil, particularly for evil acts committed by perpetrators of genocide in WW2, where those engaged in such acts systematically were acting as functionaries of a genocidal bureaucracy, supported by a supremacist ideology. In addition, Arendt's concept of the unreflective bureaucracies who somehow manage to be superlatively effective in their tasks while side-stepping the full implications of their activity leaves certain issues unaddressed.

Let us examine these problems and questions.

²⁵² 'Inability to think is not stupidity; it can be found in highly intelligent people, and wickedness is hardly its cause, if only because thoughtlessness as well as stupidity are much more frequent phenomena, *is necessary to cause great evil... Hence, in Kantian terms, one would need philosophy, the exercise of reason as the faculty of thought, to prevent evil.*' Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture", 423.

²⁵³ This perspective on the perpetrator had committed Arendt to a strong position on the culpability of the victim. For a discussion of this problematic outcome of the thesis of the banality of evil see Bernard Wasserstein, "Blame the Victim: Hannah Arendt Among The Nazis: The Historian and Her Sources", Times Literary Supplement, (London: Times of London, 2009), 9 October 2009, 13-15 and Shlomo Avineri, "Where Hannah Arendt Went Wrong", *Haaretz*, (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publications, 2010), 3 March 2010.

- i. The question of motivation, both personal and collective: Arendt assumes that genocidal bureaucrats follow orders without questioning them but does not suggest why they might do that.
- ii. The question of effectiveness: Arendt admits that genocidal bureaucracies are frighteningly effective but does not explain how this effectiveness can be achieved without full critical awareness of bureaucrats of all ranks. We would assume that producers of a product that failed to recognise its aim and function could not successfully develop or implement their product; in this case, why should non-reflective bureaucracies achieve such levels of effectiveness?
- iii. The question of group dynamics: what makes bureaucracies work? Arendt assumes that bureaucracies are mere collections of order-following individuals implementing directions from a totalitarian leader. She does not treat bureaucracies as groups, inquire about the dynamics likely to shape these groups or even about individual changes that an individual working for these bureaucracies is likely to undergo as a consequence of his or her membership of that bureaucracy.
- iv. The question of the improbability of cognitive closure: given the complexity of behaviours and cognitive processes required how probable it is that they can be achieved non-reflectively?
- v. The question of ideology: what is the role of ideology the formation of thoughts, feelings and identities?

With regard to personal motivation Arendt dismisses the explanation of anticipated personal gain without due consideration. She fails to explain why otherwise rational and competent persons would be motivated to join the National-Socialist party, volunteer for the SS, to leave their families, to undergo rigorous training and eventually to participate in acts of mass murder. However, personal gain is a strong motivator of human behaviour, one which we routinely use to explain various actions. We do not assume that persons take up jobs, embark on careers, or enter into relationships without intending

to benefit from them. Arendt does not provide reasons why the explanation of personal gain should be dismissed in the case of genocidal acts.²⁵⁴

Arendt sidesteps the second question we raised, the question of effectiveness. She admits that genocidal bureaucracies are very effective but does not explain how they can be so effective if they are merely following orders while avoiding at all costs reflecting on their tasks and their moral import. According to her such a sleepwalking bureaucracy is so committed to efficiency as to disregard the end result of its efficiency²⁵⁵. The genocidal bureaucrat, in Arendt's view, is someone so invested in the process of organising anything – be it the manufacture of bathtubs or dead bodies – as not to care whether the end result of his labours are bathtubs or dead bodies.

This claim is, of course, self-contradictory. In order to be efficient at a task I have to keep its end-result in mind. An efficient bus driver is one who can drive the bus down a pre-established route, from its first stop to the last. If the driver puts the last bus stop out of mind and concentrates on steering or switching gears then she stops being efficient. Arendt's notion of sleepwalking efficiency lacks both coherence and support by the perpetrators' own accounts of their motivation and cognition at the time of the offence.

The second problem with Arendt's explanation is her choice of 'thinking', meaning radical reflection and self-reflection, for the determinant of whether or not one engages in evil acts. Arendt makes no reference to feeling, thus rejecting a moral psychology that has the support of both empirical and historical evidence.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ This is all the more surprising since in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* she meticulously chronicles Eichmann's rapid rise from obscurity to near-supreme power in a space of several years. See *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963/2006), pp. 27-35.

²⁵⁵ This analysis is shared by Heidegger. See Todd Samuel Presner, (Candor, NY: Telos Press, 2006) " 'The Fabrication of Corpses': Heidegger, Arendt , and the Modernity of Mass Death", (Candor: NY: Telos Press, 2006) Summer2006, Issue 135, 84-108

²⁵⁶ For later attempts to describe the activities of the Nazi genocide perpetrators as a failure of reason see Franz Neumann, *Behemoth* (New York: Harper Books, 1942); Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947); Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1947).

I submit that the reason individuals abstain from evil acts is respect for others, recognition of them as fellow humans, carriers of both human and divine images. This is the case even when these acts, if performed, stand to clearly benefit the would-be perpetrator and where compassion is either suppressed or absent.

By living with others we come to recognise them as persons like us, in possession of bodies and emotions that can be hurt by the same causes that hurt, or would hurt, ours. For example, I recognise that I shall be in pain if someone punched me. This is a good enough reason for me to avoid punching others. This awareness of another's capacity for suffering and the desire to avoid being the cause of it lies at the foundation of our capacity for compassion.²⁵⁷ It is augmented all the more if we regard others as the children of God, bearers of God's image. If we recognise the need to avoid hurting others as a fundamental form of divine command then we add another powerful reason to support our socialized sense of compassion for others.

When we intentionally hurt others we have successfully over-ruled our respect and compassion for them. But compassion and respect left unsuppressed do not require a process of radical reflection or self-reflection as postulated by Arendt. For most of us it is nearly instinctual and instantaneous, often profoundly intense. When we say that we would be horrified if we were to shoot an unarmed victim, for example, we image the intense emotional suffering we would undergo in such circumstances and are repelled from further contemplation of the act by the intense emotions of compassion, anxiety and guilt.

Historical evidence describing the training provided to the perpetrators of the final solution during WW2 shows that this training was specifically designed to employ both individual and group processes in order to lead the trainees

²⁵⁷ Please see chapter 3 of this thesis for a detailed explanation of the process of dehumanisation involved in evil acts. This process is a method of arresting and dismissing compassion so as to facilitate the performance of an evil act.

towards effortless and masterful suppression of compassion for their victims.²⁵⁸

The SS recruitment procedures were designed to rule out anyone with strong religious or moral commitments. Those past this first hurdle would undergo long and intense training, complete with training camps where the trainees practiced escalating sadism upon the inmates. In addition to this hands-on training the trainees would undergo many hours of classroom instruction aimed at assisting them in shedding the inhibitions of civil society and their own peacetime psychology.²⁵⁹

By the time such a trainee graduated and was unleashed on the inmates of the concentration camps the organisation managed they were no longer ordinary individuals.

Here is a description of two such graduates in action on the streets of the Warsaw ghetto on the morning of February 14, 1941, as recorded by a witness:

‘ At first I was startled and frightened by the terrible sound of a mass of people moving, like the roaring of the sea; after two or three minutes I was frightened by the silence that followed. I looked through my window and the street was empty. Not a living soul was there; it was if all creation were dead.

In less than a minute a Nazi murderer with a face as red as fire, whose every movement expressed burning wrath, came striding with a singularly heavy step in search of a victim. In his hand was a whip. Behind him, at the distance of a few paces, came his comrade. Both of them glanced in every direction with malicious eyes. The Jews had all disappeared. Near the building at 25 Karmelika they met a poor ragged peddler, whose every aspect bespoke oppression, standing near his basket of wares. An awful encounter. The unfortunate peddler became a target for the blows of the murdering beasts. He fell to the ground at once, and one of them left him and went away. But no so his companion. The very physical weakness of his victim inflamed the soldier. As

²⁵⁹ For more information on the SS training and recruitment procedures please see Guido Kopf, *SS: A Warning from History*, (London: The History Press, 2005), 175-293.

*soon as the peddler fell, he began stamping on him and beating him mercilessly with his whip. He beat him in various ways, cruelly and sadistically – sometimes on the head, sometimes on the face, sometimes with a kick, sometimes with a jab. He didn't leave a single part of him unharmed. From a distance it looked as though he was beating a corpse. The beaten man lay flat, without a breath of life. But the tormentor would not let him alone. It would be no exaggeration to say the he beat him without stopping, without pity, for about twenty minutes.'*²⁶⁰

This attack cannot be understood in terms of ordinary human interactions, not even the more violent ones. This is why the witness, the Warsaw Ghetto diarist Chaim Aron Kaplan, cannot understand it and has to abandon his attempt at a behavioural analysis.

Further, it is impossible to describe these actions as the result of a lack of reflection. Rather these are the actions of an individual who had learned to over-rule compassion nearly automatically and to exercise extreme sadism effortlessly. Because this new psychological profile is unexplainable in terms of personal pathology, or in any normative terms, it presents a challenge to the understanding of those unaware of how it was created and how it is maintained.²⁶¹

It is important to emphasise that such training and eventual assignments were absolutely voluntary. In addition, the SS elite – men like Eichmann, Heydrich, Himmler – did not have to submit themselves to such behavioural modification since their position was administrative rather than executive²⁶². It seems

²⁶⁰ Chaim Aron Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan*, A. Katsh ed., (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966), 221-222.

²⁶¹ The witness, the ghetto diarist Chaim Aron Kaplan, attempts and fails to understand the frenzy of violence he had witnessed: 'It was hard to comprehend the secret of this sadistic phenomenon. After all, the victim was a stranger, not an old enemy; he did not speak rudely to him, let alone touch him. Then why this cruel wrath! How is it possible to attack a stranger to me, a man of flesh and blood like myself, to wound him and trample upon him, and cover his body with sores, bruises, and welts without any reason? How is it possible? Yet I swear that I saw all this with my own eyes.' (ibid, 222).

²⁶² Hence the difficulty in proving, during the Eichmann trial, that the accused had killed anyone in person. See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 22.

coherent that their rapid rise to unprecedented power from humble beginnings is the main motivation for their actions.

Let us now examine how the concept of unreflectiveness is expanded by Arendt in her attempt to explain the workings of the bureaucracies in charge of Nazi genocide.

Arendt sees genocidal Nazi bureaucracies as sleepwalking into a genocide²⁶³. The bureaucracy is a collective of non-reflective persons on the model of the non-reflective Eichmann, soothed and protected by non-reflective routines that allow them to somehow perpetrate a genocide that claims millions of victims in the space of several years.

However, as we have seen, Arendt ultimately fails in this task. Her failure stems from her initial assumption that evil acts are at some level irrational, an aberration of the thinking processes that, when properly utilised, would prevent them.

The failure of the perpetrators is not cognitive but moral and spiritual; they intentionally fail to treat their victims as humans should be treated, over-ruling whatever compassion they may feel when it is felt, or blocking any compassion whatsoever with the help of their ideology and training.

Speaking of the crime of genocide Arendt noted its particularity and the inability of the existing legal systems to properly punish its perpetrators. Since the crime involved complex administrative and executive systems working in concert putting single perpetrators on trial and trying them for the crime of murder is patently inadequate.²⁶⁴

In this chapter I will agree with this claim and argue that an understanding of the ways in which state bureaucracies make genocide possible allow us to expand the notion of responsibility and culpability beyond the individuals involved and find systems and hierarchies responsible.

²⁶³ Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 22.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 16.

However, I shall argue against the claim that the perpetrators of systemic evil are philosophically deficient or that this description can be applied to the processes and interactions within systems that perpetrate political evil acts.

We now know that the dynamics of genocidal bureaucracies encourage entrepreneurialism and initiative rather than mere order-following. Eichmann went all the way from a non-descript oil-company salesman who joined the SS to a man who controlled the lives and deaths of millions of civilians in occupied Europe in a space of 8 years. No other career track could offer such rapid progression. To a lesser extent such elevations were achieved by other members of the SS. The question of motivation is therefore addressed.

The question of effectiveness suggests to us that an effective functioning of a genocidal bureaucracy will be seriously impaired if its functionaries had selectively blocked out the outcomes of their actions. In fact, interviews with perpetrators years after the genocide often show a clear-headed, unsentimental awareness of the process and its moral consequences. We can conclude that the reason that genocidal bureaucracies are so very effective is precisely because they involve individuals capable of unambiguous, clear assessment of the issues at hand.

The question of group dynamics asks us to account for the motivations behind the group processes that affect and shape genocidal bureaucracies. Unsurprisingly, we find that such bureaucracies are not chains of blind obedience to orders from outside the system but rather a complex network of competing departments or wings, each with its own leaders and allegiances, its own protocols and goals. Since the system is constantly evolving its methods it involves much inventiveness, cooperation and experimentation.

For example, the invention of the gas chamber as a means of disposing of those the Nazi regime regarded as undesirable was accomplished by SS Gruppenfuehrer Arthur Nebe²⁶⁵ in September 1941 under circumstances showing the inventiveness, cooperation and experimentation we have noted.

²⁶⁵ Arthur Nebe (1894-1945), a former head of the Berlin criminal police department, joined the Nazi Party in 1931. Rose to the post of commanding officer of Einsatzgruppe B, an SS deployment group, participated in

In the autumn of 1941, at the beginning of the German invasion into the USSR, Nebe, the commander of Einsatzgruppe B²⁶⁶, was faced with the task of killing the inmates of the insane asylums of the captured Belorussian towns Mogilev and Minsk. While his colleague Otto Rasch²⁶⁷ was conducting shooting massacres in the Ukraine, the notorious Babi Yar among them, Nebe believed that a more efficient way to kill those slated to die was required.

The German euthanasia programme²⁶⁸ had used gas as a method of terminating patients before and Nebe was familiar with the fact. He therefore conceived a number of possible methods, the main ones being killing by explosives in a confined space and killing by gas, with patients similarly enclosed.

One possible idea was that of a mobile gas chamber, consisting of a covered lorry equipped with piping to channel the exhaust fumes inside, killing the passengers in transit. However, killing the patients by explosives still remained a viable option. Having developed the concept of the mobile gas chamber Nebe called on his contacts in the criminal police and asked for experts from the euthanasia program to aid him with their expertise.

An expert, one Dr Widman, was duly dispatched and arrived in Belorussia carrying with him explosives and the pipes needed for gassing. Before leaving Munich he had consulted a fellow Criminal Police medic and a veteran of the

Operation Barbarossa. Executed in 1945 for involvement in the bomb plot against Hitler. See Michael Balfour (1988). *Withstanding Hitler in Germany, 1933–45*, (Oxford: Routledge, 1988), 160-165.

²⁶⁶ Einsatzgruppe were SS liquidation corps. During Operation Barbarossa each invading army was accompanied by its own Einsatzgruppe. Group B, led by Nebe, was deployed together with Army Group Centre on the territory of modern-day Belarus.

²⁶⁷ Dr Otto Rasch (1891-1948), commanding officer of Einsatzgruppe C, deployed with Army Group South in the territory of modern-day Ukraine. Holder of two doctoral degrees in law and political economy. Indicted at Nuremberg for crimes against humanity, he died in prison the same year.

²⁶⁸ Action T-4, Nazi Germany's first programme of mass murder of 'persons judged incurably ill'. First targeting the mentally ill hospitalised in Germany, it was later expanded to include many other categories of persons who had failed the tests of 'racial hygiene' instituted by the Third Reich. It is estimated that the programme is responsible for around 400,000 deaths and 360,000 forced sterilisations. See Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 163.

euthanasia program, a Dr Heess, who recommended the use of gas. Nebe and Widman then experimented in Belorussia, alternating between killing the asylum inmates by explosives and by gas. Gas was deemed to be more effective and easier and so the project of a death lorry whose exhaust pipe was connected to its cabin was accepted by both Nebe and Widman. The project was then presented to Heydrich, who approved it.²⁶⁹

As we can see in this excerpt, the processes that led to the invention and its adoption are similar to those leading to the invention and adoption of an industrial project. The SS works similarly to a large corporation, whose various departments share expertise and take credit for the invention in exchange. Nebe operates much as an experimental scientist would, using his own networks within the larger organisation to obtain the expert advice and backing he needs. His advisors in their turn draw upon previous experience and confer, sharing expertise. The invention is eventually presented to the CEO of the corporation for approval and, having obtained that, is merchandised.

It is obvious that none of these actions could have performed under the conditions of cognitive closure, either institutional or personal. One does not sleepwalk into a gas chamber.

Let us now look at the role of ideology. Despite his protestations on the witness stand, Eichmann was an anti-Semite long before he had joined the SS. The same is true for many of those who joined the SS before the Nazis came to power in 1933. Before the electoral win, when the Nazi party was looked down upon as the refuge of the violent underclass, there was no reason to believe that joining it would benefit one's career. On the contrary, joining it may well have damaged one's career prospects.²⁷⁰

Therefore, joining the SS in the late 1920s and the early 1930s was likely to be due to ideological conviction strong enough to risk social costs for associating with an unpopular minority party.

²⁶⁹ Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1987), 10–11

²⁷⁰ See interview with Dr Yaacov Lozowick, former director of the Yad Vashem archives at, available from www. http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/insights/video/arendt_eichmann.asp, retrieved 10/10/14.

During his pre-arrest recorded interviews with a fellow SS veteran, the journalist Willem Sassen, conducted when both men were refugees in Buenos Aires, Eichmann attests to his ideological idealism: 'I worked relentlessly to kindle the fire. I was not just a recipient of orders. Had I been that, I would have been an imbecile. Instead, I was part of the thought process. I was an idealist.'²⁷¹

Therefore we must assume that ideological commitment cannot be dismissed as an important reason for the perpetration of systemic evils.²⁷² The complex reasoning involved in the assimilation and adoption of an ideology cannot be executed by persons who confine themselves to the following of orders, or not considering complex moral issues. Rather it is a process that is dependent upon the active participation of the individual in question and as such is dependent upon that individual's agency and rationality.

4. Bureaucracies and their processes:

In this section I shall discuss the structures and relational economies and processes governing bureaucracies.

A bureaucracy is a specialised hierarchical network of executive professionals with extensive executive powers. It can be found in the public, the private and the voluntary sectors.

In the public sector they are to be found in the legislature, the armed forces, the branches of civil government, law enforcement and education. In the private-sector bureaucracies are to be found in the self-regulating professions, large

²⁷¹ Edited by Roger Berkowitz, available from <http://www.hannaharendtcenter.org/?tag=sassen-tapes>, retrieved 10/10/14. The tapes were declassified in April of 2011 as part of the declassification of 4,500 documents on Eichmann by the Federal Republic of Germany. The tapes are now in the German Federal Archives in Koblenz. The first tape was recorded in 1953.

²⁷² Hate ideologies and the propaganda that promotes them are important components of genocidal violence. See Ervin Staub, "The Roots and Prevention of Genocide and Related Mass Violence", *Zygon: Journal of Religion & Science*, (New York: Wiley, 2012) Dec 2012, Vol. 47 Issue 4, 821-842, for an overview of the role played by anti-Tutsi ideology and propaganda in the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

enterprises and multi-national corporations. In the voluntary sector they are to be found in medium-size and large NGOs and non-profit corporations.

Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist and political economist, had described bureaucracies as a formal, rational method of organisation, more effective and impersonal than previous forms of authority.

- Clear Jurisdiction: the area over which a bureaucracy holds power is clearly defined and distinguished from competing areas.
- Hierarchical organisation: A command-and-control structure in which the upper echelons control the lower echelons. The subordinates are expected to follow the orders of their superiors but have the right to appeal them.
- Rules and regulations: The conduct of a bureaucracy is governed by a system of rules which the functionaries are expected to learn and adapt.
- Desk-bound means of production: The locus of production in a bureaucracy is the office and its mode of production is administrative procedure. Office property is held separately from personal property.
- Technocratic appointments: functionaries are appointed rather than elected to their positions. Technical qualifications are required for an appointment. The functionaries are paid a salary and a pension commensurate with their rank in the hierarchy.
- Lifelong employment: the functionary is offered a lifelong career track with steady promotions and is a full-time employee of the organisation. Functionaries enjoy the benefits of tenure and protection from arbitrary dismissal.²⁷³

Weber contrasts this means of organisation and execution with an older means of projecting power, one he describes as traditional authority. This form of organisation predates bureaucracy and differs from it in both its organisation and specialisation of function.

Under traditional authority is leader-centric and its appointments lay in the hands of the leader. Duties delegated by the leader can be changed at any

²⁷³ Adapted from Max Weber, *Economy and Society* G. Roth & C. Wittich, eds., (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 956-958.

time. There are few rules and these are liable to change. The leader's followers have no right of appeal and no protection against arbitrary dismissal.²⁷⁴

Where a traditional authority structure is patrimonial and is run much like a family a bureaucracy is impersonal in both the nature of its command-and-control procedures and in the fact that it is exempt from a reward structure based upon personal favours and privileges.

5. Bureaucracies' Relational Economies, costs and rewards:

A bureaucracy is a hierarchical structure that allows the new recruit an occupational and organisational identity, as well as a promise of steady rise through the ranks. In addition it allows the recruit a power over members of the wider society. Recruits to and members of bureaucracies are also offered anonymity, immunity from prosecution over acts committed as part of their work and the support of the entire bureaucracy should they find themselves the target of criticism or conflict from outsiders.

Much later work by philosophers associated with the Frankfurt School and genocide scholars was triggered by Weber's concept of *Zweckrational*, a process by which an originally instrumental action becomes a value in itself.²⁷⁵ Writing about the later extrapolation of this concept into a theory of a goals-oriented yet non-rational bureaucracy the genocide scholar Yehuda Shenhav states: 'This 'instrumental rationality' thesis, which was developed against the back-drop of the horrifying state violence during World War II and thereafter during the Cold War, was indeed eye-opening. In Weberian terminology, the Frankfurt School scholars examined the tension between action and its

²⁷⁴ Weber's own example of a traditional authority structure is feudalism and the power projection of a feudal lord over his vassals. However, it is worth to note that armies, trading companies and governments were, until the latter half of the 19th century, often based on this organisational model. E.g., the Napoleonic army, as well as the armies of the Crimean War (1853-1856) and the American Civil War (1861-1865) were all direct-command structures.

²⁷⁵ See Max Weber, *On the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1949); Richard. Rubinstein, *The cunning of history* (New York: Harper, 1978).

unintended consequences, between stability and destruction and between value rationality (and morality) and instrumental rationality. It pointed to the manner in which rational bureaucracy faced unintended consequences and turned into a non-rational death machine. The instrumental rationality thesis underscored the deceptive nature of the organizational machinery, the detrimental effects of ideology-based efficiency and the malicious use of bureaucracy's advantages towards genocide.²⁷⁶ However, later extrapolation notwithstanding, I do not believe that Weber intended the concept of *Zweckrational* to form a theory of unreasoning efficiency.

Weber fails to pay attention to the psychological and social processes that are prevalent in bureaucracies and did not account for the power distribution within the bureaucracies. Bureaucracies act as powerful in-groups, providing ready-made social networks that in turn exercise powerful relational economies for its participants. A major cost for any would-be whistle-blower is the ostracism from a group with which he or she had previously identified. A reward for the functionary who chooses to remain within the bureaucracy is the continuing support of the group whose strong bonds are an ongoing reward for belonging and compliance.

The power vested in bureaucracies is such as to dwarf the varieties available in person-to-person relationships. State bureaucracies enjoy devolved authority conferred by legislation, whose extensive powers allow a bureaucracy to assume control over a variety of basic social functions of many individuals. A side-effect of this legislation is that bureaucracies become largely self-governing systems. Most hold self-investigative and self-regulating powers, thus becoming impervious to outside scrutiny or control.

The relational economies operating within these organisations differ from those operating in smaller, less powerful and more transparent organisations within both the public and private sectors.

