The Ontological Reality of Evil in the Philosophy of Luigi Pareyson

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Abstract
In this article, I focus on Pareyson's conception of evil, which he understands in terms of concrete ontological reality, rather than regarding it as a sheer moral issue. After outlining Pareyson's existential hermeneutics, which revolves around the concept of person and her constitutive relation with transcendent Being, I also show how Pareyson's discourse on evil is strictly related to his conception of freedom and transcendence. In particular, he defines freedom as 'beginning and choice', that is God's originary choice of Being over nothingness, rather than as the theoretical foundation of Being itself. Moreover, the idea of transcendence is a constant presence in Pareyson's reflection, from the early to the mature period, and therefore even his interpretation of the questions of evil and freedom is to be considered within the theoretical framework set by his notion of transcendence. In conclusion, I demonstrate that, according to Pareyson, not only are evil and freedom inscribed in God's transcendence, but they cannot properly be grasped and understood independently of their deeply religious implications.

1. Introduction

With good reason, Luigi Pareyson should be considered one of the fathers of 20th-century philosophical hermeneutics, as well as one of the main contributors to the development of existentialism in post-WWII Europe.[1] It is worth noting that Pareyson developed his hermeneutic theory between the late 1940s and the early 1950s, thus preceding the philosophies of Gadamer and Ricoeur: indeed, Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* was published in 1960, while the early works on hermeneutics by Ricoeur were published in the late 1950s.[2] This clearly shows the importance of Pareyson for 20th-century philosophical hermeneutics, and possibly some of the influence he might have had on the other two fundamental thinkers of that current of thought. In this respect, Gadamer himself praised Pareyson's philosophical writings for their innovation and significance, demonstrating that the audience reached by Pareyson's thought was not limited to an Italian readership.[3]

The main goal of Pareyson's philosophy is to go beyond the old-fashioned rational metaphysics, which he regards as an ephemeral way of philosophising. Indeed, the kernel of his thought is that philosophical speculation cannot prescind

[1] See Bubbio, 'Introduction' to EIF, 1.
[2] See Tomatis, *Pareyson,* 47.
[3] See Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I,* 66n110 and 124n219, and Gadamer, *Hermeneutik II,* 433.

from human existence, which in turn has to be understood in terms of the concrete situation of each living person. Accordingly, Pareyson firmly rejects rational metaphysics and all forms of Hegelian idealism and neo-idealism, since they fail to address the fundamental issues of the philosophy of his time, such as the one concerning the paradoxical nature of human existence. That is to say, philosophy as a concrete reflection on the essence of personhood, it cannot be grounded on the theoretical axioms of traditional Western metaphysics; instead, it must rely on the features of actual human existence, giving due weight to religious experience and leaving aside abstract formalisms.

However, despite Pareyson's growing fame in the Anglophone world,[4] there are still few contributions on his discourse on the nature of evil — which is one of the crucial elements of his late philosophy. For this reason, with this article I aim to fill in the gap in the Anglophone literature, by focusing specifically on Pareyson's speculation on evil. In doing so, I intend to highlight how Pareyson defines evil in terms of ontological reality, and not as a moral principle. Moreover, I show how Pareyson's conception of evil has its roots in his early existential hermeneutics, and resolves itself into a religious hermeneutics in which a central role is played by the notions of freedom and transcendence.

More specifically, I begin by outlining Pareyson's existential hermeneutics, which revolves around the concept of person and her constitutive relation with transcendent Being. Subsequently, I analyse in detail Pareyson's discourse on evil, showing that he attributes a proper ontological reality to evil itself, rather than defining it in merely moral terms. In this sense, Pareyson argues, evil is present in God as an eternally suppressed possibility, but is actualised by the free choices of the human being. In conclusion, I highlight how Pareyson's conception of evil is intertwined with a definition of transcendence and freedom as 'beginning and choice', that is God's originary choice of Being over Nothingness, rather than as the theoretical foundation of Being itself.

Additionally, my focus on Pareyson's philosophy will be sustained by a small selection of material from the archives of the Centro Studi Filosofico-religiosi 'L. Pareyson' in Turin, including Pareyson's personal notes and unpublished manuscripts. To the best of my knowledge, this material has never been released to the public before.

2. The Concept of Person and the Ontological Relation with Being

In the early phase of his thought, Pareyson defines existentialism as the dissolution of Hegelian metaphysical rationalism, borrowing from Kierkegaard and Jaspers the idea that 'existence is not only *ex-sistentia*, being outside, protrusion, emergence,

[4] Among the various contributions, see Benso and Schroeder (eds.), *Thinking the Inexhaustible*, but also Carravetta, 'Introduction to the Hermeneutics of Luigi Pareyson', and Valgenti, 'The Primacy of Interpretation in Luigi Pareyson's Hermeneutics of Common Sense'.

but also *in-sistentia*, being inside, presence, intimacy'.[5] Accordingly, Pareyson claims that existentialism must be characterised by three fundamental features: 'the revaluation of the singular, ontologicity, and the concept of situation'.[6] This means that concrete existence is to be understood as the proper object of philosophy, and therefore that philosophy has to focus on the living person, rather than on any sort of metaphysical and idealistic abstraction.

'To explain the advent of Existentialism', Pareyson writes, 'it is not sufficient to reduce it to the filiation, derivation or deformation of a philosophical movement, to the mere revival of an author, or to the mere rebellion against a trend or a theory. [...] The most precise perspective and the most complete interpretation of Existentialism is therefore the one that places it amongst the liveliest inclinations of contemporary thought, and sees in it the most vigorous manifestation and the boldest expression of the *personalistic exigency*, which seems to constitute the substratum of the most contemporary philosophical speculation'.[7] Thus, existentialism must be personalistic, and this means that it cannot be built without taking into account and assuming as its proper ground the existence of the singular living person.

