

Time to Speak Up—What You Can Say

“We are living in unprecedentedly exciting times. But most of us don’t know it yet. That’s essentially the point of this book, to share the news that what many people have dreamt of—and others have believed could never happen—has happened, or at any rate is happening this very minute and has been happening for some time. By this I mean the emergence of inescapably compelling evidence for God’s existence.” Eric Metaxas in *Is Atheism Dead?*

I. Starting with the conclusion—Paradigm Shift

A. From Post-Modernism to Transcendent Realism (I’ll define it later!)

II. Redefining the “debate” - one word at a time

A. Context: Losing the meaning of the word “truth”

1. The “Enlightenment Project” - only accepting what can be empirically proved (reject faith and authority as a source of truth) - led to “modernism”
2. Post-modernism deconstructs modernism; conclusion—all truth is relative (“There is no absolute truth, and that’s the absolute truth.”)
3. Currently, we “construct” our own “truths” - you have your truth, I have mine, etc.

B. The difficulty is no one is in charge of language, and discussions of “truth” are seen as “competing truth claims”

C. The solution? Reframe the discussion to be first about “reality” and secondarily about “truth”

III. The question needs to be, “What is real?”

A. Something is “real” if it exists—the question is where does it exist

1. An example: Imagination. Is imagination real? Yes! However, what you imagine is not inherently real—it exists, but only in your imagination—it is an example of “subjective reality”

IV. Objective and Subjective Reality

A. Objective reality refers to things that really exist, and that “own” their own existence—that is to say, their existence is NOT *dependent* on your knowledge or experience—you may be aware of them, but whether you are or not, they exist

1. Example: germs existed, and affected our existence, long before we could see them under a microscope

B. Subjective reality refers to things that really exist, but their existence is subject to the person who has “called them into existence” - who “named” them

1. Example: the gold band I wear on my left hand is, objectively speaking, (and physically speaking), just a 14k gold ring—but to me and my wife, it is my wedding ring

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V. Objectivity and Subjectivity are both aspect of Reality

- A. As such, you can properly speak of “objective truth” and “subjective truth” as “truth” is really just an idea—and when your idea matches the reality, you can be said to know the truth
- B. But these two aspects are very different with regard to permanence
 - 1. Objective reality has a great deal more permanence—a rock does not last forever, but is “material” and subject to the laws of nature (remember the 1st Law of Thermodynamics)
 - 2. Subjective reality has only the permanence assigned by the one who “named it” and is also subject to the permanence of the person themselves—it can disappear in a blink

VI. The real “rub” is when your “subjective reality” does not match well with the “objective reality” that we all share

- A. Example: The high school student who “identifies” as a “dog” may be saying something that is “subjectively” true, however, if they take heart worm medication (as all good dogs should) it will not be healthy for them
- B. Example: The person who wants to “identify” as some one of the supposed 83 different genders may be saying something “subjectively” true (“for them”), but, by definition, we cannot “enter-in” to their “subjective” world—we might be able to “respect” it in some fashion but we can only meet them on the common ground of “objective” reality

VII. So, what can you say in the face of the confusion?

- A. First, attempt to clarify if the person you are speaking with is speaking “objectively” or “subjectively”
- B. Then you can point out that you cannot deal with their “subjective truth” without first dealing with the “objective truth” of the situation
 - 1. Example: Mr. Jenner (I don’t know him well enough to call him Bruce) may want me to call him and even think of him as Katlyn, however, his “subjective” decision to “identify” himself in that way in no way obligates me to do so. In fact, if I cared about him (which God calls us to do), then, in love, I cannot help him to perpetuate an idea in his mind that is so at odds with the objective reality of the situation. And Mr. Jenner knows this is true! Because if he didn’t he would have to support the “transgender” men who are competing in women’s sports, and he doesn’t

Next week—How did we get here? Understanding the source of the confusion.

