

God, Geography, and Justice

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ABSTRACT

The existence of various sufferings has long been thought to pose a problem for the existence of a personal God: the Problem of Evil (POE). In this paper, we propose an original version of POE, in which the geographic distribution of sufferings and of opportunities for flourishing or suffering is better explained if the universe, at bottom, is indifferent to the human condition than if, as theists propose, there is a personal God from whom the universe originates: the Problem of Geography (POG). POG moves beyond previous versions of POE because traditional responses to POE (skeptical theism and various theodicies) are less effective as responses to POG than they are to other versions of POE.

KEYWORDS

Introduction

Suffering is distributed unequally throughout the world. Poverty and disease ravish much of Africa while those fortunate enough to be born in the industrialized West live in relative affluence and health. Drought, tsunamis, earthquakes and other natural disasters frequently recur in the same geographic areas, areas often populated by the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. Similarly, the opportunity to flourish and to stave off human suffering is offered abundantly in some societies but is beyond reach in many others. In this article, we argue that the distribution of suffering, and the unequal opportunities for flourishing or suffering, are better explained if the universe

is indifferent to the human condition than by classical theism.¹ Our argument is a novel version of the Problem of Evil (herein: POE). Traditionally, POE has been posed as an incompatibility between at least one aspect of the suffering in our world and classical theism. While this paper serves to highlight one particular element of suffering, that of geographical distribution, our paper's significance goes beyond merely delineating one more injustice. Theists have devised a variety of theodicies in an attempt to overcome the challenge posed by POE. Though we don't believe any theodicy has been successful in undermining the force of POE, many theists continue to find theodicies convincing. The most commonly postulated theodicies are made less plausible given the Problem of Geography (herein: POG), as defined below, and therefore the POG represents an advancement over the standard POE and further inoculates POE from commonly presented theodicies. Theists have recently advanced Skeptical Theism² (as described below; herein: ST) as a response to POE. As we argue, POG presents several novel difficulties for ST. Therefore, POG presents a new and significant challenge for classical theism.

The problem of geography

The POE literature distinguishes between natural evils and moral evils. Natural evils are sufferings which do not arise from the deliberate actions of humans (see, for example, Hick 1966; Inwagen 1988; Trakakis 2005), including the destruction of cities, towns, and villages caused by severe storms or earthquakes; famines as caused by draughts; or any number of other naturally occurring phenomena. Call individual instances of natural evil *first-order natural evils*. Theists seek to explain first-order natural evils by appealing to one or another theodicy, which purport to demonstrate that God may allow first-order natural evils to bring about some greater good.

Additionally, there are *second-order natural evils*, which concern facts about the first-order natural evils. One second-order consideration is whether or not the distribution of the first-order natural evils is just. Supposing the first-order natural evils can be reconciled with theism through one or more theodicies, their unjust distribution may still render theodicies ineffective and leave the theist without an explanation for natural evil. In order to explain

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1. Classical theism is the view that there exists a unique omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent being who created and sustains the universe and who personally cares about humans.
 2. Paul Draper coined the phrase "skeptical theism" in his (1996).

the notion of justice salient to second order natural evils, we first explicate the analogous notions of just and unjust societies. Most ethicists agree that for a society to be just, the society necessarily adheres to the principle of equality:

Equality: A just society would not treat A differently from B in any significant way, unless there is some morally relevant difference between A and B.³

Given equality, just societies do not necessarily provide all persons equivalent material possessions. For example, one way of treating persons equally is to afford each person equal opportunities. When applied to ethical problems in the social, political, and/or economic realms, equality has broad explanatory scope. For example, equality can explain why racially segregated seating on buses is unjust; race is not a morally relevant difference for deciding seating on buses.

In a variety of prominent and influential moral theories, equality is a central consideration and is often understood as a condition of rationality. Deontologists argue that anyone who applies inconsistent standards to themselves or others has acted irrationally. Utilitarians start from the premise that all calculations of pains and pleasures must be made dispassionately and irrespective of morally irrelevant factors. Equality is likewise recognized by virtue ethics. A person who treated others unequally without some morally relevant reason for doing so is rightly regarded as exhibiting one of a number of vices: arbitrariness, nepotism, or favoritism, for example. Equality is central to modern contractualist theories, as evidenced by Rawls' principles of the veil of ignorance and the original position. Various experiments involving primates reveal that they recognize and react to unequal treatment as unjust, suggesting that equality of treatment is at the evolutionary root of our notions of morality.

Ethical views denying the centrality of equality, and replacing equality with self-interest, such as Randian Objectivism, are often regarded by philosophers as implausible. Although self-interest is not irrelevant to moral considerations, morality is *about* how we should treat others and *not* about single-mindedly advancing one's self-interest. Since equality is a prominent consideration in the most influential and compelling moral theories available, we argue equality is a central moral principle. Due to God's perfect moral goodness, God, if God exists, would follow a corresponding principle:

Divine Equality: A benevolent and perfectly good deity would ensure that A and B have the same opportunities to attain goods and avoid evils unless

3. One early source for this principle is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1130b–1132b. Also see Gosepath, 2011.

there are morally relevant difference between A and B, or there is some overriding factor that outweighs the moral demand of equality.

Given divine equality, God does not necessarily treat all persons in exactly the same ways nor does God necessarily afford all persons the same material possessions. Instead, according to divine equality, God treats all persons *equivalently* and affords all persons equivalent opportunities, unless there are relevant differences between the persons in question. Divine equality is consistent with a variety of ethical theories in which two different actions may achieve the same good. For example, on utilitarianism, two different actions may be equally good if they bring about the same amount of utility.

Consider our world's distribution of first order natural evils and of opportunities for suffering or flourishing, which we label "D." Either distribution may be justly heterogeneous if the heterogeneity is warranted by morally relevant differences between populations. The heterogeneity of D indicates a violation of divine justice only if there is no sufficient morally relevant difference between populations that experience substantively different natural evils and opportunities for flourishing or suffering. As described below, we argue that the heterogeneity in D offers compelling evidence against theism.

