# 13

# Counterpart and Appreciation Theodicies

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A man is on trial for murder. The prosecution shows the jury that the defendant's finger-prints were found at the crime site. Furthermore, the victim's blood was found on the defendant's clothing. This looks like pretty good evidence that the defendant is guilty – after all, it would be *surprising* if his fingerprints were at the scene and the victim's blood was on his clothes if he were innocent. However, despite appearances, the defense attorney has a case. She can explain the facts about the prints and the blood while maintaining that her client is innocent by proving that the defendant was actually the medical first responder to the crime scene. Given this explanation, it is now *unsurprising* that the defendant's fingerprints were at the scene and that the victim's blood was on his clothes. Hence, the prints and blood no longer serve as good evidence for the defendant's guilt.

Compare this situation to the problem of evil. Some philosophers show the jury a world filled with a wide variety of evils. This looks like pretty good evidence that there is not a perfectly powerful, perfectly good being like God in control of the world. After all, it would be *surprising* to find a wide variety evil in a world governed by a being like God (see Chapter 4). However, despite appearances, other philosophers have a response. Parallel to the case earlier, these philosophers attempt to explain the facts about evil while maintaining that God is "innocent." Given a successful explanation, it would be *unsurprising* that the world is filled with evil even if there were a God. Hence, the evil in the world would not serve as good evidence for the nonexistence of God.

Philosophers who offer such explanations for evil are in the business of offering a *theodicy* (see Chapter 12) A theodicy for some given fact about evil is an explanation for why God would have an all-things-considered sufficient reason to allow that evil. If a theodicy is successful, then it shows why the fact about evil in question is not evidence against the existence of God. And when it comes to the argument from evil, there are a wide variety of facts about evil that have been cited as evidence against the existence of God. For example, some people object to the *amount* of evil in the world (e.g., why would God allow

so much evil in the world?). Others object to the existence of specific *types* of evil in the world (e.g., why would God allow cancer?). Others object to the *distribution* of evil in the world (e.g., why would God allow children to suffer?). Finally, others object to particular *tokens* of evil in the world (e.g., why did God allow the Holocaust?). For ease of discussion, the term 'evil' will stand for any of these facts about evil in our world.

Philosophers have offered a great many theodicies, and it is contentious whether any is a success. In particular, there are two theodicies that are extremely common among those who first encounter the problem of evil. Consider the following excerpt from an actual student paper on the problem of evil:

> After much thought on the issue, two conclusions have seemed rational to me and justifiable by a Christian God. The first one is simple that God allows moral evil to occur so that we as a human race have the opportunity to know what "good" is. Without the presence of evil, good would not be good, it would just be neutral.[1]

There are actually two distinct theodicies at play here, and despite their popularity, both are almost completely overlooked in the professional literature. Worse, where they are mentioned, they are either confused for a single theodicy or hastily dismissed.[2] But they are quite distinct and quite interesting.

The first of these theodicies says that good cannot exist without evil, and so God must allow evil in order to allow good. Call this the *counterpart theodicy*. The counterpart theodicy relies on a *metaphysical* claim about existence – good cannot exist without evil. The second theodicy says that we would be unable to know/recognize/appreciate the good without evil, and so God is forced to allow evil in order to allow for such appreciation. Call this the *appreciation theodicy*. The appreciation theodicy relies on an *epistemological* claim about recognition or appreciation – we are unable to know/recognize/appreciate good without evil (even if it is possible for good to *exist* without evil). Determining whether either of these theodicies is a success requires a careful discussion of whether either meets the conditions on a successful theodicy.

## Necessary Conditions for a Successful Theodicy

To get a handle on what would make a theodicy successful, consider another legal analogy. The accused is charged with speeding and reckless driving. He drove over 60 mph in a school zone where he was pulled over by local police. The prosecuting attorney asks the judge for a stiff fine. However, the defense attorney has a case. She grants that her client was speeding in a school zone, but she insists that his behavior is *justified*. To make her case, the defense attorney provides evidence that her client was driving an injured child to the hospital and that time was of the essence. Furthermore, it was the middle of the night, so school was not in session nor were there any other cars on the road. No one was endangered by her client's behavior. Thus, while it is true that he broke the law, he was justified in doing so.

