St. Augustine is one of the key figures in the transition from classical antiquity to the middle ages and in the scholastic trend in which faith or revelation is prior, superior and preferable to reason and this is to be used as an instrument to justify revelation as far as it can. He was also a great figure in the sphere of literature, theology and philosophy. This great African Doctor dominated the thought of the western world for a long time. After the Bible it is the writings of St. Augustine which have influenced the Christian thought when we go through his writings we find that the problem of evil has been the central problem of his philosophy.

He lived through nearly eighty years of the social transformation, political upheavals and military disasters that are often referred to as "decline of the Roman Empire". His life also spanned one of the most important phases in the transition from Roman Paganism to Christianity. The old Roman Pagan tradition was by no means dead, although the Roman emperors had been Christians since Constantine's conversion, some forty years before Augustine was born, nevertheless it was during this period that the Roman state
developed Christianity as the official state religion. Medieval Europe began to take shape within the framework of the Roman empire.

Augustine belonged to the world of late Roman antiquity and its cultural and educational system had a decisive and lasting role in shaping his mind. His education following the standard pattern of the time, was almost entirely literary with great stress on rhetoric. Its aim was to enable its recipients to imitate the great literary masterpieces of the past. This is especially true of the philosophy of the period. Its stock of learning was in large part contained in compendia, though works of Cicero were still being widely read and those of the Neo-Platonist thinkers gave inspiration to both pagans and Christians.

In this social, political, philosophical and theological background, Augustine was born in Tegasta, north Africa, in 353 A.D., of a pagan father and Christian mother, Monica who exercised profound influence on her son.

His education began in his native town, Tegesta with the state language Latin and Arithmetic. At the age of eleven his parents sent him to Medura for advance learning of Latin literature and grammar. The pagan atmosphere of
the place and the study of Latin classics expelled him from Christian faith. The effect which Medura exercised on him was wiped away during the four years of ideal stay with the Christian mother and his father who died as a Catholic in 320 A.D.

Then at the age of sixteen he went to Carthage which was a great port and the centre of government activities. The licentious ways of the city corrupted him and removed him from his ideals of Christianity and soon he yielded to the temptation of marriage but he still maintained a brilliant record of his education. Of all the books, he studied there, Hortensious of Cicero exercised the great influence over him and turned his mind to the search of truth.

At this critical juncture he came into contact with Manichians and became the follower of this sect. This sect used to explain the problem of evil through two ultimate principles: (i) Ormuzd (ii) Ahriman, i.e. good principle is responsible for the good and the evil principle for the evil. Because his materialistic young mind had not been so profound at this stage and he could not find a satisfactory solution of the problem of evil in Christianity, therefore he detached himself from Christianity at least intellectually and this was the first phase of his life.
He became a teacher of rhetoric, first in his native city, and later at Milan (384-386 A.D.) and devoted himself to the study of theological and philosophical questions, which carried him from Manichianism to scepticism and which left him dissatisfied. This was the second phase of his life.

In 380 A.D. he began to read some of the writings of Plato and the Neo-Platonists which gave stability to his thought. At the same time he came under the influence of the eloquent St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. Now he was in a position to grasp and appreciate the problem of evil as presented by the monotheistic theory. This was his intellectual conversion and the third phase of his life.

After this third phase he came in contact with the words of St. Paul which absolutely changed his character and this was the fourth phase of his life.

After his conversion in 387 A.D. he returned to Tegasts, where, for three years (388-391 A.D.) he passed his life according to monastic rules and was ordained to priesthood. During his bishophood he had to face many opponents. First of all he had to throw himself into anti-Donatist struggle. He then, turned his attention to the pelagian.
He devoted his great gifts to the developments and propagation of Catholic doctrines until his death on 28th of August, 430 A.D. when he was receiving the penitential psalms.

Section - B

A sketch of his life and activity will suffice to make it plain that with a few exceptions Augustine did not compose purely philosophical works in an academic sense. This mingling of theological and philosophical themes may appear old and unmethodical to us today because today there is a clear distinction between the provinces of dogmatic theology and philosophy. But "Augustine did not play two parts, the part of theologian and the part of the philosopher he considers the natural man; he thought rather of man as he is in the concrete fallen and redeemed mankind, man who is able indeed to attain truth but who is constantly solicited by God's grace in order to appropriate the truth that saves."

