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David Ray Griffin, EVIL REVISITED: RESPONSES AND RECONSIDERATIONS

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inian fashion, a useful set of reminders, reflections, musings, and questions about what it is to 'leave everything as it is.' Exploring the senses in which photography, for example, leaves everything as it is, and provocatively asking whether theology leaves everything as it is, Bambrough makes us think again about the philosophical status of 'description' and the ways in which philosophical accounts can contour religious responses.

Anthologies are particularly frustrating objects for review, for one can never even begin to do justice to the individual essays. Acknowledging that, let me commend this collection for its richness: it addresses a perennial question with remarkable detail across a wide historical range, and the pages are full of intriguing suggestions; it is frustrating only in its great diversity, not in its quality.

Evil Revisited: Responses and Reconsiderations, by **David Ray Griffin**. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991. Pp. xiv and 277.

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In 1976, David Griffin published *God, Freedom, and Evil*, a book in which he argued that the solution to the problem of evil proposed by process theism is superior to those solutions available within traditional (classical) theism. *Evil Revisited* consists largely of responses to critiques of his earlier book. But it is not simply a collection of independent counter-responses to specific criticisms. It is a coherent, self-contained restatement of Griffin's belief that only process theists can offer an adequate theistic response to the scope and intensity of the evil we encounter.

Griffin begins by outlining the three theodicies with which the book is concerned. Proponents of traditional all-determining theism, we are told, believe that "God in fact totally determines every event, including all human decisions and actions, and therefore all 'sinful' acts" (p. 13). And thus, to preserve God's goodness, they must ultimately deny that there *is* any genuine evil—any evil that is not necessary for bringing about some greater good or avoiding some greater evil—and acknowledge instead that each instance of evil is a necessary component in God's perfect creative plan.

Proponents of traditional free-will theism, Griffin continues, agree with proponents of traditional all-determining theism that "God *essentially* has all the power in the universe" (p. 14). They agree, for instance, that God could unilaterally have created a world with no genuine evil. But free-will theists also hold that "God has *voluntarily* delegated power to creatures" (p. 14). Specifically, they hold that God has given us significant freedom—the freedom to bring about good or evil—because he desires that we develop "moral and spiritual qualities through free decisions" and "because pain and suffering

are essential conditions to the realization of many of the most important moral and spiritual qualities" (p. 15). And, accordingly, they believe that they can maintain justifiably both that genuine evil exists and that God is perfectly good.

Finally, proponents of process theism, Griffin points out, agree with proponents of traditional free-will theism that humans possess significant freedom and thus that genuine evil exists but does not count against God's goodness. However, they deny that this freedom has been voluntarily bestowed on humanity by God. They believe, instead, that every actual entity (including each human soul) *simply does* possess some power of self-determination—some "freedom to transcend to some extent the causal power of the past...in order to decide what [its] reality in that moment will be" (p. 27). And, accordingly, since it is *always* possible for such freedom to be used in less than the most appropriate manner, process theists also deny that God could unilaterally have produced a world with no evil.

Griffin next identifies the criteria that will be used to assess these theodicies. He acknowledges that analytic philosophers such as Alvin Plantinga have successfully demonstrated that "God exists" and "Evil exists" are not necessarily inconsistent. But Griffin "cannot see how anyone facing the problem of evil as a real problem" will be helped by this type of solution (p. 46). What is needed, rather, he believes, is a plausible theodicy—a solution that is (1) *rationally consistent* in the sense that it is not "positively self-contradictory," (2) *experientially adequate* in the sense that it is "at least minimally consistent with all the relevant facts of experience," and (3) *illuminating* in the sense that it allows "us to see features of the world or our experience that we had not seen before" (p. 53).

With these 'plausibility criteria' in hand, Griffin begins his assessment of the two traditional theodicies. [Actually, he utilizes these criteria before he formally discusses them.] Griffin quickly dismisses the theodicy proposed by traditional all-determining theism. This theodicy, he reminds us, denies the reality of genuine evil—evil that is not a necessary component in God's perfect plan. But for a theist to deny the reality of genuine evil, Griffin argues, requires him or her to acknowledge that such horrendous evils as Auschwitz "must finally be regarded as good" (p. 14). And since he believes that this is something that no person can *actually* acknowledge, even if she says she does, he concludes that this theodicy fails in that it is inadequate "to the facts of experience" (p. 3).

The only way for the proponent of traditional all-determining theism to attempt to avoid this conclusion, we are told, is to try to salvage the concept of genuine evil by arguing that "*God's* complete determination of human acts is compatible with their [indeterministic] freedom" (p. 72). But this desperate attempt to salvage belief in God, Griffin contends, requires the affirmation

of an incoherent concept of omnipotence and therefore is also unable to "provide an adequate theodicy" (p. 77).

Griffin begins his assessment of the traditional free-will theodicy by acknowledging that it is more plausible than that offered by traditional all-determining theism. But he then goes on to discuss the three questions that he believes expose the Achilles' heel of a theodicy based on freedom that is bestowed on humans by God: (1) If, as it must be granted, the God of free-will theism "*could* have created beings who would be like us in all ways, enjoying all the values we can enjoy—intellectual, aesthetic, interpersonal, creative—except that they would not really be free to act contrary to God's will, and thereby would not wreak havoc," then why did this God not do so (p. 83)? (2) Why doesn't a God who could unilaterally intervene "occasionally violate human freedom for the sake of an overriding good, or to prevent a particularly horrible evil" (p. 87)? (3) How can a theodicy built on the contention that evil is the result of misguided human choice explain the vast amount of natural evil we encounter?

