

## Manata Overboard: Adrift and Without a Paddle

It is most pitiable to observe an apologist for a religious perspective, so eager to sick his magical spirits on atheist spoilsports, take a bite out of his own backside in the very trying, while haughtily congratulating himself before his peers. Even when he's fallen overboard, his colleagues do not throw him a life-preserver. Instead, he haphazardly drifts to and fro, at the mercy of torrents and eddies which carry him in no particular direction. But unlike the tale of baby Moses fortuitously caught among the reeds, Paul is found [drifting up a creek without a paddle](#).

This time, Paul tried to take me to task for my quotation of Matthew 19:26, which includes the affirmation that "all things are possible." I pointed to this verse to remind Christian believers (so forgetful they often are) of their own 'worldview presuppositions' which commit them, like it or not, to a chaotic and unpredictable reality (or *surreality*) in which "all things are possible," since an omnipotent spirit is personally directing its every whip and wiggle. I [have pointed out before](#) that presuppositionalism's own hallmark slogan to the effect that Christianity is true "because of the impossibility of the contrary" is incongruous with the worldview such contrivances are intended to defend; for, in a worldview which affirms that "all things are possible," it makes no sense to turn right around and start enumerating things that are impossible. Similar tension arises when one wants to affirm, on the one hand that the nature of the universe is such that "all things are possible," while insisting on the other that things can only be a certain way, which just so happens to be in agreement with other affirmations dear to the confession. From here the dilemmas only succeed in multiplying themselves.

This has apparently gotten on Paul Manata's nerves, for he has sought to undermine my understanding of this clause by suggesting that I have stretched it beyond its intended context. For instance, he tells us that the claim that "all things can happen" applies in a very narrow scope:

- 1) Dawson's verse he uses to show that "anything can happen, willy-nilly" in a Christian theistic universe, is specifically talking about salvation.

The statement in Matthew 19:26 - "all things are possible" - is in fact the answer that Matthew's Jesus gives in response to his disciples, who asked in the preceding verse "who can be saved?" As an answer to such a question, it could hardly be any more vague, and reads as an attempt to evade stating anything specific on the the issue, as if to say "get outa here, kid, you're bothering me." Coming after such a question, the statement "with God all things are possible" may seem at first blush to have relevance to salvation to a novice. But seasoned Christians should surely know better, for it is very much on the issue of salvation which Christianity demonstrates firm inflexibility. For though the topic of the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples in Matt. 19 relates to salvation, Jesus is made to say "with God all things are possible" (v. 26) right after declaring that "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 23). Evangelists typically emphasize Christianity's view of salvation, which is marked by its exclusiveness, and contrast it from the eastern adage that "there are many paths to the summit of a mountain." Christianity hardly promotes a soteriology in which the possibilities are endless. On the contrary, "strait is the gate" to the magic kingdom (cf. Mt. 7:13-14), and many denominations stress the teaching that there is no allowance for even minor deviation from the plan. James 2:10 tells us that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The gospel of John has its Jesus exclaim that "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (14:6).

Because of its intolerance to alternatives in regard to salvation, the claim that "all things are possible" in this regard is highly misleading. For instance, Christians are not supposed to entertain the possibility that the god they worship is anything other than the god of the New Testament. Thus on their teaching it is not possible that the god with whom "all things are possible" is a god that also says "there are many paths to the top of the summit" with regard to salvation. Would Christians say that one can be saved by praying to a non-Christian god? No, it's not likely that Christians would admit this. And yet here is a possibility proposed in relation to salvation, and already the statement "all things are possible" patently does not apply. Would Christians say that it is possible for a sinner to be saved without repentance? No, I doubt many Christians would admit this. Would Christians say that it is possible for a sinner to be saved without faith? No, I doubt they would admit to this, either. Would Christians say that it is possible for a sinner to be saved on his own volitional instigation? Calvinists likely would not admit to this. Would Christians say that it is possible for a sinner to be saved without the intervention of the Holy Spirit? Many Christians would likely dismiss this as well. Perhaps the applicability of the claim that "all things are possible" is more specific to who can be saved, owing to the question this is supposed to answer. But even here we find another dry well. For what Christian would say that a sinner who refuses to repent can be saved? What Christian would say that a sinner

who refuses to confess Jesus as his Lord and Savior can be saved? What Christian would say that a sinner who refuses to believe there's a god can be saved? It is highly unlikely that any doctrine-driven Christian would admit to such proposals, instead dismissing them as impossible. So, contrary to what Paul intimates, it seems that the statement "all things are possible" in fact does not apply to the issue of salvation at all. Rather, it seems that Paul is simply offering another dodge which misses Christianity's own teaching!

Since it is clear now that the statement "all things are possible" could not apply to salvation, for this statement still to be true, it must apply in some broader context, one that is not made clear in the Matthean passage in which we find it. The context in which I cited Matt. 19:26 concerned the suggestion, made by Jason Engwer, to the effect that a mass hallucination being responsible for the alleged appearances of the post-resurrection Jesus was "highly unlikely." For [I had written](#):

While we are told that coincidental mass hallucination "seems unlikely," this is stated in the context of a defense of a belief system which tells us that "all things are possible" (Mt. 19:26), that the universe was created by an act of consciousness, that dead people rose from their graves (cf. Mt. 27:52-53), that serpents and donkeys and burning bushes speak in human languages, that water was turned into wine by a wish, etc.

Even though many apologists might prefer the safety of non-commitment, it seems that some apologists are in agreement that the Christian god could cause hallucinations on a large scale basis. But couldn't also the devil? Christianity's defenders tend to shy away from discussing (yea, even acknowledging) the mischief that demons, devils and other "bad spirits" are presumably capable of wreaking in human affairs, for doing so admits the possibility that Christians themselves have been deceived by these invisible beings. And what about other gods? Naturally, Christians discount the claim that there are other gods. But if one grants legitimacy to the notion of the supernatural to begin with, then we could only rule out such possibilities by special pleading.

2) Does that verse really mean that anything can happen, that anything is possible?

This is a question that the Christian will ultimately have to decide for himself. To discover what the bible means, I have to start with what the bible says. But it needs to be kept in mind that I did not write Matt. 19:26, nor does my worldview conceive of an invisible magic being and invest it with the power to do what Christianity claims on behalf of its god. So again, what a particular passage might mean and the concern to find a way to live with it, are not my problems. But here Paul is on the verge of reducing "Scripture" to a game of "that's what it says, but that's not what it means." Perhaps Paul needs a course in McKinsey 101. We saw above that there are many hypothetical possibilities that can be conceived in regard to the salvation of man's soul, the issue to which Paul contends the meaning of the statement in Matt. 19:26 is constrained, which Christians themselves, on the basis of statements taken from the New Testament, would reject.

