



REASON AND REENCHANTMENT:

The Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin

*Ed. John B. Cobb, Jr., Richard Falk, Katherine Keller
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David Ray who?

Theory mavens will no doubt be familiar with the umbrella term speculative realism (SR), and with thinkers who opened the umbrella, including, especially, Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux, and with the acceleration of thinkers who are contributing to the acceleration of sub-fields that can be placed beneath that umbrella. Such mavens will also be acquainted with the name Alfred North Whitehead – in no small part because of Harman’s periodically wondrous explications of Whitehead’s work – and with some of the speculative realists more in tune with Whitehead’s vision, including Steven Shaviro, Jane Bennett, Bruno Latour, and Isabelle Stengers. We have heard that metaphysics – or at least a proper set of ontological questions – is back, and that Kant is out, and that continental philosophy can now discard what Meillassoux calls “correlationism,” the sturdy insistence that we cannot ever prize apart thinking and being in order to consider one in isolation from the other.¹ We have also heard that deconstruction – and the entire catalogue of over-textualized, finitude-celebrating, anti-humanist, anti-realist post-whatevers – has turned out to be a failed attempt to prize thinking apart from itself, and has, in the process, simply opened the back door to more correlationism. And, finally, we have heard that Whitehead’s unapologetic metaphysics of becoming – re-discovered, reconstituted and even respectfully

1 Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (New York: Continuum, 2008), 5.

rejected – might have helped to energize and catalyze the new directions of SR, which, like Whitehead, drops the arrogance and ups the ambition. It’s an oversimplification, like all genealogies: Slavoj Žižek, for example, has argued that Meillassoux’s critique of Hegel actually out-Hegels Hegel.² But it’s an interesting tale.

When theory mavens gather for drinks, however, the tale not often told, at least not with much enthusiasm, is that there are whole other genealogies, evolutions and “grey literatures” of Whiteheadian thought, both in and out of philosophy, and that at least one of them – situated in and typified by the Claremont Center for Process Studies – was up and running long before the advent of SR, and that one of the School’s primary originators is philosopher and theologian David Ray Griffin. Along comes *Reason and Reenchantment*, straight out of the Center’s press, based on a 2012 conference on Griffin’s influence and legacy. Sixteen diverse thinkers, including Griffin himself, remind us that the flickering coal of Whitehead’s process thought, which matured in the late 1920s, was long kept alive in ostensibly shady precincts like theology, education, and even parapsychology.

What an intriguing collection, especially for scholars who like to stray from the path. John Cobb Jr., Griffin’s teacher and collaborator (and still perhaps the clearest, surest explicator of Whitehead), admits already in the preface that Griffin’s willingness to embrace wide-ranging and controversial topics is “sometimes a source of embarrassment to other Whiteheadians.”³ Catherine Keller, Cobb’s co-editor, characterizes Griffin’s work in a similar way, as possessed of a “swashbuckling lucidity,”⁴ a phrase that captures both the daring and danger of Griffin’s multiple enterprises, many of which are, from the vantage point of careful scholarship, naïve, and many of which deeply violate the sanctions and warrants of “serious” academic politics, and certainly the temperamental inclinations of any good theorist or Anglo-American philoso-

2 Slavoj Žižek, “An Answer to Two Questions,” in *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change* (Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy), Adrian Johnston (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 174-230, especially 225.

3 John B. Cobb, Jr., Preface, *Reason and Reenchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), i-xiv.

4 Catherine Keller, “God, Power and Evil: David Griffin Revisited,” in *Reason and Reenchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), 3-14.

pher. And yet, would it not be important for any process-relation thinker, SR or otherwise, to know something about Griffin's contributions to the onflow of process-relation thought, since process-relation thought is all about process and relation? Griffin's interventions have been subsumed into many crucial events in the unfolding of process thought; given the nature of onflow, it is likely that the sheer intensity of his endeavours may yet be prehended by future events and novel unfoldings, in ways that are unpredictable.

