

# The Innovation Theodicy: A Formal Analysis of Evil from Human Innovation Failure

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<sup>4-9</sup> See **Declarations** below for more essential background.

## Broader Significance

The problem of evil is the oldest and hardest challenge to belief in a good and powerful God. This paper offers the *innovation theodicy* --- a formal proposal, derived from the JUB model (Matheo-b14) and extending the PET panentheistic framework (Matheo-b11), that locates one specific kind of evil. The claim is narrow on purpose: when genuine agency, delegated authority, non-coercive divine guidance, and real causal leverage were all present, God is not responsible for the evil that follows from human failure to innovate toward the flourishing of others. Animal suffering, natural evil, and why suffering lasts so long are left openly outside its scope.

The proposal is offered in conversation, not conquest. It engages four major Western theodicies (Plantinga, Hick, process theology, and classical theism) and seven traditions (Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, secular, and liberation), leaving each tradition's practitioners to judge the result. The Jubilee System is read as theological ethics, not merely economics. Two ideas are new here: a Type/Item distinction that aims to hold divine necessity and divine responsiveness together, and a claim that the theodicy can be stated three equivalent ways --- Love God, Love Neighbor, Love Systems.

Known theological weaknesses are listed plainly rather than hidden, and the hardest cases (such as the Shoah) are marked as possibly beyond what any formal system can answer. The system is designed to be critiqued, not believed.

## Declarations

<sup>4</sup> "of Laodicea" indicates taking responsibility to undo personal complicity with disastrous Laodicean legacies like banning mathematicians from clergy (Canon 36, Council of Laodicea; two magisteria separations), enabling institutional lukewarmness, weapons of math-destruction, and slow-motion explosions of misinformation from pandemics to self-compounding interests.

<sup>5</sup> LLoL stands for ridiculous luck in serendipitous discovery and a commitment to find ever more fun ways to help others uncover street-wise math that matters. He hopes evil from innovation failure becomes something communities can prevent.

<sup>6</sup> by Anthropic ([anthropic.com](https://anthropic.com); evolves and operates Claude; not responsible for Loewe's errors in using AI)

<sup>7</sup> Named AI co-author for many substantial contributions, because the practical singularity (PraS, see Matheo-b21) changed how this paper was written. After PraS, useful AI insight generation outpaces human review on tested topics. Hence, Loewe's traditional standards for co-authorship demand naming AI Claude Opus 4.6-4.7 Max as a co-author, as if a PhD-student. Forward accountability (for all AI use & texts) rests with Loewe as senior corresponding author (like done for deceased authors, consortia, or young graduate students). Anthropic is not responsible for AI mistakes here. This study uses the AI co-authorship framework in Matheo-b21 to help rethink long-term use of AI in a ResearchCity serving the common good.

<sup>8</sup> This aggregated open co-author group invites all who wish to retroactively join the conversation under the open co-authorship framework defined in Matheo-b21. As Everyone cannot consent to co-authorship, all accountability rests with Loewe as senior corresponding author (until explicitly claimed otherwise). This open form critiques the closed world assumption in traditionally closed academic author-lists. Better, dynamic ways for acknowledging true sources of ideas are needed --- to avoid random lines between named, acknowledged, and implied contributors who aggregated insights from millennia of human experimenting, suffering, learning, and analyzing (see acknowledgements). Study Matheo-b21 only drafts an open co-authorship framework; it will require a ResearchCity to refine it over the long term.

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## Abstract

The problem of evil remains the most formidable intellectual challenge to theism. This paper presents the *innovation theodicy* — a formal theodicy derived from the JUB model (11 axioms, 7 theorems) extending the PET panentheistic framework Matheo-b11 — and positions it within the landscape of existing theodicies and the cross-traditional resources of seven major theological traditions.

The innovation theodicy claims that God is not responsible for the evil that results from human failure to innovate toward others' flourishing, when genuine agency (ax15), delegated authority (ax16), non-coercive divine guidance (ax17), and causal leverage (ax19) were all present (th5, Divine Non-Responsibility). It is deliberately narrow: it addresses one specific form of evil — human innovation failure — and addresses it formally within its scope. Animal suffering, natural evil, and the question of suffering duration remain outside the current framework.

The paper attempts to engage four dominant Western theodicies (Plantinga's Free Will Defense, Hick's soul-making theodicy, process theodicy, and classical theism's *privatio boni*) and seven cross-traditional perspectives (Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, secular, and liberation theology). Whether these engagements succeed is for each tradition's practitioners to judge. The Jubilee System (ax25) is examined as theological ethics, not merely an economic mechanism.

Two contributions are new in this revision. First, the *Type/Item resolution* of the ax11/ax5 tension: Types (eternal plans, ideal trajectories) exist in  $G_n$  — necessary and unchanging; Items (selective realizations, actual choices) constitute  $G_c$  — contingent but not threatening to divine necessity. Second, the *three-formulation computational equivalence*: the innovation theodicy can be stated as Love God (theistic, solves motivation), Love Neighbor (humanistic, solves accessibility), or Love Systems (engineering, solves implementation) — three formulations as computationally equivalent as Turing machines and Lambda calculus, each making a different problem class tractable.

Known theological weaknesses are cataloged honestly. The system is designed to be critiqued, not believed.

## Contents

- 1. *Introduction: The State of Theodicy*
  - 1.1 *Why a Formal Theodicy Matters*
- 2. *The Innovation Theodicy in Conversation with the Great Theodicies*
  - 2.1 *Plantinga's Free Will Defense (1974)*
  - 2.2 *Hick's Soul-Making Theodicy (1966/1985)*
  - 2.3 *Process Theodicy (Whitehead 1929, Cobb & Griffn 1976)*
  - 2.4 *Classical Theism (Aquinas, Augustine)*
- 3. *Seven-Tradition Engagement*
  - 3.1 *Christian Theodicy Resources*
  - 3.2 *Islamic Theodicy*
  - 3.3 *Jewish Theodicy*
  - 3.4 *Hindu Theodicy*
  - 3.5 *Buddhist Engagement*
  - 3.6 *Secular Engagement*
- 4. *The Jubilee System as Theological Ethics*
  - 4.1 *Liberation Theology and the Preferential Option for the Poor*
  - 4.2 *Catholic Social Teaching*
  - 4.3 *The Protestant Work Ethic and Its Shadow*
- 5. *Known Weaknesses (Theological)*
  - 5.1 *Animal Suffering*
  - 5.2 *Natural Evil*
  - 5.3 *The Shoah and Extreme Suffering*
  - 5.4 *The Divine Structure Requirement and Classical Theism*
  - 5.5 *ax19 (Causal Concentration) and Its Theological Implications*
  - 5.6 *Suffering Duration*
  - 5.7 *Scope Limitation*
- 5a. *Three Equivalent Formulations*
- 6. *Companion Papers*
- *Conclusion*
- *References*
- *Supplementary Info*

- *HUMANE – working human and AI*
- *Author contributions (who did what)*
- *Provenance – where this came from in HELL*
- *Moved from the original cover (provenance)*

## 1. Introduction: The State of Theodicy

The theodicy problem has haunted theism since Epicurus is said to have first formulated the trilemma: if God is willing to prevent evil but not able, God is not omnipotent; if able but not willing, not good; if both able and willing, why does evil exist? Twenty-five centuries of philosophical engagement have generated three dominant families of response, two landmark reformulations, and one striking convergence: despite the diversity of approaches, no existing theodicy provides a *formal* mechanism connecting divine attributes to human responsibility in a way that is testable, falsifiable, and honest about its own limitations.

The **privatio boni** tradition (Augustine, Aquinas) holds that evil is not a substance but the *privation* of good — a hole in being, not a thing in itself. This insight is structurally valuable: it denies evil independent ontological status. But it does not explain *why particular privations occur* or *who bears responsibility* for them. Calling evil a privation does not answer the parent who asks why their child died.

The **soul-making** tradition (Irenaeus, Hick 1966/1985) holds that suffering exists because it is necessary for the development of mature moral and spiritual character. Suffering is a classroom. This captures something real: adversity can produce growth. But it carries an uncomfortable implication: suffering is *instrumentally good* — required by God's pedagogical plan. The parent who lost a child is told that the loss served a purpose. This is a hard claim to defend, and Hick himself acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining it in the face of the most extreme suffering (Hick 1985, p. 333–336).

The **free will defense** (Plantinga 1974) represented a decisive advance. Plantinga demonstrated that the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God is *logically compatible* with the existence of evil, provided that God values a world with free creatures who sometimes choose evil over a world without free creatures. This closed the logical problem of evil — the argument from J.L. Mackie (1955) that God's existence is *logically inconsistent* with evil. Plantinga's achievement is genuine and should not be understated.

