

## Nocterro's Anti-Objectivist Pseudo-Terrorism

There's another critic of Objectivism who's hit the internet, and this guy's got us on the run big time!! Finally someone has come along and refuted Objectivism. In his sleep, even!

No, I'm not making any of this up. Check out the original post for yourself right here: [Why Objectivism Sucks](#)

Nocterro raises numerous "challenges" (sic) against Objectivist philosophy. Let's see how well they stand.

Problem #1: Nocterro says that Objectivism "tries too hard." Thinkers should be so ambitious. They should cut themselves down to size, humble themselves before sovereign academic authorities who know better, or someone in the approved philosophical establishment might denounce or (gulp!) ignore them.

Nocterro writes:

Objectivism includes theories of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics.

That's right - no philosophical system should attempt this. Therefore "Objectivism sucks."

Nocterro writes:

Not only that, it is touted by some of its proponents as a massively complete philosophy that pwns pretty much everything else in existence. Nothing else in philosophy, as far as I have seen, makes such an incredibly bold claim.

Adherents of Objectivism think Objectivism is true. How preposterous! Imagine adopting a philosophical system because you're persuaded that its principles and the application of those principles to every field of philosophy are sound! No one should dare do this! Thinkers should be contented with the intellectual shipwrecks endorsed at the college level, and never consider the possibility that a sea-worthy view of reality and life is available. Therefore "Objectivism sucks."

Nocterro writes:

Consider, for example, metaphysical naturalism. It makes a claim regarding what sorts of things exist - nothing more. It doesn't say 'here's a theory of knowledge' or 'here's a political system' - many different options are available for these things for a naturalist.

On Nocterro's view, one should never strive for an integrated worldview: he should not strive to develop an epistemology which is consistent with his metaphysics, or a theory of values which can stand on his metaphysical and epistemological views without contradiction. Rather, he should ensure that his worldview is a compartmentalized hash of conflicting elements, regardless of their discontinuity with each other. Objectivism is too principled in this regard. So instead of striving for non-contradiction among all its parts, today's thinker should treat his philosophical needs as if it could be satisfied by channel-surfing the Ivy League - whatever demagogue happens to mesmerize him first rules the day.

Nocterro writes:

The first weakness of Objectivism lies in its incredible scope. Successfully challenge one part of it, and the entire thing crumbles. There's too many possible weak points. Offer a counterexample to what its ethics entails - gone. Show that its political system doesn't work - gone. For Objectivism to withstand any philosophical criticism at all, it must either narrow its scope, or be developed into the most mind-bogglingly airtight position philosophy has ever seen.

I've seen dozens and dozens of attempts to uncover any of the "many possible weak points" which Nocterro tells us afflict Objectivism. Unfortunately, almost all of them suffer from the very deficiency which characterizes Nocterro's rant from beginning to end: a profound lack of firsthand familiarity with what Objectivism actually teaches. A telltale sign in Nocterro's case is a complete absence of quotations from Objectivist sources. That alone ensures that he's at a disadvantage. Additionally, he does not even interact with anything that Objectivism teaches through secondhand sources; he doesn't address anything that Objectivism teaches. Objectivism's great sin, in Nocterro's mind, is that it academic philosophers do not, for whatever reason (critics love to insert their own list of complaints here), take it seriously. If the preferred group doesn't take it seriously, then only a moron would take it seriously. This is how party insiders take care of their own. Nocterro is welcome to it.

Problem #2: Objectivism "has virtually no support in the modern-day philosophical community." Never mind the fact that Objectivism never needed or asked for support in the modern-day philosophical community. They have their own problems (just look at today's global mess), and Objectivism is more than happy to make a clean break from them.

Nocterro writes:

I suspect the first objection to this point will be something along the lines of "So? All those other philosophers are wrong!"

Preposterous! All those philosophers have Ph.D.s! How could they possibly be wrong on anything? By the way, who are these folks? Oh yes, they remain unnamed. Nocterro has so much confidence in them that he doesn't name one of them. Apparently they're all supposed to be infallible thinkers whose views are to be accepted unquestionably. Otherwise, if you dispute what they say, Nocterro will accuse you of "wonkyness." And nobody wants that!

Nocterro writes:

But consider this - there's something else that A) Doesn't have any support in the relevant community, and B) would have at least a moderate level of support if it were even plausibly true. So, what is this mysterious thing that's analogous to Objectivism?

Only one other thing? What is that one other thing?

Nocterro writes:

Young-earth creationism.

Ah, guilt by superficial association. Nocterro would have us believe that everything that finds "backing" in "the relevant community" is perfectly sound and rational. That same community is what has given us the welfare state we now live in.

Now Nocterro ridicules the idea that Objectivism's critics might be dishonest. And yet here he puts Objectivism on the same level of "Young-earth Creationism." It should not be difficult for anyone with firsthand familiarity with Objectivism and any form of creationism to see the crass dishonesty in this. Nocterro inadvertently offers himself as confirmation of the suspicion of dishonesty (perhaps he thinks no one could ever be dishonest).

Nocterro writes:

YECism, like Objectivism, has little to no backing in the relevant community (science to Objectivism's philosophy).

Is Nocterro saying that Objectivism has no confirming basis in the sciences? Clearly he's not familiar with the work of David Kelley, Harry Binswanger, David Harriman and numerous others who have done their homework in this regard.

Nocterro writes:

Why is this? I think the most likely explanation is that the experts just don't think it's strong enough to be taken seriously, and thus dismiss it.