Now Paul asks if the verse in question can "really mean that anything can happen, that anything is possible." Christianity answers this question in its characteristic yes-and-no fashion, offering no stable guide to discerning when a guarantee on either yes or no can be had. The Christian wants things both ways: he wants to say, on the one hand, that his god is all-powerful, possessing unlimited sovereignty, completely and unexceptionally in control of its creations; and yet, on the other hand, he wants to say that there are constraints in place which cannot be altered, constraints which even his god must observe (even though those constraints owe their very existence to this god). It should be no wonder at this point why Paul has fallen overboard. Yet he continues:

a) If so, Dawson's should provide an argument for it. He needs to because his case rests on this.

I need to provide an argument to the effect that the words "all things are possible" mean "all things are possible"? If we do not allow the words to speak for themselves, what good will it do for me to present an argument, which itself consists of words? We saw above that his initial point completely misfires, and even then he does not shed any light on exactly how Mt. 19:26 should be understood. In spite of these shortcomings, he complains that the onus is on me.

Then Paul sought outside help:

b) Just because it uses a word that is universal, does not mean that is how it is being used in this passage. There is such a thing, which philosophers of language recognize, as restricted quantification. Philosopher of language William Lycan, speaking on restricted quantification, writes that, "What logicians call the domains over which quantifiers range need not be universal, but are often particular cases roughly presupposed in context" (*Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, p.24).

This is quite odd, especially coming from Paul himself. For [elsewhere he has affirmed](#) that a statement that is not

qualified automatically defaults to universal scope of meaning, and yet in the present case, when the statement is in fact explicitly qualified universally, it is not to be taken as such. So, is Paul saying that it is *not* the case that "all things are possible with God"? It is limited? To what extent? The original issue was whether or not the Christian god could cause mass hallucinations. Is Paul actually trying to say that the Christian god could *not* cause mass hallucinations? Fellow Triablatherer Jason Engwer himself [stated](#):

Christians don't argue that hallucinations would be supernaturally impossible. What Christian ever denied that God could produce mass hallucinations?

Jason should throw Paul a safety line. Instead, we'll likely see the apologists striking out against their critics. For instance, Christians may counter saying, "But this is the Christian God! It wouldn't make sense for Him to misrepresent Himself by causing mass hallucinations to those whom He has chosen to document and deliver His message of salvation!" This kind of retort of course overlooks the fact that these are the believer's assumptions, not mine. And they rest on very shaky ground indeed. Adult thinkers typically admit that human beings are not infallible. Also, human beings are always the source of supernatural claims (claims to mystical revelation notwithstanding). In his letter to the Roman church, the apostle Paul seems quite happy in calling "every man a liar" (3:4). (Perhaps he meant everyone but himself.) If one grants validity to the notion that there is a supernatural consciousness which can coordinate human history according to its will or "plan," whose power is invincible and whose efficacy in causing desired outcomes cannot be impeded by any extraneous factor, then one erases any rational distinction between the arbitrary and the objective, the absurd and the reasonable. In effect, one admits the all-encompassing element of complete randomness (for there is nothing more difficult to judge than another mind), having no idea of what to expect to be the case from moment to moment, unless of course, at the height of his pretense, the believer in such things carelessly blurs the distinction between his mind and the mind he imaginatively attributes to the supernatural fantasy he enshrines. (And if he does this, we'll have some simple tests for him to take.) In such a way, the theist is simply being consistent with the foundations of his worldview by confessing "all things are possible," without any hint of limitation of impediment.

The myriad dilemmas to which this tangled mess leads are in fact logically prior to tales of a resurrected god-man who was born of a virgin, worked miracles and preached a folk morality whose maxims are well suited to adorning billboards and placemats, for the premise that such a supernatural consciousness is real is logically prior to the accounts we find in the gospel narratives. (In fact, it is often on the basis "if God exists" that the mere possibility that these narratives have any truth to them is accepted and defended.) Thus we continue to see how the Christian worldview works against itself: [in the words of Steve Hays himself](#), the apologist "can only make his claim by burning his drawing card." In this case, the drawing card is essentially the premise that "not all things are possible," which is sensible on certain non-Christian grounds, only to surrender that card in exchange for a new card which says "all things are possible." The way out of this conundrum is to dilute the card that replaced the original in order to soften its claim. But at this point it's too late. Does the apologist ever make his position clear? No, he doesn't. He's in complete defense mode, and that's it. His only hope at this point is to rummage for some trivial *tu quoque* that he can slap on the non-believer.

What should not be overlooked is the fact that Paul's concern to tone down the scope of Mt. 19:26 by suggesting that its use of the modifier 'all' is unnecessary, can easily be taken as criticism of the bible's own wording. For here he's saying that there is a better way for the bible to have stated its message (it just happens that this better way matches Paul's apologetic interpretation). Mt. 19:26 says "all things are possible," and yet here Paul is telling us that not "all things are possible." Contending against the bible itself, he quotes one line from a college intro text on the philosophy of language to suggest that the "all" in "all things are possible" might not really mean "all" after all, but may instead refer to "particular cases roughly presupposed in context." This is exegesis by retreat to the approximate. But as we saw above, if the particular case in this context is the issue of salvation, then exactly what is Matt. 19:26 saying? Taking the New Testament teachings on salvation as this broader context (which is what Paul tells us it must be), we already observed significant inflexibility on this matter. So without further elaboration from Paul, this point is unhelpful to his case. He could sure use a paddle at this point. But he only succeeds in making matters worse for himself. Observe:

c) Is there more to the story? That is, should we assume that this is not to be taken universally because of other basic presuppositions? Well, the Bible tells us that, indeed, not everything is possible. For example, God cannot lie or deny Himself (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:13). Also, it was "impossible" that death should hold Jesus (Acts 2:24).

This just demonstrates that Mt. 19:26 is in conflict with other New Testament teachings. I know better than to dispute the fact that the bible is far from internally uniform. Many before me have pointed out that the bible contradicts itself in many points. So this is nothing new, and given the points I've already raised so far, broadcasting this internal disagreement does nothing to vouchsafe Paul's attempt to constrain the relevance of Mt. 19:26 to the

topic of salvation.

In his haste to claim a petty victory, Paul draws a non sequitur:

d) Therefore, Dawson's foundational premise has been refuted.

