

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Incinerating Presuppositionalism: Year Four

Today marks the fourth anniversary of [Incinerating Presuppositionalism](#), the blog dedicated to scorching the scarecrows and strawmen of Vantillian apologetics. Still untouchable after all this time! That's quite an achievement, if I don't say so myself!

Below is a list of the blog entries which I published over the past year, since the blog's third anniversary.

143. [Incinerating Presuppositionalism: Year Three](#) - March 26, 2008
144. [The Double Whammy](#) - April 6, 2008
145. [God the Father: A Father of Love?](#) - May 16, 2008
146. [Faith as Hope in the Imaginary](#) - June 5, 2008
147. [Stolen Concepts and Intellectual Parasitism](#) - June 13, 2008
148. [Dodging the Subject-Object Relationship](#) - June 21, 2008
149. [Before the Beginning: The Problem of Divine Lonesomeness](#) - July 11, 2008
150. [\[SIC\]](#) - July 13, 2008
151. [Is I Corinthians 15:3-8 'Too Early' to Be Legend?](#) - July 27, 2008
152. [In Response to David on I Corinthians 15:3-8](#) - July 29, 2008
153. [Another Response to David, Part 1: The Charge of Strawman](#) - August 25, 2008
154. [Another Response to David, Part 2: The Witness of Paul](#) - August 26, 2008
155. [Another Response to David, Part 3: The Usual Pagan Suspects](#) - August 27, 2008
156. [Another Response to David, Part 4: Paul, Q and Groping Traditions](#) - August 28, 2008
157. [Another Response to David, Part 5: Paul's Knowledge of Jesus](#) - August 29, 2008
158. [Another Response to David, Part 6: Signs of the Legend](#) - September 16, 2008
159. [Another Response to David, Part 7: The Anatomy of Legend and the Ruse of Revelation](#) - September 17, 2008
160. [Geisler-Turek Reflux](#) - September 21, 2008
161. [Paul's Ignorance of the Earthly Jesus, Part 1: Prologue and Preliminary Basics](#) - September 22, 2008
162. [Paul's Ignorance of the Earthly Jesus, Part 2: Claims 1-7](#) - September 23, 2008
163. [Paul's Ignorance of the Earthly Jesus, Part 3: Claims 8-14](#) - September 24, 2008
164. [A Reply to Tennant on Theistic Foundationalism vs. the Objectivist Axioms](#) - October 24, 2008

165. [Rival Philosophies of Fact](#) - November 9, 2008
166. [Thoughts on Recent Comments by Vytautas](#) - December 6, 2008
167. [Could the Christian God Be Rational?](#) - December 7, 2008
168. [The Inherent Subjectivism of God-belief](#) - December 26, 2008
169. [Do Objectivists Try to “Define God Out of Existence”?](#) - January 1, 2009
170. [Off to Asia!](#) - February 6, 2009
171. [Was Adam Created Perfect?](#) - March 19, 2009
172. [Pass the Pepto Baptismal: The “Hell Being Community” at Wat Phai Rong Wua](#) - March 21, 2009
173. [Legends, Lüdemann, and Inductive Inference](#) - March 23, 2009
174. [A Response to Josh Ratliff on the “Creed” in I Corinthians 15](#) - March 24, 2009

Although there were not quite as many posts this past year as there have been in previous years, much of the activity on my blog this year took place in the comments sections of various blogs, where some lively debates and informative exchanges provide additional substance beyond what I have written in my entries.

Although I am moving full steam ahead, I hesitate to make any promises about what specifically I will be publishing in the fifth year of this blog’s life. I have lots in the works, some very in-depth and penetrating interactions and critiques, but all in various stages of incompleteness. Time is the final limiting factor for my work, as it likely is for my readers. I am a slow toiler, careful in what I finally produce (whoever said “be careful for nothing?”), very busy with other things in life (like making an income, loving my wife, enjoying my daughter, working on my never-ending “honey-do” list, paying bills, etc.), and occasionally lazy (Friday nights are typically reserved for [Forensic Files](#)). But in spite of these constraints, I intend to do my best at squeezing out some juicy blogs here and there.

