UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

WHAT'S EVIL GOT TO DO WITH IT?

A Thesis on William Rowe's Argument from Evil and John Hick's Soul-Making Theodicy

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

from the department of

PHILOSOPHY

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4/7/2014

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The Philosophy of Religion is a complicated area of study and I chose this area in the Western Philosophical tradition to explore cutting edge work in axiology and meta-physics. For this thesis I assume the existence of the Judeo-Christian Omni-God and put this definition of god up to the test of William Rowe's Argument from Evil. From there I explore John's Hick's attempt to overcome Rowe's Argument from Evil through his Soul-Making Theodicy. Finally, I conclude that Hick's attempt to overcome Rowe's Argument from Evil fails through a series of proofs and analytics and thus, the Omni-God does not exist

Special thanks to Dr. Bradley Monton PhD, Dr. Wesley Morriston PhD, Dr. Greg Johnson PhD, Emily Wallin, Jim Dornan, Austin Fracchia, Connor Dozois, Kristen Clark, Steve Woods, Carol Woods, Sheri Martin, and Dr. Scott McLaughlin.

A very special thank you to Dr. William Rowe and the late Dr. John Hick for inspiring philosophical enthusiasm.

Thank you to all who supported my months of writing and my academic career.

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Part 1: Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider the debate over William Rowe's *Argument from Evil*[1] and John Hick's *Soul-Making Theodicy*[2] in the philosophy of religion. I will first begin with a brief introduction to this debate and then lay out some of my assumptions before stating my thesis.

There are a wide variety of gods to choose from when discussing religion. I am assuming that god's metaphysical nature is that of the Judeo-Christian Omni-God ("God"). The traditional definition of God includes such features as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence. This is the same God that William Rowe and John Hick assume. For this reason, I will also assume the existence of God to make my argument. I will deconstruct this definition later so we might be able to better parse out the theology surrounding God.

Rowe's argument is troubling to theist because the *Argument from Evil* disrupts the metaphysical nature of God if God exist. I am assuming evil exist, as does Rowe and Hick. Rowe argues that it is unlikely that God exists given the amount and variety of suffering in the world.[3] Traditionally, most theist and atheist agree that evil exist in some form or another. I will dive into a more narrow definition of what evil is later.

In an attempt to defend God against the *Argument from Evil*, Christian apologists like Irenaeus, Augustine, Leibniz, Schleiermacher, and Hick[4], among others, try to give logical rationales that prove God's nature is compatible with the existence of evil. Hick's proposed

[1] Rowe, William L, "The *Argument from Evil* and Some Varieties of Atheism," New York. Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0-19-515511-4
[2] Hick, John, *Evil and the God of Love*, 2d. ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 , 1966.
[3] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 338.
[4] To name a few, these apologists are recognized in Hick's theodicy and are a part of the historical debate Hick has entered into with Rowe. I will not go into detail here on their various views which can be found in: Hick, *Evil and the God of Love.*

solution is called the *Soul-Making Theodicy*. Hick's *Soul-Making Theodicy* rationalizes the existence of evil in the world of God. Hick argues that evil is a necessary component of God's master plan: soul-making.[5] For Hick, soul-making is extremely valuable, even more so than ready-made goodness. Hick posits that evil is necessary to obtaining the great value of soul-making. I wish to continue the debate where Hick left off. I will summarize the *Argument from Evil* and Hick's *Soul-Making Theodicy* before moving on to refute the *Soul-Making theodicy*.

My argument is an axiological critique of Hick's main premise: a world with evil is necessary and good as it is a part of God's master plan. Hick must show that a world with soul making is a better possible world than a world made perfectly good by God—i.e., ready-made goodness. I rest my case on showing how the value of a world without evil or less evil is more valuable than Hick's world with all the evils our world contains. I will show why Hick's *Soul-Making Theodicy* fails to account for why God would allow for the amount and variety of suffering in the world.

I will offer a rebuttal to salvage Hick's conclusion that a possible world with soul-making is valuable even more so than a ready-made perfect world. Hick might find sanctuary in an argument proposed by Wes Morriston. Morriston proposes that there does exist a scenario in which ready-made goodness is good for God but not for humans. This premise is the basis for Morriston's desideratum.[6] If the desiderata are met then there is a significant distinction between God and humans thus rendering the dilemma false. As a result, soul-making would be necessary for humans because humans require moral freedom to be morally responsible while God does not. Evil is necessary for soul-making and thus necessary for humans to obtain moral freedom.

[5] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 259.
[6] Morriston, Wes, "What is so Good about Moral Freedom?," The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 50, Issue 3, July 2000, 347.

However, Morriston has a response to his own counter point. Morriston argues that the nature of one's existence is an irrelevant distinction. For any creature, regardless of how they came to exist, whether by divine fiat or as a first cause in themselves, the creation distinction does not account for a significant difference between humans and God. At least no distinction is accounted for that would require moral freedom in humans and not God. Morriston will argue that all creatures are subject to their nature including God.[7] The desiderata fall apart and God does require moral freedom in order to have moral responsibility. This would require that God be able to do evil yet it is impossible for God to do evil so we must conclude that God lacks moral responsibility.

Finally, I will show that the value of soul-making which lies in the value of moral freedom is not as valuable as ready-made goodness. Without moral freedom we do not get moral responsibility. Moral responsibility entails the possibility of evil choices. God does not have moral freedom and so God does not have moral responsibility. But we do not think God's nature is less valuable because he lacks this quality and his nature is not so significantly different than ours that he should not have moral freedom. In fact, God has a ready-made perfect nature so we should value ready-made perfection over soul-making. Thus, I will conclude that Hick does not meet the burden set by Rowe's *Argument from Evil*. Further, even if there is some value in soul-making its value is outweighed by the value of God's ready-made goodness that could have been instilled in us but was not.

[7] Morriston, "What is So good About Moral Freedom?," *352.*

Part 2: The *Argument from Evil*

I: Introduction to the *Argument from Evil*: Definition of God and Evil

Imagine a world in which an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing god created a perfect paradise on earth for humans to enjoy and live a prosperous, meaningful life. Hick describes just such a place of "infinite plenitude of being, limitlessly dynamic life and power, and unfathomable goodness and love."[8] There is no pain, no suffering, and no wrong doing. Hick calls this place "Heaven". For Rowe, the conception of a perfect world is one without evil, more specifically a world without apparently pointless suffering.

> "In developing the argument for atheism based on the existence of evil, it will be useful to focus on some particular evil that our world contains in considerable abundance. Intense human and animal suffering, for example, occurs daily and in great plenitude in our world. Such intense suffering is a clear case of evil."[9]

In Rowe's world, we would be a lot better off if suffering—or at least apparently pointless suffering—ceased to exist. Hick will later argue that there is a point to there being a lot of randomly distributed suffering; this suffering has a purpose towards God's master plan.

Rowe and Hick can both agree that Earth is not a utopia because it is filled with horrendous wrongs, pain, and suffering. Imagine the pain of all the children who are brought into this world only to suffer because of birth defects or the families destroyed by tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, or tornadoes. Beyond the horrors nature has in store for us we must also consider the evils we inflict upon ourselves. Consider Jeffery Dahmer who raped, murdered and dismembered young boys and men, or the man who most recently kidnapped and imprisoned three young women in his basement for his own sick pleasure. These people embody an evil we cannot even fathom; however, there are an infinite number of instances of evil that have and will continue to happen in our imperfect world: a car accident, a loved-one's death, a fatal shooting.

[8] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 278.
[9] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 333.

These evils pass under our radar, although they happen every day. I want to consider a possible definition of evil and further, I want to consider why evils exist in the world God made, and I want to parse out the definition of God.

What is evil? Hick and Rowe posit at least two types of possible evils: natural evil and moral evil. "Accordingly evil exists, both as a social evil resulting from human behavior, and as natural evil."[10] Social evils are perpetrated by a moral agent(s) responsible for "bad states of affairs". Typically moral evils evolve out of a motive such as negligence or malicious intent. These evils are seen as the work of moral agents making the wrong moral choices. "Moral evil is evil that we human beings originate: cruel, unjust, vicious, and perverse thoughts and deeds."[11] Natural evils are "bad states of affairs" that exist in the natural world independent of a moral agent. For example, a child is born with half a brain and dies in agony after a few days of life. A natural evil could be considered a "bad state of affairs" in which a tsunami destroys an entire village, or a tornado destroys a family home. Natural evils typically have no obvious agency for the evil committed. For example, the genes that led to the developmental problems of the baby born only to die did not have malicious intent for that baby to suffer nor did the tsunami go out of its way to decimate an entire village.[12] However, when these things happen under the all-watchful eyes of an all-knowing, benevolent, and all-powerful being, then responsibility for natural evils lies with God. So, we must consider why God allows—or perpetuates—evil in the world. The real *Argument from Evil* rests on who—or what—God is and why God allows these evils to happen?

[10] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 226.
[11] Ibid., 12.
[12] Ibid., 13.