He was a student of Cicero. And the reading of Cicero's Hortensius aroused in him a love of philosophy. He says, "I was delighted with that exhortation, so far only, that I was thereby strongly roused and kindled, and inflamed to love and seek and obtain and hold and embrace not this or that sect, but wisdom itself, whatever it were." The search for wisdom is a leading characteristic of Augustine's thought.
He identifies wisdom with happiness because his philosophy is practical, it is the search for the supreme good of the human soul. All men desire happiness but the supreme object of desire must be a permanent good, because to love what may be lost or can perish results not in happiness but in a state of constant fear and anxiety. Therefore earthly or perishable good should not be the supreme object of our desire but God alone is permanent, changeless and eternal. He alone is the supreme object of desire and the possession of God is the indispensable condition of perfect happiness. To possess God is to possess the highest good, but knowledge of God is a necessary prerequisite; he, therefore says "I desire to know God and the soul, Nothing more Nothing at all".

Knowledge of the supreme good is an indispensable stage but only a stage in the acquisition of perfect happiness which can only consist in the possession of God. The true philosopher must also be a lover of God, because through love and enlightened by reason a man reaches his final end. To achieve it a man must not only know the end but he should, in a sense, become that end and this can only be brought about by love. In loving God, man becomes like God. Thus there is a perfect blend of intellectualism and mysticism in Augustine's thought. According to him the true philosopher not only seeks to know the eternal
truth, i.e. God, but he loves God and thereby becomes assimilated to Him.

According to Augustine, "the supreme goal of human conduct is a religious, mystical ideal - the mind's union with God in the vision of God. And such union is not possible in this physical or imperfect world but only in future life. This union is possible through love of God. Love is the supreme virtue, the source of all other virtues. Love of God is self control and temperance as opposed to love of the world. It is, the basis of true love of self and others. Fortitude, justice and wisdom guided by love of God, faith, hope and charity are interdependent and are all essential to conversion. "Without (love) faith profits nothing and in its absence, hope cannot exist -- -- -- -- -- there is no love without hope, no hope without love, and neither love nor hope without faith."

St. Augustine envisaged a two-fold ideal, the highest good or perfection is a transcendent good, which is not possible to realize in the flesh because in the flesh a man remains under the sway of carnal desires. This perfection consists in the love of God, in the absolutely good will. A relative perfection may be reached by the performance of external works.
He further argues that the knowledge and the love of the highest good or God restores to man the power to do good works, the power to turn away from the life of sense to the will emancipated from the flesh. "Love of the good is synonymous with freedom; only the good will is free, some men possess good will, others lack it because good will is a free gift of God."

Predestination implies God’s foreknowledge of man’s choice but such foreknowledge is in no way prejudicial to man’s freedom. Man was free to choose eternal life, he did not choose it; God was knowing that he would not and so he decided before hand whom to save and whom to not. Man, in the person of Adam, had his chance; he abused the privilege; God knew he would abuse it; but man was under no compulsion to do wrong. Nevertheless if a man truly loves God, if he has the good will, he will be redeemed.

He regards the existence of God as self evident. One of his main arguments for the existence of God anticipates the "Cogito ergo-Sum", i.e., "prior to his knowledge that God exists, man has incontrovertible proof of his own existence." He further argues that the certitude of self knowledge provides three aspects on which the argument can be built. These are, "being, life and knowledge". Of two in
animate objects one presupposes the other. An object such as a stone can exist without the added perfection of life or knowledge but living creature presupposes the fact of "being" and a knowing subject that presupposes both life and being. Knowledge is the highest of these three aspects, since its possession implies the other two. Rational knowledge is superior to sense perception.

Among the truths grasped by human intelligence, there are some that are unique in being eternally and necessarily true. They are not reached by a process of reasoning. Such truths then point the way to the existence of an Eternal Truth, necessary and unchanging, which is God.

To him, man is the highest creature in nature. The soul which is immortal, simple, immaterial and spiritual substance, entirely distinct in essence from the body. He rejects the doctrine of soul's free existence, but he could not solve the question as to how the soul arose? He hovers between Traducianism and Creationism. He seems at times to favour Traducianism, i.e., souls are generated from the souls of parents, to explain the transition of sin. On the other hand he adopts the theory of Creationism that the soul is infused into the body by a creative act of God.
He further says that, without an internal light soul is blind and the internal light is God who illumines the darkness of our minds. This doctrine is called "Divine Illumination". The human mind is illuminated directly by God; there is no intermediary (Nulla nature interposital). The universal truths with which our thought is concerned are none other than The Divine ideas, and sometime he calls them, forms, species, thoughts and laws.

