

Introduction

The question of the origin of evil amounts in the end to word-play and scholastic prattle.

J. G. HAMANN

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What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

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The problem of evil is usually understood to be a religious problem. How can a good and omnipotent God exist, if there is so much evil in the world? Recent philosophical discussions about the problem have shown it to be a more general and deeper problem that concerns the meaning of the world and our place in it.

Yujin Nagasawa has brought the larger scope of the problem of evil to the fore by claiming that atheists too face a problem of evil. How can life be meaningful and how can the world be good, if evolutionary processes have led to the birth of mankind and these processes include a huge amount of evil and suffering? Nagasawa's atheist problem of evil explicitly concerns the value and meaning of the world in a non-theist setting, so the search for the significance and logic of the problem of evil has to be wider than just the problem about God and evil.¹

Susan Neiman presents the problem of evil as a problem of meaning of the world in her exploration of the problem of evil in modern thought. She reads modern epistemology as an attempt to seek for meaning and order behind evil and potentially deceptive appearances. Is there an order giving reasons for phenomena and justifications for evil? She also gives an alternative

¹ Nagasawa 2018. See also Phillips 2004.

characterization of the problem of evil: the real and rational aren't related at all. The problem is also rooted in a rationalist logic of justification that is shared by both rationalists and empiricists: facts can be meaningful and have value only, if there is a system of sufficient reasons that orders and justifies them. The problem of evil then concerns the intelligibility of the world: how can the world be meaningful, if it contains much evil?²

This book concerns the relationship of the problems of evil and intelligibility. It is based on my dissertation *The Problem of Evil and the Problem of Intelligibility*.³ My goal is to lay bare the logic of the problem of evil and to develop a grammatical metacritique of its background assumptions. The method of grammatical metacritique comes from J. G. Hamann (1730–1788) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), who charted language-use and its underlying relationships to criticize the ways philosophical questions are posed. My work also greatly strengthens the Neiman Thesis: the problem of evil and the problem of intelligibility are linked. The problem of intelligibility consists of three related problems about the relationship of the mind and the world:

1. How is the ability to think possible? (The mind)
2. How can rational concepts of the mind be used of empirical objects in the world? (The interface)
3. Does the world itself have a rational order and meaning, which can be grasped? (The world)

The Problem of Evil has three main presuppositions: the fact/value-, fact/meaning-dualisms and the principle of sufficient reason. The problem has deep roots in Western philosophy, as philosophers since Plato have often connected the concepts of being, reason, good and God. These arguments and connections depend on the Principle of Sufficient Reason: being itself is constituted by the rational grounds and explanations of reason. The question of sufficient reasons in the empirical world gives the question of the foundations of metaphysics: how can models for rational conceptual structures be used for describing the being of empirical objects in science, religious practices or everyday life? The question of moral reasons is another attempt to search meaning through sufficient reasons: does everything have a meaningful purpose, if there is evil in the world? The problems of evil and intelligibility are then two sides of the same coin.

The overarching argumentative narrative starts from the commonly accepted theistic problem of evil: how can God exist if there is so much evil in

² Neiman 2015.

³ Snellman 2020b.

the world? The theistic or special problem of evil quickly becomes a part of a larger problem of intelligibility: how can the world have sense and how can life be good and meaningful, given that there is so much evil in the world? I then trace the roots of the traditional formulation of the problem of evil in Plato⁴ and then explore, how the search for an order behind appearances led to the rise of the problem of evil to a central position in early modern philosophy.

I explore Neiman's reading of modern philosophy to identify the key presuppositions of the problem of evil: the appearance/reality, fact/meaning and fact/value-conceptual gaps, and the principle of sufficient reason. Things appear to be chaotic and evil, but they might be expressions of an underlying good order. The facts of the world make our expressions and observations true logically independently of each other, but their meaning consists in the logic of how they hang together. Values are a special case of meanings, as they point out what ought to be the case. However, values do not automatically entail facts, as "There ought not have been a coronavirus pandemic" does not entail "There was no coronavirus pandemic". The search for meanings and values in the world then takes the form of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: there is an order of sufficient reasons and an Arche that together unify the chaotic-looking and evil facts into an ordered, meaningful and good whole. The problem of evil then arises when evil appearances challenge such unifications. Theists might doubt that horrific evils have no purposes or moral reasons for God to permit them. Atheists face similar problems, because materialist Arches and orders of Darwinian evolution cannot assign meaning to the world or purpose to life. I articulate the problem about evil and meaning as a General Argument from Evil, which lays bare the logic of the problem of evil.⁵

The theistic problem about evil and God is just a special case of the general problem of evil. Facts, values and meanings are united by God, who is the source of values and creates an order of sufficient reasons giving meaning and purpose in the world. G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716) is the most prominent proponent of this approach. Leibniz takes God to be the ultimate origin of things, because He chooses essences to maximize the greatness of the world. Then God is the sufficient reason of the world, and the order of essences gives a reason for God's choice and also orders God's creation. Then God is taken to be the guarantor of an order of sufficient reasons. Leibniz however notes that the apparent existence of evil presents an anomaly for his theism and develops different theodicies to explain these evil appearances.⁶

4 *Rep.* 2: 379.

