

Let's look at my first contention, that Christian theism is roughly equal to naturalism in terms of simplicity:

If you will notice on my slide; Christian theism makes 6 specific claims

AND The Hypothesis of indifference, or HI makes 6 specific claims:

Without HI, generic naturalism doesn't have enough content to predict facts about triumph and tragedy. But then, as Michael Tooley says, "it is far from clear why the prior probability of HI should be greater than the prior probability of theism." If Mr. Lowder thinks his background knowledge is doing the predicting, then I can do the same thing with supernaturalism to make my case. Lastly, since HI is so immodest, and consistent with supernaturalism, generic naturalism cannot entail HI.

Thus, specified Naturalism and Christian Theism are roughly equal in simplicity. If Mr. Lowder still disagrees with me on this, then this notion of simplicity should be rejected because the probabilities it yields are too dependent upon arbitrary choices made by the theorist and are therefore not objective.

Let's look at my second contention that God exists necessarily and so even if naturalism is simpler, it doesn't matter.

Let's look at objections to my argument from the origin of the universe

Mr. Lowder says everything that begins except the universe needs a cause, but this imagines the universe to exist tenselessly, timelessly, but with a beginning edge like a shuttlecock; which is one of two ways that Mr. Lowder seems to agree the universe has to be eternal on naturalism. I agree that everything IN such a universe would need a cause, but not NECESSARILY the universe itself. The problem for Mr. Lowder is that the BGV theorem shows that the origin of the universe was absolute in the sense that all matter and energy, even physical space and time themselves, came into being a finite time ago, and that would apply to his entire tenseless shuttlecock universe.

Mr. Lowder says everything has to have a material cause. Obviously the origin of the universe cannot have a material cause; that would be physically impossible but that is a problem for Mr. Lowder's case not mine, because the universe can have an efficient cause. In any case, not everything that begins needs a material cause; an efficient cause produces more space all the time in the absence of a material cause, so why can't the universe have an efficient cause but no material cause. Indeed, Mr. Lowder's position implies the absurdity that the universe had neither an efficient nor a material cause! Moreover, Mr. Lowder's claim would render it inexplicable why we don't observe signatures from collisions with other bubble universes beginning to exist without any kind of cause whatsoever. What makes nothingness so discriminatory!

Mr. Lowder says God's creating the universe involves a contradiction: No, God could have created physical time from within an undifferentiated metaphysical time, or if God is timeless without the universe, we can say that the universe comes into being at the first moment of time and in virtue of his causal relationship with the universe, God enters into time at that moment as well. This isn't special pleading because physicists routinely talk of effects being simultaneous with their causes.

Let's look at objections to my argument from why there is something rather than nothing:

Mr. Lowder seems to agree with the key premise of this argument: everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature, or in an external cause.

Mr. Lowder says I'm assuming an infinite cannot exist and that the universe cannot be factually necessary: No, I am not, the role of an observer in quantum indeterminacy shows that the universe cannot exist in a determinate state out of the necessity of its own nature especially since observers evolve later in the universe, and this is true even if the universe is eternal whether because of an infinite regress or an actually infinite number of things. Therefore, it must have an external cause, namely, a transcendent, necessary, and conscious being. The infinite regress Sinclair was referring to was explanatory, not ontological, and isn't necessary to the key premise at all.

Thus, we have two reasons to think God exists necessarily, and that Mr. Lowder begs the question now when he claims that the universe is intelligible without appeal to supernatural agency.

Let's look at my third contention, that Christian theism has more explanatory power and scope than naturalism. Here I'll address Mr. Lowder's 9 arguments

1-Does physical matter support naturalism? No, by definition, God's goodness entails that God would always do God's best. While a world with just God in it is a good world, it is not better than a world with God plus a value-generating universe. Thus, theism entails the existence of physical matter so defined. This cancels Mr. Lowder's argument out, and reveals that Mr. Lowder doesn't really have an argument here at all, but instead is making a prediction of his hypothesis that says an eternal and uncaused universe exists, but he hasn't given any positive reasons to think such a universe exists. Yet another reason the bare existence of the universe doesn't provide evidence for naturalism.

