A JOURNEY TOWARDS A NEW EMBODIED PROBLEM OF EVIL*

Un viaje hacia un nuevo problema del mal encarnado

Nataliia Reva [a]

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3931-3755

nat.reva.mail@gmail.com

[a] Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná in Curitiba, Brazil.

Abstract

Traditionally, the problem of evil revolves around the issue of reconciling the coexistence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God and evil. In response to this threat, philosophers use a generalized and abstract concept of evil to build a stronger argument against it. In this article, I challenge this method and advocate a practical approach to the problem of evil, emphasizing the importance of studying the concept of evil through concrete examples of its manifestations. I propose studying the latest from an embodied (phenomenological) perspective. Evil becomes a case of lived embodied experience that religion can help deal with. Thus, by introducing the concept of the body in the middle of the traditional Trilemma, I shift the questions toward the coexistence and interrelation of three separate subjects: God, Evil, and Human Agency. Such an embodied perspective offers a new look at the concept of evil, taking it out of a strictly abstract intellectual problematic circle and opening a possibility of methodological expansion and further interdisciplinary studies of the question.

Key-words: Problem of Evil; Embodied Evil; Embodiment; Body; Human Agency.

Resumen

Tradicionalmente, el problema del mal gira en torno a la cuestión de conciliar la coexistencia del Dios omnipotente y omnibenevolente y el Mal. En respuesta a esta amenaza, los filósofos utilizan un concepto generalizado y abstracto del mal para construir un argumento más sólido en su contra. En este artículo, cuestiono este método y abogo por un giro práctico en el problema del mal y en la necesidad de estudiar el concepto del mal abordando ejemplos concretos de las manifestaciones del mal. Propongo estudiar lo último desde la perspectiva corporizada (fenomenológica). El mal se convierte en un caso de experiencia corporal vivida que la religión puede ayudar a abordar. Así, al introducir el concepto del cuerpo en medio del trilema tradicional, desplazo las cuestiones hacia la coexistencia e interrelación de tres sujetos separados: Dios, el Mal y la Agencia Humana. Esta perspectiva corporizada ofrece una nueva mirada al concepto del mal, sacándolo de un círculo problemático intelectual estrictamente abstracto y abre una posibilidad de expansión metodológica y estudios interdisciplinarios adicionales de la cuestión.

Palabras clave: Problema del mal; Mal encarnado; Encarnación; Cuerpo; Agencia humana.

I. Introduction or Point of Departure: Traditional Problem of Evil

The problem of evil occupies a unique place in philosophical and, in particular, theological discussions. In two words, it is a longstanding intellectual challenge to reconcile the existence of evil with that of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God. In this section, I will present an overview of the traditional problem of evil, focusing on two main approaches to this issue — doctrinal and apologetic —, discussing their proposed arguments, and showing examples.

The doctrinal approach is based on the "argument from God" and recognizes God's existence as an undoubtable truth. Almost all theists subscribe to some well-worked-out and comprehensive theology based on such assertion. Thus, the problem is viewed from the angle of whether an all-powerful and all-loving Creator would allow the existence of evil and, if so, for what reasons. Meanwhile, the apologetic approach arises from the observation that evil exists in our world, which forms the question of whether the presence of such vice in nature does not prove the absence of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent Creator. In other words, this approach starts with the "argument from Evil," taking the existence of evil as a primary point to question God's presence and power. The formulation of the problem can vary depending on the context. Nonetheless, it always comes upon a Trilemma:

1. Since God is omnipotent, he should be able to prevent all evil,
2. Since God is omnibenevolent, he should be willing to prevent all evil,
3. Yet, evil still exists

(1-3) Thus, God is either unable to prevent all evil and therefore is not omnipotent, OR is unwilling to prevent all evil and therefore is not omnibenevolent.

The trilemma presented makes us rethink our image of God, his causal relation to this world, and even (by some) doubt his forces. Such an image is unacceptable for theology, for which omnipotence and omnibenevolence are crucial features of the divine nature. Therefore, *one of its main responses was to deny the existence of evil*. The privation theory of evil fits this request. Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and other ancient Greeks were convinced that evil does not exist in reality and that we should instead

discuss the absence of Goodness (understood in the sense of cosmic harmony of nature). Although it dates back to Antiquity, the privation theory found its heyday in medieval theology. One of the brightest examples is St. Augustine's theodicy. Augustine's theodicy famously insisted that God, as the supreme Good, could not create anything inherently evil. Instead, evil is "the loss of good, lacking its own positive nature" (St. Augustine, 426/2015, p. 244). His argument frames evil not as a substance but as a deficiency, akin to disease being a privation of health or darkness, the absence of light. He explained it in the following way:

> For the Almighty God, who, as even the heathen acknowledge, has supreme power over all things, being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil among His works if He were not so omnipotent and good that He could bring good even out of evil. For what is that which we call evil but the absence of good? In the bodies of animals, diseases and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a cure is effected, that does not mean that the evils which were present — namely, the diseases and wounds — go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist; for the wound or disease is not a substance, but a defect in the fleshly substance — the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore something good, of which those evils — that is, privations of the good which we call health — are accidents. Just in the same way, what are called vices in the soul are nothing but privations of natural good (quoted in Bourke, 1974, p. 65).

Another way to respond to this attack on God's almightiness is to argue that evil is allowed because it has a good purpose only an all-knowing God can see. For instance, Gottfried Leibniz argued that God, being supremely wise and good, "cannot but have chosen the best" (Leibniz, 1800/1996, p. 128) of the possible world for His prodigies. He insisted that what may seem evil in isolation often contributes to a "greater good" within God's comprehensive plan. Even a "lesser evil", error or sin, may be "repaired to greater advantage" and "ultimately serve the total perfection of the universe" (Leibniz, 1800/1996, p. 335). For him, everything should have its reason, and even evil. Such a reason could be found if we distance away from the particular cases of the suffering of some individuals or creatures and try to see the bigger picture from God's perspective. Of course, it is a painful task for mortal beings who cannot foresee the future for centuries ahead, but it is in God's power. However, if we could see all the outcomes of all the events for the generations ahead, would not we

choose the best course of action? Leibniz thought we would, as well as God:

> God is the first reason for things. Its understanding is the source of essence, and its will is the origin of existence. This supreme wisdom united to a goodness that is no less infinite, cannot but have chosen the best. For as a lesser evil is a kind of good, even so, a lesser good is a kind of evil if it stands in the way of the greater good, and there would be something to correct in the actions of God if it were possible to do better (quoted in Larrimore, 2001, pp. 196-197).

Some may say that such foreknowledge entails determinism. However, this is not a physical causal necessitation but a moral one (Bergby, 2005). It is the moral principle that underlines the Sufficient Reason. God always chooses actions that are most advantageous to keep our world the best of all. In other words, any physical manifestation has a moral core through its relation to God. Therefore, all the degrees of (im) perfections become highly important, allowing us to maximize the variety of phenomena in the world and, in this manner, making it whole, rich, and perfect.