The ideas have two fold existence. They exist as exemplars in the Divine mind and they have another mode of being in the world. Mind can see the Divine ideas which permeate them. It intuitively seizes the intelligible realities which underlie the existence of sense experience and it is on account of the intuition of the Divine ideas that our concepts are universal and necessary.

About the creation He says, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth ". By earth physical universe is intended and Heaven means the angelic spirits. God created the earth i.e. a matter which was absolutely "without form and void". But the creation of matter did not precede that of form in order of time but in order of causality. Actually the creation of matter and the forms was simultaneous. The forms are eternal and changeless, therefore, possess a two- fold mode of existences: (1) as the ideas in the Divine Mind and
(ii) as the forms of contingent beings. These two modes of existence are simultaneous.

God's act of creation has a double aspect, i.e. (i) the act of making which consists in giving "being" to things; and (ii) that of perfection, in endowing them with their proper forms. He created the world through the 'word' and impressed upon matter a movement which tending towards Him, is an imitation of that intimate union which exists between the world and the Father.

The creatures also are of two kinds; (i) those created in their definite form in the beginning i.e., the angels, the sky, the stars and the four elements, fire, air, water and earth and the soul of man and (ii) those created in germ, as it were ready for some future process of development that is existing in their seeds (Rationes Causales or seminales). The Rationes seminales are humid akin to water and contain within themselves an active principle of development. Thus, God created every thing simultaneously either in actuality or in their rationes seminales. But he believes in the fixity of species; man begets man and the oak tree produces its kind.

Section - Ca

Conception of Evil:

The problem of "Good and Evil" as it has been shown in the introduction is one of those persistent problems that has always agitated every inquisitive mind throughout
the ages of human history. It had agitated the primitive and the medieval minds and still seems to have been agitating the mind of the modern man. Such questions, as what is the measure of good and evil in the world? How can we know whether or not an act is good or evil? Is there in the very nature of the universe a Code of laws which determines good and evil or is good or evil a matter of the relation of an act to other acts; and many others have been asked persistently by the philosophers throughout the history of man's thought. A survey of the thinking men down the ages about these questions pertaining to the problem of evil reveals two fundamental positions. On one hand, measures of good and evil are thought to be fixed and unchangeable i.e. good and evil are absolute. These measures having been established from the beginning of the creation and apply in all situations and all times. The other position is that good and evil are relative terms, and that the measures or the criteria are to be discovered by taking into account the particular situation involved, i.e. good and evil are determined by the requirements of time and place. Between these two extreme positions i.e., the absolute and the relative, are many theories of good and evil, which have tried to follow the course of moderation in their approach. They are, however, simply the different shades of the two fundamental positions. They are at variance only with regard to their points of emphasis. Keeping in view these general observations, we should explain Augustine's conception of Evil.
The problem of evil had been, in fact, a life long preoccupation for Augustine. The significance of this problem first struck his mind in his adolescence when he happened to steal some pears with a gang of youth. Having an inquisitive mind, he was set to think whether he had done so owing to the goodness of the fruits themselves or due to the pleasure of his company only. Ultimately he arrived at the conclusion that he committed theft due to the attraction of evil deed itself. This observation seemed to have made a deep imprint on his mind and he grappled throughout his career, since then, with the problem of evil in the world.

St. Augustine was a theistic philosopher of the scholastic trend of medieval Europe. The dominant factor in his philosophy having the Christian faith is the absoluteness and all pervading majesty of God. He believed that God is an Eternal and Transcendental Being, All powerful, All-knowing, All good and All-wise. Theistic philosophers desiring to prove the absolute goodness of God having difficulty in explaining the existence of death, suffering, and evil in the universe. They are faced with this seemingly perplexing question as to how can an all-good God create a world in which there is evil. St. Augustine, being adhered to the philosophy of theism had to face the same dilemma, i.e.
If God is all powerful Being, He must be able to prevent evil, and if He is an absolute good, He must not create evil. But evils are, on the contrary, accepted facts in the universe. Therefore, it logically follows that God is not either all powerful or all-good. Thus, to bring a reconciliation between a good God and an evil world was really a challenging problem for Augustine.

To solve this perplexing problem Augustine firstly adopted Manichian's position at Carthage after coming into contact with Cicero's work at the age of eighteen.

Here he found an easy solution of his perplexing problem in its dualistic theory; where good principle is responsible for the good, and evil principle for the evil. At that time it was difficult for his materialistic young mind to conceive the existence free from the material embodiment or to move easily on a level of abstraction. And he was unable to find any satisfactory solution in Christianity in the face of the dilemma.

