
<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=40>

posted on 3-29-2003 at 05:48 PM

I am new to this list and I have a question.

In your view, is it ever morally justified to sacrifice the virtuous for the benefit of those who are vicious such that the vicious are in effect rewarded because they are vicious, while the virtuous who is sacrificed is sacrificed because of his virtues?

Please explain your yes or no answer.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=34>

posted on 3-29-2003 at 06:26 PM

Zeus: "Yet what can be proven scientifically matters not. I am not saying that I care not for scientific things. I am a big science nut, who loves technology, but believing in God hasn't hindered that interest, nor stunted my learning of it."

This suggests to me that your Christian views are effectively irrelevant to your interest in science. I've known self-identified Christians whose seriousness of belief ranges from trivial afterthought to all-consuming zeal. Perhaps you fall somewhere in between. But if your religious belief does not effect or impress upon your fascination with science (as it clearly would if you took it very seriously, just as the example of those Christians who oppose stem-cell research shows), it seems to me that you may effectually putting the squelch on those beliefs when you indulge that fascination.

Don't get me wrong. I'd agree that this is a good thing.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: Logic/"God as an Axiom"

posted on 3-30-2003 at 11:45 AM

A Comprehensive Interaction with CogentThesis's "God as an Axiom"

I have read CogentThesis's brief essay "God as an Axiom," and I was asked to provide my thoughts. Here are a few that spring to mind on first blush.

CogentThesis says: "For those who don't know, Axioms are things that cannot be proven but are assumed true anyway, because they are necessary to hold to further beliefs."

This view of axioms is not uncommon, though many thinkers would take sharp exception to this description of what constitutes an axiom, for it fails to identify the means by which one supposedly comes into the knowledge of the truth proposed by the axiom in question, a crucial point which guards against arbitrarily assigning just anything one wants to the role of a conceptual fundamental. Nevertheless, this is what CogentThesis has proposed, and I am willing to examine its implications.

CogentThesis offers two essential criteria which an axiom must satisfy:

1. "Axioms... cannot be proven but are assumed true anyway," and
2. "they are necessary to hold to further beliefs"

It can be said that the belief that the Christian god exists aptly satisfies these two criteria in the following ways. First, the supposed truth of the belief that the Christian god exists "cannot be proven but [is] assumed true anyway" by those who want to believe it. Second, the truth that the Christian god exists "[is] necessary to hold to further beliefs" such as the belief that this god caused a worldwide flood, had a son and inspired authors to pen the Old and New Testaments. Since these subsequent beliefs assume the truth of the claim that the Christian god exists, one logically must accept this fundamental claim, as an "axiom" as it were, to then be able to build on that foundation the beliefs about what this god has allegedly accomplished.

Unfortunately for those who want to say that the belief that the Christian god is axiomatic, there is nothing offered to protect against any other religious claim from qualifying as "axiomatic" given the flimsy criteria which such a belief should satisfy. For instance, like the Christian's claim that the Christian god exists, the Muslim can just as easily claim that Allah exists, and, given what is proposed to qualify a belief as an "axiom," this belief certainly satisfies it. For one thing, the claim that Allah exists cannot be proven true, but believers all over the world believe it anyway. Also, the belief that Allah exists must be assumed, in like manner with the belief that the Christian god exists, to accept claims about what Allah has done in history, for instance. The "further belief" that Allah chose a man named Mohammed to be his final prophet, for instance, certainly depends on the more fundamental belief that Allah exists in the first place.

Given the weak criteria for what constitutes an axiom that CogentThesis provides, there is nothing to protect a thinker from assuming that his wild inventions have truth value, for those criteria allow one to grant validity to idea of the imagination that "cannot be proven but [is] assumed true anyway" and which serves as a foundation for "further beliefs." This of course simply means that axioms, on this conception of what constitutes an axiom, is utterly arbitrary and useless. It can only serve as the foundation for a corrupt philosophy, for rationality is nowhere a concern. By calling an arbitrary belief an "axiom," one is seeking to dignify an indignant belief, hoping to give it a status which it cannot earn on its own merits, but to which its advocates lay claim regardless of its arbitrary and admittedly indefensible ("cannot be proven but... assumed true anyway") nature.

CogentThesis says: "Now it seems logical to me that the theory that holds to the *fewest* assumptions (thus, the fewest axioms) would be the most likely to be correct."

Notice how the truth value of a statement or belief is assessed, not by examining its correspondence to what we discover in reality, but by counting the number of assumptions it makes. For some unidentified reason, CogentThesis tells us that "it seems logical" to him "that the theory that holds to the *fewest* assumptions" - and thus, "the fewest axioms" - "would be the most likely to be correct." He gives no reason why he thinks this, he gives no defense for this view, whose claim to logic has at best a "seeming" nature to its author. Apparently, any dispute between rival theories can be settled simply by counting the number of assumptions each theory requires, and "the theory that holds to the *fewest* assumptions" is deemed the victor.

This approach might work well for keeping score in golf, but it can only cheapen the project of philosophy. For after the assumption count has been performed, one can always come along and modify a theory such that it makes even "*fewer* assumptions" than the one which survived previous trials, and thus gains an advantage over previous rulings. This policy would simply turn the project of philosophy into a numbers racket, not a science for discovering and understanding the workings of the mind and knowledge.

CogentThesis says: " So we look at logic and ask why should we trust logic? What is the basis of logic?"

Good question. But given the fundamentals which CogentThesis has laid down so far, I think now it would be appropriate to ask "why should we trust" anything that he has to say on the subject?

Let's examine what he has proposed.

CogentThesis says: " My argument has been that God is the source of logic."

I have read at least two articles on this website which purport to propose such an argument, but in reviewing those articles, it was quite unclear to me how exactly that argument was supposed to proceed. It is clear that CogentThesis wants the belief "that God is the source of logic" to be the conclusion of that argument, but what its premises are and how its inferences are supposed to be secured, is a complete mystery to me. Perhaps he can present his argument in a clearer manner.

CogentThesis says: "What I mean is that God's existence demands that logic be valid."

From this statement, I think it's clear that CogentThesis believes that logic gains its validity because someone "demands" it. In other words, given what is stated here, the validity of logic is based on someone's whims. There are far too many implications here which are equally untrustworthy, but this is enough for me to reject it out of hand. It simply tells me that its author has very little understanding of what he's talking about. In fact, he has not provided any reason, stable

or otherwise, why one should accept this. But it seems clear to me that he is a proponent of these views, and that he wants others to take them seriously. But he does not say why we should.

CogentThesis says: "Logic is part of the character of God--it is one of His attributes."

If that were the case, why would we need it? We are not god, and the incredible nature which Christians for instance imagine their god possesses is one which could not be more alien to the world in which we live. But clearly logic, as some of us use it (I'm not sure how Christians use it, for I do not know Christians for being logical), is very much a this-worldly conceptual tool. But CogentThesis wants to give it a supernatural origin. Rather, I see logic as completely natural. I see no need to appeal to the supernatural to "explain" logic, for not only does this imply a wholly and insuperably problematic view of what logic is, it does nothing to explain it. Indeed, it can only lead to more and more questions, questions which I know will not be answerable given these premises. And, given CogentThesis' view that "the theory that holds to the *fewest* assumptions... would be the most likely to be correct," the attempt to link the basis of logic with a supernatural deity introduces such a wide complex of complications that it seems that he should discard it immediately, if indeed this were his view.

CogentThesis says: "Thus, in my system, God is axiomatic in order for logic to work."

This is very convenient for anyone who wants to grant validity to their fantasy that such a god exists and that it has a place in the believer's life. But again, CogentThesis gives no reasons why his "system" should be accepted as one which has any value whatsoever. And given the flimsy criteria which he announces at the outset of his essay, there is no reason given to protect against the claim that Allah or any other mystical figure can satisfy the same requirements and enable the same project.

CogentThesis says: "I've met some atheists who have said that logic is based on the way that matter works. It is claimed that because matter is repetitive and predictable, logic exists."

It's not even that complicated.

CogentThesis says: "The problem with this idea, of course, is how one would test it."

It is interesting how, at this point, when hoping to interact with competing views, CogentThesis should want that the views of those who do not accept his Christian view to pass some kind of "test." But look at the criteria which he gave for what constitutes an axiom above. They were:

1. "Axioms... cannot be proven but are assumed true anyway," and
2. "they are necessary to hold to further beliefs"

He had also stated that "it seems logical to me that the theory that holds to the *fewest* assumptions (thus, the fewest axioms) would be the most likely to be correct."

These are the only criteria which he has given so far in his essay for determining the validity of a view. But instead of asking whether the atheist's view "that logic is based on the way that matter works" satisfies these threadbare criteria (and it's not hard to see how they would satisfy them), he now wants to raise the burden on rival views to make them fail some new "test" which he has in mind. How is this different from a typical bait-and-switch game in the fine print of an insurance policy?

CogentThesis says: "One must have unchanging matter--else logic would change too."

Really? If that's actually the case, CogentThesis does not tell us. For indeed, the basis identified by the atheists he has in mind was not the nature of matter itself, but "the way that matter works." The notion of "works" denotes activity, and thus necessarily implies change. The view under dispute would apparently make use of the manner in which matter changes, so the requirement that "One must have unchanging matter" misses the point entirely.

CogentThesis says: "Yet we have observed matter change shape and form (such as when an ice cube melts)."

Yes, and it is clear from what CogentThesis has related from his interaction with said atheists this kind of change may very well be what provides the basis of their view of logic. So again, expecting that such a view must be tested by correspondence with "unchanging matter," as I mentioned above, clearly misses the atheists' point. Indeed, CogentThesis simply points to the very thing that confirms that the atheists' view has some correspondence to reality, namely matter which has been observed to "change shape and form." At least the atheists' view of logic, regardless of whatever problems it may have, is centered within this universe! CogentThesis cannot even make this claim.

CogentThesis says: "Likewise, in order for matter to explain the universality of logic, it must be eternal."

Here CogentThesis has laid down yet another criterion on the shoulders of his would-be atheist contenders, yet it is unclear why such a test should have to stick. Did the atheists in question identify this as a criterion necessary for substantiating their view of the foundations of logic? If not, perhaps they have a reason for this. CogentThesis nowhere shows that he has considered this. Instead, he simply wants to continue raising the bar on the atheist, while the two criteria which he offered above were accepted as sufficient for meeting his own view's burdens. This tells us that he wants to grant to himself a freedom of assertion which he is not willing to grant to others.

CogentThesis says: "If matter ever did not exist, then logic would not exist either; and logically, if existence can be without logic then logic is not valid for existence."

This is extremely confused and is saying contradictory things. On the one hand, logic requires matter ("If matter did not exist, then logic would not exist either"), but on the other hand, it is implied that the view proposed by the atheists in question somehow assumes that "existence can be without logic." But I don't see how CogentThesis came to this assessment. Indeed, it is nowhere implied in the view which he attributed to the atheists in question, at least not in his description of that view. The leap to the conclusion that "then logic is not valid for existence" is just that - a broad leap. It does not follow from anything that has been given so far. It is simply interjected into CogentThesis' characterization of the atheists' view at this point, perhaps to make it seem much worse than it really is. But clearly it does not compute. Indeed, it involves an equivocation of terms, from "matter" to "existence." That's quite a sleight of hand, but unfortunately it's not the only one going on here.

Since the second clause of this statement appears to bear no relation whatsoever to the view under dispute, let's toss it out (for it has no relevance) and focus for a moment on the first clause. That clause is:

"If matter ever did not exist, then logic would not exist either."

I don't know how this would be problematic for the atheist. His position can easily absorb this point quite happily by noting that logic only has validity so long as there are things to be logical about. If there is nothing to be logical about (i.e., "If matter ever did not exist"), then there would quite simply be no need for logic. It is a mystery how this could qualify as an objection to the atheists' view. It seems quite reasonable to me.

CogentThesis says: "If matter must be eternal and unchanging, then what else must it be?"

Here CogentThesis attempts to build on a premise which has been shown to miss the point. Since the atheists' view of logic in question holds that "the way matter works" provides the foundation to logic, the requirement for matter that is "unchanging" misses the point, as I explained above. Furthermore, the requirement that matter is "eternal" also misses the point, for reasons given above. But here CogentThesis goes on his merry way, assuming he's made points against his would-be opponents. Let's see what else he says.

CogentThesis says: "Must it not also be omnipresent."

I'm assuming this is a question, as suggested by the word order given (though it lacks the proper punctuation).

To provide the foundation of logic, "Must [matter] not also be omnipresent"? Well, what does "omnipresent" mean, and why should this apply? Indeed, it was not one of the criteria given by CogentThesis for determining the validity of an axiom, so it is dubious that he should now expect the atheists' view to satisfy this newly introduced criterion. The bar continues to be raised for the opponents. This hardly seems legitimate.

But it is difficult to see how the atheists' view could not satisfy this requirement, if indeed "omnipresence" can be shown to be a legitimate requirement. For the atheists may hold that, since logic has to do with matter, its applicability is constrained to wherever there is matter. Depending on how one might fashion a definition of 'omnipresence', it would not be difficult for the atheists in question to show that logic and matter have an omnipresent relationship. Indeed, since the atheists' bodies are made of matter, wherever they go, there is matter. But again, this criterion needs to be shown to be legitimate, and CogentThesis has not done this.

CogentThesis says: "That is, if logic is based on the repetitions of matter, then wherever matter is not, logic is not. But this seems to me irrational."

Given the description of the atheists' view on logic, this seems quite reasonable. But CogentThesis disagrees. However, he does not state why "this seems to [him] irrational." Perhaps he simply needs to give it more thought.

CogentThesis says: "Do not laws govern the space between matter in the universe?"

Did the atheists in question say that it does in their view? If the aim here is to find a problem with the atheists' view on the foundation of logic, it seems that they would have to supply the answer to this question before moving on with the critique. Indeed, it nowhere is a concern among the criteria given for what an axiom is at the beginning of this article, so

it seems that no matter how the atheists answer this question, it is entirely irrelevant. That's part of the problem with laying claim to the arbitrary on one's own position: he gives up any say over others doing the same.

CogentThesis says: "In any case, we have matter necessarily being eternal, unchanging, and omnipresent."

Neither of these criteria have been established with regard to the atheists' position in question, as I have made clear above. Quite simply, CogentThesis is not interacting with the view he described and attributed to the atheists he has in mind.

CogentThesis says: "We could go on through the other attributes that the Bible claims for God, but I think you get my point."

It's very clear what CogentThesis' point is: he wants to assume a laxity of philosophical principle which he will not grant to other thinkers.

CogentThesis says: "The only thing that we really need to worry about is the idea of personality, for God is personal and matter is not."

Who needs to "worry" about this, and why? Indeed, I'm not worried. In fact, by insinuating that the belief that this god exists is an "axiom," and by admitting with this that the claim that this god exists cannot be proven (for "Axioms... cannot be proven but are assumed true anyway"), CogentThesis has made no headway towards showing us that this claim has any truth value whatsoever.

CogentThesis says: "Otherwise, it is obvious that the basic essence of what we call "God" is identical to what the basic essence of what matter would need to be in order for logic to be valid."

But it is clear, from what CogentThesis stated earlier, what that crucial essence is. Recall that he had stated that God "demands that logic be valid." CogentThesis clearly thinks that validity follows from someone's desires.

CogentThesis says: "The question then posed is this: are we personal beings? This is obvious--we are, for we have *personality*. Therefore, can impersonal matter cause a personal being?"

Notice how the entire focus of CogentThesis' article has radically changed gears. Unable to make his prior points stick, he now shifts the discussion in a last ditch effort to focus on something that at best could be said to be marginally relevant.

He asks "can impersonal matter cause a personal being?" Well, if there is a means of causality which can do this, then the answer is obviously yes. Is CogentThesis claiming that there is no means of such causality anywhere in this big universe of ours?

He answers his own question by saying, "This does not seem logical to me," but he does not say why. Instead of investigating the matter deeply, he dismisses it as if its implausibility were a foregone conclusion. But of course, that's not how science works. Unlike CogentThesis' view of logic's validity, science does not conform to one's desires. If human beings are determined to be "personal beings" by definition, for instance, the fact that we are here can only suggest that there is some course of causality which makes this possible. So why exactly does "this not seem logical" to CogentThesis?

CogentThesis says: "It would be much easier to stipulate that a personal being created personal beings, rather than an impersonal matter bringing about personal beings."

"It would be much easier to stipulate..."? Is something "true" because it would be easy "to stipulate" it? If the goal is to settle on what is easiest "to stipulate," it seems that it would be even "easier to stipulate" that there is no need to assume that personal beings were not "created" in the first place, and "to stipulate" that personal beings have always existed. This relieves the burdens which CogentThesis wants to introduce at this point, and it in no way violates any of the criteria which he stipulated at the outset of his article.

CogentThesis says: "We have no evidence that personality can come from anything other than another personality."

But where has there been any concern prior to this point for "evidence"? This is the first time that CogentThesis has introduced any concern for evidence, and notice that it is introduced in the context of rebutting a competing view which rivals his. If indeed CogentThesis wants to use the absence of "evidence that personality can come from anything other than another personality" as a debating point, then he risks the hazard of arguing from silence, and this would hardly be the fixings of a convincing (or "cogent") thesis. He needs to do more than express his own lack of key evidence. Does he assume that, because he does not know of any such evidence, that no evidence for this exists anywhere, and that none can ever be found, ever, anywhere, and no how? This would hardly follow.

CogentThesis thus concludes: "Thus, matter does not solve the problem of a personal being (myself, yourself). Theism does. This would make God an Axiom, since only He would satisfy all the requirements needed for existence now."

Given the foregoing analysis of CogentThesis' assertions and the problems therein which I have exposed, I see no reason to accept his concluding remarks here.

Perhaps I am wrong?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=40>

re: Murder

posted 4-01-03 at 7:01 pm

Pete asks "are you asking in regards to the absolute good, or to the relative "goodness" between two individuals (ie: it may be said that John Doe is good compared to Hitler, but woefully inadequate compared to the absolute moral standard)."

I'm speaking of the moral good of the individual, the one who values his life and those things and actions which make it possible and who acts in the interest of his life at his own expense. I don't know where Pete finds this distinction between "absolute good" and "relative goodness." Since I see morality in terms of the human individual, I see no reason to dichotomize the concept of good in this manner. The question I asked is not one which seeks to compare the moral goodness between various individuals, for this exercise can only weigh in favor of the lowest common denominator at the expense of the virtuous. In this way, it clearly serves to undermine the individuality of the person's involved. The question is not asking "who is better than someone else?" but "should vice hold moral primacy over virtue?" Pete's response can only mean that he, in conformity with his religious beliefs, does in fact think that vice holds moral primacy over virtue, and I will bring this out in the following analysis of his statement.

When Pete says that, "In comparing ourselves to each other, then it does not seem justifiable to sacrifice a "good" person for an "evil" person," he comes across as uncertain on this matter. I find this uncertainty baffling. How could it be justifiable to sacrifice a virtuous person for the sake and benefit of a person who is vicious? A virtuous person is one who acts to secure and protect his values at his own expense; a person who is vicious is one who seeks to destroy values, his own and those of others, either by theft, fraud, coercion or by initiating the use of force. I am trying to think of any occasion when it would be morally just to sacrifice someone who is virtuous, precisely because of his virtuousness, for the benefit of someone who is vicious, precisely because his viciousness. Such action would expressly penalize the good while expressly rewarding the evil. To condone such action and then say that it is morally justifiable, is an unspeakable perversion, yet at most Pete says that "it does not seem justifiable." (emp. added) We will see how his remarks remove him even from this relatively hopeful position.

Pete then asks, "how do we define what is good or evil anyway?" That's a good question. I hold that life is the good, along with that which makes life possible, including the values which man needs in order to live, and the actions which makes securing and protecting those values possible. This view of the good is based on man's nature - attributes of man's identity which are not subject to emotions or desires, but which he must obey if he chooses to live. For instance, no amount of wishing or commanding will overturn the fact that man requires food and water, shelter from the elements and threatening animals, and protection from those who would act against his life. These are objective needs of man's life. They cannot be commanded away. That man requires these serves as a guide to his choices and actions, and thus they serve as the basis of a rational approach to moral action.

Pete says that "If [our definition of good] is based on ourselves, then there is no good person and there is no evil person, and this entire question is moot," but I don't understand how he comes to this conclusion. On what must our definition of good be based in order for such questions to be relevant? Why must it be something other than man's nature itself, especially when it is man's nature which requires that he be moral? If man's life requires values (and it does), and if man must act in order to secure and protect those values (and he does), then values find their basis in man's nature and on this understanding the question is clearly relevant (particularly since man requires a code of values which guides his choices and actions). The concept of moral good has an objective basis (man's nature as a living being), and questions about the moral validity of the call for sacrificing the virtuous for the sake of the vicious is quite pertinent, since many people advocate (and exercise) such a practice. The question needs to be addressed in these terms, and I don't think it has been so far.

Pete writes "It is good to recognize the worth of object;" but that recognition is only possible in a context which recognizes that objects have worth to individuals. In other words, we must ask: of value to whom? Not everyone values the same things. For instance, I have stacks of sheet music which I have written over the years which are of great value to me; but I don't expect others to value it beyond the function of fueling a fire on a freezing winter night. I'm mature enough to recognize this. If for instance Saddam Hussein (a vicious man) is found shivering in the winter desert, is it morally justified to confiscate my sheet music (a value to me, a virtuous person - virtuous by the fact that I act to secure and protect my own values at my own expense) so that Hussein can last through the night without freezing to death? Some might take it upon themselves to say "To hell with your sheet music," as if I had no right to my property, and then run to rescue the ailing dictator. We see this kind of dog-eat-dog, rights-negating behavior throughout the world today, and I think one of the primary reasons why people think such sacrifice is morally justified is because they have enshrined as a model of morality a story in which the virtuous is sacrificed for the sake of those who are vicious.

One of the problems of course is that the concept 'good' has been divorced from man's nature and his life needs, and has been dispatched to a realm beyond his rational faculty. This can only serve to undermine man's values and his ideas of what is good and just. The results of such "concepticide" are widespread and observable virtually everywhere. Pete says that "it is the highest good to recognize the worth of the supreme," which suggests that the form of "the highest good" is a simple act of recognition. I don't know why he thinks this is so, for he does not explain. He then says "Therefore, the highest good is to recognize and glorify God," which does not logically follow from anything he has said. Indeed, such a conclusion can only be possible if concepts of morality are divorced from man's nature and life requirements. It is claimed within the context of a religious worldview that this is how such concepts are given a "proper basis," when in reality it simply divorces concepts of good and just from reality altogether.

Pete then says that "the answer to your question is found by determining whether or not the virtuous one is sacrificed in order that God is more glorified." This can only mean that the end justifies the means: if the end is that "God is more glorified," then any action which serves this end is "certainly justifiable" (as Pete puts it), regardless of its destructive effect on values. As if this were not sufficiently corrupt, we now have the idea that god can be "more justified," which, if we're speaking of the Christian god, is incoherent, as explained by John Frame in his discussion of Cornelius Van Til's wrestling with the same problem:

<< Van Til's paradigm case of the concept of "apparent contradiction" is what he calls the "full-bucket difficulty." God is self-sufficient; He needs nothing outside himself; He cannot become greater than He is, in knowledge, love, power, glory, for a greater than God is inconceivable. Nevertheless, He creates a world for His own glory -- to obtain more glory, to enter into significant knowledge; love- and power-relationships which He would not have entered otherwise. In other words, on the one hand, God's knowledge, love, power, and glory preclude addition; on the other hand they demand addition." >> (_Van Til the Theologian_, p. 16.)

By legislating that "god is perfect," which entails the claim that "God is self-sufficient" and thus "needs nothing outside himself" and that "He cannot become greater than He is, in knowledge, love, power, glory, for a greater than God is inconceivable," it is necessarily admitted with this that the idea that god can be "more glorified" is incoherent. The two positions cannot be integrated without contradiction. That which is maximally glorified cannot be more than maximally glorified (for the maximum cannot be exceeded, as Frame confesses). So even internal to Christianity, such answers as Pete offers are insurmountably problematic, let alone the violence they do to a rational conception of morality. The attempt to dismiss this as an "apparent contradiction" is simply a last ditch effort to evade the unavoidable implications, and in a sadly desperate manner to boot. Rather than admit that these internal problems are inescapable because of their arbitrary basis, believers are expected to accept these contrivances "just because," since the alternative is paramount to liberating reason which can only spell the dissolution of the religious view of the world so defended. (If you read further in Frame's exploration of Van Til's teachings, you will see that this kind of internal problem "appears to arise from our ignorance concerning the precise senses of certain key terms" (p. 18), a knowledge which is available, it is claimed, only to god, so not only is the problem said to arise from ignorance, its solution is also found in ignorance as well.)

From this flimsy course of reasoning (which incidentally makes no appeal to values), Pete wants to conclude that, "then it is certainly justifiable to sacrifice a virtuous person." Notice that in reaching this conclusion, he had to divorce concepts of morality from man's nature - indeed, from reality - giving them instead a basis which is imaginary in nature (which has its own internal problems, as sympathetic commentators have repeatedly admitted), in order to salvage a position that is emotionally dear to him ("indeed, this was the very sacrifice of Christ") from criticism. In the very act of defending his religious commitments, we find Pete exercising the very policy which he seeks to defend - that is, that the end justifies the means: reason can be sacrificed in the interest of protecting an emotionally-captivating religious belief, which obviously is the intention here. At least in this regard he is consistent.

Pete then tells us that, "Since that is the point of the sacrifice, then it is justifiable." Again, we have another instance of the end justifying the means. Replace "sacrifice" with any other vicious action, such as stealing, murdering, raping, etc., and the elasticity of this erroneous view becomes all too evident: since the results of vicious action are the point

of practicing vicious behavior, vicious behavior is thus justifiable. This is incredible!

Pete explains that, "If, on the other hand, God is ignored and the point of the sacrifice is instead focused on the vicious who benefit from the sacrifice, then it is not good, for God is not supremely glorified in that process." But this is essentially what Christianity models in the final analysis, for the focus is clearly on the believer, who is held to be a depraved (i.e., vicious) recipient of this "gift" of sacrifice made possible by a father standing by while he watches felons destroy his son for the crime of being virtuous. In turn, he is called to sacrifice himself in like manner. In Matthew 16:24, we have Jesus saying the following: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (See also Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, et al.) In Romans 12:1, the author Paul tells us that he thinks it is a "reasonable service" that believers "present [their] bodies a living sacrifice" to his god. The gospel story models the sacrifice of the virtuous for the sake of the vicious, and such practice in reality can only serve to reward those who are evil, regardless of how prettily one attempts to dress it up. The garb of allegory cannot quell the destructiveness of bad principle.

Pete seems only concerned with "relating this to the sacrifice of Christ for sinners," but in doing so he ignores the essence of the policy being advocated here, as well as its consequences when put into practice in human relationships, in order to promote the hideous pretense that such action is somehow morally just. He says that "we must first and foremost recognize that Christ's death on the cross was primarily intended for God alone," which begs the question to which Frame effectively admits defeat: how can a perfect, invulnerable, eternal, immortal and indestructible being benefit from such action? To say that "Christ's death on the cross was primarily intended for God alone" ignores the nature which imaginative believers have attributed to their god. It also ignores the practical consequences of a story which models the rewarding of the vicious at the express cost of those who are virtuous.

Finally, Pete gives away the cards of his game when he tells us that "Men are saved by the death of Christ because that, too, brings glory to God, and not because of anything found in man himself making him "worthy" to be saved by Christ's sacrifice." This simply means that, in Pete's view, man has no value whatsoever, and can only be seen as a means of glorifying something beyond him (as if there could be any value in this!). Man, in this view, is a means to the ends of others, not an end in himself. It should be no surprise then that the Christian view of the world has led to so many dictatorships throughout its history, for it explicitly views men as chattel in service to whatever aims those who have seized power over him have in mind. This is the same primitive view of morality that encourages young Middle Eastern men to leave their families and sacrifice themselves in suicide missions against Allah's enemies.

Peter tells us that "In short, men are not saved because they are men and ought to be saved--they are saved because it glorifies God." Which can only mean: men have no value in their lives, and thus are wrong to value themselves, and god glorifies himself by allowing for the murder of his son for the sake of those who have no value to begin with. In this perverse labyrinthine contortion of morality beyond all sensible recognition, Peter concludes that "it is good for Christ to have sacrificed Himself." Thus we have in clear terms Peter's belief that value has no place in his view of what constitutes the moral good. We know this because action against one who is virtuous is taken in the interest of those who have no value is deemed "good." Thus, the virtuous are sacrificed for the sake of the vicious, and here we have someone rushing to defend such a practice.

Have I missed something?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: Logic/"God as an Axiom"

posted on April 1, 2003 at 10:03 pm

Pete says "I have argued for my position."

Okay, perhaps you have, and I just haven't seen it. But I have read a number of your papers, and what I have seen in place of an argument is a string of unargued assertions. I'm looking for reasons to see why one should accept what you claim, but I must admit that I haven't found them.

Pete says "You, however, have not offered any reason as to why you have the basis to disagree with me in the first place."

I don't think I need to. If someone told me that the moon was made of green cheese, I don't need to defend any reasons for disagreeing with this either. If someone told me that Allah is the foundation of logic (and some people have claimed this to me), I don't need to defend any reasons for dismissing such claims as well. In fact, I need a reason for

accepting your claims as knowledge, not for not accepting them. If your intention is to defend the position that logic is based on god's nature, or that logic requires a god, I'm interested in reviewing it. I hope this is clear.

Pete says "Let me put it quite simply. You are attempting to use logic against my position."

Well, actually, in my comprehensive analysis of your article "God as an Axiom," I was simply seeing how your own logic establishes your points, how it guards itself against rival claims that are in my assessment equally arbitrary (such as similar claims that logic is based on Allah, for instance), and how your intended rebuttal of a view contrary to yours (namely the view that the basis of logic is "how matter works" or something along these lines) does not make consistent use of the criteria which you wanted to claim for your view. I think I showed this with great success. Perhaps you disagree. Okay.

Pete then lists a number of questions for me.

The first one asks:

1. Does your logic apply equally to both you and me? If not, what difference does it make and how do you know you're right?

I'm not really sure what you mean by this question, "Does [my] logic apply equally to both you and me?" Is there a way you can rephrase this? You ask "what difference does it make?" I think you will have to make this decision for yourself, Pete. I cannot dictate to others that they hold something important when in fact they may not. I think these are determinations that one must make for himself. You ask "how do you know you're right?" I'm not necessarily claiming to be right about anything. I'm simply offering some counterpoints, and you are free to take them seriously and interact with them, or not. Your choice, Pete.

2. If logic is universal and applies equally to both of us, then what reason does it apply equally to both of us? Hint: it cannot be perception as you and I do not have the same perception.

First of all, to say "it cannot be perception as you and I do not have the same perception," does not address the issue. Indeed, I accept as facts that we are both capable of perception, and that we do perceive, and these are crucial facts. It does not matter that we do not perceive the same things. The particular objects of our perception are not at issue here. Rather, the general principles which the relationships between any particulars imply are at issue. It is from these relationships that we have been able to isolate and identify the initial and subsequent principles of logic. This is no mystery, and much work in this area has been fully developed, tested and validated times over, and is available in the philosophical literature (see for instance HWB Joseph). We cannot escape the fact that we perceive; similarly, we cannot escape the fact that there is a relationship between us and what we perceive. It is this relationship which is central to the grounding of logic. I don't see how questions of the existence of a god could come prior to such a relationship, for one would have to be aware in the first place (thus possessing such a relationship) in order to consider such questions.

3. What reason do we have to take logic "authoritatively"? That is, why should we care what logic says about something in the first place?

I would say that we take logic as "authoritative" because we want to live. Then again, I am only speaking for myself here, but I think this is the natural orientation of man in general, since we all need to act in order to live, and since we all need to guide our action by a conceptual process. I recognize that there is a proper relationship between myself and what I perceive, and that the perceptual process provides the model for the conceptual process. Since I want to live, and since I must think in order to live, I have no choice about the fact that I must take logic as "authoritative," so long as living my life is my goal. This thesis is clearly testable. For instance, notice that when one abandons the goal of living life, reason no longer guides his actions, and consequently logic is out the window. That is one reason why those who do seek to live must embrace reason fully so that they can protect themselves from those who abandon reason.

Pete says "I have answered these questions."

You have? Okay, I'm not saying you haven't. But perhaps you could paste them here in response to your questions as you ask them, or at least distill what your answers are if you were to pose these questions to yourself. Claiming that a god exists tells me nothing about why one should consider logic as authoritative, unless of course you are saying that god's desires has some pertinence here (and so far, it appears that you've tried to distance yourself from this position). Besides, I don't see how one can object to my view that we choose to take logic authoritatively because it serves the project of living our lives. I think the essential difference between my view of logic and yours, is that I see logic as wholly natural and this-worldly, while you say that logic is supernatural and otherworldly, or at least has a supernatural basis. I think it's clear that this is what you want to be your conclusion, but how exactly you argue to it is a complete mystery to me. And indeed, if you say that god is your "axiom," and mean by this that the belief that there is such a god is your starting point, then I'd say it's even more baffling for you to say that you have argued for this position, for

that would undermine your claim to its being an axiom. In traditional foundationalism, the truth of an axiom is not established by prior arguments; rather, the axiom is noted, among other things, for its necessity in erecting any arguments in the first place.

Pete says "Logic is universal because God transcends human experience, and thus logic is equally valid for everyone."

Okay, here's another one of these unargued assertions. You simply interject it along the way, but I see no reason to accept it, other than your desire that it should be accepted. Not only do I nowhere see where you establish the claim that your god exists, I also nowhere see where you establish a connection between your god and logic as such. Perhaps you can explain why you believe these things yourself, assuming you really do.

Pete says "Because logic is fundamental to the nature of God, not being logical is actually akin to lying, which is morally wrong (at least if done intentionally)."

Again, your view of logic assumes the very point which needs to be defended, and I see no reason why one should accept it. And I don't think it's accurate to say that "not being logical is actually akin to lying." This premise does not follow from any points which I've seen you present, so I don't see why it should be accepted either. If in fact you hold that "not being logical is actually akin to lying," then I would expect, supposing you want to be in good graces with your god, that you not fail to be logical in your statements. That is why it is odd to find that, from this, you proceed to conclude that "Therefore, it is vitally important for everyone to approach everything logically." Again, I don't see how this follows from anything you've presented. I don't think you've even presented an argument that can be presented in valid form (though I may be wrong on this), but clearly your statement makes use of claims that need support, which I have not seen.

You say "This answers those three questions," and while I might agree that your comments may in some way respond to the questions (that's a big maybe, though), I don't think they in any way answer them (for reasons identified above). You seem to think that asserting the existence of a god "solves the problem," but I'm not exactly sure you understand what the problem is, or why it's a problem at all (in fact, I don't think it is a problem, for reasons indicated).

I wrote "And then, you say "These are all attributes of God." Voilà!" And in response to this, Pete says "No, I do not say that--the Bible says that."

I'm not sure where the bible claims that god is "transcendent," or where the bible argues that god is the basis of logic. I suppose many verses could be contorted into speaking on these matters in some trivial way, but I don't see what that would accomplish. I've looked in numerous English translations of the Christian bible for the word "transcendent," and I don't see it used, save for in contemporary notes in one study bible, but clearly that's not part of the text in question. But regardless, you seem to think that these characteristics apply on the basis of what the bible says, and you have repeated these claims in your forum. Surely you understand that repeating a claim is not equivalent to proving it true. I'm simply curious as to how you would substantiate the position your statements indicate. I hope you're okay with this?

Pete says "you have nothing that fits those characteristics, so what can you refute it with?" But still I'm wondering how you validate the requirement for these attributes as a basis for logic. It's clear that you've asserted them, but I don't think you've established this beyond any reasonable doubts.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: God as an Axiom

posted on 4-02-03 at 08:58 am

I wrote "If someone told me that the moon was made of green cheese, I don't need to defend any reasons for disagreeing with this either."

Pete suggests that the following anecdote serves as an analogy to my position:

"Suppose there are two blind people on the beach. They notice that the waves get higher and lower during the day and call it tides. One blind person says, "These tides are caused by the moon." The other blind person says, "I don't have proof that the moon exists. Therefore, you must prove that the moon exists or I won't believe it is causing the tides." The first person says, "Well, the tides exist. What else would explain the tides if not the moon?" The second person

responds, "I don't need to answer that question."

Pete, are you saying that, if someone presents to me the claim that the earth is made of green cheese, and offers no evidence for this, and does not support this claim in any way, that I have some kind of obligation to refute it? (I'll give you a hint: I don't.)

I said "If someone told me that Allah is the foundation of logic (and some people have claimed this to me), I don't need to defend any reasons for dismissing such claims as well."

Pete's response: "If Allah fit the necessary preconditions that logic require, then Allah could be put up as a potential alternate explanation."

Really? Why? Just because someone says that Allah fits these preconditions? On what basis should this be accepted if other than just someone's assertions?

Pete says "However, you have no potential alternate explanation to begin with."

How do you know this? In fact, I pointed to it in my last message, and you have not interacted with it. I will elaborate on it in the following.

Pete asks: "Why should I listen to anything you say then?"

You must answer this yourself, Pete. It all depends on what value you think there is to gain from this discussion. I cannot answer this for you.

Pete asked "Does your logic apply equally to both you and me? If not, what difference does it make and how do you know you're right?"

I asked for clarification: "I'm not really sure what you mean by this question, "Does [my] logic apply equally to both you and me?" Is there a way you can rephrase this?"

Pete clarifies: "Okay: is logic universal, or conventional in nature?"

What does it mean to say that logic is universal? Do you mean by this, that logic applies everywhere in the universe? I would agree with this, if that is what you mean, but with the qualification that I have not been everywhere in the universe. Does that answer your question?

Pete asks: "That is, is what logical for you actually logical, or only your opinion of what would be logical."

Well, I don't see any problem with saying that something is both my opinion and also logical at the same time. In fact, it may be my opinion that my opinions are logical. I don't think opinion and logic are necessarily mutually exclusive. In other words, I don't think there is a necessary division between that which is actually logical and my opinion that something is logical. In fact, I don't know how I would express my conclusion that something is actually logical in a manner that is not an opinion, reducible to opinion or somehow construable as an opinion. It's no secret that one could dismiss anything I say, no matter what its merits or faults may be, as "mere opinion."

Pete asks: "Is there any way for you to use logic to determine what is real for me?"

Well, I think so, but of course logic requires context, namely a set of data inputs which vary from individual to individual. I am working off a context of accumulated data inputs, and so are you, and within these respective contexts we are trying to draw inferences and conclusions from those data inputs and what we take to be their implications. In this sense, I see logic as the form or method of the reasoning process, and the data inputs as the content which the reasoning integrates. If for instance I could convey to you all the necessary data inputs which generate a specific conclusion that I want to defend, for instance, I'm reasonably confident that I could show you how the conclusion follows, if not certainly, then perhaps at least tentatively. But the problem is in conveying that context to you or to others, which can be a very complicated and laborious process, depending of course on the nature of the content. If you have a sibling with whom you grew up closely, you'll often notice how much context you probably share with him/her. Compare the ease of communication between yourself and your sibling with the effort it takes to communicate with someone who grew up in a different country speaking a different language, who has learned your language as a second language. There are many unknowns here, and in your efforts to communicate with this person and to avoid misunderstandings, you may find yourself trying to navigate the unknowns so as to fill in what you perceive to be gaps in the respective context base between you and this other person. But once that is achieved, it's possible to reason together, so long as both are willing to reason. That's a big if sometimes, of course, for not all people are open to reason.

Pete asked: "If logic is universal and applies equally to both of us, then what reason does it apply equally to both of us? Hint: it cannot be perception as you and I do not have the same perception."

I responded: "First of all, to say "it cannot be perception as you and I do not have the same perception," does not address the issue. Indeed, I accept as facts that we are both capable of perception, and that we do perceive, and these are crucial facts. It does not matter that we do not perceive the same things. The particular objects of our perception are not at issue here. Rather, the general principles which the relationships between any particulars imply are at issue. It is from these relationships that we have been able to isolate and identify the initial and subsequent principles of logic. This is no mystery, and much work in this area has been fully developed, tested and validated times over, and is available in the philosophical literature (see for instance HWB Joseph)."

Pete now asks: "So is this why philosophers disagree constantly over what constitutes logic? Would a Zen Buddhist logic be okay to use or is it wrong? They think it's right...."

I think philosophers often disagree because their starting points are in conflict, and often they have a bias which they want to protect (such as a religious belief which they are afraid to abandon). Fundamentally, I think most thinkers tend to overlook the system-wide implications of the subject-object relationship, and thus ignore a set of facts which are easily taken for granted but which are undeniably central to the reasoning process itself. This is correctable, but the thinker needs to learn how to recognize this relationship and its implications, and that can become complicated, especially at higher levels of abstraction.

Pete asked: "What reason do we have to take logic "authoritatively"? That is, why should we care what logic says about something in the first place?"

I answered: "I would say that we take logic as "authoritative" because we want to live."

Pete now asks: "Have you died yet? How would you know that logic is necessary for life if you haven't been killed because of it. Is this something you just assume?"

Sorry, I don't quite understand this question. Are you challenging my view that life requires action, and that this action requires the guidance of reason? The questions which you ask here suggest that you are assuming that the following alternatives are jointly exhaustive:

That either

1. I must experience death to know that logic is necessary for life, or
2. I must "just assume" that logic is necessary for life

Do you mean to suggest this, Pete? By "just assume," do you mean "assume without appropriate justification"? Do you think it's not possible to observe the process of human life and recognize from this that man's actions are necessarily goal-oriented, for instance, and that his action must be directed by a process of reasoned thought?

I said: "Then again, I am only speaking for myself here, but I think this is the natural orientation of man in general, since we all need to act in order to live, and since we all need to guide our action by a conceptual process. I recognize that there is a proper relationship between myself and what I perceive, and that the perceptual process provides the model for the conceptual process. Since I want to live, and since I must think in order to live, I have no choice about the fact that I must take logic as "authoritative," so long as living my life is my goal. This thesis is clearly testable. For instance, notice that when one abandons the goal of living life, reason no longer guides his actions, and consequently logic is out the window. That is one reason why those who do seek to live must embrace reason fully so that they can protect themselves from those who abandon reason."

Pete responds: "This argument fails on two points. 1) According to your view, Christians have abandoned reason--yet they do not kill themselves en mass. 2) Nihilists take materialism to its logical conclusion and, in their logic, kill themselves. Explain."

Sure, I'll help you out here. First of all, I have not suggested that "Christians have abandoned reason" as a premise in my argument, so even if this is not true, it does not invalidate my conclusion (since this is not a premise intended to support it). In fact, I made no statement about Christians in this paragraph, so I don't know where you're getting this. (In fact, I know many Christians, and I would say that they are all capable of reason and that they guide their actions by reason much of the time. However, I would say that they do not employ reason consistently, but I've never known a Christian who claims that he does.) Second, I don't know of any instances of "Nihilists [who] take materialism to its logical conclusion and, in their logic, kill themselves." And again, this was not a premise in my argument, so even if it is true that Nihilists do this as a logical result of their erroneous philosophy, I don't see how it has any bearing on the truth of the points that I have presented here. The two criticisms which you list here, Pete, do not seem even to address the essence of what I have stated. It appears that you are looking for counter-examples in order to invalidate

what I've said, but even these counter-examples could be shown to confirm what I am saying (since there are a lot of inputs which are ignored in the examples which you have proposed).

Do you think that logical thinking is an unnatural orientation for men? Do you dispute the premise that we all need to act in order to live? Do you dispute the fact that we all need to guide our action by a conceptual process? Do you dispute that there is a proper relationship between yourself and what you perceive, and that this relationship should be identified in your worldview, and that your view of logic should take this relationship into account? I ask these questions so that you can focus your response to what I have said, rather than speaking about Christians and Nihilists, about which my original statement said nothing.

Pete says "Logic is universal because it is dependent on things that transcend human experience."

How does the supposition that something "is dependent on things that transcend human experience" infer or confirm the claim that "Logic is universal"? What exactly do you mean by "transcend human experience"? If something "transcends human experience," how could we discover this?

Pete says "Logic is dependent upon a transcendent God."

When you make a claim like this, then the obvious question is: How do you know that a god exists? Your whole thesis about logic is dependent on the belief that a god exists, Pete. I just wonder how you think you secure this. I'm curious, Pete. Please don't be offended by this.

Pete says "The reason logic is authoritative is because it accurately depicts reality."

How do you know this, Pete? How do you know what reality is, and how have you determined that logic "accurate depicts" it?

Pete says "The reason it accurately depicts reality is because reality is logical in design (chaos does not naturally become logical)."

This strikes me as insurmountably circular. One could easily say "the reason evolution accurately explains the fossil record is because the fossil record exhibits evolutionary design," but I doubt you would accept this.

Also, if reality is the product of design, was that which designed it real?

Pete says "Logic is authoritative because it is based on a God who is real."

I know this is what you claim to be the case, Pete, but that's part of the problem I'm pointing out here: How do you establish this? Repeating over and over that logic "is based on a God who is real" in various guises is not the same as establishing it through argument.

Also, if this god is real (as you say here), but reality is a product of design (as suggested by your comment above), who designed god?

Pete says "It has nothing to do with His desires--it has to do with His nature and being."

Are you saying then that god's nature and being are not the product of his desires? If they are not a product of his desires, and he cannot change them, then obviously this means that god's nature is not something which can be said to exhibit design (for I doubt you would allow that a god has a designer). But if something can be the basis of logic and yet is not the product of design, what is accomplished in asserting the existence of a god? It sounds like you've asserted yourself into a corner here, Pete.

I said "Besides, I don't see how one can object to my view that we choose to take logic authoritatively because it serves the project of living our lives."

Pete asks "Because, quite frankly, if that's all that we use logic for, then there is no reason for you to engage in this conversation. How does this serve to project the living of your life?"

That's easy. This is an enjoyable source of entertainment for me, and I have identified that entertainment is a vital human need (it is a great opportunity to learn and exercise new skills while enjoying life at the same time). If this is your only objectionable concern, then I don't think you have any valid objections to what I've proposed. Do you think that logic is useful for something other than the project of living our lives? If so, what?

I said "I think the essential difference between my view of logic and yours, is that I see logic as wholly natural and this-worldly, while you say that logic is supernatural and otherworldly, or at least has a supernatural basis."

Pete's response: "You have that right. Now, demonstrate how anyone can take logic seriously in a natural and this-worldly existence. You have not done so."

Actually, Pete, I have demonstrated this. Logic guides our action. Man must act in order to live, and this is why we need logic. You do this all the time yourself, and in so doing, you confirm my thesis. (Indeed, your challenges to my view so far have been very weak.)

Logic tells us that our lives require values in order to continue. We need sustenance, warmth, shelter, information, friendship, love, long-range goals, etc., to make our lives possible. Logic tells us how to achieve X if X is our goal. Logic also tells us that, if we want to achieve Z, we must first achieve X and Y before Z is attainable. I don't see how this could be difficult to grasp. Logic tells me that, if I want to use my pen in order to write with it, I must remove its top to expose the ink point. Logic tells me that, if I want to keep my ice cream frozen after I return from the grocery store, I must put it into my freezer. Logic tells me that, if I want to prevent cavities, I need to practice dental hygiene daily. Logic has applicability to life, and this is why it is of such value to us. These are all natural and this-worldly concerns, and logic enables us to meet them so that our efforts to live have a chance for success.

I said "And indeed, if you say that god is your "axiom," and mean by this that the belief that there is such a god is your starting point, then I'd say it's even more baffling for you to say that you have argued for this position, for that would undermine your claim to its being an axiom."

Pete's response "Not at all. Geometrists argue the Axioms of geometry and give reasons why we should accept, for example, that a line is made of infinite points. Axioms can be argued for--they just cannot be proven. There is a difference."

The difference to keep in mind here is the difference between geometry and philosophy. Geometry is not philosophy, and what passes for axioms in geometry are not of the same nature (nor are they intended to be of the same nature) as those which are found in primary philosophy. Knowledge requires a starting point (otherwise you're faced with an infinite regress). This means that the very basis of knowledge cannot assume knowledge prior to it, and thus that what qualifies as a starting point cannot be the conclusion of prior reasoning (for then it would not be a starting point). The fact that axioms in geometry are definable in terms of prior concepts illustrates that they are not intended to be axioms in the sense that philosophical axioms are axioms. This is something that is frequently taught in first year philosophy courses. Have you taken any?

I said "In traditional foundationalism, the truth of an axiom is not established by prior arguments; rather, the axiom is noted, among other things, for its necessity in erecting any arguments in the first place."

Pete's response "And, the necessity in erecting further arguments, is in fact an argument for the axiom itself."

Then obviously the claim that it is an axiom is ill-founded. If a supposition requires an argument to substantiate it, it cannot be an axiom, by definition.

Pete continues "This is what I have been stating."

No wonder I find it impossible to accept.

Pete again "Logic demands the existence of God."

Here we go again…

Pete "Prove logic in any meaningful kind of way without resorting to God and you will have disproven the notion of logic presupposing God."

But you miss the point. Logic is needed in order to construct a proof to begin with. I do not "prove logic." Proof is the wrong thing to seek here. If you think you have proven logic by resorting to god, then obviously you've committed yourself to a cycle of endless fallacy. I challenge you to take such a thesis to a peer-reviewed publication and see if it will even be accepted for publication. Be prepared for a rejection, Pete.

Pete says "Logic is universal because God transcends human experience, and thus logic is equally valid for everyone."

I said "Okay, here's another one of these unargued assertions."

Pete says "This is my axiomatic point. I am saying that logic is dependent upon a transcendent God. If you can demonstrate that it is not, then do so."

The claim that "Logic is universal because God transcends human experience, and thus logic is equally valid for everyone" makes an enormous number of assumptions (not to mention its use of a number of terms which must be defined in terms of prior concepts). It cannot serve as an axiom. It may be a dogmatically held belief which you are reluctant to abandon, and that's fine. But it's no axiom. You may claim that it is an axiom in the sense that you qualify in your paper "God as an Axiom," but I brought forth many criticisms against this sense, pointing out its criteriological weaknesses, and you've not resuscitated it.

Given the criteria which you have presented for what qualifies a belief as axiomatic ("cannot be proven true but [is] assumed true anyway" and "they are necessary to hold further beliefs"), I could just as easily counter your proposed axiom with one of my own invention, such as:

"Logic is universal because there are no supernatural beings which transcend human experience, thus granting men the surety that their assumptions about the universe cannot be undermined by supernatural meddling."

Since you do not demonstrate the truth of your axiom, why should I have to?

I said "I'm not sure where the bible claims that god is "transcendent," or where the bible argues that god is the basis of logic."

Pete's response "Just because certain words are not used does not mean the concept is not present."

Okay. I can accept that. Concepts are often implicit and not explicitly identified.

Pete continues "Arguing against that is just absurd."

And I'm not.

Pete continues "In any case, you have the fundamentals of logic being presented in the fact that God calls Himself: "I AM THAT I AM", which is the Law of Identity (A is A) and the Law of Non-Contradiction (A is not both A and non-A at the same time/relationship)."

But of course, this simply assumes the point in question (namely that a god exists which made such claims), and this has not been demonstrated. And still, I'm trying to figure out where the concept 'transcendent' is implied in the text of the bible. Does the statement "I AM THAT I AM" qualify its speaker as one who is transcendent? If so, why can't I say this and deem myself as a "transcendent being"? Does god transcend his own experience? Why is the attribute of transcendence at all a requirement for logic? I think this has been asked before, but I'm still wondering what your answer is.

I said "I've looked in numerous English translations of the Christian bible for the word "transcendent," and I don't see it used, save for in contemporary notes in one study bible, but clearly that's not part of the text in question."

Pete's response "The Bible would make no sense if it is not speaking objectively (ie: transcendently)."

Are you saying that objective = transcendent????? Is this what you really want to be saying here, Pete? Please, explain this one.

Pete continues "The truth statements made in the Bible are true for everyone and they are not relativistic."

Really now? Psalm 69:2 says "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." This statement is true "for everyone"?

Pete says "They are, by definition, transcendent to human experience."

If they are "transcendent to human experience," how can you say in virtually the same breath that they "are true for everyone"?

I said "But still I'm wondering how you validate the requirement for these attributes as a basis for logic."

Pete responds "I have given you the summary, and you claim to have read my website where I provided the details."

I have not read everything on your website, Pete. If you have a particular article in mind which addresses these points and establishes them with rock-solid certainty, please specify the link, and when I get a chance, I will examine it.

Pete says "You know that circular reasoning is invalid, so if logic is proven by circular reasoning, logic would be invalid. Logic cannot be used to prove logic, therefore."

Which is one of the objections I raised to one of your statements above.

Pete says "What, then, would be required in order for logic to be valid? Either logic isn't universal (in which case some circular arguments are okay--in which case, your claim that my arguments beg the question could just be one of those arguments that are okay to be circular, right?), or else logic is proven by something else entirely."

But "proof" is a process of logic, so to seek a proof of the validity of logic is to invite circular arguments. So, this course will obviously not do.

Pete says "Logic does not exist in and of itself, as it is not a thing. It is therefore dependent upon something else in order for it to even function or be thought of."

I agree. As I have mentioned, its basis is the relationship between the mind and its objects. This should not be difficult to grasp.

Pete says "Logic, in order to be valid, must be universal. If there is any place that logic is not valid, then logic is not valid anywhere. Why? Because if logic says there are no contradictions, and one exists, then logic is wrong. If logic says that $a = b = c$ and yet a does not $= c$, then logic is wrong everywhere. Therefore, whatever it is that brings about logic must also be universal in order to ensure that logic itself is universal."

This is easily integrated into the view I am generally proposing, namely that there is a subject-object relationship in all instances of awareness, and that this relationship lies at the basis of logic. That's the universality that you're looking to identify, but which you want to place in a realm of your own imagining. But it's right there in front of your nose wherever you go, literally.

Pete says "Logic must always be logical. That means there can be no time when a contradiction is valid, for if there ever were a time then we have no way of knowing that contradictions cannot be valid now. Therefore, whatever it is that causes logic to be in the first place must likewise be eternal. Eternal simply means "outside the realm of time", and not "forever" as some people assume it to mean."

