

3000-10000 Words

WHAT WOULD BE THE EXPLANATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN A UNIVERSE WHERE GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS EX NIHILO, AND THEREBY AVOIDED EVOLUTION ALTOGETHER?

- 1) God values an autonomous creation in which human behavior unfolds apart from his direct causal intervention over a creation that is not autonomous, and in which human behavior is directly caused by God.
- 2) If God creates human beings, then He either uses supernatural means, natural means, or a combination of both (i.e. He could supernaturally use natural means).
- 3) If God uses natural means, then evolution is the only metaphysically available option for all we know.
- 4) If God uses supernatural means, then God must create human beings ex nihilo, and if He does so, evolution would be avoided (at least to the degree that God uses supernatural means to create biological organisms).
- 5) If God created human beings ex nihilo and skipped the evolutionary process leading up to them, then the explanation of human behavior in an autonomous creation immediately after such a miracle would either have to be entirely deterministic, indeterministic, random, self-deterministic, or some combination of these factors.
- 6) God would not want the explanation of human behavior to be random.
- 7) For all we know, it is metaphysically impossible for God to create human beings with the power of self-determination.
- 8) For all we know, it is metaphysically impossible for God to create human beings ex nihilo whose behavior would either be entirely deterministic or indeterministic.
- 9) If the behavior of human beings in an autonomous universe cannot be entirely explained by deterministic categories, indeterministic categories, self-deterministic categories, or some combination of these categories (recall that God wouldn't value the random explanation of human behavior) after they have been created by supernatural means (thereby skipping evolution altogether), then that means that it is impossible for God to create human beings by supernatural means (skipping evolution altogether) and for there to be a complete explanation of that behavior in an autonomous universe.
- 10) Therefore, that means that the creation of human beings according to such a process is metaphysically impossible.

11) Therefore, God must use natural means in order to create human beings.

12) Therefore, God must use evolution in order to create human beings.

13) Therefore, the explanation of human behavior is an autonomous universe is not entirely deterministic, indeterministic, random, or self-deterministic, but it is partly (and irreducibly) biological/evolutionary.

DEFENSE OF PREMISES:

1] Universal divine determinism is the view that God sovereignly controls everything that happens by directly causing it to happen. On this view, even the movement of the human will is caused by God. God moves people to choose evil, and they cannot do otherwise. God determines their choices and makes them do wrong. If it is evil to make another person do wrong, then on this view God is not only the cause of sin and evil, but becomes evil Himself, which is absurd. By the same token, all human responsibility for sin has been removed. For our choices are not really up to us: God causes us to make them. We cannot be responsible for our actions, for nothing we think or do is up to us. Even compatibilists will deny human responsibility for some evil action if an external factor (i.e. somebody holding a gun to your head) forces them to do something. However, universal divine determinism is even worse than this because at least you have the option of letting the person shoot you in the gun example whereas with universal divine determinism you are a mere puppet that doesn't even have 'free won't' if you will. So, I think it is uncontroversial that God would prefer a world that allows biological moral agents to be responsible for their behavior over a world where human behavior is caused directly by God. (<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/molism-vs-calvinism>)

2] This premise seems obvious to me because it exhausts the possibilities. If it is indeed metaphysically necessary for God to use evolution to create biological organisms, then perhaps He could supernaturally use this natural means. For example, God may be able to supernaturally cause certain mutations, or by way of His middle knowledge and providence, so that the natural means is 'sped up' or made quick, clean, and effective all things considered. Indeed, this does seem plausible to me: "...In the first place, the neo-Darwinian mechanisms of random mutation and natural selection work far too slowly to produce, unaided, sentient life. In their *Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, Barrow and Tipler list ten steps in the evolution of *homo sapiens*, including such steps as the development of the DNA-based genetic code, the origin of mitochondria, the origin of photosynthesis, the development of aerobic respiration, and so forth, each of which is so improbable that before it would have occurred, the sun would have ceased to be a main sequence star and incinerated the earth.¹⁵ They report that "there has developed a general consensus among evolutionists that the evolution of intelligent life, comparable in information processing ability to that of *homo sapiens* is so improbable that it is unlikely to have occurred on any other planet in the entire visible universe."¹⁶ "They estimate the odds of the

evolution of the human genome by chance to be on the order of $4^{-360(110,000)}$, a number which is so huge that to call it astronomical would be a wild understatement. In other words, if evolution did occur, it would have been a miracle, so that evolution is actually evidence for the existence of God!”