How We Got Here—The Medium and the Message

“There are two ways by which the spirit of a culture may be shriveled. In the first—the Orwellian—culture becomes a prison. In the second—the Huxleyan—culture becomes a burlesque.” Neil Postman

I. Ideas and Language—the problem of communications

A. What is the message (idea) and how does the medium affect it?

- 1) The limitation of language
 - a) Words have more than one meaning (denotation and connotation)
 - b) The real question is what is the idea that is trying to be communicated
- 2) The limitations of the medium
 - a) Postman’s example of smoke signals

II. Oral Intelligence—Solomon and his 3,000 proverbs

III. Print Intelligence

A. Requirements and advantages (Hard mental work and rational analysis)

- 1) Remain more or less immobile for a fairly long time
- 2) Not pay attention to shapes of letters: see through them to the meaning of the words they form
- 3) Assume an attitude of detachment and objectivity: including an “immunity to eloquence”; be able to distinguish the form of the argument (charming or ingratiating tone) from the logic of the argument itself
- 4) In judging the argument, you must do several things at once:
 - a) delaying a verdict until the entire argument is finished;
 - b) holding in mind questions until you have determined where, when or if the text answers them;
 - c) and bringing to bear on the text all of your relevant experience as a counterargument to what is being proposed.
- 5) You must also be able to withhold those parts of your knowledge and experience which, in fact, do not have a bearing on the argument.
- 6) In preparing to do all this, you must have divested yourself of the belief that words are magical, and above all, have learned to negotiate the world of abstractions, for there are very few phrases and sentences in this book that require you to call forth concrete images.
- 7) Dwell comfortably without pictures, in a field of concepts and generalizations

B. Limits and disadvantages

- 1) The author is not there personally, so there are multiple “valid” interpretations, but only one will be what the author intended
- 2) You cannot reduce life to propositions—but the temptation is there

IV. Visual (or Media) Intelligence

A. Requirements and advantages

- 1) Does not require long periods of time watching (commercials are extremely short) although movies and series can be quite long
- 2) The dialogue and the cameras perspective work together to communicate an emotional rather than rational subtext which is the real message being communicated – the operative question is how does it make you feel?
- 3) Fulfills desire for “resonance” (even at the expense of facts – if it “resonates” with me I can ignore the evidence that does not fit the interpretation) – knowledge becomes experiential rather than objective

B. Limits and disadvantages

- 1) Words (dialogue) come too quickly and moves forward so that propositional argumentation (as is available in print) is lost because any level of complexity cannot be assimilated, much less critiqued
- 2) A gullibility that expects that truth can be reduced to a slogan or phrase – or in Will Mancini’s terms – simplicity before complexity
- 3) Fulfills desire for “resonance” (even at the expense of facts – if it “resonates” with me I can ignore the evidence that does not fit the interpretation) – knowledge becomes experiential rather than objective (notice this is both an advantage and a disadvantage!)
- 4) Information out of context is, at best, trivia, at worst a clever way of lying. Everything becomes entertainment.
- 5) The horror of “And now this!” Too much information out of context

V. The Solution?

- A. Shift the discussion back to the question of Reality—it puts truth and the medium of communication back in their proper place—tools for communicating ideas in the search of finding the reality

The Preface to *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

“We were keeping our eye on 1984. When the year came and the prophecy didn't, thoughtful Americans sang softly in praise of themselves. The roots of liberal democracy had held. Wherever else the terror had happened, we, at least, had not been visited by Orwellian nightmares.

But we had forgotten that alongside Orwell's dark vision, there was another - slightly older, slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bum-blepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, Orwell added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we desire will ruin us.

This book is about the possibility that Huxley, not Orwell, was right.”

— Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*

It's about Time—Three Views of Time

“Time and history have meaning. Under the twin truths of God’s sovereignty and human significance, time and history are going somewhere, and each of us is not only unique and significant in ourselves, but we have a unique and significant part to play in our own lives, in our own generation, and therefore in the overall sweep of history.” Os Guinness

I. The major views of time: Cyclical, Covenantal, Chronological

A. Cyclical

1. Eastern religions
2. Evidences in nature
3. Nietzsche adopted as “eternal recurrence”

B. Covenantal

1. Revealed
2. Linear and covenantal
3. Makes human beings exceptional, responsible, and consequential
4. The awareness of time
 - a. memory of the past (which gives context and lesson)
 - b. imagination and vision of the future as a living factor of the present
 - c. awareness of time includes *will*, which expresses the freedom of human agency
5. Freedom
 - i. Freedom requires humility and defies the arrogance of rationalist certainty
 - ii. Freedom is truly creative in relation to the future
 - iii. Freedom is potentially redemptive in relation to the past
 - iv. Freedom always necessitates living with risk and insecurity. This is an inescapable
Implication of covenantal time and history: the human story will always be open-ended
6. Time is linear (it moves in only one direction) but includes cycles (seasons) with gives life rhythm