Let us look at the costs of leaving a bureaucracy: a) The aggregated power of the institution militates against the breaking of ranks and stacks the

²⁷⁶ See Yehuda Shenhav, "Beyond 'Instrumental Rationality': Lord Cromer and the imperial roots of Eichmann's bureaucracy", *Journal of Genocide Research*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 15,4, 381.

disadvantages of doing so in order to deter would-be whistle-blowers. B) The substantial financial compensation offered by the institution, c) probable loss of one's social milieu upon leaving.

Let us now look at the benefits of belonging to a bureaucracy: a) access to power unparalleled by other citizens, b) financial rewards of stable wages and pensions, c) security of promotion, d) protection from outside criticism and resultant dismissal, e) a stable social circle and a contingent personal identity.

It is therefore clear why a functionary is likely to wish to remain within the bureaucracy whatever its actions than to leave it.

6. Genocide:

Let us now look on the processes and structures involved in the crimes of genocide. Genocide is the systematic process of mass killing of the non-combatant members of a definable ethnic or cultural group, and often does involve additional actions designed to obliterate the target group²⁷⁷.

The process of genocide is goal-driven: 'Genocide is almost always a premeditated act of its perpetrators through mass murder... Rather than being simply an expression of passion, genocide is a rational instrument to achieve an end.'²⁷⁸ Smith (1999) classifies acts of genocide in accordance with the motives behind them: retributive, institutional, utilitarian, monopolistic and ideological.²⁷⁹ Totten and Bartrop (2009) emphasise its conscious nature: '...

²⁷⁷ The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) defines genocide in articles I, II and III. The definition includes the 'intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group by acts of a) killing members of the group, b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, c) deliberately inflicting upon the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. See Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 12-13.

²⁷⁸ Roger W. Smith, "State Power and Genocidal Intent: On The Uses of Genocide in the Twentieth Century" in Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinan, *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, (London, Macmillan, 1999) chapter 1, 4-5.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 5-9.

genocide is a policy option that is consciously chosen from a number of alternatives. It does not have a life of its own; it must be adopted as a course of action *consciously*.²⁸⁰

Until the 20th century acts of genocide were largely non-bureaucratic, involving an army who attacked an enemy group as part of war or imperial expansion. For example, the Vendee Uprising²⁸¹ (1789-1796) had followed the French Revolution of 1789 and involved a campaign of the Republican army against the pro-royalist rebels and the civilian population of the district of Vendee, resulting in the deaths of approximately 150,000. Similarly the Zulu genocide (1810-1828) involved a campaign of the Zulu army under the leadership of Shaka Zulu against the tribal groups of South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The 20th century had changed both the processes and structures of genocide by removing it from the sphere of conventional armed conflict. Instead of armies we now encounter bureaucracies, often especially-constructed bureaucracies, as the planners and perpetrators. These bureaucracies are often supported by armies, militias or paramilitary organisations set up specifically for the purpose of executing and policing the genocide.

20th century genocide is as liable to take place during peacetime as during wartime and often is part of a country's domestic policy rather than its foreign policy. Another 20th century innovation is the introduction of genocidal campaigns targeting members of a defined social class, as was the matter in the USSR (1921 – 1939) and Cambodia (1975-1978).

In this section I would like to examine the role of bureaucracies in the perpetration of genocide.

Bureaucracies set up especially for the implementation of a genocide are predated by a relevant political decision and as a result empowered by the machinery of the state. This includes finance, legislation to confer over-reaching powers upon the new bureaucracies, the appointment of the

²⁸⁰ Samuel Totten and Paul R. Bartop (2009): *The Genocide Studies Reader*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), 97.

²⁸¹ Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 6-7.

executive. This period is followed by a period of recruitment and training, when large numbers of functionaries are recruited by the newly-enfranchised bureaucratic network, command-and-control chains and hierarchies are developed and specialisation of function is developed and settled.

The costs and rewards for the functionaries of a genocidal bureaucracy are similar to those of a functionary of any other type of bureaucracy; the costs remain low and the rewards remain high. However, this equilibrium is even more unequal in the case of a functionary of a genocidal bureaucracy since such a bureaucracy is more empowered, better resourced and better protected from the exposure of the identities of its functionaries and its command-and-control hierarchies and thus from the threat of imposition of personal responsibility. Therefore the functionary of such a bureaucracy enjoys greater rewards and lower costs as compared to the functionary of a non-genocidal bureaucracy.

The power differential between perpetrators and victims is at its highest. It is of such magnitude as to never be replicated in the sphere of individual human relationships. A single abusive individual may come to hold the power of life or death over one or more persons but is never able to hold this power over the vast numbers of victims available to a mid-ranking bureaucrat within a genocidal bureaucracy.

In addition a genocidal bureaucracy offers the best opportunities for fast promotion, thus appealing to the ambitions of its functionaries. A non-genocidal bureaucracy cannot match the genocidal one on the speed of promotion and empowerment offered to functionaries, in particular to those who enter the bureaucracy early in its history and are entrepreneurial enough to assume new roles as they develop, or develop these roles themselves. The steady advancement of a non-genocidal bureaucracy is no match for the meteoric, non-linear one of its genocidal counterpart.

Once the genocidal bureaucracy has its orders, had established its central hierarchy and has evolved an operational strategy for elimination the decision-making process and implementation will become intuitive and fragmented. The chains of command know their job; they will now experiment or respond

to specific local conditions as they work towards the main goal of elimination. This fragmentation of decision-making is responsible for the difficulty of assigning personal responsibility if and when the functionaries are put on trial after the end of the genocide.

Such evidence as we have from functionaries reporting on the decision-making and implementation of genocidal processes confirms full awareness of the mission in which the bureaucracy is engaged, the necessity for intuitive interpretations of orders that could not have been written down and the rewards for those who performed their jobs well.

These functionaries were aware of both the content and the process of their organisations when they were members in them and are aware of both content and process after their membership in these bureaucracies had ended.

A genocidal bureaucracy does not merely obediently follow orders given by the political echelon. It often reinterprets orders, ignores orders obedience to which promises no benefit to the bureaucracy or its functionaries and often improvises. Such a bureaucracy is to a large extent a law unto itself, a closed system that is impervious to all but the most forceful external intervention.²⁸²

Historical record shows, on the other hand, how this acute awareness of moral categories and in particular of the wrongness and criminality of genocide is manifested in the efforts taken by genocidal bureaucracies to conceal their actions and hide their results. Orders given at the height of genocidal actions maintain this ongoing awareness²⁸³.

In the following section I would like to examine the role of bureaucracies in the perpetration of genocide.

²⁸² The periodic purges visited by Stalin upon the Checka, the forerunner of the KGB, in the midst of the wider political purges of the 1930s was a strategy to prevent the organisation getting out of control.

²⁸³ For example, SS Brigadefurher Otto Rasch, commander of Einsatzgruppen C and the planner of the Babi Yar massacre as well as other such shooting massacres during the first months of the German invasion into the Soviet Union, had courted personal unpopularity by ordering his officers to participate in the massacres along with their men 'so that all shall be equally culpable'. This order indicates clear awareness that the shootings invoked culpability. Before WW2 Rasch was the Lord Mayor of Wittenberg and held two doctoral degrees. See Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and The Invention of the Holocaust*, (New York: Alfred N. Knopf, 2002) , 223.

7. Genocidal bureaucracies:

Bureaucracies set up especially for the implementation of a genocide are predated by a relevant political decision and as a result empowered by the machinery of the state. This includes finance, legislation to confer over-reaching powers upon the new bureaucracies, the appointment of the executive. This period is followed by a period of recruitment and training, when large numbers of functionaries are recruited by the newly-enfranchised bureaucratic network, command-and-control chains and hierarchies are developed and specialisation of function is developed and settled.

In terms of the relational economy established by this process the costs and rewards profile for the functionaries of a genocidal bureaucracy are similar to those of a functionary of any other type of bureaucracy; the costs remain low and the rewards remain high. However, this equilibrium is even more unequal in the case of a functionary of a genocidal bureaucracy since such a bureaucracy is more empowered, better resourced and better protected from the exposure of the identities of its functionaries and its command-and-control hierarchies and thus from the threat of imposition of personal responsibility and accountability. Therefore the functionary of such a bureaucracy enjoys greater rewards and lower costs as compared to the functionary of a non-genocidal bureaucracy.

The power differential between perpetrators and victims is at its highest. It is of such magnitude as to never be replicated in the sphere of individual human relationships. A single abusive individual may come to hold the power of life or death over one or more persons but is never able to hold this power over the vast numbers of victims available to a mid-ranking bureaucrat within a genocidal bureaucracy²⁸⁴.

The discussion of the value of interpersonal power, must, I believe, be included in any analysis of perpetrator motivation and the dynamics of predation, both individual and collective. Primary among the non-material rewards of predation, interpersonal power emerges as a commodity of great value in the

²⁸⁴ E.g., Adolf Eichmann.

account of perpetrators²⁸⁵. One of the specifics of a bureaucratic career is the vast accumulation of power in the hands of a single functionary. Other non-material motivators such as career progression, improvement of one's social status and peer approval should also be taken into account in any discussion of motivation, in particular in cases of collective evil acts, where such motivators are likely to be common to many perpetrators.

A genocidal bureaucracy offers the best opportunities for fast promotion, thus appealing to the ambitions of its functionaries²⁸⁶. A non-genocidal bureaucracy cannot match the genocidal one on the speed of promotion and empowerment offered to functionaries, in particular to those who enter the bureaucracy early in its history and are entrepreneurial enough to assume new roles as they develop, or develop these roles themselves. The steady advancement of a non-genocidal bureaucracy is no match for the meteoric, non-linear one of its genocidal counterpart.

a. Rational decision-making and implementation of objectives:

Once the genocidal bureaucracy has its orders, had established its central hierarchy and has evolved an operational strategy for elimination the decision-making process and implementation will become intuitive and fragmented. The chains of command know their job; they will now experiment or respond to specific local conditions as they work towards the main goal of elimination. This fragmentation of decision-making is responsible for the difficulty of assigning personal responsibility if and when the functionaries are put on trial after the end of the genocide.

Such evidence as we have from functionaries reporting on the decision-making and implementation of genocidal processes confirms full awareness of the mission in which the bureaucracy is engaged, the necessity for intuitive

²⁸⁵ The discussions of WW2 German POWs discussed on pages 140-146 of this thesis make this very clear.

²⁸⁶ Eichmann admitted that it was the opportunity for fast promotion that attracted him

interpretations of orders that could not have been written down and the rewards for those who performed their jobs well.²⁸⁷

These functionaries were aware of both the content and the process of their organisations when they were members in them and are aware of both content and process after their membership in these bureaucracies had ended.

A genocidal bureaucracy does not merely obediently follow orders given by the political echelon. It often reinterprets orders, ignores orders obedience to which promises no benefit to the bureaucracy or its functionaries and often improvises. Such a bureaucracy is to a large extent a law unto itself, a closed system that is impervious to all but the most forceful external intervention.²⁸⁸

In Raul Hilberg's meticulous study of the German railway system's role in shipping Jews to the death camps during the Holocaust he demonstrates the clear awareness of those operatives charged with scheduling and costing these one-way journeys. The railway officials had charged group-discount fares for their captive passengers, complete with half-price fares for children under ten and free passage for those under four. As Hilberg notes, the railway operators may have shipped Jews like cattle but they have booked them like any other passengers. The railway system had gone on to destroy most of its wartime documentation, ensuring no judicial investigation could ever take place.²⁸⁹

A genocidal bureaucracy enjoys the same perk as most individuals and organisations participating in a genocide, the anonymity of collective action. This allows not only for effective escape from accountability and responsibility but for the avoidance of feelings of guilt or remorse. Irwing Horowitz depicts genocidal collective actions and the problems these create for attribution of responsibility as following: 'The very inability to identify specific individuals

²⁸⁷ See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 102, for an analysis of the dehumanisation of bureaucratic objects.

²⁸⁸ The periodic purges visited by Stalin upon the Checka, the forerunner of the KGB, in the midst of the wider political purges of the 1930s was a strategy to prevent the organisation getting out of control.

²⁸⁹ Raul Hilberg, *Sonderzüge nach Auschwitz* (Mainz: Dumjahn Verlag, 1981); see also a shorter, earlier version in Raul Hilberg, "German Railways, Jewish Souls", *Society*, 14:1 (1976), 520-566.

who carry out such crimes, and who are accountable for such crimes, is a basic characteristic of genocidal environments (...) in democratic societies, collective guilt is not a concept readily admitted.²⁹⁰

There is no evidence to indicate that moral boundaries become blurred among the functionaries of a genocidal bureaucracy. Historical record shows, on the other hand, how this acute awareness of moral categories and in particular of the wrongness and criminality of genocide is manifested in the efforts taken by genocidal bureaucracies to conceal their actions and hide their results. Orders given at the height of genocidal actions maintain this ongoing awareness. For example, SS Brigadeführer Otto Rasch, commander of Einsatzgruppen C and the planner of the Babi Yar massacre as well as other such shooting massacres during the first months of the German invasion into the Soviet Union, had courted personal unpopularity by ordering his officers to participate in the massacres along with their men 'so that all shall be equally culpable'. This order indicates clear awareness that the shootings invoked culpability. Before WW2 Rasch was the Lord Mayor of Wittenberg and held two doctoral degrees²⁹¹.

The processes of genocidal Nazi bureaucracies had generated much investigation.²⁹² It is worthy of note that the approach of those historians who tend to present the work of these bureaucracies as clinical and efficient is facing criticism from those researchers who believe that such representations are incomplete, severing the connection between the operative and the moral, obscuring the choices these operatives made and the reasons they made them. Simone Gigliotti argues that such severance is likely to be misleading: 'While the repetition of deportees as numbers in train convoy totals and timetables to

²⁹⁰ Irving L Horowitz, "Science, Modernity and Authorized Terror: Reconsidering the Genocidal State", in Chorbajian & Shirinian, eds., *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, pp. 15-30, (London: Macmillan Press, 1999) 15-30.

²⁹¹ See Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and The Invention of the Holocaust*, (New York: Alfred N. Knopf, 2002), 223.

²⁹² See Michael Thad Allen, "Introduction: A Bureaucratic Holocaust – Toward a New Consensus", in *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business and the Organization of the Holocaust*, Gerald D. Feldman & Wolfgang Siebel, eds., (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 259-268.

be shipped reminds the reader of the compression of transit, it can also have the effect of severing that compression from the human action, choices and commitment on which it was so critically dependent. Numbers obscure the trauma of deportation as a human crime with inhumane impacts.²⁹³

In his article *The German Bureaucracy and the Holocaust* Christopher Browning is at pains to demystify the actions of the Nazi-era genocidal bureaucracies and their motivations. Noting the rush of the lower-echelon German officials to identify as Nazis the wake of the National Socialists' rise to power in Germany in 1933 Browning says: 'The lower-echelon officials were of a younger generation, shaped by the turmoil and insecurity of post-World War I Germany. When the Nazis came to power, they rushed to gain party membership. For some, it was a chance openly to declare long-held political sympathies. For others, it was a matter of expediency, the most tangible demonstration of loyalty to the new regime that was now essential for successful career prospects. For many, it was undoubtedly a happy coincidence of conviction and self-interest. If the motives were mixed, the results were not. The civil servants soon reached the highest percentage of Nazi membership of any profession in Germany. It was this younger generation of easily Nazified civil servants that provided the cadres of "Jewish experts" (Judensachbearbeiter) to staff the Sections for Jewish Affairs, which became a mandatory feature of practically every governmental and party organization in Germany after 1933.'²⁹⁴

Browning emphasises that although the older, upper-echelon German bureaucrats of the time with their origins in the pre-WWI imperial grandeur had generational reasons to incorporate the Nazi ideology it was the younger, lower-echelon bureaucrats who had the powerful double reward of rapid career prospects and ideological representation that flocked to the Nazi party and rapidly answered its need of expertise in the matter of the Final Solution.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Simone Gigliotti, *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity and Witnessing the Holocaust*, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 54.

²⁹⁴ Browning, Christopher R Browning (1983), "The German Bureaucracy and the Holocaust", in Adam Grobman & Daniel Landes, eds., *Genocide: Critical Issues of the Holocaust*, New York: Rossel Books, 1983), 145-148.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

Mark Osiel, an expert on international criminal and humanitarian law, criticises the 'organisation man' accounts of mass atrocities for overlooking the crucial role of individual initiative and accelerated promotion that it brings the enterprising low-echelon operative in genocidal environments: 'Episodes of mass atrocity often notably depart from the rational orderliness, sanitized precision and efficiency suggested by the "organization man" account. Scholars now stress instead the spontaneous initiative at lower echelons, informal character, and face-to-face nature of much Nazi killing, to say nothing of the Rwandan (and other) experiences. Milosevic , for that matter, was in no organizational position to order the Bosnian Serb leaders to do or stop doing anything at Srebrenica.'²⁹⁶

In his book *Peasants in Power: The Political Economy and the Genocide in Rwanda* (2013)²⁹⁷ development economist Philip Verwimp argues persuasively against scholars who would treat genocide as an irrational act of collective hatred. Verwimp delineates the incentives for genocide offered by the Rwandan regime to its agrarian Hutu population. He argues that in conditions of high rewards for participation and high penalties for non-participation, augmented by the high loyalty built up by the Habyarimana regime over the previous decades among the Rwandan peasants the genocide was all but inevitable.²⁹⁸

Verwimp argues for the rationality of perpetrator motivation and action from the success of the Rwandan genocide: the most successful genocide in history, it had caused the elimination of ¾ of the target population in the space of only ten weeks. Its very effectiveness suggests that it was a highly-organised,

²⁹⁶ Mark J. Osiel (*Making Sense of Mass Atrocity*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) , 99. Osiel identifies Arendt as one of the main proponents of the 'organization man' theory of genocidal bureaucracies in the 1960s. For Osiel's discussion of the disparity of goals between superiors and subordinates please see Mark J. Osiel, *Obedying Orders: Atrocity, Military Discipline & The Law of War*,(Washington, DC: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 173-85.

²⁹⁷ Philip Verwimp, *Peasants in Power: The Political Economy of Development and Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Springer, 2013).

²⁹⁸ Verwimp (2013), introduction.

rational endeavour. Its timing and location also suggest deliberation and specificity, the interplay of planning and pre-existing local factors.

Verwimp provides a detailed analysis of the Second Rwandan Republic with its authoritarian regime, efficient organisation and top-down control structures. He discusses the policy of ruralisation of the Habyarimana regime and its pro-peasant rhetoric. Verwimp establishes the dependence of this regime on the international coffee prices; an increase or decrease of these prices caused an increase or decrease the power of the dictatorship.²⁹⁹

Verwimp concludes that, in addition to such geopolitical conditions, it was a process known to social scientists as the availability cascade³⁰⁰, a process of public opinion formation that depends upon only a few segments of the population, those close to the centre of the opinion spectrum in this matter, changing their minds in favour of extremist action as the social cost of their resistance becomes progressively higher. This dynamic, a clear example of collective relational economy, serves to change public opinion³⁰¹ on a variety of issues. In the case of Rwanda it served the Habyarimana regime to turn mainstream Hutu public opinion in favour of genocide.³⁰²

8. Gender and The Dynamics of Predation:

Arendt fails to account for the role of gender and gender-related processes upon the perpetrators of the Holocaust in general and upon Eichmann in particular. In the following paragraphs I endeavour to suggest the avenues of

²⁹⁹ Ibid, chapter 5.

³⁰⁰ The availability cascade theory was developed by Timur Kuran and Cass Sunstein in their article "Availability Cascades and Risk Regulation (1999), *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Apr., 1999), pp. 683-76.

³⁰¹ An availability cascade, whether triggered intentionally (e.g., by means of social action) or circumstantially (e.g., by means of changing socio-political conditions), can be observed in action in a variety of historical process. If we take gay rights for an example we shall see how the cascade dynamics changed the mainstream heterosexual opinion in their favour.

³⁰² See Verwimp (2013), chapter 8.

analysis that would be most beneficial to a modern investigation of the relationship between gender and the dynamics of predation, both individual and collective.

While it would be incorrect to suggest that predatory acts are the preserve of men, it would be incorrect to disregard gender entirely as a category of analysis. The dynamics of predation play a normative part in many models of male socialisation, as does the acculturation to interpersonal violence and cooperation within hierarchical all-male groups. War games, hunting and competitive athletics, historically a preserve of boys and male adolescents, all tend to both socialise the growing male towards the dynamics of predation and to normalise it³⁰³. The different social reactions to male and female dominance and aggression tend to reward such behavioural displays in men while discouraging them in women.³⁰⁴ Therefore predatory dynamics tend to follow masculine models and organisational patterns.

In cases of bureaucracies these male organisational patterns are evident, in particular the centrality of peer bonding and cooperation within a hierarchical structure. The men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the members of the Interahamwe³⁰⁵ gangs that perpetrated the Rwandan genocide were drawn and held together by the powerful forces of collective male aggression and the intense male bonding that follows in its wake.³⁰⁶ Militarism, with its unique male protocols and reinforcements, is an institution that codifies and facilitates collective predatory dynamics. When a bureaucracy becomes militarised, as is usually the case for genocidal bureaucracies, militarism provides an additional layer of masculinist culture that empowers and energises the bureaucracy.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ E.g., see Sabina Low et al. "The Role of Social Networks in Physical and Relational Aggression Among Young Adolescents", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 42.7 (July 2013), 1078-1089.

³⁰⁴ E.g., see Christopher R Matthews, "Biology, Ideology and Pastiche Hegemony", *Men and Masculinities* 17.2, (June 2014), 99-119.

³⁰⁵ The name of the genocide-era Hutu militias means 'those who attack together' in Kinyarwanda, the language of Rwanda.

³⁰⁶ On the role of male bonding and collective aggression please see George R. Pitman, "The Evolution of Human Warfare", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 41.3, (September 2011), 352-379.

³⁰⁷ On the socialisation of militarist male identities see William J. Gibson, "Becoming The Armed Man", *Public Culture*, 4.1 (October 1991), 71-88. On the dynamics of militarised masculinist bureaucracies see Muschalek, Marie, Muschalek, "Honourable Soldier-Bureaucrats: Formation of Violent Identities in the Colonial Police

These factors suggest that when such genocidal bureaucracies involve women these women will tend to adopt male norms and behavioural patterns as they assimilate the values and culture of the bureaucracy to which they were admitted. Such was indeed the case of women admitted to the SS as auxiliary troops and who worked as guards in the women's death and concentration camps.³⁰⁸ They also suggest that women joining such bureaucracies will gain an additional benefit of attaining a social status higher than that of other women by virtue of doing 'men's work' and legitimately exhibiting 'male' traits such as aggression and physical violence.³⁰⁹

Conclusion:

On the basis of the above, I conclude that acts of collective evil are rational, and that their rationality is demonstrated by the perpetrators' motivation, relationships to each other and the reasoning employed when engaging in the most destructive and unsavoury of these acts. These acts are committed in response to relational economies which reward systematised predation.

Arendt's thesis of the banality of evil cannot be maintained in the face of these observations. By examining and accepting the power of group dynamics we can suggest that participation in acts of mass predation does not involve the abolition or suspension of the perpetrators' moral or cognitive capacities. Instead we come to accept the powerful social motivators, pressures and processes that solicit such participation.

In turn this leads us to an opposite thesis, one we can name the *exceptionality of evil*. According to this thesis, to be preferred due to its greater realism, evil acts are extraordinary. They are ordinarily discouraged by normative relational economies that penalise predation and encourage cooperation. When they do

Force of German South-West Africa, 1905-18" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 41.4, (November 2013), 584-599.

³⁰⁸ On women in the SS see Wendy Adele Marie Sarti, *Women and Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes During Hitler's Regime, 1933-1945*, (Palo Alto, CA: Academica Press, 2011) 35.