Yes, the high school clique of modern academia do tend to move in unison on many matters. No one wants to “stick his neck out.” If others in the academic establishment aren’t taking it seriously, then by all means, don’t touch it with a ten foot pole. You might lose tenure! You might lose your prime parking space. You might miss out on ice cream on Friday afternoons!

But where are the academic papers which present these devastating critiques of Objectivism? Oh, that’s right, the academics won’t give Objectivism the time of day. So if they denounce Objectivism, they may be doing so out of utter ignorance of what it teaches. Of course, this does not concern Nocterro. All that matters to him is that he does not find an entry on the issue of metaphysical primacy in Blackwell’s Companion to Philosophy or discussion of the hierarchical nature of knowledge in his introductory philosophy course in college. If it’s not taught in these infallible and omniscient sources, then only a kook would take them seriously.

Meanwhile, in response to Nocterro’s gratuitously uninformed rant against Objectivism, Gil S., another forum member, gave his glowing thumbs up response, saying he “couldn’t agree more” with what Nocterro has posted, and pointed to a [diatribe](#) by none other than “the Maverick Philosopher.” We’ve already seen examples of the kind of “rigor” one can expect from this inbred party-liner in examining Objectivism (see [here](#)).

Nocterro writes:

It’s a sad truth that there are many ideas posited that really aren’t worth taking seriously - see Jesus as myth, moon landing hoax, and 9/11 truthers.

So play it safe - don’t affirm any new ideas and bury your head in the crowd. If you propose an idea of your own, you might be shunned by the academic community, and for the secondhanders that’s a fate worse than death.

Nocterro gives his recommendation:

We probably shouldn’t even be addressing these things - they should be ignored, or in the case of those that are immoral as well as silly (such as holocaust denial), ridiculed.

So far, it’s wholly evident that Nocterro has done precisely this in regard to Objectivism: he’s ignored it completely, demonstrating no informed familiarity with what it teaches, and showing more concern for the fact that academics joined at the click of the heel don’t like it than for interacting with its teachings intelligibly.

Nocterro writes:

Objectivism is almost certainly one of these - it’s an idea that’s been around for awhile, so the relevant experts have had a chance to look at it.

But have they? Where are the peer-reviewed papers criticizing Objectivism, tearing it apart to shreds?

Nocterro writes:

Very, very few accept it.

How many have even examined it? Nocterro gives the impression that they’re all intimately familiar with Objectivism. My experience has confirmed quite the opposite in fact. Notice how unfamiliar Nocterro himself is.

Nocterro continues:

It’s certainly not “mainstream”.

I don’t know of any Objectivist who has ever claimed that Objectivism is “mainstream.”

Nocterro writes:

Not only that, there’s also the issue of conspiracy. What I mean by this is that to hold that Objectivism is philosophically tenable, one must posit the bizarre notion that almost every professional in the relevant field is

either dishonest, or mistaken, in rejecting it.

It could be that they're just not informed about what Objectivism actually teaches. Nocterro is a case in point. He doesn't quote anything from Objectivist sources to make his points. His goal is simply to malign Objectivism, not to criticize what it teaches, and he does this (as has already been seen up to this point) in a manner that only a high-schooler would appreciate.

Nocterro:

So, you may ask, why am I addressing Objectivism? Simple: I'm an insomniac, and I'm bored at the moment.

Is that really why? Is Nocterro really being honest here?

Problem #3: In the next section, titled "Wonkyness," Nocterro identifies his standard of measure:

"What", you may ask, "is wonkyness?" Wonkyness is a measure of the amount of phrases that some idea employs that seem to be meaningless in the field of study of which the idea is a part. For example, the Intelligent Design crowd commonly cites "complex specified information" or "specified complexity" as evidence. However, these terms don't mean much to either biologists or information theorists. So, Intelligent Design has a certain level of wonkyness.

Since Nocterro styles "wonkyness" as "a measure" of something, what are the degrees by which that measurement is meted? Perhaps we could call it the "wonk." Nocterro cites as an example theistic creationism in its latest garb, "Intelligent Design." Nocterro does not indicate how many "wonks" can be calculated in examining Intelligent Design, but I'm sure he'd agree it is many. But notice how Nocterro thinks this system of measurement can be reliably applied: by going outside a system and seeing if that system's terminology has any meaning to those who may very well be completely unfamiliar with the specifics of the system in question. The method of measurement he prefers makes no guarantee that those consulted will have the familiarity needed to generate a reliable wonk rating, nor does it seem to allow for an internal critique of the system in question. Also, it invites subjectivism since it provides no standard for determining the suitability of consultants. It's essentially a method of surveying others' opinions, a common theme in Nocterro's remarks about Objectivism. Of course, if you ask an accounting expert about metallurgical terminology, you may find that metallurgy's terms "don't mean much" to the accountant. Therefore, according to Nocterro's standard, metallurgy must have a certain level of wonkyness.

In applying this system of measurement to Rand's philosophy, Nocterro ignores the fact that Rand was often careful to explain her terms, especially terms that are key to her system's essential principles. She not only gave her own definitions (and that in itself bothered a lot of folks - how dare she!), she developed those definitions in accordance to her own theory of definition (a major component of her theory of concepts). Moreover, the system she developed applied those definitions consistently. Perhaps this annoys folks like Nocterro as well. After all, Nocterro thinks it's wrong to develop a comprehensive view of life and reality that is integrated without contradiction. We learned this in his opening statement.

Nocterro writes:

Now, back to Objectivism. One example I've seen cited in discussion regarding Objectivism is 'the hierarchial nature of knowledge'. I've not seen this idea in any literature in the field of Epistemology that I can recall, and I've only seen it (briefly) explained once (here: <http://tinyurl.com/27w5mnf>).

