

Let's look at my first contention about simplicity:

I'm gratified Mr. Lowder agrees that his hypothesis entails five claims, but he also needs to add the factual necessity of the universe. Which means that we both make six claims and that entails Christian Theism is equal in simplicity to Naturalism.

What about my second contention that God exists necessarily

2a-He says metaphysical time is Ad hoc, and incompatible with a timeless being

If his argument about timeless causes is correct, and my argument about the origin of the universe is correct, then metaphysical time is implied by our background knowledge which doesn't make it ad hoc. Yes, it is incompatible with a timeless being, but my argument works with either a temporal or timeless cause.

2b-He says timeless causes are incoherent and God began to exist.

No, God is causally, but not temporally, prior to creation, He becomes temporal at the moment of creation when he creates. A timeless God wouldn't begin to exist because there is a state of affairs in the actual world in which God exists timelessly without creation.

2c-What about the BGV theorem?

The majority of experts including Sean Carroll accept the BGV theorem. Rather, Carroll thinks his model of the universe avoids one of its assumptions, but Vilenkin showed in 2012 that Carroll's model fails on other grounds to avert the beginning of the universe.

2d-Mr. Lowder's anti-creation argument fails because:

First, I showed that more space begins to exist without prior existing materials, and he never responded.

Second, it presents a false dilemma because the potentiality for creation out of nothing lay in the power of God to create it, not stuff distinct from or pantheistically out of God. He never responded to my other two objections that defeat this argument as well.

3a-He says it is uncertain that observers play a role in wave function collapse. Granted, but this shows that theism is a fruitful research program, and besides, according to the BGV theorem, the universe cannot exist by the necessity of its own nature.

Thus, the universe isn't factually necessary, naturalism is impotent as an explanation for why there is something rather than nothing, and for why the universe originated out of nothing a finite time ago.

What about my third contention that Christian theism has more explanatory power and scope:

He incorrectly defines naturalistic theism. According to Howard Van Till, naturalistic theists claim that God is impotent because God cannot do miracles; and they take no stance on the status of the laws of nature. Thus, by definition I am a supernaturalistic theist because from the beginning I have argued for an efficient value-generating universe wherein God has already performed miracles where it was rational and possible to do so.

Let's look at Mr. Lowder's 3 errors in logic about necessity that are completely unrelated to naturalistic theism:

1-He claims I confuse physical with metaphysical necessity.

Virtually no other philosopher besides Mr. Lowder disagrees with me that it is logically impossible for an omnipotent God to do metaphysically impossible acts like change necessary laws.

2-He claims necessary laws undercut some of my arguments:

Even if the actual laws are necessary, virtually no other philosopher besides Mr. Lowder thinks that entails the constants, quantities, and initial conditions of the universe have to be necessary as well. Moreover, evolution can still be intrinsically chancy on this view, and that is all I need for my arguments to work.

**3-He claims the laws of nature exist necessarily**

The counterfactuals of laws may be necessary in their truth value, but Jeff hasn't show they exist necessarily.

Therefore, despite his trying to poison the well, I am a supernaturalistic theist, and Mr. Lowder is in fact the one who holds bizarre and sectarian views that don't undermine any of my objections.

What about his 9 arguments for naturalism:

1<sup>st</sup> - Physical matter-

At most, God's goodness would entail both a non-physical and a physical value generating universe which still confirms theism. His second objection makes my point that physical matter isn't really an argument for either one of our positions, but is really just an unspecified prediction he hasn't supported.

2<sup>nd</sup> - Hostility to life-

He sidestepped his original objection, and now claims that God should have used different laws; but 'A', he already thinks God can't according to his anti-creation argument, 'B' he hasn't shown the laws are contingent, 'C' he hasn't shown these other laws would produce an even better value-generating universe than our own. 'D' the formational economy argument I gave strongly supports theism over naturalism according to the Bayesian total evidence requirement even if the laws are contingent. 'E' using miracles to skip the hostile development of the universe would produce a less valuable universe because autonomy, intelligibility, and discoverability would be undermined. 'F', since total significance decreases in proportion to the number of other intrinsically valuable things in the universe, a universe teeming with moral agents would be less valuable than ours.

3<sup>rd</sup> - Evolution as God's only option-

He says God could have created biological creatures with different intrinsic essences, but he already thinks God can't, given his anti-creation argument, and I showed this is impossible for an omnipotent God because biological creatures necessarily have historical essences which requires common ancestry.

He claims I illegitimately appealed to authority:

It isn't just Ayala that thinks unguided evolution works too slowly to produce intelligent life; it is the majority of evolutionary biologists.

He claims God would have to intervene to guide evolution:

No, God could guide evolution without intervening in two ways: through quantum indeterminacy, and by front-loading the universe with the right initial conditions. Thus, we still have multiple reasons to think the universe wouldn't be teeming with moral agents more impressive than humans on theism, that evolution is evidence for theism, and the formational economy of the universe significantly outweighs Jeff's atheistic intelligibility argument since it shows that the entire natural history of the universe implies the supernatural.

4<sup>th</sup> - Pain and Pleasure- My necessary laws, and evolution as God's only option defeaters still stand, and Jeff didn't respond to my two arguments from moral flourishing and perception from my last speech, which still outweigh this argument.