³⁰⁹ See Gerhard Rempel, 'The SS Female Assistance Corps', (in) *Hitler's Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS*. (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 1989).

occur they occur in violation of these relational economies and are a clear indication that a reversionary relational economy, one rewarding predation and penalising its avoidance, had been set in place.

It is important to keep in mind that the acceptance of this thesis does not constitute a species of determinism. No single individual is bound to participate in acts of mass predation; however, given the large numbers required for such acts it is highly likely that many shall, given an appropriately rewarding relational economy. It is possible to think of a time when such reversionary relational economy will cease to be effective, for example at a time when large numbers of individuals commit themselves sufficiently strongly to moral codes eschewing predation to not be responsive to either the rewards or the costs offered by it.

Until such time, however, it is likely that mass-appeal reversionary economies will continue to be effective.

Chapter V: Relationalities, Rationalities and Relational Economies

In the previous chapter I have addressed the topic of systemic evil, examining the dynamics of genocide, tyrannical governments and oppressive bureaucracies. In this chapter I would like to advance the discussion to examine the issue of relationality. Where the previous chapter argued that those who engage in acts of systemic evil act competently, cogently and volitionally this chapter will examine what prompts such choices by introducing the concept of relational economies. Moreover, I will also look at the processes inherent in human relationality and how this relationality is affected by predatory acts.

The final question I ask in this chapter is how moral evil affects the relationality between humans and God. In the chapter to follow, the final chapter of this thesis, I shall discuss the impact possible divine interventions would have on both human-to-human and human-to-God relationality.

1. Relational sacrality:

In her book *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz* (2003)³¹⁰ Melissa Raphael describes how the degrading treatment meted by the Nazis to the women imprisoned in that camp constituted not only a denial of their humanity but a profanization, a continuous denial of the sacrality of their persons:

‘The profane need mean no more than the ordinary or the non-sacral: that which has not been set apart. And yet if Auschwitz was a spectacle and experience of the most horrifying transgressions of the ordinary or customary, what is under discussion here is not merely the non-cultic or a gradation of the freely available, but the active forces of destruction which theologians have traditionally referred to as the demonic.’³¹¹

³¹⁰ Melissa Raphael *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2003)

³¹¹ Ibid, 63.

For Raphael relationality, the ability to form and maintain enduring relationships of care, is both the process of acknowledging and endorsing the humanity of another but also the manifestation of God, affirming the divinity in human interactions. Although God is distinct from humanity, human relationality, particularly under extreme duress, has the power to manifest God: 'The divine personality is ontologically transcendent and other to human personality, but it is such that when human personhood is carefully tended so as to remain reflective of the divine personality it images, then the divine personality achieves immanence by its reflection. Within the recursive relationship of God and humanity, divinity is tended in the tended person. The image of both coalesces in a moment of (re) unification that recalls the moment of creation in and by God and looks forward to the reconciliation of redemption (...)'³¹²

God, therefore, is both invoked and affirmed in the act of care. When, on the other hand, the other is predated upon, degraded and destroyed God is expelled. Only acts of care can restore God to a world following such expulsion.³¹³

Raphael describes the genocidal regime of Auschwitz as a brutal, unceasing attack on human relationality, 'the degradation of relation', particularly painful for the camp's female prisoners. The camp's depersonalisation, what Raphael interprets, following Levinas, as the obscuring or destruction of the face, not only makes the task of perpetrators easier as it confronts them with a faceless mass but challenges the prisoners themselves to see themselves and each other as human and distinct.³¹⁴ The tattooing of the new arrivals who had survived the initial selection, the removal of all personal possessions from them, be they family photographs, clothes, letters or toothbrushes, served to obscure the individuality of the prisoners, to erase and debase their humanity.³¹⁵

³¹² Ibid, 88.

³¹³ Ibid., 89: 'Speaking theopoetically, to restore God's immanence to the world which has expelled it is to make God once more visible to God in God's transcendence.'

³¹⁴ 'In an environment of unceasing bodily and verbal abuse, a strenuous effort of moral will and imagination was required for a woman to continue to see herself and others as persons.' Ibid., 90.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

This entry-time depersonalisation followed the destruction human bonds that both anchored and defined the prisoners' individuality. The bond between mothers and children was put under intolerable strain during the deportation and the train journey to Auschwitz. The severance of this bond was particularly destructive for women, in particular mothers. This in turn followed the degradation and the undoing of social and familial relationships during imprisonment in the ghettos.³¹⁶ On arrival at Auschwitz and during the initial selection relationships between mothers and children were severed summarily.³¹⁷

The degradation of Auschwitz, whose most torturous facet was the denial of basic washing privileges to the prisoners, the camp's 'excremental assault', made them lose their internal and external image as humans as well as lose their sacrality:

'One girl in a ghetto camp lamented the lack of facilities for washing and disposing of picked lice: "we used to squeeze the lice with our clothes, which caused the latter to become damp and stick to our bodies." Significantly, she adds, "We literary lost the image of God."' ³¹⁸

Raphael quotes from the memoirs of a survivor, Sara Nomberg-Przytyk to describe the brutality of the inmate guards at Auschwitz. These female 'camp aristocrats', the Lageraelteste, were more feared than the SS, to whom they were solely responsible: 'Nomberg-Przytyk remembers one blokowe³¹⁹ who, catching an old woman relieving herself in front of the block instead of going to the latrines which lay at some distance from there, beat her without mercy. When she had finished, "a rag of a human being", covered in mud, lay in front

³¹⁶ 'For many women, the degradation of relationship by acclimatization to the suffering of the other had already begun in the ghettos.' Ibid.

³¹⁷ A woman simply standing next to a child, or looking after someone else's child could be sent to the gas. In short, although mothers, daughters and sisters within an approximate age range could enter Auschwitz together, a woman whose death was postponed by her selection for labour was intended to be a woman already divested of dependent relationships.' Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid, p.64. The quote is from Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland during the Holocaust*, (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1987)

³¹⁹ Polish for 'block supervisor'.

of the block and “Madame blokowa returned to her warm room furnished with pink silk eiderdowns, tables, chairs, dishes and glasses.”³²⁰

The murderous block supervisor achieves no tangible benefit by her attack on the old woman. In all probability she empowered herself by disempowering her victim, satisfying herself that there is someone in the world more debased and powerless than she, one over whom she had complete power and on whom she could unleash her frustration and anger. This grotesque empowerment continues even after the attack is over; the block supervisor retreats to a warm room furnished with silk eiderdowns while leaving her victim dying in the freezing mud. The contrast between the two is complete.

This empowerment is, of course, illusory. Not only does the block supervisor remain a prisoner herself but, by stripping both the humanity and the sacrality away from her victim she had achieved the same for herself. Dehumanising and profanizing the victim dehumanises and profanizes the perpetrator.

By committing a predatory act the perpetrators too lose their humanity and their sacrality. Brutality, by definition, is acting as an animal would, 'like a brute'. As perpetrators we no longer act as humans should but rather adopt the processes of non-human animals, for whom predation is natural and normative. When we act as animals we deny our unique human faculties and their attendant responsibilities; in addition to that we deny our own image of God and assume the image of the demonic.³²¹

When individuals normatively interact with others they do so while recognising them as the bearers of both human and divine components. Predating on others denies both their humanity and their sacrality, thus voiding our relationship with them. The nature of dehumanisation, a crucial stage of the predation process, is the denial that the person against whom we predate is as human as we are. Auschwitz is the epicentre of mass predation and desecration and as such the forefront of a war against God, as well as a model of new, God-less world.

³²⁰ Raphael, *Female Face of God*, 93. The quote is from Sara Nomberg-Przytyk, *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grotesque Land*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985)

³²¹ We can conclude that since normative human relationality bears upon itself the mark of the divine presence, then a compassionate act is an act of consecration while an act of predation is one of profanization.

The other side of this relationality is that in Auschwitz the act of caring for another became an act of affirming both the humanity and the sacrality of carer and those for whom she cared. Raphael emphasises how the loving act of one woman cleaning another woman's face of its encrusted dirt and scabs was an act not only of human kindness of returning God into the world by reaffirming the sacrality of both.³²²

An essential part of the collective predation of Auschwitz was the denial of the victim's face, its soiling with mud, blood and lice bites. Raphael sees the act of cleaning an inmate's face as an act of uncovering the face of God: 'Israel is commanded to be a holy nation. That the holiness of Israel consists in its being commanded to be 'a nation of priests' is the basis of my argument. Defining priesthood broadly as the mediation of the holy, the art of consecration, women in Auschwitz, as women, continued to fulfil Israel's covenantal mission to mediate God's presence to the world (Ex. 19:6) when they sought to remove from their and others' faces and bodies the marks of the profane – the filth that the Nazis commanded them to bear. In so doing, they purified themselves in preparation for divine presence and as a revelation of that presence.'³²³

In the degrading and murderous reality of Auschwitz the acts of caring for others – kindness, sharing food, sewing or knitting clothes to keep the other from cold – are acts of restoring not only the human faces of those involved, the woman doing the caring act and the one receiving it, but also a restoration of the *face of God*.³²⁴

I would like to use Raphael's argumentation, despite certain problematic areas discussed later in this chapter, as the framework for my discussion of the relationship between evil acts, both individual³²⁵ and systemic³²⁶, and the two relationalities relevant to the problem of evil, human-to-human relationality and human-to-divine relationality.

³²² Ibid, 67-70.

³²³ Ibid, .75.

³²⁴ Ibid, 140.

2. Dehumanisation and power relationships:

According to Vittorio Gallese, the cognitive neuroscientist chairing the Human Mind Project, the capacity to dehumanise others is uniquely human. "I don't think that we have any evidence that any other living animal is able to negate the status... of another individual belonging to the same species," cognitive neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese said last month at the launch of the Human Mind Project. The ability to deny another person's humanity is "probably one of the worst spin-offs of language", he concluded.³²⁷

Dehumanisation is often manifested in the words that perpetrators use to describe their victims. In his study of serial sex offenders the criminologist Dennis J. Sevens had found that his subjects rarely describe their victims, including intended victims, as women or girls.³²⁸ The guards at Auschwitz did not describe the prisoners as prisoners or persons; the descriptor was 'figures'.³²⁹

Social psychologist Albert Bandura, the founder of the social learning theory, had investigated the role of self-absolving beliefs in aggressive behaviour. He found that attributing blame to the victim, or perceiving the victim unfavourably has a powerful disinhibiting effect on self-deterrence under conditions when the opportunity for an aggressive act was available. In Bandura's experiments the dehumanisation factor was found to be more potent than the diffusion of responsibility in reinforcing aggression.³³⁰

In her book *Cruelty: Human Evil and The Human Brain* (2009), the neuroscientist Kathleen Taylor describes human cruelty as dependent upon 'otherization', a dehumanisation that creates 'an increasingly impassable social gulp between Us and Them'³³¹ This gulf allows the perpetrators to absolve

³²⁷ "The Urge to Dehumanise Others is All-Too-Human", Editorial, *New Scientist*, January 22, 2014.

³²⁸ The routine descriptors were 'bitches' and 'cunts'.

³²⁹ In German, *figuren*.

³³⁰ A. Bandura, B. Underwood, & M.E. Fromson, (1975), "Disinhibition of Aggression through Diffusion of Responsibility and Dehumanization of Victims", *Journal of Research in Personality*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier, 1975) 9, 253-269.

³³¹ Kathleen Taylor, *Cruelty: Human Evil and The Human Brain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.

themselves from guilt while treating others with the outmost cruelty: 'Otherization is grounded in the general human bias towards pleasure and away from pain... Generalization, misdirection and obfuscation are useful tools when otherizing foes. An explicable enemy risks being one whose point of view we might come to accept as reasonable. An incomprehensible foe brings no such moral burden'.³³²

When we discuss human relationality we must discuss the question of power and the role power plays in human relationships.

Many human relationships are asymmetric; they involve an imbalance of power, with one person holding more than the other or others. The relationships of parents to dependent children, teachers to students, employers to employees, the state and its functionaries to the citizens all involve an imbalance of power, occasionally quite extreme.

Normative, non-abusive relationships are non-predatory even when they are asymmetric. An imbalance of power by itself does not constitute predation. When predatory acts take place they either abuse pre-existing, legitimate relationships or establish illegitimate, abusive relationships.

In the previous section of this chapter I have discussed the case of Helga Schneider's mother, Traudi, a SS guard the Auschwitz -Birkenau. We have examined the benefits offered to her by the ability to leave her life as a frustrated housewife and enter the service of the SS, rising to senior rank. However, we have concentrated on personal variables only; now let us look at the role the acquisition of power had played in her career progression.

Helga's mother transitioned from powerlessness to absolute power, that of having the power of life and death over disempowered others. As a housewife in pre-war Vienna she had very little control even over her own life. As a guard in Auschwitz-Birkenau she had absolute power over women prisoners. While her social status in pre-war Vienna was low, her status in the camp was very high.

³³² Ibid, 9-11.

Many of the women prisoners she now ruled over had occupied higher social strata than she did; before the war they were her social superiors and would expect nothing from her but politeness and prompt service. Now she was their superior and the prisoners had to serve her, hope for her inaction, be terrified by her rages. She could relax in Frau Hoess' pleasant cottage outside the camp's perimeter fence in full knowledge that the social revolution accomplished by the Nazi regime had empowered her by disempowering her erstwhile superiors.

The Nazi regime allowed Helga's mother to position herself into a power relationship with multiple unwilling others. Unlike the prisoners, torn from their homes and families and forced into the camp, she came to it voluntarily.

Her victims, on the other hand, did not have a choice as to whether or not to abandon their pre-war lives, families and identities in order to enter Auschwitz-Birkenau and become Traudi's prisoners. That coercion, enacted by the Nazi regime, empowered Traudi all the more, making the power asymmetry between her and them complete and irreversible.

We can therefore conclude, together with Helga Schneider, that the incentive of power was the greatest of all those on offer to tempt an unremarkable Viennese housewife to join the SS and volunteer for guard duty at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Although acts of systemic evil are discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, it is important to note that the acquisition of power, in particular over one's *ci-devant* superiors, is a potent incentive for many who join totalitarian regimes. Theodor Eicke, Obergruppenfuhrer-SS mentioned below, was the son of a station master and twice a dropout from secondary school, once as an adolescent and once as demobilised veteran. Adolph Eichmann, head of Gestapo Department IV B4, a planner and executor of the Final Solution programme, was the son of a failing businessman who had twice failed to complete his secondary schooling. The fact that both men rose to hold the ultimate power over many thousands of dispossessed and dehumanised victims should not be overlooked in any discussion of the reasons behind their actions of their affiliation to the Nazi regime.

3. Power dynamics and the perpetrator's God's-eye perspective:

Every predatory act establishes a maleficent power relationship between the perpetrator and victim. This power is coercive. The specific coercive power derived by the perpetrator is relative to the act: a murderer holds the power of life and death over an intended victim, while a defrauder holds the power to impoverish the victim.

The effects of power on human behaviour have been the subject of numerous studies. In one David Kipnis³³³ had placed his participants into a simulated work situation with a subordinate. The positions of 'manager' and 'subordinate' were determined randomly. One group of participants had little formal control over the subordinate, having to rely on persuasion to get things done. Others had formal power over the subordinate, being able to reward and punish them. Kipnis found that those 'managers' who had most power had used that power more often to affect the behaviour of their subordinates. Moreover, Kipnis found that the 'managers' in the second group came to see the results of their subordinates' work as resulting from their control and less from their own efforts. They saw themselves as superior to those they supervised and wanted to distance themselves from them.

Power relationships require clear boundaries in order to avoid becoming grounds for predatory acts. As Kipnis' study demonstrates, power-holders are likely to come easily to a point of seeing themselves as god-like, qualitatively different from and above those over whom they wield power. This self-serving and unrealistic bias can easily become a point of departure for dehumanisation and predation.

Writing about Auschwitz, Raphael shows the total destructiveness of power taken to extreme, most specifically its intentional displacement of God. The very extremity of power asymmetry, the constant application of that power for degradation and destruction was, as she notes, a challenge to God and a war

³³³ Kipnis, David (1972): Does Power Corrupt?, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 24 (1972), pp. 33-41.

against him. I believe that this description can be given to all predatory acts since all such acts involve the creation of an illicit power relationship of extreme asymmetry and dehumanisation.

German historian Sönke Neitzel and social psychologist Harald Welzer had analysed 150,000 pages of transcribed conversations between captive German officers held in Allied detention, recorded by the Allies and found by Neitzel in British and American archives.³³⁴ This unique material provides us with an opportunity to listen in to the conversations these POWs led in their cells.

A small selection of the conversations deserves to be quoted at length to demonstrate their most jarring features: a God's-eye perspective, a pseudo-masturbatory replay of past moments of supreme power over others and emphasis of the speakers' disregard for their victims.

The first conversation took place between a captive pilot and a reconnaissance soldier on April 30, 1940:

Pohl: "I had to drop bombs onto a train station in Posen (Poznan) on the second day of the war in Poland. Eight of the 16 bombs fell in the city, right in the middle of houses. I didn't like it. On the third day I didn't care, and on the fourth day I took pleasure in it. We enjoyed heading out before breakfast, chasing individual soldiers through the fields with machine guns and then leaving them there with a few bullets in their backs."

Meyer: "But it was always against soldiers?"

Pohl: "People too. We attacked convoys in the streets. I was sitting in the 'chain' (a formation of three aircraft). The plane would wiggle a little and we would bank sharply to the left, and then we'd fire away with every MG (machine gun) we had. The things you could do. Sometimes we saw horses flying around."

Meyer: "That's disgusting, with the horses...come on!"

³³⁴ Neitzel, Sonke and Wezler, Harald (2011), *Soldaten: Protokolle vom Kämpfen, Töten und Sterben*, Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag

Pohl: "I felt sorry for the horses, not at all for the people. But I felt sorry for the horses right up until the end." ³³⁵

Pohl tells his story with the relish of someone reliving it. It is important to him to emphasise his God's-eye perspective: he is above, an all-seeing and all-powerful actor, remote yet infinitely close to his victims by means of his ability to inflict terminal damage upon them.

Pohl tells Meyer of his power and its fury, describing how the firing upon civilian convoys was done by 'firing... with every machine gun we had'. He marvels at just how powerful his attack was: 'The things you could do.' Earlier in the conversation he notes the power imbalance between himself, the airborne pilot, and the doomed Polish soldiers on the ground, fleeing him through the fields – and is relishing it: 'We enjoyed heading out before breakfast, chasing individual soldiers through the fields with machine guns and then leaving them there with a few bullets in their backs.'

In the next conversation, recorded on March 6, 1943 is between fighter pilot Budde and Corporal Bartels, captured by the British some weeks earlier:

Budde: "I flew two spoiling attacks. In other words, we shelled buildings."

Bartels: "But not destructive attacks with a specific target, like what we did?"

Budde: "No, just spoiling attacks. We encountered some of the nicest targets, like mansions on a mountain. When you flew at them from below and fired into them, you could see the windows rattling and then the roof going up in the air. There was the time we hit Ashford. There was an event on the market square, crowds of people, speeches being given. We really sprayed them! That was fun!"

In this conversation we see a competition between the two speakers. Bartels suggests that the spoiling attacks flown by the pilot Budde were less destructive than those flown by him, involving a clear order to destroy a specific target. Budde is at pains to refute this claim by recounting the choice

³³⁵ Ibid, quoted in Jan Fleischhauer, "Rape, Murder and Genocide: Nazi War Crimes as Described by German Soldiers", *Der Spiegel*, (Hamburg, Germany: Spiegel-Verlag, 2011) April 11, 2011, translated from the German by Christopher Sultan, available from: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/rape-murder-and-genocide-nazi-war-crimes-as-described-by-german-soldiers-a-755385.html>

of targets he enjoyed, as distinct from Bartels, and the destruction he rained on them. He implies that he is more destructive than his interlocutor by describing in detail how his God's-eye perspective was enhanced by his free choice of targets and the close contact he had with them at the time of his attack. Like the pilot Pohl in the first conversation, Budde is excited by his own narrative, relishing the memories of his destructiveness.

In the last conversation I quote, recorded in March 1943, the first speaker, a submarine seaman named Solm reminisces about sinking a children's transport ship, *City of Benares*, sunk in the North Atlantic on September 17, 1940, in which 50 children were drowned:

"Did they all drown?"

"Yes, they're all dead."

"How big was it?"

"6,000 tons."

"How did you know that?"

"Via the radio."

Seaman Solm's God's-eye perspective encompasses not only the dying victims but the ship he sunk, stalking it from the depths of the North Atlantic. It is as important for him to know and remember the ship's size as to be assured that all the ship's passengers have drowned.

Let us now compare these captive pilots and the incarcerated sex offenders studied by the American criminologist Dennis J. Stevens.

But for the fact that the speakers in these transcripts are soldiers while the serial sex offenders interviewed by Dennis J. Stevens are civilians, there is little to tell between the two groups. Although social sanction is never granted to sex offences and is often granted for military acts³³⁶, it is important to note

³³⁶ The actions described by the pilots do not belong to the scope of conventional warfare. It is precisely their non-conventionality, the scope for their own initiative and the close personal contact with their victims that they achieve that make those experiences, rather than others, more conventional ones, the subject of discussion many months after they took place.

that the narrative and psychic dynamics of predatory acts as recounted here follow the same pattern. The narrative structure of their confessions is all too similar. Both groups adopt God's-eye perspective, relieve their exploits with a masturbatory relish and are at pains to emphasise that they feel nothing toward their victims while relishing the power differential between themselves and the victims.

In the accounts of the sex offenders interviewed by Stevens the most striking feature is the role of the God's-eye perspective and the power imbalance between perpetrator and victim in the sexual arousal of the perpetrators. Like the POWs above the imprisoned serial sex offenders relieve their attacks, contrasting their current powerlessness with the supreme power they have enjoyed before imprisonment. For example, one offender described in interview how he would select his victims, taking his time during the stalking phase so as to enjoy it and its arousal potential fully. Another, describing with relish an attack in which he kidnapped, imprisoned, battered, degraded and eventually killed his victim before inflicting another attack on her lifeless body, was at pains to explain that what aroused him and kept his arousal steadily growing in the course of this long attack was the absolute power he held over his victim and the disempowering degradations he had inflicted on her.

This God's-eye perspective encompasses a number of facets. The perpetrator not only seizes and acutely enjoys supreme power over the victim but insists that his moral code supervenes upon the one held by the victim or the wider moral community. For example, in the first POW conversation quoted above the first speaker, the pilot Pohl, is at pains to emphasise that he is sorry for the horses that were killed as a result of his strafing over Poland. He is aware that most moral codes regard the lives of non-combatant humans as being of greater value than those of horses, yet is adamant that his code, one that values horses above Polish civilians, is superior. He does that by emphasising that after the first day of strafing civilians he had lost compassion for them yet his compassion for horses remained unchanged till his capture.

In her book *Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and The Erosion of Identity* (2004), the French psychoanalyst Marie-France Hirigoyen describes this feature of perverse moral supremacism as a form of narcissistic megalomania: 'Abusive

narcissists are megalomaniacs who judge the standards of what is good and bad and what is the truth. They are often viewed as moralizing, distant and superior.... Abusers seem to adopt irreproachable values, which on the one hand deceives others and, on the other hand, creates a favourable self-image. They denounce human evil.’³³⁷

In Stevens’ transcripts the serial sex offenders view themselves as stringently moral and qualitatively superior to their victims whom they blame for provoking the attacks on them. Writes Stevens: ‘Sexual contact played an insignificant role; what took precedence for these rapists was the punishment they inflicted on their victims. These rapists demonstrated little regard for their victims as human beings. Like other violence fiends, they transcend humanity – especially the humanity of their victims.’³³⁸

Among Stevens’ serial sex offenders a common feature was the importance they ascribed to explaining that they were not deluded or mad and knew that their actions violated the moral codes of those around them.

