Discuss the relationship between divine omnipotence and goodness. In light of this relationship are theodicies required to demonstrate that divine omnipotence and the existence of evil are not contradictory?

John Polkinghorne in developing the scientifically responsible apologetic that he has spent his post-quantum physicist career in developing, describes evil as the "most painful of [Christianity's] difficulties"[1]. Similarly, John Hick writes, "evil constitutes the most serious objection there is to the Christian belief in the God of love"[2] and this is reflected in the antithetical manner by Richard Dawkins, "Goodness is no part of the *definition* of the God hypothesis, merely a desirable add-on."[3] However, what is not immediately clear is that Hick, Polkinghorne are giving evil "a very wide signification"[4]. Evil is not just construed in terms of metaphysical, moral or spiritual evil[5] but some of the most aggressive challenges to theistic belief have come in terms of considering the intrinsic "evil" character of creation which is then seen to reflect on the physical weakness of God in relation to the creation which can then go on to inform us of the moral weakness of God in relation to the creation. It is the intention of this essay to first examine why goodness and omnipotence are theologically connected and why it should be asserted that the existence of evil and omnipotence are considered to be mutually exclusive. It will then examine the philosophical and theological issues related to this challenge and evaluate how effective the defences are.

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[1] John Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality – the relationship between science and theology* (SPCK, London: 1991), p84
[2] John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 2nd Edition (Macmillan, London: 1977), p.ix
[3] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, London: 2006), p108. Emphasis original.
[4] Marilyn McCord Adams, Robert Merrihew Adams, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford, OUP: 1990), p1
[5] Hick (1977), p38

Perhaps one of the most vivid and protracted exegetes of the view that "natural" evil reflected badly on the theistic belief in divine omnipotence was the influential 19th century philosopher John Stuart Mill:

> *"In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's everyday performances. Killing, the most criminal act…nature does…to every being that lives, and in a large proportion after protracted tortures…with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice…Not even on the most distorted and contracted theory of good…can the government of nature be made to resemble the work of a being at once good and omnipotent."* [6]

The presence of evil in the world is seen as a contradiction to divine goodness. This seems to be implicitly accepted in less dramatic language by C.S. Lewis whom was noted for his broad liberal apologetic:

> *'If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do what he wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both."* [7]

It is also clear that both Mill and Lewis are connecting "physical" evil with "moral" evil with no qualification. This might easily be questioned and a particular theological defence against evil might claim this. However, it has powerful theological support as a point of pre-understanding from the foundation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the creation narratives:

> *God called the dry ground "land" and the gathered waters he called "seas." God saw that it was good… The land produced vegetation – plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good…·to separate the light from the darkness.[40] God saw that it was good…God created…it was good…God saw all that he had made – and it was very good!* [8]

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[6] J.S. Mill in 'The Existence of God', John Hick (ed) (Macmillan, New York: 1964), pp114-120

[7] C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Collins, London: 2012(1940)), p16

[8] Gen 1:10 – 31 (NET), The NET Bible, Version 1.0 - Copyright © 2004, 2005 Biblical Studies Foundation, http://www.netbible.org.

This connection between divine goodness and omnipotence is seen historically within the great Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam[9] where God is essentially considered to be "good" and the evidence of this goodness is found in what He has created, how He treats His people and what He does.

It is this intimate relationship between the physical goodness of the world as a reflection of the character of God that is particularly focussed in Judaism and then Christianity:

> *"For the Jews, creation was the first revelation of God. Paul said the material world so eloquently reveals the invisible attributes of God that no one has an excuse for not believing in him. Paul argued with the mystics of his day that God is not only the God of the unseen world but also of the seen."*[10]

This intimate and important relationship between the two for such a "religious man" is expressed by Eliade thus, *"nature is never only 'natural' [it] is a divine creation…the world is impregnated with sacredness…it spontaneously reveals many aspects of the sacred"*[11]. This co-joining of physical goodness and omnipotence well describes why the issue is so important to Polkinghorne and Hick. It also explains why the issue of evil has been less focussed and more easily dealt with in the Far-Eastern traditions and in Christian traditions influenced by platonic or mystical ideas that create a distance between omnipotence and goodness by reducing the importance of the physical world.