Given violations of divine equality, theism can be reasonably rejected in favor of what Paul Draper, following David Hume, has termed the *hypothesis of indifference*: "neither the nature nor the condition of sentient beings on earth is the result of benevolent or malevolent actions performed by nonhuman persons" (Draper 1989, 332). The hypothesis of indifference is consistent with atheism but also with deism and impersonal definitions of God (e.g., pantheism). The hypothesis of indifference is not, however, consistent with classical theism. Favoring the hypothesis of indifference over theism is distinct from endorsing the hypothesis of indifference because there may be another hypothesis one should endorse over either the hypothesis of indifference or theism. Consider the following argument:

1. D is inexplicable on theism.
2. D is not surprising on the hypothesis of indifference.
3. Conclusion: Given 1 and 2, D favors the hypothesis of indifference over theism.

Various data constitute D; some examples follow. Pompeii was systematically and rapidly destroyed, while other peoples were allowed to flourish. Climatic shifts may have brought about the destruction of the Rapa Nui people who inhabited Easter Island (Mann *et al.* 2008, 26). Other researchers claim the Rapa Nui's downfall was due to anthropogenic deforestation (Mann *et al.*

2008, 24). Regardless, the Rapa Nui's island environment represents a difference of opportunity. As a third example, the collapse of the Old Kingdom in Egypt has been explained in terms of climatic changes altering the flow of the Nile, resulting in famine (Lloyd 2014, 177; Stanley *et al.* 2003, 398). The world was created without clear indication of what a given region has in its favor or of where a future disaster may occur. Humans were created without the ability to discern which regions could sustain them over the long term. Even if they are able to recognize the hostile nature of their particular environments, many people born in such areas do not have the means to move elsewhere. Due to forces beyond their control, human populations have been afforded differential opportunities for flourishing. On classical theism, this is inexplicable. On the hypothesis of indifference, it is expected.

To further explicate the notion of *unfairness*, we borrow from Richard Schoenig's Argument from Unfairness. Schoenig argues that, due to God's perfect goodness, God, if God exists, cannot enact or endorse the unfair opportunities which determine our postmortem eternal fates in common afterlife doctrines. Schoenig provides the following definition of *unfairness* in which P, A, and B are either persons or groups of persons and O represents an outcome desired by both A and B and which itself is not immoral:

(1) P acts unfairly towards B in comparison to A with regard to O if and only if, without sufficient reason, either P intentionally treats A in a manner that P knows will assist A in getting O in a way that P does not so assist B, or P intentionally treats B in a manner that P knows will hinder B from getting O in a way that P does not so hinder A. (2) The degree of P's unfairness is commensurate with the degree to which P intentionally and knowingly assists A more than B, or hinders B more than A, in getting O, and also with the importance that O has to the fulfillment of the non-immoral desires of B and A. (Shoenig 1999, 117).

We add: (3) P acts unfairly towards B in comparison to A and with regard to O if God sets conditions of the universe in such a way that A is arbitrarily advantaged in the attainment of O over B or if B is arbitrarily disadvantaged in the attainment of O as compared to A (or if either A or B is advantaged or disadvantaged in their ability to avoid some gratuitous suffering, E). If God brings about the actual state of affairs, and has the power to prepare that state of affairs so A and B have equal opportunity in the attainment of O or avoidance of E, then, given God's beneficence, we would expect God to prepare an equitable state of affairs in which A and B have equal opportunity in the attainment of O or the avoidance of E. If the opportunity for the attainment of various goods, O, and the avoidance of various evils E, were shown to be arbitrarily, rather than fairly, distributed, classical theism could only be maintained on pain of contradiction.

Previous authors have commented on the incompatibility between God's perfect goodness and the injustice involved in favoring some groups over others. William Jones, in his *Is God a White Racist?*, argued, contra black liberation theology, the experience of black suffering and disenfranchisement poses a significant challenge for theologies in which a providential God watches over, protects, and promises future liberation for the black community. Perhaps, Jones muses, the heterogeneous distribution of suffering points more to a racist deity than to an omnibenevolent God. Jones writes, "[t]o speak of divine racism is to raise questions about God's equal love and concern for all men [sic]. It is to suggest that He is for some but not for others, or at least not for all equally. [...] The charge of divine racism, in the final analysis, is a frontal challenge to the claim of God's benevolence for all" (Jones 1998, 6). Jones continues by illustrating what he calls the *multievidentiality of suffering*. A situation X is multievidential if X offers as much support for one hypothesis as for a rival hypothesis. For Jones, the world's suffering has offered ambiguous evidence for God's moral nature. While black liberation theologians claim to "discover the liberating hand of God at work in the present black condition" (Jones 1998, 9), white racist pastors see God's attempt to "destroy an obsolete people."⁴

Jones suggests we derive the divine attributes from God's historical actions. Whereas Jean-Paul Sartre stated "man [sic] is the sum of his actions," Jones argues we should understand God as the sum of God's actions. If so, suffering's multievidentiality poses a challenge to black liberation theologians who maintained God would liberate the black community in the future (Jones 1998, 10–15). On what grounds should anyone expect liberation, if, in the past, God's providence created more suffering for one's community than for other communities? Jones continues:

[...] I wish to call attention to that suffering which is maldistributed; it is not spread, as it were, more or less randomly and impartially over the whole human race. Rather, it is concentrated in a particular ethnic group. My concern in utilizing the concept of ethnic suffering is to accentuate the fact that black suffering is balanced by non-white suffering instead of white suffering. Consequently, black suffering in particular and ethnic suffering raise the scandal of particularity. (Jones 1998, 21)

For Jones, the failure of early black liberation theologians to successfully deal with the experience of black suffering implied the divine-human relationship should be re-evaluated. In this paper, we do not follow Jones in his

4. Samuel Yette, as quoted by Jones 1998, 9.

restructuring of the divine-human relationship into humanocentric theism; instead, we argue the geographic distribution of suffering and of opportunities for flourishing or suffering poses a problem for *classical* theism which has not been sufficiently appreciated or resolved. Furthermore, while Jones's project dealt primarily with moral evil, we focus on the distribution of first order natural evils. Additionally, the POG is even more troublesome for the theist than Jones's racial considerations. The racial disparities Jones identifies are exacerbated by geography. On average, persons of color in the United States are better off (despite their mistreatment) than persons of color in most of Africa. God not only countenances unjust racial disparities, but allows geographical disparities to affect the same populations. Thus, the problem Jones identifies is worsened by geographical considerations.