Reason and Reenchantment, like its subject, is variable in quality and usefulness (acknowledging immediately that both values are perspectival, and subject to evolution and adaptation). The most immediate challenge I faced was bewilderment: because Griffin's wide-ranging curiosity mirrors Whiteheads own, and because the contributors to *Reason and Reenchantment* are themselves curious and wide-ranging, especially with regard to the relations between past and future, the collection contains a blizzard of topics and perspectives that exceed the typical anthology. The reader will be confronted with everything from global taxes to black swans to afterlives to Chinese politics to the "real" Plato to 9-11 to deep excursions into epistemology; the preceding is already such an acutely truncated list as to misrepresent the book. Further, the reader will be asked to consider the possible relations that are evolving between disparate topics, for example, between the truth of 9-11 and the management of ecological crises. These challenges are then exacerbated by the shared vocabulary of the contributors, namely, a serious array of Whiteheadian terms – e.g., concrescence, prehension, superject – all of them crucial, none of them completely sensible without some understanding of all the others, all of them still evolving and infinitely evolutionary. To put all of this in another way, *Reason and Reenchantment* can be a bit of a rude welcome to the process-relational metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, which is a banquet of distinct flavours and, possibly, acquired tastes. There are philosophies of becoming, and then there's Whitehead, whose kaleidoscopic mental habits, especially as expressed in his 1929 masterpiece *Process and Reality*, drove him to speculate from an absurdly daunting categorial scheme and vast inventory of neologisms, even as he insisted, in *Process and Reality* and in later work, that all attempts to fix and fasten language enact the "fallacy of the perfect dictionary."⁵ Whitehead is a life's work, as Griffin has literally demonstrated.

5 Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, (New York: The Free Press, 1968 [1938]), 173.

To further complicate matters, the contributors, collectively, perform just how many ways there are to read Whitehead's scheme and terms, in addition to Griffin's own. In a long concluding response essay, Griffin thanks the contributors for their insights, but also notes where he thinks those contributors have been misleading or incorrect.⁶ Some of the essays, in turn, speculate on how Griffin himself has been misleading or read Whitehead with an imbalance. What are those of us not steeped in the lineage of the Claremont School to make of all this? Qualification and genealogy are familiar to everyone in theory or philosophy, but rarely to this extent. Whiteheadians, for better or worse, take their process and relation very seriously, and their praxis can feel relentless, unfinished and vertiginous to those of us disciplined by the protocols of academe.

But these challenges, to my mind, turn out to be an advantage: the various Whiteheadians in *Reason and Reenchantment* perform, over and over, the unique reflexive mode of Whiteheadian process thought, hinted at above, especially as regards the seeming tension between rationality and experience, and inherent in the distinctions and categories offered up by the rational thinker in order to interpret experience. To take one example (and there are many): Nancy Frankenberry is the most "correlationist" of all the contributors, and the most likely to reject all correspondence theories of truth. Yet even she demonstrates just how nimble the process thinker needs to be when finagling the necessity of positive empirical declarations with the impossibility of symbolic closures: "we do not need to elide the distinction between experience and interpretation... Yet we cannot say just how we should preserve and account for such a distinction. The intransigent tension is that the distinction can be preserved only at the cost of forfeiting any account of it" (121).⁷

And so the reader of the collection is often immersed in a mode of thought that is somewhat familiar, especially to fans of ethically inflected late post-structuralism, yet with a cadence and lilt that is foreign to mainstream theory, and antecedent to it. In his response to Frankenberry, Griffin points

6 David Ray Griffin, "Responses," in *Reason and Reenchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), 261-326.

7 Nancy Frankenberry, "The Vagaries of Religious Experience: David Griffin's Reenchantment in Light of Constructivism and Attribution Theory," in *Reason and Reenchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), 111-130.

out just how generously Whitehead recovers what he deems useful in the history of philosophy, and how confidently he leads a Kant or Wittgenstein to the conclusions they should have made, given their own insights.⁸ (It's worth noting, as a relevant aside, that Whitehead was a big fan of Kant, though not of Kant's unbalanced subjectivism.) Fans of speculative realism might be intrigued by Whitehead's refusal to choose between the histories of anti-realism and realism (or realism and pragmatism, for that matter) and find in *Reason and Reenchantment* a launching pad to *Process and Reality*, where subject and object are theorized not as opposites, but as two contrasts or "poles" of every event, together converting past into present and creating the possibilities for the future.