1  Quote from a paper by Isaac Bickel, a student in Introduction to Philosophy at Fort Lewis College, Fall semester 2011.
2  For an example of the former, see Mackie (1982, 151–152); for an example of the latter, see Van Inwagen (2006, 68–69).

The defense attorney's case will work as long as three conditions are met. First, her story about her client must be *true*. If it were false that he had an injured child in the backseat, then this story would not excuse his behavior. Second, her story must do an *adequate* job of explaining why her client broke the law in question. For example, this story would not explain why the driver had an expired license plate. Third, her story must explain why it was *better*, all things considered, to break the law in this case. If time was not of the essence (e.g., if the child only had a toothache) or if speeding would endanger the lives of more people than it would save, her client's behavior would not be justified.

We can think of the defense attorney's case as a theodicy for her client's behavior. It is an attempt to show that her client is justified despite breaking the law. And just as the defense attorney's case must meet three conditions to be a success, so, too, a theodicy about evil must meet three conditions to be a success. First, the theodicy must be true. This is how a theodicy differs from a defense (see Chapter 27). A theodicy explains evil by appeal to something we know to be true whereas a defense explains evil by appeal to something that might be true for all we know (i.e., by appeal to something that is consistent with what we know). A theodicy is thus obviously stronger than a defense.[3] In the case earlier, the defense attorney who can show that her client *did* have an injured child in the backseat has done a better job defending her client than a defense attorney who can merely show that her client *might have had* an injured child in the backseat for all we know.

Second, a successful theodicy is one that provides a sufficiently good explanation for the evil in question. In most cases, this amounts to showing that God could not guarantee that some good obtain or that some worse evil be averted without allowing either the possibility or the actuality of the evil in question. Call this the *adequacy condition*. Such a theodicy need not explain every single feature of the evils in question no more than a successful theory of heart disease is tasked with explaining every single instance of a heart attack. But to be useful in explaining evil, and hence showing how evil is not evidence against the existence of God, a theodicy has to do a sufficiently good job of explaining the entire range of facts about evil that stand in need of explanation.[4]

Third, and finally, a successful theodicy must explain why God would have an all-things-considered sufficient reason for allowing the evil in question. In most cases, this amounts to showing that the good result is enough to *compensate* for the evil itself or the possibility of the evil. Call this the *compensating condition*. Note, too, that the good result need not ultimately obtain for the compensating condition to be met: the driver would be excused for speeding even if the child ultimately dies in the hospital. But not every "trade-off" between goods and evils will meet the compensating condition. For example, a good parent will not feed his children poisoned sweets. In this case, the good of the experience does not compensate

3  It is a substantive question whether the counterpart and appreciation theodicies should be offered as theodicies or defenses. In my experience, they are almost always offered as theodicies – their defenders mean to be making true claims about the nature of goodness, and so on. However, I think that the objections that I raise to using these strategies as theodicies will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to defenses, so I do not think much hangs on how we interpret them at this point.

4  No doubt this condition is vague. How much evil must a theodicy explain to be sufficient? There is probably no answer to this question. But in defense of the condition, note that the same problem arises in the scientific domain, and this does not prevent us from making judgments of adequacy in that domain. Intuitively, some scientific theories provide sufficiently good explanations for physical data whereas others do not. The same holds here.

for the evil of being poisoned. So, too, for God to have an all-things-considered sufficient reason to allow evil, there must be a sufficient amount of good (or at least the possibility for a sufficient amount of good) secured by the evil (or the risk of evil).

Putting these three conditions together, we can say that a successful theodicy for any fact about evil will be a true claim (or set of claims) that meets both the adequacy and the compensating conditions. Each of these three conditions is necessary.[5] Our next task is to clearly state both the counterpart and appreciation theodicies and see whether either meets all three of the conditions for a successful theodicy.

