

Qu'il s'agisse de la sociologie bourdieusienne, de la déconstruction derridienne ou de la généalogie foucaldienne, Michel démontre tour à tour comment Ricœur peut entrer en dialogue avec la pensée post-structuraliste et même s'accorder sur plusieurs points, sans toutefois perdre l'originalité de sa pensée. L'ouvrage est structuré en cinq chapitres, chacun portant sur une comparaison entre la philosophie de Ricœur et celle d'un autre auteur. Le premier chapitre porte sur Bourdieu, le deuxième sur Derrida, le troisième sur Deleuze et Guattari, le quatrième sur Foucault et le cinquième sur Castoriadis. À travers des lectures de Spinoza, Nietzsche, Levinas, Hegel, Freud et Marx, l'ouvrage tente de lier plusieurs aspects de la philosophie de Ricœur aux diverses ambitions de dépasser les limites du structuralisme.

Michel conclut en présentant un nouveau portrait de Ricœur. Au lieu de l'image traditionnelle de l'herméneute conservateur, il dégage la figure d'un penseur prudent mais progressiste pouvant être rangé aux côtés de Derrida et de Foucault.

Pour les adeptes de la pensée post-structuraliste française, cet ouvrage peut ouvrir des nouvelles avenues dans l'exploration et la déconstruction du «sujet» ricœurien. Cependant, la brièveté de l'ouvrage ne va pas sans certaines lacunes. Chacune des analyses, bien que déployée de manière claire et concise, loin de se prêter à une lecture facile, suppose déjà une bonne initiation, les comparaisons proposées par l'auteur étant basées sur une connaissance approfondie de la philosophie ricœurienne. L'ouvrage s'adresse donc en définitive à des lecteurs qui, possédant une certaine familiarité avec celle-ci et avec la pensée des autres auteurs abordés, seront en mesure d'apprécier l'intérêt des rapprochements effectués par Johann Michel.

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Corey MILLER and Paul GOULD (eds.), **Is Faith in God Reasonable? Debates in Philosophy, Science and Rhetoric**. New York NY: Routledge, 2014, 15.7 × 23.11 cm, 188 p., ISBN 978-0415709408.

This volume edited by Corey Miller and Paul Gould is based on a debate between Christian philosopher and theologian, William Lane Craig and atheist philosopher Alex Rosenberg which took place on February 1, 2013 at Purdue University. The debate was centered around the following question: "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" It drew a significant amount of attention and is considered one of the most viewed debates of our current decade (p. 5). The bulk of this work consists of the following components: an introduction and a transcript of the debate between Craig and Rosenberg, eight responses from different scholars (forming a chapter each) and finally, rejoinders by Craig and Rosenberg.

In the introduction, Miller and Gould, seek to situate the context surrounding various God debates in modern day Western culture. They both note that there has been a significant amount of attention in the past decade on questions related to God, faith and meaning of life. This is not only true for the academic world

(particularly Anglo-American academia) but also for the popular culture. Countless popular books have been written on God by public intellectuals such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Michel Onfray, Timothy Keller, Antony Flew, David Berlinski and many others. In the academic world, the resurgence of rigorous analysis of the God question dates back to 1957 with the publication of Stuart Hackett's *The Resurrection of Theism: Prolegomena to Christian Apology* but the work that spearheaded the revolution in Christian philosophy was Alvin Plantinga's 1967 *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. This work spawned the awakening of much of the subsequent works in Christian philosophy by many thinkers including Craig, J.P. Moreland, Peter van Inwagen, Timothy McGrew, Alexander Pruss, Charles Taliaferro, Robin Collins, John Leslie and many others. This revolution in thought has also given rise to various philosophy journals including *Faith and Philosophy*, *Sophia*, *The International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, *Religious Studies*, and *Philosophia Christi* and numerous anthologies (pp. 3-4). This does not even take into account the various journals that have arisen in recent decades on the science-theology interaction and the countless volumes geared around such topics. Many documentaries have also been produced. This strongly suggests that the God question is very much alive and even respectable (ironically, more so in academic than nonprofessional circles). The editors also provide a brief commentary on the notions of "faith," "God," and "reasonable." They do not get into extensive definitions since each respondent and the two debaters provide their own understanding of these terms.