But after going through the treatises of Neo-Platonism and its postulates concerning the existence and greater reality of that which is non-material, he turned his attention to the nature of the evil in the light of Christianity.
To understand the right position of Augustine's conception of evil we should be clear about the distinction of 'Cosmic' and 'Moral Evil', because he consistently adheres to this distinction. The theory which he adopted is Neo-Platonic in character, i.e., to him "Evil is the privation of good", he says, "In the universe, even that which is called evil, when it is regulated and put in its own place, only enhances our admiration of the good, for we enjoy and value the good more when we compare it with the evils". For what is that which we call evil but the absence of good? e.g. "In the bodies of animal, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health, for when a cure is affected, that does not mean that the evils which were present i.e., the disease and wounds go away from the body and dwell elsewhere. They altogether cease to exist; for the wound or disease is not a substance but a defect in the fleshy substance - the flesh itself is a substance and, therefore, is something good, of which these evils are accident. Similarly what are called vices in the soul are nothing but the privation of natural good. And when they are cured, they are not transferred elsewhere. When they cease to exist in the healthy soul they cannot exist anywhere else".
Thus he tried to solve the dilemma and to explain the Cosmic and Moral Evil through the conception of the privation of good.

As regards Cosmic evil he explains it through his conception of "Nature".

To understand his conception of nature, we should know his conception of God and the Creation because nature is created by God who is supreme good.

Though the conception of God and Creation have already been explained in section 'a' here it is enough to say that Augustine believes that "God is the source of all existence. Therefore, He is the Creator of all things and because He is all good, therefore the entire Creation is good. As He says, "The highest good than which there is no higher good, is God", consequently He is unchangeable good, hence truly eternal and truly immortal. All other good things are only from Him. He further says, "Thou our Lord, the true God who makest not only our souls and bodies but all things". Thus he proves that God is All powerful, All-good and All wise etc. Therefore everything which he creates, by the very fact that He is the source of existence, has a nature which is good. In other words, He cannot, since He is perfect good create any nature that is not intrinsically good."
These natures are not on the equal plane or level of existence. He says, God is able to make good things both great and small, both celestial and terrestrial, both spiritual and corporeal. But because He is also just, He has not put those things that He has made out of nothing on an equality with that which He begot out of Himself. Therefore, no good things whether great or small can exist except from God; but since every nature, so far as it is nature, is good it follows that no nature can exist save from the most high and true God; because all things not in the highest degree good but even related to highest good and again, because all good things, even those of most recent origin which are far from the highest good can have their existence only from the highest good. Therefore every spirit, though subject to change and every corporeal entity is from God; and all this having been made is nature. For every nature is either spirit or body. Unchangeable spirit is God; changeable spirit, having been made is nature, but is better than body.

These natures are not all on the equal plane or level of existence. He admits the hierarchic order and when he examines the universe of space and time he distinguishes between three categories of things. First, those beings which exist; that which 'is', mere bodies in the physical world. Second, that which both 'is' and 'lives', the class which comprises plants and animals and third which 'is'
'lives', and 'knows', i.e. man who shares existence with mere physical bodies, existence and life with plants and animals but who alone of created things, by virtue of his reason is capable of knowledge.

And among things that have life, the sentients are higher than those which have no sensation as animals are ranked above trees. And among the sentients the intelligents are above those who have no intelligence, for example human being is higher than animal.

And among the intelligents, the immortals such as the angels are above the mortals, i.e., men. These are the gradations according to the orders of nature, but 'according to utility each man finds in things various standards of value'. St. Augustine attributes to the infinite wisdom of God, who desired to create the universe in a majestic harmony in which things more valuable and important could not exist if they could not be compared with the less valuable. In short, he recognizes 'three planes of being (i) Body', (ii) 'Soul' and (iii) 'God'. As soul controls body, so does God control the soul to which He is in closest proximity'.

St. Augustine's doctrine of 'Nature' has an important implication on the problem which in modern philosophy is called the fact-value relation. If a nature has its
existence, i.e., its factuality, from a creative act of God and if at the same time its goodness or value is derived from the same source of creation, it becomes quite impossible to contemplate a nature without considering simultaneously its existence and goodness. Augustine's attitude towards the relation of 'fact' and 'value' appears also when he considers the highest level of reality, i.e. God. As he says, "But as He is a substance together with the Father and Son, so that substance is together with them great, and together with them good and together with them holy and whatsoever else is said in reference to substance, since it is not one thing to God to be and another to be great or to be good and the rest."

