

EXAMINATION OF THE GODLESS DELUSION A CATHOLIC CHALLENGE TO MODERN ATHEISM

The Godless Delusion A Catholic Challenge to Modern Atheism by Patrick Madrid and Kenneth Hensley

This Catholic book tells us to realise that we cannot be serious about morality being solid and real and true unless there is a God of love and justice who makes love and justice right. So morality is threatened and weakened by atheism or naturalism - the notion that everything is just mechanical and we are part of something that acts without purpose or knowing what it is doing.

We must remember that morality could be real but no good to us for we are in a naturalistic closed system. Naturalism that says we are in that kind of system does not repudiate morality. That is because it is not ruling out that there could be something outside of our system that is not subject to mechanical causes and which may have moral underpinnings. Naturalism that says there is no system but naturalistic ones does.

The honest conclusion then is that if all is natural and mechanical then the problem is not with validating morality but how it does not apply to us.

God then is of no real concern to us.

The moral argument for God is not a lie but is lying in how it tries to tell us to be moral for God. It then is an abuse not an argument.

Quote: If God doesn't exist and did not create man in His image and likeness, then man must have created God in his image and likeness.

Comment: This is not a minor matter. If human ideas are posing as God then that is very serious for people are asked to give serious commitment to illusions and are vulnerable to those who make the illusions. The book does not admit that we need proof for this image and likeness data.

If a relationship type God doesn't exist OR did not create man in His image and likeness, then man must have created God in his image and likeness. Nobody should be following God if man is what has made him for that is asking for manipulation. Even if it is a benevolent dictatorship is still a dictatorship. Dictatorship is wrong not because it can be savage but is just wrong. All dictatorship starts off sweet. It is the key to much worse and that is why it is bad even if the key is not turned.

If man makes gods then rebel against them. Don't be a fool and respect man by honouring his gods or looking the other way. Just tell man he is not going to tell you what to worship and that is that.

So let us now do the numbers. God may not exist. God may not care what we do. Man may create God as a weapon to manipulate. God may be real and we are like him enough to have a relationship with him and obey him. The default is that that the Christian God is unlikely.

Evidence can get around the automatic assumption or intrinsic improbability but not in this case. Evidence cannot help override God for evidence has to be accidental or testimony. Testimony is not worth anything in itself but has to be defended by accidental evidence. Giving your own evidence risks you making the evidence. It is like a Jack the Ripper going to the crime scene and planting a clue. That is not evidence. With God there is no accidental evidence for he controls all which is why God is based on testimony. God giving you the evidence is no good. He also gives you the testimony a person gives so it gets worse. In reality God is just a guess, "There is a God for I say so and I am right for there is a God." The believer may use reason yes but reason is given a God filter. "I don't trust reason just because it is reason but because God set it up." So reason itself is turned into a testimony - one from God. That is not reason but just something parasitic on the rules you keep when you are reasoning.

God then is clearly proven to be made in the image of man and man's manipulative handprints are all over him.

The Muslim God does not make man in his image. In philosophy, believers in God usually insist that God is too different from us to be described as anything like us or us anything like him. Christian religion says that we have human dignity which gives rise to human rights simply because God made us in his own image and thus invested us with divine dignity. We are not God but raised by God to a level as if we were. This is anti-rational and accuses Muslims of having a fragile understanding of human rights! It accuses religions that don't have a God of being dangerous! It implies religions like that need dealing with before they cause trouble! It is good news for the Islamaphobe.

Quote trying to argue that scientists should not embrace naturalism in the name of science: "What would we think of an auto mechanic who concluded from his intensive study of cars that nothing existed but cars?"

Comment: So the idea is that the scientists study the physical but they cannot reason that nothing exists but the physical. Actually they can in this way. Science is about testing and testing treats nothing as real unless it is physical for only the physical has a chance of being subject to trial and error. That is our method. It is not about the possibility that something non-physical is out there. The possibility is irrelevant.

If the scientist agrees there is a supernatural she or he is not agreeing as a scientist but as a private person.

Also, the trouble is what the supernatural is. It may go by rules even more than what nature does. We know nothing about it. Just because something is magical or spiritual does not mean it is not a machine.

There is no way to disprove the notion that all things, regardless of whether they are matter or spirit or whatever, are just machines of some kind to which moral rules or principles cannot apply.

Quote regarding atheists saying that evil and suffering show that there is no loving and almighty God: If it's true that an all-good and all-powerful God could not or would not allow evil to exist even for a limited period of time, then, of course the argument works. It's unsound because it assumes the truth of a premise that cannot be known. It takes for granted that an all-good and all-powerful God could not or would not allow evil to exist even for a limited time...