## The Counterpart Theodicy

In a nutshell, the counterpart theodicy says that there cannot be good without evil. This is a metaphysical claim about how the world is constituted. The idea is that good and evil are like metaphysical twins or like two sides of the same coin: anytime you have the one, you have the other. When two things are bound together in this way, philosophers call them counterparts. Counterparts are things that are logically or metaphysically impossible to "separate" – the existence of one is modally required for the other. The counterpart theodicy claims that there is a metaphysical link between goodness and evil such that anytime you have the former, you have the latter as well.[6]

There are many counterparts in the world. Take, for instance, mountains and valleys. Given what it is to be a mountain, there has to be some mass of land to contrast it against, such as a valley or a plain. Without the contrast, there could not be a mountain. Similarly, there could not be mothers without children. Given what it is to be a mother, there could not be a world in which there were mothers but no offspring. And lots of properties seem to have counterpart properties: nothing can be red without also being colored, nothing can be a circle without being a plane figure, and so on.

In order to see how a counterpart theodicy could show that God has an all-things-considered sufficient reason for allowing evil, it is important to clearly state the content of the theodicy since there are a variety of permutations. Let us start here:

C1: Necessarily, if there is an instantiation of good, there is at least one instantiation of evil.

C1 allows for a many-to-one correspondence of good to evil. Goodness merely requires that there exist some token of evil or other in the universe. Now the obvious problem with C1 is that it is too weak to explain all of the evil in our world. If God only required that there be a single token of evil in the world in order to secure all of the goods that he is

5 It is an interesting question whether meeting these three conditions is *sufficient* for a successful theodicy. At least some philosophers disagree and note a further condition: God must have the right to subject people to suffering, and so on, and that without this right it would not matter whether He could use evil to bring about good. I leave this question open since settling it is not crucial for determining whether the counterpart or appreciation theodicy succeeds.

6 For the counterpart theodicy to be a success, it is only necessary for the modal dependency to go in one direction: anytime there is good, there must be evil as well. Whether or not one could have evil without having good is another question.

interested in promoting, then surely he would do so. But our world contains many evils. Hence, C1 fails the adequacy condition – it does not do an adequate job of explaining the evils in our world (at best, it only explains one token of evil!). But, of course, it was a strange principle anyway. In the commonsense examples of counterparts listed earlier, the counterpart relation applies to *every* instantiation of the properties. So we might try a stronger principle:

C2:    Necessarily, for *every* instantiation of good, there is a *unique* instantiation of evil.

If C2 were true, then every good thing in the world must be paired with a counterpart evil. The two are in one-to-one correspondence. Given C2, God is limited in his choice of worlds to create: he could create a world without evil, but that requires that he create a world without good. Or he could create a world filled with goodness, but that requires that he create a world filled with evil as well. And so it would make sense that God would allow some evil in the world. As Mackie (1982) puts the point:

> If this counterpart relationship [between good and evil] is logically necessary, then a wholly good being would presumably not eliminate evil completely, even if he could do so, since this would logically require the disappearance of goodness also, including, presumably, his own. (Mackie 1982, 151)

Supposing that a world with a balance of good and evil in it is better overall than a world without either, God would have an all-things-considered reason to instantiate a world with evil.

Is C2 a successful theodicy? One might object that even if C2 is true it doesn't explain why God must create evil because nothing is impossible for God. There is nothing that God cannot do. Thus, God can create a world with goodness and without evil (Mackie 1955, 203–205). Hence, C2 is a failed theodicy because it does not meet the adequacy condition.

This objection basically boils down to a denial of C2 on the grounds that nothing is metaphysically impossible for God. Whether the objection is any good depends on the correct understanding of omnipotence. When theists say that God can do anything, to what are they committing themselves? In particular, can an omnipotent being do things that are metaphysically impossible? Historically, theists have disagreed on the issue. Some (perhaps Descartes) have thought that not even the laws of logic limit God's power. God could make a square circle if he wanted to. Others (perhaps the majority) have thought that to be omnipotent only means that one has the power to do anything that is metaphysically possible. For such a being there is really no "thing" that cannot be done – anything that is possible is doable.