In the most influential of the Buddhist traditions, the person of God is absent, so there is no co-joining of omnipotence and goodness. The aim of life is really to

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[9] Islam differs significantly and seriously in some respects in its view of the physical world which leads some (Cope (2011)) to say it deemphasises the physical realm in favour of the spiritual. However, it nevertheless views God as "good".

[10] Landa Cope, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Template*, 2nd edition (YWAM Publishing, Seattle: 2011), p92

[11] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane – The Nature of Religion* (Harcourt Books, Orlando: 1987(1959)), pp116-117

transcend the suffering that is caused by the preoccupation with the physical life.

Suffering is viewed as that which comes upon those whom do not have the correct

focus because they are preoccupied with the physical world:

> *"The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering is this: It is this thirst
> (craving) which produces re-existence and re-becoming, bound up
> with passionate greed. It finds fresh delight now here and now there,
> namely, thirst for sense-pleasures; thirst for existence and
> becoming; and thirst for non-existence (self-annihilation)…"* [12]

The response to the problem of evil is to cease to be concerned with the physical

world:

> *"The Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering is this: It is the
> complete cessation of that very thirst, giving it up, renouncing it,
> emancipating oneself from it, detaching oneself from it."* [13]

The answer to the problem of evil is thus that evil only comes upon the man when

the man has the wrong focus. This has found resonance too in the mystical

Christian tradition throughout the history of the church where particular scriptural

injunctions are interpreted dualistically[14]. Alternatively, as found in ancient Greek

mythology, polytheistic Hinduism and paganism, the "gods" are not presented as

particularly "good" in the sense found within the theistic religions seen most vividly in

the myth of Zeus and his seduction and rape of Europa in ancient Greek mythology[15]

which some have asserted were modifications of far more ancient myths of the East.

They demand primarily appeasement and do as they please with one another and

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[12] Walpola Rahula, 'The First Sermon of the Buddha' in *Tricyle Magazine*,
http://www.tricycle.com/new-buddhism/teachings-and-texts/first-sermon-buddha, accessed
18/04/2015
[13] Walpola Rahula, 'The First Sermon of the Buddha' in *Tricyle Magazine*
[14] For example, Colossians 3:1 (NET): "if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things
above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Keep thinking about things above, not things
on the earth"
[15] One of many accounts is found in http://www.thenewfederalist.eu/Europa-and-the-bull-The-
significance-of-the-myth-in-modern-Europe.

with mortals[16]. Evil is a normal state of being, something which has existence apart from good, rather than simply the "privation of good"[17].

Thus, the solutions offered by these pessimistic views of temporal reality, is that evil is either transcended or evil just *is*. However, in the first case this is sidestepping the issue of the suffering of righteous at the hands of the wicked, it would almost be suggesting such suffering is contradictory: *if* you were living right on the true path, your suffering *would* cease. In the latter case, this is only answering the question by "*[presupposing] the very thing that they are trying to explain*"[18]. The answer to the question in such terms seems to be purely descriptive and does not help us to understand the *why* that this evil should be almost universally perceived as unpleasant and undesirable; that life would indeed be better without it; that humanity must work to eliminate it.

The answer is in contrast to the broad Palestinian religious tradition, where there seems the assumption that God is perceived to be both good with omnipotence and the problem of explaining evil in terms of its prevalence seems to have demanded an answer from Man as soon as the concept of God descended from the moral neutrality of the transcendental or numinous and landed in the moral sense of Judaism:

> *"Morality, like numinous awe, is a jump; in it, man goes beyond anything that can be 'given' in the facts of experience…All men alike stand condemned, not by alien codes of ethics, but by their own, and all men therefore are conscious of guilt…Of all the jumps that humanity takes in its religious history this is certainly the most*

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[16] See for example, http://www.lcaruana.com/webtext/europa.html
[17] Hick (1977), p38ff
[18] Lewis (2012), pp9, 11

surprising…a single people, as a people, took the new step with perfect decision – I mean the Jews" [19]

There remains an existential need to deal with the evil and suffering of the righteous and how this reflects and informs Man of the character of God. As such, the remainder of this essay will examine the philosophical core of the problem, examine how *theodicy* attempts to deal with the problem and then evaluate how successful the attempts are.

