

The Privation Theory of Evil and Logical Realism: How things really are when they are in privation of something?

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As it is well known, evil is incompatible with the typical theistic set of beliefs. Omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect God as the ultimate ground of everything cannot coexist with such a thing as evil. But then again, it seems hard to deny that there is evil: any human and animal suffering may be counted as instances of some moral or natural evil. Expectedly, in addressing the perennial '*unde malum?*' challenge, various strategies have been developed by philosophers and theologians in the hope of reconciling the datum of evil with the concept of the so-called Omni God. One such strategy is the privation theory of evil. In short, an advocate of this theory claims that evil is mere privation, i.e. the absence of good or simply a lack of good in some particular nature.

In this talk, I argue that the privation theory does not deliver what it promises: it does not explain how something that is allegedly negative, or at least an absence or lack of something positive (i.e. good) can be causally efficient. In fact, a typical response to the privation theory is that there are positive instances of evil (i.e. pain). But I insist that the very distinction between positive and negative is suspicious in the first place. Still, even if we admit privations into our metaphysics, I suggest that the only way to successfully explain the incompatibility of the sentences signifying some *having* and some *lacking* is to endorse the principle of contraries. Such a principle, however, is not a logical principle yet a metaphysical one saying in the most general sense how things can and cannot *be*.

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