CHAPTER 7

The Grammar of Worldviews and the Fallacies of Theodicism

Now we can sum up the discussion on the General Problem of Evil in Chs. 2–5, so that we can discuss, how different world-views approach the questions of God, evil and intelligibility. The problem of evil rests upon the fact/meaning dualism and the principle of sufficient reason, as the general problem and the general argument arise from the model of sense-making that attempts to build a synthesis of facts and meanings by appealing to the principle of sufficient reason. We have seen in the preceding chapter that this model of sense-making rests upon conceptual confusions. This entails right away that the general problem of evil does not get off the ground: since facts and meanings are not separate, then there is no need to try to unify them by appealing to the principle of sufficient reason. Therefore chaotic evil does not by itself threaten meaning.[1]

To summarize the arguments, both facts and meanings are intertwined against the background of a system.[2] Facts are the values of a coordinate in logical space, but these coordinates function against the background of a language-game and the functional relationships that underlie it. The facts are thus among the elements of a language-game and its underlying systemic relationships. The facts are located in processes, powers and characters that are the typical ways of action and functioning of objects in the context of relationships. The objects and the causal, character-given, institutional and other types of functioning in relationships are the institutions of the system. The functions and roles of the objects in relationships are identified with the aid of stories. The relationships forming the system are the background for both the facts that compose its elements and the characters, causal powers and other institutions. Together they then make the facts meaningful in their systemic context, as the facts embody powers, roles and other systemic properties and the powers, roles and other values are realized through the facts:

1. Elements: The facts of a system, which is a part of a language-game functioning as a category.

1 See Chapters 2–6, esp. 3.1.2.3 and also ZH 7, 169–170.

2 See Chapter 3.2.2, Chapter 5 and ZH 7, 169.

2. Institutions: The underlying causal powers, social institutions and roles, characters and ways of interacting in relationships. The corresponding principles for pointing out and identifying the functioning of objects with stories.
3. Context: The underlying relationships of a language-game that include the facts, the dynamic principles of functioning and continuity, and the objects of the game. The language-game that includes expressions, rules and meanings.[3]

This system-theoretic view of language-games and their underlying relationships then overcomes the fact/meaning dualism. Facts embody characters, powers and other systemic roles. The roles are pointed out by stories and models that are used to identify objects in our language use. The logic of language-games also interprets logical concepts like possibility, necessity, logical entailment and is required for making sense of the world. The rules of the language-games then constitute conceptual possibility and necessity, and are moreover autonomous and contingent. Language-games are therefore prior to giving reasons and explanations, and one does not need to appeal to the principle of sufficient reason to make facts meaningful.[4]

The principle of sufficient reason moreover encounters other difficulties as well. We have seen that the claim "Everything has a sufficient reason" does not by itself identify any reasons or what counts as a reason. Therefore the principle of reason is dependent on a prior logic of sense-making, and it can only succeed by describing first-level ways of sense-making. However, we have seen that the logic of elements, institutions and systems goes against the principle of sufficient reason. There can be systems where the context makes a random event intelligible, like drawing an ace when playing cards. Moreover, the principle identifies being with reason and explanation, so it presupposes that the language-games for being are ones involving deducing reasons and giving conceptual explanations. However, we have seen that the language-games for being are based on encountering objects and seeking and finding them, rather than giving explanations or conceptual reasons.[5] Thus the key presuppositions of the general problem are conceptual confusions.

The confusions regarding the relationship of facts and meanings and the connection of meaningfulness with sufficient reasons have an important influence in debates surrounding different worldviews. A grammar of worldviews

3 See Chapters 3.2.2, 4.2.3 and 5–6.

4 See Chapter 6, Poteat 1985.

5 See Chapter 6.2, Heidegger 1971/1996, Pruss 2006.

offers a key to the problem of evil, because worldviews can be seen as practices for coping with evil. We have seen in Chapter 2.4 that the fact/value split is a version of the fact/meaning split: since value is one sort of meaning and facts and values are separate, then facts and meanings are separate. Therefore the intertwining of facts and meanings holds for facts and values as well. I describe the grammar of values and virtues by taking Alasdair MacIntyre's account of virtue ethics, and then interpret it through the intertwining of facts and meanings and link it with Jamesian antitheodicy. I also build on Putnamian arguments that language-games presuppose values and intertwine them with facts.[6] I then use Wittgenstein and Neiman's account of Nietzsche to show how Classical and non-Enlightenment versions of humanism can overcome the fact-meaning gap in situations that involve tragic evil.[7] I also highlight a conceptual similarity between virtue ethics and the religious concept of salvation. Both involve a move from state-as-it-is to a state-to-come, and the virtues and paths of salvation are ways of overcoming evil. The isomorphism of grammars of virtues and religious stories suggests that the special problem about the existence of God in a world containing evil is confused as well.

Theological grammar does give good grounds for questioning the special problem. I present overviews of Buddhist thought and investigate Christian biblical theology in my discussion of the problem of evil in religions. My goal is to examine these two "religions of the sick soul" in order to develop grammatical remarks for the purpose of antitheodicy. Thus the purpose of an overview of different religions is to offer materials for philosophical reflection. Although I approach biblical stories from a Christian angle, the investigation into the historical meaning (or plain sense) of the Book of Job in Chapter 7.3.2 can also be appropriated within Judaism.[8]

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the atheist argument from evil is just a special case of the general problem. God is taken to connect facts with values and meanings by making an omnipotent choice from the set of all possible worlds so that all facts have sufficient reasons. Thus the existence of chaotic evil, or evil without sufficient reasons, calls the existence of God into question. Theological grammar however locates the word "God" with the language-games of religious practices and telling stories about God. The word "God", questions about divine nature, and the associated concepts of divine omnipotence and

6 See MacIntyre 1981, James 1979, 1985, Putnam 1981, Chapters 4.1, 5. For biblical virtue ethics, see von Rad 1988.

7 Neiman 2015, 224–227, PI 522–523, Appelqvist 2008, 2010.

8 See *Dhammapada*, Wright 2006, Perdue 1991, James 1985, PI 127, Ochs 2004. See also Goldschmidt 2014.

goodness are then interpreted against religious stories and their principles for identifying God. This immediately calls the theodicist definition of divine goodness and the logical concept of omnipotence into serious question. The logical concept of omnipotence collapses, because the expressions "God can…" and "God cannot" are only used in the context of a language-game, and divine action is also identified through stories describing God's involvement with the world. Identifying divine choices with the principle of sufficient reason presupposes that the reasons for divine action can be identified a priori. This is however problematic, because the principle of sufficient reason is dependent on prior ways for assessing reasons and leads theology straight into speculative metaphysics.[9]

These problems can be sharpened by examining the grammar of biblical stories. I will focus on N.T. Wright's narrative antitheodicy *Evil and the Justice of God*, and Leo Perdue's very sharp commentary on the Book of Job, *Wisdom in Revolt*.[10] Both Perdue and Wright argue that the justice of God does not entail the existence of a static system of sufficient reasons, but instead involves the commitment of God to act in the world and to defeat evil within it. Perdue also argues that the point of the Book of Job is to function as a grammatical critique of the metaphors and forms of language that are used of God: "the book aims at *speaking correctly* about God, as Job, his servant, has done. The entire movement of the book is theological (…) the articulation of language about God".[11] Perdue presents various mythical and narrative models for identifying divine activity and discusses, how Job and his friends take religious language off gear.[12] I then build upon Perdue's description of the Book of Job to build analogies between the Book of Job and the positions taken in contemporary discussions on theodicy.[13]

7.1 Narratives, Virtues and Worldviews

We have already touched briefly on the identification of personality through narratives and actions performed in a worldview. We also saw in Chapter 5 that a system of identification locates facts like acts of a person within larger institutions and strategies, like plans for an activity in a context and social

9 See Phillips 2004, ZH 1, 450–453 Chapter 3.1.2., Chapters 5–6.
10 Wright 2006, Perdue 1991.
11 Perdue 1991, 75.
12 See PI 132.
13 See Plantinga 1974, Rowe 1979, Mackie 1955, Chapter 2.3.

institutions. It is now time to investigate, how narrative identification plays out in the context of personal identity. We will also investigate, how the narrative concept of identity allows us to overcome the fact/value gap by defining the concept of virtues.[14]

7.1.1 *Facts, Virtues and Narrative Identification*

MacIntyre argues forcefully that the atomistic conception of actions as decontextualized modern facts fails to give enough context to make the actions of a person intelligible or allow for the identification of persons. Events and facts only make up the actions of a person when they are embedded in histories, and the histories can only be told by telling stories. These theses can be clarified and defended by applying the narrative forms of identification examined in Chapter 5.1 to personal identity. Persons are identified by telling stories about their acts. This presupposes that the identity of a person is the identity of his character or roles in stories. The characters, strategies and habits of a person thus constitute the identity of a person and identify the facts about his action. The narrative identifications take place against the background of the story of a whole, the interaction of characters and various narrative settings. Then the concept of narrative identification gives a way of overcoming the dualism of facts and meanings in the case of human (dramatic) action.[15]

Facts and actions function as plot elements in the narrative sense, and as moves in the game sense. They are the elements of human action. MacIntyre examines the concept of a decontextualized event involving human action by giving the example of Samuel Johnson's notes: "Five soldiers"., "Women" etc. These decontextualized descriptions of events resemble the descriptions of modern facts: they specify the place and time of an event, and who was there.[16] These descriptions have however been detached from a narrative that makes them intelligible. Moreover, MacIntyre argues that one experiences life as a series of meaningless decontextualized facts only, when one's plans for life and practices for achieving one's goals have broken down and one is contemplating suicide. MacIntyre's note about the breakdown of intelligibility connects with Neiman's definition of evil as an event that makes our practices for pursuing good pointless. The resulting experience is then the one described by Levinas,

14 See Chs 4.2.4 and Chapter 5.

15 MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 15, Bayer 2002, 9–17, see Chapter 5.2.

16 MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 15. Modern facts are discussed in Chapter 2.4 and 5.2.

Pihlström and Kivistö: evil represents a breakdown of meaning that cannot be fixed by appealing to third-person justifications.[17]

Facts and actions are thus meaningful only, if they can be fitted into a practice. These practices are the institutions underlying narrative intelligibility. MacIntyre takes up examples related to the question "What is he doing?" in order to describe the discourse possibilities for actions and their identification.[18] If a man is digging a hole in his backyard, we might say that "He's digging", "He's taking care of the garden", "He's preparing for winter" or "He's trying to make his wife happy". The fact (A man is digging in the backyard) can then be related to different activities that aim at different kinds of goals and embody different intentions. If a man is writing, one might say that "He's writing a sentence", "He's writing a book", "He's writing a book on action theory" or "He's trying to become a professor at a university". The act of writing is then related to many different goals and many activities or strategies that aim at these goals. Moreover, the aim of becoming a professor orders the lower-level goal of writing a book and the goal of writing a book similarly organizes the lower-level goal of writing a sentence. Acts are then embedded in practices that are related to goals, and the causal effects and ordering of actions in temporal sequences are constitutive of the acts themselves.

MacIntyre builds on the embeddedness of actions with practices for pursuing goals by arguing that the concept of intelligible action is logically prior to the concept of action. He argues that a series of acts like breaking eggs in a bowl and then mixing them, or saying the Latin name of a bird, are only intelligible in a social setting like baking bread or having a conversation. Thus a sequence of actions relates to goals only against the background of a setting. MacIntyre's views on the primacy of intelligibility of actions and of actions, goal-directed sequences and settings have a striking resemblance to Hamann's view of interpretative action. Bayer argues that Hamann views language and other forms of symbolic activities as a mathesis universalis, as language-games allow for self-expression, interpreting others and acting. Hamann uses drama as a model for language use: the practices of language use form a setting, and

17 See Neiman 2015, 7–8, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, Chapter 2.2.4, 3.1.2.1. MacIntyre's point that narratives of pointlessness (see e.g. Pihlström & Kivistö 2016) reflect a suicidal person's take on life calls into question the claim that offering third-person justifications is unethical. Offering a sense of purpose with a theodicy could well save the sufferer's life if he is able to use it to experience his life as meaningful from the first-person perspective. (Aku Visala has made a similar point about Viktor Frankl's experience in concentration camps. See Frankl 2000).

18 MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 15. For discourse possibilities as a ground for categorization, see Garver 1994, 52–64, Chapter 4.3.

speech acts and physical actions function as acts in a play. Each speech act becomes intelligible by expressing a role in the linguistic exchange, and linguistic acts are always responses to the situation. One encounters a situation in the setting, and then one responds by acting or speaking according to one's goals and one's role in the game. Moreover, all speech acts or physical actions are judgments that interpret the setting of the act. Hamann argues that "every action can have many figurative, formal, tropical and typological meanings in addition to their original material, natural and mechanical descriptions".[19]

Hamann's reference to the material and formal aspects of actions is to be understood against his communicative view of matter and form. The matter of an act is the physical event or fact performing it.[20] The form of an act is the use that the act gets in a play, or the role that the action has in a practice used to pursue goals. One could also use the analogy with language-games from Chapter 4.1 to use the language of formal game theory: the facts of an action are a move in a play, and the goal-directed sequences of activities are strategies. Both acts and practices for pursuing goals take place against settings that are social institutions that give the backgrounds for action. We can then use Hamann's scheme of elements and institutions to show that facts and their meanings in pursuing goals are intertwined:

1. Element: The physical fact of performing an action, like writing a sentence
2. Institution: A practice or strategy for pursuing goals in a social setting, like writing a book on action theory or a plan to become a professor.
3. Context: An institution of social relationships that forms a setting for pursuing goals, like the institution of philosophical argumentation and debate, or the academic world.

The actions then express roles in settings and strategies for responding to situations, so the roles and activities have meanings that function through the material facts. Similarly, the material facts constitute the actions of a person only, by being a functional part of an activity that responds to a setting. The physical facts and meanings of symbolic forms of responding to situations in a setting are then functionally intertwined.

The concept of a virtue offers a means to overcome the fact/value gap, which is a central presupposition of the problem of evil. The concept of

19 N III, 366. MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 15. Bayer 2002, 9–17. See also Peirce's concept of habit (EP 2, Pietarinen 2009).

20 See Bayer 2002, 158–170, ZH 5, 25. For game metaphors, see Chapter 4.1 and Osborne & Rubinstein 1994.

virtues describes habits or strategies for realizing correct human functioning or answering to reality and the good present in it. The concept allows one to show, why the modern concept of a fact necessarily leads to grammatical confusions related to the term "good", both when applied to human beings and to God as well. In Chapter 4.1 we have seen that language-games and their practices constitute virtues in terms of good or bad cognitive functioning and good or bad responses to the world. Since we can only recognize and describe the facts of the world through linguistic practices, all recognition of fact presupposes the intertwining of social and physical facts and values in the virtues of language-games. The concept of a virtue also allows one to formulate a Jamesian antitheodicy, why a monism based on the principle of sufficient reason ends up destroying self-control and the ability to realize or even define the good, and thereby goes against the relational conditions of truth and moral language.[21]

We have seen in Chapter 2.2 that the fact/value gap is a special case of the fact/meaning gap, because values are a type of meanings. We have also just seen that actions become intelligible by being related to practices and strategies of pursuing goals in a social context, and thus giving the histories of the actions of a character or person. We can then get a working definition for the concept of virtue: a virtue is a correct way of acting and responding to one's situation against the background of a setting of human nature and the possibilities for cooperation in the drama of life.[22] MacIntyre discusses the concept of virtues by searching for explanations for modern moral philosophy's failure to close the is/ought gap. The modern concept of fact cannot recognize functional or relational concepts of human well-being as factual. Facts have been defined as atomic occurrences against the background of some coordinate grid, like space-time or visual space. Proper function and right relationships concern how such facts hang together in correct human social relationships and the correct expression of human potential and other powers. Thus the modern concept of a fact leads to grammatical confusions regarding the term "good", because goodness has either to be reduced to material or phenomenal facts or one has to presuppose a special type of normative facts to account for them.[23]

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21 For facts and virtues in language-games, see Chapter 4.1 and Putnam 1981, chs 6 and 9.

22 This definition is based on MacIntyre 1981 and von Rad 1988. The concept of virtue does not reduce to game-theoretic concepts, as some equilibria, like those in the Prisoner's Dilemma, are not conducive to human welfare.

23 J. L. Mackie argues against the existence of values on these lines: see Joyce 2015. Mackie seems to explicitly deny the existence of natural teleology, which entails the denial of functional concepts. See also Sayre-McCord 1995.

MacIntyre argues that classical Aristotelian and theistic worldviews work with a system of virtue ethics that distinguishes between thee different parts:

1. Human nature as it is: The states and tendencies of man that happen to exist in fact. They may contain evil states, defects and bad habits.
2. Virtues: Practices for moving from human nature as it is into human nature if its telos were realized. The virtues are primarily habits and practices, but they also embody moral maxims and laws that are guidelines for action and self-control in pursuing the telos.[24]
3. Human nature if its telos were fulfilled: The correct functioning of a human being in relationships according to the nature of the relationships and human nature.

