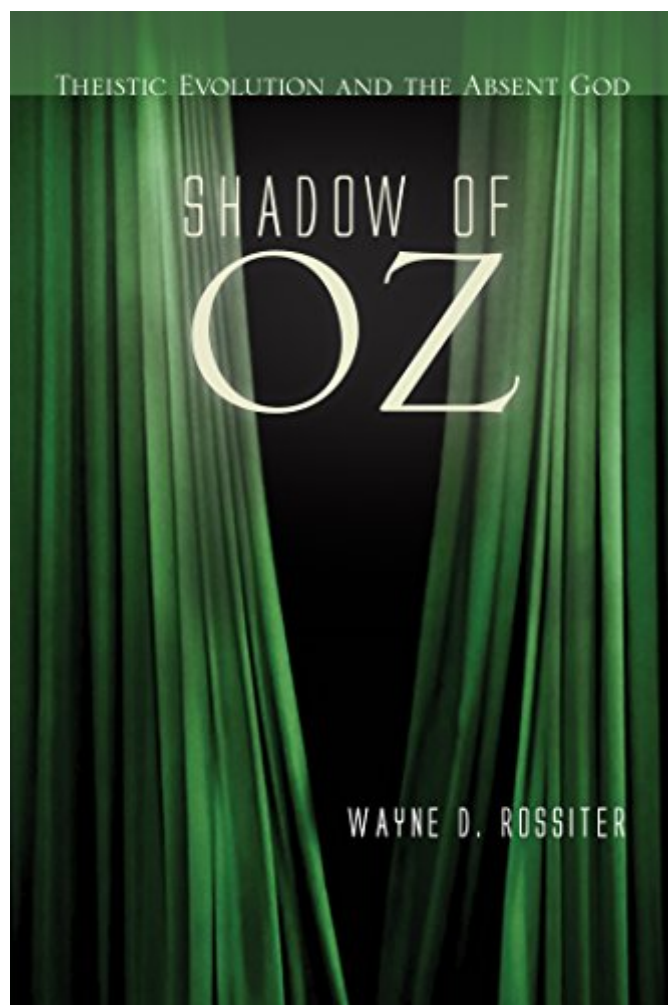


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Shadow Of Oz: Theistic Evolution And The Absent God



Synopsis

In the century and a half since Darwin's *Origin of Species*, there has been an ongoing--and often vociferously argued--conversation about our species' place in creation and its relationship to a Creator. A growing number of academic professionals see no conflict between Darwin's view of life and the Christian faith. Dubbed "theistic evolution," this brand of Christianity holds that God has used processes like Darwinian evolution to achieve his creation. But is that true? Can Darwin's mechanism of natural selection acting on chance mutations be reconciled with God's intentionality in producing particular outcomes? Does humanity represent the apex of his creation, or just an erasable and ephemeral signpost along a path still being revealed? Does theistic evolution permit God to intervene supernaturally in the workings of his creation? Can we as humans be made in the image of God if we are just one of the millions of products of evolution? Can we salvage concepts like freewill, meaning, purpose, or an eternal soul within theistic evolution? In this book, Wayne Rossiter assesses theistic evolution, and whether or not it is consistent with Christianity and secular science. His conclusion is that it bears little resemblance to classical Christianity, and promotes a century-old understanding of evolutionary theory. Theistic evolution renders God a passive player in creation, so far removed and undetectable that he resembles a mere shadow of the Creator described in Christianity. "As if the thorny terrain separating Darwinism from Design were not intimidating enough, Wayne Rossiter has parachuted into the thickest patch, where people of faith are contending with one another for the future of their faith. Loppers in one hand and a machete in the other, he wastes no time. You may not agree with every cut, but you have to admire his courage and you can't ignore his arguments."--Douglas Axe, Director, Biologic Institute