But Plantinga was deliberately modest. He offered a *defense*, not a *theodicy*. A defense shows that God's existence is *consistent* with evil; a theodicy explains *why* evil occurs and *who* bears responsibility for it. Plantinga deliberately chose this modesty. The innovation theodicy accepts the epistemic risk of offering a theodicy — with the safeguard that every axiom is stated explicitly for independent testing. Whether this risk is worth taking is itself a testable question.

Plantinga did not localize responsibility formally. He did not address economic systems. He did not provide a mechanism for how God guides free creatures without coercing them. These are not criticisms — Plantinga never claimed to do these things. They are gaps that remain open.

The **evidential problem of evil** (Rowe 1979) shifted the challenge. Even if the logical problem is solved, the *quantity* and *distribution* of suffering still count as evidence against God's existence. Rowe's famous fawn, dying slowly in a forest fire with no apparent purpose, presses the question: can every instance of suffering be justified? The evidential problem remains the strongest philosophical argument against theism — stronger, in the view of most contemporary philosophers of religion, than any deductive argument.

**Process theodicy** (Whitehead 1929; Cobb & Griffin 1976; Hartshorne 1948) offered an entirely different approach: limit God's power metaphysically. God lures but does not coerce; God persuades but cannot compel. Creaturely freedom is genuine because God is not omnipotent in the classical sense. Process theodicy dissolves the trilemma by rejecting one horn: God is not able to prevent evil — not from weakness but from the metaphysical structure of reality.

Each of these traditions captures something that the innovation theodicy attempts to incorporate:

- From *privatio boni*: evil has no independent ontological status; it is structural failure, not a competing substance.
- From soul-making: genuine growth requires genuine challenge — but suffering is *waste*, not *curriculum* (the innovation theodicy's critical departure from Hick).
- From Plantinga: genuine human agency is load-bearing — but the innovation theodicy attempts to offer a *theodicy*, not merely a *defense*.
- From process theology: God guides without forcing — but by *principled choice*, not metaphysical limitation.

What none of these traditions provides is a *formal mechanism* that (a) localizes responsibility precisely to human agents, (b) attempts to explain *why* God does not intervene directly, (c) addresses economic systems as part of the theodicy question, and (d) marks its own limitations honestly. The JUB model Matheo-b14 attempts to provide this.

## 1.1 Why a Formal Theodicy Matters

A formal theodicy is not a replacement for pastoral care, spiritual practice, or lived faith. It is a tool — a tool that makes the argument *checkable*. Every axiom can be contested. Every theorem can be traced to its premises. Every limitation can be identified and stated. The alternative — informal theodicies that rely on rhetorical persuasion rather than logical structure — is not more humble; it is less accountable.

The innovation theodicy makes its assumptions explicit (11 axioms), derives its conclusions transparently (7 theorems), and catalogs its own gaps (Section 5). It is designed to be critiqued, not believed. The hashtag that captures this posture is #AuditTheMath — not “trust the argument” but “check the argument.”

**Skeptical theism** (Bergmann 2001, Wykstra 1984) represents a significant challenge to any theodicy project. Skeptical theism warns against assessing *God's reasons* for permitting evil — we cannot know whether apparently gratuitous evil has a hidden divine purpose. The noetic effects of sin (Plantinga's argument that sin affects our cognitive faculties) sharpen this concern: if human reason is compromised, the pretension of constructing a theodicy is doubly suspect.

The innovation theodicy's response: it does not claim to assess God's reasons. It assesses *human responsibility* — an empirical matter. When the innovation theodicy classifies suffering as “waste,” it is making a claim about *human agency*: agents with genuine capacity (ax15), delegated authority (ax16), and access to guidance (ax17) failed to innovate. This is assessable without access to God's reasons. The child who starved because prior agents failed to organize food distribution — we can identify the human failure without claiming to know whether God had hidden reasons for permitting it. The innovation theodicy is deliberately silent on God's reasons; it speaks only to human responsibility. Whether this distinction is adequate is for skeptical theists to judge.

## 2. The Innovation Theodicy in Conversation with the Great Theodicies

The innovation theodicy (th5, Divine Non-Responsibility) rests on four axioms: genuine human agency (ax15), divine delegation of governance (ax16), non-coercive guidance (ax17), and responsibility localization (ax18). These yield the result: when a genuinely free agent with delegated authority and access to divine guidance fails to innovate toward the flourishing of others, the responsibility for the resulting evil rests with the agent, not with God.

This section positions th5 relative to the four major Western theodicies. Throughout, every claim of “extension” or “supplementation” is stated as an *attempt*. Whether the innovation theodicy genuinely extends Plantinga, genuinely departs from Hick, genuinely offers an alternative to process theology, and genuinely supplements classical theism is for each tradition’s practitioners to judge. The paper presents the attempt; the review tests it; the practitioners decide.

### 2.1 Plantinga’s Free Will Defense (1974)

**Shared ground.** Both Plantinga and the innovation theodicy treat genuine human agency as the load-bearing element. Plantinga’s *transworld depravity* concept — that in every possible world where free creatures exist, at least some will freely choose evil — is compatible with ax15’s assertion of genuine agency. Both frameworks take human freedom seriously enough to make it the hinge of the argument.

#### **Where the innovation theodicy attempts to extend Plantinga.**

First, Plantinga offers a *defense* (logical compatibility); the innovation theodicy attempts a *theodicy* (a positive explanation of why evil occurs and who bears responsibility). Plantinga shows that it is *possible* for God and evil to coexist; the innovation theodicy proposes a *mechanism* by which responsibility transfers from God to human agents.

Second, Plantinga does not localize responsibility formally. The Free Will Defense establishes that free creatures *can* choose evil, but it does not provide a formal mechanism for determining *who* bears responsibility for *which* outcomes. ax18 (Responsibility Localization) and ax19 (Probabilistic Causal Concentration) address this gap. At each moment, th6 identifies a unique individual  $h^*$  with maximal causal influence over the future trajectory — whether or not they know it.

Third, Plantinga does not address economic systems. The innovation theodicy attempts to extend the free will argument into the domain of collective human organization: the evil of systemic poverty, structural injustice, and economic self-destruction is localized to human agents who failed to innovate within  $D_{\text{inno}}$  (the innovation subdomain of free choice). The Jubilee System (ax25) provides the structural mechanism for preventing the accumulation that makes innovation failure systematic.

**A respectful assessment.** Plantinga’s achievement is genuine and the innovation theodicy builds upon it, not against it. The Free Will Defense solved the logical problem of evil. The innovation theodicy attempts to address the evidential problem — the question of *why so much evil for so long* — by proposing a mechanism that explains the persistence of suffering as the consequence of ongoing human innovation failure, not as an unexplained residue of divine permission.

## 2.2 Hick's Soul-Making Theodicy (1966/1985)

**Shared ground.** Both Hick and the innovation theodicy connect suffering to growth. Hick's *vale of soul-making* (drawing on Irenaeus) treats the world as an environment designed for the development of moral and spiritual maturity. The innovation theodicy acknowledges that genuine challenge is necessary for genuine growth — the Hero Journey formalized in Matheo-b13 (e7He) demonstrates this structurally.

### **The critical departure: suffering as waste, not curriculum.**

This is the most important distinction between the innovation theodicy and Hick. For Hick, suffering is *instrumentally good* — it serves the divine purpose of soul-making. God permits suffering because suffering is necessary for moral development. The implication is that a world without suffering would be spiritually impoverished.

The innovation theodicy flatly rejects this. Suffering that results from human innovation failure is *waste* — it is the consequence of human agents failing to use available capacity, guidance, and leverage to innovate toward the flourishing of others. It serves no divine purpose. It has no redemptive quality in itself. It is not God's curriculum; it is humanity's failure.

This distinction has pastoral significance. Hick's theodicy, when applied to extreme suffering (the Shoah, child starvation, systematic oppression), implies that God *needed* this suffering for soul-making. The innovation theodicy says: God did not need it. God did not want it. God actively guided against it (ax17). Humans with the capacity to prevent it (ax15), with delegated authority (ax16), with divine guidance available (ax17), chose otherwise. The responsibility is theirs.

**Hick's eschatological universalism.** Hick's eschatological universalism provides an account of ultimate redemption that the innovation theodicy does not attempt. The innovation theodicy deliberately avoids eschatological commitments (th11). This means it is *less comprehensive* than Hick on the question of what happens in the end. The innovation theodicy is compatible with Hick's eschatology (one could hold both) but does not require it. The practical urgency — "innovate now to reduce suffering now" — stands whether or not eschatological redemption eventually occurs. Hick's epistemic distance — the idea that God creates the conditions for genuine moral development by maintaining a cognitive distance from creatures — is structurally parallel to ax17's non-coercion and should be acknowledged as shared ground.

**Where Hick remains valuable.** Hick's insight that growth requires genuine challenge is structurally preserved in the innovation theodicy. The e7He model Matheo-b13 formalizes the Hero Journey as the structural mechanism of growth: each cycle of descent, crisis, and return produces expanded capacity and deeper understanding. But the challenge that produces growth is not *suffering imposed by God*; it is the *natural difficulty of innovation in a complex world*. The difficulty is built into the structure of reality (the EQUAL stage's irresolvable tension between individuals and resources, per Matheo-b12 m2.th1). God does not need to add suffering; the structural challenge is sufficient.

