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Review of "The Problem of Evil and the Problem of God" by D. Z. Phillips

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unexamined ideas of human nature that stand behind and/or support various genetic interventions, particularly with respect to gene therapy or enhancement. James Keenan, professor of ethics at Boston College, applies his well-honed theory of virtue ethics to issues such as enhancement and germ-line gene therapy. This is undergirded by a relational anthropology that can help develop guidelines for genetic policy.

Lisa Cahill, a professor of bioethics also at Boston College, continues her critical contribution to these discussions by raising questions of social justice and the common good—arguing that these issues need to be at the heart of the genetics debate as core values in the setting of genetic policies in research and therapy. Only with these values can market forces be countered and fairness brought into the distribution of resources.

The book concludes with four conversation partners from various disciplines (Bartha Maria Knoppers, Andrea Vicini, S.J., Gerry Evers-Kiebooms, and Hasna Begum) who individually reflect on the previous essays, highlighting various perspectives and focusing on agenda that have been raised. These reflections vary in their commentary, but serve as a concluding reminder of the major themes of the collection.

The book is a significant step in bringing the resources of the Catholic ethical tradition to bear on those developing applications that are rapidly generated by modern genetics. The essays are most helpful in their critical analysis, their use of the tradition, and their thoughtful and thorough examination of possible responses to current developments in genetics. The problems are difficult conceptually and ecclesially. The authors are to be highly commended for their willingness to engage in the creative development of a Catholic approach to them. The book would be most useful for upper division undergraduate seminars or for graduate courses.

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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE PROBLEM OF GOD. By D. Z. Phillips. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. Pp. xxiii + 280. \$20.

D. Z. Phillips, a leading exponent of philosophy of religion from perspectives often identified with the “later” Wittgenstein, examines in part 1 what he calls “the problematic inheritance” of efforts to frame and resolve the problem of evil—as is typically done in the project of theodicy—in terms of concepts of God’s omnipotence. After probing what he considers to be the conceptual incoherence of notions of God’s omnipotence and perfect goodness as construed by analytic philosophers of religion, he then canvasses ten views advanced as answers to the question, “Does God have morally sufficient reasons for allowing evil to exist?” (49). P. finds them all insufficient for fundamentally the same reason—none of them “treat *human life* seriously enough” (89) in its particularity. Here he devotes a chapter to the free-will defense, that is, to the claim that “a world containing freedom of the will must be a world containing some evil” (54). Despite finding this view “profoundly right” in its emphasis on “the freedom with-

out which life would not be recognizably human at all” and in its recognition “that religious belief is a response to that life *as a whole*” (108), P. also judges it ultimately wanting in that it amounts to a form of “religious utilitarianism” (109). Then, P. provides a two-chapter “Interlude” that considers some consequences for thinking about human life and God in a way that does not try, in von Hügel’s phrase, “to tidy up reality” (141) by abstracting from its intractable particularity. Finally, in part 2 he aims to show “a conception of human life found in Christianity, but not only there, that not only avoids the pitfalls of theodicy, but, at the same time, shows a response to the contingencies of life [from which] . . . concept-formation involving belief in a God of grace is possible” (141). The considerations he offers in this part, framed through discussions of covenant, God’s presence and absence, renunciation, sacrifice, and eschatology, constitute what P. terms a “neglected inheritance” regarding Christian belief in creation and the relation between the Creator and creatures: “To believe in a Creator *is* to believe in the givenness of life as a grace” (183). Negatively, P.’s targets are views that construe creation in terms of power and that, be it crudely or subtly, instrumentalize the relation between the Creator and creatures. Positively, P. makes a case for taking the stance of “dying to self” as one’s fundamental point of reference with respect to the problem of evil. Texts from Kierkegaard, Simone Weil, and Rush Rhees serve as *loci* for his philosophical discussion of this theme; the biblical themes of the Suffering Servant and Christ’s passion serve as its formative background.