For Western analytical philosophy, evil has been construed as a "logical problem"[20] regarding the consistency of the various implicit propositions of theistic belief. These may be stated thus:

Proposition 1: God exists, is omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good.

Can this be consistent with the ontological statement (A) "evil exists" given the following propositions that would also seem to be self-evident:

Proposition 2: A perfectly good being would always eliminate evil so far as it could;

Proposition 3: An omniscient being would know all about evils;

Proposition 4: There are *no limits* to what an omnipotent being can do.

Adams and Adams in laying out this problem identify the logical problems:

1. Proposition 4 would seem to be denied by the preceding propositions and A;

2. Statement A and any of proposition 2, 3 and 4 would deny proposition 1;

3. Proposition 1 combined with 2, 3 and 4 would imply denial of the ontological reality of evil;

4. This is in turn would imply God does not exist or evil does not exist.

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[19] Lewis (2012), pp11-12
[20] Marilyn McCord Adams, Robert Merrihew Adams, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford, OUP: 1990), p2

Now, as Plantinga effectively argues, this set of propositions is *"both implicitly consistent and implicitly inconsistent"*[21] because either possibility expressed by proposition 4, if true, would have to be "*necessarily* true or *necessarily* false; so if such a claim is [just] *possible* [either is equally consistent]"[22]. This, effectively, according to Plantinga, is a logical conjunction that is not formally solvable. That is, the argument becomes one in which the opposing parties are arguing the plausibility of a possible additional proposition that renders the propositions compatible or incompatible[23]. He finds a peculiar ally in Dawkins on this logical point:

> *"[such a proposition] transport[s] us dramatically away from 50 per cent agnosticism, far towards the extreme of theism in the view of many theists, far towards the extreme of atheism in my view."*[24]

Plantinga describes two basic approaches of the theist in generating such a proposition. This is mirrored by atheologists that seek to confound such attempts and push the propositional balance in the atheistic direction. One he describes as the approach of *theodicy* which is an attempt to "specify God's reason for permitting evil"[25]. Theodicies are intended as a strong assertion of "what God's reason *is*"[26] for permitting evil. They reconcile the apparent contradiction by what Adams and Adams describe as an "aporetical" reinterpretation of the propositions[27]. Plantinga's approach, a *possible* rationale for why God could permit evil is known as the "Free Will Defense" which is the more conservative what God's reason *might possibly be*"[28] for permitting evil. This is perhaps distinctive of Plantinga's

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[21] Alvin Plantinga, 'The Free Will Defense' *in* James F. Sennett, *The Analytic Theist – an Alvin Plantinga Reader* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1998), p23
[22] Alvin Plantinga, 'The Free Will Defense' *in* James F. Sennett, *The Analytic Theist – an Alvin Plantinga Reader* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1998), pp22-23. Emphasis added in first and second instance.
[23] Alvin Plantinga (1998), p24
[24] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, London: 2006), p109
[25] Alvin Plantinga (1998), p25
[26] Plantinga (1998), p25. Emphasis original.
[27] Adams and Adams (1990), p2
[28] Plantinga (1998), p25

philosophical approach, the truth of the proposition is not asserted absolutely but in terms of its *warrant*; that is, it can be reasonably or rationally believed[29], it is not necessarily the truth:

> *"[T]he theist's not knowing why God permits evil does not by itself show that he is irrational in thinking that God does indeed have a reason."* [30]

