

has an irreducible aesthetic element, but I would welcome a more detailed methodological account along these lines. Do not allow these minor concerns to mar what is an important contribution to the existing literature on the theism and naturalism debate.

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**David O'Connor. *God, Evil, and Design: An Introduction to the Philosophical Issues*. Blackwell, 2008.**

Given that many standard texts on the problem of evil are often too technical for undergraduates, this new introduction by Seton Hall's David O'Connor is a welcome addition to the literature. What is more, it helpfully pairs a discussion of the problem of evil with consideration of design in nature (which discussion of the problem of evil naturally evokes) with the goal of seeing if an inference to God's existence is rational overall.

O'Connor admirably cajoles students into their own philosophical inquiry rather than passive reading. However, he (unhelpfully) asks students to shed their biases and pretend that they are behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance regarding their own religious affiliations. Judgments will differ, but to this reviewer it would be better for students to reflect upon their biases rather than pretend they do not exist. After all, if we are so biased that we cannot deliberate reasonably about God and evil, how will we be able to successfully pretend to be impartial arbiters?

*God, Evil, and Design* certainly wears its introductory nature on its sleeve. One assumes that even freshman do not need to be reminded twice in five pages that the great monotheistic religions are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. O'Connor spends a whole chapter laying out the basic terminology necessary for the discussion: moral versus natural evil, the basic properties of the God of classical theism, and various understandings of the relationship between faith and reason. Chapter three opens with eight pages explaining logical contradiction, an idea that could surely be explained in a paragraph. The chief culprit here is O'Connor's style of providing abundant examples and thought experiments. While defining terms up front can be helpful, the effect is that the central ideas do not even begin to appear until halfway through chapter three.

But with some basics out of the way, O'Connor first considers J. L. Mackie's famous logical argument from evil. He ably details the structure of Mackie's argument and the assumptions it embodies. Then follows a critique of Mackie via Plantinga's free will defence. Again, the burdens of Plantinga's argument, and hence the dialectic itself, are extremely lucid. It should be crystal clear to students, for instance, that Plantinga need only point to a possible world where God and evil coexist to defeat the logical version of the argument from evil.

Readers are even treated to both Mackie's rebuttal that God could have created a world only populated by those with libertarian freedom who would never choose evil and Plantinga's 'transworld depravity' response (i.e., it is logically possible that each free person would sin at least once). O'Connor's explication is only hampered by repeated use of the concept of 'proof' (where 'reasonable argument' would do) and the fact that readers are given O'Connor's verdicts but not told about the current consensus of the discipline.

Instead of moving directly to the evidential problem of evil, O'Connor pauses, spending two chapters exploring how nature's apparent design should affect our overall judgments concerning God's existence and his goodness. If nature is designed, then by his lights it was intended, planned, and brought about by an intelligent agent. O'Connor thinks we regularly observe the complex, orderly nature of nature. And, in our everyday experience, 'means-to-ends behaviour often reflects intention and purpose' (p. 77). But, in the realm of organisms, Darwin's theory of natural selection undercuts this inference to intelligence. After all, 'natural selection is not deliberate or chosen' by an agent (p. 79).

As is fashionable, O'Connor dumps on the modern intelligent design movement without truly considering its arguments. O'Connor puts little effort into explaining the ideas of biochemist Michael Behe before telling us that philosopher of science Michael Ruse disagrees with him. Apparently, a U.S. judge concurred with Michael Ruse and settled their dispute. What magisterial authority or qualifications the judge has for resolving delicate issues of science and philosophy, O'Connor does not say. Disappointing as this is for both ID supporters (who want their arguments fairly described) and Darwinists (who want ID soundly refuted), O'Connor adopts Richard Swinburne's strategy of side-stepping the issue of biological design in favour of cosmological considerations: life's emergence depends on finely tuned laws of nature, and evolution neither explains these laws nor the existence of a finite universe.

Though not without its own problems (which are explored in the subsequent chapter), O'Connor agrees with Swinburne that a 'personal explanation' for the universe and its laws is preferable to both the chance and multiverse hypotheses (p. 86). However, given that there are many seemingly pointless evils, O'Connor thinks 'the only reasonable and plausible conclusion' at this point is that this source of the universe is either indifferent or not wholly good (p. 106). 'The fact of evil blocks a conclusion that the original source of natural order is perfectly good', he boldly asserts (p. 108). Any other conclusion is 'unjustified' (p. 108). But surely even as a provisional conclusion this moves too fast. It would seem the better part of wisdom, instead, to minimally claim that one would seem rational in concluding that God exists based upon the evidence of design but also that God might not be perfectly good based upon the evidence of seemingly pointless evil.