It does not follow from the question "does that verse really mean that anything can happen, that anything is possible?" that my "foundational premise has been refuted." In fact, what does he think my "foundational premise" was, if not Mt. 19:26? Is Paul claiming to have refuted a statement in the bible?

It does not follow from the absurd claim that I need to provide an argument to the effect that the words "all things are possible" mean "all things are possible," that my "foundational premise has been refuted."

It does not follow from the fact that there are verses within the New Testament which conflict with Matthew 19:26, that my "foundational premise has been refuted."

Paul's dinghy is not only hopelessly adrift, it's also starting to list, so he's going to have to do better than this. While he's at it on another try, he might stop to take a broader look at my point. But I doubt he will. Also, he can tell us precisely what he thinks the best way to understand Mt. 19:26, and explain what value it has. Paul will likely want to say that Mt. 19:26 says something less than what it plainly reads.

3) Since that premise has been cut off at the knees, Dawson's other points are nothing but hasty generalizations. God creating the world, talking animals and the like, does not imply that we should suspend belief on, say, the resurrection because since those things happened, maybe hallucinations happened. Maybe they did, but you're not going to get there from where Dawson starts.

Again Paul must not be reading very well, for I will be the first to point out that, from where I start, we are not likely to arrive at the conclusion that the characters mentioned in the gospel stories, for instance, were hallucinating when they thought they saw Jesus walking around after being crucified, simply because I don't grant these stories even that much credibility to begin with. That does not mean that I start out by assuming them to be false outright. If I did that, I never would have become a Christian myself in my early 20s, and none of our exchanges would have ever taken place. My point here is that the hallucination theory itself grants a level of credibility to the texts of the New Testament which I think is unwarranted. This was the point I was trying to illustrate when I gave the example of the woman at the trial hoping to reverse the murder charge against her husband. A juror in that case need not come to the trial assuming that whatever the wife will state in her testimony will be false in order to reject her tale about the vampire flying into the room where the murder occurred and killing the victim, only to fly back out and never be seen again. That the wife claimed that there were 500 witnesses to the murder as she describes it, in no way prompts us to suppose that those 500 people were hallucinating. Indeed, we only have her passing claim that they existed, with no details on the identity of any of those 500 persons; even if there were some witnesses, we cannot consult with them to learn what they think they saw. Similarly, that we find a passage in I Corinthians (a passage, mind you, which some scholars think is a creed that the apostle Paul is repeating while yet others surmise that it is [a post-Pauline interpolation](#)) that posits an *anonymous* 500 or so witnesses of the risen Jesus, in no way prompts me to suppose necessarily that those 500 witnesses must have been hallucinating. And the claims in passages such as I Corinthians 15 or Matthew 27:52-53, in no way prompt me to believing them any more than the miracles attributed to St. Genevieve and apparently recorded by a contemporary who would have witnessed them firsthand, or at any rate consulted those who had. Richard Carrier, in his multi-part essay [Why I Don't Buy the Resurrection Story](#), gives some background on this:

In 520 A.D. an anonymous monk recorded the life of Saint Genevieve, who had died only ten years before that. In his account of her life, he describes how, when she ordered a cursed tree cut down, monsters sprang from it and breathed a fatal stench on many men for two hours; while she was sailing, eleven ships capsized, but at her prayers they were righted again spontaneously; she cast out demons, calmed storms, miraculously created water and oil from nothing before astonished crowds, healed the blind and lame, and several people who stole things from her actually *went* blind instead. No one wrote anything to contradict or challenge these claims, and they were written very near the time the events supposedly happened--by a religious man whom we suppose regarded lying to be a sin. Yet do we believe any of it? Not really. And we shouldn't.

Perhaps the Trogs govern their minds otherwise. As [Jason Engwer writes](#), "We don't need a report by Mike Wallace before believing what somebody tells us or before concluding that we weren't hallucinating when we thought we saw something." Though statements such as this do not strike me as expressly plugging outright credulity, what exactly is it intended to mean? Indeed, I really would like to know why Christians seem to be personally offended at

the fact that I do not believe the bible's claims. The more I interact with their defenses, the more it seems they're offended at the fact that I do not simply take their word for it. For Paul, now apparently hoping that he can wade his way back to shore, it is at this point merely a matter of a personal "right to believe" what the bible states. He writes:

4) Dawson mentions that the things we believe show our fundamental beliefs about the world as a whole. I agree with him on this. The problem, though, is that Dawson only gives half the Christian story. God is the determiner of what is possible and impossible. On the basis of God's revelation, I believe it was "impossible" that death should hold Jesus. Furthermore, the Bible reports these things as true. It reports the sightings as true sightings of the risen Jesus, not hallucinations. So, taking in to account the rest of the story, I have every right to believe that these things happened, and that they were not hallucinations. The Bible proclaims that these people witnessed the resurrected Lord, it proclaims this as fact. So, holding to my fundamental presuppositions, I do rule out the hallucination story (this is not to go against what Engwer has argued, but is a presuppositional approach to the matter). Thus, Dawson asks the believer to take only part of his story, while neglecting other crucial aspects. Christianity comes as a unit.

I agree that Paul has the right to believe what Christianity feeds him, just as I declare my right not to believe such nonsense. (Of course, I do not find a theory of individual rights in any of my bibles, and the concept of rights only applies in the sphere of chosen actions, and Reformed Christianity teaches that the believer does not have a choice about his beliefs since they are divinely chosen for him.) And no, I am not asking the believer "to take only part of his story, while neglecting other crucial aspects." Rather, I'm simply pointing out that the fundamentals of the Christian worldview are generously compatible with outcomes which Christians want to reject because of their obvious conflict with higher-level doctrines. That apologists strain themselves over the hallucination theory so much suggests that they, too, are at least implicitly aware of this. Also, the methodology that the apologists employ to validate the claim that the gospel stories are historically accurate, can only commit them to accepting extra-biblical claims - even if they conflict with the bible's theology - if that methodology is employed consistently. We saw above the miracles attributed to St. Genevieve. We have also seen the example of the vampire alibi provided by the wife of an accused murderer who claims to have witnessed the extraordinary event firsthand. Indeed, can we really suppose that Marshall Applewhite would "die for a lie"? The believer's problems get even more complicated when he borrows from a worldview which Christianity rejects as "foolishness" in order to defend Christianity, as I have exposed.