I think this is very sloppy reasoning, Pete, and here's why. For one, your own view provides no safeguard against not knowing that contradictions exist. You yourself even say "if there were ever a time [when a contradiction is valid] then we have no way of knowing that contradictions cannot be valid now." This simply means that you are operating on ignorance, but I don't think that's what you meant to say. (I.e., I think you meant to say something else, but this is precisely how I read what you have written.) Second, you want to conclude from this that "whatever it is that causes logic to be in the first place must likewise be eternal," where "eternal simply means 'outside the realm of time' and not 'forever'"; But even as you have stated this, I don't see how this intended conclusion follows from your statement about contradictions.

Indeed, the issue of contradictions is not nearly so complicated. That we can know that contradictions do not exist is implicit in all acts of awareness, in all instances of the subject-object relationship. The law of contradiction finds its validity in the distinction between the subject and the object. This recognition is available to any human thinker who attends to his own awareness. It's no mystery - thinkers do not confuse themselves with the objects that they are perceiving; they recognize, if only on an implicit level, that there is an unchanging, perpetual and ever-present distinction between themselves and the objects which they perceive. To want to say that "whatever it is that causes logic to be in the first place must likewise be eternal" ignores the fact that logic takes place in time. That which gives rise to logic is the subject-object relationship, and this only lasts as long as the subject lasts, for without the two to tango, there is no dance. That the logical experience is shared by multiple subjects (what you may be calling "universal") is simply due to the fact that the subject-object relationship is the same kind of relationship for all subjects which perceive objects. Additionally, logical thinking is an active process of the mind, and as such, it is temporally directional - i.e., it necessarily occurs over the course of time (just as when you read this page and integrate its content). And since thinkers are mortal humans, to say that "whatever it is that cause logic must be eternal" I think mishandles the facts of the case and misleads one to ill-founded conclusions like those which you want to repeat (such as the view that the logic has a supernatural basis).

Pete says "Logic cannot change. If something is logical today, it is always logical. Something cannot be a contradiction today and yet tomorrow, in the same relationship, be a non-contradiction. Therefore, whatever it is that causes logic to be valid must also be immutable (ie: unchanging)."

It's true that logic does not change because the relationship between subject and object does not change. The subject and its objects cannot "swap places," so to say, so the basis of logic on this view is stable so long as there is a subject which has a relationship with objects. See, not difficult.

Pete says "Tell me what fits even these three points if not a "god" of some kind: eternity, immutability, omnipresence."

I've done just this, while keeping the focus of the discussion on the very nature of what logic is, and without having to leave the orbit of reality and enter the hyperspace of imagination.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: God as an Axiom

posted on 4-02-03 at 09:28 am

Nick says:

"If I say Bill is taller than Mike, and Tim is taller than Bill, then Tim is taller than Mike. Logical, right? Does it mean that there are really 3 guys named Mike, Tim, and Bill and that Tim is the tallest? Of course not.

"Logic is a very fragile thing. It serves as the structure of an argument. "If A, then B", things like that. It is hypothetical, not realistic. There are times that logic can be used in reality, but it is in no way a universally accurate depiction of reality."

There is an important truth to what Nick is saying here, and I commented on this in my last message. The truth is that there is a distinction between the form of reasoning (which is a process that is logical in nature) and the content of reasoning (which are the inputs which we perceive). For a course of reasoning to have relevance to reality, we need inputs. These inputs may be actual objects which we perceive, or they may be symbols which we substitute for actual objects to represent them in groups or classes (i.e., concepts). Unless there are inputs which inform the content of our reasoning, its logical rigor is worthless (save perhaps as comedic devices).

The problem I am finding with Pete's view of logic is that it seems to be asserted as its own content, for logic is treated as its own input, and the basis which he claims lies at the foundation of logic has no perceptual basis. Thus, there is no tie between what he is claiming to provide the basis of logic (a content claim) and reality, which he says logic "accurately depicts." Thus, it is expressly contentless and purely self-referential.

Furthermore, I don't think the view that logic "depicts" reality is at all correct, if this is taken to mean that the function of logic is to describe the objects of which we perceive. Rather, logic is the process or method by which the mind works in identifying and integrating those objects. This enables us to identify the kinds of actions we need to take in order to reach our goals relative to the objects in our environment.

Good catch, Nick!

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: God as an Axiom

posted on 4-03-03 at 08:04 am

I asked "Pete, are you saying that, if someone presents to me the claim that the earth is made of green cheese, and offers no evidence for this, and does not support this claim in any way, that I have some kind of obligation to refute it? (I'll give you a hint: I don't.)"

Pete responds "That's not what I said at all,"

Good. Then you agree with me that simply asserting a claim does not obligate others to respond to it or take it seriously, right?

Pete says "and you have completely ignored the example in your response."

Because it's not analogous, as we'll see.

Pete says "And please pay attention to what I am saying! You said, "If someone presents to me the claim...blah blah blah...and offers no evidence for this, and does not support this claim in any way"--but that is the very point the

Illustration made! THERE WAS EVIDENCE! The tides were evidence!"

If there was evidence, then your example is clearly not analogous to the situation at hand. The situation at hand has you presenting claims for which you present no evidence whatsoever.

By the way, since the two persons in your example were blind, how did they discover that there were tides in the first place?

Pete says "How you leap from that to some stupid notion that you have to disprove theories without any proof is just absurd and ludicrous! Honestly, I'd figure people would know how to read better than this! "

Now now, Pete, don't take yourself so seriously. I doubt anyone else does.

Pete says "With the blind men demonstrating the existence of the moon, the theory that the moon existed to cause the tides actually solved the problem of why tides exist. The second person just dismissed the argument altogether, and did not provide any other counter-argument to take its place."

And what's the dreadful consequence of this action? Does he go to hell for this?

Pete says "If something works and solves the problem, then you do have to give reasons as to why it would not be so."

I do? Why?

Pete says "Given that I have demonstrated how the existence of God necessarily brings about a transcendent and objective logic whereby reality is not subjective,"

Where have you "demonstrated" this, Pete? I just don't see it. Maybe I am just dense? But whenever you make a claim about what you call "God" I have not seen any reason put forward for accepting its content as true. When will you put forth an argument?

Pete says "you cannot simply dismiss my point of view and not provide another way to demonstrate how you can use such a logic in the first place!"

Sure I can.

Pete says "My theory works so you have to provide counter-evidence."

It "works" only in your imagination, Pete. You've presented nothing that I have seen to suppose otherwise.

Pete's says "If Allah fit the necessary preconditions that logic require, then Allah could be put up as a potential alternate explanation."

Really? Why? Just because someone says that Allah fits these preconditions?

Pete said "However, you have no potential alternate explanation to begin with."

I asked "How do you know this?"

Pete says "Because you have not given us any reason why we should accept a universal, transcendent, objective logic. You could do so now, of course."

Which means you were drawing a conclusion from silence. In fact, worse than this. You are saying that you know X to be the case simply because I "have not given any reason why we should accept a universal, transcendent, objective logic." Supposing that I present nothing, how does it follow from this that you can know X to be the case? Not wise, Pete.

Pete asks: "Why should I listen to anything you say then?"

You must answer this yourself, Pete. It all depends on what value you think there is to gain from this discussion. I cannot answer this for you.

Pete says "Once again, you are missing the point. You are basing your entire argument on your opinion of what is real. This is all you are able to say!"

I have no problem with this. In fact, it is my opinion which you are essentially trying to change with your unargued

assertions about supernaturalism and invisible magic beings. And all we have from you is, similarly, idle opinion in the form of unargued assertions. It's clear that you're getting flustered, and I've not even been on this list for a week yet. I must be hitting some buttons.

Pete says "You have no assurance that you are correct, because there is no objective truth in your worldview. As such, to argue that you are correct is to deny your own worldview!"

More assertions, still no support. Very sad, Pete.

Pete says "You have continued to not demonstrate why you can make absolutist statements, such as "Pete is wrong" (which assumes I am actually wrong in reality, and not just subjectively wrong), without having an objective standing."

Then why do you choose to discuss matters with me?

Pete commands "Provide one."

Provide one what?

Pete says "Give me an objective reality by which you can base your logic."

I have already identified it. It is the subject-object relationship, a relationship at the foundation of awareness and logical thinking, but which nowhere appears as a factor in your pontifications about the basis of logic. This is worse than a gross oversight.

Pete says "Until you do so, I can just take your argument: "You haven't proven it, therefore I don't have to believe it.""

Even if I do prove it, Pete, I don't think you have any onus to accept it. I'm not one who tells people that they have an obligation to do something. You do what you want, Pete. I've been consistent that, if you want to change other people's opinions or beliefs, you have to do your own heavy lifting. So far, you haven't done this. I know, I know, you probably think you have, but I think you haven't. Apparently this bothers you. Why is it so important to you that I accept your claims about a god?

I asked "What does it mean to say that logic is universal? Do you mean by this, that logic applies everywhere in the universe?"

Pete responds "Yes."

Then clearly logic has a this-universe orientation. What, pray tell, does your imagined supernatural being have to do with it?

I said "I would agree with this, if that is what you mean, but with the qualification that I have not been everywhere in the universe. Does that answer your question?"

Pete responds "Yes, it does. You do hold to universal logic--although even in your answer you demonstrate that you have no reason to do so, for you say that you have not been everywhere in the universe."

Then you haven't understood what I've written. And frankly, I'm getting the impression that you don't want to.

Pete says "Well, if that is the case and logic could be wrong somewhere else, what assurance do you have that you actually have an accurate understanding of logic right now?"

I didn't say that I think "logic could be wrong somewhere else," I simply said that I have not been everywhere in the universe. Have you? I threw this point in intentionally, because I knew you would try to use it in order to get a foothold to launch another empty criticism, to twist it to mean something it does not. You walked right into it, right on schedule.

I said "Well, I don't see any problem with saying that something is both my opinion and also logical at the same time."

Pete says "That's not what I'm asking. I'm asking if logic ITSELF is an opinion."

Well, if everything I am going to say about logic is going to be dismissed as "mere opinion," then why do you want me to answer such questions?

Pete asks "If the rules by which you determine logic are nothing more than your opinion, and have no reality to them, then what makes your opinion any more valid than my opinion?"

Obviously, you seem to think that opinion and truth are incompatible. However, I don't know why (except as a short-cut to discrediting my statements).

I said "In fact, I don't know how I would express my conclusion that something is actually logical in a manner that is not an opinion, reducible to opinion or somehow construable as an opinion."

Pete responds "In which case your arguing that there is insufficient evidence for the existence of God is nothing more than your opinion and says nothing about reality at all."

Yes, it is my opinion that you have not provided sufficient evidence to support your claim that there is a god to begin with. I think someone else agrees with my opinion on this. Now's your chance to change this.

Pete asks "Tell me, does your opinion change what is real?"

Does god's?

I said "It's no secret that one could dismiss anything I say, no matter what its merits or faults may be, as "mere opinion.""

Pete says "Yes, and if that is the case, again I have to ask: why should anyone listen to you?"

I cannot answer this for others, Pete. I explained this before. I assume that those who would listen to me are big enough to make this decision for himself. Regardless, it doesn't matter why one chooses to listen to my ideas; what's noteworthy is that people do choose to, for whatever reasons. Like you. Since you are taking what I say so seriously, why don't you say why you do so? I have my suspicions as to why you do, but I'd rather hear it from the horse's mouth.

Pete says "What makes your opinion so special that it trumps my opinion, for example?"

I don't think you want an answer to this (but clearly I've got your attention!).

I said "Well, I think so, but of course logic requires context, namely a set of data inputs which vary from individual to individual."

Pete says "And if they vary from individual to individual then logic is not universal,"

Clearly wrong. You need to work on your reading skills, Pete. We all have a unique set of data inputs. This is the material about which we reason. You're confusing form with content (again!).

Pete says "you can only express your opinion which says nothing at all about what is real."

See, you want to dismiss what I say as just my opinion, and when you do make some attempt to interact with what I have said (for you apparently take it seriously enough to spend the amount of time that you do on responding), you completely botch it up. Not very impressive, Pete!

Pete says "It is just your thoughts."

Yep. I make no pretenses otherwise.

Pete asks "And again, what makes your thoughts so important that anyone should listen to you?"

How many times are you going to ask this, and how many times do I have to answer it? My answer will not change, Pete.

Pete says "By the way, I think you misunderstood my question to begin with."

It may be. To be honest, I find a lot of your statements to be quite inarticulate.

Pete says "I wasn't asking about communicating logic. I was asking if something is logical to you, does that mean it's real for me, even if I do not think that it's logical?"

Huh?

I said "I think philosophers often disagree because their starting points are in conflict, and often they have a bias which they want to protect (such as a religious belief which they are afraid to abandon)."

Pete asks "Why is it assumed that the religious belief is the bias?"

Because in so many cases, that's what it is.

Pete says "You said that you trusted in logic because you want to live. In other words, you "know" somehow that not being logical will cause your death."

Sure. I know by observing those instances when people have acted illogically, and they came to a premature demise (or got dangerously close to their demise). For instance, someone who walked out into the street to deliver a pizza to the other side of the street did not stop to watch for on-coming traffic. Not very logical. His funeral took place three days later. How we guide our actions has survival significance. This is where our need for logic comes in. I don't know why this would cause you such confusion.

Pete says "But you have not died, and therefore you do not know that being illogical will cause your death."

Non sequitur (that means it doesn't follow). It's like saying: You have put your hand in a garbage disposal, therefore you do not know that doing so will hurt. If this is an example of your exquisite logic skills, Pete, I'm afraid you need serious help, ol' boy!

Pete says "You assume that logic preserves your life,"

Not quite that, Pete. I am saying that basing my actions on logical inferences instead of illogical inferences will increase my chances for survival, since our actions have survival significance, and we need to guide our actions by a reality-conforming standard (i.e., logic).

Pete says "but that is all it is--an assumption."

Are you disputing that logic-guided action has survival significance????

Pete says "And again, what reason do I have to accept your assumptions?"

I don't say you have to do anything, Pete.

I had taken the following points from a statement of Pete's which clearly suggested the following dichotomy:

1. I must experience death to know that logic is necessary for life, or
2. I must "just assume" that logic is necessary for life

Watch how Pete tries to interact with this, while apparently overlooking the fact that these points were taken from his own statements.

Pete says "If reality is not objective and depends completely on your subjective view,"

Are you suggesting by this statement that my view holds that "reality is not objective and depends completely on your subjective view"? This describes Christianity, for as you have indicated, reality is the product of design. You said this yourself. You can't get more subjective than this! Such views are the result of shattering the subject-object relationship. You want to start with a subject ("god"), and its object is something of its own creating. That, my friend, is subjectivism with a vengeance. It does not come close to my view. You're like a one-legged man trying to run a marathon. You were left behind long ago.

Pete says "then yes these two options are the only available."

Then now I know why you suggested that these were the only two options available. Go back and look - they were your suggestions!

I asked "By "just assume," do you mean "assume without appropriate justification"?"

Pete asks "Appropriate justification for whom? For you, or for all reality?"

You tell me - I was asking you to explain your own term ("just assume"). Don't ask me to tell you what you originally intended to say when I ask you for clarification. That won't help!

Pete says "I don't think you understand the implications of your argument here. You want to say that logic is objective, yet all the arguments you present for it boil down to your opinion, and your opinion alone. You have to give an

objective answer if you are to have logic as objective."

See? What did I say? Everything I say can and will be dismissed as "opinion," while the arguments and points which I have presented are simply ignored. Perhaps Pete does not want to learn something new here?

I asked "Do you think that logical thinking is an unnatural orientation for men?"

Pete responds "Not at all."

Then there you go. That's my position.

Pete asks "What is your reason for logic to come naturally to man?"

The subject-object relationship. No gods need apply.

I asked "Do you dispute the premise that we all need to act in order to live? Do you dispute the fact that we all need to guide our action by a conceptual process? Do you dispute that there is a proper relationship between yourself and what you perceive, and that this relationship should be identified in your worldview, and that your view of logic should take this relationship into account?"

Pete responds "No"

Then you see my position is correct. That's a good start, Pete.

Pete says "You are just assuming that men have a drive for life and that that spontaneously causes logic"

No, I am not assuming this, and you do not show that my points (the ones with which you have now expressed agreement) assume this. Indeed, I've never made the claim that "men have a drive for life" or that the choice to live "spontaneously causes logic." Where have I said this?

Pete says "--but you haven't demonstrated this."

Because this is not a position which I am proposing. Watch the straw man arguments, Pete.

Pete says "Demonstrate how logic arrived from the need to survive."

I'm not saying that there is a "need to survive." I'm saying that each human makes the choice to survive. Big difference, Pete. You're interacting only with your own interjected assumptions here, Pete. We have you on record agreeing with my statements above. My position is that we need to act on logic if our chosen goal is to live. I've demonstrated this with simple anecdotes, and you have expressed agreement. But I did not say that we have a "need to survive," though now you want me to "demonstrate how logic arrived (???) from the need to survive," when clearly that is not the position that I have stated.

I asked "How does the supposition that something "is dependent on things that transcend human experience" infer or confirm the claim that "Logic is universal"?"

Pete says "Logic is not based on anyone's opinion."

Of course. It's based on the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "It transcends human experience."

This is what you have claimed over and over. But still you do not show why one should accept this. It's like you're stuck on repeat. You need an argument. Present it.

Pete says "That is why it is universal, and not dependent upon anyone's experience."

How are you defining "experience"? And how do you prove that logic is "not dependent upon anyone's experience"? I'm just curious how you might support such statements, assuming you ever get around to it.

Pete says "If logic was dependent upon personal experience it would, of necessity, be non-universal."

Why? Again, just another assertion. You give no reason why one should accept this.

I asked "What exactly do you mean by "transcend human experience"? If something "transcends human experience,"

how could we discover this?"

Pete says "Interesting you ask that. If logic does not transcend human experience, then why are you trying to use logic to prove to me that you are right when I do not have the same experience that you do?"

I'll ask again, since you do not address the questions which you yourself say are interesting that I asked: What exactly do you mean by "transcend human experience"? If something "transcends human experience," how could we discover this?

Pete said "Logic is dependent upon a transcendent God."

I responded "When you make a claim like this, then the obvious question is: How do you know that a god exists?"

Pete says "Because of the impossibility of the contrary. Go ahead and give me contrary evidence--that's all I'm asking for anyway."

Can you establish this asserted and as of yet unargued "impossibility of the contrary"? I haven't seen you do so yet. Will you ever?

I said "Your whole thesis about logic is dependent on the belief that a god exists, Pete. I just wonder how you think you secure this."

Pete responds "Because of God's mercy and grace."

But these assume the point in question. Do you think this demonstrates your logic skills, Pete?

Pete says "That's the only way that I could understand anything--that's the only way you can."

So, in other words, you have no reason for believing this, you just want it to be the case?

Pete said "The reason logic is authoritative is because it accurately depicts reality."

I asked "How do you know this, Pete? How do you know what reality is, and how have you determined that logic "accurate depicts" it?"

Pete responds "I could just as easily ask you the same questions about it."

But you still don't know whether to take what I seriously or not, right?

Pete says "I know this because it fits my worldview and makes sense."

You simply stipulate it ad hoc and then say "it fits!" You show no tie between what you claim and reality.

Pete says "When I try to synthesize it with opposing worldviews, it is utter chaos and self-contradiction."

That's because you are working from an invalid basis, and you refuse to accept this.

Pete says "Therefore, it is a worldview level of statement."

A "worldview level of statement"? What's that?

Pete says "I accept Christianity, which means I must accept these foundational aspects, such as reality and logic."

We know this, Pete. But you need to explain why you accept it. So far, all we've seen are unsupported assertions. That's no help.

Pete says "This makes perfect sense in such a system."

If you say so.

Pete says "However, the alternatives do not make sense at all--if you can make them make sense, do so, otherwise there's no way I could abandon Christianity."

Are you expecting me to make it make sense to you? I think you understand my position, for it's quite easy to grasp. But I don't see you interacting with it.

Pete says "To do so would be to abandon all reason, as there is no reason to hold to reason without God."

But how do you show that a god exists, Pete? When will you show this?

Pete said "The reason it accurately depicts reality is because reality is logical in design (chaos does not naturally become logical)."

I said "This strikes me as insurmountably circular."

Pete asks "But if logic is just your opinion, who cares?"

I do, for one. That's all that matters to me in the long run.

I said "One could easily say "the reason evolution accurately explains the fossil record is because the fossil record exhibits evolutionary design," but I doubt you would accept this."

Pete says "Actually, evolutionists already do similar things."

And I doubt you accept it, which makes my point!!

Pete says "The difference is this: arguments that are on the worldview level are inherently circular."

Pete, just because your arguments are inherently circular, it does not follow from this that everyone else's worldview arguments are circular.

Pete says "They have to be because the worldview levels are axiomatic. All arguments are, at root, circular reasoned."

Oh brother.....

I asked "Also, if reality is the product of design, was that which designed it real?"

Pete says "I didn't bring design into this argument."

I'm still wondering how exactly your argument is supposed to proceed, since all I've seen from you is a bunch of unargued assertions about god and logic. But clearly you did introduce design into your view of logic by saying that "reality is logical in design" (see your quote above). Whether or not that is part of your grand argument is irrelevant. Since you introduced it, it prompted my questions, which you haven't addressed.

Pete said "Logic is authoritative because it is based on a God who is real."

I asked "I know this is what you claim to be the case, Pete, but that's part of the problem I'm pointing out here: How do you establish this?"

Pete asks "How else do you explain logic?"

Didn't you read my post? I see that you haven't addressed my points about the subject-object relationship. Did you not understand it?

Pete says "I refer again to the illustration of the blind men and the moon. My view has demonstrated a reason why we can accept logic."

No, it hasn't demonstrated anything. You've simply asserted. Big difference.

Pete says "Therefore, you have to come up with a reason why my view is wrong, not just say you disagree with it and replace it with nothing. At least my view has the ability to stand on its own."

Buttressing your religious beliefs with repeated, unargued assertions, does not mean that your "view has the ability to stand on its own." In fact, what you say about logic suggests quite convincingly that your understanding of what logic is, is superficial at best.

I asked "Are you saying then that god's nature and being are not the product of his desires?"

Pete says "I would reverse it, yes. I would say that God's desires are a product of his nature and being."

Okay! Then obviously, by saying that god's nature and being are not the product of his desires, his nature and being are not the product of a prior designer. From this, since you want to say that logic has its basis in god's nature and being, we can see that you think that the basis of logic is not something that is the product of a prior designer. Which simply underscores the question: What does asserting the existence of a god accomplish?

I said "If they are not a product of his desires, and he cannot change them, then obviously this means that god's nature is not something which can be said to exhibit design (for I doubt you would allow that a god has a designer)."

Pete says "Again, my argument never mentioned anything about design."

Didn't you write this:

"The reason it accurately depicts reality is because reality is logical in design (chaos does not naturally become logical)."

????

Clearly you think that logic has pertinence because "reality is logical in design."

Pete asks "Why are you bringing it up?"

I didn't. You did. Why didn't you address my point?

I asked "Do you think that logic is useful for something other than the project of living our lives? If so, what?"

Pete says "Our afterlife, for one...."

So, are you saying that the afterlife does not entail a project of living? Also, since you brought it up, can you present an argument for the supposition that there is an afterlife? (I'd love to see this!)

I said "Logic guides our action. Man must act in order to live, and this is why we need logic."

Pete says "Man needs to act in order to live, so he just spontaneously gets logic."

I didn't say this, Pete. I do not say that man "just spontaneously gets logic." This is your own mischaracterization.

I ask you, Peter: Do you not use logic to guide your actions?

I said "Logic has applicability to life, and this is why it is of such value to us."

Pete says "But none of that explains why logic is objective and universal."

That statement was not intended to explain this. I think that's pretty clear.

I said "The difference to keep in mind here is the difference between geometry and philosophy. Geometry is not philosophy, and what passes for axioms in geometry are not of the same nature (nor are they intended to be of the same nature) as those which are found in primary philosophy. Knowledge requires a starting point (otherwise you're faced with an infinite regress). This means that the very basis of knowledge cannot assume knowledge prior to it, and thus that what qualifies as a starting point cannot be the conclusion of prior reasoning (for then it would not be a starting point). The fact that axioms in geometry are definable in terms of prior concepts illustrates that they are not intended to be axioms in the sense that philosophical axioms are axioms. This is something that is frequently taught in first year philosophy courses. Have you taken any?"

Pete says "I've studied lots of philosophy in my life, but I have not taken any philosophy courses (yet)."

That's okay, Pete. Just understand that you still have a lot to learn. Might I humbly suggest that you consider taking a little extra time to edit your postings before you submit them to the board?

Pete says "Be that as it may, I was using the term in the same way as geometrists did--that was my meaning, and I explained it to you now."

And my point is that a philosophic axiom has higher criteria to fulfill than those employed in geometry. I've explained that already.

Pete says "Whether it was proper definitions or not, you have to deal with my concept still, else you are just using ad

hominem."

Not if it's asserted as an axiom and if at the same time is clearly fails the test of an axiom (which it does, since it assumes prior concepts).

Pete's response "And, the necessity in erecting further arguments, is in fact an argument for the axiom itself."

I said "Then obviously the claim that it is an axiom is ill-founded. If a supposition requires an argument to substantiate it, it cannot be an axiom, by definition."

Pete says "You miss the point. It doesn't require an argument to substantiate it"

Then why do you say you've proven it by means of argument? Don't you hear yourself?

Pete says "This is an unproven axiom, yet it can be argued for by the fact that geometry works because of that axiom."

And I pointed out that, since this "axiom" assumes concepts prior to itself, it cannot serve as an axiom in the sense that a philosophical axiom must. Perhaps you have a shallow understanding of a rational theory of concepts.

I said "But you miss the point. Logic is needed in order to construct a proof to begin with."

Pete says "EXACTLY! Behold the inherent circular reasoning."

Where? I'm not trying to prove logic, Pete. If you detect circular reasoning, it's not chargeable to me.

Pete asks "What reason do you have to hold to logic? You haven't given me one yet."

I have. You simply steamrolled right on by it. (Remember? It had something to do with guiding my actions and living my life.)

I said "If you think you have proven logic by resorting to god, then obviously you've committed yourself to a cycle of endless fallacy."

Pete responds "Not at all. I have merely demonstrated how logic can possibly be objective and transcendent."

You've not "demonstrated" anything. You've simply asserted it, and repeated this assertion over and over and over and over. That's not a demonstration of the point in question.

Pete says "With God, logic is valid. Without God, logic is just your opinion and nothing more."

See! You just did it again!

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>

re: God as an Axiom

posted on 4-03-03 at 08:04 am

Nick says "The law of contradiction transcends god, therefore god is not necessary for it to be true. God can't make a square circle, nor can he make a square that is not a square. God can not defeat the law of identity, so why is he needed to explain it? Take god out of the equation, and the law of identity, as well as the law of non-contradiction, still hold."

Exactly. This is just another instance of the theist wanting his cake, and to eat it, too. It's often overlooked that a proof of god would be fatal to religion. If it could be proven that a god exists, it would simply be another item of reality open to scientific investigation. But religion does not want anything to do with this. It relies instead on faith, which is the obliteration of reason.

Seeker17

posted 04-03-03 at 6:05 pm

re: Argument against TAG

TAG has been answered and refuted many times, Martin's is just one that I know of. But since Nick has been kind enough to paste Martin's essay on the Calvin Board, I'd like to see Pete present a comprehensive, point-for-point rebuttal to all of Martin's critique of TAG (rather than reacting to one sentence taken out of context). This would be a great opportunity for Pete to demonstrate his reasoning skills to his readers. If Martin's critique is really in error, and if Pete understands where these errors lie, this should not be difficult for Pete to do.

I shall watch for it.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71&page=2>

re: God as an Axiom

posted on 4-03-03 at 08:52 pm

Nick says "The rules of logic, such as the law of identity and the law of non-contradiction, MUST be true because of their wording."

I would take this even further to point out that their wording is comprised of concepts, and concepts are formed on the basis of the subject-object relationship. It would not be possible for a subject to form concepts unless it had objects to identify and integrate into classes and categories. Just by grasping that there is an object, even if it is not properly identified (thus defusing the "Matrix" counter-example), implies the law of identity and its corollary, the law of non-contradiction. Thus, the law of identity, the fundamental principle of logic which is implicit in the subject-object relationship by virtue of its nature as an irreversible and inescapable correspondence in all instances of awareness, can be grasped conceptually and identified explicitly by a rational view of philosophy (i.e., one which does not elevate emotions above the objects of perception, a habit which is the substance of faith).

Nick says "Pete claims that he has proven god exists by proving that the alternative is impossible if logic exists."

Yes, that is what Pete has claimed. But I still haven't seen anything that resembles an argument for such a position so far as I can tell. It's quite curious. And he does not seem to have considered the significance of the subject-object relationship in anything that he has written. I must admit, that's most baffling given the nature of the topic at issue (logic).

Nick says "It is quite the contrary."

Agreed. The idea of a god stands on the attempt to sever the subject-object relationship, and this is no more clearly evident than in Pete's recent post in which he wants his opponents to prove the existence of their persons. The object in the subject-object relationship is non-existent for Pete, yet he claims philosophical propriety to a set of principles which is based on the subject-object relationship. He has annihilated the relationship, and has essentially wished one of the two necessary parties away into the cornfield.

Nick says "I say that logic holds true without god. Why? Because the alternative is impossible."

That works, given the nature of logic's basis. All that is needed is a subject capable of forming concepts and which is aware of objects.

Nick asks "Can you show how, Pete, that if there were no god, the law of non-contradiction would NOT hold true?"

Good question. I'd like to see Pete offer a clear answer.

Nick says "Would we then be able to make a square circle, or a square that is not a square? Of course not."

As you so rightly said earlier, Nick, in admitting that their god cannot make a square circle, theists are saying in effect

that god has the same orientation to logic that man does.

Nick says "Now, Pete, it is a time to test your honesty."

Here, Nick, you hit on the most critical point in question.

Nick says "You are faced with irrefutable evidence that TAG does not prove the existence of god. Are you able to admit to being wrong?"

Hmmm...

Nick says "You said that if I saw someone rise from the dead, I would immediately look for a scientific explanation."

I wonder if Pete thinks that this would be the wrong thing to do.

Nick says "I said that if I saw such an occurrence, it would be proof enough for me."

Hey, here's a potential convert, Pete! Now all you have to do is pray to god and ask him, believing, to raise one of Nick's ancestors from the grave. This should not be difficult if what Pete claims is true. In John 12:14 Jesus said "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Does Pete believeth on Jesus? According to Matthew 18:19, Jesus supposedly said "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Thus, if Pete is having a hard time achieving the desired results on his own, he could enlist the help of a fellow believer. This should not be difficult. Pete can grab a friend from church, join hands and pray to Jesus, asking for one of Nick's long lost ancestors to return from the grave. Jesus is recorded as saying in Matthew 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." In John 14:13-14, Jesus says "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

Given Jesus' own word, proving god's existence to Nick should be a snap for Pete's god. Is Pete's god a faithful god? Now's the time to see.

Nick, if one of your long-dead ancestors comes knocking on your door, please let us know - I'll make an effort to attend your baptism.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71&page=2>

re: God as an Axiom

Posted on April 5, 2003

I said "I would take this even further to point out that their wording is comprised of concepts, and concepts are formed on the basis of the subject-object relationship."

Pete says "The problem with this is that there is no way to determine the difference between the subject and the object without logic already there."

Not true. And Pete nowhere argues to defend this (he just asserts it). The distinction between subject and object is self-evident, not the result of inference. Indeed, we need this distinction in order to draw inferences in the first place. That's the point, and Pete seems unable to grasp it.

Pete says "In short, without logic already in place, there is no distinction between subject and object."

Here Pete simply repeats the very thing that he had just said, so if he thinks he's moving closer to establishing his criticism, he needs to guess again.

Pete says "You say that the distinction between two things brings about logic,"

No, I did not say that this distinction "brings about logic" (those are certainly not my words). I said that this distinction lies at the basis of logic. And, you've not brought forward any points against this. Instead, you've simply ignored the significance of the subject-object distinction in everything you've written on the topic of logic that I've read, and in

place of it you have asserted a supernatural being, for which you have not provided any evidence.

Pete says "but what you should be asking is why there is a distinction between two things in the first place."

Because subject and object do not have the same identity. The concept 'distinction' is only possible because of the fact that two different objects are not one and the same.

I said "It would not be possible for a subject to form concepts unless it had objects to identify and integrate into classes and categories."

Pete says "And the subject would not be able to do this unless the subject already had an understanding of logic."

Not true, and again, Pete does not argue to defend his point of criticism (either because he does not know how it can be a criticism and simply wants to throw it out there as a bluff, or because he simply does not understand the crucial significance of the subject-object relationship to begin with). In fact, the knowing subject is not born with an understanding of logical principles. What infant understands logic? Look at how hard Pete himself, as an adult, struggles with even the most basic logical principles. An understanding of logic comes about after much focused attention to the project of reasoning. But long before this occurs, and even if such study is never pursued, there is still a subject-object relationship. The subject-object relationship does not presuppose logic; rather, logical principles presuppose a subject-object relationship. This is basic, and attempts to deny it are simply laughable. The subject-object relationship is the essence of awareness; a subject which is not aware of objects cannot be said to be aware - of what would it be aware? But an infant is aware of its surroundings. Watch an infant put its hands out to grasp its mother - it is aware of its mother (i.e., as a subject it has a relationship with the objects it perceives), but it has no understanding of logic at this point. So again, Pete's attempt to undermine the importance of the subject-object relationship fails, and quite miserably I might add.

I said "Just by grasping that there is an object, even if it is not properly identified (thus defusing the "Matrix" counter-example), implies the law of identity and its corollary, the law of non-contradiction."

Pete says "Yet there is no "implication" unless there is already logic in place by which to make the distinction between two things;"

Wrong. The distinction is metaphysical, while logic is an epistemological phenomenon (as a set of principles which serve to guide thought) which depend on the relationship, the participants of which exist even if one never grasps the first logical principles. We see this with non-human animals which have not reached the conceptual level of consciousness. A dog for instance is an animal which possesses awareness of its surroundings, but which operates on a level of consciousness no higher than the perceptual level. As such, it participates a subject-object relationship. But we do not say that a dog has logic "already in place." This is simply an attempt to reify logic, when earlier Pete himself said "Logic cannot exist independently" (CogentThesis, re: "God as an Axiom," 4-3-2003 at 09:33 PM). Pete, can you ever be consistent about anything? The implication to which I referred exists as a potential for a concept-able subject to grasp the relationship between itself and its objects in conceptual terms.

Pete says "therefore it cannot be the distinction that causes the logic to occur!"

Even if you could establish your prior point (and you cannot - indeed, you did not even try), this conclusion would not follow. You need to start learning what it means to say "therefore..." because you use it as if you thought you were drawing valid conclusions when in fact you typically are not doing so.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71&page=2>

re: God as an Axiom

Posted on April 5, 2003

Nick asks "Can you show how, Pete, that if there were no god, the law of non-contradiction would NOT hold true?"

I said "Good question. I'd like to see Pete offer a clear answer."

Pete says "Since it is impossible for God not to exist, then it is impossible to answer this question."

Pete, you need to establish your as of yet still unargued claim that "it is impossible for God not to exist" before you can

use it as a premise in subsequent inferences. You have not done this yet. Thus your attempt to evade Nick's question is just that: an attempt to evade. This does not bode well for your credibility as a thinker.

Pete says "Furthermore, I would like to know why atheists insist on not capitalizing the term "God.""

Because it is not a proper name. There are literally thousands of different gods populating the world's mythological literature. It's a take-your-pick category of imaginary friends and foes, and you, Pete, seem to have made a selection from among them. But by calling it "god" you do nothing to distinguish it from anything else in the mixed bag of mythological legacy.

Pete asks "I mean, if He doesn't actually exist, what difference would it make to you whether you capitalized it or not???"

You're just frustrated that you can't find any reasonable thinkers to accept your religious beliefs.

Pete asks "Would you capitalize Mother Nature?"

Who?

Pete says "I couldn't care less how you refer to God,"

If you "couldn't care less," why then do you bring it up?

Pete says "but this certainly seems inconsistent to me...."

How is it inconsistent? Inconsistent with what? Try to be precise in your answer (or have you even thought about this yet?).

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=82>

Posted on April 5, 2003

Question to Defenders of TAG

Two friends, Pete and Repete, are engaged in a dispute over the foundations of logic. Pete says that the foundations of logic find their source in the Christian god. Repete says that the foundations of logic find their source in Bert. Pete says that Repete must be wrong because Bert is finite, corporeal, mortal, and not authoritative. Repete responds by explaining that Pete is wrong, because Pete's claim about Bert is not true. Pete then rebuts Repete by pointing out that Bert would have to be the Christian god if he were infinite, incorporeal, immortal and authoritative. Repete retorts that this is not so, for the Christian god is claimed to have had a son, but Bert is all these qualities but has not had a son.

Who is right, Pete, or Repete?

Be prepared to discuss your answer.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=82>

Posted on April 8, 2003

Re: Question to Defenders of TAG

Nick said "I just want to say, Seeker, that this a brilliant analogy."

Thanks for the kind words, Nick! I'm glad someone sees it.

Nick also said "I wonder if anyone, Pete in particular, will get it."

I can only think that Pete does get it. That's why he hasn't responded to it.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 8, 2003

Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

I was mulling around Peter Pike's website, <http://www.debateatheism.org>, and came across his essay "The Atheist's Double Standard," located here: <http://debateatheism.org/stuff/doublestandard.html>

After reading it, I decided to offer some critical remarks. So here it goes:

Pete Pike writes << When talking with an atheist, the theist will often hear such things as, "You haven't proven your position." Many times, what this means is "I don't like your argument so I'm going to pretend you didn't say anything." >>

Really? How does Peter Pike figure this? If someone does not prove their position, should others be dishonest and say "Hey, I think you have proven your position" anyway? If someone makes a series of assertions, but provides no reason why one should accept them, is Peter Pike saying that one should not point out to the poor sot that he has not proved those assertions? Why not?

Notice how Peter Pike wants to promote a worldview which is propped up exclusively by pretenses and imagination, yet he wants to accuse those who do not accept his primitive view of the world as relying on pretense in order to dismiss it as what it is, which is nonsense.

Peter Pike writes << However, it is important to note that logically a person who affirms something has the onus to prove his position correct. >>

Exactly. Which means: when someone tells you that invisible magic beings exist, we should not let him off the hook - he should make an effort to prove such assertions, and if he doesn't prove them, he does not deserve to be taken seriously.

Peter Pike writes << The problem, when dealing with atheists, is that the average atheist thinks that he has nothing to prove since all he is doing is refuting theism. >>

Is the atheist asking you to accept the claim that invisible magic beings exist as knowledge of reality? If not, then what's the fuss? If the atheist is not asking you to accept claims that invisible magic beings exist as knowledge of reality, what exactly is so controversial about what the atheist is proposing? What makes it controversial?

Peter Pike writes << The argument, "You haven't proven your position, therefore I don't have to accept it" is often used to end all discussion as if the atheist himself did not have something to prove. >>

What does the atheist have to prove? It may very well be the case that the atheist is not attempting to persuade

others to change their beliefs. Most atheists simply want to be left alone. Other atheists find the enshrinement of arbitrary notions among religious persons so curious a phenomenon that they inquire as to why anyone would carry on the pretense of believing them. Clearly, in regard to claims about the existence of invisible magic beings, the theist has the onus, and he holds the reins on whether or not any legitimacy can be established with regard to the claim to truth that he touts before others. After all, it's his belief, not the atheist's. What does the atheist have to prove here?

Also, many atheists are not seeking to "end all discussion," but in fact encourage defenders of theism to offer more in regard to why they want to say that their religious beliefs are true. This is what I have done on the Calvin Board, and it appears that others have, too. It is certainly not the case that all atheists want to "end all discussion"; but it certainly may be the case that atheists are not convinced that theists have proven their claim that a god exists. And pointing out that theists have not proven their claim that a god exists, does not mean that the atheist stating this fact is seeking to "end all discussion."

Peter Pike writes << Atheism does not just deny the existence of God. >>

I wouldn't even say that atheism and the active denial of the existence of a god are wholly equivalent. True, those who do deny the claim that a god or gods exist are by definition atheists, as atheism includes those who deny or reject the claim that a god exists. But this is not complete. Anyone who has no belief in the existence of a god or gods is by definition an atheist, whether or not they actively deny the existence of a god or gods, or not. Infants, for instance, do not (and cannot) believe such things, so clearly they are atheists. We are, by definition, atheists upon birth. It is only after we have encountered claims about the existence of a god or gods that we have an opportunity to accept such claims, and this cannot transpire until after some maturity has taken place. It may even be arguable in some instances where children have been taught to parrot the religious beliefs of their parents, that they do not really believe them. The very fact that some people find that they need to develop a "ministry" or build a website in order to defend the silly claim that a god or gods exist, simply raises the suspicion that they themselves have little confidence in the claim that a god exists, and are simply seeking to compensate for their own guilty consciences.

Peter Pike writes << Instead, it promotes the idea of the existence of the universe without any notion of God whatsoever. >>

This is a construal which is intended to tip the scales of debate in favor of the theist artificially. But think about it. By this kind of pseudo-reasoning, the atheist could also be argued as promoting "the idea of the existence of the universe without any notion" of the Great Unicorn, the Headless Horseman, Pumpkinhead, Jack and the Beanstalk, the Wizard of Oz, etc. I do not believe that the Wizard of Oz exists, therefore I am promoting (by Peter Pike's pseudo-reasoning) "the idea of the existence of the universe without any notion" of the Wizard of Oz. Yep! I guess I am doing just that! And if Peter Pike does not believe in the Wizard of Oz, he is doing the very same thing. How dare he! (and Peter wants to lecture his readers on double standards? How hypocritical!)

Peter Pike writes << That means that in saying, "There is no evidence for a God, therefore I don't have to accept Him" the atheist is making a truth statement (i.e. that there being no evidence for a God is sufficient reason to not accept Him as being real). >>

Yes, he's making the following claim to truth: "I am not aware of any evidence for the existence of a god or any other invisible magic being, and given this absence of evidence, I see no reason why I should accept claims that such things exist." The obvious way to challenge such a likely position is for those who wish to defend a theistic worldview to present evidence to such persons. If that person does not accept what is proposed as evidence as qualifying as legitimate evidence, then Peter Pike and other "apologists" will simply have to accept that their arbitrary ideas will not work on him. Pike and other theists could continue to look for more gullible converts, or they could sit down and try to learn why their worldview is arbitrary to begin with (which is what I suggest they do).

Peter Pike writes << What this means is that implicitly, the atheist is indeed promoting a worldview, even if he doesn't know it. >>

That may be so, but it's not an argument against atheism. Not all atheists share the same worldview. Many atheists in fact have sharp disagreements among themselves on fundamentals. So even if one atheist is caught peddling an irrational worldview or doctrine, it does not follow from this that another atheist shares this fault as well. When one says that he is an atheist, he simply tells us what he does not believe, not what he does believe.

Peter Pike writes << Atheists often claim that they do not have any "beliefs" or any "views" because they are simply denying the theistic view; but this does not pan out in reality. >>

Agreed. Most likely, however, the atheists who say this are framing their statements about lack of beliefs in the context of religious beliefs, and they are simply saying that they as atheists do not hold to religious beliefs. That's hardly controversial. But clearly, everyone has beliefs in some sense or another, even if only fleeting. Belief is the level of confidence one has in a statement, idea or assessment, and it does not entail certainty. For instance, if my wife

asks me where our car keys are, I might say "I believe they are in my coat pocket." I say "I believe" here because I am not certain, and by saying "I believe" I am conveying to my wife that I am open to correction on the matter. It may be the case that the car keys are on the kitchen counter, and I simply did not remember this, or ever learn it to begin with. The belief is fleeting, for soon she discovers them on the lamp table. My belief turns out to have been wrong, misinformed. I learn otherwise and life goes on.

But not for the theist. He says "I believe" but he is not willing to concede the uncertainty that necessarily accompanies belief as such. He wants his god claims to be so true that others should not dare to dispute them. He is so insecure in his own religious beliefs that the mere existence of others who do not believe likewise are perceived as a constant threat which must be assaulted in the guise of philosophy, by pseudo-philosophy, by the flimsiest application of ideas, by the shabbiest pretense of reasoning and the most inane use of sophistry available. Just look at some of Peter Pike's articles, there are plenty of examples to be found.

Peter Pike writes << Atheists do not like to admit the fact that they are promoting a worldview, and the reason is simple. >>

Well, I cannot speak for other atheists (and I don't know how Peter Pike thinks he can), but I am proud to promote the worldview of Reason. Clearly, it is not the worldview which Peter Pike and other apologists want to see go forth, for they have assumed an incorrigible stance against Reason, and we find them in the embarrassingly dubious position of trying to use reason against reason. The problem is that they simply do not know what reason is, or, they don't want others to.

Peter Pike writes << If they promote a worldview, they are obliged to offer the burden of proof for that worldview. And that is something that cannot be done in an atheistic universe. >>

The proof is right before the theist's own eyes: reality is what it is independent of consciousness; reality does not conform to what we think. Rather, our thinking must conform to what is real. When Peter Pike drives his car, does his steering conform to the road (objective - my atheist position), or does the road conform to his steering (subjective - the theist's position). Those who assert a god are essentially saying that reality conforms to whatever that god says, which is a defiance of the principle of objectivity and an affirmation of subjectivism. History, for instance, is said to follow "God's plan." In other words, the course of events which make up history have all been designed and predestined to unfold according to a preconceived plan, a plan wholly under the control of god's conscious directing. For the theist, the road conforms to the driver's steering. This is subjectivism in a nutshell. It permeates the religious view throughout its claim to promote a "worldview."

Peter Pike writes << Just for fun, I have engaged in discussions with knowledgeable atheists in the past, and I simply take the refutation approach that they take for me. They say, "You have not proven God, therefore I do not have to accept Him." I say, "You have not proven that statement, therefore I do not accept it. Now tell me why I should." >>

Who says that Peter Pike should accept anything? Pike misses the point. As an apologist looking for converts, he's the one who wants others to change their beliefs. Atheists are not trying to evangelize and proselytize. No atheist has ever knocked on my door trying to spread the views of Madalyn Murray O'Hair for instance. But I cannot count how many times my door has been knocked by religious evangelists looking for converts. This happens elsewhere in my community - out on the street, on the city bus, at the park, etc. No one has ever approached me and tried to spread atheism. Big difference here. Needs to be taken into account, and I don't think it has been.

Peter Pike writes << This puts the issue square on the atheist's shoulders. >>

No, it doesn't. If the theist wants to prove something to the atheist, then it rests on the theist's shoulders. Period. Resentment against wise atheists who are not gullible enough to fall for theistic nonsense will not help the theist's aims.

Peter Pike writes << How are you able to make any truth statements without the existence of a transcendent God? It is impossible to do. >>

This is what Peter Pike is called to prove. If he does not prove it, why should anyone accept it? Should one accept it in the spirit of charity, as if to say, "What a poor dear! Poor Peter Pike tried so hard to prove his claims, and failed miserably. Let's believe it so he feels better"? I won't do this.

Peter Pike writes << The atheist makes attempts, to be sure; but if you simply throw the same line back at them, they run into massive amounts of trouble. >>

No, actually, they don't, particularly if they don't give a damn what theists believe (and most atheists whom I've known do not). If they don't want to change theists' beliefs, they have no such onus, and to say that "they run into massive amounts of trouble" is to overstate the case by an exaggerated degree.

Peter Pike writes << The main problem stems from what an atheist considers proof. If you ask an atheist what the shape of the world is, most of them will say, "Round." >>

They should say "spherical." A compact disc is round, but it's flat, not spherical.

Peter Pike writes << Ask how they know, and they'll say, "Because I learned about it in school" or "Because we have pictures of it from space" or any number of answers along those lines. If you ask them why they trust those authorities, they will say something like "Because I have no reason not to trust them, and others have verified those claims." >>

And the problem here is?

Peter Pike writes << Using an argument that I myself do not make, if you tell an atheist, "I accept the existence of God because it has been taught me" they will ridicule you as being a fool. >>

As they rightly should.

Peter Pike writes << If you say, "The people who taught me have given good arguments" they will say, "Those people were deluded too." >>

Yep. Those "good arguments" always have the habit of being so poorly conceived that they only prove their bearers to be either stupid or dishonest (and sometimes both!).

Peter Pike writes << If you say, "I have no reason not to trust them" they will say, "Because you are brainwashed." >>

Is Peter Pike saying that religious brainwashing does not occur? Ever hear of Jim Jones? David Koresh? The Mormons? Lutherans? Calvinists? Jehovah Witnesses? Etc. Etc. Etc.?

Peter Pike writes << Now this example is a bit extreme-not all atheists are like this; >>

Indeed. So what relevance does it have?

Peter Pike writes << however, it illustrates the double standard that atheists use quite nicely. >>

Which atheists?

Peter Pike writes << An atheist accepts the things he sees as being real without ever questioning whether his eyes are seeing correctly; >>

Am I wrong, or is Peter Pike saying that one is not right to accept the teaching that the earth is spherical in shape? And how does Peter know that "an atheist accepts the things he sees as being real without ever questioning whether his eyes are seeing correctly"? This seems quite presumptuous on Peter's part.

Peter Pike writes << yet any idea about the existence of God must be proven with absolute certainty beyond a shadow of a doubt. >>

And of course, no one has ever come close to doing this. In fact, a proof of the existence of a god would be wholly fatal to religion. If one could prove that a god exists, it would simply be another item of reality open to scientific investigation. But religious people do not want this to be the case. They want to promote the double standard that, on the one hand, they can prove that there is a god (through a wholly contorted view of logic, as we have seen employed on the Calvin Board), and, on the other hand, that this being is beyond our comprehension and that we must accept "revelation" in the place of scientific investigation in order to have any inkling of what this being's "character" and "nature" are like. How's that for a double standard? And Pike wants to lay down the charge against atheists, saying that atheists indulge a double standard! Has this man no conscience on these matters?

Peter Pike writes << You cannot say that what you see is proven beyond the shadow of a doubt (for example, how would you disprove The Matrix idea of reality?). >>

Again, we have a total misunderstanding of the nature of proof being paraded as high philosophical criticism. To suggest that we must prove that the objects of perception are real or that they are not part of a movie plot is a denial of the subject-object relationship, the very relationship upon which logic and proof stand. Conceptually speaking, it is as if Peter had walked out into the middle of the Golden Gate Bridge, detonated a bomb beneath it and expected not to get hurt or wet as a consequence. Discard.

Peter Pike writes << The double standard is made all the more blindly obvious by the fact that from an atheist's worldview, he has no reason to accept anything that he sees. >>

Where does Pike establish this? Indeed, he does not; he simply asserts it as if he had proven it. This is not reason, it is faith. Discard.

Peter Pike writes <<< Without a transcendent God, reality is nothing more than what a person experiences; thus reality is relative to the individual. >>

Again, Pike sticks with his preferred "debating" practice: Assert claims, and do not attempt to defend them with argument. He offers no reason why one should accept his claim here. Discard.

Peter Pike writes << And in this circumstance, not only is there no way to discuss if what you see is real, but there is no way to discuss such ideas as "true" and "false." >>

That's because Pike has demolished the relationship which gives such concepts meaning, namely the subject-object relationship, a relationship which he nowhere takes into account.

Peter Pike writes << And perhaps the greatest double standard comes when you point this out to an atheist. In my experience, 99% of atheists whom I have said this to have responded with, "I don't have to prove my position. You have to prove yours." >>

Is Pike saying that he does not bear the onus of proof when he makes the claim that a god exists? If someone does not find this claim acceptable, what is he supposed to prove? Is he supposed to prove that he does not find this claim acceptable? And to whom is he expected to present such a proof, to those who have demolished the very basis of proof as such? Why should he attempt this?

What controversial claim does the atheist have to prove? If you say that the very fact that one does not believe religious claims is controversial, then all you would have to do to end such controversy is to prove that a god exists. If you can't do this (and Peter nowhere has proven this), then pipe down and let it be. In the meanwhile, you might examine your own reasons for why you accept the claim that there is a god, and take the opportunity to disclose this to the Calvin Board. From what you have presented, it's still unclear why you say you believe what you claim to believe.

Peter Pike writes << Yet the fact of the matter is that this position sets forth-that reality is relative-is a positive position that bears a burden of proof that the atheist must accept. >>

It appears that Peter is saying that the absence of belief in a god or gods necessarily means that one's view of reality is "relative." But I see nothing in what Peter has said that compels such a dichotomy. Why should we accept this? Peter does not say.

Peter Pike writes << If he cannot argue the possibility of discussing truth from a subjective standpoint and succeed in making in objective, then there is no reason whatsoever to accept the notion that God is not real. >>

Here Peter seems to be more concerned about why one would not accept the notion that there is a god than about why one would (or should) accept such a notion. Again, he has his priorities reversed. Peter needs to stop worrying about why people do not accept the notion that a god exists, and start examining the flimsy, paltry, and nonsensical reasons which he has championed for why his belief should be accepted as truth.

Peter Pike writes << In short, unless an atheist can prove how it is possible for existence to exist without the existence of a transcendent God, then it is impossible for God not to exist. >>

Here's another classic Peter Pike non sequitur. It does not follow from the inability to "prove how it is possible for existence to exist without the existence of a transcendent God" that "it is impossible for God not to exist." An inability to prove X does not prove that Y is true. Replace "God" with any other arbitrary, nonsensical notion, and the point is clear:

=> "unless an a-unicornist can prove how it is possible for existence to exist without the existence of the Great Unicorn, then it is impossible for the Great Unicorn not to exist."

I doubt Peter Pike would accept this, even though it is precisely the same form of argument which he endorses. Discard.

In the end, we have another series of unargued claims, misunderstandings, and miserable attempts at reasoning culled together into an effort to discredit atheists. Peter nowhere proves that atheists are committed to a double standard, and in fact he nowhere shows awareness of or interest in the many double standards which theists want to enjoy, but intend not to correct.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 9, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

Pete says "Until you can come up with a valid basis for logic, then there is really no point in talking with you about it."

Pete, a valid basis for logic has been proposed and defended, namely the subject-object relationship. You have not presented a worthy challenge to this proposed basis for logic, nor have you interacted with the defenses that have been supplied in support of its foundational relationship to logic. From what I have been able to gather from what you have written, it appears that you are not even aware of the significance of this relationship. It also appears that you have deliberately ignored what I have presented.