5 See Neiman 2015, Nagasawa 2018, Nagel 2012.

6 Leibniz 1989.

The debate was taken up in mid-20th century by John L. Mackie, William Rowe and Alvin Plantinga, whose articles are the classics for the analytic debate on evil. Mackie argues that the set {"God is good", "God is omnipotent", "Evil exists"} is inconsistent: it is logically impossible that a good and omnipotent God exists, given that there is evil. Mackie however has to admit that God could have a higher-order good that gives Him a reason to permit evils and is led to paradoxes about the ordained power of God and the existence of God in a world with independent centres of causal power. These problems lead to the collapse of the logical problem of evil. William Rowe argues that a good God can allow an evil *s* only, if it prevents a greater evil *s'* or leads to a greater good *G*. This interprets divine goodness in terms of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and the associated theodicism: "*God (...) would not allow any evil unless it is necessary for a greater good. Meeting this criterion (...) is the only thing that would provide God with a morally sufficient reason to permit evil*".⁷ Alvin Plantinga then models the dialogue of God and creatures in the joint creation of the world in his free-will defence. God actualizes a set of affairs *T*, and creatures *S* freely choose an act *A* according to their tendencies to make the free choice $T \rightarrow A$. Then if *S* chooses to sin at *A*, God cannot create the world where *T* and not-*A* hold. Plantinga then argues that God's choice of essences or counterfactuals of freedom aims for the best balance of good and evil. Then Plantinga too works within the Leibnizian picture of God being constrained by the essences and His choices aiming for the best among logically possible worlds.⁸

Chapter 3 examines the methodological questions involved in a critique of the problem of evil. I first examine anti-theodicies, or objections to the theodacist approach to evil. The analytic debate on God and evil is thus neo-Leibnizian, as it works with the picture of the Principle of Reason, an a priori logical space of essences and God shopping essences for the best. This picture can be questioned in two ways: either by morally condemning the Panglossianism or by rejecting the underlying speculative metaphysics. Toby Betenson distinguishes between conceptual and moral anti-theodicies. Conceptual anti-theodicies reject the conceptual presuppositions of the problem of evil, and moral anti-theodicies condemn anti-theodicies morally. I have defended conceptual anti-theodicy in a debate with Betenson. Moral anti-theodicies will either have to assume that the atheist Argument from Evil is valid, or are dependent on a deeper rejection of the logic of the problem. One can put it as a problem

⁷ Peterson et al. 148, 128–153.

⁸ Mackie 1955, Rowe 1979, Plantinga 1974, Neiman 2015.

of moralism: if a theodicy is correct after all, then condemning theodicies amount to morally condemning God and the moral order of the world, which is moralistic hubris par excellence. A successful anti-theodicy then necessarily involves a critique of the underlying speculative metaphysics and a dissolution of the problems of evil. One can even define anti-theodicism as a denial of the claim that meaning or God require sufficient reasons.⁹

A critique of reason is then needed to reject the problem of evil – especially as the problems of evil and foundations of metaphysics are closely related. There are three kinds of conceptual anti-theodicies: Kantian, Jamesian and Hamannian. Kantian anti-theodicy builds on the work of Immanuel Kant (1724–1806) and rejects the problem of evil as speculative metaphysics. Evil appearances are a part of the sensuous world of phenomena, divine justice is a part of the intellectual world of values. Attempts to unite these two worlds or to argue for atheism go against the limits of reason or the necessary conditions of moral practices. The question of God and future justice become practical and moral matters. Jamesian anti-theodicies follow William James (1842–1910) in locating religious expressions in language-use, and examining their practical consequences. Theodicist appeals to the PSR go against the pluralist relationships of experience and the necessary conditions of moral improvement, as they presuppose a single metaphysically necessary system of reasons. God too is redefined as a chessmaster, who can defeat evil.