The perpetrator sets himself up as beings of supreme power over another, as a universal moral arbiter and as someone whose unrivalled power of destruction can radically change the world around him; he transcends humanity. This, I believe, amounts to a direct act of war against God.

Perpetrators destroy that which God had created, subverting and, in effect, perverting³³⁹ God’s world. Speaking from a non-theological, psychoanalytic perspective, Hirigoyen states the same fact: ‘whether the subject is serial killing or perverse abusiveness, the matter remains one of predatory behaviour: an act consisting in the appropriation of another person’s life.’³⁴⁰

³³⁷ Marie-France Hirigoyen, *Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and the Erosion of Identity*, Helen Marx, trans., (New York: Helen Marx Books, 2004), 127.

³³⁸ Dennis J. Stevens, *Inside the Mind of Sexual Offenders: Predatory Rapists, Pedophiles and Criminal Profiles*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniverse.com 2001), 50.

³³⁹ Hirigoyen uses this term in its original meaning, to take something originally good and to so treat it as to make it bad. I adhere to this usage.

³⁴⁰ Hirigoyen, *Stalking the Soul*, 7.

Perpetrators challenge God and attack God's creation, remaking it to fit their own destructive vision. The world in which perpetrators are active is a world remade in a destructive mould whenever a person's life is appropriated. A perpetrator does not have to go as far as to force upon the world a New Order in order to change it since a single act of predation will achieve this aim.

The perpetrators 'play God' but the god they play at being is in fact an anti-God, a destroyer rather than a creator, a god of hate rather than a god of love. Although they adopt a God's-eye perspective, the perpetrators' vision of their victims is profoundly paranoid, making kindness and love impossible. Says Hirigoyen of the emotional abuser: 'The abuser's hatred is a function of projecting the degree of hatred he imagines the victim bears against him. He sees her as a destructive, violent, deadly monster. In reality, the victim during this phase feels neither hatred nor anger, which would at least shield her and allow her to defend herself. The aggressor ascribes to her the most evil intentions and anticipates her actions by attacking first. The victim is permanently guilty of offensive intentions.'³⁴¹ One has only to mention the hostility and paranoia of WW2-era Nazi propaganda to see the application of this principle in the political realm.³⁴²

Where God derives joy from creation and relationality with and within that creation, the perpetrator derives joy from destruction and anti-relationality. From the point of view of the perpetrator destruction is 'fun'; note that the first speaker in the second POW conversation I quote above, the pilot Budde, refers to the strafing attack on Ashford by saying 'It was fun!'. The same exclamation is offered by a number of the repeat sex offenders interviewed by Stevens.

The 'fun' experienced by the perpetrator is not merely a-relational, it is anti-relational; the pleasant sensations derive not only from the awareness of one's own unlimited power over other, or by denying the other's humanity and thus a relationship that would respect that humanity. It comes from the elimination

³⁴¹ Ibid, p.117.

³⁴² See Jeffery Herf, *Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008)

of any possibility of a relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. This is why the first speaker in the third POW conversation I quote above, the submarine seaman Solm, is at pains to emphasise that all the fifty children on board the sunken transport ship *City of Benares* had drowned. Their irredeemable drowning irrevocably prevents any kind of relationality between Solm and them, such as the one of empathy or regret; ‘Yes, they are all dead.’

Summarising his many years of study into incarcerated serial sex offenders, Stevens offers a startling observation: ‘More than likely, these individuals have produced their own sense of corruption in that they have taken the role of an individual they perceive as the devil... By showing how violent and corrupt they can be, the more they perceived that they are the evil one... the one who the Judaic-Christian Bible condemns! Doing corrupt acts makes them unique and special... their battle of dominance is with God’s children. Therefore, ugly sadistic rape is their way “of making a mark upon God’s world.”.’³⁴³

To support this observation Stevens quotes Donald Henry ‘Pee Wee’ Gaskins (1933-1991), an American mass murderer, who boldly stated after his final arrest: ‘I am god – the god of death.’³⁴⁴

In an unpublished paper delivered at the Spring 2015 meeting of the London Bi-Logic Group Fr. Marin Boyle, an Irish priest and an investigator of sexually-abusive priests for the Irish Roman Catholic Church, offered an unorthodox theory of the dynamics of sexual abuse among the clergy. Drawing on the theology of Thomas Aquinas, Freud’s theory of infantile sexuality and Ignacio Matte-Blanco’s theory of the symmetry of the deep layers of the unconscious Boyle argues that abusive priests misuse theology to represent themselves as God-like beings to whom everything is allowed. Quoting a case from his investigative practice Boyle describes a priest in his 50s who had, for most of his time as a priest, engaged in sexual relations with young boys. These relationships continued when the boys reached adulthood, with the priest using funds obtained under false pretences to pay them for sex. According to

³⁴³ Stevens (2001), 93.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. For more on Gaskins, who confessed to killing between 100 and 110 persons, see Donald H. Gaskins and Wilton Earle *Final Truth : The Autobiography of a Serial Killer*, (Toronto: Titan Books Ltd, 1993)

Boyle, 'The priest in question did not see anything wrong in what he was doing and treated his work with these people in the same way as he treated any other person. (...) He treated the situation in such a way that there was no difference between right and wrong.'³⁴⁵ Boyle's explanation shows how the theology of divine transcendence and the prerogatives of the priestly office is transformed into a platform for identification with God that places the abuser outside accepted ethical norms: 'The priest identifies with God in this way. In doing this the priest can feel himself to be beyond the human situation.'³⁴⁶

I argue that the perpetrator seeks to assume a God-like power by obtaining absolute control over the victim. Many perpetrators make this striving explicit, as do the sex offenders in Stevens' study or as does the abusive priest in Boyle's investigation. However, many perpetrators do not use religious language at all, focusing instead on relishing the power itself its emotional and sexual facets. Therefore, I believe that the perpetrators may or may not consciously seek to displace God and position themselves as the destructive anti-God, but that they do so ipso facto.

Let us now examine a first-hand account of a self-reflective and intelligent sexual predator who is frank about his motivation, *modus operandi*, lack of compassion for his victims and the compulsiveness of his predation.

In the summer of 2012 the American social-media platform Reddit.com had published a controversial invitation to its mostly male users: 'Reddit's had a few threads about sexual assault victims, but are there any redditors from the other side of the story? What were your motivations? Did you regret it?'.³⁴⁷ The invitation had generated a flurry of responses. While many of those responding to the question were young men who had recounted college-campus, alcohol-fuelled but consensual sexual encounters that had gone wrong when a non-consensual act was added onto a series of consensual ones, an act for which many expressed belated remorse, one responder, an unapologetic serial rapist,

³⁴⁵ Martin Boyle, "Breaking the Link", paper given at the Spring 2015 meeting of the London Bi-Logic Group.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Available from
http://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/x6yef/reddits_had_a_few_threads_about_sexual_assault/

had described his rapes as planned well ahead and executed consciously and calmly. This lengthy account is worth quoting in full, both for its surprising and unstinting depth of self-reflection and for its competent and meticulous description of the both the process of predation and its addictive dynamics.

'This is probably not going to surface to the top being as I'm coming to this thread late in the game, but I am a post-college age male who raped several girls through use of coercion, alcohol, and other tactics over a course of 3 years.

First off, I must say, I was at a dark and horrible place in my life, that I've since grown from. I'm ashamed of the person I was, if the people who I'm close to now knew who I was, I would be ruined. I'm known for being a great guy, friendly and easy to get along with, a community/political activist, a fervent volunteer in the community, and a person who rises through the ranks quickly due to successes at work. That was my mask, and I was good at it, so good that maybe I convinced myself along the line that was who I could really be, and that may of helped me change, and stop doing what I did.

I'm somewhat remorseful for what I did to those girls, but I don't think I could ever face them to apologize. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but I had this certain insatiable thirst that brought me to do what I did. I didn't know how to stop, and just when I thought maybe I could, I'd find myself back in my pattern, back on the hunt.

I'm a good looking guy, and I can get girls pretty easily. I'm currently married to a beautiful woman that I met during this time of my life (not someone I raped, but someone who knew my mask during this time). So, anyways, after a while it became boring to go after the sluts and sorority girls that would easily throw their cunt after you. I wanted the thrill of the chase, and that's what led me to forcing myself on girls. I would find attractive girls that were self-conscious about their looks. Girls who were pretty in their own unique way, but not the outgoing sort, mostly introverts, and girls that didn't party or do wild things. Hopefully a girl who was a bit damaged, had a shitty ex-boyfriend, or family issues, came from a small shut in town, that sort of thing. So, when I showed interest in them they'd be completely enamored, they'd almost be shocked that a popular, good-looking, and well liked guy would be talking to them. I'd have that initial meeting at the library, a coffeeshop, a work function, or a party where I had them convinced of what a great guy I was. I listened to them, and made them feel special, like they were a princess. Sometimes we might sort of hook-up that night (kissing, making-out, never anything more). The next day I'd

call, and see when they wanted to get together again. I'd feign some excuse for not going out somewhere, but having them come over late in the night. It was college, and not a lot of people had transportation off campus, so it was typical for people to come over and watch a movie or something on a date.

They would come over, and I'd always make sure it was real cold in the room, cold enough so that when we started watching the movie I'd say something about being chilly, and grab a big fleece blanket for the both of us. We'd get kind of close, and then maybe ignore the movie for some kissing. After a while, we'd talk some more, and I'd start edging my hands around the under strap of the bra, or maybe a bit into her pants, just kind of playing on the edge to gauge her response. Some girls would stiffen up a little, and that's when you knew they didn't like what was going on. We were in my studio apartment, so the bed served as the couch, and it was easy to start sliding down throughout the movie so we'd be laying down. It was then that I could turn around and get on top of her. The girls usually didn't know how to respond. Some of them were into it, and those nights were usually consensual and boring sex, sometimes followed up by a few more nightly visits before getting the boot. However, the great nights were the ones who squirmed, ones who didn't want to give in. I'd have to shush them down, and try to work on them slowly enough so they didn't know what was going on until it was pretty much already happening. I'm a muscular guy, over 6' around 200 lbs. and most of these girls may have been 125-130, really tiny and easy to pin down. To be honest, even remembering it now, the squirming always made it better, they didn't want it to happen, but they couldn't do anything about it. Most girls don't say no either. They think you're a good guy, and should pick up on the hints, they don't want to have to say "no" and admit to themselves what's happening. Alcohol helped. Having a few drinks during the movie, or doing a few jello shots that were "prepared for a party that weekend" would usually do the trick.

The aftermath was always different. Some girls left after about 15 minutes after. Some girls would stay until the morning and then leave. A few tried to call back, maybe blaming themselves for what happened or something. I never worried too much about being caught. Everyone knew me, and I worked with the police a lot, with administrators, and campus officials. I was on first name basis with the Chancellor and the President of Student Affairs, so if anything came down to a he/she-said I figured I'd be in the clear. Having her come over

*to my place also made it seem less predatory, as she came into my domain, and "could leave at any time".*³⁴⁸

This respondent is clear on the fact that his sexual arousal is dependent on the complete power gained over a helpless victim. This power has both physical and mental components and is attained by means of careful victim selection, pursuit and entrapment. The narrative lays clear the dynamics of predation. Although he says that he is ashamed of his actions he shows no compassion for the young women he had attacked. His recollection of them is pornographic, inherently tied in to his arousal. The masturbatory quality of the account is quite overt.

The dynamic of the chase, of stalking and apprehending his victims, is conscious and clearly expressed, as well as savoured, in his account ('I wanted the thrill of the chase and that's what led me to forcing myself on girls.') . He is aroused and gratified by his cleverness in identifying and grooming the ideal type of victim, young women with a history of failed relationships and low self-esteem ('a girl who was a bit damaged, had a shitty ex-boyfriend, family issues, came from a small town.'). He acutely enjoys the preliminary stages of the chase, the identification of the victim, his conversations with her, his public meetings with her. He clearly identifies the difference between two kinds of sex that these grooming activities produce, consensual and non-consensual. For him consensual sex is dull and 'boring' while non-consensual sex is intensely gratifying ('the great nights were the ones who squirmed').

The difference between the two kinds for the perpetrator is the presence of the power differential between him and his victim and the coercion that makes this differential evident and undeniable: 'I'm a muscular guy, over 6' around 200 lbs. and most of these girls may have been 125-130, really tiny and easy to pin down.' As he recounts these past attacks he becomes aroused by the very mention of the coercion and the absolute power it gave him over the woman he attacked ('To be honest, even remembering it now, the squirming always made it better, they didn't want it to happen, but they couldn't do anything about.').

The respondent does not use a religious language but his attainment for the ultimate power over his victims follows the same pattern as evidenced by Stevens' subjects and the POWs in the accounts above.

³⁴⁸ http://www.reddit.com/r/MuseumOfReddit/comments/1t1r2z/the_ask_a_rapist_thread/. Italics are mine.

To conclude, I believe that we are justified in regarding the ultimate abuse of power inherent in a predatory act as having a seminal theological and philosophical significance.

In the following section I would like to introduce a new concept that will assist us in our discussion of the motivations behind predatory acts, whether personal or systemic. This concept, relational economy, will allow seeing how the incentives for predatory acts develop and are maintained.

4. Relational economies:

When the problem of evil is broken down into the problems of physical and moral evils we find ourselves with a question of relational motivation. Why do people do horrible things to each other?

Evil acts, just like good and bad acts, occur within the context of relationality. Relationality is both necessary and sufficient for all three categories of acts to occur. It is therefore in the sphere of relationality that one must seek out approaches to the problem of evil.

I would like now to introduce the concept of a relational economy. This concept captures the dynamics of exchange in a human relationship in which acts are rewarded or penalised.

Philosophers and social scientists have discussed the systems of human relationships for quite some time. My concept of relational economies is a mere development of previous debates about the ways people are motivated to make particular choices.

For example, the Prisoner's Dilemma³⁴⁹ and the Nash Equilibrium³⁵⁰ are both examples of relational economies. However, both the dilemma and the

³⁴⁹The Prisoner's Dilemma is a canonical example in game theory that attempts to show why two individuals might not cooperate, even if it appears that it is in their best interest. See Alvin E. Roth and Keith J. Murnighan, "Equilibrium Behavior and Repeated Play of the Prisoner's Dilemma", *Journal of Mathematical Psychology*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier, 1978)17, 189-198.

³⁵⁰ Nash Equilibrium is a solution concept in game theory. Persons are in a Nash Equilibrium if Participant A is making the best decision she can, taking into account Participant B's decision, and Participant B is making the best decision he can, taking into account Participant A's decision. Likewise, a group of players are in Nash equilibrium if each one is making the best decision that he or she can, taking into account the decisions of the

equilibrium are limited by the number of choices available to the participants. The prisoners have to take into the account the likely decisions made by other self-interested prisoners while the participants of the equilibrium have to act in accordance to their assessment of the best decision taken by other participants.³⁵¹

a. Relational economies and the social contract:

The concept of the social contract, as theorised by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and modern contractarians is a form of relational economy. In the following paragraphs I will endeavour to elucidate the concept of relational economies by comparing and contrasting it with the contractarian model.

Most human relationships, both moral and political, are founded upon a system of rules, either overt or tacit. These rules reward certain acts and punish others. A social contract is a public relationship that involves multiple participants and agreements about rules and the penalties attendant upon breaking the rules. For example, the men in the Hobbesian state of nature come together to create a centralised authority that will grant them security in exchange for the surrender of some of their natural rights: “From this fundamental law of nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour peace, is derived this second law: that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself. For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing anything he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone to divest himself of his: for that were to

others in the game. See Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980)

³⁵¹ The concept of relational economy does not constrain its participants to act according to

expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace."³⁵²

For Locke the social contract is relational, engaged in not by narcissistic individuals but by heads of families concerned about the care for their offspring. This contract too involves a quid-pro-quo, a surrender of pre-existing rights such as the right to self-defence in exchange for the stability and security of a state: "No one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent, which is done by agreeing with other men, to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living, one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it."³⁵³

For Rousseau property rights are impossible outside of a social contract: "What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and the absolute right to anything that tempts him and that he can take: what he gains by the social contract is civil liberty and the legal right of property in what he possesses."³⁵⁴ The social contract grants rights rather than protects or expands pre-existing rights.

For John Rawls the social contract is not as directly relational as it is for Rousseau and Locke. After the choice made behind the veil of ignorance, the rational and exclusively self-interested agent gets to live in a world in which justice equals fairness. Rawls misses the opportunity to discuss what choices could be made by persons truly concerned for the welfare of others, outside of their own possible futures.

Even for David Gauthier, author of *Morals by Agreement* (1986), social contract is an exercise in self-interest. His aim is to demonstrate that morals further our self-interest and by doing so to support the authority of morality. In Gauthier's hypothetical social contract people contract so as to further their own interests, since each party benefits from the contract, and by doing so grant

³⁵² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1981), VI, 64.

³⁵³ Locke, John, *The Social Contract Theory*, Philosophical Questions, 520.

³⁵⁴ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract*

legitimacy to the rules to which they consent. Much of Gauthier's book is an exercise in defending the liberal principle of consent.³⁵⁵

Feminist scholars had criticised the contractarian tradition as being implicitly gendered.³⁵⁶ Carole Patman argues that underlying the social contract is a presumed sexual contract, one that governs the relations between men and women: 'The social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract is a story of subjection. The original contract constitutes both freedom and domination. Men's freedom and women's subjection are created through the original contract – and the character of civil freedom cannot be understood without the missing half of the story that reveals how men's patriarchal right over women is established through contract... Contract is far from being opposed to patriarchy; contract is the means by which modern patriarchy is constituted.'³⁵⁷

The benefit of the relational economy model is that it does not obscure the power relations that connect the participants but rather elucidates them. A dynamic model rather than a static one, a model that describes existing relationships rather than historic or hypothetical ones, relational economy is a framework that takes our discussion of human relationality away from the assumptions of self-interest and assumed neutrality in the face of difference. Nor does the concept of relational economy falter at the private/public divide, but is equally applicable to the discussion of both private and public relational exchanges.

b. Relational economies in action:

Let us now look at some examples of relational economies, drawn from both public and private arenas.

Let us consider a marriage where the wife wishes to return to work once her children have started at school. Her husband, long-term unemployed due to a chronic illness, feels threatened by her plans since, should she return to work, she will become the family's breadwinner, 'the man of the house' in his view

³⁵⁵ David Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986)

³⁵⁶ For example, see T. Brennan, and C. Pateman (1979), "'Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth": Women and the Origins of Liberalism', *Political Studies*, vol. XXVII. A feminist analysis of Locke is to be found in M Butler, "Early Liberal Roots of Feminism: John Locke and the Attack on Patriarchy", *American Political Science Review* 1978, vol. 72.

³⁵⁷ Carole Patman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), 2.

and will therefore supplant him as the head of the family. He therefore undertakes to sabotage her plans but does so tacitly and in a way that is highly rewarding to her. One day he notices that their young daughter appears to be uncommonly pale and insists that the girl be taken to hospital for a series of exhaustive tests; he then praises his wife for her selflessness and excellent mothering. On another occasion he compassionately discusses with his wife her doubts about returning to work, fearful of how hard such adjustment will be for her; when she agrees to postpone her return to work he praises her superlatively for her sensibility and self-care.

What we have in this case is an example of relational economy. This marriage involves an ongoing dynamic, an exchange between the main participants. Some things are rewarded, others are punished. One party holds a position of power in this relationship and is eager to keep it. Another party is kept away from power or equality but is lavishly rewarded for agreeing to keep the status quo. The rules in this case are tacit; the wife does not realise that her husband does not want her to return to work or that the praise she receives from him is in fact a reward for her ceding to his wishes.

This marriage can change of course, in which case the current relational economy will be repudiated and another will take its place. The wife may insist upon returning to work and by doing so disempower her husband, gaining a position of power equal or superior to his. He may in turn react to this violation of the status quo by withdrawing the rewards he had granted for its maintenance, becoming cold and critical with his wife or leaving the marriage altogether.³⁵⁸

Let us look on another example, this time drawn from the public realm: a democratic state has a law code and rewards those who keep the laws while penalising those who break them. This relational economy is overt since its rules, rewards and penalties are public knowledge. Let us now imagine that a totalitarian regime takes the place of a democratic one. One relational economy is overthrown and another takes its place. With this new regime actions rewarded may be the very opposite of the actions penalised under the

³⁵⁸ For a discussion on how such family relationships last please see John Hill, *Introduction to Systemic Family Therapy: A User's Guide*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

previous regime, for example spying on one's neighbours. This is a new relational economy, new tariffs of incentives and disincentives and, should this tariff be tacit, the citizens will have to find ways to distinguish between the official proclamations of the new regime – for example, its assurances that democracy is still in force - and its actual expectations³⁵⁹.

Therefore a relational economy is a dynamic interpersonal relationship in which certain behaviours are rewarded and others penalised. Many are familiar to us: an employer may reward quality work that meets deadlines and penalise low-quality work that does not. A state may reward acts of civil courage and penalise law-breaking acts. All these are examples of relational economies.

Relational economies function in all layers of human interaction and may involve as few as two and as many as billions of participants. The smallest are those involving couples and families; the largest are global, involving many unrelated individuals interacting with global food and energy trends.

As we noted, some relational economies are overt: their rules are widely known, formalised and disseminated. An example of such overt relational economy is that of the traffic code. All drivers and pedestrians within a given jurisdiction know the rules of the road, such as on which side the cars should drive, what speed limits are in various areas, what the changing lights mean for traffic and where to cross a road. The traffic code is formalised, is easily accessible and is taught to new participants.

Others are tacit: their rules are unspoken, are learned rather than taught and are not formalised. An example of such a tacit relational economy may be the nepotistic corporate culture of a business that, despite its public commitment to ethics and equality is in fact profoundly unequal and unethical in its dynamics. A new entrant to such an economy will have to see past the overt values championed by this business and learn the tacit ones, i.e., what actions

³⁵⁹ For a discussion on how totalitarian and authoritarian regimes balance the demands of ideology and governance please see Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, (New York: Lynn Reinner Publishers Inc, 2000).

are truly rewarded and what are truly penalised. The rules of such a relational economy will not be widely known, formalised or taught openly.

Another example of a tacit albeit public relational economy is a totalitarian state such as the former Soviet Union. Apparently the values of equality, liberty and fraternity were publicly proclaimed yet in reality they were violated as the state did not treat its citizens equally, grant them basic liberties or preserve unity, instead fermenting discord. Soviet citizens had to live in a split reality, publicly affirming these revolutionary values while being aware that they were not honoured in reality.³⁶⁰

Some relational economies are private and their systems of incentives and disincentives rely upon the rich resources of interpersonal relationships. An example may be a family, where certain acts accrue the pleasure or the displeasure of one's loved ones. The incentives and disincentives in this case would be mostly, though not exclusively, immaterial; one is rewarded by the love, attention and gratitude more than by gifts of money, property or social standing³⁶¹.

Other relational economies are public and impersonal. This structural factor is reflected in their reward systems. An example may be the relationship between a citizen and that citizen's state. The state rewards obedience to the law and penalises law-breaking. The citizen may have strong feelings regarding the state and the state may play an important part in the citizen's identity and allegiances but the relationship is nevertheless impersonal. The citizen does not know the functionaries of the state whose job it is to penalise her when she breaks the state's laws and she is not affected by her relationships with them in her decision on whether to keep the laws or break them. The rewards system in this case relies on impersonal rewards and penalties.

Let us now look at relational economies that reward predatory acts.

