there is apparent evil in nature—as this would have been evident before Darwin. The claim the authors wish to challenge is that since evil in nature exists for no good reason, therefore God does not exist. Rather than apply a direct argument, the authors suggest that all we really need is a good explanation of evil that is true "for all we know" (p. 101). A good explanation "makes it clear that the evil that is permitted is a necessary condition for the occurrence of an outweighing good" (p. 101). After dismissing some popular explanations they regard as weak, the authors offer two explanations that comport well with the scientific story. One relates to our lack of understanding of animal consciousness; the other reasons that the possibility of law-like regularity, producing beings such as us, would necessarily require the kind of history that we see from remnants past.

Space does not permit me to summarize the book further, but I do want to raise a couple of questions about a few of the other essays in the volume. To start with, Myers's article raises a number of issues related to religiosity and psychology, with several of the points not well supported by the data. For example, with little evidential support, Myers states that sexual orientation is "natural," that is, largely biologically influenced. The problem is what is meant here by "natural." Conditions such as substance abuse can have genetic components as well. Would we then say that they are "natural" too, and therefore acceptable, or would we recognize that the world is broken because of the Fall and interpret them in light of that? This is reminiscent of Abraham Kuyper and his "two sciences." If creation is fallen, then we must take that into account in our explanations. It follows that there is no such thing as a category called "natural" that allows us to conclude that what appears in nature can be judged simply as part of the "good." Myers tells us he comes out of the "Reformed and ever reforming" tradition, but perhaps his "ever reforming" in this case has gone too far.

Swinton's essay also suffers from some surprising misunderstandings. When I read that he thought his methods for studying spirituality and health ("randomized control variables, statistical analyses and modes of research that follow the principles of falsifiability, generalization and replicability") were the measure of why he thought the research should be considered "hard science," I was taken aback. As anyone who does research in the hard sciences knows, it is not that the methods make the conclusions reliable. It is rather the constricted subject matter of the investigation that is so constraining as to qualify as "hard science." This does not lend confidence to the conclusions Swinton draws from his investigation.

In light of the criticisms noted above, the reader should realize that the quality of the book's essays is variable; some are more substantial, others less so. Who would find the book of interest? Anyone who is following the writings of particular authors in this collection might like to pursue their essays. Beyond that, those who do not have a substantial background in the issues involved may find the essays as a whole an interesting introductory read. However, as many of the edited Templeton volumes seem to be, I would suggest that there is little here that one cannot find in more depth elsewhere.

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MY SEARCH FOR RAMANUJAN: How I Learned to Count by Ken Ono and Amir D. Aczel. Switzerland: Springer, 2016. 238 pages. Hardcover; \$29.99. ISBN: 9783319255668.

"But what does a mathematician actually *do*?" It is still as likely as not that the lay person who asks this question will be pointed, first of all, to G. H. Hardy's *A Mathematician's Apology*, first published in 1940. In the third paragraph of that elegant but elegiac work,

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Book Reviews

the author describes himself and his literary task thus: "A man who sets out to justify his existence and activities."

No sensitive Christian reader can pass over those words without a profound sense of sadness. True, Hardy's "justification" is not exactly the δικαιοσυνη of the Epistle to the Romans. Yet, true also, Hardy does not welcome the idea that the real justification at the heart of life is received as an unmerited gift. Indeed, *A Mathematician's Apology* is poignant precisely because it combines the defense of mathematical fame (for those few who are capable of achieving it) with the fear that even this "safest and soundest of investments" may not endure. "How painful it is to feel that, with all these advantages, one may fail ..."

Ken Ono's heart-wrenching autobiography bears a subtitle with a double meaning: "How I Learned to Count." On one level, this is a capsule description of the combinatorial aspect of Ono's mathematical work. "Combinatorial" refers to counting patterns or arrangements of some kind, such as the parti*tions* which are frequently mentioned in the text: a partition of an integer (such as 6) is simply a way of writing it as a sum of smaller integers (such as 1+2+3). The number of different ways of partitioning a given integer, like 6 in our example, is called p(6), and the behavior of p, the partition function, has many surprises and unexpected depths. On another level, this is the story of how the author learns that he himself counts as a human being, and that (contrary to what a reading of Hardy might perhaps suggest) his significance is not measured simply by the abundance of his mathematical achievements. These stories are interwoven with one another and with a third one: Ono's interaction with the work of the enigmatic genius Srinivasa Ramanujan, who was "discovered" by European mathematicians when he wrote to Hardy in 1913 and who, upon his early death from tuberculosis, left for posterity a huge collection of mysterious formulae (most without a sketch of a proof, most subsequently turning out to be both true and profound) which he believed had been revealed to him by the goddess Namagiri. (Ramanujan's story was recently dramatized in the movie The Man Who Knew Infinity, and the story of Ono's work as mathematical consultant to this movie serves as a kind of coda to his autobiography.)

Ono shares with us that he was raised by Japanese-American "tiger parents" determined that their son follow the path they had marked out to the goal they had determined was best for him: that of becoming a distinguished professional mathematician. He writes: They wanted their boys to be hungry for success, so they starved us of praise ... At school, I was a star student; at home, nothing I did was good enough. [My parents] saw no point in acknowledging such insignificant achievements as straight A's on a report card ... I awoke each day with painful thoughts. I will never be good enough. I am an impostor. My parents will never love me because I can never live up to their expectations ... And so I dropped out. (p. 11)

Today, Ono is indeed a distinguished professional mathematician, although he did not arrive by the path his parents had mapped for him. His book contains heartfelt tributes to friends, family, and professional mentors who helped him recover his life's purpose. Behind all of these stands the figure of Ramanujan, whose story Ono retells in this book: a story which deeply influenced his father's life and subsequently his own. "Ramanujan's story showed me that there might be a way to earn my parent's respect that didn't require following the rigid script that they had written for me" (p. 49). In fact, Ramanujan's story opened his heart, and perhaps his family's heart, to the possibility of grace.

How do I count? How do I know that I count? I suggest that in the parables of Luke 15, Jesus shows us that to count is to be embraced by the love of Abba, the Father who runs to welcome the strayed one home. Jesus warns us also, through the figure of the elder son in the story, that we can misperceive this love; we may regard it as something to be earned or "slaved for," and as a result live with a sense of hollowness, of never having done enough. Ono courageously describes his own journey from this hollowness to this grace, and he (raised agnostic from the cradle) chooses to conclude the story with his request to receive baptism and join a church community in 2004, in his middle thirties. This is a brave and passionate autobiography, combining the academic and the deeply personal. Strongly recommended.

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THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE FICTION by James F. McGrath. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016. viii + 113 pages, bibliography, no index. Paperback; \$17.00. ISBN: 9781498204514.

Is there a Creator God who made all that exists out of nothing? Has God evolved along with the cosmos? Are godlike beings actually advanced aliens whose science and technology appear supernatural? Will humans develop godlike power? Will we be superseded by artificial super-intelligences? Will robots develop souls? Will Christianity survive encounters with extraterrestrial cultures in the spacefaring