Can you give one good reason why the subject-object relationship is not a valid basis for logic? Please do not offer a reason which itself assumes the validity of this relationship, for then you will be contradicting yourself. To challenge what I have proposed, you will have to show why the subject-object relationship is not a valid basis for logic while not assuming the validity of the subject-object relationship to begin with. I don't think this is possible, since it is my position (as I have argued it) that the concept 'validity' necessarily presupposes this relationship. You need to interact with this. So far, you have simply evaded it, which does not surprise me.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 9, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

Yes, Nick, you're right in everything you have stated here. It is a matter of honesty for Pete at this point. Peter has been presented with what he asked for: an alternative explanation for the foundation of logic which does not make appeals to invisible magic beings. This alternative has been presented. Peter has not brought any point against this that has endured criticism. Additionally, Peter has failed to offer any good arguments in defense of the claims which he has asserted. He has given no reason for why one should accept the minimum claim that a god exists, which is so central to his apologetic agenda. It has also been shown that his caricature of atheism and atheists is blatant mischaracterization, promoted for the sake of easily discrediting those who do not accept his claims. And now he accuses you of ad hominem, which is simply another signal of his defeat.

You also point out the fact that Peter is heavily invested in his god-belief. Since so much of Peter's life is built on the premise that a god exists, and that the god which he wants to exist is the ruler of the universe, much in Peter's life would be dramatically disrupted were he to acknowledge honestly that his religious views are a sham and a shame.

Not only would a change in Peter's orientation to religious belief cause those presently close to him to shun him, but it would also earn their disapproval, which probably terrifies Peter, since the approval of others is one of the currencies of religious motivation.

Peter now faces some important choices for his life. I invite Peter to face his choices now as a man, and not run from them as he has in the past. It is not easy to extricate oneself from the philosophical wreckage of religious belief. But it is possible if he chooses to embrace reason fully and to be honest to himself. Religious people have told me throughout my life how important it is to be "honest to god." I think it is more important to be honest to oneself. Those people who told me those things were clearly not being honest to themselves, and their words and actions revealed this. Religion is fantasy as well as evasion. It is a short-cut to authority over others. This is precisely how Peter has used it on his website. He uses religious belief as if it were a cudgel which he can bring down over the heads of those who do not likewise believe, and to corral those who do believe likewise. If he really believed these things, it would be clear from his choices and actions that he did believe them. I don't think many people in the west actually believe the religious views which they want to spread, in spite of what they claim. I think many people who claim to believe these things make such claims because they are afraid of the consequences of admitting that they do not believe, not because they actually believe. Others do so simply because they want authority over others without having to first earn their

respect.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 9, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

I said "Religion is fantasy as well as evasion"

Zeus asks "I simply ask, an evasion from what?"

Many things. For instance, the responsibility of independent, rational thought.

I said "It is a short-cut to authority over others"

Zeus asks "It is?"

In many cases, absolutely, undeniably, Yes.

Zeus asks "Quite the contrary to me, to me it makes nothing of us/mankind and everything of God."

It may be the case that you're one of those who simply wants to be led, which provides those who seek authority over others someone to have authority over. Religion needs these too.

I said "This is precisely how Peter has used it on his website. He uses religious belief as if it were a cudgel which he can bring down over the heads of those who do not likewise believe, and to corral those who do believe likewise"

Zeus asks "Peter has? Where? I've seen no implications thereof."

See my analysis of his paper "The Atheist's Double Standard," for instance. Many of the other articles on Pike's website exhibit this as well. It is part and parcel with the religious mindset. Look how much concern is placed on authority in apologetic treatments. See the quote you kindly supplied from Greg Bahnsen, namely the view that the unbeliever "needs to change his fundamental worldview and submit to the revelation of God in order for any knowledge or experience to make sense." What is desired is that men submit to others. They try, albeit feebly, to disguise this as submission "to the revelation of God," but of course as is quickly apparent whenever two or more Christians get together, there is always a struggle that ensues as a result of disagreements on interpretation of that revelation. So, in the end, it comes down to human authorities posturing themselves as mouthpieces for the divine.

I said "I think many people who claim to believe these things make such claims because they are afraid of the consequences of admitting that they do not believe, not because they actually believe."

Zeus says "Your back on track again, well done. Yes many say they believe only because they fear the consequences of admitting their unbelief, even I were to blame earlier, but now I only fear God and not man."

Which is essentially the same thing: motivation by fear. That one identifies the object of his fear as either human or otherwise, does not overturn the fact that fear, as opposed to values, is what motivates the believer's actions and choices. My point is made.

I wrote "Others do so simply because they want authority over others without having to first earn their respect."

Zeus asks "So since we believers admit and profess our belief this gives us authority over others? How so?"

No, I did not say that professing belief gives the believer authority over others. I said that the desire for such authority is common among those who invest themselves in the religious view of the world.

Zeus asks "Can I come into your home and tell you how to live? Can I monitor your actions and hinder you from making your choices, doing your deeds?"

No, and the reason was expressed quite succinctly by a pastor who once said to me, "You know too much." That told me volumes then, and it still does to this day.

Zeus says "I believe respect is earned, but I also believe that the Love of God is not."

If "the Love of God is not" earned, then it cannot have any value. (This ties into my discussion on the morality thread, to which no one has yet responded.)

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 10, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

Pete says "You would like to pretend that theism/atheism has no bearing on anything."

I would? If that were the case, why do you suppose I would join the Calvin Board?

Pete says "You would like to compartmentalize the whole notion, toss it up "there" some place and not deal with the issues involved."

What suggests this? You are addressing me here, right?

Pete says "But the fact of the matter is that theism and atheism are vastly different worldviews."

I don't think that atheism is a worldview. Perhaps that's where we differ. Theism is generally a worldview which ascribes to god-belief. Atheism is simply the lack of god-belief; it is not a worldview as such.

Pete asks "Why are we [humanity] here?"

I don't think that people are "here" to serve someone else's purpose, if that's what you mean. We each have the right to exist for our own sakes.

Pete says "The theist says it is because God created us."

Yes. We've heard this.

Pete says "The atheists says that it is a random reaction of matter and energy (if one is a materialist), or any other kind of cosmic accident depending on their particular view."

That's certainly not what I say. Metaphysically, we are here by means of biological causality. I don't see how one could contest that.

Pete asks "How does one tell the difference?"

Difference between what?

Pete says "Again, I refer you to my analogy of the blind men experiencing the tides."

Remember my question in regard to this? I had asked: If the two men are blind, how did they know about the tides? Will you answer this question now?

Pete says "We perceive something (tides in the analogy represents reality as we know it)."

How did the two blind men perceive the tides?

Pete says "The question becomes: why is this such as it is? Depending on your worldview, you will answer that question differently."

Yes. Some want to appeal to invisible magic beings which they imagine to exist, while others seek scientific answers to such matters. I belong to the latter category.

Pete says "However, the worldview in question must be able to actually explain the process of reality--if it does not do so, it ought to be rejected."

Which is one reason why I reject a worldview which asserts the existence of invisible magic beings.

Pete says "Thus, an atheist, in discrediting the notion of God, is not making his statement in a vacuum."

Of course not. If the atheist in question is me, he is making his statement in the context of a rational worldview - i.e., one which identifies reality according to reason and which does not elevate the emotions and imagination above what he perceives.

Pete says "When he says, "There is no evidence for a god" he is saying that all that is seen around can be explained without a god--but if he cannot explain such things without a god, then there is no reason to take his claim that "there is no evidence for a god" to be accurate."

So, you expect the atheist to be omniscient? Is that it?

Pete says "Now I know that you are going to go off half-cocked without thinking about this (judging by the way you "read" my article already), so calm down and consider the following:"

Okay.

Pete says "We both agree that reality is real."

We do? Your worldview says that reality is a creation. Mine does not.

Pete says "For this illustration, let me just grant a whole bunch of stuff that we can examine in more detail later. Let us, therefore, consider reality as "X." There is this X which has characteristics, such as the fact that we exist in it, that logic is valid, and that we can empirically understand all that there is to know about X."

Okay.

Pete says "Now we ask a simply question: why is X the way X is? The answer to this question will depend 100% on whether or not you believe X was created, was an accident, or any other alternative. Therefore, to answer the why X is, one must depend on a worldview."

Okay.

Pete says "If one is to ask, how X is the way it is, one must know why X is the way it is."

Why?

Pete says "Therefore, to even approach X scientifically (using the scientific method) is to already presuppose a worldview relating to X."

Why?

Pete says "Let me illustrate why this becomes a problem."

Okay.

Pete says "I have talked with several atheists who have been insistent that everything must be proven empirically, or by the Scientific Method."

Okay.

Pete says "The problem: one cannot prove the Scientific Method by the Scientific Method--it is only circular reasoning."

Okay.

Pete says "Likewise, empirical evidence cannot be used to prove the philosophy of empiricism."

Okay.

Pete says "Thus, to establish your idea that the world is empirically experienced means that you are assuming it from some philosophical standing not proven by the results you find (I refer you again to the Truth Finding Machine problem)."

And your point is?

I said "Notice how Peter Pike wants to promote a worldview which is propped up exclusively by pretenses and imagination."

Pete says "Fine, you may call it what you wish, but your worldview does not fare any better. In fact, it fares worse."

Really? Please, tell us how that is the case.

Pete says "You want to assert a worldview of base materialism and naturalism,"

When have I ever identified my worldview as either "materialism" or "naturalism"? These are certainly not my terms. Already you're off building a straw man, for you want to characterize my view in loaded terms.

Pete says "without even considering whether such a worldview could make any statements whatsoever about the supernatural."

Where have you established that I have not considered "whether [my] worldview could make any statements whatsoever about the supernatural"?

Pete says "You have a materialistic worldview that denies the supernatural,"

Are you operating on the discredited dichotomy that there are only two fundamental views, one of which is supernaturalism, and the other is materialism? I do not accept such a dichotomy, and I doubt you'd find any philosopher worth his salt who thinks these two alternatives are exhaustive.

Pete says "and then demand supernatural evidences that fit your worldview."

What "supernatural evidences"? (That's one of the outstanding questions!)

Pete says "This doesn't work--you've defined them away from the start!"

Where have I defined these things away from the start? Show me where, Pete. Find a quote somewhere among my messages which supports your accusation here. I want to see it.

Pete says "You see, when I say that God exists, you say that it hasn't been proven."

And I am right to say this. You offer no reasons for accepting your claim that a god exists. You interject it from thin air. That's why it's called faith, Pete. Don't you get it?

Pete says "Yet your worldview has no way by which a God could be proven."

Don't whine to me about this. It's not my fault that your notion of what is true is at odds with what is really true.

Pete says "And yet you expect me to use your worldview in order to argue for the existence of God?"

I am not sure that you even understand my worldview.

Pete says "I think not!"

I'm certain that you don't.

Pete says "I do not accept your premise of naturalism,"

My premise is not "naturalism" - this is your characterization, and I have not seen you substantiate it. My premise is objectivity - the view that the object holds primacy over the subject in the subject-object relationship. You have destroyed all access to objectivity by dynamiting this relationship from the very beginning in order to make room for your invisible magic being. Your carrying on about "The Matrix" is just one case in point.

Pete says "and therefore I do not accept your starting point."

We know this. That is why you have no alternative but to embrace some variant of subjectivism, the view that the subject holds primacy over any objects, which naturally arises when one denies the importance of the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "I cannot give you evidence that fits your worldview because it is inherently contradictory and unsound."

Your "evidence" is inherently contradictory and unsound"? Yes, I agree, it is just that, because your basis is subjective in nature (as I have shown repeatedly).

I said "yet he wants to accuse those who do not accept his primitive view of the world as relying on pretense in order to dismiss it as what it is, which is nonsense."

Pete says "Who are you to say that my world view is "primitive"?"

I am a rational man. That's who.

Pete says "You see yet again that you can only resort to ad hominem attacks that have no bearing on the position at all."

Where have I called anyone names?

Pete says "Furthermore, I have already given instances where you take my worldview. The most obvious is in the fact that you accept an objective standard for logic, when based on your worldview there is no such thing as an objective anything."

It has already been shown to you repeatedly that objectivity is not a component of the religious worldview. I did this again just above. You claim that there is a master subject ruling the universe, its object. The object, according to your view, conforms to whatever the subject wants. This is the primacy of the subject over the object. This is subjectivism in a nutshell. Meanwhile, you have tried to claim that objectivity is on the side of your worldview, but all you've been able to do is assert this. You nowhere explain how this could be, you do not even show anywhere that you comprehend the concept to begin with. Where, for instance, does the bible speak on objectivity?

Peter Pike writes << However, it is important to note that logically a person who affirms something has the onus to prove his position correct. >>

I said "Exactly. Which means: when someone tells you that invisible magic beings exist, we should not let him off the hook - he should make an effort to prove such assertions, and if he doesn't prove them, he does not deserve to be taken seriously."

Pete says "But which also means that when you have certain events occurring that would be perfectly explained by a "magic being" one must offer reasons as to why we should reject such a notion."

That's just the thing: the assertion of magic does not explain anything. The assertion of magic is the resort of those who seek a substitute for an explanation. How could Peter Pan fly? We don't know, let's throw out the idea of magic dust, and that will satisfy the children's meager curiosity and wild imagination. See, no explanation. It's an evasion of explanation.

Pete says "In the absence of contrary evidence, why should we assume you right?"

You don't need to assume that I am right. I'm happy to offer explanations, which magic does not do.

I asked "Is the atheist asking you to accept the claim that invisible magic beings exist as knowledge of reality? If not, then what's the fuss?"

Pete says "The "fuss" is that I have a way by which logic is universally applied to all, and you have subjectivism which you are imposing on me."

Answer the question, Pete: What is so controversial about what the atheist in question is proposing? Also, how is it that you think that I am advocating subjectivism? You need to explain this. So far, you haven't. Apparently you think like the god you imagine: just speak it, and it will come to pass. Doesn't wash.

Pete says "I don't accept it."

Correction: what you offer is subjectivism, as I have shown repeatedly, and from which you have not been able to recover yourself.

I said "If the atheist is not asking you to accept claims that invisible magic beings exist as knowledge of reality, what exactly is so controversial about what the atheist is proposing? What makes it controversial?"

Pete says "What makes it controversial is that the atheist has not explained the results of what the "magic beings" have caused."

I'll ask again: what is the atheist proposing which is so controversial? If the failure to explain something is controversial, I'll wager that we'll find a lot more controversy on the theist's side of the fence, for once we get into that loopy arena, there is a whole litany of bizarre notions which are supposed to be accepted dogmatically, such as the notion of the incarnation, the notion of faith, the notion of the trinity, the notion of atonement, the notion of divinely inspired scripture, the notion of miracles, the notion of the fall of man, the notion of the Noachian flood, the notion of prophecy, the notion of evil in a universe created by a supposedly non-evil god, etc., etc., etc. I could go on and on and on. None of these things have been explained without avoiding further controversy. Look at the history of the church, and you'll see what I mean. Religious claims are a source of unending controversy, and if controversy is measured by what is not explained, religion is a boundless cornucopia of controversy.

Pete says "In short: suppose you see someone levitate in the air. One person says, "It's magic." Another person says, "No it's not.""

I've never seen anyone levitate in the air. Now, do you expect me to explain this anyway? If so, you won't be satisfied (but I do know several Buddhist monks who can explain it).

Pete says "Magic would certainly explain how such a person could levitate."

No, it would not. The assertion of magic simply acts as a substitute for explanation. There is no input to grasp as knowledge when one asserts magic. It cannot be taken seriously by someone seeking rational explanations. But you're free to believe it anyway, Pete. It's your mind to lose.

Pete says "The person denying the claim could say, "There were cables used." But if, when you examine that, you discover that there were no cables used, what next? Perhaps it was a trick of the light or something?"

Who levitated?

Pete says "So we proceed. But if every single theory doesn't pan out, and the person says, "Well, I don't know what it was, but it wasn't magic" is that a reasonable response?"

The reasonable response is: I agree, asserting magic explains nothing. We need more inputs to formulate a reasonable explanation, and until we have those inputs, we cannot formulate a reasonable explanation. This is how science proceeds all the time. It is unspeakably naïve to think that "magic" is an acceptable "explanation" of anything in reality. As a metaphor for some amazing technology (such as when the microwave, we playfully called it "magic") that's fine. But in philosophy and science which are supposed to be sober-minded and mature fields of intellectual pursuit, "magic" will not wash. But thanks for trying.

Pete says "It is only reasonable if you first presuppose the impossibility of magic."

But I didn't presuppose this. I examined claims of magic, and found them to be superficial, unreasonable and completely out of contact with reality.

Pete says "If you do not presuppose the impossibility of magic, and there are no other explanations, then magic is the notion you will accept."

Not at all. As I said, we need more inputs. Until we have the needed inputs, it is premature to expect a reasonable explanation to obtain. The proper thing to do at this point is to recognize this fact, and await further inputs.

Pete says "But if you don't accept the possibility of magic, then there must be something else that "we just don't know.""

Admitting that you do not know something when in fact you do not know, is simply a policy of honesty. Why is this so bad? On the other hand, if you say that something was done by means of magic, and you do not know this, that's called dishonesty. Why not simply admit that you don't know?

Pete says "But what reason would you have to presuppose that magic did not exist in the first place?"

I didn't presuppose this. I examined the claim to magic, and found that it denies objectivity by denying the subject-object relationship. Of course, this is acceptable to you.

I asked "What does the atheist have to prove?"

Pete says "How he can know anything to begin with would be nice."

To whom is he supposed to prove that "he can know anything to begin with"? Should he try to prove this to those who deny the very basis of proof to begin with? Also, if an apologist is attempting to get an atheist to accept as knowledge the claim that there is a god, it appears that the apologist himself is assuming that the atheist is capable of knowing something to begin with. So, why should he have to prove this? Watch the performative inconsistencies, Pete. They're choking your "logic."

Pete says "How he knows he would be able to tell what supernatural evidence would be."

Is that really so difficult? "Supernatural" is the term used by subjectivists for things belonging or pertaining to the subjective realm of their imagination. Since this realm is simply a fantasy, there can be no evidence for it. The only evidence in question here is that of the fact that some people believe this kind of hoopla. For instance, Peter's claims about logic finding their basis in a god. That's evidence that Pete ascribes to a subjective worldview.

Pete says "How he has confidence that he can make statements about reality."

This confidence comes through the maturation process of the mind. Many people abandon this task (or never set out on it to begin with) and submit their minds to the first passer-by who comes along and claims to have all the answers. Without reason, one can have no confidence in his mind, and consequently in his ability to make statements about reality. Without reason, all one can do is bluff. That's where religion steps in. That's why religion has to appeal to threats to compel belief. Its first cousin is the initiation of the use of force. "Believe, or go to hell" they say. That is not the calling card of those who embrace reason.

I said "It may very well be the case that the atheist is not attempting to persuade others to change their beliefs."

Pete says "It doesn't matter whether one wants to persuade or not"

Yes, it does matter. If someone is not attempting to persuade others, then it is not reasonable to expect him to present arguments and proofs. That's one point that's being missed here.

Pete says "--it's whether one has a valid reason to presuppose the position that he holds."

That's getting off the topic. The topic was your charge, in your article "The Atheist's Double Standard," that the atheist has an onus of proof. But if he's not seeking to prove anything to anyone, then he has no such onus.

Pete says "Even if he doesn't want to persuade someone, an atheist still must come up with a reason as to how the world exists the way it does without God,"

Why? Who says? It's no surprise to see defenders of the religious view of the world dictating what kind of obligations everyone else has. Here Pete says that atheists have some kind of obligation to "come up with a reason as to how the world exists the way it does without God," while the theist himself never comes up with any good reasons for people to accept what they claim (as we've seen repeatedly to be the case with Pete's writings). And Pete wants to talk about double standards???? Good grief!!

Pete says "or else he is simply taking it on faith that God does not exist."

No more than he is "taking it on faith" that the Great Unicorn does not exist. Tell us, how can the world exist the way it does without the Great Unicorn?

I said "And pointing out that theists have not proven their claim that a god exists, does not mean that the atheist stating this fact is seeking to "end all discussion.""

Pete says "Had you offered a reason to hold to your views, instead of just denying mine, then you could make this argument."

It's not an argument, just an observation. And you've not countered it with an argument, either. It's clear that one can both point out that a proof has not been successfully established and also encourage further discussion. This is what I have done. My actions are the evidence to support my observation here.

Pete says "But in the absence of being able to support the existence of reality without God,"

See! You want to say that reality is a creation after all. You think that reality needs a god to explain it. This is the subjectivism which I pointed out earlier. Tell us, Pete, is that which created reality also real? I asked this before, but

you have yet to answer. If that which created reality is real, what created the creator? If the creator did not need a creator beyond itself, why does reality need a creator beyond itself? See, you're tripping over your own shoelaces and now you've got a smudge of mud on your brow. Very unbecoming!

Pete says "then you are being disingenuous at best."

You mean, if I don't also explain how reality can exist without the Great Unicorn, I'm being disingenuous? Why must I explain how reality can exist without a god, but not also be held to offer an explanation of how reality can exist without the Great Unicorn? Pete, why don't you simply present what you take to be good reasons for why one should accept your claim that a god exists, and then we can go from there? Why????

Pete says "Part of my argument has been "the impossibility of the contrary.""

Which you nowhere establish. Thus, using "the impossibility of the contrary" as a premise in your argument can only beg the question. You need to secure the premises which you use in your argument as well. You have not done this, and it's been pointed out to you before.

Pete says "And if you truly had contrary evidence, you would have provided it."

Evidence for what? Evidence applies to that which does exist, not to that which does not exist. The evidence which I would point to (if you would take a moment to understand it) is the subject-object relationship. The idea of a god is built on a denial of this relationship. Since this relationship clearly exists, then any assertion which is built on the denial of this relationship cannot be true. Voilà. There you go. I've presented my proof. Now interact with it (and don't validate my position by acting as if the subject-object relationship were real, for your view rests on a denial of this relationship, for reasons explained).

I said "I wouldn't even say that atheism and the active denial of the existence of a god are wholly equivalent. True, those who do deny the claim that a god or gods exist are by definition atheists, as atheism includes those who deny or reject the claim that a god exists. But this is not complete. Anyone who has no belief in the existence of a god or gods is by definition an atheist, whether or not they actively deny the existence of a god or gods, or not. Infants, for instance, do not (and cannot) believe such things, so clearly they are atheists. We are, by definition, atheists upon birth. It is only after we have encountered claims about the existence of a god or gods that we have an opportunity to accept such claims, and this cannot transpire until after some maturity has taken place. It may even be arguable in some instances where children have been taught to parrot the religious beliefs of their parents, that they do not really believe them."

Pete says "This doesn't explain how religion came about in the first place"

It's not meant to.

Pete asks "--if we are born atheists, then why does every single culture have religion?"

Not every single culture has a religion. There exists a culture among myself and those who think like me, and we do not have a religion. But the question has been asked: how did religion come about in the first place? That's easy: by misunderstanding the nature of the subject-object relationship, even if only implicitly. Early thinkers failed to identify this relationship, and having thus failed, they consequently failed to understand its importance to the project of human cognition. Thus, they assumed an invalid orientation towards reality, and consequently sabotaged their ability to deal with it in rational terms. The result is a reversal of the subject-object relationship - the view that the subject holds primacy over its objects. This is the view that we find in Plato as well as in the Judeo-Christian view of the world. The mind came first, and then the objects came as a result of the mind's intentions. Religion is a set of allegories and metaphors which are built on this idea, which finds itself diametrically opposed to the principle of objectivity.

Pete asks "If we are born atheist, how is it possible that so many people are convinced that God exists?"

They aren't convinced that a god exists. They simply repeat what they've been told to repeat. Repeating a claim is not the substance of conviction.

Pete asks "If we are born atheists, then why is it that the notion of "god" or "gods" is in every continent and every country?"

Because thinkers failed to identify the nature of the subject-object relationship, and their ideas gained wide popularity by appealing to people's emotions rather than to their reason. But even where such primitive beliefs are popular, there have always been those rare individuals of unborrowed intellect who have dared to think for themselves and refused to follow the flock of thoughtless sheeple.

Pete says "And if you claim all are deceived into believing in a false idea of "god", what made such a deception possible if it weren't for the fact that mankind naturally gravitates towards the acknowledgement of deity?"

I don't think that "mankind naturally gravitates [sic] towards the acknowledgement of deity." Mankind is not an entity, but a collection of individuals. And one confirming point in favor of my position is that there are so many different kinds of deities out there to choose from in history. The fact that there are so many different deities out there can only confirm the fact that they are inventions (unless you want to say that they are all real?).

I said "The very fact that some people find that they need to develop a "ministry" or build a website in order to defend the silly claim that a god or gods exist, simply raises the suspicion that they themselves have little confidence in the claim that a god exists, and are simply seeking to compensate for their own guilty consciences."

Pete asks "First, who defines silly?"

Webster's does. Silly: adj. Weak in intellect, foolish, exhibiting or indicative of a lack of common sense or sound judgment, trifling, frivolous.

Pete says "Second, how could "guilt" exist without a God by which actions could be judged?"

Simple. By the fact that there is a contradiction or point of friction between what you consciously hold and choose to do and what you have subconsciously automatized.

Pete says "Third--this whole statement is down right absurd. Is that the best you have to offer?"

What is absurd about it?

I said "The obvious way to challenge such a likely position is for those who wish to defend a theistic worldview to present evidence to such persons."

Pete asks "But what kind of evidence?"

Start with what you yourself as a believer in the things that you claim take to be evidence that supports what you claim. Don't ask us. These are your views that you are called to support. What do you take to be good evidence for the things you claim? Identify this evidence for the record, and give us a chance to review it, if you have any confidence in it whatsoever. If you have no confidence in it, then keeping it to yourself might save yourself further embarrassment

Pete says "You already rule out any kind of supernatural evidence from the beginning by claiming that it does not exist."

Can you identify for the record what you take to qualify as "supernatural evidence"?

Pete says "As a result, my very evidence is the fact that you cannot present a convincing counter-argument to theism."

Hey, that will take you a long way (chuckle). The believer in the Great Unicorn does just the same thing. So does the believer in Bert. Why should I believe you over them?

Pete says "What else would I have to argue with that you would actually accept?"

Try me. Start by identifying reasons why you believe the things you say you believe. Don't let the potential fact that I will not accept what you present stop you from presenting it. Show some confidence in your views.

I said "If that person does not accept what is proposed as evidence as qualifying as legitimate evidence, then Peter Pike and other "apologists" will simply have to accept that their arbitrary ideas will not work on him."

Pete asks "Who says that it is the theist's views that are "arbitrary"?"

I do.

Pete says "How do you know that your claim that there is no supernatural is not, in fact, arbitrary?"

Because I am not making a claim that is baseless or contrary to perceptual evidence. That's why.

I said "He is so insecure in his own religious beliefs that the mere existence of others who do not believe likewise are perceived as a constant threat."

Pete says "Oh, so we're speaking to the omniscient Seeker now...."

I nowhere claim omniscience for my side, Pete. This is what you as a theist do.

Pete asks "And this insecurity is why you cannot provide a rational defense for your beliefs?"

I have presented a rational defense of my view. You need to interact with it now.

I said "Well, I cannot speak for other atheists (and I don't know how Peter Pike thinks he can), but I am proud to promote the worldview of Reason."

Pete says "But you have no basis for your worldview."

Sure I do. It's the subject-object relationship. I know, you do not want to admit that this relationship exists. Yet you confirm its existence every time you think, act or say anything, as Nick rightly pointed out. To say that I "have no basis for [my] worldview" is to show us that you do not understand my worldview. But if you do not understand it, then you cannot speak intelligently against it.

Pete asks "How can you even begin to speak of reason without an objective source by which we can agree on what reason is?"

I've identified the objective basis on which reason is built. In fact, you assume the reality of this basis every time you think, act or say anything, even though the worldview which you are trying to spread denies it. It is you, Pete, who are caught in a performative inconsistency here, and you've not made any effort to correct the problem.

Pete asks "How can you come to an objective source unless you transcend individual experience?"

What do you mean by "transcend individual experience"? If I am doing an activity in which I "transcend individual experience," am I not experiencing that activity that I am doing? I asked you before to explain your use of such terms, but so far your views remain obscured in undefined and unclarified terms.

Pete asks "And if individual experience does not determine what rationality is, what does?"

The subject-object relationship does.

I said "Clearly, it is not the worldview which Peter Pike and other apologists want to see go forth, for they have assumed an incorrigible stance against Reason"

Pete says "On the contrary--my worldview is the only one in which Reason makes any sense."

Really? Please explain. How does this claim comport with your view that reality is ruled by invisible magic beings which are beyond the access of reason? How does this claim comport with the fact that your view denies the very basis of reason, which is the subject-object relationship? How does the bible define 'reason'? Where did Christ encourage his disciples to rely on their rational faculties and to reject faith-based fantasies which contradict reason?

Pete says "All other worldviews delegate reason to nothing more than mere opinion."

Where do you establish this?

I said "The proof is right before the theist's own eyes: reality is what it is independent of consciousness."

Pete asks "I agree"

If you agree that I have a proof for my side, then why do you carry on as if I have not proved anything?

Pete asked "--but how do you know this?"

By means of reason. Indeed, it is testable. I have tried to turn water into wine, for instance, by commanding it to do so. But this did not work. When I opened my jug, it was still water. This confirms my initial supposition: that reality does not conform to consciousness. This is a principle which must be incorporated at the fundamental level of one's worldview if his worldview is to be rational. Otherwise, it ignores the subject-object relationship, and offers falsehood in its place. That, my friend, is religion in a nutshell.

I said "reality does not conform to what we think."

Pete asks "How do you know this?"

By being honest to myself.

Pete asks "Did you think it?"

Did I think what?

Pete says "If so, then reality does not conform to what you think, and this statement is self-contradictory."

That's not true, if my thoughts conform to what exists. You misunderstand the concept 'contradiction'.

I said "Rather, our thinking must conform to what is real."

Pete asks "But how does one know what is real?"

By means of reason.

Pete says "Is it experience?"

I don't know what you mean by "experience." Is this a package deal?

Pete says "But experience is only understood through thought, which means that what you accept as real depends on what you think is real. You have solved nothing here."

Wrong. You're assuming pure self-reference, which is nowhere implied in anything that I have said.

I said "When Peter Pike drives his car, does his steering conform to the road (objective - my atheist position), or does the road conform to his steering (subjective - the theist's position)."

Pete says "You've got it flat backwards--the objective view is the theist view because only it gives you an objective reality!"

But according to theism, reality is a creation of consciousness. So the concept of "objective reality" is non-existent in theism. Where, for instance, does the bible speak of "objective reality"? You still do not get it!! If reality is that which is a creation of consciousness (as the Judeo-Christian view claims), then reality conforms to consciousness, and consciousness - the subject - holds priority. That's subjectivism. They call it "subjectivism" for a reason, and that reason is: the subject has final say, not the object. According to the objective view, reality is not a creation; reality is not explained by appealing to a subject which precedes the object. Explanation as such requires a relationship between subject and object, which subjectivism denies by asserting reality as a creation of the subject.

Pete says "You have no basis to say what is real or what is not,"

Yes, I do. It's called the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "when you do not even know if you are living in a giant hallucination right now!"

What is a "hallucination"?

Pete says "You have no basis to determine whether what you see is real, or only what you think is real."

Again, I do. It's called the subject-object relationship.

Pete asks "Why do you think nick got so upset at the mention of The Matrix?"

Ask Nick.

Pete says "He couldn't deal with the philosophy and simply rejects it as "childish""

He's right. It is childish. I think it could only be taken seriously by those who want to deny the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "--that's not answering the problem,"

It's not a legitimate problem. It is self-refuting. Don't you see that? Go back and answer some of the questions which I

posed to you in response to your enshrinement of your movie scenario. If you're honest, you might have a chance of seeing what I mean. Until then, you'll remain lost in confusing movies with reality.

Pete says "that's putting your hands over your eyes, plugging your ears, humming the National Anthem, and pretending the problem doesn't exist."

Actually, this describes what it is to take "The Matrix" seriously. Quite ironic!

Pete asks "Will you deal with it?"

I have, but I am open to the possibility that you do not recognize it yet.

I said "Those who assert a god are essentially saying that reality conforms to whatever that god says, which is a defiance of the principle of objectivity and an affirmation of subjectivism."

Pete says "Not at all, for subjectivism depends on the individual who experiences."

You fail to comprehend the nature of subjectivism, Pete. I suspected this. I'm hoping that some of the pointers I offered above will address your confusion, but I won't hold my breath (as Nick so rightly put it, this is now an issue of honesty).

Pete says "If reality conforms to God, then it has nothing to do with the individual who experiences it."

If reality conforms to god, then the subject ("god") holds primacy over the object (reality). That's subjectivism, pure and simple. You are on subjective grounds as soon as you assert a universe-creating, reality-ruling god.

Pete says "Even were I to accept your premise, this would only make reality "subjective" to God--not to us."

The orientation to whom the object is supposed to conform is not of primary importance. It is still a misidentification of reality. It obliterates objectivity from the get-go, and disables your ability as a believer to conceptualize in a rational manner. I offer your articles on your website as evidence to this fact.

I said "History, for instance, is said to follow "God's plan." In other words, the course of events which make up history have all been designed and predestined to unfold according to a preconceived plan, a plan wholly under the control of god's conscious directing."

Pete says "You're stating this as if it's an argument."

Not true. I'm stating it in the interest of presenting a description of your worldview.

I asked "Who says that Peter Pike should accept anything? Pike misses the point."

Pete says "No, that is exacty my point. You hit it right on the head--what reason do I have to accept your denial of God's existence? You cannot provide one!"

You don't have to accept it, Pete. That's my point. It is a choice which you must make, not an obligation which you must fulfill. We each have the choice to follow reason, or to evade reason. I invite you to follow reason, but I cannot make you do so. It is wholly up to you. That's my point here, Pete. I wish you'd see it.

I said "As an apologist looking for converts, he's the one who wants others to change their beliefs. Atheists are not trying to evangelize and proselytize."

Pete says "This is bull and you know it."

It's not bull. And I do know it.

Pete says "Why else would you be trying to convince me that you are right?"

I'm not trying to convince you. I don't think it's possible to convince you, since you have rejected reason.

Pete says "You want me to accept your views."

Actually, you're doing precisely what I would like to see you do: flail against the air and embarrass yourself on your own website. It makes for great entertainment. If you changed your beliefs, then I'd have to move on elsewhere.

Pete says "Maybe there's a need for my acceptance of it to make you feel better about your views,"

Feelings are not an arbiter of truth in my view. But they are in your view. Ever read Proverbs 1:7?

Pete says "but there would be no reason for you to engage in this conversation at all if you did not want me to accept your view as accurate."

Sure there would. It's called entertainment. And so far, it's been quite enjoyable.

I said "No atheist has ever knocked on my door trying to spread the views of Madalyn Murray O'Hair for instance."

Pete asks "Who says evangelism has to take place by knocking on a door?"

Not I. In fact, I also noted that evangelists approach me on the street and also on the city bus. They're all over the place. I've never had anyone approach me anywhere in the effort to spread the views of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, however.

I said "No, it doesn't. If the theist wants to prove something to the atheist, then it rests on the theist's shoulders. Period."

Pete says "And if the theist's argument is the impossibility of the contrary, then the atheist must demonstrate the possibility of the contrary."

If the theist's argument rests on the claim of "the impossibility of the contrary," I'd say he has the onus of proving this "impossibility." Otherwise, he does not secure a major premise in his argument.

Pete says "You have not done so, so I do not accept your view."

I have, only you probably don't recognize it (or don't want to).

I said "This is what Peter Pike is called to prove. If he does not prove it, why should anyone accept it?"

Pete says "But I have an objective basis to my reality!"

Not at all. You've denied the very basis of objectivity, which is the subject-object relationship. And to say "my reality" only cinches my point to boot.

Pete says "This is proven by the fact that God exists."

Ah ah ah! Now you're begging the question again. You need to prove your claim that a god exists before you can use this as a premise in subsequent inferences. You have not done this, Peter Pike.

Pete asks "Can you provide an objective basis to reality without a God?"

Yes, the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "If you could, you would have already done so."

I did this already, and you nowhere interacted with it. Why should I do it again?

Pete says "This next part beautifully illustrates the double standard."

Which double standard? Where? Can you point it out specifically rather than simply level the charge without identifying any basis? I want to know.

quote:

Peter Pike wrote << Ask how they know, and they'll say, "Because I learned about it in school" or "Because we have pictures of it from space" or any number of answers along those lines. If you ask them why they trust those authorities, they will say something like "Because I have no reason not to trust them, and others have verified those claims." >>

I asked "And the problem here is?"

(Peter did not answer)

Peter Pike wrote << Using an argument that I myself do not make, if you tell an atheist, "I accept the existence of God because it has been taught me" they will ridicule you as being a fool. >>

And I responded "As they rightly should."

Pete says "Why is it right that they should ridicule claims for God because of what has been taught, but not claims for science because of what has been taught? IS THIS NOT A DOUBLE STANDARD?"

No, because science teaches on the basis of reason, and religion rejects reason. That's silliness, by definition (see above).

Pete says "The EXACT SAME METHOD was used both times!"

Wrong, you drop context.

Pete says "Therefore, the method itself cannot be wrong--you simply don't like the answer to the one, but you do like the answer to the other. This is the definition of arbitrary!"

Not at all. I simply grant more respect for the rational faculty than you do. One should not believe everything one hears.

Peter Pike wrote << If you say, "I have no reason not to trust them" they will say, "Because you are brainwashed." >>

I asked "Is Peter Pike saying that religious brainwashing does not occur?"

Pete says "*yawn* Wake me up when you get to an argument."

Why? You have denied the very basis of argument as such, and in fact it is you who has yet to present an argument for your claim that a god exists. So, which way will you have it?

quote:

Peter Pike wrote << An atheist accepts the things he sees as being real without ever questioning whether his eyes are seeing correctly; >>

I asked "Am I wrong, or is Peter Pike saying that one is not right to accept the teaching that the earth is spherical in shape?"

Pete says "No"

Okay. Good!

Pete says "--I am asking you for what reason you trust your eyes to accurately display all the information about reality that one could possibly "see.""

You are treating perception as if it were distinct from consciousness. But that's just the point - perception is a level of consciousness, a level on which the conceptual level of consciousness depends. To ask why one "trusts" his eyes denies both of these facts. It is just another reversal. I would have to be dishonest to address your question as you ask it, for it is inherently fallacious.

Pete says "It is because you already assume a naturalistic world without proving such that you accept what you see. But you can't even deal with The Matrix example."

I've given your movie example much more response than it deserves, Pete. But I suspect you'll not grasp this and continue touting it. That's what makes you so entertaining!

Peter Pike wrote << yet any idea about the existence of God must be proven with absolute certainty beyond a shadow of a doubt. >>

I said "And of course, no one has ever come close to doing this."

Pete asks "Why should theism be absolutely proven?"

Because you are asking others to believe it.

I said "In fact, a proof of the existence of a god would be wholly fatal to religion."

Pete says "That's just stupid. It's so stupid it doesn't even deserve a remark noting it's stupid."

I see. So, when I don't like something you say, I can say it's stupid, and you'll accept that? Okay, that's fine. You have set the precedent. (But what you call it an instance of ad hominem when I do it!)

I said "If one could prove that a god exists, it would simply be another item of reality open to scientific investigation."

Pete says "Which proves you assume that all reality must be open to "scientific investigation.""

If something is not open to scientific investigation, what could qualify it as real?

Pete asks "How do you know this?"

Because that which exists has identity, and identity is discoverable.

I said "And Pike wants to lay down the charge against atheists, saying that atheists indulge a double standard! Has this man no conscience on these matters?"

Pete asks "Does a conscience actually exist to you?"

Yes.

Pete asks "And if so, why should YOU determine my morality?"

I don't. Reason does.

Pete says "That's might presumptuous of you, given your subjectivism."

Pete, if you want your claim that I hold to subjectivism to stick, you will need to argue for it. So far, you've not even demonstrated that you understand what the term means, let alone show that anyone beyond yourself is guilty of holding to a subjective view.

Pete asks "You violate your own precepts and expect me to accept them?"

Where have I violated my own precepts? Which precepts in particular have I violated, and where precisely have I violated them?

Peter Pike wrote << You cannot say that what you see is proven beyond the shadow of a doubt (for example, how would you disprove The Matrix idea of reality?). >>

I said "Again, we have a total misunderstanding of the nature of proof being paraded as high philosophical criticism."

Pete asks "And how the heck would you know what proof needs to prove what???"

I'm not sure what you're asking here. It seems rather muddled. Can you clarify your question? I'm trying my best to interact with your statements Pete, but you do need to try to be a little more coherent.

I said "To suggest that we must prove that the objects of perception are real or that they are not part of a movie plot is a denial of the subject-object relationship, the very relationship upon which logic and proof stand."

Pete says "The only thing that would be necessary, from your worldview, is that there is a perception of a subject-object relationship--neither the subject nor the object need actually exist."

Wrong. In my view, there could be no subject-object relationship if neither the subject nor the object actually existed. If you do not understand my view, don't answer for it. You only confuse yourself.

Pete says "If I dream of a brick and I dream of a tree, there are two different things which I differentiate, although neither are real."

What is a brick, and where did you get this idea? What is a tree, and where did you get this idea? If you answer my questions, you'll answer your own contention.

I said "Where does Pike establish this? Indeed, he does not; he simply asserts it as if he had proven it."

Pete says "And yet you do not offer any evidence as to how you can accept what you see as being valid--you just assume it to be so! All I'm saying is YOU HAVEN'T PROVEN IT!"

I think Nick's response to this adequately put you to bed, Pete. But so have many things which I have already stated. But you do not show yourself as possessing the sophistication needed to comprehend what has been said to you. You completely mutilate the concept 'proof'. That is not the action of an objective thinker.

I said "Again, Pike sticks with his preferred "debating" practice: Assert claims, and do not attempt to defend them with argument. He offers no reason why one should accept his claim here."

Pete says "And yet you STILL cannot disprove my claim. WHY?!"

I've disproved it many times over. You show that you either cannot comprehend this fact, or you are in such denial that you won't deal with it.

I said "That's because Pike has demolished the relationship which gives such concepts meaning, namely the subject-object relationship, a relationship which he nowhere takes into account."

Pete asks "Why should I? That's YOUR worldview, and you haven't proven it."

You confirm it just by assuming that your words have meaning, Pete. Don't you see that? You don't recognize the fact that there is a relationship between yourself and the objects which you perceive and about which you speak? How is it that you do not grasp this?

I said "It appears that Peter is saying that the absence of belief in a god or gods necessarily means that one's view of reality is "relative." But I see nothing in what Peter has said that compels such a dichotomy. Why should we accept this? Peter does not say."

Pete says "I have indeed said why--you have simply ignored it. Again, there is no reason to hold to anything as being objective without a transcendent, objective source that you can point to--and atheists cannot have such a source. Even if they were to assume one, they cannot know anything for certain about what it is."

I have asked numerous times about this notion of "transcendence" that you continually interject but do not explain. You have not answered any of those questions. You say that I "have simply ignored" what you have said, but of course, that is not true. I am very careful to interact with every point you have made. When I find a point which you are trying to make incoherent or poorly supported or informed, I ask. If you do not answer my questions about it, but instead claim that I am not dealing with your points, then I can only figure that you do not have enough esteem in your own points to give them better clarity. Naturally, this bothers you, because you yourself probably do not understand why "transcendence" is as important as you want to say. Perhaps you simply read it in one of Greg Bahnsen's woefully miserable pieces, and are just parroting it here as if it were self-evident. Let's see how well the mighty Peter Pike understands it. Don't just repeat, Peter. Explain. Get into it, or admit that you do not understand (which I don't think you do).

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 10, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

Pete says "I am going to be breaking this up into smaller sections since I don't have time to comment on all of it at once."

Okay. Good idea.

I said "I don't think that atheism is a worldview. Perhaps that's where we differ. Theism is generally a worldview which ascribes to god-belief. Atheism is simply the lack of god-belief; it is not a worldview as such."

Pete offers the following two definitions for the term "worldview" (also called Weltanschauung):

1. The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world.
2. A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.

I looked up "worldview" on Webster's online dictionary (<http://www.m-w.com>). It referred to "Weltanschauung" and for this term it gave the following definition:

"a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint."

Pete says "Atheists like to claim that they do not hold beliefs, just non-belief."

Not this atheist. I have many beliefs. For instance, I believe that my brother is most likely working at his job right now. I'm not certain of this; he could have called in sick today. But I believe this is most likely the case, since I know it to be the case that he is scheduled to work on Thursdays, and today is a Thursday.

Now, granted, Pete might respond to this saying that this belief is not a worldview-level belief, and I agree - it is not a worldview-level belief. In the sense that I employ the term 'belief' however (which I explained previously in this thread), this is precisely what I mean by belief: some but not total confidence in an idea or statement accompanied by the willingness to be corrected if shown to be unfounded.

Pete says "Even if we grant that, it only excludes the secondary definition. You still have to deal with "the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world.""

That's fine.

Pete says "How do you see and interpret the world?"

By means of Reason.

Pete says "If you reject theism, then you must embrace a non-theistic worldview, which would be an atheistic worldview."

By definition, a worldview which is non-theistic is also atheistic, for non-theism is also atheism.

Pete says "Now, just as there are different theistic worldviews (depending on if you're Christian, Muslim, etc.), there are different atheistic worldviews too--no one is denying that."

Good move, Pete.

Pete says "But you still have to deal with the worldview level, and if you reject a theistic worldview of any kind, then you are stuck with an atheist worldview."

"stuck"? Regardless, I am an atheist, because I am an advocate of Reason.

Pete asks "Do you even know what an atheist worldview would be?"

Yes. The philosophy of Reason is one such worldview. It is the worldview which I am advocating.

Pete says "I doubt it since you don't even claim to have one."

Have I claimed that I do not have a worldview? I'd like to see where I said this. Perhaps you misunderstood me. If you have read my Interaction with your article "The Atheist's Double Standard," posted to the Calvin Board on April 8, you will recall the following exchange:

Peter Pike wrote << Atheists do not like to admit the fact that they are promoting a worldview, and the reason is simple. >>

I responded "Well, I cannot speak for other atheists (and I don't know how Peter Pike thinks he can), but I am proud to promote the worldview of Reason."

So, to say that I "don't even claim to have [a worldview]" is not consistent with what I myself have stated.

Pete says "I doubt that you've even considered the ramifications of a worldview that did not rely on borrowed concepts from the theistic worldview."

Put your doubts to rest, Pete. I've fielded this accusation numerous times, and since the ideas of theism are built on a denial of the subject-object relationship (as I have shown now repeatedly), and the ideas of my worldview are built on the integrity of that relationship, the concepts which inform my worldview cannot be said to have been "borrowed... from the theistic worldview." Feel free to try to argue otherwise. For instance, identify which concepts you think my worldview "borrows" from your worldview, show how your worldview has rightful and exclusive propriety over those concepts, identify how and where your worldview defines, formulates and integrates those concepts, and show why my corresponding worldview cannot legitimately make use of the concepts which it claims for itself.

Pete says "Go ahead and give me your worldview then."

I've given quite a bit of it already. I am compelled at this point to ask: Have you understood what has been presented so far?

Pete says "If you have no worldview to promote, then why should I give up my worldview for your position?"

If I had no worldview, then I would have no position to defend and thus no position for you to adopt in contradistinction to yours. But it should be clear that this is not the case with me.

Pete says "At least my worldview provides an overall perspective from which I can see and interpret the world...."

The basis of your worldview has been challenged and you have not been able to successfully defend it against criticism, Pete. Your attempts to salvage your ideas from criticism have not sustained our inquiry and commentary. It has been shown to be full of holes and untenable. Indeed, it has no confirmable basis. Meanwhile, it denies the subject-object relationship while assuming it at the same time. This is a performative inconsistency at the foundation of your worldview, and you've not been able to rescue your worldview from the wreckage to which this denial leads, which is subjectivism.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>

Posted April 10, 2003

Re: Peter Pike's "The Atheist's Double Standard" - An Interaction

Pete said "Again, I refer you to my analogy of the blind men experiencing the tides."

I asked (again) "Remember my question in regard to this? I had asked: If the two men are blind, how did they know about the tides? Will you answer this question now?"

Pete now says "Sorry, I missed that question previously."

That's fine.

Pete says "However, the answer is simple."

Okay.

Pete says "You are assuming that the only way to notice tides are due to sight."

No, I'm not assuming anything of the kind. I just asked: how did they know about the tides?

Pete says "I would suggest, therefore, that you haven't visited the ocean."

I live about 1.5 miles away from the ocean and have for over 12 years. I see it everyday of my life. I hear it everyday of my life. But I've never been able to tell by listening to the ocean that it is subject to tidal activity.

Pete says "If you sit on the beach during low tide, and the tide comes in, and you note that you haven't moved, you do not need to see in order to know tides exist."

Okay. That's fine. But how does this tell someone that there is a tide?

Pete says "The question becomes: why is this such as it is? Depending on your worldview, you will answer that question

differently."

I said "Yes. Some want to appeal to invisible magic beings which they imagine to exist, while others seek scientific answers to such matters. I belong to the latter category."

Pete asks "Why?"

Because knowledge has identity, and a rational philosophy acknowledges this consistently. Given the alternatives of appealing to magic beings or relying on scientific procedures to discover and certify causal implications to the phenomena which we perceive, it is clear to me that science is the only one of these two alternatives which is compatible with the facts that knowledge has identity and that reason is man's means of acquiring and validating knowledge.

Pete says "Again, as the illustration was meant to point out, you ignore the most important part of this issue."

Which is?

Pete says "Again, it wasn't the tides that were not empirically observed in that example--it was the cause of the tides."

Really? How do you know this? Are you "assuming that the only way to notice [the moon] are due to sight"? If so, why?

Pete says "One man hypothesized the moon;"

What basis did he offer to substantiate his lunar hypothesis?

Pete says "another said it was impossible because he did not have any reason to accept the notion of the moon,"

Would the supposition that tides are real provide a reason to accept the notion of the moon? If not, why not?

Pete says "fully ignoring the fact that the tides were reason enough to accept the moon."

So, you are saying that the second man ignored part of the contextual support of the first man's hypothesis, right? Sort of like when someone denies one half of the subject-object relationship?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=82>

Re: Question to Defenders of TAG

Posted April 10, 2003

Again, with feeling...

I still have not seen a Christian response to the following question. Can a Christian address it?

[snip]

Two friends, Pete and Repete, are engaged in a dispute over the foundations of logic. Pete says that the foundations of logic find their source in the Christian god. Repete says that the foundations of logic find their source in Bert. Pete says that Repete must be wrong because Bert is finite, corporeal, mortal, and not authoritative. Repete responds by explaining that Pete is wrong, because Pete's claim about Bert is not true. Pete then rebuts Repete by pointing out that Bert would have to be the Christian god if he were infinite, incorporeal, immortal and authoritative. Repete retorts that this is not so, for the Christian god is claimed to have had a son, but Bert is all these qualities but has not had a son.

Who is right, Pete, or Repete?

Be prepared to discuss your answer.

Seeker17

Posted April 11, 2003

The Analogy of the Two Blind Men - An Analysis

Okay Peter,

I wrote the following prior to reading your recent pin-up "Two Blind Men: An Allegory" (<http://www.debateatheism.org/stuff/twoblindmen.html>). After reviewing it, it does not appear that you have added anything significant which answers my points below, so I am posting this for everyone's comment.

Even before you posted "Two Blind Men: An Allegory," you did make an effort to salvage your analogy of the blind men (albeit with duct tape and bread ties). But now it is time to examine its relevance to the broader topic of our debate. Specifically, we must now ask: What are the corresponding analogues between the anecdote of the blind men trying to determine the cause of the tides and our dispute on the basis of logic? What ties Pete's analogy to our debate on his claim that the Christian god provides the basis for logic? From here, we must determine whether the analogy properly exemplifies our respective positions, and whether or not the analogy you propose is either strong or weak. Since you have not spelled this out according to your intentions in erecting the analogy, I will take a stab at it. Please feel free to correct me where you see fit.

The Analogy:

Your analogy posits two individuals, both blind. I assume from this that you mean that one of the blind men corresponds to you, and the other to me. Call them Blind Man #1 and Blind Man #2.

Let us grant for purposes of argument that both have consistently observed the phenomenon of tidal activity while sunning themselves at a beach someplace. Let us grant that they are aware of this activity, but initially are lacking knowledge of the causality of this activity which they observe. To use your own explanation, they have observed this by sitting by the shore at what happened to be low tide, and throughout the day at regular periods they found they had to move in order to stay dry because of the rising tide. Later they found they could move further out again and still remain dry, only later to have to retreat once again if they did not want to get wet or dragged away by the undertow.

Now, in musing on what could possibly "account for" (a favorite presuppositional term) this tidal activity, Blind Man #1 offers the Moon Hypothesis in which he posits a large body which orbits the earth, and in certain aspects of its orbit about the earth it exerts gravitational forces on the oceans which causes the raising and lowering of tidal levels. Being blind, however, neither of the blind men have the occasion to look up to the sky to verify this hypothesis by direct perception of the moon which Blind Man #1 has proposed.

Because he cannot verify the Moon Hypothesis by independent means, Blind Man #2 is skeptical and wonders why he should accept it. He cannot see the moon because he is blind, and he finds the idea of a large body orbiting the earth dubious and even incredible. "Bah, hogwash!" he exclaims, knitting his brows in the effort to conceive of a competing hypothesis.

Is this right so far, Pete? Have I covered all the major points and have I properly identified the elements of your analogy? (I notice in your new edition of this example you make Blind Man #2 asserting that it is the nature of the oceans which causes the tides, and Blind Man #1 objects to this. But in the final analysis, both turn out to be right, for the moon influences the ocean, and the ocean as a large body of water does have an identity, a nature, and reacts to the moon's gravitational pull accordingly.)

The Analogy's Relevance:

Now we must ask: What is the intended relevance of the Analogy of the Blind Men to the current issue of our debate?

The current issue of our debate is whether or not the assertion that the Christian god provides the basis of logic has any rational merit.

We have two sides to this issue.

Pete claims that the Christian god is the only possible ultimate explanation for the basis of logic. The basis of logic, according to this view, is supernatural in nature, imperceptible by the senses, and is said to satisfy a host of other preconditions of which the legitimacy of some remain obscured in lack of clarity (cf. "transcendent," etc.).