Who is correct? Actually, it does not matter for present purposes. Suppose that God *cannot* do the impossible. If so, then this first objection to C2 fails. If it is truly impossible to have good without evil, then not even God can be faulted for failing to create a world with the former but not the latter. On the other hand, suppose that God *can* do the impossible (alternatively: nothing is impossible for God). Well, then, C2 will not explain why God had to allow evil in the world, but it is also hard to see how the existence of evil in the world serves as evidence against the existence of God. Remember, on this horn of the dilemma, the existence of evil in the world is not inconsistent with the existence of God because God can do the impossible (alternatively: nothing is impossible for God). Hence,

a morally perfect, all-powerful being could create a world filled with evil despite the fact that this is impossible.[7] Thus, no matter what the theist says about the limits of omnipotence, there is a response to the problem of evil given the truth of C2.

A better objection to C2 insists that it is false. In particular, one might complain that C2 is inconsistent with traditional theism. There are a couple of ways to raise this concern. First, traditional theism is committed to the view that God is good, that God exists necessarily and that everything else that exists depends for its existence on the free actions of God. This suggests that there is at least one possible world in which a good thing exists (God) but no other created thing. Second, many theists are committed to the view that the world as it was initially created by God was perfectly good and without evil. Either of these commitments makes it difficult to endorse C2.

Maintaining C2 in the face of these objections might require abandoning traditional theism. The most promising way to do so might be to endorse some form of dualism – the view that there is a good power in the world who is counterbalanced by an evil power in the world. This latter view has been endorsed by various historical religious groups including the Manicheans, Zoroastrians, and others. Saint Augustine – one of the most important early Christian figures – was once a Manichean. And C.S. Lewis says that next to Christianity, "Dualism is the manliest and most sensible creed on the market," (Lewis 1952, 42).

Still, defending C2 by resorting to the claim that, in addition to God, there is an evil, anti-god is an important departure from traditional theism. And since it is only on traditional theism that there is a serious problem of evil, this is a capitulation on the part of the theist. For obviously, the existence of evil in the world is not surprising on the assumption that the world is ruled by both a good and an evil being in conflict with one another. The gist is that no traditional theist would accept C2 as a successful theodicy. In other words, a traditional theist is committed to the view that not every instantiation of goodness be matched with a unique instantiation of evil. So, on theism C2 is false.

Even if one does not accept this argument against C2, there is a different point to be made: even in the absence of reasons to think that C2 is false, *there is no reason to think that C2 is true*. On any plausible normative theory of the good, it is possible to have at least some good things without a corresponding evil thing. Goodness, we might put it, is not a zero-sum game.

But this confession is not as damaging to the counterpart theory as it first appears. As long as there are at least *some* goods that require the existence of evil, a pared-down version of the counterpart theodicy may yet explain the existence of evil in the world:

C3:   Necessarily, for every instantiation of *some types* of goods, there is an instantiation of evil.

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7 Suppose God can do the impossible. One might object here that even though God *could* create a world filled with evil, it would still be *unlikely* that he would do so. In other words, while granting that the existence of evil is compatible with the existence of God, one could also insist that the existence of evil is unlikely given the existence of God. Hence, evil still functions as evidence against the existence of God. I do not think this objection works because I do not think that we can make sense out of probability judgments about what an agent would do once we grant that an agent can do the impossible. While there is not space to fully defend this claim here, the rough idea is that truths of probability are ultimately bounded by truths of possibility. If it is possible for the ball on a roulette wheel to fall on black and not fall on black at the same time in the same way (i.e., being on black does not metaphysically preclude not being on black), then we cannot make any probability assignments about whether or not the next roll will fall on black.