The *Argument from Evil* is a very direct threat to a certain God: the Christian Omni-God. "The *Argument from Evil* does not attach itself as a threat to any and every concept of deity. It arises only for a religion which insists that the object of its worshipping is at once perfectly good and unlimitedly powerful."[13] Hick is adamant that any uprooting or deviation from this basic understanding of God would "not constitute [the God] of the normative or historic Christian faith."[14] Hick asserts that his definition of God, for the purposes of his theodicy, will be understood as "the most perfect conceivable Being…the unique infinite, uncreated, eternal, personal Spirit, absolute in goodness and power."[15] Rowe shares this sentiment as a basis for God's nature because it is the direct relation of evil to God's perfect goodness and might that causes conflicts. To understand how the *Argument from Evil* relates to God we should separate out God's nature into three distinct features: all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good.

Hick's God is all powerful, "He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able to abolish all evil."[16] In this sense, God is all-knowing and has knowledge of all events: the past, the present, and the future. God has the knowledge of all the evils committed in the past and what evils are to come. In the example of the Tsunami, God can control the force of the tsunami because God created a world in which the tsunami could exist and knew the tsunami would destroy lives. The anthropic principle—i.e., the fine tuning argument—suggests that God has fine tuned the world in such a way to make human life possible. If certain features of the laws of the natural world were to change, then life would not be possible on Earth.[17] Ergo, the world was made in such a way that hurricanes and tsunamis are the bi-products of the world created by the laws of God. In

[13] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 4.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 5.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Davis, John J. "The Design Argument, Cosmic "Fine Tuning," and the Anthropic Principle," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1987), Springer, 0697780473, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40018832, 139-150.

such a case, God, as moral agent, is responsible for the existence of hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and a plethora of natural occurrences responsible for "bad states of affairs" in the world. Thus I conclude that if God exists, then natural evils are perpetuated by a moral agent.

God is all-loving and all-perfect. This aspect of God's nature is all important in the concept of the Judeo-Christian Omni-God because God can grant redemption and salvation after death. "If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil."[18] But not only is God so loving that that he would want to eliminate suffering, God grants the salvation of his human creation into the "Kingdom of God"—i.e., "blissfull happiness".[19] Thus, we are left to reconcile how the all loving Omni-God could not only allow for but also create evil in the world when a better possible world exist: Heaven. "For if there are finally wasted lives and finally unredeemed sufferings, either God is not perfect in love or He is not sovereign in rule over His creation."[20] This is the starting point for the *Argument from Evil*. How could the all-loving God allow and/or perpetuate the evils in the world? Rowe argues that a being fitting the definition of God is incompatible with the existence of evil, thus it is unlikely that the Omni-God exists.

In the context of this debate we can assume that on Hick's account and Rowe's account of the best possible world there would be no apparently pointless suffering. This has been determined to be the minimum standard for the best possible world on both accounts. Hick sees suffering much the same way as Rowe, "By Evil, Schleiermacher means those aspects of our material environment which are experienced as inimical to us and as obstructing our lives: death, pain, disease, etc."[21] A burden is then placed on Hick to prove that apparently pointless suffering has some purpose in God's master plan. I will consider this further in the discussion of Hick's

[18] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 5.
[19] Ibid., 340.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 226.

theodicy. First, we need to consider Rowe's argument to understand why Hick has the burden of proof.

II: William Rowe's *Argument from Evil*

Rowe makes both a strong argument and a weak argument in defense of the *Argument from Evil*. His strong argument is deductive and relies on the premise that unneeded or pointless evil exists in the world and that God must have reasons for all instances of this type of evil in the world. Thus, what follows is that God does not exist.[22] Rowe's weaker argument is inductive and concludes that God probably does not exist in light of the existence of evil in the world. His argument is as follows:

P1) Probably there is pointless suffering in the world.
P2) If God exists, then there is no pointless suffering.
_____
C.) So, probably God does not exist.

Premise one is controversial. Originally, Rowe stated that "there exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse." [23] The problem resting on Rowe's original premise is that the theist could argue that God has a reason for all the suffering and evils that occur. If the theist is right, then premise one is false and the argument is not sound. The wording of premise one is an inductive—i.e., weak—claim. Rowe claims that there is a high likelihood that some pointless suffering occurs, which, by definition, means God has no reason for those instances of evil.

Rowe gives an example of what he means by apparently pointless suffering in the case of *The Fawn*. Let us imagine there is a terrible woodland fire that kills everything in its path. It just

[22] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism", 308.
[23] Ibid.

so happens that a small fawn is trapped in the woods and is badly burned by the fire but does not die immediately. In fact, this fawn is slowly burned alive and must endure tremendous pain before the fire takes its life. [24] There are a few things we should note about this case. First, it should be noted here that even though Rowe's main example of apparently pointless suffering concerns a non-human animal the agent harmed by the fire could have been a human and Rowe's conclusions would still be true. Imagine that the fawn is actually a human transient with no loved ones or family left. Nobody is aware that the transient was caught in the fire nor that he died and the same scenario plays out. Second, nobody witnesses the fawns or the transient's suffering and it has no relevance to any other being's life. Third, the fawn and the transient are made to suffer for no apparent reason. Fourth, for the theist to be correct, then God must have some reason for this fawn and the transient's agonizing death. However, in this case, God apparently seems to have no reason for the intense suffering of the fawn or the transient. Rowe states, "[God] could have easily prevented the fawn from being horribly burned alive, or, given the burning, could have spared the fawn the intense suffering by quickly ending its life…"[25] Rowe argues that the fawn's case—and I propose also the transient's case—is at least one instance of pointless suffering in the world; meaning one instance of suffering with no divine intention to provide some reason for its occurrence. Rowe makes an inductive inference from the fact that the fawn's suffering is apparently pointless to the fact that it is pointless.[26] Making this inductive inference, we can then imagine almost an infinite number of apparently pointless sufferings occurring: and, pending a divine reason why the suffering occurred, we infer these cases to be instances of pointless suffering.

[24] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 337.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

By this reasoning the apparently pointless suffering of the fawn and the transient seems to make premise one appear to be true. Rowe wants to be clear that these cases of apparently pointless suffering do not make premise one true. He argues that each case of apparently pointless suffering strengthens his position in premise one but do not prove premise one. This makes his whole argument very inductively strong.[27] Rowe makes a strong epistemic claim that it would be absurd to believe that none of the suffering in our world could have been prevented without losing out on some greater good or preventing some worse evil. Thus, Rowe concludes, "It seems then that although we cannot prove that [P1] is true, it is, nevertheless, altogether reasonable to believe that [P1] is true, that [P1] is a rational belief."[28]

Premise two is important to making the inference from premise one to the idea that God's nature is flawed in the conclusion. Rowe deduces that God's nature must be such a way in which all acts of evil must be divinely justified. If the fawn and transient cases are at least one instance of pointless suffering, then we should conclude that God, in its infinite goodness and power, allowed the fawn and the transient to die for no apparent reason.[29] Here is the dilemma: either God has a reason for pointless suffering, or it is rational to believe that God does not exist. Premise two concludes that an all perfect being, by definition, could not allow evil in the world without just cause. Rowe explains, "Let S1 be an instance of intense human or animal suffering which an omniscient, wholly good being could prevent. We will suppose that things are such that S1 will occur unless prevented by the [Omni-God]…we need only to try to state a necessary condition for [God] failing to prevent S1." [30] In such a case, Rowe believes there are three ways in which it would be necessary for God to allow evil to occur: (i) a greater good occurs in such a

[27] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 337.
[28] Ibid., 338.
[29] Ibid., 336.
[30] Ibid.

case where evil occurs, (ii) a greater good occurs in such a case where evil, or some evil equally bad or worse occurs, or (iii) evil is preventable only in such a case in which God permits some evil equally bad or worse. So, if some evil occurs, then either (i), (ii), or (iii) must obtain. Rowe believes this is held in common, and if you buy into this reasoning then you can have no fault with premise two.[31] In Rowe's view, premise two simply concludes that " if an omniscient, wholly good being permits intense suffering then either there is some greater good that would have been loss, or some equally bad or worse evil that would have occurred, had the intense suffering been prevented."[32] If premise two is to be accepted, then the theist must find fault with premise one.

The conclusion follows from premise one and two. If there is pointless suffering, and God cannot allow for pointless suffering by his nature, then "…it does seem that we have a rational support for atheism that it is reasonable for us to believe that the theistic God does not exist."[33] Rowe's argument aims to call into question the existence of the Omni-God. If Rowe's argument is sound, then we must conclude that God does not exist. This is not to say that god does not exist, only that a god with the metaphysical nature of God does not exist. Perhaps this god is not all knowing. It is conceivable that god did not know that the fawn or the transient would be made to suffer. Perhaps this god was ignorant of some suffering that occurred in the world. It is also possible that god is not all powerful. This god might have known of the suffering and wanted to end the suffering but was unable to save the fawn or the transient's life. Conceivably, god may have known and been able to stop the suffering but did not want to. Perhaps this god is not all loving and had some malicious intent to cause the fawn or the transient misfortune. How can the metaphysical nature of god be compatible with the existence of evil?

[31] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 336.
[32] Ibid., 336-337.
[33] Ibid., 338.

The metaphysical nature of god must be reconsidered if we are to accept that there are probably instances of pointless suffering. Rowe proposes a challenge to the theist in light of his strong inductive argument. Since the theist is committed to premise two, we will consider how the theist might respond to premise one.