Hamannian anti-theodicies follow J.G. Hamann (1730–1788) in developing a grammatical metacritique of reason and language-use to dissolve the dualisms and assumptions underlying the problems of evil. It also emphasizes intertwining between facts and meanings and facts and values, and locates expressions like “God”, “good” and “omnipotent” in religious language-games to criticize theodacist metaphysics. Hamannian anti-theodicies can also be used as metatheories for Kantian and Jamesian anti-theodicies. Kantian accounts still presupposes the fact/value and senses/reason-dualisms, and its philosophical principles and concepts of reason are based on language-use. James offers a focus on language-use, a view of God as a chessmaster and a pluralism of relationships and reasons, which can be accommodated into a metacritical anti-theodicy.¹⁰

The problem of evil then rests on a dualistic metaphysics of facts, meanings and values. It also presupposes that intelligibility is to be found in orders of reasons or moral purposes. One could easily object that the Problem of Evil

9 Betenson 2016, Snellman 2019. Cf. Gen. 3.

10 See Pihlström & Kivistö 2016 for the alternatives Kantian, Jamesian and Wittgensteinian anti-theodicies.

is just another piece of speculative metaphysics. Hamann in fact raised this objection to Immanuel Kant (1724–1806) in 1759. Hamann had converted to Lutheran Christianity, and Kant was trying to convince him to hold on to the Enlightenment project by sending him theodicies. Hamann then introduced David Hume's (1711–1776) scepticism to Kant, which led Kant to question his pre-critical approach. Hamann then started a life-long debate with Kant.¹¹ This book is in many ways builds on the legacy of these debates, especially by emphasizing the critique of reason and linking it with critiques of language and of dualistic and speculative metaphysics:

Metaphysics has the language of its scholasticism and its courts; I am suspicious of both and cannot either understand them or work with them. I almost suspect that our entire philosophy consists more of language than of reason, as the misunderstanding of countless words, the objectification of arbitrary abstractions, the dualisms of Gnostic so-called knowledge and even common metaphors of the *sensus communis* have produced a world of questions, whose answers are just as groundless as the questions themselves. We still lack a *grammar* of reason that could function like the grammar of Scripture, by revealing how its common elements intertwine harmoniously like the strings of the Psalter.¹²

Chapter 3 goes on to develop grammatical methods in philosophy. I first investigate, how Hamann and Wittgenstein developed philosophical grammar. Philosophical grammar charts the relationships underlying language-use and its phenomena. Relational necessary-conditions arguments then draw necessary conclusions about these relationships and point out necessary conditions for phenomena. The linguistic metacritique of reason then offers methodological tools to approach the big philosophical questions about intelligibility. Metaphysics concerns the nature of being in itself (“being qua being”), different forms of causation and intelligibility, and the nature of possibility and necessity. The question about the possibility of metaphysics and the applicability of metaphysical categories to empirical objects has been taken up in recent analytic philosophy.¹³ The debate includes many important critical questions about the links of metaphysics and science and the question of realism about metaphysical natures, possibility spaces and language-world-links. The foundations of metaphysics debate is however just a version of the problem of

11 For the Hamann-Kant debate, see Bayer 2002, Beiser 1987, Betz 2009.

12 ZH 5, 272.

13 See Morganti & Tahko 2017.

intelligibility: how can we understand the world with abstract concepts? The problem of intelligibility is however closely related to the problem of evil. My strategy then is to use the approach of language-games to expose the assumptions underlying the normal approaches to the problem of intelligibility, and then use these results to expose the problem of evil as a pseudo-problem.

I articulate and systematize Wittgenstein's concept of a language-game by taking up two ideas from Hamann: the connection of language-use and money, and the comparison of philosophical grammar and abstract algebra. These comparisons lead to the use of game theory and mathematical category theory to chart language-games. These formalizations are very much in the spirit of Charles S. Peirce's (1839–1914) logical semiotics and triadic world-view. Linguistic practices and their underlying relationships can be viewed as games or category systems. They are composed of elements or Firsts, like the word "Chess!" and the fact that there is a mug on the table. These elements are connected through uses, practices, rules, laws and other institutions or Seconds. The institutions or Seconds however function against the background of a relationship, game or system. Systemic logics like tendencies of cups to fall to the ground or the meaning of the word "Chess!" are then mediated by the practices and interactions of a system. Hamann and Peirce also use communication theories to articulate their ideas. Peirce's system of (sign → interpretant → object) has also parallels in Hamann's (word-sign → regular use → object-involving practice) and (God → nature → reason). I also introduce Peirce's language-games for seeking and finding. One interprets the sentence "Some woman is adored by all Catholics" by first pointing at Mary, and then let Interpreter pick a Catholic to see that the sentence becomes true regardless of the Interpreter's choice. Jaakko Hintikka similarly argues that "There are transuranium elements" is true, because one can produce them in a nuclear reactor. Then such language-games of seeking and finding interpret terms like "being", "there is" and "exists".¹⁴

