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Post Holocaust Theodicies: Contemporary Solutions to the Problem of Evil

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POST HOLOCAUST THEODICIES:

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I. Introduction

> One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows. Roll call. SS all around us, machine guns trained: the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains – and one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel. The SS seemed more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual. To hang a young boy in front of thousands of spectators was no light matter. The head of the camp read the verdict. All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him... The three victims mounted together onto the chairs. The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses. "Long live liberty!" cried the two adults. But the child was silent. "Where is God? Where is He?" someone behind me asked.
>
> At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over. Total silence throughout the camp... The march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive... For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look at him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed. Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "Where is God now?" And I heard a voice within me answer him: "Where is He? Here He is – He is hanging here on this gallows..."
>
> - Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Evil is a gruesome sight to behold. It can be found, among other places, in the Holocaust and its systematic slaughter of millions. It is the stench of death choking the air of Buchenwald and Auschwitz. It is God and the little boy gripped in their death throes upon the gallows. In a world following the holocaust, we are challenged, more than ever before, to reconcile the existence of the traditional Judeo-Christian God with the experience of sheer, incomprehensible evil. How could an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God, if He exists, allow this cruelty to take place against his beloved chosen people? These two images of the powerful and loving God and the child

painfully succumbing to death are so in conflict with one another. If left unexamined, they can provide nothing but emptiness and bewilderment.

Thus, this problem of evil must be taken up if any reconciliation of these two images is to occur. I intend to show, through an examination of five distinct theodicies or explanations of the problem of evil, that this reconciliation may be found. I wish to further propose that this reconciliation may best be found in the process theodicy of David R. Griffin. This conclusion, however, may only be drawn through a relative comparison of his theodicy with those of other philosophers and theologians. To this end, I will evaluate the Christian eschatological theodicy of John Hick, the Free Will Defense of Alvin Plantinga, Richard Rubenstein's death of God theology, and Gordon Kaufman's radical imaginative reconstruction of the symbols of God and Christ. In the end, I hope to present five accurately represented theodicies and a convincing argument for the appropriateness of Griffin's process theodicy.

We shall begin by introducing the traditional problem of evil. Although there are slight variations in wording, the traditional problem of evil may be generally stated in the following way:

(1) God is an omniscient being.

(2) An omniscient being would know of all moral goods and genuine evils within all possible worlds.

(3) God is an omnipotent being.

(4) An omnipotent being could unilaterally bring about an actual world without any genuine evil.

(5) God is a morally perfect being.

(6) A morally perfect being would want to bring about an actual world without any genuine evil.

(7) If there is genuine evil in the world, then a God who is an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect being does not exist.

(8) There is genuine evil in the world.

(9) Therefore, a God that is an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect being does not exist.

It is supremely important to note that there are not only two extremes where this problem can be resolved. It is not the case that either this God exists and genuine evil does not, or that evil exists and no God exists at all. While there are theologians who argue both these extremes, we shall see that in order to bring coherence to this problem, theologians have employed a number of strategies. Some will reject God's omnipotence; some may reject his morally perfect state; others his omniscience; and some may reject all three qualities along with God's personhood. As we shall see, each one of these solutions brings with them both strengths and weaknesses. It will thus be our charge to decide which theodicy, if any, is the most appropriate.

In order to evaluate the various theodicies that will be presented, we must stipulate certain qualifications and measures. The first measure of the appropriateness of a theodicy is logical consistency. This seems rather self-evident as any argument or system of thought that is incoherent is utterly useless and inappropriate. The second measure is the capacity of the theodicy to provide a meaningful orientation within the world. By this, I mean to evaluate whether it makes sense, not on the logical level, but on the personal and pragmatic level. Will the application of this theodicy allow one to make

sense of the world and the tragedies they find there? The third measure is the capacity of the position to retain as many characteristics of the traditional image of God as possible. Here, a premium is placed upon consistency with the traditional image. The closer the solution is to the traditional image of God, the better. The reasoning for this measure can be analogized to mechanical repairs made to a car. If a broken car may be fixed by replacing a few belts or gaskets, then those should be the extent of the repairs. It would be unnecessary and inappropriate for the mechanic to replace the whole engine in the repair process. Likewise, a theodicy should only make the necessary repairs to the traditional image of God and no more.

Now that I have established the traditional problem of evil as well as the qualifications with which to evaluate the theodicies, we may begin our exploration of these varying solutions to the problem of evil.

II. John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*

John Hick provides our most traditional approach to theodicy in *Evil and the God of Love*. In this text, Hick presents an eschatological theodicy based upon the theology of Irenaeus. Hick relates his ideas of good and evil to the purposes of God. That which is good, theologically, is that which furthers the divine purposes of God. Conversely, evil is "that which frustrates or tends to frustrate God's purpose for His creation" [1978, 338]. We shall now begin our discussion with Hick's rejection of the dominant Augustinian tradition in favor of the lesser-held Irenaean theology.

Hick gives three reasons for rejecting the Augustinian explanation of evil as originating in the fall of man. First, Hick argues that the creation story should be seen as

Christian mythology – "the great persisting imaginative pictures by means of which the corporate mind of the Church has expressed to itself the significance of the historical events upon which its faith is based" [1978, 245-6]. The development of science and reasoning along with the resulting increase in the understanding of our natural world requires us to reject the notion that the creation story is an authentic historical account. Clearly the natural order of things, including evil, pain, and suffering, existed even prior to the emergence of man. If this is so, then it is inappropriate to attribute evil to the fall. Second, there is an injustice in the concept of original sin where a person is punished for the iniquities of a distant ancestor [1978, 249]. Third, there is an incoherence in the apparent emergence of sin *ex nihilo*; for how could perfect beings in paradise become evil but for some corrupting influence to which they freely succumbed? But how could this corrupting influence come about except that God ordained the corruption? "If evil could... create itself out of nothing in the midst of a wholly good universe, it could do so in a mundane Garden of Eden as easily as... in the highest heaven" [1978, 251]. Thus an attempt to explain the fall as resulting from free will ends with a divine orchestration of the fall and "the theodicy collapses into radical incoherence" [1978, 250].

Fortunately, Hick believes that the Irenaean tradition offers a coherent alternative. Irenaeus held that the world is still in the process of creation because creation is a two step process. The first stage consisted of the creation of the world and man in God's image; the second stage involves the sanctification of man into God's 'likeness'. While the first stage can be entirely dictated by God, the second stage cannot because "personal life is essentially free and self-directing. It cannot be perfected by divine fiat, but only through the uncompelled responses and willing-cooperation of human individuals in their

actions and reactions in the world in which God has placed them" [1978, 255]. This process, Hick posits, "has a value in the eyes of the Creator which justifies even the long travail of the soul-making process" [1978, 256].