³⁶⁰ For a discussion of this split reality and the resulting cynicism please see Vladimir Bukovski, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter*, (London, Viking Press, 1979)

³⁶¹ For examples of this see Aaron Beck, *Love is Never Enough*, Chapter 4: 'Breaking the Rules', (London: Harper Collins, 1989)

A totalitarian regime that spies upon its own citizens relies heavily on citizens spying upon each other. According to William Sheridan Allen, the author of *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of A Single German Town, 1922-1945* (1984) most of the arrests that were carried out by the Gestapo in the town of Northeim were due not the reports of Gestapo's agents³⁶² but to the unsolicited denunciations of townspeople who informed on neighbours and even friends.³⁶³

The Nazi ascent to power and the enfranchisement of the Gestapo in Germany had reversed the relational economy of this town. Where before friendship was a rewarding experience it has now become a perilous one. Where before friends had cause to trust each other now they had good cause for mistrust. A denunciation written against another protected its writer, positioning him or her as a loyal supporter of the regime. In addition to this benefit and other benefits that may be derived from it the speedy³⁶⁴ arrival of such a letter, it protected the writer against a denunciation by another, possibly by the very person the writer denounced. According to Allen, "in the atmosphere of terror, even people who were friends felt that they must betray each other in order to survive".³⁶⁵

³⁶² Only one had visited the town and none was stationed there permanently. Most German towns the size of Northeim (around 10,000 persons) never have had a permanent Gestapo station. See Gellately, Robert *Gestapo and the German Society*, p. 658.

³⁶³ William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945*, 189. We must note that similar processes followed the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia and the post-war communist regime in the former East Germany. The Bolshevik regime established the Checka, an internal secret police, while the communist regime in East Germany established the Stasi on the same model. Both regimes encouraged denunciation and spying on one's fellow citizens by means of those agencies. See Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky (1990) *The KGB*, (London: Harper Collins; 1990) also John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police*, (London: Basic Books, 2000)

³⁶⁴ The premium on speed was due to the primacy effect: if two denunciations were received by the Gestapo, the first from A denouncing B and the second from B denouncing A, then the first informer was likely to be believed and the second disbelieved. Therefore sending a denunciation as soon as one could was a self-protective act, protecting the writer against the possible – and, in these conditions, highly likely – denunciation by the subject of his own.

³⁶⁵ Allen, *Nazi Seizure of Power*, 189.

The social revolution ushered in by Nazism and described by Allen in his study of Northeim had succeeded in altering radically the relational economies that pre-existed this regime. Where before friendship rewarded personal loyalty and trust, it now became a source of clear and immediate danger to all erstwhile friends since a system of incentives far more powerful than those of these friendships had come to supervene above them.

However, it is important to keep in mind that relational economies are not deterministic. They merely increase inducements for a particular action while decreasing inducements for another. Not everyone at Northeim betrayed his or her friends; in particular persons of strong convictions would be apt to refuse the inducements offered by the new regime. However, enough people would accept these inducements to create an atmosphere of mistrust and danger.

An example of a personal relational economy that supports predatory acts is domestic violence. Despite the widespread belief that the roots of this abusive dynamic lies in the perpetrator's past or the marital relationship between perpetrator and victim³⁶⁶, investigations of perpetrators and their social networks show that the perpetrator is acting in response to the expectations, tolerances and rewards of his social network.

Jeffery Hearn (1998) had demonstrated this in his study of domestically-abusive men and the men in their social networks by means of in-depth interviews with all concerned. Hearn found that most of the men in the abusers' network either actively supported the abuse or tacitly tolerated it.³⁶⁷ In the relational economy between the abuser and his peers his abuse of his partner is continually rewarded by men who either support the abuse because

³⁶⁶ Many of such theories rely on misapplied or misunderstood psychoanalytic concepts. E.g., see Linda Mills, *Insult to Injury: Rethinking Our Responses to Intimate Abuse*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006)

³⁶⁷ Jeffrey Hearn, *The Violences of Men: How Men Talk About and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Women*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1998)

it validates their values or wishes and by the non-censure by those men who remained silent.³⁶⁸

In the previous chapter I examine predatory acts perpetrated by large-scale, impersonal organisations and regimes. The relational economies enacted and maintained by such regimes, be they totalitarian governments or maleficent bureaucracies, tend to combine high incentives for predatory acts with high disincentives for good acts. For example, during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 the penalty for Hutu villagers refusing to participate in the killing of their Tutsi neighbours was death while the rewards for participation was safety from violence to themselves and their families, as well as a share in the victims' property, often land and cattle, possessions of supreme value to poor villagers.³⁶⁹ In this case predation was highly rewarded and the refusal to engage in it severely punished. Under such conditions while few may refuse to accept the rewards and will be willing to face the extreme penalty most will not.

It is important to note that by dividing the spoils of the massacres the regime ensured the moral complicity of these unwilling participants.

c. The relational economies of maleficent bureaucracies:

In a maleficent bureaucracy the reward for a functionary's cooperation is steady or accelerated progression up the career ladder, social sanction by co-workers, professional identity, and social status derived from belonging to the bureaucracy, as well as a salary and the lifestyle such a salary affords. The penalty for breaking ranks and exposing the bureaucracy's failings as a whistleblower is the loss of all the benefits of compliance listed above as well as defamation, loss of professional prospects and resultant loss of employability.

³⁶⁸ There are other rewards in this particular economy: the perpetrator may benefit from the subservience his violence achieves, enjoy being feared or be aroused sexually by his violence. For the connection between physical and sexual violence within marriage please see Elaine Jill Hasday, "Contest and Consent: A Legal History of Marital Rape". *California Law Review*, (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley School of Law, 2000), 88 (5): 1425.

³⁶⁹ See Phillip Verwimp, *Peasants in Power: The Political Economy of Development and Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Springer, 2013) p. 128.

For example, in 1999 Kathryn Bolkovac, a police officer from Nebraska, USA, had uncovered, during her mission in Bosnia, that both UN peacekeepers and civilian employees of her employer DynCorp, a United Nations personnel contractor, had been implicated in the human trafficking of adolescent girls from Eastern Europe and their sale into sexual slavery to local brothel owners.³⁷⁰

Bolkovac had faced a long campaign of harassment and obfuscation from both her employer DynCorp and the UN bureaucracy. Her unfair dismissal from her employment with DynCorp in effect terminated her career in international law enforcement. On the other hand, UN Mission Head to Bosnia, Jacques Paul Klein, faced no consequences and enjoyed unaffected career prospects. When the UN mission to Bosnia ended in 2003 Klein went on to head the UN mission to Liberia; that mission too was plagued by allegations of human trafficking by UN peacekeepers.³⁷¹

The Bolkovac case demonstrates a tacit institutional economy that allowed predation, rewarded silence and protection of the bureaucracy's failures and harshly penalised public disclosure of these failures. The relational economy is extreme, with high rewards for compliance and harsh penalties for non-compliance. Such extremity of rewards and penalties is typical of non-transparent and abusive bureaucracies.

However, it is important to note that relational economies are not deterministic. Both the economies, with their inducements and penalties, and their values can be rejected by those willing to face the penalties for some other, higher value.

Let us look at an example where the values and personality traits held by persons faced with a relational economy that offered high rewards for

³⁷⁰ Please see Kathryn Bolkovac, *The Whistleblower: Sex Trafficking, Military Contractors and One Woman's Fight for Justice*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

³⁷¹ 'UN personnel have hitherto been protected by diplomatic immunity – meaning they can't be prosecuted in their mission country – and political expediency. Once they're home governments often have little desire to highlight their troops' bad behaviour.' (Daily Telegraph, 6 February 2012, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/9041974/What-the-UN-Doesnt-Want-You-to-Know.html>).

surrendering members of a persecuted group and ultimate penalties for sheltering them have successfully rejected and subverted this economy. A study of 80 Eastern-European WW2-era rescuers, men and women who had risked their liberties and lives to hide persecuted Jews during the Holocaust, found a strong correlation between personality traits and acts of rescue. The study found that the rescuers, when compared to bystanders and a generic sample Eastern-European immigrants with whom the rescuers shared many attributes, had scored high on measures of locus of control, autonomy, risk taking, social responsibility, tolerance/authoritarianism, empathy, and altruistic moral reasoning.³⁷²

According to the researchers the rescuers were in a group of their own. They differed sharply from the generic sample and from the bystander sample: 'When the bystanders and immigrants, who differed very little from each other, were grouped together and compared to the rescuers, the personality variables alone correctly classified 93.1% of the sample.'³⁷³ The rescuers were protected from the effects of the relational economy set up by the Nazis in occupied Europe by their very personalities. They could resist that economy successfully despite the high risks they run in doing so.³⁷⁴

d. Maleficent relational economies as a threat to beneficent ones:

Relational economies are effective in regulating human behaviour because of the strong incentives and disincentives they offer. These incentives and disincentives are not the only reasons for predatory acts but they provide the framework within which such acts occur. Often it is the occurrence of a predatory act that acts as an indicator that an unacknowledged relational

³⁷² Elizabeth Midlarsky et al., "Personality Correlates of Heroic Rescue During the Holocaust", *Journal of Personality*, 2005, volume 73, issue 4, pages 907–934, August 2005.

³⁷³ Ibid, 907.

³⁷⁴ It may very well be the case that not everyone can be a rescuer since it is possible that factors of both nature and nurture combine to shape human personalities, including those of rescuers whose personality type appears to be uncommon. However, everyone can refuse to be a predator.

economy had been set up intentionally or developed via a confluence of events.

Predatory acts are not only the outcomes of maleficent relational economies but are a threat to the beneficent ones. Let us see how this impact occurs.

In chapter III I quoted a lengthy passage from Patricia Weaver Francisco's autobiographical account *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery* (1992). The passage describes how, months after the assault on her, Francisco is overcome by intense anxiety when a solitary male walker seeks shelter from a sudden downpour in the same park pavilion as she and a friend. She relieves the anxiety by running away through the downpour, her friend with her. Her anxiety is relieved only when the two leave the park and reach the street with its reassurance of milling crowds.

This episode illustrates the breach of trust that occurs between the victim of a predatory act and the wider community.

Before the assault the relational economy in which Francisco participated, that of a relatively tolerant and safe society had rewarded trust in others. However, the assault on her had overruled this economy and instituted another, reverse one, in its place. Now she knows that a male stranger can be a source of violence and therefore cannot trust him even to the point of sharing a park pavilion. Her new relational economy rewards caution, not trust.

In her memoir *Let Me Go* (2005) the German writer Helga Schneider describes her Austrian mother. The mother, Traudi, abandoned her two young children, Helga and her brother Peter, in order to join the SS, where she became a concentration camp guard and enjoyed a steady career progression till the end of the war.

The arrival of the Nazi regime and the annexation of Austria to Germany in 1938 created a relational economy that had overruled the pre-existing one, that between Helga's mother and her children and a peacetime community that placed high value on the retention of ties between mothers and children.

And so Helga's mother, a reluctant housewife and mother, was offered a much more interesting and rewarding career path of joining the SS and accepted it

with alacrity. Years later, as a 90-year-old resident of a nursing home, this woman would reminisce longingly about her SS superiors, the pleasant times she had at the home of Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau, in his restful cottage outside the camp's perimeter fence. Traudi, Helga's mother remains within the scope of the Nazi relational economy till her very death, rejecting the old relational economies of family and community; she continues to reject her daughter and any suggestion of repentance.

As I have noted earlier, relational economies bring with them their own values. In this case one relational economy, that of peacetime Vienna, although apparently benign, in effect failed to offer sufficient options to this profoundly unhappy and frustrated woman. Neither the relational economy of pre-*Anschluss* Vienna nor the post-*Anschluss* relational economy of the Third Reich held women in high regard, although the Nazi economy did offer women willing to serve them better options than the peacetime one. Traudi accepted the better options and by accepting them and entering the Nazi relational economy accepted its values as well, rejecting the values of her pre-*Anschluss* life.

This stands in sharp difference to the actions of the East-European rescuers mentioned before. The rescuers rejected the Nazi economy even though it had offered high rewards because they had their own, internal values that stood outside this economy.

We can claim with confidence that had the Nazis never come to power in Germany and annexed Austria Helga's mother would have remained a frustrated housewife. She would have neither the opportunity nor the reason to attack others and had she attempted any aggressive acts she would have been effectively penalised by a peacetime state able and willing to stop aggression against its citizens. The monster of Birkenau, the fearsome guard who held the power of life and death over thousands of women, would never have come into being.

When relational economies turn malign, when they reward maleficent and predatory acts they create processes from which God is excluded ipso facto, at times intentionally so. Often such economies and the values they promulgate

last in time and space, shaping history. The institution of slavery, genocides, oppressive and long-lasting histories of institutionalised misogyny and racism all have this effect. They endure because they offer sufficiently high incentives to a sufficiently high number of persons; as they last they disseminate their values. But as they last in time and space they create places from which, as from Auschwitz, God is purposely excluded.

These space-time loci are places where a war is fought against God. It is therefore important to us to clarify the relationship between God and evil acts.

5. God in a God-less Landscape:

I believe that relationality lies at the very core of the problem of evil. When we ask, with Boethius, ‘if there is God, then where does evil come from?’ we are addressing a radical challenge to our relationship with God. The endurance and ubiquity of evil acts, both individual and collective, leads us to doubt the existence of God or at the very least his goodness and concern for us. The existence of evil creates a breach in our relationship with God.

As Aleksandar Santrac argues in his book³⁷⁵, God’s moral status is in doubt whenever we consider his reaction or lack of it to acts of moral evil, in particular acts of radical evil. In addition to this, the problem of evil creates a problem of observational certainty for us – the complete certainty of our evaluation of God’s moral status is in doubt. When theodicies offer us reasons for why radical evil exists we are unsure of how to evaluate their claims. What reasons may God have for tolerating acts of radical evil?

Monotheistic faiths advance the concept of a benevolent and all-powerful God. The evidential problem of evil is more dangerous to this concept than the logical one since even if we are told that the existence of a benevolent God is

³⁷⁵ Aleksandar S. Santrac, *An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga’s Free Will Defense: Whether our Power to Do Bad is Something Good*, (The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 2008).

not logically incompatible with the existence of radical evils we are still left feeling alienated from God and mistrustful of his goodness and competence.³⁷⁶

The concepts of God held by monotheistic religions are largely relational. The persistence of acts of radical evil makes us question this relationality and doubt it. Is God really there, and if he is, does he care for us, as our religions assure us? Saint Anselm speaks of all those who seek an encounter with God: 'But if you are everywhere, why do I not see you present? . . . Again, by what marks, under what form, shall I seek you? . . . What, O most high Lord, shall this man do, an exile far from you?'³⁷⁷ God's apparent inaction in the face of acts of radical evil make us doubt the nature of his care for us and for his creation as a whole. To use the language of Saint Anselm, God's intervention in the face of radical evil would be the very 'mark' by which he would be recognised. Yet this is the very mark that is withheld from us.

When we speak of profanization, of expulsion of God from human relationality by means of the predation upon others we have to pose the question of what a world would be like with God excluded from it. In her discussion on the profanization and sanctification of Auschwitz Raphael does not draw a clear line between human and divine manifestation. This leads us to ask what role does God play in human-to-human relationality and how this relationality is altered when God is absent from it.

Relationality, and the radical challenges posed to relationality by the existence of evil, lie thus at the very heart of the problem of evil. The power of evil acts to undermine and destroy relationalities, the personalities and values that underlie them and the failure of God to stem this power is the issue.

³⁷⁶ Herbert McCabe argues against predicating the terms 'good' and 'evil' of God is impossible to do in such a way as to find the creator good and any of his creations evil. The problem of predication stems from Aquinas. See McCabe, Herbert McCabe, *God and Evil in the Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, (London: Continuum, 2010).

³⁷⁷ Anselm, Proslogion 1. St Anselm's Proslogion, translated and introduced by J M Charlesworth, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992. In Proslogion 12 Anselm goes on to argue that God is just when he fails to punish the wicked.

Let us address this question by means of a thought experiment. Let us imagine two worlds, Alpha and Beta. Both Alpha and Beta contain death camps on the Auschwitz model. World Alpha has a God while world Beta does not. In the death camps on both Alpha and Beta some prisoners treat each other kindly despite the degradations meted out to them by their guards. How does the care prisoners give each other on Alpha differ from that on Beta?

If the care is exactly the same on both worlds then God is superfluous since he does not add anything to the dynamics of care. If, on the other hand, some component is present in the care given on Alpha then we can discern the role God plays in human relationality and the effects of profanization on that role.³⁷⁸

I would argue that the crucial component is the divine image imparted to human beings. On Alpha care for another is an act of sanctifying God while on Beta it is not. On Alpha an act of degradation of another is an act of profanization because what is assaulted is not just the human image of the victim but her divine image as well. On Beta an assault has the power to degrade the human image only.³⁷⁹

The existence and persistence of evil create a breach in our relation to each other. This would be so even if we lived in a God-less world.³⁸⁰ Evil acts in such a way as to degrade the quality of our world and the quality of our relations with each other. It impacts upon our ability to trust others. It leaves behind individuals, families and communities forever harmed by an encounter with it; these people are often isolated by their experience of evil, removed from further, beneficent human relationality by being irrevocably altered by that experience.

³⁷⁸ Raphael writes of Auschwitz: 'To hold another woman, to raise her face from the ground, as has been recorded of women in Auschwitz, was to raise God's standard in Auschwitz.', *Female Face of God*, 157.

³⁷⁹ Of course, many other differences between the two worlds would exist. For example, reasons for helping behaviour may well be more limited on Beta than on Alpha, i.e., motivated by mere affection or kinship.

³⁸⁰ For a discussion of the reasons to act morally in a God-less world please see Mary Midgley, *Wickedness: A Philosophical Essay*, (Oxford: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), chapter 6.

We encounter event horizons, those ongoing consequential arcs of evil acts, all too often. We live in a world from which people are missing, in which the weakest are the most vulnerable to acts of predation and the destruction such acts bring. We come to terms with living in a world where horrors can happen without warning, where the closest relationships can be shattered at any time by abuse, betrayal and external violation. How could a world be different if it did not contain those threats and uncertainties?

6. Trustworthy communities:

Let us again consider two worlds, world X and world Y. World X is identical to ours as it is now, with predatory acts a regular occurrence and with the cumulative outcomes of predatory acts and their attendant event horizons. World Y is a world where predatory acts are rare.

World Y would, I believe, would be a world of profound and untrammelled relationality in a fashion that our world is not. What kinds of relationalities would world Y contain? World Y would be, first and foremost, a world of trustworthy and enduring relationality. Its inhabitants would have better reasons to trust each other and to trust God than we do. Since the first quality that predatory acts affect is trust it makes sense for us to assume that a world with a minimum of predatory acts would be a world where trust is practiced routinely and widely.

In addition, world Y would be a world with many more people. The absence of genocides, wars of aggression and murders would result in the absence of those event horizons that follow missing persons. If world Y is to have bureaucracies these will be minimal, transparent and democratic. It would be a world of egalitarian encounters, enduring and respectful relationships.

Power relationships in world Y are bound to be minimal, temporary and carefully apportioned. They will be transparent and open to inspection by members of the community not parties to them. It is probable that world Y would provide clear regulations regarding who and why can hold power and provide vetting and education for power-holders together with supervision.

World Y will likely contain more human-divine relationships than ours because the problem of evil would not form the barrier it does to these relationships.

World Y will have fewer places from which God is excluded.

In her book *Becoming Divine: Towards A Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (1998)³⁸¹ Grace Jantzen describes trustworthy communities as communities founded upon the principles of competence and mutual care. They are communities where the continuity of care and trust allow for religious insight and where both care and religion is practiced as an expression of the embodied, this-worldly existence.³⁸²

A trustworthy community then, is akin to world Y. Its relationality is bound by the recognition not only of the humanity of the other but by that of the other's divine image. Its relational economies are not structured in such a way as to reverse or sabotage this awareness; neither do they displace God by encouraging degradation and destruction.

It is important to remember that relational economies come into existence and become established by gaining the consent and acquiescence of their participants and, in specific cases, gaining the sanction of their victims.³⁸³ Such acquiescence is gained when an absence of care and trust become normative, when predation and exploitation is normalised. Sharon Welch, writing in her book *A Feminist Ethic of Risk* (1990) describes how a trustworthy community differs from one in which predation and suffering are normative: 'The kingdom of God implies conquest, control and final victory over the elements of nature as well as over the structures of injustice. The 'beloved community' names the matrix within which life is celebrated, love is worshipped, and partial victories over injustice lay the ground-work for further acts of criticism and courageous defiance.'³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Grace M Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards A Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

³⁸² Ibid, chapters 9 and 10.

³⁸³ I refer here to cases of false consciousness, when the victims of an oppressive but enduring relational economy come to regard their oppression as normative.

³⁸⁴ Sharon Welch, *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 160.

Welch, like Jantzen, speaks about a gradual process of transformation, a step-by-step transition that will make world X closer to world Y: 'Responsible action... is participation in communal work, laying the groundwork for the creative response of people in the present and the future...Responsible action provides for partial resolutions and the inspiration and conditions of further partial resolutions by others. It is sustained and enabled by participation in a community of resistance.'³⁸⁵

Conclusion: Radical clarification:

Santrac argues for a radical clarification of the relationship between God and radical evil. One such clarification is found in the approaches stemming from process theology³⁸⁶, and its argumentation in favour of relationality and divine involvement in historic and personal processes. Raphael's treatment of Holocaust theology and the problem of evil is part of this tradition. However, this is not the only route that can be taken and there are reasons why other avenues of clarification should be pursued.

Process thought problematically redefines God's omnipotence, reducing it to mere persuasive power. In the next chapter I would like to investigate God's relationship to evil acts under the traditional conception of God as omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 75.

³⁸⁶ See Norman Pittenger, *God in Process* (London: SCM Press, 1967); Rabbi William E. Kaufman, *The Case for God*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1991).

³⁸⁷ Process theologians have discussed in depth the questions arising from their view that God's main power is the persuasive rather than the coercive. Please see the debate between the philosophers Frederik Sontag and John K. Roth with the process theologian David Ray Griffin over Auschwitz in David Ray Griffin (1981) "Creation Out of Chaos and the Problem of Evil," in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen Davis, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) p.135. My objections to process theology's treatment of God's power are delineated in chapter VI of this thesis.

Chapter VI: God, Good and Evil

In this chapter, the final chapter of this thesis, I return to the theological question which had started this thesis: ‘si quidem deus, est unde mala?’ – ‘If there is God, where does evil comes from?’. Discussion of evil acts in the previous chapters had been conducted without reference to God or to God’s relationship with such acts and their ramifications. This chapter will return God to the heart of the problem of evil and suggest approaches to discussing divine intervention and divine perception of these acts. Having examined the dynamics of predation and its processes, structures and reinforcements in cases of both individual and collective evil acts, I address the questions concerning God’s failure to prevent such acts and God’s awareness of them. In this chapter I shall discuss two venues open to God for the prevention of evil acts and argue that either of these two would prove to be too costly in terms of eventual outcomes, altering the nature of reality in ways that would be inherently destructive of human existence on both physical and moral levels. I would like to emphasise that I maintain the conceptual framework offered by traditional theism, assuming God to be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.

I shall first explain why I have found the methods adopted by process and open theology unsatisfactory. In the first section of this chapter I will examine Hare and Madden’s arguments against process theologians writing in the 1960s and the 1970 and add my own arguments to their conclusions, explaining while I prefer the positions of traditional theism³⁸⁸ to the postulates of process theology. I will explain why I diverge with Melissa Raphael and do not adopt the position she develops in her *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz* or a similar one, maintaining instead that an omnipotent and omniscient God makes a series of choices concerning the ongoing crisis of evil acts and makes the best choices, participating in the human struggle with evil acts and their outcomes.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ My concept of God is limited to Anselm’s three attributes: omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence.