Paul asserts that "God is the determiner of what is possible and impossible." I recall imagining things like this as well when I was a Christian. But on Christianity's own premises, the claim in Mt. 19:26 that "all things are possible" is a divinely revealed truth which settles the question here quite explicitly. Unless Christians suppose that their god goes back on its word, then it seems that anyone confessing himself to be a Christian should accept Mt. 19:26 as a solemn and unalterable truth, and consequently have the courage to follow it to its logical conclusion, regardless of the undesirable implications it may have for other teachings (such as those biblical teachings which are in direct conflict with it). But an even larger point which Christians are likely to blank out on, is the fact that along with belief in the supernatural comes any arbitrary belief one wants to throw in with it, since the very notion of supernaturalism is in itself arbitrary. And Christianity is a prime example of this. Claims that the bible provide the guide on which beliefs should tag along with the underlying supernaturalism of Christianity, far from disconfirming this, actually substantiate it in large measure. For pointing to the bible's content in this manner only shows that, whatever happens to fill its pages is good enough to be believed on its say so.

Fighting against the undertow as the tide begins to fall, Paul tries to leverage himself in the sandy liquefaction swaddling his ankles:

5) The mere fact that God could have deceived people, does not imply that He did. This is a modal fallacy.

Paul should have stayed in his dinghy. For since I do not posit any gods to begin with, I cannot be charged with this modal fallacy. For I have not argued a) that there is a god, b) that this god can deceive people, or c) that it did deceive people. Naturally, both b) and c) assume a), so I'm simply being consistent in rejecting them along with a). Also, the fallacy with which I am charged presumes a), b) and c), and since these are not my premises, any fallacy here is not to be charged to my position.

While it may be Paul's outward ambition to discredit my position (which is a sure failure, for I assert no gods), his deeper concern is to settle in his mind the assumption that his god has not deceived him. But how could he know this, if in fact he accepts that it is possible that his god could deceive him? If he has been deceived, his claims not to have been deceived would be worthless. If he has been deceived, he could have been deceived to think he was right when in fact he was not. Paul is in peril of being caught up by a waterspout 'bout now. But he goes on:



6) Dawson makes reference to what the believer is "torn" over. As I illustrated above, the believer is only "torn" if he leaves out other parts of his worldview. Thus Dawson's critique looks like thus: RESTATED: "If the Christian only believes some parts of the Christian worldview, then he'll have problems believing other parts." Sorry, but this is not intellectually convincing, in the least. Thus Dawson's attempts at an internal critique is a completely abortive one.

There is another way in which the believer can be torn, namely by straddling contradictory premises (in this case opposite fundamental orientations between subject and object of consciousness) while trying to coordinate both to supporting the same conclusion. This is what I had referred to in my blog, but which Paul fails to mention. In other words, leaving out some part of the Christian worldview is not the only way that the believer can be torn in this manner. As I pointed out in my blog, he is torn when he attempts to incorporate assumptions borrowed from a rival position and alien to the Christian worldview in order to defend the Christian worldview, as in the case of seeking to discount various proposals on the basis of so-called 'naturalistic' premises in order to defend a position which enshrines supernatural notions. The tension between affirming a worldview which asserts that "all things are possible" on the one hand, and enlisting on the other hand the premises of a worldview which recognizes certain proposals to be impossible or so unlikely as to be justifiably dismissible, to defend that former worldview, should be obvious. Because it grants metaphysical primacy to an imaginary ruling consciousness, supernaturalism (of which Christianity is only one variant-type) relinquishes its ability to provide any *objective* analysis of real-world proposals because of the subjective orientation inherent in its affirmation of a ruling consciousness controlling the universe of objects. Since, in such a view, all the objects in the universe owe their very existence and distinctions to the creative wishing of the ruling consciousness, the ruling subject serves as its *own* standard as well as the standard of *everything it creates* (which is said to be everything distinct from itself). In this way, the Christian effectually reduces what he might call 'objectivity' to pure self-reference by denying reference to any objects distinct from itself which exist independent of its intentions and resist conforming to its wishing. It is this paradigm of ultimate subjectivism which affirmations purported to have objective backing (such as assessments as to what is 'likely' and 'unlikely') are hired on to defend. It simply does not work.

As the storm current carries him dangerously close to a jagged reef, Paul really begins to feel the absence of his paddle:

7) Dawson makes mention of a cartoon universe. Well, if ours is a cartoon universe, his is a fairy-tale one: "Once upon a time (read: "billions and billions of years ago"), a frog turned in to a prince (read: "one species turned in to another species"). It's also an alchemists worldview. The alchemists tried to get qualities to turn in to their opposites, such as making gold from lead. [sic] Well, in Dawson's fairy-tale universe we have: scales turning in to feathers, the non-flying acquiring flight, the non-moral becoming moral, the non-rational becoming rational, etc.

Just as I had predicted above, Paul can come up with nothing more than a *tu quoque* retort, and a poor one at that. The problem is that Paul has not sufficiently grasped the point of [the cartoon universe analogy](#). Since my worldview does not posit a supernatural ruling subject, the changes which occur in the world are, according to my worldview, not at all analogous to changes that occur in cartoon, which are directed by the designer of the cartoon. The evolution of the species is not the result of a ruling consciousness wishing their changes into place. If "scales turning in to feathers, the non-flying acquiring flight [I take it he does not have the Wright brothers in mind here], the non-moral becoming moral, the non-rational becoming rational, etc.," are all hallmarks of a fairy-tale universe, then the picture that Genesis gives us is quintessentially fairy-tale in nature. According to Genesis, we have dust becoming a human being, and yet dust is non-moral while human beings are moral. Thus we have, according to Genesis, the non-moral becoming moral. The same with the non-rational becoming rational, since dust is also non-rational. Genesis has a bone taken from the first man turn into a woman. I remember scolding fellow Christians when I was a believer, explaining to them that they simply did not grasp Christianity at all well since they insisted that a cow becoming a whale is impossible. As a believer, I thought: "If my God can turn water into wine, who can say that He cannot turn a cow into a whale?"

At any rate, the cartoon universe analogy clearly does not apply to the theory of evolution, for the theory of evolution does not posit a consciousness which plans and executes the course that evolution takes. In fact, as a scientific theory, it is perfectly compatible with the primacy of existence principle. The proposal that reptilian features probably evolved into avian features has support in both the genetic and fossil records, and thus is not without evidential basis. This gradual transformation over time is not at all analogous to a man waving a wand and reciting an incantation to part the waters of an inland sea, cursing a tree and making it wither and die, walking on unfrozen water, or turning water into wine just by wishing it. In these examples, the causality is the wishing of a consciousness which holds metaphysical primacy over the objects involved. On the contrary, the incremental changes motivating the evolution of the species happen over great expanses of time gradually as the result of biological causality (not by some cosmic spirit's *wishing*), and is thus more analogous to an infant growing into an

adult, or a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, both of which are examples of biological causality which we do observe within the relatively shorter periods of our delicate human lifespan.