C. Chronological

1. The chronological view sees time as a succession of linear moments, devoid of God and eternity, therefore devoid of meaning and direction—just the tic toc of the clock
2. Chronos was the Greek word for time in this sense, Kairos meant the moment that was meaningful
3. The chronological view reject ultimate meaning from God and embraces the idea that it is human beings who must give meaning to history
4. Ultimately, the chronological view offers no absolutes (only what meaning “we” create) and no answer for entropy—death steals all motion and meaning—which is why Nietzsche took the leap of faith to the cyclical view

II. Measuring time—the invention of the clock

- A. Precision—atomic clock 9,192,631,770 quantum vibration of a atom of cesium per second— an accuracy of within 1 second every 1 billion years!
- B. Coordination
- C. Pressure

III. The hidden tyranny of time

- A. The term “civilized” has moved from referring to space, to referring to time—the “backwards” are no longer barbarians, but primitives, reactionaries, and Neanderthals, they are reactionary,

passe, and old-fashioned— “progress” is assumed to be inherent in the future

- B. Progressivism is simply what is to come and it is assumed to be inherently better because the technology will make it “faster” and faster is inherently better
- C. The future is seen as the land of freedom, progress, and change as an assumption regardless of the evidence to the contrary
- D. But paradox is the part of the tyranny of this (merely chronological) view of time because it offers no “telos” - no destination for all the “change” and “progress”

IV. The Covenantal View—Seize the Day

- A. Walk before God
- B. Discern the time (Kairos)
- C. Seek to serve God’s purpose in our generation

V. Prophetic Untimeliness

- A. Distorting the past—living *in* the past rather than *with* the past
 - 1. The quasi-Marxist way of secular progressivism holds on to the ‘victimhood’ of the past - And victims remain ‘objects’ of their self-defined victimhood—the covenantal view offers repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation—it pays the price of injustice and in the process, restores justice—it lives *with* the past, not *in* the past and changes the present and future
- B. Distorting the present—generationalism—originally referring to bearing children (Latin: *generare*) it has been moved from biology to sociology (The Boomers, the Busters, etc.)
 - 1. Leads to the mistake of using “generation” as an identity: “I’m a child of the sixties”
 - 2. Brings in a new form of relativism along with class, race, gender, and religion—gives rise to ‘gender truth’, ‘racial truth’, ‘personal truth’ and ‘generational truth’ - all of which are arbitrary
 - 3. Reinforces the crisis of authority and repudiates the wisdom of experience
 - 4. Undermines wider and longer frames of responsibility and solidarity
 - 5. Aggravates the breakdown of sustainability and living tradition
 - 6. Emphasizes the disconnect between people—the fragmentation of identity politics
 - 7. Fragments the solidarity of the “one generation” - the one that is living
- C. Distorting the Future
 - 1. The future is seen as inevitably better (progressivism) and at the same time
 - 2. The future is what we ‘construct’
 - 3. Yet, finally, it leads to nowhere
- D. But, the end is not the end!
 - 1. Time is chronological and covenantal—therefore, within time, human beings have been made exceptional, responsible, and consequential—all within the plan of God!
 - 2. Eternity is not timelessness—it is time without end—in the New Testament Greek, ‘the ages into the ages’! - or ‘everlasting life’!

Transposition—Sets and Subsets

Summary of the Argument:

- I. Glossolalia—belongs to a class of difficulties
 - A. How do you distinguish between natural life and spiritual life?
- II. Recognize the problem occurs in natural life between higher/lower spheres
 - A. Falling in love, a roller coaster, and the stomach flu
 1. Same physical response to different emotional causes
 2. One “bad” the other “good”
 3. Want to repeat the “good”
 4. The “lower” actually “taken up” (participates) in the “higher”
 - B. Therefore, the “emotional life” is higher (or richer) than the “sensations”
- III. Transposition—not a one-to-one correspondence
 - A. Orchestra– piano
 - B. 3D—2D
- IV. Observations:
 - A. What happens in lower, only understood from perspective of higher
 - B. Sign or symbol vs. sacrament
 1. brain—mind—mind of God
- V. Three added points
 - A. Transposition not development
 - B. You cannot explain something “outside of someone’s experience” except by comparing it to something “inside of someone’s experience” i.e. by analogy
 - C. Lower to upper puts one in position of animal—dog & finger
- VI. Finally, hope for believers in communicating—people really are on “higher” level, therefore, reality is one our side—people will keep bumping into it!