On this principle, not every good requires the existence of an evil (to avoid the earlier objections), but some forms or types of goods do. And on behalf of C3, there are certain goods that *do* seem to be metaphysically linked to certain evils. Take, for instance, the good of sympathy. It seems that it is impossible to be sympathetic unless there are people who are in need of sympathy. Or consider courage. It seems that it is impossible to be brave unless there are circumstances that are scary, hard, or threatening. Or consider the good of forgiveness. It seems that it is impossible to forgive others unless one has been wronged. Following Mackie (1982), we may call goods that *do not* metaphysically presuppose the existence of any evils "first-order goods" and goods that *do* metaphysically presuppose the existence of some evil or other "second-order goods" (p. 154). In fact, some have called this kind of limited counterpart theodicy a *higher-order goods theodicy* (e.g., Howard-Snyder 2008, 335).

One might object to the case for C3 along the following lines: sympathy does not require that anyone *actually* be hurt or suffering but only that one *believe* that another is hurt or suffering. The same can be said for courage: as long as one *believes* that one's life is at stake, and so on, it is possible to show courage. However, even in this case, there is a first-order evil at work, namely massive deception. In a world in which I sacrifice my time, wealth, and abilities to courageously help another only to find out that it is a hoax, is a world in which there is a serious evil at play. Furthermore, even in this case, there is a good that is lacking: no one *actually* forgives, sympathizes, and so on. It is a good thing to *try* to forgive, be sympathetic, and so on, but it is also good to *succeed*. This success would be missing in a world where everything was a hallucination. Hence, we can say with some level of confidence that C3 is true: there are some second-order goods. But does C3 meet the other two conditions of a successful theodicy?

Consider first the adequacy condition. To meet this condition, C3 would have to sufficiently explain the evils in the world. There are two problems with such a suggestion. First, note that first-order evils "cut both ways": just as first-order evils can give rise to second-order goods, they can also give rise to second-order evils (Mackie 1982, 155). Just as suffering and hardship can give rise to sympathy and courage, they can also give rise to cruelty and cowardice. Given that first-order evils give rise both to second-order goods and second-order evils, it is not clear how one could be justified in allowing first-order evils.

Second, it is reasonable to think that many of the first-order evils in the world fail to give rise to second-order goods. For example, not all instances of suffering give rise to sympathy, courage, and so on. In fact, it seems that very little suffering does so. In the example of sympathy, in order to sympathize with the suffering of others, I have to know about it. But the world is full of instances of suffering that go unnoticed by anyone at all.

The counterpart theodicist may retreat to the following suggestion: yes, suffering in the world rarely corresponds with *actual* sympathy, and so on, but it always produces the *possibility* of sympathy, and so on. Furthermore, this possibility is, in itself, a good thing. The first of these claims is false: there is a lot of suffering in the world that does not even make things like sympathy possible (e.g., nonhuman suffering before humans had evolved). However, even if we granted both claims, at best, this retreat would show that C3 meets the adequacy condition at the cost of landing us in a very different problem: now it seems that C3 fails the compensating condition.

In some cases, we are justified in allowing an evil for the mere possibility of a good. For example, a parent is justified in allowing her sick child to undergo a painful experimental

treatment for the possibility of curing an otherwise fatal disease. However, there will be many cases in which we are not justified in allowing an evil for the mere possibility of a good. For example, a father cannot break his daughter's arm and offer the excuse that doing so made it possible that others sympathize with her. So while it may be true that all first-order evils always allow for the *possibility* of good things like sympathy, it is not true that the mere possibility of good things like sympathy is always *good enough* to provide an all-things-considered sufficient reason for allowing first-order evils.

Denying this claim – in other words, insisting that the evils in our world are justified because they make possible things like courage and sympathy – is hard to square with our ordinary moral judgments about other humans. I cannot purposefully hurt you and excuse my behavior by appeal to the claim that your suffering made sympathy possible. The mere possibility of sympathy, courage, and so on rarely compensates for suffering, terror, and so on. And therefore, even though C3 is true, it fails to meet either the adequacy or the compensating conditions. Hence, a theodicy based on C3 is a failure.