The third option to protect God's powers and goodwill is to shift the responsibility onto Humans. There are variations here: some claim that God permitted evil for humans to grow morally and prove that they deserve to join their Creator for eternal life beyond pain and suffering (*Irenaean* theodicies); others insist that humans brought evil on themselves by disobeying God's orders (*Augustinian* theodicies) (see Hick, 2010). The already mentioned St. Augustine belonged to the latter category. In his view, all of us inherited Adam and Eve's sin, which distanced us from the Greatest Good, which is God. He emphasized that "from the bad use of free will, there originated the whole train of evil, which, with its concatenation of miseries, convoys the human race from its depraved origin, as from a corrupt root, on to the destruction of the second death, which has no end, those only being excepted who are freed by the grace of God" (St. Augustine, 426/2015, p. 323). Thus, for him, understanding this fact helps people to revalue God and choose the moral life to earn the forgiveness of the Creator.

On the contrary, the Irenaean theodicy (named after St. Irenaeus) insists that God could not give his creatures all without making them gods. In other words, humans were not made perfect at once and lost it, as St. Augustus thought, but with a potential for self-development. God neither punishes His children nor stands aside. In St. Irenaeus' view, the Almighty

fully knows how much evil we must bear to ultimately become a better version of ourselves. John Hick described it in the following way:

> Instead of seeing humanity as having been created in innocent perfection and then falling, it [Irenaean theodicy] sees us as having been created — as we now know, through the long process of evolution — as immature beings capable of growing through the experience of life in a challenging world. We are to grow gradually, in this life and beyond it, towards our perfection, which lies in the future, not in the past. Moral and spiritual growth can only take place in a world requiring our free decisions and calling for courage, self-sacrifice, determination, resourcefulness. This shows why this is, and has to be, an imperfect world, operating impartially according to its own laws, and containing what we call evil (Hick, 2010, p. xiii).

Hick himself chose the Irenaean side, proposing his Soul-Making theodicy. He drew our attention to the fact that even the Bible is full of descriptions of things that people generally call evil: premature death, cruelty, torture, violence, agony, diseases, hunger, catastrophic accidents, and so on. After studying all that, it would be an exaggeration to call the world we live in "the best of possible ones." Nevertheless, we must understand that all has its purpose. All those illustrations become apprehensible, in Hick's opinion, when we rethink the execution of Jesus Christ, the evil act of no doubt. However terrible it might seem in its nature, it served a Greater Good — Son got back to Father, and the mortals were taught not to fear pain, suffering, death, and other evils. Thus, our world becomes a place for our improvements, as a forge for our souls, where every one of us is his own smith. It is here that people should free themselves from inner inclinations towards evil (vices) and, following Christ's example, bravely endure all life's *peripeteia*.

Such a version of the Trilemma does not threaten God's existence and is an example of the "argument from God." Philosophers like St. August, Leibniz, and Hick directed their efforts to justify the ways of God. However, there is a more radical (sometimes called atheological) version that transforms the pondering of God's essence into the query of His reality. It has the following form:

1. Since evil exists,
2. And the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God does not prevent it,
(1-2) Thus, God does not exist.

We can see that the structure of the argument is reversed. The counterpoint is based on the indisputable evidence of tremendous evil being there in the world, while God's appearance (and intervention) is hidden and unseen. This argument can be of both types: deductive, pointing out the logical inconsistency by deducing a contradiction between two premises, or inductive, highlighting the improbability of one of the premises in the light of available proofs. To respond to these types of "arguments from Evil," philosophers develop different kinds of defences, namely counterarguments.

John Leslie Mackie (1955) successfully set up the deductive version of the argument. It is supported by a simple rule: the argument is sound if all the premises are true, and the conclusion follows deductively from them. If there is a direct contradiction in the premises (or it can be deduced from them), then the whole argument is logically inconsistent. Mackie applied this rule to the traditional Trilemma, saying:

> In its simplest form, the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions so that if any two of them were true, the third would be false [...] However, the contradiction does not arise immediately; to show it, we need some additional premises or perhaps some quasi-logical rules connecting the terms 'good', 'evil', and 'omnipotent'. These additional principles are that good is opposed to evil in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can and that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do. From these, it follows that a good omnipotent thing eliminates evil, and then the propositions that a good omnipotent thing exists and that evil exists are incompatible (Mackie, 1955, pp. 200-201).

Those philosophers who want to dispute the logical problem of evil need to prove the logical consistency of the previously mentioned premises, meaning that they need to give such a counterargument that will be able to show that the statements of both God's and Evil's existence could be true at the same time. One example was provided by Alvin Carl Plantinga (1989). To Mackie's original premises (A), a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can, and (B) there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do, he added the third, saying (C) unless this good thing has a good reason for not doing so. In Plantinga's view, such a good reason is our free will:

> A world containing creatures who are significantly free (and freely perform more good than evil actions) is more valuable, and else being

equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all. Now, God can create free creatures, but He cannot cause or determine them to do only what is right. For if He does so, then they are not 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 cannot give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so. As it turned out, sadly enough, some of the free creatures God created went wrong in the exercise of their freedom; this is the source of moral evil. The fact that free creatures sometimes go wrong, however, counts neither against God's omnipotence nor against His Goodness, for He could have forestalled the occurrence of moral evil only by removing the possibility of moral good (Plantinga, 1989, pp. 26-27).

Plantinga is often criticized for focusing all his attention on moral evil, for which humans can be held accountable. While natural evils, such as epidemics, natural disasters, and famine, slipped his attention. His free will defence may succeed in undercutting the claim that moral evil is inconsistent with the existence of God, but what kind of excuse does it have for a painful death caused by fire or earthquake, diseases like cancer, deformities like blindness or insanity, that deprive a person of a whole life? Therefore, Paul Draper (2010) proposed an alternative approach to addressing the logical problem of evil — sceptical theism. It is based on two claims: (1) the undoubtable existence of God (theistic premise) and (2) the limited cognitive ability of humans to make judgments about God's actions and motivations (sceptical assumption). Thus, we are unable to understand the role of natural evil on Earth critically, but we must accept that it is here for some reason. He explained it in the following way:

The core idea of skeptical theism is that arguments from evil are all flawed because they all presuppose that we know more about goods and evils and their logical relations to each other than in fact we do know. Applying this to my argument from evil, skeptical theists would be skeptical about the A premise [a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can], denying that we have good reason to accept it. They would claim that we know so little compared to what an omniscient being would know about what possible goods and evils there are and what logical relations goods and evils bear to each other that we are in no position to judge the accuracy of theism with respect to the data of good and evil (Draper, 2010, p. 16).

Nevertheless, no matter how successful logical argumentation is, one can see that it always generalizes evil, discussing it without looking into particular examples of its manifestation in the lives of all living creatures. How can the death of this unborn child help his/her soul to grow, according to Plantinga's idea? Or should his death help his/her mother's soul become better? Why such an enormous cost? Why is her soul worthier than that of her baby? In his paper "The Problem of Evil and some varieties of atheism," William Leonard Rowe (1979) gave another example. He proposed to think of the fawn trapped in the forest fire. The poor creature had been horribly burnt and died in agony a few days later. What good comes of the suffering or eventual death of this innocent animal? The original sin of humankind did not poison it. Nobody said anything about animal souls. Should it also grow with its experience of evil? Or is it a bargain so that no greater evil would happen? Why, though, are its life and torments less valuable than those of humans are? Rowe argues that with all the pointless sufferings in the world, believing in the omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God will not be reasonable; namely, he said that:

> It seems quite unlikely that all the instances of intense suffering occurring daily in our world are intimately related to the occurrence of greater goods or the prevention of evils at least as bad; and even more unlikely, should they somehow all be so related, than an omnipotent, omniscient being could not have achieved at least some of those goods (or prevented some of those evils) without permitting the instances of intense suffering that are supposedly related to them. In the light of our experience and knowledge of the variety and scale of human and animal suffering in our world, the idea that none of this suffering could have been prevented by an omnipotent being without thereby losing a greater good or permitting an evil at least as bad seems an extraordinary absurd idea, quite beyond our belief (Rowe, 1979, pp. 337-38).

