

child. These things, it seems to me, are good in and of themselves. What makes them good, what explains their goodness, lies entirely within their intrinsic nature. If there are such intrinsic goods, then it appears that neither Murphy's nor Adams's theory can account for them, and this is a strike against both theories. This is an explanandum-centred challenge to Adams's and Murphy's accounts of the goodness of finite things.

Whatever the merits of this criticism, Murphy has written a book very much worth reading. By way of conclusion, I should emphasize that the book contains a number of stimulating arguments beyond those I have sketched here. In particular, Murphy offers some novel challenges for standard natural law theory and theological voluntarism that defenders of those approaches will want to consider – though whether Murphy's arguments will 'settle' the theological voluntarists as he suggests they should (p. 132) remains to be seen.

JAMES D. MADDEN

*Benedictine College*

**Charles Taliaferro, Jil Evans. *The Image in Mind: Theism, Naturalism, and the Imagination*. Continuum, 2011.**

*The Image in Mind: Theism, Naturalism, and the Imagination* is an attempt to bring a previously underemphasized consideration to the forefront of the theism-naturalism debate: the comparative aesthetic value of opposed worldviews. The authors, Charles Taliaferro and Jil Evans, endeavour to shift our attention away from the more directly evidential questions that currently dominate the theism vs. naturalism literature toward such questions as 'What is beautiful or ugly, deep or superficial, extravagant or empty, illuminating or stultifying about these images' (p. 1)? Whether naturalism can account for the emergence of specifically aesthetic values is a theme tracked throughout the book, but Taliaferro and Evans are equally interested in the prospects of naturalistic accounts of the emergence of '... life, sentience, consciousness, free will, and moral, aesthetic, and religious experience through non-purposive, impersonal forces' (p. 3). They offer substantial discussions of each of these issues, and in doing so they employ an aesthetic mode of evaluation. Despite its relative brevity, *The Image in Mind* competently treats this broad sweep

of issues, but Taliaferro and Evans' most important contribution is the proposal of a novel, aesthetically based, methodology for evaluating competing philosophical perspectives.

Many analytic philosophers are likely to be scandalized by the suggestion of such an aesthetic methodology. Taliaferro and Evans set out to correct this implicit, and largely unreflective, mistrust of aesthetic standards for philosophizing in chapter 1. Marilyn McCord Adams has also suggested that aesthetic evaluations should not be so neatly quarantined from supposedly more properly truth-oriented modes of philosophizing. According to her diagnosis, analytic philosophy's dismissal of aesthetic criteria is an unnecessary consequence of post-positivist attempts to preserve the objectivity of ethics by contrasting it with the supposedly properly subjective realm of aesthetics. (See Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 129-132.) Taliaferro and Evans, however, contend that our recent dismissal of aesthetic criteria runs deeper than a hangover from the excesses of logical positivism in the last century, i.e., it is part and parcel of a general denigration of the role imagination plays in perception, agency, and rationality by even self-avowed anti-positivists that can be traced back to a tension present at the very beginnings of modern philosophy. They contrast the Cambridge Platonists with other early modern philosophers, mainly Descartes and Hobbes, and find that their attitudes toward the imagination are particularly instructive inasmuch as the former, and not the latter, take it that 'imagination can provide a natural means to make explicit and give shape to ideals that are not immediately observed ...' and thereby '... provide an arena in which to explore the good, the true, and the beautiful' (p. 13). This is a stream of early modern thought that the authors trace through Hume, Kant and Coleridge, but they note that this high view of imagination is called into question by Wittgenstein's and Ryle's influential arguments against private language and dualism respectively. Taliaferro and Evans argue that Wittgenstein's private language argument, whatever its broader value might be, fails to undermine the role of imagination in inquiry, because it does not actually establish that humans lack mental images entirely and Wittgenstein himself employs an imaginative method in developing the argument in the *Philosophical Investigations* (pp. 19-21). Likewise, Ryle bases his case against the Cartesian theory of mind by appealing to certain unfortunate images, e.g. 'the ghost in the machine', that he believes dualism foists on us (pp. 21-23).