MacIntyre argues that Enlightenment ethics works with a broken conceptual scheme, because it has embraced the modern concept of facts. Because the modern concept of facts can recognize only human-nature-as-it-is, ethics is grounded in the real world only if it can derived from the world as it stands. Human-nature-as-it-is is however defined opposite to virtues and the realization of the human telos, so a conceptual gap appears between the facts as they are and the values arising out of virtues and the human telos. Overcoming this gap requires rejecting the fact/meaning gap.[25]

MacIntyre argues that virtue ethics presupposes that the concept of a human is a functional concept: human beings have certain powers and social roles, and a good human being is one who functions well in them. Aristotle argues that the grammar of the words "human" and "good human" is analogous to the grammar of "musician" and "good musician", because in both cases the goodness consists of functioning well: "For just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or any artist, and in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the 'well' is thought to reside in that function (…) if he has a function".[26] Human beings can then be said to pursue their telos well or badly, if they have typical activities and powers and their actual acts follow from practices that embody or aim at functioning well as human beings. Moreover, such a functionalist view of the good entails that ethics is based on facts. If "X is good" means "X functions well", then the goodness of an X depends on the

24 The idea of virtue as a habit or a strategy comes from Peirce and James via Hintikka and Pietarinen.

25 MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 5. The topic is already covered in Chapter 2.4.

26 Nicomachean Ethics I, 7, 1097b, 25–28.

functioning of X, which is based on facts in a broad (but not modern) sense of the word.[27]

MacIntyre also discusses monotheistic contributions to the tradition of virtue ethics. He argues that the theistic religions have given the tradition a concept of divine law, which sets habsolute obligations in addition to defining virtues. Gerhard von Rad however argues that biblical wisdom theology includes virtue ethics.[28] The key principles of the ethics of wisdom literature are: respect God, reject evil and choose the good. The biblical wisdom tradition thus differs from the classical tradition by having a different conception of the good.[29] The classical tradition views the good as proper functioning, while the wisdom tradition views it as a force that is oriented towards man and offers an opportunity to get good results in one's life and as a member of a community. The good is thus a collection of powers or tendencies in reality that interact with man and allow man to get good practical results in terms of communal well-being, social status or success in life. The good person is thus one who responds well to the inter-subjective and external tendency of the good, and forms his or her practices to further the good. These practices then correspond to virtues, as they are proficiencies in answering to the order in creation. The conception of virtue as a skilled response to the good moreover goes along with a divine order within phenomena. God has established orders within creation, and men establish and further good by acting according to these orders. Responding to the good in natural and social orders thus means dealing with God, as God speaks to men through natural and social orders and events. This creaturely mediated communication proceeds God → orders → man, and biblical virtue ethics thus operates with a picture of nature as "speech to creatures through creatures".[30]

The concept of virtue also allows us to discuss the role of values in the underlying relationships of language-games. In Chapter 4.1 we have seen that language-games are a response to the world, and thus can be a good or bad response to the underlying relationships and the human condition. Putnam argues that language-games can contribute to the good functioning of human

27 MacIntyre 1981, Chapter 5. For the Aristotelian concept of a fact, see Poovey 1998 and Chapter 2.4.

28 von Rad 1988, esp. chs 5 (74–96) and 7 (115–137). This summary is based on Chapter 5.

29 von Rad 1988, Chapter 5.

30 H 65/ N 11, 197. Timo Veijola connects Hamann's view of speech to creatures with von Rad's work (1999). The communication channel God → orders → man also corresponds to Hamann's view of God → Nature → Reason as a communication channel. See Chapter 3.3.2, ZH 5, 272, Floridi 2004.

cognitive capacities, or cognitive Eudaimonia. However, the concept of good response is a strategic concept and cognitive Eudaimonia is a functional concept, so the values underlying language-games must be understood in strategic and functional terms. Then concepts like truth as adequacy of the mind to reality, epistemic justification, conceptual intelligibility and reason are located in language-games, whose forms of life are described with the grammar of virtues and virtue ethics.[31]

Once we have defined virtue ethics, it is time to see why the facts/values gap fails. Take the example of Matt giving a donation to a foundation that helps the homeless. Matt's action is based on the virtue of compassion: he has a tendency or practice for recognizing the situation that homeless persons are in, and then responding to it by acting through social institutions to help them. We then have a fact: Matt puts money in a collection pot. Matt's action however arises from a habit or institution of taking homeless people into account, and helping them when a suitable opportunity arises. The practice is embedded in the social settings of charitable NGOs, the social relationships between Matt, the NGOs and the homeless, and the fact about human nature that helping out the homeless improves the well-being of both the homeless and the helper. We can now analyse Matt's act into facts about his conduct, habits and settings:

1. Elements: The fact of Matt putting money in the pot.
2. Institution: Matt's virtuous practice of recognizing the homeless and helping them.
3. Context: The social relationships between Matt, NGOs and the homeless, the general fact about human nature that helping the homeless improves the life of both.

The fact of Matt's putting money in the pot and the values underlying the virtuous habit are then intertwined. Matt's act functions in its social context by arising out of Matt's practice, and thus it embodies the values of Matt's virtuous practices. Similarly, Matt's maxims and virtuous dispositions are habits and strategic rules of self-control, which lead Matt to choose the action involving the fact of putting money in the pot. Matt's virtues and principles thus function through the act of putting money in the pot, and the act of putting money in the pot functions in its social setting by embodying the virtues and norms of charitable giving in its social context. Facts and values are thus functionally intertwined, and the fact/value gap is a conceptual confusion.[32]

31 See Chapter 4.1, Putnam 1981.

32 For functional intertwining, see Chapters 4.1, 5.2.

7.1.2 *Humanistic Meaningfulness: Moral Responsibility, Virtue and Tragedy*

The concept of a virtue allows non-Enlightenment humanistic worldviews to overcome the fact/value and fact/meaning gaps. With the concepts of virtue and narrative one can find meaning in humanistic moral sources as human action and human responsibility.[33] By locating facts about human action in stories that are humanely meaningful and where the characters show virtue, the facts are woven into meaningful and value-laden stories. The genre of tragedy includes stories, where the hero displays virtue but is defeated by external factors. Humanistic narratives can then give meaning to events that include tragic evil, and thus have no moral purpose.[34] Moreover, James persuasively argues that the human (and divine) responsibility for the world presupposes the falsity of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: if we are moral beings, we have a responsibility to fight evil. It is possible to fight evil only, if the evil is not a necessary evil decreed by some order of sufficient reasons. Humanism then has its own anti-theodicist concepts of meaningfulness that arise from the moral sources of human dignity, which also theists and other worldviews have to recognize.[35]

Nietzsche's view of narrative intelligibility and tragedies offers a humanistic way of seeing meaning in human actions. Neiman holds Nietzsche to argue that the intelligibility of plays and tragedies offers the possibility of seeing human life as meaningful. She shows that such a view involves rejecting models of meaningfulness based on the principle of sufficient reason and looking at the meanings of music instead.[36] The logic of music however brings us to familiar Wittgensteinian ground. Hanne Appelqvist shows that Wittgenstein views musical meaning as rule-governed portrayal of themes. Musical meaning is constituted by the institutions of musical rules. Rules do not answer to an a priori order of sufficient reasons, because they are autonomous. The meaning of music, quality pictures and other artistic signs is self-contained: "'What the picture tells me is itself.' That is, its telling me something consists in its own structure, its lines and colours".[37] Moreover, music intertwines its matter

33 For the concept of a moral source, see Taylor 1989.

34 My argument is based on Neiman's reading of Nietzsche (2015, 224–227). For the connections between Hamann, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, see Gray 2012, Betz 2009, 319–326.

35 See James 1979, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016. For the idea that human dignity and responsibility has to be recognized by theists, see Gen. 1:27. The order/Arche description of the PSR comes from Chapter 2.2.5.

36 Neiman 2015, 224–227. For a logic based on music and principles of audial identification, see Poteat 1985, Strawson 1959, Chapter 6.2.2.3.

37 PI 523, PI 522–523, 527.

and form, as its melodic matter is its musical form and vice versa. The logic of music and tragedies is thus inherently anti-theodicist.[38]

We can use Hamlet as an example for the narrative meaningfulness of tragic virtue and tragic action.[39] The story of Hamlet is well-known in the Anglo-American world. Hamlet is a Danish prince, whose father has been assassinated by his uncle Claudius. Hamlet's father appears to Hamlet and exposes the plot. Hamlet decides to get revenge and starts to feign insanity by reflecting on mortality and the human condition. Claudius decides to have Hamlet executed by sending him to England as an ambassador together with a death warrant for his accreditation. Hamlet gets his chance to kill Claudius when Claudius is praying, but waits until Claudius has repented in order to send him straight to hell. Hamlet confronts his mother and kills Polonius, a nobleman who is spying on their conversation. Claudius and Laertes, Polonius' son hatch a plot to poison Hamlet in a duel, after Hamlet was not killed on his mission to England. Then a messenger brings Laertes the message that Ophelia has committed suicide out of grief for his father. Hamlet then meets the gravediggers, and they reflect together over human mortality. In the final scene, Hamlet confronts Claudius and Laertes in the duel. He wins the duel with Laertes, while his mother the Queen drinks poisoned wine. Laertes then tells that Claudius hatched a plot to poison Hamlet, and that both will die because the weapons were poisoned. Hamlet then accepts his fate and shows great bravery by killing Claudius by wounding him with a poisoned blade and giving him poison to drink. He is then given a state funeral because he was able to act like a real king, and he came to grips with the human condition as well. Hamlet was able to come to terms with mortality and act courageously in the tragic situation where he had lost his family and was about to die.

The story Hamlet is as grim as *1984* and other books that Pihlström and Kivistö quote as stories about the collapse of meaningfulness.[40] Hamlet has many dark themes: the human condition is one of mortality, and the treachery and corruption of court politics leads to broken family and human relationships. In such a condition, one does not have many good ways of responding to the situation: the story includes the responses of insanity, suicide and fortitude. The events of the story and Hamlet's actions are not meaningless, however. Take his action of contemplating "To be or not to be?" as an example. It

38 Appelqvist 2008, 2010, 2013. For the intertwining of matter and form in music, see Dickson 1995, 293. See also Gray 2012, Betz 2009, 319–326.

39 *Hamlet.*

40 Pihlström & Kivistö 2016. The interpretation of the *Hamlet* example is inspired by Neiman 2015, 224–227.

is a fact (or a line in the play) that Hamlet utters the line. The line is however a plot element: it is a part of Hamlet's role of feigning insanity and reflecting on his situation. Hamlet's role and activities in the play form the institutions holding the character and his actions together, and the plot and setting of the play offers a dramatic context or Hamlet's actions. Thus we can assign the plot points of Hamlet pondering on the meaning of life as elements, and Hamlet's role and character as institutions. The artistic meaning of Hamlet's actions then arises out of their role in the setting and plot of the play:

1. Elements: The fact of Hamlet stabbing Claudius and giving him poisoned wine.
2. Institution: Hamlet's role includes the decision to take revenge on Claudius for murdering him and his father. The act expresses great resolve and courage in getting justice even when one has been mortally wounded.
3. Context: The plot of Hamlet and the setting of court intrigues and betrayals.

The meanings and plot points are then intertwined: the plot and its aesthetic meaning proceeds through lines and plot-points like "To be or not to be?". The plot-points like the words "To be or not to be?" function in the play by having a meaning in the plot. Moreover, Hamlet's actions are then literarily meaningful and show the virtue of courage, even though the events in the plot and in the setting of the play do not have morally sufficient reasons. The Hamlet case then shows that a literary humanism has the resources of seeing human actions as meaningful and as displaying moral virtues even, though the context includes relationships that have been broken by chaotic evil like betrayals and political corruption.

Virtue ethics also gives conceptual tools for formulating an anti-theodicist argument due to James and Pihlström.[41] Pihlström argues that for James, both the recognition of evil and the possibility of fighting it are necessary conditions for a moral standpoint in the world.[42] Taking the existence of evil and fighting it as a starting point has its consequences in theology as well: James redefines God as a chief helper and a "cosmic fighter" against evil. The Jamesian view of God actually comes close to the biblical view of God as a divine warrior, who

41 Jamesian antitheodicism is discussed in Chapter 3.1.2.2. The argument builds mainly on James' "The Dilemma of Determinism" (1979) and Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, 194–209.

42 Pihlström (2016, 206) formulates the argument as a Kant-style transcendental argument, but I would like to present it as a relational necessary conditions argument about the possibility of virtuous practices.

has a plan to fight and defeat evil.[43] James' arguments about determinism and the necessary relational condition of moral choice and action however form a powerful critique of the principle of sufficient reason, which is a key presupposition of the general problem as well.

James discusses the moral consequences of the principle of sufficient reason in "The Dilemma of Determinism".[44] James argues that the difference between determinism and indeterminism runs deeper than the issue of free will.[45] Determinism holds that there is no genuine potentiality or unrealized possibilities in the world, because the state of the world is determined by one total causal chain and its Arches. He argues that indeterminism on the other hand allows for unrealized possibilities, and there are alternative possibilities open until the facts become settled. He claims that indeterminism entails that the world is made up of many disparate collections of facts and many centres of causal power, since the facts of the world are determined only as they come to pass and there is no single system of sufficient reasons determining them. James thus links the debate over determinism with the problem of monism and pluralism: is the world a single system of facts with a causal structure connecting everything, or is it more of a "joint-stock company" of many facts and many local connections and structures?[46]

James argues that the choice between monist determinism and pluralist indeterminism is made on their different presuppositions.[47] He argues that science deals with the facts and not the structure of logical space, and in any case it has to explain phenomena only after they have been encountered. The motive for determinism is the fear of chance, or the existence of facts that cannot be explained from an Arche. It is clear that the motivation for determinism is then the principle of sufficient reason, or that everything can be explained in terms of an Arche.[48] If there are open alternative possibilities, then nothing presently actual explains why one of them will hold.

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43 See Chapter 6, Paulsen 1999, Perdue 1991, Wright 2006. See also e.g. Ex. 15.

44 James 1979.

45 For the dialectic around freedom of the will, determinism and alternative possibilities, see Mele 2014.

46 For monism vs pluralism, see *Pragmatism* 4. For the idea of a single Arche determining the unification of facts and values in theodicism, see Chapter 2.2, 2.3.2.1, Mackie 1955. The argument might not work against a liberalized PSR with many independent centers of explanation (see Pruss 2006). However, it does work against the claim that all evil is necessary, because then the distance between the good and actual collapses.

47 James 1979.

48 See Pruss 2006, Heidegger 1971, Chapter 6. The monistic version of PSR is stronger than Pruss's. The monist version of the PSR posits a single Arche and takes sufficient reasons to be logically sufficient. However, the PSR and the General Argument presuppose a single

James then goes on to explore the moral consequences of PSR-based monism. He claims that it goes against the relational conditions of morality.[49] He takes the example of a psychopathic murder, which causes morally healthy people to recoil in horror: "This should not have happened".[50] However, if determinism holds, then one cannot say that the murder was bad, because it was metaphysically determined. If there is a system of sufficient reasons determining the murder, then a metaphysical Arche determines the murder. However, if a metaphysical Arche determines the murder, then the evil proceeds from the essence of the world and could not have been otherwise, in the strong sense of metaphysical necessity. If the murder could not have been otherwise metaphysically, then it is not possible to fight evil or even regret it. James formulates the objection in terms of different alternatives open to the determinist: he might offer a theodicy to justify it, or alternatively to view it as a part of a necessary educational (soul-making?) process. In any case, James argues that the determinist has to view the universe itself as essentially and irredeemably evil, because he has committed himself to the Principle of Sufficient Reason and consequently has to face a problem that is analogous to the general problem of evil.[51]

The general problem of evil then leads James to support meliorism. If determinism is true, then there are no alternatives to the-world-as-it-is, and developing practices for fighting evil and moving it closer to the good are pointless. Moral action then presupposes that there are many possibilities in the world, and it is possible to further the good through moral action. Moreover, his indeterminist position leads away from the view of God as an Arche of the world to a view of God as a chessmaster who inevitably manages to realize His plans.[52]

These points can easily be recast in terms of virtue ethics as a relational argument about the necessary conditions for the relationships of virtuous action that underlie the grammar of the term "good".[53] If determinism is true, then the world-as-it-is is necessary. Alternatively, if all evil has a sufficient

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centre of explanation: if PSR holds and there are many independent centres of explanation, one has to have a super-explanation explaining how they hold together, and that would amount to a universal explanation.

49 James 1979, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, 194–209.

50 Neiman 2015, 5.

51 See Neiman 2015, 314–328, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, 194–206. For the general problem, see Chapter 2.2.

52 Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, 194–206. Paulsen 1999, Wright 2006. See also Nagasawa 2018. Cf. Pruss 2006.