Read more: <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/does-god-exist-the-craig-pigliucci-debate#ixzz1xEBmNH42>

15 Barrow and Tipler, *Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, pp. 561-65.

16 Ibid., p. 133

Read more: <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-is-the-relation-between-science-and-religion#ixzz1xEB7myq3>

3] Alvin Plantinga has remarked that, “If you reject theism in favor of naturalism, this evolutionary story is the only game in town, the only visible answer to the question: Where did all this enormous variety of flora and fauna come from? How did it all get here? Even if the fossil record is at best spotty and at worst disconfirming, this story is the only answer on offer (from a naturalistic perspective) to these questions.”

(<http://www.arn.org/docs/odesign/od181/methnat181.htm>)

Though Plantinga is referring to metaphysical naturalism, his point would apply equally well to methodological naturalism for the purpose of premise 3. According to this premise, if God exists, but chooses to use natural means to bring about life on Earth (or any planet for that matter), then the origin and development of life would occur AS IF God did not exist, and according to our best science, this would have to be through an evolutionary process.

4] I take it as obvious that if God creates via supernatural means that what we are really saying is that God has performed a miracle or miracles, and that such miracles would be examples of creation ex nihilo. Perhaps God could create all of life ex nihilo as it currently exists while skipping evolution all together.

5] The explanation for human behavior after the miraculous creation of human beings ex nihilo would only have a certain limited number of metaphysical possibilities. I take it the possibilities I listed are exhaustive (Biological/evolutionary explanations would not be an option since no such mechanisms were operative in the creation of human beings and so they would not have inherited any evolutionary dispositions; and I think it is impossible for God to create something that both evolved and didn't evolve). Moreover, I am referring to ontological determinism and indeterminism here. I am not referring to epistemological indeterminism or randomness for example (i.e. chaos theory, hidden variables).

6] A prerequisite for moral behavior, scientific discovery, interpersonal relations, and just about any other facet of human existence requires the stability, intelligibility, and the perseverance of an autonomous creation in order to be able to rationally navigate our existence in the universe. In a random universe, rational decisions, thinking, and discoveries would be precluded. Such a universe probably would not be produced by God who is a rational being par excellence, and moreover, many goods that we typically associate with human existence would be lost.

7] In order for human beings to have the power of self-determination (or agent-causation), they must have souls, or some facet in addition to their physical nature that both transcends and is capable of producing effects in the physical universe. In other words, human beings must be able to perform miracles! However, it has been a staple of theology, and of common sense, that God alone (perhaps angelic beings to a lesser extent) can perform miracles. Miracles are the product of omnipotence, or at least, something much more powerful than human beings are.

(Dualist And Agent-Causal Theories by Timothy O'Connor / Does Agent Causation Require Substance Dualism?) Even though O'Connor seems to denigrate this point he still admits that agent causation would require something ontologically distinct from the physical cosmos: "Note that this requires a metaphysical, not merely epistemological, understanding of emergence, and so something rather more ambitious than what is contemplated when the term "emergence" is used in some contemporary theories of mind in philosophy and cognitive science. (Pg. 6)" Thus, it seems that human beings are fundamentally the wrong kinds of things when it comes to self-determination.

8] Surely, God could create humans being ex nihilo whose behavior can be given either a deterministic or indeterministic explanation according to some law, or laws of nature, right? Wrong, for this presupposes that there are laws of nature; either statistical or not; in the realm of biological creatures. The problem here however is that there are not any laws of nature of in biology, and in particular, in evolution, not even statistical laws, and moreover, causes in biology (evolution in particular) cannot be reduced or eliminated in favor of the laws of physics and chemistry.