³⁸⁹ The reason I bring God back into the discussion at this point is that although my analysis of evil so far in this thesis was conducted in purely secular terms and with the assistance of the social sciences and the humanities rather than with the assistance of theology I regard the problem of evil as a primarily theological problem. It is

My second set of arguments will look at God's options in the face of evil acts. I argue that God faces two possible courses of action by which he could prevent evil acts, one by means of design and one by means of miracles. I discuss what consequences can be expected from each of these routes of divine intervention and argue that either one would be counterproductive. I then discuss the ways in which God may act concerning evil acts without incurring either one of the consequences generated by these two preventive choices.

I argue that a prevention from design, designing humans in such a way as to make them functionally incapable of committing evil acts would not be feasible since the very same neuroanatomical and cognitive mechanisms that facilitate predatory activities also make possible human cooperation, compassion and mutual assistance. This argument involves extensive reference to the work of the psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen and to his theory of mindblindness, part of his investigation of the neural bases of human ability to understand the feelings and thoughts of others.

It is important to note that I, like most philosophers of religion working in the analytic tradition, accept the logical restriction upon divine action. God cannot be expected to create states of affairs that violate the rules of logic, for example married bachelors or square circles.³⁹⁰ Therefore when we ask God to create a world free of evil, or one in which humans are incapable of evil acts, we have to ensure that such a world is possible without a contradictory state of affairs. In this chapter I shall argue that, due to reasons of the human neuroanatomy underpinning our relational capacity, it would indeed be logically inconsistent to expect a world populated by human beings capable of

a problem about God and the choices God makes vis-a-vis evil acts and their destructiveness. Therefore this problem must be answered in theological terms.

³⁹⁰ E.g., see Brian Leftow, *God and necessity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and J. Anderson & G. Welty, "The Lord of Noncontradiction", *Philosophia Christi*, (Evangelical Philosophical Society, 2011), 13 (2), pp. 321–338

positive relationality such as cooperation and compassion but incapable of a violation of that very relationality.

I further argue that a prevention from miracles would fail to prove beneficial in the long term due to both the law of diminishing returns and the persistence of human intentional action. I discuss why miracles that prevent acts of overt predation will merely transfer the attention of the perpetrators to tacit tactics, much more difficult to prevent by means of a miraculous intervention without causing major complications to the human ability to think and act effectively.

In this chapter I discuss the interaction between God and human communities as they seek to address and control evil acts. The last section of this chapter compares and contrasts evil-aware communities and evil-tolerant ones, the former aware of the utter destructiveness of evil acts and acting to minimise them and the latter failing to treat evil acts in their midst with the gravitas these acts deserve and thus allowing them to proliferate. I discuss the status of God within these communities and their theological and historical significance.

In addition I address the argument that evil acts are a natural and normative part of human existence and will remain for ever a feature of human history both private and public. I compare these claims to the arguments advanced by the proponents of slavery in the ante-bellum United States of America during the public debates on abolition in the early part of the 19th century. I argue that just as the supporters of slavery were proven wrong when they argued from the normativity of slavery, from the necessity of slavery or from the nature of humanity given this normativity so are those who believe in the normativity, necessity or eternal endurance of evil acts.

1. Process Theology, Divine Power and Persistent Evil:

In this section I examine the arguments offered by the philosophers Peter Hare and Edward Madden against the assumptions of process theologian Charles Hartshorne and argue in support of Hare and Madden against Hartshorne. I conclude this section by explaining why I do not adopt the approach of process theology.

In their article *Evil and Persuasive Power* (1972)³⁹¹ Hare and Madden argue against process theologians Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb and Lewis Ford over the question of God's power to interfere in evil acts. While the theists claim that God's power is wholly persuasive, Hare and Madden claim that such a conceptualisation does not succeed in acquitting God over the existence of evil. Hartshorne in his book *New Look at the Problem of Evil* (1966) says that '... the idea of omnipotence, as it figures in the classical problem of evil, is a pseudo-idea. It would not make sense no matter what the empirical world happened to be like.'³⁹² Hare and Madden disagree not only with Hartshorne's dismissal of divine omnipotence but with his facile dismissal of ontological and metaphysical modalities.

The argument offered by Hare and Madden is five-pronged³⁹³. The first counter-claim grants the process theists' argument that a wholly-coercive divine power is morally repugnant and incommensurable with the idea of a good God. However, Hare and Madden argue that, given the nature and persistence of evil a divine power that is wholly-persuasive is also morally repugnant and incompatible with an omnibenevolent God. According to them, a state of affairs in which God allows so many evil acts to occur unopposed, whatever the kind of power he exercises, means that such God cannot be considered good in most of the meanings we would ascribe. Powerlessness is, according to Hare and Madden, incompatible with divinity. In addition, they claim that divine power can be both persuasive and coercive since the two qualities are not mutually exclusive ipso facto. I agree with Hare and Madden on both these points. If we would find the failure of human power-holding authorities to intervene for the prevention or cessation of evil acts, both

³⁹¹ Peter H. Hare & Edward H. Madden, "Evil and Persuasive Power", in *Process Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring, 1972.

³⁹² Ibid, p.303.

³⁹³ The five counter-arguments are: a) compatibility of persuasive and coercive powers, b) high numbers of unpersuaded evil-doers reflects poorly on God's persuasive power, c) failure of process theists to produce either a theodicy reconciling limitations of freedom with persuasive power, d) the failure of process theists to produce a theodicy that negates the possibility of an equally effective persuasive power to the evil being exercised as the one for good, and e) the failure of process theists to establish persuasive power as a coherent concept. (ibid, pp.44-45).

individual and systemic, once their persuasive powers have failed as morally unacceptable then will reach the same conclusion in relation to God³⁹⁴.

Let us imagine a state that instead of arresting and prosecuting offenders, or stopping them from offending by any other effective means, confines itself to persuasion instead. A recidivist perpetrator of violence will receive, instead of a visit from the police, a visit from the state's qualified persuader, endeavouring to convince the perpetrator not to offend again. This scenario will recur no matter how many times the perpetrator had re-offended and how many perpetrators there are or how heinous were their offenses. Certainly such a state would be considered morally repugnant.

Neither is there a reason to believe that persuasive and coercive powers are incompatible or inherently contradictory. In the case of human power-holding authorities both types of power usually coincide, and often the persuasive follows from the availability of the coercive. To adopt the language of political theory, the 'soft' power of persuasion is contingent upon the 'hard' power of coercion, either exercised or implied.³⁹⁵

In their second counter-argument Hare and Madden point to the high number of unpersuaded evil-doers. Let us recall the serial sexual offenders from Stevens'³⁹⁶ longitudinal study. These perpetrators, argues Stevens, are often following an addictive pattern³⁹⁷. His conclusion is that they will continue to offend as long as they are free to do so. We can use Stevens' conclusion to illustrate Hare and Madden's argument. It so happens that the most destructive persons are highly resistant to persuasion or any other means save the coercive. Therefore divine persuasion fails at the very cases where its

³⁹⁴ In the political realm, we can think of the United States refusal to either prevent or stop the Rwandan genocide of 1994 when its rhetoric failed. See Samantha Powers, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, (London: Flamingo, 2003)

³⁹⁵ E.g., see Joseph S Nye, JR *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

³⁹⁶ Stevens, Dennis J Stevens, *Inside the Mind of Sexual Offenders: Predatory Rapists, Pedophiles and Criminal Profiles*, (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com Ltd, 2011) quoted in Chapter V of this thesis.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 81.

success would be the most effective in preventing the greatest number of horrendous evils. For Hare and Madden this failure is an indication that divine persuasion, as strong as it may be, isn't working. The failure of process theists to explain satisfactorily why this is so suggests to Hare and Madden that the arguments in favour of persuasive power as God's one and only mode of engagement fail.

I have another reason to agree with Hare's and Madden's rejection of the argument from divine persuasion. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, perpetrators often strive to a competition with God, adopting a 'God's-eye' perspective on their victims. Both the WW2 POWs and Stevens' serial offenders discussed in this thesis emphasise in their narratives and testimonies how fundamentally important to them is the ability to see their victims from a superior vantage point, complete with the god-like power to destroy them³⁹⁸. It is this element, rather than the destruction itself, that recurs in the fantasies these perpetrators indulge in while imprisoned.

In a paper presented to a London psychoanalytic conference by Martin Boyle³⁹⁹, a priest in the Irish Roman Catholic church and an internal investigator appointed to investigate sexual abuse by the clergy, Boyle argues that priestly abuse is founded upon a theology which makes it easy for the offender to identify with God: 'The priest identifies with God in this way. In doing this the priest can feel himself to be beyond the human situation. His problems arise around emotional thinking and sexuality. It is through our sexuality that we make links with each other and this creates uncertainty. It makes the priest feel vulnerable within his own being. In his theology he tries to see himself as the one who brings light to the stress and darkness of others, he compares himself to being the salt of the earth. This places him in an impossible situation, creating within him a dilemma or emotional conflict, and he may not have the inner tools with which to help him to connect with reality

³⁹⁸ 'One thought here is that the individual who destroys other human beings sees himself as an individual above the law of both man and nature, or God – he sees himself as playing the role of evil, it could be argued for the descriptions of offenders.' Ibid, 91.

³⁹⁹ Martin Boyle, "Breaking the Link", an unpublished paper presented to the London Bi-Logic Group on April 25, 2015.

in a different way.’ According to Boyle the offending priest transfers the same theological thinking that he uses in his mission to create an identity of a representative of God to a situation in which his sexuality and emotions are involved.

On the basis of this it seems that God is not only ineffective in achieving its objective of dissuading the perpetrators but that his very existence in the world is in fact counter-productive in terms of preventing evil acts since it and certain elements of it apparently encourage serial evil-doers to enter into a profoundly destructive and blasphemous competition with him.⁴⁰⁰ The perpetrator strives to ‘become God’ by assuming absolute power over another person, albeit a destructive rather than a supportive one. Not only is the perpetrator not amenable to persuasion given the addictive dynamic of his predation but the competitive striving to become a god of destruction will make him unpersuadable.

In their third counter-argument Hare and Madden claim that the emphasis placed upon God’s promotion of freedom and creativity not only fails to address the large number of evil-doers unaffected by God’s persuasion but also fails to explain how this persuasive power maximises the conditions for freedom and creativity in the world. They are not persuaded by an attempt to elevate creativity to the status of a supreme metaphysical principle and caution against it⁴⁰¹.

Hare and Madden correctly observe the inverse relationship between evil acts and human creativity. A world that contains evil acts of such number and permanence as ours is one in which human creativity is limited; there could have been more of it had it not been so badly truncated by the predatory acts

⁴⁰⁰Stevens discusses the importance of god-like power for the perpetrator: ‘In a sense, acting evil can be the opposite of acting divine. For example, necrophilia involves holding a god-like power (the opposite of evil) over an individual. The finality of death; is it not the last decision made by a god of darkness? Gods have many decisions to make and perhaps their decisions, or so these offenders implied, are part of what helps the offenders physically and psychologically to meet their objectives.’ (ibid, p. 93).

⁴⁰¹ This is an argument directed specifically against Charles Hartshorne who had argued for this position in his *Creative Synthesis & Philosophic Method* (1970). See Hartshorne, Charles (1970): *Creative Synthesis & Philosophic Method*, La Salle, IL: The Open Court Publishing Co.

of others. Predation limits not only the creativities of victims but also that of the perpetrators, locking them into vicious circles of trauma on the one hand and addiction on the other.⁴⁰² Hare and Madden join creativity and freedom in their argument against Hartshorne. Aleksandar Santrac⁴⁰³ makes an important albeit a disturbing observation concerning the persistence of slavery in human history and the implication of this for both God's value of freedom and God's ways of maximising it for humans. Santrac claims that had God held freedom as the supreme good the institution of slavery would not have gained such magnitude and persistence in our history. Maximising freedom and creativity for all would involve such actions by God through history as to minimise this ultimate violation of both⁴⁰⁴ and such actions would involve both providential and coercive elements. I would argue that this argument applies not only to slavery but to all evil acts involving extreme personal degradation.⁴⁰⁵

The fourth argument presented by Hare and Madden is founded upon the isomorphic nature of the problem of evil. If there is divine persuasion to the good then, on the evidence of persistence and severity of human evils, it is possible that there is an equally potent persuasion to the evil⁴⁰⁶. This, I believe,

⁴⁰² 'In ordinary contexts we would find unacceptable an analysis of a society which pointed to the fact that even men in solitary confinement exercise some freedom of choice and inferred from that freedom that this is a society in which creativity and freedom are being fostered by a great persuasive power. An adequate analysis of a society must take seriously the question of whether more creativity and freedom are feasible. While it is clear that there is genuine creativity and freedom everywhere in this world, it would seem to us that there are many situations in which we would like to see a great deal more creativity and freedom, and an adequate theodicy must show that this additional creativity and freedom cannot be achieved by even unlimited persuasive power.' Hare and Madden (1970), p.47.

⁴⁰³ Aleksandar S. Santrac, *An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defense: Whether our Power to Do Bad is Something Good*, (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 27.

⁴⁰⁴ I include in the category of slavery not just formal slave-trading such as the Atlantic slave trade but all cases where categories of persons were subjected to long-term imprisonment and forced labour. This would include women confined to the home and its work in misogynistic cultures, prisoners of war exiled for forced labour purposes, political prisoners so employed, victims of human trafficking as well as agricultural or industrial workers forcibly detained and exploited by their employers.

⁴⁰⁵ Santrac: 'It is bizarre that God *respects* free will or freedom of its exercise of the notorious criminals who degraded the personal existence of others.'(ibid.)

⁴⁰⁶ Hare and Madden (1971), p. 50.

is the weakest of their five counter-arguments. It is possible, of course, that there may be such persuasion, yet it is unlikely. Given human relationality and the potent motivations to commit predatory acts such acts are too easily achievable for us to need to postulate a persuasion to do them. The application of Occam's Razor to the problem of evil advocates in the rejection of this counter-argument. The process theist has no need to prove that there is no persuasion to the evil but merely assert that, given the goodness of God, the only persuasive power exercised is the one to the good or that this power is ipso facto stronger than any other power advocating evil acts.

While certain thinkers, including Michael Lloyd⁴⁰⁷, Alvin Plantinga⁴⁰⁸ and Aleksandar Santrac⁴⁰⁹ have asserted that the activities of volitional non-human agencies such as fallen angels can be held responsible for acts of physical evil⁴¹⁰, either at the time of the Fall or continuously since then, none has suggested that such non-human entities engage in persuading human agents to commit acts of moral evil. The personality and capacity of Satan as developed in the Christian tradition is part of the lapsarian tradition and is related to the vision of a fallen cosmos resulting from two falls, that of the angels who rebelled against God and that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The role of this figure as a tempter is one that has traditionally been invoked as a causal factor in acts of moral evil committed by human perpetrators⁴¹¹. However, besides the objection from Occam's Razor, there is another one, coming from the same lapsarian tradition. At no point is Satan the tempter assumed to be more potent than God; therefore whatever

⁴⁰⁷ See Michael Lloyd, 'The Cosmic Fall and the Free Will Defence', Dphil dissertation, Worcester College, University of Oxford.

⁴⁰⁸ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977)

⁴⁰⁹ Santrac (2008). Santrac's argument differs from those of Lloyd and Plantinga, since he regards the ongoing relationship between God and angels, with its mystery, as a possible cause for the persistence of extreme evil.

⁴¹⁰ For Lloyd, it is the creation of an inherently fallen cosmos with its attendant imperfections; for Plantinga it is the causation of natural disasters and illnesses.

⁴¹¹ For a fuller discussion of the history and cultural importance of Satan in the Christian tradition, please see Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan in Christian Tradition*, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at the University of Utah on May 14, 1977; also available from http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/p/Pagels99.pdf

persuasive power Satan may bring to bear on human evil-doers is bound to be weaker than God's persuasive power.⁴¹²

The last counter-argument offered by Hare and Madden is another engagement with Hartshorne. The latter claims that the metaphysics of process theology, qua metaphysics, cannot be disproven by evidential facts but only on the basis of conceptual coherence, or lack of it. Hare and Madden see this claim as another attempt by Hartshorne to avoid addressing the evidential problem of evil and counter with the claim that if, as Hartshorne claims, the traditional idea of divine omniscience is conceptually incoherent then so is the idea of persuasive power: 'It is by no means clear to us that the concept of persuasive power as used by Hartshorne⁴¹³ is coherent. Does it make conceptual sense to speak of a sort of power whose nature and extent is in principle impossible to estimate experientially? In ordinary contexts power is always something that can be, at least indirectly and roughly, measured experientially. To speak of completely immeasurable power appears as much as "pseudo-idea" as to speak of weight that will never require force to lift.'⁴¹⁴

As I see it, the notion of persuasive power is less than absolutely clear. If God speaks to persuade, then how is God's voice heard? Is it the *sensus moralis* mentioned by Santrac⁴¹⁵, our moral intuitions, which he puts on par with the *sensus divinitatis* described by Calvin⁴¹⁶? Is it the scripture? And at what point does divine persuasion become, in essence, Divine Command⁴¹⁷?

⁴¹² See *ibid*, p. 7. For the role of the figure of Satan in early Christian theodicies please see Russell, Jeffrey B (1953): *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*, Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press.

⁴¹³ See Charles Hartshorne, "New Look at the Problem of Evil", in Frederick C. Dommeyer, ed., *Current Philosophical Issues: Essays in Honor of Curt John Dyeasse*, (Springfield, IL.: Charles C. Thomas, 1966)

⁴¹⁴ Hare and Madden (1972), 47-48.

⁴¹⁵ Santrac (2008), 7.

⁴¹⁶ Calvin speaks of the *sensus divinitatis* in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1555), where he describes it as a human instinct for God, a God-sense: see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (Grand Rapids,

Let us look at the question of how God's persuasion is perceived. If it is overt then it will have to be recognised by us as such, as distinct from our private and autonomous moral reasoning. The hearer should be able to say: 'I have heard God speak to me and I am convinced by his persuasion not to commit an evil act I was earlier considering'. If, on the other hand, it is tacit then it will be not recognisable as divine persuasion but rather be bundled together with our private moral reasoning or feeling⁴¹⁸.

Reducing divine persuasion to the *sensus moralis* is not without its problems. We encounter the same problem as with the tacit mode of divine persuasion; it is indistinct from our own moral reasons and emotions. If we postulate that the *sensus moralis* acts as a channel of communication by which we need to establish how it differs from self-generated moral considerations. Perhaps this can be done by adding another layer to our moral considerations, that of considering morally significant acts *sub specie aeternitatis*, but this should be significantly different process from our usual globalised moral reasoning. It becomes apparent that the problems of reducing divine persuasion to Divine Command are numerous. They would involve describing divine persuasion under the constraints of the Euthyphro dilemma, deciding if it exists under the conditions in which human moral sense conforms to God's or otherwise, and

MI: Eerdmans, 1995). For a discussion of this concept please see Helm, Paul Helm, "John Calvin, the *Sensus Divinitatis*, and the noetic effects of sin": *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 1998, **43** (2): pp. 87–107.

⁴¹⁷ For the discussion of divine command theories please see Robert Merrihew Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Paul Helm, *Divine Commands and Morality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

⁴¹⁸ E.g., Paul Copan argues that human moral sense is identical with God's moral sense. See Paul Copan, and William Lane Craig. *Passionate Conviction: Contemporary Discourses on Christian Apologetics*. (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2007),.9.

determining the presence or absence of divine persuasion in other possible worlds.⁴¹⁹

For these reasons I avoid following the theological route followed by process theologians and those philosophers of religion who adopt the same or a similar stance. It is my argument that God's power is primarily creative, in accordance with his primary role as the creator-God. The power to create involves, ipso facto, the power to destroy that which was created⁴²⁰. God of necessity must have a multiplicity of ways in which to interact with his creations and persuasion as well as coercion are parts of this relational arsenal. I argue that this coercive power may remain unused for most of the time and discuss this later in this chapter.

2. God and the prevention of evil acts.

The history of the problem of evil is replete with the belief that, had God only wanted, he could have easily created humankind as either incapable of performing evil acts or less than successful in their performance. This argument is usually structured in such a way as to allow for the importance and existence of free will while at the same time maintaining that the ability to choose evil acts is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the exercise of free will. For example, Peter Hare and Edward Madden advance the argument that God should have had other options open to him when creating

⁴¹⁹ Robert M. Adams, writing on divine command, asserts that humans still have to either accept or reject this command and still have to make moral deliberations. Thus reducing divine persuasion to a modified form of divine command does not help the argument in its favour. For Robert M. Adams's treatment of divine command please see Robert Merrihew Adams, "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness", in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, Charles Taliaferro and Paul J. Griffiths, eds., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1987)

⁴²⁰ It also involves the power to abstain from creation, as well as the power to withhold providence to creation or its parts. For fuller discussion of providence please see William Hasker, *Providence, Evil and the Openness of God*, (Oxford: Routledge Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, 2013), as well as Evan Fales, *Divine Intervention: Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles*, (Oxford: Routledge Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, 2010).

humans as capable of free will, other than merely creating them as either free or unfree. Arguing against John Hick's 'soul-making' theodicy Hare and Madden claim that Hick is guilty of a false dichotomy in arguing for an 'either-or' restriction on God's design.⁴²¹ In response to Hick's claim that humans would be mere 'pet animals' in God's safari had they been functionally deprived of the ability to choose evil, Hare and Madden suggest a humorous thought experiment in which God is faced with the options and values of a liberal-minded school headmaster. In this scenario God is committed to the freedom of his charges, does not want them to learn or obey him due to a fear of punishment and so decides to forgo any rules or interference in the students' learning or conduct. Hare and Madden argue that such a decision is obviously absurd since the headmaster has more options than two open to him. He can choose a liberal regime that combines a respect for his students' freedom with restrictions and rules that protect them from at least some kinds of harm. If the headmaster is wrong in believing that any restriction or regulation of his students' conduct is tantamount to illicit interference with their freedoms then so is Hick in believing that God has to choose between freedom and the lack of freedom only.⁴²²

In the next pages I shall address the argument from design. Could God design humankind in such a fashion as to make evil acts impossible for them? What options⁴²³ did God have at the design stage?⁴²⁴ My argument, though with a different conclusion from that reached by Hare and Madden, will serve as one of the two concluding arguments of my thesis. In the second chapter of this thesis I have argued that the capacity to commit evil acts is unnecessary for

⁴²¹ Edward H. Madden & Peter H. Hare, "A Critique of Hick's Theodicy" in *Evil and the Concept of God*, (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1968)

⁴²² Hick is not alone in embracing this false dichotomy. It is common to those who argue for free-will theodicies.

⁴²³ Given the assumption that God is bound by the rules of logic. If we cannot expect God to create for himself an option to produce a world containing married bachelors or square circles, then we equally cannot expect God to produce for himself options that will lead to illogical outcomes.

⁴²⁴ Hare & Madden address the argument from design in a later article. Please see Peter H. Hare & Edward H. Madden, "Evil and Persuasive Power", *Process Studies*, pp. 44-48, Vol. 2, Number 1, Spring, 1972. They argue that God could have designed humanity in ways that would have made it either impossible or very difficult to commit acts of egregious evil.

the exercise of free will. The conditions of morally significant choice, I argued, are met with the provision of the two options of good and bad, making the third option of evil superfluous.

However, let us examine the argument from design in detail. If, as Hare and Madden suggest, God would have set out to design humankind in such a way as to make them functionally unable to engage in evil acts then what kinds of changes would he have to introduce to his design? What faculties now present should he have eliminated, or, conversely, added for this purpose and what would the outcome be? Let us unravel Hare and Madden's thought experiment and see what options are open to God's intervention.

In chapters II and III of this thesis I defined evil acts and distinguished them from bad acts, concluding that evil acts are acts of predation. It follows, therefore, that in order to make humans functionally incapable of the performance of evil acts their design would have to make them incapable of predating upon others.