As must be obvious, this is a rich book, often because it is really about Whitehead, viewed through the various perspectives and parameters that have characterized Griffin's intellectual life. Part One, "Philosophical and Religious Perspectives," contains chapters that the doctrinaire academic may give a pre-emptory dismissal, for example, those in which parapsychology or full-force theology are under discussion. That's too bad, because Part One offers up a kind of midrash on Whitehead, a preliminary sense of his philosophy from a confederation of thinkers who demonstrate how multiple perspectives can integrate and evolve within respectful community. Further, whatever the discipline, each chapter throws out some provocative process claims that reveal unique and evanescent perspectives on perennial philosophical questions both familiar and urgent: the relations between epistemology and ethics; the possibility of intersubjectivity; the status of science; the role of intuition. Other claims reveal unique and evanescent perspectives on questions that are only recently gaining more familiarity: panexperientialism and panpsychism, for example. If nothing else, Part One is worth reading in that it will introduce theory fans unfamiliar with Katherine Keller to her unique processual mode, which has sought for decades to read Whitehead together with the poststructuralists, always at the cloudy edges of speech and silence, presence and absence, knowing and unknowing, finite and infinite, *kataphasis* and *apophasis*. (If one wants to see Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze, Walt Whitman, and quantum physics together at last, Keller's recent *Cloud of the Impossible* is a must-read.) My own idiosyncratic view is that Keller's stream of work, perhaps more than any other, prehends the delicate flickers, vibrations,

8 "Responses," 292.

transmutations and superpositions of *kataphatic* and *aphophatic* knowing at the heart of Whitehead's enterprise, which treats language with warm welcome and chilly dismissal, each yin to the other's yang. So this last exhortation may be more of a sermon than a review.

Part Two introduces the quirky uses of process thought that Griffin is more fully responsible for, in that it contains topics that Whitehead never explicitly engaged. Perhaps the two most intriguing, provocative and frustrating of these topics are the status of official 9/11 explanations and the outsize influence of "constructive postmodernism" on contemporary Chinese scholarship and politics. Both topics are intimately tied to the unfolding vectors of Griffin's life. If nothing else, both topics are fascinating in that they enact just how processual and relational a process-relational thinker's – or anyone's – life is, just how dramatically the future can flow from vectors of subtle, determinate and unrecoverable antecedents, just how novel the future can be.

First, the dicey issue of 9/11 and truth. I was not even aware that Griffin was a seminal figure in the disparate set of voices we sometimes term the "truther" movement. But it turns out that Griffin began his critical analyses of the official account in 2003 – after Baudrillard and Žižek, but still relatively early – and has written no less than ten books and forty articles on the subject since. According to geographer Tod Fletcher, Griffin's first book on 9/11, *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11*, was itself a completely novel event, with no clear precedent.⁹ If true, this is interesting intellectual and political biography, but readers might be forgiven for wondering whether that biography finds a process-relational context, or whether it simply represents the dashing and haphazard pursuits of Griffin himself. The answer is the former, though, for my tastes, that answer is somewhat muted in the two chapters on 9/11.

At least for Fletcher, Griffin's work on 9/11 is tenacious and rigorous, in a fashion characteristic of Griffin's own persistence to "go wherever the evidence leads,"¹⁰ and damn the consequences. Griffin inherits this commitment from Whitehead, who describes his own "unflinching determination to take the whole evidence into account," against the "fluctuating extremes

9 Tod Fletcher, "Championing Truth and Justice: Griffin on 9/11," in *Reason and Re-enchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), 201-220, esp. 202.

10 *Ibid.*, 203.