WHAT IS A LAW OF NATURE? (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/lawofnat/#H6>)

Regularists and Necessitarians agree as to five conditions necessary for a statement's being a Law of Nature.

Laws of Nature

1. are factual truths, not logical ones; "The boiling point of sulfur is 444.6° Celsius" expresses a factual truth. "Every number has a double" expresses a logical truth.
2. are true for every There are no laws of nature that hold just for the planet earth (or

time and every place in the universe;	the Andromeda Galaxy, for that matter), nor are there any that hold just for the Eighteenth Century or just for the Mesozoic Era.
3. contain no proper names;	Laws of nature may contain general concepts, such as “mass”, “color”, “aptitude”, “capital”, “diabetes”, “return on investments”, etc.; but may not contain such terms as “the Fraser River”, “the planet Earth”, “\$59.22”, “June 18, 1935”, “IBM”, etc.
4. are universal or statistical claims; and	“(All pure) copper conducts electricity” expresses a law of nature. But “Stars exist” (although true) does not express a law of nature: it is neither a universal nor a statistical claim.
5. are conditional claims, not categorical ones.	<p>Categorical claims which are equivalent to conditional claims (e.g. “There are no perpetual motion machines of the first kind” which is equivalent to “If anything is a perpetual motion machine then it is not of the first kind”) are candidates for lawfulness.^[2]</p> <p>Categorical claims (e.g., again, “There are stars”) which are not equivalent to conditionals are not candidates for lawfulness.</p> <p>Note: Laws of physics which are expressed mathematically are taken to be elliptical for conditional truths. For example, the law “$m_v = m_o / (1 - v^2/c^2)^{1/2}$” is to be read as equivalent to “for any massy object, if its velocity is v, then its mass [m_v] is equal to its rest mass [m_o] divided by ...”</p>

Are these five conditions *jointly sufficient* for a proposition’s being a Law of Nature? Regularists say “yes”; Necessitarians, “no”.

I do not mean that the laws of nature have no extrinsic causal force or control over biological creatures, nor do I even mean that something like blood flow, or the effects of neurotransmitters in the brain do not follow certain deterministic processes according to the laws of physics and chemistry. Rather, what I mean is that even though my behavior may be determined externally by the laws of nature, the organs, brain tissue, muscle fibers and the like that the laws of nature act on are independent of the laws of nature since the material they are made out of is not solely the product of physics and chemistry, but also an evolutionary heritage and story which itself cannot be reduced to the laws of physics and chemistry, and moreover, the behavior they produce are not themselves a law of nature (nor is this behavior somehow emergent from the laws of physics and chemistry). The fact that robins lay blue eggs is not a law of nature. It cannot be explained entirely in terms of deterministic or indeterministic laws. Rather, that

behavior is inherited from the process of evolution (which is not law-like) and also determined by external forces. But perhaps you might say: 'Couldn't God have created a robin EX NIHILO and have it lay blue eggs since the disposition to lay blue eggs is part of the very essence of what it means to be a robin?' The answer of course is no, because biological organisms do not have essences!

(Other arguments have been mustered against species essentialism. Hull (1965) contends that species have vague boundaries and that such vagueness is incompatible with the existence of species specific essences. According to Hull, essentialist definitions of natural kinds require strict boundaries between those kinds. But the boundaries between species are vague. In all but a few cases, speciation is a long and gradual process such that there is no principled way to draw a precise boundary between one species and the next. As a result, species cannot be given essentialist definitions. (Hull's argument against species essentialism is very similar to one of Locke's (1690[1975], III, vi) arguments against kind essentialism.)

Sober (1980) raises a different objection to species essentialism. He illustrates how essentialist explanations have been replaced by evolutionary ones. Essentialists explain variation within a species as the result of interference in the ontogenetic development of particular members of that species. Organisms have species specific essences, but interference often prevents the manifestations of those essences. Contemporary geneticists offer a different explanation of variation within a species. They cite the gene frequencies of a species as well as the evolutionary forces that affect those frequencies. No species specific essences are posited. Contemporary biology can explain variation within a species without positing a species' essence. So according to Sober, species essentialism has become theoretically superfluous.)