In the second half of the book O'Connor introduces probabilistic arguments from evil. First, he conveys Paul Draper's argument that the hypothesis that the universe is indifferent is more probable than theism with respect to seemingly pointless evil; for, seemingly pointless evil is more surprising on theism than on the indifference hypothesis. Second, he relays William Rowe's argument: the fact that we can think of no plausible reasons which justify God's allowance of suffering makes it more probable than not that there is no such justification and hence that God does not exist. O'Connor spends the rest of the book describing and evaluating two sorts of defences – what he calls 'technicality defences' and 'substantive defences' (p. 129). (The former are standardly called 'defences' and the latter 'theodicies'.)

By the (somewhat prejudicial) term 'technicality defences' he has in mind sceptical theism. O'Connor describes the sceptical defences of both Stephen Wykstra and Peter van Inwagen in an admirably non-technical fashion. Wykstra's well-known argument claims that one is only justified in thinking that something does not exist only if one's evidence is such that, were that thing to exist, one would expect to see it. For example, one cannot justifiably claim that there are no fleas in one's garage, O'Connor notes, if one has only stood at the door and looked. One would not expect to see fleas from that distance. Similarly, Wykstra argues that Rowe is wrong to conclude that probably there is no justification for some evils just because Rowe cannot think of any plausible justifications. Wykstra thinks Rowe is not in the best epistemic position to judge.

Similarly, van Inwagen seeks to provide a story which is compatible with God's existence and the amount of evil we see – a story which is true for all anyone knows. He imagines a Garden of Eden where people lived in harmony with each other and had supernatural powers by which they avoided even natural evil. But when they freely chose to sin, God initiated a rescue plan. For this plan to succeed, people have to realize how devastating it is to fall out of fellowship with God. Thus some amount of evil is necessary. Further, van Inwagen claims, there may be objective vagueness here: there may be no exact amount of evil, relative to this redemptive plan, which is too great or too little. In this way, van Inwagen challenges the arguments of those who claim that there is too much evil and thus God does not exist.

O'Connor finds the arguments of both Wykstra and van Inwagen wanting. He raises serious questions about Sceptical Theism – for instance, whether it implies a scepticism which also rules out natural theology – but overall O'Connor fails to give it its due. He reduces Wykstra's argument to the thesis that theism makes no difference to the world. He writes:

But we should not be surprised to find the world being the way it is if God exists, and we should not be surprised to find the world being the way it is if God does not exist. Either way, we should not be surprised. We should not expect God to make a discernible difference. We should not expect commonsense standards to work when we think about God and evil. That is the essence of Wykstra's noseum defence. (p. 146)

Yet that does not at all seem the essence of Wykstra's defence. At its core, rather, is Wykstra's 1984 CORNEA (Condition of Reasonable Epistemic Access) principle, an attempt to formulate when it is justifiable to infer 'probably there is no X' from 'we see no X'. CORNEA proposes that we can do so 'only when X has "reasonable seeability" – that is, is the sort of thing which, if it exists, we can reasonably expect to see in the situation' (Stephen John Wykstra, 'Rowe's Noseum Arguments from Evil', in Daniel Howard-Snyder, ed., *The Evidential Argument from Evil* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 126). Wykstra's chief observation is that such inferences are legitimate in some instances but not others. Thus he seeks to formulate the epistemic principle at work. O'Connor fails to wrestle with CORNEA let alone formulate his own principle. Wykstra is not saying theism makes no difference to how the world appears. He is only claiming that it may not be the case that

we should expect to see God-justifying goods clearly connected to each act of evil.

O'Connor attacks van Inwagen's defence with numerous charges. For instance, given that van Inwagen has argued that God may not be able to prevent every evil via miraculous intervention without creating massive disruptions in the natural order, O'Connor wonders how it is that van Inwagen's imagined Garden of Eden (where people have preternatural powers to avoid natural evil) does not lead to massive disruptions in the natural order. And given that van Inwagen is fond of pointing out vagueness problems for others, O'Connor argues that van Inwagen faces his own: 'specificity is needed regarding the cut-off point, below which miracles [by the humans in van Inwagen's garden scenario] do not cause massive disruption' (p. 159). There is a good question here, but given the dialectic, it is not clear that van Inwagen needs a response. His is a defence, not an affirmative vision of the world. As such, the fact that his garden scenario is not obviously incoherent may be enough to show that the inference from the existence of suffering to the likelihood that there is no God is questionable. O'Connor also questions whether it is fair that the abuse of free will in van Inwagen's Garden was met with the horrors of disease and natural disasters. Here O'Connor misses that in van Inwagen's scenario suffering is not meant for punishment but for rescue: suffering reminds us of the horror of disunion with God; it can disrupt our dangerous contentment with this life and lead us back to our true good.