This is an example of an evidential problem of evil. Stephen Wykstra (1996) attempted to address Rowe's concerns by proposing what he terms a "neutralizing tactic." He offered the Condition of ReasoNable Epistemic Access (CORNEA) based on the *noseeum* argument. To put it briefly, we cannot say that if "we see no x," "there is no x." Our inability to see x (or the fact that there is x) can only justify the claim that "it appears there is no x." Therefore, it would be reasonable to believe that God has no reason for a particular case of evil if and only if we suppose that we can see such a reason. In other words, in Rowe's case, we can only say that it appears that there is no good (or prevented evil) for God to allow the intense suffering of

this poor fawn. "The disparity between God's vision and ours, I suggested, is comparable to the gap between the vision of a parent and her one-month-old infant. This gives reason to think that our discerning most of God's purposes are about as likely as the infant's discerning most of the parent's purposes" (Wykstra, 1996, p. 97).

Wykstra insisted that we could not epistemically approach God's decisions. We are trying to fit the shoes of the ancient goddess of justice and law, Themis, blindly weighing all the cases of evil we have. However, unlike her, we do not have the gift of foresight to see the consequences of all the facts of intense suffering we consider evidence against God. Therefore, the inference from "I see no reason for allowing this instance of evil" to "there is no reason for allowing this instance of evil" is invalid. In Wykstra's opinion, such an argument cannot be levering evidence.

Thus, as we have seen, the problem of evil has been a topic of discussion among philosophers and theologians for centuries, generating a wide range of responses. Since the article's size is limited, I can only present a couple of the brightest examples (in my humble opinion). I must say that regardless of whether the author developed a theodicy or defence or accumulated his forces to support the "argument from evil," they all have one significant feature that unites them — theoretical orientation. Consequently, the traditional problem of evil can also be named the theoretical or intellectual problem of evil. In the next section, I will discuss the issue with such an orientation.

II. First Stop: The Problem with the Problem of Evil

Since the transcendental God is beyond our physical reach, we use the best tool we have to deal with the issue — our mind. Intellectual ponderings have yielded fruitful results in the form of various theoretical approaches to discuss evil. Yet, some philosophers, such as Peter van Inwagen, still consider it a philosophical failure. Why? In his book *The Problem of Evil* (2006), he argues that the argument from evil cannot succeed in converting neutral agnostics into atheists — the fact, in his opinion, that renders the argument ineffective. Can the counterarguments help convert the same agnostics to theism? That is an open question. What I find interesting in his criticism is that van Inwagen appeals to the effect that the argument (and the problem of evil in general) has on humans rather than its logical consistency or theological success. Intentionally or not, van Inwagen shifts the question's perspective from the divine to the human dimension.

As a Christian and a philosopher, van Inwagen has his reasons to think that the argument from evil is a failure. For him, it was important

to show that nothing can shake the pillars of faith. As an agnostic and a philosopher, I have my thoughts on why the traditional problem of evil, in general, is no longer effective. This section will demonstrate three main arguments to support my assumption. *The first one is a careless tendency to generalize evil*. It is easier to build an argument in God's favour by discussing some abstract concept of evil instead of a real-life threat. Thus, this method was severely abused by philosophers. *The second reason is a wrong orientation of the problem*. The concept of evil was "stigmatized" by misorientation regarding its relation to the divine, while human agents dealing with evil are left aside. *The last point is that the problem of evil, as it is presented and addressed, is too theoretical and lacks practical application in today's world*. It might be a different story in medieval times, but it does not respond to the needs of modern, anthropocentric, and pragmatic society.

Returning to van Inwagen's lectures (2006), he discusses both global and local arguments using generalization. In the first case, he discusses all the evil in the world and employs a version of the free will defence to address it. In the second, which focuses on the particular evil that occurred on Earth, such as the Lisbon Earthquake or the Holocaust, he proposes addressing the type of evil events that can be studied on a case-by-case basis but analyzed as a group. Therefore, when a specific example is considered, the counterarguments would still rely on the abstract idea of evil. For example, van Inwagen talks about, as he calls it, "the mutilation" case. A woman was raped, mutilated, and left to die. She survives, but she must live crippled and mentally broken after all the horror she lived through. Theistic philosophers may say that by permitting her suffering, God had prevented some greater *abstract* horrible evil whose existence is impossible to prove.

The causal relation between some manifestation of evil (happened evil), like "the mutilation" case, let us call it H, and some unhappened greater evil, let us say U, is so contrived that it is hard to accept without believing in God and its cognitive superiority over humans. Therefore, it is not the case of a causal relation where H → U, but of one's belief that God allowed H to prevent U. Using Graham Priest (2016)'s intentional operator of belief, we can say that it is the case that $t\Phi A$ where A = ($\exists G$ ($God(G) \wedge \forall y(\text{Time}(y) \rightarrow (G \rightarrow (H \rightarrow U)))$), meaning that some person t believes that with the God?s providence a particular event H causes U. If we use it in general terms, it becomes impossible to check the truth of the content of our belief but let us imagine the cases where we can trace the cause-and-effect relationship.

In some possible world w_1, H → U might be true: an event H happened, and U did not happen. For example, the man who raped and mutilated that

poor woman with an axe initially intended to break into a public library and kill everyone there. When he was caught, he confessed his motives to the police but said he was too tired to implement his plan. In this case, we found a correlation between H and U that demonstrates a "causal relation" between them and can be seen as proof that God, indeed, could allow this personal tragedy to happen to save more lives. So, the case turns out to be a version of God's trolley problem.

In another w_2, H → U might be false: H happened, but U also happened, so the causal relation we believed in proved wrong. The man who raped and mutilated the poor woman broke into the library and tried to kill everyone with an axe. He was once again caught and confessed to his crimes to the police. Why did God not stop him from the second murder? Should we suppose that there is a second event E that could have happened if H and U had not taken place? Is it the justification for serial killings? In this manner, the list can be expanded indefinitely.

We can also imagine another development of events. In w_3, H → U is true because H did not happen, and U did happen. The man did not meet that poor woman on his way, so he came directly to a public library and killed (or at least tried to kill) all the people in there with an axe. In this case, the belief stated earlier is true, but how can we possibly know that there might be some H that could prevent this U from happening? Would we be in the position where U became H_1, which should prevent another E (that became U_1) from happening? Such a supposition may entail that everything in our world is related in this manner, and, therefore, it is impossible to stop one evil from happening without triggering the other.