These core ideas then lead to a critique of the mind/world, senses/reason and fact/meaning gaps. A higher-level relationship H can function through a lower-level relationship L so that they are intertwined. Then this intertwining and isomorphism between the relationship breaks down dualisms between H and L. Language intertwines rational concepts and empirical expressions and objects. Language-use then breaks down the subject/object, senses/reason and fact/meaning-dualisms. Models also allow us to see meaning in events,

14 EP 2, 168, PI, OC, H, Bayer 2002, EP 2, Hintikka 1973. Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen's (2009) interpretation of would-bes and habits as strategies is a major background influence for this work.

as they are symbolic systems representing real ones. One can see a bubble-chamber picture as electrons by juxtaposing it with a model. Models work by reorienting the activities of seeking and finding: one can point at a trace and say “That is an electron!” by comparing the picture with a model. Models then allow us to recognize meaning through aspect-perception and practices of object-recognition. Language-games also involve responding to reality and their rules can capture necessities and tendencies in the world. The rule of weighing cheese and reading the meter can be isomorphic with the event of a piece of cheese being weighed and pulling the scales down. Practices of weighing and looking at the scales also mediate the natural isomorphisms. The rules of language-games are then arbitrary social constructions and they symbolize real tendencies via practical isomorphisms. Then language-use can guarantee the objectivity of our concepts, as long as the concepts do not go against the necessary conditions of linguistic relationships.

The examination of language-games and the activities of seeking and finding also clears the ground for an investigation about the categories. Peirce and Hintikka locate the expression “to be” and “exist” in language-games of seeking and finding. Newton Garver argues that language-games underlie metaphysical categories, because they give the different possible characterizations of objects.¹⁵ The different ways of seeking and finding objects can then give us categories of being. We can point out the possibilities of an object by exploring the ways its different properties, relationships and facts can be pointed out and identified. We can also investigate, how it is traced across time and across possible situations and how stories give its causal and social roles. The language-games involved in categorization also include their objects and build on their powers and roles in relationships underlying language. Then the language-games of seeking and finding give essences of objects: how objects are identified, what are the possible states they can be a part of, and how they are reidentified by their roles in relationships and stories that are told about them. Categories are then located in the practices of encountering reality, and not straightforwardly in the objects themselves or in the thoughts of the subject. They are logical types of linguistic activities of seeking and finding. These activities simultaneously also include types of objects that are parts of these activities. Moreover, these logical types are higher-order structures of language-use, our interactions with reality and the responses of reality and its objects. Then the categories cannot be detached from language-games without turning the theory into groundless speculative metaphysics.

15 EP 2, Hintikka 1973, Garver 1994.

Chapter 5 shows, how locating categories in language-games also leads straight away into the collapse of the fact/meaning-dualism. Objects are identified against a background of grids of reference and possibility, and principles of reidentification. These principles trace the roles and interactions that objects have in relational systems. The grids of reference and possibility however give the logical spaces of facts: I am located in my office, and I am typing on a computer. The principles of reidentification allow one to see the facts as my activity: it is a person writing a book. Then seeking and finding objects leads to an aspect-perception of their facts, and this aspect-perception assigns meaning to these facts by locating them in objects, their relationships and systems of interaction. The relational contexts for objects and facts can also be analysed into elements, institutions and systemic logics, or Firsts, Seconds and Thirds. Facts about objects are their elements, and rules governing their action in a context are their institutions. The systemic logics of a relationship then play out through the objects and its facts, and render the objects and facts meaningful. Moreover, the higher-level meanings H function through the facts, rules and objects at L, so facts and meanings are functionally intertwined. I then apply the model to examine physical causation, biological systems, social expressions and mental states, art and aesthetic values, and also Divine Presence in Christianity.

I examine the Principle of Sufficient Reason in Chapter 6. Alexander Pruss has recently given a strong defence of the version “All contingent facts have an explanation”. Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) contrasts between the readings “*Nothing is without reason*” i.e. everything has an explanation, from “*Nothing is without reason*”, or being in itself (or being qua being) is constituted by rational grounds.¹⁶ Pruss’ arguments build on a neo-Aristotelian views of possibility and actuality that link possibilities with causal powers and actuality with causal actualization. He also offers a modal ontological argument for the claim that everything has a cause. These reasonings are however metaphysical and they depend on a synthesis of neo-Aristotelianism and liberalized Leibnizianism. The metaphysical basis of Pruss’ argument immediately points to Heidegger’s reading of the Principle: it links being itself with the structures of reason. I then examine how the Principle is generated with the process of taking phenomena, abstracting a rational structure out of them, and then identifying the structure with being itself: phenomena → concepts = being. The abstraction produces essences in Greek metaphysics, categories of representation in Kant’s deduction and the structures of mathematical physics in modern