This soul-making process – the formation of man into God's likeness – becomes the central aim of creation; it is God's purpose. "If, then, God's aim in making the world is the 'bringing of many sons to glory', the aim will naturally determine the kind of world that He has created" [1978, 256]. The perfect world for this purpose, then, would not be a hedonistic paradise devoid of pain and filled with pleasure. This utopian state provides little motivation for personal growth and soul-making. Instead, the world should be ordered as to provide the greatest opportunity to growth. Implicit in this idea is that challenge and adversity offers a growth that is qualitatively distinct and unattainable in any other manner. If this is the case, then adversity is a necessary component of a soul-making world [1978, 155-61].

Of course, more needs to be said of this world and its inhabitants. Hick argues that this world must be created in such a way so that God is veiled and distanced but not detached. The distance is necessary because a finite being created in the direct presence of God could not gain sufficient autonomy to freely choose God. The unveiled glory of God would be so compelling as to eliminate any real freedom for the individual [1978, 280-7]. In short, God must set man in a naturalistic world where his presence is veiled so that man might freely respond to Him through faith:

> This divine economy makes it possible for man, thus reaching self-consciousness at an epistemic distance from God, freely to accept God's gracious invitation and to come to Him in uncompelled faith and love... Man can be truly *for* God only if he is morally independent of Him, and he can be thus independent only by being first *against* Him! [1978, 287]

Having established that the world must be distant from God, consideration must now be given to the evils that arise in this world. We are now speaking of moral evils such as "cruelty, greed, lovelessness, ruthless ambition, [and] narrow suspiciousness" [1978, 263]. Hick seeks an explanation for these moral evils in eschatology. While Hick holds that evil is in every way genuine and detestable, it is also finite and limited. This limited evil is forever outweighed by the infinite goodness and justice of that will be apparent at the end of the soul-making process [1978, 350]. In order for this to work, however, good must always triumph over evil in the end; good must never fail. An example of failure can be found in eternal sin and eternal condemnation in hell. The idea of being sentenced to eternal misery in hell, argues Hick, is a testament to the failure of God to conform a person to His likeness. Instead of sanctification, there is a degradation of the soul [1978, 340-2]. An alternative to eternal condemnation must exist for Hick if evil is to be eschatologically justifiable.

Hick offers one alternative where "God will eventually succeed in His purpose of winning all men to Himself in faith and love" [1978, 342]. One can say from tradition that "God will never cease to desire and actively work for the salvation of each created person" [1978, 343]. If this is so, and if there is an afterlife such as the one argued in Christian eschatology, then there is an eternity for God to engage in the soul-making process. Hick argues that God's compelling will never cease so that even though "we cannot say in advance *how* God will eventually free all created souls from their bondage to sin and establish them in love and glad obedience toward Himself..., despite the logical possibility of failure the probability of His success amounts, as it seems to me, to

a practical certainty" [1978, 344]. Thus, for Hick, evil is a finite and intermediate step which will always lead to good in the end.

At the same time, Hick does not believe this eschatological justice diminishes the ferocity of evil in any way. We can see this in the way Hick describes the reality of evil in the holocaust:

> When we think, for example, of Belsen and Auschwitz and Buchenwald we are compelled to take seriously the idea of the demonic in the sense of evil which is utterly gratuitous – evil simply for evil's sake. We encounter this in sheer pointless sadistic cruelty; in the deliberate destruction or corruption of personality by the crushing of a human being into moral insensibility, or his perversion into an evil monster; in terrifying experiences that unhinge the mind; and in other shapes and forms. When we meet evil in such senselessly malevolent and malicious acts and attitudes we seem to be face to face with that which has been called the devil or, less anthropomorphically, the demonic. [1978, 288-9]

But however great the demonic force, Hick says, we must not say that it is "unforeseen by the Creator or beyond His control" [1978, 289]. In all its horror, this evil is still finite so "even as we recognize the demonic potentialities and actualities of evil we must still affirm [that]... 'sin must needs be, but all shall be well. All shall be well; and all manner of thing shall be well'" [1978, 289]. Here, we see the heart of Hick's theodicy. Hick retains the traditional image of an omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good God at the expense of genuine evil. Evil for Hick appears to only be an intermediate state which will ultimately resolve itself to good. There is thus in all evil a condition for good. If there is no condition for good in evil, then God would not be able to redeem the evil. This failure to triumph over evil is unacceptable to Hick.

Even if we accept that God's infinite goodness will work all things for good in the end, the question of how we ought to react in the present still remains. Hick offers three responses in light of evil and God's universal plan. First, if we must respond with an

understanding of God's eschatological plan, we see that those millions who have perished in the Nazi extermination are not gone forever: "In the realms beyond our world they are alive and will have their place in the final fulfillment of God's creation" [1978, 362]. So while we may mourn their temporal passing, we must also acknowledge the hope of eternal life. Second, we may respond to such cruel injustice by following the example of Christ's self-sacrifice. If evil stirs in us a sense of righteous anger, then our response ought to be a willingness to risk our lives for the sake of others. Lastly, we must respond with a rejection of vengeance: "For hatred begets hatred and cruelty begets cruelty in a downward spiral that can be halted only by the kind of sacrificial love that was supremely present in the death of Christ" [1978, 362]. We must not seek to avenge, but merely to help bring about justice, for vengeance belongs to God [1978, 361-2].

What are we to think of Hick's theodicy? While it may come across as a mostly acceptable theodicy to the laity because it remains relatively close to Christian orthodoxy, it fails when measured by the standards which we have set out.

Hick answers the problem by rejecting the premise that there is any genuine evil in the world. We may say this because all evil has an instrumental value for Hick as God will use it to 'work for the good of those who love Him.' Every instance of evil may be used to bring about divine providence. If this is so, then there is nothing for Hick that is truly evil. While Hick would argue against that conclusion, it is clear that Hick sees the evils of this world as insignificant when compared to God's infinite goodness. This evil, then is only an apparent evil to mankind. In fact, his theodicy even requires a certain amount of this evil to be within the world in order to provide challenge and adversity. But then evil is not really evil, but rather the good because it works to further God's

divine goal of soul-making. If at its heart, this theodicy rejects genuine evil, then it fails to make any real advance upon the Augustinian theodicy which Hick rejects.

But where Hick's theodicy fails the most is in its power to provide real and meaningful orientation in this world. Hick's repeated claim is basically that we must see the larger picture; we must place all our faith in the afterlife: "Christian theodicy must point forward to that final blessedness, and claim that this infinite future good will render worth while all the pain and travail and wickedness that has occurred on the way to it" [1978, 340]. Again, "if there is any eventual resolution of the interplay between good and evil, any decisive bringing of good out of evil, it must life beyond this world and beyond the enigma of death" [1978, 339]. But this looking forward to the future does nothing to alleviate the present pain. Instead, it trivializes the pain and suffering and reprimands the afflicted for not seeing their place in the cosmic drama that is unfolding. The appeal to traditional Christian eschatology and the future does nothing for the person in the present. What's more, this eschatological theodicy is based upon a sheer leap of faith. To accept this theodicy, one must accept a myriad of tenets associated with the Christian tradition. But in the darkest of nights when even God has died in the hearts and minds of the suffering, a theodicy based upon faith in *any* God, let alone that God's mysterious afterlife, will have no meaning or significance.

III. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*

Alvin Plantinga addresses the problem of evil through a logical approach which he terms the Free Will Defense. Plantinga begins with the premise that God must be logically consistent; to say anything else of God is to wind up in absurdity. So for

Plantinga, both God and his creation are limited by logical consistency. Plantinga distinguishes the Free Will Defense approach from a Free Will Theodicy in that the Free Will Theodicist is arguing a proposition which is claimed to be true. The Free Will Defender, on the other hand, is merely arguing a proposition that will consistently resolve the problem of evil. The Defender does not need to know or even believe that the proposed defense is true; it is only important that the proposed defense provides the possibility of resolving the problem of evil [1977, 28].

Plantinga's begins his defense by stating the premises of the problem: (1) God is omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good and (2) There is evil. He then argues that these two premises in and of themselves are not contradictory [1977, 54]. It is only with the insertion of a premise such as (3) If God is omniscient and omnipotent, then he can properly eliminate every evil state of affairs [1977, 22]. However, there is the possibility that this premise is not true and likewise a possibility that the following is true: (4) It was not within God's power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil [1977, 54]. If premise (4) were inserted into the logic, then premises (1) and (3) would be consistent:

> (1) God is omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good.
>
> (3) It was not within God's power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil
>
> (4) God created a world containing moral good (as evidenced by this actual world)
>
> (2) There is evil.

If this is the case, then Plantinga concludes that if one can show that premise (3) is possible, then there is not necessarily a contradiction between premises (1) and (2). "The heart of the Free Will Defense is the claim that it is *possible* that God could not have created a universe containing moral good (or as much moral good as this world contains) without creating one that also contained moral evil" [1977, 31].

But is this proposition even a possibility? According to Leibniz, the world which exists is the best of all possible worlds. If God is omniscient, he is aware of all possible worlds; if God is perfectly good, then He would want to create the best world; and if God is omnipotent, he would have been able to create any of the possible worlds. With Leibniz's claim, one could ague that this actual world is clearly not the best of all possible worlds because of the presence of gratuitous and sheer evil. If this is so, then a God that exhibits these characteristics does not exist [1977, 33]. Plantinga's response is that Leibniz was wrong and God cannot create any world He pleased because of logical limitations and the genuine free will of other beings beyond God [1977, 34].

Before we may see how Plantinga justifies this claim, we must first address the logical terminology which Plantinga employs. First, a state of affairs is a condition or a grouping of conditions. For example: Nixon's having won the 1972 election or All men's being mortal [1977, 33]. A world, for Plantinga, is a complete or maximal state of affairs where every state of affairs is addressed in some form. Further, Plantinga states that each world has a corresponding 'book' of propositions which are unique to that world. This "book is a maximal consistent set of propositions; it is so large that the addition of another proposition to it always yields an explicitly inconsistent set" [1977, 36]. It is important to note that Plantinga says that God does not strictly speaking create

these states, worlds, or books. These exist independently of God. God merely acts in such a way as to actualize one world over another [1977, 38-9].

Plantinga's first objection to Leibniz is that God could not have actualized any world within which He did not exist. Therefore, all worlds within which God did not exist, although possible, would not be able to be actualized by God [1977, 39-40]. Of course, the natural argument would be that "if God is omnipotent, then He could have actualized any of those possible worlds *in which He exists*" [1977, 40] and it is certainly possible that some of these worlds contain free beings who do good but refrain from evil. Plantinga's response is in two steps. First, he argues that there are many possible worlds which God could not actualize. Second, he argues that there is a possibility "that among the worlds God could not have actualized are all the worlds containing moral good but no moral evil" [1977, 45].

To argue the first step, Plantinga provides the following example with a world containing free persons. Plantinga defines a free person as

> a person... free with respect to a given action, then he is free to perform
> that action and free to refrain from performing it; no antecedent conditions
> and/or causal laws determine that he will perform the action, or that he
> won't. It is within his power at the time in question, to take or perform the
> action and within his power to refrain from it [1977, 29].

Suppose there is a world (W) with a person "free with respect to some insignificant action" [1977, 42]. The state of affairs for this world (S) does not contain the outcome of this act because including the outcome in S would mean that the person is not free with respect to the act – it is already dictated. In this world, the person could either choose to take action A or reject action A. Now suppose that if S were actualized, this person would have chosen to take action A. This means that God could not have created an

alternate world (W') where the person could have rejected action A because the only way to reach the same premise and thus the same choice would be to actualize S. But in actualizing S, the person would have freely chosen to take action A. The only way for God to make the person reject action A would be to remove the person's free will in this situation, but doing so would cause God to not be able to actualize W because W includes a state of affairs where the person is free with respect to this action. So a world where the person rejects action A is perfectly possible, but God is not able to bring it about because He cannot unilaterally establish the outcome. Part of the outcome falls to the free will of the person. Thus, there are many possible worlds which God does not have the power to actualize [1977, 43-4].

Plantinga justifies his second step by positing a special characteristic that is possible with an action. It is possible that there is an action A that, if performed by person P, would have been performed in a wrong or evil manner. This is consistent with free will because the state of affairs does not dictate whether or not person P chose to perform or refrain from the action. It merely states that if the action is performed, it will be performed in a wrong or evil way. If this is possible, then it is possible that God cannot create a world without person P performing a wrong or evil act. If this is so, then in the worlds which God could have actualized, person P would not be able to perform moral good (obtained only through free choice) without performing at least one act of moral ill as well. This is called transworld depravity [1977, 48]. Furthermore:

> it is possible that *everybody* suffers from [transworld depravity]. And if
> this possibility were actual, then God, though omnipotent, could not have
> created any of the possible worlds containing just the persons who do in
> fact exist, and containing moral good but no moral evil. [1977, 48]

There would be no use in creating a world with entirely different people as it is possible that everybody, including all the possible persons not in existence, would have transworld depravity within their essence: "Under these conditions God could have created a world containing no moral evil only by creating one without significantly free persons" [1977, 53].

If this is the case, then Plantinga has successfully shown that premise 3 - it was not within God's power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil – is possible. This possibility, then, means that the existence of a omniscient, omnipotent, and wholly good God is not necessarily contradictory with the existence of evil.

How are we to evaluate Plantinga's work in the free will defense. Its strength clearly falls in the category of logical consistency as the entire defense was an exercise in logic. But while Plantinga's logic passes, he leaves much to be desired in the other two measures. First, in his conservative defense, Plantinga has not really answered the problem of evil because he has not provided an actual way through which the traditional characteristics of the Christian God are reconciled with the existence of evil. Plantinga only provides a possibility that prevents a necessary contradiction. Plantinga even admits that "a theodicy would be much more satisfying, if possible to achieve" [1977, 28]. Second, Plantinga's strict logic does not provide any orientation, guidance, or meaning for a person in the real world. Plantinga has spoken nothing of the real world at all! This shortcoming is not lost on Plantinga. He acknowledges that his defense does not give "any hint as to what God's reasons for some *specific* evil – the death or suffering of someone close to you, for example – might be" [1977, 28]. There is, then, an utter failure to invoke or provide any significant comfort in the depths of despair. So while

Plantinga's efforts may have been lauded in the high circle of theistic logisticians, not a single soul behind the gates of Auschwitz or Buchenwald would have been better comforted had they known the Free Will Defense.