The issues, arguments, and principal interlocutors (Robert Adams, Marilyn Adams, Stephen T. Davis, John Hick, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne) P. discusses in part 1 represent styles of philosophical analysis that may be relatively unfamiliar to many Catholic theologians. This unfamiliarity, however, should not stand as an insurmountable obstacle to helpful theological engagement with the important points about creation, grace, and renunciation he insightfully articulates, particularly in the “Interlude” and in part 2. P. is especially good at reminding us how thoroughly a concept of God made in our image—“treating God as a moral agent like ourselves” (107)—has been implicated in the conceptual underpinnings of the project of theodicy.

P. does not contextualize this important point in terms of a larger charting of the intellectual currents of modernity—such as those provided by Susan Neiman (*Evil and Modern Thought* [2002]) and Michael Buckley (*Denying and Disclosing God* [2004])—that follow the trajectories along which God and humanity came to be aligned against one another in a zero-sum game of power and inevitable moral rivalry. When read in the context of those larger accounts, however, P.’s critical strictures in part 1 and his constructive proposals in part 2 suggest, first, that analytic philosophy of religion rides on those same currents and, second, that a more appropriate bearing on the problem of evil lies along directions that can be taken once we are ready “to give up the notion of creation as an act of power” (162) and to understand that “the only omnipotence God has is the omnipotence of love” (272).

At least two other conceptual *loci* in P.'s volume deserve thoughtful theological attention: first, his treatment of the "sense of the eternal" that he claims "has been eroded in our culture, and [for which] the temporal has been transcendentalized as a pseudo-replacement" (273–74); second, his reflections on dying to self and on sacrifice in which Christ's passion forms the paradigmatic locus from which we are invited to learn "to accept [our] radical contingency and dependence on grace, and to see creation itself as an act of grace and compassion" (240).

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REASON, TRUTH AND THEOLOGY IN PRAGMATIST PERSPECTIVE. By Paul D. Murray. *Studies in Philosophical Theology* 24. Leuven: Peeters, 2004. Pp. xiv + 280. \$39.

Paul Murray writes from a pragmatic philosophical perspective—the kind with which most theologians feel hardly at home. Following Christ's directive, "By their fruits you will know them," pragmatists trace out the logical *consequences* of ideas—even if often with less stringency than did Charles Peirce, the "father" of pragmatism. A careful scholar and researcher at Durham University, United Kingdom, M. is currently interested in Peirce, ecumenical theology, and the dynamics of doctrinal development, as well as in modern Roman Catholic theology, ecclesiology, and pneumatology. Preceded by several articles in leading journals, the present work is M.'s first published book. It deserves careful reading to match its informed and thoughtful composition.

M. searches for that kind of human rationality that fits both the needs of contemporary Christian theology and the demands of our contemporary pluralist, postfoundationalist, and postmodern context. His method employs "charitable critique"—one that probes to save the best elements in an author's work while indicating its weaknesses (195). Chapter 1 establishes M.'s agenda. In chapter 2 he presents and critiques Richard Rorty's pragmatism. Chapter 3 explores a far more acceptable rationality in Nicholas Rescher's later work. Then, in chapter 4, M. measures Rescher's pragmatic-idealist account of human rationality to see whether it has adequate correspondence with a faith-filled trinitarian theology. In chapter 5 he proposes Don MacKinnon's influential writings as an example of the pragmatic-idealist rationality needed in today's postmodern context. M.'s conclusion supplies a retrospect and prospect.

M.'s treatment of Rorty strikes me as balanced. Positively, he endorses Rorty's critique of foundationalist "objectivism" as an unattainable illusion and a stimulus to radical skepticism. Not starting from the radical contingency of human knowing, such objectivism promotes claims to privileged knowledge that thwart democratic processes. Yet M. faults Rorty for neglecting the ordinary conduct of human conversations and, thus, inten-