However, the person carries in herself a paradoxical (but essential) element, since she is the coincidence of self-relation and hetero-relation (i.e. relation to the other): in this sense, existence is both *ex-sistentia* and *in-sistentia*. This means that existence is not to be intended as a closed system, that is, exclusively from an intimist point of view, since this would lead to a limited understanding of it. Conversely, a fundamental aspect of existence is the act of opening towards Being, that is, an opening towards transcendence and towards the 'other-than-self' *(altro-da-sé).*

In this sense, Pareyson argues, the opening towards transcendence implies the possibility of religious experience, or, better, it is the religious experience as such, since it establishes a direct and concrete relation with the authentic (and therefore transcendent) Being. Put simply, once existentialism has been defined as a philosophy of the singular living person, and therefore a philosophy of the finite, the finite itself is conceived as a relation both with the self *and* with the other-than-self. However, the finite cannot be understood as pure negativity, since this would lead to nihilism; rather, it has to be grasped in its positive reality. As Pareyson himself claims, the finite is 'insufficient but not negative, positive but not sufficient';[8] hence, although Being cannot be reduced to it, the finite still participates in the authenticity of Being itself through the opening towards transcendence. In other words, existence is the experience of the insufficiency of the finite — but also of the positivity of Being and transcendence.

[5] SE, 16.
[6] SE, 14.
[7] EIF, 37–38; SE, 12.
[8] EP, 12.

This paradoxical coincidence of self- and hetero-relation is not a mere attribute, but an essential feature of the human being. According to Pareyson,

> on the one hand, Being is irrelative, namely unobjectifiable, and can neither be reduced to the relation nor resolved into it, nor can it be established as cause or external principle of the relation, yet it is *present* in the relation, since precisely because of its unobjectifiability it alone can *build* the relation that can be formed with it; on the other hand, human being is *in* relation with Being since human being is constitutively this relation itself: the human being does not *have*, but is a relation with Being.[9]

This argument, Pareyson believes, implies both the coincidence of self- and hetero-relation and the inseparability of existence and transcendence. The human being, indeed, *is* the ontological relation with the Being that transcends humankind itself; therefore,

> there is, between humankind and Being, an original solidarity, an initial complicity, which manifests itself, on the one hand, in the constitutive ontologicity of humankind and, on the other hand, in the inseparability of existence and transcendence; in this lies the fundamental concept of the unobjectifiability of Being.[10]

Consequently, Pareyson theorises an ontological intentionality of the human being, which goes hand in hand with the irrelativity (*irrelatività*) and unobjectifiability (*inoggettivabilità*) of Being. That is to say, while 'ontological intentionality' refers to that relational dimension in which the self calls into question something other-than-self, the irrelativity of Being means that it is to be understood as that which establishes the relation, but then withdraws itself from it. So, Being is unobjectifiable because it cannot be the *object* of the aforementioned relation, but only its *subject*, namely its foundation, which ceases to be the foundation since it withdraws itself from the relation. Being, Pareyson argues, is present in the relation because it establishes the relation itself, but it is also *beyond* the relation, from which its transcendence and unobjectifiability derive. Instead, the human being is essentially constituted by this relation with Being.

Pareyson rejects negative ontology, that is, a theory of Being according to which Being itself is ineffable and therefore grasped in its coincidence with nothingness. Conversely, he theorises an ontology of the inexhaustible, which means that, although we cannot possess Being as the object of our knowledge, Being itself can still be said and grasped in its transcendence and irreducibility to

[9] EP, 14.
[10] EP, 15.

finite beings. Moreover, an ontology of the inexhaustible cannot but be a hermeneutics of the inexhaustible, since to exist means to interpret, namely to singularly incarnate Being and to personally possess truth. This is why the originary relation with Being also implies the equally originary solidarity of human beings and truth.

Pareyson considers the hermeneutic relation with Being as a free one, meaning that it originates from freedom; that is, since it implies fidelity to Being, it cannot but be the result of a free choice, because a genuine fidelity can only be freely embraced, and thus it cannot be imposed. Similarly, Being is originally free, since it chooses to be through a free act of self-affirmation. In this sense, Pareyson maintains, Being has its own will, which makes it a person, namely God: however, Pareyson is not referring to the God of the philosophers, that is, the rational outcome of a purely intellectual speculation; instead, he means the God of religious experience, that is, a personal and concrete God who embodies the abyss of freedom rather than coinciding with the necessary Being. Therefore, being the source of freedom conceived of in absolute terms, God is that original positivity from which everything springs, including good and evil. However, evil subsists only as the originally rejected option, which cannot be actualised by God: in this sense, God is not a metaphysical good 'in itself', but the good *freely chosen* over evil.

In conclusion, it must be added that Pareyson's discourse on good and evil is structurally analogous to his hermeneutics of Being. That is, Pareyson argues that a genuine theodicy cannot ignore the reality of evil, to which he attributes a primordial and positive ontological core, rejecting any form of thought that aims to belittle or deny its effectiveness. Then, as evil keeps subsisting as a constant threat for every single human being, an endless struggle between good and evil, which is a fundamental characteristic of the concreteness of human existence, takes place. Once again, Pareyson's hermeneutic and existentialist turn aims at re-evaluating the concreteness of human life intended as an actual situation taking place here and now. That is, this kind of situation can be understood only hermeneutically: in other words, not only does Pareyson consider evil as a persistent ontological threat (in its concrete occurrence), but he also indissolubly and hermeneutically relates it to the material situation of actual human existence. This means that good and evil are not objectifiable, because every single experience is hermeneutically different from all of the others and has to be considered in its peculiarity and singularity.

3. 'A Temerarious Discourse': Pareyson on Evil and Freedom

One of the key issues in Pareyson's late philosophical activity is evil, which he reflects on largely in his *Ontologia della libertà*. Pareyson takes as his point of departure the belief that Western philosophy has not been able to do much to properly understand and answer the question concerning evil; in the 1986 essay 'Philosophy and the Problem of Evil' (*La Filosofia e il Problema del Male*), Pareyson underlines the insufficiency of philosophical solutions to the issue of evil

over the centuries, since they do not grasp the reality and effectiveness of evil itself. In this sense, Pareyson adds, Kant's theory of radical evil can be considered as the first successful criticism of theodicy and of any other account aimed either at reducing evil to a lack of good or at denying the reality of evil itself. Schelling's discourse on evil is also very highly regarded by Pareyson,[11] together with 'authentic existentialism' (i.e. his personalistic existentialism, as I defined it in the previous section), since they point the way ahead and open up 'enlightening perspectives' on the issue of evil.[12]

The most common mistake in philosophy, according to Pareyson, is to ascribe evil exclusively to the ethical dimension: such an approach cannot but result in a limited understanding of the issue. That is, Pareyson claims that evil cannot be understood only in ethical terms, as a moral and axiological disvalue, because by so doing the vital core of evil would be disregarded. Therefore, in order to get to the root of the question, our understanding cannot be confined to the attempt to find a solution to a mere moral dilemma, but rather we have to consider the ontological extent of evil. Put differently, evil cannot be understood merely through a rational and philosophical analysis, since 'the issue of evil has its roots in the dark depths of human nature and in the secret meander of the relationship between the human being and transcendence'.[13] The question of evil, Pareyson believes, is directly and deeply related to suffering, which demonstrates that evil does not concern 'the realisation of a virtue, but rather the very negativity that inheres in the human condition'.[14] Accordingly, 'the very negativity' of evil and suffering transcends rational comprehension, from which follows the insufficiency of philosophical speculation alone.