Secondly, he says that 'nature is another name of three things viz. measure, form and order.' In his words, "Spiritual, corporeal, every measure, every form; every order, both great and small are from the Lord or God. These three things where they are great, are great good; where they are small, are small good; where they are absent, there is no good; where they are great, these are great natures, where they are small, these are small nature, where they are absent, there is no nature; therefore, all nature is good'*. Thus it can be said that every nature so far as it is nature is good. Therefore, every spirit, though subject to change and every corporeal entity is from God and all this having been made is nature.
In short, every thing which exists has a nature and nature is created by God; therefore, everything is good though there is a gradation in goodness but nothing is evil in its being. But "in all these things whatever are small are called by contrary names in comparison with greater things; e.g., as in the form of a man, because the beauty is greater, the beauty of the ape in comparison with it is called deformity. And the imprudents are deceived as if the former is good and the latter is evil".

Now it is proved that nature is good, because it is created by Supreme Good. Then "where is evil"? Augustine says, "Evil, which is nothing else then corruption, either of the measure, or the form, or of the order, that belongs to nature. Because they are less than they should be or because they are not adapted to those things to which they should be adapted, (1) as if anyone should be said not to have done in a good measure because he has done less than he ought; (2) likewise a form is called bad either in comparison with something more handsome or more beautiful, this form being less in comeliness or it is out of harmony with the thing to which it is compared. Similarly order is called bad when order itself is maintained in an inferior degree. Hence disorder is bad. Thus if there is any form, order and measure there is some good and some nature. Though it may be corrupted if anyone of them is less than it should be. But even when corrupt, so far as it is nature,
it is good and so far as it is corrupted it is evil. In
other words, an evil nature is one in which measure, form
and order is vitiated and it is only evil, in exact propor
tion to the degree in which they are vitiated; if the nature
is not vitiated it would be all order, form and measure, i.e.
it would be good even when vitiated, as nature it is still
good and evil only in so far as it is vitiated. Thus nothing
evil exists in itself but only as an evil aspect of some
actual entity.

Thus it follows that there can be evil as long as
there is some good; if there is no good at all there can be
no evil. As Augustine says, "So long as a being is in process
of corruption, there is in it some good of which it is being
deprived of. If a part of the being should remain which can
not be corrupted this will certainly be an incorruptible
being and accordingly, the process of corruption will result
in the manifestation of this great good, therefore corruption
33 can consume the good only by consuming the being".

There can never be entire corruption, because entire
corruption of good is the entire consumption of the entity
and consequently the entire consumption of the corruption
itself because the subsistent corruption will have nothing
to dwell in. Thus, corruption cannot consume whole good
without consuming itself because, "the good which makes it
a being cannot be destroyed without destroying the being itself."
Thus he justifies that "every being, therefore, is good "
A great good if it cannot be corrupted, a little good if it
36 can". This conclusion forbids us to say that a wicked man
is bad; and it amounts to say that good is bad because in a
wicked man there is certainly positive existence of good in
the form of man or being and it can incur the prophetic judge-
ments, "woe unto them that call evil good and good evil. That
put darkness for light and light for darkness. That put bitter
36 for sweet and sweet for bitter."

In short, we may say that "every actual entity is good"
37 (Omnis natura, Bonum est).

He further says that the corrupted nature of a more
excellent order is sometime better than inferior nature even
uncorrupted; as corrupt gold is assuredly better than in-
corrupt silver and corrupt silver than incorrupt lead etc.
"So in case of spiritual beings, rational being even corrupt-
ed through an evil will, is better than an irrational being
38 though incorrupt". But if corruption takes away all measure,
all form, all order from corruptible things, no nature will
remain. And consequently "every nature which cannot be
corrupted is the highest good and such highest good is God.
39 But every being which can be corrupted has some good."
In the case of good and evil the logical rule that two contraries cannot be predicted at the same time of the same thing does not hold. Because good and evil are contraries but evil springs up from good and cannot exist without good, "For a man or an angel can exist without being wicked; but nothing can be wicked except a man or an angel". And being a man, he is good and being a wicked he is an evil, thus "two contraries are so far co-existent that if good did not exist in what is evil, neither could evil exist". He, thus, justifies the existence of evil in things that it is not a positive entity, but merely a privation of a positive entity.

Secondly, "God desired to create the universe in a majestic harmony and harmony depends upon the hierarchic ordering of things in creation." In his hierarchic order the things more valuable and important cannot exist if they cannot be compared with the less valuable. "God, therefore, willed every thing for the best interest of His creatures and even so-called evil must be good in its own way".