There is also a fourth scenario: in w_4, neither H nor U occurred. The man fell into the open sewer hatch on his way to committing those crimes. He was found a while later and delivered to the hospital, where he confessed his intentions to the nurse. Since those intentions did not come true, one may say that in this case, God does not find himself under the necessity to solve the trolley problem but erases it completely, as an omnipotent creature should do. Nevertheless, how can we prove that there was a correlation between H and U?

Let us sum up all the scenarios in *Table 1* below. The question is what will happen with the initial belief A? If we suppose that $(\exists t(\text{Person}(t) \wedge \forall y(\text{Time}(y) \rightarrow (t\Phi A)))$ — some person t in any possible time y keeps holding to his initial belief A, then no proof should change his mind. This is what the generalized answers proposed by giving an abstract concept of a greater evil. Since an abstract metaphysical concept is hard (if not impossible) to revise, the A is the one thing that remains to hope for. Even though van Inwagen himself uses the generalization tactic, he understands

its flaws, emphasizing that "no proposed solution to the problem of evil according to which the rabies virus or the Thirty Years' War or the Gulags are a part of God's plan for the world has any hope of being even faintly plausible" (Van Inwagen, 2019, p. 15).

If we suppose that our person t is open to the revision of his beliefs, then we should accept that at one point in time y, t may believe in A and in another point of time x, believe in ¬A, but never both at the same time. ($\exists t$(Person (t)∧($\exists y$(Time (y)→($t\Phi$A))∧$\exists x$(Time (x)→¬($t\Phi$A)))). In other words, our person t, if he is not biased in his judgments, should be able to change his mind according to the evidence he collects from the world. In the first case scenario of w_1, A is proved to be true (T), with the testimonials gathered by the police serving as essential evidence of that. In this manner, the facts have shown the legitimacy of our beliefs. While not all the other scenarios are that simple, they ask for the revision of our initial belief A. It is not the aim of this paper to check how the initial belief A would change, but to make it clear that the belief is more likely to be changed when it meets the concrete examples, unlike the generalized abstract assumption that most of the philosophers of religion and theologians propose to beat the arguments from evil.

	Event H	Event U	Causal relation H → U	Belief A
W_1	T	T	T	T => NO CHANGE
W_2	T	F	F	? => POSSIBLE CHANGE
W_3	F	T	T	? => POSSIBLE CHANGE
W_4	F	F	F	? => POSSIBLE CHANGE

Table 1.

The other issue with this tactic is that *when we generalize evil, we alienate it from the world and anonymize it in a way that diminishes its horrendous impact*. Individual suffering fades and loses its gravity. Eleonore Stump gives an excellent analogy to explain this drawback:

> Theodicy resembles clinical psychology, embryology, or any other body of knowledge in which the possession of a general theory is not the same as the ability to apply that theory in any given particular case. Why this person should have become sick in this way, given her genetics and environment, may be mysterious to us, not because we lack the relevant theory, but because the information about this particular person that

is necessary in order to apply the general theory to her case is lacking to us. Analogously, it is possible to have a general theory about the justification for God's allowing human suffering in general without being able to understand why any given person suffered as he did. Theodicy is therefore not the project of proposing to explain God's particular reasons for his dealings with any particular person or group of persons (Stump, 2010, p. 14).

Unfairly, the human perspective is not considered as important as the divine's is. The traditional philosophical problem of evil focuses on God rather than Human Agency, overlooking the fact that humans face evil first (Jantzen, 1999, p. 262). This intellectual concentration on God (raised in questions such as how He can permit evil, whether the evidence of evil threatens His existence, and whether He cannot abolish evil, etc.) sidesteps the practical inquiry. Issues such as whether the relationship between Humans and God changes because of evil, how humans can overcome or prevent its effects, and to what extent they can bear responsibility for the evil that exists on Earth, among others, remain unaddressed by the philosophy of religion. However, most religions offer ways to help people cope with evil through different rites and practices. For instance, Ukrainian Orthodox Christians come to church to light a candle and pray before the icon, asking for divine protection from evil or the strength to endure the misfortune that has befallen them. What is interesting is that the social surveys conducted in Ukraine in April-May 2023 show that since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, the faith in God and hope for his help and justice increased for 29% of Ukrainians and decreased for only 7% from a sample of 2020 respondents (see Shotkina, 2023). Such a personal response to the evil that Ukrainians are forced to live through is a demonstrative example of the practical problem of evil.

Another example could be found in the Buddhist tradition. The primary objective of this religion is to help individuals overcome the practical issue of evil and suffering by ceasing samsara — the continuous cycle of rebirth — and attaining nirvana. Unlike Western theology's metaphysical and ontological orientation, Buddhism emphasizes soteriology while dealing with evil. A famous legend about Buddha's story on the simile of the arrow is very illustrative:

Would a man, wounded by a poisonous arrow, refuse treatment until he knows who shot the arrow that wounded him, where his assailant was from, from what fiber the bowstring was made, what kind of feathers were used on the shaft, and so forth? Of course not, the Buddha says;

by the time these questions were resolved, the man would have died. Similarly, the question of why evil exists may not tend to edification; instead, the question that demands an answer is: What do people do right now about the evil and reactive suffering they are currently facing? (Buswell, 2019, p. 216)

An interesting fact was noted by David Burnett (1999) during his conversation with a Tibetan monk. The last one said that only a few people become Buddhists without facing (physical) problems or/and some emotional crisis; as the Ukrainian case illustrates, the same is true with Christianity. Dark times call for the light of hope, and religion can fill this need. Therefore, philosophy of religion must tend to provide a comprehensible answer to the question of evil. One can say that, perhaps, it is easier for Buddhists to deal with the problem of evil in a practical way since all the evil and suffering in the world are consequences of human cravings and, therefore, the entire responsibility lies on their shoulders (and Buddha is not the Creator of this world). Nevertheless, this does not justify Western tradition in its neglect of Humans and unwillingness to offer a practical solution to the problem of evil.

In some rare cases, when the problem of evil concerns humans, it is often used to transfer responsibility from God. However, the *actual practical issue is not "why" but "how" questions*: how humans adjust to a world in which evil exists, how we feel and understand the evil that fell to our lot, how we can liberate ourselves from it, as well as, of course, how humans' relations with religion/church changes due to evil events in their life (do people become more religious or, on the contrary, withdraw them from God due to inner disappointment), and so on. As Stump notices, "it would be obtuse to fail to see that, no matter how successful a theodicy is, it cannot possibly alter the fact of suffering, whatever justification for suffering theodicy finds, it remains a justification for suffering. To explain suffering is not to explain it away, the suffering remains the grief over it ought also to remain, no matter how successful the justification" (Stump, 2010, p. 16).

To sum up, the intellectual problem of evil gave rise to an enormous amount of interesting and undoubtedly important scientific literature. Nevertheless, it left a crucial part of the issue out of sight — its practical influence on the lives of those who reflect on it. Saying that some greater abstract Good will come (no matter for others or themselves) makes people who suffer here and now feel like they are pawns in the wrong game. In such a way, philosophers unconsciously turn God into a Stalin-like dictator for whom the suffering of millions of men is not a tragedy but a statistic

that has no importance in the name of a higher purpose (soul-making, prevention of a greater evil, punishment for the original sin, etc.). Of course, as was illustrated in the first section, there are other ways to explain why God allows evil and whether He is responsible (or not) for it, but answering those questions would not make human lives any better. In this section, I tried to present and justify my vision of the problem with the (theoretical) problem of evil. In the following two sections, I will offer my answer to this problem.