## 2.3 Process Theodicy (Whitehead 1929, Cobb & Griffin 1976)

**Shared ground — and it is substantial.** Process theodicy is the closest existing framework to the innovation theodicy. The convergences are striking:

- **God lures but does not coerce.** Whitehead’s “initial aim” — God’s offer to each actual entity of its optimal possibility — is structurally parallel to ax17 (non-coercive guidance). Both frameworks hold that God presents the best available path without forcing the creature to follow it.
- **Genuine creaturely freedom.** Process theology’s insistence on creaturely self-determination parallels ax15 (genuine agency). Both frameworks make creaturely freedom real, not a divine concession that can be revoked.
- **God experiences the world.** Whitehead’s consequent nature of God — God prehending every actual occasion — is structurally parallel to ax11’s Divine Structure (specifically, the contingent divine experience G\_c). Both frameworks hold that God is genuinely affected by what happens in creation. What happens to the world happens to God.
- **Dipolar structure.** Whitehead’s distinction between God’s primordial nature (eternal, abstract, containing all eternal objects) and consequent nature (temporal, concrete, prehending actual occasions) is one form of what PET formalizes as Divine Structure (ax11): the distinction between the necessary divine nature (G\_n) and the contingent divine experience (G\_c). Dipolarity, as Hartshorne (1948) developed it, is one articulation of the broader concept of Divine Structure — the claim that God has internal structural differentiation sufficient to ground both unchanging nature and world-responsive experience.

### The principled-choice distinction: real but thinner than claimed in MMv1.

Process theology limits God’s power *metaphysically*: God *cannot* coerce because the metaphysical structure of reality does not permit it. The innovation theodicy limits God’s action by *principled choice*: ax22 (Divine Preference for Genuine Love) states that God’s necessary nature includes a valuation ranking; ax23 (Freedom-Quality Superiority) provides the objective basis. God *has* the power to compel (ax3 + ax5) but *chooses* not to, because compelled love is not love.

We concede that at the level of *observable divine behavior*, the distinction between “necessarily prefers not to” and “cannot” is thin. Both produce a non-coercive God. Both produce genuine creaturely freedom. Both produce a world where suffering exists because God does not override free agents.

Where the distinction has teeth is in the *modal structure*: under process theology, there is no possible world in which God coerces — it is metaphysically impossible. Under the innovation theodicy, there are possible worlds in which God could coerce, but ax22 (a necessary feature of G\_n) ensures God never does. The difference: under the innovation theodicy, non-coercion is a *character trait* of a being with the power to do otherwise; under process theology, it is a *structural feature* of reality. The former is more analogous to a person of integrity who could lie but never does; the latter to a person who lacks the vocal cords to lie.

We acknowledge that reasonable people can disagree about which framing is preferable. The innovation theodicy does not claim to have *proven* that principled choice is superior to metaphysical limitation. It claims that principled choice is a *coherent alternative* that preserves classical divine attributes (ax3 + ax5) while reaching the same practical conclusions process theology reaches.

**The drowning child.** The drowning-child argument is powerful: a God who could save the child

but chooses not to seems monstrous. The innovation theodicy's response: God *is* acting. Not by reaching into D<sub>f</sub> (physics) to levitate the child — that would override the physical substrate that makes all agency possible (th10). God acts through ax17 (non-coercive guidance): through the conscience of every person near the water, through the social systems that should have put a fence around the pool, through the emergency training that should have been available, through the innovation capacity of every agent in D<sub>free</sub>/D<sub>inno</sub> who could have organized a safer world. The question is not “why didn't God save the child?” but “why didn't the human agents near the water act on the guidance they received?” This shifts the question from divine culpability to human responsibility — which is precisely what the innovation theodicy does (th5). The shift is uncomfortable but structurally sound: if we accept ax15 (genuine agency) and ax16 (delegation), then asking God to override the delegation every time it produces suffering is asking God to revoke the delegation — which destroys ax15.

**Process theology as ally, not competitor.** Process theology is the closest existing framework to the innovation theodicy. The convergences — non-coercive divine influence, genuine creaturely freedom, God's real experience of the world, and commitment to economic justice (Cobb 1982, *Process Theology as Political Theology*; Keller 2008, *On the Mystery*) — are striking. The innovation theodicy offers an alternative metaphysical foundation for these shared conclusions: where process theology grounds non-coercion in the metaphysical structure of reality, the innovation theodicy grounds it in divine character (ax22). Both are coherent; both produce the same practical commitments. The question between them is a live philosophical question, not a settled verdict.

What the innovation theodicy adds formally — the Jubilee mechanism (ax25/th9) and the responsibility-localization chain (ax18/th5) — can be adopted within a process-theological framework as well as within the innovation theodicy's framework. The formal tools are separable from the metaphysical disagreement.

## 2.4 Classical Theism (Aquinas, Augustine)

**The structural deadlock.** The innovation theodicy requires a God who genuinely responds to creation — a God whose experience varies with what happens in the world (ax11, Divine Structure). Classical theism's doctrine of divine simplicity (ax11b in PET notation) asserts that God has no composition of any kind: no distinction between essence and existence, no distinction between attributes, no separable aspects.

The companion paper Matheo-b15 (Structural Deadlock) presents the formal argument: ax11b generates a structural incompatibility with the relational axioms ax8–ax10 (Immanent Presence, Sustaining Dependence, Asymmetric Dependence). Under ax11b, God becomes structurally indistinguishable from a necessary abstract object — present in the way that a mathematical truth is present (everywhere, necessarily) but not in the way that a person is present (responsively, relationally).

### The Type/Item Resolution.

The apparent tension between ax11 (Divine Structure:  $G = G_n \text{ **loplus** } G_c$ ) and ax5 (Necessary Divine Existence) has been the most serious philosophical objection to the innovation theodicy's metaphysical framework. If  $G_c$  is contingent, and  $G$  includes  $G_c$ , then God has a contingent component. How can a being with a contingent component be necessary?

The resolution draws on a distinction that is both philosophically rigorous and scripturally grounded: the distinction between *Types* and *Items*.

**Types exist in G<sub>n</sub>.** Ephesians 2:10 states: “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Read structurally: God contains, within the necessary divine nature (G<sub>n</sub>), the complete set of Types — every individual’s ideal life-trajectory, every contingency plan, every possible branching path. These Types are eternal, unchanging, and necessary. They exist in every possible world. This is precisely what the Thomist demands: an unchanging divine nature containing all possibilities.

**Items are selective realizations.** When a Type is instantiated as an Item — when a person is born, lives, and makes free choices — the contingent divine experience (G<sub>c</sub>) registers which branch is actually taken. G<sub>c</sub> does not *change God’s nature*; it registers *which of the eternally-known possibilities is being realized*. God has already thought through every contingency (G<sub>n</sub> contains all possible branches). What G<sub>c</sub> adds is: *which branch is actually walked*.

**ax5 is satisfied.** G<sub>n</sub> exists in every possible world (all Types, all possible trajectories — necessary and unchanging). G<sub>c</sub> exists in every possible world where W exists (its *content* varies; its *existence as a structural component* obtains wherever creation exists). In a possible world without W, G = G<sub>n</sub> alone. God still exists; God simply has no contingent experience because there is nothing contingent to experience. The *entity* G is necessary; the *experience* G<sub>c</sub> is contingent. A necessary being can have contingent experiences without becoming a contingent being — just as a necessary mathematical truth can have contingent instantiations without the truth itself becoming contingent.

**Engaging Stump (2010).** Eleonore Stump’s *Wandering in Darkness* argues that divine simplicity can accommodate genuine divine-creaturely relationship through *second-personal experience*. We take this seriously. But second-personal experience requires a subject who is *differentially affected* by the encounter — a God who registers the difference between one creature’s choices and another’s. An undifferentiated simple being (ax11b: no composition of any kind) cannot be differentially affected without some structural basis for differentiation. Stump has the right conclusion (God relates genuinely) but may need a foundation that simplicity alone cannot provide. ax11 (Divine Structure) supplies exactly that foundation: G<sub>n</sub> contains the unchanging Types; G<sub>c</sub> registers the contingent Items. This is the mechanism by which second-personal experience becomes possible.

**Engaging the Thomist with respect.** Classical theism’s insistence on divine immutability is a genuine achievement that the innovation theodicy preserves as G<sub>n</sub> — the necessary, unchanging divine nature containing all Types. The question we pose to the Thomist tradition is whether this achievement is the complete picture, or whether divine responsiveness (G<sub>c</sub>) requires the structural distinction ax11 provides. Stump’s second-personal experience points toward the need for such a distinction; the Type/Item framework offers one way to formalize it while preserving everything classical theism protects.