Thirdly, he justifies it through aesthetic theme like the shadow in a picture, which contributes to the beauty of the whole. "Evil is indispensable to the goodness of the world" as the antithesis for the poem. For what are called antitheses are among the most elegant of the ornament of
speech. The Apostle Paul also makes a graceful use of antithesis in that place where he says, "By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left by honour and dishonour, by evil reports and good reports: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying and behold, we live: as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things". These oppositions of contraries lend beauty to the language; so the beauty of the course of this world is achieved by the opposition of contraries arranged as it were by elocuence not of words, but of things. In this way "God has set good against evil and life against death".

In short every thing in the universe is good and beautiful in its own place. No nature at all is evil and this is a name for nothing but the want (absence) of good. But from things earthly to things heavenly, from the visible to invisible, there are some thing better than others; and for this purpose are they unequal in order that they might all exist. Now God is, in such sort, a great worker in great things that He is not less in little thing — for these little things are to be measured not by their own greatness (which does not exist) but by the wisdom of their Designer, as in the visible appearance of a man. If one eyebrow be shaved off, how nearly nothing is taking from the body, but how much from the beauty, for that is not
constituted by bulk but by the proportion and arrangement of the members. Thus he explains the Cosmic evil through infinite wisdom and goodness of God who ordains all and whose ways are beyond human understanding.

After discussing the Cosmic evil St. Augustine explains moral evil.

St. Augustine explains moral evil on the basis of human will or freedom of will. He did so by isolating the inner fact or the human will and seeing in it the ultimate source of moral evil.

Augustine says that it is an admitted fact that God has given man free will. It is proved by the commandments of holy scripture because there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will, for instance, there is "Be not overcome of evil", "Be not like horses or mules, which have no understanding", "Despise not the chastening or the Lord", "Forget not My law", "Forbear not to do good to the poor" and "Devise not evil against thy friend", "If I do this willingly, I have reward", "Do not speak evil one of another", "Do not love the world" and other things of the same import. Now whatever it is said, "Do not do this" and "Do not do that" and whenever there is any requirement in the Divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything or to refrain from doing anything, there is a sufficient proof of free will. No man,
therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed a work is done and it is to be pronounced a good one, when a person does it willingly, then, the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, "He shall reward every man accordingly to his work". Nature with free will owes its proper use. If anyone thinks he is forced to sin and thus owes this, that he ought to sin; is an error, for his own nature compels no one to sin but, it (sin) is a matter of free will.

Thus he states that "evil does not arise from a substance but from the perversion of the will".

The will is free to turn away from the immutable God and to attach itself to mutable good, taking as its object either the goods of the Soul, without reference to God or of the goods of the body."The will necessarily seeks happiness, satisfaction, and defacto this can be found only in God, the immutable good." Therefore, "evil is the turning away from the immutable good to mutable good".

The human will is, then, free to turn to God or away from God, but at the same time the human mind must recognize the truth that happiness can be found only in immutable good
or God, and also that the direction of the will to that good is implanted by God and willed by God, who is the Creator; by turning away from God the will runs counter to the divine law, which is expressed in human nature made by God; for himself the will is free, but it is at the same time subject to moral obligations, and to love God is one's duty. Augustine says, "That the only cause of any good that we enjoy is the goodness of God and that the only cause of evil is the falling away from the unchangeable good of a being made of good".

But here a question arises when every created thing which is mutable is good because it is created by Good God, as it is shown, why turning towards that thing becomes evil?

Augustine argues how a man should lead a rational life? We all certainly desire to live happily and happiness can be attained through the man's chief good which is loved by him. Man's chief good cannot be anything inferior to man himself but every man is bound to follow what is best. If we find "something which is both, superior to man and can be possessed by the man who loves it, who can doubt that in seeking for happiness man should endeavour to reach that which is more excellent than the being who makes the endeavour." In other words we can say that human being is mutable and insufficient to himself, "it can find his happiness only in the possession of what is more than himself, in the possession of an immutable object". But the possession
of the eternal and immutable object i.e. God, for him, is not "purely philosophic and theoretic contemplation of God, but a loving union with and possession of God, of supernatural union with Him".

Secondly, there should be confidence regarding the good, he enjoys. Further he says that Man's chief good is the good of both, body and soul.

Thus the perfection of all our good things and our perfect good is God. We neither come short of this nor go beyond it. And He is the object of love; therefore, He is man's chief good and He cannot be lost against our will. The greatest commandment, therefore, which leads to happy life is "Thou shalt love the lord, thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind". For to those who love the Lord all things, issuing from Him are good. Hence Paul says,"I am persuaded that neither death nor life ------ not things present, not things future shall be able to separate us from the love of God". Thus, according to Augustine we can "unite to God by love in subjection to Him".