3. Argument From Design and the Theory of Mind:

As described in Chapter II⁴²⁵ of this thesis, human predation is a behavioural dynamic that involves a number of stages. To establish the dynamic of predation the predator must identify the prey as prey, noting the prey's vulnerabilities and assessing its resources. The predator must then estimate the prey's range of responses to different kinds of attack and choose the one with highest rewards and lowest costs. After this comes the attack and its aftermath.

As is evident from this discussion, the sine-qua-non requirement for the predator is a ToM, a theory of mind. ToM is a specific cognitive ability to

understand others as intentional agents, that is, to interpret their minds in terms of theoretical concepts of intentional states such as beliefs and desires. It is the ability to predict behaviour by attributing mental states to both self and others. How does a ToM operate? Baron-Cohen, Leslie and Firth have confronted both autistic and non-autistic children with a false belief task under experimental conditions. In this experiment the children were presented with two dolls, one of whom places a sweet in the cupboard, then leaves the room. The other doll then removes the sweet from the cupboard and places it in the drawer. The child is then asked whether the doll that has left the room would look for the sweet in the cupboard or in the drawer.

In this study Baron-Cohen had established that 80% of autistic children had answered the task incorrectly; they have attributed their own belief (the sweet is now in the drawer) to the absent doll. Only 30% of non-autistic children, including children with the Downs Syndrome, have given this answer. Most have correctly assumed that the absent doll could not know what they did.

ToM is instrumental in the formation of such relational abilities as compassion and cooperation. We have to be able to predict, with a high degree of accuracy, the mental states of others in order to experience either empathy or sympathy with them, work in concert with them and maintain that complex web of social relationships that constitutes a human community. A world populated by persons devoid of ToM would look very different from our own. Writing in his book *Mindblindness* (1997) Baron-Cohen describes the role played by a theory of mind: 'Imagine what your world would be like if you were aware of physical things but were blind to the existence of mental things. I mean, of course, blind to things like thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, desires, and intentions, which for most of us self-evidently underlie behaviour. Stretch your imagination to consider what sense you could make of human action (or, for that matter, any animate action whatsoever) if, as for a behaviourist, a

mentalistic explanation was forever beyond your limits. This is a hard thought experiment.⁴²⁶

Baron-Cohen describes a number of evolutionary mechanisms that constitute ToM. The first among them is Intentionality Detector (ID): 'In my theory, ID is a perceptual device that interprets motion and stimuli in terms of the primitive volitional mental states of goal and desires. I see these as primitive mental states in that they are the basic ones that are needed in order to be able to make sense of the universal movements of all animals: approach and avoidance.'⁴²⁷ We employ the ID to recognise the intentionality behind the actions of both animals and humans: e.g., the dog approaches the water bowl because it wants to drink; the Prime Minister is lending his support to a new law because he wants it to pass, etc. The ID is indispensable for the ability to perform compassionate or collaborative acts; it is also indispensable for the ability to perform predatory acts.

In order to be able to perform a collaborative act we have to be able to discern what goal the individual or the group I wish to collaborate with is intent on achieving. To perform a compassionate act we have to be able to discern what it is that the target of my compassion is wishing for or is eager to escape. This ascription of agency and intentionality is just as indispensable for the performance of a predatory act. For example, the mugger has to estimate correctly the ability of his intended victim to escape or fight him; the perpetrator of a boiler-room fraud has to estimate correctly the goals his intended victim wishes to achieve (secure retirement, increase in income, etc.).

We now established that to be unable to think in mentalistic terms renders humans incapable of predicting or understanding the mental states and therefore the actions of others. It also renders them quite harmless to fellow humans as they could never engage in a predatory dynamic since it is contingent on the ability to predict accurately the actions and reactions of

⁴²⁶ Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and The Theory of Mind*, (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1997), 1.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 32-33.

another. It is important to note that although critics of Baron-Cohen's theory⁴²⁸ had disagreed with his claim that the absence of ToM is a significant characteristic of those on the autistic spectrum, there was little disagreement with his hypothesis of the ToM and its role in human cognition.

Let us assume, irrespective of whether the persons lacking a ToM would be autistic or not, that such persons will be harmless as they will be unable to predict another's actions well enough in order to attack them. Such harmlessness, however, comes at an exceedingly high price. In order to practice good acts we need to know what constitutes the good of others as distinct from my own. This ability is dependent upon having a functioning ToM. To practice bad acts we also need a ToM since a bad act involves knowing the good of another and disregarding it.

ToM has other constituent mechanisms that make our intentional interactions with others possible. These are the Eye-Direction Detector (EDD), the Shared-Attention Mechanism (SAM) and the Theory-of-Mind Mechanism (ToMM).

The EDD is an innate ability that allows us to identify and discern the intentionality of others by identifying and interpreting the direction of their gaze: 'I suggest that in the human case, EDD has three basic functions: it detects the presence of eyes or eye-like stimuli, it computes whether the eyes are directed toward it or toward something else, and it infers from its own case that if another organism's eyes are directed at something then that organism sees that thing.'⁴²⁹ The Shared-Attention Mechanism allows the organism to conceive of intentional relations among the organism, another agent and a third object that is being perceived by both the organism and the other agent. For example, you and I are both looking at the cake; we are both in love with the same person; we are both competing for the same job, etc.

⁴²⁸ E.g. Francesca Happé, *Autism*, (London: UCL Press, 1996); B. Sodian, & U. Frith, "Deception and sabotage in autistic, retarded, and normal children", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 1992, 33, 591–606.

Let us look at the cognitive processes surrounding compassion and love⁴³⁰. Both emotions are contingent on the ability to create complex pictures of the mental states of others. In order to feel compassion for an ill friend I must not only be able to picture to myself her physical state but also her mental states in all their complexity: her changing moods, her sense of vulnerability, isolation and precariousness. I must effectively put myself in her place in my mind before I can experience the first stirrings of compassion. Without a ToM compassion will remain forever outside my grasp. In order to cooperate with others I have no choice but to think in mentalistic terms. If my community cooperates on the construction of a dwelling, for example, I must be able to accurately predict what each one of my fellow builders is about to do, why and when. Only then can I join successfully in this group endeavour. The same will be true for such complex group activities as hunting and fighting.⁴³¹

I therefore argue that if God wanted to create humans incapable of performing evil acts he would have to create them without a ToM. A person lacking a ToM would not only be unable to carry out an act of predation but will be highly unlikely to even conceive of it. Forever perplexed about why others act as they do, this individual would be more likely to be frightened of them and their unpredictability than to conspire against them.

There are a number of obvious problems with this preventive solution.

The absence of a ToM would render them incapable of cooperating, creating personal or communal bonds and so would in all probability make them speedily fail in the evolutionary struggle. The ability to form group affinities, to support the group, to care enough about other group members to risk one's life for them would be impossible for a non-ToM individual. This would in all probability lead such a group to a speedy failure in the evolutionary struggle. Even if we assume that the group somehow survived it would not prosper since it would have no ability to develop cooperation, socialisation or even

⁴³⁰ Love, either erotic or of other kinds, requires the ability of at least one person to attune herself to the mind of another. A mother who 'knows' that her child is unwell long before this had been confirmed by a doctor exercises ToM skills, as does the lover who, sensing his beloved's distress, boards a plane to see her without further prompt.

⁴³¹ Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, 38-39.

maintain the group by forming a hierarchical social structure. Their lives would be poor in relationships and social networks, their culture will be the minimal culture of a collection of individuals who find it exceedingly difficult to cooperate or share emotions. The lives of this group would be indeed be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short; their state of nature would be permanent and as perilous as to make long-term survival unlikely and development impossible.

I therefore conclude that God avoided the design of individuals incapable of the ToM as these individuals could not survive or create a flourishing human civilisation. Let us now look at another choice that God may take to prevent the occurrence of evil acts: the course of preventive or reactive miracles.

3. Argument from miracles: miraculous prevention:

An alternative approach to take would be for God to leave human development as it is but to intervene by means of a miracle whenever an evil act is about to occur. By providing a safety net that would allow bad acts but not evil ones God could ensure that no evil act would ever occur.

However, I argue that this solution is liable to the problem of diminishing returns. Let us imagine for the sake of the argument that God develops a reliable system by which a preventative miracle occurs whenever an evil act is about to be committed. It is reasonable to assume that human communities would learn the limits of permissible behaviour over time, learning, for example, that the failure to render aid to someone in need of it would not generate a miracle to provide that aid, but that an attempt to kill or wound someone does generate a miracle that stops or subverts the attack. Given that our emotions and interpersonal relationships will remain as they are it is inevitable that those who entertain predatory intentions towards others will continue to do so under conditions of predictable miraculous intervention. On this assumption we can argue that persons with predatory intentions will soon look for ways to circumvent the miracle-triggering protection net in order to achieve their goals.

Let us imagine that Jones hates his neighbour and repeatedly tries to shoot him dead. However, a miracle is triggered by each and every of Jones' attempts at murder and his gun jams every time he points it at his neighbour and squeezes the trigger. Jones' murderous intentions remain as steadfast as before and so, undeterred, he starts looking for ways to foil the miraculous safety net. Could he achieve his objective of eliminating his neighbour by getting the man to commit suicide, he wonders. Perhaps if he started a whispering campaign aimed at making Jones believe that his wife is having an affair then Jones, tormented by jealousy, insecure and depressive, will indeed take his own life? Jones puts his plan in action. Since God is committed to preventing the occurrence of evil acts by means of miracles, Jones' innovation means that God is now bound to prevent this latest plan from succeeding. He has to either prevent Jones from starting the whispering campaign or to prevent the recipients of his gossip from either believing it or from passing it on. This means that now God has to perform a series of second-order miracles, affecting a multiplicity of persons and severely restricting their freedoms in order to prevent this new evil act from taking place.

From this point on God is presented with a problem of diminishing returns. He would have to perform more and more miracles, create more and more restrictions on human action and change a variety of natural processes in the world in order to achieve his aim of preventing evil acts. As persons other than Jones learn the scope and confines of the miracle safety net system more and more miracles will have to be performed in order to frustrate their attempts to circumvent it. The universe will grow more and more unpredictable as more and more natural processes would be disturbed and more and more human actions blocked.

Let us consider another example. Elisabeth is trying to poison her elderly aunt in order to inherit her fortune. God performs a miracle to prevent the poison from having an effect upon Elisabeth's aunt. Just like the miracle that prevented Jones' bullet from being fired it is a miracle that causes a primary intervention with the laws of nature, the laws of aerodynamics in the case of the jammed gun and bio-chemical laws in the case of the deactivated poison.

However, just as in the case of Jones and his murderous intentions towards his neighbour, God does not intervene in Elisabeth's volition and so her intent to kill her aunt remain intact. It may be that, unlike the case with Jones, Elisabeth's intent will decay over time and she will give up trying to kill her aunt. If she does then the chain of events that, in the case of Jones, led firstly to attempt to circumvent the miraculous safety net and secondly to the awareness of other members of the community of the net's existence and its scope will not take place. But what if Elisabeth's frustrated aggression finds another victim and takes another path? Giving up on trying to poison her aunt, she turns instead to driving her insane in order to have her committed and gain control of her fortune thus. Again God is presented with a duty of intervention. He will have to block all words, situations and interactions that Elisabeth may set up to convince her aunt that she is losing her grip on reality. The sheer amount of preventive acts God is now have to enact will not only significantly limit Elisabeth's freedom but significantly alter the nature of the reality both Elisabeth and her aunt inhabit.

The scenario grows even more problematic if, for example, God were to act miraculously to prevent an act of systemic evil. The sheer number of preventive acts needed to sabotage the work of an abusive or a genocidal bureaucracy or an oppressive regime would create a reality profoundly altered and unstable and inevitably run into the problem of diminishing returns. God would have to interfere with the relational economy of that bureaucracy and the political regime under which it serves and alter both. The actions as well as the cognitive processes of most or possibly all bureaucrats involved in the process would have to be changed in order to sabotage the destructive process. By the time this process is complete the outcomes may well be even more disastrous than if the state of affairs was left without divine interference.

We can now argue that even if a given number of persons prevented by the miraculous safety net from committing an evil act will not persist in trying to circumvent it there will a) still be a sufficient number of persons who will, b) without an intervention with their volition it is quite possible that such persons will merely turn to more tacit forms of predation, thus recreating the problem and requiring second-order miraculous intervention with their cognition and

volition, and c) miraculous interventions in acts of systemic evil will profoundly alter and destabilise reality.

However, let us assume that preventive miracles are possible that do not alter reality to a point of instability. Ryan Nichols argues in his 1999 article⁴³² that we must not expect such first-order miracles as those described above but that other kinds of miracles are possible that do not intervene with free will and do not violate the laws of nature. Let us examine his arguments.

Nichols breaks evil-preventing miracles into three types: 1) those preventing an intention to commit an evil act; 2) those preventing the volition to act following the intention; and 3) those preventing the outcomes of the action. He accepts Plantinga's theory of free will and so accepts that both 'type-1' and 'type-2' miracles interfere with free will: 'Granting that freedom is (or is a necessary condition for) a good of enormous proportions, this observation serves as a theodicy to explain why God allows agents to will and act in evil ways. Yet for what reason does God refrain from performing Type-3 miracles (in large quantities) to prevent evil effects from obtaining?'⁴³³.

We have already accounted for reasons why God will not interfere with the volition and action stages of an evil act, although we have argued from neurology rather than free will. According to the argument in Chapter Three of this thesis free will, as the ability to freely choose between good and bad actions, would remain unaffected if God eliminated the choice to do evil; however, as we argued earlier in this chapter such choice would be both physically and metaphysically ominous and eventually counter-productive.

Nichols argues that type-3 miracles would not violate free will in the same way that type-1 and type-2 miracles do. The outcome of an action cannot be coherently included in the scope of an action itself. For example, if Regan stabs John in order to cause him pain but John does not experience any pain then John's failure to experience pain does not impinge upon the stabbing as being freely performed by Regan. Nichols reduced the argument that would regard

⁴³² R. Nichols, "Actions, Their Effects and Preventable Evil", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 1999, 46, 127-145.

⁴³³ Ibid, 131.

the outcome as part of a freely willed action to the absurd by arguing that if that was the case then the outcomes of free actions would have to enjoy posthumous protection, e.g., cutting down the tree my grandfather had planted decades ago would count as a violation of his free will exercised in planting it.⁴³⁴

However, this argument overlooks the causal causation that exists between events in the physical domain, independent of the volitions involved. If Regan stabs John then he inflicts not just pain but damage to John's blood vessels and internal organs which will lead to death and of which the pain John experiences after the stabbing is a symptom. The same state of affairs would maintain if John came by his injuries accidentally. So to negate Regan's action the miracle would have to prevent not only the suffering experienced at the killing but the killing itself. Even if Nichols is correct in saying that changing the expected outcome of an action does not violate the agent's free will in committing it⁴³⁵, changing the expected outcome would sabotage a number of natural laws.

Significantly, Leibniz agrees with the arguments in this chapter by claiming that more evil-preventing miracles are not performed in consideration of the orderliness and regularity of creation. Like us he concludes that a world in which miracles are commonplace is dangerously and disconcertingly unpredictable⁴³⁶.

What would a world look like in which such a protective safety net was in operation? Let us consider the implications.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 132.

⁴³⁵ This is a problematic claim. If my aim is to make a donation to charity and I am allowed to send the money but it is never received because someone intercepted it then it can be said that my freedom to make a donation to that charity was violated.

⁴³⁶ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, (London: Dent, 1968), 146. Significantly Leibnitz does not define miracles as mere violations of natural laws.

A system of miraculous interventions is established at Time 1. From this point on any predatory act is prevented from coming to fruition.⁴³⁷ When the fact becomes publicly known those harbouring predatory plans will have to re-examine and re-design their plans. The would-be murderer turns into a suave intriguer who seeks to eliminate his victims by exposing them to indirect dangers. The would-be robber becomes a fraudster. The abusive spouse abandons physical violence, now rendered ineffective, in favour of emotional violence. Oppressive regimes operating in this world abandon overt violence in favour of tacit coercion.

This leads us to Time 2. At Time 2 the world had changed to become more sophisticated and tacit about the evil acts that occur in it. However, the sum total of evil acts performed in this world had not significantly decreased. The world at Time 2 is significantly more dangerous and unpredictable than it was at the start of Time 1 because covert violence and aggression is harder to predict, recognise and prevent.

At Time 2 the miraculous safety net is expanded in scope. It will now include tacit acts of predation as well as overt acts. Miracles will now prevent the murderous intriguer from causing his victims' deaths by exposing them threat and despair, the fraudster from defrauding his victims and the abusive spouse from practicing emotional abuse. Oppressive governments are now prevented from enacting tacit coercion.

There are a number of immediate problems with the world at Time 2. The first concerns the direct manipulation of free will, since the expanded safety net can no longer involve only Type-3 miracles. It will have to interfere with individual volition by performing Type-1 and Type-2 miracles.

Another and more insidious problem is the problem of disablement inflicted on the population at Time 2. It is not only free will that will be affected but a variety of cognitive and perceptual processes. Certain parts of the ToM mechanisms of would-be perpetrators will have to be screened or controlled in order to achieve the expansion of the miraculous safety net.

⁴³⁷ Let us assume, following Nichols, that the intervention is type-3, i.e., not interfering with the free will of the perpetrator.

The third problem with world at Time 2 is the social changes that are bound to result from the operation of the expanded safety net. The world at Time 2 is profoundly uncertain. No one knows which actions will be prevented from occurring or from having the desired effect. Many people are disabled to a point of not being able to participate in any communal activities due to the disablement of their ToMs. As the first generation of would-be perpetrators are decommissioned a new generation will come up, intent upon trying their luck. The end result would be a community so limited and confused as to differ little from the ToM-deficient community is the first example.

Arguments that the multiplication of miracles in the world would decrease its quality can be traced back to Leibnitz. According to him, God had created a world in which the fewest number of miracles can be performed because he had created the best of all possible worlds.⁴³⁸

4. The Radical Alternative: Aborting the Experiment.

From our discussion so far it may appear that neither the design option (species-wide ToM disablement) nor the miracle option (preventive safety net) is the best option for God to take as a means to preventing acts of moral evil and their consequences. In the following discussion I would like to compare the options and then suggest a possible third alternative.

ToM disablement will ensure a species unable to survive the evolutionary struggle. A species made of persons unable to cooperate or sympathise with each other lacks the basic abilities, shared by other primates, to ensure survival in the changing environment. They would speedily fail and leave the space for another species not so hampered.

The miraculous safety net option will, we have found, either drive evil acts underground, making the world less predictable or destabilise it even more profoundly by attempting to prevent the outcomes of tacit designs. Another alternative does exist, however. It is radical and terminal but it does have the

⁴³⁸ Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, 146.

effect of eliminating evil acts without interfering with the free wills of those who would commit them.⁴³⁹ Let's call it the eliminativist option.

If humankind fails and becomes extinct as so many other species had before it then it is certain that no evil acts will be committed in the future. Furthermore such extinction would not violate volitions or be necessarily in itself painful or dramatic. The planet would merely return to the state it was in before sentient life emerged in it.⁴⁴⁰ The consequences of this drastic alternative would branch beyond the elimination of all evil acts. With humankind gone no good acts could be committed either, of course. Whatever states of moral achievement could have been achieved if humankind survived and found ways to minimise the evil acts committed by its members will now never be attained.

From this we may deduce that a) the continuing existence of humankind is of supreme value to God, and b) that the continuing existence of humankind is in some way compatible with a future in which evil acts will be minimised. If we accept that all evil acts are gratuitous then the continuing survival of humankind may be seen as a testament to a hope that the situation may improve till all human societies come to minimise evil acts.

5. God's Involvement with Evil Acts: What Does God Do in the Face of Evil?

I argue that God fulfils the following functions in relation to evil acts:

- i. The lawgiver: God starts his relationship with humanity by giving them a code of law with clear guidance on the moral life.

This code of law contained the blueprint for a society who placed ethical concerns at the foundation of their social, cultic and relational processes.

⁴³⁹ If God wanted to prevent all suffering from occurring he could extend the elimination to include all sentient beings.

⁴⁴⁰ This hypothesis is to be found in the thought of a number of deep ecology thinkers. See Merle Jacob, "Sustainable Development and Deep Ecology: An Analysis of Competing Traditions." *Environmental Management*, 1994, 18(4):477-488.

The giving of the ethical and communal commandments that make the Mosaic Law had altered history by introducing new and better reasons⁴⁴¹ to avoid predating and exploiting others and by ensuring that all those aware of the law will know that it is God's will that individuals treat each other kindly and non-predatorily. Those considering or following the law will know that their relationship with God is predicated upon the ways in which they treat others .

- ii. The protector of history: God acts as the guarantor of the historical and temporal processes.

It is my argument God's role as the guarantor of history involves the provision of constraints on such relational economies as imperil history. In this capacity God will perform such acts as are consistent with the limitation of potentially globally destructive historical trends. I do not argue that miracles preventing evil acts do not occur, merely that they may occur and possibly do occur in tacit ways that do not trigger the overt protective net scenario discussed earlier in this chapter.

We can argue that the fact that the Nazis did not win WW2 can be counted as a fact in favour of the view that God had intervened in the course of human history against the forces of mass destruction. We can also note that many of those who volunteered to fight the Nazi war machine at that time believed strongly that they are doing God's work and that God was on their side. On my view this will make God's primary function in history protective; it to ensure that the forces of destruction did not predominate and did not hijack history irretrievably.

The German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg⁴⁴² argues in the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* that we can trace God's historical acts by reading history as a history of God: 'This view of history is certainly not the same as the modern view which makes individuals, institutions, nations or humanity as a

⁴⁴¹ E.g., the Hammurabi Code (1754 BCE, Mesopotamia) an earlier code of laws, regulated wages and contracts and promulgated the lex tallionis (retributive justice), as well as apportioning penalties based on the social class of both victim and perpetrator. It did not provide reasons for treating all people with consideration or demand it, nor did it relate ethics and religion.

⁴⁴² Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), Protestant German theologian, author of *Systematic Theology* (1991).

whole the acting subject of history. For this reason the historian Klaus Koch uses the term “metahistory”⁴⁴³ for early understanding of history in Israel. From the modern, secular standpoint this term might well seem to be apt, yet it must not cause us to think that early Israel saw another history standing behind real history. For Israel the history of the acts of God was itself the real history that embraces all human action. This view of history does not rule out human action. It includes it, but not as that unifies and gives coherence to occurrence.’⁴⁴⁴

Unlike Pannenberg, I do not assert that human history can be seen as the direct reflection of God’s involvement with the world, or that God’s own values can be read from it. With Santrac I assert that, had God’s involvement in history been direct and his moral values manifest in it we would have seen much less historical evil, and institutions such as slavery would not have had such purchase and longevity.⁴⁴⁵ However, an argument in favour of a protective function can be made without arguing for either a predetermination of history, as in Pannenberg, or for some version of Whig historiography⁴⁴⁶ which would oblige us to see history as an ongoing progress.

It is important to keep in mind that, given the destructiveness and easy progress of systemic evils history is forever imperilled by them; therefore, it is an ongoing concern for God to prevent systemic evils winning, taking over history and radically changing its course. We can use an expanded notion of divine providence to discuss how this may be achieved. Since one of God’s functions is the maintenance of both the natural order of the universe and its history, it is rational to suppose that this function is expanded to the limitation of event horizons, both personal and historic.

⁴⁴³ Klaus Koch, *The Prophets*, (London: SCM Press, 1978) , 71.

⁴⁴⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume I*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991) p. 231.

⁴⁴⁵ Santrac (2008), 27.

⁴⁴⁶ A tradition of historiography, associated with 18th century Whig historians, of depicting history as a march of orderly progress. For more on this please see Ernst Mayr, "When is Historiography Whiggish?" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, April 1990, Vol. 51 Issue 2, pp 301–309.