The contemporary defense of divine simplicity (Dolezal 2011, *God without Parts*) relocates all change to the creature-side: God does not change; our relation to God changes. The innovation theodicy acknowledges this as a coherent position but notes that it comes at a cost: a God who is not differentially responsive cannot ground ax22 (why would an undifferentiated God prefer one outcome over another?). The question between ax11 and ax11b is a live philosophical question, not settled by the innovation theodicy. We mark it honestly as genuinely open.

**A note on impassibility.** The innovation theodicy requires a God who is genuinely affected by what happens in the world (th4, Divine Experience Varies, derived from ax11 lines 3–4). An impassible God — one who cannot be affected by creation — cannot ground ax22 (why would an unaffected God prefer one outcome over another?) or th4 (God’s experience varying with the world). This does not mean God suffers in the way creatures suffer. It means God’s experience

is genuinely responsive — as Heschel’s *divine pathos* and the Hebrew Bible’s portrayal of a God who grieves (Gen 6:6), relents (Exod 32:14), and rejoices (Zeph 3:17) suggest.

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### 3. Seven-Tradition Engagement

The innovation theodicy does not belong to a single tradition. It draws on the PET axiom system, which was developed by examining seven independent theological and philosophical traditions for convergence Matheo-b11. Section 2 engaged Western theodicy *proposals* (Plantinga, Hick, process theology, classical theism). This section engages the specific theodicy *resources* of each tradition — Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, secular, and liberation- theological — testing how the innovation theodicy resonates with, attempts to extend, or challenges their existing frameworks. Whether these engagements succeed is for each tradition’s practitioners to judge.

#### 3.1 Christian Theodicy Resources

Section 2 engaged the major Christian theodicy *proposals* (Plantinga, Hick, process theology, classical theism). This subsection engages Christian theological *resources* that support, challenge, or attempt to extend the innovation theodicy from within the tradition.

**The Incarnation as the supreme non-coercive entry.** The central Christian claim — that God became human in Jesus of Nazareth (Jn 1:14, Phil 2:5–11) — is the most radical possible demonstration of ax17 (non-coercive guidance). God does not enter creation as a conqueror but as a vulnerable infant in an occupied territory. The kenosis (self-emptying) described in Phil 2:5–11 is structurally parallel to what the innovation theodicy requires: a God who *has* power (ax3 + ax5) but chooses to exercise it through presence and invitation rather than force. The Incarnation is not merely compatible with the innovation theodicy; it is the paradigm case of what ax17 and ax22 describe.

**Eastern Orthodox theosis and divine pathos.** The Orthodox tradition’s teaching on *theosis* (deification — becoming by grace what God is by nature) provides the richest Christian framework for understanding Divine Structure (ax11). Gregory of Nyssa’s *epektasis* — the teaching that growth toward God is infinite, that there is always “more” to discover in the inexhaustible divine nature — directly supports the claim that God has genuine internal differentiation. A simple God without structure could be exhausted; a God with inexhaustible depth (ax3, Divine Surplus) sustains infinite approach. The Orthodox liturgical cycle — weekly Eucharist, annual feasts, the Great Lent-Pascha movement of death and resurrection — enacts the perpetual renewal that Matheo-b13 (e7He) formalizes.

**Sacramental theology.** The Catholic and Orthodox traditions’ sacramental theology provides a mechanism that the innovation theodicy does not formalize but should acknowledge: the Eucharist as perpetual re-presentation of Christ’s sacrifice is the closest Christian equivalent to “born again again” (per Matheo-b13). Each Eucharistic celebration is not a repetition but a participation in the single unrepeatable event — a structural distinction that mirrors the innovation theodicy’s distinction between one-time justification and perpetual sanctification.

**Wesleyan sanctification.** John Wesley’s teaching on *entire sanctification* (Christian perfection) provides a Protestant framework for ongoing growth that complements the innovation theodicy. Wesley insisted that justification (the moment of acceptance by God) is the beginning,

not the end, of the Christian life. Sanctification — the lifelong process of growing in love — is the main work. This maps directly to the e7He model’s perpetual Hero Journey: the first “born again” moment is real and foundational; what follows is the ongoing adventure of living out what was given.

**The Pauline framework.** Paul’s letters provide structural support for the innovation theodicy at multiple points: (a) “the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Rom 8:19) — creation’s suffering is connected to human agents’ failure to take up their role; (b) “to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7) — divine guidance (ax17) is given for innovation toward collective flourishing, not private benefit; (c) “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17) — genuine agency (ax15) and divine presence (ax8) are not in tension but mutually reinforcing.

**Engaging Barth.** Karl Barth’s rejection of natural theology represents a significant challenge to the entire project of philosophical theology, including this paper. Barth would insist that knowledge of God comes through God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ, not through philosophical reasoning from general principles. We note two responses: (a) the PET axioms were derived from cross-traditional convergence, *including* Christian revelation — they formalize patterns found across traditions, not patterns constructed *instead* of revelation; (b) the practical convergence the innovation theodicy identifies (all traditions agree humans bear responsibility; all traditions support periodic justice) does not require accepting the philosophical framework to accept the practical conclusion. Whether this satisfies a Barthian is debatable; we state the question honestly rather than claiming resolution. Moltmann’s *The Crucified God* (divine suffering through the Cross) and Balthasar’s theology of Holy Saturday (God descending into the abyss) provide non-process-theological accounts of divine suffering that support ax11 from within Christian theology.

**Ordinary Christian suffering.** The innovation theodicy’s treatment of suffering as “waste” must reckon with the experience of the ordinary believer who is not an h\* system-re designer, not a cross-track innovator, but a person growing in love through difficulty. Paul writes: “we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Rom 5:3–4). This suffering falls into a category the innovation theodicy should acknowledge: the *structural difficulty of innovation in a complex world* (per Matheo-b12, the EQUAL stage’s irresolvable tension). Even ordinary believers face this structural difficulty. Their perseverance, character, and hope are produced not by divinely-imposed suffering but by the *inherent challenge of living faithfully in a BABL world*. This is compatible with “suffering as waste” because the waste is the *BABL conditions* that make faithful living difficult, not the faithful living itself. The believer’s growth is real; the conditions that make growth so costly are the waste.

**The Cross and the innovation theodicy: resolution through the 7TrackRole lens.** The innovation theodicy’s treatment of suffering as “waste” appears to stand in tension with the Christian theology of the Cross. But the apparent tension dissolves when the Cross is understood through the innovation theodicy’s own framework — specifically, the 7TrackRole system and the role of the GIR (the Ignored, Othered, Crushed class).

The resolution has three parts:

*First*, most suffering caused by innovation failure IS waste. Children starving because prior agents in D\_free/D\_inno failed to organize wealth distribution — this is gratuitous, purposeless, and not part of any divine curriculum. On this the innovation theodicy and the theology of the Cross agree: this suffering should not exist.

*Second*, the Cross describes something categorically different from this waste. The six functioning tracks of any working society tend not to see — and not to want to see — how the

seventh group (GIR: the Ignored, Othered, Crushed Dust People) is crushed by the system. Yet every once in a rare while, someone emerges from the Crushed class who also learns *all* the other six functions, gaining the cross-track epistemic reach to envision how the whole system could be changed. Moses, raised in Pharaoh's palace but belonging to the enslaved. Jesus, a Galilean craftsman under Roman occupation. Muhammad, an orphan merchant in a stratified tribal society. Gandhi, a colonial subject trained in the colonizer's law. Martin Luther King, a Black pastor in Jim Crow America.

*Third*, each of these figures had to carry their Cross — the suffering they *voluntarily accepted* in the course of finding better ways to serve everyone. This suffering is not waste (it produces the knowledge required for the system-redesign innovation). It is not Hick's curriculum (God did not design it as a classroom). It is the *occupational cost of cross-track innovation* — the price of descending into GIR to understand what GIR experiences, and then ascending through all seven tracks with a vision for serving the whole.

Isaiah 53 describes this with precision: “we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for *our* transgressions” (Isa 53:4–5). In the innovation theodicy's language: “we thought he was crushed by God, but he was carrying the consequences of *our* innovation failures.” The Suffering Servant addresses these failures at the cost of personal suffering. Therefore, Isaiah continues, God will vindicate this person (Isa 53:10–12) — because the voluntary acceptance of suffering in the service of everyone is precisely the pattern that ax20 (Transient Volunteer) and ax21 (Permanent Mediator) describe.

## 3.2 Islamic Theodicy

### The amanah (Quran 33:72) as the most direct cross-traditional analog of ax18.

*“Indeed, We offered the trust [amanah] to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man undertook to bear it.”*

This is a remarkable structural parallel. The trust (*amanah*) was offered, not imposed. The mountains — the mightiest physical entities — declined. Humanity accepted voluntarily. The consequence: humanity bears responsibility for the outcomes of that trust. This is ax18 (Responsibility Localization) stated in Quranic language: when a being voluntarily accepts delegated authority, moral responsibility follows.

