
Aaron D. Conley

Horizons / Volume 42 / Issue 02 / December 2015, pp 491 - 493
DOI: 10.1017/hor.2015.88, Published online: 23 November 2015

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0360966915000882

How to cite this article:

Request Permissions : Click here
still fail to make this distinction: the shape of the argument and the burden of proof are different for each, and Speak’s work clearly evinces that distinction.

The text weaves in ideas from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. It helpfully distinguishes personal from theological problems. It approaches the logical problem of evil (against which defenses are found effective). It discusses the evidential problem of evil (which results in a real challenge to theistic belief, but not an unbeatable argument against theism). The issue of “divine hiddenness,” that we do not know God’s mind, results in an advocacy of humility (with a nod to the current discussions of “skeptical theism,” which is something of an analytic analogue to the apophatic moment in analogical talking of God more common in Catholic theology). Turning away from “defenses,” Speak’s examinations of theodicies yield a verdict that there has not (yet) been real success. Tentative conclusions note an analogous problem of evil for atheism and the turn to more particularly Christian doctrines as resources some analytical philosophers have used.

Speak pays little attention to the variety of strong antitheodicy arguments offered by those in dialogue with the analytic tradition: Kenneth Surin, D. Z. Phillips, this reviewer, Nick Trakakis, et alii. He does not take seriously the claims that theodicies are part of the problem, not the solution. Nor does he attend to the works of Thomists (of various stripes) who have disputed with the analytic tradition: Brian Davies, David Burrell, et alii. He does not examine their nuanced understandings of the divine, understandings quite different from those evident in the debates about free will defenses and the purposes of God invoked in the analytic tradition. These omissions are unfortunate, but completely understandable, given the purpose, focus, and length of this text.

All college libraries should acquire this book as a resource for students. It can be used as supplementary reading for advanced undergraduates or graduate students as an orientation to this lively and important set of debates and discussions. Attending to these discussions can help Christian theologians understand how to walk their own paths more fruitfully as they deal with the problem(s) of evil.

TERRENCE W. TILLEY
Fordham University

doi: 10.1017/hor.2015.88

As the title suggests, social ethicist Rebecca Todd Peters provides a concise starting point for reflecting upon and practicing a theologically based ethic of
solidarity. The demanding yet hopeful aim of this book is to provide both individual and structural parameters for solidarity of privileged people from the Global North, and of the US more specifically, with marginalized persons and communities from the Two-Thirds World. Peters claims early on that this ethic “requires First World citizens to work simultaneously on transforming personal habits and lifestyles as well as global economic and political structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice” (2). The foundations of the book and of her ethic of solidarity support three pillars: a critical understanding of social location and privilege, the construction of relationships across lines of difference, and action for structural and systemic change.

Solidarity for Peters is as intentional as it is self-critical, which is the first pillar of the book. After an introduction and first chapter defining and outlining globalization and solidarity, Peters critically unpacks social location to identify potential dangers that might undermine solidarity. Some dangers include moral superiority of the haves as well as paternalism toward the have-nots. To this end, she pushes past the language of charity in pursuit of her deeper ethic. In chapters 2 and 4 she provides a serious engagement with social location and privilege to begin a process of moral reasoning capable of “thinking beyond the immediate needs to ask deeper questions about the causes of a problem” (41). This upstream thinking will require an intentional engagement with poverty, environmental degradation, and centers of inequality such as racism that are pervasive in many forms of globalization.

Dialoguing across our many lines of difference without collapsing them is the middle pillar of this book. Such dialogues require metanoia, honoring difference, accountability, and direct action—all in the greater service of reshaping “all the structures of industrial society in ways that are compatible with life on Earth” (57). Taken together, these characteristics pave the way toward establishing mutuality across difference in the direction of what Peters means by solidarity.

The third pillar of the book is action, and, consistent with the liberationist tenor present in Peters’ other works, she provides constructive action strategies to help her audience envision possible ways forward. These ways include establishing moral habits of daily living, embracing more heterodox models of the economy, and creating communities of solidarity in which Christian churches become relevant actors in the global work of justice.

To fully appreciate the contribution of this book one must continually listen for the notes of its intended audience. With intentionality, Peters writes this book to theologically sensitive First World citizens already familiar with the language of consumption and charity. Yet she writes in such a way as to convince this audience that there is much work to be done if “we” (herself
included) are to join hands in solidarity with people in the Two-Thirds World. For example, in her introduction she provides a very generous reading of Adam Smith and his contribution to Western values and public policies. However, by the end of the book she doesn’t let her readers walk away without telling them that her visions for a more heterodox approach to economic life stand in complete contrast to Smith’s invisible hand. By favorably connecting with a normative theorist and theory, Peters demonstrates her willingness to speak a language close to the hearts of many in her audience. In so speaking, Peters establishes a point of commonality that itself can be the basis of solidarity across differences.

Ultimately, Peters initiates a conversation about solidarity and provides some essential tools for helping her readers become more discerning and deliberate actors for social justice both at home and around the globe. What the book lacks in length and theme development, it makes up for in thought-provoking invitations for the reader to work through the meanings and actions of solidarity. As such, this could be a broad and useful resource for religious communities and undergraduate students, while the diverse and global reach of Peters’ bibliography could make this a helpful tool in some graduate settings as well.

AARON D. CONLEY
Regis University

doi: 10.1017/hor.2015.89

This book is the first of twelve volumes that will comprise Raimon Panikkar’s complete works. It is fitting that the first volume of this series deals with the subject of mysticism, as Panikkar refers to this as the “most important theme of my life” and the “indispensable hermeneutical key” to all of his writings (xiii). In this book, Panikkar considers the meaning of mystical experience and its implications for an understanding of human consciousness of the divine and the encounter between religions.

Two interrelated triads form the foundation of Panikkar’s conception of mysticism. The first is represents the corporeal, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of human consciousness. The second includes the cosmos, the human, and God. Panikkar argues for an advaitic (nondual) understanding of the relationships within both of these triads, in which their constitutive elements can be distinguished from each other but are also inseparably one.