In the case of a historic event horizon, such as the one created by the St Bartholomew's Eve massacre, God's function would be to limit its destructive outcomes. In fact, according to the historians investigating the massacre and its long-term outcomes, the French Revolution of 1789 with its message of secularism and the ensuing separation of church and state, effectively ending wars of religion, can be traced to the massacre in Paris 217 years earlier⁴⁴⁷.

Interestingly, that was a connection made by both French and English observers at the time of the Revolution.⁴⁴⁸

iii. God's perception of Evil Acts:

a. Simultaneous awareness:

In this section I would like to discuss God's relationship to evil acts and his perception of them. Earlier in this chapter I have discussed the two options God has at his disposal to prevent evil acts and why, upon examination, each one will eventually prove counter-productive. Now I would like to examine how the perpetration of evil acts affects God.⁴⁴⁹

My question is not whether the omniscient, omnipresent and omnibenevolent God knows the future and if so how, but rather how does this God experience evil acts and their consequences; I assume that God's knowledge of the future to the extent that is necessary to limit the expansion of event horizons resulting from evil acts.

The first feature to notice is that God is simultaneously aware of the thoughts and experiences of both perpetrators and victims. When Jones murders Smith God is impacted with the mental content of both and is thus aware both of

⁴⁴⁷ E.g., Dale K Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁴⁴⁸ For the reactions of contemporary observers please see Hedva Ben-Israel, *English Historians of the French Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 57.

⁴⁴⁹ In this discussion I will not make the assumptions made by the proponents of either open or limited theism. For more on open theism please see Boyd, Gregory A. (2003); *Is God to Blame? Moving Beyond Pat Answers to the Problem of Evil*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity.

Jones' rage and bloodlust and of Smith's pain and terror. Since God is aware of both sets of mental content simultaneously he experiences twice the range of emotions involved. This is not the experience that is available to humans.

In addition to this, God is also constantly aware of the event horizons opened up by acts of either personal or systemic evil. This knowledge is not absolutely unavailable to us⁴⁵⁰ as simultaneous awareness is, but it is not the kind of knowledge we usually seek since we tend to limit our awareness of evil acts to the acts themselves rather than to their consequences as they develop in time and space.

God's awareness of event horizons creates an additional cognitive layer that distinguishes his perception from ours. We may be aware of Smith's murder by Jones, but are not usually aware of the experiences unlived by the dead Smith, the family uncreated, the work undone, the effects upon Smith's surviving relatives and friends as they unfold in time.

b. Timelessness:

Another important feature of God's perception of evil acts is the timelessness of his perception. Our perception is time-bound and so our awareness of, and emotional engagement with evil acts tends to be limited by time. God's awareness, on the other hand, is not bound by time. We become aware of an evil act and remember it in time and for a limited time. Its emotional impact on us tends to decline as more time passes: the murder that shocked us and evoked profound compassion in us ten years ago is now recalled by us with a degree of equanimity. Not so for God, however.

To limit our awareness all the more, evil acts that have occurred before the time of our birth tend to impact us much less than those that are contemporaneous to us. The more time has passed between the occurrence of the act and our birth the less is the less interested and emotionally responsive are we to it.

⁴⁵⁰Event horizons are discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis. As I state there, it is possible to trace event horizons, though not fully. They are known by absences (e.g., missing persons), post-traumatic reactions of individuals and communities and, on the historical level, by missing communities in places where genocides have occurred.

Let us consider the case of a particular act of systemic evil, the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day that had commenced in Paris in the early hours of the 24th of August, 1572, against the background of the European wars of religion. Modern historians estimates that in the three days of the massacre in Paris around 3,000 people were murdered before a wave of copycat massacres spread through France, claiming a further 30,000 victims.⁴⁵¹

No one today is as shocked and pained by this massacre as those who had lived through it. It had taken place too long ago for us to either feel it as relevant to us or to respond to it emotionally. Reading the historical record, we tend to respond to the content cerebrally, asserting that it was horrendous and inhumane. However, we cannot pierce through the veil of time and attain immediate, unmitigated awareness of the massacre.

This is not so for God. In God's mind the massacre in Paris is as open to immediate and unmitigated perception as it was at the time of its occurrence. The surprise, terror and suffering of the victims⁴⁵², trapped and attacked unawares, the grim focus and commitment of the perpetrators⁴⁵³ intent on their task are all as fresh in God's mind as they were when they happened.

In addition to this God is aware of the multiple event horizons that were opened up by this massacre. These range from the absence of the people killed during the massacre, the lives they left un-lived, to the absence of their descendants and their lives, never commenced. These will include the historic and communal outcomes as well⁴⁵⁴.

c. Lack of Defence Mechanisms:

⁴⁵¹ For more on the massacre please see Barbara B Diefendorf, *The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre: A Brief History with Documents*, (London: Bedford/St Martin's, 2009)

⁴⁵² The victims were mostly Huguenots, Calvinist French Protestants attending the royal wedding in the capital. See Diefendorf (2009).

⁴⁵³ The original perpetrators of the massacre were the Paris citizens' militia, bolstered by the house troops of the Duke de Guise, head of the Catholic League; these were trained soldiers, veterans of many battles. They were later bolstered by armed civilians. Their victims were mostly civilians or off-duty soldiers in Paris for the royal wedding. See Diefendorf (2009).

⁴⁵⁴ Historians call what-if speculations 'counterfactuals'. My argument is that God's mind contains all those counterfactuals, each with its attendant loss and pain.

Unlike human cognition, God's mind does not have those psychic defence mechanisms that human minds have and employ in order to protect their mental equilibrium. Omniscience implies a complete knowledge of one's own mind as much as of other states of affairs and therefore it is important to realise that, unlike human minds, the mind of God is not protected from painful awareness.

Human minds respond to the stress of painful stimuli by activating a number of unconscious defence mechanisms. These include such tactics as repression, regression, reaction formation, sublimation, isolation, projection, displacement and introjection.⁴⁵⁵ Our minds thus mitigate the suffering caused by painful stimuli and emotions, allowing us to minimise their immediate impact upon our conscious minds. This is not the case with the mind of God since God's mind is both unconstrained by either time, space or the division between the conscious and subconscious layers.

For an example let us return to the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day. Human witnesses to the massacre and its survivors would have reacted to the horror they have endured and the resultant trauma by the activation of their defence mechanisms; they would have reinterpreted the massacre in religious or spiritual terms (isolation), temporarily lost recall for the most traumatic moments (denial), denied their own feelings of rage by attributing them to the other side in the religious conflict (projection), etc. However, God did not and does not have recourse to such protective strategies. He would have absorbed, and continues to experience, the full impact of the massacre.

iv. Evil-tolerant and evil-aware communities:

In Chapter III of this thesis we have discussed how communities can become evil-aware. A community that puts high costs on evil acts and significantly reduces the returns on them and that maintains such regime by means of constant vigilance will be able to minimise the perpetration of evil acts if not to eliminate them altogether.

⁴⁵⁵ These are the classical Freudian defence mechanisms. For more on them please see Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, Revised edition, (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1968).

Evil acts, as we have seen, are performed in the context of particular relational economies. A relational economy, either private or public, that puts low costs and high returns upon evil acts is one in which such acts are likely to occur. A relational economy that reverses this, placing low returns and high costs on evil acts is one in which such acts will be minimised. Therefore human communities that generate or tolerate high returns-low costs relational economies can be described as being evil-tolerant. Those that insist on low return-high costs economies can be described as being evil-intolerant.

Evil-tolerant communities have predominated throughout history. These are communities with rigid power hierarchies and power inequalities, communities in which evil acts are socially-mediated and normative. Their legal codes and social practices tolerate a variety of predatory actions that are deemed acceptable as reflections of the power imbalances among its members. In the following paragraphs I would like to propose the concept of an evil-intolerant community and to elucidate it by comparing and contrasting it with an evil-tolerant community.

An evil-tolerant community is identical to the ones we currently inhabit and which have predominated historically. It is a community that regards evil acts as normative albeit unwelcome facts of community life. Such a community has laws, customs and regulations designed to penalise the performance of clearly-defined evil acts, most commonly those that involve overt predation: murder, theft, assault, etc., and some system or systems of moral education aiming at teaching the young the desirability of choosing good rather than evil choices.

Historically evil-tolerant communities have existed under various political regimes and modes of government and have had various religious traditions or the absence of any. They went through periods of warfare and peace. However, neither one of these changes had instituted an intolerance towards evil acts.

An evil-intolerant community, on the other hand, is one that does not regard evil acts as normative. This community is evil-aware: it is constantly and proactively on guard against the possibility of evil acts occurring in its midst. This community mobilises all of the existing social dynamics to delegitimize evil

acts. It educates its young insistently and consistently about the tremendous damage caused by evil acts.

This community teaches compassion to both children and adults and ensures that compassion and predation-avoidance are skill constantly exercised, discussed, debated and taught. Even though it may appear that the difference between the two communities is relatively small – after all, the evil-tolerant community does not encourage evil acts but merely treats them as normative – the different approaches to evil acts in fact underlie a profound difference between the two communities, even before contingencies are accounted for. This community will change its legal codes from reactive (activated only after a predatory offence was committed) to pro-active (insisting on preventing predatory acts rather than merely penalising them after their commission). For example, the community would conduct consistent and multi-layered education against violence and predation rather than merely adopting a legal code that penalises certain violent acts.

A community that keeps its legal code reactive is evil-tolerant, no matter how stiff the penalties meted out by its legal code and how strict it is. A reactive legal code is founded on the assumption that predatory acts are bound to happen and that they will keep on happening. A pro-active culture and legislation, on the other hand, will not regard predatory acts as normative, but rather regard their ongoing prevention as normative. E.g., a criminal code is reactive while a social code, mandating ongoing education for compassion and equality and against predation and domination, through all available social and communicational processes, e.g., the media, social organisations, employers and the state itself.

For an example, let us turn to legal history. From the earliest known legal code, that attributed to Urukagina, A Mesopotamian king reigning circa 2360 BCE and up to modern legislation by liberal-democratic regimes, the legal codes are reactive, based on penalties after a predatory act had been committed. They meet the expression of James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-1894), a legal theoretician who had describe the aim of the English criminal code thus : ‘... criminal law... proceeds upon the principle that it is morally right to hate criminals, and it confirms and justifies this sentiment by inflicting upon

criminals punishments which express it.’⁴⁵⁶ It is only that Urukagina’s penalties are somewhat harsher than those mandated by modern legal codes.⁴⁵⁷

An evil-tolerant community penalises a limited category of overt and violent evil acts, reacting to evil post-factum. It does not penalise event horizons, nor does it practice ante-factum prevention. A large category of evil acts are not and never have been criminalised, especially those that do not involve physical violence. At any given time in its history an evil-tolerant community is a host to a large body of recidivist perpetrators, a small percentage of who will be individuals with a history of previous convictions. Many will be habitual or serial perpetrators who have never been charged⁴⁵⁸.

On the other hand, an evil-intolerant community will criminalise, or acknowledge, a much larger category of predatory acts, including non-violent ones. The community would have invested most of its resources in the ante-factum period, educating and advocating for compassion and confronting its members with the event horizons of predatory acts. It would have acted to change norms that either glamorise or romanticise predation and have moved to delegitimize and marginalise hate ideologies.⁴⁵⁹ Persons who are habitually or repetitively predatory towards others will be separated from the main

⁴⁵⁶ James Fitzjames Stephen, *A General View of the Criminal Code of England 1863*, (New York: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2008).

⁴⁵⁷ Ukuragina was the ruler of Lagash, a Mesopotamian principality, in the 24th century. The code itself was never recovered but it was partially reconstructed from writings referencing it. According to www.duhaime.org Ukuragina’s code stipulated that ‘thieves and adulteresses were to be stoned to death with stones inscribed with the name of their crime.’

⁴⁵⁸ For example, emotional abuse and violence is not a crime in England, Wales and Scotland. Other jurisdictions criminalise variously defined behaviours resulting in mental harm towards children only. See Copperthwaite, K (2013), *Emotional Abuse and the Criminal Law: An International Comparison*. I argue that many more predatory acts should be criminalised than are currently. See also Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabularies, *Everybody’s Business: Improving Police Response to Domestic Abuse* (HMIC, 2014), on the ‘alarming and unacceptable’ failure of the police constabularies of England and Wales to address domestic violence, including ‘lack of compassion’, taking the victim and the offense seriously and recognising emotional abuse. (ibid).

⁴⁵⁹ See Prior, William (1987), *Compassion: A Critique of Moral Rationalism*, *Philosophy & Theology*, 2 no 2 Winter 1987, p 173-191 for an argument for moral emotivism against moral rationalism. For latest initiatives on education for compassion see The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) of Stanford University at www.ccare.stanford.edu. See also www.charterforcompassion.org

community.⁴⁶⁰ An evil-aware community would also rein in its bureaucracies and institute stringent checks and balances to ensure that organisations avoid bureaucratisation whenever possible and that bureaucracies are sufficiently transparent to allow for public supervision. It would also have a procedure in place to dismantle organisations or bureaucracies that have become involved in acts of administrative evil.

It is important to note that an evil-intolerant community is neither utopian nor one striving towards utopian goals or visions. Such a community merely adopts a realistic stance on human predation and strives to minimise it. An evil-intolerant community will have its quota of the human bad and will be as exposed to physical 'evils' as the rest of humanity. Those living there will not enjoy a life of pure bliss, although they will enjoy a life enhanced by the relative rarity of evil acts, moral awareness and the habit of compassion.

I argue that evil-tolerant communities exclude and marginalise God while evil-aware communities include and centralise him. An evil tolerant community leaves God in the position of a responder, tasking him with managing event horizons that are constantly opened up in this community.

The minimisation of evil acts is a realistic goal since it seeks to eliminate profoundly destructive human behaviours by using the traditional influence tools used by human communities historically to achieve norms change: education, advocacy, social stigma, criminalisation etc. Since evil acts are merely human choices they can be affected as any other human choices.

I now turn to addressing the claim that evil is an inherent, natural and inescapable part of human existence. I shall turn to the historical example of slavery and present the arguments advanced by the proponents of slavery.

⁴⁶⁰There is a profound difference between exclusion and ostracism: social exclusion is a process of keeping the target(s) away from the majority, while ostracism is a process of ignoring and excluding the target(s). See Eric D. Wesselmann and Kipling D. Williams, "A Commentary on Cyberball: A Reasonable Paradigm for Studying Ostracism in Developmental Science?", *International Journal of Developmental Science*, 7 (2013) 57–63, 57. I here imply social exclusion rather than ostracism.

A variety of practices have been minimised after being regarded as normative for many centuries. One can name slavery, the subjugation of women and racism. Abolitionism of destructive and unjust practices is therefore an integral part of human history and has an impressive record of success.

Slavery in particular provides a helpful parallel to our attempt to imagine how an evil-intolerant community may function. At a not-so-remote time in history it would have seemed either impossible or improbable that a human community can function successfully without the institution of slavery. Abolitionists were routinely denounced as impractical dreamers, blind to the moral and economic justifications for slavery accepted by the majority.

Among the arguments of the time was the argument from permanence: slavery had always existed, claimed its defenders, and is an integral part of civilisation. It is a normative practice reflecting a normative mode of human relations, those of master and slave.

Religious arguments in favour of slavery included Biblical precedents and even divine acquiescence⁴⁶¹. Much like modern thinkers who argue that moral evil is a part of the cosmic order, defenders of slavery argued that the practice represented a divinely-mandated mystery that will jeopardise both the cosmic and the social order if dismantled⁴⁶².

In parallel to modern thinkers who argue that whoever incomprehensible and unjustifiable the predominance of moral evil is to us it does nevertheless result in good, Senator James Barbour (1775-1842) of Virginia, a defender of slavery, had claimed in 1820 that however 'incomprehensible' is slavery to us it is 'a

⁴⁶¹ See Larry R. Morrison, "The Religious Defense of American Slavery Before 1830", *Journal of Religious Thought*, 37 no 2 Fall-Winter 1980-1981, 16-29 : The emphasis from proslavery defenders was always upon a literal reading of the Bible which represented the mind and will of God himself. Slaveholding was not only justified by also moral because it was recognised as such in the Holy Scripture.' (ibid, 1)

⁴⁶² Morrison quotes from the *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 February, 1820: 'That as the supreme lawgiver and judge of man, God is infinitely just and wise in all decisions, and is essentially irresponsible for the reasons of his conduct in the moral government of the world - so it is culpably audacious in us to question the rectitude of any of those decisions - merely because we do not apprehend the inscrutable principles of such wisdom and justice.' (ibid, p.2).

link in that great concatenation which is permitted by omnipotent power and goodness and must issue in universal good.’⁴⁶³

Another parallel is the arguments of contemporary thinkers that the exposure to evil acts make better persons, defenders of slavery argued that the experience of slavery is beneficial to both slaves and non-slaves. A Lutheran minister from Georgia quoted by Morrison claimed that slavery is to be accepted because it had removed ‘the African from the heathenism of his native land to a country where his mind would be enlightened by the gospel, and provision be made for the salvation of his soul.’⁴⁶⁴ An argument for vicarious benefit, one claiming that others are enlightened by means of the suffering endured by the victims, was voiced as well. An individual writing a letter to Hezekiah Niles, the editor of the Niles’ Weekly Register, claims that God had allowed some Africans to be enslaved so that other Africans would benefit when the captives return, carrying with them ‘the light of civilization, and the blessings of Christianity, to their benighted and unhappy countrymen.’ The writer argues that in this way the ‘apparent evil’ of slavery is transmuted by God into ‘the utmost possible good’.⁴⁶⁵

Despite such opinions and despite the acceptance of the practice of slavery by large majorities in many places and times, it had been successfully abolished. This does not mean that no one is ever enslaved, but only that the practice had been delegitimized and suppressed. Incidences of enslavement do and will occur, but not at the scale as before abolition; they are severely punished, attract social demerit instead of social status and for most persons are simply unthinkable. Most of us no longer seek to enslave others.

I therefore argue that it is as possible to minimise evil acts as it is to minimise slavery. Both kinds of abolitionism are a way of aligning the world with God, by bringing God back into a world from which he is expelled by the persistence of evil acts, either individual or systemic.

⁴⁶³ Annals of Congress, 16 Cong., 1st sess., 1 February 1820, p. 335. Quoted in Morrison, 28.

⁴⁶⁴ Morrison, 29.

⁴⁶⁵ The writer signed his letter as The Delaware Watchman and the letter was published in *The Register* on November 8, 1817. See Morrison, *ibid.*

Conclusion:

In this chapter I have examined and rejected the route taken by process theology to address the problem of evil, discussed the two options open to God if he were to intervene in evil acts, addressed the eliminativist option and concluded why neither one would be optimal. I have then discussed what evil-intolerant communities would look like and why striving to minimise evil would be a work of restoring God to a world from which he is expelled by evil acts.

The main question addressed by this chapter is what exactly God could do in order to prevent evil acts from taking place. The standard complaint about God's inaction within the experiential problem of evil is that God should have done 'something' in order to prevent a particular instance of evil, either personal or systemic, from occurring. I endeavoured to find out what that 'something' could be and how the world would look after that something was put in place.

Having examined the two options open to God to prevent evil acts from occurring I have concluded that neither route is beneficial in the long term. I have then proceeded to argue that evil acts, both individual and systemic, being merely reversals of human relationality and as such can and should be prevented using the mechanisms of social influence available to human communities.

Raphael argues that although Auschwitz was the ultimate exclusion of God, God was reintroduced into this inhumane landscape by the care and kindness its female prisoners showed each other⁴⁶⁶. Acts mundane in other settings, such as the acts of washing, clothing and comforting others became in Auschwitz acts of restoring the divinity of others and thus of bringing God back into a place that was, of its essence, a fight against God⁴⁶⁷. I have taken this vision to include a world in which evil acts, both individual and systemic, are a regular occurrence; in an evil-tolerant community, I argued, all acts of care and

⁴⁶⁶ Raphael, *Female Face of God*, 100.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, 118.

compassion are acts that reclaim this community for God and restore the inherent divinity of its members.

On the basis of this argument I would like to conclude this chapter with the claim that a world in which God is included is by definition evil-intolerant. When recognising evil acts, whether personal or systemic, as the malign and needless reversal or human relationality human communities will act to severely limit them, becoming evil-aware, evil-intolerant and abolitionist. God's ability to contain moral evil is limited by both design considerations at an early stage and by considerations of practicability at the stage of the perpetration of predatory acts. The onus on evil-prevention is therefore, and in all probability always was, with us.

That does not absolve God from the responsibility for the existence of moral evil, however. Therefore the arguments of this thesis should not be regarding as construing either a theodicy or a defence, but rather an exploration of the relationship between God and moral evil and of the nature of moral evil itself.

Thesis conclusion:

In this thesis I have examined the theological problem of evil with the aid of an embedded analytic method, one that included evidence from the relevant social sciences and the humanities on the one hand and the testimonies of victims and perpetrators of evil acts on the other. The development of this method allowed me to investigate the problem of evil and the problem of evil-doing with commitment to the depth and complexity this field requires.

I defined an evil act as an act of predation of one person upon another and have argued against Augustinian appeals from freedom of the will and Irenean appeals from soul-making. I examined the relational dynamics of individual and collective acts, describing predatory processes as they are manifested in attacks against the person and genocide. I examined the mental processes of individual and collective perpetrators and have argued that at the core of these acts is an assumption of a God-like power over the victim and its unique value to the perpetrator.

By defining an evil act as an act of predation I have positioned the problem of evil within the scope of human relationality and its violations, removing it from theories of cosmic struggle or simplistic theories of human psychology. This in turn allowed me to analyse the dynamics of an evil act in its relational context and thus arrive at a neurophysiological explanation of human relationality and of evil as its aberration.

I further introduced the concepts of event horizons and relational economies to assist me with the task of explaining the outcomes and the motivations of predatory behaviour, both individual and systemic. These concepts widened my discussion of the phenomenon of evil acts and allowed me to trace processes and dynamics inherent in these acts that have so far not been discussed in relation to the problem of evil.

I argued that instead of the a choice between good and evil options we in fact choose among good, bad and evil options and that the evil option is both abnormal and anti-relational, a reversion of normative human relationality rather than a normative part of it. I discussed the ultimate destructiveness of evil acts, arguing that they transform both individual lives and the historic process as nothing else can or does.

I discussed God's role in countering evil acts and have argued that none of the two options of preventing such acts would be advantageous in the long term. Further I have discussed the mind of God and God's perception of evil acts. I concluded this thesis with arguments in favour of evil-aware communities, explaining how such communities, while not at all utopian, will be able to choose to minimise evil acts rather than mediate them and by doing so allow God back into the community. I have finally compared the views of those who argue from the inevitability and persistence of evil with the views of the proponents of slavery.

This thesis allowed me to investigate the problem of evil and offer an unusual and unorthodox solution. I was also able to investigate the relationship between God and acts of moral evil and to point out the costs and outcomes of divine intervention either at the point of design or in the course of human history at the point when evil acts were perpetrated.

My embedded analytic method has, I believe, justified itself by allowing me to compare and contrast the accounts of both victims and perpetrators of moral evil and to thereby discern the dynamics of predation and to find it an violation of normative human relationality, not an integral part of it. I hope that this method will find application among analytic philosophers investigating human reasoning and emotion as well as among other scholars whom it may benefit.

To argue that an evil act is not merely an extreme form of a bad one and that evil is neither normative nor unthinking means to be able to envision human communities where evil is minimised through constant evil awareness. Such communities, I argue, are neither utopian fictions nor prescriptions for restrictive and overbearing regimes. I have argued that such communities will be both realistic and trustworthy, fit places for the developments of the best relationships between individuals and between individuals and God.

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