16 Pruss 2006, Heidegger 1971/1996.

scientism. Moreover, the analysis highlights the deep connection between the problem of evil and the problem of intelligibility. The problem of evil can be put: is being = moral reason or purpose? The problem of sufficient reasons for intelligibility can be put: is being = theoretical reason? Then the grammar of being, the question of evil, the grammar of the word “God” and the nature of reason come together at a very deep level.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason sounds like common sense, so it might look foolish to criticize it. There are however some counterexamples. Take a coin toss, where the probabilities are 50%/50%. Then the toss doesn't show any kind of directionality to a particular outcome or make it more probable than the others. Such cases are even said to obey the Principle of Insufficient Reason. Another problem is that the Principle could lead to reductionism, as one can have institutions that determine the makeup of a system but does not determine its parts. For example, a sports club board could have 5 seats and 2 seats reserved for both women and men. The particular seats are however left undetermined. Leonard Susskind even argues that quantum indeterminism involves the possibility that we can know everything about a system but not know everything about its parts.¹⁷ For example, a half of uranium atoms decay over a given time, but we cannot predict or explain, which ones decay. These problems however are small when compared to the difficulties in identifying being qua being with reason.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason identifies being itself with reason, but does not define reason. Heidegger instead shows that the Principle takes reason for granted. This leads to a collapse of the strong version of the Principle. Wittgenstein has shown that the term “reason” is used and reasons are given in language-games. These language-games however presuppose encountering the world and the ability to seek and find objects, so the concept of being is prior to giving reasons. Moreover, there are many kinds of sufficient reasons: moral, causal and logical. This plurality of reasons in fact resembles the fact/meaning and fact/value-gaps. The fact that moral reasons do not reduce to causal or logical ones is analogous to Hume's fact/value-gap. The fact that causal reasons do not reduce to logical ones underlies Hume's critique of causation, which itself is a version of the fact/meaning-gap. Then attempts to unify facts, values and meanings with a grand unification based on sufficient reasons then fails, because the conceptual gaps are just turned into ambiguities about reason. Moreover, our concepts and categories are responses to reality in the communication (reality → facts → language-games), so concepts and categories cannot

17 Susskind & Friedman 2014.

be straightforwardly identified with the structures of reality even though the two might be practically isomorphic. Concepts of possibility, necessity and essence too are embedded in language-games and their underlying relationships, and these relationships are contingent. These concepts cannot then be objectified into a super-order of a priori logical possibility either. The chapter closes with a discussion about the role of metaphysics in science and creation theology. The metaphysical principles like the *PSR* must be interpreted through religious practices, theory formation and other practices of interpretation, if one uses them as principles of order in creation theology or as regulative principles in science.

Chapter 7 deals with humanistic and religious meaning. I use the collapse of the fact/meaning-dualism to collapse the fact/value gap with a grammar of virtues. Alasdair MacIntyre and Hamann argue that human actions are not isolated facts, but are meaningful against the background of activities and their goals. An act is then an element of activities, and the activity is a strategy or institution in a social or communicative context. Then the activities render activities meaningful in their contexts. Human beings can moreover respond well to their human condition: one can distinguish between human-nature-as-it-is, the realization of human telos and virtues as habits or strategies that lead one to the telos. The fact/value-gap then collapses, because virtuous practices or habits like recognizing the homeless give moral meaning to actions like making a donation against the settings of social institutions and facts about human nature.¹⁸

I use the grammar of virtues to articulate an account of literary humanist meaningfulness in *Hamlet* and other tragic stories. Tragedies like *Hamlet* include broken relationships that frustrate the good, but Hamlet's actions can nevertheless show courage and other moral virtues. Hamlet's actions like uttering "to be or not to be?" are plot points or elements, the roles of the drama and Hamlet's virtues are institutions, and the plot points embody Hamlet's virtues and the narrative in the drama even though the events do not have morally sufficient reasons. The grammar of virtues also challenges the metaphysically determinist versions of the *PSR*, as they go against the relational conditions of moral action. Moral actions presuppose that one can distinguish between the present evil state and the realization of the telos, but this can't be done if the world is metaphysically necessitated by sufficient reasons. I also show that the grammar of virtues is isomorphic to the religions of the sick soul, so the use of the word "good" leads to a grammar of the Holy that avoids theodicism.