The magnification of injustice through geographical distribution can be demonstrated by a number of examples. Consider two newborn babies. One baby dies before advancing beyond infancy while the other lives to an old age. Unless there is some morally relevant difference between the two babies, a clear injustice has been committed against the baby who died in infancy. However, geographical details may exacerbate the injustice. Infant mortality rates are, at least in part, geographically determined. Children born in affluent industrialized countries are more likely to survive infancy than those born into comparatively impoverished locations. Dead children are bad enough, but geographical disparities compounded upon tragedy are far more difficult to explain away.⁵

Some populations, between which there are no relevant differences, are afforded differential access to opportunities for suffering or flourishing. Some populations are devastated by natural disasters, for example, while others are not, though there are no morally relevant differences between them. Likewise, there are geographic disparities in the likelihood of exposure to various diseases and other quality of life measures. In an attempt to save God's perfect goodness in the face of apparent divine equality violations, theists might point out that humanity's historical progression indicates we have much to learn about morality. Our inability to see a morally relevant difference between two societies may indicate there are moral differences unknown to us. Nonetheless, we note the historical progression has generally been away from thinking that societies which suffer deserved to suffer. For example, the recognition of American slavery as unjust is widely regarded as moral pro-

5. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *Res Philosophica* for bringing this objection to our attention.

gress. Reasoning inductively over humanity's moral progress, in the future, we are likely to discover further injustices presently unknown to us.

We have employed divine equality, a substantive ethical thesis that, as we have argued, should be endorsed by a wide variety of contemporary ethicists. However, specific subsets of theists might not find divine equality plausible. While modern liberal political philosophers may find appealing notions of justice emphasizing the equal distribution of axiological goods (or of opportunities to obtain axiological goods), and especially those entailing equality (or some similar principle), they do so by jettisoning large portions of historically important conceptions of justice. Christian theists may be reticent to reject more traditional notions of justice, especially if liberal notions of justice, in conjunction with empirical data can be shown, as we claim, to undermine Christian theism. Nonetheless, we note that an incompatibility between Christian theism and contemporary liberal notions of justice is itself significant. *If* one finds Christian theism less attractive than liberal notions of justice, *then*, ceteris paribus, one should deny Christian theism. As liberal theories of justice, emphasizing fair distribution of opportunities for obtaining the good, have been defended elsewhere, our paper can be understood as arguing that Christian theism is undermined by the success of liberal theories of justice.

One may be skeptical D is expected to be unjust on the hypothesis of indifference. For example, deism is compatible with the hypothesis of indifference. Perhaps a morally ambivalent, deistic God created the universe for some impersonal purpose; why should we suppose D would be unjust in a world created for impersonal purposes?⁶ Perhaps an impersonal deity would possess some end accomplished through creating the universe, incidentally or accidentally aligned with creating a just world. We respond by noting, of all the metaphysically possible ways the world could be arranged, there are many more arrangements in which D is unjust than those in which D is just.⁷ Given we do not know what the motivations might be of an impersonal deity, but, qua impersonality, they are not directed towards the welfare of human beings, an impersonal deity's ends are unlikely to align with an equitable

6. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *Sophia* for bringing this objection to our attention.

7. The reader may object there are infinitely many possible worlds that are just and there are infinitely many unjust worlds. We agree. Our claim is that the cardinality of the set of unjust worlds is greater than the cardinality of the set of just worlds.

D. We do not claim the hypothesis of indifference is logically incompatible with a just world; instead, we claim an unjust world is more likely than a just world on the hypothesis of indifference.

In the next section, we show skeptical theism, a strategy recently employed against POE, does not resolve POG. In subsequent sections, we will argue that five common theodicies not only fail to resolve POG but are less effective against POG than against the standard POE.

Skeptical theism does not resolve POG

Much discussion of POE has focused on William Rowe's argument (see, for example, Rowe 1979, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1996), according to which there are a wide variety of evils whose justification is inscrutable on theism. These are evils which, from our perspective, *seem* to serve no greater good. Rowe infers from the inscrutability of such evils that they are gratuitous: evils whose existence is "*not* necessary either to avoid some evil equally bad or worse or to secure some compensating (or justifying) good" (McBrayer 2010). In other words, if an evil *e* seems to serve no greater good, then *e* probably does not serve a greater good. If gratuitous evils exist, God does not. So, Rowe argues, the existence of inscrutable evils is evidence against theism.

One should not mistake our argument as an inference from the inscrutability of D to the gratuitousness of D. Any argument from the inscrutability of D to the gratuitousness of D would inherit the many objections to Rowe's argument. Instead, we argue that D is better explained by the hypothesis of indifference than by classical theism. We will proceed by explicating ST as an objection to Rowe's argument. Afterwards, we will show our argument is not subject to the same worry. Consider several skeptical theses, as described by Michael Bergman (2001, 279):

ST1: We have no good reason for thinking that the possible goods we know of are representative of the possible goods there are.

ST2: We have no good reason for thinking that the possible evils we know of are representative of the possible evils there are.

ST3 : We have no good reason for thinking that the entailment relations we know of between possible goods and the permission of possible evils are representative of the entailment relations there are between possible goods and the permission of possible evils.

Human history render ST1-3 plausible. Further investigation often reveals things we once understood as goods turn out to be evils and vice versa, so one reason to find ST1-3 plausible concerns a kind of pessimistic meta-induction

over the history of ethical inquiry. Plausibly, human moral knowledge is not representative of moral truth, so we should expect those with indefinitely greater moral knowledge to behave in ways we find incomprehensible. We expect to look back on our present culture and cringe at our naivety, as many who remember American racial segregation do at present. When ST1-ST3 are placed in conjunction with theism, the resulting view is termed “skeptical theism” (see, for example, Bergman 2001; Almeida 2003; Dougherty 2014; Law 2014).

Since God is omniscient, and God’s moral knowledge vastly exceeds ours, God may have moral justifications for Her actions beyond our comprehension. Moreover, human moral knowledge may be so deficient that many of the states of affairs which seem good or bad to us may not be. Simply because *x* appears to serve no greater good does not entail *x* probably serves no greater good. Therefore, one cannot infer from the inscrutability of evils to the existence of gratuitous evils, or so skeptical theists charge.