John Hick takes up this challenge. He argues that God does have a reason for every instance of suffering and that no such suffering is pointless. If Hick is successful in proving his case, then premise one is false and there is no such thing as pointless suffering in the world of God. In fact, God has a purpose for all the suffering that occurs. Hick argues that suffering is all important to God's master plan: soul-making.

Part Three: John Hick's Soul-making Theodicy

I: Introduction to John Hick's Soul-making Theodicy

Hick argues that pointless suffering does not exist at all; in fact, all suffering serves the purpose of soul-making. "There is no room within the Christian thought-world for the idea of tragedy in any sense that includes the idea of finally wasted suffering and goodness."[34] Soul-making begins from the premise that humans are currently still in the process of creation.[35] Man is God's "raw material" and through the process of "mastering temptation" and making responsible choices man will grow into "the infinite likeness of God".[36] Humans must "undergo spiritual growth that will ultimately fit them in communion with God."[37] Moral agents grow through moral choices and revelation. Through soul-making, humans train their souls and come to be reconciled to God. This is the essence of soul-making and is the foundation for Hick's

[34] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 244.
[35] Ibid., 254.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Tooley. "The Problem of Evil," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy , Summer 2013 Edition, Edward N. Zalta ed. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/evil/.

ultimate goal: to fit the existence of evil in God's master plan. However, soul making requires the freedom to make choices and these choices come at a cost.[38] These costs are what we would define as "evil" in the world.

Christian theists are left to provide compelling reasons why evil exists in the world. Why would the all loving creator allow evil to persist and allow for human suffering? Two prominent Christian traditions take up the daunting task of explaining God's reasons and purposes for all the evil in the world: the Augustinian tradition and the Irenaean tradition. The Augustinian tradition recollects that God gave humans freedoms. One such freedom is moral freedom. Humans, with their new found moral freedom, misused this gift from God and brought evil upon themselves:

> "God made our world, and mankind within it consisting initially of a single human pair. The first man and woman, living in direct knowledge of God, were good, happy, and immortal, and would in due course have populated the earth with descendants like themselves. But Satan…tempted them to disobey their creator, who then expelled them from this paradisal existence into a new situation of hardship, danger, disease, and inevitable death. This was the fall of man, and as a result of it the succeeding members of the human race have been born as fallen creatures in a fallen world." [39]

This is the story of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are given moral freedom, yet they chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—i.e., they made the wrong moral decision—and thus this led to the *fall*. As we were made in God's image in the Augustinian tradition, we fell from our God-like image. We were made good with a good-will. Evil originates from "disordered love," and the *fall*—or original sin—came from this disorder. Augustine summarizes: "For defection from that which supremely is, to that which has less of being--this is to begin to have an evil will. Now, to seek to discover the causes of these defections--causes as I

[38] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 255-256.
[39] Ibid., 247.

have said, not efficient, but deficient--is as if someone sought to see darkness, or hear silence."[40] We turned our backs on God and settled for our now less than perfect world. Thus, natural evils exist because nature was disordered after the fall, and moral evils exist because we as humans have free will and choose to do evil. God has reason to deny us a perfect world and can allow for the evils that exist because they serve as punishments to us. "This traditional solution finds the origin of evil, as we have seen, in the fall, which was the beginning both of sin and, as its punishment, of man's sorrows and sufferings."[41] We are undergoing the punishment of original sin and we are worthy of the punishment because we turned away from God. However, through soul-making and doing good works we come to be reconciled to God. Because God is all-loving we may be redeemed of our wrong doings and accept salvation through the atonement of the crucifixion. "But God in Christ made the atonement for man's sin that His own eternal justice required and has offered free forgiveness to as many as will commit themselves to Christ as their savior."[42] Thus, if we are reconciled we may spend eternity in Heaven, while those who still choose to turn away from God will spend eternity in hell.[43]

Hick rejects the Augustinian tradition on three accounts: scientifically, morally, and logically. First, scientific evidence proves that pain and suffering existed prior to the event of the *fall*. The conditions causing human disease and mortality, the need to hunt, and the hardships of agriculture already existed prior to the *fall*. Thus, the event of the *fall* fails to account for the initial existence of pain and suffering before the *fall*.[44] Second, Hick questions the morals of punishing the entire human race for the sins of the original pair. The account the *fall* paints God

[40] Solomon, Robert & Greene, Jennifer, *Morality and the Good Life: An Introduction to Ethics through Classical Sources*, McGraw-Hill, 4 Ed, Feb. 6, 2008, 175-176.
[41] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 249.
[42] Ibid., 247.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 249.

as unjust and immoral, and thus the theodicy already fails to address the challenge set by the *Argument from Evil*—Christian apologist do not want to conclude that God is unjust and immoral.[45] Third, the account of *fall* is logically inconceivable. Hick claims that it would not be possible for perfect people to sin in a perfect environment. If it were the case that humans were made in God's image, then humans could do no wrong. "It is impossible to conceive of wholly good beings in a wholly good world becoming sinful."[46] In Hick's view, humans could only sin if they were motivated to sin by external or internal moral flaws. If the Augustinian tradition is correct, then a ready-made perfect world would not have moral defects and humans made in God's image would be made in the moral likeness of God: all-loving, all-perfect, and all-good. The Augustinian theodicy "merely pushes back into an unknown and unknowable realm the wanton paradox of finitely perfect creatures, dwelling happily and untempted in the presence of God, turning to sin. Whether on earth or in Heaven, this still amounts to the impossible self-creation of evil *ex nihilo*."[47] We must then conclude that the Augustinian tradition is scientifically, morally, and logically flawed, thus we ought to reject it as Hick does. Instead, Hick falls back on the Irenaean tradition to describe his theodicy.

II: John Hick's Argument for the Soul-Making theodicy

Hick argues that human genesis began in a world full of suffering. "cruelty, torture, violence, and agony; poverty, hunger, calamitous accident; disease, insanity, folly; every mode of man's inhumanity to man and of his painfully insecure existence in the world."[48] Hick rejects the notion that humans were perfectly situated in a perfect world. Rather, Hick argues along the lines of Schleiermacher that "the original perfection of creation is its suitability for

[45] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 249.
[46] Ibid., 250.
[47] Ibid., 251.
[48] Ibid., 243.

accomplishing the purpose for which God created it."[49] This is to say that we as humans must come to recognize our ultimate dependence and "conscious relationship with God."[50] This is what Schleiermacher calls *God-Consciousness* and what Hick argues is the original perfection of the world. Our world allows for the cultivation of man's *God-Consciousness*.[51] Sin on this account includes "all-arrestments of the disposition to the *God-consciousness*." Meaning, when humans fail to recognize their dependant and conscious relationship with God they fall into sin and fall away from their creator.[52] Salvation occurs as a part of God's master plan in which human beings freely choose to reconcile themselves to God: to share in communion with their creator. Through sin humans fall away from God but we may regard sin "as that which, as it is to disappear, can disappear only through redemption."[53] In the context of the Irenaean tradition, human's sinned because of "…an understandable lapse due to [the] weakness and immaturity" of human beings.[54] In order to share in communion with our creator, humans must develop their moral selves through experience and find redemption through the pre-condition of sin.[55] However, humans must freely choose redemption to cultivate their *God-Consciousness* within their environment. God's purpose for this environment is not safety and contentment—i.e., ready-made goodness—but moral and spiritual goodness—i.e., character building/soul making.

Hick wants us to view the world as a "vale of soul-making."[56] Hick argues from the Irenaean tradition that soul making is an important part of a two stage creation process: one in which we develop morally, the *Bios,* and the point at which we reach the likeness of God, the

[49] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 220.
[50] Ibid., 220-221.
[51] Ibid., 221.
[52] Ibid., 222.
[53] Ibid., 223.
[54] Ibid., 215.
[55] Ibid., 231.
[56] Ibid., 295.

Zoe.[57] He argues that it is logically impossible for God to make us in his likeness; we cannot be ready-made with moral and spiritual values. "Men may eventually become the perfected persons whom the New Testament calls 'children of God', but they cannot be created ready-made as this."[58] We must develop these moral and spiritual values freely. In the *bios* we develop morally as God intends for us since he made us with moral faculties. "Man was created in an undeveloped state; and sin was virtually inevitable in finite creatures in which the consciousness of God had not yet developed."[59] The *bios* is a spiritual process on Earth: "the movement from the image to the likeness [of God]. *"*[60] The expectation is that we develop to the moral likeness of God, thus we reach the *Zoe*. The *Zoe* cannot be reached by divine fiat; moral freedom is required to reach the *Zoe*.[61] He argues that a personal life, with the purpose of soul making, is necessarily a life with free will.[62] The environment he has created for us is one in which we may become moral beings. "Man is in the process of becoming the perfected being whom God is seeking to create. However, this is not taking place…by natural and inevitable evolution, but through a hazardous adventure in individual freedom."[63] Hick's argument is not only suggesting that soul making is how we come to be reconciled with God but that it is a necessity for our moral development. Further, God desires for his human creation "…to know and love him…" without divine coercion.[64]

So why is evil important to this process? Hick's answer to this question is that evil is necessary to freedom; which is necessary to soul-making; which is necessary obtaining *God-*

[57] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 254.
[58] Ibid., 350.
[59] Ibid., 226.
[60] Ibid., 254.
[61] Ibid., 232.
[62]Ibid., 350.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Hick, *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy:* "An Irenaean Theodicy," Stephen T. Davis Ed., Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1981, 2001, 38-72.