8) Dawson says we're inconsistent because we have fantasy intertwined with reality. Well, if all you need to do to win is label someone's view false, then Dawson has a problem, "one that usually runs along undetected by the believer as he insists on [fairy-tales and alchemy] while illicitly borrowing from a reality-based worldview."

If Paul were half as concerned with understanding his opponent's position as he is with winning debates, he might actually learn something. However, he shows not only that he does not have any actual arguments against the position he cites, but also that he's not very original, either.

Finally, Paul realizes that he's adrift and without a paddle:

9) An, last but not least, we find ourselves up Dawson's creek without a paddle. Dawson writes,

On the basis of my worldview's fundamentals, I can consistently suppose that it is "highly unlikely" that a group of individuals will have the same hallucination, complete with shared uniform details, and for reasons not unlike those which Jason himself has mentioned. For instance, an hallucination is not only an individual and private experience, its distortion of what one perceives is most likely to be influenced by such an enormous number of imperceptible factors that it would be essentially unrepeatable.

Therefore we see that if Dawson is to be consistent with his "worldview's fundamentals" then he should believe in the resurrection and deny that it was hallucination (note that the hallucination approach does not have more explanatory scope in that it fails to address the empty tomb)!

Dawson's "worldview fundamentals" lead him to affirm fundamentals of a "cartoon universe!" At the end of the day, though, no argument of this sort is going to convince a man who loves his sin. We are told that even in the presence of the resurrected Lord, "some doubted" (Matt. 28:17).

Yes, we indeed find Paul up a creek without a paddle. For here Paul reasons on the basis of a false dichotomy, namely that either the resurrection stories in the New Testament are explained on the premise that the early Christians were hallucinating, or on the premise that the stories in the New Testament are true. (Notice that many apologists seem to think that the truth of the New Testament follows by default if the hallucination theory is sufficiently rebutted.) Apparently Paul, like others who sought to interact with my statements, did not read my opening paragraph very well; or, due to short attention span, they did not retain what I had stated there. For [I stated](#):

I know of no good reasons to limit the debate to only these alternatives, I am not writing to defend the view per se that the individuals which the New Testament claims to have witnessed Jesus after his alleged resurrection were in fact hallucinating; indeed, I have no confessional investment to protect on this issue and thus am not committed to such predetermined outcomes.

In fact, I think there are better explanations for the development of the early Christian record, namely that it developed along the lines of an evolving *legend*. This is precisely what the documents themselves suggest if we examine their content in their own right, and refrain from the 'authorized' habit of reading the later accounts (i.e., the gospel narratives) into the earlier epistolary strata. I mentioned some of these points under the section titled 'The Legendary Nature of the Evidence' in [my blog](#), but the responses that the Triaboogers have offered to it were weak where they were not concessional. Jason, for instance, basically admits that he is not certain about the resurrection accounts (he writes: "Historical judgments, including a historical judgment about Jesus' resurrection, are matters of probability"), and seems to concede that it is "not impossible" that mass hallucinations helped in getting the early Christians off to a good start.

If the accounts of Jesus' life in the end boil down to legends, then there is no need to grant the documentary evidence the level of credibility that the hallucination theory assumes. After all, documentary evidence is not proof, and imaginative embellishment such as we find in fiction as well as non-fiction, was just as available to writers in the first century as it is today. True, I cannot prove that hallucination did not play a role in at least the development of some portion of the overall legend, but neither have the Triaboogers or other apologists. What's more is that their protestations against the hallucination theory clearly take for granted key assumptions which are disputed in the critical literature, and thus they beg the question to begin with. Not only do they assume that the New Testament documents outline uniform accounts and teachings, they also assume that the accounts are historically reliable. But if, for instance, the stories of Paul's conversion in Acts are not historically reliable, then there's no need to suppose that Paul was hallucinating. Time and again, such basic points seem to have escaped the wit and wisdom of

Triblogue's apologetic superstars, who are apparently so eager to rush into battle against their threatening nemeses that they don't realize they've fallen over a cliff.

As for the claim that there was an empty tomb, what proof does anyone really have that there was an empty tomb to begin with? Even the apostle Paul, the earliest Christian writer, made no mention of an "empty tomb." Nor do the other NT epistles. The element of the empty tomb may very well be a later concoction, incorporated into the Jesus story specifically to ward off the charges of hallucination, subjective visions and the such, just as Matthew's narrative incorporates the element of Jesus' tomb being guarded in order to ward off the charge that Jesus' disciples stole his dead body (cf. Mt. 27:62-66). Because these precautionary devices are effectively used by believers in barricading themselves in the belief program of the New Testament, apologists often characterize alternative explanations, namely those which do not appeal to Christianity's invisible magic beings, as if they were themselves fantastical. I'm reminded of [Carrier's comments in response to Bill Craig](#) regarding alternative explanations on the topic of the alleged empty tomb:

Craig thinks "that most alternative explanations for the empty tomb are simply incredible" (259) but I wonder how he figures that. They may be unusual, but they are certainly not beyond belief--a great many unusual things have actually happened in history. (Carrier is quoting from Craig's *Reasonable Faith*.)

Indeed, unusual and unlikely things do happen. But it is most ironic to say on the one hand that a 'naturalistic' explanation - i.e., one which does not point to activity said to be performed by invisible magic beings - is "incredible," and then turn around and affirm supernaturalistic explanations as if they were credible.

As for the story element that "some doubted" Jesus' resurrection, a good story-writer could have easily worked this into his version of the story to give his imaginary scenes additional didactic relevance with respect to the theology he wanted his story to illustrate. Given the nature of the gospels as a medium showcasing a community's particular theology, we would expect nuances like this. While they may serve in making the overall account more palpable, they do not make the obviously fantastical portions of the story believable.

Paul says that "no argument of this sort is going to convince a man who loves his sin." This kind of statement reads more like the author's own self-projection than anything approaching a well considered indictment. But since it is directed at me, I can only ask what exactly is it that I love which Paul is calling "sin"? What I love is my life as an end in itself, and this is what Christianity resents. Steve Hays made this clear [when he wrote](#): "we need to serve God. We are creatures. We are not our own end. We find our fulfillment in serving one greater than ourselves." The view expressed here conceives of the individual as *the means to someone else's ends*. In this Christianity exposes its political affinity with the communism of the Soviets, which reduces men to chattel in selfless service to the State. (Here we can agree with the presuppositionalists that the communist unbelievers have 'borrowed' their morality from the Christian worldview.)