ST has been challenged on several fronts, so ST’s efficacy as a response to POE is questionable. For example, William Hasker argues while human beings might be completely ignorant of the moral considerations relevant to God or angels, we are plausibly aware of moral considerations relevant to human suffering. Hasker states, “The idea that there are major sorts of goods and harms that are possible for human beings, and figure prominently in God-justifying reasons, but that are *completely unknown in all human history and experience*—this I believe, is something that we might countenance as at most a bare speculative possibility, but have little reason to see as being in any way plausible” (Hasker 2010, 19). Concerning possible offsetting goods experienced by God and the angels as the result of human suffering, Hasker argues convincingly this makes little sense, morally speaking. He writes, “It would hardly do to suppose that God was justified in permitting the Holocaust because of some incomprehensible-to-us benefit derived from it by God and his angels! To say that would create a new problem of evil worse than the one we are trying to solve” (Hasker 2010, 19).

Hasker notes, for ST to work, the evils that allow for the posited, but unknown, larger good must be logically necessary. If God is omnipotent, then She could create any good without the existence of the associated evil—unless the evil is logically, rather than merely contingently, necessary for the good. There is little reason to believe the seemingly gratuitous evils experienced by human beings and non-human animals is logically necessary for the unknown goods proposed by the skeptical theist.

Finally, Hasker argues ST is simply too skeptical. By requiring us to be skeptical as to whether we have any knowledge at all about what constitutes

good and evil, ST leaves us in a position of absolute moral ignorance. If we cannot determine any particular action or event is a gratuitous evil because we are ignorant of the overall cosmic effects of the action or event, then we cannot make such determinations about good events or actions either. ST leaves us unable to distinguish between good and evil at all (Hasker 2010, 22). Mark Piper and Scott Sehon argue along similar lines, demonstrating ST leaves us in a position of moral paralysis (Piper 2007; Sehon 2010).

Despite the criticisms posed by Hasker, Piper, Sehon, and others,⁸ many remain convinced ST defeats POE. In the face of POG, however, the theist is faced with a greater challenge. This is so for several reasons. First, we previously noted ST1-3 seem plausible, in part, due to a kind of pessimistic meta-induction over the history of ethical inquiry. As Draper argues (in his 1989; 1996), just as God may have unknown reasons for allowing evils, there may be unknown reasons God would have to disallow evils. POG deepens this worry for ST. Moral progress has tended toward a recognition of injustices. Reasoning inductively from previous moral inquiry, future moral inquiry will most likely reveal greater injustices presently unknown to us and is likely to leave unaffected some substantive claims about injustice. For example, discovering widespread African starvation serves some greater good seems a less likely outcome of future moral inquiry than the recognition of additional ways in which women and racial minorities are oppressed. Thus, there are likely more unknown injustices than unknown justices. In order for ST to resolve POG, we require some reason to think presently acknowledged injustices are likely to turn out just or to serve some greater good, after further moral inquiry. Injustices acknowledged in the past have more often been added to than subtracted from.

Second, not only must skeptical theists argue that there are reasons for evils that are beyond our understanding, but they must argue that the inequitable distribution of those evils is likewise beyond our ken; yet this is less plausible than their original skepticism. The heterogeneous distribution of evils violates well-known principles of ethics, with a foundation in reason, and are capable of resisting doubts not justified by more compelling arguments. For example, John Rawls's "veil of ignorance" thought-experiment provides a compelling reason to believe that in just worlds without favoritism, evils would be distributed equally. If we were about to enter the world from behind a veil of ignorance, from which our future identity, socio-eco-

8. For additional responses to ST, see Leary-Hawthorne and Howard-Snyder, 1993; Wielenberg, 2010; Hudson, 2014; Wilks, 2014.

conomic status, and geographic position were occluded, and knew the world must possess a certain amount of evil in order to generate greater goods, the most rational preference would be for evils distributed without regard to morally arbitrary factors. Skeptical theists may retort this is just another thing of which we should be skeptical, but we reply that being skeptical of the principle of equality—which follows from principles of rationality—is more skepticism than either theists or atheists should endorse. If the principle of equality follows from principles of rationality, then the principle of equality is a necessary, categorical truth.

We turn to a third challenge for the skeptical theist. Consider externalities, as they are discussed by economists. Externalities are unintended consequences of any given economic activity. For example, the manufacturing process for a certain product may result in harmful pollutants as a byproduct. Pollutants are an externality and exact a cost from those who suffer from the pollution or who must pay to clean them up. The fairest way to distribute the costs of an externality is in proportion to how much one has benefited from the manufacturing process. Those who manufacture the product benefit from the profits generated while those who purchase the product benefit from its use. Both the manufacturers and the consumers of the product are rightfully saddled with absorbing the costs of the externality, the former through reduced profits and the latter through a greater cost. A distribution of the costs which disregarded relevant details—for example, one which arbitrarily charged taller people with greater costs—would be unfair. The imposition of the costs on arbitrary groups of people who received none of the benefits would be even more unfair.

If we grant various first order evils can be explained or excused for some unknown greater good, the theist is left with the task of explaining the distribution of those evils. If evil is necessary for a greater good then we would expect evil to be evenly distributed across the beneficiaries of that good (in this case, humanity as a whole). When there is a common good all beneficiaries must pay for, anything less than an equitable distribution of the costs is unfair. When faced with POG, skeptical theists must overcome an additional obstacle because, in addition to the cost of an unknown higher good, they must explain the apparently unfair distribution of the “cost” for the acquisition of the unknown good (or argue we have no reason to expect the distribution to be fair on theism).⁹

9. Existing literature on POE and ST appears to affirm this point. For example, in developing what sort of morally sufficient reasons, beyond our ken, God might

We turn to a fourth objection to the ST reply. Unlike Rowe's formulation of POE, our argument contrasts two rival hypotheses—the hypothesis of indifference and classical theism—and asks which of the two renders D more likely. The hypothesis of indifference provides an explanation for D while ST leaves only mystery. Consider the respective epistemic probabilities, given D, of ST and the hypothesis of indifference. If we grant to the skeptical theist that we do not know the probability God would create a world with the D we observe, then we do not know whether D raises, lowers, or is neutral towards theism's epistemic probability. However, the D we observe is expected given the hypothesis of indifference; thus, $P(D|HI)$ is close to 1 and, thus, D raises $P(HI|D)$.¹⁰ While this is not enough to confirm the hypothesis of indifference (or to disconfirm ST), this does entail D is some bit of evidence for the hypothesis of indifference.¹¹

Some theists may object that their particular religion renders D probable, so D may also be evidence for their religion.¹² For example, Christians can point to Matthew 5:45, in which Jesus tells his followers God causes the sun to rise on both good and evil and rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. In other words, God has unknown reasons to bring about goodness and badness for individuals without regard for their moral differences. As a result, divine equality appears to be broken; D may appear arbitrary and unfair. Given Christian theism, the likelihood of D, $P(D|C)$, may be close to 1. Consequently, as with the hypothesis of indifference, $P(C|D)$ increases; D is evidence for both Christianity and the hypothesis of indifference.