2-Does a hostile universe support naturalism? Since I have identified a value-generating universe as God's goal (where embodied moral agents are just one of those goals), we can examine whether God has rationally accomplished this goal by using the known laws of nature. Mr. Lowder appears to think not, given the hostility of the universe. However, from an astronomical point of view, the earliest a planet like Earth could have appeared is when it did appear, 9.2 billion years after the beginning of the universe. This is true for at least 3 scientific reasons: 1-it would take 9.2 billion years to produce life-essential elements not given in the Big Bang, 2- The same dangerous radiating supernova events that are required to produce these life essential elements also preclude life in the universe until after it has expanded for 9.2 billion years, allowing the radiation to dissipate; and 3-the universe has to be as big and as packed full of stuff as it is for its mass-density ratio to be fine-tuned to generate the right expansion rate and volume necessary for all this life-permitting cosmic evolution to take place.

This shows that God has acted rationally and efficiently by front-loading the universe to bring about a planet like Earth to support moral agents as early as physical possible! Besides, what sort of God would actualize a creation which would require periodic intervention to accomplish its goals? Only one with less than perfect knowledge, power, and goodness.

What about evolution though? Evolution is actually evidence for theism for at least two reasons: First, if unguided, the known mechanisms of natural selection acting on random genetic mutations operate too slowly to produce intelligent life. Renowned evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala has recently calculated that the probability of only a quarter of the steps necessary to get intelligent species from evolution on an Earthlike planet anywhere in the

universe is less than 10 to the minus one millionth power! This number is so tiny that the evolution of intelligent life is exceedingly unlikely to have occurred even once in the universe. Second, a number of terrestrial and solar system related reasons account for the necessity of a 4.57 billion year delay which implies that the universe was ready to serve as a home for human beings at the earliest imaginable date on the right planet to make discoveries. This is incredibly more likely on theism than naturalism! Thus, the universes astoundingly robust, efficient, and gapless formational economy provides yet another argument for God's existence. Thus, we have 2 defeaters to think it isn't surprising that the universe isn't teeming with embodied moral agents, and 2 defeaters and 1 outweighing argument to think it isn't surprising that so much of the universe is intelligible without appeal to supernatural agency.

Moreover, I think evolution was probably God's only option:

Many assume, without argument that God could create any biological creatures God wanted to without using evolution. However, this can only be the case if biological creatures have an intrinsic essence. In that case, biological creatures will have the same behavioral dispositions whether or not God uses evolution to create them. However, it is the consensus view in the philosophy of biology that biological creatures have a historical essence acquired from evolution, rather than an intrinsic essence, and that this is a metaphysically necessary truth like water is H₂O. Therefore, God had to use evolution because it would have been metaphysically impossible to miraculously create a biological creature without an intrinsic essence to behave according to its intrinsic essence. This would be like creating a Prime Minister that is a Prime Number. Thus, it isn't surprising on theism that embodied moral agents are the result of evolution, and why our universe isn't teeming with moral agents more impressive than ourselves. This point also defeats Mr. Lowder's 4th and 5th arguments since they are dependent on the assumption that God didn't have to use evolution.

Let me offer more objections to Mr. Lowder's 4th and 5th arguments: A number of philosophers today defend the position that the laws of nature in the actual world are the laws of nature in any possible world as the best explanation for the regularity we observe and because there aren't any laws of nature in biology. But this entails that God could not fine-tune humans so that they only feel pain and pleasure when it is morally necessary, and it would render the facts we know about languishing and flourishing unsurprising on theism since ecosystem stability requires a means to regulate the levels of each category of organisms. Recall that Mr. Lowder quoted Larry Arnhart's work as an objection to *the two arguments I gave which showed that our instinctual moral beliefs and desires predominantly contribute both to survival and reproduction as well as flourishing because they track independently given morally necessary truths. However, Mr. Lowder's quotation of Arnhart actually supports my arguments further. Indeed, the whole point of Darwin's thought experiment was to show that a species instinctual moral desires and beliefs can come apart from reflective necessary moral truths and goods; and that would make objective flourishing biologically impossible, or nearly so. Thus, Mr. Lowder needs to address both of my arguments especially since they outweigh Mr. Lowder's argument from pain and pleasure not always being morally necessary.* Lastly, we should feel relieved that of the 8.7 million different species that have ever existed on Earth, more than 99.9999 percent of them lacked the capacity for any one of the five levels of self-awareness that have been identified. This means that if they suffered at all, they didn't suffer to the extent humans do. Even those that are self-aware probably aren't as self-aware as humans which also implies that they suffer somewhat less than humans. Moreover, I think that since animals aren't persons, they don't have a right to life, and are not wronged when they languish from natural causes.