Contrary to Pete's claim, both Nick and I have argued that the subject-object relationship is the fundamental basis of logic. This basis of logic, according to our view, is natural and requires no appeals to "the supernatural" (whatever that means), and consists of a correlation between a knowing subject and the objects which it perceives. The knowing subject has a nature as do its objects, and so does the relationship between them.

In considering Pete's Analogy of the Blind Men, it appears that Pete wants the two blind men to serve as analogues for our respective positions in the debate.

The issue to be explained in the Analogy is the phenomenon of ocean tidal activity: what causes the tides?

Analogous to this phenomenon in terms of our present debate is the basis of logic: what provides the basis to logic?

In Pete's Analogy, Blind Man #1 asserts the Moon Hypothesis in order to explain the tidal activity. This hypothesis posits the existence of a large physical body which orbits the earth and influences gravitational reaction against the earth resulting in the tides which the blind men have observed. Unfortunately because of their blindness, however, neither of the gentlemen can observe the moon directly to verify the Moon Hypothesis, and because of this, Blind Man #2 rejects the Moon Hypothesis.

We await an alternative explanation from Blind Man #2. (In Pete's new edition of the example, Blind Man #2, Larry, says that the ocean's nature causes the tides.)

While I do not recall Pete saying this explicitly, I do get the distinct impression that he thinks that the analogue corresponding to his own position (the claim that the Christian god provides the basis of logic) is represented in Blind Man #1 and his Moon Hypothesis.

If so, then by extension, it would seem that Pete has cast Nick and myself and our position on the subject-object relationship in the role of Blind Man #2 who rejects the Moon Hypothesis and has yet to offer a viable alternative (since so far, Pete has not acknowledged the relevance of the alternative which both I and Nick have proposed and defended to date).

Assuming that these are the intended analogues of Pete's example, I will comment now on the strengths and weaknesses of Pete's Analogy of the Blind Men insofar as it corresponds to our debate.

The Analogy's Strengths:

The analogy does have a number of strengths going for itself, but I submit that they are indeed superficial. In the current debate, there are two sides being defended. In the Analogy, there are two individuals. In the current debate, challenge has been laid down to identify the basis of logic. In the Analogy, the two individuals seek to identify the cause of ocean tides. In the current debate, Peter has asserted the existence of the Christian god as the basis of logic. In the Analogy, Blind Man #1 asserts the Moon Hypothesis to explain the causality of the tides.

On the surface, the analogues in Pete's example seem to have correspondence. But the seeming nature of this correspondence breaks down upon investigation, which I shall now consider.

The Analogy's Weaknesses:

In the Analogy of the Blind Men, Pete apparently wants to portray allegorically his assertion of the Christian god as the basis of logic as corresponding to the Moon Hypothesis proposed by Blind Man #1. Likewise, he apparently wants to portray my position as one corresponding to Blind Man #2 who rejects the Moon Hypothesis and has yet to offer a viable alternative to explain the subject at hand.

If this is the intended correspondence of Pete's Analogy of the Blind Men to our current positions on the debate on the topic of what provides the basis of logic, I submit that Pete has the analogues reversed.

Clearly the Moon Hypothesis does not analogously correspond to Pete's proposal of the Christian god as the basis of logic. For one thing, the moon proposed by Blind Man #1 is physical, finite, natural, bound to the natural laws of motion, cause and effect, and perceptible to intact sense of sight. Its relationship to the phenomenon for which the two blind men seek an explanation (that is, the tides) is one of gravitation and causality, two natural phenomena which do not introduce any new principle alien to the direct experience of the two blind men. Both blind men experience both gravitation and causality on a daily, moment-to-moment basis throughout their conscious lives, and the Moon Hypothesis makes use of these principles without asserting some new idea which has no perceptible basis. All that is asserted is the existence of a body of matter (a moon) which has a relationship to the body of matter (the earth) on

which they find themselves. The Moon Hypothesis does not contradict any previously validated knowledge, and it can be confirmed by consulting any sighted person who can verify the existence of a large physical body orbiting the earth.

Contrary to these points, however, Pete asserts the existence of the Christian god as the basis of logic, and apparently wants to pass this off as analogous to the Moon Hypothesis in the example which he proposes. But while the moon proposed by Blind Man #1 is physical, finite, natural, bound to the natural laws of motion, cause and effect, and perceptible to intact sense of sight, the Christian god which Pete has proposed is neither of these things. On the contrary, Pete's Christian god is non-physical, infinite, supernatural, unbounded to the natural laws of motion, cause and effect, and imperceptible even to sighted persons. Also, while the moon proposed by Blind Man #1 has a relationship to the tides which is clearly natural, Pete's Christian god could not have a natural relationship to logic given its supposed supernatural, infinite and otherworldly characteristics. Additionally, while the Moon Hypothesis did not require the introduction of new principles alien to the direct experience of the two blind men in Pete's example, Pete's Christian god is accompanied by a huge assortment of doxastic accoutrements, such as belief in divine creation, divine revelation, the incarnation, the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of miracles, the doctrine of faith (can't forget that one!), the doctrine of prophecy, the virgin birth, the sonship of Jesus, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the doctrines of atonement, salvation and justification, the doctrine of spiritual gifts, the doctrine of heaven, etc., etc., etc., all of which must be accepted along with Pete's Christian god in one enormous package-deal. None of these ideas find their basis in the moment-to-moment interaction with the world around us, as the principles of gravitation and causality do, for they are "truths and facts... [that] are beyond the reach of the ordinary human processes of acquiring knowledge" (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 396). In fact, many (if not all) of these ideas which come part and parcel with Pete's Christian god entail ideas wholly contradictory to our daily interaction with the world, such as the idea of creation ex nihilo (whereby the Christian god speaks, and the universe comes into being as a result), the idea of miracles (when do we observe water turning into wine or men walking on unfrozen water?), virgins giving birth to children (arguably possible now with the scientific advent of test tube babies, but very unlikely that females willing to undergo such experiments are themselves virgins), resurrection of men well after their deaths (cf. Jesus, Lazarus, and the horde of zombies briefly mentioned in Matt. 27:52-53), souls leaving the bodies of their hosts and finding themselves in an idyllic paradise that is somewhere but also nowhere, etc.

Thus, we have no similarity, and therefore no analogous correspondence, between the Moon Hypothesis of Pete's Analogy and the Christian god of Pete's side of the debate. With these points I submit that Pete's Analogy, so long as he wants to consider Blind Man #1 and his proposal of the Moon Hypothesis to be analogous to his proposal of the Christian god in the context of our current debate, is insuperably weak and thus ill-fitting to our respective positions.

Restoring Pete's Analogy to Active Duty:

There is a way to rescue Pete's analogy and restore its relevance to our current debate, but only in a way which Pete will find at the very least dissatisfying and distasteful for his position as a defender of theism.

Instead of assuming that Blind Man #1 and the Moon Hypothesis finds its analogous correspondence in Pete and his proposal of the Christian god as the basis of logic, consider Blind Man #1 and the Moon Hypothesis as properly corresponding to Nick's and my position and our proposal of the subject-object relationship as the proper basis of logic. This swap of analogous correspondence will undo all the damage to the Analogy which I identified above, while preserving the relevance of the Analogy to the current debate.

Here's why:

Unlike Pete's version of the Analogy where only one of the gentlemen has proposed an explanation for the ocean's tides, in the current debate two distinct proposals for the basis of logic have been proposed, namely the Christian god, championed by Pete himself, and the subject-object relationship which both Nick and I have securely defended.

More importantly, the subject-object relationship which we have proposed as the basis of logic is wholly analogous to the relationship between the earth and the moon proposed in the Moon Hypothesis in explaining the causality of the tides. In the Analogy, the existence of a physical body orbiting the earth is hypothesized. Just as in the Analogy both the moon and the earth are cast in a significant relationship which explains the phenomenon for which an explanation is sought, Nick and I point to the fact that in every instance of logical reasoning there must be a subject which does the reasoning, an object which the reasoning concerns, and a relationship between the subject and object themselves, namely the subject's awareness of the object. Furthermore, the subject-object relationship, unlike Pete's Christian god, does not possess qualities unlike those entailed in the Moon Hypothesis. Just as the moon is physical, finite, natural, bound to the natural laws of motion, cause and effect, and perceptible to intact sense of sight, both the subject and its objects in our proposed basis of logic share these same qualities. Just as the relationship between the earth and moon in their cause of the tides is a natural relationship, the relationship between subject and object in their provision of logic's basis is a natural relationship, one which in no way calls for the assertion of invisible magic beings. Furthermore, just as with the moon in the Analogy's Moon Hypothesis, the subject-object relationship neither contradicts previously validated knowledge (indeed, it is because of this relationship that we are able to form the

concept 'contradiction' in the first place), nor does it require us to accept along with it a litany of dubious and intellectually burdensome ideas and doctrines as part of a huge package-deal which must be smuggled in along with it surreptitiously.

Clearly, the properly corresponding analogue to the Moon Hypothesis is the proposal of the subject-object relationship which both Nick and I have defended, and this means that the side of the current debate analogous to Blind Man #1 is that defended by both Nick and myself, not Pete.

Consider now Blind Man #2. Pete has not inserted a viable alternative to the Moon Hypothesis into Blind Man #2's mouth as of yet. So, I will do so in the interest of completing the Analogy of the Blind Men vis-à-vis its relevance to the current debate.

Sputtering, stammering and spitting in resentment against Blind Man #1's Moon Hypothesis, Blind Man #2 proposes that an invisible magic pixie is responsible for causing the ocean's tides. When Blind Man #1 counters that he has no basis to accept this, and can think of many reasons why he should not (for he has never experienced an invisible magic pixie before, and such an idea violates his entire understanding of intelligence), Blind Man #2 simply retorts that Blind Man #1 cannot prove that the invisible magic pixie does not exist. And since neither can see the moon posited in the Moon Hypothesis, Blind Man #2 says that the Moon Hypothesis has no sufficient evidence for it.

Similarly, in the current debate, we have Pete asserting the existence of the Christian god, an invisible magic being, which is said to provide the basis of logic. Rather than identifying good reasons to accept this proposal and pointing to evidence to support it, Pete has in effect simply challenged those who do not accept it to prove that it is not the case that the Christian god exists. He has issued this challenge in various ways, the most recent in my memory being occasioned when he offered such statements as the following:

"How are you able to make any truth statements without the existence of a transcendent God?" ("The Atheist's Double Standard")

"In short, unless an atheist can prove how it is possible for existence to exist without the existence of a transcendent God, then it is impossible for God not to exist." ("The Atheist's Double Standard")

"But in the absense of being able to support the existence of reality without God, then you are being disingenuous at best." [sic] (rebuttal, 9 Apr 2003)

Etc.

To be sure, there are other characteristics of Pete's Analogy which weaken its relevance to our debate. For instance, Nick and I are not blind, but clearly Pete wants both sides of the debate to lack sense in one manner or another. This is only relevant I'd say in the case of Peter himself, who seems lacking in at least one sense.

Anyway, those are some thoughts to mull on for the time being. In the end, however, I think Pete needs to give his would-be analogy some serious re-thinking.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=85>

Posted on April 11, 2003

Moral Question for Christians

This is a question for the Christians on the Calvin Board.

Q: As a Christian, is there anything that you are NOT willing to sacrifice for your faith in Christ?

Please explain your answer, and offer any reservations you may have to the answer which you provide. For instance, if you respond with a something such as "No, there's nothing that I'm not willing to sacrifice for my faith in Christ, but...", please feel free to elaborate.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=77>

Posted on April 12, 2003

Free Will Discussions

Caleb says "When he removes his unmerited aid it is like a judgment. We are left to choose what we will. We are free to choose what we want. But there in lies the problem. Our choices are totally bound by our desires. Without Gods help we desire nothing but sin. we in and of ourselves are unable to do any righteous thing."

If this is really the case for you, Caleb, then I think there's something seriously wrong with you, and your religious beliefs will not correct it. The ability to choose between alternatives is a most wondrous power of our consciousness, but along with it comes a great responsibility. You have set up a false dichotomy: either blindly obey the whims of an invisible magic being (god's otherworldly "judgment" and "commandments"), or let your own whims run wild and do whatever your desires dictate ("Our choices are totally bound by our desires"). Either way, it is someone's whims - i.e., irrational, reality-rejecting abandon - that is your standard of action in the end.

The rational alternative to this nightmare scenario is the benevolent orientation towards life and the world made possible by rational philosophy, which teaches that Reason guides our choices, not whim. The recognition that reason should guide our choices and actions enables us to operate our volition responsibly, and frees us from depending on the whims of others, invisible, magic, or otherwise. But of course, this is not what the bible teaches. Nowhere do you find either Jesus or Paul, for instance, saying that we should guide our choices and actions by reason or acknowledging that we can operate our minds responsibly if we guide our choices and actions by reason. Instead, what is more important to these ancients was simply that people "believe" and surrender their minds to religion's confessional formulations, and supposedly everything else, righteousness, justice, love, goodness, will just magically follow.

When a Christian says something like "Without Gods help we desire nothing but sin," he is telling us that he himself desires sin. But by putting it in the plural ("we" instead of "I") he seeks to enlarge the circle of his admitted guilt to include all other human beings. It is as if to say: It's not good to be guilty of such things all by one's self, but it's okay so long as everyone else is presumed to be just as guilty as well. But simply accusing others of a breach of morality is not enough to convict them of such infraction. There must be a trial, evidence must be brought forth to substantiate the charge, the prosecutor bears the onus of proving his indictments, witnesses, if any, should be summoned to provide testimony, the accused must be allowed to speak in his defense, and an impartial judge and jury must review the evidence and cross-examine witness testimony to pass a just verdict. But this is certainly not what the bible teaches. The bible teaches that all men are guilty by virtue of their existence as men (as Caleb puts it, "Without Gods help we desire nothing but sin. we in and of ourselves are unable to do any righteous thing."). Thus, guilt, in the Christian worldview, is not a matter of morality, but an inescapable, metaphysical attribute of man's nature.

Caleb, what sin do you want to do today? What sin do you want to do that "Gods help" [sic] is preventing you from executing? Now ask yourself: why do you want to do this sin? It may be the case that Caleb is "unable to do any righteous thing," but I know that's not true for myself and many others whom I've known throughout my life.

Caleb asks, "Does this mean we deserve Gods help?" Apparently the intended answer is no, even though god is said to be the potter, and man, the inherently depraved being that is metaphysically "unable to do any righteous thing," is the pottery. If it is the case that all men, by virtue of their nature as men, "desire nothing but sin" and are "unable to do any righteous thing," how can men be to blame for this state of affairs? After all, as Christians continually like to remind us, we did not make ourselves. However, they want to have their cake, and to eat it, too: On the one hand, no, man did not make himself - he is the way his maker made him, and that way is that he cannot do anything righteous by his own effort and choosing. But on the other hand, the maker is not responsible for this; man, the creation of the maker, is responsible. So, we have an irresolvable contradiction in the way the Christian is taught to view man.

Caleb says "You must realize that a Calvinist or an advocate of the Reformed faith is not an elitist. We are totally humbled by Gods unbiased, unmerited choice of us. We believe there is nothing we can do to become chosen. It is not by our actions, nor our faith that we are among the elect. We are among the elect because the potter has crafted us so, because of his sovereign choice. He is the chooser not us."

Here we find another contradiction in the Christian worldview: On the one hand, God chooses a statistically insignificant number of individuals throughout history to be recipients of his favor (called "grace"), that the choice of who is to receive this favor is totally up to god's whims (euphemistically called "sovereign choice"), for "there is nothing we can

do to become chosen" and those who are chosen "are among the elect because the potter has crafted us so." But on the other hand, we are told that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). Try telling that to Abel's brother Cain. Paul tells us that "God does not show favoritism" (Romans 2:11, NIV). What would be an instance of god showing favoritism to some individuals at the exclusion of others if not what the Calvinist views of salvation and predestination propose?

Caleb emphasizes that "nothing we can do earns our election," which means that the doctrine of salvation for the Christian is simply another expression of the believer's pursuit of the unearned. It is the greatest value that the Christian doctrine offers to man, but one can only enjoy it by some means other than by earning it. By what means does he enjoy this salvation? Simple: At the expense of someone else. The believer is essentially one who profits and benefits from another man's innocent suffering and death. This is precisely what the gospel story models.

No wonder they don't want anything to do with Reason - it does not allow for the unearned.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=77&page=2>

Free Will Discussions

Posted April 13, 2003

I said "The rational alternative to this nightmare scenario is the benevolent orientation towards life and the world made possible by rational philosophy, which teaches that Reason guides our choices, not whim."

Zeus says "Unfortunately this statement would be wonderful only if it were true."

It is true. Either you simply do not know this, or it may be the case that those who told you that it's not true lied to you.

Zeus says "However, it is our reasoning that is corrupted which guides our corrupted choices and not whim."

Look at the dilemma such a statement brings to its author:

On the one hand, if you attempt to defend this statement by reasoning, then its intended conclusion condemns itself. If you do not attempt to defend this statement by reasoning, then you offer it without rational support. Furthermore, it does not follow from the potential or actual fact that your reasoning abilities have been corrupted (for instance, by the influence of mysticism), that everyone else's reasoning abilities have been so corrupted as well. That would be a non sequitur. Either way, what we have here is an outright assault on reason as such. It only hurts you. You simply announce that you want something other than reason to guide your choices and actions.

I said "But of course, this is not what the bible teaches."

Zeus says "Your doing 100mph, thats entirely correct, your trivial worldview does not correlate with Holy Writ, and thus why I cannot accept it."

I certainly have not seen any speed barriers, and I don't know how speed is measured in this forum. But nonetheless, burn quick, burn bright. The charge has been made that my worldview is "trivial," though I am curious how this assessment was made. Specifically, I wonder just how informed Zeus is on the details of my worldview. Does Zeus not recognize that he has to assume the foundations of my worldview - thus acknowledge the validity of those foundations - in order to think in the first place? That foundation is the subject-object relationship, which Christianity seeks to destroy (as I have shown in other fora). The Christian has to assume the validity of the subject-object relationship in order to deny it, and that's exactly what he does. Perhaps anything that "does not correlate with Holy Writ" is "presupposed" to be "trivial," and thus unacceptable. This is simply an effort to protect a confessional investment from reason. Perhaps Nick can incorporate this theme in his upcoming book somehow. I think it's quite noteworthy.

I said "Nowhere do you find either Jesus or Paul, for instance, saying that we should guide our choices and actions by reason or acknowledging that we can operate our minds responsibly if we guide our choices and actions by reason."

Zeus apparently wants to correct this. He says "Interesting when Paul stated; Romans 14:5 - One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

And I suppose, according to Zeus, this passage from Paul serves as an exhortation that we should guide our choices and actions by reason or as an acknowledgement that we can operate our minds responsibly if we guide our choices and actions by reason? After all, Zeus cites this verse in response to my recognition that Paul does not make such an exhortation. Being "fully persuaded" is hardly the same thing as relying on reason to guide one's choices and actions. So the relevance of this passage needs to be established, and Zeus has not done this. Furthermore, Zeus announced at the beginning of his post that "our reasoning... is corrupted." If that were so, why would Paul exhort that we guide our choices and actions by reason? No answer. It's becoming more and more evident that Zeus speaks well for himself, but he will have a hard time establishing that his assessment applies to those who do not share his mystical worldview.

I said "Instead, what is more important to these ancients was simply that people "believe" and surrender their minds to religion's confessional formulations, and supposedly everything else, righteousness, justice, love, goodness, will just magically follow."

Zeus says "Unfortunately this is perhaps what you've witnessed during your life, FALSE CONVERSIONS, which I assure you can imprint the above speculation."

Zeus, are you saying here that conversions which by your estimation are authentic and in nowise false could not also serve to "imprint the above speculation"? Indeed, how do you show this to be speculation as opposed to an informed assessment? Isn't belief important to Christianity? That's the overwhelming impression I have gotten from reading the New Testament, for instance. It is also the overwhelming impression which I have gotten from Christians seeking to evangelize. And when this evidence is coupled with admissions to the effect that "our reasoning... is corrupted" and the implicit urgency that some otherworldly surrogate for our ability to reason should replace this doomed faculty, what other causality but the magic of an imaginary being in which belief is so heavily emphasized could bring about the fruits so touted in Christianity? You seem more interested in discrediting my statement by supposing, without support, an insufficient data base than in exploring the possibility that it is true. Perhaps it is this very possibility which you do not want to entertain in the first place, even though your own statements confirm it!

I said "When a Christian says something like "Without Gods help we desire nothing but sin," he is telling us that he himself desires sin. But by putting it in the plural ("we" instead of "I" he seeks to enlarge the circle of his admitted guilt to include all other human beings."

Zeus says "Thats right, without God restraining people we all desire sin, were born in sin and shapen in iniquity."

Here Zeus makes the same error that Caleb made in the post to which I responded. It appears that Zeus has not digested the points which I have made therein. The non sequitur is repeated as if fallacy as such were mythical.

Zeus asks "Can you achieve your best aspirations without corruptibility?"

Be careful not to equivocate between corrupted and corruptibility. The two are not the same.

I said "in the Christian worldview, is not a matter of morality, but an inescapable, metaphysical attribute of man's nature. "

Zeus says "Untrue, sorry, wrong answer. It is most likely calvinists that regard guilt as inherint along with the conviction of our God's power."

Then they would only make my case for me. Perhaps you just do not see it. But let's examine what else you say.

Zeus says "Most denominations have steadily moved away from teaching "sin," "guilt," and "punishment.""

My statement was not meant to apply to any particular denomination or denominations, but to the view that man's nature is condemned to the kind of corruption which many Christians, regardless of denomination, say that man cannot overcome by his own volitional effort. Given this, of course, those denominations which "have moved steadily away from teaching 'sin', 'guilt', and 'punishment'" are irrelevant to what I have said.

Zeus asks "That doesn't appeal to the modern man and why should it?"

This is wholly irrelevant to my point.

Zeus says "Now of course I am not that familiar with many other denominations, however I am speaking generally about the mainstream Churches."

Again irrelevant, for reasons explained. Indeed, my comments have been made in a forum dedicated to discussing Calvinism!

Zeus says "Because people naturally want to think "they are good folk", when in reality they are as vile and wicked as the rest of us."

Here you beg the question. So again, irrelevant.

I said "After all, as Christians continually like to remind us, we did not make ourselves."

Zeus says "However and "AFTERALL" (no pun) God did make man upright."

That's one of the claims of course. It is one horn of one of many contradictions which Christianity teaches. That only serves to validate my point.

I said "So, we have an irresolvable contradiction in the way the Christian is taught to view man."

Zeus says "Might as well use the label "Calvinist." As I said earlier mainstream Christianity is packed with lies, holes, and deceit."

Since I agree that this assessment applies to all forms of Christianity, I am in full agreement with you: Christianity is packed with lies, holes and deceit.

Zeus says "Many as yourself argue against Total Depravity of Man, even many fanatical, zealous Christians today."

Because it's obviously indefensible. It's self-refuting and stands on a rejection of reason (as your initial admission made explicit). Nothing you have said in your attempt to rescue this view from criticism has been successful.

I said "But on the other hand, we are told that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). Try telling that to Abel's brother Cain. Paul tells us that "God does not show favoritism" (Romans 2:11, NIV). What would be an instance of god showing favoritism to some individuals at the exclusion of others if not what the Calvinist views of salvation and predestination propose?"

Zeus says "I will use The New Testament Greek lexicon based on Thayer's and Smith's Bible Dictionary to understand more clearly what "respecter of persons" mean." [sic]

Zeus is right on schedule, taking the general route which I expected. We will see that he does not answer my question.

Zeus says "Reference #4381; Original Word:proswpolhvmphθ (one who discriminates)"

Zeus says "Case in point, if God did discriminate, we all would die, because a leopard cannot change its skin."

Again, irrelevant. That "a leopard cannot change its skin" does not imply that "God" does not discriminate. And, what's more, if as Zeus wants to say here that "God" does not discriminate (clearly an effort motivated by the express interest of rescuing his Calvinist view from the obvious internal contradiction), then what criteria could "God" be using in making his choices for who should receive salvation according to this view? The position that "God" does not discriminate (a position uncomfortably necessitated by statements such as Romans 2:11), can only imply that "God" consults NO criteria in making such choices. This means (and can only mean) that "God" discriminates arbitrarily, i.e., without reason. This can only validate my earlier point that "God" operates on whim. So, we see Zeus painting himself into a corner again, and that's because he wants to defend an irrational worldview.

Zeus says "We all are an unclean thing."

Zeus again begs the question.

Zeus asks "How do you see it as favoritism when all of us deserve death, yet God selects some of us to live?"

I will repost my question, which Zeus nowhere addresses:

I had asked "What would be an instance of god showing favoritism to some individuals at the exclusion of others if not what the Calvinist views of salvation and predestination propose?"

Why no answer?

Zeus says "I suppose on the surface it appears as favoritism, but cannot be mistaken for what it really is, which is "grace," and unmerited, unwarranted mercy; clemency."

What is the difference? No statements are offered to differentiate from "favoritism" and "unmerited, unwarranted mercy;

clemency." Zeus seeks the cover of euphemism in order to evade the charge of contradiction, but clearly such a ruse is inadequate. He's stuck.

Zeus says "But make no mistake, you fall in line with many zealous Christians today which protest this very topic - Election."

Again, more irrelevance.

Zeus says "But isn't it interesting that not 15 chapters earlier from the book of acts we see; Acts 15:18 - Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Which only confirms my earlier point that the supposed corruption and depravity on which your view condemns all men amounts to the view that this corruption and depravity is not a matter of morality (i.e., not a matter open to man's volition), but a metaphysical attribution to man's nature. If everything that happens in the world is "known unto God... from the beginning of the world," how could man change it? Again, the potter and clay metaphor confirms this: man is made to exist and perform as the potter has made him, according to this view. This is the view that man is morally impotent by virtue of his nature, not his choices and actions. To then turn around and say that man is thus "guilty" of "sin" is just another hideous contradiction, since the preconditions of guilt (moral action open to man's volition) have been denied. Nothing Zeus has said has served to rescue his view from this charge. Indeed, he simply confirms the more significant of its various components. Thank you for your contributions!

Zeus then offers some helpful advice:

Zeus says "If your going to use Holy Writ as your argument try looking up the word Elect, Election, and Chosen, which appear numerous times in the new testament."

I have done this, thank you.

Zeus says "Don't stop there,"

I didn't.

Zeus says "use a concordance if need be,"

I have.

Zeus says "but you quoting the Bible is futile in aiding your position,"

It is? You have not shown this. In fact, you've shown, both by appealing to irrelevant issues and by ignoring my questions, that so far you cannot defend against my criticism, a criticism which is supported and supportable by reference to the bible itself. My citation of biblical references serve to demonstrate the relevance of my criticism. Your assertion here that my "quoting [sic] the Bible is futile in aiding my position" ignores this fact.

Zeus says "again you want it to make sense but it doesn't correspond with your worldview,"

I want what "to make sense"? Your worldview? Perhaps I'm wrong in expecting your worldview to make sense, in spite of the fact that most apologetics that I know to be associated with the overall Reformed view make the hideously untenable claim that "only the Christian view of God, creation, providence, revelation, and human nature can make sense of the world in which we live." (Michael Butler, "TAG vs. TANG"). But as we have repeatedly seen to be the case with regard to the claim that logic "presupposes" the existence of the Christian god (which Peter Pike has weakly attempted to defend), the Christian worldview falls flat on its face in spite of these grandiose claims. Indeed, making sense is precisely what it cannot do.

Zeus says "so you must reject it, and only use bits and pieces that seem fitting to your cause which in my view makes you just as much as a hypocrite as you describe many Christians to be."

If there are "bits and pieces" to be found in the bible that support views opposite to those informed by the verses which I have cited, then you simply uncover more problems internal to the bible itself. This cannot serve to establish your unargued claim that I am in any way guilty of the hypocrisy of which you charge me here, sir. If you want such accusations to stick, you need to substantiate them. Otherwise, you simply appear as a man flailing his arms against the air in frustration and indignation over the fact that the game has been given away. Doesn't fly.

I said "Caleb emphasizes that "nothing we can do earns our election," which means that the doctrine of salvation for the Christian is simply another expression of the believer's pursuit of the unearned. It is the greatest value that the Christian doctrine offers to man, but one can only enjoy it by some means other than by earning it. By what means

does he enjoy this salvation? Simple: At the expense of someone else. The believer is essentially one who profits and benefits from another man's innocent suffering and death. This is precisely what the gospel story models."

Zeus says "Do you honestly think even us laymen can figure this entire statement out?"

I can't speak for others, Zeus. If you do not understand it, then you have something to strive for. I'd hope you'd think that's a good thing.

Zeus asks "The expense of someone else? Who are you referring to, or is this used in a general sense?"

You don't know?

Zeus says "Please, if your going to refute, are attempt to lay on us an athiestic apologetic make it clear, simple, to the point,"

Sorry, Zeus, but this clause was entirely incoherent. Not exactly sure what you were trying to say here. Did you mean to say "or" instead of "are"? If what I said earlier was not clear, perhaps some of the points I have given here will help enlarge your understanding.

Zeus says "in short try not to weave a confusing web of philosophy that makes the unlearned Christian grope for answers in the dark while you parade your will on them unknowingly."

If you are confused in your attempts to grasp what I have said, Zeus, how then do you think you can interact with it intelligently?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=77&page=2>

Free Will Discussions

April 15, 2003

I said "If that were so, why would Paul exhort that we guide our choices and actions by reason? No answer. It's becoming more and more evident that Zeus speaks well for himself, but he will have a hard time establishing that his assessment applies to those who do not share his mystical worldview. "

Zeus quotes 1 Cor 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Zeus says "Unfortunately the Gospel does not render nor apply to human reasoning."

That's my overall point: Christianity thwarts reason - it is expressly irrational. By this, I mean that its claims are unacceptable on rational grounds, for they have no basis in reality. Reason is the manner in which the human mind works. Since the mind has identity, so does the way in which it properly works, and this way is not compatible with the kinds of claims that Christianity asks people to accept. It is not believable, since there are no inputs to support it, or inference to enable its claims to be arrived at in the form of rational conclusions. Given these facts, which you are in effect conceding here with your statement, it is not possible to accept its claims as knowledge of reality. It is imagination, not knowledge.

Zeus says "This is perhaps why it does appear absurd and foolishness to professing intellectuals of our time."

A teaching which violates reasoning will always appear absurd to those who are reasonable. That's why the bible's teachings appear absurd to me and to others who accept reason as an inviolable absolute.

I said "It is one horn of one of many contradictions which Christianity teaches. That only serves to validate my point. "

Zeus says "Instead of quoting you more I will just get into the heart of the matter."

Okay, good move.

Zeus asks "Can we charge God with favoritism?"

Yes, we can. Let's first examine this by grasping what is meant by the term "favoritism":

Merriam-Webster online defines 'favoritism' as: "the showing of special favor; partiality."

The same source defines 'favor' as: "1 a (1) : friendly regard shown toward another especially by a superior (2) : approving consideration or attention; 3 a : gracious kindness; also : an act of such kindness; 4 a : a token of love (as a ribbon) usually worn conspicuously b : a small gift or decorative item given out at a party; 5 a : a special privilege or right granted or conceded; 7 : behalf, interest." (Definitions #2 and #6 were both said to be "archaic.")

The same source defines the idiom "in one's favor" as "in one's good graces."

If 'favoritism' is defined as "the showing of special favor," and 'favor' is defined as it is here, how could one say that a divine being choosing some men to receive the gift of salvation due to nothing that they have done, is NOT an instance of favoritism????? Zeus writes a lot, but he only evades the issue.

What the Calvinist view asserts is nothing but the favoritism on the part of their god. It couldn't be more explicit! Zeus simply wants to deny this because he doesn't like the idea that he's been caught endorsing a direct contradiction, even though he opens his message with the concession that "the Gospel does not render nor apply to human reasoning."

Note also what we read in Luke 1:28 about Mary, the supposed mother of Jesus: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Here's an instance of the New Testament explicitly affirming that biblegod bestows favor on those whom it wants to show favor - and thus shows favoritism. John Wesley, a theologian strongly influenced by Calvin himself, considered the Christian god's "grace" to be "undeserved favor" (Robert V. Rakestraw, "John Wesley as a Theologian of Grace"). Many other sources link 'grace' with 'favor' by definition. For instance, one source defines "grace" as "The undeserved favor of God whereby he forgives (see "Forgiveness") our sins and makes us right with him (see "Justification") through Jesus Christ." (Dictionary of Theological Terms by Don Matzat) Bill McGracer, a Christian writer, says that "grace is God's unmerited favor. That means that you are God's favorite and there is nothing, absolutely nothing, you can do to change His mind about you. It is unmerited - you can't earn it, you can't dis-earn it, it has no roots whatsoever in you and your performance. It has roots in God and His love, nowhere else." John Calvin himself writes "Since God inflicts due punishment on those whom he reprobates, and bestows unmerited favor on those whom he calls, he is free from every accusation" ("The Institutes of the Christian Religion," ch. XXIII, sec. xi). Indeed, we have it from the horse's mouth: if it's the case that "God inflicts due punishment on those whom he reprobates," but "bestows unmerited favor on those" who deserve the same punishment as those "whom he reprobates," then clearly one cannot say that "he is free from every accusation." The accusation of favoritism, by definition, is inescapable. If grace is what the Christian god shows to those whom he saves, and "grace is God's unmerited favor," then the doctrine of salvation essentially says that the Christian god is "the showing of special favor," which is, by definition, favoritism.

Zeus concedes "If God selects a certain few for salvation it seems as though God either discriminates or chooses arbitrarily, i.e., without reason."

And given the added stipulation that there is nothing that the recipients can do to earn the grace (i.e., favor) which makes salvation possible, as Calvinism explicitly and vociferously teaches, that "seeming" quality disappears and is replaced by ironclad certainty: the Calvin god does choose arbitrarily, i.e., without reason. There's no mystery here, only a desire to resist calling a spade a spade.

Zeus says "The problem I face is, how can I legalistically charge a Creator of exercising favoritism or discrimination towards a small amount of the things he forms?"

Easy: by exercising moral judgment informed by reason, as I have modeled for this forum. But, since, as he himself admits (remember that Zeus has stated said "our reasoning... is corrupted" and "the Gospel does not render nor apply to human reasoning"), he has surrendered his reason, Zeus has consequently disabled his moral judgment and thus pontificates in order to perpetuate a hideous error.

Zeus says "In my simple minded understanding I must reduce it to an example; Can I charge a carpenter for using his scrap lumber for fire wood as favoritism?"

How is such a superficial example (a carpenter "using his scrap of lumber for fire wood") at all analogous to what we are talking about? Indeed, there is no analogy here. A carpenter has reason for "using his scrap of lumber for fire wood," since as a living being he is a being of purpose. As a human being, a carpenter can have a demonstrable need to build a fire: to keep warm. But this cannot be in the case of the Christian god; does god need to build a fire to keep warm? Is god ever cold that he should need to build a fire in order to keep warm? Man is a being of purpose because he faces a fundamental alternative: to live or to die. It is because man can lose his life that he has before himself the purpose of meeting his life requirements once he's made the choice to live. This is the case for all human beings. Teleological concepts have a biological, not a religious or supernatural, basis. Yet religion wants to ignore and deny this all the time,

and the case in point will expose yet another example of this denial the more we pursue this with Zeus. The Christian god obviously cannot be a being of purpose since, as an immortal, indestructible and perfect being, it does not face the alternative of life versus death, a precondition of the concept 'purpose'. So, Zeus is obviously seeking to obfuscate the issue by interjecting an irrelevant and wholly weak analogy. It misses the point entirely!

Zeus says "Can I charge God with making some people of lesser use, some fit for Heaven, and some fit for Damnation?"

Why not? This is what the outcome of Christian teaching, as informed by Calvinism, amounts to. Does being a Christian mean that you cannot identify things as they are? Does being a Christian mean that you cannot adduce inferences such that 2+2 does not equal 4, assuming equivalent units? If so (and if what Zeus is arguing here is what he really believes, then it must be asked), what good then is it to be a Christian? And Christianity postures itself as being concerned with "truth"? Couldn't fool us!

Zeus says "To me it seems absurd to protest favoritism or discrimination because if by God comes all things, then doesn't He also have the power to make use of the things He forms as He sees fit? Obviously if He could not then He cannot be a diety."

Exactly! That's the point. He can practice any favoritism he likes, since he has no standard of justice independent of his whim to meet, and since he does not guide his choices and actions by reason. Again, Zeus makes my point for me, and in a manner more eloquent than I could! Thanks again!

Zeus quotes Romans 9:20 "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

When Paul implies that one should not ask its maker "Why hast thou made me thus?" he is essentially telling his readers not to question whether his god is a being of purpose or not. Questions which ask a person why he has done something, are asked in the interest of discovering the motivation and purpose for engaging the action in question. But clearly Christians do not want such questions asked (as Paul's writing here so models), for they won't like the obvious answer: their god is not a being of purpose.

Zeus quotes Romans 9:21 "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

As we saw in my last message, this quote simply serves to seal my case. I don't know what Zeus thinks he is accomplishing by quoting it here again.

I had asked (twice!) "What would be an instance of god showing favoritism to some individuals at the exclusion of others if not what the Calvinist views of salvation and predestination propose?"

Zeus responds "Again your rationalizing sovereignty with favoritism to fit into your view."

How so? Are you saying that my question is not valid in some way (which way? you do not say), and therefore you will not answer it? I think that's quite telling. And still my question goes unanswered.

I read the quote from A. W. Pink about the Pharaoh of Egypt which Zeus pasted to his post, but I don't see what relevance it has to our discussion. It appears that Zeus is operating on the assumption that sovereignty somehow negates the charge of favoritism, or that the one somehow cancels out the other. But I nowhere see where Zeus has established such an assumption, or why one should accept it. I do not see why one would have to deny the sovereignty of the Christian god in order to recognize that it practices favoritism. Indeed, it is the very idea that the Christian god wields unrestrained liberty and ability ("sovereignty") which is used to rationalize its favoritism. This couldn't be any clearer to me, yet Zeus, motivated by the desire to protect a confessional investment, wants to argue otherwise. I think so far his effort is futile, for the more we delve into this issue, the more the evidence points to favoritism on the part of the Christian god as it is described by the Christian religion. Apparently, I've hit a raw nerve.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=77&page=2>

Free Will Discussions

April 15, 2003

I said "To then turn around and say that man is thus "guilty" of "sin" is just another hideous contradiction, since the preconditions of guilt (moral action open to man's volition) have been denied."

Zeus quotes Matt. 7:23 "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work."

Zeus says "When we read in Rom. 11:2 God hath not cast away his people (Israel) whom he foreknew", it is obvious that what was signified is, "God has not finally rejected that people whom he has chosen as the objects of his love — cf. Deut. 7:7,8. In the same way (and it is the only possible way) are we to understand Matt. 7:23. In the day of judgment the Lord will say unto many, "I never knew you". Note, it is more than simply "I know you not". His solemn declaration will be, "I never knew you" — you were never the objects of my approbation. Contrast this with "I know (love) my sheep, and am known (loved) of mine" John 10:14. The "sheep", his elect, the "few", he does "know"; but the reprobate, the non-elect, the "many" he knows not — no, not even before the foundation of the world did he know them — he "NEVER" knew them!"

None of this addresses the essence of the point which I made in my response to Caleb's message (and which has sustained Zeus' subsequent criticism), namely that "guilt, in the Christian worldview, is not a matter of morality, but an inescapable, metaphysical attribute of man's nature."

But notice, not only how richly this paragraph dances on both horns of the contradiction which Calvinism explicitly endorses, but also how it introduces additional problematic issues of biblical doctrine. For instance, alluding again to Matt. 7:23, Zeus says that "In the day of judgment the Lord will say unto many..." This of course suggests that the "day of judgment" has yet to come, as confirmed by Hebrews 9:27, which states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." But elsewhere it is said that man is already deemed guilty of sin, such as when Paul says in Romans 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." So, obviously, Paul was assuming that men have already been judged, while the author of Hebrews (tradition used to attribute this letter to Paul, but this view has been wholly discredited; the letter to the Hebrews is anonymous) said that we have yet to be judged. Does the Christian god judge men twice? Why would this be the case? Why would the Christian god judge men before they exist (for passages such as Rom. 5:12 are supposed to apply to people living today, some 1950 years after Paul was writing his epistles), and then judge them after they have lived as well? And of course, given Christianity's hatred for man as such, is it no surprise that in both instances, the judgment is accompanied by a guilty verdict and condemnation? So many questions. So few answers.

Notice also how Zeus says that the Christian god's "solemn declaration will be, 'I never knew you' -- you were never the objects of my approbation." First of all, Zeus does not tell us how he knows what his god's future judgments will be. Perhaps he has confused his own condemnation with that of the god which he imagines. Or, Zeus imagines he is omniscient. What an imagination the Christian believer must have to believe these things! But what's even more important to note in the context of the present discussion is that, according to Christianity (and most explicitly according to Calvinism), it is wholly up to the Christian god who will receive his approval, and who will receive his condemnation. It is god's whim which dictates who receives what, since there is nothing that we can do one way or another to persuade god. This means that man cannot reason with the Christian god, just as a citizen of Iraq could not hope to reason with Saddam Hussein. One cannot reason with someone who has rejected reason or who is incapable of thinking rationally.

Zeus emphasizes statement which Jesus is supposed to say to the condemned in Matt. 7:23, namely "I never knew you." But if god lacks knowledge (as this verse clearly says), then he could not be said to be omniscient, even though this is a characteristic which Christians like to attribute to their god. And here we have the god incarnate admitting ignorance. Go figure.

Zeus quotes A. W. Pink ("The Sovereignty of God") again in order to make his point. Let's see if this source rescues him from the contradictions which I have exposed.

Quoting Pink: "God does not (as we have been slanderously reported to affirm) compel the wicked to sin, as the rider spurs on an unwilling horse."

Here Pink skirts the issue at hand: Does man have a choice in the matter of his own guilt, or not? To say that man has a "fallen nature," which Pink affirms in the same paragraph, can only tell us that, according to this view, man does not have a choice in the matter of his own moral status, since his supposed guilt is by definition inherent in his nature as man. Pink lets his distaste for humanity peek through in likening man to a beast of burden ("as the rider spurs on an unwilling horse"), thus denying the conceptual - and with this also his volitional - capacity of his consciousness. This is a denial of the very rudiments of morality as such, which only works to confirm my exposure of a contradiction here.

Pink continues: "God only says in effect that awful word, "Let them alone" Mt 15:14."

And they want to say that this god is a loving god. Amazing! First, men are said to be created with a "fallen nature," then the only being which is said to hold the keys needed to unlock them from the condemnation that his own nature will bring them in the end, says: "let them alone." This is a worldview which can only breed dependence, resentment and irrationality, and the net result is that individual independence wholly impossible.

Pink goes on: "He needs only to slacken the reins of providential restraint, and withhold the influence of saving grace, and apostate man will only too soon and too surely, of his own accord, fall by his iniquities."

See! The outcome is rigged, but in spite of this Pink wants to say that this is "of [man's] own accord" - i.e., that man is responsible for his "fallen nature." On this view, man cannot win. The philosophy of Reason teaches a can-do outlook on the world by teaching man how to achieve independence from others by relying on his reason, while the Christian view tells its believers that man is wholly impotent and that all effort to realize one's own rational ideals is futile from the beginning. I'm glad the Christian worldview is not true!

Pink says: "Thus the decree of reprobation neither interferes with the bent of man's own fallen nature,"

See, there it is: "man's own fallen nature." Here Pink confirms that my criticism is right on target. By attributing a "fallen nature" to man, Pink affirms that the nature of man's guilt is metaphysical, not moral. It is not a result of man's choices and actions, but a characteristic of his nature as man. This is one horn of the contradiction which Calvinism teaches. Pink gives us the other horn without missing a breath:

Pink states: "nor serves to render him the less inexcusable."

See! Like Zeus, Calvin and Paul, Pink wants to hold man accountable for his own nature, when at the same time we are told that the Christian god is the author of that nature, as the potter and clay metaphor makes undeniably clear. By quoting Pink here, Zeus simply reaffirms the same contradiction which I have pointed out.

If man has a "fallen nature," as Pink affirms here, but man did not make himself (we are told that the Christian god made us), then man cannot be accountable (let alone "inexcusable") for that nature, any more than he can be responsible for having only two arms and not six. One cannot be held responsible for something over which he has no control or say. It makes as much "sense" as blaming Peter Pike for the American Civil War.

Quoting more Pink: "The decree of Reprobation in no wise conflicts with God's goodness."

Sure. That's because "God's goodness" is wholly arbitrary - its basis is not a code of rationally delineated values based on genuine life needs (indeed, it cannot be, since the Christian god, which is said to be immortal, indestructible and perfect, lacking nothing, cannot be said to have any needs - this would make him out to be a vulnerable god, which believers will not admit), but whim and nothing else. In effect, any state of affairs can be said to be compatible with "God's goodness." Jumbo jets falling out of the sky, tornadoes leveling entire towns, fires ravaging factories where 47 workers are killed, 600,000 Rwandan villagers afflicted with disease, starvation and tyrannical governments, etc. All these horrific situations are all part of "God's plan," according to Christians, and therefore, by definition, compatible with "God's goodness." Such a notion as "God's goodness" is thus patently meaningless. To say as Pink does here that the "Reprobation" of man's "fallen nature" "in no wise conflicts with God's goodness" is to say nothing meaningful at all. It's simply a ploy to make a contradiction seem more plausible to those who want to pretend it is truth. Denying a contradiction does not make it go away.

Pink tells us: "Though the non-elect are not the objects of his goodness in the same way or to the same extent as the elect are,"

Here's the favoritism. Luke (cf. Acts 10:34) and Paul (cf. Romans 2:11) lied about their god.

Pink continues: "yet are they not wholly excluded from a participation of it. They enjoy the good things of Providence (temporal blessings) in common with God's own children, and very often to a higher degree."

If this is supposed to serve as an attempt to undo the contradiction under discussion (namely, the clear indications of favoritism taught in Calvinism versus Paul's and others' claims to the effect that "God does not show favoritism"), it misses the mark since it clearly relies on an equivocation. The "goodness" under consideration is not the "temporal blessings" mentioned here, but the notion of "eternal salvation." I think Zeus knows better here, but apparently has been hypnotized by the authorities which he hopes will do his heavy lifting for him.

Pink asks, perhaps rhetorically, "On what righteous ground, then, can they murmur against not being the objects of his benevolence in the endless ages yet to come?"

Well, apparently not on the basis of Paul's supposedly divinely inspired epistolary testimony, for Paul claimed that "God does not show favoritism" (Rom. 2:11), and clearly this is not the case, as Calvinism clearly teaches. If it is the case that man is made with a "fallen nature" as Pink and other sources sympathetic to Christian theism affirm, and there is nothing that one can do to earn the Christian god's gracious favor, then salvation is certainly a show of favoritism on the Christian god's part and Paul is thus discredited as a worthy and reliable source of information on the Christian god. The problem for the believer is even greater than this, for if he cannot confidently depend on what he calls "the Word

of God," then clearly he has nothing from his god on which he can depend. And, having rejected reason, he is left embracing contradictions left and right and calling it "holiness," "goodness," "love," "peace," "righteousness," and whatever other euphemism seems most appropriate for the moment.

Pink tells us that, "Moreover, if it did not clash with God's mercy and kindness to leave the entire body of the fallen angels 2 Pet. 2:4 under the guilt of their apostasy; still less can it clash with the Divine perfections to leave some of fallen mankind in their sins and punish them for them."

See! My point is made! Thank you A. W. Pink!

Zeus had said "so you must reject it, and only use bits and pieces that seem fitting to your cause which in my view makes you just as much as a hypocrite as you describe many Christians to be." "

Now he says again "This still stands for you have attempted to use verses to support your argument, which is a contradiction in terms based upon your athiestic views." [sic]

Wrong. My views as those of a non-Christian do not prohibit me from using the bible as a source in my critique of what the bible teaches. This is simply standard scholarly practice. By quoting "scripture," I am in no way implying that I believe what the bible teaches. This is apparently a fact which you have failed to recognize and integrate. Essentially, I am only interacting with your worldview. And, by quoting the source of your worldview, I am showing the relevance of my criticism. If you were to critique my worldview, I'd expect you to do the same.

Also, it must be pointed out that my citation and quoting of the bible as a source for Christian god-belief is consistent with the presuppositional method. That method teaches that one should assume that the opponent's view is true for the sake of argument, while showing that its teachings lead to internal problems, such as the contradictions which I have exposed in the Calvinist teaching. In his attempt to demonstrate to his readers that the belief that the Christian god exists is present even among those who reject the teachings of Christianity, Peter Pike writes:

<< This is done by two methods. First, I am going to look at your worldview and presuppose it is correct to discover what is required in a non-Christian universe, and "take the roof off" with you. Then, I am going to ask you to presuppose my worldview and look at the same issues. >> ("Summary of My Presuppositions" - <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=48>)

So, essentially, by quoting the bible, I'm not doing anything that is not expected by either side.

Zeus asks "I am only stating the obvious here which I find interesting because your using Holy Writ as evidence to support your claims, yet you also claim to be an unbeliever, am I wrong here?"

Yes, you are wrong in the following sense. I am not using "Holy Writ as evidence to support" my position (since the bible does not teach its readers to understand the significance of the subject-object relationship in cognition, I could not quote it in support of my philosophical worldview). Rather, I am using the bible's own quotes as support for my criticism of what it teaches. How else would one critique what the bible says, than to examine and cite it as a source?

I said "I can't speak for others, Zeus. If you do not understand it, then you have something to strive for. I'd hope you'd think that's a good thing."

Zeus responds "I can speak for myself, and I suppose I'll speak more blatantly. I am a simple minded person, one who enjoys simple things, call it a handicap if you desire, easily understood things etc..."

That's fine, Zeus. But I hope you don't expect me to go soft on you or anyone else in this forum. Besides, I don't think anything that I have said here is really beyond your comprehension. Perhaps I have more confidence in your mind that you do. If you take your time and work at it, I'm confident that you'll be able to understand everything I have stated here. But, you must make this choice to work at it. I cannot make this choice for you. Don't be frightened. Understanding is a good thing.

Zeus says "Perhaps it was a request for you to make yourself more clear because I cannot rise to your level of intellect in your cerebral posts here. In some paragraphs I see a very challenging arguments clearly and beautifully written. But in other paragraphs it becomes overwhelming to say the least, one question at a time please :-)."

I'm sure you can understand what I say, with a little patience and willingness on your part to integrate what I say. What I am presenting is not rocket science, Zeus. Just take your time. Read what I say carefully. If you do not understand a word or term, consult a dictionary, or ask me. I'm happy to clarify. I want to help you understand what I am saying. That is why I take so much time in writing my responses.

I said "If you are confused in your attempts to grasp what I have said, Zeus, how then do you think you can interact

with it intelligently?"

Zeus says "#1 - I can only interact with what I know, I never professed having intellectual knowledge of everything you post here."

That's fine. That's why I post it. It may very well be the case that the points I am making are points which you have never considered before. If that's the case, recognize that they are new to you. They're here for you to consider now.

Zeus says "And by far do I view myself as an intellect, but only someone who can respond as a layman."

You don't need to hold any station higher than this to grasp what I am saying. Don't worry so much. It's not over your head. I had to learn at one time, too. I'm glad I did!

Zeus says "If you hold me in contempt then perhaps you should cease to respond to my inferior responses."

No contempt here, Zeus. I was in your shoes at one point in my life too. I enjoy our exchanges. I hope you do, too.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 17, 2003

Zeus,

I have some comments and questions which I'd like you to consider.

Personally speaking, I readily admit that I am unclear on how exactly TAG is supposed to proceed as an argument. By definition, TAG is supposed to be an argument, right? After all, "TAG" is short for the "Transcendental Argument for the existence of God," right?

Perhaps, Zeus, you are confident in your understanding of the inferential structure of TAG, and thus could offer a coherent, streamlined and orderly presentation of TAG, identifying what you take to be its most important premises and the conclusion they are supposed to generate and support. I've asked other defenders of TAG to do this in the past, and unfortunately the results have been at best mixed to dismal. So, I hope you can understand that I have many unanswered questions.

For instance...

What do you take to be TAG's initial premise? Do you think this first premise is defensible? What about the next premise? How many premises are there in TAG as you conceive of it, and are they all defensible? Which premise do you suppose is most controversial, and why, and how would you defend that premise? How exactly do all the premises support their intended conclusion? What is the form of TAG? Is it expressible in the form of modus ponens, for instance? Do the argument's premises support the conclusion they are intended to support necessarily, or only probably? Why would TAG support the conclusion that the Christian god exists, for instance, but not Bert? (See my question here: <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=82>)

And, how could a defense of Tag overcome the objections which have already been offered on this forum?

Many points have been raised and substantiated against Peter's defense of TAG, and so far as I can see, none of these points have been answered or rebutted by any defender of TAG. As a result, I don't think Nick's comments on this thread are inappropriate. For the growing silence from the Christian side of the debate becomes more noteworthy with each passing day, particularly when compared to the chest-thumping bravado which is found in the messages of Christians on this Board (especially Peter Pike's messages) prior to the raising of those points against TAG's intended conclusion.

In a post which I submitted to the "God as an Axiom" thread (in the "Logic" forum) on April 2, I introduced to the Calvin Board an alternative to Pete's Christian god as the proper basis of logic. That alternative basis is the subject-object relationship in which all knowing persons necessarily participate. No presuppositionalist with whom I've debated in the past has ever been able to challenge this alternative effectively, or defend his claim that the Christian god can be the only thing that provides the basis of logic in light of my alternative. Additionally, not only does it appear, from reading many of Peter Pike's published statements on logic and TAG (both on his "Debate Atheism" website and on the Calvin

Board), that he has considered my alternative before, and his feeble attempts to counter it have proven to be self-defeating (for he can only confirm the legitimacy of the subject-object relationship while arguing against it). Will the presuppositionalists on the Calvin Board become a similar statistic?

Now, it may be the case that you think neither I nor Nick exhibit sufficient comprehension of TAG in the presentation of our points against it. I'm willing to entertain this possibility. If that is the case, Zeus, then perhaps you could address the questions which I have asked above in order to move the discussion in the right direction. Would you be willing to do this? (Apparently Pete has other matters to attend to now.)