Now it is clear that why the perversion of the will towards mutable things or good becomes evil. In short we can say that man's desire is to live happily and be can attain this happiness only by chief good and chief good is only God who is immutable, therefore, that happiness which is attained by chief good or God can never be lost, while
on the other hand mutable goods are not eternal, therefore, they can be lost; that's why if a man turns towards such mutable good he loses his eternal happiness which becomes evil for him. Thus, "the principle of morality is love of God and essence of evil is a falling away from God". The cause of good things is in the Divine goodness whereas the cause of evil is in the created will, which is to turn away from the immutable good."

Now in this case that if man's actions are not always what they should be, his will is responsible because he makes his decision freely and it is in virtue of this freedom that he is capable of doing evil. The question then arises as to How could a perfect God endow us with free choice, i.e. with a will capable of doing evil? or who was that put this in me? etc. In short, we can ask whence comes this evil will?

If it comes from God, why not God is ultimately the source of this evil?

Augustine simply says that will is good, which does come from God, for without it man would be unable to act rightly because the concept of righteous action would have no meaning. But to be able to act rightly carries with it inevitably, the possibility of acting wrongly. In reality, we can say that in the world of bodies there are many things which we can put to bad use, but this is no reason for saying
that they are evil and that God should not have given them
to us, because considered in themselves they are good. As
hands are good and useful things but the man who com­mits
criminal and shameful acts with them makes bad use of them.
A human body without feet would obviously be very imperfect.
but a person who uses his feet to go to wrong places and
injure another or to disgrace himself, makes bad use of
them and same may be said of the will. "In itself will is
good, because without it no one could lead an upright life.
It comes to us, therefore, from God and we should find
fault with those who use it badly, and not with Him who
gives it to us".

"Free will is the medium good", its nature is good,
but its effect can be good or bad according to the way man
uses it, now "the use to be made of free choice is under
the control of free choice itself". It is resistable be­
cause if it is not resistable it has been created to func­
tion under necessity and in that case the fault would have
been on the part of the Creator, which is extremely absurd.
"Reason, the source of all knowledge knows itself; memory,
the storehouse of all recollections, remembers itself, free
will, the master of every thing else - for it is all at its
free disposal - is also master of itself. Hence it rests
with free will, and free will alone, to put to evil use the
good that it is".
On the other hand, the possibility of evil use of free will was the necessary condition for the goodness and happiness brought about by its good use. When our will clings to that immutable and universal good in order to find its joy in it, it possesses the happy life, which is man's supreme good.

"Turning away from the Sovereign Good, and turning to secondary good: these are, in brief, the two free acts which decide our eternal happiness or misery".

But here a question lies, as to how does it happen that the will chooses sin? God is the cause of every thing. So He is the cause of the act whereby free choice turns away from the supreme good to fasten on lower goods and since that act is unquestionably a sin. God is, therefore, the cause of sin itself. Or if that act does not come from God, where does it come from: "The only honest answer that can be made to this question is that we do not know anything about it, not to be sure, that we do not know where the real responsibility lies, but rather because we cannot know a thing which is nothing". (Seiri Crim non potest quod nihil est).

Every good comes from God; every nature is certainly good; therefore every nature comes from God. This strict conclusion applies to sensible as well as to intelligible
things. Whenever we see a being in which measure, order and number are to be found let us not hesitate to acknowledge that God is its author. But if we strip that being of the order, measure and number it has, and remove them altogether, absolutely nothing will remain. As long as a rudiment of form remains, however crude and imperfect it may be, there is still a seed of goodness and like a kind of matter it can be brought to its perfection, step by step if an abandonment of being is a certain good, the complete deprivation of good is by definition equivalent to an utter destruction of being. Consequently, it becomes quite inconsistent to imagine a positive cause like God at origin of the act whereby free will turns away from Him. It is true that He has made the will master of itself and capable of adhering to the sovereign good or of turning away from it, but once so made by God, it was in its power to separate itself from God, it was its duty not to do so.

In similar way he tried to explain the original sin of Adam. "Adam's fault—for that is what it was not the natural and necessary fall as of a falling stone but rather the free fall of a will letting itself go". It was sin to touch the tree not because the tree was bad as "every creature of God is good" and accordingly every tree also which God planted in Paradise is assuredly good. Man did not, therefore, strive after an evil nature when he touched the forbidden tree; but by deserting what was better, he
committed an evil deed. Since the Creator is better than any creature which He has made, His command should not have been deserted, that the thing forbidden, however good, might be touched; since the better having been deserted, the good of the creature was striven for which was touched contrary to the command of the Creator. God did not plant an evil tree in Paradise; but He Himself was better who prohibited its being touched.