53 The virtue ethical reading of the Jamesian argument uses the conceptual scheme from MacIntyre 1981.

reason, the distance between actuality and the good collapses. It is not then possible to reach any other telos than the actual (dys)functioning of the world. It is in fact not even possible to differentiate between the-world-as-it-is and the-world-if-things-were-right, because objects and relationships can only function as they do or they function well. Then the whole relational network underlying virtues and the use of the term "good" breaks down, as it is not possible to develop virtuous ways of life to reach the telos or to develop strategies for fighting evil. The point is not so much that morality requires free will, but that the machinery of virtues and means of reaching goals presupposes a conceptual distance between the telos and the existing facts, and that reaching the telos is not frustrated metaphysically. Otherwise practices of reaching the good through virtues lose their point. In a world that contains evil and has no alternatives, neither condition holds. Then determinisms and theodicisms based on the principle of sufficient reason go against the relational conditions for the use of the term "good", and evacuate it of meaning:

1. The use of the term "good" makes sense and its grammatical relationships function only, if it is possible to fight evil.
2. It is possible to fight evil only, if one can form practices and strategies for moving from the-situation-as-it-is to the-world-if-its-telos -were-fulfilled.
3. One can form practices and strategies for moving from the situation to the telos only, if it is functionally and relationally possible to distinguish between these two.
4. One can form practices and strategies for moving from the situation to the telos only, if there are alternative choices to exercise self-control over and alternative strategies, some of which can in principle fail to conform to proper functioning or realize the telos.
5. If there is an overarching system of sufficient reasons, then there are no alternative possibilities and the situation-as-it-is is either the best possible or is metaphysically determined.
6. ⟶ If the situation-as-it-is is the best possible or metaphysically determined, then one cannot determine between functionally and relationally correct situations from others (because only the actual is possible and there are no alternatives to rank as correct or not).
7. If there are no alternative possibilities, there are no alternative choices to exercise self-control over and no alternative strategies, some of which can in principle fail to conform to proper functioning or the telos (because every fact and the-world-as-it-is holds essentially or is the best possible)

8. ⟶ If there is an overarching system of sufficient reasons, it is not possible to fight evil.
9. If there is an overarching system of sufficient reasons, the use of the term "good" makes no sense and its grammatical relationships do not function.

Theodicism is thus an incoherent doctrine. It involves using terms like "good" to assess the world as a whole, or God. However, it goes against the relational conditions of moral language use and practices. In a necessary world, the language-games upon which terms like "God is good", "There is evil" and "The world is good" lose their point. James' metaphors of fighting evil and of God as a chessmaster point to an alternative worldview option that has a way of making these terms meaningful. We have already seen that stories about virtues can make the world meaningful for humanism. James' chessmaster metaphor points to an analogy between speaking about virtues and speaking about God. This analogy can be used to lay the groundwork for an antitheodicy that builds on the resources of narrative theology: God is the Divine Warrior or Chessmaster who defeats evil.

7.1.3 *Virtues and the Religious Concept of Salvation*

Religious practices use the concept of holiness and salvation to assign meaning to life. They are also practical means for responding to evil and coping with it. James characterizes religious practices in *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* and these characterizations can be used to build a grammar for the expressions "holy" and "salvation".[54] James defines religion as all the feelings, acts, and experiences towards the divine. James has to expand the concept of the divine to include pantheistic religions like American Transcendentalism, and atheist religions like Buddhism. He then defines the divine as the ultimate realities that are taken to be present and to which the believer responds. The religious attitude regards the divine in a serious manner and as something sublime and worthy of solemnity. The religious attitude leads to an acceptance of the Universe: the world is seen as enchanted and worthy of active consent, because evil can be defeated.

We can now define the Holy: the Holy is taken to be the realities encountered in religious practices, the realities are a matter of ultimate concern and encountering them gives religious meaning to life. The religious concept of salvation concerns religious liberation from the evil of the human condition.

54 James 1985, Chapter 2.

Salvation can then be defined: x is saved if and only if x is rescued from evil by the Holy. The concept of salvation in fact works analogously to the ethical concept of virtues: both presuppose the existence of the-world-as-it-is, salvation is the liberation from the-world-as-it-is into the-world-if-its-telos-were-realized, and the Holy is taken to be good because it "set us free from the present evil age".[55] I will take up Buddhism and the Book of Deuteronomy as examples of this conceptual structure.

Buddhism was formed as a solution to the existential problem of evil. Buddhism was formed by the Buddha or Enlightened one, Siddhartha Gautama, in India in the 6th century BC.[56] The Buddha argues that all things in the stream of life are fleeting and impermanent, so evil and suffering are a part of the human condition. Buddha's teaching then seeks ways for liberation from the evil of the human condition, and the stream of life and death that makes up the cosmos. The Buddhist way of salvation is available through the Buddha, Buddhist doctrine or Dharma, and the Buddhist monastic form of life, or the Sangha:

> One who has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, penetrates with wisdom the Four Noble Truths – suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of suffering.
>
> This, indeed, is the safe refuge, the refuge supreme. Having gone to such a refuge, one is released from all suffering.[57]

The Buddha, Buddhist teaching and Buddhist monasteries then save, because they make the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path available to the seeker of salvation. The Noble Truths allow one to realize the human condition of suffering and to find the Eightfold Path that leads to liberation. The first teaching is that human life is full of suffering, because everything is changing and impermanent: "'All conditioned things are unsatisfactory' – when one sees this with wisdom one turns away from suffering".[58] The second teaching is that the cause of suffering is a craving for existence and an attachment to the

55 Gal. 1:4. The concepts of holiness and salvation are mainly based on William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1985), and the following comparison between Deuteronomy and Buddhism.

56 My general interpretation of Buddhism is based on Smart 1998, 57–68, the *Dhammapada*, and on Bhikkhu Bodhi's introduction to it.

57 *Dhammapada* 190–192.

58 *Dhammapada* 278.

world: "From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear. For one who is completely free from craving there is no grief, whence the fear?"[59] The third teaching is that overcoming the craving for existence and the attachment to the world leads to the end of suffering. The fourth teaching is that one overcomes craving through the Noble Eightfold Path. The practices of the Eightfold Path divide into three types. Right ethics includes correct speech, correct actions and a righteous profession. Right wisdom includes having the correct Buddhist beliefs and attitudes. Right meditation involves effort, concentration and meditation.[60]

Buddhism emphasizes character development via meditation. Bhikkhu Bodhi argues that the centrality of mind and meditation corresponds to the centrality of the account of creation in theistic religions. The Bible starts with the creation story, and the Dhammapada starts with an account of the mind as the source of all thoughts, and as being in need of practice:

> Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.
>
> Just as an arrow-maker straightens an arrow-shaft, so the discerning person straightens his mind – so fickle and unsteady, so difficult to control.
>
> Although he recites few sacred texts, if he puts the Dhamma into practice, forsaking lust, hatred and delusion, with true wisdom, clinging to nothing in this or any other world – he, indeed, partakes in the blessings of a holy life.[61]

We can now see that Buddhism offers liberation from the evil of the world by developing the mind out of the habit of clinging to existence. The mind is educated with Buddhist doctrines, meditation and other virtues of the Eightfold Path. The telos of this practice is Nirvana or the detachment and liberation from the changing stream of life. The Buddhist path then corresponds to virtue ethics:

1. The world-as-it-is: Human life is suffering, because everything is changing and human beings seek happiness by attaching themselves to changing enjoyments.

59 *Dhammapada* 216.
60 Smart 1998, 57–68, "Introduction" in the *Dhammapada.*
61 *Dhammapada* 2, 33, 20, "Introduction" in *Dhammapada.*

2. Salvation: Following the Noble Eightfold Path liberates one from suffering and attachment to the changing world. One can follow the Path by educating the mind and following virtues like meditation.
3. The world-if-its-telos-were-realized: Human beings reach Nirvana, or are liberated from suffering and the changing stream of life.

Buddhism is an Eastern, non-theistic religion. Its concept of salvation concerns liberation from the impermanence of the world. However, the view of salvation in Deuteronomistic Judaism has the same conceptual structure, although Deuteronomic Judaism is monotheistic and this-worldly. We can examine the Deuteronomic concept of salvation through one of Deuteronomy's confessions:

> A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.[62]

The story of the Exodus is one of the basic stories of Judaism. It is also central in the grand narrative of the Bible, which N. T. Wright claims to be "*a story about what God has done, is doing and will do about evil*".[63] The story starts when the Israelites are enslaved in Egypt. They call upon God to help them. God then hears their cry and liberates them from slavery, which shows His justice and faithfulness. He judges the oppressors of Israel and punishes them with the disasters surrounding the exodus, which show His power. He then leads the Israelites into a prosperous and fruitful land, where they can live. The story can be similarly analysed as having the same structure as virtue ethics or Buddhism:

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62 Dtn. 26: 5–10. See also Ex. 1–15. For the evolution of Judaism(s) across the ages, see Smart 1998. In short, one must distinguish between the religion of Ancient Israel and Judah, which eventually developed into a monotheist religion, the Judaism of the Second Temple era, and post-70 Rabbinic Judaism. The Judaism practised today developed from classical Rabbinic Judaism, whereas Christianity developed out of a messianic movement in the Second Temple era. With "Deuteronomic Judaism" I mean the crystallizing monotheism that was codified into the book of Deuteronomy.

63 Wright 2006, 45, 55–56.

1. The-world-as-it-is: Israelites are enslaved in Egypt and oppressed by the Pharaoh.
2. Salvation: God hears the Israelites and liberates them from Egypt.
3. The-world-if-its-telos-were-fulfilled: Israelites live prosperously in the Holy Land and deliver the fruits of their work to God.

The story moreover concerns the goodness and power of God. In the Exodus story, God is the object of ultimate concern who is encountered in the events of the story, so He is said to be holy. He is said to be good because He listens to the Israelites and decides to free them out of faithfulness to them. He is said to be omnipotent because the liberation from Egypt is accompanied by great acts of power that defeat the Pharaoh, like plagues and drowning Egyptian chariots. Thus God is said to be good and powerful, because He delivers Israel-in-Egypt to the telos of Israel-in-the-Promised-Land. Calling God good and powerful because He defeats evil and takes Israel to the telos is in fact analogous to calling the Buddhist Eightfold Path noble, because it takes one from the situation of impermanence and suffering into the telos of nirvana. We can make Table 7 of the isomorphisms:

We have already shown that the presuppositions of the general problem of evil do not hold. The arguments above show that the special atheistic problem is in deep trouble for much the same reasons. The isomorphisms between virtue ethics and religious worldviews show that both biblical monotheist and Eastern religions have the conceptual resources to see the world as meaningful even, when there is evil in the world. This contrasts with the modern tradition of natural theology. I remarked in Chapter 2.2.4 that the problem of evil resembles the failure of the Enlightenment foundations of morality project. Both Bayer and Diogenes Allen show that Enlightenment natural theologies typically take their views of God from the moral ideals of reason and take the state of the world-as-it-is in order to prove the existence of God by linking the two. This however is the cosmic analogue of attempting to derive morality out

TABLE 7 Isomorphism of the grammars of virtues and salvation

Virtues	**Religions**	**Buddhism**	**Deuteronomy**
Human-as-is	World-as-is	Suffering	Israel in Egypt
Virtues	Salvation	Noble 8-fold path	Liberation by God
Human telos	World telos	Nirvana	Israel in the Land

of human-nature-as-it-is, as moral rules correspond to Divine Presence and the world-as-is to man-as-is. Thus the standard Leibnizian theodicist approach to the special problem of evil rests upon conceptual confusions.[64] The links between virtues, salvation and religious views of the Holy can be formulated in an anti-theodicist argument:

1. If the term "good" can be given a meaning in terms of fighting evil and realizing the good in situations that include evil, then we can define it by distinguishing between the situation containing evil, strategies for fighting evil and realizing the good, and the situation where the good is realized.
2. The religious stories of salvation contain a description of an evil human condition, the Holy encountered through religious practices, and the situation where the evil is defeated by the Holy.
3. ⟶ (Situation-with-evil, strategies fighting evil and realizing good, good realized) is conceptually isomorphic to (evil human condition, the Holy, the Holy defeats evil and realizes good).
4. ⟶ If the term "good" can be given a meaning in terms of fighting evil and realizing the good in situations that include evil, then we can use them of the Holy in situations where the Holy liberates human beings from the evil of the human condition and realizes human good.

7.2 Theological Grammar, Divine Goodness and Omnipotence

Religious practices and stories then have a way of calling the Holy (e.g. God) "good" even in situations in which there is evil. This can be seen from the Exodus story, which gives the discourse possibilities for expressions like "God is good" and "God is powerful". We have seen in Chapters 3.2 and 4.3 that the questions about the essence of an X are answered by charting the discourse

64 See MacIntyre 1981, Bayer 2012. I quote Allen through Hinlicky 2015. Mikael Stenmark points to the possibility that atheists could reinterpret terms like "good" and "omnipotent" through a secular language-game. However, any of these interpretations can be answered by locating these expressions in religious forms of life with arguments similar to those presented here. These grammars will also fail as dialectical examinations (see MacIntyre 1988) of religious beliefs, because they detach expressions from their religious contexts and reinterpret with secular language-games. Moreover, these games will be pointless in a world where some kind of salvation takes place, just like Betenson's (2019) attempts to reject theodicies are pointless in a world where God has a reason for evil after all. See Chapter 3.1.

possibilities relating to X. Moreover, Hamann and Wittgenstein introduced the view of categorizing essences through investigating language-games and their underlying relationships as a generalization of the investigation of the term "God" in biblical stories. We can now move on to develop the themes introduced in the Exodus story and James' chessmaster analogy into an explicit refutation of the special problem by building a grammar of biblical narratives on God and evil.[65]

The view of language-games as categories then offers a way of charting the essences of objects in language-games. Theological grammar locates religious language in religious practices. These practices give discourse possibilities, as they include ways for encountering the Holy. They also allow for reidentifications, as they interpret reality against the backgrounds of stories and guidelines in the Scriptures. I discuss biblical grammar in Christianity and Judaism, but Ninian Smart's contrast of theistic and non-theistic religions allow us to show the generality of the grammatical approach. Theistic religions include practices that aim at encountering an Other with dialogues like prayer, and their scriptures offer stories of God's actions in nature and history. Non-theistic religions aim at encountering the Holy too: e.g. Buddhism aims at reaching the inner calm of Nirvana via practices like meditation. Scriptures then include guidelines for achieving Nirvana and stories of practitioners like the Buddha who have achieved it. The grammars are structurally similar, although the Holy is understood differently and these religions use different scriptures.[66]

In the theodicy debate, goodness and omnipotence are taken to be essential properties of God. As we have seen in Chapter 2.3, goodness is taken to mean that God does not create a world where there are no sufficient reasons for an evil. van Fraassen argues that the theodicist God was defined thus to make His activity transparent to reason, as He makes an unlimited choice according to reason. These positions have a key presupposition. Both divine goodness and divine power are defined independently of religious language-games and stories of divine activity, and then God is defined by appealing to these logically prior concepts. These presuppositions can be questioned by applying

65 See Chapters 3.2, 4.3. For philosophical grammar as a generalization of theological grammar, see ZH 7, 169, PI 373, Snellman 2018. For language-games as categories of discourse possibilities, see Garver 1994.

66 Smart 1998, 214–215. James' definition of religion (1985, Chapter 2) and pragmatist account of the Holy (Paulsen 1999) for the background for the comparison along with Chapter 3.2, 4.3 and For Buddhism, see *Dhammapada* and Chapter 7.1.3.

the grammatical methods of Chapter 3.2 to religious practices and stories about God.[67]

7.2.1 *Theological Grammar and the Logic of Scripture*

Hamann explicitly notes that his grammatical method of philosophy is a generalization of Luther's theological method: "like Luther I turn my entire philosophy into a *grammar*".[68] From the 1970s onwards, Christian theologians like Hans Frei and Jewish thinkers like Peter Ochs have been developing a view of theology as a grammar or logic of biblical narrative. Ochs systematizes recent views of theology as a grammar of the Bible.[69] He takes the Rabbinical Jewish theological method to interpret the Scriptures, and then compares the method with Peirce's pragmaticism. He then builds a theory of biblical grammar that encompasses Jewish pragmatist interpreters like Max Kadushin, and Frei's Christian school of grammatical theology. These schools of biblical interpretation emphasize that rules are internal to theological discourse and shape the life of a religious community. This approach is often criticized as relativistic: the question of truth does not arise. However, Ochs locates the articulation of biblical rules and laws in a dialogue with God to overcome suffering. Thus the account of the articulation of rules internal to a faith community must be complemented with a metalanguage that describes language-games for encountering God. I use Hamann's and Veijola's views of revelation to formulate such descriptions.[70]

Rabbinic Judaism holds that both the written Torah of the Pentateuch (Scripture) and the oral Torah of rabbinic interpretations (tradition) are both authoritative, but requires that traditional interpretations are included in the literal sense. The rabbis interpret the Bible by first focusing on the plain sense of the biblical text, and then highlight any contradictions and ambiguities that arise from the text. Biblical interpretation searches for an interpreted sense in the passages that clarifies the text and removes its ambiguities and contradictions. The search takes place in a tradition of Jewish theology, which gives it the goal of contributing to the religious community and the paradigm of

67 For the theodicist view of God, see Chapter 2.3, Mackie 1955, Plantinga 1974, Rowe 1979. The description of the basic assumptions is based on van Fraassen (2002, 1–30) and Phillips (2004).