Perhaps there are other, more promising permutations of the counterpart theodicy than the three versions explored here. But until such views are both articulated and defended, it seems most reasonable to conclude that the counterpart theodicy is a failure.

## The Appreciation Theodicy

The counterpart theodicy makes a claim about the world: it is impossible for good to exist unless evil also exists. We have seen that this metaphysical claim is difficult to defend. However, the appreciation theodicy covers different ground. According to the appreciation theodicy, it is not that good cannot exist without evil (maybe it can), but we would not know/recognize/appreciate the good without the contrast of evil.[8] This is not a metaphysical claim but an epistemic one. And even J.L. Mackie – an early critic of the counterpart theodicy – admits that this sort of contrast principle is plausible:

> There is still doubt of the correctness of the metaphysical principle that a quality must have a real opposite: I suggest that it is not really impossible that everything should be, say, red, that the truth is merely that if everything were red we should not notice redness, and so we should have no word for "red"; we observe and give names to qualities only if they have real opposites. (Mackie 1955, 205)

Thus even if the counterpart theodicy fails, the appreciation theodicy might provide a successful explanation for why the world would contains evil despite the fact that God exists.

There is something plausible about the epistemic claim made by the appreciation theodicy. To use Mackie's example, if the entire world were red, it seems very unlikely that we would grasp the difference between red and nonred. We likely would not even have a word or concept that designated redness. If we only experienced pleasure, it seems unlikely that we would have a very good grasp on the difference between pleasure and pain. And there are many everyday examples of this sort of principle at work. Parents often operate under a similar sort of principle when they make their children do hard work. Judges often

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8 Insofar as recognizing goodness/evil is important for building character, one might view this kind of theodicy as a subset of the soul-crafting theodicy (see Chapter 14).

operate under a similar sort of principle when they force convicts into exposure with the victims of a crime. It is hard to be sympathetic until you have experienced what someone else is really going through. You do not appreciate the value of a college education until you have flipped burgers for a living.

It is clear how the appreciation theodicy would explain the existence of evil in the world. It is a good thing for us to recognize the difference between good and evil. Parents, mentors, and teachers spend a great deal of time teaching others about the difference between good and evil and teaching them how to pursue the former rather than the latter. And it is a good thing to be aware of important features of the world and to know when these features obtain. But, according to the appreciation theodicy, it was metaphysically impossible for God to create a world as good as ours with creatures who appreciated the difference between good and evil without allowing instances of evil.

Determining whether the appreciation theodicy is a success requires getting clear on the precise statement of the principle at issue and determining whether the principle meets the three conditions of a successful theodicy. Let's start with a formulation of the theodicy. As a first pass, we might try something like this:

> A1:   Necessarily, knowing that something has a certain feature, F, requires knowing that something is not-F.

According to A1, if I know that something is red, I must also know that something else is not-red. As applied to the problem of evil, if I know that something is good, then I know that something is evil. Since knowledge implies truth, the fact that I know something is good implies that evil is instantiated. Hence, A1 might explain why God has an all-things-considered reason for allowing evil.

However, A1 cannot form the basis for a successful appreciation theodicy because it is false. Daniel Howard-Snyder (2008) notes that the principle "incorrectly implies that if I know you have the feature of being a non-unicorn, then I know something has the opposite feature, namely the feature of being a unicorn" (p. 328). But, of course, there are no unicorns. And so the principle is false.

The problem with A1 is that it requires that the complement feature actually be instantiated. A weaker version of the principle is as follows:

> A2:   Necessarily, knowing that something has a certain feature, F, requires knowing what it is for something to be not-F.

The idea is that grasping a concept requires being able to distinguish the concept from its logical complement: to know what redness is, I must be able to distinguish between red and nonred. It need not be the case that nonredness be instantiated. And this version of a contrast principle seems plausible. As applied to the problem of evil, surely an agent who can successfully deploy the concept of goodness can recognize or appreciate the difference between good and evil.