O'Connor concludes that these two sceptical defences are unsuccessful. This only highlights a serious deficiency of the book: *God, Evil, and Design* contains numerous controversial conclusions. O'Connor is certainly entitled to his opinions. But this makes the book much less helpful in an introductory setting where students need to learn and wrestle with the basic arguments.

Because sceptical responses to arguments from evil fail in his judgment, O'Connor concludes the book with a consideration of two theodicies (or in his terminology, 'substantive defences'). One had hoped O'Connor would treat readers to a careful exposition of John Hick's soul-making theodicy and Richard Swinburne's free will defence. Instead, O'Connor immediately peppers the free will defence with countless possible problems without any attempt to respond: *Shouldn't God have restrained Hitler? Can't God reduce the range of our choices without eliminating free will?* The summary of soul-making is even worse. O'Connor reduces this

theodicy to the claim that without evil consequences to our actions we would never know that we are able to cause good and evil. There is no consideration of the great good of the virtuous soul or how suffering grows character like little else. All in all, O'Connor spends much more time dismissing these defences than explaining them to newcomers.

Even though most of the chapter which was to explain greater-good theodicies was devoted to interrogating them, there follows an entire chapter critical of such theodicies. Repeatedly, O'Connor probes our moral intuitions by asking how we would govern the world in a given situation (if our child were dying, etc.). While such thought experiments are certainly worthwhile, O'Connor appears not to have given serious thought to the fact that God may bear a different relationship to us than we do to our children. Locke, for instance, maintained that we are God's property.

In his final judgment, while theism cannot be dismissed neither can it be justifiably inferred from nature's design, even without consideration of evil. Given the strong nature of this conclusion, it is highly surprising that he did not spend much time discussing particular theistic arguments, both cosmological and biological. 'Our verdict overall', he writes, 'is that the enormous amounts of seemingly pointless evils give us sufficient evidence to think that, probably, there is no God' (p. 212). Theistic belief is not dismissed, but it is certainly seen as unwarranted. O'Connor even claims that his verdicts are the result of 'religiously neutral philosophical investigation', though one might wonder if there is such a thing (p. 213).

O'Connor notes that the believer might still try to take refuge in religious experience as the basis of her faith. He is somewhat sympathetic to this position, writing, 'perhaps it can be reasonable for the believer [with religious experience(s)] to see evil as a mystery, without seeing it as sufficient negative evidence to warrant unbelief' (p. 220). Yet O'Connor insists that such 'supporting [religious] experiences are not evidence' (p. 216). For many leading evidentialists (e.g., Conee and Feldman), however, evidence consists in experiences or their associated mental states. On this plausible view it is difficult to see why (supposedly) religious experiences or the mental states derived from them are not every bit as much *prima facie* evidence as other sorts of experiences or their attendant mental states. Thus it is highly contentious that O'Connor takes 'evidence' to be equivalent to 'public evidence'.

If I were to use *God, Evil, and Design* in an undergraduate course, I would (1) choose readings directly from Swinburne and Hick rather

than use O'Connor's last section, and (2) have students read specific design arguments and replies. Despite these reservations, this work is a great reminder of the value of philosophy of religion in an introductory context: serious discussion of God, evil, and design touches on issues of modal logic, free will and determinism, epistemic justification, and so much more.

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**Jerry L. Walls. *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation*. Oxford University Press, 2012.**

In a time when most would consider the doctrine of purgatory as problematic and medieval, Jerry L. Walls rehabilitates the doctrine for the purpose of contemporary discussion. As a philosopher in the Protestant and Wesleyan tradition, Walls brings fresh eyes to the doctrine of purgatory that is often associated with Roman Catholicism. In the spirit of C.S. Lewis, Walls offers us a feast of thoughts on purgatory that logically and coherently link salvation and sanctification in this world to glorification in the next. *Purgatory* is also the culmination of a series of works Walls has written on the afterlife with *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* and *Heaven: The Logic of Joy*.

As to the structure of the work, Walls proceeds from the historical, the philosophical, to a contemporary construction of the doctrine of purgatory by drawing from C.S. Lewis on salvation and purgatory. The aim of the book is to assess the logic of the doctrine of purgatory and provide a view that has ecumenical promise not only to Roman Catholics, but to the rest of the Christian tradition – the Orthodox Church and the Protestant Church. In chapter 1, Walls offers a short canvassing of historical views on purgatory. Walls proceeds to look at objections from his tradition in chapter 2. In chapter 3, he offers various models of purgatory, broadly including Satisfaction Models and Sanctification Models. In chapters 4 and 5, he considers the problem of personal identity in purgatory, specifically the notion of stability and change, and the possibility of a 'second chance' for those who did not accept the satisfaction offered in Christ. The last two chapters include a constructive proposal of purgatory that is ecumenical in nature and a summing up of findings.