The debate itself consists of an opening speech, two rebuttals, and concluding remarks. Craig opens the debate by providing eight reasons that are best explained by God's existence:

1. Why anything at all exists.
2. The origin of the universe.
3. The applicability of mathematics to the physical world.
4. The Fine-Tuning of the universe for intelligent life.
5. Intentional states of consciousness in the world.
6. Objective moral values and duties in the world.
7. Historical facts about Jesus of Nazareth.
8. God can be personally known and experienced (pp. 13-19).

Each of the eight arguments are summarized by Craig in syllogistic forms. Presenting the arguments in syllogistic form allows the audience to follow his line of reasoning more easily and as such, has a strong pedagogical merit.

Rosenberg's opening statement begins with an *ad hominem* fallacy suggesting that Craig has never bothered to revise his arguments since he presents them in the same fashion every time:

Craig's arguments tonight are exactly the same as seven or eight or nine Internet presentations of his arguments in the past. And what it leads me to ask is, is Dr. Craig infallible or does he just not listen? Probably the latter. And I don't think that he listens because he's really not interested in getting at the truth, he is interested in scoring debating points (p. 19).

What is interesting about this accusation is that Rosenberg fails to acknowledge that Craig has published his research on, for instance, the origin of the universe, which is related to the *Kalam Cosmological Argument* in numerous peer reviewed journals since the late 1970s. This body of work involves many responses to a great number of critics. Craig has also defended this argument in many anthologies, as well as several manuscripts. Rosenberg also commits the *appeal to irrelevant authority* fallacy when he criticizes Craig's position on fundamental physics, philosophy and the existence of God stating that:

[T]here are 2,000 members of the National Academy of Sciences, the most important body of the most distinguished scientists in the United States (of which four are faculty here at Purdue as are Purdue's two Nobel Prize winners in chemistry), of these 2,000 people, 95% of them are atheists and the percentage for the physicists is even higher. What do these people know about physics that Dr. Craig doesn't know? Is it a coincidence that this number of members of the National Academy of Sciences are unbelievers? I think it isn't and I think it requires us to take with a certain lack of confidence the claims that Dr. Craig makes about science. (p. 20).<sup>1</sup>

From a logical standpoint these figures seem largely irrelevant. Whatever the personal belief of a scientist may be is of no consequence to the truth of a specific claim, particularly when it involves a wholly different domain of knowledge. Argumentation regarding the existence or non-existence of God involves philosophy and theology, not solely natural science, i.e., empirical observation but a deep reflection upon the findings of science and its implications. Moreover, science may be used to substantiate a premise in an argument but science alone cannot adjudicate the question of the existence of God. It is not meant to do so. Rosenberg's main line of argumentation is to bolster a brand of scientism, whereby science can explain all domains of inquiry (pp. 20-23). He also presents an underdeveloped version of the problem of evil which ignores the distinction between the logical problem of evil versus the evidential/probabilistic problem of evil (pp. 23-24). The former has been abandoned by many atheists and theists alike, which suggests that the existence of evil is logically incompatible with the existence of God. The debate has shifted to the latter, namely to deciphering the extent to which evil may exist with respect to certain instances, kinds and amounts which then can be argued to be pieces of evidence against the existence of an omnibenevolent, omniscient and omnipotent God. Rosenberg has fixated on the logical problem of evil and seems to be unaware of recent developments since he does not raise the probabilistic problem of evil. This is something Craig also points out in his first (p. 24) and second rebuttal (p. 32), where, in addition to the first eight arguments for the existence of God presented in his opening statement, he outlines eight more. Craig demonstrates through these arguments why "metaphysical naturalism is so contrary to reason and experience as to be absurd" (p. 25). The first premise of each argument is taken from Rosenberg's book, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions*. One of Craig's arguments demonstrating the absurdity of metaphysical naturalism states the following:

1. On p. 169 Rosenberg continues with this line of reasoning without supplying us with any positive evidence as to why science should lead to the conclusion of atheism or as he puts it, that there is "inductive evidence that science is incompatible with theism."

And finally, the argument from personal existence. This is perhaps the *coup de grace* against naturalism. According to Dr. Rosenberg,

1. If naturalism is true, I do not exist.  
He says there are no selves, there are no persons, no first-person perspectives. But,
2. I do exist.  
I know this as certainly as I know anything! From which it follows
3. Therefore, naturalism is not true (pp. 27-28).