I look forward to any intelligent comments which you or any other members on the Calvin Board may have in response to the questions which I ask here.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 18, 2003

Zeus asks "How can supposition, presumption, or basically guesswork be an argument?"

That's a great question for Peter Pike to address. I hope he does (but I'm supposing he won't).

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 24, 2003

Zeus says "The Gospel is no mere invitation, but a proclamation, a proclamation concerning Christ; true, whether men believe it or no."

It is most curious to me when Christians say things like "[the Gospel is] true, whether men believe it or no," for this implies the objectivity of truth, a principle with which Christian metaphysics is wholly incompatible, since the subject-object relationship is denied by Christian theism. Peter Pike's own posts have demonstrated this denial, both in his claim that logic's basis is in an invisible magic being (not on the subject-object relationship), and in the several examples which he has erected to illustrate his views, such as "The Matrix" example and to a lesser degree his blind men at the beach example (which, as I showed, conceals a loaded reversal).

The principle of objectivity is based on the recognition that the objects of our awareness hold epistemological priority over ourselves as knowing subjects - things are what they are whether we know it or not or want them to be so. According to the principle of objectivity, then, the object holds priority over the subject.

But one cannot allow for the priority of the objects over our awareness if we deny the fact that there are any objects in the first place, which is how Christianity starts out. Recall that Christianity starts out with an awareness ("God") in order to explain the existence of the objects (the universe of things). If the non-believer says that he starts with the objects of his perception, for instance, the believer asks the telling question "where did those objects come from?" and he will expect that the only viable explanation is to assert the existence of a super awareness which created them. The objects are literally and explicitly said to be a "creation" of that awareness ("God"). Thus, Christianity starts out with a subject which has no objects to begin with, and any and all objects which do exist are only those which it wants to exist (the so-called "sovereignty of God"). This is subjectivism in metaphysics (since the subject holds priority over any and all objects), and it can only lead to subjectivism in epistemology as well. This is where the Christian gets the idea of "faith" - the notion that one's hopes and desires have a causal significance in determining truth (as so clearly illustrated in the books of the Bible). If god for instance doesn't want something to be true, who or what is going to stop god from changing it? Believers will say that god need not change truth because "His character" already reflects truth; but that's the point: by making the state of affairs (truth) dependent on god, the Christian is admitting to the

subjectivity inherent in his religious views, only this subjectivity is buried in a mass of allegories and anecdotes which, when stitched together as the New Testament does so effectively, become more and more real to the believer as he imagines them on the silver screen of his bible-reading mind. Just as magic is not a species of explanation but an evasion of the burden of offering a viable explanation, the fictional details of the gospel story constantly divert the mind of the believer from the important issues of philosophy.

Neither Zeus nor Peter Pike have been able to rescue Christianity from the recognition that it is inherently committed to subjectivism, even though we continue to hear from Christians the charge (in one guise or another) that non-believers are incapable of objectivity on their own "unbelieving presuppositions." Where have they identified what those "unbelieving presuppositions" are? Where have they identified their own "believing presuppositions" and explained why they should be accepted as true? We are still waiting for such questions to be addressed.

In essence, we have Zeus on the one hand attempting to utilize the principle of objectivity in order to make his point ("true, whether men believe it or no"), while on the other we hear a continuous stream of the Christians' denial of the fact that their views reduce to subjectivism. If in fact Christianity is subjective in nature, it is subjective "whether [Christians] believe it or no," and I don't hear any Christians admitting this.

Zeus says "In the Gospel, God simply announces the terms upon which men may be saved (namely, repentance and faith) and, indiscriminately, all are commanded to fulfil them."

Note that "the terms upon which men may be saved (namely, repentance and faith)" nowhere include reason and rationality, but their very antithesis - "faith." This is quite telling. Faith is the determination to claim something is true, even though one does not have the sufficient data inputs to confirm it as having any truth value whatsoever; it is the decision to say that something is true simply because one wants it to be true (i.e., the subject holds priority over its objects). Because it lacks rational support, believers urge themselves to "believe" it anyway, not because they really think it is true, but because they fear the consequences advertised for not believing it, such as alienation from the group, condemnation and a supposed eternity of suffering. So, acting the premise that their minds should be ruled by threats rather than by reason, believers run around the world telling men that the sky is falling and that great turmoil is forever inevitable regardless of man's efforts to improve his existence (i.e., no rational concept of justice). So, in essence, "the terms upon which men may be saved" consist most notably of the choice to reject reason and to sacrifice the mind out of fear of an unknown and unknowable invisible, magic and wrathful being which is said to promise everlasting destruction as the price for failing to acknowledge its existence in lifelong adulation and servitude.

Zeus says "My experiences are just that, "my" experiences and no one else's. My argument is God gives the gift of faith, no one can say, "Yes, I persuaded this man or woman to believe, by illustration of my experiences."

Zeus says that his "argument is [that] God gives the gift of faith." How exactly does this "argument" proceed? What is its first premise, and how is it established (assuming it is or can be established)? Also, if all you have is your experiences, and you admit that those experiences will never convince others of the claims you assert, then why argue in the first place? This is essentially Nick's original question, and I don't think it's been addressed in anything Zeus has stated.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=89>

The Reformed Christian Worldview

April 24, 2003

Answers please...

Pete says "First, the Reformed Christian Worldview stipulates that there is a God."

On what basis would one accept the claim that there is a god as knowledge?

Pete says "However, there isn't just any old God--there is specifically the God of the Bible."

How do you know that what you are calling "God" is really "the God of the Bible" and not Bert or some other invisible magic being which is not identical with "the God of the Bible"?

Pete says "This God has both communicable and incommunicable attributes."

How do you know this and on what basis should anyone accept it?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 24, 2003

Nick said "You have been shown the problems with your worldview and you have been shown how an atheistic worldview can bring forth logic."

Pete responds "Actually, I haven't yet. Your defense has been Seekers subject/object argument so far--yet that means there is only logic if there is perception."

Of course there is logic only if there is perception. That's fundamental. I'll take it even further: there can be logic only if there's conceptualization as well, which rests on perception. We do not infer in order to perceive; we infer once we have perceived and have formed concepts based on what we perceive. Logic begins with the first inference, but inference requires inputs (i.e., objects about which we make inferences), and we discover these by means of perception. Both the abilities to perceive *and* to form concepts are necessary preconceptions for logic and logical thinking, since logic is a body of principles (i.e., statements necessarily consisting of concepts which identify truths which we discover through perception and on which subsequent truths depend) employed as rules which guide the reasoning process. There needs to be a perceiving, concept-forming consciousness in order for the concept 'logic' to have any meaning. Isn't ironic that those who refer to themselves "presuppositionalists" discard necessary presuppositions and preconditions with wild abandon? If the fact that "there is only logic if there is perception" is supposed to be some kind of criticism of the thesis which I have proposed (namely, that logic finds its ultimate basis in the subject-object relationship), you'll have to do better, Pete. And, just as Nick's comments have indicated, just the fact that you can spell the word "perception" is sufficient to show that you grant validity to your senses. No invisible magic beings needed. Perception is inescapable for living human beings, and its necessity to the reasoning process is undeniable. To deny it is to engage in a performative inconsistency, thus invalidating one's own conclusions.

Pete, I appreciate that you've been busy lately. So have I. But I'd relish the opportunity of seeing you demonstrate that you comprehend what has been presented. From what little you have presented, I would have to conclude either that you do not grasp it, or that you just do not want to concede the point. If it's the latter, just say so.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 25, 2003

The Universality of the Subject-Object Relationship

Pete says "your laws of logic are not universal and do not apply to me, for I do not perceive what you perceive."

This is a simple misunderstanding, and one which I have already countered in a prior message (see for instance my Apr. 2 post to the "God as an Axiom" thread). This is not difficult stuff, Pete, and I have full confidence that you can comprehend what I am saying if you want to.

It is not *what* you perceive (the particular object of your perception) which is crucial, it is the very fact *that* you perceive something (any thing) which is epistemologically significant. Just by perceiving an object, you participate in a relationship with that object as a subject to it. This is the subject-object relationship. Even you, the great Peter Pike, cannot escape it, so long as you are living and conscious. This is the "universality" which you're looking for but want to attribute to a god which is anywhere but in reality. It does not matter which object you are perceiving as opposed to which object I am perceiving. We may both be perceiving completely different objects. You might be beholding the Eiffel Tower in Paris while I'm looking at hotdogs in Atlanta. But there is a fundamental similarity in each case: we are both perceiving objects and thus enter into the same kind of relationship with those objects. This happens everywhere a consciousness comes into contact with reality.

It is because every act of awareness, by definition, involves a perceiver (the subject which is aware) and what the perceiver perceives (the object[s] of which one is aware) which gives logic its global relevance to all instances of thought (since thought is the mental operation of the perceiver about the perceived). I can go into a laundromat in South Dakota and perceive a box of laundry detergent, or go to New York City and see the Empire State Building. The same principle applies in either instance: I am a perceiving subject, and by perception I have awareness of objects. Those objects change all the time, but my relationship to them as subject does not change. So not only does the view which I am proposing answer to the call for universality in logic, but also to the unchanging or immutable quality which you have raised in the past. As I mentioned before, it's all there right in front of your nose. No need to assert the existence of Bert or any other invisible magic beings.

Pete says "Your point of view makes logic relative"

No, Pete. Your mischaracterization of the view which we have presented makes logic appear relative. Indeed, you have to mischaracterize it by shifting emphasis ("I do not perceive what you perceive") to make it appear "relative."

To test this, answer this simple question: Can you give an example of an instance when one perceives without object?

If there is no object, what in your view qualifies the instance as an instance when one perceives? This would be a good question for you to examine, for if my contention is true that every instance of awareness consists of subject (perceiver) and object (perceived), then my claim to universality and immutability, two qualities which you have pressed in the past, in the basis of the subject-object relationship has undeniable and relevant merit.

Pete says "you cannot prove your logic is universal outside of merely asserting that it must be."

Actually, Pete, that's all you've been doing. You have nowhere demonstrated any understanding of the importance of the subject-object relationship in the reasoning process. Frankly, I find this bloody amazing! Furthermore, I can point to reasons why logic is universal to all actions of consciousness by pointing to the inescapable subject-object relationship which makes actions of consciousness possible (see above). Even if you want to deny these points, you validate them simply by considering them. You validate it the very instance you open your eyes (for when you open your eyes, you see an object!).

Pete says "Again, I haven't been arguing for logic in general (although most of the time, for brevity's sake, I have been only using that word), but for transcendent and universal logic."

I'll be honest, Pete. It appears that you have at best a very superficial understanding of what logic is, and I suspect that may be the case because of the sources which you are taking authoritative on these matters (Bahnsen and Van Til are woefully inadequate thinkers... Try HWB Joseph for starters). It appears that all logic is for you is a way to bamboozle unsuspecting non-Christians (and perhaps "misguided Christians") with your religious views, for this seems to be your only interest with regard to the nature of logic. Your treatment of the issues which you attempt to discuss only suggests to that your understanding of those issues is at best ankle deep. You mention in every other post that you are pressed for time and apologize "for brevity's sake." Okay, I appreciate this. So, slow down. Read what is presented. Digest. If you want to really learn something about logic, pay attention to what is being said. If you just want to close your mind off to real issues in epistemology, keep doing what you're doing. The choice is yours.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 25, 2003

Pete says "In which case you must demonstrate why things exist logically before there is logic."

It's not my view that logic is metaphysical, but epistemological. Things exist, and that's that. I do not say that a rock or a mountain or a planet is logical. Rather, I hold that statements and ideas about rocks, mountains and planets, for instance, can be logical, so long as they are consistent with all the implications of the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "You see, if logic is based on perception of what exists, then what exists precedes logic."

Yep! That's the principle of objectivity: the object holds priority over the subject. You catch on real quick, Pete!

Pete says "If existence precedes logic, then there is no logical reason why what exists should exist as it does"

Right. Again, we do not say that a rock is logical. Logic refers to the workings of a mind in its effort to identify what it perceives. To suggest that the universe exists "for a reason" is to embrace a reversal of the subject-object relationship. This is not rational.

Pete says "Furthermore, there is no logical reason to assert that what exists before logic can be understood by logic."

That's because logic doesn't do the understanding; those minds which guide their reasoning process by means of logic do the understanding. The subject (the perceiver) does the understanding; logic is simply a set of principles and rules which organize and guide his cognition. We don't say that a jackhammer understands the nature of concrete just because it blasts through it. Similarly with logic - it is a tool of cognition, not a living, conscious entity apart from the perceiver. This does not preclude a perceiver from understanding what he perceives. So long as one operates his mind without violating the subject-object relationship and its implications (the principle of objectivity, as I explained in my Apr. 24 post to this thread in response to Zeus), he has an epistemologically healthy orientation to the objects of his perception, and thus has the potential to identify and integrate those objects conceptually without contradiction. This is what understanding is all about. Do you want to understand, Pete?

Pete says "In other words, if this is your argument, you have fully opened the door to supernaturalism!"

Not in the least. And the reason is simple: the subject-object relationship is held intact (because I'm not trying to reverse or pervert it). As I mentioned in my last post: No need to assert the existence of Bert or any other invisible magic beings.

Pete says "All I have to say is that God created that which exists and you have no basis to deny this charge rationally, for there is no reason before existence in your view."

Sure I do. Since the object does not conform to wishes (again, the principle of objectivity holds in my view), I can fully grasp and make use of the fact that your saying "that God created that which exists" doesn't make it so. Wishing doesn't make it so, just as simply repeating a claim doesn't make it come true. You have to argue for it, and we're all waiting for you to do so. The trouble is, you do not appear to have an argument to begin with.

Pete says "Logic cannot be used before existence, so you cannot determine how existence came about using logic."

I don't say that "existence came about" in the first place. I don't hold that there was a "time" when there was no existence at all. So any supposed problems associated with the effort to "determine how existence came about" - whether one uses logic or divination or other device - are not my problems. Philosophically, I start with the fact that there is a reality, just as conceptually I start with the fact that I am aware of objects whenever I perceive. This is fully consistent with itself from its foundations.

Pete says "I think you have just walking into a massive problem and you do not even realize it."

If I have, you've not presented it very well. I just sunk another of your battleships. Please try again! (But one suggestion: Please try to understand what has been presented to you so far; at the moment, you're not integrating, you're groping.)

Meanwhile, would you present for the record what you mean by the term "supernaturalism"? Please try to tell us what it is, not simply what it is not.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 25, 2003

Pete says "As long as you agree that the perceived does not have to be real, then I accept this."

Pete, I would like to explore this issue a little further with you.

Can you give us an example of what can be perceived but is not real?

What is your definition of "real"?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 25, 2003

I wrote "It is not **what** you perceive (the particular object of your perception) which is crucial, it is the very fact **that** you perceive something (any thing) which is epistemologically significant. Just by perceiving an object, you participate in a relationship with that object as a subject to it."

Pete says "But this doesn't tell you anything at all about the object itself."

That's right - it's not supposed to, not yet anyhow. Identifying the nature of something is not possible until one is first aware of it as an object. One must first have awareness of an object, either directly or indirectly, to have any chance of identifying it. Determining **what** an object is, is an issue subsequent to and presupposing the subject-object relationship, since conceptualization (the process of identifying the objects of our perception) requires perceptual inputs. But the crucial point here for you to grasp, Peter, is that it is not the specific nature of any objects which one perceives in particular which is epistemologically relevant to our discussion at this point, but the fact that the relationship between the subject and its objects has identity. I explained this fully in my previous message, and here you are ignoring it.

Let's see if your other points have any lasting damage, for the one you just pointed out is not problematic in any sense whatsoever.

Pete says "It only tells you that you perceive something."

Right! That's all we need at this point. Bingo!

Pete says "The "object" relationship is really unnecessary, because one only needs the subject in order to establish relativistic logic."

First of all, this doesn't follow from anything you've stated so far; you're simply asserting it, which commits you to a performative inconsistency. But what's even more dismal for you is the fact that, to say that "The 'object' relationship is really unnecessary" is to openly embrace subjectivism. You assert a subject without an object - you say "one only needs the subject" - hence blatant subjectivism. Subject to what? Blank out. Where do you think the term "subjective" comes from? On my view, the subject by definition must have an object, otherwise it could not identify itself as a subject. This is basic. To assert otherwise is commit oneself to a contradiction, which theism does at its very roots (as I have proved on this site numerous times now).

Pete says "The fact that you perceive something does not mean that what you perceive is real,"

Watch the reversals, Pete. You just threw yourself into one again here. The fact of the matter is that perceiving does not make something real. Something is real (objective reality), and that makes it possible to perceive it, either directly or indirectly (subject-object relationship). Again, priority of the object = objective (my view). Priority of the subject = subjective (Pete's view).

Pete says "and therefore conclusions made based on the assumption that what you see is real are not valid outside of the reality of the assumption you already made."

Even if your prior point could be resuscitated (and it cannot without hanging itself in the process), this would be another non sequitur. You're groping again, Pete. I can't say I'm surprised (or impressed).

Pete says "You cannot, therefore, make logic universal"

I'm not claiming that I "make" logic universal. The subject-object relationship does this for us; we simply need to recognize it. Some thinkers have recognized this, but many (I'd say most) have renounced their rational faculty in deference to a worldview based on a neurotic terror (cf. Proverbs 1:7 - "the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge"). Again, Pete, you need to interact with the point as I have presented it. You have not done this. Instead, you simply mischaracterize it. Even in doing so, you implicitly validate my position simply by uttering words which you think have meaning. Preconditional to your actions is the subject-object relationship, which you deny. So you affirm it action while denying it in words. Not a good situation for you, Pete.

Watch this doosey:

Pete says "since you cannot even know whether there is anyone else who exists or not."

Who says that I cannot know this? More mischaracterization. It's like you're simply flinging out accusations just to keep the heat off your position. It would be humorous if I didn't know you were so confused.

Pete says "And if they do exist, you cannot know what they experience and perceive."

Why would I need to have knowledge of "what [others] experience and perceive"? Again, I'm not making statements about *what* they perceive, and I've clarified this already. But here you go, failing to integrate my earlier points. Either you did not read what I wrote, did not understand what I wrote, or are simply ignoring what I wrote in order to persist in mischaracterizing my view. This is a clear sign that one is on the ropes. Indeed, my position is valid even hypothetically: *if* someone perceives, he must by definition have an object to perceive. I don't have firsthand knowledge of what other people "experience and perceive," and I don't need to. Having firsthand knowledge of what other people "experience and perceive" is in no way a prerequisite to achieving validity in thought.

Pete says "This is why you don't like The Matrix illustration,"

Just curious, Pete: When did I say that I "don't like The Matrix illustration"? It's one of the easiest things to debunk!

Pete says "by the way, because it is something your worldview cannot defend against."

My worldview does not need to defend against the arbitrary, especially contrived schemes which not only miss the point, but beg the question as well as refute themselves. Go back and look at the many questions which I posed to you in response to your glorification of "The Matrix." We haven't seen you address them. It's clear why you haven't, and it's not due to time (for you clearly have time to participate on this web, as your activity on it documents).

To be sure, I actually love to see apologists pull out the rusting variations on the theme of the brain in the vat idea. Not only does it expose their love for uncertainty and self-destructive ideas as such (a consequence of their own self-loathing), it also confirms the point that defense of religious beliefs which are most popular among many apologists are those which must appeal to the outlandish hyperbole fiction in order to drive a point. Given the sad state of today's generation of thinkers, few can tell the difference between reality and a movie. Keep it up, Pete! You're right on schedule there.

Pete says "What if I perceive something that violates the rules of what you perceive? What if I have a divine vision? By what basis are you going to deny the reality of that experience?"

I don't deny that you have experiences, Pete. I just hope that you would aspire to maturity in thought such that you would seek to find rational explanations of the causes of those experiences. We all have experiences (this is possible because of the subject-object relationship, by the way, so again you're affirming the truth of my worldview), but we don't always identify their cause accurately.

Pete says "All you can say is, 'I have not had that experience!'"

No, I can say much more, and if you actually read what I've written on the Calvin Board, you'll find that I have done just that. You just need to start interacting with it rather than with the distortions which you foist up in place of what I've stated. You do this, at great expense to your credibility as a thinker, simply because you don't like the outcome. That's not honesty, for Pete's sake!

Pete says "You cannot say that the experience is either wrong or impossible,"

And I don't say that "the experience is either wrong or impossible." I simply question your honesty in what you claim as the caused of that experience.

Pete says "and thus your logic is relative to only yourself."

Again, not only does this not follow from what you said (even without the desperately needed corrections which I have supplied), it is clearly propped up by mischaracterization and a failure to integrate the points which I have presented. You simply are not making any points against a view if you do not interact with it.

Pete says "It cannot be objective, for what makes your experience more valid than mine?"

Funny how here you say that my view "cannot be objective" when just above you had asserted a subject without an object. Apparently words have no meaning for you.

Pete asks "What standard can you even begin to compare your worldview to mine?"

You mean, you haven't figured this out yet?

I said "This is the "universality" which you're looking for but want to attribute to a god which is anywhere but in reality."

Pete responds "But there is no universality in perception so that which is based on perception cannot be universal."

Wrong again, Pete. Universal to all instances of perception is the fact that there is a subject and an object which is perceived. This relationship is universal to all instances of perception. You cannot have one without the other, just as you cannot have a dance without a dancer. You will grasp this once you grasp the *distinction* between a) the nature of perception as an instance of a subject's awareness of objects and b) the nature of the objects which are perceived. There is a distinction between the act of perceiving and the object which is perceived, and this distinction is clearly being ignored in your attempts to raise objections to my view. Since I already pointed out this distinction in a prior post (specifically, I wrote "It is not *what* you perceive (the particular object of your perception) which is crucial, it is the very fact *that* you perceive something (any thing) which is epistemologically significant"), I can only conclude, supposing you have taken the time to read what I have said, either that you just do not understand what I said, or that you simply want to erect a straw man and battle that instead of what I have proposed. But, no worries, neither ignorance nor dishonesty are sufficient to refute a truth.

I said "It does not matter which object you are perceiving as opposed to which object I am perceiving. We may both be perceiving completely different objects. You might be beholding the Eiffel Tower in Paris while I'm looking at hotdogs in Atlanta. But there is a fundamental similarity in each case: we are both perceiving objects and thus enter into the same kind of relationship with those objects. This happens everywhere a consciousness comes into contact with reality."

Pete says "This is quantifiably not the case. A schizophrenic hears his dog tell him to kill the mailman. He concludes that dogs can talk. You do not hear dogs talking. You conclude that dogs cannot talk. Which view is correct?"

It's quite telling when one's opponents resort to treating the confusions of a schizophrenic as a standard on which to raise objections against Rational Philosophy. Gotta love it!

Pete says "You accept the worldview you have, and therefore deny the schizophrenic's worldview; yet he has experienced it--he has perceived it,"

He may have perceived something, but I would raise the strong suspicion that the tortured soul simply misidentified what he perceived. There is a distinction between perception (a biological, physical and automatic process) and conceptualization (a volitional process). But this is yet another distinction which has been repeatedly ignored. More context-dropping. Invalid.

Pete says "He has satisfied the requirements used to justify your position--a subject/object relationship!"

Really? What was the object that the schizophrenic perceived? Was the object that he perceived a dog telling him to kill the mailman? You actually believe this? Perhaps this is a Freudian allusion to Balaam and his talking ass? I know you believe some crazy stuff, Pete, so I'm exercising caution here. It may be the case that, having rejected reason, you actually believe (or want to believe) such stuff.

Pete says "Now here's why you have a problem. You say that your perceptions result in universal logic."

No, I have not said that "perceptions result in universal logic." Again, you're not interacting with my view; you're erecting a straw man again. Do you see it? I certainly do. You need to read more carefully before you respond, Pete.

Pete says "Logic says there can be no contradictions. The logic that you use comes to a contradictory answer to the logic that the schizophrenic uses, and both are based on an identical foundation--preception. Therefore, if the foundation is sound, you have contradictory logic."

And all the while, Pete is affirming the truth of my worldview by assuming that his words have any meaning to begin

with. Even before he read my post to which he now responds (he had to perceive it - there's an instance of the subject-object relationship), Pete affirmed the truth of my worldview by choosing to switch on his computer (an object of his perception) this morning. He could only do this if he as a subject participated in a relationship with the computer as his object. The same with the words on this page as well as the meanings he intends them to have. And look at him flail his arms enraged that his apologetic cannot be rescued.

I said "It is because every act of awareness, by definition, involves a perceiver (the subject which is aware) and what the perceiver perceives (the object[s] of which one is aware) which gives logic its global relevance to all instances of thought (since thought is the mental operation of the perceiver about the perceived)."

Pete says "But you assume the existence of what is perceived when that is not necessary."

I don't need to "assume" it. It's self-evident. In fact, I couldn't assume otherwise if I wanted.

Pete says "If what is perceived is not real, then are the conclusions drawn from it real?"

You're only digging yourself deeper into your own confusions here, Pete.

Let me ask you something:

By what means other than by perception would you determine whether something is real or not? If you are asleep in your bed one night, for instance, and you are awoken by the smell of smoke and your battery-operated fire alarm, and, when looking out the window of your house you see flames licking its walls, what would you do to determine whether or not the fire you see is real or not?

Remember, since you want to deny the validity of perception as well as the necessity of the subject-object relationship, your answer to these questions cannot assume the validity of perception or the relationship between yourself as subject and any objects which you might want to point to. Have at it.

I said "To test this, answer this simple question: Can you give an example of an instance when one perceives without object?"

Pete says "You're missing the point."

Ah!! As I thought. Pete will not address the question. And he says that I'm "missing the point"! Boy, doesn't that take the cake!

Pete says "If the object is not real, then how do you know the conclusions drawn from it are right?"

Who says that the object must be real in order to "know the conclusions drawn from it are right"?

Pete asks "How do you verify whether an object is real?"

Bert tells me, so it must be so, because whatever Bert says is true. (How's that for an answer? More your speed?)

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 26, 2003

I asked "Can you give us an example of what can be perceived but is not real? What is your definition of "real"?"

Pete says "Examples of what can be perceived but is not real: hallucinations, dreams, imaginations, mystic visions, etc."

Hallucinations "can be perceived but [are] not real"? So, when one hallucinates, he's not really hallucinating? Can one experience a hallucination, yet the hallucination which one experiences is not real? How does that work? As for dreams, I didn't know that we perceived dreams. By what means would you say we perceive dreams? Is the experience of dreaming not real? You can see where this is going, don't you? How would one determine that something is not real? Can you give some examples?

Pete says "The definition of real that I am using here is relative to your worldview and refers to physical existence."

"physical existence"? What is that? Where does my worldview distinguish "physical existence" from other kinds of existence?

Regardless, you state that the "definition of real" which you are using in your statements is one which "refers to physical existence." Is "physical existence" the definition of 'real' that you are using? If so, can you define "physical" and "existence"? Since you say that you "want to focus on this issue first since it really take precedence" [sic], wouldn't you say that defining these terms is of utmost relevance here?

Pete asks "Or do you accept the existence of non-physical objects?"

Such as?

Pete says "(I have not yet met an Objectivist who does, but if you are one then I can change my statement for you.)"

Have I identified myself as an Objectivist? And, supposing you've not "met an Objectivist who does" "accept the existence of non-physical objects," do you conclude from this that no Objectivists accept the existence of non-physical objects? How big a pool of Objectivists surveyed have you tested? For that matter, how many Objectivists have you met? Can you cite anything in the Objectivist literature which rejects the existence of non-physicality?

Pete says "My own personal definition of what is real is different, but it was not the way I was using the word here so it's not important at this point. I can explain that more in the worldview section."

Please offer your definition for the concept 'real' as you use it in your worldview. A simple, straightforward, unclouded definition would be nice.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 26, 2003

Nick asked "Are you getting it yet?"

Pete replied "I have to wonder the same from you. I notice that no one has bothered to take up my challenge in the worldview section to give us the atheist worldview yet."

In how many sections must we present our views, Pete, before you'll acknowledge them without distorting them in those few instances when you make an attempt to interact with them?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 26, 2003

Nick said "It now seems to be your stance that we need a way to determine if perceptions are "real" as opposed to hallucination."

Pete responds "That's not at all what I have been saying. I am saying that YOU have no way of determining if what you percieve is real,"

Sure I do. The "way of determining if what I percieve [sic] is real" is called reason. You, on the other hand, as a theist who wants to believe in invisible magic beings and who bases his worldview on fear rather than reason, cannot make a rightful, philosophical claim to reason, since you deny the very basis of reason. I have shown this in virtually every post

which I have submitted to the Calvin Board so far, and you still fail to interact with it. Why is that, Pete?

Pete says "so any conclusions you come to based on your perceptions are inherently uncertain;"

Your conclusion is self-evidently false, since at this very moment I am certain that I am perceiving a computer before me. Its existence is self-evident. The fact that you read my message on the Calvin Board only confirms the validity of my certainty all the more. There is no disputing my certainty here. Yet you want to assert that the conclusions which I come to based on my perception of the world around me "are inherently uncertain." Not only do the self-evident facts of reality attest otherwise, your own actions do so as well.

Pete says "and thus cannot be objective."

Once again, Pete, you use this term "objective" as if it had meaning when you use it. But since you have gone on the record numerous times now denying the necessity of an object in the subject-object relationship, your characterizations to this effect are of no value or credibility. By denying the need of a subject to have an object in order to qualify as a subject, you openly embrace subjectivism. Priority of the object = objectivity. Priority of the subject = subjectivism. You deny the object, and are thus left with subjectivism.

Pete says "Your worldview cannot provide a way for promoting objective truth."

On the contrary, only a Rational Philosophy, which I am proposing, can "provide a way for promoting objective truth" (is there any other kind of "truth," Pete?). That "way" is called reason. I have defended it consistently throughout my posts to the Calvin Board, but since you do not like reason, you throw around words like "objective" as if they had some kind of meaning. In your worldview, which destroys the subject-object relationship, there can be no meaning whatsoever. Even your imaginations are secondhand, borrowed from primitives who were just as confused on these matters as you are today.

Pete says "You have to steal from a worldview that does provide a way in order to do so."

No stealing involved whatsoever. Why? Because of the subject-object relationship, which you openly deny while implicitly affirming in your very act of turning on your computer, reading my post on the Calvin Board and attempting to respond to it. In each instance there is you the subject, and at least one object which you hold in your awareness. Where did you get that object? You will not address this question. You evade it. You seek to bury yourself in flimsy analogies and self-refuting counter-examples which any able thinker can demolish in an instant. That you continue to take them seriously only brings your own grasp of the issues involved into serious doubt.

Pete says "My worldview does provide a way, for if God is real (as my worldview stipulates by axiom), then I have an objective standard by which I can appeal and say, "You, nick, are wrong because you do not agree with this standard." You have no such standard."

Tell me, Nick, how does the statement "God is real" qualify as a legitimate axiom? In my Mar. 30 interaction and follow-up posts to your brief essay "God as an Axiom" (thread: <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=71>), I demonstrated that your understanding of what qualifies a statement as axiomatic fails on numerous counts. Your efforts to resuscitate your defense of "God as an Axiom" failed upon subsequent critical analysis. Now here you go again, asserting "God is real" as an axiom, a position which your worldview "stipulates" (which tells me that your worldview asserts this by fiat). This can only mean that your belief that "God is real" is not compatible with reason. And yet, you try to wear reason as if it were a mask that could conceal your cognitive errors. Doesn't fly, Pete.

Tell me, Pete, if the statement "God is real" qualifies as an axiom in your view, does the statement "Bert is real" also qualify as an axiom? Why arbitrarily go with "God is real" when you could just as easily make it "Bert is real"? You offer no standards for directing such preferences. You apparently just go with the flow, is that it?

Pete says "Again, your worldview can neither negate nor verify mine."

It doesn't need to. The arbitrary is not within the scope of either verifying or negating, since the arbitrary has no concern or respect for truth in it whatsoever. It is simply whim let loose on the playground of the imagination of those who are guided by fear rather than by reason, as Proverbs 1:7 makes so dreadfully clear.

Nick said "Logic works regardless of whether or not what we see is "real", as illustrated by the Tim, Bob, and Jim analogy."

Pete asks "But what kind of logic works this way?"

"what kind of logic"? How many kinds of logic do you know of, Pete? Are you an advocate of polylogism, as the Marxists

taught? If you assert different kinds of logic, I'm wondering if this is the case. According to the Marxists and their offspring, there is bourgeois logic vs. proletarian logic; there is the aristocrats' logic vs. the workers' logic. On college campuses today you'll find people who advocate different kinds of ethnocentric logic, "women's way of knowing," and other curios of groupthink. Similarly, for the Christian, there is the logic of "the chosen" vs. the logic of "the damned" (cf. I Cor. 2:14 et al.), and Peter, fearing that such denials might have their basis in truth (since he himself doesn't know how to defend against them), wants to think of himself as a member of "the chosen," and everyone who disagrees with him as numbering among "the damned."

Pete says "Only the kind that is not objective and transcendent."

If Nick bases his view of logic on the integrity of the subject-object relationship, and recognizes that the objects of his awareness hold epistemological priority over himself as the subject, then his view of logic has an objective basis.

Now, again we have this term "transcendent" cropping up again, and even though I and others have asked Peter on numerous occasions to explain what he means by this and to prove that such a quality is indeed a necessary attribute of logic, it is still wholly unclear, at least to me, what Peter thinks he is saying here when he wants to position himself as promoting a logic that is "transcendent." Peter, for the umpteenth time, would you please delve into this matter more than ankle deep so that a reasonable determination can be made as to whether or not this is a legitimate issue? Until you do so, I don't see any reason to accept it. It remains without any meaning whatsoever (for you have not provided a context to give it any meaning). Perhaps you are using the word "transcendent" merely for impact or effect, perhaps as a wedge to make your attempts to link logic with an invisible magic being seem more tenable in some as-of-yet-unexplained way?

Pete says "Again, look at the idea of the schizophrenic."

I do not consider the experiences of schizophrenics to be a standard. Why do you?

Pete says "He hears a talking dog--he experiences that. His perception doesn't change whether or not dogs can talk...but neither does yours!"

Has Nick argued that his ability to perceive has some influence on the supposed ability of dogs to talk?

Pete says "You are on equal footing if perception is the basis for your logic."

The schizophrenic also has the potential to guide his thoughts logically, but only so long as he successfully safeguards the integrity of the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "And this means that you have logic, based on perception, that tells you X (dogs can talk) and logic, based on perception, that tells you non-X (dogs can't talk)."

When did my logic tell me that dogs can talk? That a schizophrenic hears voices in his head (like many of the bible's patriarchs), does not mean that logic tells me that dogs can talk. My inputs do not support this conclusion.

Pete says "Thus X is non-X in the same relationship at the same time, and is a contradiction."

Where's the contradiction? Who is saying X is non-X? My inputs do not support contradictory conclusions, so there is no problem here for me.

Pete says "So tell me, what kind of "logic" does perception of a object/subject actually get you? A contradictory logic. Logic that denies itself."

Again, you show that you completely misunderstand the point. I've discussed these issues with 15-year-olds who show far more ability to grasp these issues that you seem to have, Pete.

Nick says "You seem to want us to "prove" that we aren't in "The Matrix". How do YOU prove that we are not in "The Matrix"?"

Pete says "The Matrix is not possible in my worldview, and thus is not a problem."

It's not possible in mine, either. So what's the fuss?

Pete says "Remember, my worldview assumes a God who created all things and who does not lie."

Now THIS sounds startlingly similar to "The Matrix" if you ask me. It is directly analogous. In "The Matrix" a computer generates the images which it wants subjects to perceive; in Christianity an invisible magic being creates objects for its

subjects to perceive. No fundamental difference here whatsoever.

Pete says "Your worldview, however, is not exempt from this question, because it is based on perception and an object/subject relationship."

Wrong again. It is because the integrity of the subject-object relationship is maintained throughout a rational worldview that such arbitrary scenarios are invalid as counter-examples. Such counter-examples assert concepts while denying the means by which they are formed. They are based on a wholly invalid view of consciousness (indeed, you've nowhere attempted to identify and validate the view of consciousness which such scenarios assert). You just don't want to acknowledge this is all.

Pete says "You have not demonstrated how one could accept your worldview and be required to deny the possibility of the Matrix, as one who accepts my worldview would be required to do."

"required"? "possibility"? Where do you get these ideas? Still confused?

Pete says "Your answer to this in the past seems to have been something along the lines of this; "I have no reason to believe that I am." Do I?"

That is not the answer that has been presented in response to your assertion of "The Matrix" as a counter-example. If you think that's all that's been said, you need to go back and read what has been presented. I haven't seen you interact with the points that have been made in response to your beloved "Matrix" scenario. You simply keep throwing it up there as if it were clean and sober. It's not. It falls under the weight of its own stolen concepts. It's simply not a problem in my worldview whatsoever; I would have to be dishonest to say that it is a problem in my worldview, while you would have to be dishonest to say that it is not a problem in your worldview, since your own religious beliefs are directly analogous to "The Matrix" notion.

Pete says "Again, reason in my worldview is dependent upon God;"

If it's "dependent upon God," then it cannot be reason. Again, invalid. Even you yourself affirmed that "God" cannot make a square triangle, which amounts to an admission that "God" has the same orientation to logic that man has. Thus to say that such is based on "God" begs the question as well as ignores context. Deeply flawed here, Pete.

Pete says "thus, I have no reason to accept the Matrix."

In fact, what you accept is arguably much worse than "The Matrix." When you encounter another human being, for instance, how can you be certain that he or she is not infested with 20,000 demonic spirits waiting to eat your soul for supper? You simply can't know, but since you think invisible magic beings exist and influence human minds (as the primitives who wrote the bible clearly believed), you have to accept such arbitrary notions as legitimate statements of what is possible. This is just the tip of the iceberg. When we get to issues of induction and metaphysical value judgments, you're in an even more hopeless mess. I'm glad it's not my worldview which suffers such a self-destructive impulse.

Pete says "Your reason is dependent upon a subject/object relationship (and the perception of it),"

Not on our perception of the subject-object relationship, but on the fact that there is such a relationship, whether anyone recognizes it or not, in all instances of awareness. This is definitional. Again, you're blathering past the point.

Pete says "which tells us nothing about whether or not such an object that is perceived actually exists."

If the object does not exist, how could it be perceived?

Nick said "I recall you saying at some point that the worldview with the smallest number of presuppositions is the one most likely to be correct. Well, the only one Seeker and I have made is that we are not in "The Matrix". Given your claim that all worldviews must have presuppositions, can you give me a number of presuppositions that is greater than 0 and less than 1?"

Pete says "You have no reason from within your own worldview to say that you are not in the Matrix."

You have not shown this, Pete, and Nick and I have both shown the reverse numerous times now. You just don't like the answer which we've presented (and why would you? It is a reason which is within our own worldview). You don't want it to be an effective response to your counter-example (even though it's apparent that you do not really understand the issues involved to begin with), so you simply go on repeating your accusation, but offer nothing to substantiate it. This is what I mean by dishonesty. It's not a pretty sight.

Pete says "In fact, your assertion of that runs counter to your own ideas of how reason is valid in the first place. In stating, "We are not in the Matrix" you have denied your own worldview."

How so? To substantiate this charge here, Pete, you'd first have to show that you have intelligently understood the worldview which has been proposed in contradistinction to yours. This is a bare minimum condition which you have not yet fulfilled. So your claim here is without warrant and totally premature.

Pete says "Demonstrate how your idea of logic can cause one to come to the conclusion that there is no Matrix."

Piece of cake. "The Matrix" example assert concepts while denying the means by which they are formed. It invalidates itself. Nick has shown that he clearly understands this, and so have I. Why don't you understand this?

Pete says "It cannot be done from your own worldview,"

It can (and I just did), since my worldview articulates an objective method of concept-formation.

Pete says "and that's why you keep borrowing mine (granted, I doubt it's intentional that you do so)."

Not at all, for not only is your worldview simply a variation of the same idea as "The Matrix" (though far more hideous), your worldview does not even offer anything intelligent in regard to man's need for an objective method of forming concepts. If you feel otherwise, please cite where the bible articulates the method of forming concepts which you employ and show how that method and the concepts so formed are compatible with your use of "The Matrix" as a counter-example. I rose to and satisfied your challenge, now it's your turn to return the honor.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 26, 2003

Pete says "The "object" relationship is really unnecessary, because one only needs the subject in order to establish relativistic logic."

I responded "First of all, this doesn't follow from anything you've stated so far; you're simply asserting it, which commits you to a performative inconsistency. But what's even more dismal for you is the fact that, to say that "The 'object' relationship is really unnecessary" is to openly embrace subjectivism. You assert a subject without an object - you say "one only needs the subject" - hence blatant subjectivism."

Pete says "But isn't that exactly what I said? "[O]ne only needs the subject in order to establish relativistic logic" (emphasis added)."

Again, you assert a subject without an object. This is incoherent, for reasons which I have stated. Didn't you see them? To assert a subject without an object, you need to explain what qualifies something as a subject if it has no objects to perceive. You have only asserted this is possible, but you've nowhere defended it. Now it's time for you to defend what you've asserted. Will you do it?

Pete says "Secondly, this is not what I am asserting--I am simply trying to get you to be consistent with your own worldview."

I am consistent within my own worldview. Where have I defiled the subject-object relationship? To successfully press the charge that I am not consistent with my worldview, you would a) have to understand it (and you do not), and b) have to find some significant point in my worldview which is incompatible with the subject-object relationship and its relevant implications. Frankly, I don't think you've taken the time to comprehend any of this yet to detect such an instance to begin with.

Pete says "You are trying to assert an objective logic by perception"

You're erecting a straw man again. Don't you see it? Why won't you interact with my worldview, Pete? Are you afraid to?

Pete says "--but perception cannot be anything but subjective!"

Not if there is an objective nature to perception, and since perception is a physical, non-volitional and biological process, it is objective. You fail to understand what the term 'subjective' means. Subjective means either denying the objects of awareness while claiming awareness or acting as if the subject has epistemological priority over its objects. We cannot look at a glass of water and choose to see a piano or an automobile in its place. If you are awoken in your home by the smell of smoke and the sound of your fire alarm, and you see that flames are burning your home, you can't choose to be experiencing an afternoon on Waikiki Beach sipping pina colodas instead. But this is what would have to be the case if perception were subjective. Perception has an objective, identifiable and researchable nature. And it's quite predictable, too. For instance, if you pick up a prescription bottle and the label is facing away from you, you know that by turning the bottle you will be able to see the label. As a subject aware of objects, we have a relationship with those objects, and we must act in accordance to the nature of that relationship. I cannot look at the back of the prescription bottle and say that I see the face of its label when I do not. Again, we're back to the issue of honesty. See how all these things are so tightly integrated in my view, while in your view there is nothing but mind-negating disintegration?

Pete says "The object in your object/subject relationship is not doing any perceiving--it is only the subject that perceives."

Good job, Pete! I'm impressed. And the means and form of perception have an objective nature. But you still need to grasp what is meant by the terms "subjective" and "objective," even though I've clarified them as I use them in many posts now.

Pete says "The fact that you perceive something does not mean that what you perceive is real,"

I said "Watch the reversals, Pete. You just threw yourself into one again here. The fact of the matter is that perceiving does not make something real. Something is real (objective reality), and that makes it possible to perceive it, either directly or indirectly (subject-object relationship)."

Pete says "But I have already given counter-examples that disprove this notion. You cannot prove that the object is real, and therefore it is perceived. This is the very thing that the illustration of the Schizophrenic demonstrated."

Your "illustration of the Schizophrenic" depends on a frozen abstraction fallacy, Pete. It conflates (and thus ignores the distinction between) perception and conceptualization. In fact, the fact alone that the schizophrenic has awareness of anything is sufficient to confirm the validity of my worldview, just as you affirm the validity of my worldview when you try to deny it. The fact that the schizophrenic misidentifies what he perceives only drives home my point that we need to guide our conceptual faculty by reason and not by something that rejects reason (such as religion). Even your "illustration" fails to serve as an effective counter-example. None of your examples and illustrations have been effective so far, Pete. Your glorification of "The Matrix" only defeats its own stated purpose; your two blind men on the beach is not only a weak analogy but also commits a hideous reversal; and now your "illustration of the Schizophrenic" only shows that you're missing the point.

Pete says "Now consider again what you said. "The fact of the matter is that perceiving does not make something real." THIS IS EXACTY WHAT I JUST SAID! Just because you perceive it does not mean that it is real!"

That's because it is the fact that something exists makes it real. Do you think we could perceive it if it did not exist? Yet you want to say that there are things that we perceive that do not exist, and then you also want to say that there are things which exist which can never be perceived. You don't even know whether you're coming or going, Pete.

Pete says "You are, in fact, contradicting yourself here. You say perceiving something does not make something real. Yet then you say "Something is real...and that makes it possible to perceive it." This directly refutes your previous statement. Let me give you an illustration to demonstrate this."

No contradiction whatsoever. Apparently you are acting on your own confusion here. Observe:

Pete says "Suppose you hold a brick in your hand. How do you know the brick is real? Answer: you perceive it. Problem: our perceptions do not determine what is real or not, so how does your perception of the brick demonstrate that the brick is actually there?"

Did you see where Peter slipped? We have two issues, yet he has conflated them into one. One issue is "what *makes* something real?" and the second issue is "How do you *know* that something is real?" It is true, perceiving something does not "make" something real. Something is real by virtue of its existence regardless of whether or not someone perceives it. But this does not address how one can know that something is real, which is a matter which becomes an issue only when a subject-object relationship is present. That is where perception and the conceptualization process come in. But Peter has ignored the distinction here, and has conflated these two issues into a package-deal. It is on the basis of this ignorance and failure to integrate that he now charges me with a contradiction. Again, he must erect a

straw man to critique my position, which only means: his critique is a misfire.

Pete says "Or perhaps you go this way. How do you know the brick is real? Answer: because it is real, and therefore it is able to be perceived. Problem: This is circular reasoning--you assert the brick is real in your conclusion, when it is the premise you are trying to prove."

Here we have the other side of the coin of Pete's package-dealing. As a consequence, he ignores the fact that proof is a process of showing the logical relationship of that which is not perceptually self-evident to that which is perceptually self-evident. I do not need to prove that what I perceive is real, since it is self-evident whether something is real or not. So, no circularity whatsoever here. Also, Pete will be hard-pressed to find a quote attributable to me where I said "I know that X is real because it is real" in the sense that he charges here. This is simply another mischaracterization. Furthermore, Pete ignores the fact that he operates on his perceptions all the time, and does precisely what I have been describing all along every moment of his waking life. Just by reading my words on the computer screen, Pete affirms the validity of my worldview. This bothers Pete to no end, so he rushes in to find some way not to concede the point. But every attempt to evade my position fails miserably.

Pete says "You cannot have an objective answer in a object/subject relationship because the subject is always there,"

Of course the subject is there - the subject is the one perceiving and from whom you are demanding an "objective answer." On the implications of what you say here, the term "objective answer" can have no meaning whatsoever. So clearly you're understanding of what the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' mean is woefully deficient. Subjective does not mean "the subject is always there" or "the subject is present"; subjective means that either the objects of awareness have been denied in one sense or another or that the subject asserts itself as holding epistemological priority over its objects. Pete has not explained what he means by 'subjective', so I can only assume that he agrees with my terms as I define them until he does provide his own definitions and defends his claim to their conceptual viability. Now, look at the alternative which Pete wants to assert in place of a Rational Worldview. He wants to assert the existence of an invisible magic being (a subject) which finds itself existing all by its lonesome (i.e., no objects of awareness) and then one day decides to create a realm of objects (the universe). Not only does Pete start out by denying all objects to the subject he asserts, he says that any objects which do arise are creations of that subject and thus epistemologically subordinate to the subject. Now, that's subjectivism with a vengeance!

Pete says "and in this case the subject is the determining factor."

Not in my worldview, since in my worldview the subject defers to the object. As I have said numerous times now, the object according to my worldview holds epistemological priority over the subject. That is why it is so important to maintain the integrity of the subject-object relationship.

Pete, you really need to learn to read more carefully.

Pete says "The only way to have an objective reality is to not have anything to do with the subject! Take it out completely!"

Pete's hatred of the subject-object relationship has bloomed a new blossom. Denying the objects of awareness did not produce the desired outcome, so now he tries the other alternative: deny the subject. This is Pete's self-denial transmogrified into the form of an all-encompassing policy: if first attempts to deny reason did not succeed, try another route even if it means embarrassing yourself even more than you already have to date.

Pete says "Thus: God is logic. An objective statement that requires no subject."

You (a subject) just stated it, Pete, thus refuting itself. Besides, since you will likely insist that "God" is conscious (would you have it any other way?), your own stammerings here, assuming they had any validity, would be just as effective in demolishing your own stated view as anyone else's. How comedic!

Pete says "This is the basis by which I can use objective logic."

"I"? To what does that refer, Pete? Does that refer to a being which has awareness? That's a subject, by definition. For any of the terms which you've used in your post so far to have any meaning whatsoever, there has to be a relationship between perceiver and perceived. It's clear now that you recognize that the subject-object relationship provides a valid answer that is wholly devastating TAG, thus refuting it in spades, and that's why you are driven to deny it. Yet, in denying the subject-object relationship, you deny all meaning to begin with. You will deny the validity of your own eyesight in your effort to put into writing an argument for the existence of an invisible magic being. You are doing precisely what TAG accuses non-Christians of doing, right down to the letter. The irony here is stupendous to behold.

Pete says "You have no objective logic, and therefore have no basis to use objective logic."

Wishing will not make it so, Pete.

I said "Again, priority of the object = objective (my view). Priority of the subject = subjective (Pete's view)."

Pete says "But priority of the subject is not my view"

Yes, it is undeniably your view if your view holds that there is a god that created the universe and which dictates the course of history. According to this view, the subject holds priority over all objects - the objects do everything that the subject wants. The standard in such a view is the subject's whims, not the nature of the objects which it perceives. The objects have only that nature which the subject "allows" (i.e., wants) them to have. That's religious god-belief in a nutshell. You can't get any more subjective than that.

Pete says "--I am simply demonstrating the problem with your view."

No, you're simply denying my view. That's not the same as "demonstrating" a problem in it.

Pete says "Do not assign the problem in your view to my position when I do not accept your view."

Whether or not you accept my view is irrelevant. You've gone on the record first as denying the object in the subject-object relationship, and now denying the subject in the subject-object relationship, all the while acting on the assumption that your words have meaning. This is a grotesque performative inconsistency, since meaning as such depends on the integrity of the subject-object relationship. Your own actions are inconsistent with what you have stated. You are beginning to recognize that this position has only fatal implications for TAG, and that's why you're grasping, groping and choking on any straw and weed that can be blown out to obfuscate matters. I see it. I wouldn't doubt that Nick sees this as well. You make it painfully clear, Pete.

I said "I'm not claiming that I "make" logic universal. The subject-object relationship does this for us; we simply need to recognize it."

Pete says "But it doesn't make a universal logic--it cannot do so, and you cannot demonstrate how it can."

I've demonstrated this many times. Either you do not understand it, or you simply are in perverse denial. I'm tending to think it's the latter in your case, Pete. You don't even address my main points in regard to this issue. That's telling enough.

Pete said "since you cannot even know whether there is anyone else who exists or not."

I asked "Who says that I cannot know this?"

Pete says "YOUR WORLDVIEW says that you cannot know this."

Who says that my worldview says that I cannot know this?

I said "Why would I need to have knowledge of "what [others] experience and perceive"?"

Pete says "Because if they do not experience what you experience then your logic is not universal."

I've already responded to this. You're confusing the distinction between the nature of the particular objects which one perceives and the overall nature of the perceptual process itself. Another straw man. It fails to apply to my view.

Pete says "Your logic is dependent upon the perceptions of the subject viewing the object; yet each subject is different and with different perceptions."

And in each instance of any subject's awareness of any objects, there is a relationship between the subject of that awareness and the objects of that awareness. This is what you have denied. That is why you retreat to subjectivism; there is no alternative for you once you commit yourself to such a denial.

Pete says "A logic based on these perceptions must be subjective."

Wrong again (and it doesn't follow from anything he has thus far stated, so it's a non sequitur). There is nothing in my worldview which says that the particular attributes of each perceiving subject and the particular attributes of each object perceived must be identical in all instances of awareness. Again, that's confusing the distinction between the nature of the objects which one perceives and the nature of the perceptual process itself (which amounts to a straw man). The particular attributes of both subject and object can vary within a broad spectrum of ranges. The subject can be tall or short, Asian or Hispanic, blue-eyed or green-eyed, in Los Angeles or in London, at home with a cold or

climbing Mt. Everest, etc. But as a subject, he is still able to perceive objects. The objects which he perceives might be a skyscraper or a garbage can, an optometrist or a convicted felon, an apple or a can of soup, a computer or a stone-age ax. They are still objects of his perception. What does not change in each instance is the fact that there is a perceiver (the subject) and that which the perceiver perceives (the object). Thus, in each instance, there is a relationship between subject and object. I have asked you, Pete, to present an example of a subject without an object and to explain what qualifies it as a subject, and you've not done so. However, for you to substantiate your charge that my view of logic reduces to subjectivism, you would have to do this. Your attempts to attack my view have not succeeded. They invalidate themselves, since to have meaning, those attempts would have to assume the validity of the subject-object relationship.

I said "Again, I'm not making statements about *what* they perceive, and I've clarified this already."

Pete says "But you are making statements about what they perceive. You are saying that God is not rational. This discounts my perception of God, doesn't it?"

Oh, so now you want to claim that you *perceive* "God"? Well, this is a new topic, and one which I would really like to explore!! Perhaps you could start a new thread, Pete, one in which you identify what you mean by "God" and the means by which you "perceive" it. I will have many questions to ask you there, Pete, and I wouldn't be surprised if Nick will, too.

You might also consider starting another thread in which you defend the position that "God is rational." I would very much like to see how such a defense would proceed. (However, if what is past serves as a prologue, I wonder what lasting use such an exercise will have for your position.)

I said "Indeed, my position is valid even hypothetically: *if* someone perceives, he must by definition have an object to perceive."

Pete says "Wrong. Your argument is that because the object is real, it can be perceived."

That was not an argument, just an observation. It does not need an argument since it is self-evidently true. I don't need to argue for what is self-evidently true. Nor do you. When you want to switch on your computer, do you first have to construct an argument to prove that your computer exists, Pete? Of course not. So, you're simply dissembling here.