That being the case, Pareyson thinks that it is obviously not possible to encompass the very core of evil within the rational and objectivising categories of philosophical analysis: indeed, that would yield a blatant misunderstanding and denial of evil, since its transcendent and ontological features are not graspable by mere objectivity. Therefore, reason needs to recognise its own limits, which in turn need to be overcome and transcended in order to grasp 'pure negativity'; otherwise, an exclusively rational and philosophical approach would result in a theodicy, namely in a misleading account of evil unable to acknowledge its effectiveness. Indeed, 'objectivising thought would rationalise evil, looking either for its place in the universe or for its purpose in human life: it will see in (evil) a simple deprivation of Being and a pure lack, or will make it a factor of progress and rather an efficacious contribution to the advancement of good'.[15]

Pareyson, then, argues that once reason recognises its limits and its inability to have the final word about evil, it has to retreat and leave room for a different

[11] On this point, see Ciancio, 'Pareyson e l'ultimo Schelling'.
[12] See OL, 151–56.
[13] OL, 152.
[14] Ibid.
[15] OL, 155.

kind of speculation, that is, religious experience. Indeed, only through religious experience does it become possible to fully grasp evil in all its anguishing effectiveness. By shifting the core of the problem of evil from rationality to religious experience, Pareyson means to stress, once again, the finiteness of human reason, rather than to embrace irrationalism or fideism. Put differently, Pareyson aims at developing an existential hermeneutics, which is characterised by 'concepts but not objectivising ones, ideas and thoughts but existential ones, discourses and reasonings that are not demonstrative but rather interpretative, knowledge not achieved by the extension of demonstrations but acquired through direct experience'.[16]

Through this argument, Pareyson also intends to reinstate the philosophical value and the truth-value of myth, which he considers as revelatory and directly related to the original and transcendent dimension of truth. In this sense, Pareyson considers it indispensable to resort to religion and myth in order to properly grasp evil and God in their concrete nature and to avoid the pitfall of abstract metaphysics and rational theodicy. Accordingly, Pareyson builds his discourse on evil on that which he calls 'the God of religion', rather than on 'the God of the philosophers': by the latter, he refers to 'a God that is reduced to a mere metaphysical principle, or that, as existing reality, has to be somehow related to Being';[17] by the former, instead, he means the personified and living God of religious experience, the God to whom we can directly relate through faith and prayers. Put simply, the latter is an abstract conceptualisation of God, while the former is the concrete and living God, who carries in Godself the abyssal nature of freedom, as well as the burden of the vestige of evil (even if it is eternally overcome).

As Pareyson himself explains, 'evil is not absence of Being, deprivation of good, lack of reality, but is reality, and more precisely negative reality in its positivity. It results from a positive act of negation: [...] from a negating force, that does not limit itself to a negative and privative act, but that, positively instituting a negativity, is a negating and destructive act'.[18] This means that evil is to be understood not as a decrease or a disappearance of good, but rather as a deliberate act of ontological opposition to good, that is, as 'a real and positive negation (of good) in the sense of a deliberate infraction and inobservance'.[19] These words clearly show Pareyson's rejection of any positive and rational theodicy, whose final aim is to deny the effectiveness of evil and understand it as a mere lack or deprivation of good without a proper ontological reality.

Evil, then, is an act of opposition and rebellion aimed at annihilating good, Being and freedom, which is to say that it is negativity trying to overwhelm positivity. In other words, evil is nothing but omni-destruction turning into self-destruction, since it is aimed at destroying originary freedom but ends up destroying only one's

[16] OL, 165.
[17] OL, 85.
[18] OL, 167–68.
[19] OL, 168.

own individual freedom. As Pareyson puts it, 'freedom is free also not to be free, and it is still through an act of freedom that it denies itself as freedom, becoming then potency of destruction, in the double sense of omni-destruction and self-destruction. From which derives the ambiguity of both freedom and Evil: on the one hand, the freedom that aims at destroying Being ends up destroying itself instead [...] and on the other hand, freedom's self-destruction is still an act of freedom, and then self-affirmation'.[20]

In fact, evil is freedom unsuccessfully turning against itself, that is, it is that free and deliberate act through which we operate in opposition to originary freedom by denying our individual freedom. However, such an act of opposition, despite being ontologically rooted in our will, cannot but fail and must reinstate the transcendent and ambiguous nature of freedom. Accordingly, evil cannot but miss its main target, namely the transcendent core of freedom, leaving the originary positivity unharmed; conversely, the only thing that evil can actually do is to destroy individual freedom, the latter being the only target within its reach. Put simply, the will of omni-destruction perpetrated by evil can only be frustrated and fall back on individual freedom, since evil itself has been originally and incontrovertibly defeated by God and can only occur through humankind's behaviour without affecting the originary positivity.

In this sense, Pareyson argues that 'the reality of evil and negating force presupposes the priority of the positive',[21] meaning that, in order to be characterised as a negating force, evil needs a prior positive force to oppose and by which to be negated. Therefore, it can be deduced that, as already mentioned, originary positivity is equivalent to the primal and irreversible victory of the good, which has left evil subsisting as a mere latent counterpart with no possibility of full actualisation. Hence, evil can actualise itself only through humankind's actions, for which reason it appears as a constant threat to human will and conduct and keeps itself alive by opposing and negating originary positivity, despite the perennial impossibility of subverting the positivity itself and of taking its place as the ruling core of Being.