Consciousness; which is necessary to God's master plan. "Man's fallenness is thus the price paid for his freedom as a personal being in relation to the personal Infinite."[65] In Hick's view a world without suffering does not allow us to develop our spiritual soul for communion with God.[66] We only come to learn and develop through life challenges and hardships. At face value this conclusion makes sense. For example, we could not build character in a world that could not facilitate character building—i.e., a world without suffering. There would be no sympathy if we could not be sympathetic to someone suffering;[67]there would not be courage if we could not be courageous in the face of danger;[68] we could not be generous if there could be no generosity in times of scarcity.[69] We come to have sympathy, courage, and generosity through a world with bad states of affairs that cause suffering, danger, and scarcity. In fact, these bad states of affairs are the products of moral and natural evils. Hick argues that without evil we cannot build these character traits. Character building is valuable in that it is necessary to the creation process. "…the Irenaean type of theology sees our perfection as lying before us in the future, at the end of a lengthy and arduous process of further creation through time."[70] Therefore, without evil we cannot come to have soul-making.

Hick's ultimate conclusion is that the best possible world to foster soul making is one in which there is randomly distributed suffering and widespread ignorance of God. Humans were made at a distance from God which ensures that, "…we pursue goodness for its own sake rather than the immediate reward."[71] Hick calls this the "positive value of mystery…for Hick, the

[65] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 328.
[66] Ibid., 326.
[67] Ibid., 325
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1963, 1990, 45.
[71] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 335, 353.

'haphazardness and inequity' of suffering elicits sympathy and compassion from others."[72] This type of world is one in which evil is inextricably connected to the design of soul-making, and the process of soul-making is unfinished by its nature. We will not complete the process of soul-making on earth: however, "Hick's theodicy appeals to an eschatological resolution where the soul-making process begun on earth will reach completion in the afterlife."[73]

In the case of the *Argument from Evil*, as stated by Rowe, it would seem Hick has a compelling answer to the dilemma of why God would allow for evil. God "constructs a world that will 'foster quality and strength of character' rather than grant every wish…and its value [is to be] judged by its fitness for its primary purpose, the purpose of soul-making."[74] Hick argues that the existence of evil and hazardous conditions as presented by the *Argument from Evil* "…actually confirm God's goodness rather than call it into question."[75] These evils are good in that they are a part of God's master plan; that we, his human creation, succeed in the process of soul-making and the value of soul-making outweighs the negative value of evils in the world. "God has willed to create a universe in which it is better for Him to permit sin and evil than not to permit them."[76] Rowe presented three possible ways in which evil might be allowed under the all watchful eyes of God: (i) a greater good occurs in such a case where evil occurs; (ii) a greater good occurs in such a case where evil, or some evil equally bad or worse, occurs; or (iii) evil is preventable only in such a case in which God permits some evil equally bad or worse.[77] In this case, Hick might assert that God allows for evil if (i) obtains. In this case, (i) obtains if and only if a greater good—e.g., soul-making—occurs in such a case where evil occurs. According to

[72] Scott, Mark "*Suffering and Soul-Making: Rethinking John Hick's Theodicy,"* The Journal of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal, 320.
[73] Ibid., 321.
[74] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 259.
[75] Scott, "Suffering and Soul-Making: Rethinking John Hick's Theodicy," 318.
[76] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 233.
[77] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 336-337

Hick's theodicy, soul-making occurs when instances of evil occur.[78] Thus, (i) does obtain, and premise one of Rowe's argument is false. Pointless suffering is a part of God's master plan because a world with general and unpredictable suffering is the best possible world to foster soul-making.[79] Further, God even has good reasons for operating on a general policy that permits lots of suffering that is not accompanied by soul-making because this pointless suffering helps to set us at an epistemic distance from the creator and to foster a *Good Will*. "The systematic elimination of unjust suffering, and the consequent apportioning of suffering to desert, would entail that there would be no doing of the right simply because it is right and without expectation of reward."[80] Hick believes pointless suffering forms what he calls the *Good Will* which is an intrinsic good in the world.

Part Four: Objection to the Soul-making Theodicy

I: A Discussion on Value and a Challenge to Hick's Soul-making Theodicy

As mentioned before, my critique of Hick's soul-making theodicy will be an axiological critique on the value of Hick's possible world with soul-making scenario. I want to consider what value might exist in a world with soul-making as compared to the value of a world with ready-made goodness. My argument presents a challenge to Hick: I burden Hick to show why a world with soul-making is the best possible world. Hick must prove that a world with soul-making is a part of God's master plan. To prove this contention Hick must show why evil is necessary to make the best possible world—i.e., the type of world God would make. Hick argues that soul-making is valuable and evil is necessary to the process of soul-making; thus, the world with soul-making is the best possible world.[81] I will argue that a world with soul-making is not as

[78] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 231.
[79],Ibid., 233.
[80] Ibid., *335.*
[81] Ibid., 233.

valuable as a world with ready-made goodness. I define a world with ready-made goodness as the world Hick describes as Heaven. According to Hick God did create this type of possible world[82] and I will accept Hick's basic description on the nature and meaning of Heaven:

> "…so far as men's suffering are concerned, is that these sufferings - which for some people are immense and for others relatively slight - will in the end lead to the enjoyment of a common good which will be unending and therefore unlimited, and which will be seen by its participants as justifying all that has been endured on the way to it…an infinite good that would render worthwhile any finite suffering endured in the course of attaining it."[83]

For my purposes, I will consider why a world with evil has to exist at all, and why human beings cannot just exist in a place like Heaven—i.e., a Heaven on earth. Assuming God exists, I argue:

> P1.) god is the Omni-God if and only if he would have chosen the best possible world.
> P2.) god did not choose the best possible world.
> _____
> C.) Thus, god is not the Omni-God.

To prove premise one, we have three options to consider: (i) God has a reason to take issue with creating the best possible world, or (ii) maybe there is no best world—maybe, for any world God creates, he could have created a better one, or (iii) God is malicious and did not create the best possible world. If you believe the first option then the conclusion already obtains and Hick's theodicy fails. We can also discard the second option because it is paradoxical. To accept the second option would mean that the best possible world is impossible; however, the best possible world exists according to Hick. It is the world in which we reach the likeness of God—the *Zoe*,[84] but, if that is impossible, then God is impossible because the likeness of God would not exist: therefore, the best possible world must exist in Hick's world if God exists. Considering Hick's

[82] Scott, "Suffering and Soul-Making: Rethinking John Hick's Theodicy," 321.
[83] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 340-341.
[84] Ibid., 254.

theodicy I will also assume the existence of a best possible world and will reject option (ii). Finally, I will consider the third option, as Hick must, that God is malicious and did not create the best possible world. Hick will argue that God has a reason for not choosing Heaven on Earth because there is value in soul making because there is instrumental value in evil.[85] Hick will take issue with premise two. Further, Hick could assert that premise one is true because a world with soul making is the best possible world—God would have chosen the best possible world and did.[86] So, premise one remains uncontroversial, and the real challenge of this argument lies in premise two.

Premise two claims that God did not make the best possible world due to the persistence of evil on Earth, which is the world where human genesis began.[87] Hick believes this world is good because it fosters soul making.[88] However, I want to consider the value of the *Zoe*, or what we might call Heaven, in comparison to the value of the *bios,* which is conceivably Earth.

Heaven is defined by Hick as the end result of becoming ready-made good like God through the process of soul-making. "Moreover, the heavenly bliss that awaits us will 'justify retrospectively' and 'render manifestly worthwhile' all the suffering that we encountered along the way."[89] It should be noted that Heaven, on Hick's account, is a part of the best possible world because its purpose is to justify our suffering on Earth.[90] Heaven is separate from Earth but still a part of the soul-making world Hick is proposing. So the best-possible world consists of an Earth with evil and a place separate from Earth with no evil. However, this would mean that some part of Hick's best possible world is one without evil. If Heaven did have evil it would fail to render

[85] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 233.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 220.
[88] Scott, "Suffering and Soul-making: Rethinking John Hick's theodicy," 318.
[89] Ibid., 321.
[90] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 340-341.

our suffering on Earth worthwhile because it would be no different than Earth. Also Hick states that the beings in Heaven are perfected which logically entails the absence of evil in such a place. I will argue for this claim later when considering Perfect Freedom. For now we can assume that Hick's conception of Heaven is absent evil. If Heaven is absent evil Hick has a problem: Heaven is less valuable in Hick's world than Earth because it is absent evil and in turn absent soul-making. Hick argues for soul-making on the basis that character building is valuable and evil is necessary to the character building process of soul-making.[91] However, Heaven is a place of perfect love and happiness with no evil and as a consequence it does not have the value of soul-making. Yet for Hick, Heaven is supposed to be the best possible fulfillment of human existence after enduring pain on Earth and so it is even more valuable to humans who have lived long lives of suffering.[92] It might seem, then, that Hick finds himself in a dilemma. Hick claims Heaven justifies our pain on Earth, yet it would be worse than our existence on Earth since it lacks the value of soul-making.