III. Second Stop: An Embodied Perspective on the Problem of Evil

After reading the previous section, one should not think that the practical debate regarding the problem of evil in the Western philosophy of religion is entirely absent. Indeed, some work has been done in the "practical fields." However, the reflections on the intellectual problem of evil still prevail. Peter van Inwagen mentioned that the practical problems (in plural) of evil are those that the theists confront when they encounter some particular evil, more accurately, the "problems about how their beliefs about, their attitudes concerning, and their actions directed towards God are going to be affected by their encounter with evil" (van Inwagen, 2006, p. 5). In his opinion, the practical problem of evil primarily concerns believers and can be divided into two categories: personal and pastoral problems — the former deals with the individual's struggle to reconcile their belief in God with their own sufferings. The second problem concerns clergy members and other individuals of religious or spiritual rank who should guide and support those who suffer, helping them preserve their faith in God. In my opinion, this restriction is fallacious. All people, whether religious or not, encounter some evil on their way and need to deal with it. Some may become religious after surviving evil, like a terrorist attack or severe cancer. Some, on the other hand, can lose faith. Others can have no interest in religious salvation and God's help but are worried about the material survival and cessation of suffering and pain (seen as evil) here and now. Therefore, I dare say that the relationship with God and the question of faith is only one of the sides of the problem of evil and should not be considered as the only important one. Further in the paper, I will present the other sides of the problem and the questions that it raises.

Supporting Shane Andre's (2021) appeal, I also think it is time for a shift from theological to practical issues, a time to *de-divinize* the debate on the problem of evil in philosophy. Some philosophers call this perspective existentialistic (see The, n.d.), but I prefer to call it embodied. Although the embodied perspective shares with existentialist thought a concern for lived

experience, it diverges in key ways. Classical existentialism, exemplified by thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and, to a lesser extent, Søren Kierkegaard, centres on the freedom, angst, and alienation of the human subject. Evil, within this frame, is often viewed through the lens of metaphysical absurdity or the failure of ethical commitment in a godless or opaque universe. The existential subject is primarily a self-conscious, meaning-making agent, grappling with the void or with radical freedom and the absurd in the face of evil. The embodied perspective, by contrast, locates evil in sensorial and corporeal encounters. It does not ask, "Why am I condemned to freedom?" but rather, "How does evil impress itself upon the flesh, and how is meaning reconstituted through the body?" The human being is not merely a fine thinker but a bodily subject, encountering evil not only as a philosophical dilemma but also as a concrete invasion of flesh, pain, fear, and survival. In this light, evil is not merely that which robs the existence of meaning but that which strikes the body, disfigures it, and destabilizes its orientation in the world. The embodied approach thus privileges first-person experience, which consists of both mental and corporeal involvement, and shifts the problem from metaphysical speculation and transcendental existential anxiety to phenomenological immediacy.

I propose studying the problem of evil from the perspective of the body, as it is our embodiment that differentiates us from a transcendent God. One can see the body as the first physical world we encounter — we discover its abilities before moving on to the second world, the one outside this body. One can see it only as an instrument, a medium through which we coexist with other mediums-bodies of humans and animals (and even trees if you are an animist). The body can be seen as oneself by someone who denies the existence of an inner soul. However, no one can reject the existence of a body without rejecting the material existence itself. The body is a source and a transmitter of all the experiences people have. Even when people meditate, trying to focus on their inner mental state, their senses continue to receive information — such as smells and sounds — from the outside world. Margaret Wilson (2002) suggested that the evolutionary human mind develops mechanisms for interacting with the environment that operate without one's awareness or will. In this manner, whether we like it or not, our experiences cannot be disembodied unless we lose all our senses (or the sense of our body in general). Thereby, our meeting with evil, in any of its manifestations in life, always involves body feelings, through which we struggle with the unpleasant consequences of such encounters.

There are various types of encounters between the body and evil, as well as their corresponding responses. Since evil comes in many forms (at least people tend to name lots of dire circumstances, events, or accidents

by this name) — from a broken tree branch on the top of your new car to a destroyed city by a missile attack — such variety poses tons of questions for philosophers. However, generally speaking, evil can be divided into two categories: man-made (moral evil) and God- or nature-made. Let us examine both types from an embodied perspective to better understand their influence and connection with the human body. To do so, I want you to meet Sam — an average human being.

- As a human being, Sam has free will. That means that Sam can choose for himself what to do and what to believe in. However, this freedom of choice makes Sam responsible for his actions. Therefore, if he wishes to harm someone and succumbs to this atrocious inner impulse, one may say that he chooses to do evil.

- However, there are some external events and forces on which Sam has no influence, even though he possesses the power of free will. For example, a terrible tornado can happen in the place he lives. Sam is neither responsible for this natural disaster nor can he in any way stop it from happening. The only thing left for him is to live through this natural evil and deal with its consequences.

In the first case, the evil Sam deals with is an inner evil. Such a perspective is usually studied in psychology. For instance, Professor Michael Stone (2009) understands evil as a malfunctioning amygdala that prevents people from 'putting on the brakes' to regulate their actions. Sir Simon Philip Baron-Cohen (2011, 2012) expresses the opinion that evil can be redefined as an erosion of empathy, meaning a lack of empathy in a human being. One can see how the philosophical privation theory of evil influenced his thought in this regard. Baron-Cohen's approach focuses on the psychological nature of evil, asking questions like why some people are more capable of cruel actions than others and what causes this inclination. The scientific approach views evil as a biological or cognitive aspect within us that determines an agent's actions, decisions, and motives (see Midgley, 1984). Even though science does not hesitate to adopt philosophical ideas for its use, it often accuses philosophy of seeing evil as some metaphysical entity completely disembodied. Such an accusation is only partly true. As I demonstrated in the previous section, there are diverse theories within the philosophy of religion that generalize evil and employ abstract conceptualization, which makes the concept seem less tangible. Nevertheless, it does not mean that no attention is paid to the moral side of the question and the kind of evil brought to the world by men's hands.

Susan Neiman (2015) thinks that the shift of focus from the metaphysical and theological perspective of the problem of evil to the ethical and psychological one can be found in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1734), which accentuates the need for self-reflection of men as to the morality of their actions, instead of constant complaining of the injustice of given nature. In Pope's view, any cataclysm and disaster is the downside of the natural order established by God to shape a world that can survive without his intervention. However, all other evils are consequences of human moral sins, such as pride, arrogance, and greed, which tend to disrupt God's order. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, elaborating on Pope's idea, famously argued that civilization introduced most of the evils now endemic to modern life. He writes in "Discourse on Inequality" that "the first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, said 'This is mine'… was the real founder of civil society" (Rousseau, 1762/2002, p. 113), suggesting that much of what we call natural evil is, in fact, the byproduct of human systems. For example, many diseases are products of the civilized world and did not exist in indigenous times. He envisioned a pre-civilized state where humans were free from these ills, suggesting that we bear responsibility not only for moral evil but for many of the supposed "natural" harms as well. However, the good news is that such evil can be eliminated, and since humans are responsible for it, it is our duty to do so. Philosophers believed that people must learn to understand and evaluate their actions as a species. In such a way, the responsibility for all the doings of humankind lies on the shoulders of every individual.