Pete says "But not all that is perceived by a person is real (hallucinations, dreams, etc.)."

I had some questions about what you mean by the insinuation that hallucinations and dreams are not real. Have you had a chance to consider them yet? If a person is hallucinating, but hallucinations are not real, what is going on? If I am dreaming, but that dream is not real, what is it? Also, I'm still waiting for you to define what you mean by "real." You indicated in a prior post that you think your meaning of the term "real" differs from mine. But when you use the term "real" it is not clear which meaning you are assuming, yours or the one you attribute to my position (I think you said "physical existence" which of course I have never claimed). So, when you use the term "real" in the future, can you clarify what you mean by this term, since you've already expressed confusion on the matter.

Pete asks "Since I can see things when I dream, does that mean that what I dream is an object?"

Good question. I'm VERY curious as to how Christianity with all its authoritativeness would answer the question which you ask here. I await your explanation.

I said "Just curious, Pete: When did I say that I "don't like The Matrix illustration"? It's one of the easiest things to debunk!"

Pete says "Okay, it was nick who didn't like it--sorry. But you can't debunk it anyway."

That's odd. My position is that it debunks itself, as I've shown repeatedly. You've not rescued it. Why is that?

I said "My worldview does not need to defend against the arbitrary, especially contrived schemes which not only miss the point, but beg the question as well as refute themselves."

Pete says "Obviously your worldview does not need to defend itself against such things--because that is what your worldview IS!"

Oh brother... Did you just emerge from the Playground School of Philosophical Quibbling or something, Pete? Sometimes you come across as a real child.

I said "Go back and look at the many questions which I posed to you in response to your glorification of "The Matrix.""

Pete says "I don't glorify the Matrix. I am simply pointing out that based on your worldview there is nothing you can say to refute it. I have skimmed back over other posts and I don't see anything where you actually addressed this issue."

I have addressed it. It is conceptually fallacious. It asserts meaning while attempting to dynamite the very basis of meaning itself. It's both pitiful and laughable that you do not see this.

In order for you to rescue your "Matrix" illustration from the points I have brought against it (points which perhaps you simply do not recognize or understand), you need to show how the concepts which it employs can have meaning while preserving the point that it is trying to illustrate. Not only do you nowhere do this, you don't even seem to exhibit an understanding of the need to do this.

I quote myself (Apr 26):

"not only is your worldview simply a variation of the same idea as "The Matrix" (though far more hideous), your worldview does not even offer anything intelligent in regard to man's need for an objective method of forming concepts. If you feel otherwise, please cite where the bible articulates the method of forming concepts which you employ and show how that method and the concepts so formed are compatible with your use of "The Matrix" as a counter-example."

Pete says "We haven't seen you address them."

Then you haven't been reading intelligently. It's there. Go back and look.

Pete says "Any objections that you bring against it have to come from a worldview other than your own."

You've not shown this, either. Wishing does not make it so, Pete.

Pete says "Demonstrate for me, right now, how the object/subject relationship leads you to reject the Matrix. Do it, if you can."

Easy. On the one hand, your "Matrix" illustration denies the validity of the subject-object relationship (that's its intent to begin with), yet the illustration itself assumes that the concepts it uses have meaning. But meaning requires a subject-object relationship, since meaning is the referential correspondence between one's ideas and reality. It simply refutes itself, Pete, just as Christianity does, and for the very same reasons. It's a chimera. I'm not surprised that you, as a Christian, take it so seriously. You have no defense against it yourself. A major reason for this is that you lack an objective understanding of the nature of concepts.

Pete said "What if I perceive something that violates the rules of what you perceive? What if I have a divine vision? By what basis are you going to deny the reality of that experience?"

I responded "I don't deny that you have experiences, Pete. I just hope that you would aspire to maturity in thought such that you would seek to find rational explanations of the causes of those experiences."

Pete says "SEE! SEE! You have proven my point exactly! WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT to determine what is "rational" or what is "maturity in thought"? Huh?"

A worldview which is founded on the integrity of the subject-object relationship gives me this right (for it is only in the context of such a worldview that the concept 'right' could have any meaning in the first place). And the only thing which you are able to bring against me is the tiresome, point-missing question "what gives you the right..."? Try at least to be somewhat original.

Pete says "You are trying to conform me to your worldview when I REJECT your worldview."

But Pete, you confirm my worldview all the time, though you do not want to admit this. Every time you have awareness, you have awareness of an object, by definition, and you have essentially launched yourself on a campaign to deny this fact. But even in doing so, your actions affirm the validity of my view, since you assume that your concepts have meaning. You checkmate yourself.

Pete says "Your reasoning is foolishness and I do not accept it."

Actually, you act on it all the time. You just don't want to admit it.

Pete says "Your worldview provides no reason why *I* should be subject to it."

My worldview does not say that you "should be subject to it." It's not a matter of obligations or service, Pete. It's essentially a the willingness to recognize facts and the choice to be honest, and only then could you have a hope of employing my worldview consistently. But you have chosen a course of denial and dishonesty, and that is why you are having so many problems philosophically.

Pete says "My worldview, on the other hand, provides reasons why you should be subject to my worldview."

That's because your worldview is all about obligations and service (i.e., self-sacrifice), and not about living life. That is why it has no alternative but to pursue a course of denial and dishonesty.

Pete says "How, then, can you try to make me conform to your worldview when you have no basis to do so?"

I don't claim to have a basis to make you do anything, Pete. You're free to do as you choose. If you want to hang yourself, no one will stop you. But when you want to convert other people to your religious views at gunpoint, be prepared to encounter heavy resistance. Many people throughout the world are growing tired of the "believe or die" crowd. They are not welcome here.

I said "We all have experiences (this is possible because of the subject-object relationship, by the way, so again you're affirming the truth of my worldview)"

Pete says "WRONG! Just because we have experiences does not cause what we experience to be real!"

Now, which definition of 'real' are you using here, yours, or the one you have erroneously attributed to me? You keep evading this issue, Pete. Why is that? Can't define it, eh?

Pete says "Your logic is based on the assumption that what you perceive is real."

It's not an assumption, Pete. It's a recognition of that which is self-evident. No need to assume what is self-evident.

Pete says "You do not take into account what would happen if what you perceive is completely hallucinary."

Two questions:

1. How do you know that I "do not take into account what would happen if what [I] perceive is completely hallucinary" [sic]?
2. Why do YOU think one should "take into account what would happen if what [one] perceive[s] is completely hallucinary" [sic]?

I'm very curious to know your answers to these questions, Pete. You seem to have an infatuation with fantasy, imagination and hallucination. Perhaps you can explain why one should take this infatuation of yours seriously.

Pete says "You assert physical existence based on what you see;"

Where did I assert "physical existence"? This is not my term, Pete. Are you denying that physical objects exist? How do you *know* that they are physical? Nick asked you questions along these lines, but still you evade the matter. I know why.

Pete says "yet our dreams are not physical existence."

How do you know this? How would you prove that "dreams are not physical existence"? This is crucial, Pete. Define your terms and show your argument for this conclusion. Let's see your cards.

Pete says "You assert logic that is dependent on the fact that something is real in order to be perceived,"

And that's wrong because of what? Should logic not be based on fact? Logic is only possible within the context of reality. Perhaps that's not the case in your worldview?

Pete says "but if that something is not real and is still perceived what does that do to your theory?"

I'm still trying to think of an example of "something that is not real and is still perceived." If it's not real, how could it be perceived? Simply saying the words "hallucination," "dream," etc. is not helpful, for you do not provide any context to support how they qualify as "something that is not real and is still perceived." You leave your homework unfinished. The more you continue to evade this question (I've asked it several times now), the more you damage your own credibility

here.

Pete said "All you can say is, 'I have not had that experience'."

I responded "No, I can say much more"

Pete says "But you have no reason to."

You've not established that I have no reason to, Pete. Wishing does not make it so.

Pete said "You cannot say that the experience is either wrong or impossible,"

I responded "And I don't say that "the experience is either wrong or impossible." I simply question your honesty in what you claim as the caused of that experience."

Pete says "And yet you have already said that logic comes after the existence of the object that is perceived, right?"

Yes, we need inputs to reason about in order to exercise logic. Your own actions confirm this all day long, Pete.

Pete says "Therefore, how can you use your logic to question anyones honesty about the cause of an experience?"

Sure. So can you (assuming you were capable of honesty yourself). If person A experiences X and says that Y caused X, and upon examination Y strikes me as wholly absurd, and A's attempts to defend Y as an explanation of X dig the holes of absurdity ever deeper and deeper, there comes a point at which I would only be wise in questioning that person's honesty. He does not strike me as a stable, rational mind, and thus I doubt it would serve my interests to enter into a contractual relationship with him, for instance. So, yes, there is a practical issue here, to be sure.

Pete said "It cannot be objective, for what makes your experience more valid than mine?"

I responded "Funny how here you say that my view "cannot be objective" when just above you had asserted a subject without an object. Apparently words have no meaning for you."

Pete says "Funny how you are not dealing with my arguments at all!"

I don't think you've presented any arguments, Pete. You just fire off assertions. They do not qualify as arguments. No one is denying the fact that you have experiences, Pete. That you have experiences is not problematic. The problems arise when you want to explain those experiences by replacing fact with imagination and fantasy.

Pete says "I am taking your position here and totally refuting it. You cannot argue against it."

Not at all, as I've repeatedly shown, you have simply succeeded in mischaracterizing my view. You drop contexts, conflate distinctions to form package-deals, shift emphasis, assert concepts while denying their basis, assume meaning while destroying the context on which they depend, and a whole host of other nefarious deeds. You may think you've refuted something, but since all you've done is attack a straw man, you cannot claim to be "totally refuting" anything in my view.

I said "Wrong again, Pete. Universal to all instances of perception is the fact that there is a subject and an object which is perceived."

Pete says "YOU are the one who is wrong. Universal to all instances of perception is only the fact that a subject perceives."

Perceives what? If you say "It perceives nothing" then you need to explain what qualifies it as a subject.

Pete says "This says nothing about the object that is perceived"

The subject-object relationship tells us three things: 1) the object exists, 2) the object is perceived, and 3) it is involved in a relationship with the subject which perceives it. But here you want to say that it "says nothing about the object that is perceived." It's just not true.

Pete says "--the object is totally irrelevant, and therefore doesn't prove anything."

Prove it. Show how all the concepts in your statements have meaning while not conceding that a subject must have awareness of objects to qualify as a subject. (Hint: Just by reading this, you have invalidated your own task.)

I said "It's quite telling when one's opponents resort to treating the confusions of a schizophrenic as a standard on which to raise objections against Rational Philosophy. Gotta love it!"

Pete says "AND YET YOU DO NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION!"

Getting huffy, Pete? No need to yell. And what you say here is not true. I have answered the question by pointing out that there is a distinction between perceiving an object (a perceptual, automatic process) and identifying it (a conceptual, volitional process). You want to erase such distinctions (i.e., package-dealing), so you do not acknowledge that such distinctions exist and are philosophically relevant to the issue at hand.

Pete says "It's quite telling when one's opponents CANNOT REFUTE the confusions of a schizophrenic!"

By admitting that they're confusions, you admit that we have no onus to refute them. One has no obligation to refute nonsense. The trouble is, many thinkers get the subject-object relationship confused (principally because they want to base their philosophy on the bias of an arbitrary idea), just as Christianity has. It should be apparent from Pete's example that the schizophrenic is analogous to Pete himself. Where the one is claiming to have perceived a talking dog, the other claims to perceive an invisible magic being.

I said "He may have perceived something, but I would raise the strong suspicion that the tortured soul simply misidentified what he perceived."

Pete says "But who are you to make this judgment?"

A thinking man, Pete, theism's worst enemy.

Pete says "How do you know that you have not misidentified what you perceived?"

Because of the impossibility of the contrary.

I said "There is a distinction between perception (a biological, physical and automatic process) and conceptualization (a volitional process). But this is yet another distinction which has been repeatedly ignored. More context-dropping. Invalid."

Pete says "Because you say so?"

No, because reality says so. Take a look at how your own mind works, Pete. When you perceive an object and you do not know what it is, what do you do? You seek to integrate it into the context of the sum of your knowledge by identifying it conceptually. Concepts require perceptual input, but perceptual input does not automatically result in concepts (they must be formed consciously, by a volitional process), and attempting to form concepts does not guarantee that the concepts which result have adequately isolated the attributes and distinctions of those objects which they are supposed to integrate. That is why we need an objective theory of concept-formation. Without such a theory, concepts such as "right" and "wrong," "accurate" and "inaccurate," "success" and "error," etc., break down and cease to have reference to reality. If there is no tie between the content in our minds and reality, there can be no meaning to our concepts, by definition.

I said "Really? What was the object that the schizophrenic perceived? Was the object that he perceived a dog telling him to kill the mailman? You actually believe this? Perhaps this is a Freudian allusion to Balaam and his talking ass? I know you believe some crazy stuff, Pete, so I'm exercising caution here. It may be the case that, having rejected reason, you actually believe (or want to believe) such stuff."

Pete says "Notice that Seeker nowhere in this paragraph answers the question, although he did spend some considerable time ad homineming me."

For one thing, my answer to your question was given prior to this paragraph (only, you ignored it), and nowhere do I offer an ad hominem. I'm simply wondering aloud. It is true that you believe that Balaam's ass talked, right? After all, isn't that what Numbers 22:30 says? You do believe this, right? If so, then there can be no ad hominem here. Also, if you want to speak of questions which have gone unanswered, you're lagging far behind on the meter count, Peter Pike.

Pete says "Yes, Seeker--the talking dog is the object that the Schizophrenic perceived."

Supposing the schizophrenic in your imaginary example did perceive a dog. What inputs suggest that the dog was talking? What inputs guarantee that the conclusion that the dog was talking is sound? Since the details of this example are open to what you can imagine, Peter, you should have no problem elaborating here. But, of course, it is because it is your imagination which is taking over in place of your reason that makes this example worthless. So, pursue it at your choice.

Pete says "What's so hard about that? C'mon now, how does this NOT satisfy the object/subject relationship?"

If the schizophrenic perceives an object, the subject-object relationship is satisfied, as I said in my last message (specifically, I said "He may have perceived something, but I would raise the strong suspicion that the tortured soul simply misidentified what he perceived"). But I can see your confusion here. You seem to think that I am arguing that the subject-object relationship is a *sufficient* condition for logic, when in fact all I have been saying is that the subject-object relationship is a *necessary* condition for logic (as I have repeated: there must be a subject-object relationship for logic to be possible). Simply perceiving an object will not guarantee one's conclusions. If you would integrate the many other points which I have articulated in association with this (namely, the crucial fact that there is a distinction between the perceptual level and the conceptual level of consciousness, and that logic is a conceptual matter, etc.), then you should easily see this point. But if you run roughshod beyond what I have stated about my worldview (for instance, in your eagerness to mischaracterize it for an easy kill), then you simply fail to interact with what my worldview teaches.

Pete advises "Remember: YOUR view is the view that is dependent upon perception, not mine, so quite pretending that this is my argument when I am merely showing you the bankruptcy of your own position."

Right, I'm fully aware of this. My view finds its basis in objective fact (perception is a physical, objective and automatic process of consciousness), while your view denies the validity of perception (thus cutting off the mind from reality) and depends on emotions (primarily the fear that your own guilt will damn you) and imaginations (which you nourish every time you read the bible). On your view, all argument is impossible from the very beginning. An all-knowing god would not need to construct arguments (for it would have no need to validate new knowledge by integrating it with previously validated knowledge), and as a servile believer who does whatever the dictatorial deity says, the Christian has no need for argument, for arguing with someone who pretends to have all the answers already is moot. Such are the trappings of an inherently dishonest worldview.

I said "No, I have not said that "perceptions result in universal logic.""

Pete says "But this is exactly what you have done! Your logic is based on the perception of an object!"

You're missing the point again... It's been presented enough times now and you're a big enough boy to go back and read where you missed. I won't hold your hand on this one.

I said "And all the while, Pete is affirming the truth of my worldview by assuming that his words have any meaning to begin with."

Pete says "No, I affirm my worldview because I do have an objective standard--God."

By treating your worldview as an object of your awareness (which you must do in order to affirm it), you confirm the validity of my worldview. Again, checkmate.

Pete says "I do not need your perception of something in order to have valid words, Seeker."

I've nowhere argued that you need *my* perception in order to have valid words, Pete. This is another straw man.

Pete says "You, on the other hand, have not been able to demonstrate any sort of objective standard, so it is you who are denying your worldview and accepting mine."

Let me get this right here. You say that since I "have not been able to demonstrate any sort of objective standard" that I am "accepting [yours]"? The converse of this would be, if I "demonstrate any sort of objective standard" I am not "accepting [yours]." Well, of course! Since your worldview rejects the principle of objectivity (since it makes the existence and specific nature of all objects dependent on a subject - cf. the "doctrine of creation"), and my worldview depends on the subject-object relationship, which is an objective fact (one which Pete affirms in every act of his consciousness), it would follow that I am denying your worldview by accepting an objective standard. So, there you have it: theism succinctly debunked in one paragraph.

Pete says "But you assume the existence of what is perceived when that is not necessary."

I said "I don't need to "assume" it. It's self-evident. In fact, I couldn't assume otherwise if I wanted."

Pete says "Then why is the schizophrenic wrong?"

I didn't say the schizophrenic is wrong (and if you've been paying attention, you'll know why I say this). Can you supply an argument for why the schizophrenic is right?

Pete says "You cannot have it both ways, Seeker."

Of course, the subject-object relationship will not permit it. Only, my worldview consistently integrates this fact, since it is founded on this relationship rather than a denial of it.

I said "By what means other than by perception would you determine whether something is real or not?"

Pete says "But I thought perceptions didn't determine reality, Seeker....."

So what is your answer to this question, Pete? Come on now. Answer the question in accordance to your worldview. Your actions on the Calvin Board suggest to me that you think your computer is real. How, according to your Christian worldview, did you determine that your computer is real? If your worldview addresses all these important philosophical issues, you should be able to answer this question with a snap. Oh, and please, try to be consistent with everything you've said so far (especially that stuff about a subject not needing an object).

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 27, 2003

Nick,

If that were the definition of 'real' within the context of Pete's own worldview, then yes, your point would be correct.

However, it appears that when Pete offered the definition of 'real' as "physical existence," he was saying that this is the definition which my worldview assumes. In his post on Apr. 25, he wrote the following:

"The definition of real that I am using here is relative to your worldview and refers to physical existence. Or do you accept the existence of non-physical objects? (I have not yet met an Objectivist who does, but if you are one then I can change my statement for you.)"

Pete said that the definition he proposes is one that "is relative to [my] worldview," which suggests to me that he's taken the liberality to answer the question "What is your definition of the term 'real'?" for me. I ask him to cite where he got this definition, whether among my own statements or among the sources which I have sited (and I've only alluded to one source so far as I recall, and that is the Aristotelian logician HWB Joseph).

In that same post (Apr. 25) Pete also stated that his "own personal definition of what is real is different," though he has not identified that definition. I have asked him to offer that definition as his worldview uses the term, but so far I don't think he's gotten around to it. I am very curious, for I share Peter's concern when he stated (again Apr. 25) "I want to focus on this issue first since it really take precedence."

I have not stated my definition for 'real' so far, and I haven't done so for a good reason. But I will keep that to myself for the moment out of concern for strategy. Suffice it to say, my definition of 'real' is certainly not "physical existence," and I don't think there's anything that I've said in any of my posts that can support the charge that I am assuming this as my definition of 'real'.

I want to see how Peter defines 'real'. I don't know of any passage in the bible that offers a definition of this term, so to provide a definition for it I am anticipating that Peter must consult some other source, either a dictionary or his own insights. I am also anticipating that whatever definition he proposes for the term 'real' is one which can be utilized consistently with his beliefs and argumentative points. But the question is here reasserted, and I would like to see an answer, as Peter's schedule allows.

So, it is an important point that you bring up, Nick. I hope Peter can take the time to inform us.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 28, 2003

In regard to Zeus' point 1, I would mention along with Nick's points that, if a theist continues to engage in the discussion but continually relies on mischaracterizing his opponent's position in order to make it seem unreasonable, all the while denying self-evident facts which he must assume even to dispute them, I'd say there are more than adequate grounds to question the genuineness of his motivations.

In response to Zeus' point 2 (re the design argument), Nick mentioned that we think the items named are "obviously designed" "because we know of people who design such things," and that "If we knew of a universe factory, perhaps we would feel different." Exactly right. The so-called design argument is simply built on a very weak analogy. It attempts to liken the universe to the handiwork of human craftsmen, inventors and designers, but the similarity asserted is naïve and at best superficial. In the case of planes, computers, calculators, compasses, etc., these artifacts are all made from materials which already exist. If the universe is to be similar to these artifacts, it must have been made out of preexistent material. But the Christian says that god created the universe literally from nothing, "ex nihilo" as they say.

The artifacts mentioned in Zeus' quote are all manufactured with labor and effort, and in most cases many trials and failures preceded the finished products which we take for granted today. But the Christian claims that god created the universe by wishing it into existence, something we've never seen performed.

Large-scale artifacts, such as aircraft carriers and skyscrapers, are the product of many people's effort, all working in concert and in accordance with pre-arranged division of labor. If the universe is supposed to be an artifact of design, we would expect it to be the product of a group of designers and builders likewise, but the Christian denies this. Another missed similarity.

Often we encounter artifacts with defects, and from this we can rightfully infer that its designer or designers were ignorant or cheap or simply careless. But with no less credibility than the theist's claim that the universe exhibits design, one can point to things throughout the universe that are clearly defective and dysfunctional. Just with the human organism, for instance, we have the terribly inefficient spinal column, which is so delicate that a minor injury can disable an individual for life. The appendix is another life-threatening oversight on the part of the supposed designer. In the plant and animal kingdoms, for instance, some 90 percent or so of all species known to have existed on the planet were not successful survivors and suffered mass extinction (for instance, the dinosaurs to name just a few). When the Christian says that such mass extinction was all part of "God's plan," he simply exposes the ad hoc malleability of the god-belief premise. It's amazing how every believer seems to "know" the details of god's "plan" for history. God has many, many self-appointed spokesmen. If it's so true that this universe-designing deity exists, as sloppy and careless as it would have to be, can't it speak for itself?

Suffice it to say, there are many weaknesses to the analogy proposed by the design argument, and because of these, we are justified in rejecting its intended conclusion. The context of the premises simply do not support it.

Nick says "What I find interesting is that Christians say that humans are far too complex not to require a designer, but on the other hand claim that their god, who is far more complex if he does indeed exist, needs no designer."

Yes, that's true. But again, many Christians in my experience are a slippery bunch, and some will concoct any reason to which only they themselves are privy (such "reasons" certainly are not based on facts which we discover in reality) in order to slink out of such difficulties. Not convincing, and I don't think it's very honest, either.

From Zeus "5. When a Christian offers you his own "experience" as evidence for God, you consider it stupid and subjective. But when he offers you historical, philosophical and scientific evidence, you consider it too inconclusive and claim that you need to see God to believe in Him. "

Nick said "I thought we agreed that personal experience IS subjective evidence and that even you would not accept it as proof of something."

I thought so, too. In fact, the Christian might be just as confused as the schizophrenic in Peter's example. One is welcome to believe in talking dogs (and asses, for that matter), but don't complain when others do not buy it.

Nick said "I have yet to see persuasive historical, philosophical, and scientific(?) evidence that there is a god."

Same here.

Nick said "I never claimed that I had to "see" a god to believe in one. In fact, I have posted that if I saw the dead rise from the grave, I would believe."

That's right, I remember, Nick did say this at one point. I take it, Nick, that you've not encountered an re-animated corpses yet? Well, I haven't either, but I'm keeping my eyes open.

Nick said "The first Christians were supposedly granted such an experience, but apparently your god expects the rest of us to rely on hearing about the personal experience of those who lived thousands of years ago. This is exactly the type of evidence that you yourself said you would not expect anyone to accept. (If I told you I flew yesterday, would you believe me?)"

Very good point. I can't add anything to it, and I don't think it needs anything else to fortify it.

From Zeus "6. You can quote from the bible better than most missionaries...at least the parts where someone dies."

Nick asks "Is there a problem with this?"

Apparently there is, otherwise Christians wouldn't be complaining about it. If anything, they should be flattered that some people take them as seriously as they do.

Nick asks "How many theists can quote atheistic literature?"

In my experience, only a very tiny of majority do this. And even when they do, they often mischaracterize what is said. It's not okay when non-believers quote biblical verses out of context, but quoting Russell, Hume or any other non-believing thinker out of context is apparently perfectly okay for some believers.

Nick says "I would say this only proves that many atheists have studied both sides of the issue, which makes their beliefs all the more solid."

Yes, it is good to know the positions of all sides, especially if one is going to debate them.

From Zeus "10. You get angry when Christians tell you you're going to a place that you don't think exists."

Nick says "I don't know many atheists that do, although I'm sure some see such statements as blatant disrespect. I, for one, think it is hilarious when someone tells me I am going to hell. What would you think if I told you I though you were going to mystical place where you would be snapped with rubber bands for eternity? I'm guessing you'd laugh and dismiss my statement."

This reminds me of something I wanted to post to the Calvin Board. If I can find it, I will do so soon. Stay tuned!

From Zeus "8. You assert that the crimes and failings of some Christians (acting inconsistently with the teachings of Christ at that!) disproves the whole edifice of Christianity but that the crimes and failings of some atheists (acting consistently with the fact that atheism can provide no basis for objective morality!) should on no account be held against the philosophy of atheism."

Actually, I've not asserted that "the crimes and failings of some Christians... disproves the whole edifice of Christianity," so I guess that means I'm not a "fundy atheist." Whew!

And in this quote we see repeated the tiresome disinformation that atheism is a philosophy. That's simply not the case. Atheism is simply the condition of not holding a god-belief, nothing more. It tells us what one does not believe, not what one does believe. Synonymous with "atheist" is the term "non-believer"; a non-believer is a non-believer by virtue of the fact that he does not believe. That doesn't say jack about what he does believe or hold to be true.

If you have any more such postings in mind, Zeus, I would like to see you post them if you get the time. I think these are ripe for generating new discussions.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=92>

Heaven: A Short Play in One Act

April 28, 2003

Heaven: A Short Play in One Act

This is both humorous and instructive. It captures in succinct wit and insight many impressions I have had over the years of the Christian's belief (particularly the Calvinist view) in a heaven and a hell.

HEAVEN

(a short play in one act)

by Bev Eyre (reprinted by permission)

Characters: Bill and Pete.

Scene: A neighborhood pub in Heaven

BILL: So, Pete, how's the wife and kiddies? You have two daughters and a son, as I recall.

PETE: Yep. Pete Jr, little Alice, and Mary, named after her mother.

BILL: Kids are great.

PETE: Yeah. I love my family. Well, I guess they're doing about as well as can be expected.

BILL: Oh?

PETE: Well, Hell is no party, y'know. They're down there being tormented by Our Lord. They're burning in flames and every fiber of every nerve they have is sending waves of agony flowing through their being.

BILL: Hmmmm.

PETE: Not as bad as the soul destroying despair of being forever separated from Our Lord, though. <chuckles> He sure knows how to punish! Don't he?

BILL: Heh heh. Well....

PETE: Anyway, nothing I can do about it.

BILL: Yep, it's a crap shoot. Some get picked and some don't. What can ya do?

PETE: God's good pleasure. I still feel close to them though. I can hear their screams wafting up occasionally.

BILL: That reminds me....

< Bill walks over and turns on the TV over the bar >

BILL: Time for Hellavision. Let's see if we can find little Alice. Or else my family. You've made me nostalgic.

<show comes on >

PETE: Geez. All those flames are making me thirsty. Beer?

BILL: Sure, thanks. Yow! That's gotta hurt! <chuckles>. Oooh man. Lucky we're in Heaven.

PETE: The Good Lord be blessed.

<they share a brew >

FIN

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=2>

Avoiding the Issue?

April 29, 2003

I said "Suffice it to say, there are many weaknesses to the analogy proposed by the design argument, and because of these, we are justified in rejecting its intended conclusion. The context of the premises simply do not support it."

Zeus asks "Can you illustrate this for us? You tell us the context premises simply do not support it, but fail to give us an explanation."

Zeus, did you read anything prior to the two sentences which you snipped from my post? One of the premises of the design argument is that the universe exhibits design. That's why it is supposed to support the intended conclusion that the universe had a designer. To support the premise that the universe exhibits design, an analogy is drawn between man-made objects (e.g., "planes, computers, calculators, compasses, etc.") which are "all obviously designed," and the universe as such, which the theist wants to portray as exhibiting design. My points show why this analogy is terminally weak.

Perhaps you'd like to defend the argument?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 10, 2003

Nick says "As for induction...this one is even easier. I believe that there is consistency in the universe because there is no god that has the power to mess with it."

and

"On the other hand, Christianity has no such assurance. Christians believe that God has the ability to intervene with existence and change it. What is your assurance that God will allow the universe to be tomorrow the way it is today?"

and

"If you believe there is a god with the ability to affect reality, then you can never be certain that he will keep it consistent."

Exactly. Belief in a miracle-performing consciousness can only sabotage and destroy inductive certainty. Consider the governor of the feast at the wedding ceremony of Cana mentioned in John 2:1-11. His waterpots were filled with water, but when the guests drew from them, they drew out wine. He would have been wrong to claim certainty that water was what was in the pots. In a universe where things like this CAN happen, one could never be certain about anything. One would be hopelessly uncertain at virtually all times about virtually all things. If I, believing in a miracle-performing god, pour myself a cup of coffee at work, how could I know that I won't suddenly find myself drinking wine or cod liver oil? The believer might respond, saying, "God would not turn your coffee into wine because it would not suit His purpose." But how does the believer know the finer details of God's purpose all of sudden? How does one discover the details of this "purpose"? Sounds like the believer is making himself out to be God. If the believer has such intimate knowledge of God's purpose, perhaps he can tell us what the stock market will do in the next week, so we can shore up our recent losses. If I believed the stories in the bible, for instance, I could never be certain that I would sink in a lake, or be able to walk on its surface. If I attend the funeral of a loved one, I could not be shocked and surprised if the deceased suddenly popped his head out of the coffin and said "I'm hungry! Lunch is on me!" If I believed in a miracle-performing god, I couldn't be certain that my neighbors dog will not sprout wings and start flying, or that my tea kettle won't start talking to me in a language I understand (and I know several). I don't need to see these things happen to think that they might. All I would need to do is to believe that it is possible, and that is sufficient to destroy inductive certainty. Believers who assume their inductive conclusions are certain only act contrary to the beliefs they say they accept. If you ask me, I don't think they really do believe after all. They only tell us that they believe these things, but of course, there are no inputs to support such belief. Rather, they fear the consequences of admitting that they really do not believe, and it is from this basis - a basis of irrational fear (see Proverbs 1:7) - that their worldview materializes.

Pete says "I think the one I came up with is fair. If you still disagree, then I shall wait for you to come up with one."

Why don't you try this: defend the position that TAG is SOUND. After all, TAG is supposed to be an argument, right? If so, then arguing for its validity and consistency is incomplete and would not show much confidence in TAG as an argument. An argument can be validly constructed, and still not be sound. An argument may be consistent with itself in one or more respects, but again still not be sound. If you really have confidence in TAG as an apologetic argument, Pete, this is the thesis you should try to defend, namely that TAG as an argument is a sound argument.

Of course, to do this, you would have to address a number of concerns. For instance, if TAG is an argument,

1. What are its premises?
2. How many premises are there?
3. Do the stated premises validly support the intended conclusion?
4. What is that intended conclusion?
5. What is the form of the argument?
6. Are the premises true?
7. Can you show that the premises are true?
8. Does the argument avoid all informal fallacies?
9. Etc.

These are a few minimum issues which would have to be addressed if one wanted to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument. Additional questions will no doubt arise after these have been answered. If TAG does not pass the test of soundness, then the fact that one can present it as a validly constructed argument is moot. An unsound argument is one which cannot be logically accepted as anything but that - an unsound argument. So, your work is cut out for you, Pete.

I would also humbly suggest, Pete, that you keep this dialogue on the level of an open discussion rather than a formal debate. I say this because, with all due respect, I do not think you are ready to debate TAG formally. If you assume a position in a formal debate, you will no doubt try to defend it even if it is proven invalid or unsound at some point early in the match, which would be silly and tiresome. But in an open discussion, we can all work together to discover what TAG argues and how it is supposed to argue it, and then we would have some points to bounce off each other and consequently enlarge our mutual understanding of the issues involved. This is just my suggestion, and if you do not like it, that's fine.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 10, 2003

Pete,

Virtually all of what you say here is a red herring. My post was in regard to TAG and the terms of debate you are considering between yourself and Nick. You have repeatedly asked for alternative suggestions, and now you've been presented one which speaks to the heart of the issue ("is TAG sound?"), and look at what you do in response to this: you retreat to the battle of the worldviews position. It is behavior like this that tells me that you are not ready for a formal debate on any of the matters that have come up so far. You also say that I have not yet asserted a worldview. Apparently you've not been reading. I've been very consistent in presenting a worldview based on reason; my posts are saturated with my worldview. Clearly you do not recognize this, which is not surprising; reason is generally not taught either in the schools, and it's definitely not taught in churches. Again, I don't think you're ready to debate these things.

Pete asks "can you demonstrate this yourself? That is, you claim that this is the method by which one can determine what is sound and what is not. Can you apply this same standard to that methodology?"

Pete, do you accept logic as a standard, or not? Are you willing to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument, or not? The question is simple. Don't worry about me and what I can or cannot apply. You and Nick have been considering terms of debating TAG, and I've proposed that you debate whether or not TAG is sound. Perhaps you do not have enough confidence in TAG to defend the thesis that it is a sound argument. If that's the case, and you do not want to admit this, then the attempt here to deflect the suggestion is quite telling.

Pete says "It is relatively easy to "brush aside" someone's argument without looking at it. In fact, you claim that I am doing that very thing myself."

And if you address the questions I've posted in relation to your understanding of TAG, then we will have a chance to look at what it says. By asking you to present what you know about TAG, am I not doing the exact opposite of brushing aside your argument? I'd think that, if you genuinely considered TAG to be a sound argument (and maybe you do not?), you'd welcome the opportunity to defend the thesis that I have proposed. But your words do not suggest to me that you do welcome this opportunity for some reason. Is that the case, and, if so, why not?

Pete says "I still sense that our problems are coming about because we do not accept the same worldview from which all of our reason and intellect is based."

I don't necessarily dispute this. As we've seen with regard to the issue of the subject-object relationship, a basic component essential to my worldview, you do not seem to think it has any importance whatsoever. This has dramatic implications for your view of concepts and what you consider consciousness as such to be, and as a result a deep and thorough impact on the entire nature of your worldview. Essentially, by denying the subject-object relationship in the foundations of your worldview while having to make use of it at the same time, your worldview will always be at odds with itself since its basis is inherently self-contradictory. This has been pointed out to you repeatedly, yet you either just deny it, or do not understand it.

For instance, your primary contention against the subject-object relationship appears to be the suggestion that the subject does not need an object (a position known as subjectivism). I have asked on at least one occasion for you to explain what qualifies something as a subject if it has no object to be conscious of. You have not addressed this point. Instead, you swung around 180 degrees and said that there only needs to be an object and no subject. But if that's the case, then there's no subject that needs logic in the first place. All your responses to the thesis that I have defended smack of desperation and ignorance. Again, I don't think you're ready for a formal debate.

Pete says "It is impossible for me to accept your position given my worldview, and it is impossible for you to accept my position given your worldview."

It is impossible for me to accept your worldview because a) there are no inputs from reality which support it, and b) I would have to be dishonest to say that I think your worldview is true, and I'm not willing to be dishonest. I don't think it's true. I think it's purely arbitrary.

That having been said, however, I am not asking you do accept my position. I have simply asked you whether you are willing to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument. You're not saying you will do so, but you are not rising to this challenge either. Instead, you're trying to shift the focus of the discussion. Do you think you need to adopt my worldview in order to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument? If the answer to this question is yes, what does that tell you? If the answer is no, why don't you accept this challenge?

Pete says "Until we dig down and discuss the worldview issues,"

Such as the issue of the subject-object relationship and its importance in forming objective concepts, an issue to which I have repeatedly drawn attention in this forum?

Pete says "we're only going to keep talking past one another."

Right. And since you do not show yourself prepared to deal with the issues which have been introduced in these fora on a mature level, I suppose that you will continue to evade the issues, just as you do not address the questions I have posted about TAG. Apparently you are not willing to step up to the plate and defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument and instead prefer to take on a much weaker challenge (e.g., that TAG is "consistent" whatever that is supposed to mean). Why not simply say so? I think you'll feel a lot better if you be honest about this, Pete.

Pete says "Because what is logical in my worldview is based on my worldview, and that makes your worldview irrational, and the opposite is also true."

Your worldview is based on a rejection of the subject-object relationship, which destroys logic from the very outset. So whatever it is you are calling "logical in [your] worldview," it's not logical. There's no content (i.e., no inputs integrated from reality) and the forms of your methodology have no objective basis (since you deny the subject-object relationship). I have identified the basis of logic in my worldview, and you've simply denied it, while at the same time you have to act as if it were valid (for every time you are even aware of something, you are partaking in a subject-object relationship). That's not rational, Pete. It's expressly irrational and self-refuting.

Pete says "The problem that we are running into is that one cannot use a method based on the veracity of his own worldview to refute another worldview unless such a worldview is actually right and the other is actually wrong."

Pete, are you just trying to say in a roundabout way here that you are not willing to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument? If not, what relevance does your statement here have? If you think that TAG is a sound argument, will you address the questions I've presented? Yes or no? If not, can you give a better explanation than this? Statements such as the one you make here just indicate to me that you do not have any defense for your beliefs. I'd hope that's not the case, but I'm willing to consider it.

Pete says "This is what Christians claim: our worldview is right."

I understand this, Pete. I also understand that many Christians think that TAG secures this claim. That is why the question has been posed: Is TAG a sound argument?

Pete says "The only way you can dispute this is to say that your worldview is right, and mine is not."

I've said it: my worldview (the philosophy of Reason) is right, and your worldview (a philosophy which rejects reason) is not right. Are we done now?

Pete says "But to do that, you have to actually assert a worldview (which you have been careful not to do yet)."

I have, you simply either do not want to admit that I have, and/or you do not understand it. I'm tending to think it's a combination of both.

Pete "Then, with both worldviews out in the open, we can look at each of them and decide which one is consistent."

Pete, showing that a worldview is consistent with itself is not sufficient grounds to say that the worldview is proper for man. It must prove itself to be consistently based in reality and to equip man with the conceptual tools that he needs in order to live. These are the values I look for in a worldview. My worldview does this, and yours does not. Your

worldview does not even say anything about the nature of concepts and the proper methodology of forming concepts. If you dispute this, then all you have to do is point to where the Bible speaks on these things. Where does the Bible define 'concept' and where does it teach its readers how objective concepts can be formed? If it does not do this, then a Bible-based worldview is woefully incomplete in terms of fundamentals, which can only mean that you must look outside your worldview in order to form your first concept! Reason enables us to do this, but your worldview does not TEACH reason. It teaches faith and gullibility and expects believers to satisfy their need for rational principles by substituting them with alleged historical events which make no sense whatsoever and have no objective evidential support whatsoever. If you think there is objective evidential support for the alleged historical events related in the Bible, please identify it for the record, and let's review it. Meanwhile, try to find where the Bible identifies and expounds a system for forming objective concepts, for without this, you cannot even form the concept 'worldview' to begin with in terms of your own worldview. The early primitives who composed the Bible took these matters completely for granted, and I think you do, too.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 13, 2003

It appears that, not only does Pete not like my suggestion that he defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument, it also appears that my suggestion has struck a raw nerve in him. Although he apparently wants to hold the position that TAG is an effective proof of the Christian worldview, he shows himself to be desperate not to let himself be called onto the mat to defend the position that it is a sound argument. He has not even stated for the record whether he thinks TAG is sound or unsound. Why will he not tell us for the record? Perhaps he cannot defend it in spite of his digressive rhetoric?

In another thread in the TAG forum (<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=23>), Pete says "Closely linked to TAG is presuppositions." He also says "logic itself presupposes certain things about the nature of reality. In short, logic presupposes the existence of God. In order for logic to be valid, the person using logic must presuppose the existence of a transcendental, universal, eternal, immutable, something. And the only thing that fits that definition is God." According to many defenders of TAG (e.g., Bahnsen, Wilson, Jones, Anderson, Byron, Choi, et al.), TAG is supposed to secure these claims about logic and the Christian God. Perhaps I'm wrong in thinking that Pete has any confidence in TAG to begin with, for when it is proposed that he defend the position that TAG is sound (a thesis championed by other defenders of TAG), he retreats to the shadowy murkiness of his internal worldview dilemmas.

In that same piece, Pete alludes to apologist Greg Bahnsen's role as one of the chief defenders of TAG. (Specifically Pete says "Perhaps the best modern spokesman for TAG was Greg Bahnsen.") In his famous debate with Gordon Stein, Bahnsen announces that "The transcendental proof for God's existence is that without Him, it is impossible to prove anything." A *proof* is an end achieved by means of argument. If an argument claiming to prove its conclusion is found to be unsound, then it cannot be accepted as a proof. Ironically, even Bahnsen failed to put an argument to TAG; he does not identify the steps that lead to TAG's intended conclusion - like Pete, he simply asserts them. TAG is something that we hear a lot about, but never see.

On 17 April I submitted a series of questions to the thread titled "Avoiding the Issue?" started by Nick (see <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88&page=1>). In that post, I inquired on the inferential structure of TAG, since it bears the description "argument" in its name. But to date, no one has addressed my inquiry. Is TAG even an argument? At this point, I'm starting to wonder. Perhaps there is no argument to TAG whatsoever, just the claim that somewhere, somehow, there exists in some mysterious valley of some unnamed theologian's mind an argument called "TAG," but no one really knows how it's supposed to proceed. What else are we supposed to gather from the blaring silence on the matter when apologists are invited to elaborate on the matter?

One point which is quite striking to me is that Pete seems to think that one must first accept his worldview before the question of TAG's alleged soundness can be settled. But this is most flabbergasting, especially given how defenders of TAG have hyped up their beloved argument. If one accepts the worldview in question, why would one need an argument which secures it after the fact? Blank out. This and other ordeals in Pete's understanding of philosophy are raised in his own post, as I shall show for the umpteenth time.

Pete says "This is not a red herring on my part at all."

Is too!

Pete says "All along I have maintained that all that can be argued is whether or not TAG is consistent with its worldview."

Are you say that, even on the basis of your own worldview, you cannot defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument?

Pete says "If you *ACCEPT* the worldview, then you can go into other issues;"

But Pete, that's just the point. If I accept the worldview in question (the version du jour of Christianity), TAG would be pointless. Why argue for the (alleged) truth of a worldview if you've already accepted it?

Also, on what basis is one supposed to accept your worldview?

Pete says "but since you don't, it's irrelevant."

If TAG is not a sound argument, it's irrelevant either way. Do you, or do you not think that TAG is a sound argument? Pick only one, Pete.

Pete says "It is not, therefore, myself who is going off on tangents, but you."

Wrong. TAG is by definition supposed to be an *argument*. Look at what "TAG" is short for: the "transcendental *argument* for the existence of God." Deductive arguments are either sound, or unsound. If you claim to have an argument, then it is in no way "going off on tangents" to ask if you are willing to defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument. Clearly you do not have confidence in TAG, or in your ability to defend the position that it is a sound argument. Whether or not an argument under discussion is sound or not is hardly a tangential matter. If it is not sound, what use is it?

Pete says "What is obvious is that we cannot communicate here at all. You are intent on arguing over whether or not $a + b = c$ when we haven't even defined our terms yet. $a + b = c$ when $a = 5$, $b = 6$, and $c = 11$, but not when $a = 5$, $b = 6$, and $c = 12$. And that makes a world of difference."

Pete, tell you what. Why don't you tell us what you think the value of TAG is, and if you think it is sound as you understand it, why don't you present that understanding for us to examine? Or, will you find some reason not to do this?

Pete says "You ask if I accept logic. I most certainly do, but as I've said all along, I do not accept the kind of logic you accept."

Pete apparently doesn't like "the kind of logic [I] accept," and apparently prefers another "kind of logic" instead. The "kind of logic" that I accept teaches that arguments have identity and are governed by specific rules of inference (see for instance HWB Joseph), and that arguments are either sound or unsound, or cogent or not cogent. Since presupposers generally do not want to argue that the alleged truth of their god-belief is a matter of probability, but rather an unquestionable certainty, the relevant matter is naturally whether or not TAG is sound as opposed to being cogent. Perhaps the "kind of logic" which Pete prefers instead of the formal logic which my worldview teaches does not rate arguments in terms of soundness, but rather in terms of their agreeableness with the preferred religious god-belief program of the Bible. If that's the case, perhaps we should inquire what the Bible teaches on logic. Where are the rules of "biblical logic" taught in its many pages? Perhaps Pete can point this out for us, so we can have a better understanding of the "kind of logic" which he prefers to employ. Pete, would you be willing to do this for us?

Pete says "My logic is based on an objective standard--God."

On what is your claim that God is an "objective standard" based? And how does it overcome the plethora of problems which both Nick and I have identified against it in our many previous, unanswered posts? I don't expect we'll see an answer to this, but I thought I'd ask for the record anyway.

Pete says "Your logic is based on a subject that perceives an object."

Here we have another tired mischaracterization. It appears I can identify my position 1000 times, and Pete will still misrepresent it. I have said it before, and I will say it again: logic in my view is based on the *relationship* between subject and object. This is radically different from saying that it is "based on a subject that perceives an object." Perhaps Pete does not recognize the difference? If not, that's another failure on his part.

Pete says "You try to claim objectivity by stating there is an object involved,"

Another misrepresentation. I do not say that objectivity is a matter of simply having "an object involved." I have explained quite thoroughly (well enough for a 15-year-old to readily grasp) that objectivity is a matter of the objects holding priority over the subject in the subject-object relationship, and the subject deferring to the objects which it perceives. For instance, if I see a computer before me, I cannot say it is a microwave oven and have it heat my turkey pot pie. It's not difficult, Pete. These are basic principles which we derive from our everyday experience which we take completely for granted. I've explained this in many lessons already, so clearly you are deliberately misrepresenting my view.

Pete says "all the while forgetting that it is the subject in your example that determines what the object is,"

And another misrepresentation (that's three in a row!). I do not say that the subject "determines" what the object is. This term is ambiguous and it is not one which I recommend because it can be readily lent to common equivocation. Rather, my view holds that the subject *identifies* the object. We all do this, Pete. Even you. Or, do you not identify the objects which you perceive? How do you get by day to day? You just don't want to concede the obvious point. That's fine. But notice how you have to mischaracterize my view - and deny your own everyday experience - in order to do this.

Pete says "because it is the subject that perceives"

Yes, the subject does perceive its objects. This is the case with all of us, Pete. Even you.

Pete says "and develops logic, not the object."

Do you think that the inanimate objects which we perceive need logic for some reason? Does my pocket knife need logic, Pete? If so, what for? Perhaps you should answer Nick's question: Do you even know what logic is?

Pete says "Just think about this for a minute!"

Okay.

Pete says "The only possible way for you to be able to claim objectivity is if you can demonstrate that the subject does empirically observe the object exactly as it is."

Really? Why? What do you mean by "empirically observe the object exactly as it is"? Sounds like Kantianism. I don't think it's any more valid than saying that I-95 takes me to New York only as New York is entered by an approach from I-95, not to New York as it really is. The error here is the failure to distinguish between the object's identity and the form of perceiving that object, a distinction which my worldview enables one to identify objectively. I'd like to see where the Bible teaches the believer how to make such distinctions.

Pete says "If there is any part of the object that the subject views in error, then the conclusions drawn from that perception are going to be wrong."

Ah, as I thought. This is just another veiled challenge to prove a negative. Essentially, Pete is saying that I must prove that there is no error in my perception. But I do not accept any such onus, and Pete gives no reason why I should. He simply asserts that I have this onus. How does he do this in the case of his own perceptions?

Pete says "Does a blue field become grey just because a color-blind person looks at it? Of course not--the attributes are not determined by the subject who perceives, but by the object itself."

See what I mean? Pete errs in speaking where he is obviously ignorant. There are a number of primers on theories of perception, and it's clear that Pete hasn't consulted even one of them before. And what he says here is not even consistent with his own worldview. For he says that "the attributes [of an object] are not determined by the subject who perceives [it], but by the object itself." This is hardly biblical! According to the biblical view, the identity of all objects, living and non-living, is determined by the ruling consciousness, the grand subject of all the universe, for there would be no objects without the ruling consciousness to create them (and give them identity, hint hint) in the first place. And Pete wants to defend the view that TAG is "consistent"? He cannot even get his own worldview right!

Pete says "Given that, the subject must be removed from the determining aspect of the object or else you have only subjectivism!"

Oh, if only your premises were true, Pete. But they are not. They certainly do not reflect a good understanding of my worldview.

Pete says "The object cannot be defined by the subject's empirical view of it,"

I agree. My worldview does not teach that the subject "defines" its objects. This is far closer to the Christian view which holds that a subject creates all its objects and gives them their identity. Rather, my view teaches that we *identify* the objects of our perception; this is a process of recognition, not definition or determination. Definitions do not come into the picture until those objects have been identified *and* integrated into conceptual units whose specific measurements are omitted. But since Pete knows nothing about concept-formation (and since his worldview teaches nothing on this matter), I won't bore him with the details that he most likely does not want to know anyway.

Pete says "Objectivity cannot result unless it is from the object alone."

Clearly you do not understand the concept one iota. All you can do is bluff your way through. You're not fooling anyone, Pete.

Pete says "So, Seeker, we do not accept the same starting point, even though we call it the same thing."

Actually, you have to accept the same starting point as I have identified even to begin to think. Only, you do not want to admit it because then you would be conceding the whole matter. That's why you resist it so much. I'm glad we have it on the record. To begin thinking, you must be aware of something. That's where my worldview starts, right there: existence, consciousness, and identity. Not even you can bypass them (i.e., start above them) or dig prior to them (i.e., start before them). You have to start at the very same place, Pete. You just want to deny this, though. Our fundamental difference is not so much our worldviews (for you most likely interact with the world around you as I do, by perceiving the objects before you and interacting with them according to what you recognize in their identity and integrate into the sum of your knowledge). The fundamental difference between us is just what Nick said it was: a question of honesty. My worldview requires that one be honest, and yours cannot survive if one is honest. It's your choice, Pete. No one can force you to be honest. All your misrepresentations won't reverse this polarity.

Pete says "How can I say that I agree with you that logic is valid when we disagree on how logic comes about in the first place?"

Good question. I suppose this means that you won't be defending the position that TAG is a sound argument then, right?

Pete says "You have continued to try to put my position on trial, and yet your own worldview does not allow you to do this."

It's interesting that you can make such statements about what my worldview can or cannot do, especially given the fact that you have voiced the complaint on several occasions now that I have somehow failed to identify and present my worldview. In a previous post (10 May) you pined "The only way you can dispute this is to say that your worldview is right, and mine is not. But to do that, you have to actually assert a worldview (which you have been careful not to do yet)." And now, in the very post in which you assume such familiar knowledge of my worldview, you voice the complaint that I have not "taken the time to provide a detailed analysis of [my] worldview." You say "I know you have one, and I know that you also know you have one and have alluded to aspects of it--but you have not formally put it out for all of us to see it. Please do so in order that we can examine all of these worldview issues!)," but it's not clear why I should do this, since you seem to have such keen insight into what my worldview teaches already. For here you are telling me what my worldview cannot do, even in the midst of voicing complaints that I have played my position too close to my chest. I'm impressed at your omniscience and infallibility, Pete, not to mention your craft of inconsistency. Can you tell me what the Dow Jones will do by week's end? I could really use the tip. Or, if you want to show your intimate knowledge of my worldview by speaking on something more topically relevant, perhaps you can explain how my worldview tackles David Hume's skepticism? I'd like to see what you understand about my worldview in this context.

Pete says "There is no way for you to validate or refute any supernatural claim in a naturalistic worldview."

Well, until you give the term "supernatural" a definite meaning, why would "a naturalistic worldview" need to say anything for or against anyone's claims about "the supernatural"? In my 10 April post (over a month now) I noted that "'supernatural' is the term used by subjectivists for things belonging or pertaining to the subjective realm of their imagination." (see <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=83>) Nothing Pete has said in regard to "the supernatural" leads me to reconsider this. He leaves the term without a positive meaning, and simply throws it out there from nowhere, and expects it to be taken seriously somehow. But there's no there there. It's simply an empty term, that is, unless Pete wants to give it a positive definition, which I haven't seen him do yet. Careful readers will note that this is not the first time I have asked Pete to address this matter. In my 25 April post to the "Avoiding the Issue?" thread (see <http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=88>), I asked "Meanwhile, would you present for the record what you mean by the term 'supernaturalism'? Please try to tell us what it is, not simply what it is not." I'm still waiting for Pete to get back to us on this.

Now Pete wants to engage me in a debate about what my worldview can or cannot say about "the supernatural." Even in his blurb about "supernaturalism" vs. "non-supernaturalism" (see Pete's 25 April post

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=89>), Pete nowhere identifies what he means by the term "the supernatural." It is a term void of meaning, so what is there to debate?

Once Pete gives the term "supernatural" a solid meaning (so that he is not the only one who knows what he means by it), then more questions will need to be addressed. For instance, what distinguishes what you are calling "supernatural" from the content of your imagination? Can you answer this, Peter? Can you explain to us in detail (assuming you have detailed knowledge of the things about which you pontificate), how you can determine that something is true or false when it comes to "supernatural" claims? Would you accept that it is true that Bert, a supernatural being, exists? Or, is this false? How do you know? Can you prove that Bert does not exist? When one enters the realm of the arbitrary, anything can be claimed to be true because the final arbiter is not reason but whatever the commanding whim approves. How do you make the determination that you are not mistaking your own whims for truth, Pete? How can you be certain that you are not confusing your imagination with reality? Delos McKown points out that "the invisible and the non-existent look very much alike." Likewise, it seems that the resemblance between "the supernatural" and the imaginary is not merely coincidental. If you want more dialogue on your "supernatural" claims, Pete, these questions must at minimum be addressed. Otherwise, how could I hope to know what you're talking about when you use the term "supernatural"? Words do have meaning in your worldview, don't they? (Or, should I not assume this to be the case?)