There are several responses. First, we have difficulty seeing why D would be better evidence for Christian theism than for the hypothesis of indifference. Matthew 5:45 is vague and whether Jesus intends to discuss the sufferings that may befall various peoples is unclear. Similar interpretive problems occur

for allowing evil, Mark Piper writes, “[t]he benefit in question must either go primarily to the sufferer of evil, or the sufferer of evil must eventually be compensated for the evil in some way” (Piper 2007, 70); based on a footnote in (Piper, 2007), Eleanore Stump (apparently) agrees and adds additional criteria which Piper leaves out due to its controversial nature.

10. This claim follows by Bayes's Theorem, according to which $P(HI|D)$ is proportional to $P(D|HI)$, with a constant of proportionality equal to $P(HI)/P(D)$.
11. Here, I have assumed a common definition of evidence in which E counts as evidence for H iff $P(H|E) > P(H)$.
12. Several philosophers have offered views of this sort. For examples, see McHugh 2002; Craig 2007, 74–75; Otte 2004.

generally. Suppose D was just as good evidence for both Christianity and the hypothesis of indifference. In that case, D raises the probability of both hypotheses equally. Nonetheless, at best, the prior probabilities of Christianity and the hypothesis of indifference are approximately equal and, consequently, the best case for the Christian is that $P(C|D)=P(HI|D)=0.5$.

What do we mean by “best case”? Define the hypothesis of difference as the thesis that the universe, at bottom, cares about us. The hypotheses of indifference and difference are mutually incompatible and exhaustive. Christian theism is a particular version of the hypothesis of difference, so can be no more probable than the hypothesis of difference (this follows from the fact that $P(A\&B)$ is less than or equal to $P(A)$). Because the hypotheses of difference and indifference are symmetric, they are both equally intrinsically probable, and sum to 1. Thus, at most, $P(C|D)+P(HI|D)=1$. But because $P(C|D)=P(HI|D)$, we have $P(C|D)=P(HI|D)=0.5$. A proposition should only be believed if its probability is greater than 0.5, so neither the hypothesis of indifference nor Christian theism should be believed. *At best*, and all else being equal, we should be agnostic.¹³

Suppose $P(C)$ were less than $P(HD)$. Then, because D raises $P(C)$ and $P(HI)$ equally, $P(HI|D) > P(C|D)$. While this is not sufficient reason to accept the hypothesis of indifference (because the hypothesis of indifference may still be less than 0.5), we would have sufficient reason to reject Christian theism. Moreover, because $P(HD)=P(HI)$ and $P(C)$ is less than or equal to $P(HD)$, $P(C)$ cannot be greater than $P(HD)$. Therefore, unless the Christian can show D is *better* evidence for Christian theism than for the hypothesis of indifference, we should reject Christian theism.

Furthermore, in contrasting one hypothesis against another, inscrutability is normally taken to count against, and not in favor of, hypotheses. A workable and plausible explanation is always to be preferred over an appeal to mystery.¹⁴ While this is not a problem POG uniquely poses for ST, POG highlights a problem for ST.¹⁵ Having argued POG presents greater challenges to ST than the traditional POE, we now turn to five theodicies and argue they do not resolve POG.

13. For a defense of the claim that one believes p. only if the epistemic probability for p, given the evidence, is greater than 0.5, see, for example, Swinburne 2005, 6.

14. John Shook has recently made a similar argument; see his (2014).

15. We thank an anonymous reviewer at *Sophia* for suggesting this response.

Theodicies do not resolve POG

Theists often respond to POE by offering theodicies. Theodicies endeavor to show evils are required for some overriding reason and to make potential overriding reasons explicit. We consider five of the strongest and most popular theodicies. We demonstrate all five theodicies fare worse against POG than they do against the traditional POE and none of them succeed in resolving the challenge to theism posed by POG.

The free-will defense

If a benevolent God created humans with free-will, one result might be that humans freely choose to inflict suffering on each other. The free-will theodicy posits evil is the unavoidable cost of achieving the good free-will affords humans. As applied to POG, the free-will theodicy posits God created our world with opportunities for humans to choose to share with each other. We live in a globally connected world where one population can choose to help another resolve a local problem. Thus, the distribution of suffering is inequitable because some groups of humans freely choose not to help other groups. The differences in opportunity between geographic regions would be alleviated if those in more prosperous regions chose to help those in less prosperous regions. This objection fails for several reasons.

First, the majority of our ancestors lived prior to the establishment of global connectivity. Therefore, we have difficulty seeing how the free-will defense would apply to most of human history. Explaining some portion of D as the result of free choice would be a temporally parochial argument.

Second, humans could have been created with a greater propensity for sharing than most humans possess. Humans naturally categorize those who are less fortunate than themselves as less deserving of moral consideration, especially if the less fortunate are located outside of what they recognize as their geographic boundaries. Nonetheless, as evidenced by those humans who have been taught to do otherwise, God would have the power to create beings who are, by nature, unlikely to miscategorize the less fortunate.

Perhaps God could not have created beings less likely to miscategorize the less fortunate because doing so would undermine free-will. Swinburne writes, “For humans to have libertarian free choice between good and bad, not merely is the possibility of moral evil required, but the actual occurrence of a certain kind of natural evil—bad desires—is required” (1998, 141). Without the possibility of bad desires, there is no free choice to act morally. Swinburne considers the example of donating money to the starving. If one did not need to overcome selfish impulses, then being generous would not

be virtuous. We would lack a true choice between generous and selfish acts (1998, 141).

Swinburne argues “God cannot give us certain kinds of free will (certain strengths of temptations to choose between certain kinds of important actions) and at the same time ensure that there is only such-and-such a probability that we will do such-and-such bad or wrong actions. The stronger the temptation to do bad, and the more significant are the good or bad actions, the greater the possibilities for good that God gives us and the less the chance that those possibilities will be realized” (1998, 143). The possibility of doing ill is what makes the choice of doing good so righteous. Without such possibility, the goodness becomes hollow.