So here’s to another year of [Incinerating Presuppositionalism!](#)

Regards,
Dawson

Labels: [IP Archives](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [6:00 AM](#)

7 Comments:

[atimetorend](#) said...

Congratulations, and keep up the good work. I don't think I have commented here before, but have been perusing around for a couple of months. Thanks for all the work you've done, I have benefited from reading. It can be mind boggling, trying to fit presuppositional apologetic ideas into my brain.

[March 26, 2009 6:50 AM](#)

[Todd Wiley](#) said...

I've just discovered your blog and I wanted to thank you for providing such a resource. I've just stepped on a pile of presuppositional crap through a Christian friend of mine who is tangling with a cabal of Calvinists (who seem to love Bahnsen). After it finally dawned on me that they were serious about their claims, and after I stopped laughing, I had

to do some research to even comprehend what they were saying. This site has been a huge help.

[March 27, 2009 12:09 PM](#)

[NAL](#) said...

Just found your site via the comments section over at DC. Great stuff. I've got a lot of enjoyable reading ahead. My arguments with a certain Calvinist are going to be improving. Thanks.

[March 27, 2009 11:32 PM](#)

[Barn Stormer](#) said...

Wow. Your blog seems like a good resource.

I'll be subscribing. Keep up the good work.

[March 28, 2009 9:43 PM](#)

[Darrin](#) said...

I'm not the only one out there after all.

I take it since you quoted Kelley on my blog comments that you're not "orthodox" Objectivist, i.e. that you take Kelley's side in "Truth and Toleration." I think even Leonard could be "softening" a bit himself, whether he realizes it or not; one of his recent podcasts admitted Rand was in error in personal judgment (not fundamentally opposed to her philosophy, and I agree - just that she was in error on that particular point).

If you are orthodox Objectivist, i.e. you believe Objectivism to be a closed system, then you'll probably find me the most deplorable person on the blogosphere. As I like to say, I'm so close to an Objectivist that Rand would have called me one of her worst enemies. And if not, I think we'll be hand-in-hand in our counters to Presuppositionalism.

I noticed your blog is geared toward Van Tillianism. You may want to check out Gordon Clark, a bizarrely lovable mysticist who took the entire Bible as an axiomatic foundation and maintained no "apparent contradictions" at all - he rips Frame and Van Til on a Youtube video quite handily on analogical knowledge, for instance, among other points. He's the guy who translated John 1:1 as "in the Beginning was the Logic, and the Logic was with God, and the Logic was God." You gotta crack a smile at that - even if I do end up atheistic I HAVE to keep that one (it's no surprise that two books of the small Clarkian library at the Trinity Foundation are against Objectivism ...)

Feel free to contact me over at my blog or at hyperskeptic at hotmail.

-Darrin

[March 28, 2009 10:18 PM](#)

[Bahnsen Burner](#) said...

Hi Darrin,

Welcome to my blog! Thanks for your thoughtful comments.

You wrote: "I take it since you quoted Kelley on my blog comments that you're not 'orthodox' Objectivist, i.e. that you take Kelley's side in 'Truth and Toleration'."

Actually, I have not read this book of Kelley's. I may have read portions of it (if excerpts are available on the net - I read a lot!). But I do admire much of the work that Kelley has produced. The lecture which I quoted in my blog ("Universals and Induction") dates from the 80's, before the "split," and has nothing to do with the controversy which divided Peikoff and Kelley. Part of me tends to consider the matter trivial, but I can see how divisive it can be. I consider myself to be an Objectivist in the sense that I ascribe wholly and uncompromisingly to the primacy of existence, and embrace the other five points which Binswanger lists as Rand's primary achievements in philosophy

(as given in his article “Ayn Rand’s Philosophic Achievement” in *The Objectivist Forum*, June, 1982, pp. 8-13). Those include the following:

1. The primacy of existence
2. The theory of concepts
3. The theory of free will
4. Man’s Life as the standard of morality
5. The moral basis of individual rights
6. The psycho-epistemology of art

I guess you could call me a six-pointer Objectivist! (Why not? Let’s carve out a new schism!)