That's right: Nocterro's never seen this idea before (he's been learning about philosophy from under a rock apparently), so it can't possibly have any merit to it. Therefore, "Objectivism sucks." Nocterro's "rigor," wit and wisdom are simply amazing! He should run for president - he'd fit right in with the Washington crowd.

You will notice that Nocterro linked to [this article](#) on the [Importance of Philosophy](#) website. Nocterro is thus aware of a source where he can go to get some introductory information on the idea. But he does not tell us why it "sucks" or why it makes Objectivism "suck." Again, he just tells us that this idea is new to him. Perhaps he thinks it's a bad idea because of this.

Nocterro writes:

Another example of wonkyness is the ‘fallacy of the stolen concept’. A search for “stolen concept” on <http://www.logicalfallacies.info/> returns no results. The only mention of this fallacy I can find on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is on the Ayn Rand page.

So Nocterro must mean that, since he cannot find information about the fallacy of the stolen concept on the one website he’s checked, a stolen concept can’t possibly be a real fallacy. Go ahead and affirm the validity of geometry while denying the truth of basic number theory, of measurement, of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, Pi, etc.

Of course, some critics of Objectivism have insisted that Rand’s identification of the fallacy of the stolen concept is nothing new (though they have a really hard time pointing to a prior thinker who identifies it explicitly). Those same critics agree that it is a fallacy, but want to deny Rand any credit for discovering it. Nocterro pretty much put a capper on that one, all by citing a single source!

Nocterro writes:

There are most likely many other examples of wonkyness in Rand’s work; however to page through “The Fountainhead” and “Atlas Shrugged” looking for them is a bit more than I can bear.

Oh, but those examples of “wonkyness” are there, Nocterro assures us. He can’t produce any for us, even though they’re on every page of Rand’s novels. Just take Nocterro’s word for it. He’s shown himself to be really informed expert on Objectivism so far, hasn’t he?

Nocterro writes:

In any case, it’s apparent that at least these two ideas, upon which Objectivism seems to depend entirely, are in fact examples of wonkyness.

Now here’s something worse than “wonkyness”: Nocterro thinks that Objectivism depends entirely on 1) the idea that knowledge has a hierarchical structure, and 2) the identification of the fallacy of the stolen concept. Nothing about a theory of perception, a theory of concepts, axioms, the issue of metaphysical primacy, unit economy, a theory of entities, and all the other things that we’d apparently be mistakenly led to think are involved in informing the fundamentals of Objectivist philosophy were we to go by Objectivist sources.

Nocterro seems to put no limit on how far he can embarrass himself:

Now, you might ask: isn’t the idea of wonkyness itself an example of wonkyness? Well, no. Wonkyness, far from being some sort of logical or metaphysical core of this critique, is merely a name, or label I’ve given to ideas which are not employed in a relevant field. You can call it whatever you like - the idea behind it is that sometimes people have no clue what they’re talking about.

As if Nocterro’s shown himself to be a real expert on the matter that he’s been talking about.

In a section titled “Final Thoughts,” Nocterro writes:

Before I get a slew of comments from Objectivists attempting to defend their pet theory, I’d just like to point out one thing. This is not entitled “why Objectivism is false” or “why Objectivism fails”; but “why Objectivism sucks”. I am well aware that I have only indirectly critiqued what Objectivism actually posits. I have not addressed, for example, ethical egoism, or the relationship between consciousness and objects. However, I don’t really see a need to.

Exactly: not only has Nocterro failed into interact with what Objectivism actually teaches, he knowingly has failed to do so, and doesn’t think it’s necessary to do so. It’s more likely the case that he wouldn’t stand a chance had he attempted a more “rigorous” examination of Objectivism (academics are always patting each other on the back for their “rigor”).

Nocterro writes:

Objectivists, like others who have “dogmas” (YECs, Mormons, etc.) will most likely never give up this philosophy - at least not because of any argument against it.

Perhaps this is what’s behind Nocterro’s resentment against Objectivism - it has a loyal following. And if “argument against” Objectivism is what Nocterro has presented in “only indirectly critique[ing] what Objectivism actually posits,” guess again. He hasn’t even done that. Really, he’s simply given us an opportunity to be entertained.

Nocterro writes:

Rather, like the other aforementioned groups, they must come to realize it is untenable on their own.

If “critiques” like Nocterro’s are the worst that are available (and I’ve seen many attempts which were actually serious), then if there really is something wrong with Objectivism, we certainly will not learn what it is from Nocterro.

Nocterro writes:

This post was written because I was bored, and for anyone considering studying Objectivism to see whether it’s a decent idea.

Nocterro wants his readers to think that he wrote his pile of slander because he was bored, as this would give the impression that it takes little effort to challenge Objectivism. And though it’s true that his spew indicates that he’s put precious little effort into examining Objectivism (has he shown that any one thing which Objectivism teaches is false? Not that I can see), someone who is truly interested in determining whether Objectivism is “a decent idea” or not would do better to examine Objectivism from its own sources rather than through third-hand and fourth-rate displays of uninformed naysaying that Nocterro serves up.

So there you have it: another devastating critique of Objectivism without one quotation from an Objectivist source modeling extravagance of attitude and scarcity of content. It all goes to confirm what I’ve said before: the only alternative to Objectivism is some form of subjectivism. For Nocterro, Objectivism “sucks” because his crowd is either ignorant of it, they don’t like it, or they resented Rand for daring to speak on philosophical matters without their approval. And while we can point to the results of the academic establishment’s ideas put into action (national stagnation, welfare statism, government confiscation of wealth, collectivization of “the masses,” the sacrifice of the individual to the in-crowd’s designs, genocidal pogroms, etc.), Nocterro cannot point to anything like this that has come about as a result of Objectivism. Objectivism provides a defense of human reason and individual liberty. It is therefore to be denounced, ridiculed, vilified and condemned by the establishment community, as reason and liberty are direct threats to their self-enthronement.