Plantinga, by his own admission, had a narrow interest in what he was trying to argue and recognised he did not provide a defence for a believer confronted with the "*magnitude* and *extent* of evil [precipitating] a crisis of faith [it] is not intended for that purpose"[31]. He was concerned with answering philosophers like Hume, Mill and Mackie that had presented a logical argument which they had then used as part of a more general attack on theistic belief, "the theologian can maintain his position as a whole only by..be[ing] prepared to believe, not merely what cannot be proved, but what can be *disproved* from other beliefs that he also holds". Thus, Plantinga, though he was intensely thorough in his treatment and demonstrates there is no formal contradiction between the propositions, was more concerned with the philosophical reasoning rather than dealing with evil in and of itself. There seems a dissatisfaction with terminating the argument at this point, for as Plantinga himself states, propositions may be not formally contradictory but may be "clearly contradictory"[32] in their sense. What Plantinga is implicitly admitting is that there are limits on God's omnipotence, in the sense that he is bound by the laws of logic, "not even an omnipotent being can bring about logically impossible states of affairs"[33]. Thus, although Plantinga succeeds in answering the philosophical challenges by

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[29] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2000), pxi
[30] Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*, Eerdmans reprint (Grand Rapid, Wm. B Eerdmans: 1977(1974)), p11
[31] Plantinga (1977), pp28-29
[32] Plantinga (1977), p13
[33] Plantinga (1977), p17

demonstrating no formal contradiction and perhaps no other *logical* contradiction[34], there is still a theological uneasiness that would seem to require explanation of evil at a greater depth and it these *theodicies* that are now examined.

Theodicies are seen primarily as Augustinian or Irenaeusian but the central ideas are found within far more ancient religions. The middle-Eastern tradition, starting with Sumerian and Akkadian theodicies[35] is seen most focussed in ancient Judaism. Thus, the Book of Job in the ancient Jewish canon wrestles with the problem of evil in a deep and controversial way. Some scholars have held that it is a product of a morally pessimistic, failing late second temple Judaism seeking to explain the oppression and suffering of the Jewish people in this period by providing a narrative of suffering as central to the will of God for His people. Though such dating of Job seems to be flawed on linguistic grounds with its Babylonian style pointing to an era perhaps just four generations from Abraham[36], this theological explanation of suffering as within the will of God has been found attractive to many in theism.

[Augustinian theodicy]

One Christian commentator on Job is keen to see the salvific work of God prefigured in the narrative:

> *"The idea that both good and evil come to the righteous from the hand of God for some ultimate purpose, which the righteous may not understand, laid the foundation for the New Testament interpretation of the cross and the suffering of Christians." [37]*

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[34] Plantinga (1977) uses formal, implicit and explicit in describing logical contradiction
[35] Edward Blair, *The Word Illustrated Bible Handbook* (Word UK, Milton Keynes: 1977), p146
[36] Professor Carol Newsom, http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/main-articles/job.aspx, accessed 02/04/2015
[37] Blair(1977), p148

Though it would seem to represent the extreme that there is an implicit salvific purpose in suffering, suffering as corrective discipline or punishment from God has been found attractive to many within Judaism ("because of our sins" ref. Holocaust), Islam[38] and Christianity. It is arguably within the New Testament canon in the writings of the apostle James where he argues God had "a good end in mind" for Job and in 2nd Peter where his counsel to suffering Christians is to commit themselves to trusting God within their suffering. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews exhorts "endure suffering as discipline for God is treating you like sons". A modern interpretation of this view is found in the philosophical theology of John Hick, in which he asserts, alleging the Irenaeusian tradition, that Man is in the best environment for his fashioning into the son of God he is intended to be:

> *"The question that we have to ask is rather, Is this the kind of world that God might make as an environment in which moral beings may be fashioned, through their own insights and responses, into 'children of God'?...I think it is clear that a parent who loves his children, and wants them to become the best human beings they are capable of becoming, does not treat pleasure as the sole and supreme value [such] are confusing what heaven ought to be, as an environment of perfected finite beings, with what this world ought to be." [39]*

[Leibniz]

However, it is equally true that to assign a salvific role rather than an incidental or a transitory disciplinary role to evil in the form of suffering has profound theological difficulties for Christianity. If suffering is required to "perfect the saints" then heaven (or at least the training as you arrived) would be a place of profound,

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[38] http://www.onislam.net/english/ask-about-islam/faith-and-worship/islamic-creed/168393-why-does-god-allow-suffering.html, accessed 02/04/2015
[39] Hick (1977), pp257-8

deep and complete suffering. This would appear to be in direct opposition to the fundamental Christian hope. A measured interpretation of Christianity asserts that the hope of eternity is one of an age without evil and the suffering that is associated with it. For a conservative, Protestant Christianity, freedom from evil is cognate with the will of God and is experienced in its fullness as the believer enters heaven and the age to come[40] but should also be experienced wherever the Kingdom of God is manifest on Earth. The central petition of Jesus represented in the Lord's Prayer, "on Earth as it is in heaven" would seem to firmly locate salvation apart from evil.