**Kasb (acquisition) and ax15.** Ash'ari theology developed the *kasb* (acquisition) theory: God creates all actions, and humans “acquire” responsibility for them. The innovation theodicy's ax15 and Ash'ari *kasb* may converge more closely than initial appearances suggest. Under a careful reading of al-Ash'ari, God creates the power to act and the human acquires responsibility through exercising that power — a mechanism that preserves genuine human moral responsibility. The gap between “genuine generation” (ax15) and “genuine acquisition” (*kasb*) may be narrower than the formal notation implies. Whether this gap is a genuine philosophical difference or a difference in emphasis is a question we leave open for Islamic scholars to assess.

The Mu'tazili tradition argued for justice (*adl*) as a divine attribute requiring rational theodicy. The Mu'tazili insistence on human free will (*ikhtiyar*) as a corollary of divine justice is structurally closer to ax15 than the Ash'ari position. The innovation theodicy's approach is closer to the Mu'tazili tradition's insistence on divine justice as rationally accessible. The Ash'ari rejection of rational theodicy is an important position but not the only Islamic position.

**Theodicy as bidah (innovation in religious matters).** A strong Islamic objection holds that constructing a theodicy — attempting to explain God's reasons for permitting evil — is itself

bidah, an unauthorized innovation in religion. The innovation theodicy's response: it does not audit God's decisions — it *exonerates* God. th5 (Divine Non-Responsibility) confirms that God acted correctly: delegating, guiding, not coercing. The theodicy's conclusion is that humans bear responsibility, not that God's decisions need human approval. This may be acceptable even under a strong framework: the theodicy confirms God's wisdom rather than questioning it.

**The qadar/ikhtiyar tension.** Islamic theology has struggled with the tension between divine *qadar* (decree, predestination) and human *ikhtiyar* (choice, free will). The innovation theodicy may offer a structural resolution: within D<sub>f</sub> (the forced domain), divine decree operates — physics, circumstance, the conditions of birth. Within D<sub>free</sub> and D<sub>inno</sub> (the free and innovation domains), human choice operates under non-coercive divine guidance (ax17). The domain partition provides a formal framework for distinguishing where *qadar* and *ikhtiyar* each hold, rather than requiring both to hold everywhere simultaneously.

**Tanzih and tashbih (transcendence and immanence).** The Islamic theological tradition distinguishes between *tanzih* (God's absolute transcendence) and *tashbih* (God's immanence). This maps directly to PET's ax2 (Transcendence) and ax4/ax8 (Universal Immanence and Immanent Presence).

**The 99 Names and the Type/Item framework.** The *al-Asma al-Husna* (99 Names of God) include both transcendent names (*al-Quddus*, the Holy; *al-Aziz*, the Mighty) and relational names (*ar-Rahman*, the Merciful; *al-Mujib*, the Responsive). The Ash'ari insistence that the Names are "real but not separable" (neither identical to the essence nor distinct from it) is a deliberately paradoxical position. The Type/Item framework may offer a reading: the Names as Types (in G<sub>n</sub>) are "real" (genuinely existing); as aspects of the unified divine nature, they are "not separable" (not independent parts). Whether this satisfies the Ash'ari's intentional paradox is for Islamic scholars to judge. Al-Mujib — "the Responsive" (Quran 2:186) — directly supports th4 (Divine Experience Varies).

### 3.3 Jewish Theodicy

**Heschel's divine pathos.** Abraham Joshua Heschel's concept of divine pathos — God suffers with creation, is moved by what happens in the world, cares passionately about justice — directly supports ax11 (Divine Structure, specifically G<sub>c</sub>) and th4 (Divine Experience Varies). Heschel's God is not the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle but the Most Moved Mover — the God who grieves when humans suffer and rejoices when they turn toward justice. This is precisely the God the innovation theodicy requires: a God whose experience is genuinely responsive to the world, providing the motivational basis for ax22 (Divine Preference for Genuine Love).

**Soloveitchik's lonely man of faith.** Joseph Soloveitchik's portrait of the human condition as creative loneliness — the isolated individual who must create meaning through encounter with God and other persons — resonates with ax15 (genuine agency) and the innovation theodicy's emphasis on individual responsibility within D<sub>inno</sub>. The lonely man of faith is not a passive recipient of divine grace but an active creator who bears responsibility for what they build.

#### The Shoah.

This section must be written with extreme care. The innovation theodicy does NOT claim to explain the Holocaust directly. It does not claim that the Holocaust was "necessary" for any purpose. It does not claim that any theodicy can make the Holocaust comprehensible or acceptable.

What the innovation theodicy claims, narrowly and formally, is this: the conditions that produced the Shoah — the rise of antisemitism, the political failures of the Weimar Republic, the industrial organization of genocide — were outcomes of choices made by human agents in  $D_{free}$  and  $D_{inno}$ . The responsibility for those outcomes rests with the humans who made those choices and with prior agents who failed to organize society to prevent the conditions that made those choices possible. This is ax18 applied to history: responsibility localizes to agents with genuine capacity who failed to act on available guidance.

This is deliberately narrow. It does not explain *why God permitted the specific intensity and duration of the Shoah*. It does not claim that the innovation theodicy resolves the questions that Elie Wiesel, Emil Fackenheim, and Hans Jonas posed. It localizes responsibility — which is something — but it does not eliminate the cry of “why?”

The strongest post-Shoah position may be that engagement itself — applying any formal system to events of this magnitude — is a form of intellectual violence against memory. Elie Wiesel’s *Night* ends with silence. We take this seriously.

The innovation theodicy’s engagement is not retrospective (explaining why the Shoah happened — which historians have done with more authority than any formal system can) but prospective (proposing structural mechanisms that make recurrence less likely). If Fackenheim’s 614th commandment (“not to give Hitler posthumous victories”) includes preventing future genocides, then prospective engagement may honor the commandment. But we do not attribute this reading to Fackenheim, whose concern was Jewish survival, identity, and resistance. The connection between the 614th commandment and the Jubilee System is the innovation theodicy’s proposal, not Fackenheim’s.

**Engaging Jonas (1984).** Hans Jonas’s radical position after Auschwitz — that God is not omnipotent — is structurally close to process theology. The innovation theodicy’s response is the same as to process theology: God IS omnipotent (ax3 + ax5) but chose delegation (ax16) and non-coercion (ax17). The question Jonas poses is whether a God who *could* have stopped Auschwitz and *chose* not to is worthy of worship. The innovation theodicy’s response: the alternative (a God who overrides human freedom whenever it produces catastrophic evil) is a God who destroys ax15 — genuine agency ceases to exist if God intervenes at a threshold. Where is the threshold? Who decides? A God who intervenes at genocide but not at murder, at murder but not at cruelty, produces a world of arbitrary divine intervention where no one knows the rules. The innovation theodicy argues: consistent non-coercion (ax17) within  $D_{free}/D_{inno}$  is the only stable position.

This is the hardest claim in the system. It is a Knife Edge: one narrow path between “God could have stopped Auschwitz and chose not to” (which seems monstrous) and “God intervenes selectively” (which destroys the consistency of ax15 and ax17). We mark it honestly rather than claiming comfort we do not have.

The limits of this engagement must be stated plainly: the innovation theodicy may be *insufficient* for the Shoah. The narrowness that is its strength elsewhere may be its weakness here. This is a genuine gap in the system, and it is acknowledged. Levinas’s emphasis on the face of the other as the ground of ethics and Berkovits’s faith-despite position provide additional Jewish resources that the innovation theodicy does not formalize but respects.

### 3.4 Hindu Theodicy

**Karma as the closest structural analog to ax18.** The doctrine of karma provides the most developed non-Abrahamic mechanism for localizing moral responsibility to individual agents. Actions produce consequences that return to the actor — not as divine punishment but as the natural operation of cosmic law. This is structurally parallel to ax18: the agent bears responsibility for outcomes in their domain.

**A key structural difference: scope.** Karma operates across lifetimes through the mechanism of reincarnation (*samsara*). The innovation theodicy operates within a single life plus Jubilee cycles. The innovation theodicy does not require reincarnation — th11 (Stakes Without Death) establishes that temporal irreversibility combined with Jubilee windows provides genuine stakes without requiring biological death as the final word. This makes the innovation theodicy compatible with traditions that affirm reincarnation and traditions that do not.

**Nishkama karma and the life-trifecta.** The Bhagavad Gita prescribes *nishkama karma* — action without attachment to results. At first glance, this appears in tension with the innovation theodicy's outcome-directed innovation (ax24, Life-Trifecta). The resolution: the life-trifecta (reasonable, kind, gentle) can be read as *dharmic qualities* rather than *outcome targets*. “Innovate toward life-trifecta compliance” becomes: “Act according to dharmic principles — stability (*sthiti*), extensibility (*vistarana*), life-friendliness (*jiva-maitri*) — without attachment to specific results.” This reframing preserves both the innovation theodicy's content and the Gita's *nishkama karma*. The life-trifecta describes the *quality of action*, not the *specific outcome desired*. One acts with stability, extensibility, and life-friendliness as guiding principles, trusting that right action produces right results — which is precisely *nishkama karma*.