of fashionable opinion,” in his precursor to *Process and Reality, Science and the Modern World* (187).¹¹ Taking on an unfashionable but urgent topic, whatever the price, is part of the Whiteheadian temperament. But, just as importantly, insisting on the “whole evidence” invokes not so much a conventional empiricism and appetite for thoroughness as the pragmatic tradition of radical empiricism taken up and adapted by Whitehead in later life: it places the political within a radicalized epistemology where propositions are pried from their logical vacuums and associated with values and intensities. If I understand Whitehead correctly – never guaranteed – propositions continue their traditional capacity: they are true or false, conformal or non-conformal. But their genuine aim is not judgment in an arid conceptual vacuum, but rather the co-production, with other elements of experience, of novel events. Whitehead insists that propositions are distinct from judgments: judgments are one type of feeling, to be mingled with other types in any occasion of subjective consciousness, in a variety of possible consecutive phases. Propositions are data – or lures – for many kinds of feeling in addition to judgment, including everyday “physical” feelings. Whitehead’s brash (and pretty famous) insistence that “in the real world it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true”¹² probably requires a book-length series of qualifications, but it opens the possibility of political action that rejects, as too finite and unambitious, rationales and pretexts in which propositions stand on their own, and are adjudicated through limiting conceptual standards like consistency or coherence. The key processual habit, once again, is to view object and subject as two shades or poles of the same transactional event, in which past rushes into present and creates objective possibilities for future subjects. Propositions can then be seen as determinate data from the past, and as constituents of new formulations coalescing in the present, which, in process-relational ontology, are two ways of saying the same thing. The future always holds the possibility not only of new combinations of feeling, but of new propositions. I can’t claim to fully understand radical empiricism, let alone its full range of political implications, but readers of William James, especially as taken up by the likes of Brian Massumi, are sure to find something intriguing here.

Perhaps more interesting yet is the contextualization of 9/11 within

11 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, (New York: The Free Press, 1967 [1925]).

12 Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, corrected edition, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 259.

the possibly distressing implications of Whitehead's process ontology. Peter Dale Scott, a former English professor, most clearly notes how Griffin's dogged work on 9/11 is driven by his more fundamental interest in American empire, which, in turn, is driven by his sense of the "demonic." The demonic, for Griffin, is not some supernatural force. It is the almost logical teleology of process as it rushes – with increasing momentum – *away* from the good. For many process thinkers in the Whiteheadian tradition, once a trajectory of events has a set of properties and momentum, there is almost no limit to how far and long it can intensify itself (a kind of ontological plasticity). It becomes recognizable and persistent – "canalized," to use a term Whitehead sometimes borrowed from Henri Bergson – and has a temporarily enduring identity. Process theology usually imagines a universe in which "god" lures rather than coerces; the lure instigates an overall trajectory that is negentropic, characterized by vectors that aim toward greater complexity, harmony, intensity, beauty, novelty, communion. But, by the same processual logic, the qualities of feedback and momentum apply equally when a vector, for whatever reason, aims at future events that are harmful and destructive. Vectors can canalize away from harmony and beauty, and instead intensify disconnection, harm, alienation, anomie, destruction, violence. Griffin calls these vectors and possible vectors the demonic. And demonic is exactly how Griffin has come to see the more noxious aspects of American Empire, manifest in conspiracy and coverup: 9/11. Whether he is right or not I leave to readers. But this demonic potential of process-relation is an intriguing field for further political and ethical speculation.

Finally, the business of Griffin's so-called "constructive postmodernism." Through a series of books published by SUNY press, Griffin and others offered what they took to be a simultaneous correction of modernist excess and recovery of modernist possibilities. Further, those "post-modern" corrections and recoveries were supposedly antithetical to the "deconstructive" versions of postmodernism, which most writers in the series deemed relativistic, nihilistic, narcissistic, impotent and obsessed with negation. It hardly needs mentioning that this project never really took off in Western Humanities departments, nor anywhere in the West, really. But it does need mentioning that the notion of, indeed the very phrase, "constructive postmodernism,"

has also been used by thinkers more dubious than Griffin, like Ken Wilber,¹³ and by thinkers less known than Griffin, like Martin Schiralli, who, in 1999's *Constructive Postmodernism: Toward Renewal in Cultural and Literary Studies*, set out a similar program that was not part of the SUNY series and Claremont project. Indeed, Schiralli only mentions Whitehead once, in passing, and Griffin not at all.¹⁴