68 ZH 7, 169, quoted in H XIII, n.6. Wittgenstein is aware that PI 373 goes back to Luther: Snellman 2018.

69 Ochs 2004.

70 For the solipsism charge, see McGrath 1994, 174. The descriptions of dealing with the Holy can be non-confessional descriptions of religious practices and beliefs in a Jamesian spirit: see Kusch 2011, James 1985, Smart 1998.

interpretative problem-solving via the Talmud. The goal of the search is to find a practical meaning that can be used to repair and correct the practices of the Jewish religious community and remove difficulties in its traditions.[71]

Ochs argues that Peirce's pragmaticism is also a method for clarifying ideas by removing ambiguity and contradictions by developing rules for pragmatic logic, which can then give definite meaning to the terms by fixing the conduct of the research community in the context of its received common-sense beliefs.[72] Specifically, he attempts to clarify the relationship between a critical correction, the final opinion and the practical task of correcting reasonings.[73] The criteria for a correct critical correction involve the practice y that is being repaired by the correction x: a higher-level argument is x valid only, if it helps to repair practices y on the lower level. For example, the rules of the philosophy of mathematics are correct only, if they can serve as a guide in mathematical practices. Ochs refers to Peirce's way of formulating pragmatism by quoting Jesus, Rabbi Hillel and Moses: "By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?"[74]

Ochs then defines pragmaticism as a method to repair the beliefs of a community in response to practical problems. He then applies his model to religious practices: theological logic concerns describing the beliefs of a faith community and devising repairs to religious practices. Ochs develops a grammar of Scripture by applying the model to the prophets' dialogues with God. Every suffering is a vague sign that God will redeem it. The prophets then enter into dialogues with God, who repairs suffering. These dialogues and interpretations presuppose faith in an Other who redeems suffering, and compassion

71 Ochs (2004) discusses rabbinic interpretation on pp. 5–10 and Kadushin on pp. 300–305.

72 For Ochs's interpretation of pragmaticism, see 2004, 251–259.

73 Ochs 2004, 246–285. To put Ochs' formulation technically: The relationships C(x,y): x corrects y, and F(y,p): the reading p is the final interpretant for the vague text y, are both constituted by their interrelatedness in the practice of enquiry. Reasonings at the level B^n can be corrected at the level of corrective metalanguage B^{n+1}. There is an ongoing process of enquiry, where arguments B^n and their corrections B^{n+1} resolve to the process $\bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} B^n$ that contain final interpretants at some B^{n+k}. The interrelationships and the ongoing, non-terminating process of enquiry are then necessary to understand enquiry correctly. The process of enquiry contains for each level of argumentation Bk the level $Bk_{+}n$ such that arguments on k+n correct k and offers the final interpretant for fixing practices.

74 Mt. 7:16, Ochs 2004, 246–285. Cf. Hamann's comments on modern philosophy: "Our philosophers talk like alchemists about the treasures of productivity, though to judge by their fields and vineyards, they do not know to tell (…) grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles" (H 106).

with God and with the suffering person. The prophetic dialogues then terminate in God commanding the prophet to institute corrective activities in order to take care of suffering people. The suffering x is then connected to the correction or redemption y, but this relationship is subject to confusions. The task of the prophet is to clarify the relationship between the suffering x and God's repairing redemption y, and issue corrections to the practices of caring for sufferers. The prophet then offers an account of God's action of repairing suffering, which connects the suffering x to the divine act p that is its interpretant. At the same time, prophets clarify the relationship of God's revelation and corrections of the world.[75]

Ochs then presents a summary of biblical grammar. The purpose of the grammar is to give the term "God" a practical meaning by describing, how God overcomes suffering and by offering corrections to suffering in the biblical texts and interpretative traditions. Jewish and Christian theologies offer re-readings of God's actions building on their respective religious sources for their communities. They use different sources in their interpretations: Christians use the New Testament and tradition, as Jews use rabbinical interpretations and the descriptions of God's virtues. The repairs moreover bring sufferers into a dialogue with God. The dialogues do not impose a cure, but they modify the religious practices of a community. The different readings are context-dependent and mutually enriching, so there is no single correct interpretation.[76]

Ochs's theological grammar then involves developing a description of the term "God" by identifying God's actions correcting suffering against the background of language-games of encountering God. Therefore Ochs' grammars require a description of language-games for encountering God in religious practices. Timo Veijola argues in "Offenbarung als Begegnung" that the basic structure of the Hebrew Bible consists of language-games of dialogues between God on the one hand, and human beings, Israel and the world on the other.[77] Veijola describes the biblical stories of encountering God by referring to the First Commandment: "I am the LORD your God".[78] The commandments start with an address, so they set up and build upon a relationship between

75 Ochs 2004, 286–290.

76 Ochs 2004, 290–315.

77 Veijola 1991. I am referring to the Finnish version of the essay. Veijola has cooperated with Bayer, and reads the Bible against the background of Luther's grammar that "God 'deals' with the person in the word, and the person 'deals' with God in faith". (Bayer 2012, 164) Ochs's rabbinic pragmatism (2004) explicitly affirms that prophetic dialogues with God underlie issuing interpretative corrections to the religious life of a community.

78 Ex. 20:2.

the believer and God. More generally, language about God is not abstract at all, but describes divine action towards man, Israel and the world in a space of conversation. Language about God and practical access to God then takes place in practices of interaction and language-game-like exchanges between man and God. When using the word "dialogue", one must notice two things. First, God both initiates the dialogue and has the last word in it. Thus God is free to both create and call, and both the existence of these language-games and their eventual outcome depends on God. Second, for all participants in the dialogue, both words and actions are moves or *Handlungen* in the language-games. Revelation is then understood as the words and events that constitute God's moves in the dialogue, so it is not a set of dogmas.[79] Veijola discusses prophetic dialogues, and uses stories about Moses and Jeremiah as examples:

- Moses!
- Yes, who is it? I'm here.
- Nice to meet you! I'm the god of your ancestors. My people Israel called. They've complained that the Pharaoh is oppressing them. Go liberate them from slavery.
- How can I do it? The Pharaoh will throw me in jail, or worse.
- I'll be with you and you'll have my full support.
- This is unbelievable. What god? Who are you? How can I introduce you to Israelites?
- I am who I am. Just call me Yahweh.[80]

Veijola develops grammatical remarks about the Moses story.[81] The divine name leaves the question about God's being open so that God maintains His freedom. Thus God's response upholds a distance between God and Moses. God's response and self-description however locates God in relationships. God's being who He is refers to divine action in relationships, so God both remains transcendent and commits Himself to relationships by promising to remain present by actions, e.g. by actions and strategies to repair suffering. Biblical laws and rules of conduct also gain their validity from relationships. The laws and commandments determine the right way of answering divine address: "First comes salvation, then comes legislation". Thus it is God's action

79 Veijola 1991. Chapter 4.1 includes a sketch of a language-game between God, Adam and the world. For the theme of God's freedom in divine address and the contingency of language-games, see H 65, Bayer 2012, 72–78, Poteat 1985.

80 Ex.3.

81 Veijola 1991.

that offers a ground for morals by first establishing a relationship and then determining virtuous practices by establishing correct ways of responding. Veijola also interprets the prophetic books by arguing that in the Bible, revelation is not confined to the Laws of Moses but remains a dynamic word that functions in prophetic dialogues with God. The prophet is called to God to be a messenger like Moses was, and in general revelation calls its recipients to action. The words of God are again an address: they are independent of the prophet, but they address particular people in particular situations and establish responses and relationships.

Veijola then argues that the theme of revelation as an encounter with God offers a suitable category to capture the structure of the Hebrew Bible, and other traditions as well. Biblical grammar describes the linguistic categories of encountering God, and builds categories of these relationships to clarify religious beliefs and to act as descriptions of and second-order norms in religious practices. He also argues that both Christian stories of Jesus encountering people and Jewish traditions of rabbinic interpretation affirm that biblical religion is based on encountering God. Veijola's theme of encounter both locates revelation in dialogues of religious language-games and raises the Hamannian theme of divine speech. Hamann's emphasis on the sensuous and practical character of revelation gives another angle for building descriptions of categories for encountering God and thus locating the practical meaning of the word "God".[82]

Hamann famously offers a statement of the Christian doctrine of creation and revelation when he argues that "creation (…) is a speech to creatures through creatures"[83] Hamann refers to Psalm 19, so he draws on the worldview of Wisdom literature: God establishes natural orders, and man then responds to them. Elsewhere Hamann sketches the communication-theoretic view of God → nature → reason, where nature is a communication channel transmitting God's speech.[84] Bayer interprets Hamann's slogan as offering a means of understanding both the freedom and the relatedness of God. The phrase "to creatures" implies that God is free to speak and that He is an Other who is not reducible to the state of nature. Bayer interprets "through creatures" Christologically, but Hamann clearly refers to creation as whole. Hamann argues that natural facts can be elements in the language-games of

82 Veijola 1991. See H 65, Bayer 2012, 70–78. For a Jewish theology that bases biblical grammar on encounters, see Ochs 2004. For language-games as categories, see Chapter 4.3, Garver 1994, 61–72, 217–325. For practical meanings of "God", see Paulson 1999.

83 H 65 / N II, 198.

84 ZH 5, 272. von Rad 1988, Perdue 1991, 2007, Veijola 1999. See Floridi 2004, and also Evans 2010.

divine-human relationships by embodying the institutions of divine speech and action. I take an example from Wittgenstein to illustrate Hamann's view of divine language:[85]

1. Elements: A phenomenon of nature, e.g. trees bowing to a saint.
2. Institution: God uses the phenomenon as a symbolic gesture of validating the words of the saint.
3. Symbolizing divine ideas: The trees symbolize the divine idea of validating the saint, because the phenomena are used as a gesture in communication between the saint, the hearers and God.

Thus dialogues between man and God as well as God and nature can be viewed as language-games, where God is an Other, and words and events function in a dialogue by embodying the actions of God and of creatures.[86] Hamann's view of creation then corresponds to Veijola's biblical grammar, but it expands the grammar to cover all experience and allows one to emphasize the sensuous character of theological language-games. Dickson argues that Hamann's *Aesthetica*[87] is a doctrine of experience and the creative reinterpretation of sense-experience. Hamann's starting point is that there is no dualistic conceptual gap between the world and God. Therefore empirical knowledge reveals God, as all creation is a revelation of God. Hamann in fact connects the concepts of revelation and of experience, as he speaks of nature as "the sensory revelation of his majesty" and refers to empirical results in the sciences as revelations: "the revelations of Niuwentyt, Newton and Buffon", as well as "the revelations of a Galileo, Kepler, Newton".[88] Revelation then is experiential, and experience becomes an empirical result or divine revelation when it is located in a practice of interpretation that involves its object and recognizes its presence.[89]

Ochs's Jewish pragmatism together with Veijola's and Hamann's Christian pragmatism offer perspectives on theological grammar.[90] Theological grammar describes how a particular religious tradition understands God to act, especially to repair suffering. These descriptions then give the essence of God,

85 CV 51, Snellman 2018, Bayer 2012, Dickson 1995.

86 See Dickson 1995, 145–149, Bayer 2002, 18–20, Snellman 2018.

87 H 60–95.

88 H 64, H 77, H 101.

89 Dickson 1995, 124–149, 338, Ochs 2004, Veijola 1991. Hamann understands faith as a recognition of a present object or reality. See Hein 1983, ZH 7, 165.

90 Ochs 2004, Veijola 1991, H 60–95, Bayer 2012, 67–86, ZH 7, 169, PI 371–373, Kusch 2011.

and serve as criteria for religious beliefs and activities within that tradition. Thus these descriptions chart the belief system in question. Martin Kusch too characterizes Luther's theological grammar as a description of religious practices: "Theology is a grammar of the ways in which the religious believer speaks and thinks about God, and the actions he thinks possible vis-à-vis God, and of the properties he attributes to God".[91] These descriptions are Jamesian in a broad sense, as they involve describing what it would be like to take part in the practice of encountering the Holy. The descriptions function against the background of practices for encountering God, which form the relationships R that underlie the concepts P that are used of God. The practices for encounters are language-games that involve the words and actions of both the believer or the community, and the encountered Holy. These religious language-games are moreover the primary context in which the word "God" is used. The words and actions of the language-games are mediated by the sensuous practices and events of the world. Moreover, the dialogues with the Holy form a history for tracking and identifying the activities of God.

Theological grammar charts the activities that locate talk about God and His properties in practical relationships. David Paulsen argues that James' critique of religious language aims at determining the practical meaning of the word "God" by locating it in practices.[92] In Chapter 3.1.2.2 we have seen that James defines practical meaning as the empirically mediated states of affairs that we encounter in seeking and finding solutions to our practical needs.[93] James defends the view of God as personal, limited and related to us with relational arguments that locate the practical meaning of the word "God" in religious practices for encountering God. Language about God is practically meaningful only, if God can be encountered in religious practices and empower moral practices. God can be encountered in religious practices and empower moral practices only, if He is personal and understood in terms of relationships with men and the world.

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91 Kusch 2011. Kusch is commenting on a passage from Luther that stands behind PI 373 and ZH 7, 169.

92 See Paulsen 1999. I use James' pragmatic theory of meaning to interpret theological grammar.

93 See Chapter 3.1.2.2, 3.1.3, James 1975, chs. 2 and 6. Peirce understands practical meaning as the practice itself: see Pietarinen & Snellman 2006. The view I develop may be closer to Peirce, as I interpret religious practices as sensuously mediated activities of seeking and finding God and the Holy.

James' arguments then offer ways of deepening points about grammar by reinterpreting them through the pragmatic theory of meaning. A concept is practically meaningful only, if it is embedded in sensuously mediated practices of seeking and finding. Religious practices in sensuously mediated language-games allow one to locate the pragmatic meaning of the word "God", as these practices are ways of interpreting and encountering God's activity and responses to suffering. Then the possible moves in religious language-games of encountering the Holy give the discourse possibilities and sensuous practices of encountering God, and the stories told of the encounters give the character and principles of identity for God.[94] These language-games are then categories for identifying God, as they locate the possibilities of discourse and action regarding God, and make it possible to identify and reidentify God by telling stories about His activity. Religious language-games then establish the practices of use and practical meanings for terms used to characterize the essence of God.[95]

1. Language-games are categories that characterize essences: they answer the question "What is an X?" by identifying basic intuitions for seeking and finding X in encounters with reality, and give the criteria of identification that are typical for X.
2. If language-games are categories characterizing their objects, then the word "God" has practical consequences and God is identified via religious language-games for encountering God.
3. Theology is a grammar: It describes and regulates religious practices and uses of language in religious language-games, which are used for encountering the Holy.
4. ⟶ The second-order terms of theological grammar describe the essence of God only, if theological terms are connected to first-order practices of encountering God in language-games.
5. ⟶ Theological terms describe God only, if these language-games are connected with encountering the Holy and relating to it via practices functioning as basic intuitions.
6. The principles for identifying an X help determine the essence of an X by locating it in a narrative that describes its typical actions and character.

94 See Chapter 3.2 for a description of grammar, Chapter 4.1 for language-games and 4.3 for categories and criteria for identity.

95 See Chapter 4.3, Phillips 2004, 5–13, Garver 1994, 61–72, 217–325, Paulson 1999, Kusch 2011.

7. In biblical traditions, biblical stories are used to identify God: The Old and New Testaments in Christianity, the Hebrew Bible and the Talmudic tradition of interpretation in Judaism.
8. ⟶ Theological grammar characterizes the essence of God and His essential properties like "good" and "omnipotent" by pointing out the practices of responding to God that give discourse possibilities and basic intuitions, and by giving criteria of reidentification via biblical narratives.