Hick could respond to my rebuttal by claiming that Heaven is valuable in that those who reside in Heaven have gone through soul making. Heaven is vastly more valuable if it is reached by way of the long and arduous soul-making path. If individuals were placed in Heaven ready-made Heaven would lose its value. Even though Heaven is void of soul-making the residents of Heaven are the products of soul making; thus, Heaven is valuable in this sense and soul making is required for such value. Hick could also claim that Heaven has value to all of its residents but it is more valuable for those who have gone though soul-making to be there. However, if Hick makes either of these claims, then he runs into the ultimate problem of the compatibility between God's ready-made nature and the value of soul making. Either God is made ready-good or God

[91] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 258.
[92] Ibid., 352.

also had to go through soul-making. If God is ready-made good, then God's nature lacks the value of soul-making—which is the greater value according to Hick.[93] The nature of God's human creation is quite different from that of God's nature: they must go through soul-making. Still Hick claims that "God is so overwhelmingly great that his children…must be prodigal children who have voluntarily come to their Father." Yet God is not one of these prodigal children, God is ready-made and did not voluntarily decide to do good: God is perfectly good! It would seem a consequence of Hick's conclusion is that the great value of the soul-making quality is lacking in God, but this quality if not lacking in God's prodigal children. So God is lacking a quality that his own creation has and God could never have this quality because he is perfectly free. Another consequence is that there is more value in the nature of God's creation because it has the soul-making quality while God's nature would be less valuable because this quality is absent. This seems absurd, and if we agree this conclusion is absurd then we also must concede that the value of soul making is less valuable than the value of ready-made goodness. If this is the case, then soul making is not necessary nor does it contribute to the value of Heaven and God could have created a better possible world—i.e., a Heaven absent the suffering on earth. I will elaborate on my main objection below before deconstructing Hick's argument to get at the root value of soul-making: moral freedom.

II: Argument why Ready-Made Goodness is the Better Possible World

Hick claims it is better to work to be good than to be ready-made good. "The intrinsic value of human virtue and goodness forged in the fire of trial and temptation outweighs the intrinsic value of "ready-made virtues" that require no effort." [94] On face value, this seems right. However, I will propose that this main argument comes down to the importance of humans

[93] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 233.
[94] Scott, "Suffering and Soul-making: Rethinking John Hick's theodicy," 317-318.

having moral freedoms. "God is overwhelmingly great that the children in His Heavenly family must be prodigal children who have voluntarily come to their Father from a far country, prompted by their own need and drawn by His love." [95] Hick's argument is based on the idea that there is something valuable about moral freedom as opposed to being ready-made to make the right moral choices. There must be some component required of soul-making that adds value to a life lived on earth that is not attainable in a world with ready-made goodness. In Hick's view, that unique value is the freedom to choose God's love which boils down to the moral freedom to choose or deny God.[96]

So, what is so great about moral freedom? Morriston illustrates the point that moral freedom is not so great after all and that it creates a conundrum between the ready-made nature of God and his human creation. Morriston illustrates this issue through juxtaposing the value of "perfect freedom" compared to the value of "moral freedom". [97]

"Perfect freedom" is defined as a state of being in which one is not subject to "irrational desires and inclinations…that might tempt him not to do what he ought."[98] Moral freedom is defined as the freedom to choose between good and evil.[99] Hick argues that God is one of perfect love: meaning in every possible world God would have a nature of perfect love. Logically speaking, this also means there is no possible world in which God could commit evil acts. Thus, it is impossible for God to do evil. Given Morriston's definitions, Hick is committed to the metaphysical claim that God has perfect freedom because there is no possible world in which God might be subject to irrational desires and inclinations that might tempt him not to do what

[95] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 323.
[96] Ibid., 232.
[97] Morriston, "What's So Good About Moral Freedom?*,"* 345
[98] Ibid., 345.
[99] Ibid.

he ought. "[God] is at once perfectly good and unlimitedly powerful."[100] "Unlimitedly" is defined within the scope of possibility: God can do all that is possible and can prevent and stop evil in every possible world. "Perfectly" is also defined within the scope of possibility: God is all-loving toward his entire creation and would want to prevent unnecessary evil in all possible worlds. However, human beings on earth are not perfectly free rather they are morally free and must reconcile themselves to God by choosing between good and evil. Hick argues that moral freedom in humans is more valuable than perfect freedom. But, Hick does not qualify why we ought to value moral freedom in the case of humans and value perfect freedom in the case of God.[101] Hick must qualify his argument in favor of the value of moral freedom over perfect freedom at this junction without rejecting the value of God's ready-made nature to save his argument.

There are four possible ways we can evaluate moral freedom and perfect freedom: (i) moral freedom and perfect freedom share the same value, (ii) moral freedom is more valuable than perfect freedom, (iii) perfect freedom is more valuable that moral freedom, or (iv) perfect freedom is valuable for some beings and moral freedom is more valuable for others. I will evaluate the consequences of all four options.

A: Evaluation of Moral freedom and Perfect Freedom: Option One

Option one considers whether moral freedoms and perfect freedoms share the same value. Neither one is more valuable than the other and they are equally good. This would amount to the claim that Heaven, with perfect freedoms, and earth, with moral freedoms, are both equally good worlds and that human nature, which is morally free, and Godly nature, which is perfectly free, is equally valuable. Option one concludes that humans and God are on par with

[100] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 4.
[101] Ibid., 323.

each other in the context of value which seems problematic up front. Morriston echoes Swinburne's claims that, "…creatures who are perfectly free and essentially good…would not be morally free; but they would be in no way worse or less valuable than ourselves."[102][103] However, Morriston has a compelling response:

> "If you were offered two equally tasty and exquisite dishes, and were informed that one of them, but not the other, would very possibly make you violently ill within twenty-four hours of tasting it…you would not think it appropriate to 'have some of each'." [104]

Considering this example, I would be a fool to try both dishes. I intuit that I would prefer the exquisite dish that leaves me feeling content, happy, and healthy. In this way these two types of beings—morally free and perfectly free—are not equally valuable because there is always the risky possibility that moral freedom may lead to disastrous results. It is as if God is playing a giant game with the world and could have just as easily eliminated the risk without losing some further good because on this view both moral and perfect freedom are equal.

In terms of my axiological critique of Hick's argument, the conclusion that God does not exist obtains on this view. If god is God, then he would have chosen the best possible world for his human creation. However, considering the reasonable differences between a world with perfect freedom and moral freedom God seems to have chosen a world with moral freedom. I say this because we have a world where evil is possible as a result of humans making the wrong moral decisions. This would make sense of a world that is morally free because this chosen world carries with it a serious risk for disastrous consequences—i.e., the possibility for humans with free will to make the wrong moral choices. If the world were perfectly free then evil would not exist because humans would not be tempted to make the wrong moral decisions. Given this

[102] Morriston, "What is so Good about Moral Freedom*?,"* 345.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

state of affairs God must have a reason for allowing a world with moral freedoms and consequently evil. But, if both moral and perfect freedoms are of the same value then God's only relevant consideration would have been the risks that each world posed. On this basis God should have chosen the world with absolutely no risks—i.e., the perfect freedom world—in order to make the best possible world. There would be no evil in the perfect freedom world and the value would be exactly the same as the value of the moral freedom world. However, the value of the perfect freedom world as a whole has a better net value that the moral freedom world because moral freedom has risks. Since God did not create the perfect freedom world the conclusion from Rowe's *Argument from Evil* obtains: god is probably not the Omni-God. Therefore, Hick cannot choose the position that both moral freedom and perfect freedom are equally valuable because it would fail to address the *Argument from Evil* and his theodicy would fail. Hick is left with two options: (i) moral freedom is more valuable than perfect freedom, or (ii) perfect freedom is more valuable than moral freedom. Hick must attempt to prove the former to maintain his soul-making theodicy.

B: Evaluation of Moral Freedom and Perfect Freedom: Options Two and Three

Hick believes that Heaven is what makes our suffering on earth worthwhile. After achieving some level of soul-making, we will soon find ourselves God-like enough to enter into this realm we call Heaven.[105] To dissect this view further, we must consider what the ultimate goal of soul-making is. I will argue Heaven is the ultimate goal: existing with God in an infinitely good place is the end goal of Christian eschatology and theology. Hick says the bounty of Heaven will right the wrongs we have faced in life "to render worthwhile any finite suffering".[106] Hick does make mention of the place sinfulness and evil states of affairs serve in

[105] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 323.
[106] Ibid., 341.

divine providence. The act of overcoming sin through our moral choices adds intrinsic value to our lives:

> "The contribution which sin and its attendant suffering make to God's plan does not consist in any value intrinsic to themselves but, on the contrary, in the activities whereby they are overcome, namely redemption from sin, and men's mutual service amid suffering."[107]

The reason Hick believes the world of soul-making has more value than a perfect utopia is because the world of soul-making has the value of moral freedom. The value of a world with soul-making rests on man coming to love his creator on his own terms.[108] In this way, there is no direct intrinsic value to the suffering we experience on Earth. However, there is value in a world that best accommodates moral freedom.[109] Bad states of affairs—i.e., suffering—are necessary to cultivating a moral conscience and freely choosing a life with the creator.[110] This means evil is necessary for moral freedom. At this point, Hick's argument looks something like this:

> (P1)The best possible world is one that fosters soul-making.
>
> (P2) If the best possible world is one that fosters soul-making, then we need moral freedom.
>
> (P3) If we want moral freedom, then bad states of affairs must exist (evil must exist)
>
> _____
>
> (C) Evil must exist.