Or maybe not. The complement of good is nongood. So perhaps all we need is a world in which there would be good things and nongood things, where nongood things could be either morally neutral states of affairs *or* evil states of affairs. But even if we concede that all non-good things are evil, A2 is not – by itself – enough to motivate an appreciation theodicy. If knowing that something is good only requires my having the *concept* of evil and not *actual* evil, then it is hard to see how this principle could explain the existence

of evil in the world. One might go further and insist that having the concept of an F requires that an F actually be instantiated, but this reply only moves us back to A1 and the problems faced there. Hence, even if A2 is true, it would fail the adequacy condition since it would explain only why we have the concept of evil and not why we have actual evil.

But perhaps these versions of the principle are misguided because they focus on *knowledge* instead of *appreciation*. Knowing that something is good does not require the existence of evil but being able to fully appreciate the goodness of something might. Hence, the best hope for the appreciation theodicy is to revise A2 to clearly connect the idea of appreciating the good with the requirement of actually existing evil:

A3:   Necessarily, fully appreciating goodness requires the existence of evil.

A3 might be able to explain the evils in our world. But there is an ambiguity in A3 (and the other permutations) that is important to address up front: is this a claim about *metaphysical* possibility or *epistemic* possibility? If this is a metaphysical restriction, then the principle implies that not even God could fully appreciate goodness unless there were actual evils. This reading of A3 will make difficulties for traditional conceptions of God and his knowledge, and it appears to collapse A3 into a species of the counterpart theodicy considered earlier (namely C3). If this is an epistemic restriction, then this means only that humans are wired in such a way that we cannot fully appreciate goodness unless there is actual evil. While this reading of A3 does not make trouble for traditional theism, it does raise a different problem of evil: since it is possible that there be creatures that were able to fully appreciate good without the existence of evil, why did not God create those creatures instead of humans?

Furthermore, even the weaker, epistemic reading of A3 (or something like it) has been pointedly dismissed by other philosophers. For example, Peter van Inwagen (2006) introduces a view like this by noting that "Many undergraduates at the University of Notre Dame . . . seem inclined to say something like the following: if there were no evil, no one would appreciate – perhaps no one would even be aware of – the goodness of the things that *are* good" (pp. 68–69). What, according to van Inwagen, is wrong with such a theodicy?

> . . . I have brought up the "appreciation" defense – which otherwise would not be worth spending any time on – to make [the following point:] It is not at all evident that an omnipotent creator would need to allow people really to experience *any* pain or grief or sorrow or adversity or illness to enable them to appreciate the good things in life. (van Inwagen 2006, 69)

But how could we appreciate the difference between good things and pain and sorrow unless we actually experienced the latter? Van Inwagen suggests that God might give us vivid and convincing nightmares of evil things. Michael Martin (1990) offers another way in which God could have gotten the good results of appreciation without requiring us to experience evil:

> If God is all-powerful, it would seem that He could create us in such a way that we could appreciate and understand good to a high degree without actually experiencing evil. . . . God could have created all humans with a high degree of empathetic ability. God has already created some humans with the ability to produce imaginative art and literature that depicts evil. By viewing art and reading literature about evil, people created with highly sensitive empathetic ability could empathetically experience what is depicted and thus learn to appreciate good without experiencing evil. (Martin 1990, 450)

If van Inwagen and Martin are correct, it is possible to get the good results of appreciation/recognition without any actual evil in the world. Hence, A3 is false.

But are the critics of A3 correct? Take Peter van Inwagen's criticism. He claims that the appreciation theodicy fails because there are other ways for God to get us to know what evil and suffering are like (e.g., he could give us vivid dreams of evil things). But there are at least two important replies. First of all, it is reasonable to think that vivid and convincing nightmares of a hellish world *are themselves evil*. This is why we comfort our children who suffer from such nightmares and would eliminate them if we could. So van Inwagen's suggestion seems to bolster the case for A3 – fully appreciating the good requires the existence of evil (if only in the form of evil nightmares).