7.2.2 *Theological Grammar, Goodness and Omnipotence*

Philosophical grammar then offers a way to contrast the concept of God in religious practices with the logical concept of omnipotence and the principle of sufficient reason. Paulsen interprets James' pragmatic critique of theological terms.[96] James contrasts the socially related God of practical life and of biblical traditions with the abstractly defined God of metaphysical theism and Transcendentalism. God makes a positive difference to the practices of day-to-day life, as He responds to calls of help and calls us to a moral life. Then God is present and related to the world, as He can be related to via prayers. Similarly, God is limited, because He is related to human beings and the world. If God is related to man and the world, then we can draw the distinction (but not construct a conceptual gap) between God and the world. Similarly, if the relationships between man and God are genuine moral relationships, then God has to work in a world with many independent centres of causal power, and does not determine everything.[97] James contrasts the pragmatic picture that arises from encountering God with metaphysical theism, which defines God as an unlimited Being as such. God is taken as a limit concept of being qua being e.g. by defining Him as the Perfect Being or the ultimate sufficient reason of the universe. James argues that this conception is devoid of practical meaning, as defining God as a limit of reason and something completely different from us and the world cuts Him off from relationships.[98] Having such a God does not call for any particular kind of practice, so it does not have practical meaning.[99]

96 Paulsen 1999.

97 For monism in the theodicy debate, see Mackie 1955.

98 Hamann makes a similar criticism of Kant: see Bayer 2002, 56–62.

99 Paulsen 1999. James is maybe too harsh: views like Transcendentalism and Thomism are ways of looking at the world, and Scholasticism views God as a limit that is reached by applying a particular empirical interpretation of causation. See Burtt 2016, cf. the discussion of Catholicism in Chapter 6.2.3. Paulsen admits that James' argument must be assessed piecemeal.

James' pragmatic critique of religion can be recast as Hamann's and van Fraassen's dilemma, which was discussed in Chapter 3.[100] God is either understood in terms of metaphysics as the God of philosophers, or of revelation as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understanding God in terms of metaphysics leads to the conceptual confusion of speculative metaphysics, including theodicist word games. Understanding God as revealed gives a fixed meaning to the word "God" through religious language-games, but the approach to evil is not theodicist. This can be clearly seen with the concepts of goodness and omnipotence.

Phillips argues at length against the logical concept of omnipotence.[101] He rephrases the Hamann-van Fraassen dilemma: is the talk about omnipotence related to an a priori concept of logical space, or is it interpreted in the language-games where we put the word "God" to its ordinary use? If we ground the logical concept of omnipotence in an a priori order of possibility, then we detach the meaning of "omnipotent" from its relational conditions, because the order of possibility is determined only against the background of the rules and underlying relationships of some language-game. Then the logical concept of omnipotence fails to get off the ground. On the other hand, if the concept of omnipotence is defined within religious language-games, then the logical concept of omnipotence fails as a grammatical principle.

The key idea of Phillips's argument that the logical concept of omnipotence presupposes that logical space is given a priori and the concept of omnipotence is logically prior to that of divine activity. In Chapter 2.3 we have seen that Mackie defines omnipotence as follows: for all logically possible p, if God wills that p, then p: $(W_{God}\, p \rightarrow p)$. Phillips quotes a similar definition from Swinburne: "An omnipotent being is one who can do anything possible, anything, that is, the description of which does not involve a contradiction".[102] The concept of omnipotence then presupposes the Scotist picture of the rules underlying logical space that was discussed in Chapter 3.3: w is possible if and only if w does not contain contradictions. In fact, Scotus developed possible worlds semantics to articulate a view of divine power that admits divine choice.[103]

Phillips's arguments against the logical concept of omnipotence build on Wittgenstein's ideal language argument, which is based on the Hamannian

100 See Chapter 3.1.2.3. ZH 1, 450–453, Beiser 1987.

101 Phillips 2004, 5–20. See PI 116, ZH 1, 450–453, van Fraassen 2002, 1–30.

102 The quote comes from the book *Providence and the Problem of Evil.* Quoted on Phillips 2004, 6.

103 See Chapters 4.1.1, 4.2.1. Knuuttila 1996.

relational arguments of Chapter 4.2.1. Logical possibility is based on the logical rules of language. The logical rules of language are then the institutions that concern its logical aspects. These institutions however function in the context of language-games, where language use establishes the meaning of logical and mathematical symbols. Conceptual possibility is then not given a priori, but is located in language-games. Also, talk about the logically possible depends on the different discourse possibilities in language-games and possibilities given by their underlying relationships. An attempt to detach the concept of possibility from language-games and its rules and underlying relationships then removes it from its relational conditions, because language use and the relationships underlying the linguistic rules are the necessary conditions for logical and conceptual possibility. Then the a priori concept of logical possibility does not get off the ground at all.[104]

Another way of understanding the concept of "omnipotence" is to refer to what is possible for God, or what God can be said to do. These descriptions of possibility however presuppose ways of describing God, so the context of using the word "God" is then taken to be the relational context for the concept of omnipotence. Such a linking of the concept of omnipotence with religious language-games however embeds the concept in the grammar of these language-games, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Then the concept "is omnipotent" is subject to the discourse possibilities of what God can be said to do, and the stories of reidentifying God. The grammatical possibilities however offer a different picture of omnipotence than the logical picture. Phillips argues that "God cannot ride a bicycle" or "God cannot eat a cone of good ice cream" are part of the grammar of divine action. Theologians often argue e.g. that God cannot do evil, or He cannot watch suffering callously and instead aims to repair it.[105] Then the concept of omnipotence depends on the grammar of divine action, which controls what p God can be said to do. Such a concept however is narrower than the logical concept of omnipotence, because God cannot be said to do actions contrary to the totality of discourse possibilities about Him, and the stories for identifying Him.[106]

The logical concept of omnipotence then fails, as it detaches the concept of omnipotence from the language-games for identifying divine activity. The

104 Phillips 2004, 5–13, PI 81–136, H 205–218, Bayer 2002, Snellman 2018. See Chapter 4.2, 6.2.

105 The point arises from Ochs 2004, 288.

106 Phillips 2004, 5–20, Chapter 7.2.1. Phillips thus makes the possibilities attributed to God to depend on the religious language-games. However, the dependence of attributions of metaphysical necessity on language-use is a special case for the simultaneous contingency and necessity of grammar. See Chapters 3.2, 4.2.3, 6.2.2, Garver 1994, 231–235.

concept of divine goodness also faces a similar problem. We have seen that Rowe defines divine goodness: God is good if and only if every evil s either makes possible a greater good G or prevents a greater evil s'. Otherwise God would not have a sufficient reason to permit the evil s: "*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".[107] When the logical concept of omnipotence connects omnipotence with an a priori logical space, the theodicist definition of divine goodness connects goodness with the principle of sufficient reason. Both of these connections take concepts of God into metaphysical use from their everyday use.[108]

We have seen in Chapter 6 that the principle of sufficient reason is an abstract principle. Heidegger defines it as the principle that "Being qua being is constituted by reason", and Pruss defines it as the principle that "Everything has an explanation". Such principles do not define, what is reason or an explanation. Heidegger argues that Plato's theory of Forms and Kant's transcendental deduction offer two competing ways for grounding being in reason. Similarly, simply arguing that everything has an explanation does not determine, what counts as an explanation, which explanations are good ones and which explanation is true in any particular case. We have seen in Chapter 4.3 that the principle of reason and other metaphysical principles are second-order principles that need interpretation in terms of first-order systems and language-games for assessing moral and logical reasons. These language-games and their underlying systems function on the logic of elements, institutions and systemic contexts. On its own, the principle of reason fails to specify any specific reasons or what counts as a sufficient reason, as reasons are relative to systems and language-games. However, defining divine goodness in terms of sufficient reasons detaches the descriptions of God from the language-games that are used to identify and evaluate divine activity, as the principle is taken to be logically prior to the concept of God.[109]

This insight seems to stand behind Hamann's critique of Leibnizian theodicism in the Antitheodicy Letter.[110] Hamann here poses the dilemma: are we using an a priori concept of divine justice, or are we appealing to revelation? Hamann argues that it is vanity to claim a priori knowledge of God's intentions

107 Peterson et al. 2003, 148, Rowe 1979, Chapter 2.3.2.

108 PI 116. Phillips (2004) too argues that the concept of divine goodness as sufficient reasons fails. My line of argument is different, and closer to van Fraassen's (2000) and James' (Paulsen 1999) critiques of metaphysics.

109 Chapter 2.2.4.3, 4.3, 6, Heidegger 1971, Pruss 2006.

110 ZH I, 450–453, Beiser 1987, Chapter 3.1.2.3.

and total knowledge of the world, both of which are necessary to show that the world is the best possible and give a theodicist proof of divine justice. He instead claims that trying to get a priori knowledge of God's character is like a blind man looking at the sun, and sceptical philosophers are right that the more they try to discern divine reasons, the less they know. A blind man simply does not have the means to identify the Sun or to be in visual contact with it. We can then put the argument in terms of identification conditions: we can talk of divine goodness and justice only, if we have practices for identifying and encountering the Holy.

Hamann appeals to Christian revelation, but his argument can be made in terms of the grammatical remarks of the previous chapter. Working with the language-games of a religious tradition ends up in a similar situation as appeals to revelation: both religious language-games and revelation are dependent on practices of encountering God and the Holy. These practices then lay a groundwork for theological grammar, which gives ways for describing the justice of God by describing His properties via ways of seeking and finding Him, and His action by telling stories. Then theological grammar establishes the ways for speaking about divine justice, because they determine both the discourse possibilities and the narratives that determine the practical consequences underlying the claim "God is good".[111] For example, Hamann's example of Christian faith has the confession: "for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist".[112] The confession specifies practices for encountering God in the Christian tradition. Early Christians held that Jesus is God's chief agent who realizes His plans to repair suffering, so God can be encountered through Jesus. Early Christians then devised language-games for worshipping Jesus. Moreover, the confession links the identity of the Christian God with the story of the Hebrew Bible, as they quote the Jewish confessions that Israel has only one God. The Christian confession then defines basic intuitions for encountering and a story for reidentifying the Christian God, and also practices and definite reasons for calling Him good. The same does not hold of the theodicist claims "There is a God, because all evils are for a greater good or prevent a greater evil" and "There is no God, because some evils are not for a greater good and do not prevent a greater evil".

We can see this on the basis of the survey of the theodicy debate in Chapter 2.3. Plantinga argues that free will is a greater good that gives God sufficient

111 ZH 1, 450–453, see Chapter 7.2.1. Cf. Rowe 1979.

112 1 Cor. 8:6. See Hurtado 2015, Dt. 6:4.

reasons for letting Curley extort bribes. Mackie claims that libertarian free will does not constitute a greater good, because the libertarian concept of free will is incoherent. Since compatibilism is the right way to understand moral responsibility, Curley can well be a morally autonomous free person and an automaton who is the puppet of blind physical forces. Rowe claims that it is so horrible that Bambi died in the forest fire, so then there can be no sufficient reasons for such callousness. Plantinga claims that freedom is a good reason to let environmental hooligans or Lucifer play with matches, burning down the entire forest.[113] All of the disputants accept theodicism, or the claim that if God exists, then all evils have morally sufficient reasons. What they disagree on is whether a given possible situation w is such that God has a sufficient reason for allowing w. The structure of the debate tends to increase the ambiguity, as the cottage industry of defences depends on offering epistemically possible reasons for allowing worlds. Then the theodicy debate, the principle of sufficient reason or theodicism are not sufficient (do not offer sufficient reasons?) for determining the set of worlds $P_{God} = \{w | w \text{ is a possible world } \& \exists x \, x \text{ is sufficient reason for God to permit } w\}$. More specifically, they conceptually fail to establish whether the actual world $w \in P_{God}$. Then the principle of sufficient reason and other assumptions have not fixed the practical consequences for the claims "God exists", "God is good", "God does not exist", "God is not good".[114] We can now sum up the critique of the theodicist metaphysical uses of the terms "good" and "omnipotent":

1. The expressions "God is good" and "God is omnipotent" either gain their meaning from religious language-games, or they are defined in terms of the logical concept of omnipotence and the principle of sufficient reason.
2. If the expressions "God is good" and "God is omnipotent" gain their meaning from religious language-games, divine goodness and omnipotence are understood in terms of the grammar of religious practices.
3. If divine goodness and omnipotence are understood in terms of the grammar of religious practices, then the PSR and logical omnipotence do not fix their meaning.

113 Mackie 1955, Rowe 1979, Plantinga 1974. The idea that the debate about theodicy is fit for parodies comes from Dickson' aptly named essay "Wortspiel and Schulgeschwätz" (2005).

114 The concept of practical consequences comes from James (1975) and from Chapters 3.1.2.2 and 3.1.3.

4. The logical concept of omnipotence and PSR detach the expressions "God is good" and "God is omnipotent" from their contexts and relational conditions for their use
5. If the logical concept of omnipotence and PSR detach the expressions "God is good" and "God is omnipotent" from their contexts and relational conditions for their use, then the PSR and logical omnipotence do not fix their meaning.
6. ⟶ The PSR and logical omnipotence do not fix meanings for "God is good" and "God is omnipotent".[115]

7.3 Biblical Grammar and the Fallacies of Theodicism

Focusing on religious practices and stories then can help bring back the word "God" from its metaphysical use into its ordinary use. My approach to anti-theodicy builds on James' and van Fraassen's critiques of metaphysical theism. I build a grammar for the terms "omnipotent" and "good" in biblical traditions, which form the religious background for their metaphysical use.[116]

My approach will focus on Christianity, as I read the Gospels in light of Hamann's and Wright's antitheodicies and use my reading to motivate the use of William James. I build on N. T. Wright's *Evil and the Justice of God* to describe anti-theodicy in the Gospels, while using Gerd Theissen's *In the Shadow of the Galilean* as a background. I will then investigate the Book of Job by using Leo Perdue's *Wisdom in Revolt* to develop an anti-theodicist grammar of metaphors of God in the Hebrew Bible. The same Jamesian points arise within the investigation of the original context and the plain sense of the Book of Job as well. The core of my argument is to combine Perdue's plain-sense reading of the encounter of God, Job and evil with James' pragmatist interpretation of divine attributes in everyday religious practices and encounters with the Holy. My approach could also offer resources for Jewish anti-theodicies. Christianity and Judaism both use the metaphors of the Book of Job through their respective traditions of interpretation, and Tyron Goldschmidt has shown that most theodicies and antitheodicies arising in Christian traditions have corresponding rabbinic versions. Moreover, Jon Levenson has also given a Jewish

115 ZH 1, 450–453, van Fraassen 2002, Phillips 2004.

116 PI 116. van Fraassen 2002, 1–30, Paulsen 1999. Wright makes a similar argument in the Logos Seminar of 2017. See Chapter 3.3, Morganti & Tahko 2017.

antitheodicist reading of the Hebrew Bible that in some ways parallels Perdue's reading of Job.[117]

The importance of stories in biblical grammar can be approached via examining stories that are familiar from the Christian Gospels. In *The Shadow of the Galilean,*[118] Gerd Theissen locates Jesus in the tradition of ancient Jewish story-telling. Jesus' agrarian parables tell about a God who is completely different from our preconceptions, like the idea that God must be on the side of the powerful or the principle of sufficient reason. The stories tell about the relationship between God and man, and thus help to identify God's actions towards man and possible human responses. Since one cannot make a picture of God, He can be described only by giving an account of events or telling a story. The events then form plot points or God's actions, and the story as a whole reveals His character or strategy. The parables build on the conviction that God can only be sought and found by reorienting one's life, as they aim at changing the hearer's life and relationship with the Holy. The stories of the Hebrew Bible locate God's action in the world by telling about the history of Israel, and Jesus' parables aim at reorienting one's way of looking at the world by telling about the presence of God in everyday life. The stories tell about a God who seeks human beings to return to Him and has great forbearance towards them.[119] These stories then help chart God's actions, as they are metaphors in the sense of Chapter 4.2.2: they represent possible situations and relationships of God's action via literary creations.

Take the example of the Prodigal Son. A father has two sons. One turns his back on his father by demanding his inheritance and then proceeds to waste it. When he is ruined, he returns home and asks his father for forgiveness. The father readmits the son to the family and organizes a party because the son is back. The form of the story is (abandon father → come back). The story can be reinterpreted: the father is God, and the lost son can be interpreted to be a tax collector or a prostitute, e.g. Matthew Levi or Mary of Magdalene, who gave up on sinful ways to follow Jesus. Then there are narrative isomorphisms between the relationship of the story and relationships, where God calls these people back through Jesus' activities. Then the story opens new ways of seeing Jesus' socializing with sinners as God's actions by looking at them from a new angle, and thus recognizing (or identifying) them as God's presence. It also

117 Wright 2006, Perdue 1991, Theissen 1994, Ochs 2004, Levenson 1994, Goldschmidt 2014.

118 Theissen 1994, Ch.14. Cf. Wright 1996. I use Theissen's account to highlight points about grammar and categories.

119 For identification through stories, see Chapter 7.1.1. For theology as a grammar, see Chapter 7.2.

gives criteria for identifying God's activity in different possible situations by pointing out functional similarities between the compared situations. One can compare the cases of Matthew and Mary, and the comparisons give similarities and isomorphisms between the cases that function as identity criteria for divine activity.[120]

James' approach to the meanings of expressions for divine properties like "omnipotent" and "good" offers a starting point to bring these terms "to the rough ground".[121] James defines these expressions as follows: "God's holiness, for example: being holy, God can will nothing but the good. Being omnipotent, he can secure its triumph. (…) Being loving, he can pardon too. Being unalterable, we can count on him securely".[122] Paulsen argues that James is thus redefining the traditional properties of God in order to take them out of metaphysical use and to reconnect them with religious practices and narratives. God's holiness and goodness are then redefined as willing the good and preferring to act so that it triumphs. God's omnipotence is redefined as the ability to act so that good eventually triumphs. James also introduces the famous chessmaster example to describe this sense of the sovereignty of God. In "The Dilemma of Determinism" James argues that God can guarantee His purposes in a world where there are many independently acting agents, some of which are opposed to His will. James makes the argument by appealing to the concept of a winning strategy in game theory.[123] He first distinguishes between a Providence that necessitates the world and a Providence that builds a contingency plan for responding to possible situations with some fixed points, or actual states of affairs that count as objectives. He then offers the analogy of God as a chessmaster, who is playing against a novice:

> An analogy will make the meaning of this clear. Suppose two men before a chessboard – the one a novice, the other an expert player of the game. The expert intends to beat. But he cannot fore-see exactly what any one actual move of his adversary may be. He knows, however, all the *possible* moves of the latter; and he knows in advance how to meet each of them by a move of his own which leads in the direction of victory. And the

120 Lk. 15:11–32, Dt. 21: 18–21. See Theissen 1994, Chapter 14, Wright 1996. The topic of metaphors and dynamic models is discussed in Chapter 4.2.2 and Ziman 2000. For faith as a recognition of presence, see Hein 1983.