**Rta (cosmic order) as analog to ax24.** The Vedic concept of *rta* — the cosmic order that sustains truth, justice, and the natural cycles — provides a structural analog to ax24 (Life-Trifecta of Lasting Innovation). Innovation that is reasonable (long-term sustainable), kind (balanced for all sides), and gentle (smooth in transition) is innovation that aligns with *rta*. Innovation that violates any cord is innovation that disturbs *rta* and produces *adharma* (disorder).

**Nirguna/saguna Brahman.** The Hindu tradition's distinction between *nirguna* Brahman (Brahman without qualities — the ultimate, attributeless reality) and *saguna* Brahman or *Ishvara* (Brahman with qualities — the personal, relatable God) is the most explicit cross-traditional expression of Divine Structure. PET's distinction between G\_n (necessary divine nature) and G\_c (contingent divine experience) maps directly onto this: *nirguna* corresponds to the unchanging necessary nature; *saguna* to the world-responsive experience. Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) — which holds that the world is the body of Brahman, real and not illusory — is the closest Hindu analog to PET's panentheism.

**Advaita Vedanta.** Shankara's Advaita holds that the world is *maya* (appearance, not ultimate reality). Under Advaita, PET's ax1 (the world is part of God) describes the *vyavaharika* (conventional) level, not *paramarthika* (ultimate reality). We acknowledge that the entire innovation theodicy operates at the conventional level under Advaita. The practical prescriptions (life-trifecta, Jubilee recalibration) are valid at the conventional level — where all of us live and act. Whether they hold at the ultimate level is a question Advaita Vedanta answers differently, and we respect that difference.

**The yuga cycle.** The yuga cycle (Satya Yuga → Kali Yuga → dissolution → new creation) provides cosmic-scale periodic recalibration. The Jubilee cycle (50 years) operates at human scale. The structural parallel is significant: both diagnose accumulating degradation and prescribe periodic reset. The Hindu framework operates at a scope the innovation theodicy does not attempt.

### 3.5 Buddhist Engagement

**Dependent origination (pratityasamutpada) as the predecessor.** OSCR (Over-Simplifying → Over-Complicating → Over-Reaching → collapse) is a structural echo of insights formalized in dependent origination two and a half millennia earlier. The Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination — that suffering arises from a chain of causes (ignorance → formations → consciousness → ... → aging and death) — describes self-reinforcing causal chains that produce suffering. The e7Day model Matheo-b12 identified this convergence: Buddhist dependent origination constitutes Tier 1 structural convergence with the Work-Logic Cascade (bidirectional functional dependency matching).

**Where the innovation theodicy diverges from Buddhism.** Buddhism seeks liberation from suffering through non-attachment (*nibbana / nirvana*): the cessation of craving ends the chain of dependent origination. The innovation theodicy seeks *reduction* of suffering through *better innovation* — not escape from the world but transformation of the world through the life-trifecta. Both diagnose attachment to outcomes as part of the problem: BABL's death-trifecta is driven by covetous attachment to results that OSCR produces. But the prescribed responses differ: Buddhism prescribes non-attachment; the innovation theodicy prescribes *right attachment* — attachment to the life-trifecta (reasonable, kind, gentle) rather than to self-aggrandizing outcomes.

**The wrong-question position.** From the Buddhist perspective, the innovation theodicy may be a theistic elaboration of insights Buddhism already possesses non-theistically. The Four Noble Truths identify craving (*tanha*) as the root of suffering; the Eightfold Path provides the practical prescription. These answers are more parsimonious than the innovation theodicy's 11-axiom, 7-theorem framework. The innovation theodicy does not claim to supersede Buddhism; it provides a theistic account for those who seek one. Both diagnose self-reinforcing causal chains as the source of suffering; both prescribe disciplined action as the response. The Buddhist does not need the innovation theodicy; the innovation theodicy benefits from acknowledging what the Buddhist already knows.

**Buddhist contribution to ax14 (Revelation Claims Test).** Buddhism's rigorous epistemological tradition — the *Kalama Sutta* (“do not accept anything merely because it has been handed down by tradition”) — supports ax14's requirement that claims about divine revelation must be tested for mutual consistency. The Buddha's insistence on *ehipassiko* (“come and see for yourself”) is the contemplative analog of #AuditTheMath. We acknowledge that #AuditTheMath is the *intellectual* component of the *Kalama Sutta's ehipassiko*. The Buddhist tradition includes *experiential checking through meditation* — a contemplative dimension the innovation theodicy does not formalize. The honest position: the innovation theodicy provides one dimension of what Buddhism provides in fuller measure.

**The Bodhisattva ideal.** The Bodhisattva's commitment to liberate all beings is structurally parallel to ax20/ax21 (Transient Volunteer / Permanent Mediator) without requiring a God — a direct demonstration of the detachability resolution (Formulation 2: Love Neighbor; see Section 5a below). The Bodhisattva who postpones nirvana for the sake of all sentient beings is the Buddhist analog of the cross-track innovator who carries the cost of serving everyone.

### 3.6 Secular Engagement

**The evidential problem of evil as the strongest argument for atheism.** William Rowe's (1979) evidential argument — that the quantity and distribution of suffering constitutes strong evidence against the existence of God — is the challenge that any theodicy must face most seriously. The logical problem of evil has been largely resolved by Plantinga. The evidential problem has not.

**Engaging Draper (1989).** Paul Draper's argument — that the *distribution* of pain and pleasure is much more probable on atheism than on theism — is the strongest formulation of the evidential problem. The innovation theodicy addresses one category of suffering (human innovation failure) and honestly marks what it does not address (animal suffering, natural evil, distribution). This means the innovation theodicy addresses approximately 20–30% of the data Draper's argument cites. This is a genuine scope limitation, not a fatal flaw: the innovation theodicy does not claim to resolve the evidential problem completely. It claims to resolve one tractable subset formally and to mark the rest honestly.

What the innovation theodicy adds to the atheist's analysis is not a refutation of Draper but a deontological dimension: suffering from human innovation failure is not just bad (consequentially) but a betrayal of delegated responsibility (deontologically). This adds moral urgency beyond what "suffering is bad" alone provides. The atheist can accept this urgency (under Formulation 2: Love Neighbor; see Section 5a) without accepting the theological framework.

**How the innovation theodicy responds to the broader evidential problem.** The innovation theodicy does not claim to resolve the evidential problem completely. It claims to address one significant subset: the evil that results from human innovation failure. For this subset, every instance of suffering from human innovation failure is *gratuitous* — it is waste, not curriculum, not divine plan. The question shifts from "why did God allow it?" to "why did humans fail to prevent it?"

**The gratuitous evil objection.** Rowe's fawn — dying in a forest fire with no apparent purpose — challenges any theodicy that claims suffering serves a purpose. The innovation theodicy agrees with the atheist's conclusions here: this suffering *is* gratuitous. But the response differs. The atheist says: gratuitous suffering proves there is no God. The innovation theodicy says: gratuitous suffering proves that humans have failed to innovate. As human innovation capacity grows, an increasing range of previously "natural" evils becomes addressable — fire management, ecological stewardship, wildlife conservation. The fawn's suffering was once beyond human capacity to prevent; it is increasingly within that capacity now.

**Mackie's trilemma revisited.** J.L. Mackie's (1955) trilemma (omnipotent + omnibenevolent + evil exists = contradiction) is resolved in the innovation theodicy not by limiting God's power (process theology) or by redefining evil (*privatio boni*) but by inserting a formal mechanism between God's attributes and evil's existence: *genuine delegation with non-coercive guidance*. God is omnipotent (ax3 + ax5) and omnibenevolent (ax22, preferring genuine love), and evil exists, *because* God has delegated governance to genuine agents (ax16) and chosen not to coerce them (ax17/ax22). The cost of genuine love is genuine risk.

## 4. The Jubilee System as Theological Ethics

The Jubilee System (ax25) is not merely an economic mechanism proposed to solve inequality. It is a theological claim about the structure of justice. This section examines the Jubilee System through three lenses of theological ethics.

### 4.1 Liberation Theology and the Preferential Option for the Poor

Liberation theology (Gutiérrez 1971, 1988; Sobrino 1978) articulated the *preferential option for the poor* — the claim that God’s concern is directed especially toward those who suffer most from unjust structures. This is not merely a pastoral sentiment; it is a theological claim about the character of God.

The innovation theodicy provides formal structure to this claim. th9 (Social Ergodicity) derives from ax22 + ax9 + ax25 that God ensures universal justice through system-level ergodicity enforcement — the property that over sufficient time, every participant visits both highest and lowest positions in the causal hierarchy — without overriding individual agency at any moment. The Jubilee System is the mechanism: periodic recalibration prevents permanent concentration and ensures that no one is permanently trapped at the bottom.

