

Response paper on being an atheist philosophy essay



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In the H. J. McCloskey article entitled, On Being an Atheist he begins with assertions that are absent of logic, common sense, and reasoning. He reaches all these conclusions without even a respectful cursory reading of God's word, much less study. I will attempt to show where his arguments do not, conclusively prove that atheism is true, or that God does not exist.[1]I find it interesting that he does not address ontological arguments (the idea of God proves, or adds evidence to, the fact that He exists and, in fact, dismisses them. Therefore, I want to point out that ontological arguments do not prove atheism, because simply declaring yourself an atheist does not qualify you as an atheist. With all due respect, Mr. McCloskey argues in favor of atheism and attempts to discredit theism, by using multiple approaches one being that God failed to establish His own existence, and he claims in his cosmological argument, that the existence of all that we experience and see while on earth, does not prove God exists or that He is even necessary.[2]

Proofs can't definitively establish the case for God

First, McCloskey implies proofs can't definitively establish the case for God, so they should be abandoned. McCloskey makes no effort to define evil, nor does he attempt to explain it. He tries to discredit anyone's belief in God, by attacking the origin of their belief, but he never addresses why a person's faith cannot be valid whether they examine all the evidence prior to accepting Christian theism are not! To understand McCloskey's argument, you have to understand relativism, which is a position where all points of view are equally valid and all truth is relative to the individual, but relativism does not prove there is no God. Philosophy sometimes clouds issues to the point, that nothing can be known for sure. For the Christian, the ultimate

expression of truth is found in Jesus' words in John 14: 6, " I am the way, the truth, and the life..." McCloskey portrays God as jaded, accusatory, argumentative, uncaring, incompetent, unforgiving, and punitive. Mr. McCloskey is putting forth a cause and effect argument absent of consequences. McCloskey says the best proofs of the non existence of God are the evil acts of men and women and he circumvents morality, and focuses on evil, because morality is stronger proof that an intelligent creator designed the universe. As a result, McCloskey struggles with the question: Why is there evil and suffering in the world?[3]

The Cosmological Argument

In his book: Reasonable Faith, William Lane Craig, writes, " There must exist a creator, or a being responsible for all creation and that creator has no need of a cause, as do those things which have an origin. So everything that begins to exist does need a cause, but to say that something has no beginning does not need a cause, denies the existence of a predecessor." [4]

In Dr. Evans book, Philosophy of Religion, he summarized the " cause" question saying, " The person who believes in God and the person who does not believe in God, do not merely disagree about God. They disagree about the very character of the universe."

If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist and since they do, then God does exist. Cultural relativism makes the culture the supreme determinant of right and wrong; therefore, the culture becomes god.

McCloskey flippantly and wrongly asserts, " There is no God, because of all the evil and wickedness in the world." [5] Mr. McCloskey argues against

theism and paints a picture of humanity being little more than animals and acts that we classify as murder, torture, and rape are natural and amoral just as in the animal kingdom. Moreover, if there is no rule of law to prohibit certain actions, how can we have moral obligations or prohibitions? The cosmological argument asks: Is something good because God wills it, or does God will something because it's good? Theists have traditionally taught: God wills something, because He is good, but that doesn't ignore divine sovereignty. William Craig's answer is, " God's moral nature is itself the ultimate standard of moral goodness. God's moral nature is what Plato called the " Good." He is the source of moral value." [6]

The Teleological Argument

McCloskey claims, as does many philosophers, that in order to believe that nature was designed, there would need to be examples that were indisputable. The Argument of Design, appeals to a principle of reasoning that seems to be firmly embedded in common sense and in scientific thinking, so he asks, " How can evil exist if an omnipotent God really exists?" That brings us to the concept of free moral will. Evil is not something God deliberately and maliciously created so that humans could experience pain and suffering. Atheists never deal with the question of what the purpose of man's existence is.

Julian Huxley, representing the atheist view, said: We are as much a product of blind forces as is the falling of a stone to Earth, or the ebb and flow of the tides. We have just happened, and man was made flesh by a long series of singularly beneficial accidents. [7] McCloskey asks why God can't keep

humans from making wrong decisions? The teleological argument says, " To <https://assignbuster.com/response-paper-on-being-an-atheist-philosophy-essay/>

approach this proof, indisputable examples of design would be required.”

Generally speaking, to give an example of design, would make it possible that there is a Designer; and in order for that possibility to exist, God must exist! McCloskey says, “ No being who was perfect could have created a world in which there was so much suffering or in which his creatures would engage in morally evil acts, which often result in injury to innocent persons.

[8]Moral evil is caused by the actions and wrong choices of free, morally responsible beings. Natural evil, is the evil that does not occur as a result of a responsibly moral being. God is justified in allowing evil, because he is God and we are not! Alvin Plantinga in his book: God, Freedom, and Evil writes, “ God has reasons for allowing evil that we can’t know and would not understand if we did. Some of the evils in the world happen in order to produce second order virtues. For example, a first order evil occurs, when a grizzly bear charges a man’s daughter; perhaps a second order virtue, courage, is produced when the man charges the bear waving his arms to scare the bear off. Or, if the bear gets the girl, which would be evil, perseverance and reliance on Christ could be the second order virtue of the man. The second order evils that occur, are opposite virtues, such as cowardice? This is the result of the mistakes of Man and his poor use of free choice.”[9]McCloskey’s discussion of free will begins when he asks why God did not arrange so that man always makes the right choice. His argument, is not logical, because had God decreed that everyone always choose the right path, then no one would have a free will. As Evans stated in his book, Philosophy of Religion: Thinking About Faith, A God allows human kind a free will, because without it we could not be morally responsible, nor would we be capable of freely doing good by responding to and loving our Creator.

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Atheists cannot always argue that free will and necessitation to virtue are incompatible, because they represent God himself as possessing a free will and as being incapable of acting immorally. If this can be the case with God, why can it not be so with all free agents?[10]

The Presence of Evil.

There is the idea postulated worldwide that states, the amount of good in the world ultimately outweighs the evil in the world. It's the Agreater Good@ argument where a greater good is achieved and therefore the good will always outweigh the bad. So by McCloskey's definition, wholesale murder is wrong, but unavoidable. If the atheist says there is no such thing as objective morality, the atheist loses all credibility. In JudeoChristian theism, we believe objective morality exists, and is the byproduct of the regenerate heart and mind, and if morality is transcendent of the opinions of man, it becomes nothing more than logic, when in fact morality is far more important than logic. So does atheism have a better explanation for the existence of objective morality? McCloskey offers nothing to the debate!

Atheism is not comforting

Our universe is a maze of mysteries, like how can gravity pull the Milky Way into a spiral?

How can atoms contain such power that matter, smaller than a dime, produced the energy in the bomb that killed 100, 000 Hiroshima residents? How can the doublehelix thread of DNA create all living things, from bacteria to trees to Beethoven? How can electrons, dormant in every atom of your body, explode into violent lightning bolts when they're detached? Why does

anything exist? If we say that the power of gravity, atoms, DNA, lightning and all the rest is God B and that God is $E = MC^2 B$ then God exists. Those baffling forces are undeniably real. McCloskey offers some encouragement and insight saying, "Atheism is not comforting when you consider the problem of evil. Instead, atheism adopted by a thoughtful and sensitive person, leads to a spirit of self reliance, and self respect which demands that we comfort and help those who need such support, because it will mitigate the blows of fate.[11]William Lane Craig was absolutely accurate when he spoke ingeniously, "If God does not exist, then you are just a miscarriage of nature, thrust into a purposeless universe to live a purposeless life." [12]