Thus, within most religious traditions, physical evil is considered undesirable and moral evil is to be rejected. The theological method of dealing with the origin of evil within late second temple Judaism was to locate it in the person of Satan as "the Adversary of Israel" as found in the late compilation[41] of 1Chronicles 21:1. Here David's evil actions were at the instigation of the supernatural being and the didactic tone of Chronicles ensures a neat explanation of evil action and its consequences as occurring at this evil being's instigation. Within this tradition, the appearance of Satan in the opening chapters of Job is thought to be a late apologetic addition to Job added by scribes concerned about the character of God as portrayed in the book[42]. These chapters serve to "soften" the perceived self-interest (and hence, questionable morality) of God at Job's expense. Job is thus perceived as a work of theodicy.

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[40] "Enter into the joy of the Lord"

[41] John Gray, *The Book of Job* (Phoenix Press, Sheffield:2010), p32 footnote 2

[42] For the early debate regarding the status of the Prologue and Epilogue see S. R. Driver and G.B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (T & T Clark, Edinburgh: 1921), ppxxvff. For the repatriation of the Prologue and Epilogue as core literary features of the dialogue see N.C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (SCM, London: 1985), pp25-26

However, this argument has some weaknesses. The Hebrew "the satan" which appears here is not conceptually the being Satan of 1Chronciles and the New Testament[43]. Though there are probable references to the later Satan allegorically in both Isaiah and Ezekiel these are not immediately obvious to the reader and do not serve a directly didactic purpose to the reader unless they are armed with New Testament theology. The concept of an evil being who stands in direct opposition to God's purposes is only developed strongly within the gospels and in certain New Testament passages describing the evil government of the heavenlies. Job, it is argued, is not so much concerned with defending God but is rather concerned, as were Habbakuk and Jeremiah, with "the suffering of the innocent and the prosperity of the ungodly, which upset the belief in the doctrine of sin and retribution"[44]. In this interpretation, the question is regarding the human response to the theological disjuncture of the doctrine. However, the "answer of Yahweh" does seem to serve in the name of theodicy by redirecting the reader to the magnificence and wisdom of God. With this passage firmly seen as within the core of the book rather than an addition, it would suggest a terminus within the tradition that views the presence of evil as permitted by God and used as He would. Thus, the theological question would appear to resolve down to what is the origin of the authority of evil in human history and this intersects with the philosophical question of evil and how it affects the warrant for a belief in an omniscient, omnipotent and good God.

The locus of this theological and philosophical argument is what is known as the "free will defence"[45],[46]. Polkinghorne concisely states it thus, "*a world of freely*

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[43] Gray(2010), pp34-35
[44] Gray (2010), p33
[45] John Polkinghorne, *Reason and reality – the relationship between science and theology* (SPCK, London: 1991), p83.

choosing beings is better than a world of perfectly programmed automata, however destructive some of those choices may be."[47] Polkinghorne observes that an early objection to this argument is found in that it "*leaves untouched the problem of physical disaster (disease and evil)*"[48] but this reflects the cautiousness and scientific rigour of his approach to the problem. The fundamentalist has a simple answer to the problem of physical evil, it is caused by spiritual evil and that spiritual evil was released into the innocence of creation by the choice of the first Man Adam to believe Satan over God. The presupposition of this position is of course to imply that the creation narrative of Genesis chapters 1-3 are written in deterministic language that can be interpreted literally. This is instantly severely problematic as the central components of this creation myth are found by anthropologists amongst virtually every grouping of Man on the planet and that there are two separate creation myths juxtaposed in Genesis[49]. However, Cope relates the story of an Amazonian tribe contacted by missionaries that listened to the stories of the tribe from the elders for a week who described the relationships between the tribes of men and then repeated the essential elements of the Genesis creation narrative to the astonished missionaries. Cope asserts that the linguistic quality of the initial chapters of Genesis reflects an oral tradition that Moses reinterpreted to demonstrate the purposes of God within the creation.