Hick argues that in Heaven, sinfulness, and the suffering that results from sinfulness, "ought to be abolished."[111] The value of Heaven is apparent only in the beings that exist in Heaven because they have come to reconcile themselves to God on their own volition. Hick says these Heavenly beings are valuable in that they "must be prodigal children who have voluntarily come to their

[107] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 323.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 233.
[110] Ibid., 254.
[111] Ibid., 323.

Father."[112] Considering Hick's position on Heaven what then is the status of moral freedom in the Heavenly world if Hick believes that the Heavenly world absent moral freedom is more valuable than our life on Earth? I would argue he does believe there is some grander value to Heaven on the basis that Heaven is the end goal of our soul-making on Earth.[113] Yet, this seems problematic if Heaven is perfectly free—meaning it is impossible to do evil in Heaven—and absent moral freedom. Hick will assert that for human beings to be morally good we must be significantly free. "God preserved the will of man free and under his own control…in order that man might be able to receive Him."[114] This is what makes Heaven so perfectly good: that human beings cultivate the necessary character traits to make Heaven such a good place. He wants to argue that freely choosing goodness is better than perfect goodness. Plantinga makes a similar argument that in order to be morally good—the type of goodness required in Heaven—we must be morally responsible for our choices—i.e., we must have significant freedom.[115] However, this leads to an inconsistency as illustrated by Morriston in Hick's argument in which significant freedom is required for moral goodness in human beings but not for God's moral goodness.[116] Hick must find a way to avoid the conclusion that human nature is more valuable than God's nature because humans are significantly free. Hick musts also avoid the conclusion that perhaps our just desert in Heaven is not such a great place after all and we should reconsider Christian eschatology. These conclusions do not fit into Hick's ideal of the divine-human personal relationship. In fact, his Irenaean tradition is false on this account. We have a contradiction between the origin of man as a child-like agent who must come to fulfill God's master plan by obtaining God-like goodness through soul-making and the idea that God-like goodness is less

[112] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 323.
[113] Ibid., 261.
[114] Ibid., 213.
[115] Morriston, "What is so Good about Moral Freedom?," 346.
[116] Ibid.

valuable that the original state of mankind. The problematic and unintended consequence of Hick's view is that the point at which we reach God-like perfection is the state in which we have less value than our original selves. At that point we are no longer significantly free but perfectly free. Like a snake eating its own tail we must back track to our original state before we may achieve a valuable existence. But this is the antithesis of Hick's project which is to be "eschatological in its ultimate bearings. That is to say, instead of looking to the past for its clue to the mystery of evil, it looks to the future…"[117] The Irenaean tradition would suggest that we must work to add value to our lives yet with every action we take to accomplish this task we move farther away from the ideal—significant freedom—and closer to a lesser state of being—perfect freedom. Heaven would no longer be a place in which the wrongs of the world are made up to us in full because we would no longer be significantly free. The process of soul-making begins at birth and relies on the progress we make in this life "eventually [reaching] its completion in the infinite good of the common life of humanity within the life of God."[118] Only we give up this better world with soul-making for a less valuable existence in Heaven where our trials come to mean nothing because the true value of existence lies in making the right moral choices. It would be impossible to make moral choices in Heaven based on Hick's original definition. In this way, Hick runs into a massive existential and logical problem for human kind and must abandon the Irenaean tradition.

III: Conclusions on why the Soul-making Theodicy Fails to Address the *Argument from Evil*

I presented three ways in which we can evaluate the value of moral freedom. I showed why the first evaluation would fail to meet Hick's standards which left us with the two options: moral freedom is greater than perfect freedom or perfect freedom is greater than moral freedom.

[117] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 261.
[118] Ibid., 374.

Inevitably, valuing moral freedom over perfect freedom leads to the unwanted conclusion that humans are better than God because they are significantly free which is a conclusion Hick would reject. In light of this, Hick must choose the only option left that perfect freedom is more valuable than moral freedom. This means we are left with a world in which soul-making is not as valuable as a world with ready-made goodness and God did not create the best possible world. In the case of the *Argument from Evil*, God could have prevented suffering without thereby losing something greater or preventing some greater harm but did not.[119] So, I conclude that god is not the Omni-God.

Part 5: A Possible Rebuttal to Salvage John Hick's Theodicy

At this point Hick must salvage his argument and prove one major point in order for his theodicy to succeed. Hick must show why it is the case that God is so significantly different from humans that he does not require the type of moral freedom that would be required in humans to become ready-made good like God. If Hick succeeds in meeting this burden then my objection would fail because I would not have been able to show that moral freedom is inferior to perfect freedom because moral freedom is not necessary for God.

I want to consider arguments made by Morriston against the free will defense that could be used as a possible solution to save Hick's theodicy. Morriston presents a desideratum that I suggest is needed to solve the problem. In order for Hick's theodicy to work, all four of the following desiderata must be met on any account we consider of moral freedom. All four desiderata together propose certain possible conditions in which moral freedom is required for

[119] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 308. Also, see Part 2: Section II: William Rowe's *Argument From Evil.*

humans, but not for God. The problem is solved if all four of the following conditions are satisfied:

> 1.) Human beings are both morally responsible and morally free.
>
> 2.) In human beings, moral responsibility does presuppose moral freedom.
>
> 3.) God, on the other hand, is not morally free; his nature is such that he cannot choose between good and evil.
>
> 4.) Nevertheless, God is morally responsible for his actions, and is perfectly good in the distinctively moral sense.[120]

Morriston continues with a possible scenario in which are four conditions are met. First we will begin with God. This scenario begins with the proposition that God is not morally free. Since God is perfectly free he does not have the possibility of choosing between good and evil. However, we should recognize, that even if we reject the principle of alternative possibilities[121]we can still claim that God is morally responsible for his action as the "absolute first cause". This means that God is unlimited and undetermined by all other factors apart from himself.[122] In this sense we can now claim that God is morally responsible for his actions even if he not free to choose between right and wrong. Morriston states, "Nothing apart from God determines what God will choose, or what God will do."[123] This is true on the basis that God is the absolute first cause. On this account, we fulfill condition three, in which God is not morally free, and condition four, where God is morally responsible. Next, we will consider the case of humans.

[120] Morriston, *"*What is so Good about Moral Freedom?*,"* 347.
[121] "The claim that moral responsibility for an action entails that one could have avoided doing the act; or the ability to do otherwise." Ibid.
[122] Ibid, 349.
[123] Ibid.

In this scenario, Morriston asks us to consider if God could have made humans into autonomous first causes. However, he rejects this on the notion that "If God made me with a nature that guaranteed that I always did the right thing, then something outside me, *viz*., God, would have caused me to choose good or evil."[124] If being your own first cause is necessary for moral responsibility humans would not be morally responsible on this account. In fact, God would be morally responsible for human actions.[125] Humans require the freedom to choose between good and evil in order to have moral responsibility. On the other hand, God does not require the freedom to choose between good and evil because he is his own first cause and thus always responsible for his actions. A human's freedom to choose regardless of God's middle knowledge of all the things one might choose to do over the course of a life time, is based on the "character, desires and beliefs [that are] the causes of [our] decisions, with no untoward intervention from outside."[126] For humans the principle of alternative possibilities is necessary for moral responsibility. Thus, not only are humans both morally free and morally responsible but moral responsibility presupposes moral freedom. So, conditions one and two are met and all four conditions of the Desideratum are met. According to Morriston this is one promising way that God is so significantly different from humans that he can maintain his essential goodness and humans can maintain the value of moral freedom; in which case Hick's theodicy is out of trouble.

For Hick, an important point has been derived from Morriston's argument: God is significantly different from his human creation in a way that he can be perfectly free while humans are better served by moral freedom. The dilemma was as follows: if ready-made goodness is good enough for God then what is so bad about ready-made goodness? You will

[124] Morriston, "What is So Good About Moral Freedom?," 349.
[125] Ibid.
[126]Ibid., 348.

recall I argued that the ready-made good nature of God excludes the value of soul-making which in turn brought us to the argument concerning the value of soul-making where I showed that soul-making is valuable because it requires moral freedom—which we believe is valuable. Thus, the ready-made good nature of God would be less valuable than a being who has gone through soul-making because it lacks moral freedom. The same argument also applies to the ready-made best possible world (Heaven) scenario. However, as Morriston showed us, perfect freedom is not valuable to humans because we would be ready-made as perfectly free by God and humans would not have moral responsibility. Since we are not our own first cause—unlike God—we must have the freedom to choose between good and evil in order to be morally responsible agents. As a result there is great value in moral freedom in Humans whereas moral freedom is incompatible with God's metaphysical nature and does not presuppose moral responsibility for God. From here we can conclude that there is a great value in soul-making for humans to grow spiritually and that moral freedom is imperative to the soul-making process. While God can be ready-made good without losing anything of significant value humans would lose something of significant value as ready-made beings: their moral freedom. Absent ready-made goodness soul-making becomes essential to humans cultivating their spiritual growth through moral freedom. What Hick can conclude from this discussion is that my initial dilemma ceases to be a problem in light of the significant difference between human nature and Godly nature. The conditions of the Desideratum have been met in this scenario and we ought to conclude that my initial dilemma was a false dichotomy and both sides of the horn[127] can be true.