Examples:

The Silver Chair—the Witch’s Argument

1. When you wish to describe the sun (something outside your experience) you can only use examples from this world (something inside your experience)
2. Therefore, the sun (S.O.E) is just something you make up from seeing the lamp (S.I.E.)
What would you respond?
The logic is impeccable—the presupposition (assumption) is what is false
 1. Premise: empiricism—only what our sense organs report exists (not proven)
 2. Premise: Reason is sufficient (but reason based on assumptions, therefore needs revelation)
 3. You can only describe something outside your experience (S.O.E.) but using something inside your experience (S.I.E.)
4. This is the trouble of approaching a transposition from below (example: Uncle Andrew from *The Magicians Nephew*)

The danger to be avoided: The Dwarfs (From *The Last Battle*)

Following the Evidence—On Creation

“[The discovery of a definite cosmic beginning] is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. . . . It is unexpected because science has had such extraordinary success in trying the chain of cause and effect backward in time. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”
From **God and the Astronomers** by Robert Jastrow [*An agnostic Jew and scientist with the Goddard Institute*]

- I. From Eric Metaxas’ book, *Is Atheism Dead?* Our cultural moment—paradigm shift
 - A. Context—1966 *Time Magazine* cover story— “Is God Dead?” - a Kairos moment
 - B. Since then, five things have arisen to challenge the ‘secular consensus’
 1. The universe has had a definite beginning (i.e. the universe is *not* eternal)
 2. The ‘fine tuning’ of the universe
 3. The lack of abiogenesis—life definitely didn’t happen by chance; no chance
 4. Archaeological discoveries—all support the Bible
 5. Atheism is a road from nowhere, to nowhere
- II. “In the beginning. . .”—proving the Big Bang Theory
 - A. Logical aside: God, who can make something out of nothing, could create a universe that ‘appears’ 14 billion years old—whether He did or not, does not change
 1. The universe had had a beginning (nothing comes from nothing)
 2. Scientifically speaking, the universe ‘appears’ about 14 billion years old, extrapolating backwards from the observable expanding of the universe
- III. The Big Bang Theory—short history
 - A. The solar eclipse of May 29, 1919, provides proof of Einstein’s theory that light is affected by gravity, providing verification of matter and energy being different ‘states’ of one another ($e=mc^2$)
 - B. Hubble and his 100 inch Mt. Wilson telescope—observing the expansion of the universe (1924)
 - C. Father Georges Lemaitre—a Belgian Catholic priest (and mathematician) - using Einstein’s equations, shows (mathematically) that the universe is expanding (1927)
 - D. In 1931 Father Lemaitre postulated that working backwards from the expanding universe, that the universe had a definite beginning from ‘the primeval atom’ [Einstein rejected this idea as being too close to religion “. . . inspired by the Christian dogma of creation”. He later had to admit that Lemaitre’s math, and even later, physics, were correct.]
 - E. Scientist at the time didn’t like the Big Bang theory for several reasons—none of which were the evidences of it
 1. It removed ‘infinite time’ that went with an eternal universe (needed for abiogenesis)
 2. It put a limit on science—the laws of physics also had a beginning, and nothing before the Big Bang was available to scientific inquiry—mathematically, it was a ‘singularity’
 3. While Einstein admitted that ‘singularities’ were mathematically possible, it was Oppenheimer who calculated that ‘black holes’ (a collapsed star) were singularities
 - F. Other evidence
 1. ‘Background radiation’
 2. *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*, by Hugh Ross (see addition notes)
- IV. Fine Tuning
 - A. Cultural background—Carl Sagan’s “Only two conditions necessary for life on a planet. . .” therefore, the universe must be teeming with life a la Star Trek
 - B. Size of the earth—a little smaller, not enough gravity to keep the atmosphere, a little larger and the atmosphere would be thick as syrup