Griffin does not deny that the traditional free-will theist can offer self-consistent responses to these questions and thus does not deny that it is possible for a "rational, sensitive person" to affirm a free-will theodicy (p. 21). But the key question to ask of any theodicy, he believes, "is whether that idea of God lends itself to an explanation of the world, including its evils, that is psychologically convincing to thoughtful men and women" (p. 89). And he argues that, while a traditional free-will theodicy may initially appear to have some plausibility, the more it is probed, the more unconvincing its explanation for evil will become for thoughtful persons.

Having thus established, he believes, "that neither form of traditional theism has been successfully defended against the claim that it cannot provide a plausible theodicy" (p. 95), Griffin turns his attention to the question of whether a process theodicy is adequate. He grants that a number of significant questions about this theodicy have been raised: (1) Is it really true that a being possessing the properties of the process God could never unilaterally control human behavior? (2) Is there really any experiential basis for believing that all actual entities (including those of which sticks and stones are comprised) have some power of self-determination and thus cannot be wholly determined by powers beyond themselves? (3) Does the God of process theism have equal concern for all creatures or is such a God an elitist? (4) Is the God of process theism worthy of worship? But he argues that process theism can provide adequate responses to all such challenges and thus concludes that, unlike traditional theism, process theism can offer a theodicy that is plausible.

This book has much to recommend it. For those interested in process theism, it is by far the clearest, most comprehensive presentation of a process

theodicy to date. And since most of the book consists of dialogues with free-will theists, those interested in the free-will defense (or theodicy) will find Griffin's presentation thought-provoking. Moreover, I believe he accomplishes part of his overall task. He does, as I see it, demonstrate successfully that the process theodicy is no less consistent and comprehensive, and faces no greater challenges, than classical theodicies.

But I do not believe that Griffin successfully demonstrates that process theism alone can produce a plausible theodicy.

First, I do not believe that Griffin does justice to proponents of traditional all-determining theism. It is certainly true that such theists must maintain that every instance of evil is a state of affairs that God has determined should occur. But this does not necessitate, as Griffin implies, that such theists must therefore also maintain that all instances of evil—for example, Auschwitz— are intrinsically desirable state of affairs, even from God's perspective. On the contrary, it is perfectly justifiable for the proponent of traditional all-determining theism to maintain that each instance of evil is intrinsically undesirable to both God and humans. And thus it is perfectly justifiable for such theists to be saddened by the fact that such events have taken place and hope that such events will not occur in the future. What the proponent of traditional all-determining theism must acknowledge is only that God has created a world containing evil because each occurrence of such evil is *necessary* to produce some very intrinsically desirable state of affairs or to avoid some even more intrinsically undesirable state of affairs. And while Griffin may well find such a contention farfetched, it seems to me that this type of explanation for evil is certainly more defensible—by any standard—than either of the explanations Griffin allows proponents of traditional all-determining theism to choose between: to simply acknowledge that what we as humans find to be reprehensible is really intrinsically good or to deny that our understanding of evil is self-consistent from a human perspective.

Second, I believe that Griffin's critique of the plausibility of traditional free-will theism contains a serious 'burden of proof' confusion. Griffin is certainly justified in telling us why he and others believe that the traditional free-will theodicy becomes less plausible—less adequate and illuminating— the more carefully it is inspected. But to maintain justifiably that free-will theism has not been successfully "defended against the claim that it cannot provide a plausible theodicy," Griffin must do more than simply tell us why he and others find this theodicy so unsatisfactory. Rather the burden of proof is on him to demonstrate that the reasons why he and others find this theodicy so implausible are so logically compelling that thoughtful men and women who considered these reasons objectively *would* not be justified in affirming its plausibility. That is, the burden of proof is on him to demonstrate that, given his line of reasoning, thoughtful men and women would not be justified

in holding that the traditional free-will theodicy is adequate and illuminating. But, as far as I can see, Griffin does not even attempt to address the issue in this manner. And hence I see no reason to grant that he has established the implausibility of this theodicy.

Overall, though, as I stated earlier, I believe that most philosophers will find this book to be a valuable addition to the ongoing discussion of the problem of evil.

Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy, edited by **Michael D. Beaty**. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990. Pp. vii, 380. $34.95 Cloth; $14.95 Paper.

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This is the fifth volume in the *Library of Religious Philosophy* series. It contains a reprint of Alvin Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers" (*Faith and Philosophy*, July, 1984) followed by thirteen essays which show how to follow part of that advice. The various authors attempt to resolve important philosophical problems by examining them in light of uniquely theistic (and often Christian) assumptions. To the extent that the essays are successful they not only help with the philosophical problems but also reveal the explanatory relevance and usefulness of theistic beliefs. Even when they are not so successful, the essays display clearly the quality of contemporary Christian philosophy. The proposals contained in the articles are focused and readable, and most of all they are *creative*, repeatedly offering interesting new angles on the problems under discussion.

Excluding "Advice to Christian Philosophers," four essays each are devoted to epistemology and ethics, and five concern metaphysics. Four of the essays appeared in volume 4, number 4 of *Faith and Philosophy* (October 1987) and so may already be familiar to readers of this journal; the other nine were written for this volume. The volume also contains a fine introduction to the essays by editor Michael D. Beaty.

The epistemology section contains essays aimed at showing that a theistic perspective yields a better understanding of probability and of epistemic justification, an essay which explores the compatibility of reliabilism and theism, and one which develops a theory of rationality applicable to both scientific and religious belief systems. Two of the metaphysics essays are concerned with counterfactuals. The first focuses on those with impossible antecedents and leads to a proposed extension of "the standard analysis" of counterfactuals. The second argues that "natural laws" are grounded in counterfactuals of freedom. The section also contains interesting articles on the ground of mathematical objects, the mind/body problem, and free will. The