[127] The dilemma I suggested earlier is the same dilemma that Morriston suggests in his paper. How can God be perfectly good—meaning he can never choose to do evil, thus he is perfectly free—while humans must be free to make moral choices? Morriston, "What is So good About Moral Freedom?," 350.

To rebut this possible solution to the problem I posed to Hick I will argue that even in light of this scenario the desideratum is not met and Hick's theodicy fails to meet the challenge as set by Rowe's *Argument from Evil*.

Part 6: A Response back to The Objection on Behalf of Hick

Morriston proposes a thought experiment that I will use as a counterexample to the objection I made on behalf of Hick. The counter example rests on proving one contention: that there is no clear difference in moral standing between God and his human creation. Morriston will use a thought experiment to show that "If God is neither responsible for nor identical with his nature, it looks as if he is 'subject to' his nature, just as humans are 'subject to' theirs."[128] If this is the case and Morriston's argument succeeds, then it looks like Hick's theodicy fails to meet the *Argument from Evil* challenge. Morriston's argument shows that the metaphysical nature of God Hick champions would have a ready-made nature that does lose something of significant value: moral freedom.

Morriston will also show that nothing about God's nature exempts him from losing the value of moral freedom which Hick proposes is of the utmost value. God does not have moral freedom because God is perfectly free which theist would agree is a good quality in God and is essential to his nature. Yet this means God's ready-made nature is still less valuable than the morally free nature of his human creation. This conclusion is absurd, so Hick must accept that ready-made goodness is more valuable than soul-making and concede that God did not make the best possible world, which God would not do, and so the *Argument from Evil* succeeds.

[128] Ibid., 358.

I: The Thought Experiment

In this thought experiment, Morriston asks us to consider two groups of finite beings: group alpha and group beta. Morriston stipulates that both groups are naturally good meaning it is impossible for either group to choose to do evil. In fact their only difference is that the *alphas* were "made to exist" by some force outside of themselves and the *betas* were "not made by anything"; they came into existence. However, this simple difference leads to a different moral standing between the two groups if we accept the account of moral responsibility I proposed in the objection made on behalf of Hick. "The *betas* would be morally responsible for their actions (since nothing gives them their good natures), whereas the *alphas* would not be morally responsible (since they are made with good natures)."[129]

Morriston argues it is unclear that the *alphas* would not be morally responsible while the *betas* would be morally responsible. "[Alpha] and [Beta], alike, lack control over their natures, and thus it seems that they are *equally* responsible (or not responsible) for the predetermined consequences of their natures."[130] It is unclear how causation affects moral responsibility. The thought experiment shows us that causation does not entail moral praise in essentially good morally perfect beings who do not choose their natures. This is because "essentially morally perfect beings whether created or not, would be determined by *their natures* to act in a certain way, and he suggests that they would therefore be *equally* praiseworthy (or not praiseworthy) for their actions."[131] As a result, we have a possible response to the claim that God is the "absolute first cause" thus God does not require moral freedom yet God is still morally responsible. Nothing about God's causation makes him exempt from moral freedom. We can conclude then that condition four of the desideratum is not met.

[129] Morriston, "*What* is So good About Moral Freedom?," 350.
[130] Rasmussen, "On the Value of Freedom to do Evil," Faith and Philosophy, Vol. 30, Issue 4, Oct. 2013, 419-420.
[131] Ibid., 419.

Morriston considers the possibility of this thought experiment. He argues there is nothing conceptually impossible about the scenario. Morriston grants that even in the case that all beings must be granted their existence through God the thought experiment is still possible. One possible objection to Morriston's proposed thought experiment is that all conditionals are true even with impossible antecedents, thus there is nothing informative about subjunctive conditionals with impossible antecedents. However, Morriston argues "subjunctive conditionals with impossible antecedents can be non-trivially true" and so the thought experiment is still informative and insightful. Morriston notes the following examples to make his case:

> Example (a) If humans had existed uncreated, they would (still) have been featherless bipeds.
>
> Example (b) If humans had existed uncreated, they would (instead) have been feathered quadrupeds.[132]

Both examples have impossible antecedents, yet (a) is true while (b) is false. This is because the nature of creation—created or uncreated—is irrelevant to the nature of that beings existence—whether it is feathered/un-feathered, or a biped/quadruped. However, "human nature (created or not) is not neutral between these alternatives."[133] Morriston argues that a feathered quadruped would not have been a human at all. In this example, Morriston has shown that our judgments about even impossible scenarios can still be true and informative.[134] Thus, the thought experiment stands in light of the objection that the thought experiment is impossible and thus not informative. Morriston's ultimate conclusion from this discussion is that your membership in group beta does not entail you are more responsible for your good nature than if you were in the group alpha. This is derived from the premise Morriston proves that "the presence or absence of

[132] Rasmussen, "On the Value of Freedom to do Evil," 351.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Morriston, "What is So good About Moral Freedom*?," 351.*

a creator who made me with this good nature [makes no] difference to whether I am morally responsible for the good deeds that flow from it."[135] Further, you would only be doing that which your nature determined you to do, in either case. One's nature would determine the agent to do good rather than the method of creation.

II: Is God a Beta?

Since the case of God and the *betas* are the same the following problem still persists: "Why is it that being good by nature does not deprive [God] of moral responsibility, even though it would deprive the *betas* of moral responsibility?"[136] We will recall that Morriston concludes that there is no difference between God and the *betas* on the basis of nature that would require moral freedom in humans but not God. Instead, perhaps Hick would be better off arguing that God is not subject to his nature in the same way that the *betas* are subject to their nature. This could account for a difference between God and the *betas* significant enough to entail a need for moral freedom in one and not the other. In objection I will argue that God, like the *betas*, is subject to his nature. Below I will consider how God is subject to his nature as illustrated by Morriston.

Morriston's proposes three potential ways to consider the relationship between God and God's nature: (a) God is not subject to his nature, (b) God is identical to his nature, or (c) God is subject to his nature. I will show that (a) and (b) are false, which leaves us with (c) which means there are no possible differences between God and the *betas*. Thus, God does lose the value of moral responsibility even if he is "the first cause".

[135] Morriston, "*What is So good About Moral Freedom?,"* 352.
[136] Ibid.

A: Option A

The first option, that God is identical to his nature, meets the first criterion that God cannot be subject to anything distinct from himself unlike the beta's who are not identical to their nature and so they are subject to their nature. Here is a relative difference between God and the *betas*. This is called the "Thomist Doctrine of Divine Simplicity."[137] This would mean that God is God's nature and so he is not subject to his nature. Morriston rejects this: we could claim that God is identical to his nature, however if his nature is complex God would not be identical to the different components of his nature. Morriston argues:

> "[there is] the possibility that God is 'subject to' the attributes that make up his nature—including the attribute of goodness. According to St. Thomas, this is the clear consequence of complexity: 'every composite is posterior to its component parts and is dependent on them' (summa Theologiae III7)"[138]

If this is true, then anything apart from a full acceptance of the Thomist Simplicity Doctrine would fail to show that God is not subject to anything distinct from himself. The problem with accepting the full Doctrine is that we then have to reject the multiplicity of God. Morriston concludes two things: "(i) that God's nature must be comprised of a multiplicity of distinct attributes, and (ii) that whether or not God has a multiplicity of distinct essential attributes, he could not be identical with the attribute(s) that make up his nature."[139] God is impossible because of his multi-faceted nature. Thus, Hick and his proponents would have to reject the idea that God is identical to his nature. However, Morriston's argument continues:

> (P1) If God were identical with his nature, none of his intrinsic properties could be contingent.
>
> (P2) But some of God's intrinsic properties are contingent.
>
> _____

[137] Morriston, "*What is So good About Moral Freedom?."* 353.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

(C) Therefore, God is not identical with his nature. [140]

Premise one is true because a thing's set of properties are true in every possible world in which that thing exists. "If God were identical to his nature, all of his intrinsic properties would be essential and thus not contingent."[141] In consideration of Premise two, we have to determine if there is any property of God that is both intrinsic and contingent. Morriston argues that God's choosing to create the universe is an intrinsic property of God. This is because God choosing to create the world is the cause of the world, thus his choosing to create must be prior to the existence of the world. If it were an extrinsic property of God then God would only exist in relation to an already existent world. So, God's creating the world is at least one property that is intrinsic and contingent. So we can then conclude that God is not identical to his nature.