- C. Other planets in the solar system run “interference” for us with asteroids
 - D. Moon—our moon is relatively large—27% the size of earth
 - 1. Steadies the effect of earth’s rotational wobble
 - 2. Causes tides which moderates weather
 - E. Our distance from the sun, the size of the sun, the iron core of the earth which creates a radiation shield from the sun’s radiation, temperature ranges, and many more—now, we know there are more than 200 factors which must be ‘just right’ for life to exist on our planet
 - F. The math is such that it is mathematically improbable that life, as we know it, exists anywhere else in the universe!
- V. Fine Tuning of the universe
- A. Where we are in the universe
 - 1. If our solar system was any closer to the galactic core, the radiation would fry us
 - 2. If our solar system was any further out, earth would have been smaller and no atmosphere
 - B. The size of the universe and its mass
 - 1. If any more massive, not enough energy to overcome the force of gravity—the mass would have collapsed back in on itself
 - 2. If any less massive, not enough mass for gravity to have worked to form stars, planets, solar Systems
 - 3. Margin of error? The mass of a single dime, more, or less, and we don’t have a universe
 “For example, in his widely unread 1988 bestseller *A Brief History of Time*, Stephen Hawking wrote: *‘If the overall density of the universe were changed by even 0.00000000000001 percent, no stars or galaxies could be formed. If the rate of expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have recollapsed before it reached its present size.’*” (quoted in *Is Atheism Dead?* By Eric Metaxas)
 And, “In his book *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*, Caltech astrophysicist Hugh Ross gives us the frightening details: *‘At certain early epochs in cosmic history, [the universe’s] mass density must have been as finely tuned as one part in 10 to the 60th power to allow for the possible existence of physical life at any time or place within the entirety of the universe. This degree of fine-tuning is so great that it’s as if right after the universe beginning someone could have destroyed the possibility of life within it by subtracting a single dime’s mass from the whole of the observable universe or adding a single dime’s mass to it.’*”
 (quoted in *Is Atheism Dead?* p. 60)
- VI. More Planetary Fine Tuning
- A. Water—105° angle of the two hydrogen atoms to the oxygen atom—gives a slightly polarized molecule (which makes water such a good solvent) and from 0 degrees Celsius, to –4 degrees Celsius, water in its solid form (ice) expands as a lattice, making it less dense than water, which is why ice floats
 - B. Sunlight—if the different wave lengths of the electromagnetic spectrum were represented by playing cards, the number of cards would create a stack that went outside of earth’s atmosphere and stretch to the nearest galaxy. In that stack, 2 or 3 cards would represent the ‘visible’ spectrum of light
 - 1. 70% of our sun’s radiation falls within the visible light spectrum
 - 2. Seawater absorbs, very efficiently, all the other wave lengths of the electromagnetic spectrum, except the visible range. Without that being the case, there could be no photosynthesis for the phytoplankton and nothing to support life in the oceans.
- VII. All a ‘happy accident’? I think not! The evidence is in—yes, Martha, there is a Creator!

From Hugh Ross' book, *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*

- I. The “Why Questions” - Ross affirms that universal sense of questioning we have as human beings. Quoting Stephen Hawkins, “*We want to make sense of what we see around us and to ask: What is the nature of the universe? What is our place in it and where did it and we come from? Why is it the way it is?*”
- II. Two types of curiosity
 - A. *Scientific curiosity* arises from the desire to understand the way things work. People want to understand how things like gravity, electricity, and magnetism—as well as living organisms—function.
 - B. *Spiritual curiosity* is driven by the quest for meaning and coherence. This source of cosmic why questions combines reason and imagination, logic and speculation.
- III. Some “large” questions
 - A. Why Such a Vast Universe?
 1. visibility
 2. Super-sized
 3. The mass of matter
 4. An exquisite balance
 5. Dark matter
 6. Dark energy
 7. Clear and present purpose
 - B. Why Such an Old Universe?
 1. Just right age to support humanity
 2. Just right terrestrial age to support humanity
 3. Just right age for observing the universe
 4. Powerful purposes
 - C. Why Such a Lonely Universe?
 1. Prime location
 2. Finding simple life
 3. Not so alone!
 - D. Why Such a Dark Universe?
 1. Dark moon
 2. Dark planetary companions
 3. Distant star clusters
 4. Dark Nebulae
 5. Other kinds of darkness
 6. Signs of design
 - E. Why a Decaying Universe?
 - F. Why a Realm beyond this one?
 - G. Why This Particular Planet, Star, Galaxy, and Universe?
 1. Echoes of Goldilocks
 2. The case for fine-tuning grows
 - H. Why Believe the Bible?
 - I. Why Not a Perfect Universe Now?
 - J. Why These Physical Laws and Dimensions?
 - K. Why Two Creations?
 - L. Why Is the New Creation Better?