And conversely, 'if on the one hand, real evil understood as active negation supposes a prior positivity, on the other hand, positivity is not conceivable otherwise than as the overcoming of negativity, as victory over negation'.[22] Positivity and negativity, then, are deeply interrelated and mutually imply one another, in accordance with the inner structure of freedom, as Pareyson himself points out: 'freedom is itself dialectic, because it is always both positive and negative, both positive choice in the presence of the possibility of the negative choice, and negative choice in the presence of the possibility of the positive choice'.[23] Consequently, Pareyson notes that the ontological interrelation between positivity and negativity

[20] Ibid.
[21] OL, 170.
[22] OL, 173.
[23] OL, 173–74.

cannot be grasped by a sterile and abstract dialectics of necessity, according to which the two terms are logically interdependent. Rather, he believes that through a dialectics of freedom it is possible to reach a better understanding of the vital core of reality, that is, a temporal succession of unpredictable acts and non-deducible facts.

Accordingly, Pareyson argues, the language of freedom is similar to that of religious myth, so much so that 'philosophical reflection cannot but assume the character of the hermeneutics of religious consciousness'.[24] Indeed, an ontology of freedom and religious hermeneutics are interwoven in Pareyson's discourse, which is aimed at disclosing the mutual relation of opposites, such as good and evil, Being and nothingness, or positivity and negativity. In this respect, the originary positivity is the victory of Being over nothingness and of good over evil, but still it carries in itself a shadow of negativity, of nothingness and of evil, even though it is eternally defeated. This is also why 'at the core of reality there is contrast, conflict, contradiction. Ontology is not to be separated from meontology. Being and nothingness, good and evil, are always somehow associated and are inseparable'.[25]

This does not mean that even God has to face the alternatives between Being and nothingness, and good and evil, as the human being does. God, indeed, is originary positivity, meaning that God has eternally chosen Being and good at the expense of nothingness and evil. That is, God is also freedom, and therefore God fully represents the ambiguous core of freedom, carrying in Godself the vestige of unchosen possibilities, that is, evil and nothingness. Thus, God 'is not the good, but the *chosen good*, namely the good placed before evil, affirmed through the negation and rejection of evil',[26] from which it follows that evil keeps subsisting in God only as eternally negated and rejected and as the shadow cast by the light of good.

That being the case, Pareyson comes to the conclusion (bearing Schelling's philosophy in mind) that the origin and the ontological source of evil is to be found in God. That is, since the reality of evil cannot be denied (otherwise one would fall back into rational theodicy or abstract metaphysics), it also has to be accepted that its source and origin coincide with the source and origin of its ontological counterpart, that is, the good. Therefore, in God we find the origin of evil in the terms in which evil itself is nothing but (and cannot be anything other than) the originally rejected option, namely a possibility that has been discarded in the very moment in which it has been provided. Put simply, in the very primordial and originary act of freedom through which God chooses and reveals Godself, nothingness and evil are posed only in order to be negated and irreversibly overcome by Being and good.

However, Pareyson specifies, we must not confuse the origin of evil with its cause: that is, arguing that God is the origin of evil does not mean that God is also

[24] OL, 174.
[25] OL, 175–76.
[26] OL, 178.

the cause of evil. Pareyson is also well aware that such an understanding represents a 'temerarious discourse' (as he himself defines it in 1988[27]), which could lead to a slippery slope. In order to avoid that, he reaffirms that 'the expression "evil in God" does not mean that God encounters and finds evil in Godself, as forming part of God's own reality';[28] rather, evil is immediately defeated by the very existence of God, since 'the act through which God originates Godself is the same as that through which nothingness is vanquished and evil is defeated'.[29] Thus, it is incorrect to conclude that God is also the cause of evil, because God cannot in any way be its perpetrator, such an option being ruled out as soon as it is posed.

Nevertheless, maintaining that evil is in God is extremely disconcerting and maybe counterintuitive, whence the aforementioned 'temerity' of such a discourse: how is it possible that evil is originated by God, that is, by the creator of the universe and the source of Good? Similarly it is possible to assert that nothingness also is in God, even if it takes the form of an eternally unchosen possibility. Nevertheless, Pareyson believes that such an account is not related to nihilism, but rather is a philosophical statement of religious experience: as he writes, 'in philosophy understood as hermeneutics of religious experience, [...] every statement has at the same time a philosophical and a religious nature'.[30] Put simply, hermeneutic philosophy and religious experience cannot but cooperate to enlighten the very essence of God and freedom, which inevitably brings us to the acknowledgement of the ontological consistency of evil and nothingness, in the terms explained above.

Once again, despite its being thorny and 'temerarious', Pareyson firmly dissociates his discourse from nihilism, relating it instead to a strongly hermeneutic and religious account of evil and God. In other words, the claim that evil and nothingness are in God does not annul God's Being and goodness, but rather reinforces them. Indeed, evil and nothingness are in God as negative principles, namely as those terms that are essentially and primordially negated by God and against which good and Being are eternally affirmed. On these grounds, Pareyson argues that 'the divinity implies a negation of the negation',[31] which has to be understood not in logical but in ontological terms. That is, by negating any ontological primacy of evil and nothingness, God negates anything that can be outside Godself, and in turn does nothing but absolutely reaffirm originary positivity, as well as God's transcendence. As Pareyson puts it, 'the negation of the negation is [...] the acknowledgement of God's ontological fullness, which then excludes every metaphysical nihilism'.[32]

Pareyson's goal, it is worth repeating, is to argue that the presence of evil in God implies that God is not the perpetrator of evil, but contains it as suppressed

[27] See Pareyson, 'Un 'discorso temerario': il male in Dio', in OL, 235ff.
[28] OL, 243.
[29] OL, 244.
[30] OL, 236.
[31] Ibid.
[32] OL, 237.

possibility, which in turn makes God coincident not with the good, but with the will for good. This is also why evil cannot be defined as a metaphysical moral principle, but has to be understood in ontological terms. More specifically, 'evil is to be distinguished as either possible [evil] or real [evil]: in God evil is present as possible, and there it is found by the human being, who realises it in history'.[33] The true perpetrator of evil, then, is the human being, who freely and deliberately actualises and enacts that which otherwise would remain a mere and unrealised possibility. Indeed, humankind feels the possibility of evil, which in turn manifests itself as a threat to and a temptation for human freedom.

The human being 'is the only *perpetrator* of evil, but cannot be its *inventor*. [Human] creativity and its potency are limited, and suffice at most to *discover* evil as a possibility to be realised, and to effectively *realise it*'.[34] In other words, as soon as the human being feels the possibility of evil, it also feels an irresistible impulse to turn such a possibility into a real act: this, for Pareyson, is the only possible way in which evil can become real. Furthermore, he also situates his position firmly in the hermeneutic and religious sphere; that is to say, Pareyson understands the realisation of evil in humankind as sin, not in the moralistic sense of the term, but rather as an intentional transgression of and deviance from God's ontological statute and God's will for good.