18 See MacIntyre 1981, von Rad 1988, Bayer 2002.

Religious stories start with an unhappy initial state: Israel in Egypt for Judaism and Christianity, suffering and impermanence in Buddhism. The Holy then saves and leads from this initial state: God rescues the Israelites from Egypt and the Eightfold Path liberates from craving to life. The Holy is then called noble, good or omnipotent because it can save and liberate. The isomorphism between the grammar of virtues and the grammar of salvation strongly hints that the special problem of evil is just another failed Enlightenment foundational project. The grammar of the Holy leads to an investigation of theological grammar.¹⁹

Chapter 7.2 develops the methods of theological grammar and uses them to investigate the presuppositions of the theistic problem of evil. Theological grammar uses the method of language-games as categories from Chapter 4 and applies it to religious practices, and the method of language-games as categories can be seen as a generalization of theological grammar: “Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)”²⁰ The expression “there is”, “exists” and “some” are interpreted through activities of seeking, finding and encountering realities and objects. Religious practices are then interpreted as attempts to encounter God or the Holy and interpret the world as His presence and creation. The objects of activities of seeking and finding can be categorized by charting the different ways of locating them, pointing their properties and reidentifying them with stories that point out their causal tendencies, characters and other roles in relationships. These discourse-possibilities for seeking and finding then give the possible properties and the principles for reidentification for an object, or its essence. The grammatical method is used to chart God’s essence in religious practices by examining, how pragmatically minded philosophers and theologians like Peter Ochs, James, Hamann, David Paulsen, Martin Luther and Timo Veijola characterize the practices of encountering God, issuing corrections to religious beliefs and practices and God’s essential properties like goodness and omnipotence through religious stories and practices.²¹

The focus on theological grammar leads to a critique of the presuppositions of the theistic problem of evil in the spirit of Hamann, Bas van Fraassen and D. Z. Phillips. They all formulate versions of a dilemma: goodness and omnipotence are either defined with the PSR and the logical concept of omnipotence as in theodicism, or in terms of religious practices. Definitions of God’s

19 MacIntyre 1981, *Dhammapada*, James 1979, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, Dtn. 26.

20 PI 373.

21 Ochs 2004, James 1979, Paulsen 1999, ZH 7, 169, H 60–95, Kusch 2011, Veijola 1991, Garver 1994 61–72, Hintikka 1973, EP 2.

essential properties in terms of the PSR and the logical concept of omnipotence however turn out to be indeterminate, because sufficient reasons and logical grids of possibility depend on language-games and their underlying systems. An investigation into the theological grammar of the Bible leads to interpretations that are at odds with theodicism. The Gospels offer a grand narrative of God's redemptive sovereignty and the defeat of evil through the actions of Jesus, whose execution did not have morally sufficient reasons. The Gospels however presuppose the metaphors of "kingdom of God" and creation theology, which are investigated in Leo Perdue's reading of the book of Job: "the book aims at *speaking correctly* about God, as Job, his servant, has done. The entire movement of the book is theological, that is, the articulation of language about and to God".²² The book of Job uses the metaphor of the struggle against chaos as a metatheory for metaphors of creation theology and anthropology: God as a craftsman, a fertile world, God's Word, humans as kings, humans as slaves and revolt against gods. The metaphor of struggle against chaos → the victory of god → god crowned as king → creation via word or construction → judgment then controls the grammar of "God is good" and "God is omnipotent".

My use of biblical grammar has two key presuppositions. First, the plain sense of Scripture should control the different interpretations of the religious texts. Second, metaphysical theologies should be tested against the Scriptural material or abstracted from the Biblical metaphors themselves. These assumptions are broadly Protestant in character, although the primacy of plain sense is also a part of some Scripture-and-tradition religions like Judaism. Although I work in a Christian framework, the plain-sense reading of Job can be appropriated in Judaism as well. The Jewish theologian Jon Levenson argues similarly that "the overwhelming tendency of biblical writers as they confront undeserved evil is not to *explain* it away but call upon God to *blast* it away".²³

Theological grammar then leads to a formal consistency proof or a refutation of the atheist argument from evil in Chapter 8. God's goodness is understood as His commitment to repair suffering and to see that the world reaches its telos. God's omnipotence is understood in terms of God having a strategy to defeat evil and to guarantee the triumph of the good, as in James' famous chess-master example. Then "justice is not a static principle inherent in the structure of creation, but a dynamic force that must be continuously established and

22 Perdue 1991, 75. Wright 2006, Levenson 1994, van Fraassen 2002, Phillips 2004, Ochs 2004.

23 Levenson 1994, xvii, Morganti & Tahko 2017, Hamann explicitly states that "like Luther I turn my entire philosophy into a *grammar*" (ZH 7, 169).

aggressively maintained by means of victory over evil".²⁴ The dialogue between God and Job can be put as a game, where God, Job and Leviathan make moves according to the storyline of the book. Both Leviathan and Job include chaotic and pointless evil in the game, as Leviathan destroys Job's happiness and Job challenges God's cosmic order. God can however defeat Job's revolt and also restore his happiness by answering Job and vindicating him, so God has a strategy for defeating Leviathan and the pointless evils of Job's disasters and the curse on creation. Then the game formally articulates the logic of the struggle against chaos and the fight for justice in the *Chaoskampf* metaphor: struggle → the victory of god → god crowned as king → creation via word or construction → judgment, and locates God's essential properties of goodness and omnipotence in the struggle. Some of its positions or "possible worlds" however make the claims "God is good", "God is omnipotent", "There is pointless evil" all true, so the set {"God is good", "God is omnipotent", "Pointless evil exists"} is consistent.