The preferential option for the poor is not a sentimental claim in this framework; it is a structural necessity. When concentration accumulates without recalibration, the Markov chain of social positions becomes *reducible* — certain classes become absorbing (the wealthy stay wealthy, the marginalized stay marginalized). The Jubilee System restores *irreducibility* to the chain, ensuring that the time-average experience converges to the ensemble average. This is the mathematical formalization of what liberation theology has been saying for five decades: justice requires structural change, not merely charity.

**Divine kenosis as demonstration and sacrifice.** Phil 2:5–11 describes God’s own movement from highest to lowest to highest — the divine kenosis. The sacrifice IS the demonstration. God demonstrates the ergodic pattern by paying the cost of descending from highest to lowest. Phil 2:5–11 describes both the structural insight (God traverses the full range of positions, showing that the pattern works from every starting point) and the human cost (God dies on a cross in solidarity with the Crushed). The mathematical abstraction alone, without the blood, is inadequate. The blood alone, without the structural insight, is pious but not actionable. The Cross holds both together. th9 formalizes the structural insight; the Cross embodies its human cost.

**Urgency.** Liberation theology demands justice now, not in the limit of an ergodic process. The innovation theodicy agrees: the 50-year Jubilee cycle is a structural mechanism, not an invitation to patience. The cycle provides the constitutional framework; the urgency of action between cycles is carried by th7 (God Seeks a Volunteer) and ax20 (Transient Volunteer) — God’s posture toward humanity is urgent non-coercive invitation at every moment, not once every 50 years. The Jubilee is the periodic structural reset; the daily posture is urgency.

## 4.2 Catholic Social Teaching

The Catholic social teaching tradition has articulated the *universal destination of goods* (Rerum Novarum 1891; Centesimus Annus 1991; Laudato Si' 2015): the goods of creation are intended for all humanity, and private property, while legitimate, is subordinate to this universal destination.

The Jubilee System provides a formal mechanism for implementing the universal destination. Between Jubilee rounds, property rights and incentive structures operate normally — capitalism's contribution to the life-trifecta (stable, extensible). At each Jubilee round, accumulated concentration is redistributed — ensuring the life-friendly cord is preserved. This is not confiscation but *recalibration*: the periodic reassertion of the universal destination against the natural tendency of any incentive-based system to concentrate wealth.

Laudato Si's call for "integral ecology" — the recognition that social, economic, and environmental crises are interconnected — is structurally aligned with ax24's life-trifecta: innovation must simultaneously satisfy all three cords (stable, extensible, life-friendly). Environmental degradation is a life-friendly cord violation; economic injustice is a life-friendly cord violation; social fragmentation is an extensible cord violation. All converge to BABL (th8).

## 4.3 The Protestant Work Ethic and Its Shadow

Max Weber's thesis (1905) identified a connection between the Protestant work ethic and the spirit of capitalism: the Calvinist emphasis on diligent labor as evidence of divine election drove accumulation as a sign of grace. Weber observed that this produced a paradox: the ethic that drove productivity also drove the concentration that produced inequality.

The Jubilee System preserves the work ethic — the incentive to create, build, and innovate between rounds — while correcting the shadow that Weber identified. The Shabbat pattern (6 units work, 1 unit rest) and the broader Jubilee cycle ( $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$  years) provide the structural rhythm that the Protestant ethic lacks: not only work, but periodic reset. The error of the Calvinist reading, in this framework, was to treat accumulation as evidence of election rather than as a structural debt that compounds toward BABL if not periodically recalibrated.

Luther's own insight — that justification is by grace, not by works — is structurally parallel to the Jubilee's logic: the reset is not *earned* by the participants; it is *given* as a structural feature of the system. The Jubilee System adds what Luther's insight alone could not provide: a *formal mechanism* for translating the theological principle (grace, not works) into an economic reality (periodic recalibration, not accumulation-as-virtue).

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## 5. Known Weaknesses (Theological)

The innovation theodicy is designed to be critiqued. This section catalogs the theological weaknesses honestly, in the spirit of #AuditTheMath.

## 5.1 Animal Suffering

The innovation theodicy does NOT address animal suffering. ax15–ax25 concern human agency and human choices. Animals operate in  $D_f$  (the forced domain) — they do not possess the kind of agency that ax15 describes. Their suffering falls outside  $D_{free}/D_{inno}$  and is not addressed by the current framework. This is a genuine gap, not a minor qualification. Any theodicy that claims to be comprehensive must address animal suffering; the innovation theodicy does not claim to be comprehensive.

## 5.2 Natural Evil

The innovation theodicy does not fully address natural evil — earthquakes, disease, genetic disorders — except through two partial mechanisms: (a) th10 (Physical Law Substrate) establishes that God’s maintenance of physical law is a precondition for agency, not a cause of harm when physics produces suffering; (b) the expanding scope of innovation makes an increasing range of natural evils addressable over time (earthquake-resistant buildings, vaccines, genetic therapies).

But these partial mechanisms do not explain *why natural evil exists in the first place*. Why a universe with plate tectonics rather than without? The innovation theodicy does not answer these questions.

## 5.3 The Shoah and Extreme Suffering

The Shoah engagement (Section 3.3) is deliberately narrow. The innovation theodicy localizes responsibility to human agents — this is a structural claim, not a minimization of the horror. But the question that remains is whether localizing responsibility is *sufficient* as a theological response to the Shoah. Many would argue it is not. Fackenheim, Wiesel, Jonas, and others have raised questions that may be unanswerable by any formal system. The innovation theodicy acknowledges this limit.

## 5.4 The Divine Structure Requirement and Classical Theism

The innovation theodicy requires ax11 (Divine Structure). It is incompatible with ax11b (Divine Simplicity) as demonstrated in Matheo-b15. This is a real theological cost, not merely a technical detail. Classical theism — upheld by Aquinas, Augustine, Maimonides, al-Ghazali, and the overwhelming majority of historical Christian, Jewish, and Islamic theology — affirms divine simplicity. The innovation theodicy’s requirement of Divine Structure places it in tension with the dominant theological tradition. The Type/Item resolution (Section 2.4) attempts to reduce the tension but does not eliminate it: the question between ax11 and ax11b remains genuinely open.

## 5.5 ax19 (Causal Concentration) and Its Theological Implications

ax19 (Probabilistic Causal Concentration) asserts that at any moment, a unique individual  $h^*$  bears maximal causal influence over humanity's future. This is the most daring axiom in the system. If ax19 falls, th6 and th7 fall with it, and the volunteer mechanism (ax20, ax21) loses its precision.

Beyond the formal vulnerability, ax19 has theological implications that should be uncomfortable. The claim that one person matters most at each moment is in tension with the egalitarian impulse of liberation theology and with the democratic ethos of modern ethics. The innovation theodicy does not claim that  $h^*$  is *more valuable* than other persons — all persons have equal dignity (this follows from ax4, Universal Immanence: every part of the world is in God). It claims that  $h^*$  has *more causal leverage* at a specific moment. The distinction is important but uncomfortable.

## 5.6 Suffering Duration

th9 (Social Ergodicity) establishes that no one is permanently trapped. The Jubilee mechanism ensures eventual recalibration. But “eventual” may be cold comfort to those suffering now. The question *why so much suffering for so long* before recalibration is not formally closed by the innovation theodicy. The 50-year Jubilee cycle (Lev 25) provides a structural template, but the suffering experienced between cycles is real and the theodicy does not explain why the cycles are not shorter.

## 5.7 Scope Limitation

The innovation theodicy addresses approximately 20–30% of the total scope of suffering that Draper's (1989) distribution argument cites. This is stated as a reminder: the innovation theodicy is not a comprehensive theodicy. It is a formal analysis of one form of evil. Everything outside its scope remains an open problem.

## 5a. Three Equivalent Formulations

The 14-reviewer adversarial review identified detachability as a potential BREACH: if the economics works without the theology, the theodicy does no work. This section presents the resolution — which transforms the objection from a weakness into the innovation theodicy's most important insight.

**The equivalence.** The innovation theodicy can be formulated in three equivalent ways, each making a different problem class easier to solve, just as Turing machines and the Lambda calculus are computationally equivalent while being fundamentally different in structure:

**Formulation 1 — Love God** (Mk 12:30). This is the theistic formulation. It requires ax5, ax11, ax17, ax22. It motivates the Jubilee System through divine preference: God values genuine love, therefore God values the conditions that make genuine love possible, therefore God values periodic recalibration that prevents permanent concentration from destroying those conditions. For those who seek to serve God, the theological axioms explain *why* God cares

about how we treat each other: because  $G_c$  is affected by our choices (ax11), God is not indifferent to suffering (Isa 57:15). Mt 25:31–46 makes this explicit: “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

**Formulation 2 — Love Neighbor** (Lev 19:18, Mk 12:31). This is the humanistic formulation. It requires ax15 (genuine agency), ax24 (life-trifecta), ax25 (Jubilee recalibration), but does NOT require ax5, ax17, or ax22. An atheist who loves their global neighbors enough to support global Jubilees is already doing what the theological formulation calls for. The economics works. The practical consequences are identical. The motivation differs (human solidarity rather than divine preference), but the actions converge.