According to Taliaferro and Evans, there is no reason to doubt our common intuition that imagination plays a significant role in perception, but they go on to argue that imagination plays a much more active role in our knowledge gathering by (a) providing *prima facie* evidence that a certain state of affairs is possible; (b) making explicit what is implicit in our other beliefs; (c) providing a means of pursuing specifically ethical and philosophical inquiry by way of the method of thought experiment; and (d) allowing us to make connections between evidence and challenges to evidence (pp. 24-30). The reader must keep in mind that the notion of 'imagination' in play is not a mere free-association of ideas, but rather '... the proposed use of imagination in testing theism and naturalism is one of enlargement of perspective ... rather than substitution' (p. 31). That is, evidentially significant imagination takes us beyond, yet is still grounded in, the data; it is a sort of picturing that allows us to put a body of evidence into a larger or more complete context that fills in the inevitable gaps and limitations in any given body of data. The aesthetic evaluation of these expansive images are what Taliaferro and Evans believe to be evidentially significant, particularly with respect to the assessment of the credibility of theism and naturalism.

In chapter 2, Taliaferro and Evans begin by articulating a mode of the aesthetic evaluation for expansive imagination that is integral even to our scientific inquiries. In particular, 'In science, as in art, one highly valued aesthetic feature is a cognitive, affective completeness or unity' (p. 39). Human beings 'long for unity and wholeness', but our ordinary experiences of the material world are fragmentary or otherwise incomplete. The impetus for inquiry is then our movement to discover a broader unity or wholeness that puts our particular experiences into a coherent picture. That is, we move to complete our fragmentary experience by developing an expansive image. This picture, however, is not merely a free association or substitution of one idea for another, but a *fitting* expansion. Whether an image is indeed fitting to a set of data becomes an evaluative criterion not only in visual arts, but inquiry in general, natural science included: 'These examples from science and the arts demonstrate that in the pursuit to bring the urge for wholeness to fruition, wholeness is achieved by images. Whether or not we are convinced by the images lies in how we believe the image is constructed', i.e. whether the image is fitting (p. 43). That is, 'The link between art and science has been recognized insofar as the criteria for accepting scientific theories [e.g., simplicity] may be cast in aesthetic terms' (p. 46),

and Taliaferro and Evans use Darwin's quasi-aesthetic concerns that helped to lead him to an evolutionary image as a confirmatory case for this claim. This is not to say that aesthetic considerations are primary in scientific inquiry, but only that 'beauty and aesthetic considerations in general have (as a matter of fact) impacted scientific work, and that many elements (imagination and creativity) that enter into artistic practice have their analogue in scientific investigations', and presumably there will likewise be evaluative analogies (*ibid.*).

At this point in the argument the notion of emergence, i.e., the coming to be of a *sui generis* form or way of being from a prior or more fundamental form, becomes crucial for Taliaferro and Evans. The emergence of novel forms has vast plasticity in the visual arts (and presumably other mediums alike). Nevertheless, even in this context emergence is not without its limits: 'But it is important to realize that the emergent entities are grounded in something that is identifiable; otherwise there would not be a picture of metamorphosis, but a picture of no identities or without intelligible identity of any kind.' (p. 65) That is, in the visual arts, emergence is limited by a fittingness relation, however polymorphous it might be within these limitations, between the emergent form and the ground from which it is derived. Analogously, the fittingness between an emergent form and the metaphysical resources of a broad worldview by which we attempt to account for it then becomes the central aesthetic criterion by which we are to judge theism and naturalism throughout the remainder of *The Image in Mind*. Taliaferro and Evans' treatment of the plausibility of libertarian free will serves as a good example of how this method bears out. On the one hand, they take theism as the view that 'offers an account of the whole cosmos in terms of a good, purposive Creator' (p. 57). On the other hand, naturalism, though it may vary in terms of the strength of the physicalist reduction it proposes, takes the universe as fundamentally free of purpose or ultimate direction because natural science is the ultimate arbiter of truth and 'appeals to theism or souls are scientifically inscrutable and thus not acceptable' (p. 48). The authors then use a familiar argument from Galen Strawson to show that libertarian freedom is not at all plausible given a strongly reductivist version of naturalism, and they argue that attempts by non-reductivist naturalists, e.g., Unger and Searle, to give emergentist accounts of libertarian freedom are generally unpromising. Thus, there is not much of a 'fit' between libertarian free will and a naturalistic worldview. In theism, however, we have an image wherein freedom is much more at

home: 'Consciousness and freedom do not emerge as a radical break in an impersonal cosmos. At the heart of reality, God is conscious and free.' (p. 60) If we are inclined to take fittingness, even in an aesthetic sense, as a criterion for evaluation, theism would seem to have an edge.