Pete says "Let me again reiterate why this is so important. Once again, let us take two opposing worldviews. One is Christianity, the other is naturalism."

I haven't the foggiest notion of what you mean by "naturalism." I do not use this term to identify my worldview. I wouldn't be surprised if it refers to a jumble of straw men next to which Christianity is supposed to shine like sound common sense by comparison. Fat chance.

Pete says "Christians are subjects perceiving the world, but they admit that their perceptions do not encompass the whole of reality. Naturalists, on the other hand, perceive the world, but they claim they see it exactly as it is."

I'm not precisely sure what you mean by the view that "perceptions do not encompass the whole of reality." What is your definition of 'reality' here, Pete? Does the Bible define it? What definition are you assuming for sake of clarifying your worldview's position? Next, can you explain what you mean by "encompass reality" in this context? Also, are you assuming that the position that "perceptions do not encompass the whole of reality" and the position that one "see[s reality] exactly as it is" are mutually exclusive positions? (It looks like you are assuming this.) Can you explain your answer? Please try not to be clumsy here.

Pete says "How would you prove one position right and the other wrong?"

Before I could answer that, I'd need more inputs to chew on. You're not giving any here. Your terms are asserted void of definition and meaning. Perhaps answering my questions will help enlarge the context so that your question here might have some relevance. At the moment, it's far too premature. The scenario you are painting is rich in connotative impact to be sure, but unfortunately it is wholly bereft of denotative meaning. You need to balance it out some before your question here can be taken seriously.

Pete says "You cannot ask the Christian to provide naturalistic evidence for the supernatural, since naturalistic evidence would be natural, not supernatural, in origin!"

What's the difference? Tell us what you think distinguishes the natural from "the supernatural." Also, what do you take to be evidence of the Christian worldview? Do you classify that evidence (the evidence on which your belief supposedly stands) as "supernatural" evidence? Can you tell us what it is? If you say that this "evidence" is "supernatural," how did you come into awareness of it? Was it zapped into your mind from some invisible being, or did you just read it in a book and are pretending it is true? Or, is there some other answer you can give here?

Pete says "But the naturalist cannot admit to any supernatural evidence at all, because there is no supernatural in the naturalistic world."

Can you describe what you consider to be "supernatural evidence," Pete? I'd like to know what you have in mind. How do you know that it is "supernatural" as opposed to "natural"? What exactly is the difference and how can one recognize that difference?

Pete says "Therefore, it is impossible for one who accepts the supernatural to "prove" it to the naturalist using the naturalistic worldview!"

Well, before we can even worry about proving something to "the naturalist" (whoever that is supposed to be), my question is this: What proved it to you, Peter Pike? Or, did you just accept the "supernaturalist" view without proof? Please, if nothing else, speak on this.

Pete says "There is no evidence that is possible to submit or to accept naturalistically that can demonstrate the supernatural."

Then it's clear that "the naturalist" is right not to buy into such nonsense.

Pete says "Why, then, do you insist on me providing proof for my position?"

I don't. I just suggested that you defend the position that TAG is a sound argument. Apparently you are in agreement with me that it is not a sound argument. Otherwise, I'd expect to see you rise to this occasion in a jiffy.

Pete says "You cannot accept anything provided, and you ought to realize that your worldview does not allow you to address this question, so why do you ask it?"

Here you go speaking as if you had thorough knowledge of my worldview again. Perhaps now that I have given you some questions about the supposed identity of "the supernatural," you can start to inform us what you mean by the term so that we can speak to the issues with the benefit of some information. Right now, "the supernatural" could mean anything you imagine it to mean. But why would I care what you imagine?

Are you worried that I will reject what you present as "evidence" for your worldview? Why let this worry you? Why not simply tell us what this evidence is and be over it? Try me.

Pete says "It is impossible for you, using your naturalistic worldview, to come to any knowledge of the truth or falsehood of the supernatural."

If "the supernatural" is arbitrary, then there is no truth or falsehood to the idea. Even if something turns out to be false, there is still at least some respect for truth (for the concept 'false' has meaning in contradistinction to the concept 'true' and those who have respect for truth will correct their view when it is shown to be false). But the arbitrary has no concern for truth whatsoever, and those who embrace it show not willingness to embrace the truth when it is shown to them. It is a total abandonment of reality. I suspect that this is what is lurking in your mind when you use the term 'supernatural', and nothing you say suggests otherwise.

Pete says "My worldview, on the other hand, allows me to question yours because it is not based on naturalism."

Are you saying that you cannot question your worldview because you hold it?

Pete says "It is based on the supernatural claim that God exists and that He wrote to us the Scriptures."

Okay, if you say so. But that's the problem, Pete. On what basis do you accept "the supernatural claim that God exists and that He wrote to us the Scriptures"? On no basis?

Pete says "This supernatural claim not only establishes the naturalistic realm (via God's creation of it), but it also goes beyond it."

What you're describing is blatant subjectivism, as I've explained before. Your view holds that the objects which exist are there because a subject put them there. The subject holds priority over the objects. That's subjectivism by definition.

Pete says "It gives answer to questions that cannot be answered in naturalism."

Such as?

Pete says "Let us leave aside the question at this point of whether my view is right or wrong--if I question your worldview, I am being consistent with my worldview!"

Well, this is hardly a substantial claim, especially since only you will know when you are consistent to your worldview. It's no challenge to be consistently arbitrary. It's like saying that toothpaste has a definite, particular shape, and whatever shape it assumes is that "definite, particular shape." We can call this the gelatinous standard of philosophical slithering.

Pete says "You, on the other hand, have no such consistency when you question my worldview."

How do you know so much about my worldview? Where did you learn it? What specific teaching of my worldview tells you that I "have no such consistency when [I] question [your] worldview"? Can you substantiate your characterization of my worldview by something I have stated about it without mischaracterizing what I have said? Or, are you just erecting another straw man in the haste of your bluff?

Pete says "Your worldview does not allow you to question whether or not there is a supernatural because it cannot answer that question either way!"

Well, if the term "supernatural" has no meaning (and at this time, you've not given it a meaning), then how could one question it? There is no "it" to question!

Pete says "It is something that is impossible to discuss in your worldview, so your very act of asking me to prove my worldview requires you to abandon your foundation of naturalism and accept a different foundation that would enable you to know whether the supernature is or is not."

Actually, I only asked whether you would be willing or not to defend the position that TAG is a sound argument. I did not ask you to prove your worldview. After all, I don't think your worldview has any proof. So why would I ask it?

Pete says "So, Seeker, I propose a formal debate with you. Thesis: The naturalistic worldview can determine whether or not supernaturalism is valid. You be the affirmative, and I'll be the negative."

But Pete, if you are unwilling even to defend the position that TAG is a sound argument, then you've conceded already. No further debate is necessary. Besides, since the notion of "the supernatural" has no meaning, you have nothing to defend. Debating the topic would be meaningless since the notion itself is meaningless.

Pete says "If you think that I'm not ready for a formal debate--if you think this will be a walk in the park for you--then by all means accept! Humiliate me, if you can. Let us debate where the issue matters."

Pete, if my ambition were to embarrass you, it would have been fulfilled long ago, and not by my hand.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 16, 2003

I said "It appears that, not only does Pete not like my suggestion that he defend the thesis that TAG is a sound argument,"

Pete responds "No, Seeker, it is simply this. I will not be drawn into a debate where you get to make all the rules, rules which define my view automatically false."

Several thoughts come to me as I read this. One is that I do not think I am making "all the rules." The only rules implicit in my suggestion that you defend the position that TAG is sound are the standard rules of logic. I thought you'd accept these rules, since you seem to think that logic is on your side of the debate. But apparently I was mistaken. Apparently logic is not on your side of the debate. It's either that, or TAG is not really an argument whose defenders can rightly claim to be a sound argument. If that's the case, it must be something other than a legitimate argument (a bluff strategy, a smoke and mirror tactic, or a defense mechanism perhaps?), and as such should not be taken seriously.

Pete says "I do not accept your presuppositions,"

My "presuppositions" are that existence exists, that existence exists independent of consciousness, and that consciousness is the faculty which perceives that which exists. I'd bet that, if you were honest, you'd confess that you operate on these assumptions in your every waking moment. But you deny this. Okay.

Pete says "and I will not argue any point based on them."

Well, in order to argue any point, you'd have to assume the truth of these points. So by choosing not to argue for anything at all, I suppose that's consistent for your position, since you deny the basis of all argument as such. Good choice, Pete.

Pete says "You ought to be as consistent yourself."

I agree, that's why I am.

I said "Although he apparently wants to hold the position that TAG is an effective proof of the Christian worldview, he shows himself to be desperate not to let himself be called onto the mat to defend the position that it is a sound argument."

Pete responds "And yet your definition of what is sound or not is based on a worldview that rejects my thesis to begin with."

My definition of what is sound comes from sources which are not identical to myself. In other words, I am not the author of the definition of 'sound argument' which I am assuming in my statements on this forum. Hurley defines 'sound argument' as "A deductive argument that is valid and has true premises" (*A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 3rd Ed., [Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1988], p. 540). (Compare this definition to the one which Nick proposed in his last post; it's virtually the very same idea.) Perhaps you dispute this definition? Do you have an alternative definition you'd like to propose?

Now, you may want to dismiss Hurley's definition of 'sound argument' because you suspect it arises from Hurley's worldview. But we do not know what Hurley's worldview is. For all I know, he could be Christian of the Reformed Theological tradition, a Muslim, a Buddhist, or a Moonie. I don't know, and it does not matter to me; not knowing Hurley's worldview does not stop me from accepting the definition which he proposes for 'sound argument'. Does this stop you for some reason? Again, what alternative definition of 'sound argument' would you propose? Perhaps Jesus spoke on this matter somewhere, and offered a definition which can be introduced now?

Pete says "This has nothing to do with my "willingness" to debate the issue--it has to do with whether or not you are going to address the right issue."

Well, I suppose it probably has more to do with whether or not you are willing to accept the definitions of terms which have been announced. If you do not accept the definitions which I have announced (and to which I have thus expressed assent), you are free to suggest your own alternative definitions. What is the Bible's definition of 'sound argument' for instance? Can you elaborate on this matter for us, Pete? And, what do you think "the right issue" is, and if I have not addressed it to your satisfaction, do you know why I haven't (if indeed I haven't)? It's time to come out of the shadows, Pete. What are you trying to hide?

Pete says "Given that you don't feel that examining how your worldview affects your view of reality is actually important,"

What do you mean by this statement, and where did I say this?

Pete says "there's really nothing we can talk about."

I think there's plenty we can talk about. I'm willing to be patient to discover it. Aren't you?

Pete says "This issue isn't something that can be taught. You just have to know it"

Then what is the purpose of your website, Pete? What is the purpose of arguing for your Christian beliefs? Isn't the purpose to explain what you believe, and by explaining those beliefs, are you not trying to *teach* to your readers what you believe?

Your words here are rich with many implications, but I shall not explore them all in this post. I have asked what I think are the more important questions that came to mind as I read what you had to say. I will say, however, that my worldview equips thinkers with the proper tools of cognition such that they never abandon the thought process and say, throwing up their hands in frustration, "I can't explain it to you, you just have to know it!" To acquire knowledge, we must have a means of knowledge. My worldview teaches that the proper means of knowledge is the faculty known as Reason. And it is teachable so long as the thinker is willing to learn. It all depends on the willingness of the thinker. It cannot be forced. But as a teacher, I am a very patient man, what the Bible calls "longsuffering," and I can endure periods of waning fecundity in our dialogues without distress.

I said "He has not even stated for the record whether he thinks TAG is sound or unsound. Why will he not tell us for the record?"

Pete says "Why should I? I define what is sound completely differently than you do!"

What is your definition of 'sound' then, Pete? I would like to see it. After that, I'd like to see what TAG is all about. What are its premises? What is the conclusion they are supposed to support? Let's examine it. If TAG is still undergoing construction, then it's premature to say that TAG has the power which its champions have claimed for it. If it's such a worthwhile device, why can't we have occasion to take a look at it? Can you not afford it for some reason, Pete?

Pete says "What good does it do if I say, 'Yes, it is sound based on the theistic worldview'. Does this accomplish anything?"

Good question. And I cannot estimate the answer until you show us what you're talking about. Simply saying that it is a sound argument according to your own accepted worldview categories is just making an assertion. Now it's time to put some substance to this oft-repeated claim. Define your terms, and present what you take to be a sound argument. What are the argument's premises? Why do YOU accept them? After all the discussion we've had, I still do not know why you, Peter Pike, believe what you claim to believe. It is a complete mystery, and I am wondering if at this point the issues involved are a psychological and no longer really philosophical concern. I can see that your commitment to god-belief is emotional in nature. But there's no evidence to suggest that it is a rational commitment whatsoever.

Pete says "As it is, I see nothing worth commenting on further. Until you address the foundation issues--until you look at the worldview points you seek to ignore by trying to pin me down in a manufactured playing-field (which is the only way you could defeat my view), then it is pointless to continue and I have better things to do with my time."

Pete, what "foundation issues" am I "seek[ing] to ignore"? I must say I will be disappointed, Pete, if you abandon our discussion at this point, for I was hoping to examine your "supernaturalism" some more. In my last post (13 May) I had asked a series of questions with the intention of getting a better understanding of what you mean when you use the term "supernatural." At this point in time, I don't know what you have in mind when you use this term and how it can be distinguished from the other horn of the dichotomy you have asserted, namely "naturalism." What does "supernatural" mean, Pete? How do you distinguish between what you call "the supernatural" and what you imagine? How can I distinguish between what you call "the supernatural" and what you imagine? Isn't it the case in your worldview that words, especially those referring to important worldview categories, must have a definite meaning? What does this word mean? You proposed a debate which centered on "the supernatural" and comment to the effect that my worldview is unable to evaluate "supernatural" claims. But in order for such a debate to proceed, at the very minimum we must agree on the terms of debate, and one of those terms is the definition of important worldview components, such as "the supernatural."

You seem frustrated that I am somehow ignoring unspecified "foundation issues," and yet you do not offer a definition of a key term in your worldview, that key term being "the supernatural," even though you have proposed that we have a debate on it. Can you give this term a meaning, one which you are willing to stick with at all times, so that we could discuss this further? If you do not, then I'd have to go with my original inkling, which is namely that the idea of "the supernatural" is essentially contentless. I'd prefer not to do this, because the implications that would have for the preceding exchanges we've participated in are not agreeable to me. Has this all been a pure waste of time? Why did it take so much effort to get you to admit, one way or another, that your religious beliefs have no substance?

Well, I suppose it has not been a waste of time for me, for I've learned a great deal from these exchanges. And the lessons I have learned and helped to shape are available on the net and open to all viewers free of charge. There is a record of our discussion, and I am hopeful that future thinkers will make use of it as they consider these very issues as well.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 17, 2003

Nick,

Thanks for your words. If our discussions have provided material for your book, then I'm happy to agree with you that they have not been a waste of time. I am very excited about the prospect of a book that would have anything to do with what has been discussed here. How can I get my copy once it's been published? Do you have an idea of when you might be able to have it published? How can I get more information so that I don't miss it once it is published?

You may be right in supposing that Pete has learned something from these exchanges, and I hope you're right. But with every new message of his, I find this hope quite frustrated. I see his messages today, and see that he does not address the issues which we have brought up, and insists that we are not addressing "the issues that matter." Well, I've tried to deal with the issues that matter both to him and to myself, as evidenced in my many comprehensive interactions with the messages he has authored. It's not clear what issues matter to him, because he continually shifts his focus. At one point, the idea of "the supernatural" was an issue that mattered. But when I show willingness to address this issue, he avoids it and then says I'm not addressing "the issues that matter." Go figure.

Identifying what it is that Pete considers important is no easy task. If you recall, Pete said in his 12 May post to this thread (not yet a week ago, mind you), "So, Seeker, I propose a formal debate with you. Thesis: The naturalistic worldview can determine whether or not supernaturalism is valid. You be the affirmative, and I'll be the negative. If you think that I'm not ready for a formal debate--if you think this will be a walk in the park for you--then by all means accept! Humiliate me, if you can. Let us debate where the issue matters."

Elsewhere on his website, Pete writes "when we use these terms we must be careful to define them precisely." ("Defining the Christian God" - <http://www.debateatheism.org/stuff/definegod.html>):

Notice what Pete wants to emphasize in these two quotes:

1. The need to focus on "where the issue matters" (a point which he has re-emphasized today)
2. That "we must be careful to define [terms] carefully"
3. Can a "non-supernaturalist" (that is, someone who does not subscribe to the "supernaturalistic" view of things) "determine whether or not supernaturalism is valid"?

Pete also apparently wants to portray himself as confident contender in the debate which he proposes (item #3). For he says "If you think I'm not ready for a formal debate... then by all means accept!" The tone here is one of defiance, a reaction no doubt to my announcement that I do not think Pete is ready for a debate on these matters (an opinion which I still hold, by the way).

As you can see from point #2, Pete himself has indicated on his website (www.debateatheism.org), that defining terms "precisely" is an important habit. When he proposed that he and I debate on the issue of whether or not my worldview can enable me to speak intelligibly and credibly on the matter of whether or not supernaturalism is valid, I asked him to answer a number of questions whose answers would be preconditional to such a debate, such as: What does Pete mean by "the supernatural"? How can one distinguish between "the supernatural" and Pete's imagination? Etc. Pete has refused to address these questions, questions which would have to be addressed before the debate which he has proposed could proceed. Either he does not have an answer for these questions, or he does not think they matter (an attitude which is not consistent with what he says in his essay "Defining the Christian God"). Clearly, if he wants a debate on whether or not one can determine that "supernaturalism is valid," these questions are undeniably relevant, so his challenge that we debate this matter must not have been serious, because he is not willing to follow up on my queries.

I submit that, if the term "supernatural" has no meaning (and until Pete provides a meaning to the term, it remains contentless), then its adherents cannot claim validity for the idea. For an idea to have validity, it must first have identity. By refusing to define the term "supernatural," Pete is not providing an identity to the idea that he apparently has in mind. Thus, the term "supernaturalism" does not refer to anything, so there is nothing that could claim validity, and thus nothing to debate. Consequently, Pete concedes the debate before it even begins. And this is precisely the way presuppositionalists like to characterize debate between themselves and those who do not believe in the Christian triune god of the New Testament. How delightfully ironic.

Note also that Pete nowhere argues in an effort to validate the idea of "the supernatural." Rather, he wants those who do not believe in "the supernatural" to prove that it does not exist. Again, we have another onus to prove a negative, while at the same time Pete nowhere shows willingness to prove the corresponding positive. This is neither debate nor philosophy, but a game. The notion of "the supernatural" is simply the mystic's attempt to dichotomize reality, to split it into two opposing realms, one of which only he, by virtue of his confessed mystic commitments, can access. But Pete offers no reason why one should accept any of this. It's merely smoke and mirrors deployed in the hope of camouflaging his inability to address the matters which have been brought to his attention, whether he thinks they matter or not.

Nick says "I applaud you for requesting a formal presentation of TAG. For quite a while, I was sure that I was missing something. Everything I read about TAG speaks about it from the outside, including the writings of Greg Bahnsen. Everyone says, "TAG says this, TAG proves that", but no one ever says, "OK, this is TAG, so listen up." I would be very surprised if Pete is able to present TAG in the form of a formal argument."

Oh, I'd love to see it. But it's a fact: TAG is simply a bluff, nothing more. Pete's own refusal to engage the issue is just one of many instances confirming this. I have interacted with more presuppositionalists than I could possibly remember over the last 10 years, have lurked their e-mail lists and examined every conceivable (and inconceivable) thread they've spun out in order to erect and sustain the impression that TAG is some kind of argumentative dreadnought, and I'm continually disappointed to see that there is no content to it whatsoever. You're not missing anything, Nick, they are. Presuppers love to point to the Bahnsen-Stein debate, a debate which I have examined thoroughly. Bahnsen has ample opportunity to present an argument for his claims, but he does not take that opportunity. They say he's right simply because they want his conclusion to be believed, and of course, that is not rational. Reality does not conform to our whims, but this is precisely what Christianity teaches.

The aim of TAG and locution which springs from "presuppositionalism," is not to validate Christianity or the claim that a god exists, but expressly to evade the onus of proof. By design, TAG is geared to accomplishing this by accusing non-Christians of a series of philosophical failures, an inability to "account for" some matter which the apologist claims can only be "accounted for" by his preferred version of Christian god-belief. It's nothing but a litany of unargued assertion upon unargued assertion, and, if pressed on those assertions, the apologist usually flees debate rather quickly. Look at Pete's example. After inquiring on the matters which he initially treats as if they were important, he redirects the discussion to something else, and then says that it "isn't something that can be taught. You just have to know it" (16 May). Today, he has indicated that belief can only come by forceful intervention by the divine which is supposedly capable of "mercifully enabling" wicked atheists like you and me to "understand." Well, as one pastor once said to me, "you know too much." He was more right than he could ever hope to know.

Nick says "If you grow tired of beating a dead horse here, I suggest you try this board <http://new.carmforums.org/dc/dcboard.php>."

Thanks for the tip. I'll keep it in mind.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91>

Challenge to Pete

May 17, 2003

Pete says "You ought not think too highly of yourself."

Pete, who determines when Nick or anyone else thinks "too highly" of himself? You? As far as I know, Nick does not host a website which is geared essentially for self-promotion (cf. "The Peter Pike Official Website" - <http://www.peterpike.com/>) or invite online viewers to advertise (cf. "The Peter Pike Network" - <http://www.thecalvinist.com/ads.html>). I wouldn't be surprised if there's a Peter Pike Fan Club, too. Are despicable "evil atheists" like myself allowed to join?

Pete says "Let's get this straight. You come in here, mocking me, claiming I don't even understand logic and such issues--and now you are celebrating your imaginary 'victory'?"

I would suggest, Pete, that observing a man continually resisting reason, mischaracterizing the views of others, and failing to interact with opposing views, all for the sake of protecting his primitive beliefs, is no cause for celebration.

Pete says "I really don't get it."

Perhaps that's the problem.

Pete says "From your point of view, what was the great victory?"

Who declared a "victory," Pete? Indeed, there has been no debate, since you have conceded (as I have explained). Perhaps Nick would be right in declaring a victory. After all, in my experience, presuppositionalists want to do this all the time. Time and time again, they prove themselves to be concerned only about presupposing their way to victory, in a manner not unlike the one you've consistently displayed in our exchanges.

Pete says "You already thought of me as an idiot for believing in God in the first place, so what's to celebrate?"

Where did either Nick or anyone else say that he thought of you as an idiot, Pete? I don't think you're an idiot. I just think you're dishonest as well as poorly informed on these matters. But I don't think you're an idiot by any measure, and I doubt Nick really thinks you are, too. You've managed to put together a handy-dandy website network with loads of bells and whistles. I wouldn't know where to begin if I wanted to do this. (But then again, why would I want to?)

Pete says "On the other hand, not a single one of you will address the issues that matter."

Funny, we both think the same thing about you.

Readers should bear in mind that I have consistently offered comprehensive interactions with the material Pete has posted in our exchanges. How he can now say that I have not or will not "address the issues that matter" could only

mean that he has not yet introduced them. So Peter, tell you what, why don't you identify for us what exactly you think are "the issues that matter" *to you*, and maybe give us some indication why you think they matter? Can you do this?

Pete says "Not that you could."

We can't until you tell us what you think is so important. So far, I haven't any clue what you think is an "issue that matters." At one point, the debate between "naturalism" and "supernaturalism" was an "issue that matters" to you, but now, after I've expressed an interest in exploring your ideas on this "issue that matters," you have shied away from it, and apparently now it is not one of "the issues that matter" to you. Why is that, Pete? Why?

Pete says "But I did not expect any different."

Oh, so, you approached our discussions with pre-set expectations, and now your expectations proved true? What a surprise! (But it would be wrong for Nick to have "thought of [you] as an idiot for believing in God in the first place," right?)

Pete says "The book of Romans makes it clear--it is impossible for you to understand this without God mercifully enabling you."

Then your god-belief is not a matter of reason, by definition, but a matter of force. This can only confirm that all your posturing about logic, objectivity and rationality (each a component of reason), is a pretense, since force and reason are opposites. According to the view expressed in Romans, one is not led to believe in the existence of "the supernatural" by means of argument and sound reasoning which persuades one to consider such claims worthy of assent. Instead, that belief must be forced into the believer by "divine intervention." And in Christianity's Orwellian habit of calling black white, this forceful intervention is euphemized with such terminology as "mercifully enabling."

If it's the case, Pete, that understanding does not come by means of reason (as the view in Romans makes crystal clear), why do you argue in the first place? If it's the case that "it is impossible for [me or Nick] to understand... without God mercifully enabling [us]," what possible purpose could something like TAG serve? This is simply an attempt to evade the matter after you've clearly conceded all debate. Essentially, you are saying that debate is not even a concern, since it is up to god whether or not we believe, even though you've complained repeatedly that we are not dealing with "the issues that matter" and have challenged me to a debate on a matter to which you will give no definition.

Pete says "And contrary to the popular Christian notions, God doesn't choose everyone."

No, but he chose Peter Pike, right? Is that what we're supposed to believe? Christianity divides men into two opposing collectives, the "chosen" versus the "damned." Pete wants to number himself among the "chosen," and, by default, Nick and I number among the "damned." Why? Essentially, because we are honest: we are not willing to prostitute our minds by saying we believe something when we do not. Apparently this is wrong in Pete's view.

Pete says "There were several points that I wish I had more time to delve into."

I wish you would delve into them, Pete. Such as, what does "the supernatural" mean, and how can I distinguish between what you are calling "supernatural" and what you imagine?

Pete says "I will do so, whether you people choose to remain on this forum or not."

Okay. I'm a patient man, Pete.

Pete says "I couldn't care less."

Is this an expression of that longsuffering Christian "love" that we've heard so much about?

Pete says "I have nothing to hide,"

Then why are you still hiding? Why don't you trot out your version of TAG, for instance? Why don't you address my questions on "the supernatural"? Why don't you interact with my messages? Why do you continually mischaracterize my view in order to attack it? You're definitely hiding from something, Pete. Perhaps this is "the issue that matters" most of all.

Pete says "and the only reason anything ever gets deleted is when it gets really old or, as was the case when I started this board back up previously, we have a system crash."

Okay. I'm hoping that these exchanges remain on the web for future viewing. I know many who would enjoy the

opportunity to examine them. Meanwhile, however, anticipating the potential as Nick mentioned that you might choose to delete our exchanges out of shame, I have kept a record of my posts offline. Perhaps I will post them elsewhere as well.

Pete says "That ought not happen again since I have upgraded my web account and also now have more megs at my disposal."

Good move, Pete! I wish your site continued health!

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=96>

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 17, 2003

Pete, think of it like this.

When you drive your car (I'm assuming you drive),

a) does the road conform to your steering?

Or

b) does your steering conform to the road?

How would you answer this question, Pete?

Similarly, do you think that the objects of your awareness conform to your desires? Or, do they remain what they are regardless of your desires?

Objectivism simply teaches that reality does not conform to consciousness. In order for you to do anything, Pete, be it tying your shoes, writing an essay on your computer, or running a business, you must act on this principle. Religion is wholly antithetical to this principle, and that is why it is irrational.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=96>

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 18, 2003

I said "When you drive your car (I'm assuming you drive),"

Pete responds "Actually, I don't. But I know how, so it's a moot point."

No, it's not moot, Pete, because the same principle applies to everything you do. Keep in mind that a principle is a general truth upon which other truths logically depend. It is because reality does not conform to your wishes that you must put forth effort in order to achieve your goals, whether it is pouring a glass of milk or arranging a merger between two multi-national corporations. You have to act in accordance to the identities of the objects involved; they will not bend to your desires. Recognizing this is grasping the fact that the object holds metaphysical primacy over the subject.

I asked

"a) does the road conform to your steering?"

"Or

"b) does your steering conform to the road?"

"How would you answer this question, Pete?"

Pete says "But see, that's the whole point. How does one know? (I'm not asking that as if I don't have an answer--I'm trying to get your epistemology, which I already suspect--but you have a way of not stating it.)"

Pete, before we go any further, I want to know your answer to my question. It does not have to be driving if you don't like driving. If you've ever ridden a bicycle, or walked a footpath or through a large college campus with meandering sidewalks, you can answer this question. Will you answer it?

My epistemology should be very clear to you by now if you've been reading and understanding my posts. I have repeatedly identified it. It is the epistemology of reason. Reason is the faculty which identifies and integrates what we perceive. One of the conditions of reason is the choice to be honest about things; one cannot be rational if he is not willing to be honest. Are you willing to make the choice to be honest, Pete? This is crucial. If you are not willing to be honest, then there's no chance for you to really learn and understand.

I know that this emphasis on honesty may be novel for you. Christianity essentially teaches that honesty is a social virtue to be practiced out of fear of a universe-creating consciousness, while the philosophy of reason holds that honesty is a metaphysical orientation; it has to do with one's orientation to reality and to the facts that he discovers in reality. According to rational philosophy, one does not need others to practice the virtue of honesty; he is honest whether or not others are around. Rand presented her conception of 'honesty' in her novel Atlas Shrugged:

"Honesty is the recognition of the fact that the unreal is unreal and can have no value, that neither love nor fame nor cash is a value if obtained by fraud - that an attempt to gain a value by deceiving the mind of others is an act of raising your victims to a position higher than reality, where you become a pawn of their blindness, a slave of their non-thinking and their evasions, while their intelligence, their rationality, their perceptiveness become the enemies you have to dread and flee - that you do not care to live as a dependent, least of all a dependent on the stupidity of others, or as a fool whose source of values is the fools he succeeds in fooling - that honesty is not a social duty, not a sacrifice for the sake of others, but the most profoundly selfish virtue man can practice: his refusal to sacrifice the reality of his own existence to the deluded consciousness of others."

I'm willing to understand, Pete, that your mind has been so deeply confused by the horrors of the Christian worldview that your habit of distorting reality has been automatized, and perhaps that is why you carry on the way you do. Christianity seeks to sabotage your mind, your honesty, your ability to achieve and maintain a proper orientation to reality. I've seen firsthand how Christianity does this, and I am confident that its destruction does not have to be permanent if one grasps the importance of the rational integrity of one's own mind, and makes the choice to no longer sacrifice it for the sake of a rotting scarecrow that hangs before him in a place he is expected to consider "hallowed ground." But no one can force you to make your choice either way. You have been deceived, and you've been bamboozled, and now you are trying to see the same process repeated in others by your own hand (hence your apologetics website). Now you must ask yourself: Are you willing to be honest, or not? An honest man will recognize and admit that reality does not conform to consciousness. A dishonest man will not admit this while feverishly hoping to evade the fact that he must recognize it in order to do anything. What will your choice be, Pete?

I said "Similarly, do you think that the objects of your awareness conform to your desires? Or, do they remain what they are regardless of your desires?"

Pete says "Again, I am asking YOU to define YOUR views. My views are irrelevant at this point."

I have defined my views. Observe what I had stated and what you had quoted from my last post:

"Objectivism simply teaches that reality does not conform to consciousness. In order for you to do anything, Pete, be it tying your shoes, writing an essay on your computer, or running a business, you must act on this principle. Religion is wholly antithetical to this principle, and that is why it is irrational."

Did you not understand this?

Now, I will ask you again, Pete: Do you think that the objects of your awareness conform to your desires? Or, do they remain what they are regardless of your desires?

Try a simple experiment. Find an object in your room. Take your computer monitor for instance. Say it weighs 35 lbs. Can your wishing make it weigh 350 lbs.? Can your wishing make it weigh only 2 lbs.? You ask "how do you know" that reality does not conform to my wishes. I know this by directly perceiving an object and comparing it to my wishes about that object. Here's a thought experiment which you yourself can try. There is a stack of music CDs on my shelf. I

have counted them, there are 11 CDs. Now, I close my eyes and make a wish: I want there to be 500 CDs there instead of the 11 that I have counted. Now I open my eyes again and count. How many do you think are there, Pete? The 11 that were there before I made my wish, or the 500 that I wished for?

Now, try this thought experiment: command Pike's Peak to cast itself into the Pacific Ocean. What do you think will happen, Pete? Will the mountain cast itself into the Pacific Ocean (i.e., will reality conform to your consciousness), or will the mountain remain where it is unchanged (i.e., will reality continue to exist independent of your consciousness)? Try to be honest for a moment, Pete, and answer this question.

Pete says "And yet there is no mention of how the subject/object relationship accomplishes this, which is what I asked for in the first place."

What do you mean by "accomplishes" in this context, and why do you use this term? I do not say that "the subject/object relationship *accomplishes* this." I have consistently maintained that the subject-object relationship is the *basis* on which all knowledge and reasoning stand. The subject-object relationship is the metaphysical precondition of logic. Objectivity is the recognition that the objects which we perceive do not conform to our desires, that our consciousness must operate in accordance with what we perceive. The object holds primacy over the subject. There must be both a subject and an object, and a relationship between them, for such a recognition to be in the first place. The subject-object relationship, as a precondition to rational thinking, defines for us what the proper orientation to reality must be, namely, objectivity (i.e., the objects of our awareness hold priority over our consciousness).

Now, if your intentions to understand my view are indeed genuine, Pete, then I suggest you try to read more carefully. When you regurgitate my views with your own inputs in place of my own words, you're already distorting what I have said. Again, it is a question of honesty, Pete. You cannot escape this. No one can.

Pete says "I just want you to explain how it is possible for the subject/object relationship to give objective results."

I really don't understand the question. What do you mean by "give objective results"? Have you read anything which I have written so far? Did you really read it, Pete?

Pete says "(Remember, I already gave a definition at the beginning for what was objective--which is basically the same thing that you are driving at in your last paragraph; objectivity is not the issue! The subject/object relationship giving objectivity is.)"

Pete, the quote which you pasted to your initial message is not a definition, but a description provided for explanatory purposes. There is a difference, and frankly, I think you're making things more difficult than they are. Rand conceived of objectivity as a two-fold recognition. She writes that objectivity "pertains to the *relationship* of consciousness *to* existence. Metaphysically, it is the recognition of the fact that reality exists independent of any perceiver's consciousness. Epistemologically, it is the recognition of the fact that a perceiver's consciousness must acquire knowledge of reality by certain means (reason) in accordance with certain rules (logic)." ("Who is the Final Authority in Ethics?", *The Voice of REason*, p. 18, emphasis added.)

Our first recognitions are directly perceptual in nature. An honest man will acknowledge this. From our earliest awareness of the world, we recognize that objects exist and that they are distinct from us. Already there is a subject-object relationship involved, and must be in order for one to recognize anything. For a child, this recognition is purely implicit; he does not grasp the concept 'object' until he has formed it, and until he does the recognition remains at the perceptual level. At some point in the child's development, he gains an important stage of recognition, what psychologists call "object permanence." It is at this point that the child begins to grasp the fact that objects which are no longer in his immediate perceptual range still exist, even though he does not perceive them. He sees mom walk out of the room and close the door, but he grasps that mom still exists. And sure enough, a few moments later, mom comes walking back into the room.

The intimate connection between the subject-object relationship and the principle of objectivity should be clear to you now, Pete. In order to recognize that the objects of our perception hold metaphysical primacy over our consciousness (the principle of objectivity), we must have an object of our awareness (the subject-object relationship). This is a relationship which is ever-present in all awareness, but not all people grasp and act on the principle implicit in that relationship. That is why it needs to be made explicit, which is what the philosophy of reason does. It teaches us to recognize these basic fundamentals and to understand how they undergird rational thought. You won't learn this from the Bible, for the authors of the Bible took all of these basic principles completely for granted (i.e., they remained implicit for them), and, having failed to grasp them explicitly, they undermined their own efforts to think. Essentially, they got the subject-object relationship reversed, as can be seen from the first verses of Genesis to the last verses of Revelations.

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 19, 2003

Pete says "Now for the problems."

Pete, you quoted an excerpt from my message. Then you go on to list a number of "problems," but make no real attempt to link the problems that you identify to what I have written. Did you understand what I had written in the excerpt that you quoted? Did you find any statement in that excerpt to be false or inaccurate? Also, why did you not respond to anything else I had written?

Pete says "We have defined objectivity as that which does not conform to any subject's wishes, thoughts, desires, hopes, etc."

Not quite, Pete. Objectivity is the *recognition* that objects do not conform to any subject's wishes, thoughts, desires, hopes, etc. See the difference?

Pete says "Let us say that A is our object. A is A, because no matter what A is, it must be A. However, stating this does not tell us a single thing about A. This is important, as we shall see."

Sure, it does tell us something about A already. It tells us that it exists, that it is what it is independent of consciousness, that it is distinct from us as perceivers, and that we can have awareness of it. These are all very important facts which most thinkers take completely for granted.

Now, watch closely, Pete:

Pete says "Let us define A' (A prime) as B's perception of A (that is, the perceptions that B sees--the empirical data, etc.)."

"We therefore have the following propositions.

"A is A.

"B perceives A'.

"Therefore: A is A'"

What you are describing is not my worldview. Do you see where you slipped? Look at the second premise, "B perceives A'." You defined A' as "B's perception of A." Now, restate the second premise with its full meaning: B perceives B's perception of A. In other words, you're construing my worldview as saying that we perceive our perceptions, not the objects or our perceptions. But even in your reinterpretation, this does not make sense. How does someone "perceive perceptions"? This is Kantianism, Pete, and Objectivism has answered Kant. But you've not studied Objectivism. You've simply clipped a tiny paragraph from a website and have submitted it to wild distortion in order to debunk it. Do you not see that, when you do this, you're only debunking your own mind, Pete?

Pete says "But this most certainly does not follow. The only way for this to be so is if you can demonstrate that A' is A--in other words, the perceptions about A must be identical to what A really is! This is something that you cannot demonstrate for it is impossible."

We do not hold that the perception of an object and the object are the same thing, Pete. Perceptions are simply the form of our awareness of an object. A is A, and, likewise, perception of A is perception of A. Do you see where you switched? What you essentially want to say is that there is an "object in itself" (Kant's "Ding an sich") on the one hand, and, on the other, our "perception of perceptions," and that these two are irreconcilable (as you say "you cannot demonstrate for it is impossible"). You've created some dichotomies here, and it simply shows your own unfamiliarity with the issues. You have a long way to go before you will grasp these things I'm afraid, because you are not even aware of the errors you yourself are committing (which are not anything new), and you're not familiar with the writings which deal with them.

[skip elaboration based on a straw man (which, incidentally, denies the law of causality)]

Pete says "Let us take two people. We put up a ball (object A). One person says the ball is black. Another says the ball is red. Which color is the ball?"

But don't you see? By asking "which color is the ball" apart from a perceiver, you are already denying the subject-object relationship in a discussion of the form of perception. This is known as intrinsicism, and it is not valid. Without the subject, there is no one to perceive the object, consequently 'color' becomes a stolen concept. So already you're in over your head in context-dropping. Don't you see it, Pete?

Pete says "We know that the perception of the ball cannot change what the ball is. Therefore, all we can say is that maybe there is a color blind person who perceives the ball as being black. A normal person might see the ball as being a dark red, yet the color blind person sees it as black."

Pete, where do you think we got the idea of colorblindness to begin with? If this were a real problem, colorblind people and non-colorblind people would have divided up long ago and have waged unending civil war. They would never agree on anything if it were a real problem. But it's not a problem. It is only a problem as you characterize it, but your characterization is insufficiently informed. I mentioned before, and I'll mention again: find a good book on theories of perception (for instance, Gibson's "The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems" which is for the most part pretty good) and do some serious investigating so that you can speak intelligently on these matters.

Pete says "So we know of another case where perception is not a valid means of detecting the actual nature of the object."

You haven't established this, Pete. I know you think you have, but look at the destruction you've had to wage in order to get this outcome. It's simply mischaracterizing the issues in order to promote another stolen concept (in this case the concept 'valid'). Observe:

Pete says "In this case, a color blind person perceived false information about the color of the ball."

See what I mean? Perhaps the color god can intervene and correct "the problem" as you've conceived of it? The colorblind person does not "perceive false information." "False" has no meaning at this point. This is just another stolen concept; it has been ripped out of its proper hierarchical position in the logical structure of knowledge and has been applied where it is not rationally applicable. You assert a concept void of the context which gives it meaning in the first place.

Pete asks "But there is another problem. Are our senses adequate to fully experience an object?"

What do you mean by "fully experience an object"? Try not to beg the question here, Pete. Whether we "fully experience an object" or not, our perceptions have identity, they are what they are regardless of our wishes, and we must deal with them accordingly. When I see George Bush on TV, I see a man with two arms. Do you think that some people see a man with three arms when they see George Bush on TV, Pete? Or, is this "problem" simply a matter of the form in which we perceive light waves (i.e., "color")? Can something be seen and yet have no color whatsoever, Pete? Try to think of how you might answer this question (but I know you won't).

Pete says "The object does not change, yet the blind person does not see it as red."

Of course, the blind person does not see to begin with. Is this supposed to be some kind of profound discovery?

Pete says "This brings up a two-fold problem. Yet again, we see where a subject views the object differently and draws different conclusions from that."

How exactly is this a problem, Pete? Do you expect someone who "views the object" differently to draw identical conclusions from it?

Pete asks "But there is another, even more fundamental problem. If there are people who have fewer senses who cannot see something that is objectively true about the nature of an object, how do we know that there are not objectively true things that we cannot perceive with our five senses?"

Such as?

Pete says "What reason is there to assume that the five senses we have are comprehensive of all reality?"

What do you mean by "comprehensive of all reality" and who is saying that the senses accomplish this?

Pete says "The fact is, from this perspective, you cannot answer what the objective nature of A is outside of the physical realm."

"Physical realm"? How many "realms" are there, Pete? "Physical realm" as opposed to what other kind of realm? How are

you defining 'physical'? See, Pete, I asked you this before, and you never addressed it. And here you are using the same term, still left undefined in your hands, in order to interject yet another dichotomy. Not good.

Pete says "If A has a supernatural feature to it,"

Ah, ah, ah! Stop right there, Pete. You haven't told us what you mean by "supernatural" yet. So, whenever you use this term now, it is void of meaning. You've been requested to address this matter a number of times now, but you refuse to do so, and instead you indulge in more mischaracterization. Did you read what I had said about the virtue of honesty? Apparently you have not made the choice to be honest.

Pete says "it is impossible to know that--yet that does not change the nature of what A is."

If "it is impossible to know" that something "has a supernatural feature to it," then why are people always telling me that they know that reality "has a supernatural feature to it"? Obviously, it's a meaningless term, but they've invested their emotions in it, and thus are not willing to let go of it. They can't even offer a definition of it.

Pete says "A could, or could not, have a spiritual (for example) dimension, and empiricism would be completely unable to say a word about that. You can neither confirm nor deny it. Yet we are to have an objective understanding of the world based on this?"

Again, you completely lose sight of what objectivity is, and I think it's a question of attitude rather than ability to understand at this point. Perhaps you just don't want to understand, is that it? This is subjectivism at work, Pete: something is what you want it to be, not what it really is. This is how you are treating the views of others. It's called fallacy.

Pete says "It's my turn for a thought experiment."

I see you haven't responded to my thought experiments. Why is that, Pete? Afraid you'll have to concede something?

Pete says "Close your eyes and picture the red ball I was describing earlier. Think of it as three inches across and perfectly round, with a dark crimson red to it. Now, imagine a smaller blue ball next to it. Was there an objective ball out there from which you drew this information? No, you imagined it."

Actually, there was. All the balls that I have perceived in the past and have retained in my memory are available to me. Percepts are stored in the memory, Pete, just as concepts are. If I did not store percepts in our memory, then the notion of a ball would be meaningless to me; it would have no perceptual inputs to give it contextual meaning.

Pete says "The only objective source that you had were my words"

This error has been corrected now.

Pete says "The shapes are interpreted by your brain based on the context of language and what words mean in English. This then transfers to your consciousness and you think about something--in this case, a red ball."

Interesting switch going on here, too. I don't know if you saw it. First, something is "interpreted by your brain" and then it "transfers to your consciousness." Whatever you think you're addressing, you're not addressing my worldview.

Pete says "Now, this imagination did not create the ball--but did you see red? Did you see blue? Did you perceive it?"

No, I did not perceive it. I retrieved it from memory. There's a difference.

Pete says "Your mind manufactured them."

But from what? From the percepts which are stored in our memory. Our imagination simply reassembles them. Now, if your thought experiment were for me to picture your mother, whom I've never seen, then I could not do this very vividly, because I lack the inputs. But since I know what my mother looks like (and since I have many percepts of her stored in my memory), I can assemble many such images of her in my mind.

Pete says "There were no light-waves that bounced around to your eyes that enabled you to see red or blue balls or red and white checkers. How, then, were you able to perceive them?"

The perceiving involved happened long ago and is now stored in my memory.

Pete says "Here's the thing. You say that the subject/object relationship requires both a subject and an object."

By definition. A relationship between N and X requires the existence of both N and X.

Pete says "However, you just experienced a red ball and a blue ball that were not objective."

No, I experienced the image of a red ball and a blue ball which I have perceived in the past and retrieved from my memory.

Pete says "They were defined by your own mind, and yet you experienced them subjectively."

They were defined by my past perception of them.

Pete says "No matter what, we have our differences in our experiences. We do not have the same experiences, we do not have the same perceptions."

This is not problematic in my worldview, Pete. I know that you *want* it to be a problem for me, but wishing doesn't make it so, Pete.

Pete says "A) No one experiences anything the same way,"

So, you are saying that, when I see George Bush with two arms, you see George Bush with three arms?

Pete says "B) one can just as easily manufacture an imaginary object from which to derive his conclusions."

Yes, this is possible, and we call those who take those imaginations seriously and replace the truth with them "religionists." (But notice that those people have misunderstood the subject-object relationship, just as you have, Pete.)

Pete says "Now, perhaps you might think I'm a dunce and I just don't get it. Fine--but if you cannot explain these problems, then I will never "get it", not will I want to."

I think the problem is that you do not want to.

Pete says "I cannot subject my reason to that which is unconvincing."

Then why do you accept "that which is unconvincing" in the form of your religious beliefs, Pete? Again, what do you mean by "supernatural"? Why do you resist answering this question?

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=96>

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 20, 2003

I said "Sure, it does tell us something about A already. It tells us that it exists, that it is what it is independent of consciousness, that it is distinct from us as perceivers, and that we can have awareness of it."

Pete responds "I have given you several examples where this isn't so."

And none of which have you shown to be effective counter-examples to my worldview on an objective theory of concept-formation. Your examples as you've employed them all rest on stolen concepts, as I've shown. Thus, they are not effective challenges to my worldview. They fall flat because they have to assume the truth of my worldview while denying it.

Pete says "You are trying to have it both ways. You are claiming that A is independent of our perceptions, but then are defining it by our perceptions! This is irrational."

Not if perception is the means by which we gain awareness of A (and it is). That on the one hand A exists independent of our consciousness and on the other we must perceive A in order to acquire knowledge of it are not contradictory or incompatible facts.

Pete says "If I hallucinate an object, I can "perceive" that it is different than I. I can make distinctions between it and

myself--yet this does not make the object objective! It is still subjective because my own consciousness has formed such an object."

Pete, what do you mean by "hallucinate" as you use the term here? What is happening when you hallucinate? (Perhaps that's when you see God?) For instance, how do you know that you're not hallucinating now? Explain how you formed the concept, and against what does it derive its meaning (i.e., hallucinate as opposed to what?). Are you equating hallucination with perception? If not, then this is not an issue; if so, then you need to justify why you are doing so.

Pete says "Given the fact that the perception of an object does not prove that the object actually exists nor that the object is independent of consciousness, how can you claim it is objective simply because it is perceived? This is a contradiction in terms."

But if we perceive an object, its existence is self-evidence, so no proof is needed. Do you see how you have ripped the concept 'proof' out of its proper hierarchical context in order to assert it where it cannot logically apply? That's called a stolen concept, Pete. In addition to this persistent error in your thinking, Pete, you also rely heavily on package-dealing, most notably in the following discussion you package-deal the object of perception and the form of perception as well as perception and perceptual judgments. In both matters, you are repeatedly ignoring their distinctions and treating two different things as if they were the same. An object is distinct from the form of our perception of it (but without perception we have no awareness of it); this is not problematic for Objectivism because Objectivism recognizes that awareness of anything must take some kind of form, and that this form is the product of a causal interaction between the object and the perceiver (again reaffirming the relevance of the subject-object relationship), not a volitionally directed process. Additionally, our perception of an object is distinct from our perceptual judgments, i.e., how we identify conceptually what we perceive. Perceptions (an automatic, non-conceptual process) are not "wrong" or "invalid," but our identification of what we perceive (a conceptual process) can be wrong, false or invalid. Even the counter-examples which you have thrown up must assume the validity of these distinctions in your effort to deny and package-deal them, thus committing you to yet another performative inconsistency.

I wrote:

quote:

Now, watch closely, Pete:

Pete says "Let us define A' (A prime) as B's perception of A (that is, the perceptions that B sees--the empirical data, etc.)."

"We therefore have the following propositions.

"A is A.

"B perceives A'.

"Therefore: A is A'"

What you are describing is not my worldview. Do you see where you slipped? Look at the second premise, "B perceives A'." You defined A' as "B's perception of A." Now, restate the second premise with its full meaning: B perceives B's perception of A. In other words, you're construing my worldview as saying that we perceive our perceptions, not the objects or our perceptions. But even in your reinterpretation, this does not make sense. How does someone "perceive perceptions"? This is Kantianism, Pete, and Objectivism has answered Kant. But you've not studied Objectivism. You've simply clipped a tiny paragraph from a website and have submitted it to wild distortion in order to debunk it. Do you not see that, when you do this, you're only debunking your own mind, Pete?

[endquote]

Pete says "I see no refutation of my arguments here, Seeker. Instead, you are switching to an ad hominem attack against me, accusing me of twisting and distorting things. Why don't you argue the point?"

You mean, you don't see where you slipped, Peter? Come now. A 10-year-old could see it. Look again at your second premise. It says "B perceives A'." You defined A' (A prime) as "B's perception of A." So, your second premise, when written out, says "B perceives B's perception of A." It's nonsense, and it certainly does not represent my view (i.e., if you think this reflects what my worldview teaches, it's in error). My view does not teach that we "perceive perceptions" (as you are characterizing it), but that we perceive objects. There's a huge difference. Do you see it?

Pete says "You are claiming that what B perceives is really what A is."

Pete, what do you mean by "what B perceives is really what A is"? Where did I claim that I "do" this? Are you saying

that this is impossible to do? If so, how do you know? An object "as it really is" as opposed to what? What necessitates this dichotomy you want to introduce? Back it out, unpack it and trace it down to its roots. What do you find, Pete?

Suppose a cut a piece of paper into a circle. I hold the paper perpendicular to the ground so that when it is at eye level, you can see that it is circular. But then I raise it 15 feet above you. When you look at it now from your perspective, you perceive it as an ovoid shape, but you still recognize that it is circular in shape, because you can adjust for perspective (sight enables us to perceive depth, which makes this possible). In both cases (when the paper was directly before you and when it was 15 feet over your head), you still perceive the same object (you are not perceiving a perception of the object - you're perceiving the object itself), the object itself hasn't changed, but its proximal relationship to you has changed, and the form of our perception reflects this change. But to ask, "What does the paper *really* look like?" is nonsensical. It is like asking "What would the paper look like if I could get out from behind my eyes and look at it then?" Well, without your eyes, you're not going to see anything.

Pete says "Yet I have provided concrete examples where this is not the case!"

Ah, so you claim, but no cigar, Pete. In each case, they've backfired on themselves. Maybe you just do not see it yet?

Pete says "We have color-blind people, we have schizophrenics, we have others who are lacking certain senses--none of these change the objective A; and yet B can only function based on what B perceives."

Yes, there are colorblind people, and they perceive what they perceive. They're perceptions are not "false" or "invalid." You are again blurring the distinction between the object of perception and the form of perception.

I said "In other words, you're construing my worldview as saying that we perceive our perceptions, not the objects or our perceptions."

Pete says "This is exactly what you are doing."

Not at all. Maybe you're not reading carefully, Pete? We perceive objects, not perceptions. We are not representationalists.

I said "But even in your reinterpretation, this does not make sense. How does someone "perceive perceptions"?"

Pete says "Definitionally. You perceive that which you perceive."

Which are objects, not perceptions. So your second premise (B perceives A') does not apply to my worldview. It's based on a stolen concept, which my worldview identifies and avoids.

Pete says "Your perceptions, however, are not objective. That is the whole point."

What do you think they would have to be in order to be "objective" as you understand it? (While you're at it, how do you understand it? Perhaps what you mean by 'objective' is completely different from how my worldview understands it. I have presented a two-fold definition of 'objective' already; did you read it? Did you understand it?)

I wrote "We do not hold that the perception of an object and the object are the same thing, Pete."

Pete says "Then you cannot say that the subject/object relationship results in objectivity."

Two questions for you here, Pete:

1. What do you mean by "results in objectivity"? (This is not what I have claimed.)
2. Why do you think I "cannot say that the subject/object relationship results in objectivity," assuming this were my claim?

Pete says "For all your wind and bluster, you have still not demonstrated how the subject/object relationship actually gives us objectivity! "

It is not my position that the relationship "gives" us objectivity, Pete, so why would I need to "demonstrate" this? Objectivity is not automatic, Pete. It is an orientation, but it cannot be forced on a person. Again, I don't think you understand what I mean by 'objectivity', even though I've provided a definition of the term as I use it, and have cited the source of that definition. (Perhaps you are operating on the biblical understanding of 'objectivity'? If so, can you cite book, chapter and verse where that term is defined so that readers have better knowledge of what you mean when you use the term?)

I said "Perceptions are simply the form of our awareness of an object. A is A, and, likewise, perception of A is

perception of A. Do you see where you switched?"

Pete says "No, because that is what I was saying."

That's not what you were saying. You said in your second premise that B perceives A', which, when written out, says "B perceives B's perception of A." This is not what my worldview teaches, and unless you recognize the difference, you'll continue to be lost on this matter. Another error in your proposed syllogism is that it is supposed to derive the truth of "A is A" by means of proof (even though the conclusion was the same as the first premise!), which shows that you fail to grasp these matters from the very beginning. I think years of Christianity have rendered your mind virtually defunct in the department of rational thinking on these matters, Pete. That's just my humble opinion. You don't have to like it.