Like many secular critics of Objectivism, Nocterro gives no indication of what he considers a worthy alternative to Objectivism. Though it’s clear that any alternative must bear the academic community’s inbred stamp of approval. His profile identifies him as a “deist,” which tells us that whatever specifics his worldview affirms, he grants metaphysical primacy to consciousness at least insofar as his deism is concerned. But deists are a mixed bag when it comes to other things that they endorse. Deism has no inherent theory of concepts (in fact, Nocterro seems to think that talk of concepts is “meaningless” - a stolen concept if there ever were one), no inherent view of morality, of politics, etc.

Also, just as theists who seek to rescue their god from the problem of evil tell us about themselves, Nocterro’s tirade against Objectivism is more autobiographical than anything else: his laziness as a thinker is conspicuous, he writes in a state of drowsiness, he shirks the responsibility of honest interaction, he comes across as so preoccupied with his own bitterness against Objectivism that it’s clear that his attitude will probably get in the way of any learning he’s capable of for quite some time. He also tells us that he prefers the safety of anonymous numbers, as if the consensus of an anonymous group who presumably agree with everything he says were the key to unlocking the deeper secrets of truth.

If Nocterro were to try to put some actual content to his raging beef against Objectivism, what would the result be? If

he challenged the primacy of existence, would he not be affirming his position's adherence to the primacy of consciousness while smuggling the primacy of existence in the process? If he challenged the view that nature has a hierarchical structure, would he not be likening knowledge to "a village of squat bungalows, with every room huddling down against the earth's surface" (Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*, p. 130), thus confirming Rand's prediction that her critics were burdened by what she called "concrete-bound thinking" (cf. "How to Read (and Not to Write)," *The Ayn Rand Letter*, I, 26, 5)? If he were to challenge Objectivism's egoism, would he not be endorsing some form of sacrifice in ethics? Nocterro has learned academia's lessons well: don't stick your neck out, don't take a stand, hide in the shadows, keep your head lowered in the huddle, and hope for the safety of the group.

It is no secret that Rand was an outsider who had no interest in acquiring the necessary passkeys to the prestige of inbred academia. She was a successful businesswoman, a defender of individual liberty and capitalism, an intransigent atheist and an outspoken critic of communism abroad and the New Left at home. Each of these put her in the academic establishment's sights. How dare she question their authority!

Just take a quick look at the consistent record of intellectual bankruptcy that academic insiders have given the world, from Cartesian rationalism to Kantian idealism, from Humean skepticism to Dialectical Materialism, from Logical Positivism to Linguistic Analysis, from Anal Phil to Pragmatism, from the Existentialist worship of nausea to Post-Modernism, etc., etc., etc. The list goes on. Objectivism represents a clean break from this track record of disappointment and letdown which are the heritage of the philosophical establishment. A rejection of Objectivism is a vote for a continuation of the tragedies that these highbrowed failures have brought on men throughout the ages. But the Nocterro's of the world are not concerned about the results of their philosophical views when put into practice; their chief concern is to be part of the in-crowd, to assume the role of a useful idiot and achieve a rank in some ruling class.

by Dawson Bethrick

POSTED BY BAHNSEN BURNER AT 3:57 PM

24 COMMENTS:

The Secular Walk said...

@Dawson Bethrick

I was wondering if you could share if you have an argument in syllogistic form that you created, that you feel is strong proof for the Non-Existence of God.

If you have not created one, could you share the one Atheist argument you feel is the best for proving the Non-Existence of God?

JULY 31, 2010 7:09 PM

The Secular Walk said...

@Dawson Bethrick

There appears to be a huge flaw in what I feel is one of the strongest arguments for the falsity of Theism, and that is that Theism is based on the fallacy of Pure self reference. That at it's start, it posits a consciousness, conscious only of itself, which is a contradiction in terms.

But you told John Hutchinson that thoughts can be objects, and you said to John that ("there is no reason to suppose that thoughts cannot be real objects of awareness"). If this is the case, then there is no problem of Divine Lonesomeness or the fallacy of pure self reference, since God could have been aware of his thoughts.

Did what you say to John Hutchinson destroy the Fallacy of Pure Self Reference and your problem of Divine Lonesomeness?

JULY 31, 2010 8:03 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

Hello SW,

You ask an excellent question. My response is: No, what I stated in my reply to John Hutchinson does not undermine or destroy the problem of divine lonesomeness. And here's why:

Yes, a mind can be conscious of thoughts and ideas, in which case those thoughts and ideas are objects of consciousness. However, they are at best \*secondary\* objects - a point which I also mentioned in my reply to Hutchinson. Thoughts and ideas themselves need objects on which they can be based or to which they can refer, otherwise they would be about nothing and therefore meaningless (and thus fail to be anything like what we have in my by the concept 'thought'). In order to be conscious of one's own thoughts, one would have to have first formed those thoughts, and he would need objects independent of those thoughts on which to draw or formulate those thoughts. Only then, after having formulated those thoughts, would it be possible for him to be conscious of those thoughts as objects. To put it simply, those thoughts would have to exist in order to be objects of consciousness, and in order for those thoughts to exist, they had to be formulated on the basis of some input, i.e., on the basis of awareness of some object existing independent of the consciousness which formulates those thoughts.