IV. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*

Richard Rubenstein is a radical Jewish theologian associated with the "death of God" movement. Rubenstein regrettably accepts this title, but not without much hesitation. Rubenstein's association with death of God theology stems from his stance that in light of the Nazi holocaust, it is impossible and absurd to hold a traditional view of God: "I never 'willed' the death of the theistic God; I sadly found the idea of such a God lacking in credibility in the face of the Holocaust" [1992, 248]. It is important to acknowledge at the onset of this discussion that the death of God speaks nothing of God himself, rather, the phrase takes shape from the viewpoint of the observer: "It is more precise to assert that *we live in a time of the death of God* than to declare 'God is dead.' *The death of God is a cultural fact. We shall never know whether it is more than that*" [1992, 250]. Again, "It is a *cultural* event experienced by men and women according to their deserts, they nevertheless render homage to that God in the rituals and liturgy of the community of their inheritance" [1992, 294]. This discussion of Rubenstein will therefore focus in two areas: how we came to live in a time of the death of God and how we ought to respond to this radical change.

The death of God occurred out of a necessity to find meaning and a common ground in a world where the holocaust made explicit the inevitable tensions and persecutions found in the theistic Judeo-Christian tradition. Rubenstein reaches this

conclusion after a conversation with Dean Gruber, a religious leader of the Evangelical Church of East and West Berlin. Gruber actively opposed the Nazis during the war based on Christian grounds. These acts of opposition resulted in Gruber's confinement to Dachau. After the war, Gruber continued to devote himself to healing and reconciliation with the Jewish people. Through it all, Gruber held to "the traditional theological doctrines of the election of Israel and of God as the ultimate Author of the historical drama" [1992, 4]. It was Gruber's devotion to the traditional image that made the death of God a necessity for Rubenstein. In holding that God was the omnipotent author of creation, the "inescapable conclusion [is] the conviction that the Nazi slaughter of the Jews was somehow God's will, that, for His own inscrutable reasons, God really wanted the Jewish people to be exterminated by Hitler" [1992, 8]. This startling conclusion was not refuted by Gruber. Rubenstein saw in this a tension so dramatic that it could not possibly hold if one sought resolution. On one hand, Gruber saw the humanity of the Jews and worked actively for them even to his own detriment. On the other, Gruber saw the suffering of the Jews as justified because they failed to keep God's law. If a man such as Gruber, who cared very much for the Jews, could hold to the idea of divine punishment in the holocaust, then this logical conclusion is inescapable based upon the traditional concept of the theistic God. To move on, Rubenstein says, we must push beyond this traditional image which generates such great tensions [1992, 3-13].

Christians and Jews hold the Jewish people as unique among all the nations in the world. They alone, are the chosen people of God. This election is seen in the covenant between God and the Jews. The structure of the covenant is simple. If the Jews upheld the law then God would bless his people, but if they disobeyed God then justice would

demand punishment. We see this played out multiple times in the Hebrew Bible as the Jews would stray away from God and turn to false idols. An ensuing calamity would be interpreted as punishment from God and a call to return to God and the covenant. In the New Testament of the Christian Bible we have a situation in which the Jews have apparently perpetrated the ultimate act of betrayal – the murder of the Messiah. This ultimate crime – the very murder of God – in and of itself is deserving of an ultimate punishment [1992, 32]. Thus, persecution and suffering occurring against the Jewish people may be justified if the suffering is interpreted as punishment from a Just and omnipotent God. If one holds to the divine election of the Jews, then one must necessarily see the Jews as worthy of punishment if they transgress against the living God. Christianity may spread the blame and punishment to themselves as well, but it can not remove the blame from the Jews. At its worst, one may come to see Hitler and the Nazis as the just rod which God wields to punish His people [1992, 10-13]. As Rubenstein says of the Jewish people: *"As long as we continue to hold to the doctrine of the election of Israel, we will leave ourselves open to the theology expressed...: because the Jews are God's Chosen People yet failed to keep God's Law, God sent Hitler to punish them"* [1992, 13].

If the election of Israel is upheld, there can never be true brotherhood or unity between Jew and gentile. The world will necessarily see the Jews as the chosen people set apart from the rest. But there is a way out, says Rubenstein: "All we need for a sane religious life is to recognize that we are, when given normal opportunities, neither more nor less than others, that we share the pain, the joy, and the fated destiny that Earth alone has meted out to all her children" [1992, 13]. The only conceivable way to achieve this

normalcy is the death of the theistic God which separates and divides Jew from Gentile. Only in the death of God can a true commonality be found between the Christian and the Jew: "Our myths tell us of gifts that await us. We can be far more certain of the need that makes mythical promises alluring than of fulfillment of the promise. Since we cannot be brothers in promise, let us at least be bothers in need" [1992, 28].

Having described the death of the theistic God, we may now address the task of moving forward with God. God, in this era, is not the theistic ruler of the cosmos that has arbitrarily elected his chosen people. The force of God has become much more mystical in nature: "The term 'God' is very much like the unstructured inkblot used in the Rorschach test. Its very lack of concrete content invites us to express our fears, aspirations, and yearnings concerning our origin, our destiny, and our end" [1992, 251]. But just as each person brings to the Rorschach test their own personal traditions, hopes, and fears, so does each person bring to this new image of God the same traditions, hopes, and fears: "*in the time of the death of God the Jewish radical theologian remains profoundly Jewish, as the Christian radical remains profoundly Christian*" [1992, 251]. There is no need to wholly reject the tools and symbols of our traditions. It is through these symbols which we have seen the depths of meaning and value. What is needed is a reconstituting of these symbols so that they are once again filled with meaning and value in a time of the death of God:

> What then is the function of religion in the time of the death of God? It is the way we share and celebrate, both consciously and unconsciously, through the inherited myths, rituals, and traditions of our communities, the dilemmas and the crises of life and death, good and evil. Religion is the way we share our predicament; it is never the way we overcome our condition. [1992, 264]

While the death of God is a necessary cultural fact, it should, however, not be seen simply as a joyous occasion. In fact, it is deeply troubling for the Jewish theologian. Rubenstein has noted several Christian death of God theologians who have rejoiced in the death of God, for if God is dead then all things are possible. This freedom and liberation, they say, is something to be cherished. Besides, should the outlook of a Christian death of God theology ever become too bleak, there is always the hope of a resurrected God. This is not the case in Judaism: "God simply doesn't die in Judaism" [1992, 249]. Without this death, there is no room within the Jewish framework for a resurrected God [1992, 249-52].