So, we cannot fault God's omnipotence for not being able to create a robin that has the disposition to lay eggs as part of its essence since it is metaphysically impossible to create something ex nihilo with an essence when that thing has no metaphysical essence. But then where did the disposition to lay an egg come from? Where many or most of all the behavioral dispositions that biological organisms have; from biological evolution.

9] If I were to ask you: 'What does a circle smell like?' Or 'What would be the behavior of planets in a universe that didn't have laws of nature in it?' Or 'How much does the color red weigh?' you would properly respond that such questions do not have genuine metaphysical answers; or at least no answers that are within our ken. I would also submit that if we cannot answer the following question: 'If God created human beings ex nihilo and skipped the evolutionary process altogether, and then let that creation operate autonomously, what would be the explanation of the behavior of human beings? entirely in terms of deterministic, indeterministic, nor self-deterministic categories, then this strongly implies that such a question also does not have any genuine metaphysically possible answer apart from evolution. This of course further implies that it is metaphysically impossible for God to create human beings ex nihilo (skipping evolution) and then let their behavior occur autonomously; just as God cannot create a prime minister that is a prime number, or create something that does not have an essence to behave according to its essence. The main assumption of this premise is that everything that exists, or can exist, will have an explanation of its behavior according to the categories I have

listed in Premise 13, or if there is no explanation of the things behavior, then there will be an explanation for why there is no explanation (i.e. quantum events, self-determination--The agency theory says that I make my own choices. If asked "what causes me to choose as I do?", the answer is "nothing". I determine which desire to act from, but "I" am not determined by anything. My free choices are uncaused acts of my self. Is this response really an improvement over indeterminism? With Indeterminism, we were left wondering what an "uncaused choice" was supposed to be like. With the agency theory, we are left wondering what an uncaused act of the agent is like. If acts of my self begin a new series of events, but are themselves unconnected to any of my desires, thoughts, past events and so on, then how can they be said to be "my" choices? True, they come from me, but now from a "me" that is entirely unconnected from my character, my desires, and my current circumstances. It is a "bare" me, containing none of the rest of my)

10] It would follow from this that it is metaphysically impossible for God to create human beings ex nihilo in a universe like that described in premise 1.

11] It follows from this that God must use natural means to create human beings.

12] It follows from this that God must use evolution in order to create human beings.

13] Therefore, the explanation of human behavior is not entirely deterministic, indeterministic, random, or self-deterministic, but it is partly (and irreducibly) biological/evolutionary.

THE ILLUMINATING IMPORTANCE OF THIS ARGUMENT:

- It would make Plantinga's 'transworld depravity' argument against the logical problem of evil very probable.
- It would solve the problem of apparent imperfect biological designs.
- It would explain why it took so long for human beings to appear.
- It would explain why God permitted so much extinction.
- It would explain why God permitted so much animal suffering (assuming animals really do suffer)
- It would explain why there are limited resources (problem of social evil), since without limited resources, evolution would not begin, occur, and continue.
- It would explain why God desires to create embodied moral agents, as opposed to disembodied minds (such as souls, spirits, or ghosts).
- It would explain why the human mind is dependent on the physical brain?
- It would explain why pain and pleasure is so connected to the biological goals of survival and reproduction, but morally random (although I do not think it is morally random). For example, why do sentient beings, *including animals which are not moral agents*, experience pain or pleasure that we do not know to be biologically useful.
- It would explain why only a fraction of living things, including the majority of sentient beings, thrive. In other words, it would explain why very few living things have an adequate supply of food and water, are able to reproduce, avoid predators, and remain healthy and why an even smaller fraction of organisms thrive for most of their lives, and why almost no organisms thrive for all of their lives.

- It would explain why the relatively new discipline of cognitive science of religion support the claim that forming beliefs about invisible agents including gods is very natural for human beings.
- It would explain why our universe is not teeming with life much more impressive than human life.
- It would explain why so much of our universe is intelligible without any appeal to supernatural agency.