In Neiman's opinion, Rousseau was the first to outline the real philosophical (and not theological) problem of evil and provide an answer to it by proposing a theory of education. Building on this legacy, Immanuel Kant deepened the inquiry by formulating a moral framework centered on autonomy, dignity, and rational duty. His categorical imperative: act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means (Kant, 1785/1997, 4, p. 429), aimed to provide the foundation for a moral community composed of free and rational agents. Today, Western society is only beginning to reckon with the full implications of these ethical demands, asking urgent questions: What have we done to the planet in the name of progress? How many species have we driven to extinction? What responsibility do we bear for the exploitation of resources and people? What impact do our actions have on the future of our planet? Are we killing the planet with overconsumption? Furthermore, most importantly, what can we all do about it? The answers to such questions require not only individual moral awareness but a collective sense of accountability, an understanding that man-made evil stems from human choices and can only

be prevented by ethical transformation and sustained responsibility for our shared world.

Now, we shall continue with the second case. Poor Sam was affected by a tornado that destroyed his house, killed some of his domestic animals, and generally turned his farm into a huge mess. Sam and his family survived this cataclysm in the basement but experienced colossal stress. His youngest son has no sleep at night due to the fear of a repeat tornado, and his daughter has nightmares. Sam himself has never experienced such a tremendous tornado, so he also feels uneasy.

Regarding all the adverse effects it had on him and his household, Sam can name this natural disaster evil. Rousseau and philosophers after him could argue the correctness of the use of this term. However, concerning the problem of evil, the philosophy of religion still holds on to the division of natural and moral evils, so that I will do the same here. Although, in my opinion, it is incorrect to call nature evil itself (since it has no intention to harm its inhabitants deliberately), we can still call evil the outcomes and the effects natural cataclysms have on us. Thus, in this case, the evil was not produced inside Sam's mind or soul but struck him from the outside. Whether he was expecting it (by knowing that a tornado was coming) or it took him by surprise, the influence it had on him was hard to predict beforehand. He lives through this event, feels it through his senses, tries to comprehend it with the wit of his mind, and simultaneously knows his weakness and inability to change the course of events or stop the tornado. Once again, we deal with inner experience, but this experience is different from the first case because Sam does not influence it.

We can even imagine a more dire scenario: Sam got hit by a tornado in the fields. It lifted him into the air, turned a couple of times, and threw him back into the fields. The tornado could have been severe and caused massive damage to Sam's health and even his death. Nevertheless, let us say that it was weak, and Sam got away with a considerable shock, a few bruises, and a broken arm. In this version of events, his experience of evil is internal and external. His body was significantly affected (and even injured) by a tornado. We cannot say that in the first scenario, Sam¿s body stayed utterly unaffected because even while hiding in the basement, he should have felt something, although certainly less than from the direct influence of the second one. The impact of evil can only be seen after the disaster is gone. In the first scenario, it is more psychological — stress, problems with sleep, and so on — while in the second one, it also has physical consequences — Sam might end up in the hospital with broken bones in his arm. What unites them both is that Sam's experience of evil is a primary experience received from the first-person perspective.

Nevertheless, there is a third scenario as well. Sam could have seen a tornado from afar. He saw how it destroyed his house, turned his farm upside down, and took away his domestic animals. Sam was quite far from getting affected directly by the tornado, but could still see the damage it was causing. For instance, he could have followed the tragic developments in the news. From the embodied perspective, Sam has an indirect experience of a tornado. He could feel the stress from an event that had occurred, seeing all the consequences of it, but would this stress be equal to the one in the first case? Would he also use the term evil to describe his experience, or at least the horrible results of the tornado? Would his understanding of evil resemble Sam's, who stayed in the basement? Can we say that Sam will have an "imaginary experience" because he did not feel the direct impact of the tornado?

Before we continue, one point should be clarified if we rewrite the second case again and say that Sam was caught in the middle of a war conflict instead of a tornado. Late at night, while he was still sleeping in his bed, the neighbouring country decided to invade his homeland and sent the first missiles targeting his city. The talks about the war were in the air for months, and Sam had his backpack with all the essentials ready, but when the war started, he felt lost. He knew what the course of action should be – take the backpack and go to the bomb shelter (which he did, according to the initial plan) — but still, when it happened, the experience exceeded all his expectations and fears. Even though war is a man-made evil, people like Sam, who did not initiate the armed conflict but are still engaged in it, have little impact on the global picture (at least before he co-organizes with others to create a significant force). In this scenario, Sam will still have a similar embodied experience as in the one with a tornado. Sitting in the bomb shelter during the missile attack, knowing you cannot stop it, can cause the same fear and feeling of impotence as sitting in the basement during the tornado. Being caught by a tornado or gunfire in the fields can cause both mental and physical injuries. Watching your home being destroyed by a tornado or an enemy bomb will torture you from the inside. The sole difference is that in the case of war, you know who to blame and be angry with. If nature cannot be responsible for the natural disasters it may sometimes cause, Humans can and must bear full responsibility for the evil they commit.

Summing up, there are three possible ways in which our body can encounter evil (*Figure 1*):

1. Create it – the evil appears inside the body as an inner impulse for action.
2. Live through it — the evil has a direct physical and/or psychological impact on the body.

3. Feel from outside — the evil does not affect the body directly, but
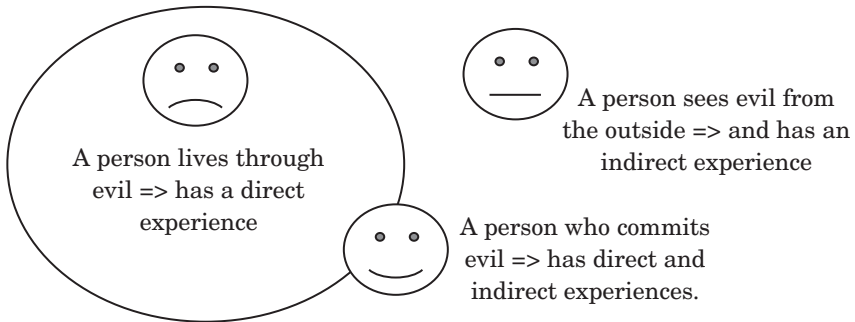   may cause a mental disturbance.

A person lives through
evil => has a direct
experience

A person sees evil from
the outside => and has an
indirect experience

A person who commits
evil => has direct and
indirect experiences.

Figure 1. Types of encounters of the body with evil.