This line of argument, however, is not convincing. There is no reason to believe such limitations of free-will would be worse than the evils entailed by allowing unfettered free-will. Swinburne seems to assume free-will must be absolute to be valuable and the value of free-will overrides all other values. As Martin puts it, on this view (though he’s replying to a similar argument made by Plantinga, not Swinburne), “the value of freedom would outweigh any possible evil that might result from its misuse. Since the evil that could result from the misuse of freedom is potentially unlimited, freedom would have to be considered virtually of infinite value” (Martin 1990, 365–366). This seems implausible. Martin asks us to judge the value of two worlds:

W* A world with the same amount of pain and suffering as our world where God’s creatures have contra-causal freedom.

W1 A world with much less pain and suffering than our world where God’s creatures have only compatibilist freedom (Martin 1990, 367).

The preference for W* is not obvious. In fact, if we are concerned with suffering, W1 should be our obvious preference. Is feeding the starving more important, or that those who feed them can feel righteous about doing so? To those who care about the plight of the starving the question should not be difficult to answer.

The unequal distribution of the benefits of free-will is difficult to explain. Why should those who suffer from the free-will of others, while unable to benefit from free-will themselves due to circumstances beyond their control, find free-will beneficial? Why should a black child born into slavery in antebellum Georgia consider his master’s use of free-will to enslave him to be good—especially when the master’s use of free-will is at the expense of the child’s free-will? Why should a Jewish child unluckily born during Hitler’s rule consider Hitler’s free-will to institute the Final Solution a benefit outweighing the costs?

If free-will necessarily creates evils then, like other externalities, the just distribution of those evils would be one where the costs accrued were proportionate to the benefits received. Those who benefited most from free-will would bear the greatest burdens. However, we find ourselves facing the most unfair of all possibilities, the seemingly random geographical distribution of the costs and benefits of free-will, with those enjoying the most benefits often suffering the least consequences. The pernicious legacy of the use of free-will by slaveholders in the antebellum American south over their human property (largely deprived of their own free-will) continues to reverberate today and impede the opportunities of African-Americans born into a cycle of poverty and structural injustice. Similarly, countries which only recently emerged from the yolk of European colonialism continue to experience history's consequences.

We are left to ask why the evil use of free-will should have more egregious impacts in some places rather than others. Perhaps there is a cultural explanation for the role of free-will in disproportionate suffering. However, people do not typically choose their cultures. We are each born into cultures that mold our personalities and shape our values. One can break one's cultural mold and identify with a different culture, but the ability to do so is differentially geographically distributed. By endowing culture with causal explanatory power over human behavior, one undermines salient notions of free-will. To the extent our behaviors are mediated or shaped by culture, our free-will is proportionally diminished.

Perhaps, the theist might argue, cultural explanations are too mundane and the real explanation is supernatural. If there exist supernatural beings other than God—such as demons—then they might explain the geographic distribution of natural evils. Perhaps racist demons prefer to bring about greater suffering in some regions as compared to others.¹⁶ However, there is no evidence for the existence of racist demons and there is little reason God could not control these nefarious beings with God's overwhelming might. Contrary to the racist demon hypothesis, we do not observe natural evils following affected populations when they migrate.

Frank Murphy presents another explanation of the geographic distribution of natural evil (Murphy 2005, 343–346). Murphy's theodicy assumes God

16. Thanks to Brandon McCleary for suggesting the notion of “racist demons.” My response to the speculation that racist demons might cause geographically induced suffering is parallel to Moti Mizrahi's response to the suggestion that supernatural agents cause a heterogeneous distribution of natural endowments in his 2014.

has endowed humans with libertarian free-will, so it is logically impossible for God to know, in advance, the choices humans will make. Murphy concludes God is ignorant of which regions humans will settle and consequently ignorant of the natural evils they might be victimized by. For Murphy, God probably cannot design “any system of nature which did not have the potential to injure unsuspecting humans” (Murphy 2005, 345). In Murphy’s view, God cannot be held responsible when creatures choose to settle in areas prone to drought or earthquakes or in which there is a diminished opportunity to acquire natural resources. He argues by analogy:

Surely, if an airline mechanic knew about a crack in a jet turbine that would fail disastrously he would take steps to prevent that failure. But [divine] providence requires only that creatures have the capacity to learn the hidden perils of the world rather than an innate or revealed knowledge of such dangers.

(Murphy 2005, 345)

There are several ways in which Murphy’s view fails to address POG. To begin with, he simply asserts—but does not show—God probably could not create a world without the potential for natural evil. Contra Murphy, we can easily imagine a world with less of a potential for natural evil. Nick Trakakis has argued that God could have created a world without a potential for any natural evil at all (Trakakis 2005). Put this objection aside; perhaps Murphy has reasons we have not considered to believe a possible world without natural evil is impossible. There are some possible worlds in which natural evils exist yet D is just. For Murphy’s theodicy to be an adequate response to POG, he should show, contrary to appearances, D is just in our world.

There is another reason Murphy’s view fails to resolve POG. Given Murphy’s assumptions, God could not have known humanity’s future. Nonetheless, due to Her omniscience, God would know the set of possible configurations future human populations might inhabit given any particular geography. This is similar to how physicists model the atoms in a gas at thermal equilibrium, where any possible microscopic configuration is equiprobable. Calculations demonstrate, although the microscopic states are equiprobable, the system is almost guaranteed to fall within a very narrow range of macroscopic states since there will be some macroscopic states for which there are a larger number of microscopic states.¹⁷ God could have performed similar calculations

17. Anyone who wishes to convince themselves of this fact need only to consider a collection of coins. The collection of possible microstates will consist of a list of whether the upward facing side of each coin is heads or tails: i.e. THTHHHTH. The corresponding macroscopic state will be a sum in which one is added if the

and determined probable locations for human habitation, especially given other facts about the humans She created (e.g. human beings are unlikely to occupy the South Pole or the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean).

Furthermore, God could compute the *risks* incurred in any particular geography. A better analogy than Murphy's airplane mechanic would be the airplane's engineering team, who assess and safeguard the airplane against unknown risks. *Prima facie*, our world lacks the safeguards an engineer would put into her designs. Some theists may object God is not an engineer and to compare God to an engineer is idolatrous. However, when theists say God is not an engineer, they do not mean God is less skilled than an engineer; instead, God transcends the capabilities of any engineer. We should expect objects created by God to have superior designs.