More importantly, Keller has argued – in the SUNY constructive postmodernism series itself – that Griffin's positioning of constructive postmodernism against "eliminative postmodernism" or "most-modernism" is a strawperson move, pitted against an imaginary opponent that is exemplified, at very best, not by French poststructuralists, but by impoverished readings of French poststructuralists by well-meaning Anglo-American critics. While Keller admires Griffin's rigorous critique of modernism itself, she notes with some puzzlement his choice of Richard Rorty, and other non-French and not particularly deconstructive thinkers, as the emblems of French postmodernism. Stranger yet is Griffin's decision not to engage anyone who was ever actually identified as a continental poststructuralist or postmodernist: not Deleuze, Foucault, Irigaray, Kristeva, and, most puzzling of all, not even Derrida (Schiralli, on the other hand, takes on everyone from Saussure to Derrida to Baudrillard). As Keller argues, it is fine to take issue with the "liberal ironism" of Rorty; it is ridiculous to identify such ironism with Derrida. Keller furthers her critique by dissolving the opposition that underpins Griffin's historical account and curative injunctions: "...reconstructive postmodernism depends upon deconstruction as much as deconstruction depends upon the speculative schemes it deconstructs."¹⁵ To pile on a bit, Griffin's constructive postmodernism – despite its rejection of modernist claims to therapeutic rationality – relies on some highly modernist values, like progress and communal problem solving. Griffin would not disagree. But, as such, constructive postmodernism

13 Ken Wilber, "Schools of Postmodernism," *Integral World: Exploring Theories of Everything: An Independent Forum for the Critical Discussion of the Integral Philosophy of Ken Wilber*, accessed November 13, 2015, <http://www.integralworld.net/postmodernism.html>, paragraph 4.

14 Martin Schiralli, *Constructive Postmodernism: Toward Renewal in Cultural and Literary Studies*, (Westport, CT and London: Bergin and Garvey, 1999).

15 Catherine Keller, "The Process of Difference, the Difference of Process," in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Keller and Anne Daniell (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 2-4.

can hardly be less “most-modern” than any other most-modernism it denounces, imaginary or otherwise. Its terminology trades accuracy for cuteness. Also, and regardless of Griffin’s re-staging of intellectual history, I have long questioned whether the general term “postmodernism” is particularly useful, beyond its historical deployment as an easy and vacuous pejorative or compliment. The obvious exception would be Fredric Jameson’s carefully articulated and influential formulation.¹⁶

So, for a variety of reasons, it would be easy to dismiss Griffin’s project as ill-informed, misdirected, and ultimately feeble. As usual, actual history intervenes (and my claim about the vacuity of “postmodernism” gets whirled into a novel onrush that forces me to rethink). In a chapter by Chinese philosopher Zhihe Wang, we learn that Griffin’s “Claremont” version of constructive postmodernism has, since at least 1995, become a major influence on Chinese scholarship of ecological management, sustainability, economics, law, democracy, religion, philosophy, and even education. According to Wang, Griffin’s constructive postmodernist approach holds great appeal for Chinese intellectuals wrestling with questions of tradition and modernization, intellectuals who were never thrilled by what they took to be the anemic anti-humanist rebellions of Derrida, Foucault and Co. According to Wang, the spirit of constructive postmodernism has percolated through much of Chinese society, such that even speeches by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao reflect the “postmodern tone” of Griffin’s experiment.¹⁷

Wang is hardly a disinterested observer, given that he got his PhD at Claremont, and is the director of the Center for Constructive Postmodern Studies at China’s Harbin Institute of Technology (among many other process-friendly appointments). Nonetheless, he notes that the serious study of Whitehead dates back to the 1930s in China, and that the interruption of that study by historical forces, like the Sino-Japanese War, was overturned by the refreshing interventions of Griffin and Cobb in the mid-nineties.¹⁸ Wang

16 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

17 Zhihe Wang, “The Chinese Encounter with Constructive Postmodernism,” in *Reason and Reenchantment: the Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought of David Ray Griffin*, ed. John Cobb Jr., Richard Falk and Catherine Keller (Claremont, CA: Process Century Press, 2013), 241.