In the first case, since evil is a poor intention if it is temporal. or a
wicked inclination if it is a permanent state of a person, we can say that it
"grew" inside him/her and directly triggered this individual to act. However,
almost always, the consequences of such actions are seen by the person
who acted from "outside." A dictator who orders the killing of thousands of
those who disagree with his rule rarely takes up arms himself. A maniac
who gets pleasure from cutting off the limbs of his victims is unlikely to
agree to do the same to himself. Neither a dictator nor a maniac can live
through the evil they are causing. A dictator prefers to watch it happen
remotely. A maniac enjoys the process, which makes it "not evil" in his eyes.
Most maniacs are mentally disturbed personalities who genuinely believe
their victims deserve what happens to them. The same happens with the
soldiers of the attacking country — they believe they are doing the right
thing. When the veil of lies and ideology falls, and the realization of what
they had done gradually emerges, most of the soldiers continue to deny
their evil desires, taking cover under the orders of their superiors. Their
sufferings begin when they admit the responsibility for the consequences
of their terrible deeds. Of course, there are cases when the destructive
actions of an individual target him/herself (for example, in acts of self-
harm or suicide). However, aggression towards others, in my opinion, is
more common.

The main point is that regardless of whether you are "in" (suffering
directly from evil), "out" (remaining a remote observer of the evil events), or
"in the middle" (causing it), your body will still react to evil. The reactions
could and should be different. The absolute absence of a response from

the body is an indicator that something is wrong. For example, congenital analgesia — a rare condition when a person does not feel any physical pain — is an extremely dangerous disorder caused by sensory system dysfunction. Of course, feeling "too much" can also indicate health problems, but for the purposes of this paper, the crucial point is that the body must feel at least something.

To sum up, even though I presented an imagined example of Sam's misfortunes, such embodied perception is valuable because it gives a possibility to deal with real, most urgent cases taken from life. For instance, cases of war crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine. In the last section, I will demonstrate how incorporating the body into the original problem of evil can alter it.

IV. Conclusion or Point of Arrival: Outlook of the New Embodied Approach to the Problem of Evil

By analogy with Stump's Martian example (Stump, 2010, pp. 17-18), I propose imagining an angel or other intelligent yet disembodied energy that has seen nothing else of earthly life except the events inside a large city hospital. What would his reaction be? Would he be able to understand the meaning of the "performance" at the hospital he witnesses? In my opinion, no. Since he has no body and has never been sick in his life or even hurt, such concepts, like illness, pain, disability, mutilation, recovery, etc., would have no sense to him. Even if he has been told that humans are mortal, he will not manage to grasp the meaning of death. How can a creature without a body recognize the pain of others if it has never experienced one? In the first section of this paper, we have seen that the traditional problem of evil is based on the Trilemma — the existence of evil versus the existence of an Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent God. By placing the body in the existing Trilemma, we shift the question of the coexistence of God and Evil to the coexistence of (or, more accurately, the interrelations between) three subjects: God, Evil, and Human Agency. Below is *Figure 2*, which presents the questions that arise from such a shift.

One may ask why the body should be placed in the middle of the new Trilemma. There are a couple of reasons for this:

1. It is the body that distinguishes humans from the transcendental God, who is beyond the physical realm.
2. It is through the body that we humans sense the impact of evil.
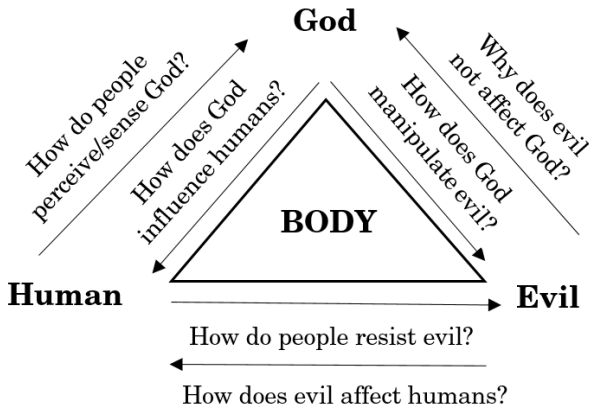3. It is precisely the disembodiment of God that makes him unreachable to Evil (and Human).

Figure 2. Interrelation between the subjects of the corrected Trilemma.

Robert Wuthnow (2020) insists that the body serves as an *organon* through which the essential aspects of human identity — both everyday (social) and religious — are expressed. As embodied creatures, we spontaneously judge people by their appearance (meaning body in general). We dress up for our partners so they find us attractive. We pay attention to body language when we suspect someone is trying to hide something from us. When she attends church, an Orthodox Christian woman covers her head and shoulders under the shawl. An Orthodox Jew wears a kippah during prayers. Wuthnow asserts that all these corporeal realities serve a representative task, helping us arrange and transmit the main ideas and beliefs about the world (physical as well as cultural and religious) we live in and:

> Organize and guide lived experience by connecting the dots, as it were between what we know to be true from the sensations in our own body and how we imagine other bodies to act and feel. Hearing that the 'body politics is under siege' or that the 'community is dying' prompts a visceral reaction that suggests a need to take action without specifying precisely what is wrong or what action should be taken (Wuthnow, 2020, p.180).

Some scholars think that this relationship is bilateral. For instance, Niva Piran (2019) claims that social experiences shape individuals' bodily experiences through three pathways: experiences in the physical domain, those in the mental domain, including exposure to dominant social labels and expectations, and those related to social power and relational

connections. These ways are also applicable to religious practices as a kind of embodied experience. Talking about religion in general, humans think of God by comparison to themselves. Imagining an anthropomorphic being with infinite power is easier than such disembodied power itself. Although we commonly associate religion with beliefs in God (or gods), it also encompasses human emotions. People come to religion and withdraw from it under the influence of (sometimes excessive and intense) feelings. Accordingly, our religious beliefs arise from the embodied (sensory-based) experience, reinterpreted by the mind, and then supported by religious embodied practices.

Let us now focus on the main benefits and difficulties of an embodied approach to the problem of evil. For convenience, I collected them in *Table 2* below.

Benefits of a new perspective on the problem of evil	Difficulties of a new perspective on the problem of evil
o A new perspective on evil enables one to bridge the gap between scientific and philosophical views, moving it beyond a strictly abstract intellectual realm.	• Definition of Evil. *What is Evil? Does the replacement of the concept of "evil" with the concept of "suffering" (like E. Stump proposed) or "empathy erosion" (S. Baron-Cohen's term) bring a misconception?*
o Humans become actively involved in the problem, which allows them to present their side rather than simply taking responsibility for moral evils off God's shoulders.	• Definition of the central thesis. *What should be placed as the departure point of the new Trilemma? Is the body the right choice?*
o The possibility of methodological expansion and interdisciplinary studies, including psychology, experimental philosophy, cognitive science, and other related fields.	• Choice of the correct methodology. *How can we maintain the study within the philosophical realm and not entirely hand it over to natural science?*

Table 2. Benefits and Challenges of an Embodied Approach to the Problem of Evil.