The Fall defense

Inwagen takes a similar view to Murphy's, but incorporates details from the Christian theological notion of the Fall. According to Augustinian tradition, Original Sin, which entered the world when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, explains our world's imperfection. After the Fall, the world was restructured to include vast amounts of evil. Though the existence of a literal Adam and Eve has been invalidated by the empirical findings of science, Inwagen proposes a modified version of the story. On Inwagen's story, God guided animal evolution for hundreds of millions of years, up to the point of producing "very clever primates," the immediate ancestors of human beings. God selected a small community of our immediate ancestors and miraculously imbued them with the gifts of rationality, language, and free will. God also brought these now fully modern human beings into special union with Godself. These beings lived in perfect harmony and love with each other and with God, and they possessed special powers allowing them to predict and escape natural disasters and to protect themselves from wild animals and diseases. Death did not come to these humans and there was no evil enacted upon them (Inwagen 2006, 85–86).

corresponding coin is heads and a negative one is added if the corresponding coin is tails: i.e. $S = -1 + 1 - 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 - 1 + 1$. Listing all of the possible microstates and computing the corresponding sums will show $S = 0$ has the largest number of corresponding states for any system consisting of at least two coins. Similar results obtain for gases; e.g. given a system with a particular amount of thermal energy, there will be a temperature for which there will correspond the largest number of possible microstates. See the extended discussion in (C. Kittel and H. Kroemer 1980).

For some unknown reason, “in some way that must be mysterious to us,” these human beings were not content with their situation and “they abused the gift of free will and separated themselves from their union with God” (Inwagen 2006, 86). As a result, humans became subject to the ravages of nature and became threats to each other through their abuse of free will. Latent genes from their animal ancestors, held in abeyance while these humans remained in union with God, were unleashed and resulted in “an inborn tendency to do evil against which all human efforts are vain” (Inwagen 2006, 87).

Inwagen argues that the heterogeneous geographic distribution of natural evil can be explained in terms of this Fall. Specifically, the post-Fall loss of their preternatural ability to sense natural disasters can explain why humans sometimes stumble into regions where natural evil occurs with greater frequency (Inwagen 1988, 171). Inwagen provides an analogy. If God created a random distribution of pits covering the Earth’s surface, and we were left blind by the Fall, our ancestrally inherited sin, acquired through the free-will of our ancestors, would cause us to continually fall into the pits (Inwagen 1988, 182–183). This analogy still fails to explain the geographic distribution of natural evils. Given Inwagen’s view of natural evil as a reminder of the broken nature of our world, his account should predict a relatively uniform geographic distribution of natural evil. There is no reason some geographic regions should contain creatures more in need of a reminder that we live in a Fallen world or of their Fallen nature—and, therefore, more in need of exposure to natural evils—than creatures living in other regions.

For some populations to arbitrarily require more of a reminder than others would violate divine equality. Yet Inwagen notes some regions do contain creatures more in need of a reminder. In the “relatively prosperous and well-ordered West,” middle-class people are “subject to an illusion about human nature and the conditions of human life” in which “they foolishly regard the kind of life they lead as the sort of thing human nature can be trusted to produce.” Yet the “wretched of the earth” are better educated as to “human nature” (Inwagen 1988, 175). If God intends for all to be aware of their broken, Fallen nature, why didn’t God construct the world so all may be equally aware? In contrast, our world is one where believers densely populate some regions and where, according to Inwagen, often the believers suffer the most. Inwagen’s view leaves mystery: why would those most in need of understanding our Fallen nature be those to whom their Fallen nature was least obvious?

Inwagen invokes genetic mechanisms in order to justify the continued effects of the Fall beyond the human generation directly responsible for

Original Sin. According to Inwagen, subsequent human beings are subject to the genetically derived tendencies towards selfishness and brutish behavior inherited from their animal ancestors and previously suppressed by God's presence. By invoking genetics, Inwagen opens himself to two problems. First, if Inwagen is correct, "sinful" human beings are more victims of their ancestry than willful perpetrators of premeditated evil. "An inborn tendency to do evil against which all human efforts are vain" surely eradicates the free will with which Inwagen seeks to explain away evil. On this view, human beings are genetically "damned" before they are ever born, and consequently one would be unjust to hold human beings accountable for their supposedly "free" decisions to commit evil. We are left to wonder why God has not stepped into alter our genetic tendencies so as to at least allow human beings the opportunity to freely resist evil, and, moreover, to reverse the tendency and render human beings predisposed to kindness and love.

Inwagen's description of God seems to render God deeply unjust, contrary to God's nature as a perfectly good being. According to Inwagen, God has not removed these evils "because to have done it would have frustrated his [sic] plan for restoring human beings to their original union with him by removing an essential motive for cooperating with him [sic]—namely, the realization that there is something horribly wrong with the world they live in...Allowing horrors to occur opens the possibility of a supernatural good for humanity that is infinitely better than perfect natural happiness" (Inwagen 2006, 104). God *could* remove these horrors from the world, but to do so would prevent people from realizing how bad things can get when they have lost their unity with God. Evils are therefore an inducement to return to God (although it is not explained how this could occur given the innate genetic tendencies that he posited earlier in his defense) and therefore serve a greater good.

Despite Inwagen's remarks, God's plan has (apparently) not been a good one. Evils have gone on for a long time and have yet to induce human beings to return to their unity with God. In fact, evils seem to have had the opposite of the intended effect since they have generated the philosophical discussion in this article and elsewhere. Further, if unity with God has its own supernatural rewards, wouldn't those rewards themselves be sufficient to draw human beings toward God? Must God use the stick in addition to the carrot? If free will is imperative, why not allow human beings to decide if they want the carrot without seeking to compel them through the propagation of horrors? Inwagen's God is a petulant one. One who will allow the most egregious evils if human beings do not comport with God's plan.

Inwagen attempts to save the situation by contending that for all we know God *does* prevent a considerable amount of evil. The worst of the worst evils are prevented, but we cannot take them into consideration because they never happened. To prevent *all* horrors, however, would be to thwart his plans as described above and some are therefore allowed to unfold. Inwagen then asks: “And if he prevents some horrors, how shall he decide which ones to prevent? Where shall he draw the line?—the line between threatened horrors that are prevented and threatened horrors that are allowed to occur?” (Inwagen 2006, 105). Inwagen responds that the line must be drawn arbitrarily. A line simply must be drawn, though there is never any particular point at which if any given specific evil were prevented it would lead to the unraveling of the plan. But to make exceptions for each one of these evils would cumulatively have the effect of subverting the plan and therefore none of the evils that fall beyond the arbitrary line are prevented.