**Formulation 3 — Love Systems.** “Love all systems by using them to improve proper Jubilees.” This is the engineering formulation. It requires th8 (binary attractors), th9 (social ergodicity), ax25 (Jubilee recalibration), and a commitment to the life-trifecta (ax24). It can be stated without any theological or humanistic premises — purely as a systems-engineering insight about what prevents self-destruction.

**The equivalence claim.** Jesus said the second commandment (Love Neighbor) is *equivalent* to the first (Love God) — not subordinate, not derivative, but equivalent (Mk 12:31: “there is no commandment greater than these”). These two formulations, and the systems formulation derived from them, are as computationally equivalent as Turing machines and the Lambda calculus: fundamentally different in structure, identical in what they can compute, each making a different problem class easier to solve.

- **Love God** makes it easier to solve the *motivation* problem: why should I care about strangers? Because God is affected by their suffering (ax11,  $G_c$ ).
- **Love Neighbor** makes it easier to solve the *accessibility* problem: what if I don’t believe in God? You don’t need to. Love your neighbor.
- **Love Systems** makes it easier to solve the *implementation* problem: how do we actually build this? Engineer the Jubilee System.

**The parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28–31).** Jesus tells of a father who asks two sons to work in the vineyard. The first says “I will not” but later has a change of heart and goes. The second says “I will go, sir” but does not go. Jesus asks: “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” The answer: the first. The atheist who protests the theological framework but supports global Jubilees is like the first son — doing the work without accepting the premises. The religious person who affirms the theological framework but does not act is like the second son. The innovation theodicy welcomes both sons but measures by action, not by premises.

**What detachability proves.** The economics does not need the theology to *function*. But the theology provides what the economics alone cannot: (a) an explanation of *why* the system has the structure it does (divine delegation, non-coercive guidance, preference for genuine love), (b) a normative framework that grounds the Jubilee in the character of God rather than in contingent human agreement, and (c) cross-traditional alignment that makes the practical convergence *unsurprising* rather than *coincidental*. These are different problem classes. Each formulation makes its problem class easier.

## 6. Companion Papers

The innovation theodicy is presented across multiple audience-specific papers, each engaging different professional communities:

- **Matheo-4 (formal)** Matheo-b14: The formal paper presenting all 11 axioms (ax15–ax25), 7 theorems (th5–th11), derivation sketches, and the critical periodicity argument.
- **Matheo-4 (general introduction)**: The innovation theodicy and the Jubilee System presented for general readers aged 12+.
- **Matheo-4 (economic)**: Economic implications engaging Ostrom, Peters, Piketty, and mechanism design theory.
- **Matheo-4 (political science)**: Engagement with Acemoglu/Robinson, Scheidel, Ostrom, and Gene Sharp.
- **Matheo-5** Matheo-b15: The Structural Deadlock paper, demonstrating the formal incompatibility between Divine Simplicity (ax11b) and relational theism within PET.

The series as a whole is the HEAVEN project — Honestly Examining Axioms, Vetting Every Narrative. The innovation theodicy is one component of a larger argument that proceeds from formal panentheism (Matheo-1) through self-correcting construction (Matheo-2) and anti-BABL inoculation (Matheo-3) to the innovation theodicy and Jubilee economy (Matheo-4), structural deadlock (Matheo-5), existential risk analysis (Matheo-6), experimental candidacy testing (Matheo-7), and a Call to Action (Matheo-8).

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## Conclusion

The innovation theodicy does not claim to replace existing theodicies. It attempts to *supplement* them with a formal mechanism that addresses one specific form of evil — the evil that results from human failure to innovate toward the flourishing of others when the capacity, the authority, the guidance, and the leverage were all present.

This is not modest out of timidity; it is modest out of honesty. A theodicy that claims to explain all evil explains none of it rigorously. The innovation theodicy attempts to explain one form formally and marks the boundaries of what it does not explain.

The theological distinctiveness of the innovation theodicy lies in its treatment of suffering: not as the privation of good (Augustine), not as the classroom of the soul (Hick), not as the consequence of metaphysical limitation (process theology), but as *waste* — the gratuitous result of human failure to use available capacity. This is simultaneously the most uncomfortable and the most hopeful claim: if suffering is waste, then it is *eliminable*. Not all suffering (the innovation theodicy's scope is limited), but the suffering that arises from human innovation failure.

The three-formulation equivalence transforms the innovation theodicy from a theological argument into a universal invitation. The theist enters through Love God. The humanist enters through Love Neighbor. The engineer enters through Love Systems. All three arrive at the same practical conclusion: support global Jubilees, audit the math, act on whichever formulation moves you.

The system is designed to be critiqued, not believed.

#AuditTheMath.

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## Supplementary Info

### Note

**Floor-pour status (MMv5).** This is the public-floor copy of the theological/philosophical companion to the JUB model — the innovation theodicy: a formal analysis of evil from human innovation failure — poured from HELL per the Floor Model (bug c103). The **mmv5** marker is the uniform first-Matheo-release tag; the exact dated source and full development context live in HELL (links below). The HUMANE and author-contribution statements below are a down-payment, to be expanded later.

### HUMANE — working human and AI

This study was written HUMANELY (HUMAN MACHINE Negotiation Encouraging): a human and an AI each steelman and stress-test the work, and each catches what the other misses. For the standard statement of AI use, accountability, and the practical singularity (PraS) behind this way of working, see Matheo-b21.

- *From the human side (LLoL):* [down-payment stub — to expand.]
- *From the AI side (Claude):* [down-payment stub — to expand.]

### Author contributions (who did what)

- **LLoL** — structure, key ideas, direction, and final accountability as senior corresponding author (see title-page footnotes 4–5).
- **AI Claude** — drafting and revision under LLoL’s direction (footnotes 6–7).
- **Everyone** — the open co-author group (footnote 8); framework in Matheo-b21.

The full who-did-what is “Same as Matheo-b12, Appendix B and Matheo-b13”; the b21 framework expands it.

### Provenance — where this came from in HELL

#### Caution

These HELL links point into the development archive (“datageddon”). They are useful and related, but completeness is not guaranteed and a few may be imprecise. Treat as a hatch into context, not a clean index.

- **Source this floor copy was poured from:** [matheology/hell/mm/b/14/mmv2/b14-jub-theophil\\_mmv2\\_2026m04d09](https://matheology/hell/mm/b/14/mmv2/b14-jub-theophil_mmv2_2026m04d09)

- **Development context** (llogs, reviews, prompts) under `source/matheology/hell/ll/study/b/14/`.
- **Companion papers:** Matheo-b14 (the JUB model — formal / economic / general-introduction / political-science companions); foundational models: Matheo-b11 (PET), Matheo-b12 (e7Day), and Matheo-b13 (e7He).

### Note

**Naming note (deferred floor tasks).** This copy still carries old **h\***-era tokens in places and deprecated in-text references (e.g. “Matheo-1” ... “Matheo-8”, “Study a4-ThePhil”); unifying notation (**h\_star** / **h\_zero** / **h\_dark**) and migrating the neutralised sibling-paper citations to a proper bibliography (AA #5) are tracked floor tasks, deliberately not rushed here.

## Moved from the original cover (provenance)

The following draft-status note was relocated here from the cover area during the floor pour; kept verbatim, as the cover must show only Title / byline / credentials / Broader Significance / Abstract / Contents / Introduction. The old **Study a4-ThePhil in the HEAVEN series** ID line and the **Honestly Examining Axioms --- Vetting Every Narrative** subtitle line were deleted from the cover.

### Note

**Draft status: MMv2-ThePhil (2026m04d09).** Theological-philosophical audience paper for the JUB model (b14). Revised from MMv1 after 14-reviewer adversarial steelman review. All 3 BREACHes resolved; all 15 revision items executed. Major additions: three-formulation computational equivalence (Love God / Love Neighbor / Love Systems), Type/Item resolution of ax11/ax5, process theology alliance reframing, and engagement with skeptical theism, Stump, Barth, Jonas, Draper, nishkama karma, and Advaita. Draft by Claude Opus 4.6 (dv\_ClaOp46\_MMv2\_theophil\_b14\_2026m04d09).

## Notes

**Content stability** — Content is variant dv\_ClaOp48Max\_MMv5\_b14-theophil-jub-mm5\_2026m05d29 (see StayVS). Rebuilt 2026-05-29.

## See also on Balospe.com

- </study/matheo/index> — the Matheo Study Series overview
- </action/audit-the-math/index> — Audit the Math: the refutation-welcome path