

Theme 2: Letter C – Religious Responses to the Problem of Evil: Irenaean Type Theodicy



Spec Check – Component 2: Philosophy

Theme 2: Arguments for the existence of God

AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding	AO2 – Evaluation
<p>C: Religious responses to the problem of evil (i): Irenaean type theodicy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vale of soul-making: human beings created imperfect; epistemic distance; second-order goods; eschatological justification;• Challenges to Irenaean type theodicies: concept of universal salvation unjust; evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God; immensity of suffering and unequal distribution of evil and suffering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether Irenaean type theodicies are relevant in the 21st century.• The extent to which Irenaeus' theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism.

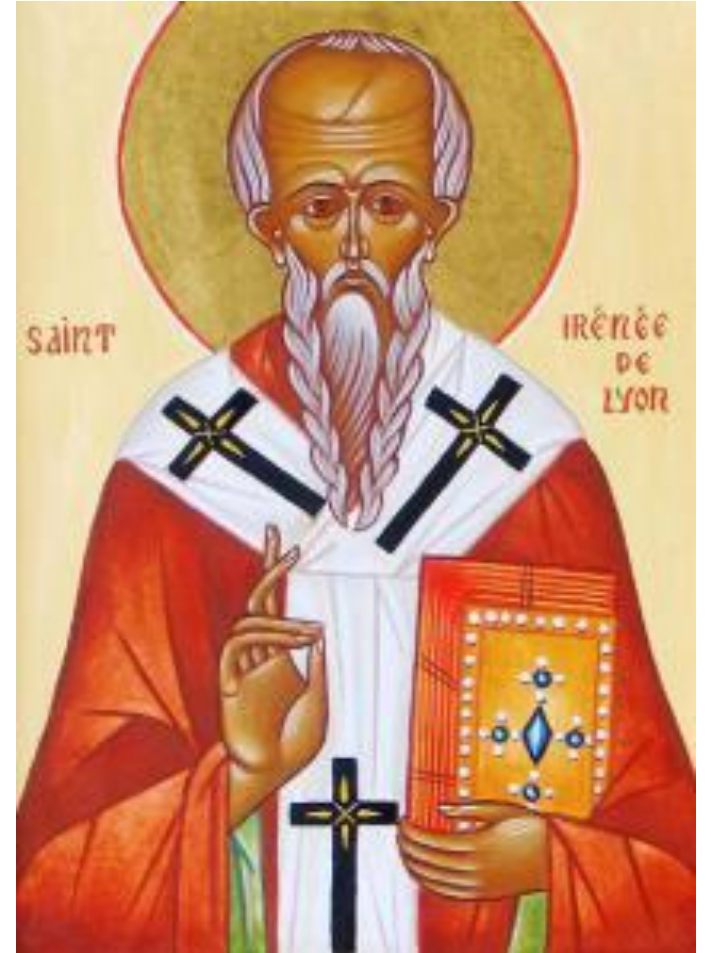
Augustine Re-Cap – Odd One Out

- A) Augustine / 2nd Century / 4th Century
- B) France / Augustine / Africa
- C) Evil / Privation of good / Lack of good
- D) Genesis 1 / The Fall / Genesis 2-3
- E) Genesis 2-3 / Original Sin / Image and Likeness
- F) Atonement / All are saved / Some are saved



Irenaeus

- 130-202 AD
- Bishop of Lyon
- Recognised as a saint in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.
- Best known for his works 'Against Heresies' which is a detailed attack on Gnosticism.



Vale of Soul Making

- **Soul Making** = Humans have the ability to learn how to **develop** and become better people. In order to do this, humans must **make good free moral choices**. Only when an agent **chooses** to do a good act, can they learn to grow and become better people. It was **John Hick** who gave Irenaeus' theodicy the title of a 'soul making' theodicy
- Irenaeus grounded this idea in Biblical literature: **Genesis 1:26**:
- "Let us make mankind in our **IMAGE**, in our **LIKENESS**"
- **Without evil**, humans **can't learn** to develop into God's image and likeness. Therefore, humans are created imperfect. This is a clear departure from Augustine's theory

- Jordan, Locke and Taylor offer the following analogy:

Imagine that wherever you drove your care, the chief of Police were to accompany you. You would still be free to break the speed limit. However, in practice, would you exceed it?

Epistemic Distance

- As **Hick** states *'In order to be fully personal and therefore morally free beings, they have accordingly....been created at a distance from God'*
- Epistemology = the study of knowledge.
- **Epistemic Distance**, therefore, is the gap in knowledge that humans have between themselves and God. Epistemic Distance accepts that humans are not Divine, and are not perfect.
- Epistemic distance again allows room for evil to exist in the world. If humans were perfect, and there was no evil, how would we be different to God?

Second Order Goods

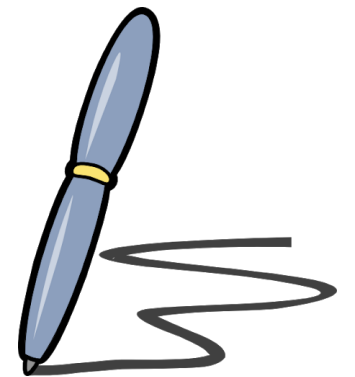
- Actual evil enables humans to develop ‘**second-order goods**’ – e.g. courage, patience, forgiveness.
- Suffering therefore **enables humans to become stronger** and appreciate goodness more.
- This also helps humans develop into better people.
- **Task**: Think of *two* more ‘second-order goods’ that people develop as a result of evil and suffering in the world.
- [I am Malala](#)
- In 2012, Malala was shot in the head just for going to school. However, from this act of evil, Malala has since gone on to educate the world about the importance of education!