But the theistic claim that God created everything distinct from itself disallows the existence of any independently existing objects which it could be conscious of and formulate thoughts about.

One way a theist may try to skirt around this is that his god has always had thoughts in his mind for all eternity. But this seems utterly incoherent, since thinking is a volitional activity, and what is being claimed in this case is that his god has thoughts but no volitional purview over them. Thus it severely compromises the idea that said god is "free" - it never had any choice over what thought content it might have. It also opens the door to what theists are always attributing to non-theistic worldviews: "chance." If said god has thoughts A, B and C for all eternity, it's just "by chance" that it happened to have those thoughts instead of thoughts D, E, and F in their place for all eternity. Thus this attempt to dodge the problem of divine lonesomeness reduces to an endless arbitrary pickle. In the end, it's all something the believer imagines anyway.

Another way which theists may try to get around this is by positing that some thoughts are actually "necessarily existing abstract entities," whose existence cannot be accounted for since they have allegedly always existed, independent of God, but knowable by God by some unidentified process (or by no process at all, to ensure infallibility and omniscience). But this seems to jeopardize the whole reason for positing a god in the first place, which is (for instance) to explain the existence of the universe. If "necessarily existing abstract entities" can exist independent of the activity of a creator-god, why can't the universe? Ah, but this is when the theist defines the universe as a "contingent entity" (or "contingent" sum of entities). In such a way, the desired conclusion is defined into being, not proven in any legitimate process of reasoning.

As to your initial question, I don't think there's any need to prove that a god does not exist. If God is imaginary, it's not real, it doesn't exist. I've given ample reasons to suppose that God is imaginary. So far, no one has challenged any of them.

Regards,  
Dawson

JULY 31, 2010 8:44 PM

John Galt said...

I've seen dozens and dozens of attempts to uncover any of the "many possible weak points" which Nocterro tells us afflict Objectivism. Unfortunately, almost all of them suffer from the very deficiency which characterizes Nocterro's rant from beginning to end: a profound lack of firsthand familiarity with what Objectivism actually teaches. A telltale



sign in Nocterro's case is a complete absence of quotations from Objectivist sources. That alone ensures that he's at a disadvantage. Additionally, he does not even interact with anything that Objectivism teaches through secondhand sources; he doesn't address anything that Objectivism teaches. Objectivism's great sin, in Nocterro's mind, is that it academic philosophers do not, for whatever reason (critics love to insert their own list of complaints here), take it seriously. If the preferred group doesn't take it seriously, then only a moron would take it seriously. This is how party insiders take care of their own. Nocterro is welcome to it.

I disagree. Scholars with as Jill Hankman and Arthur Copen have identified several problems with objectivist literature. If one examines the objectivist textual paradigm of narrative, one is faced with a choice: either reject deconstructivist substructural theory or conclude that narrativity serves to exploit the proletariat, given that art is interchangeable with culture.

If there is one thing I have learned, it is this: Dawson's allies like to say, "Dawson's addepleted retinue is a respected civil-rights organization." Such frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. If someone wants me to believe something loopy like that, that person will have to show me some concrete evidence. Meanwhile, I intend to show you that if you read between the lines of Dawson's hatchet jobs, you'll doubtlessly find that if I had to choose the most muzzy-headed specimen from Dawson's welter of judgmental gabble, it would have to be Dawson's claim that space gods arriving in flying saucers will save humanity from self-destruction. What does this mean for our future? For one thing, it means that Dawson maintains that drug money is being used to pay for the construction of huge underground cities intended to house both humans and aliens who serve a secret, transnational shadow government. This is complete—or at least, incomplete—baloney. For instance, Dawson fails to mention that I feel that writing this letter is like celestial navigation. Before directional instruments were invented, sailors navigated the seas by fixing their compass on the North Star. However, if Dawson were to trick them into fixing their compass on the wrong star they'd soon be so off-course that they'd actually be willing to help him understate the negative impact of emotionalism.

Is Nocterro saying that Objectivism has no confirming basis in the sciences? Clearly he's not familiar with the work of David Kelley, Harry Binswanger, David Harriman and numerous others who have done their homework in this regard.

I don't suppose Dawson realizes which dialectic principle he's violating by maintaining that mediocrity is a worthwhile goal. Therefore, I shall take it upon myself to explain. If Dawson's solutions get any more recalcitrant, I expect they'll grow legs and attack me in my sleep. It would be more productive for him to take a more diplomatic and conciliatory approach. I trust that I have not shocked any of you by writing that. However, I do realize that some of the readers may feel that much of what I have penned about Dawson in this letter is heartless and in violation of our Christian duty to love everyone. If so, I can say only that Dawson has gotten away with so much for so long that he's lost all sense of caution, all sense of limits. If you think about it, only a man without any sense of limits could desire to force us to adopt rigid social roles that compromise our inner code of ethics.

JULY 31, 2010 8:46 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

John: "Scholars with as Jill Hankman and Arthur Copen have identified several problems with objectivist literature."

What, like typos?

John: "If one examines the objectivist textual paradigm of narrative,"

What specifically is "the objectivist textual paradigm of narrative"?

John: "one is faced with a choice: either reject deconstructivist substructural theory or conclude that narrativity serves to exploit the proletariat, given that art is interchangeable with culture."

Why suppose that it is "given that art is interchangeable with culture"?

John: "If there is one thing I have learned, it is this: Dawson's allies like to say, 'Dawson's addepleted retinue is a

respected civil-rights organization'."

Yes, I overheard some of my allies saying exactly this just yesterday at Starbucks!

John: "Such frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me."

Yeah, your set points are far too high for this pedestrian drivel.