Paul quotes Jason Engwer's response to my blog:

Here we see another example of how Dawson Bethrick doesn't understand the issues he's discussing. Christians don't argue that hallucinations would be supernaturally impossible. What Christian ever denied that God could produce mass hallucinations? That's not the issue. Rather, the issue is the unlikelihood of these hallucinations occurring naturalistically. If Bethrick wants to argue that God made these people hallucinate, then we can interact with that argument. Until then, our focus will be on naturalistic theories, since Bethrick and other critics aren't arguing for supernatural theories.

Like Paul, Jason seems not to have read my blog very carefully, for I pointed out at the beginning that I was not writing to defend the hallucination theory. This statement also overlooks the facts that supernaturalism as a category is broader than just Christianity (for there are numerous versions of supernaturalism, Christianity merely numbering among them), and that supernaturalism is yet compatible with the view that the early Christians were deceived by hallucinations caused by a ruling consciousness which Christians themselves have misidentified. Christian apologists discount such proposals, even though they are equally implicit in supernaturalism as anything their theology teaches, typically by special pleading their position as they arbitrarily grant their assumptions primacy over alternatives which compete with theirs. Moreover, although on my view mass hallucination is unlikely, it is not patently impossible, and the unlikely does sometime happen. For instance, it is highly unlikely that a piece of music I wrote and recorded (and yet had *not* published) in the mid-1990s would become a primary piece of evidence in a legal suit having nothing to do with me. And yet, in spite of these unlikely circumstances, this did in fact happen.

Still drifting about without a paddle, Paul found himself tossed in a torrent of his own misconceptions:



But Dawson's got bigger problems than showing how the resurrection could happen naturally. Dawson needs to show now [sic] naturalism can do anything. Taking naturalistic presuppositions, why trust our reasoning (cf. Reppert's "C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea;" Plantinga's "Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism," etc). Why trust our senses? Dawson will tell us that those things are axiomatic, but he must admit that the senses do, sometimes, deceive us. How does he tell when they do and when they don't? Why trust the chemical reactions in your grey matter? Why assume a real order to the universe? You see, at the end of the day, on Dawson's "reality based worldview" everything is a miracle.

Paul says that I've "got bigger problems than showing how the resurrection could happen naturally." And though I do encounter my share of problems (for instance, I would like to lose 10 lbs over the next month and this is proving rather difficult for me), among my problems is not one of "showing how the resurrection could happen naturally." Perhaps Paul's not been paying attention, so I'll spell it out for him again: **I do not think the resurrection of Jesus happened to begin with, nor have I anywhere affirmed that it has.** Paul is obviously 'reasoning' on the basis of the false dichotomy I pointed out above.

Paul then goes on to list other problems that he thinks I have. For instance, he states that "Dawson needs to show now [sic] naturalism can do anything." But to whom am I supposed to show this? And why do I "need" to show this? At any rate, the most concise answer to this that comes to mind is Francis Bacon's famous dictum: "Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed." That is, naturalism allows man to accomplish his goals *by teaching him how to work with nature on its own terms and according to its own constraints.* (Contrast this with 'supernaturalism', which relies instead on prayers to invisible magic beings instead of action taken on the basis of sensory input - for the senses might deceive us!) As evidence of the success of naturalism so conceived, I point to everything from Paul's breakfast cereal, to the bowl that he eats it from, to the glass that he uses to drink his orange juice, to the detergent he uses to clean it, to the sink with running tap water where he cleans it (assuming he does), to the refrigerator where he stores his orange juice, to the toothbrush he should probably use more frequently, to the toothpaste in his medicine cabinet that he should use more liberally, to the razor he uses to trim his whiskers, to the motor car that gets him to church and back, to the building materials and knowledge that were incorporated in building the church in which he worships an invisible magic being, etc. All these wares that Paul uses on a daily basis are ultimately a product of "naturalism," if by "naturalism" we mean that *basic orientation of mind to the world which takes nature as its own authority on itself*, as opposed to an orientation which takes seriously the imagination of a supernatural consciousness which is accessible by means of prayer, which controls nature at will and accomplishes its tasks by wishing. The achievements that are made not only possible but very real by naturalism, are unmatched by anything the religious mindset has ever produced. Not even Gutenberg's printing press was brought into existence by praying to the supernatural or reciting incantations in the name of invisible magic beings, and yet one of the first documents to pass under its new invention of adjustable type was a set of texts which enshrines the very nonsense which can only stifle such achievements when taken seriously. My supposition is that, any time Paul wants to achieve a goal, instead of fasting and praying and making his wishes known to the ruling consciousness, he instead chooses to govern his actions according to the reality he perceives with his senses, indeed walking by sight even while pretending by faith.

Although I have thrown life-preservers to Paul on these and similar matters numerous times before, he will not accept them from me. But it is interesting how theistic apologetics has no choice when the going gets rough but to resort to ultra-skepticism, which is another bait-and-switch tactic inspired by the deep confusion that Christianity introduces into one's epistemology. Questions such as "why trust our senses?" can be dismissed as invalid on the basis of the fact that they commit the fallacy of the stolen concept. For how does one get to higher abstractions such as 'trust' if his senses did not already give him awareness of any objects in the first place? For Paul's question to be intelligible, the concepts he employs in forming that question would have to have objective content (otherwise he's engaging in a purely subjective dialogue whose only point of reference is the shifting chaos of a mind that has no access to an objective reality). Thus if we doubt or dispute the validity of our senses, this can throw the question Paul asks into dire jeopardy long before we even get to it. Moreover, for me to acquire awareness of Paul's question, I need to use my senses. To ask "why trust your senses?" is essentially no different from asking "why think you are conscious?" Such a question ignores the fact that thinking is an activity of consciousness. One would need to be conscious in order to consider the question in the first place. To ask "why trust your senses" and similarly fallacious questions, suggests that the one asking it believes that consciousness needs to be validated somehow. But this would pose an insuperable problem for Paul, for he cannot validate his consciousness without assuming what he needs to validate it, thus the validity of Paul's consciousness, on his own assumptions, stands on circular argument whose premises ultimately rest in subjective paradoxes. Such is the outcome when taking stolen concepts to their conclusion.