6-Mr. Lowder claims that triumph is the exception and tragedy is the rule, We've heard no evidence to think tragedies are the rule, and if they were the rule then that implies life wouldn't

be worthwhile, but I gave four arguments to think life is worthwhile and Mr. Lowder never responded. Moreover, to paraphrase Paul Draper, without the hypothesis of indifference, you cannot calculate the probability of tragedies given atheism! Lastly, if God had to use evolution, then it isn't surprising if natural selection was blind to God's morally sufficient reasons that would justify those anomalous cases in the world that appear to us as pointless types of evil.

What about horrific suffering destroying a person? Mr. Lowder agrees with me now in his last speech that horrific suffering doesn't destroy people, but he goes on to claim that evolution would make humans this way on naturalism! However, evolution didn't have to make us this resilient, consider the fact that certain protozoans and bacteria regularly engage in programmed cell death, or suicide, when exposed to stresses such as heat that they're fully capable of overcoming.

What about God not comforting people? I gave a detailed response to this and Mr. Lowder never responded. *Moreover, feeling God's presence in the midst of intense suffering that God has good reason not to relieve, would probably only spark resentment and serve to block future positive relationships with the young, immature, and emotionally angry. From the victim's perspective, it would be like a police officer watching a woman get raped and not doing anything. The indirect mechanism of comfort that I argued for is a wiser policy, and this shows that Mr. Lowder's argument commits the fallacy of false alternatives.*

Thus, my argument from the worthwhileness of life still stands, and outweighs Mr. Lowder's triumph and tragedy argument.

7-Does mind/brain dependence support naturalism?

Any soul that acts in the physical world would by definition be performing a miracle. However, this probably requires maximal power. But, it is logically impossible for God to create another maximally powerful being, that would be like saying there are two, everything's. Thus it is impossible, or at least improbable to think God could have created conscious life independently of non-conscious life with a soul. However, the fact that consciousness is probably an emergent property fundamentally different from nonconscious matter is itself evidence for theism over naturalism. This also explains the variety and frequency of conditions that severely limit our freedom on theism. *Would this defeat my own argument from embodied moral agents since it precludes libertarian free will? No, because according to the majority of experts who are either compatibilists, or semi-compatibilists, moral responsibility doesn't require libertarian free will, but only control via a reasons-responsive mechanism. If Mr. Lowder wants to defend the minority position of incompatibilism he can do that, but so far he hasn't.*

8-What about ethical disagreement?

1-This assumes that God has access to moral reasons we haven't already discovered for ourselves, otherwise God's telling us reasons we already know wouldn't resolve any disagreement. But, this is highly unlikely because morality is independent of God. However, if God knows of moral reasons beyond our ken that would settle ethical disagreements, then how much more likely is it that God has morally sufficient reasons beyond our ken that would undercut all of Mr. Lowder's arguments?

2-Second, several ethicists believe both that some moral truths are objective, and that some controversial ethical questions have intrinsically indeterminate answers just like the questions concerning concepts of 'baldness' and 'redness.' This implies that some moral disagreement is inevitable, God or no God.

3-Humans have enough room to grow still based on the moral facts they do know.

9-What about divine hiddenness?-This argument assumes that the evidence for and against God is exactly balanced. Mr. Lowder hasn't shown this yet. Moreover, the absence of evidence would be evidence of God's absence only if we should expect to have more evidence than we in fact do have if God existed. In practical terms, what that means is, if God exists, should we expect to have more evidence than those 10 lines of evidence I gave in my opening speech? No, what good what it do? Mr. Lowder says there are people who appear to be non-resistant; but he just asserted that. Moreover, Mr. Lowder presupposes that a meaningful relationship requires being aware of the other person? Why think this? Besides, why would there even be 10 lines of evidence for God's existence on naturalism?

In sum then, Mr. Lowder's 9 points in favor of naturalism reduce to 5 independent arguments, 3 dependent arguments, and 1 argument that is really a prediction. I have offered defeaters for Mr. Lowder's entire positive case and all the understated evidence my positive case allegedly suffered from, and shown that naturalism isn't more probable than Christian theism in terms of simplicity, and re-established 6 positive arguments for my case, two of which show that God exists necessarily and thus theism has a prior probability of 1, and added another argument from the formational economy of the universe. In my next speech I will re-establish the remaining 5 arguments in my positive case for Christian theism against Mr. Lowder's defeaters.