In chapter 3 Taliaferro and Evans extend their application of the methodology of aesthetic fit to the coming to be of a well-ordered, contingent universe and the emergence of consciousness. After offering plausible replies to standard naturalist objections to the intelligibility of theism and dismissals of the significance of the 'cosmic question', they argue that, whereas theism has ready answers as to why a contingent universe exists, '... naturalism is only able to give us the blunt answer that there is no deeper account as to why the cosmos exists or continues in being' (p. 71). Moreover, the authors claim that the fine-tuning of the physical constants of the universe that makes the emergence of living beings possible likewise constitutes an aesthetically pleasing fit with theism, and it is difficult to say the same for naturalism. Taliaferro and Evans argue that strict naturalists, e.g. Daniel Dennett, would have us 'either posit a miracle or face the explanation from below, in which the intentional dissolves and is accounted by the non-intentional' (p. 80). One worries, however, that Dennett's position amounts to an elimination rather than an explanation of consciousness, and it is therefore untenable because 'the reality of conscious experience is more foundational than the most certain posits of science' (p. 87). Moreover, theistic accounts of the coming to be of consciousness need not be so starkly *ad hoc*, so long as one is willing to countenance the plausibility of theistic evolution, according to which biologically necessary conditions for consciousness are the products of an evolutionary process, even if no ultimate scientific explanation of consciousness can be given (p. 101). In chapter 4 Taliaferro and Evans continue their anti-reductionist program by arguing against naturalistic attempts to eliminate (or reduce beyond significance) animal minds and they argue that recognition of minds (both those had by humans and lower animals) entails values that do not fit well with naturalism.

Chapter 5 begins with the admission that the seeming occurrence of unredeemable evils and the apparent silence or hiddenness of God constitute 'a deep philosophical and theological problem of emergence' particularly for the theist (p. 149). Before addressing this apparent misfit between theism and the reality of evil, Taliaferro and Evans make the point that naturalism cannot account for the sense that many

people have that evil is not merely meaningless, but a violation or loss of a way things ought to have otherwise been. Since naturalism denies fundamental purpose as a feature of the universe, it does not fit with the apparent fact that 'Tragedy is marked by lamentation and destruction, to say something is tragic is to recognize the value of loss' (p. 159). As to whether theism, despite initial appearances, can fit with evil, Taliaferro and Evans introduce and develop some of the standard theodicies appealing to natural order and free will as necessary conditions for the good of responsible agency. They are careful, however, to note that a truly satisfying account of evil for the theist must be done '... in light of redemption rather than justification', i.e., the theist should seek not only to show how God could possibly allow certain evils, but further explain how he overcomes them. This task, however, draws us into the centre of incarnational theology and speculation about postmortem reward. Taliaferro and Evans take up these very issues in chapter 6, in which they speculate regarding the use of imagination in forming a plausible picture of the afterlife and develop a *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement.

Some of the technical philosophical issues that are addressed along the way are dealt with a bit more quickly than some critical readers might prefer, but Taliaferro and Evans' treatment of these matters is suggestive enough that even their opponents will find much that is worthy to consider. This is also to be expected in a book which straddles very well the line between specialized scholarship and appeal to a broader readership. That being said, I have just two relatively minor points by way of criticism. (a) Some advocates of naturalistic emergence accounts of consciousness have not seen the *prima facie* appearance of 'misfit' between the supposedly emergent phenomena and its physical origin as particularly troublesome. Timothy O'Connor (see *Persons and Causes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 108-125) argues that many well-established causal relations, though they may turn out to be metaphysically necessary, are initially surprising or even counterintuitive. Some critical treatment of this particular way of defending naturalistic emergence would be helpful. (b) Among its many virtues, the most significant contribution by *The Image in Mind* is the development of the aesthetic mode of evaluation for philosophical theories. At times it is unclear as to how an appeal to aesthetic fit is actually distinct from the sort of inferences to the best explanation already quite frequently employed in science, philosophy, and common life. It might be the case that Taliaferro and Evans' point is that this ubiquitous mode of argument

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.

LOGAN PAUL GAGE

*Franciscan University of Steubenville*

**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.