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[46] Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1974), p29ff.
[47] John Polkinghorne, *Reason and reality – the relationship between science and theology* (SPCK, London: 1991), p84.
[48] Polkinghorne (1991), p84
[49] This is sometimes explained by appealing to Hebrew "form" who prefer that the second is an amplification of the first as in M. H. Woudstra, "The *Toledot* of the Book of Genesis and Their Redemptive-Historical Significance," *CTJ* 5 (1970): 184-89 and Guthrie et al (eds), "2:4-4:26: The generations of heaven and earth" in *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (IVP, London: 1971), p83.

Cope, like Polkinghorne, reflects a genuine evangelical view but a view that is rigorously supportive of the progress of scientific knowledge[50] and that our interpretation of reality and scripture needs to be in a symbiotic relationship rather than considering the Bible as a textbook with which to answer questions about physical reality[51]. Polkinghorne gives a series of clever illustrations of just how dangerous a thoroughgoing literalism is when trying to decide just what it is that a particular passage of scripture is teaching about the physical world. For example, 1 Sam 2:8 seems to imply the world is indeed stationary, the universe revolves around it and in the Revelation of John in speaking of the "corners of the Earth"[52] would be evidential support for the flat Earth hypothesis. Polkinghorne delineates an "analytical" mode of reading scripture[53] where the reader is understanding what is actually said and is assessing its historicity in the critical realist fashion. However, the readers of Scripture also "[submit] to it…with the totality of what is set before us"[54]. Polkinghorne and Cope elevate the role of science with a strong view that science actually does tell us about the way the physical world is in a way that the Bible does not and was not intended to do. Science informs theology rather than theology providing a normative framework into which science fits when it comes to the physical world but this does not contradict the role of the separate but complementary creation myths of Genesis 1 and 2 in communicating theological truths. Thus, Polkinghorne has no problem with Genesis as an important and crucial part of the human story but rejects it as historical prose[55].

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[50] Landa Cope, *The Old Testament Template – Rediscovering God's Principles for Discipling Nations* (YWAM Publishing, Seattle: 2011(2006)), pp91-102. These attempts seem to be made in the name of theological orthodoxy and the desire to create a seamless continuity in scripture as required by fundamentalism.
[51] Polkinghorne (1991), p61
[52] Rev 7:1, 3. See also Isa 11:12.
[53] Polkinghorne (1991), p66
[54] Polkinghorne (1991), p66
[55] Polkinghorne (1991), pp71-73

This becomes critical because science has demonstrated that life evolved and that the life of the planet has not been static but has moved through eras with species dying and new species emerging. Plantinga makes the important philosophical point that modern evolutionary theory is distinct from evolutionism that proposes an undirected development of life. Plantinga as a non-fundamentalist Christian philosopher asserts that God is free to create in whatever way He chooses and evolutionary theory is perfectly consistent with an open epistemological position that, like Cope, asserts that the details of creation are unveiled by scientific research[56] rather than the opening chapters of Genesis. Creationism, like evolutionism, is seen as an extreme of "tortuous trickery"[57] that results from misreading and by not respecting the semantic context of a text.

The purpose of this lengthy discussion above was to demonstrate that the fundamentalist circle can still not satisfactorily answer all the theological problems and challenges of evil. Such an epistemological view of evil is described by Kinoti:

> "[It] enables many to evade reality…faith [is] used as a narcotic to evade the pain, the ugliness, the difficulties, the concrete reality of the world in which we find ourselves." [58]

It labels them as unimportant but a Christian philosopher wants to assess the free will argument and answer objections to it because literalism alone will not help us understand or analyse evil.

[Conclusion]

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[56] Cope (2011), p102
[57] Polkinghorne (1991), p72
[58] Dr George Kinoti, *Hope for Africa and what the Christians can do* (