In Pareyson's account, God is not defined as foundation (*fondamento*), but as freedom and abyss; and 'it is precisely the fact of being not foundation but freedom which ensures that God can be the origin of evil without being its perpetrator'.[35] Here, the main feature of Pareyson's discourse clearly emerges, a discourse which is at the same time hermeneutic and religious. That is, in the light of all the above, it must be acknowledged that evil cannot be grasped outside a deeply religious understanding of God, since the God we are presented with is not abstractly identified with pure rationality, but is involved in the 'human tragedy',[36] as Pareyson himself calls it, and it suffers from that. It is God, indeed, who gives freedom to humankind, implicitly accepting the possibility of its misuse and abuse.

Accordingly, God takes on Godself the burden of the realisation of evil perpetrated by humankind, which alone remains responsible for its actualisation; this also implies that God takes upon Godself evil both as actual and as realised and no longer as a suppressed possibility, along with the suffering generated by the sinful behaviour of humankind, in order to comply with God's redeeming nature. That is, Pareyson here intends to stress the paradoxicality of God's assumption of sin and suffering, since this would clash with God's perfection and transcendence; however, such a paradoxicality is consistent with the fact that the redeemer must

[33] OL, 184.

[34] Ibid.

[35] OL, 183.

[36] See OL, 220ff.

identify himself with the sinners in order to understand their suffering and redeem them.[37]

In conclusion, Pareyson's discourse is very much hermeneutic, since the claim that the realisation of evil is nothing but a deliberate and willing act perpetrated by humankind, as opposed to the ontological nature of God, can be understood as a false and misleading interpretation of one's freedom. That is, God is also aware that humankind could misuse its freedom, succumbing to the temptation to do evil rather than good. Such an attitude is the reverse of freedom, that is, a singular and particular freedom that opposes absolute and transcendent freedom, which in turn is made possible only by a misleading interpretation of freedom itself. That is to say, the realisation of evil in the human being also coincides with the attempt on the part of freedom to annihilate itself, which does not consider the impossibility of realising evil in God and the subsequent absurdity of its demand.

'Evil in God is an idea that yields incomprehensible and scandalous results in the horizon of a philosophy of Being, and that solely in the perspective of a philosophy of freedom can show itself as immune to misunderstandings and misinterpretations and then reveal its true meaning'.[38] In other words, Pareyson argues that the key concept for understanding the nature and modalities of the presence of evil in God is freedom, rather than necessity, since it is due to the ambiguity of freedom that evil subsists both in God as suppressed possibility and in humankind as a concrete and viable alternative. Accordingly, it is worth providing some additional remarks and clarifications regarding Pareyson's understanding of freedom, in order to highlight once again the great relevance of that conception in Pareyson's philosophy.

In accordance with what has already been said about it, Pareyson further emphasises that 'freedom is first beginning and pure commencement'.[39] The latter observation is obviously aimed at reinforcing and further clarifying the constitutive ambiguity of freedom: that is, freedom has to be considered as the unity of originary and derived freedom, namely of divine and human freedom. Simply put, Pareyson defines freedom as beginning and choice. Indeed, 'freedom originates from itself: the beginning of freedom is freedom itself',[40] from which it follows that freedom cannot be determined and generated by anything but freedom itself. In other words, freedom has to be understood as first and pure beginning, since it initially posits itself and does not require anything else to exist. Freedom arises and commences only from itself, and it is also preceded solely by itself. Accordingly, 'at the highest level, God and freedom coincide in their pure self-originating, in their

[37] On this particular point, it is worth mentioning that Pareyson is deeply influenced by Dostoevsky, to whom he devotes some of his late works, the most important of which is *Dostoevskij: filosofia, romanzo ed esperienza religiosa.*

[38] OL, 254.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

self-origination from themselves. And this is originary freedom, that is to say divine freedom: neither God as Being fitted with freedom nor as supremely free Being, but rather God as freedom Godself, as full, originary and absolute freedom'.[41]

Moreover, arguing that freedom is preceded by nothing but itself, according to Pareyson, is equivalent to arguing that freedom begins and emerges from nothingness, from which he derives the expression 'nothingness of freedom'. That is,

> the expression 'nothingness of freedom' refers to its initial position: [namely] to its deriving from nothing, to its sudden [act of] generating itself [...]. But the expression is meaningful, since it relates freedom to the negativity of a non-Being. To designate freedom as beginning it can be said both that prior to freedom there is nothing but freedom and that prior to freedom there is only nothingness.[42]

The latter passage, despite its complexity, is emblematic of Pareyson's conception of freedom, since it explains his fundamental understanding according to which the self-generation of freedom inevitably implies the alternative of nothingness. Put simply, freedom emerges from nothingness, in the sense that, 'as beginning, freedom has a past of non-Being, but a past that has never been present'[43] and occurs only as an impossible alternative. Such a conception, finally, clearly recalls the mutual implication of good and evil, along with that of ontology and meontology.

Further, such a beginning and emergence from nothingness cannot be defined as necessary, but is a choice, Pareyson believes. 'The beginning intended as such is already a choice, in the sense that freedom could not begin, namely it could not emerge from non-Being, and it could cease, namely return to non-Being'.[44] Consequently, freedom is such only as opposed to nothingness, and good is such only as opposed to evil. This does not mean that freedom concretely aims at annihilating itself and at being replaced by nothingness, but rather that nothingness is that unavoidable alternative in place of which freedom emerges and generates itself. Therefore, beginning and choice are not two separate moments of freedom, but they co-occur and mutually imply one another: the moment freedom emerges, it has already chosen itself, relegating nothingness to the role of unrealisable alternative. The analogy with the discourse on good and evil is extremely evident here: just as evil occurs only as definitively suppressed and overcome by God, nothingness is to be understood only as the meontological counterpart of freedom, which can never become actual and replace Being and freedom itself.

[41] OL, 255.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] OL, 256.

