



The Problem of Evil with Dr. David Schenk

Lesson 5: Standard Responses: Virtue Theodicy

Outline:

Natural Evil

- We are talking about anything that happens to be bad, not malice (wicked intent or corruption of will).
- How does the free will defense square with all of the lousiness that goes on in the world, due to nature (predation, disease, tectonic plate shift, viruses, and bacteria)?
 - These things don't happen on account of human agency, but the world is put together this way.

How can we explain natural evil, evil that contains nature?

- St. Augustine's response to the problem of natural evil:
 - All evil can be explained through an abuse of free will, however, not all of it can be explained through an abuse of human free will. There are other beings that were given morally significant free will, and they abused it.
 - Natural evil is product of angelic cruelty and evil. God permits the devils to frustrate His creation.
 - This is a logically, consistent response.
- Bail on the free will defense.
 - The free will defense can explain some evil and suffering, and other theodicies can explain the other evil in the world as long as the other theodicies are consistent with the free will defense.
 - The free will defense can explain the great majority of the evil in the world that emotionally grips us.
 - The real specialty of humans is undermining ourselves. We have an extraordinary capacity to make ourselves and each other miserable (while trying not to).
 - God doesn't stop us from sabotaging our own and others' lives.

Virtue Theodicy, Richard Swinburne

- Why did God create?
- When God created humans, why did he make us for? What sort of pattern of life is it that he has in mind for us? What are God's ambitions for humanity? What is it that He hopes we will turn into?
 - God intends the virtues for us.
- **Cardinal (Hinging) Virtues**
 - Prudence: Sound judgement



- Fortitude: Strength of character
 - What fortitude would people develop if they never encounter anything that was genuinely difficult? To develop a moral spine, we have to have something that tests us.
 - **We must be cast into a world, where adversity is already stitched in to develop virtue.**
- Justice: Fairness, even-handedness
- Temperance: Ability when in front of something good, to refrain from going too far with it, ability to control the measure of one's indulgence of something good
- **Theological Virtues**
 - Faith
 - Hope
 - There is no virtue of hope if the future is bright.
 - Love
 - What compassion can I extend to my neighbor if my neighbor never suffers?