Accordingly, Rubenstein responds to the death of God in a much more tragic way: "The time of the death of God must ultimately become a time of mourning, as it was for the Karamazovs. We shall learn bitterly to regret our loss of the Divine" [1992, 253]. The death of God, says Rubenstein, does not mean that all things are permissible, "the structure of human reality is itself inherently limiting and frustrating. If there is to be any kind of society, it will have to be a somewhat renunciatory society" [1992, 258]. Indeed, the death of God not only means that we are responsible for all the deeds we perform [1992, 258] but also that there is no eschatological hope in a Kingdom of God for the Jew [1992, 265]. Instead:

> the world of the death of God is a world devoid of hope and illusion. People grow old, decline, and die. It is relatively simple to celebrate apocalyptic liberation in one's youth, but what of the later years? The death of God does not cancel death. It heightens our sad knowledge that no power, human or divine, can ultimately withstand the dissolving onslaughts of omnipotent Nothingness, the true Lord of all creation. [1992, 259]

But if the death of God is seen as tragic, how do we redeem this tragedy so that the functions of religion as stated by Rubenstein are valuable and meaningful? Is this even possible, or does Rubenstein's theodicy end in sheer tragedy? Rubenstein responds with an emphatic 'yes' by looking to a melding of the traditional symbols of Judaism with a form of paganism and naturalism:

> In the time of the death of God, some form of pagan sanity may better accord with the deepest instincts of mankind than does an atheistic Christian apocalypticism. I believe that paganism has in reality triumphed in the hearts of men. Paganism... [is] not a vulgar appeal to what is base in men; it was a wise intuition of man's holy place in the order of things... [Religion] has won the day in both Judaism and Christianity simply by appropriating their inherited rituals and symbols as instrumentalities whereby the decisive crises of life can be celebrated and shared. What remains of Judaism and Christianity in contemporary America is largely pagan. [1992, 260]

While Rubenstein's conclusion may be initially surprising, we may see how he makes this move by understanding the world view which emerges in the absence of a theistic God. Rubenstein finds that a Buddhist view of the world not only avoids many of the problems of theistic religion, but also appears to better fit the facts found in Western biology and psychology [1992, 295]. The Buddhist view provides "a synthesizing *system of continuity* over a dichotomizing *system of gaps*" [1992, 296] seen in theistic religion. Thus, this idea of unified growth and change can best be seen in divine immanence, and "in the West emphasis on Divine immanence has been expressed in mysticism and nature paganism" [1992, 296].

In turn, Rubenstein gives a Jewish conception of God which he believes is useful in expressing mysticism. Rubenstein invokes the description of God as "the Holy Nothing, *das Heilige Nichts*, and, in Kabbalah, as the *En-Sof*, that which is without limit or end. God, thus designated, is regarded as the Ground and Source of all existence"

[1992, 298]. This use of God as Nothingness stems from the idea of negation, where one

may only know something when one knows what it is not. If God is all in all, then

negation is impossible and God is literally 'no-thing' [1992, 298]. Seeing God this way

promotes a sense of unity and connectedness; God is to us as the ocean is to the waves

[1992, 299]. This connectedness and unity has become all the more apparent and

meaningful in the context of a globalizing world. We see in our interconnected societies

and cultures the undeniable truth that we are not isolated individuals bestowed with the

status of 'chosen' or 'gentile,' "but exemplification of the all-embracing, universal

totality we name as God" [1992, 300]. In seeing God this way, "God participates in all

the joys and sorrows of the drama of creation, which is, at the same time, the deepest

expression of divine life. God's unchanging unitary life and that of the cosmos's ever-

changing, dynamic multiplicity ultimately reflect a single unitary reality" [1992, 302].

It is then reasonable to see creation as an unfolding of God's life such that as life

began in the Nothingness of God so will it also return. Hence Adam's fall is the

beginning of this journey back to Nothingness and we are merely the weary travelers

taking the long road home through our pursuit of unity. In the end, while the world of the

death of God may cause trepidation and caution, it

> need not be a place of gloom and despair. One need not live forever for
> life to be worth living. Creation, however impermanent, is full of promise.
> Those who affirm the inseparability of the creative and the destructive in
> the divine activity thereby affirm their understanding of the necessity to
> pay in full measure with their own return to the Holy Nothingness for the
> gift of life. [1992, 206]

What are we to think of Rubenstein? This is certainly a departure from the more

traditional arguments of Hick and Plantinga. What appears to surface in the idea of Hitler

as God's rod of anger and the holocaust as the lashes is the rejection of God as wholly

good. God then, is the barbarian, the blood-thirsty judge who has ruled that this punishment take place. If God is not wholly good, then evil of the vilest sort is allowed to be perpetrated in the world. Rubenstein's response is that this image of God is absurd while a better and more meaningful one may be found in the pagan and mystic practices.

How does this view hold up against our qualifications? I believe we can find a decent satisfaction of all three categories. In terms of logical consistency, we can see the necessary outcome of holding the Jewish people as chosen and elect. This, if nothing else, clearly holds true. If this is so, then the rejection of this image in order to regain equality and commonality appears to be reasonable. As for the specific methods and symbols which Rubenstein chooses enhance unity, we can at best say that they are one of a number of viable options. Rubenstein himself cited Buddhism as the source of his inspiration. The lens was turned towards paganism and mysticism because those were tools more familiar in his tradition. Generally, though, we can find an acceptable reasoning behind Rubenstein's theological progression. In terms of meaningfulness, it certainly appears that a demythologized Jewish nation is more consistent with a modern world that is largely demystified. Acts are not immediately attributed to divine intervention. Instead, we tend towards naturalistic explanations for naturalistic events. If this is so, then it would seem that this view more closely follows the world in which we currently live. Lastly, we can see that the problem of theodicy has been addressed through the rejection of the wholly good God. Even more, a coherent alternative was provided so that one may move beyond the theistic conception of the world. It seems, then, that Rubenstein's theology represents a viable option, although we will have to wait until the end of our evaluation to see if it is the most viable and appropriate.

V. Gordon D. Kaufman, *Theology for a Nuclear Age*

We may glean yet another approach to theodicy by examining Gordon Kaufman's

Theology for a Nuclear Age. In this work, Kaufman engages in a radical imaginative

reconstruction of the symbols most integral to the Christian tradition in light of a

potential nuclear holocaust.

According to Kaufman, the development of nuclear weapons has ushered in a

qualitatively different age for mankind. While previous ages brought with them

potentials for great evil and tragedy, they also carried along with them the promise of

redemption: "The deeper the human tragedy, so it seems, the greater the power of the

human spirit to work redemption in the lives of those who remember and cherish it"

[1985, 2]. But the nuclear age and its threat of global annihilation means that for the first

time in history, we must take seriously the notion that we may bring about our own

extinction. If this were to occur, there would be no redemptive significance [1985, 2-3].