But, second, when we consider van Inwagen's own preferred response to the argument from evil, we find that he makes a similar move. What justifies God in allowing the evils we see in the world according to van Inwagen?

> For human beings to cooperate with God in this rescue operation, they must know that they need to be rescued. They must know what it means to be separated from him. And what it means to be separated from God is to live in a world of horrors. (van Inwagen 2006, 88)

His answer is that evil is required so that we *know* that we need to be rescued and we *know* what it means to live in a world separated from God. But if van Inwagen is correct that God could have given us the knowledge that we need to be rescued and the knowledge of what it means to be separated by God simply by giving us vivid dreams, and so on. If the appreciation theodicy fails because actual evils are not required for the goods of appreciation/knowledge, then van Inwagen's defense fails for a similar reason: actual evils are not required for the goods of appreciation/knowledge of what it means to be separated from God.

Thus, in defense of A3, we find that even some of the critics of the appreciation theodicy make similar suggestions in other contexts. And there is something plausible about the principle: it is very hard to see how we would ever fully appreciate health without illness, wealth without poverty, love without hate. In a world in which we dealt with illness only in our dreams or in literature, it seems unlikely that we would fully appreciate the fact that we were healthy. After all, what happens in dreams and stories is one thing; what happens in reality is quite another. It is hard to fear something that can only happen in a dream or in a fairy tale.

Suppose we grant, then, that A3 is true. The theodicy would still be a failure because it meets neither the adequacy nor the compensating conditions. Consider the former. Even if it is true that we would not fully appreciate the good without the instantiation of some evils or other, it is highly implausible to think that diminishing the scope of the *actual* evils in our world would significantly affect our appreciation of the good. For example, reducing the amount of breast cancer victims by half would not affect our ability to appreciate the good. So it is implausible that A3 can provide a good explanation for the extent of evils in our world, and hence it fails the adequacy condition.

Next, consider the compensating condition. Is it true that the badness of the actual features of evil on earth (including the amount of evil, type of evil, distribution of evil, etc.) is compensated by the goodness of our appreciation of the good? Well, in some cases, we are justified in allowing an evil for the good of recognition, appreciation, and so on. For example, a parent is justified in requiring his son to do yard work in an effort to cultivate in him an appreciation of the value of work, a sense of responsibility, and so on.

However, there will be many cases in which we are not justified in allowing an evil for the mere appreciation of the good. Consider again the father of a child. Suppose he purposefully allows his child to break her arm, causing extreme pain and duress for the girl. And suppose that we confront him about his choice. "Well," he says, "she didn't really fully appreciate her health or the pleasures of a normal body, but this experience will deepen her appreciation of both."[9] On the one hand, we can agree with him: surely the girl's appreciation *will* be deepened by the experience. But on the other hand, does this newfound appreciation compensate for the pain and suffering that she will endure? Few will agree. This argument from analogy suggests that while it is sometimes justifiable to allow evils in order to secure the good of full appreciation, this is not always the case.

Insisting that all (or most) of the evils in our world are justified because they cultivate an appreciation of the good is hard to square with our ordinary moral judgments about other humans. I cannot purposefully hurt you and excuse my behavior by appeal to the claim that you will now more fully appreciate the good. And therefore even if we grant that A3 is true, it fails to meet either the adequacy or the compensating conditions. Hence, a theodicy based on A3 is a failure.

Perhaps there are other, more promising permutations of the appreciation theodicy than the three versions explored here. But until such views are both articulated and defended, it seems most reasonable to conclude that, like the counterpart theodicy, the appreciation theodicy is a failure.

# Acknowledgments

# Further Reading

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9  The intuition that the father's action is not morally justifiable can be strengthened if we add to the story that the father had the ability to provide his daughter with "vivid nightmares," and so on that would provide her with the same level of appreciation of her health.

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