

Wednesday, March 30, 2005

## The Cartoon Universe of Theism

After examining many arguments offered by presuppositional apologists and considering the general view of the world that they want to defend and impart to others, I cannot help but see the formidable parallels between, on the one hand, the god they claim exists and the reality they say it created, and, on the other, an illustrator and the cartoons he draws.

Christians imagine that the universe is the product of a devising mind, just as a cartoon is the product of a devising illustrator. Just as the shapes we perceive in a cartoon conform to the content of the mind of the illustrator, the entities and their actions in the universe are thought to conform to the content of a consciousness whose initial state is consciousness only of itself. The illustrator, for purposes of entertainment, draws an imaginary realm where fifty-ton boulders fall on Wile E. Coyote, crushing him flat as a pancake only to have him crawl out from underneath it and shake himself off so he can proceed with his pursuit of the Roadrunner. Likewise the theist imagines a supernatural illustrator who wishes the universe into existence and controls it just as ably as it controls its own thoughts. The contents of the universe conform to the thoughts of the divine consciousness just as the scenes of a cartoon conform to the imagination of the illustrator.

But beyond this, significant differences begin to emerge. Where the cartoon illustrator is only seeking artful entertainment and whatever compensation the market will bear for it, theists want to take their savagely more perverse analogue very seriously, and they want you to take it seriously, too. And where the cartoon illustrator understands that the realms he creates in his drawings are just fantasy and play, theists have rendered themselves intellectually incompetent when it comes to distinguishing between reality and their imagination. And it is this blurring between fantasy and reality that inspires the hideous ideas which give Christianity, like other religions, its lethal nature as a worldview. It is this view of reality, the cartoon universe of theism, that presuppositionalists seek to defend. Only it's not funny. What's more is that they tell us that we must presuppose that things are this way - that the universe is essentially a cartoon realm created by a boundless consciousness no one can perceive - in order to make sense of the world and our experience in it.

But there is a distinction between reality and our fantasies. How could anyone think that reason and rationality are based on the theist's perverse confusion of the two? The universe is not at all like a cartoon. An entity is itself, and its actions have a necessary relationship to its nature. Facts do not change because someone wants them to, and wishing doesn't make it so. It is this hard reality that the theist finds depressing and, unable to cope, he seeks to evade it by retreating into a set of bizarre notions that disable his ability to make very important distinctions.

If you should ever find yourself in a debate with a presuppositionalist, point out to him that he is basically trying to defend the view that the universe is essentially nothing more than a cartoon. Ask him how seriously he takes the teachings of the bible, especially those attributed to Jesus in the gospel stories. Many of these teachings unmistakably confer this cartoon-like quality to the universe. For instance, Matthew 17:20 reads: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." Ask him if he really believes that Mt. McKinley is going to do what he wishes, or if he thinks such verses are to be taken as obvious hyperbole that no one should take literally. If he says the former, that indeed his wish-laden prayers can cause such devastation, his case is pathological, and there's probably nothing you can do for him. If he concedes that such bible passages should be taken as figurative exaggeration, then ask him if the stories about the creation of the earth and heaven, the talking snake in the Garden of Eden, the worldwide flood, the seven plagues of Egypt, and Jesus' resurrection are also to be taken as exaggeration. The intention here is to smoke out and expose the lunacy of god-belief, for surely it is there, and it needs to be driven out. The light of reason is the only tool necessary for this, for in it the absurd cannot camouflage itself.

by Dawson Bethrick

posted by *Bahnsen Burner* at [6:47 AM](#)

3 Comments:

[Francois Tremblay](#) said...

Cartoon universe. HAH ! I love it, Dawson ! I have to find something to do with that post of yours, it's great. Maybe I'll post it on strongatheism.net, is that all right ?

[March 30, 2005 6:22 PM](#)

[The Vulgar Mediocre Guy](#) said...

Certainly a brilliant idea. One wonders (well, I wonder) if a theist has even imagined a boulder dropping upon the head of an enemy?

[March 31, 2005 4:03 PM](#)

[Francois Tremblay](#) said...

OK, it's added.

[March 31, 2005 7:10 PM](#)