5<sup>th</sup> - Flourishing and languishing

My necessary laws, and evolution as God's only option defeaters still stand, and he said nothing that defeated my animals don't suffer to the extent humans do, and no right to life defeaters.

6<sup>th</sup> - Triumph and Tragedy: I argued that if God used evolution, then it is likely that natural selection would be blind to God's morally sufficient reasons for allowing anomalous types of tragic evil, and he never responded. His evidence for tragedies being the rule is anecdotal, and evinces a psychological phenomenon known as negativity bias. Third, I gave four responses which outweigh Jeff's appeal to tragedies, and he never responded. What about Horrific suffering often destroying people.

I have already shown that it is empirically false that horrific suffering often destroys people, and he never responded to my point about human resiliency supporting theism!

What about God comforting people

I never said that God made us resilient as a way to comfort us, so his heartless analogy is directed at nothing I said. And He still hasn't addressed my original two arguments that show comfort is available to everyone even if they don't believe in God.

7<sup>th</sup> - Mind-brain dependence

He didn't give any reason to think God could create souls capable of performing miracles, and give his anti-creation argument he doesn't think God can. Therefore, the lack of embodied moral agents more impressive than us, conscious life arising from nonconscious life, and the limitations on our freedom we see are unsurprising on theism even apart from my evolutionary argument. He dropped his point about moral

responsibility requiring libertarian freedom which implies that my argument from embodied moral agents stands up even apart from fine-tuning.

8<sup>th</sup> - Ethical disagreement:

He didn't challenge my reasons to think it wasn't possible or rational for God to try and erase all ethical disagreement. Moreover, his proposed solution is unlikely since Jesus has many explicit teachings Christians disagree on, and don't follow already.

**He thinks God should tell us morality is indeterminate:**

This wouldn't change anything because some people would disagree with God, and the best reasons to convince us of this fact would be the very ethical disagreement we already experience.

**He thinks God is to blame for violent ethical disagreement amongst Christians**

Judging from Jesus' teachings; perpetrators of religious evil aren't genuinely religious; salvation depends primarily on secular morality, and secular morality trumps religiosity which teaches against such actions.

Lastly, and he only has a duty of intervention if he has necessary authority over us which he doesn't.

9<sup>th</sup> - Divine Hiddenness:

If there really are non-resistant non-believers no matter how strong or accessible the evidence, then this entails that: If God were to present in the relevant manner to those who don't believe, then they would enter into a permanent meaningful relationship with God. But how does he know this? His only evidence on offer is from former believers, but this actually undercuts our warrant for this entailment. Indeed, if the evidence for God's existence is as strong as he allows it to be, that is strong evidence that there aren't any truly non-resistant non-believers. Moreover, recent findings from various branches of psychology also show we are unwarranted in accepting testimonial evidence for non-resisters because humans are unreliable judges of themselves in this regard. Lastly, he still hasn't shown that a meaningful relationship with God requires the belief that God exists.

Let's turn to my positive case for Christian Theism

*What about my argument from the Applicability of Mathematics:*

Jeff issued me a challenge to show a less interesting mathematical universe than our own. This is easy. Many scientists postulate an infinite number of universes that, unlike our universe, have high levels of entropy which isn't distributed over a vast region. According to Robin Collins, without the low level and vast distribution of entropy in our universe, we couldn't do cosmology, and we couldn't understand the big bang origin of our universe.

What about Discoverability:

The point of this argument is that you can have an intelligible universe without anybody around or positioned to notice, so, the fact that the same narrow circumstances that allow Earth to exist also provide the best overall setting for making scientific observations; and the fact that those same observations have yielded evidence for God, work together to outweigh Jeff's hostility to life argument independent of the applicability of mathematics because it shows Earth has an exceptionally privileged location in the universe.

He claims that Fine-tuning probabilities aren't normalizable

This objection presupposes a principle in probability calculus called countable additivity which has many purported counterexamples including fine-tuning as shown in John Leslie's fly on the wall thought experiment.

He claims the Prior Probability of the Resurrection is incredibly Low:

But, given the religio-historical context, God's raising Jesus from the dead is most plausibly understood as God's ratification of Jesus' own unparalleled life, teachings, claims, and deeds which would give God powerful motivation to raise him.

He claims the Resurrection Hypothesis Doesn't Explain The Facts

But, given the established background knowledge:

That the God of Israel was believed to authenticate new revelation to man by performing a miracle, and thereafter commissioning humans to spread this new revelation.

plus the hypothesis God raised Jesus from the dead; we can see that implies the empty tomb, the post-mortem appearances, and the origin of the disciples' belief in a bodily resurrected Jesus.

He claims the Resurrection Hypothesis Doesn't Imply a Full Jewish Resurrection:

But, given its Jewish context, if the God of Israel has raised Jesus, thereby vindicating his allegedly blasphemous claims, then the most natural inference is that Jesus' resurrection has occurred in the full Jewish sense of that term, ahead of the general resurrection which was the Jewish hope. It would be grossly ad hoc to infer otherwise.

In sum, we have no good reason to think naturalism is true, and 12 lines of evidence that support Christian theism. On balance, Christian theism is much more probable than naturalism.