Eschatological Justification

- **Eschatology** = Study of end times (salvation / heaven / hell / apocalypse)
- **Justification** = being made righteous before God
- **Eschatological Justification** is Irenaeus' final reason for why evil exists. Because humans have epistemic distances from God, and because evil has to exist in order for humans to grow and develop into God's likeness then there needs to be punishment or reward in the eternal life.
- For those that have chosen to **develop** into God's likeness – **they can be justified after death in heaven**
- This is again different to Augustine who believes that God has already decided who will be damned, due to being restricted by original sin

Modern Additions to Irenaeus' Theodicy

- **TASK:** Individually read through the modern additions as found on pages 18-20 in your workbook. Fill in the textboxes.
- These aren't specifically on mentioned in the spec, but you would be expected to make reference to Hick in a question about Irenaeus as he was such an influential contributor to his theory!



Challenges to Irenaeus Theodicy

- There are 3 challenges that you need to know against the Irenaeus Theodicy:
 - **1. The concept of a universal salvation is unjust**
 - **2. Evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God**
 - **3. Immensity of suffering and unequal distribution of evil and suffering**
- **TASK:** In pairs, read your challenge on page 75 of your textbook. Make notes and paraphrase on your whiteboards



1. The concept of a universal salvation is unjust

- The idea that everyone can 'develop' and go to heaven **undermines human effort**. There is therefore no encouragement for always demonstrating good moral behaviour.
- Also, universal salvation **undermines the process of pilgrimage** because the end result is guaranteed.
- If everyone is saved, then there is no point in enduring pain to develop **spiritual maturity**
- If everyone *can* be saved, **is freewill limited?**

2. Evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God

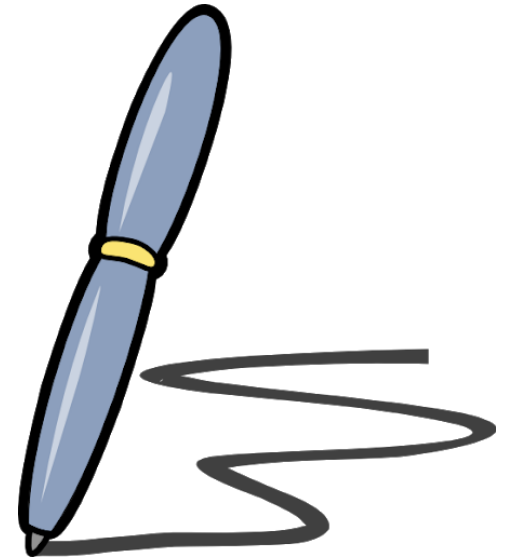
- God **should not use suffering as a tool**. It is open to abuse. It lacks love.
- The **evolutionary process** has been **long and painful** at times – it doesn't seem like a fair balance or 'trade off'
- If humans have the option to mature in the next life '**the celestial city**' then why can't they just mature in this life? Why have a generation of suffering?
- Finally, **Jesus' atonement seems unnecessary** if we can all go to heaven anyway

3. Immensity of suffering and unequal distribution of evil and suffering

- **Suffering isn't evenly spread**, which is inconsistent with God's perfect world
- This theory could be called '**soul breaking**' not 'soul making'
- There was no positive outcome from the **Nazi's holocaust**. There were no second order goods for the severity of the crime

A01 – Consolidation

- Complete lean learning sheet 'C' in your workbooks



AO1 – Skills

- **‘Examine the Irenaean type theodicy’ (20)**
- **TASK:** Read page 50 to see what the examiners wanted to see in this answer
- **‘Examine the challenges against the Irenaean type theodicy’ (20)**
- **TASK:** Individually plan what you might put in the second question
- **TASK:** We will go through a plan as a class
- **TASK:** Write a paragraph to the best of your ability. Think about your semantic starters and the level of detail that you include.



AO1 – Skills

- ‘Examine the challenges against the Irenaean type theodicy’ (20)
- **TASK:** Read the exemplar paragraphs in front of you. Mark them according to the level descriptors with WWW / EBI



What went well:

The things you did really well were...

The best part of your work is...



Even better if:

To improve your work you need to...

AO2 – Skills

- ‘Irenaean type theodicies are credible in the 21st Century’. Evaluate this view (30)
- ‘Irenaeus’ theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of classical Theism’. Evaluate this view (30)
- **TASK:** Individually write your own thoughts about the questions above
- **TASK:** In pairs, compare what the person next to you has written and add to your list
- **TASK:** Read the corresponding essay to your chosen question in your EDUQAS textbook – add to your lists



‘Irenaean type theodicies are credible in the 21st Century’. Evaluate this view (30)

ARE CREDIBLE	AREN'T CREDIBLE

‘Irenaeus’ theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of classical Theism’. Evaluate this view (30)

SUCCEED	FAIL