I have already given the argumentation regarding why the body should become a *fulcrum* of the new Trilemma. Now, I will respond to the first and third difficulties in *Table 2*. To address the difficulty with definition, I suggest viewing evil not as an abstract concept, a completed action, or a fact but as a horrific, lived, and embodied experience situated in a spatiotemporal environment. Therefore, I propose introducing the term "*embodied evil*" into the philosophical discussion to emphasize the connection between an Evil and a Human Agent through the mediation of a Body and simultaneously avoid the misleading association of evil with something supernatural. In addition, I must insist that the body, which acts as a mediator between what people feel and what they think, should be accepted with all its biological and cognitive properties. The body is our way of being in this world. Embodiment is the first reality through which we encounter the world of objects and events, including evil. From this standpoint, evil becomes a matter of personal embodied experience, providing a philosophically grounded analysis through a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology provides a method for studying conscious experience from the first-person perspective. It consists of a thoughtful description of the lived experience (encounter with the phenomenon) and an accurate hermeneutic interpretation to get to the core of the experience (the essence of the phenomenon) without being pulled away by our preconceptions. Since I propose to consider embodied evil as a lived experience of the manifestation of evil in someone's life that has an extension in space and time through the body, then such an experience of evil can be studied by its influence on humans in three ways:

1. Bodily, how such experience is perceived via senses and lived through; which embodied traumas it leaves;
2. Psychologically, which mechanisms, like mental coping, help to deal with it;
3. Cognitively, what influence does such experience have on the conceptualization of such experience.

Such an understanding of evil helps bridge philosophy closer to science and creates a fruitful ground for joint interdisciplinary studies (which is undoubtedly beneficial for both). The unpleasant experience obtained in the past can be re-experienced in the experimental setting, allowing both the participant and the researcher to take notes and analyze it from both first- and third-person perspectives. Living through the re-embodied moment together with the participant will allow the researcher to compare his/her feelings and bodily responses to those of the participant (who had encountered this experience, unlike the researcher before), and conducting a phenomenological interview will help clarify and better

apprehend the phenomenon. Thus, that is my response to the third difficulty with methodology.

To sum up, I am not saying that the theoretical problem of evil should go into history, and all the attention from now on should be directed to the practical embodied problem. On the contrary, I genuinely believe that traditional question is an excellent intellectual exercise, even though, in my opinion, they cannot bring anything new to the subject. For a person who is dying of cancer and a person who is going through a war in his country, for a woman who has been raped, and a child who is starving and lacking ordinary things, like clear water, for instance, evil would be different and at the same time the same life-threat. They would know what *their evil* is, and it would *not be* an abstract, metaphysical concept that philosophers of religion cling to too tightly. Nevertheless, it is essential to clarify that the embodied perspective I propose does not aim to negate or displace faith as a vital theological category. On the contrary, it seeks to reimagine the grounding of the problem of evil, insisting that faith is not a purely cognitive or propositional act. However, something lived, performed, and suffered through the body. The embodied approach highlights how faith expresses itself somatically through rituals, in which the body is actively engaged in physical postures, fasts, prayers, and mournings, often in response to the disruptive presence of evil. Lighting a candle, prostrating in prayer, or walking a pilgrimage are not tenets of belief; they are embodied expressions. In this way, it retains the animating spirit of *fides quaerens intellectum* but relocates the quest from the ivory tower of abstract logic into the realm of felt suffering and healing. As such, the embodied framework does not displace faith but brings it down to earth into the trembling limbs and grieving hands of believers. It is easier to generalize evil and discuss it vaguely rather than address its manifestations and consequences. Therefore, I believe that the problem of evil should be reformulated to answer questions like those stated in *Figure 2*. Contemporary philosophers can pursue the study of evil if they listen carefully to the stories of those who have experienced its direct influence and rethink their own lived experiences.

References

Andre, S. (2021). The problem with the problem of evil. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, *11*(2), 336-354. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2021.112023

Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *The science of evil: On empathy and the origins of cruelty*. Basic Books.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2012). *Zero degrees of empathy*. Penguin.

Bergby, E. (2005). Leibniz on determinism and divine foreknowledge. *Studia Leibnitiana*, *37*(1), 83-98. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40694476

Bourke, V. J. (1974). *The essential Augustine* (2nd ed.). Hackett.

Burnett, D. (1999). Post-modernism and the rise of Buddhism in the West. *Global Connections Buddhism World Day Conference*, 24 June 1999, 1-13.

Buswell, R. E. Jr. (2019). The origins of good and evil and the challenge of theodicy in the Buddhist tradition. *Acta Koreana*, *22*(2), 215-229. https://doi.org/10.18399/acta.2019.22.2.001

Draper, P. (2010). *God and evil: A philosophical inquiry*. https://philreligion. nd.edu/assets/44795/1011lecture.pdf

Hick, J. (2010). *Evil and the god of love*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jantzen, G. M. (1999). *Becoming divine: Towards a feminist philosophy of religion*. Indiana University Press.

Kant, I. (1997). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (M. Gregor, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1785).

Larrimore, M. J. (2001). G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy*. In *The problem of evil: A reader* (pp. 191-200). Blackwell.

Leibniz, G. W. (1996). *Theodicy: Essays on the goodness of God, the freedom of man and the origin of evil* (E. M. Huggard, Trans.). Open Court. (Original work published 1800).

Neiman, S. (2015). *Evil in modern thought: An alternative history of philosophy*. Princeton University Press.

Mackie, J. L. (1955). Evil and omnipotence. *Mind*, *64*(254), 200-212. http:// www.jstor.org/stable/2251467

Midgley, M. (1984). *Wickedness: A philosophical essay*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Piran, N. (2019). The developmental theory of embodiment: protective social factors that enhance positive embodiment. In T. L. Tylka (Ed.), *Handbook of positive body image and embodiment: Constructs, protective factors, and interventions*. Oxford Academic. https://doi. org/10.1093/med-psych/9780190841874.003.0011

Plantinga, A. C. (1989). *God, freedom, and evil*. Eerdmans.

Pope, A. (1734). *An essay on man: Epistle I*. Poetry Foundation. https://www. poetryfoundation.org/poems/44899/an-essay-on-man-epistle-i

Priest, G. (2016). *Intentional operators, towards non-being* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Rowe, W. L. (1979). The problem of evil and some varieties of atheism. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *16*(4), 335-341. http://www.jstor. org/stable/20009775

Rousseau, J. J. (2002). *The social contract and the first and second discourses.* Yale University Press. (Original work published 1762).

Shotkina, K. (2023, May 25). *War: How Ukrainians' relationship with God and the church has changed* (in Ukrainian) ZN,UA: Mirror of the week. https://zn.ua/ukr/war/vijna-jak-zminilisja-vidnosini-ukrajintsiv-iz-bohom-ta-tserkvoju.html

St. Augustine. (2015). *The city of God: Annotated Edition.* (Marcus Dods, Trans.). Jazzybee Verlag. (Original work published 426).

Stone, M. (2009). *The anatomy of evil*. Prometheus Books.

Stump, E. (2010). *Wandering in darkness: Narrative and the problem of suffering*. Oxford University Press.

Teh, H. H. G. (n.d.). *Paradoxes of the problem of evil through existentialism, secular humanism and pantheism as compared with christian theism*. https://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/TehH01.pdf

Van Inwagen, P. (2006). *The problem of evil: The Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of St Andrews in 2003.* Oxford University Press.

Van Inwagen, P. (2019). *God, knowledge, and mystery: Essays in philosophical theology*. Cornell University Press.

Wilson, M. (2002). Six views of embodied cognition. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, *9*(4), 625-636. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03196322

Wuthnow, R. (2020). *What happens when we practice religion? Textures of devotion in everyday life.* Princeton University Press.

Wykstra, S. J. (1996). Rowe's noseeum arguments from evil. In D. Howard-Snyder (Ed.), *The evidential argument from evil* (pp. 95-109). Indiana University Press.