Pete says "The perceptions of A are not A,"

Correct. Perception is a causal interaction between A (the object) and B (the subject). This is where we find the subject-object relationship and this is how we acquire awareness of A. When you perceive any object, Pete, you perceive it by a means of perception (but you still perceive the object; you are not perceiving a perception). In other words, there is a relationship between you and that object in which a causal interaction between your senses and the object which acts on them produce your awareness of it. There's a lot of science behind this to validate what I am saying, but even before that stage you should be able to grasp this once it's pointed out to you. But I doubt you will concede at this point, because you're emotionally invested in an opposite outcome.

Pete says "therefore it does not matter what is perceived of A as it relates to objectivism."

Non sequitur. You'll have to do better than that, Pete.

Pete says "Your perceptions do not change A, they do not alter A."

Right. That's Objectivism, Pete. A exists independent of our awareness of it. This is the direct opposite of what Christianity teaches, and here you're issuing this point as a premise in one of your own arguments. Talk about 'borrowed capital'!

Pete says "In point of fact, your perceptions may not even be related to A (again, the schizophrenic does not cause dogs to speak language). You can completely make up some fictional A in your consciousness."

A "fictional A," like a resurrected Jesus? Perhaps you're in the habit of confusing your imagination with what you perceive, but this does not mean that everyone else has this habit, Pete.

Pete says "None of these perceptions cause A to be objective!"

Again, I think you need to explain what *you* mean by "objective," because you are not using this term in a manner that is consistent with its meaning as my worldview employs it. I do not hold that perceiving an object "makes" it objective, and I've nowhere argued this.

Pete says "How much clearer could it be?"

It's clear alright, Pete. You haven't seriously studied what Objectivism teaches.

Pete says "And by the way, I have indeed read up on this subject, so you can stop your smear campaign."

Really? You've got me curious. Do you remember the source(s) which you consulted on this topic? Are you confident that you understood the subject matter well? Was the author(s) a representationalist? (For that is what you seem to be espousing.)

Pete says "Perhaps it hasn't occurred to you that there are billions of intelligent people who reject naturalistic objectivism as being false."

What is "naturalistic objectivism"? Is there another kind of 'objectivism'? Or, are you trying to rip off the name? And does the supposed fact that "there are billions of intelligent people who reject" it mean that it is in fact false? (Can fifty million Frenchmen be wrong?) My experience is that a good portion of those who reject Objectivism either do not understand it, or despise it because they do understand that it will not allow them to enshrine their fantasies in place of truth. I've noted a heavy reliance on straw man tactics among those who wish to denounce the philosophy of reason (as I have found in your treatments). If it's so false, why do the detractors of Objectivism always have to mischaracterize it in order to attempt a refutation of its teachings? Why can't they deal with what Objectivism actually teaches?

Pete says "You can claim it's bias against it, but I can make the same claim toward you--making the claim doesn't make it so."

You're right, the claim is not its own proof. But of course, we have plenty of evidence to support the claim, so such reversals are not necessary to prove the point. But that's a good observation, Pete!

Pete says "So, how about instead of ignoring my rationality here, you instead demonstrate how it is wrong."

I have done so multiple times now, Pete. Scroll up. Observe the following as well. I've pointed out many errors on your part, and you do nothing to correct them.

Pete says "The bottom line is that you aren't going to convince me when you don't even answer my question to begin with."

Well, I suppose I could say "ditto" to that as well. I've asked far more questions that have gone unanswered by you than you've asked of me that I've not answered, if you want to compare notes. Prior exchanges are ample proof of this, Pete.

I said "What you essentially want to say is that there is an "object in itself" (Kant's "Ding an sich" on the one hand, and, on the other, our "perception of perceptions," and that these two are irreconcilable (as you say "you cannot demonstrate for it is impossible").

Pete says "You cannot demonstrate it based on perceptions."

I cannot "demonstrate" what "based on perceptions"? What am I supposed to "demonstrate" and on what basis would you prefer?

Pete says "That does not mean one cannot demonstrate it."

Ah, so, YOU can "demonstrate" whatever it is I've supposedly failed to "demonstrate"? Well, by all means, don't hold back, Pete. Take the floor. Show us what you mean. Give us your demonstration.

Pete says "But again, this is about you showing how the object/subject relationship gives us objective truth."

Again, I don't know what you mean by "gives us objective truth." I've maintained and corrected you numerous times now that the subject-object relationship is a precondition for knowledge, logic and truth. You apparently have interpreted this to mean that the subject-object relationship somehow manufactures "objective truth." But that's not at all what I've affirmed. Again, I see another straw man.

I said "You've created some dichotomies here, and it simply shows your own unfamiliarity with the issues."

Pete says "Then the fact that you can't answer the question I asked must demonstrate your unfamiliarity with the issues involved...."

Sorry, Pete, I've answered so many of your questions, which one did I miss?

Pete said "Let us take two people. We put up a ball (object A). One person says the ball is black. Another says the ball is red. Which color is the ball?"

I responded "But don't you see? By asking "which color is the ball" apart from a perceiver, you are already denying the subject-object relationship in a discussion of the form of perception."

Pete says "So the color of the ball is determined by the perceiver?"

No, it is determined by both the object and the perceiver. It is the product of the interaction between the object and the senses of the perceiver. There is both a subject and an object involved with each other in a causal relationship. Both subject and object must be involved for the concept 'color' to have any meaning.

Pete says "And this is objective how???"

Again, Pete, I think you've misunderstood what we mean by objective. Objectivity pertains to an orientation of conceptual thought. We're still dealing with issues of perception, which precedes conceptual thought.

I said "This is known as intrinsicism, and it is not valid. Without the subject, there is no one to perceive the object,

consequently 'color' becomes a stolen concept. So already you're in over your head in context-dropping. Don't you see it, Pete?"

Pete says "What you are forgetting is that there was a subject involved!"

I've not forgotten this by any means, Pete. The subject is the one who does the perceiving. That's why I reject intrinsicism, which is essentially what you are espousing (it's at the root of your representationalism). You are of the impression that sensory qualities (e.g., color) exist "out there" apart from a perceiving subject. That's why the concept 'color' is a stolen concept for the intrinsicist; it is asserted while denying the subject-object relationship.

Pete says "In fact, there were two subjects who perceived the color differently."

That's not problematic, Pete (because Objectivism is not intrinsicism). In fact, it's exactly what we would expect. Consider how we perceive a ball visually, and how a bat perceives it aurally. The bat's sense of hearing is so acute that it can perceive the texture of an object (i.e., soft vs. hard, fuzzy versus solid, etc.). It perceives the very same object that we perceive, but its form of perception is different from ours. But it still perceives the same object. This is not problematic so long as we recognize the distinction between the object which we perceive and the form in which we perceive it (a distinction which the Bible nowhere mentions, by the way). Or, do you think there is no form in which you perceive things?

Pete says "I want to know how you can know which perceiver is right and which is wrong (or maybe both are wrong), for they both cannot be right in a contradiction!"

It's not a contradiction, Pete. They both perceive the same object, and they both perceive it according to the nature of their perceptual faculties. They can't perceive it any other way. There is no such thing as a "false" or "invalid" perception in the Objectivist model, Pete. A "false" perception would have to mean perceiving an object in the wrong form. But there's no such thing as a "wrong" form in which to perceive an object. The form of perception is the causal product of a physical interaction among the object and the sense organs. One individual may perceive the ball as gray instead of red because his visual receptors lack sufficient rodopsin, for instance; the causality of perception could not happen any other way for him - i.e., it would be "wrong" if you will for him to perceive red instead of gray given the causal circumstances. Only one form can be produced by the conditions at hand, and those conditions depend on the identity of both the object and the subject's perceptual faculties. Phenomena such as colorblindness, which you want to promote as some kind of counter-example, are not problematic in my worldview. Granted, there's a lot to it, and you're not aware of all the details that make up the context here, but that only means that you're not in a sufficiently knowledgeable position to say that it results in a "contradiction." If colorblindness is a contradiction for me, it's a contradiction for everyone else, too, which is as unnecessary as it is ridiculous. We cannot ignore the causality of perception, and that's precisely what the intrinsicist model does.

Pete says "Now, are you going to say that there is no objective color?"

I don't know what you mean by "objective color," Pete. Color does not have a conceptual orientation to the objects which it perceives (color does not perceive in the first place!), so the concept is not meaningfully applied here.

Pete says "The ball itself isn't objectively any color, it's just perceived however it is perceived?"

See the intrinsicism creeping in here? Do you want to say that the color is in the object itself? But the color is not in the object or in the subject, but in the interaction between them. It is the form in which optical sensory qualities of the object are perceived. The concept 'color' is meaningless without both parties of the relationship.

Pete says "Is that what you're saying? Because if it is, how can you know anything objective about the object? It is totally relative to the perceiver involved, which is exactly my point."

Again, Pete, you're not understanding what I mean by 'objective'. You've missed it (again). I suspect that by 'objective' as you are using the term, you mean what Objectivism calls intrinsicism, which Objectivism rejects (because it denies the subject-object relationship).

I said "Pete, where do you think we got the idea of colorblindness to begin with?"

Pete says "Assuming the reality of everyone, consensus. More people define a color as X than as Y. But consensus doesn't answer the basic fundamental questions."

So, tell me, Pete, is it consensus, or something other than consensus, that tells you that you perceive an object in a particular form? Why such concern for how others perceive things?

Pete asks "Just because everyone perceives something one way, does that mean that that object perceived actually is

that way?"

Do you think they could perceive in a manner other than that in which they do perceive it?

Pete said "In this case, a color blind person perceived false information about the color of the ball."

I responded "See what I mean? Perhaps the color god can intervene and correct "the problem" as you've conceived of it? The colorblind person does not "perceive false information." "False" has no meaning at this point."

Pete says "In reality, then, nothing that is perceived actually matters qua the object because nothing that is perceived is either true or false."

"True" and "false" do not apply to forms of perception, Pete, any more than they can apply to how a plant grows or how a rock tumbles down a hill. Perception is an autonomic causal function of the body. It cannot happen any other way than it does.

Pete says "This is my entire point--how is the subject's perception going to result in objectivity? PLEASE ANSWER THIS QUESTION! How many times do I have to ask it?"

What do you mean by "result in objectivity"?

Pete says "It's all fine and dandy for you to claim that I am stealing concepts, but you cannot demonstrate how your subject/object relationship can bring up such concepts in the first place and make them objective."

What would a "demonstration" of this have to look like for you to recognize it as such, Pete?

Pete says "If all the attributes that are experienced about an object depend solely on the perceiver, then the attributes of an object are completely relative to the perceiver alone."

Who is saying that the attributes that the perceiver experiences "depend solely on the perceiver"? That's certainly not my position. The object has attributes (such as shape, texture, atomic structure), but the color of something (i.e., the sensory quality of light reflected off the atomic structure of the surface of the object) has to do with the form of perception involved - that is, subject and object interaction.

Pete says "What is an object if not its attributes? How do we define a ball? By what it looks like, sounds like, feels like, etc.--but all of those are relative to the perceiver! There is no objectivity in your system, Seeker. It can tell you nothing about what is real."

Clearly you do not understand the concept 'objective' as my worldview uses it. I've explained it numerous times now, and so has Nick, and your persistent misunderstandings have been repeatedly corrected in our many posts. But again you fail to integrate.

I asked "What do you mean by "fully experience an object"? Try not to beg the question here, Pete. Whether we "fully experience an object" or not, our perceptions have identity, they are what they are regardless of our wishes, and we must deal with them accordingly. When I see George Bush on TV, I see a man with two arms. Do you think that some people see a man with three arms when they see George Bush on TV, Pete?"

Pete says "And you claimed my argument about the schizophrenic was a straw man? Here you are asking the very thing!"

No, it's not the same thing. In your example of the schizophrenic, somebody else is *claimed* to have heard a dog speaking a human language; it is not a question to me whether or not I've heard a dog speaking a human language. Your example is purely anecdotal, while my question is a call for honesty. I am simply asking a point-blank question to you: Do you see George Bush with two arms, or three, Pete?

Pete says "What if, instead of hearing his dog speak to him, the schizophrenic saw George Bush as having three arms. His perception does not change George Bush. George Bush only has two arms, and he is not going to grow one just because someone perceives it; therefore, perception has nothing to do with objectivity!"

Now, whose worldview teaches that George Bush will grow three arms because of conscious intentionality, Pete? Are you denying that God has the power to do this if He wanted? If God wanted George Bush to suddenly sprout a third arm, could God make it happen, Pete?

Pete says "Can you see the difference?"

Yup.

Pete says "My objectivity is not based on what is seen about an object, it is based on what the object actually is."

And you know what the object is without seeing it? Amazing. By what means do you have awareness of it, Pete? And how do you know that your form of awareness of the object is not "false" (since you seem to think that the concept applies at this level of consciousness)? Even on the terms which you've been trying to press against my view, you cannot escape the issue so long as your premises have been accepted.

Pete says "A is A period. End of discussion. A is not A because it is perceived in any manner."

That's essentially what Objectivism holds, Pete: an object is what it is independent of consciousness (go back to the quote you lifted from the Objectivist website, and you'll see this is explicitly what it teaches - it states "Reality, the external world, exists independent of man's consciousness, independent of any observer's knowledge, beliefs, feelings, desires or fears."). But Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that objects are whatever the ruling consciousness wants them to be. See the subjectivity in that, Pete? The object's identity, according to Christianity, depends wholly on the subject, because the subject is said to *create* those objects by an act of will. So, yes, in a sense, "end of discussion."

Pete says "A does not require a consensus of perception in order to be what it is."

Yes, according to Objectivism, but not according to Christianity. In Christianity, an object's identity depends on the consent of the ruling consciousness. That's subjectivism with a vengeance.

Pete says "A would be A whether people existed or not."

Right. And Objectivists hold that A is what it is no matter what God wants it to be. That's why Christians detest Objectivists so much (we reject the nonsense idea of "divine sovereignty" along with the nonsense idea of "god").

Pete says "A does not conform to the whims of anyone."

Right. Not even God's.

Pete says "This is true objectivity and it requires no subject! "

If there's no subject, then who formed the concept 'objectivity'?

I said "Or, is this "problem" simply a matter of the form in which we perceive light waves (i.e., "color"? Can something be seen and yet have no color whatsoever, Pete? Try to think of how you might answer this question (but I know you won't)."

Pete says "Black has no color and can be seen. In fact, it is all that is seen in the absence of light."

In the absence of light, there is no seeing going on in the first place.

I asked "How exactly is this a problem, Pete? Do you expect someone who "views the object" differently to draw identical conclusions from it?"

Pete says "Of course I don't--yet you are claiming that this brings about objectivism! THAT IS WHAT I AM ARGUING AGAINST."

And you're arguing against a straw man, because you do not grasp what we mean by the concept 'objectivity'. It's been explained to you, but it's clear that you've not grasped it.

I asked "'Physical realm'? How many "realms" are there, Pete?"

Pete says "As many as there are."

How many is that, Pete? You are affirming that there is more than one, right? How do you know?

I asked "'Physical realm' as opposed to what other kind of realm?"

Pete says "An immaterial realm."

What is that? Do you have awareness of it? By what means do you have awareness of it, Pete?

Pete says "A spiritual realm."

What is that? Do you have awareness of it? By what means do you have awareness of it, Pete?

Pete says "A supernatural realm."

What is that? Do you have awareness of it? By what means do you have awareness of it, Pete?

Pete says "Any other kind of realm someone might dream up"

I see, you just can conjure them up in your imagination with wild abandon as you like, is that it?

Pete says "--you have no way of addressing such things from this worldview. That is all my point is."

Well, if "That is all [your] point is," it's pretty weak. Why would I have to "address such things"? They are asserted without any concern for fact. It's wholly arbitrary. A little chuckling is all that is called for, to be honest.

I asked "How are you defining 'physical'?"

Pete says "That which can be empirically observed by our five senses."

So, does this count hallucinations?

I said "Ah, ah, ah! Stop right there, Pete. You haven't told us what you mean by "supernatural" yet. So, whenever you use this term now, it is void of meaning."

Pete says "You haven't defined "is" for me either. Stop using it."

I didn't know that "is" was a controversial term. I don't think it is for either of us (since you've used this term as much as I have and in a manner that is syntactically consistent with the way I've used it).

Pete says "In fact, you haven't defined how definitions are necessary. And if you do now, you still wouldn't have defined the definition of how definitions are necessary...this is just a stupid exercise in obfuscation, Seeker."

I don't need to, Pete. Your own words, from your essay "Defining the Christian God," confirm that you yourself think definitions are necessary. In that essay, you wrote "when we use these terms we must be careful to define them precisely." So, you already apparently think that definitions are important, and do not need me to convince you that they are necessary. So, the question is: will you be consistent with your own words?

Pete says "The supernatural is that which is outside the natural."

What does that mean? Where is "outside the natural"?

Pete says "The natural is the physical universe, or what can be empirically observed."

I'm still wondering what "the supernatural" *is* - you only say what it is not - it is not inside the natural. You need to identify it in positive terms. Also, you need to explain how one can distinguish between what you are calling "the supernatural" and your subjective imagination, fantasies and wishing? If one cannot perceive "the supernatural," by what means does one acquire awareness of it? By no means? Why don't you address these questions seriously, Pete? Why is it such a chore for you?

Pete asks "How is this so difficult?"

It must be pretty difficult for you, because I've asked you numerous times now, and this is the first time you've shown any willingness to even acknowledge the question. But your attempt here is less than half-hearted. Needs work.

I said "Did you read what I had said about the virtue of honesty? Apparently you have not made the choice to be honest."

Pete says "According to Rand, I do not need to. I am looking out for my self-interests, am I not? Why should I not be selfish here? Or are you going to be consistent???"

You obviously do not know what Rand wrote. Her philosophy does not teach reality-denying whimsy; it teaches *rational* self-interest. If you think you are acting in your own interest by being dishonest, that tells us a lot, Pete.

Did you read the quote which I posted? Those were Rand's own words. Did you read what it said? Did you understand it? Do you not agree that honesty is an important virtue? Or, is it just a chore, something you must do because you've been commanded, but you really don't want to be honest after all?

Pete says "In either case, I have not been dishonest."

Yes, you've been very dishonest, Pete. And you need to admit it.

Pete says "I'm getting sick of your ad hominem."

It's not an ad hominem to point out your dishonesty any more than it is an ad hominem to point out Bill Clinton's dishonesty. In fact, I'd be wrong to pretend you were not dishonest and ignore it.

Pete says "If this is all you can muster, you can talk to the wall."

Sometimes I think I am.

I asked "If "it is impossible to know" that something "has a supernatural feature to it," then why are people always telling me that they know that reality "has a supernatural feature to it"?"

Pete says "It is impossible to know based on your worldview, Seeker."

But Pete, all you've succeeded in doing is mischaracterizing my worldview. Not one of your challenges has succeeded, either because it commits some kind of conceptual fallacy, because you do not understand my position, or because you deliberately mischaracterize it in order to knock it down. So you cannot know what my worldview can enable me to know. I keep hoping with every post you submit that you will actually come close to making one point against my worldview, and so far, all your attempts - every one of them - have completely backfired on you. You've even abandoned your defense of TAG to boot! You've wandered a long way from arguing *for* the existence of "the supernatural." Now, your only concern seems to be validating your claim that I cannot say anything against your belief in "the supernatural." But Pete, don't you see? That means you've conceded all debate, and it bugs the snot out of you.

Pete says "This is what we are discussing--your idea that the subject/object relationship can actually bring about objectivity."

See, here you go and do it again: you misrepresent what I have said. Can you find where I have argued that the subject-object relationship "brings about" objectivity? That is not my position. I have stated (and corrected this very attempt to mischaracterize my view) many times now: the subject-object relationship is the *basis* of all conceptual thought, and therefore of logic, objectivity, rationality, reason, etc. I will quote Rand again, since apparently you missed it the first time:

"[Objectivity] pertains to the *relationship* of consciousness *to* existence. Metaphysically, it is the recognition of the fact that reality exists independent of any perceiver's consciousness. Epistemologically, it is the recognition of the fact that a perceiver's consciousness must acquire knowledge of reality by certain means (reason) in accordance with certain rules (logic)." ("Who is the Final Authority in Ethics?", *The Voice of REason*, p. 18, emphasis added.)

Without both a subject and an object and the causally interactive relationship they make possible together, there can be no conceptual thought. This is the basis of logic that you want to rip off from reality and send it to your god-belief. TAG says essentially nothing more than "the atheist worldview" (as if there were only one) cannot "account for" logic, rationality, intelligibility, etc. But TAG has been shown up in spades in this forum, Pete, and it's clear that, as a (perhaps former) defender of TAG, you do not like this one bit. That's why you keep coming back trying to battle the windmill. Won't succeed, Pete.

I said "I see you haven't responded to my thought experiments. Why is that, Pete? Afraid you'll have to concede something?"

Pete says "I'm not going to answer your questions when you continue to ignore mine, Seeker."

Okay. Suit yourself.

Pete says "It's that simple. When I ask you how you can get objective truth from the subject/object relationship, I am not going to answer your question about traveling down the road as if my view was the one being questioned."

Then you won't understand, and that means you will lose out. I think you don't want to address such questions because the answer is obvious, and you resent the implications of that answer.

I said "Actually, there was. All the balls that I have perceived in the past and have retained in my memory are available to me."

Pete responds "You are assuming that the first ball you see was actually real and not imagined."

How do you know I'm assuming this, Pete? Can you prove that I am assuming this? Or, are you just assuming that I was assuming this?

Also, while you're at it, can you answer the question I asked some time ago: What is your definition of 'real' as you use it here? I could simply say that, according to my conception of 'real', the first ball I saw was real, and you'd have no way of disproving this.

See, Pete. You deny the basis of 'proof,' and yet you want me to present a proof which you will accept. Again, it's a game for you, nothing more. But every time I play it and beat you at it, it pours hot coals on your head, because you do not want me to have the certainty which I do have. You're desperate to find some way to knock a hole in it, but you can't, and it bothers you to no end.

I said "No, I did not perceive it. I retrieved it from memory. There's a difference."

Pete says "How can you tell the difference?"

The same way you would be able to tell the difference when you recall something from your memory, Pete. Intentionally recalling something from memory is a consciously directed act, while perceiving is an automatic process. I can choose to recall something from memory, or not to; but I cannot choose what I will perceive. Once I open my eyes, they will perceive whatever is before me.

Pete says "A) No one experiences anything the same way,"

I asked "So, you are saying that, when I see George Bush with two arms, you see George Bush with three arms?"

Pete says "No,"

Okay, good. Finally we get an honest answer.

Pete says "but"

Ah, you had to go and mess it up, didn't you?

Pete says "what I see of him isn't going to be the same that you see of him."

Just as long as you admit that you perceive in George Bush a man with only two arms, that's good enough for me.

Pete says "It isn't universal."

What do you mean by "universal" and how do you prove that "it is not universal"? Or, are you just assuming this? Is it not the case that whenever someone perceives George Bush, he's perceiving George Bush?

Pete says "I may see him grin on something, you might see him grimace."

Like any man I've ever met, I don't see any reason why George Bush cannot grin or grimace.

I asked "Then why do you accept "that which is unconvincing" in the form of your religious beliefs, Pete?"

Pete says "Because it is convincing. It's not unconvincing."

Prove it.

Seeker17

Question for Pete

May 21, 2003

Nick said "Imagine that you were born blind, deaf, with no sense of smell or any feeling of any kind. Your state prevents you from ever having a perception, which means you could never participate in a subject/object relationship."

Pete says "The state you describe would only prevent you from having a perception gained through empirical methods."

Actually, empirical methods depend on perception to begin with (not the other way around), so there's a bit of a reversal going on here. But aside from this, do you suppose there is a means of acquiring awareness of the world of objects other than perception? If you lacked all five sense modalities, for instance, and I held an object one foot in front of you, do you think you could gain awareness of it somehow? If so, how?

Nick asked "Now, without perceptions, would you still hold your current worldview? Could you hold a worldview at all?"

Pete says "Assuming the validity of my worldview, yes--God could give me the ability to have an understanding of Him without perception via empirical methods."

But Pete, that's essentially Nick's question: on what basis could you assume the validity of your worldview if you had no means of perceiving the world around you? Do you think that you could still be conscious at all if you had no sense modalities? Or, do you deny that consciousness has a means altogether, and that you can be "just conscious" just as you think you can "just know" (i.e., consciousness without means, and likewise knowledge without means)?

Pete says "Assuming your worldview, no--there would be nothing, since you are claiming empirical perception as the means to establishing your beliefs."

Neither Nick nor I have stated that "empirical perception" (is there another kind?) is "the means to establishing our beliefs." Establishing beliefs, views and convictions is a conceptual matter which depends on perception; but perception alone is not sufficient to establish our views. We recognize and are prepared to deal with the self-evident fact that consciousness has identity, and that consciousness requires a basis and a means. Perception is that means (perceptual integration) and gives us that basis (awareness of reality). It gives us awareness of objects external to ourselves so that we can form our first concepts. Without perception, we could not claim to be conscious of anything, since there would be no means of being conscious of anything. We would be no different from a rock in this regard: other entities would exist all around us, but we would not be able to enter into a subject-object relationship with them because we would have no means of being aware of them.

Pete asks "Given that this only shows us that we do, indeed, hold different worldviews, I wonder how you can demonstrate that yours is right?"

Your own actions demonstrate that it is right all the time. If you think you could still gain awareness of the world without any sense modalities, how would you be able to establish this? If you think you could still have knowledge of reality without a means of knowledge, how would you show this? You can't. Every cognitive action on your part rests on your ability to perceive the objects around you by means of your senses (contact with the world around us) and brain activity (which integrates what they sense). Do you think that, if you did not have a brain, could you still think? I'm supposing you would probably say you could (many religionists have insisted that this would be possible "somehow" - i.e., no how), but how would you validate such a proposition?

Nick says "It is pointless for you to deny your perceptions, Pete."

Pete asks "Who's denying perceptions?"

You have been denying perception, Pete, by denying its validity and its necessity to knowledge, rationality and objectivity. Specifically, you've been denying that there must be a subject-object relationship in order for knowledge to be possible at all (you would have to argue this if you wanted to rescue TAG), all the while acting in accordance with the fact that you are a subject aware of objects by means of perception (i.e., a performative inconsistency).

Pete says "I'm denying that perception is the means by which you can claim objectivity. There is a big difference."

We have not said that "perception is the means by which [we] can claim objectivity" as objectivity is a conceptual matter (specifically, a conceptual orientation to the objects which we perceive). We have both maintained consistently that perception is a necessary condition (not a sufficient condition) for knowledge, objectivity, logic and rationality. You have denied this while assuming its truth, whether you know it or not since you assume that the concepts which you use have meaning, which means they must be integrating something. If you are not perceiving anything, then you have no material to integrate into concepts, and thus all you have are stolen concepts (since you assert concepts

while denying their fundamental basis).

I hope these pointers help further your understanding. Nick is fully capable of responding to the rest, and I must prepare myself for the day.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=96>

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 21, 2003

Pete,

Why not put it as Rand herself put it?

1. Existence exists (and only existence exists).
2. Consciousness is consciousness of existence.
3. Existence exists independent of consciousness (i.e., the universe [the sum total of all existence] does not require a consciousness for it to exist) - this means that existence holds metaphysical primacy over consciousness.
4. To exist is to be something specific - the law of identity (i.e., that which exists is that which exists; A is A).
5. A means of awareness is a means of awareness (i.e., the senses are valid).
6. Man shares with animals lower than himself both the sensory and the perceptual level of consciousness, but in addition to these also the conceptual level of consciousness (i.e., he can integrate what he perceives into concepts).
7. Reason is the conceptual faculty by which man identifies and integrates what he perceives.
8. The method of reason is logic, which is "the art or skill of non-contradictory identification."
9. Etc.

The first point (existence exists) is the most fundamental recognition: just by perceiving objects around us, the truth of #1 is continuously implicit in our awareness. Grasping #1 implies #2 and #3 (Objectivism makes them explicit). Our perceptual faculty automatically integrates sensory qualities which are in contact with our sense organs so that we are aware of the existence of objects or entities which are distinct from each other. This gives us the truth of #4: that to exist is to be something specific. Furthermore, if A is A, then a means of awareness is a means of awareness (#5), which means that it is true (that as a means of awareness the senses are "valid").

When you say "this awareness gives you reason" (your point #4), you overlook the fundamentals which undergird reason. The perceptual level of consciousness is the basis of reason (i.e., a necessary condition), but it does not make reason automatic (i.e., it alone is not sufficient). A consciousness needs the ability to integrate what is perceived into concepts in order for reason both to be necessary and possible. Rand identified this and was the first philosopher to consistently develop a philosophy in accordance with the principle of the primacy of existence, thus giving the first fully objective worldview.

Pete says "Is this an accurate summary of your beliefs? If it is, then quit accusing me of misunderstanding your beliefs. If it is not, elaborate."

Pete, when you misrepresent my words (and you have done this on numerous occasion), I will point it out. I would be wrong not to point it out when I can. For instance, I have nowhere stated that the subject-object "results in" or "gives" objectivity. This is a misrepresentation which you have repeatedly employed in your posts. I have consistently maintained that it is a *necessary* - as opposed to a *sufficient* - condition for objectivity, and even after I've corrected you on this matter, you again resorted to the same misrepresentation that I had corrected. Furthermore, this is the premise which you have attempted to attack, and in your every attempt to attack it you have to assume its truth (for you are a subject interacting with an object in every case, and you assume that the concepts you are using have meaning). Religion rests on destroying this relationship which it does by obliterating the conceptual level of consciousness. Not only does it deny that perception is our only means of contact with reality outside us, it affirms that emotions are the basis of knowledge (cf. Prov. 1:7). This means that one's feelings, not one's rational faculty, become the arbiter of truth. Truth for the religionist is gained by looking inward, to the imagination, and enshrining his whims above the facts of reality which are available for him to perceive but which he denies.

There's much more to say, but this will have to suffice for I am quite busy this week (I'm preparing my home for a summer guest from overseas, so my time is quite stretched now).

Seeker17

Subject/Object Objectivity

May 22, 2003

All of your contentions here are addressed in the Objectivist corpus, Pete, and if you are sincere in learning what Objectivism teaches and are willing to give it a charitable hearing, you should have no problem understanding. I'll give some pointers in the meanwhile.

Pete says "Existence exists? Existence is not a thing. I could understand, from your point of view, if you said objects exist--but existence? Existence is not an object--it may be the property of an object, but it is not an object. It would be like me saying largeness is large or intelligence is intelligent. No, those are descriptions of things--they are attributes of being."

The concept 'existence' is a collective noun; it refers to everything that exists, including objects, attributes of objects, elements, atoms, actions, etc. What you are essentially saying (without coming out and saying it blatantly) is that the concept 'existence' has no reference to reality, but Objectivism does not accept that. We do not point to the objects which we see and say "non-existence." Any thing or attribute is an instance of existence. I see my computer screen, it exists, it is an instance of existence. I see my house, the street outside my house, the ocean some blocks away, these are all instances of existence. Existence exists.

Existence, according to Objectivism, is not an attribute or property of objects. We do not take an object on one hand and then add existence on the other to it to make it real. That is as ridiculous as the idea of dehydrated water: just add water and you've got water. But essentially this is what Aquinas proposed when he tried to drive a wedge between existence and identity (for purposes of defending the doctrine of miracles). Such ideas simply destroy valid concepts and lead to wider and wider gulfs in the mind-body dichotomy which is so prominent in the religious view of the world.

The idea that "largeness is large" is in no way analogous, therefore, because these are abstractions which we form by isolating qualities of the objects which we perceive. The concept 'existence' refers to everything whether or not we class things into smaller groups, such as large things vs. small things; both large things and small things exist, but existence is the constant which they all share. But even before we can class things into distinct groups, we perceive those objects generally, and necessarily implicit in this perception is the fact that existence exists. We look out at the world and see objects: existence exists. Then (and only then) is it going to be possible to class them into finer and finer groups. In the Objectivist metaphysics used in this manner, the concept 'existence' encompasses the totality of all existents, existents which can upon subsequent conceptual operations be categorized into increasingly more abstract concepts. 'Existence' is the widest of all concepts and cannot be defined in terms of prior concepts (since there are no logically prior concepts).

There's a lot of nonsense being peddled out there as philosophy, Pete. For instance, one philosopher writes that "we should not be afraid to think of existence without being, and being without existence" (this was a Christian philosopher, by the way). People proposing bizarre notions like this often fill auditoriums at some college campus, and unfortunately the students attending their seminars don't know any better. They spend their time debating questions like "Yeah, but can you prove that you're sitting in a chair right now?" In many ways, the majority of thinkers today have not graduated past David Hume.

Pete asks "A) How does one define a term by using the term in the definition?"

It is not proposed as a *definition*, Pete, but a clarification (albeit, a necessary one because most philosophies today destroy the concept 'consciousness' by ignoring its nature). Remember that Objectivism's axioms name the fundamental facts of reality which are assumed or implicit in all thinking. We see that the statement "consciousness is consciousness of something" is true in all instances of thinking, since whenever we think, we must think of something or about something. I.e., consciousness requires an object. That's essentially what this statement is saying, and the Objectivist epistemology draws on the implications of this fact (e.g., the primacy of existence). To suggest that consciousness does not require an object is like saying that digestion requires nothing to digest. If there were nothing in an organism's digestive track for it to digest, we could not say that it is digesting. Similarly with consciousness: if there is no object to be conscious of, there is no consciousness. Consciousness of nothing at all is a contradiction in terms. Grasping this fact is part and parcel with grasping the concept 'consciousness' (which most philosophies are out to destroy or subvert in one manner or another). It's the same for you, Pete. You cannot be conscious of nothing at all. Even if you try to be, you will have the idea that I have proposed in your mind and your desire to refute it.

Pete says "What you are saying is: "Consciousness is (consciousness of existence) of existence" which is really "Consciousness is ((consciousness of existence) of existence) of existence" ad infinitum."

No, I'm definitely not saying that. I don't even know how you got this, but it's not what is being said. I know you have an ambition to make Objectivism look ridiculous (I suppose it's your last hope), but such characterizations strike me as terminally naïve. Do you really think that is what Rand means? I doubt you really do. But either way, it's certainly not what she meant, and if you read what she said about axiomatic concepts (of which 'consciousness' is one) and about definitions (she wrote quite a bit on this matter), I think you would know better.

Pete asks "B) Would it not be the object, not "existence", that you are claiming consciousness is conscious of?"

Objectivism does not dichotomize objects from existence, so the alternative you are proposing here would not be accepted (since it can only serve to break otherwise valid concepts).

Pete asks "Where is the object by which you derive your objectivity?"

There are objects everywhere around me. It's called the universe.

Pete says "I agree with 3."

Good to hear, Pete. Then you agree with me that theism is invalid.

I said "4. To exist is to be something specific - the law of identity (i.e., that which exists is that which exists; A is A)."

Pete says "I agree."

Also good to hear.

Pete says "However, one point--this is a tautology"

Of course. A is A is a tautological statement. Tautologies whose reference is to reality are necessarily true. The statement $2+2=4$ is also tautological. According to Objectivism, all truths in one way or another are tautological in nature.

Pete says "and doesn't actually explain anything about A."

It's not supposed to "explain anything about A." It's a general principle; it is not speaking about any specific particular.

Pete says "And, since we're dealing with existence in the abstract and not an object, A is existence only--not a thing (unless you are going to admit that # 1 is wrong)."

My pointers above should help clear your confusion here.

Pete says "Actually, one other point. You criticized me earlier for providing a negative definition for the supernatural."

I don't think I criticized you per se, I simply asked you to define the word in positive terms so that I could know what it refers to. Telling me what it does not refer to does not tell me what it does refer to, and thus means nothing to me. If that's a criticism, so be it, but in that case I'd say it's a valid criticism if you still want to assert the notion "supernatural" while failing to define it in positive terms (i.e., without giving it meaning).

Pete says "You said something like, "I don't care what it is not, I want to know what it is.""

I think I said "that only tells us what it is not, not what it is."

Pete says "However, ultimately, all definitions are either tautologies (like above) or negative in orientation."

Not all. There is a class of concepts (called axiomatic concepts) which cannot be defined in terms of prior concepts (or as negations of other concepts); their definitions are ostensive in nature. For instance, the axiomatic concept 'existence' is defined, not by ideas which come before existence (for they would have to refer to something that exists or assume existence to have meaning), but simply by opening our eyes and looking out at the world of objects. Those objects that you see - that's what Objectivism means by the concept 'existence'. Existence exists.

Pete says "What is A? A is A, and A is not non-A."

A is a symbol whose reference is variable. This is why it is handy: A can stand for any thing, attribute or quality which

exists.

Pete says "In fact, this is basically what you do when you claim that perceiving the difference between the subject and the object is the basis for logic (ie: "The subject is not the object"--a completely negative definition)."

That the subject is not the (initial) object is a *recognition*, not a definition. Definition of subject would be more along the lines of "that which perceives an object," while the definition of object would be more along the lines of "that which a perceiver perceives." So, we have another miss here.

I said "5. A means of awareness is a means of awareness (i.e., the senses are valid)."

Pete says "Validity does not follow. If you say "Senses are a means of awareness" then you have not established validity. What is meant by "valid" here anyway? Is it a claim that they provide accurate information about existence? Is it a claim that they are, in fact, senses? What is valid here?"

The senses are valid in the sense that they cannot produce contradictions. The contradictions come when we err in identifying what we perceive, what are called perceptual judgments. Your example of the schizophrenic who claims to have seen a talking dog, is simply a matter of blurring the distinction between perception and judgments made about what is perceived (a fallacy known as package-dealing). By identifying the perceiver in question as a schizophrenic, you made it clear that it could not be otherwise. The problem is conceptual, not perceptual.

Pete says "Six we basically agree on."

Do you understand what point #6 says, Pete? Can you elaborate in your own words what it means to you, and can you explain why you agree? Also, can you explain how it is compatible with biblical teaching?

Pete says "You say that the perception of an object is the means by which logic is valid; yet, logic itself is the method of reason, which is the conceptual faculty by which consciousness identifies different objects."

I think you're confusing yourself here.

Pete says "In other words, the cause for a man identifying that one object is different from another is because he already has reason to tell him to look for differences."

First of all, man does not need to be told to "look for differences." The differences are not hiding from us; they are self-evident. Awareness of these differences occurs already at the perceptual level, since perception automatically integrates sensory qualities into wholes (objects). We perceive objects as wholes, and since we perceive more than one object their distinction is perceptually self-evident. But when we name the objects (i.e., identify them conceptually), the reasoning process is begun (for reason is a conceptual process of identifying and integrating what we perceive), at least implicitly. What's important to note here is that the reasoning process needs something to identify and integrate (again, consciousness requires an object), and that is what perception provides. So we cannot say that one "already has reason in place" before he perceives the world of objects around him (that would simply be another reversal). Observing the actions of any toddler will bear this out. He's got a lot of perceptual discoveries to make before he can embark on the long and arduous road of concept-building.

Remember also that our conceptual faculty is volitional. Volition is a species of causality: it is by volition that we can focus on particular attributes and distinctions in order to broaden the context of inputs which we integrate into abstractions (here's where your concept of 'largeness' comes into play, long after the axiomatic concepts have been formed). The problem you seem to be having here, Pete, is that you ignore the fact that knowledge has a hierarchical structure, and at the base of that structure are the axiomatic concepts (whether they have been explicitly identified or not). If they are properly grasped, these points are not problematic.

Pete says "Therefore, the perception of difference cannot be the cause or reason by which logic is valid--logic must be the cause or reason by which perception of the difference becomes possible."

In order for this to follow, you have to explain where you got the concept 'valid' (i.e., explain how it was formed and what units it integrates), and show that distinctions among objects at the perceptual level has no relevance. And even then, I'm not sure it would follow, especially since the distinctions are already given to us at the perceptual level. You simply can't avoid them.

Pete says "Think of it this way. I, in my spare time, enjoy programming a computer. It is very easy to program a computer to accept input. Suppose I write a program that takes input from a keyboard. Now suppose you type the letter "A." The computer gets the code from the keyboard. The computer "knows" which key this is referring to--however, it can do nothing with this information unless it is programmed to do something with it. You press an "A" and an "A" pops up on the screen because the computer has a logical program that equates the pressing of a key on

the keyboard with the display of the character on the screen."

This example actually comes closer to how perceptual integration works, for, like the computer program, perceptual integration is an automatic function of the nervous system (just as other functions of the body are automatic - physiologists often use the term autonomic in this regard). It certainly does not bear analogy to the conceptual level of consciousness. The computer does not possess consciousness, so its operations cannot be said to be consciously directed. Similarly, since perception is caused by physical interaction of the senses with their object(s), it is also not consciously directed. We are not first aware of isolated sensory qualities and then, by a conscious process of selection and calculation, piece them together in our minds in order to build objects; we first perceive the objects (since perception integrates those sensory qualities automatically), and only then can we break those objects apart by a process of abstraction in order to form concepts naming those sensory qualities (such as 'hard,' 'soft,' 'pliant,' 'fuzzy,' etc.). The perceptual level is the given, and we work from there (since it provides an integrated basis from which to work; otherwise, you are stuck advocating a disintegrated view of the world, which makes no sense and can have no value).

A computer program is simply throwing switches according to pre-ordered causal patterns, which is a physical process, not a mental process. It has no choice but to function as it is programmed assuming all conditions necessary for its proper functioning have been met. If it is programmed to print the letter A when you hit the A key, it cannot defy you and choose to print another letter instead. To say that this is a logical program is not entirely accurate (in fact, I'm inclined to think it is totally inaccurate if this is supposed to be analogous to how man's consciousness functions). Logic is only necessary and only possible when volition enters into the picture. But that is not the case for a computer program. It does not have the power to make choices.

Similarly with our perceptual faculties, which are physical processes, like the computer program: When our senses interact with an object, there is no alternative in how it will appear to us. Like the computer program, our perceptual faculties have no choice but to function as they've evolved to function. These conditions are quite delicate, for incidence of disease (e.g., glaucoma) for instance can impede the range of their sensitivity. If I look at the ceiling and see water dripping from it, I can infer (a logical process) that the water is coming from above the ceiling someplace. But if I have trouble seeing the water, logic will not help me to see it. What I need is an eye doctor.

Pete says "Without this logical program already in place, "A" is meaningless."

And foremost, without a means of perception, "A" would be meaningless as a symbol, for it could not refer to anything and we could not form concepts to begin with. It is only after we start forming concepts and forming statements with them that we need logic, and this must be learned (obviously).

Pete says "Now, apply that principle to conscious beings. If I am not already cognizant of distinctions in perception, then perception is meaningless to me."

But perception makes those distinctions self-evident to us. They are not the product of logical inference.

Pete says "In short, I must have logic before I can understand perception in the first place, so I must have logic before I can perceive distinction between A and non-A."

Not if logic is a conceptual method (which it is). Since logic is a set of principles and rules which guide proper thinking (a conceptual method), it needs inputs in the form of concepts. Where do we get those concepts? They are formed by integrating what we perceive. So, if you trace it down, perception must precede logic.

Pete says "Also equally true, logic must precede any acknowledgement of an object in the first place."

I'm not sure what you mean by 'acknowledgement' in this context. Do you mean "have awareness of"? If that's what you mean, then what you say here is not true. The objects which we perceive are not the product of inference (a logical process), nor is our awareness of them a conclusion of an argument. They are self-evident. We need logic for drawing inferences, not for seeing through our eyes.

Pete says "Add to that the fact that consciousness is conscious of existence! Well, how is that possible without consciousness identifying existence!"

But see, Pete, that's what you're missing. Identification is a conceptual process. We need perceptions to integrate before we can form concepts. That's why in many posts I've asked you about how you form concepts given your empirical skepticism (not to mention your overt intrinsicism and representationalism). You've not explained this, and it's clear why you haven't: you can't. You've got the perceptual and conceptual levels completely reversed (just like Descartes, Hume, Kant, and numerous others had it). That's the beauty of Rand's system: by recognizing that the perceptual level of consciousness is the given, that it automatically integrates sensory qualities so that what we are first aware of are objects rather than unconnected, chaotic sensations, and that perceptual integration provides the

model for conceptual integration, Rand undid all the errors of these philosophers. Her achievement is monumental in the history of philosophy, but it will probably take a while before the culture catches up to her. But the cat is out of the bag now, so it's only a matter of time.

Pete says "Consciousness cannot identify existence exists if consciousness does not have the capability to identify"

That's true (that's the conceptual level of consciousness, the level at which we integrate what we perceive into abstractions). But even more fundamental is that we cannot identify anything unless we have something to identify, which is provided by perception. So, again, first comes perception (an automatic process), and only then is concept-formation possible (and once concepts start being integrated, then they can be formed into statements which make up principles which can be employed logically, i.e., according to their identity and scope of relevance).

Pete says "--and consciousness cannot have this capability to identify without reason,"

Reason *includes* that ability. The key term is *integrate*, however, for long before conceptual integration has taken place in our minds, our perceptual faculties have been integrating like mad. They deliver so much information about the world that we have no choice but to focus on certain objects and ignore others in order to keep things comprehensible to us. If you've ever tried to hold a conversation at a noisy cocktail party, you'll know what I mean from firsthand experience. People are chattering all around you, and you have no volume control that you can twist like you have on your stereo. But you can, with some effort (note: a volitional process) try to zero in your faculties to pick out your friend's voice out of the myriad voices that are overwhelming your senses.

Pete says "Therefore, # 2 on your list presupposes the prior validity of 7 & 8 in order for consciousness to be conscious!"

I think I may have had the same confusion you're noting here before I fully grasped what Rand meant when she identified her system as a *fully integrated* philosophy. That took some time for me, and I would expect that it may take a while for you too (and if you do not sit down and actually study what Rand wrote, I don't think you will get it on your own).

Pete says "By the way, if you are going to instead claim that not all consciousness is governed by reason, then A) you still have to demonstrate how this work for those consciousness that are"

Why do I "have to demonstrate" this, Pete? And to whom? Do those to whom I supposedly "have to demonstrate" this accept reason as their only means of knowledge, or do they think that there is some non-rational means of knowledge (e.g., Bert zapping revelations directly into the mind which could not be acquired by some other means) is possible to man?

It is interesting how frequently you make this demand that either Nick or I "demonstrate" something to you, but you do not demonstrate *one point* of your worldview. Jesus is reported in the gospels to have demonstrated his supernatural powers to his audiences, as well as Paul, Peter and the saints throughout the ages. Why is the burden on us, Pete? We're not the ones who are claiming that a god or "supernatural" being exists. Can you not meet the burden of proof? Or, do you think that challenging my understanding of Objectivism will refute Objectivism as a valid worldview, and on the basis of that smoldering ash heap conclude that Christianity must therefore be true? Essentially, you want to challenge our certainty; you don't like the fact that we are certain without the approval of your god. But in your attempts to challenge our certainty, you show yourself willing to delve deep into areas of epistemology and discuss issues which are nowhere addressed in the Bible. Even if your grasp of the issues were sound (and it is not),

Pete says "and B) you will have admitted this does not provide objectivity, for there are consciousnesses that are conscious of existence without reason."

Pete, you need to understand what we mean by objectivity. When you make statements like these and many others in your posts, it's clear that you do not. I don't know how many times I should have to explain it to you before you will get it. I must consider the possibility that you never will, or that you need some time to reflect on the exchanges that have transpired for a while (perhaps a number of months, maybe a year or two?), before some of this starts to sink in, if in fact it can. Perhaps it cannot. You come across as a man desperate not to allow others their certainty if they do not bow to your god. Don't you see how primitive this is? I don't think it's any different, in terms of essentials anyway, from the rabid Islamists of the world who want me to bow to their god as well. Your goal, like theirs, is clear to see, and you'll use any device you can to reach it. Like the song says, "If only it were legal!"

Seeker17

Question for Pete

May 22, 2003

Nick asked "Would you have this knowledge if you had never perceived anything?"

Pete says "Again, in my worldview it is possible for God to relay information without you perceiving it through your senses."

Which only means: no matter what evidence is provided to you that proves that your god-belief is invalid, you will reach for any arbitrary idea to claim that it is true anyway. Your god-belief is not a rationally established commitment, but an emotional commitment, and reason is simply a casualty of your desire to enshrine the arbitrary. Your worldview does not encourage you to look for facts in reality in order to discover truths and support its claims. Instead, it encourages you to make things up in order to dodge the facts of reality and proclaim your imaginations true regardless of the world of facts. That's the primacy of consciousness.

Pete says "But even you have to admit that there are somethings that you know without having a clue as to how you know it. For example, you breathe--but who taught you to breathe? When you were born, you just did it. There was no learning involved."

Pete, breathing is an autonomic function of the body, just like blood circulation, temperature regulation, digestion, etc. These are physical processes of our organism, and we do not need to know how to do them before our bodies can do them. Nor are they instinctual. There was no learning involved because it is not a volitional process or function which depends on one's knowledge. We can learn to control our breathing to some extent, however this is only possible after we've developed some motor coordination and learned to control the muscles of the diaphragm, such when learning to whistle or to play a wind instrument.

Pete says "Likewise, birds can migrate to the same spot on the globe, even though they have never been there before, without having learned such information. We call these behaviors 'instinct'."

Well, the last time I checked, human beings do not migrate, so I don't know what relevance the migratory behavior of birds has to do with understanding how the human mind learns to interact with the world around him and acquire knowledge of it. Human beings do not have instincts; certainly adults do not. The closest thing to an instinct in human beings might be thumb-sucking in infants - which they outgrow - but even this is hotly debated by philosophers. If it is rightly classed as an instinct, it is one of the last if not the last instinct of our pre-conceptual past clinging on to our organism. Man has evolved beyond instincts and has developed the conceptual level of consciousness (which he can direct volitionally), and no longer in need of instincts to tell him what to do. If we were run by instincts, we would not need morality. In fact, if we were run by instincts which told us what to do, the concept 'morality' would have no meaning: any "alternatives" we would face would be selected automatically by our instincts. Birds do not "choose" their summer migratory destination. They do not huddle and have a vote and say, Do we want to go to Wiscasset, Maine this year, or do we want to go to Ontario? Since man faces alternatives but does not have instincts, he needs a means of knowledge by which he can identify the reality about him and a code of values which teaches him how to guide his choices and actions. In other words, he needs a rational code of morality, which my worldview provides, and which your worldview destroys (since it links right and wrong not to facts, but to an imaginary being's whims).

Pete says "Indeed, this is the very problem with your perception. Let us suppose that your object is there and we perceive it. How did we know what to do with the information we received? Did you perceive what to do, or is it instead the case that you already knew what to do when perception came? Indeed, it must be the latter, for perception without the ability to differentiate is meaningless."

Again, you're confusing perception (which is an automatic process of our bodies) with perceptual judgments (which is a function of our conceptual faculty). Ever observe an infant growing into childhood? Observe the daily struggle it goes through just to navigate his immediate surroundings at first. He perceives objects, but he still has to learn how to identify them. He perceives his mother, but he has yet to put a name to her (e.g., "mommy"). It is a time of constant discovery, and the first hurdle for any infant is learning to cope with what it perceives. This was the case for you, Pete, as well as for me, Nick, David Hume, Greg Bahnsen, and George Bush. We could not be where we came to in life without having gone through those initial steps.

Pete asks "Yet if differentiating between two objects is how we gain reason and the ability to think in the first place, how was it possible to have that first perception of a difference?"

We perceive the objects directly, and then learn to identify what we perceive. You have a habit of package-dealing perception and perceptual judgments, which is a common error among many thinkers (particularly skeptics and nihilists).

Such a habit is not the hallmark of someone who understands the issues involved. I've tried to explain them to you, and I think you might eventually grasp what I am saying, but I think it may take some time, and this only if you really want to learn. But if you do not want to learn, Pete, no one can teach you, you will have become unteachable.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=99>

Question for Pete

May 22, 2003

Nick asked "Your argument remains circular. How do you know God would not deceive you? Because he has enabled you to trust him. How do you know he hasn't enabled you to trust him so that he will be able to deceive you without your suspecting?"

Good point, Nick. I don't think he can escape the circularity involved here. Ultimately it comes down to: "I say god is trustworthy because I say god is trustworthy," which is a statement of one's own gullibility, not a statement about some fact discovered in the world around oneself. And what's odd is that, even the bible itself says that god deceives people, giving them a "strong delusion."

II Thessalonias 2:11 puts it quite clearly: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"

So even according to the bible, this god is not to be trusted.

Seeker17

<http://www.peterpike.com/calvinboard/viewthread.php?tid=91&page=2>

Challenge to Pete

May 29, 2003

Nick said (27 May) "We've gone over this a lot, and I hope you think it over carefully, for we could advance the conversation much further if you can grasp this concept."

It's true what Nick says here: We have gone over all of this a lot already. But I think Nick's advice that Pete think it over carefully has fallen on deaf ears, for he does not appear to share the ambition to move the conversation any further. All of Pete's "objections" lately are simply recycled misunderstandings and misrepresentations which have already been addressed and corrected in prior messages to the Calvin Board. Pete has provided sufficient evidence to prove to me that he is not interested in a reasoned and informed dialogue on these matters, but that he simply wants to spit and stammer against the certainty of others and bamboozle them with his "worldview" which amounts to nothing more than a series of labyrinthine reversals and distortions which offer no informed philosophical substance whatsoever (for instance, he nowhere shows where biblical characters teach about objectivity or why one should trust in a god which is admitted to deceive people, etc.).

If (and when) Pete decides to actually engage the issues that have been brought up and honestly interact with the positions which have been presented, I may decide to jump back in. So far, however, Pete has already made it clear that he has abandoned TAG as an apologetic defense of his god-belief, and everything else he offers is pure bluff. Pete has not shown that he will debate matters intelligently or honestly, so I see no reason why either of us (Nick or myself) should continue to respond to the same self-refuting skeptical counter-examples and self-invalidating pseudo-arguments which have been continually recast in new guises. Pete has been presented with a lot of material, and even to deny it, he has to assume its truth. Until Pete is willing to recognize this, he will continue in his present course of disinformation and dishonesty.

Meanwhile, I will continue to seek out defenders of TAG who are actually willing to defend TAG. (Fakers need not apply.)

Seeker17