Interestingly, in Rosenberg's rebuttal he accepts the absurdities that arise out of "science." It seems to me that these absurdities do not necessarily follow from science itself nor its methodology, rather I think the issue lies with Rosenberg not distinguishing between methodological naturalism (which is how the scientific method proceeds) and metaphysical naturalism (the belief that nature is all there is). Here is what he states:

None of the things that he says are manifestly false and that I have argued for in my book follow from atheism. Therefore, of course, the *modus tollens* argument, as we call it in logic, which Professor Craig is trying to advance, is based on a complete misrepresentation of what it says in that book [*The Atheist's Guide to Reality*]. What it says in that book is that all these alleged absurdities *along with atheism* follow from the truth of science. Now, you can reject all these alleged absurdities, but, if I am right about the logical structure of my argument, you've got to reject science. And I don't think Dr. Craig wants to reject science because he's building God on his interpretation of what science is supposed to show (pp. 29-30).

It is worth noting that Rosenberg also conflates two of the typologies of cosmological arguments; those involving the principle of causality (based on causes) with those involving the principle of sufficient reason (based on explanations), when he states that "the principle of sufficient reason, the principle that everything that exists must have a cause" (p. 20). Both Timothy McGrew (p. 99) and Craig (p. 33) explain the issues arising out of such a conflation.

Those interested to see where Rosenberg's line of argumentation leads and if Craig's criticisms are on point or miss the mark, will have to assess the entire debate and their rejoinders for themselves.

The other major section of the volume involves the assessment of the debate by a number of other scholars. The majority of respondents are trained philosophers including Paul K. Moser, Tim McGrew, Theodore Drange, and Michael Ruse – the first two are self-professing theists while Drange is an atheist and Ruse an agnostic. The other four respondents comprise two physicists Robert Kaita and the late Victor Stenger and two professors of communication: Martin Medhurst and Clarke Rountree. Two of the more substantive responses in terms of dealing with the arguments presented in the debate include Drange's and McGrew's. I will examine these very briefly for the sake of space. The response from Drange, "Some Philosophical Aspects of the Craig-Rosenberg Debate," provides a much more systematic, while at the same time, tempered and better articulated rebuttal of Craig's main arguments, compared to Rosenberg's. Engaging with Drange's reasoning will be of use for theists who seek to strengthen their position and discard possible weak links. Most of Drange's criticisms are from an epistemological point of view. He criticizes Craig for

the lack of explanation and further clarification as to what each argument is supposed to entail. In some instances, the criticism is valid; for example, Craig's second argument requires a more robust defense of the first premise which has been pointed out and more rigorously developed in Mark Nowacki's work, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument for God*.<sup>2</sup>

McGrew, just like Drange, goes through all of Craig's arguments. McGrew explains the reasonableness of each one but admits that these arguments will not decisively settle the question at hand. Nevertheless, he himself weighs "heavily on the side of theism" (p. 110). The most interesting move that McGrew makes is in his assessment of whether Rosenberg is, in fact, being consistent in what he is attempting to affirm. Rosenberg is affirming the validity of logic, his own rationality and his own existence to only deny it from the point of view of eliminative reductionism, which is patently absurd and self-referentially incoherent. McGrew illustrates this, in an amusing way, when analyzing each of Rosenberg's statements in the Q & A period of the debate:

Look [Implicitly, *You* look – but who is "you" here?], [Beginning of a logical relation? But those aren't physical] I [Who?] am going to [Purposive action?] get scientism into your skull [Don't like the sound of that, thank you very much] I [No, but really, who??] have to use [Purposive action again?] the only tools we've got for moving information [A moment please – what is information?]. . . (p. 11).

In summary, Craig outlines a robust case for the existence of God and most specifically the Christian God through well-reasoned and articulated arguments. Rosenberg, unfortunately, does not fully engage in argumentation against Craig's position. This renders his atheism on rather shaky and unreasonable grounds. It seems that the theist, in this case, is able to demonstrate the reasonableness of faith in God whereas the atheist fails on the grounds of logic and reason. Nonetheless, there are many things to be discovered from the respondents' own respective assessment of the debate. Regardless of what one's position is, regarding the reasonableness or unreasonableness concerning the faith in God, this volume is a worthwhile read for those interested in philosophical theology, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science and rhetoric. It will help clear up muddy waters and refine one's own argumentation. It may even persuade some that their previous held position may not be in concordance with the structure of reality. This book can function as a valuable resource for those who are interested in deep and difficult questions regarding faith, God and reason.

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2. NOWACKI, Mark. *The Kalam Cosmological Argument for God*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007.