John: "Meanwhile, I intend to show you that if you read between the lines of Dawson's hatchet jobs, you'll doubtlessly find that if I had to choose the most muzzy-headed specimen from Dawson's welter of judgmental gabble, it would have to be Dawson's claim that space gods arriving in flying saucers will save humanity from self-destruction."

Yes, in between the lines I'm always writing about what you have to choose. And those space gods will save humanity - for dessert (but don't tell the masses).

John: "What does this mean for our future? For one thing, it means that Dawson maintains that drug money is being used to pay for the construction of huge underground cities intended to house both humans and aliens who serve a secret, transnational shadow government."

C'mon! That's supposed to be a secret!

John: "For instance, Dawson fails to mention that I feel that writing this letter is like celestial navigation."

It's true, I did fail to mention that. I even had a compelling reason to mention it, too! Just as Matthew had a compelling reason to mention dead people raising from their graves.

John: "If Dawson's solutions get any more recalcitrant, I expect they'll grow legs and attack me in my sleep."

You might want to lock yourself in a padded cell then - I'm growing more irreverent with each passing day.

John: "It would be more productive for him to take a more diplomatic and conciliatory approach."

Towards what specifically?

John: "However, I do realize that some of the readers may feel that much of what I have penned about Dawson in this letter is heartless and in violation of our Christian duty to love everyone."

Most of my readers should know by now not to confuse what Christians want to do with love.

John: "If so, I can say only that Dawson has gotten away with so much for so long"

"gotten away with so much for so long"? Whose fault is that?

John: "If you think about it, only a man without any sense of limits could desire to force us to adopt rigid social roles that compromise our inner code of ethics."

Yes, I'm all about forcing people to do things.

Thanks for the fun!

Dawson

JULY 31, 2010 9:25 PM

John Galt said...

Apparently Dawson doesn't get it. His objectivism nonsense has been long refuted. Slavoj Zizek, for instance, has written extensively against his Western type of arrogance.

I'll get right to the point. Mr. Bethrick's stratagems prove that he did little to no research before concluding that he defends the real needs of the working class. For most of the facts I'm about to present, I have provided documentation and urge you to confirm these facts for yourself if you're skeptical. The biggest difference between me and Mr. Bethrick is that Mr. Bethrick wants to take rights away from individuals whom only Mr. Bethrick perceives as insecure. I, on the other hand, want to test the assumptions that underlie Mr. Bethrick's expostulations.

To Hell with Mr. Bethrick! His ventures are so incontinent that if allowed to go unanswered, their final cost would be incalculable. I do not find policies that are anal-retentive, mephitic, and blathering to be "funny". Maybe I lack a sense of humor, but maybe it takes more than a mass of besotted heresiarchs to bring him to justice. It takes a great many thoughtful and semi-thoughtful people who are willing to replace today's chaos and lack of vision with order and a supreme sense of purpose. Mark my words: there is no place in this country where we are safe from Mr. Bethrick's apologists, no place where we are not targeted for hatred and attack. Mr. Bethrick's trained seals say, "Lying is morally justifiable as long as it's referred to as 'strategic deception'." Yes, I'm afraid they really do talk like that. It's the only way for them to conceal that what I call warped, uninformed marauders are born, not made. That dictum is as unimpeachable as the "poeta nascitur, non fit" that it echoes and as irreproachable as the brocard that if you can go more than a minute without hearing Mr. Bethrick talk about plagiarism, you're either deaf, dumb, or in a serious case of denial.

On Objectivism:

The "regulative idea" that underlies today's global liberal justice is not only to bring out all past (acts which appear from today's standards as) collective crimes; it also involves the Politically Correct utopia of "restituting" past collective violence by payment or legal regulations (paying billions of dollars to the US Blacks for the consequences of slavery, etc.) This is the true utopia, the idea that a legal order can pay back for its founding crime, thereby retroactively cleansing itself of its guilt and regain its innocence. What is at the end of this road is the ecological utopia of humanity in its entirety repaying its debt to Nature for all its past exploitation.

There is a problem with this liberal vision of which every good anthropologist, psychoanalyst, or even perspicuous social critic like Francis Fukuyama, is aware: it cannot stand on its own, it is parasitic upon some preceding form of what is usually referred to as "socialization" which it is simultaneously undermining, thereby cutting off the branch on which it is sitting. On the market - and, more generally, in the social exchange based on the market - individuals encounter each other as free rational subjects, but such subjects are the result of a complex previous process which concerns symbolic debt, authority, and, above all, trust (into the big Other which regulates exchanges). In other words, the domain of exchanges is never purely symmetrical: it is an a priori condition for each of the participants to give something without return so that he can participate in the game of give-and-take. For a market exchange to take place, there has to be subject here who participate in the basic symbolic pact and display the basic trust in the Word. Of course, market is the domain of egotist cheating and lying; however, as Jacques Lacan taught us, in order for a lie to function, it has to present itself and be taken as truth, i.e., the dimension of Truth has to be already established.

AUGUST 01, 2010 12:04 AM

Bahnsen Burner said...

John: "I'll get right to the point. Mr. Bethrick's stratagems prove that he did little to no research before concluding that he defends the real needs of the working class."

Where did I conclude that I'm "defend[ing] the real needs of the working class"? Quotes and citations please.

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 01, 2010 10:24 AM

Justin Hall said...

correct me if I am wrong, but is not Objectivism a personal philosophy and not a political movement. It is about the choices we make as individuals, not a cause to be followed for some one or other groups benefit. Although they might benefit as an indirect result. Dawson, I have been reading your blog going on 5 years and I don't think I have ever seen you discuss or frame the issues in terms of the proletariat. In fact just what is John smoking? He is putting words into your mouth that don't come even close to your views as stated in this blog.