18 Zhihe Wang, “The Chinese Encounter with Constructive Postmodernism,” 254

goes on to mention the journal *Chinese Process Studies*,¹⁹ twenty-two Chinese Centers for constructive postmodernism²⁰ and hundreds of Chinese publications on constructive postmodernism.²¹ Throughout his chapter he cites numerous Chinese sources, all of which point at the usefulness of Griffin's project for navigating modernization, while rejecting the toxic elements of Enlightenment and recovering the most nourishing elements of Chinese history and tradition. Constructive postmodernism is, according to Wang, an indispensable adjunct to many Chinese projects at the nexus of scholarship and policy, especially those projects that require a skilful negotiation of harmony and difference²², community and singularity. He quotes Xiaoman Zhu, president of the National Central Institute for Education Studies, who claims that, "Whitehead's process philosophy is the way of thinking that is most convergent with the aim of China's education reform and with deep Chinese tradition."²³

Now, I have absolutely no expertise in Chinese culture, politics or history, and cannot make any meaningful valuation of these claims. But I can say that this chapter gives me pause. It demonstrates how plastic and surprising the future can be given the initial conditions we predict from, a central implication of process relation ontology (and of the many disciplines of non-linearity, which align well with process). The chapter also, from a Chinese perspective, revives an old and familiar knot in theory: was *The News From Paris* finally just for Eurocentric fanboys? Or is the question itself an either/or fallacy of the type that Whitehead often rejected, and that Whiteheadians, especially Keller, continue to reject as yet more fruitless search for that perfect dictionary? Does the question itself enact the kind of simplistic de-historicization Whitehead so fully dismissed? Indeed, does the question unzip its own assumptions, given the surprising vectors of "postmodernism" – *whatever* it is – as it migrates, evolves, and transposes in new contexts?

Whatever we think of Griffin's "constructive postmodernism," it directs us back to the novel unfoldings of history, and the unique mode of process thinking that springs from Whitehead's genius. As Harman has shrewdly noted, Whitehead's notion of time and futurity is very different than that of

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid., 255.
- 21 Ibid., 238
- 22 Ibid., 253.
- 23 Ibid., 247.

Deleuze, Bergson, Delanda, et al.²⁴ Whitehead rejects any overemphasis on either becoming or relation, and insists on a distinctly non-monist evolutionary process, in which perpetual onflow is characterized by singularities that “concrese” as distinct subjective perspectives, then perish to become objective data that constitute the past and set up the future of new subjective perspectives. In such bold declarations, Whitehead seems to me both more and less certain than most other champions of becoming, more likely to welcome both silence and speech, knowing and unknowing, reason and intuition, presence and absence, negation and affirmation, singularity and multiplicity. He insists on rationality, precisely because it maps the journey to the limits of rationality, but also because it offers the way back, and thus the possibility of endless new journeys. As many of the contributors to *Reason and Reenchantment* remind us, the Whiteheadian mode demands a constant agitation between rationality and experience. The former is finally subsumed by the latter: for conscious subjects, the act of being rational is itself an experience, one that somehow arises from more anterior and chaotic pulses of experience that do not seem to “contain” any precedents to the very rationality that succeeds them, and that attempts to theorize them. So, in typically Whiteheadian fashion, “agitation” turns out to be the wrong word, but the best that will do. How is this possible? Well, not even Griffin has solved that one. But nothing could be more Whiteheadian than this productive turbulence, which reminds us that our selfhood is a flow of events, and that we live in the gush where subject flows forward to object and object forward to subject, where the distinction between the world “for us” and the world “in itself” turns to mist. Whitehead finally refuses to choose between reason and reenchantment, indeed, would see it as a false choice. And, as co-editor Keller notes in her own chapter, no one has done more to keep alive this “constructive alternative,” this refusal to concede boundless *différance*, than David Ray Griffin,²⁵ despite – or perhaps because of – his unique and sometimes contested emphasis on rationality. No one has been a better foil for thinkers like Keller. *Reason and Reenchantment* offers a welcome set of entry points into Griffin’s work, and, in turn, the vast set of evolutions and relations that connect to that work, including those that

24 Graham Harman, “Response to Shaviro,” in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, ed. Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re.press, 2011), 292-295.

25 Keller, “God, Power and Evil: David Griffin Revisited,” 14.

lead back to Whitehead and forward to the speculative realists. It is an excellent introduction and handy supplement to the theory maven who continues to expand and evolve her interest in the infinite topic of becoming, especially the Whiteheadian vision that the future, though always cascading from a determinate past, is never already here.