But consider: If your arm were severed, would you "distrust" your experience of pain? Would you have to prove that

your experience of pain is real to those who believe in invisible magic beings in order for that experience to be real? Would you suppose it is legitimate to ask whether or not you're actually experiencing pleasure instead of pain as a result of the wound? Perhaps the Triabooger would say at this point that my use of the term 'wound' is "prejudicial and tendentious," since it suggests bodily damage and therefore pain rather than pleasure.

Yes, the validity of the senses is axiomatic in that the senses do not produce contradictions, are not conceptually reducible, are not established by means of proof, are not inferred from prior truths, are implicit throughout all perception and therefore in any knowledge statement (since knowledge is knowledge of reality, and this can be acquired only by specific means). Moreover, the validity of the senses must be assumed, even if only implicitly, in the very act of denying them. Remember that consciousness is an axiom. Since man's initial means of awareness is perceptual in nature (where perception is the automatic integration of sensory material), the validity of the senses is indeed axiomatic.

Paul did ask "why trust our reasoning?" and although I thought this point was already clear to him, I find that this too needs to be spelled out to him explicitly: **I do NOT trust Paul's reasoning**. There have been far too many instances of fallacy and dishonesty in Paul's attempts to derive conclusions, so much so that what he purports to conclude is usually suspect. The statements of Paul's that I interact with above are a case in point.

Paul says that I "must admit that the senses do, sometimes, deceive us." But I do not accept this for the same reason that I do not accept the question "why trust our senses?" And that reason is quite simply that such a position commits the fallacy of the stolen concept. Paul has conflated sense perception and conceptual identification. There is no such thing as a "deceptive sensation." The tricky part to some things we perceive comes when we intend to identify what we have perceived, and this is a conceptual matter.

And the outcome of Paul's questions (reminder: questions are not arguments) is supposed to be the view that, according to my worldview, "everything is a miracle." He has confused my worldview with his, for my worldview does not pretend that there are any miracles as Christianity understands them (i.e., as 'manifestations' of a supernatural consciousness). Indeed, it could not do this, for my worldview is squarely premised on the primacy of existence principle, while the very notion of miracles rests on the primacy of consciousness view of reality, which my worldview rightly rejects. All this has been explained to Paul before, but it's clear that he does not allow these truths to sink in, and, in his zeal to make those who dare not believe in his invisible magic being look foolish, he will run roughshod over the facts of the case in order to distort an opponent's position (by asking questions which he himself does not answer).

Paul's apologetic is as cheap as it comes. It basically consists of asking a bunch of questions to which we're all supposed to throw up our hands and say "[Duh, I donno! Must be god did it!](#)"

by Dawson Bethrick

*posted by Bahnsen Burner at [8:00 PM](#)*

#### 14 Comments:

[Paul Manata](#) said...

<http://triablogue.blogspot.com/2006/06/dawsons-doltish-diatribes.html>

I especially like this part:

DB: If we do not allow the words to speak for themselves, what good will it do for me to present an argument, which itself consists of words?

PM: Okay, let's let DB argue against DB. I'm, gonna take a break and let Dawson beat Dawson up. You see, we have hear an example of what I was referring to above. DB does not mean what his "words" do. I mean, I guess he does if he thinks that words have vocal cords and mouths by which they can "speak for themselves." Indeed, are words individual persons that have "selves?" This is utterly embarrassing for poor DB! So, we can conclude that if DB is going to be consistent with his argument he gives above, then we must agree that DB thinks that words are personal agents with bodies. And he thinks we have an irrational worldview!

LOL!

[June 03, 2006 2:18 AM](#)

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

In classic Manatan form, the belief that concepts are entities is projected without apology. You've got to admire his consistency, if not his fallacy.

Speaking of absurdity, [here's](#) a "cartoon universe" take on the fairy-tale nature of creationism to which you alluded above.

[June 03, 2006 7:05 AM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

In classical Moorean form, Zach shows his ignorance.

An entity is defined as something said to exist in one's ontology. Concepts exist, therefore they are entities.

I guess Moore is of the opinion that concepts don't exist! LOL.

Yeah, they don't exist like rocks, trees, etc, but they exist nonetheless. indeed, you think they are neurons, so neurons don't exist?

[June 03, 2006 9:49 AM](#)

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

Once again, projecting your own definitions (and failings?) onto others, Paul. How embarrassing to do so twice in a row.

An "entity" is a particular existent. Thus, concepts cannot be entities because they are formed from particulars. For example, a tree is an entity, but a forest is not.

[June 03, 2006 10:36 AM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

okay, so all we're having is a definitional dispute.

You criticize me because I don't \*define\* 'entity' the way you do. Now \*that's\* embarrassing.

Oh, btw, EVERY dictionary of philosophy and encyclopedia of philosophy I have, defines entity that way.

I wonder what the university profs would call you now/

Notre dame profs already called you an ignorant redneck.

Furthermore, you're taking the definition from the "dictionary" while mine is also included.

More than that, EVERYONE knows that it's bad form to go to the dictionary for your philosophical definitions. LOL.

So, basically you're saying that I'm "fallacious" because I (1) don't agree with YOUR definition (from a dictionary (snicker)), and because I'm defining entity the proper way.

I mean, doesn't science have its set definitions for certain terms. How would a scientist like it if I went to the dictionary to define a scientific term and then called you wrong? I'd be pretty dumb, huh?

So, if all you're gonna do is pick on me because I don't agree with an online definition of 'entity' (one, of many, at that!), then you're just going to succeed in making yourself look ignorant. But you're used to that, right?

[June 03, 2006 7:40 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

p.s. you should know how I was using entity, but now thta you do know, there should be no problem.

You should read it as "something that exists within one's ontology." Certainly you believe that concepts exist, thus my using of entity is correct, it's just not the way you use entity. But considering the way I use it, there's no problem, unless you want to say that they don't exist!

LOL

Furthermore, I have your quotes where you say that concepts are neurons in the brain. So am I to take it that you don't think that neurons are particular existents?/??

So, either way you cut it, my definition or yours, I win.

Have a good night now, Zachary Moore. :D

[June 03, 2006 7:43 PM](#)

[VanTilsGhost](#) said...

Paul,

Take a chill pill.

- God

[June 03, 2006 10:10 PM](#)

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

Don't get your panties in a twaddle, Paul. Firstly, I gave my definition from my own understanding of concept-formation, not by running to a dictionary as you did (prejection, *yet again*). Secondly, I just looked up "entity" in a philosophical dictionary, and it gives the definition as "Genus: Existent; Differentia: As a particular and discrete unit." Thirdly, I understood that given your definition of "entity" concepts are included, but I also understood your definition to be incorrect, which is why I did you the favor of correcting you. Fourthly, I don't recall ever saying that "neurons are concepts," it's more likely that I said "concepts are stored in neurons," or "concepts are dependent on neurons," or something similar. If not, then I have just clarified the issue for your benefit.

