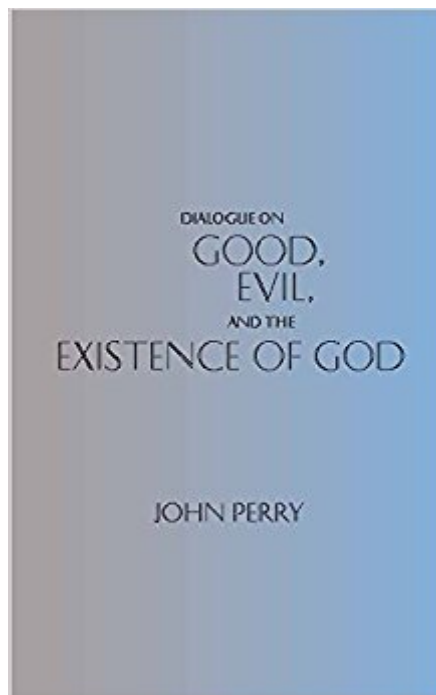




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Dialogue On Good, Evil, And The Existence Of God (Hackett Philosophical Dialogues)



Synopsis

John Perry--author of the acclaimed *Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Hackett Publishing Co., 1978)--revisits Gretchen Weirob in this lively and absorbing dialogue on good, evil, and the existence of God. In the early part of the work, Gretchen and her friends consider whether evil provides a problem for those who believe in the perfection of God. As the discussion continues they consider the nature of human evil—whether, for example, fully rational actions can be intentionally evil. Recurring themes are the distinction between natural evil and evil done by free agents, and the problems the Holocaust and other cases of genocide pose for conceptions of the universe as a basically good place, or humans as basically good beings. Once again, Perry's ability to get at the heart of matters combines with his exemplary skill at writing the dialogue form. An ideal volume for introducing students to the subtleties and intricacies of philosophical discussion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perry's work is an engaging, highly readable introduction to the problem of natural and moral evil with respect to belief in an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect God. This dialogue would work well as a supplement in either an introduction to philosophy or philosophy of religion course. . . . Perry is to be commended for taking a very difficult subject and making it accessible to a more general audience. --Jeff Wisdom, Biola University

John Perry is Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University.

Thanks.

I am a philosophy professor, and I am very grateful to John Perry for his dialogues. They are an excellent way to get introduced to different philosophical views. They are also very useful teaching tools. The reader who wants more can get to the texts that the discussion is based on (Augustine, Leibniz, Russell, etc.). Perry's dialogues are witty, accessible and easy to read. No technical jargon. For those who do not have the time or the motivation to read Leibniz' Theodicy but who want to think for themselves, this text is highly recommended.

This book is a series of conversations between three characters. One is a confirmed atheist and is one a devout believer, naturally--otherwise there would be no excuse for dialogues. The question they address is the well-known problem of suffering (or the Problem of Pain, as C.S. Lewis puts it): Is it possible (not probable, just possible) that the universe is so constructed that there could be an omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent God who could alleviate all suffering, but who chooses not to? Spoiler alert: Don't read the rest if you want to twist in suspense before checking out the book. Interestingly, the believer winds up convincing the atheist that such a universe is indeed possible, although she denies that it is likely or even that this universe could be that one. No new ground is broken here, but the arguments are well-made and accessible to a non-expert (that would be me). I sort of like this book, because philosophical dialogues (at least modern ones, not talking about Plato) often don't seem to come to any firm conclusions at all. If you are new to this discussion, you'll find the book easy to read and a pleasing introduction to the topic.

no problems, would buy again

I gave it five stars Dr Perry. Can I have an A in your class now?

This is a dialogue between a skeptical philosopher and her friends about the problem of evil and the existence of God. The philosopher feels sick, and refuses her friend's prayer until he can explain how a good God could allow for her illness and other greater evils. Evil is supposed to count against the existence of God, and the theist is supposed to show that it does not, e.g. by showing how a good God might allow for evils. In this dialogue various explanations of how God might allow for evils are presented, including the free will and afterlife theodicies. The skeptical philosopher

eventually accepts her friend's prayer. In my opinion, the problem of evil is not an insurmountable problem for religious belief; however, I doubt that the theodicies developed here alone plausibly answer the strongest forms of the problem. The book is friendly and engaging, and should be accessible to those unfamiliar with the problem of evil. The problem and the theodicies are introduced clearly and carefully. The book also includes a very brief list of further readings. To be sure, the problems of evil and possible replies are not addressed comprehensively; the dialogue is less than 70 pages in length. Nevertheless, it is a nice introduction to the problem, and the paperback edition is not expensive, at least at the time of writing this review.

Possibly the easiest introduction to the problem of evil. John Perry discusses the problem in a dialogue format that is all at once engaging, humorous and informative. I strongly suggest this book as an introduction to reasoning, the problem of evil, and/or the philosophy of religion.

This text reads like it came directly from a first-grader's undeveloped brain, or the comments section on a gossip forum. The author makes vast assumptions and backs them up with nothing, yet builds 70 pages of (tedious and inconsistent) argument on them. It's a massive discredit to the field of Philosophy to call this a "dialogue" on the claimed topics - more like a dialogue on why Mr. Miller can't do some research in the field of theology before claiming that God has a "roadmap" that looks like Nebraska. Also, Ms. Weirob is a self-absorbed bigot, and the whole thing reads like you're beating your head against the wall.

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