This is a problematic response. It might have some degree of plausibility were the amount of evils in our world less pervasive and less horrendous. If those evils seemed anywhere close to an acceptable line. But Inwagen’s arbitrary line has been drawn so far out on the side of allowing evils that it has allowed the Holocaust, mass instances of starvation, and devastating epidemics. The line does not appear to be reasonably drawn. Even if this judgment were said to be subjective and therefore not conclusive—especially since we don’t know what God knows—here the POG again demonstrates its force. An arbitrary line would still need to be one drawn fairly. Even if it were conceded that a certain amount of evil must needs be allowed, why subject people to it unequally based upon geographical location?

Inwagen opens himself to this objection in an analogy that he gives. He asks us to consider 1,000 children afflicted with a fatal illness, one that is curable if treated with the proper dosage of a medication. We have enough medicine to save some of the children, but if we divide the medicine equally so as to give some of it to all of the children, none will receive enough and they will all die. It is therefore necessary to divide the medicine. But the amount of dosage needed cannot be exactly determined. Were a little less given to each child, it might still be effective while conserving enough to save one more child. And perhaps a little less in the dosage could save one more child. But the further the medication is diluted, the greater the risk that it will not be effective. At some point a decision must be made. One that will have some level of arbitrariness to it. A dosage must be determined and the available medicines provided to however many children possible. But how to choose the N number of children who will receive it? Inwagen tells us that “The N

children will be chosen by lot, or by some other ‘fair’ means” (Inwagen 2006, 109). The children who are deprived the drug should not be chosen according to where they are from or where they live, or by any other morally arbitrary attribute, but should rather be selected randomly through a fair drawing of lots. So we would expect with evils more generally. If God was forced to draw an arbitrary line of allowable evils, we would at least expect that those evils would have been distributed randomly and fairly rather than being inequitably foisted upon those inhabiting particular geographic locations. The evils that fell beyond God’s line of allowable evil would be evenly distributed rather than clustered. So while Inwagen’s defense is highly implausible and problematic for a number of reasons, it is even more so under the POG. In addition to its many other problems, Inwagen’s defense fails to account for the unequal geographical distribution of evils in the world.

John Hick’s soul-building theodicy

We move on to consider Hick’s soul-building theodicy. Bad experiences often make us stronger. One might suppose God allows suffering for our souls to build character (Hick 1966, 253–261). Hick’s soul-building theodicy leaves D inexplicable. As we have explained throughout, different groups of people suffer disproportionately and are provided differential opportunities for flourishing. Do the individuals in some societies possess souls with a deeper need for “character training” than the souls of individuals in other societies? Wouldn’t this be an unjust bias favoring some societies over others?

Suppose two societies—A and B—occupy neighboring geographic locations. A’s land dries up and famine ensues when A’s crops no longer grow. B’s members have a chance to develop their character, but A’s do not. We may suppose the individuals in A are afforded a chance to develop their character if they survive the famine and B comes into their own problems, but any member of A who is born and dies during the famine never had an occasion for the sort of soul-building afforded members of B.¹⁸

The laws of nature theodicy

For humans to act virtuously, the universe might have to behave in a predictable manner. For example, in order for us to help others, we require an understanding of what sort of consequences our actions have. Particular laws of nature should obtain for actions to yield predictable results. Thus, the laws of nature may be required for virtuous behavior. Perhaps the same laws result in D’s unequitable distribution. In sum: for humans to act virtuously there

18. This response was constructed in parallel with Mizrahi’s (2014, 12–13).

need to be natural laws, but if there are natural laws of the requisite sort, D will not be equitable.

While some aspects of POG may be explicable in terms of natural law, different distributions of natural evils do not violate natural law. Why couldn't an omnipotent deity create a universe with either different natural laws or different initial conditions, yielding a more just distribution, but still allow humans to understand the results of their actions?

Hume considered a theodicy of this sort, but remarks if the laws of nature exist so actions have predictable outcomes, we are left to wonder why most of the consequences of our actions are not predictable (Hume 1779 [1992], 269). Although Hume utilizes this observation to conclude God is free to change the course of nature without our noticing (so no harm is necessitated by natural law after all), Hume's observation undermines the laws of nature theodicy in another way. We are often ignorant of the consequences of our actions so natural laws are not sufficient for us to know the consequences our actions produce. We require an additional capacity to understand what sort of consequences our actions would have. Consider a group of nomadic peoples who are considering where to settle. If they choose to settle in one location, the consequence may be that they starve. Unknown to them, the soil in one location is less fertile than the neighboring valley and, come winter, the group will starve. If humans possessed the capacity to consistently know the consequences of their actions—which seems to be what the natural law theodicy lacks—they would know which valley they should settle in. The nomad's starvation would be mitigated.

The after-life theodicy

Tim Mawson argues any suffering we experience in this life is rectified by an eternity of bliss after death (Mawson 2005, 207–208). Regardless of suffering's distribution in the present life, the next life provides everyone equal opportunities for eternal bliss. Perhaps D can be explained by appealing to the after-life.

The after-life theodicy fails to explain D. Consider the geographic distribution of resources in the present life. According to some theologies, one's placement in the after-life is determined by the actions one takes in the present life. What people do in the present life is largely determined by their access to resources. Thus, an unjust distribution of resources in the present life results in an unjust placement in the after-life. A second problem: future reward does not eliminate or erase present suffering. If Tatiana tortures Dan but later provides Dan a mansion and a lifetime stipend, the torture remains

unjustified. Future compensation does not imply present evils are not evils. Furthermore, the existence of future reward does not explain the unequal distribution of evils. Even if future compensation explained particular sufferings, future compensation cannot explain why some people suffer disproportionately to others as a function of their geographic locations.

Conclusion

We have argued D is better explained by the hypothesis of indifference than on theism. While the theist may be able to explain all individual sufferings, the distribution of suffering or of opportunities for flourishing is left unexplained. POG represents an advancement over the traditional POE and is less susceptible to refutation by common theodicies and to ST. The five theodicies we considered left D mysterious or entailed divine equality violations. Whether D is sufficient evidence to deny theism is left for future work. Perhaps POG undermines theism, but some stronger theistic argument raises the probability of theism over that of the hypothesis of indifference.

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