The Chapter 9 contains the results of the technical arguments of the book. Like the Introduction, it offers a synoptic view of the twin problems and their interrelationships. The presentation of the Introduction and the Summary of Chapter 9 are however different. This Introduction is a metacritical philosophical essay on the problem of evil. Chapter 9 presents the philosophical and technical results in the context of their argumentative narrative.

The outline of the argument so far gives a novel way of looking at the problems of evil, intelligibility, theology and their interrelationships. I have noticed that the legitimacy of my approach is often questioned, when I discuss my project with traditional theodiscists or moral antitheodiscists. Moral antitheodiscists like Pihlström often claim that the argument is a theodicy in disguise after all, because my grammatical antitheodicy retains a framework of meaning through the logic of language-games, systems, human practices and religious stories. My discussions with traditional theodiscists like Peter van Inwagen and an anonymous peer reviewer of the book have often ended up in mutual incomprehension. I am often accused of simply changing the subject away from the traditional problem of evil, rejecting metaphysical realism or going against traditionally interpreted Christian beliefs because I develop a linguistic critique of reason and of the presuppositions theodiscist metaphysics. Betenson too claims that I am changing the subject by calling the entire tradition of theodiscist metaphysics into question.²⁵

24 Perdue 1991, 221. I was also inspired by T.P. Virkkunen's work on God's plans in teleological worldviews.

25 I build here on my debate with Betenson (2019), discussions with Pihlström, van Inwagen, Panu-Matti Pöykkö and on reviews by Rod Nicholls and an anonymous reviewer.

These objections arise out of the fact that I am charting a position between traditional theodicy and moral antitheodicy, and my position has significant overlaps with both. Both grammatical antitheodicy and theodicism retain a framework of meaning, but differ whether it is to be found in our practices and encounters with the structures of the world, or in moral reasons for evil. Both grammatical and moral antitheodicies reject theodacist metaphysical foundationalism and speculative metaphysics by developing a critique of reason in the tradition of Hamann and Kant. They offer different criticisms of the problem of evil, different approaches to intelligibility and to the issue of realism. Moral antitheodicy is often Kantian and grounds its critiques of theodicies on the possibility of moral action, but conceptual antitheodicy builds on the ideas of language-games as an interface of mind and the world.²⁶ The different approaches can be contrasted with Table 1, which however shows how deeply the problem of evil and its critiques are rooted in views about the intelligibility of the world:

These contrasts lead to a motivational question: why grammatical antitheodicy? How can the project be motivated in present philosophical discussions, especially as it attempts to develop a new way of looking at the problem of evil and articulate a comprehensive view about intelligibility? What does it have to offer to traditional theodacists, moral antitheodacists and philosophers with differing starting-points? Editor Rod Nicholls and Professor Oliver Wiertz have both noted that it develops a new approach to the problem of evil. The focus on intelligibility and the presuppositions of the problem of evil shows, that the traditional problem of evil is not inevitable but conditioned by particular presuppositions that can be called into question. Developing a General Problem of Evil and then using it as a metatheory for the traditional theological problem also helps to understand the links between the traditional problem, Neiman's existential problem and Nagasawa's atheist problem of evil by laying bare the logic underlying them all. The method of language-games moreover allows to chart the intelligibility of the world and concepts while developing a pragmatist via media between metaphysical realism and Kant-style idealism. The project develops technical tools like language-game theory, category theory and functional intertwinings for use in philosophical analysis. Linking the problem of evil and the essential properties of God with the metaphysical methods debate also makes it possible to use debates between sophisticated and critical metaphysical realists like Tahko and brilliant critics of metaphysical

26 Oliver Wiertz emphasizes the centrality of language-games in the grammatical antitheodacist approach.

TABLE 1 A comparison of theodicism, grammatical and moral antitheodicies

Position	Theodicism	Grammatical antitheodicy	Moral antitheodicy
Starting-point	Metaphysics / traditional ontotheology	Reason is language: language-games as a critique of reason	Ethics as ontology: ethics constitutes the human POV, theodicy immoral
Realism	Intelligibility in objects: metaphysical realism	Intelligibility in interface: natural realism + constructivism about concepts	Intelligibility in the mind: Kantian transcendental idealism
Basis of intelligibility	Principle of Sufficient Reason	Interface language-games / systems, element/institution/logic	Human point of view, ethically constituted
Problem(s) of Evil	Central / taken for granted, focus on the religious problem	Problems rejected as conceptual confusion: dualism / PSR	Solutions rejected as immoral rationalization of suffering

realism like Putnam to assess the claims of essential knowledge about God in the theodicy debate. The method of theological grammar also opens a broadly Protestant approach of descriptive metaphysics of religious stories, practices and claimed revelations, which can be used to assess metaphysical theologies. Moreover, my book is a first-principles knock-down argument against the problem of evil if its premisses and assumptions are accepted:²⁷