Finally, a few words must be added concerning the way in which freedom occurs in humankind: indeed, even though in the human case freedom is not absolute but is derived from God, we also experience it as simultaneously beginning and choice. However, the main difference lies in the fact that the human being is actually capable of misusing it and of perpetrating evil, which remains a mere and eternally overcome possibility in God. The reasons for this derive from the fact that the origin of evil does not coincide with its cause: indeed, the former is in God, but the latter is in humankind. Furthermore, human misbehaviour and misuse of freedom also derives from a misleading personal interpretation of freedom itself, according to which one tends to act against the transcendent nature of freedom and Being, with the aim of destroying them.

4. Transcendence, Freedom, and Necessity

From the previous section, it clearly emerges that the framework of Pareyson's discourse on evil and freedom is strictly related to the concept of transcendence, which is a constant presence in his writings. However, it is not easy to provide a single unequivocal definition of what Pareyson means by the term 'transcendence'; therefore, I shall clarify the meaning and role of transcendence in Pareyson's philosophy, with a particular focus on its relations with freedom and necessity.

The notion of transcendence occupied Pareyson's thoughts from the time of his early studies on Jaspers; indeed, in his notes we can read that 'transcendence is the trans-ontic relation, and therefore the trans-objective relation, of *Dasein* with Being'.[45] Pareyson derives this definition from the idea that 'as *Dasein*, I am related to the world, [but] as existence I am related to transcendence'.[46] Moreover, another definition of transcendence can be found in one of Pareyson's last writings, where he states that, 'in the end, the *philosophical* affirmation of transcendence has no other meaning than the acknowledgement that the human being is not everything, so much so that she always has to do with something that does not depend on her, but rather resists her'.[47] These statements have to be understood as the two extremes of Pareyson's reflection, but they are neither in contrast nor in contradiction with one another; rather, they are two points that delimit the philosophical domain in which Pareyson positions transcendence. That is, the role and meaning that transcendence assumes in Pareyson's philosophy always pertain to the relation between Being itself and human beings in their finitude.

Accordingly, in his 1985 essay 'Religious Experience and Philosophy' (*L'Esperienza Religiosa e la Filosofia*),[48] Pareyson claims that 'the fundamental experience of the human being is an experience of transcendence: she knows she

[45] Pareyson, *Notes on Jaspers* (1937–40).
[46] Ibid.
[47] OL, 90.
[48] Pareyson, 'Filosofia ed esperienza religiosa', *Annuario filosofico* 1 (1985): 7–52, now in OL, 85–149.

didn't make herself, everywhere she clashes with irreducible transcendences, and she even happens to transcend herself'.[49] Moreover, he argues that the experience of transcendence is deeply and essentially religious, since transcendence itself has to do primarily with God — intended not as the God of the philosophers but as the God of religion. Indeed, Pareyson writes that 'not only am I ready to renounce the God of the philosophers, [... but] I am ready to avoid in my writings the name "God", because it seems to me that, in philosophical discourse, it is better, if anything, to talk of transcendence'.[50] In other words, Pareyson understands transcendence as the primal and fundamental ontological condition of God.

If the experience of transcendence is our fundamental experience, as Pareyson believes, then we must somehow face it in our lives; that is, transcendence has to reveal itself in an accessible and understandable way for humankind. But how does this happen? How can we actually experience transcendence? To answer these questions, Pareyson identifies four examples of transcendence: nature, moral law, history, and the unconscious. These manifestations 'are so clearly independent of [the human being] that their relation with her deserves the name of alterity. [They] do not reduce themselves to the experience of the human being, but firmly demand an acknowledgement and offer themselves only to an experience of transcendence'.[51] That is, these occurrences exceed humankind's finiteness and impose on it constantly in a way that exceeds their rational control; put simply, their transcendence consists in their alterity to the human being.

The transcendence of nature, Pareyson claims, is given by its being unfathomable and mysterious, as well as its appearing alternately — but simultaneously — as friendly and as hostile to humankind. Not only does nature elude human control and understanding, but it also manifests itself as irremediably ambiguous and twofold, constantly showing its greatness and superiority over us. That is, nature is always beyond human rationality and experience, and therefore irreducible to such finite categories. Conversely, the human being constantly feels its finiteness and its inadequacy towards nature, which makes it able to actually experience transcendence in the sense explained above.

Similarly, the moral law is transcendent because it is 'irreducible to human activity, precisely because of its capacity to regulate and rule it'.[52] That is, the human being feels impelled to follow the norms established by the moral law, which in turn precede our understanding but still push us to behave in a certain way. In other words, we feel the imperative of the moral law as stronger than and independent of our will, so much so that we are fundamentally unable to change or influence it, and we can only unconditionally obey it. This is due to the fact that the origin and source of the moral law itself is inaccessible for us, that is, it transcends every human capacity and possibility, from which it derives its strength and inflexibility: precisely

[49] OL, 90.
[50] OL, 89.
[51] OL, 90.
[52] OL, 91.

because the moral law is transcendent and superior to our will, we must follow it. Indeed, by perceiving its transcendence, we experience the moral law as eternal and immutable, and then as the higher moral authority that cannot be questioned or doubted.

The transcendence of history, moreover, results from the transcendence of both the future and the past. Regarding the former, Pareyson argues that it 'is irreducible for the sole reason that it cannot be but the object of hope and waiting, and never (the object) of wisdom and knowledge',[53] and therefore it is unpredictable, that is, ulterior and elusive. For its part, the past is also transcendent, because of its being fundamentally immemorable, from which follows its anguished ambiguity. Moreover, the 'ancipital' nature of past and future is also due to the fact that 'the future and the past are the places of two (transcendent and unavoidable) events [...]; birth on the one hand and death on the other hand, both enigmatic and fatal, the former for its irrevocability and the latter for its inevitability'.[54] Then history, in its being both oriented to the future and shaped by the past, transcends every human activity, which cannot completely manage either of the two temporal dimensions.

Regarding this question, in 1981 Pareyson notes that the sense of history is not within history, but outside it; it exceeds history itself. However, he is also aware that such an argument derives from a choice and cannot be empirically demonstrated;[55] nevertheless, this choice is legitimated by the irreducibly transcendent nature of the future and of the past. Indeed, it is precisely because both the future and the past are transcendent and surpass human rational control that the sense of history cannot be found within history, but must exceed and be beyond history itself. Otherwise, history would be nothing more than the sum of all human actions, reducing itself to a mere causal process and to a sheer work of pure chance.