Have a great Sunday, Paul. Would you like some orange juice with that egg on your face?

[June 04, 2006 6:08 AM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

No panties here Zach, though I wonder why you like to think of guys in panties???

What dictionary would that be? I'll quote you all the standards. Anyway, you blew it since you picked on me for on a definitional dispute whjile you could have agreed with what I wrote.

You never "corrected" me. To "correct" me I'd have to be wrong. Did you show where I was wrong? Where? Alll you did was say you had a different definition than me. I fail to see why you think your definition is correct? Oh, because you \*define\* it that way. Well, I don't. So, you've NOWHERE shown me wrong, Zachary Moore.

Even if "concepts are stored in neurons" you still think they are material. You said above that they exist, and you also have told me (cf. my dismembering of you on Craig's blog) that all that exists is matter.

1. If something is material then it is a particular existent.

2. Concepts are material.

c1. Therefore concepts are particular existents.

3. If something is a particular existent then it is an entity.

4. A concept is a particular existent.

5. Therefore, a concept is an entity.

QED Zach!

Even on Moore's own terms he must believe concepts are entities.

Zach must believe logic is an entity.

Everything on Zach's worldview, if it exists, is material, as he's told us time and time again. (Or, have I just slammed your materialism?). So, EVEN ON ZACH'S OWN PREMISES, he holds the belief that concepts are entities!

Zach started out saying this: "In classic Manatan form, the belief that concepts are entities is projected without apology." LOL.

Anyway, I know Moore thinks it's safer to debate here because big Dawson can help him out.

Actually Moore has no clue about "concept formation" and follows the out-dated and refuted bastardization of Aristotle and Locke, in Rand.

[June 04, 2006 8:55 AM](#)

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

I just can't help picturing you in a frilly set of lace lingerie, Paul, because your blustering responses evoke the quote, "Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

Yes, concepts are material. No, they are not entities. Not all materialities are particulars. I've already said this, and I don't have a problem with you disagreeing, but I do think it germane to point out that now *for the fourth time* you've projected your own definitions onto others. I mean, really- is it just me, or does it seem hopelessly desperate that the only way you can hope to "win" points is by projecting straw men? It's sad, really.

[June 04, 2006 5:01 PM](#)

[Nicknabr22](#) said...

Sorry, but concepts are not "material." Nor are they entities, unless one accepts a sloppy ontology that reifies them. Concepts may be represented by a pattern of neurons, or what have you, but that doesn't make the concepts themselves "material."

I do, however, note the dubious habit of blurring the line between ideas in the mind and things that are instantiated in reality. Confusing the two could lead to all kinds of crazy things...such as accepting one's emotions as a source of knowledge, etc.

[June 04, 2006 6:33 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

well then Zach needs to define "matter."

One of the standard analysis is that matter is particular.

Maybe he should tell us what he means by "particular" as well.

I mean, Zach's got the wild theory here, not me. Zach's got burden here.



Anyway, I fail to see how a material concept, which is located inside of a neuron (which is a particular entity, no?), is itself not a particular? Are non-particular things located "inside" of particular entities?

Zach, do you now have an idea why the prof at Notre Dame called you an "ignorant redneck?"

[June 06, 2006 3:03 PM](#)

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

You don't have to hide your curiosity with a sneer, Paul. I'm more than happy to indulge your interest in "my wild theory."

"Matter" is any entity which can be, directly or indirectly, perceived with the senses. A tree is an example of a material entity. Concepts are ideas or thoughts inferred from specific instances of matter. The concept of "green" is an example. Concepts are metaphysically material in that they depend on the qualities of matter to be coherent, and on a material brain for existence. For example, to refer to the concept of "blark" is to speak incoherently, because "blark" has no material correlate. To say, "That tree is blark" is to make no sense. Additionally, since concepts are metaphysically derived from matter but are not themselves material entities, it is incoherent to speak of "destroying" a concept in the same way that one might "destroy" a material entity. One can destroy a green leaf, for example, but one cannot destroy the concept of "green," since there are other particular material instances in existence with which to derive that concept. Even destroying the neural networks which store a concept cannot "destroy" that concept, for the same neurological pathways which store concepts can perform the same inference again with another group of neurons. Aaron Kinney refers to this as ["meta-data."](#)

To speak of concepts as immaterial is to claim knowledge of a concept without experiencing any correlating material entity. For example, this "Notre Dame professor" which you continually mention (but refuse to name... I wonder why you need to hide such an astounding intellectual behind a veil of anonymity?) claims me to be a "redneck," without ever having seen my neck. Doubtless, this is because he believes as you do that concepts like "red" are immaterial, and thus can be known without a material foundation. Thus, he can claim fallaciously that my neck is red- even though he is ignorant of the actual material color of said neck. Such a blunder is unfortunate, but I've learned to expect this kind of intellectual disappointment when confronting those who argue against material reality.

[June 06, 2006 4:22 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Poor Zach,

He writes,

"An "entity" is a particular existent. Thus, concepts cannot be entities"

"Yes, concepts are material."

""Matter" is any entity"

Thus according to Moore we have:

If something is material then it is an entity.

Concepts are material.

Therefore concepts are entities.

You see, I didn't even need to show up. I'll just have Moore refute Moore!

"since concepts are metaphysically derived from matter but are not themselves material entities"

No, above you said that they were matter. So you need to change your definition as we debate. You're dishonest

Moore!

Anyway, your post was a bunch of assertions without so much as an apology.

I already refuted "meta-date" because I pointed out that logic is dataless (uhh, ask any logician).

I missed your argument for why concepts cannot be material because you'd have to have a correlating material entity???? This is a non-sequitur.

"Doubtless, this is because he believes as you do that concepts like "red" are immaterial"

and

"concepts are metaphysically derived from matter but are not themselves material entities"

So are they or aren't they material???

Do you know how you look?!

And, Zach, it's not that theat proff disagrees with you because he believes in immaterial entities (which he does), but it's that NO ONE (except you fellow internet hacks) agrees with you. I have asked plenty of materialists if they agree with you and they have said "no." Jeff Lowder is one of them.

"Concepts are ideas or thoughts inferred from specific instances of matter."

Show me works. Take me through the steps of inference. Show me how the concept "noseness" is "inferred" from particular noses.

It's funny that you're a epiphenominalist now, you're getting closer and closer to my position all the time.

[June 08, 2006 6:35 PM](#)