Secondly, He had made the prohibition in order to show that the nature of rational soul ought not to be in its own power, but in subjection to God, and that it guards the order of its salvation through obedience, corrupting it through disobedience. Hence also He called the tree, the touching of which He forbade, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil (Gen 11:8) because when man should have touched it in the face of the prohibition, he would experience the penalty of sin, and so would know the difference between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.

Now the question arises what is the cause of this inverse turning of the will? whether it has an efficient cause or not?

If there is an efficient cause, i.e. if there is anything which is the cause of evil will, it either (1) has or (2) has not a will.
If it has a will it is either (a) good or (b) bad.

(a) If it has a good will it can never make another will bad because it is good in itself.

(b) If it has a bad will, consequently it can make another will bad and thus it will lead us into an infinite regression. So no evil will can be the cause of first evil will.

If it were since eternity it must have been existing in some nature. For if not, then it could not exist at all. If it existed in some nature it must have been injuring it since eternity, otherwise it could not be an evil will. But if it had been injuring since eternity the nature must have been corrupt since the very beginning, which can never be, because every nature at creation is wholly good. Now it is hereby proved that the evil will is not from eternity and anything that has a will cannot be caused.

(2) If it is supposed that any thing is the cause of evil will which has no will, that thing is either

(a) Superior, (b) Equal, or (c) Inferior to it.

(a) If it were superior to it, it must have a will or rather a good will and consequently can never be the cause of evil will.
(b) If that were inferior to it even, then that being intrinsically good could not make it bad.

So it is the turning of the will from a superior thing to an inferior thing which is contrary to the order of nature and not the inferior thing itself that makes the will evil, just as fault of luxury and avarice is not the beauty and gold but the will (Heart) that loves sensual pleasure, and injustice to the neglect of temperance of justice.

Another example is that 'two men alive in physical and moral constitution see the same corporeal beauty; one yields to the temptation and as excited to have an illicit enjoyment falls away from chastity. While the other steadfastly maintains a modest restraint of his will'.

Again the question arises when the sight was the same and the seers were identical (in every respect) what made the will of the former to commit evil.

Now one can only think that the will of the former might have turned evil and the will of the latter remained unmoved because each will was made out of nothing and consequently had the capacity of remaining good through resistance or to be defiled by the temptation, the former maintained the resistance and the latter did not.
Thus this evil can have no efficient cause, it itself is a defect, diminishing the good of nature, as it turns from the higher to the lower and so it must have only a deficient cause.

To look for the cause of deficiency or of a lack of being is like looking for a positive cause for silence or darkness. Silence is merely an absence of sound; darkness is simply an absence of light; in the same way we might say that sin in our will is merely an absence of the love for God. Our will is changeable because it was created from nothing and is therefore imperfect and liable to be deficient.

This deficiency is nothing other than privation of good. Will is not like tree because "a good tree cannot bear evil fruits" (Matt 7:18). But it is like a soil from which both sorts of trees (good and bad) can grow and because the will is the medium (of) good, which can be put into bad use like bodily organs such as hands, eyes etc. Through eyes we can see both good and bad pictures. In this way Augustine tried to explain evil as the privation of good.
A Critical Appraisal

The problem of evil as it is presented by St. Augustine is essentially theological, in nature because St. Augustine's faith rests upon the revelation of the Holy Scriptures and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Augustine, therefore, always has a scriptural reference ready at hand.

The problem of evil is, for Augustine, a purely optimistic. He believes in the ultimate goodness of the universe. God in his opinion, could have omitted evil altogether from the scheme of things, but He preferred to use it as a means of serving the good; the glory of the universe is enhanced by the presence of evil just as darkness adds the beauty of moon light. In order to have God's goodness along with His omnipotence, Augustine employs several devices of the theological optimists. He ascribes to evil a relative status. He states that (i) evil is necessary to the good as a black spot is to a beauty of a picture, (ii) he defines evil as a privation of the good. It is actually an absence of good, as the blindness is nothing but the absence of sight, (iii) He shifts the responsibility for evil and to man, because there is no evil other than moral evil and the source of moral evil is the perversion of free will and free will in itself is good which is created by God. At one time or another he adopted each of these mutually complementary solutions of the problem of evil.
Augustine tries his best to present a theologically-philosophical solution of the problem of evil in the light of his Christian faith with the help of scholastic reasoning.