This distinction may also be seen religiously:

> In the religious eschatology of the West the end of history is pictured quite
> differently than we today must face it. For it is undergirded by faith in an
> active creator and governor of history, one who from the beginning was
> working out purposes which were certain to be realized as history moved
> to its consummation. The end of history, therefore – whether viewed as
> ultimate catastrophe or ultimate salvation – was to be God's climatic act
> [1985, 3].

In the nuclear holocaust, however, we must see that destruction is brought about

primarily at our own hands and not God's. To deny this fact is to deny the active role

that man took in reaching the point of annihilation. Indeed, "we human beings... are

absolutely and fully responsible if this catastrophe occurs... This event confronts us

primarily as an act of human doing rather than of divine will" [1985, 7]. It is, of course, possible to deny our human involvement and justify the nuclear holocaust as divine will, "But surely to take such a position is an ultimate evasion of our responsibility as human beings in this whole matter; indeed, it is demonically to invoke the divine will as a justification for that very evasion" [1985, 8].

In fact, this failure to take responsibility is indicative of the limitations of our present religious framework in handling such a novel threat to mankind: "It has been the task of each generation of theologians to reinterpret the religious tradition to which they were heir in the light of the new historical situation in which they found themselves" [1985, 12]. This has traditionally been a conservative enterprise with the theologian working within the strict confines of the tradition. But this is no longer a viable option. The qualitatively different age in which we now live demands "the most radical kind of deconstruction and reconstruction of the traditions they have inherited, including especially the most central and precious symbols of these traditions, *God* and *Jesus Christ*" [1985, 13]. If this reconstruction does not take place, Kaufman argues, then theology will be unable to truly provide meaning and orientation in a nuclear age [1985, 10-13].

In order to move to a position where reconception of God and Jesus are possible, there must first be a reworking of the business of theology. Traditionally, theology has been based in an authoritative model where truth is that which is proposed by man but instead given through revelation from God himself. This concept of truth elevates it to a sacred position beyond reproach [1985, 16-7]. But in order to reach this point, several suppositions must be made: first, that we know who or what God is; second, that God is

self-revealing and trustworthy; third, that God revealed Himself through the Bible and Jesus Christ; and fourth, we have the appropriate method of biblical interpretation [1985, 18]. However, these points should hardly be accepted *prima facie*. They should instead be areas most worthy of examination. It would be futile to approach a text seeking its truth and validity if we already assume that this text is of sacred origins. We cannot presume the claim of the text. With these points in doubt, "we can no longer... follow in our theological work a method that requires us to take for granted the ultimate authority and truth of tradition" [1985, 19].

With this in mind, Kaufman proposes three theses which properly describes role of a reconstructed Christian theology. First, "the proper business of Christian theology is the analysis, criticism, and reconstruction of the two grounding symbols of Christian faith, *God* and *Christ*" [1985, 22]. In doing so, one comes to the understanding that theology is not an interpretation of religious creeds but a work of the imagination. Second, "the image/concept of God... is, and has always been, built out of certain metaphors or images or models drawn from ordinary experience or history and then extrapolated or developed in such a way that it can serve as the ultimate point of reference for grasping and understanding all experience, life, and the world" [1985, 22]. These metaphors are necessary because an ultimate God is beyond the finite experiences of this world; this infinity may only be grasped in the metaphor. Theology helps provide an understanding of these metaphors. Third, "all theology... is an expression of the continuing activity of the human imagination seeking to create a framework of interpretation which can provide overall orientation for human life; theology is, thus,

essentially an activity of imaginative construction" [1985, 26]. A theology is, at its core, only as useful as the meaning it provides.

Having established the method of theology, we may now examine Kaufman's reconception of God. Acknowledging our own responsibility in this world creates a break with the traditional notion of God in two ways. The first way is the rejection of an image of an omnipotent God who has dictated the course of events to such an extent that the intended goal is guaranteed. The second is rejection of the loving parental God cradling and protecting His world. These two traditional images paint a picture of a dualistic and asymmetrical world. It is dualistic in the sense that there is God and there is world. It is asymmetrical because the balance of power is skewed towards the omnipotent God. However, today we presuppose an interconnected and evolutionary world. If this is so, then any believable symbol for God must align itself with the interconnectedness and evolutionary nature of the world. A more current understanding of the world is that of a unified and independent order to the universe, and this would yield the symbol of God as working in concert with the world [1985, 39]. This symbol of God "should today be conceived in terms of the complex of physical, biological, and historico-cultural conditions which have made human existence possible, which continue to sustain it, and which may draw it out to a fuller humanity and humaneness" [1985, 42].

Again, God

> cannot be contented with any sort of private pietism or parochial concern
> for particular traditions and communities. It demands reflection on and
> action to bring about a *metanoia* in human life as a whole, for God is here
> understood as that ecological reality behind and in and working through
> all of life and history [1985, 45].

God should be seen not as person because dualism makes no sense today, but as that symbol which relativises and humanizes [1985, 33].

'Relativising,' for Kaufman, is the idea that all things in this world stand in question and are relativised in relation to God. God is "the ultimate point of reference [where] everything in us and about us is relativised" [1985, 33]. Everything, then, finds meaning beyond itself and in relation to God. Meaning and orientation is provided only in relation to God. However, we cannot say what God ultimately is in this view. Because everything is relativised, we must account for the possibility that we may be wrong about our ultimate point of reference and that the point of reference may change. 'Humanizing' acknowledges that God is not merely the ultimate unknown but also humane. Acknowledging this humanness provides us with a model of what it is to be humane ourselves. This ability, coupled with God's relativising nature, allows us a person to always be aware of both their action and relation to the world. On one hand, we realize this example of humanness is found beyond ourselves, but on the other, we understand that we may be wrong. This possibility of being wrong fosters a continual examination of life which leads to deeper humanization. "The symbol of 'God' enables us to hold this whole grand evolutionary-historical sweep together as the cosmic movement which as both given us our humanity and which continues to call us to a deeper humanization – which, that is to say, both relativises us at every point even while it continues to humanize us" [1985, 43]. This provides in orientation in such a way as to foster accountability by relativising all actions to ourselves. So if God is the unified urge to deepen life through relativising and humanizing, to live against God is to live in a way that is detrimental to the unified web of life [1985, 44].

Let us now move on to the reconstruction of the image of Christ. There is a deep ambivalence in the Christian image of Christ. On one hand, there is the image of the humble servant, born to live a life of service and die a death of self-sacrifice. On the other, there is the resurrected and exalted figure who is reigning at the very right hand of God. There is, in these paradoxical views, a tension between triumphalism and self sacrifice. Kaufman rejects the triumphant image of Christ as originating from the traditional authoritative concept of God and Christ. For Kaufman, the focus must be turned away from the resurrection to the death and the cross. This death provides the image of the potential of salvation, and to reconstruct Christ is to reconstruct the idea of salvation:

> Salvation should no longer be conceived as a singular process or activity, a unilateral action from on high coming down to earth and working primarily in and through the church. Rather, it comprises all the activities and processes within human affairs which are helping to overcome the violence and disruptions and alienations, the various forms of oppression and exploitation, and all the other historical and institutional momentums today promoting personal and social deterioration and disintegration. In short, wherever a spirit of creativity and liberation and healing, of reconciliation and reconstruction, is at work in the world, there is to be seen saving activity [1985, 57].