121 Paulsen 1999, PI 107.

122 James 1985, 353.

123 James 1979. For the concept of a winning strategy, see Chapter 4.1.

> victory infallibly arrives, after no matter how devious a course, in the one predestined form of check-mate to the novice's king.[124]

Thus God can achieve His aims in a world where there are many independent agents, and there is evil in the world. Paulsen calls this concept of divine power "redemptive sovereignty": God aims at the good, and for all situations that can arise in the history of the world, He can either block them or He can act in them so that good will eventually triumph.[125] Thus God's plan of redemption or ensuring the victory of good over evil gives the practical meaning to the claim "God is good": tragedy is only partial, but God can defeat evil and ensure the triumph of the good.[126]

7.3.1 *The Gospels and the Redemptive Sovereignty of God*

This is the picture of God and evil we find in the biblical narratives. I will examine N. T. Wright's interpretation of the Gospel stories and biblical worldviews in *Evil and the Justice of God*. Wright's book is an explicit antitheodicy, as he argues that the philosophical problem of evil is based on conceptual confusions. He builds his case on a popularization of his research on Paul, Jesus and first-century Judaism. I will also use Gerd Theissen's *The Shadow of the Galilean* as a background, as Theissen has a richer view of the social context.[127] The key for Wright's reading is the view that the Bible tells "*a story about what God has done, is doing and will do about evil*".[128]

Wright describes the beliefs of Second Temple Judaism of Jesus' day as a background of Christianity. There is only one God who created the world, and that God has entered into a covenant with Israel. This belief was not an attempt

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124 James 1979, 138–139.

125 Rowe's (1979) theodicism is a misreading of this principle: it detaches blocking evils and guaranteeing the good from its narrative and strategic context, and links it with paternalistic consequentialism and logical omnipotence.

126 See Paulson 1999.

127 Wright 2006, cf. 1992, 1996. Theissen 1994. Wright is doing a religious history of worldviews and symbols that is embedded in a political history of the development of different religious agendas. Theissen is doing social history and locates religious practices in day-to-day life, and is more sympathetic to Judaism. In many respects their approaches are similar. They locate Jesus in the context of an expectation that God radically changes things by defeating evil. They reject conspiracy exegetics through a focus on the social and political situation in first-century Israel and a scientific realism that focuses on the structure of practices and mindsets. Both have a criterion of historicity that is aimed at locating Jesus in the joint of Second Temple Judaism and Christianity by emphasizing continuity-by-difference.

128 Wright 2006, 45.

to characterize God metaphysically, but it was instead a slogan against paganism: only the God of Israel is real. It emphasizes that this God is the Creator by rejecting polytheist or pantheist identification of God with natural forces, and Gnostic and Deist views that hold that God is not actively involved in the material world. The doctrine then implies that "the present world (…) was made by the one true god, that evil, though important, is not a necessary constituent part of it, and that the one god remains sovereign over it".[129] God was also seen as acting both through natural and "supernatural" events. He was then taken to be both the creator of the world and active within it, leading to a view of divine activity as "speech to creatures through creatures".[130] This worldview involves then a rejection of dualism: conceptual gaps like spirit/matter, matter/form, God/world and fact/meaning are illegitimate, as God is present in the world.[131] However, one has to make a distinction between God and the world, good and evil and the-world as-it-is and the-world-if-its-telos-were-fulfilled in order to account for God's creative actions and His plans to defeat evil. The belief that God has called Israel offers the framework for discussions of the problem of evil. God has called Israel in order to repair suffering, and thus committed Himself to acting in history to defeat evil. The problem of evil then becomes "dynamic and relational", and the story of the Hebrew Bible becomes key for approaching it.[132]

Wright develops his account of evil in the Hebrew Bible by focusing on the call of Abraham.[133] The narratives of the flood, the Tower of Babel and the Fall form the background for the call of Abraham. In each case, human hubris and evil challenges God: humans aspire to "be like God", act in evil ways and do much violence or to build a great tower to be omnipotent. Then God judges them: He expels Adam and Eve from the garden, engineers a great flood and confuses their languages. After God's judgment thwarts evil, God blesses the world: He gives Adam and Eve the means to live from here on and continue the human race, gives the world a new beginning by calling Noah, and finally He calls Abraham so that the blessing on his family will benefit all mankind.

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129 Wright 1992, 249–250.

130 H 65.

131 Hamann takes up this theme by generalizing the Christian way of developing the idea of Divine Presence into a general attack on conceptual gap dualism. See Chapter 3.2.2, 4.1, 5.2.

132 See Wright 1992, 252, 244–279. I am using MacIntyrean terminology from Chapter 7.1 instead of "the present age" and "the age to come". Dickson (2005) argues that the problem has to be approached relationally.

133 Wright 2006, 43–62, Gen. 3, 6, 11–12.

These stories have a common structure: God is committed to working within the world and to securing the triumph of good at all costs. He contains evil and judges it in order to block it from frustrating the goals of creation, and then offers new and unexpected ways to reach these goals and to ensure "that tragedy is always provisional and partial, and shipwreck and dissolution are not the absolutely final things".[134]

This can also be seen in the story of the Exodus as well. The Israelites are enslaved in Egypt, and the Pharaoh oppresses them. God hears the cry of the Israelites in Egypt, and out of compassion is moved to liberate them from slavery. God judges the Pharaoh and Egypt through a series of natural disasters and by drowning the Egyptian chariots, and then lets the Israelites escape and leads them to the Promised Land. The call of Israel however creates new problems: the Israelites do not trust their calling and make golden calves that they worship right after God had given them a set of constitutional laws for the nation. Wright argues that setting up the institutions of biblical Israel and Judah simply sharpens the problems: the monarchy does not function as expected, and the question of how God's plans against evil will be fulfilled is left open.[135]

Wright develops a grammar of three figures he takes to be key in the prophets' charting of options of how God might act: the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, the Son of Man in Daniel and the figure of Job.[136] Deutero-Isaiah argues that despite the disaster of the exile, God is still the creator and is committed to the covenant with Israel, and therefore God will take Israel out of exile and repair the suffering in creation. God then aims at realizing His plans for creation, and His justice saves, repairs suffering and heals instead of being a static order of sufficient reasons. Wright highlights the character of the Servant, which personifies the calling of Israel in the biblical narratives. Wright also discusses the battle and judgment scenes in the Book of Daniel. A series of beasts represents a procession of empires assaulting the human figure representing God's people, but God then issues a judgment in favour of the human person (Israel?, "the Son of Man") against the beastly empires and the violent and corrupt chaos they produce. God's judgment then overthrows evil and shows that the faithful are in the right.

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134 James 1975, 55. Cf. Nagasawa 2018.

135 See Ex., 1 Sam.-2 Kings, Ochs 2004. Wright (2006, 60–62) also mentions the Psalms.

136 Wright 2006, 62–74. Isa. 40–55, Dan. One must note that Wright is writing a Christian grammar of the Hebrew Bible, as Isa. 53 and Dan. 7 form the background for Jesus' actions. See Paulsen 1999, Chapter 7.1.3.

The theme of God and the moral order comes up in the Book of Job, where Job was hit by disasters even though he was innocent. Wright interprets the book by focusing on the theology of creation as a ground for answering the problem of evil: an answer to the problem of evil involves God the Creator establishing justice, so it is not a matter of static sufficient reasons. Wright moreover sees the book as a contest between Job and Satan, and draws analogies between Job and the Servant. Moreover, he draws some points about God and evil in the Hebrew Bible. Human beings are responsible for evil, and Satan is not an important character. Human and natural evil are intertwined. Moreover, God's justice is not a matter of sufficient reasons, but involves a plan for putting the world to rights: He acts in the world-as-it-is, through the pattern of evil → judgment → new creation that operates in a pluralistic universe of many agents.[137]

Wright interprets the stories of the Hebrew Bible as a background for the story of the Christian Gospels. Wright characterizes the stories of God and evil in the Gospels: evil hits Jesus with full force, and God defeats it through Jesus. The gospel stories talk of Jesus as a healer, and a builder of new kinds of community: "a prophet mighty in deed and word".[138] In the Gospels, the healings are understood as demonstrating the victory of God over evil: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you".[139] Jesus also invited sinners, poor people and other social outcasts to meals, as his aim was to integrate them into God's community and presence. Jesus claimed divine authority for his teachings, offered a way of having one's sins forgiven and of encountering God by joining Jesus' movement, as well as liberalized different laws concerning Jewish identity. He organized his followers into communities, where everyone is fed, suffering is repaired and everyone can equally enjoy the dignity and attitudes of the well-to-do. The practices of these communities then institute new ways of being faithful to God, and are built on a universalization and radicalization of Jewish ethical and social teachings.

Jesus was executed on a political charge, because his messianic claims and the message of the kingdom of God were a threat to the ruling Establishment.

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137 Wright 2006, 62–74. Job. Cf. Perdue 1991. I follow Perdue's interpretation of Job in Chapter 8.

138 Lk. 24: 19. Wright (2006,83–88, 1996) argues that Jesus' healings and meals mean an integration into the people of God. Theissen (1994, Chapter 12–14) argues that they enact and radicalize prophetic and Jewish practices for egalitarianism, social solidarity and repairing suffering.

139 Mt. 12:28.

"The Messiah" was usually understood as the revolutionary king of Israel, and Theissen paraphrased "kingdom of God" to mean that God would soon launch an all-out revolt on the established authorities and their corrupt politics. Wright argues that the protest against the Temple, the institutions of the Lord's Supper and the crucifixion all help reveal Jesus' agenda. The Messiah was supposed to defeat national enemies, restore the Temple and other institutions, and restore the Jewish laws. Jesus acted on the vocation of confronting evil, prophesied of a new Temple and instituted Jewish ethics and social mores through his communities. The protest against the Temple was meant as a judgment on it. Jesus acted as if by joining his fellowship and movement one could find forgiveness and the presence of God, so he was offering an alternative to the Temple even before the protest. The cleansing of the Temple signalled that the present regime was going to fall: social abuses connected to the Temple had gotten so badly out of hand that God would destroy it within a generation. Wright argues that the Lord's Supper was a prophetic speech act explaining Jesus' death: the death will conclude the new covenant. It will consolidate and institutionalize Jesus' work in building new forms of life, bringing the presence of God and establishing the ethics Jesus taught to his communities into the hearts and minds of people. Jesus then intended to die a martyr in order to force a confrontation between God and evil, and he makes a Messianic claim that gets him killed.[140]

Theissen argues that the toxic combination of economic exploitation, identity politics, racism, corruption, religious fundamentalism and old-fashioned Establishment authoritarianism had produced a war of all against all. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, had thrown Jesus to the wolves in order to prevent a revolt. Jesus also formed a threat to the Jewish establishment, as their power was based on building an Establishment cartel around the laws and the Temple. Pilate was afraid of messianic movements. The relationship between the Jews and the Romans was extremely bad, as most Roman leaders and soldiers were anti-Semitic and Jewish fundamentalism had become a way for defending one's status amid economic uncertainty and dispossession. In such a situation, anybody who made Messianic claims or talked about the kingdom of God was seen as a revolutionary threat. The relationship between peasants and city-dwellers was bad as well, and the merchants and tradesmen in Jerusalem saw a prophet from Galilee denouncing the Temple

140 The interpretation of the Kingdom of God as a great change instituted by God comes from Theissen 1994, Chapter 14. Focus on the Temple protest, Eucharist and crucifixion come from Wright (1996, 2006, 88–94.) Both argue that Jesus offered an alternative to the Temple and prophesied of a new one. The theme of judgment comes from Wright.

and demanding social reform as a threat to their jobs. Wright argues that the Gospel story then tells of supra-personal and structural evil spinning out of control: structural social evil led to a war of all against all, and structural natural evil led to the power of death and the death of Jesus. In the end Jesus was killed, and death and decay are natural evils that end life and ruin the vitality and beauty of nature. Wright argues that these structural moral and natural evils are a destructive power that is greater than simply the sum total of all evils. Traditional Christian theology talks of sin, death and the devil in this context.[141]

Wright argues that in the Gospel narratives, the death of Jesus is seen as a conclusive confrontation between God and evil. Jesus was more of a prophet and community organizer than a revolutionary king, but he had chosen to make the messianic claim that led to him being executed to play the role of Isaiah's Servant and thus embody God's plans for confronting evil: "Jesus on the cross towers over the whole scene as Israel in person, as YHWH in person, as the point where evil of the world does all that it can and where the Creator of the world does all that he can".[142] The conflict ends in the victory of God, as Jesus' death is followed by his resurrection. The stories link resurrection with a new creation: Wright interprets the resurrection story as meaning the establishment of a new creation, where the power of death is broken and the downward spiral of systemic evil is halted. Theissen links it with central features of Jewish monotheism: God creates anew and He takes the side of the weak. The resurrection is a new creation that happened, because God had taken the side of Jesus who was destroyed as an innocent victim of systemic evils at all levels. The confrontation between Jesus and evil then ended in the defeat of evil, and a new creation where destructive systemic evil can do no more damage.[143]

We can now make some grammatical remarks about evil and the redemptive sovereignty of God in the Christian story. Divine action is defined in terms of God's plan, which is described by reinterpreting the Old Testament through the Gospels. These narratives of a divine plan underlie the criteria for calling God "good" and "omnipotent", and give these expressions practical meaning.

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141 The description of structural causes leading to Jesus' death comes mostly from Theissen 1994, esp. chs. 17–18. See also Wright 1996, 2006, 78–94. The ideas of downward spiral of evils and the combination of natural and social evils into demonic tendencies comes from Wright (2006, 78–94). The idea of a war of all against all comes from Theissen (1994, Chapter 18). These evils are all too familiar in our times too, and plague the human condition (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3). For the theme of victory of God over sin, death and the devil, see McGrath 1994, 341–345.

142 Wright 2006, 92. See Chapter 5.2.3.

143 Wright 2006, 86–100, Theissen 1994, Chapter 18.

God is said to be good, because He is committed to His creation and to securing the triumph of good by acting within it. Since God's justice is a project to heal and repair suffering, it does not involve a static order of sufficient reasons. God is said to be omnipotent, because He is the Creator and His plan of acting in history through Jesus and the Jewish history secures a victory over evil in the end. Jesus' role in the story as God's right-hand man in defeating evil entails that there is no Platonic conceptual gap between God and the world, as God achieves His plans through Jesus' actions. To put it in the systemic language of Chapter 3.2 and 5, the prophet from Nazareth is the element, the institution is God's strategy or plan for fighting evil, and the plan functions in the system of encounters between God, Israel and the world.[144] The Jamesian concept of redemptive sovereignty fits the Gospel accounts, as divine goodness means pursuing the good in relationships and omnipotence means having a plan or strategy to defeat evil and secure the good in the end. The relationship of God and evil is then not one of conceptual exclusion as in Mackie, but of narrative and strategic opposition. God and evil are antagonistic characters within the story, so they are locked in a zero-sum game. However, it is not the case that where God is present, evil cannot be present and vice versa.[145]

The Gospel stories then offer materials for a Hamannian and Jamesian antitheodicy. The antitheodicy is Hamannian, as God is present and makes His plans manifest in Jesus' crucifixion, which is caused by chaotic evil forces and thus has no morally sufficient reasons. The antitheodicy is Jamesian, because it operates on the logic of God's winning strategies and gives a practical meaning to terms like "God is good" and "God is omnipotent". Wright however notes that the story itself depends on creation theology and themes like God becoming king ("kingdom of God") and the defeat of chaotic evil. These same metaphors are used in the classical biblical antitheodicy in the Book of Job, and Leo Perdue argues that the Book of Job is a grammar of these metaphors. Investigating these themes in the Book of Job allows to uncover how these metaphors and figures of speech function, and elaborate on the critique of theodicist fallacies and confusions. Moreover, an investigation into the plain sense of the Book of Job can also be a starting point for Jewish anti-theodicies as well.[146]

144 This feature of biblical narratives later led to the concept of communicatio idiomatum, which lies in the background of the Hamannian attack on conceptual gaps (see. Chapter 3.2.2, 5.) Luther intended the grammar of elements and institutions to fit the Christian doctrine of Jesus: see Metzke 1948.