Then again, I found Diana Hsieh’s [Public Statement](#) explaining her break from the Objectivist Center rather sobering.

Darrin: “I think even Leonard could be ‘softening’ a bit himself, whether he realizes it or not; one of his recent podcasts admitted Rand was in error in personal judgment (not fundamentally opposed to her philosophy, and I agree - just that she was in error on that particular point).”

I think in some contexts this may be the case. He’s still a staunch defender of reason, egoism, capitalism, etc. But his podcasts do offer a somewhat refreshing side of him (which in all fairness I think was always there, it’s just been overshadowed, probably mostly by what his detractors have said about him over the years). In that case, sometimes I get the impression that Leonard’s “had a couple” before the show. He almost slurs at some points, and has slowed speech. This may be due to his age, though (not that I’m against having a couple myself!).

Darrin: “If you are orthodox Objectivist, i.e. you believe Objectivism to be a closed system, then you’ll probably find me the most deplorable person on the blogosphere.”

I don’t know enough about you to make some kind of judgment. But I know many non-Objectivists who in fact have many misgivings for it, and I don’t think of them as deplorable. I understand that we all bring our own histories and contexts to the table, and we each differ in that respect. In that case, maybe you could call me a “live and let live Objectivist”? However, I know everyone else is wrong. ;) (How’s that for an “orthodox creedal statement”?) Okay, I’m kidding.

As for whether Objectivism is a closed system or not, I’m not sure why that’s such an important debate. For myself, I see myself as *applying* what I have learned from Objectivism rather than trying to expand it. I’m not trying to formulate new positions as part of some orthodox corpus such as on the mentally retarded (an issue which Brian Register mentions in one of his essays as a topic on which Objectivism proper has little explicit to say).

Darrin: “As I like to say, I’m so close to an Objectivist that Rand would have called me one of her worst enemies.”

Or worse, like “Son of Nathaniel”?

Darrin: “And if not, I think we’ll be hand-in-hand in our counters to Presuppositionalism.”

Check out my recent comments on [this blog](#). Let me know what you think. Really, I am trying to be civil with the guy.

Darrin: “I noticed your blog is geared toward Van Tillianism. You may want to check out Gordon Clark, a bizarrely lovable mysticist who took the entire Bible as an axiomatic foundation and maintained no ‘apparent contradictions’ at all - he rips Frame and Van Til on a Youtube video quite handily on analogical knowledge, for instance, among other points. He’s the guy who translated John 1:1 as ‘in the Beginning was the Logic, and the Logic was with God, and the Logic was God’. You gotta crack a smile at that - even if I do end up atheistic I HAVE to keep that one (it’s no surprise that two books of the small Clarkian library at the Trinity Foundation are against Objectivism ...)”

Yes, I’m quite familiar with Clark & co. (e.g., Robbins, Gerety, and others in that clique). I debated a number of “Clarkians” back in the late ‘90’s. Believe it or not, but they were more attitude than Vantillians. The Vantillian side seems to have a broader literature base, both in print and online, and seem to have a more developed theory. I may be wrong on this as I haven’t compared the two schools in a number of years. But overall, I find that the Clarkian

school simply is not nearly as interesting to me as the Vantillian side. For the Clarkians who claim “The Bible is the Word of God” (or something close to this) as their starting point, they can see my blog [A Reply to Tennant on Theistic Foundationalism vs. the Objectivist Axioms](#).

See you in the trenches!

Regards,
Dawson

[March 29, 2009 9:40 AM](#)

[breakerslion](#) said...

Congratulations. Keep fighting the good fight.

[March 30, 2009 3:54 AM](#)

[Post a Comment](#)