AUGUST 01, 2010 7:07 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

Hello Justin,

"John" is clearly a troll hiding behind a blog profile created only recently (August 2010 - today's August 1!) probably for the express purpose of posting blarney-soaked comments on my site. I guess I should be flattered by the energy he's put into his two posts so far. It's probably some theist (or perhaps a certain deist?) who's sore over something I've written.

I don't think it bothers "John" that he's putting words into my mouth. He's hiding behind a cardboard cutout in order to fake his way around the internet. In fact, it seems he's been using something similar to the classic [bullshit generator](#) to inform parts of his off-the-wall comments, while relying on copy-and-paste (of entire paragraphs!) from articles he's surfed on the internet (e.g., [here](#) - which I found by googling a random string of words from "John's" second fit of blathering) to make up the rest. And you're right - what he says bears no resemblance to anything I've affirmed, nor have I ever - when speaking on behalf of my own view - framed an issue in terms of its importance to "the proletariat" or any other collective (cf. "working class").

By the way, thank you for being a loyal reader. I always enjoy reading your thoughts.

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 01, 2010 10:42 PM

The Secular Walk said...

@Dawson Bethrick

Thanks for taking the time to respond. I appreciate it.

AUGUST 02, 2010 3:54 AM

madmax said...

John Galt's comments strike me as those that are informed by some type of Paleo or Traditional Conservative ideology. He is referring to Objectivism as an example of "liberalism." This is a tip off. Only the paleo wing of the Conservative movement refers to Objectivism in that way. He is including other things in there as well; his reference to "non-symmetrical" exchanges. The only people who speak that way are Leftists or PaleoConservatives. But since "John" focuses his rant on the evils of "liberalism" he is not a Leftist. So you essentially have a PaleoCon influenced troll.

AUGUST 03, 2010 6:00 PM

Nocterro said...

Enjoy.

AUGUST 04, 2010 10:57 AM

Yog Sothoth said...

It is a good thing that contempt can serve as substitute for intellectual engagement, otherwise Nocterro would have nothing.

AUGUST 04, 2010 11:31 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

Nocterro violates his own rules by trying too hard at the art of mockery, and with little results to boast for his efforts.

Among his problems is the fact that he's intellectually cold, unable to think outside his instructors' confining boxes, unwilling to let go of his desire for the approval of the clique (for it's clear he's playing to this, and getting no bites). Even worse, given what he has stated in reaction to Objectivism, it's clear that he lacks the ability to formulate the generalities needed to integrate specific views into an integrated, non-contradictory whole. This, if nothing else, is the heritage he adopts as a result of enshrining the academic in-crowd of the "philosophical community" as his model for philosophical thought. He's made his choice. He's going to live with it.

Nocterro suffers from - and hopes to promulgate in others through mockery - precisely what Rand saw in many of the "intellectuals" of her day, namely "envy" - hatred of the good for being good. Nocterro would rather that men stagnate with the broken, irreconcilable and disparate tangents which the academic community churns out in glee, with all its syndromes of cowardice and cronyism, its institutionalized partisanship, its inherent irrelevance to man's life and indifference to his needs. Because he does not read of Rand in Blackwell's Companion to Whatever, any view Rand happened to promote is to be dismissed because of this. This is the hallmark of "intellectual rigor," Nocterror-style.

[continued...]

AUGUST 05, 2010 11:05 AM

Bahnsen Burner said...

The fact that Rand published her views independently of any institutionalized machine, is to be held against her by those who are part of that machine, and those who come under its mesmerizing spell. By publishing her views independently, making them available in bookstores rather than in inbred publications which only a tiny minority of inbred self-congratulators takes seriously, Rand essentially snubbed the academic establishment. But contrary to how the inner party may umbrageously interpret her actions, Rand's purpose was not to snub the academic establishment, but rather to reach any individual who might be interested in her ideas.

In his rant against Objectivism, Nocterro puts Objectivism on the same level with "Young Earth Creationism," a religiously generated view which directly conflicts with discoveries across the scientific spectrum. Nocterro's immediate reason for doing this - the reason his readers are expected to think this validates his equation of the two - is that both allegedly lack "backing" in the "philosophical community." In contrast to YECism, Nocterro cites no instance in which Objectivism conflicts with the findings of science, but ignores this concern for the sake of his real purpose. The real reason why he does this is because he wants to smear and discredit Objectivism by means of a simplistic example of the association fallacy.

One of the reasons Nocterro gives for justifying his equation of the two is that the "philosophical community" would show some "support if it were even plausibly true" (Nocterro's point B). While it may be true that Objectivism does not go to the "philosophical community" for support of its views (it does not need or want its support), Nocterro provides no basis to suppose that his point B has any truth to it. Academics are too busy peeling the onion of Hegel's dichotomies even to notice Rand; they're so glued to their microscopes that they couldn't spare just a moment to consider Rand's panoramic vision, and probably wouldn't value it even if they did. As a group, they're not even looking in the right direction.

So I don't buy Nocterro's premise that the academic community would even take notice of Rand's system if it were

true, as if that community were monolithically governed by honesty, rationality and a genuine concern for reality-based views. Nocterro has not persuaded me to suppose that they're interested in truth to begin with.

Given the impracticality of much of their output and the destructive implications of their heritage, I'm not convinced that they're interested in man's needs in the first place. So why would they be governed by a quest for truth?

Nocterro's mocking angst does not help here.

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 05, 2010 11:13 AM  
NAL said...

[Anton Thorn's home page](#).