145 Wright 2006, Paulsen 1999, James 1979, Bayer 2012, 78–81, Chapters 2.2.1, 2.3, 5. Cf. *Rep*. 2:379, Neiman 2015, 118, Hume 2008, X, Mackie 1955, Ochs 2004.

146 Wright 2006, Bayer 2012, 67–86, Perdue 1991, Ochs 2004. Neiman 2019 gives a Kantian and Jewish reading of Job.

7.3.2 *Metaphors in the Book of Job and the Fallacies of Theodicism*

Leo Perdue argues that the Book of Job concerns the right way to use language about God: "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".[147] Perdue's approach can then be located in the broad framework of theological grammar. Perdue also interprets wisdom theology by comparing ancient Near Eastern religions, situating it into a social history and analysing its narratives. Perdue's interpretation bears some similarities to von Rad's interpretation of the Book of Job: the witness of creation and God's speech show that God is present in Job's sufferings. They relate Job to God and correct the confusion that God's trustworthiness is based on sufficient reasons. Perdue interprets Job as a rebel against God who argues that since there are no sufficient reasons for evil, God is untrustworthy and man must take God's place.[148]

Perdue investigates the key metaphors for God's activity and for the human condition. He insists that theological language is metaphoric, and works with the same theory of metaphor as in 4.2.2: metaphors establishes interpretative connections for seeing-as, as they establish an interpretative isomorphism between the model and the system for pointing out similarities of functioning, and thus establish a way of pointing out the properties and functioning of the target system. Perdue identifies the four key metaphors for God's activity: fertility, word, artistry and the struggle against chaos. He also points out that there are three metaphors for the human condition: kingship, slavery and revolt. He argues that religious dogmatism easily turns these metaphors into dead metaphors that are disconnected from the interpretation of experience. I use Perdue's readings of the arguments of Job and his "friends" as a test case of how various theodicist positions fail and abuse theological language, and his reading of God's speeches as laying the foundation of a Jamesian consistency proof.[149]

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147 Perdue 1991, 75. Cf. Kusch 2011: "Theology is a grammar of the ways in which the religious believer speaks and thinks about God, and the actions he thinks possible vis-à-vis God, and of the properties he attributes to God".

148 Perdue 1991, 2007, von Rad 1988. Ch. Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, Chapter 2. von Rad argues that the book concerns the dialogue of God and Job. Job's friends were religious dogmatists who could not participate in the dialogue with Job, as their appeals to the view that sin gives a reason for all evils made them unable to recognize Job's point of view. Job had then challenged God to reveal Himself, as the trustworthiness of God had seemed suspect. God then answers Job. Perdue's reading of Job's arguments also resembles 20th century secularism and protest atheism (see Snellman 2019).

149 Perdue 1991, 28–31. See Chapter 8.

7.3.2.1 Metaphors for God and Man in the Book of Job

Perdue argues that in the ancient Near East, the gods were taken to guide the birth, growth and fertility of the land. In Israel, Yahweh was taken to be the father of the king and the nation. The metaphor of fatherhood means that God supports and raises the king and Israel, whom He has called. God is portrayed as a mother, who cares for Her offspring. God has given birth to Wisdom, and Israel is His spouse. Lady Wisdom tries to attract followers. The point of these metaphors is not to sexualize God, but to draw a picture of Him guiding processes that maintain life.[150]

Perdue also examines the metaphor of artistry. God designs and builds an ordered world like a craftsman does. House-builders and nation-building kings were seen to appropriate the wisdom of God, as building houses, temples and kingdoms orders the world. The Temple of Jerusalem was believed to be the dwelling-place of God. Lady Wisdom had built a house for herself and her followers. Pottery was used as a metaphor for the creation of man in the image of God. These metaphors articulate the view of creation as a beautiful and aesthetic whole. The work of builders and craftsmen also means in participating in God's creation.[151]

Perdue identifies four different terms for the divine word in the Hebrew Bible: speech, wisdom, command and breath. Similar metaphors are found across the Ancient Near East: for example, the Egyptian god Ptah created by expressing his thoughts, and Mesopotamian religion believed that the world is a state and the gods make laws in a parliament. In Israel, the word of Yahweh was believed to create and order reality. In Genesis, God calls things into being through words and orders them through names. God's commandments order nature, the stars, weather and the chaotic sea. Wisdom is God's power to order the world and human society, and to lead human beings to know God. Wise human speech creates just social institutions and ways for interpreting the world as a rational and beautiful whole. The point of the word metaphor is to claim that the language of creation reveals God, so God is present and the world is not chaotic and arbitrary.[152]

Perdue examines the fourth mythic structure: the struggle against chaos. In the struggle myth, the creator god defeats primeval chaos, which is personified as a sea or a dragon. The structure of the myth is struggle against chaos → the victory of god → god crowned as king → creation via word or construction →

150 Perdue 1991, 32–38.
151 Perdue 1991,38–42.
152 Perdue 1991, 42–46.

judgment. The myth is known from Egypt, Babylonia, pre-Israel Canaan and Ancient Israel. The Babylonian religion believed that Marduk had defeated the chaos monster Tiamat, and was then declared king and given absolute power to rule by decree. In Israel, Yahweh was taken to be the victor over monstrous chaos, e.g. the Leviathan or Behemoth. God first defeats chaos, creates the world and maintains the world order that threatens to slip back into chaos. The day of the Lord meant a historical event, when God defeats His enemies and chaos in nature. For example, Psalm 74 sings of God defeating chaos at the beginning, and then defeating the Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Therefore God has been able to order day and night and enter into a covenant with Israel. The Psalmist then expects God to defeat enemies who had razed Jerusalem.[153]

Perdue discusses three wisdom metaphors for the human condition: kingship, slavery and revolt. The Genesis creation story uses the term "image of God" to compare all human beings to kings. In both Egypt and ancient Israel, the term "image of God" referred first to kings who were taken to be the viceroys of gods, but was then democratized to include all human beings. The role of human beings as the image of God means that humans can build social relationships and rule their environment through wisdom. Human nature is then (potentially) good, and wise ways of acting are available to everyone. The human calling to be the vice-regent of God includes the creation of beauty and order like God, as well as procreation. On the other hand, authoritarianism and the plundering of nature lead the natural and social orders to chaos.[154]

Perdue overviews Babylonian wisdom literature to chart the metaphor of human being as a slave. In Babylonian religion man simply had to obey divine law, which was not rooted in covenants or any other human-divine relationships. The legalist slavery to the divine will appears meaningless in the Dialogue of Pessimism, so the best way out was suicide. In the Bible, the books of Job and Ecclesiastes express similar ideas about the human condition: it is pointless toil. Creation is then not seen as good, but meaningless and without value. God is a tyrant and a slave-holder, because He has put human beings in this position. This train of thought easily leads to a rebellion against the divine order, and Job ends up in rebelling against God.[155]

153 Perdue 1991, 47–56, Ps. 74. Cf. Levenson 1994.

154 Perdue 1991, 61–66. One needs just look at the situation in the world today… (See Altemeyer 2006).

155 Perdue 1991, 66–69. One should note the closeness of the view of human life as slavery to the tradition of modern atheism and the moralistic protest atheisms. See Neiman 2015, 113–202, Betenson 2016, Dostoyevsky 1998.

Perdue also locates the myth of rebellion in Babylonian texts, but argues that biblical texts offer important variations. In the Babylonian texts, the lower gods rebel against the higher ones, so the gods must create humans to get labour. Then humans too rebel and are almost destroyed. A friendly deity however prevents the destruction of mankind. The structure of the myth is predestination into slavery → slavery → revolt → destruction and salvation. The biblical model of rebellion involves a megalomaniac king demanding the position of God for himself, and this leads to his destruction. The king of Tyre wants to be God and abuse the position and wisdom God has given him to amass money and power. In the end Tyre is destroyed and the king is killed. The mythic structure is hubris → revolt → destruction.[156]

Perdue analyses the mythic structures in the Book of Job by showing that the book's outer narrative of God, Leviathan and Job functions according to the logic of the battle metaphor, and the inner story of Job disputing with his friends and God on the logic of the slavery and rebellion metaphors. The result of the battle is then a newly defined world of faith. The metaphors for divine activity are detached from a theodicist view that if God is just, then all evils are result of a sin. They are then reinterpreted according to the battle metaphor of God defeating evil.[157]

Perdue interprets the internal narrative of Job's debate with his friends and God by using the metaphor of revolt against the gods. I read his interpretation through the discussion of sufficient reasons and theodicism in Chapter 2. God lets Satan test Job with a series of disasters (predestination into slavery). Job argues that he is innocent, so God does not have a sufficient reason to judge him. Because his suffering does not have a sin or other reason to justify it, human life is meaningless slavery, God is a warrior waging war on humans, and it would be better that Job had not been born and that chaos destroyed the world order that had been established by God's word (Slavery). Then Job's friends demand that Job appeals to God and claim that Job's sins give God a sufficient reason to allow the disasters. They also warn that Job is starting a hubristic revolt against God. Job's appeal to God is based on hubris: present your reasons for my suffering, let's see who is right! Job thus challenges God and demands to be like Him (Hubris, revolt).[158]

Perdue locates the narrative of Job's debate with his friends and God within an external narrative that uses the four metaphors of divine activity. God

156 Perdue 1991, 70–72, Ez. 28.

157 Perdue 1991, 74–85, 260–273. Cf. Chapters 7.2.2, 7.3.1.

158 Perdue 1991, 74–85, 260–273. Cf. Neiman 2015, 314–328. See Chapter 2.

invokes artistry, word and fertility in the debate with Job, after Job had subverted them and questioned the worldview of their usual application: reality as an aesthetic and harmonic whole and "the fear of the Lord" as recognizing this order and appropriating it with wise practices that bring beauty and order to human life. The Book of Job emphasizes the metaphor of battle: the world is not static but contains chaotic and pointless evil that threatens the created order. The existence of evil does not threaten or contradict divine power, as God fights against chaos. God and human beings then uphold order in the world by fighting for justice. The conclusion can be put in Jamesian terms. God is good, as He secures the triumph of good by defeating chaotic evil, and is omnipotent, as He can defeat chaotic evil. Evil is chaotic and pointless, because it threatens the created order and thus cannot lead to greater goods or cannot be a consequence of a sin according to a system of retribution.[159]

The battle metaphor starts with God's bet with Satan. Job then reacts by cursing the created order and demands to be like God (The world slides to chaos.) God answers Job by pointing out that the world is wisely built, fertile and ordered according to laws. The created order is based on God's ability to defeat chaos and to limit it. Job cannot claim a divine role for himself, because he cannot order the natural world or establish justice in the human world (Struggle against chaos). Job admits that he has spoken nonsense and admits that God is the victor over chaotic evil and the Creator of a rational and beautiful order. (Destruction, Victory, God crowned as king). God then creates an alternative metaphoric world, where the creation of a good order and the defeat of chaos take place against a larger picture. Chaos is confined within the boundaries of a beautifully ordered creation, and chaotic evil is not a result of sin or other sufficient reasons. (Creation of a new metaphoric world). In the end, God declares Job to have been in the right. Job had demanded justice by criticizing God's questionable actions at the beginning of the story, given up his challenge to God and admitted that the claim that all evils are due to sin or other reasons is false. In the end, God restores Job's good life (Judgment, Salvation).[160]

7.3.2.2 The Speeches of Job and Atheistic Theodicism

The Book of Job starts with a scene in the divine council. Perdue describes the scene by drawing parallels with Babylonian religion. Yahweh functions as a chairman of the council, and his commands recreate the world. The case of Job

159 Perdue 1991, 56–60, 260–273, Chapter 7.2, James 1979, Paulsen 1999.
160 Perdue 1991, 56–60, 260–273. Cf. Levenson 1994.

comes up on the agenda: he has been an exemplary servant/slave of Yahweh, as he respected Yahweh and avoided evil. Satan, the Chief of the Secret Police, then raises the question about Job's loyalty: if something happens, Job will curse Yahweh outright. Yahweh allows Satan to produce a series of disasters hitting Job. The scene raises the questions of the book: Is God a paranoid dictator? Is God's word an arbitrary decision? Is Satan the god of this world? Are human beings slaves to gods?[161] Job then answers by rebelling against God in a way I claim to have parallels with the modern tradition of atheist theodicism. First Job claims that humans are slaves to God, as God has attacked him without sufficient reasons. Then he claims to be a king who has been unjustly treated by God and therefore can claim the position of God.[162]

Perdue interprets Job's speeches as a curse on creation. In Genesis, God creates in seven days. He orders the chaotic sea: first day and night, then light, and created birth and sexuality to keep up life. Job curses the order of day and night, his birth, sexual procreation and calls upon the chaotic monster Leviathan to eat up the world order. Job then sides with chaos against God and the world, as he curses the world order established by God's word and wishes for life to end. By cursing creation and declaring it worthless, he is claiming that it cannot be understood as a word, a building, as fertile or the result of battles with chaos.[163]

Job directly accuses God in his subsequent speeches, and Perdue argues that Job reinterprets the myths of battle, word, fertility and artistry in terms of human slavery. God is a warrior who has shot him with the arrows of His justice and crushed Him like the chaos monster: "Without cause or explanation the Divine Warrior has assaulted him with full fury, as if he were the chaos monster rivalling divine rule and threatening to destroy creation".[164] Job cannot appeal to God's commandments because it is God who is fighting against him even though Job has not sinned and God has no sufficient reason to attack him. Job similarly argues that God is tyrannically abusing nature and history, just like He has condemned the innocent Job without sufficient reasons. God has defeated chaos and thus has absolute power, but He has created man and the world just to destroy them arbitrarily. He is the parent who kills his children. His actions in history destroys the empires built by kings, who rule stupidly due to God's actions. God thus destroys nature, history and the social order. After God has fought Job, He has decreed human beings to be slaves, who live just for a fleeting moment and then die as a wage for their efforts. He

161 Perdue 1991, 86–91, Job 1–2.
162 Perdue 1991, See Neiman 2015, 113–202.
163 Job 3, Perdue 1991, 91–110.
164 Perdue 1991, 123.

has no hope of getting rights from his cruel master and cannot obtain a good life. Moreover, God does not answer him, after his life has collapsed into meaningless slavery. Job parodies Psalm 8: man has not been made a king but a slave. God does not forgive him, and watches over him like the Stasi and the NSA. Human life is then meaningless drudgery, and only death will set him free.[165]

One can make some grammatical remarks about Job's speeches and Perdue's interpretations. Job reinterprets the battle myth through the theme of slavery: God's struggle against man and the created order → God's victory over man and creation → destruction of man and the created order → judgment of man into slavery and reality into meaninglessness. Job's arguments are then a case of the grammatical confusion of crossing pictures. Metaphors like "God is a warrior" do not have a meaning outside the contexts and religious practices in which they are used. Job detaches the battle myth from the context of the creation of an ordered and beautiful reality, and reinterprets it in the context of slavery. Then the reinterpretation will not yield nonsense only, if the new practice does not go against the relational conditions of religious practices, like experience or values. Job moreover justifies this new interpretation by appealing to the theory of retribution: since God operates according to laws and an order within creation, all evils are a punishment for sin. This view is however a version of the theodicism discussed in Chapter 2.3: if God is just, then all evils occur for a sufficient reason. Otherwise God tyrannizes the world, and both the world and life are worthless. Thus it is theodicism that gives Job the reason to detach victory over chaos (or divine omnipotence) from the creation of a world with meaning and value. One can formulate Job's charges against God in an argument in which the key premises are similar to Rowe's version of the atheist argument and to the general argument of Chapter 2.3:[166]

1. If Job suffers and Job has not sinned, then there is suffering, which is not a punishment for sin and does not have any sufficient reasons.
2. Job suffers and he has not sinned.
3. ⟶ There is suffering, which is not a punishment for sin and does not have any sufficient reasons.
4. If there is suffering, which is not a punishment for a sin and does not have any sufficient reasons, then after his victory over chaos God has

165 Perdue 1991, 121–131, 131–147, 169–172, Job 6–7, 9–10, 12–14, 18–19, Ps. 8.

166 Rowe 1979, Perdue 1991, 170–172, Job 16–17, 19, Neiman 2015, Chapter 2.3, 4.2, PI 191, 197, Baker & Hacker 1985, 21.

arbitrarily judged sufferers with his word, destroys the world He has built, kills His offspring and fights against sufferers and the world.