Comment: Evil is evil so to say it is okay if allowed for a time is actually evil. It is illogical for evil is evil if it lasts for ten seconds or a million years. If they are more worried about suffering evil too long than evil then they are not as opposed to evil as they say but just don't like the pain. They want to feel while helping others that it will not last for that dumbs them a bit to how terrible it is. If you really want to help you cannot use tricks like that. It is about compassion not you. Compassion means walking alongside the person in their suffering. Thinking of suffering that is not allowed for a time as suffering that is, is self-interested nonsense.

Quote: "There is apparently no objective way of justifying any principle as valid for all people and all societies."

This in practice can translate into there being no way to get a principle that is valid even for most people never mind all.

They propose God as the answer but again God cannot be shown to be valid for most or all people. What about the principle, "Believe in God"? Its the same difficulty.

Quote: "Virtually all atheists understand that it makes no sense to argue for the existence of moral laws that are absolute, universal, and unchanging...in a universe comprised entirely of ever-changing and evolving material substances...that is why most atheists will argue for the relativity of ethics from individual to individual and society to society."

Comment: Relativity of ethics or relativism mean that we should form no opinion of what other cultures do even if it is sacrificing babies to celebrate the new year for that is just their way of doing things and looking at things. It is none of our business.

To simplify: all is natural and normal so feeding the poor is as natural and normal as killing them. All is physical and morality is like trying to command your doll not to fall off the shelf.

There is no mention that if nature falls into an order that discourages killing then it is hardly normal then. It is normal in principle yes but still not normal other ways. The objection is actually commanding us to kill or help and telling us that all is permitted if there is no God. The problem then is not nature but the likes of our authors. The problem by extension is Christianity.

The book argues that attempts to form an alternative standard of morality to God fail for each candidate for being that standard ends up being unconvincing and arbitrary.

Its list is,

- Happiness
- Do no harm
- Majority rule and opinion
- Moral experts
- Reason

The fact that some may combine this does not matter. If each one is no good by itself then putting two or more together is

not going to help.

They are clear that God should be on the list.

Then you have
God
Happiness
Do no harm
Majority rule and opinion
Moral experts
Reason

But in fact I would do it this way,

Happiness
Do no harm
THE BIGGER rule and BIGGER opinion - now you could be talking about God or the majority. It does not matter. It just matters that it is in a position to demand that you do certain things and abstain from others.
Moral experts
Reason

The lesson is that the majority rule item on the list is no more or less valid than God. It is not being the majority that matters but being strong. One God could be as big as a majority. A strong enough person is as good as the majority.

If you change the list to

Happiness + God
Do no harm + God
Majority rule and opinion + God
Moral experts + God
Reason + God

You learn that even God does not get rid of them. For example, maybe happiness should not be enough to build a morality on but a God could organise things so that it is.

Regarding what it means to say there is a real moral standard we read, "right and wrong are not natural objects in the natural world, are they maybe natural properties - like the color yellow, or the property of smoothness? Of course not. No one (atheists included) believes that realities such as honesty and goodness and right and wrong are properties like the colour yellow. Yet, as we've seen, everyone everywhere (including atheists) knows that these 'entities' are in some sense real and have an existence quite apart from the minds of the people who think about them. Right and wrong exist as standards above the mere preference and taste of cultures, societies, and individuals. And atheists cannot deny that they are universally perceived. But how can they adequately account for them according to their worldview, which insists that nothing exists except material 'things'?"

Of belief in morality the book says, "We demonstrate this belief continually in the way we speak."

The book then argues that we treat things such as compassion and love and justice and mercy as in some sense entities. They exist in the real universe and the reason they exist is that there is some kind of spiritual realm and it is not all about the mechanical or the physical or matter. In practice though Christians think their God and sacraments can feed things such as honesty and love for God into people. You can feed honesty into your parrot even if it cannot use it. The idea of grace and Jesus dying to magically provide us with it is pure occult.

The argument is confused for in trying to turn love and justice into more than just opinions they turn them into things. The other side of the coin is that things such as hate and injustice, take any vice you choose, say laziness or avarice, are also turned into things. Nobody talks about that. People turn evil into a supernatural monstrous power and look the other way and thus show they are not so good themselves after all.

We conclude that the book is riddled with errors. The errors all arise from failing to see that if there is a supernatural it could have the same problems grounding morality as a purely natural universe would. For example, it may be as purposeless or mechanical as nature. Or why not worse? Giving evidence that morality is real is impossible.