Thus both Christ and God are seen as relativising and humanizing forces which help orientate us away from selfish gain and towards an attitude of service which will deepen life and enhance its richness.

We may now assess the suitability of Kaufman's theology through the lens of our problem of theodicy. We can clearly see that the strong suit of this perspective is the meaningfulness that can potentially be provided in our lives for this is the very purpose of Kaufman's imaginative reconstruction. The reimagined God and Christ allow a view of the world uncluttered with religious authority and the instruction of writers from

centuries past. Instead, the relativising and humanizing images allow us to take full responsibility for the world in which we live. There is no longer a shirking of duty. We will no longer be able to pass the evils of this world off on a metaphysical God and absolve ourselves of guilt. This reorientated life allows for the possibility of true accountability in an age where humanity is in control of its own destiny.

However, while Kaufman's imaginative reconstruction may be adept at providing orientation, it is lack of continuity with the traditional image of God also provides its weakness. We see from Kaufman a rejection of omnipotence, omniscience, and personhood. For Kaufman, God "is not... an entity or being which we might otherwise ignore or overlook, but rather that [which] focuses on our consciousness and attention on that which humanizes and relativises us" [1985, 37]. This radical reconception is both Kaufman's strength and downfall. Those who can accept this theology find great meaning and orientation in life. But presently, these persons are most likely far outnumbered by persons who would not be able to accept the reconstruction. Many people still adamantly hold to the traditional ideas of God. So while radical reconstruction may be more appropriate in a societal context, individually, there are many who would find themselves utterly lost if they were placed in Kaufman's system of theology. Man people are simply not ready to conceive their ultimate point of reference in this manner. So in evaluating Kaufman, we must ask if the extent of this reconstruction is necessary. If meaning and orientation can be achieved through less drastic means, then we may say that this may not be the most appropriate theodicy.

VI. David R. Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy*

We may now finally turn our attention to the theodicy of David Griffin. Griffin approaches the problem of evil through the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Griffin rejects the omnipotence of God insofar as God could unilaterally bring about any actual world. Acknowledging this limitation, Griffin turns towards reconceiving God through process philosophy [1976, 251].

Griffin begins by establishing what he terms the 'omnipotence fallacy.' In his argument, Griffin attacks the idea that God could unilaterally bring about any logically possible state of affairs. In order to unilaterally bring about a state of affairs, Griffin says, one must say "it is possible for one's actual being's condition to be completely determined by a being or beings other than itself" [1976, 264]. What Griffin means is that the key to the omnipotence fallacy may be found in the nature of the acted upon beings: "The problem is the assumption that the meaning of perfect power or omnipotence can be settled apart from a metaphysical discussion of the nature of the 'beings' upon whom this perfect power is to be exercised" [1976, 265].

In this regard, in order for the given premise to be true, these other beings upon which power is exercised "would have to be totally determinable, in all respects, by some being or beings other than themselves" [1976, 266]. If this is the case, and if power is the ability to influence another distinct from one's self, then we must say that an omnipotent God that could unilaterally create any possible state of affairs is only possible if all other beings were entirely powerless. This necessarily means that no finite being has any sort of effect whatsoever upon any other being because to have influence is to have real power [1976, 266]. This appears to be very similar to part of Plantinga's argument, but

while Plantinga refers to logic to prove the possibility of his case, Griffin appeals to experience: "Power to influence others presupposes the power of self-determination. If an entity contributes nothing to itself, but is a mere product of other powers, it cannot meaningfully be said to have any power to influence others... This... would have to be directly experienced, and directly *experienced as a being devoid of* power" [1976, 266].

In order for this premise to be possible in this actual world, we must be given some clue or evidence that the interaction we have with others is totally devoid of influence. There is no evidence from experience that shows we do not have an influence upon others and others do not significantly influence us. If love, joy, pain, and disgust are only a charade, then this truth is entirely obscured and undiscoverable through experience. We may only say that, at the very least, our actions appear to have influence upon others. Thus, we can only conclude from experience that the premise that these entities "would have to be totally determinable, in all respects, by some being or beings other than themselves" [1976, 266], is wrong. Hence, the idea that God could unilaterally and certainly bring about any possible world is an omnipotence fallacy [1976, 266-8]: "An actual world by metaphysical necessity contains a multiplicity of beings with power... it is impossible for any one being to have a monopoly on power" [1976, 268].

Having clarified omnipotence, Griffin moves on to develop his theodicy though process theology. In process thought, an actual entity is one who has a power of creativity in an 'occasion of experience.' This concept of the occasion of experience is crucial to process thought. In this view, individuals exist only as momentary events: "a Whiteheadian actual entity happens and then 'perishes' in a sense, making room for succeeding events... Whitehead calls [these] 'actual occasions'" [1976, 277]. These

actual occasions develop in the following way. The moment begins with an experiencing subject who is receiving data or 'feelings' from previous moments of existence. These forces, acting upon that moment may originate from anywhere beyond that moment. These feelings are either "positively apprehended" and accepted or "negatively apprehended" and excluded. Having been acted upon by these other occasions, the present occasion then "becomes a unified subject by integrating these feelings. This process of integration into a concrete unity is called 'concrescence'" [1976, 277]. It is in this moment of concrescence that the moment is able to exercise its creative power such that its unified outcome represents genuine novelty. In reaching this unity, the moment loses its subjectivity and gains objectivity. It then exists as an object of experience which may be transmitted to the next moment to either be positively or negatively apprehended [1976, 276-9].

What does this mean for our image of God? An appropriate view of God should be that of a persuasive God versus an authoritative God. In process thought, God is that which provides an ideal aim to be apprehended in each moment or occasion: "This is an initial persuasion toward that possibility for the occasion's existence which would be best for it, given its context" [1976, 280]. Thus in every moment, in every process, God is providing a urging towards that which is most ideal. The moment, in its subjectivity is free to either positively or negatively apprehend this urging. In this sense, we see God as merely one of a number of influences upon the moment [1976, 280-1].