5. ⟶ After his victory over chaos God has arbitrarily judged Job with His word, destroys the world He has built, kills His offspring and fights against Job and the world.
6. If God has arbitrarily judged Job and fights against Job and the world, then God has judged Job to slavery and his life and the world are meaningless.
7. ⟶ God has judged Job to slavery and his life and the world are meaningless.

Perdue interprets Job's speeches as moving towards revolt.[167] The slavery myth proceeds predestination into slavery → slavery → revolt → destruction and salvation, and in the end a friendly deity saves humanity by appealing to the gods. Job investigates, whether he could find anyone to appeal against Yahweh's decisions in the divine council. Is there a resurrection that would restore his dignity? After Job's friends accuse him of hubris, Job decides to launch an all-out revolt against God according to the mythic structure hubris → revolt → destruction. Job describes, how earlier he was a prince acting justly and righteously – like God. He gave leaders wisdom, helped the orphans and destroyed the evildoers. God has therefore destroyed him, so God is acting unjustly. Now Job is God's slave, but God has instituted a natural law of justice, as injustice corrupts society and pollutes nature. Since the natural law is based on natural order, justice towards nature and slaves binds God as well. Job therefore challenges God: God has unjustly judged Job, but Job has ruled justly. Job then claims that he is a king like God and demands that God presses charges against him so that one could see, who is ruling justly. Job's argument can be presented as a secular humanist variant of the atheist argument: since there is evil, human action must replace God:[168]

1. If there is a moral law in nature, then God violates it if and only if there is evil that is not a punishment for a sin and does not have other sufficient reasons.
2. There is a moral law in nature.

167 Perdue 1991, 182–195.

168 See Snellman 2019 for secularist critiques of theodicies and protest atheism. Neiman 2015, 103–113 for Marxist antitheodicy. The title *Wisdom in Revolt* is a reference to the Socialist song *Internationale*: "reason in revolt".

3. ⟶ God violates the moral law if and only if there is evil that is not a punishment to a sin and does not have other sufficient reasons.
4. If Job is a king who has ruled like God and something evil happens to him, then there is evil that is not a punishment to a sin and does not have other sufficient reasons.
5. Job is a king who has ruled like God and something evil has happened to him.
6. ⟶ There is evil that is not a punishment to a sin and does not have other sufficient reasons.
7. ⟶ God violates the moral law.
8. If God violates the moral law, Job should challenge God's right to rule and try to replace God.
9. ⟶ Job should challenge God's right to rule and try to replace God.

Job's challenge to God then takes a form resembling the atheistic theodicism and moralistic anti-theodicies that were discussed in Chs. 2.3 and 3.1.1. The main premise behind Job's revolt is that if God is just, then all evils are due to sin or have other sufficient reasons. Otherwise, God has used his omnipotent power to defeat chaos to defeat and destroy Job and the world. The myth of a struggle against chaos is then detached from the context of the establishment of an ordered world. It is then crossed with the picture of humanity as a slave, who has been condemned to a meaningless life. Man must then not attempt to explain evil, but must take God's place. Theodicism forms the premise of Job's friends too, as we shall see.

7.3.2.3 The Speeches of Job's "Friends" and Theistic Theodicism

The speeches of Job's "friends" offer an approach to the problem of evil that resemble various theistic approaches to the problem of evil, including the theistic thodicism that was discussed in Chapter 2.3. Eliphaz argues that evil always has a sufficient reason in previous sins. Bildad presents an argument that resembles divine command theories: both God's right to command and Job's duty to obey are based on God's absolute and despotic power.

Eliphaz's speeches can be read as a traditional theodicy. Perdue points out that Eliphaz's arguments are versions of wisdom theology's law of cause and effect, which resembles the Deuteronomistic theory of retribution: the righteous succeed, while the godless fail. Then a person suffers if and only if he sins. It is easy to see that this is a version of theodicism: if a person is suffering, then he has sinned and the suffering has a sufficient reason. The doctrine of retribution is then a religious version of the principle of reason. Perdue argues that Eliphaz attempts to justify the doctrine by appeals to nature, human nature

and patterns of divine action. However, Eliphaz ends up in a dogmatism that detaches religious language use from experience and tradition.[169]

Perdue argues that Eliphaz is using battle as his basic metaphor, when he calls upon Job to remember, whenever has a righteous person perished. The talk about remembrance refers to the structure of the Psalms, where God's acts of salvation are referred to and brought to mind, and then God is called upon to bring justice. Eliphaz however interprets remembrance of God's acts of salvation through the doctrine of retribution: "Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?"[170] He also reads God's justice towards the created order similarly: God is an avenger who breaks the teeth of lions. Creation theology contradicts such crass theodicism: God is the Creator of animals as well. Eliphaz has thus reinterpreted the battle myth: battle → victory → kingship → God institutes laws that all evil is a punishment → evil is a judgment against evil humans and animals. Eliphaz' position can be presented as an argument:

1. If God is a warrior who has defeated chaos, then He can build the world and order it with his word.
2. If God can build the world and order it with his word, then evil occurs if and only if the victim has sinned or is otherwise evil.
3. ⟶ Evil occurs if and only if the victim has sinned or is otherwise evil.

Premise 2 is the principle of theodicism itself expressed in terms of biblical creation theology: if God creates the world, then all evils have sufficient reasons. Perdue shows that it is based on a serious abuse of theological language. The principle involves cherry-picking experiences, as only the cases where the righteous prosper and sinners fail are taken into account. Moreover, the concept of nature is anthropocentric: God is expected to destroy animals according to human views of reward and punishment instead of caring for them as the Creator.[171]

Perdue's criticism can be recast as a relational conditions argument for theological language, resembling the arguments in Chapter 3.2, 4.2.4 and 7.2. When theodicists interpret metaphors for creation through the principles of retribution, they are using the Principle of Reason to cherry-pick theological experience and thus fix the interpretation with a super-principle that is not itself based on experience. Then the interpretation of religious metaphors

169 Perdue 1991, 110–120, 163–170. See also von Rad 1988, Chapter 2.3, Neiman 2015, 314–328.
170 Job 4:7. Perdue 1991, 110–120. Cf. Rowe 1979, Chapter 2.3.2.
171 Perdue 1991, 111–120, Job 4–5.

is not based on experiences in religious practices, but logically prior a priori principles start to exclude both available experiences and potential ways of interpreting religious traditions. The principle is then detached from religious traditions and from empirical practices for theological interpretation, which form the basic intuitions for divine-human encounters. Moreover, the picture of God as a warrior presupposes the values of fighting against evil, repairing suffering and divine compassion for sufferers, whereas theodicism attempts to justify evil. The metaphor then goes against the values that guide the practices where it is applied.[172]

Eliphaz is further mired in anthropological conceptual confusions. He argues that human nature is inherently evil. Thus everybody, including Job, have sinned. Perdue argues that the view of universal sinfulness commits Eliphaz to the slave metaphor: God watches over His servants and is not happy with their work. In his later speeches, Eliphaz doubles down on the claim that Job has sinned and charges Job with revolt and hubris. Job is rebelling against God, because he challenges divine justice and the created order with his speeches. Perdue refers to the theme of Primeval Man: Job is not the Primeval Man and he has not attended God's council. Job's speeches fit the model hubris → revolt → destruction, because questioning God oversteps the bounds of Job's knowledge. Perdue's interpretation of Eliphaz' speeches comes close to sceptical theism, which claims that the question whether God has sufficient reasons to allow evil goes beyond the scope of human reason:[173]

1. If man has not been in the divine council, then he does not have God's wisdom.
2. If man does not have God's wisdom, then he cannot say whether God's punishments have sufficient reasons due to the limits of human knowledge.
3. ⟶ Man cannot say whether God's punishments have sufficient reasons due to the limits of human knowledge.
4. If man cannot say whether God's punishments have sufficient reasons due to the limits of human knowledge and he criticizes God, he is hubristically demanding a divine status.
5. Job is hubristically demanding a divine status (and God's punishment has a sufficient reason).

172 See Chapters 3.2, 4.2.4, 7.2, H 205–218, PI 81–136, Bayer 2002, Pihlström & Kivistö 2016, Ochs 2004.

173 Perdue 1991, 110–120, 163–196, Job 4–5, 15. For sceptical theism, see Dougherty 2014.

Bildad offers a position that resembles divine command theories. Divine command theories hold that moral norms are dependent on God's decision, which are not anchored in prior moral reasons due to divine omnipotence.[174] Perdue argues that Bildad reinterprets the battle myth through the idea of divine despotism: God has ordered the chaotic sea and defeated the chaos monster Rahab, so "Dominion and fear are with God; he makes peace in his high heaven".[175] Job is wrong to rebel against God, because God's power is absolute. Man is just a "maggot", so human nature is corrupt and under divine judgment due to its low status. Bildad's argument can be presented thus:

1. If God is a warrior who has defeated chaos, then His power is absolute and He rules through terror, irrespectively of creatures or the world order.
2. If God's power is absolute and He rules through terror, then He is above good and evil, and Job's duty to obey is based on God's absolute power.
3. If God is above good and evil, and Job's duty to obey is based on God's absolute power, then Job's questions about justice are unfounded rebelliousness.
4. God is a warrior who has defeated chaos.
5. ⟶ Job's questions about justice are unfounded rebelliousness.

Both Job and Bildad then interpret the battle myth through the theme of slavery and divine despotism. Job argues that the existence of pointless evil means that God has decreed humans to be His slaves, and Bildad founds the divine-human relationship on absolute divine power. These solutions abuse religious language in various ways. First, they involve a crossing of pictures, where concepts are taken from relationships giving them meaning and transplant them into new contexts where the relational conditions for their meaningfulness do not hold. The myth of a struggle against chaos presupposes that the process ends up in the creation of an ordered, beautiful and wise world. The reinterpretation detaches divine action from wisdom and world order, so that in the reinterpretations the chaotic sea and its monsters has simply been replaced by Yahweh as the ruling chaos monster and the talk about victory over chaos does not make sense. Moreover, the terms referring to God will lose their ordinary meanings, as they are located in religious practices of trusting God and such

174 See Murphy 2012.

175 Job 25:2. Perdue 1991, 174–182, Job 25-26.

practices will lose their point if God is despotic. Similarly, religious language-games are governed by the norms of compassion and justice, so developing a view of God as a tyrant also goes against their relational conditions. One can furthermore make a Phillipsian point about omnipotence. Interpreting God's victory as just establishing absolute power makes it impossible to identify God's actions. If the storyline does not determine, how God acts and what kinds of orders He will establish, then His actions cannot be identified. Identifying the defeat of chaos and omnipotence in terms of unlimited power and capriciousness thus detaches the battle myth from practical consequences for divine action. This problem is just an example of the problem of logical omnipotence: if God is defined as absolute power, then the divine essence is not given by religious practices and stories for God's activities, and the terms become meaningless.[176]

7.3.2.4 The Speech of God and a New Grammar for "God"

Eventually God answers Job by appearing to him in a whirlwind. The encounter between Job and God falsifies the doctrine of retribution, which was seen to be the biblical analogue to theodicism. Perdue argues that the divine speech opens a new world of metaphors for the development of an anti-theodicist religious grammar. The theo- and anthropological metaphors form the core of the argument.[177]

God answers Job in his first speech by challenging his demands to be like God: "Who the hell is playing against the strategies of the Divine Chessmaster by speaking metaphysical nonsense? Play your move, if you gonna play the game, boy, then you've gotta learn to play it right!"[178] Job had cursed the created order and driven it into chaos with his speeches. He had also challenged God and demanded that he take God's place. Now God has to defeat Job's challenge. Perdue argues that God's answer focuses on the metaphors of divine activity: fertility, artistry, word and battle. God asks Job, whether he has the wisdom to build the structure of the world that God had established. God had similarly nursed the chaotic sea, but His word sets limits to it and prevents it from threatening the world. God's word orders light and darkness, which serve justice by exposing evil deeds. God has made natural laws for heavenly bodies and built canals for rain. He also rules over animals that man cannot tame: He feeds the ferocious lions and ravens, supports the birth of goats and deer that

176 Cf. Chapter 7.2. Paulsen 1999, Phillips 2004, Baker&Hacker 1985, PI 191, 197, Perdue 1991, Ochs 2004, Nagel 2012, 91.

177 Perdue 1991, 198–240, 38–42.

178 Job 38: 2–3. I am here quoting Kenny Rogers' song *The Gambler.*

are hiding from man, He gives freedom to stubborn donkeys and oxen, makes horses and ostriches too unpredictable to tame and gives wisdom to falcons and eagles. Thus it is God who is the Lord of creatures. Perdue argues that the metaphors for creation and divine activity are upheld, but are detached from anthropocentrism and the doctrine of retribution.[179]

God's second speech continues with the contrast between divine rule and Job's claims, as well as the contrast between the struggle against chaos and an order of sufficient reasons. Perdue argues that God directly challenges Job: "If I'm a despotic judge, why don't you do better? Start with the racism, authoritarianism and corruption of the mighty and then overturn the trend to a heat death of the universe by the way!"[180] Job had challenged God by appealing to the doctrine of retribution and the principle of reason: Job is right if and only if sin does not offer a reason for Job's sufferings if and only if God is wrong. God on the other hand refers to the myth of battle by singing about Leviathan, the monster personifying primal chaos that God had created and only He can defeat. God had also said in His first speech that He had nursed and established bounds for the primeval sea. The motifs of God as a nurse of the sea and the creator of Leviathan point out that there are chaotic forces and pointless evil, whose actions God limits and thus keeps the world in order.[181]

Battle then forms a main metaphor for divine activity in the Book of Job: God's struggle against chaos orders the world and is necessary for upholding justice. Perdue points out that "justice is not a static principle inherent in the structure of creation, but a dynamic force that must be continuously established and aggressively maintained by means of victory over evil".[182] The myth of the struggle against chaos then allows for a Jamesian definition of both divine goodness and power in terms of God's redemptive sovereignty in defeating chaos. God is omnipotent, because He is a warrior who can defeat chaos. God is good, because He fights evil and secures the triumph of good by building a fertile and beautiful world according to His word. There is however chaotic evil left in the world, which must be fought by God and humans. Then the activities and power of God are interpreted much like in James' chessmaster metaphor: the created order, human beings and various chaotic tendencies are independent actors, and God can secure the good by having a strategy to defeat evil through the strategic interactions of the storyline struggle → the

179 Perdue 1991, 203–216, Job 38–40:6.

180 Job 40: 6–14. The phrase "racism, authoritarianism and corruption" comes from an anti-Trump pamphlet (www.indivisible.org).

181 Perdue 1991, 218–232, Job 40:6–42:6.

182 Perdue 1991, 221.

victory of god → god crowned as king → creation via word or construction → judgment. Moreover, the opposition of God and evil (e.g. Leviathan) in such storylines is narrative and strategic, not conceptual, because God contends with chaotic evil that has no sufficient reasons.[183]

Perdue argues that God calls Job to a new world of metaphors, where divine justice is no longer dependent on the doctrine of retribution.[184] He offers a picture or metaphorical model where divine goodness or the creation of an ordered world, divine omnipotence or the power to defeat evil and the existence of chaotic evil all hold. To put this in the language of consistency proofs, God offers a model M such that all the sentences in the sets {Evil exists, God is good, God is omnipotent} and {Evil exists, The world is valuable and meaningful} are true in M and the sets are thus consistent. In the end, Job puts his hand over his mouth, and one could say that his paradigm for interpreting divine activity collapses. He pleads guilty to God's charges. He had cursed God's wise creation, thus denying divine goodness. He had challenged God's rule, thus denying divine omnipotence. After the second divine speech Job admits that God is good and omnipotent, and that he had spoken metaphysical nonsense: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand".[185] Job then admits that God's creation is wonderful, so there is a beautiful and rational order underlying them. He no longer demands that all evils are punishments for sins or have other sufficient reasons. One could say that he forms a new paradigm or language-game for overcoming the pitfalls of theodicism.

Perdue then interprets the ending by pointing to the theme of God's judgment. God had defeated Job's attempt to claim divine status like He had defeated the attempt to build the Tower of Babel. God must now liberate Job and restore his happiness, so that the new world of metaphors of the battle against chaos and the establishment of just orders will be realized in Job's case too. After winning the battle with Job, God establishes a just order by judging that Job had spoken rightly of him. Job had adapted religious language to his own human condition and asked for justice. He also admitted that the principle of retribution is metaphysical nonsense. In the end, God shows himself to be just by restoring Job's happiness, thus acting in accordance with the battle metaphor.[186]

183 James 1979, Paulsen 1999, cf. Mackie 1955, Chapter 2.3.2.1.
184 Perdue 1991, 216–238, Job 40–42.
185 Job 42: 2–3. Cf. James 1979, 138–139.
186 Perdue 1991, 238–240, Job 42.