- Grammatical antitheodicy offers a new approach to the problems of evil and intelligibility and gives an overview of the connections between the two problems.
- Grammatical antitheodicy lays bare the conceptual presuppositions of the problem of evil and generalizes the Problem of Evil to get an overview of its conceptual links.
- Grammatical antitheodicy shows that the traditional problem of evil is rooted in an existential problem of meaning. It also shows that the Problem of Evil also depends on highly specific models of intelligibility that can be questioned.
- The method of language-games, pragmatist logic of elements, institutions and systemic logics articulates an approach to intelligibility and a philosophical method of relational and grammatical metacriticism that is located between metaphysical realism and transcendental idealism.
- Grammatical methods link the discussion of metaphysical essences of God with the debate about metaphysical realism, modelling and the possibility of scientific realist metaphysics.
- Methodological tools like language-game theory, category theory and functional intertwining offer powerful tools of philosophical analysis.
- Philosophical grammar systematizes an approach to philosophical theology and hermeneutics that describes religious practices, stories and world-views in order to build their descriptive metaphysics.
- Conceptual alternatives, analytic tools and philosophical overviews of the problems of evil and intelligibility yield self-knowledge of philosophical problems, the human condition and different approaches to the world in a Socratic and Hamannian spirit.

The goals of my work on the problem of evil are humanistic: the argument basically is a Christian humanist exploration of ways for making sense of the

²⁷ Here I build on Wiertz's, Nicholls' and Pietarinen's reviews, and on conversations with Pihlström. The idea of pragmatism as a *via media* between realism and idealism comes from Pihlström. See also Dickson 1995.

world and our place in it by using the tools of Helsinki logic and metaphysics.²⁸ In many ways, my work generalizes the Neiman thesis about the centrality of evil as a motivation for the discussions of intelligibility to cover Western metaphysics as a whole, because it links the entire history of Greek, Leibnizian, Kantian and positivist metaphysics with the PSR and the PSR with the problem of evil. It also connects the evil/rational intelligibility-link to the dialogue of Athens and Jerusalem. It highlights the grammatical links between the concept of reason, the concept of God and the concept of being.²⁹

My work also shows that the links between the problems of the applicability of categories, of meaning in the world and the shallowness of theodist responses to the question of meaningfulness were already exposed in the “two Königsbergs controversy”.³⁰ My own starting points to the problems have been to formulate an approach to the field of problems by synthesizing approaches from classical Wisdom theology, Aristotelian natural realism, critical and metacritical approaches formulated in the Königsberg controversies, classical American pragmatism, post-Newtonian systems-theoretic science and classical and literary humanism. The results in the philosophy of religion are corollaries. The work as a whole then can be read from many angles:

- A relational and grammatical approach into philosophical problems in metaphilosophy.
- A metacritical approach to metaphysics in general, although my goal is not to expose speculative metaphysics outside the question of theodicy or go into extracting a system of formal categories from language-games.
- An investigation into the models for deep connections between the concepts of God, meaning, being, reason and the problem of evil.
- A metacritique of modern metaphysics with its subject/object split, identification of reality with geometric mathematical structures (AKA the positivist version of the PSR) and the disenchantment of the world (AKA Max Weber’s and Ulrich Zwingli’s version of the fact/meaning split).
- An approach to humanistic meaningfulness in terms of seeing-as, grammars for stories and other systems of meaning, and the link between humanistic meaningfulness and the virtues.

28 See Haaparanta & Koskinen 2012, 6 for the Helsinki tradition of investigating the logic/metaphysics link in historical contexts. See Hintikka 1973, 1997, Hintikka & Knuuttila 1987, Pihlström 2016 and Tahko 2015.

29 I include the entire bibliography for the *Evil and Intelligibility* project as background references for this book.

30 Calling the Hamann-Kant debate the “Two Königsbergs controversy” is a reference to the two Cambridges capital controversy in economics.

- A contribution to theology or to the norms for using the word “God” correctly, especially in philosophical and doctrinal discussions about the nature of God’s properties and of reasons for divine action and the world.
- A religious apologetic or a metacritique of modern evil-based atheism, which is exposed as a mix of Platonist/Gnostic speculative metaphysics and moralistic blasphemies passed on as science.

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