Finally, Pareyson also believes that the transcendence of the past is strictly connected with the ambiguous nature of memory, since it can alternatively lead us to oblivion or to remembrance. Thus, the transcendence of memory depends on the fact that we have no real and definite control over the things we remember and the things we forget; as Pareyson puts it, 'memory is transcendent because its availability is not subordinated to the will of the human being',[56] meaning that memory preserves its independence from human will and consciousness and appears to be unfathomable and uncontrollable.

Concluding on this point, Pareyson also finds a parallel between memory and the unconscious, defining the latter as 'no less the antagonist than the precursor

[53] Ibid.
[54] OL, 92.
[55] See Pareyson, 'Schellingian Meditation' (1980–81). This is an unpublished note by Pareyson, with the title 'Meditazione Schellinghiana'.
[56] OL, 93.

of consciousness'.[57] Indeed, the unconscious is both the grounding and the fundamental condition of consciousness, and a constant threat to the centrality of consciousness itself. Also, its transcendence lies in the fact that the unconscious contains all those original and unperceived sensations of which we are not aware, besides being an 'abyssal place of obscure potencies, of occult presences, of cosmic instincts'.[58] Put simply, Pareyson justifies the transcendence of the unconscious by stating that it includes all those inexplicable drives and forces that overcome our consciousness and our rationality and of which we are terrified.

'These are all realities that elude every human being's attempt to dispose of them as she wants, because [they] either require obedience and respect or instil concern and angst'.[59] In other words, Pareyson ultimately aims at defining the transcendence of these concepts by claiming, as already mentioned, that the human being cannot be sufficient to grasp and explain the reality of Being, but rather there must be a reality that exceeds and overcomes human possibilities, and to which human beings have to be subjugated. This is nothing but the abovementioned 'trans-ontic and trans-objective' relation to Being: the transcendent reality of Being is essentially independent of humankind, and therefore it has to be ascribed to a different ontological level. Such a reality is also beyond every possible human experience, being the grounding condition of a divine and 'superhuman' Being; accordingly, the only way in which human beings can relate to transcendence is by acknowledging its inescapable alterity and superiority, which is manifested through the feelings of awe and torment and through the clear fact that reality is neither completed nor fully explained by the mere existence of humankind.

Pareyson firmly maintains that 'the human being transcends herself, and she is even in herself the symbol of transcendence';[60] that is, nature, morality, history and the unconscious not only are independent of human beings, but are above and dominate them. 'Then, it needs to be acknowledged that the human being is by nature transcendent to herself: not only is she not everything, but it cannot even be said that she coincides with herself'.[61] Indeed, the main structures that characterise the reality in which we are thrown, according to Pareyson, are neither graspable nor may they be controlled by us; and this in turn results in a fundamental inability to access that Being with which we are originarily and indissolubly related.

The human being *is* (rather than *has*) an 'ontological relation, in the sense that her being consists indeed, totally and without remainder, in being a relation with Being itself; which means that her very being is dislocated and implies a constitutive discard, a structural offset, which make her always be beyond herself'.[62] This is a fundamental point of Pareyson's philosophy, and it does not come from

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] OL, 96.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

nowhere, but characterises his reflection from the time of his early writings. Indeed, Pareyson constantly reflects on the idea that the human being is essentially related to something that transcends herself and that pushes the human being beyond herself, as befits her fundamental ontological structure.

As early as 1940, Pareyson wrote that,

> I am 'thrown' to live in a situation [...]: that is, I have a very definite position in the universe, a specific place in the world. In a word: a situation, or better, *my* situation. I cannot regard my situation as one among many others, any of which I could have been given at random. My situation is my concreteness, my configuration, or, to use Marcel's word, my 'incarnation': without it, I, as a single person, would not exist. The bonds that connect me to my situation are very tight, and above all, they are essential to me: they are not links of 'features', but of 'essence'.[63]

Consequently,

> incarnation cannot be a reduction of the singular to fact, because it is a *choice:* I do not reduce myself to my situation, but I choose it. Choice, through which I assume my situation, acts so that I do not identify myself with it. On the other hand, participation cannot be the annulment of the singular in Being, because Being is transcendent: the *transcendence* of Being prevents me from drowning in it and ensures that it is not reduced to me.[64]

The latter passage is not only the kernel of Pareyson's early conception of existence and transcendence, but also the ground for his late speculation on these issues. Put simply, he claims that I, as a finite human being, can neither be identified with my situation, nor raise myself to the ontological level of Being itself. It is precisely in this sense that, in my limited condition of human being, I am related both to the here-and-now (i.e., to the concrete and actual world) and to the irreducible transcendence of Being. Accordingly, I always transcend myself, since my being exceeds my situation in the world, but at the same time I have to acknowledge that my being does not equal Being itself, which in turn proves that reality as a whole does not end with myself, intended as a mere human being, but rather is characterised by elements that irremediably transcend and are independent of my intrinsic finitude.

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[63] EIF, 42; SE, 16. I am referring to Pareyson's essay 'Genesi e significato dell'esistenzialismo', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 5 (1940), then included in SE, 11–18. Finally, the essay has been translated and included in EIF, 35–44.

[64] EIF, 44; SE, 18.

Additionally, it is also clear that transcendence plays an essential role in Pareyson's definition of freedom. That is, the fundamental duplicity and ambiguity of freedom are nothing but a testament to its transcendence; moreover, the same applies to its being absolute beginning. Indeed, all these features unquestionably put the very root and origin of freedom out of our reach, that is, they make human beings unable to control and have at their disposal the originary occurrence of freedom. Consequently, it could be argued that for Pareyson the abyss of freedom is the abyss of transcendence, since the primordial self-origination of freedom and its emergence from nothingness, that is also the initial choice of Being over non-Being, is inexorably beyond all human capacities and possibilities, meaning that it does not depend in any way on human will, but rather makes its exercise possible.

It is precisely in this sense that God and freedom coincide in their absolute and transcendent self-originating. In other words, the coincidence of God and freedom lies precisely in their transcendence, which also explains why God cannot but be the highest and supreme expression of freedom, and why freedom cannot but be the essential and fundamental feature of God. Accordingly, Pareyson claims that, in philosophical speculation, God, that is, the God of religion and not the God of the philosophers, can be identified with the term 'transcendence', which perfectly grasps and explains the real and vital essence of God Godself. Put simply, transcendence does not reduce God to a merely intellectual notion, but rather exalts freedom as the beating heart of God Godself.