Just change geocities to reocities. A lot of Katholon links are to the defunct geocities pages. Now I've found the referenced articles. I have a lot of reading to do. :)

AUGUST 19, 2010 7:44 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

Hello Nal,

Thanks for bringing Thorn's revived site to my attention. (In fact, a visitor to my blog sent me e-mail a couple weeks ago and informed me about this.) It's great news - Thorn's site is a valuable resource!

And yes, some of my articles do link to Thorn's old site. I have no idea when I'm going to get the time to correct those links... Seems my work is never done!

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 22, 2010 12:23 AM

Tom said...

This post has been removed by the author.

AUGUST 25, 2010 7:19 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

Hello Tom,

Thank you for your comment and the links.

You wrote: "You quote this guys portable presuppositionalist alot, but seem scared to engage him in debate.

"<http://www.realapologetics.org/blog/tag/presuppositional-apologetics/>

"<http://realapologetics.org/about/frequently-asked-questions/>"

It's true that I have quoted from Hubner's book. But if you notice what I have quoted, I have quoted other

contributors to Hubner's book, namely Chris Bolt, Brian Knapp and Joshua Whipps. And I have tried many times to engage each of these gentlemen in debate. Unfortunately, they have a tendency to crap out and pretend that my critiques do not exist. In fact, I posted a comment to one of Whipps' own blog entries just this morning, but it is still "awaiting moderation" as of this writing (see [here](#)). So if anyone's "scared," it's certainly not me.

Note also that on my blog, comments are not moderated, and the only comments I've deleted are spam (such as the ones in Chinese script which have been a nuisance in recent months). Even if someone deletes his own comments on my blog, I might re-post them myself, as I have done in the case of yours.

Now if Hubner wanted to engage me, he's certainly welcome, but I have seen no indication that he would make any more effort than his sidekicks.

By the way, why do you think I'm "scared" to engage Hubner in debate? And debate about what specifically?

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 25, 2010 10:17 PM

RazorsKiss said...

Dawson: In response to your above objection - [http://www.choosinghats.com/?page\\_id=26](http://www.choosinghats.com/?page_id=26)

Clearly linked within the comment form, as well - "Please see SITE RULES before commenting."

The focus of the blog's relaunch is stated there, and does not include comment debate.

Regards,  
RK

AUGUST 31, 2010 10:05 PM

Bahnsen Burner said...

For those who may be curious:

Below I am posting the comment that I submitted to [this entry](#) on [Choosing Hats](#) but which has been suppressed by moderation. To date, no one at Choosing Hats has responded to my points.

Mike,

It is important to understand that Hume's argument for skepticism in regard to induction was based on faulty premises. His argument was based on erroneous metaphysical and epistemological assumptions which presuppositionalism itself cannot overcome.

In fact, Hume was in a sense borrowing from Christianity when he drew his skeptical conclusion about induction. Specifically, like Christianity, Hume built his position on the basis of the primacy of consciousness metaphysics and was working from a faulty understanding of concepts. In addition, he held to the event-based model of causality, which is false. His skeptical conclusion was consequently unavoidable.

Christianity cannot solve the problem of induction for numerous reasons. First of all, it underwrites the uniformity of nature (to the extent that Christians can even affirm the uniformity of nature) with the primacy of consciousness - which means all bets are off when it comes to the identity of objects and the actions which they might perform (since they are thought according to Christianity to conform to some conscious will which acts according to its own pleasure - cf. Ps. 115:3). Also, Christianity has no theory of concepts (not even a bad one), nor does it have any alternative to Hume's event-based model of causality.

The result is that Christians are philosophically unarmed when it comes to the problem of induction.

Hence it should be no question that some apologists for the Christian worldview would attempt to raise the problem of induction against non-Christians.

If you're interested in learning more about this debate, see my [Resources on the Problem of Induction](http://katholon.com/Induction.htm). (URL: <http://katholon.com/Induction.htm>)

Presuppositionalists in particular tend to have merely a college-course understanding of induction. It is high time that they step out of the sterile confines of the classroom, away from the controlled environment of inbred academia, and enter the real world, where facts govern theory, and leave the fantasy realm where theories allegedly govern facts.

Regards,  
Dawson

AUGUST 31, 2010 10:41 PM

RazorsKiss said...

awson: In response to your above objection - [http://www.choosinghats.com/?page\\_id=26](http://www.choosinghats.com/?page_id=26)

Clearly linked within the comment form, as well - "Please see SITE RULES before commenting."

The focus of the blog's relaunch is stated there, and does not include comment debate.

Regards,  
RK

SEPTEMBER 01, 2010 4:25 AM

Bahnsen Burner said...

RK,

By citing your site rules about comment debate, you indicate that you have erroneously assumed that I was submitting my comment to your blog entry for the purpose of having a debate. In fact, I was submitting it for informational purposes. That is why I directed my comment to Mike, another commenter, who was inquiring about presuppositionalism's treatment of the problem of induction.

Of course, if you don't want information of the kind I was trying to make available to Mike coming to his attention, then I can see why you censored my comment. But don't tell me it's because my comment violated the anti-debate clause in your commenting rules. A violation of your commenting rules would only occur if a debate ensued, but your moderation pre-empted that.

Of course, I can understand why the folks at Choosing Hats do not want to debate.

Regards,  
Dawson

SEPTEMBER 01, 2010 12:08 PM

RazorsKiss said...

No, not on the blog. As listed in the link above, our chat channel, or formal debate challenges are not only listed, but encouraged. In fact, Chris had two debates just recently, so that is hardly the case.



-RK

SEPTEMBER 04, 2010 8:56 PM

POST A COMMENT