Now that we have spelled out God's place and function in process theology, we must discuss the place and character of good and evil. The 'good', according to process thought, can be seen as 'harmony' and 'intensity.' I suppose these two concepts may be

analogized to the act of making soup. A soup consisting of only two or three ingredients may be in harmony such that the ingredients are in balance with one another. Yet this balance is relatively uncomplicated and bland. In order to add depth to the soup, the ingredients must become increasingly numerous and complex so that the intensity of the soup from all its individual ingredients is increased. However, this complexity, and hence, intensity, stands in a certain tension with harmony, as the more ingredients and steps in a recipe, the more challenging it will be for the chef to successfully complete the dish; it is more difficult to bring the dish into harmony [1976, 283-4]. Evil, on the other hand, would be manifested in 'discord' and 'unnecessary triviality.' Discord is the breaking down of the process of creation and novelty: "Discord is evil in an absolute or noncomparative sense. Since discord means some kind of suffering, it is evil in itself, apart from any comparison with that which might have been" [1976, 284]. Unlike discord, unnecessary triviality is evil only by comparison: "A hog's experience is not evil simply because it is less intense than human experience. But human experience is evil if it degenerates to a porcine level; it is evil by comparison with what it could have been" [1976, 284]. Hence that which is valuable is that which fosters harmony as well as intensity and that which is evil is that which manifests discord and unnecessary triviality.

Seeing this, we may now reflect upon the correlations between value and power. Griffin identifies five positively correlated variables:

> (1) the capacity for intrinsic goodness; (2) the capacity for intrinsic evil; (3) freedom, or the power of self-determination; (4) the capacity for instrumental goodness, or the power to contribute to the intrinsic good of others; the capacity for instrumental evil, or the power to be destructive of the potential intrinsic goodness of others. [1976, 291]

We shall thus discuss these correlations in brief. First are the capacities for intrinsic goodness and self-determination. If we say intrinsic goodness is "the power to integrate harmoniously an ever-greater variety of data from the environment" [1976, 292], then self-determination is necessary for intrinsic goodness to exist: "No significant degree of intrinsic value would be possible without a significant degree of freedom. If there is trivial freedom, there is trivial value" [1976, 292].

We observe a second correlation between intrinsic good and the potential instrumental good and intrinsic evil and the potential for instrumental evil. Griffin argues that "a weak individual exerts a weak influence and a strong one exerts a strong influence" [1976, 295]. In order to reach a strong influence, all the previous stages and levels of weaker influence must first be achieved. The building of influence must be continuous; there can be no leaps. Thus it is impossible for God to bring the world to its present harmony and intensity without all the previous stages. God could not simply have started the world of at this level of goodness and value. For there to be instrumental good, intrinsic good must increase. As we have already seen, this increase in intrinsic good necessary means the increase in instrumental good. The same correlation that applies to positive influence applies to negative influence as well [1976, 295-6].

Though the most important correlation may be between the capacities for intrinsic good and intrinsic evil. As the intensity of experience increases, the increased enjoyment brings with it at the same time the increased capacity to feel the same degree of discord in the next moment. The higher we climb, the further we have to fall: "The more intense the discordant feeling, the further the retreat from perfection" [1976, 293]. Herein lies a key to process thinking:

> This is part of the process answer to why there is so much suffering in the world. The answer is not that all the suffering that has occurred and will occur in the world is necessary – there could have been much less, had the creatures actualized themselves differently. It is that the *possibility* of all this evil is necessary *if* there was to be the possibility of all the good that has occurred and may occur in the future. Hence, the question is whether the good that has been achieved and is achievable is worth the risk of all the evil that has occurred and may yet occur. [1976, 294]

Griffin offers an answer in the ideal aims and feelings provided by God in the moment. Quoting Whitehead, "God has in his nature the knowledge of evil, of pain, and of degradation, but it is there as overcome with what is good. Every fact is what it is, a fact of pleasure, of joy, of pain, or of suffering (RM 149)" [1976, 303]. This overcoming with good means that every actual occasion or moment that has exhibited evil can be overcome by God in the next moment though a transformed ideal aim [1976, 304]. Thus, if there is always a redemptive quality in evil, such that it is never beyond correction, and if intrinsic goodness tends to move towards instrumental goodness, then we can see that although the risks of evil are undeniably real, they are indeed worth the possibility of the good we have obtained. To reject this good for the sake of significantly diminished evil would require an unnecessary triviality, which, in turn, is evil as well [1976, 294, 304-6].

God can therefore be called good because he both works to overcome evil and is willing to suffer its pain. This is because God is within each actual occasion as the ideal aim and he too experiences each result, feeling the good and the evil achieved. This is the consequent nature of God. After each concrescence, the product of the occasion proceeds forward to a number of other occasions. One of these occasions, however, is always God. We can see this in Griffin's quoting of Whitehead: "Each actual occasion gives to the creativity which flows from it a definite character in two ways. In one way, as a fact… it contributes ground… In another way, as transmuted in the nature of God,

the idea consequent as it stands in his vision is also added (RM 151)" [1976, 303]. God, then, is not unsympathetic to the plight of his world; He in fact is suffering along with his world, bearing the whips and scorns of time for the sake of the good. If this is so, then we have the image of a viable god in light of the problem of evil.

I wish to now suggest that this fifth and final theodicy is the most appropriate of the theodicies presently offered. In the area of logical consistency, Griffin sketches a plausible explanation for the limited omnipotence of God. Unlike Plantinga, Griffin is able to push his argument beyond the realm of mere logical possibility into actuality. Griffin then takes this clarified view of God and successfully synthesizes it with the notions of process theology, depicting a persuasive God without unilateral power working towards the ever greater good. In the area of fully addressing the problem of evil, Griffin fully fleshes out his critique of the problem as it is traditionally given before moving on to process thought. He addresses the problem in an upfront and direct manner and provides a coherent solution to the issue. It is, however, the last qualification which I believe vaults Griffin over the theodicy of Rubenstein. A process theodicy allows a meaningful view of the world because it allows one to see evil as a necessary result of the possible good that we are to have both now and in the future This evil, however, is not only apparent as in Hick's theodicy. It is, instead, genuinely damaging. In this scheme, it is possible for evil to triumph. This is not the case in Hick's Christian eschatology. Even more, a process theodicy provides a suffering God who is able to grieve along with others in moments of distress. This God is not the barbaric theistic God that Rubenstein rejects, nor is it the mystic image of God which he embraces. The barbaric God needed to die; the process God does not. The God that has emerged from this process theodicy is

one who, while transformed, still retains a limited omniscience (God is aware of all things in the present and past), goodness, and personhood. This vaults Griffin above Kaufman because it of our measure of consistency with the traditional image. Griffin is able to maintain more characteristics from the traditional image while at the same time still providing a solution. In this respect, I believe the image of the process God is more flexible and useful in providing orientation and meaning across all ages of time.

VII. Conclusion

Neither God nor the little boy need to hang upon those gallows forever. There is still redemption at work in this world. There is still hope for a future and a promise. There is the real possibility of reconciling God and evil in a rational and meaningful way. Doing so is not a betrayal of the little boy for we remember his suffering as a testament to the evils of which we are capable. But we cannot dwell upon this sheer horror forever. We must engage in the work of moving towards the future in a reconciled and meaningful way. To its end, theodicy helps accomplish this task. Where is God? God is resurrected in a new and profound way bringing with Him both the scars of unforgettable evil and the hope of redemption.

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