"Professors everywhere are pressuring students into accepting the false view that neo-Darwinian evolution is scientifically correct and friendly to Christianity. *Shadow of Oz* will give students--and any other reader--the intellectual arguments to stand up and explain why theistic evolution is poor philosophy, illogical theology, and outdated science."--Casey Luskin, Research Coordinator, Discovery Institute

"I highly recommend this book for anyone who is seriously engaged in the question of how God interacts with our world, typically cast as the debate between theistic evolution and intelligent design. Just as C. G. Hunter's book *Darwin's God* examined at length the theology of nineteenth-century evolutionists, Rossiter's book takes a focused and iconoclastic look at the theology of current theistic evolutionists such as Kenneth Miller, Karl Giberson, Francis Collins, and John Polkinghorne. Rossiter approaches the subject as an expert in biology, well aware of the nuances of the arguments. While I may disagree with some of his points, this book deserves to take its place as one of the key review texts of the modern debate."--David Snoke, Professor of Physics,

University of Pittsburgh Wayne Rossiter is Assistant Professor of Biology at Waynesburg University.

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Customer Reviews

Shadow of Oz says so many things that need to be said in the task of understanding life as we find it. Dr. Rossiter is a biologist who self identifies as a "Christian professor at a Christian university" (Waynesburg University), who claims he once was "a staunch and cantankerous atheist" converted from his youthful Christianity by the logical consequences of Darwinian evolution he learned in college and university. He had just been published on the evolution of rattlesnake venom in the Journal of Molecular Evolution, in 2008 when illness forced him to face his personal mortality. What had made logical sense of proud atheism when young, bright, learning, and healthy with the pseudo-immortality of youth, suddenly revealed itself to him as an empty, dark, and destructive force of everything that made his personal life good, happy, hopeful, and with any shred of meaning. He reconverts to the Christianity that offered him something instead of nothing. At this point an evangelical atheist like Richard Dawkins would snort, "You see, Christianity is a fairy tale for those afraid of the dark!" (To which John Lennox would retort, "Richard, then Atheism is a fairy tale for those afraid of the Light!") But other Christians from the Bio-Logos camp would rush to

comfort him, “No, no, Wayne, you can have your faith and evolution tool” with books like Francis Collins, *The Language of God*, Karl Giberson, *Saving Darwin*, John Pokinghorne, *Belief*, and Keith Miller with *Only a Theory*, and *Finding Darwin’s God*. They all suggest Darwin and God can be in the same snug bed together, a philosophical stance known as Theistic Evolution, and that only foolish and ignorant would oppose the dominant position of serious biologists who are also serious believers.

Wayne Rossiter followed an interesting path - from Christianity to Darwinism to a vocal atheism, to crisis and back to Christianity. While he remains a practicing scientist, he found himself troubled by the path chosen by many Christian intellectuals in attempting to maintain a purely Darwinian view of origins while claiming to hold to Christian beliefs. He begins the book with the troubling tale of a young college student who was so devastated by the destruction of his faith through Darwinism that he committed suicide. While extreme, this brief story sets the stage for the discussion of the uneasy marriage of two contradictory worldviews. Rossiter is clear from the beginning that the primary concern he has with Theistic Evolution is that it is an entire worldview that ultimately risks negating its own claims to being Christian or even theistic. In essence the theistic evolutionist adopts the posture of the non-theist, pure naturalism in the laboratory “an approach that enthrones the natural processes of cause and effect, pure unguided random processes acted upon by natural law and natural selection with no activity from outside the sphere of nature. Then in a sweeping sleight of hand, God is asserted back into the picture in a contradictory fashion where before it all began, God’s purpose was to use this very purposeless chain of events to produce human beings with a spiritual nature. What is troubling to Rossiter is that when push comes to shove in the inevitable conflict of two opposite sets of ideas, the theistic Evolutionists virtually always choose to maintain the views of evolutionary naturalism and mold their theism to fit around it. Darwin always wins, Christianity always loses.

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