B: Option B

The next consideration would be if God is responsible for his own nature. In this scenario God is not like the uncaused group the *betas* because God has a cause: himself. Morriston argues that nothing can be the cause of its own nature, "A cause must in some sense be prior to its effect,"[142] or to say the least the causal relation must be asymmetric. However, if God causes his own nature then God must exist causally prior to his own nature. Morriston puts it eloquently:

> "If God causes God's nature, then God, qua cause of God's nature, must have the power to cause that nature. The trouble is that God's power is itself one aspect of God's nature, and hence of the very thing being cause. It seems, therefore, that God's power must be both causally prior to and causally posterior to the creation of his own nature. Causally prior, in as much as the power to act must be prior to its exercise. Causally posterior, since this power is itself one aspect of the nature that God is supposed to cause."[143]

We may conclude that God cannot create anything—let alone himself—without already having the nature that makes it possible to create. The result would be a causal loop as God's nature

[140] Morriston, "What is So good About Moral Freedom*?,"* 355.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 357.
[143] Ibid.

must be a part of its own cause if God created himself. This is fallacious and impossible so we reject option B which leaves us with option C.

III: Overcoming My Proposed Objection on behalf of Hick

Finally, we are left with the only available option: God is subject to his nature. On this account God is not relevantly different from the *betas* or humans. Originally, Hick needed to show that God and his human creation are so significantly different that God did not require moral freedom to maintain moral responsibility as "the first cause." On the other hand, humans had to maintain moral freedom to maintain moral responsibility; otherwise God would be morally responsible for humans since he created them. We are assuming that moral responsibility is valuable which is why we value moral freedom. Arguing through analogy, Morriston provided a thought-experiment that I used to derail Hick's objection. He claimed that there is no relevant difference between group alpha and group beta except that one was created by something external and the other just existed; though they both have perfectly good natures. Juxtaposed to Hick's conceptual framework, one group would be morally responsible and the other would not be morally responsible. Morriston argued we do not intuit the two groups have different moral responsibilities because the only difference between the groups is their method of coming into being. Further, Morriston argued that the creation distinction fails because one's nature is responsible for the good deeds the relative groups perform; not the method of creation.

Morriston finally concludes after resting one last objection that God is subject to his nature, like the *betas*, like the *alphas*, like all of us. However, God is not morally responsible because he is not the cause of his own nature as we proved earlier: therefore, absent moral freedom God cannot be morally responsible. If Hick values moral freedom over ready-made goodness then he would have to conclude that God's moral nature is less valuable than the value

of human moral nature. Such a conclusion would be absurd and Hick has to concede that ready-made goodness is more valuable than the value of moral freedom in soul-making. But to do so would undercut the very fabric of the soul-making theodicy because the best possible world would be the ready-made good world. A ready-made good world would be absent evil and our world is certainly not absent evil. Rowe's *Argument from Evil* remains sound so we have to conclude God does not exist.

Part 7: Conclusion

The goal of this thesis is to pick up where John Hick's *Soul-Making Theodicy* left off and continue the debate. The *Argument from Evil* is an extremely challenging argument to attack however, while Hick's theodicy moves the debate forward where others have failed, Hick's theodicy still comes up short in meeting the challenge proposed by the *Argument from Evil*. The soul-making theodicy focuses on the metaphysical nature of God and attempts to reconcile how God in all his perfect love could either cause or allow for such pain in the human condition. At face value Hick succeeds in providing a conceptual framework that adequately accounts for the existence of evil while maintaining the all-loving nature of God. Hick argued that the ultimate goal of God's master plan is to create the best possible world for his human creation: part of that plan includes the process of soul-making. In Hick's view, the best possible world is the one that fosters soul-making. Soul making is valuable because it brings God's human creation into closer communion with him. From a theological perspective this makes sense. The idea of humans connecting with the divine through spiritual development is all important to a vast array a world religions that promote spiritual connection through worship, communion, pilgrimage, and practice. Conceptually, soul-making is valuable and important because it maintains the notion of moral freedom and thus moral responsibility.

In objection to soul-making I posed a dilemma to Hick: either soul-making is more valuable than ready-made goodness and God's nature is less valuable as a consequence, or God's ready-made nature is more valuable than the soul-making process and we should abandon Hick's theodicy. The conclusion that God's nature is less valuable than a human's nature is not a conclusion Hick would want to accept. That conclusion would mean God's imperfect, immature, and sinful creation's existence is more valuable that the existence of the all-perfect and all-loving Omni-God. I also considered the state of a possible world that was ready-made good: Heaven. I concluded that if a ready-made world like Heaven was less valuable than an earthly existence with soul-making then the whole of Christian eschatology needs to be reconsidered. Hick says that the bounty of Heaven rectifies the pain and suffering on Earth. It would be absurd that our earthly trials were only preparing us for a far less valuable existence in the Heavenly realm: rather, Earth would be a far better place than Heaven if ready-made goodness was less valuable than soul-making. Since that conclusion is not acceptable Hick has to show why ready-made goodness is valuable in God rather than humans. In this case, there must be some significant difference between the nature of God and the nature of humans. I salvaged a possible defense for Hick out of Morriston argument that there is a possible scenario in which ready-made goodness is valuable for God and not for humans: the desideratum. In this scenario, God's nature was such a way that God does not require moral freedom to maintain the value of moral responsibility. God is his own first cause so he is responsible for his own nature. God can be perfectly free without losing anything of significant value. Perfect freedom is not valuable to humans because we would be ready-made as perfectly free by God. As a result, humans would not have moral responsibility. Since we are not our own first cause—unlike God—we must have the freedom to choose between good and evil in order to be morally responsible agents. Thus there is great value

in moral freedom in Humans, whereas moral freedom is incompatible with God's metaphysical nature and does not presuppose moral responsibility for God.

At this point, I use Morriston against Hick to show why the scenario he provided is inadequate to show a significant difference between humans and God. Arguing through analogy, Morriston provided a thought-experiment that I used to derail Hick's objection. I considered what would happen if Hick used the creation distinction to account for the significant difference between God and humans. Since God is his own first cause he is directly responsible for his own nature. Morriston argued that the creation distinction fails because one's nature is responsible for the good deeds the relative groups perform: not the method of creation. What we must conclude in light of Morriston's argument is that God is subject to his nature in the same way that his human creation is. The desiderata fall apart and God does require moral freedom in order to have moral responsibility. The requirement for moral freedom would require that God be able to do evil, yet it is impossible for God to do evil so we must conclude that God lacks moral responsibility.

So who cares about moral responsibility and moral freedom? Well certainly Hick cares about these concepts. My critique on Hick's argument was axiological in nature. I burdened Hick to provide an argument that would be a solution to the *Argument from Evil*. His theodicy attempts to do just this. Hick's theodicy attempts to meet a requirement set by Rowe's *Argument from Evil* in which God could allow for evil if at least one of three situations occurred: (i) a greater good occurs in such a case where evil occurs, (ii) a greater good occurs in such a case where evil, or some evil equally bad or worse occurs, or (iii) evil is preventable only in such a case in which God permits some evil equally bad or worse.. Hick argued that God allows for evil if (i) obtains. In this case, (i) obtains if and only if a greater good—e.g., soul-making—occurs in

such a case where evil occurs. According to Hick's theodicy, soul-making does occur where instances of evil occur (as a general rule) thus (i) does obtain and premise one of Rowe's argument is false. What I have shown is that the value of soul-making which lies in the value of moral freedom is not as valuable as ready-made goodness. Without evil we do not get moral freedom and without moral freedom we do not get moral responsibility. God does not have moral freedom and so God does not have moral responsibility. But we do not think God's nature is less valuable because he lacks this quality and his nature is not so significantly different from human nature that he should not have moral freedom. God has a ready-made perfect nature so we should value ready-made perfection over soul-making. So (i) does not obtain because a greater good—e.g., ready-made goodness—does not occur in such a case where evil occurs. Even if there is some value in soul-making that value is outweighed by the value of God's ready-made goodness that could have been instilled in us but was not. As a result, we are made to suffer in a less than perfect and a less valuable world that could have been made better by God and was not. This conclusion contradicts the all powerful nature of God and there is no way out of this puzzle except to accept that the Omni-God does not exist.

As I mentioned in the beginning, I am not setting out to disprove the existence of god. Instead, my argument only sets out to disrupt many pre-conceived notions about the nature of god. My conclusion is far reaching in that I believe I have adequately cast doubt on the metaphysical nature of the Christian Omni-God but perhaps we only need to re-evaluate the nature of the Christian Omni-God. Perhaps god is not all powerful and cannot stop all the evils in the world. But this answer may not be suitable to the many Christians who believe in the power of prayer, healing, or the power to save. Instead, perhaps god is not all knowing. If this were the case then god may not know about all the evils that could occur. I worry about this conclusion

because it seems problematic that god may not know about some who are suffering so the power of prayer is nonexistent. This seems to run into the same problem that a god who is not all-powerful might run into: the inability to stop evil. But even if god was all-powerful then god could still know about all the evil even if god does not know about all the evil in the world. So by choosing not to know about evil god seems extremely negligent. Finally, perhaps god is not a loving god. This seems the most troubling. Christians worship God because many believe he is a personal god who cares about his creation. He loves his creation and wants a relationship with them. But imagine if this was not the case and god actually did not care about his human creation. Whether this god is allowing for evil or perpetuating the evil in the world, such a god would be considered a sociopath who maliciously causes/allows harms to befall his creation. Why then would anyone dare to praise this god? Considering Rowe's *Argument from Evil* and the inadequacies of Hick's soul-making theodicy, I conclude that the Omni-God does not exist.