As Pareyson writes in his personal notes, God is to be understood as 'absolute freedom in its concrete exercise';[65] in turn, God's arbitrariness is 'one of the more decisive affirmations of divine transcendence',[66] which also strengthens the centrality of the choice. That is, by choosing freedom, God also chooses to allow human beings to participate in the exercise of freedom, from which is the originary coincidence of divine and human freedom. Therefore, despite the human being being culpable of misusing freedom and perpetrating evil, this affects neither the transcendent nature of freedom nor the mutual source of divine and human freedom. Freedom, in other words, always preserves its transcendent core, although human beings continuously misuse it: indeed, we have already seen that to perpetrate evil is to turn freedom against itself, to aim at its own self-annihilation. However, we have also seen how such attempts are inevitably doomed to fail, given the impossibility of humankind to effectively undermine the very essence of freedom.

It is due to the transcendent nature of freedom that it is not possible for us to annul it through the perpetration of evil; that is, God's originary choice appears as definitive and irrevocable to us, meaning that we can only acknowledge and accept it, without any power to change or withdraw it. Put simply, such a choice has an ontological value that transcends us and is not at our disposal; hence, under

[65] See Pareyson, *Notes on Freedom and Transcendence in God* (c. 1988).
[66] Ibid.

these circumstances, freedom is eternally preserved by its divine and transcendent nature. Moreover, being free for the human being implies both to choose and to be chosen, meaning that we can freely choose and act because we have been chosen by God in the first place, that is, we can exercise freedom because God's originary choice established that we participate in God's freedom without being entitled to dispose of it. As Pareyson puts it, 'choosing, then, is a being chosen, but such a being chosen is still freedom, namely divine freedom'.[67]

That being the case, a contraposition could emerge between freedom and destiny, that is, between freedom and necessity. Indeed, at first glance it might seem that the only way to conciliate choosing and being chosen, namely our freedom and the transcendence of freedom itself, is to defer to the concept of necessity. However, Pareyson claims, in this case human beings would be prey to a predetermined fate and to an inexorable necessity, in fact frustrating their freedom. Moreover, such an understanding is vitiated by an excessive philosophical conceptualisation, which rigidly counterposes choosing and being chosen and intends them as human freedom and the necessity of fate, in fact making it impossible to conciliate them.

However, such a contraposition can be resolved through a religious understanding of God and of divine arbitrariness. Thus, being chosen 'is not truly fate or destiny, because it does not fall within the range of blind and inexorable necessity, but rather within the range of God's freedom, of originary and absolute freedom, of God's arbitrariness'.[68] This passage, I believe, shows very clearly both the fundamentality of freedom within Pareyson's philosophy, and his rejection of necessity as a primal ontological modality. In this sense, I have already explained how Pareyson conceives of reality as a pure expression of freedom, which in turn overcomes both mere contingency and rigid necessity, from which it follows that reality has its *raison d'être* exclusively in freedom. In addition, this makes reality gratuitous, ungrounded and solely dependent on freedom; accordingly, it is suspended over an abyss, which is nothing but the abyss of freedom and transcendence.

5. Conclusion

It should now be clear that transcendence plays a crucial role in this phase of Pareyson's thought. Indeed, his aim is to use transcendence both to legitimate the divine nature and source of freedom, and to delegitimate necessity as a binding ontological category. Indeed, Pareyson maintains that freedom is inherently transcendent, meaning that it is essentially beyond our control, emphasising once again that human beings are not able to exhaust reality but have to face several aspects of it that are beyond their disposal. At the same time, necessity has to be

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

put aside due to the aforementioned transcendence of freedom, which allows us properly to understand the true nature of God and reality. Indeed, if God and reality were determined by necessity, we would be in a situation where there would be no room for freedom, even in God's will, which would be predetermined by something else.

Hence, in order to preserve freedom and overcome necessity, the concept of transcendence becomes indispensable for Pareyson: that is, he understands transcendence as that ontological condition which corresponds to the divine principle and then lies not only beyond any possible human experience, but beyond our finite being itself. Accordingly, for Pareyson the term 'transcendence' can successfully replace the term 'God' in philosophical discourse, since it better grasps the religious nature of God Godself and avoids any misleading conception, such as the merely conceptual God of the philosophers.

It should also be clear that such a discourse is the consequence of Pareyson's conception of evil, according to which God posits evil itself as the eternally rejected and unrealisable option through an originary and unfathomable act of freedom. However, evil keeps recurring as an actual possibility of choice for human beings, who are therefore solely responsible for its concrete realisation. For this reason, a proper understanding of the real nature of evil, Pareyson believes, implies understanding it in its ontological occurrence, and not as a merely theoretical and moral possibility. In other words, the ontological reality of evil cannot be postulated without simultaneously theorising the transcendent and abyssal nature of freedom and God's original choice of good over evil, namely the choice of Being over nothingness. This also shows how Pareyson's existential hermeneutics necessarily resolves itself into a hermeneutics of religious transcendence, since God's freedom and Being can only be conceived as that transcendence towards which we are constitutively open.

As Vattimo points out, 'that which opens [Pareyson's] philosophy to religious experience is not the impossibility of theoretically embracing the totality of Being and its infinity, but rather the abyssal "novelty" of the free act'.[69] Accordingly, Pareyson maintains that the transcendence of God's freedom and Being is such that it cannot be threatened by the occurrence of evil as it is perpetrated by human beings. In other words, since evil is nothing but freedom unsuccessfully turning against itself, it follows that God's originary and free choice of good over evil, and of Being over nothingness, can never be jeopardised by the vain backlash of that eternally rejected possibility that is evil itself.

Borrowing Bubbio's words again, 'the dialectical thought of this dynamic of evil and freedom resolves itself in what could be regarded as the core of Pareyson's philosophical speculation. Namely, the conjecture that to affirm the existence of God means to affirm that the world makes sense, and that evil will end'.[70] Put

[69] Vattimo, 'Pareyson, ritorno al "pensiero tragico"', 10.

[70] Bubbio, 'Introduction' to EIF, 23.

differently, 'this dynamic can be regarded as a dialectic: not a triadic, but a dual dialectic for the contradiction remains open and the only synthesis possible is a paradoxical reconciliation through suffering. That is to say, this dynamic of evil is a dialectical thought whose centre is in a dialectic of freedom, not of necessity'.[71] Therefore, Pareyson postulates the optimistic conclusion (of a deeply religious nature), according to which evil and suffering will be ended through redemption, and God's goodness will triumph through freedom, and not through necessity or contingency.

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