Following the Evidence—On Abiogenesis

“Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.” Richard Dawkins

“... human designed systems architectures can't compare to the amazing architectures we see in living organisms.” Laufmann and Glicksman

- I. Definition of abiogenesis: “Life evolving, by chance (necessary material causes), from non-living materials.”
- II. Two types of causes: “Not all causes are created equal. Different causal forces do different kinds of work and have different limitations. ... there are two jointly exhaustive classes of causal forces: purely material causes and intelligent causes.” from *Your Designed Body*
 - A. Purely material causes: “Purely material causes work by the physical regularities of the universe, as described by the laws of mathematics and the laws and constants of physics and chemistry. Material causes are repeatable. The same inputs produce the same results. Their repeatability makes experimental science effective. But physical laws can't desire that something be true. They are incapable of intent or foresight, which limits their creative powers.” from *Your Designed Body*
 - B. Intelligent causes: “Intelligent causes act with intention – they perform actions and build artifacts to achieve intended goals and purposes. Intelligent agents visualize an outcome, plan how to achieve it, and execute that plan to make the vision a reality.” from *Your Designed Body*
 - C. Additional distinction: “Another distinction is that material causes work mainly from *necessity*. When a set of conditions are present, the outcome will necessarily occur, every time. In contrast, intelligent causes are mainly *contingent*, guided by the choices of an intelligent agent. Contingency is an essential feature of information. ... [Intelligent causes] takes two kinds of activities: *design* (intention) and *fabrication and assembly* (action).” from *Your Designed Body*
[With only ‘material cause’ the apparent design must only be random, and the ‘fabrication and assembly’ must be ‘necessary’ – but that is what cannot be shown!]
- III. Probability of abiogenesis—what are the chances?
 - A. Introduction to probability theory (see attachment)
 - B. Miller and Urey—generating amino acids in the lab
 1. Based on assumed early Earth atmosphere (excluded oxygen) - no longer accepted
 2. The problem of ‘left-handed’ amino acids—lab produced 50/50; life is all left-handed
 3. There are 24 types of amino acids—20 common—in life, all left-handed (from *Coppedge*)
 - i. the average number of amino acids in a protein in the simplest form of life = 410
 - ii. The chance that 1 protein with 410 amino acids would all be left-handed is 2^{410} or approximately 10^{123}
 - iii. It is estimated that there are only 10^{78} number of atoms in the universe!
 - iv. The diameter of the universe (15 billion light years times 2) represents on 10^{28} inches!
 - v. Getting a 410 amino acid protein, all left handed, by chance is 10^{45} times more than all the atoms in the universe!
 - C. More probabilities
 1. The center for Probability Research in Biology (back in the 1970's) ran an experiment using random letter draws from the alphabet. After 30,000 draws only one meaningful sequence of 7 letters long, ABC, only once, AB 41 times. Using those odds, a 400 letter sequence (from the 24 amino acids) needed to form one protein would occur, on average, once in 10^{240} draws

2. If you could combine (and break up if incorrect) amino acids bonds at the rate of 8 trillion per second, and if all the atoms in the universe could be used (10^{78}), you could expect chance to produce one meaningful protein in 10^{147} years
3. To give you an idea of how long that is, an ameba, moving at the rate of one angstrom per year, could carry all the atoms in the known universe, one at a time, across the diameter of the universe (30 billion light years), making the return trip 'empty' - 2×10^{21} times!
4. In short, the chance that life evolved from non-life, by chance is NO CHANCE! (All the facts and figures on this probability stuff is from Dr. James F. Coppedge's *Evolution: Possible or Impossible? Genes, Proteins, and the Laws of Chance*, which was written in 1973, but is sadly, out of print.)

IV. Requirements for life—from *Your Designed Body*, by Laufmann and Glicksman, MD (Laufmann is a systems engineer and Glicksman a physician so this is an engineering perspective a medical perspective on life)

A. The following is true for multicellular organisms, but is largely true, even for single cells. Bodies must:

1. Be composed of various parts
2. Work together to achieve function which non can perform on own
3. All of which are correctly arranged, assembled, and integrated
4. Exactly the range of needed capacities
5. Operate within tight tolerances and under tight deadlines

B. Physicians know bodies must:

1. Follow the rules – the forces of physics and chemistry cannot be ignored
2. Must take control – separate equilibrium (from the environment) must be achieved and maintained
3. Must possess exactly the right functional capacities
4. Must be finely tuned

C. Engineers know bodies must:

1. Require many systems and parts
2. The systems must be coherent – both functional coherence and process coherence
3. Have usually complex interdependencies

D. "Life requires massive capabilities (coherent interdependent systems), which only work when adjusted to extremely fine tolerances. These are hard engineering problems to overcome, and the fact that they've not only been solved, but solved in so many different ways, by so many different plants and animals, is mind-boggling."

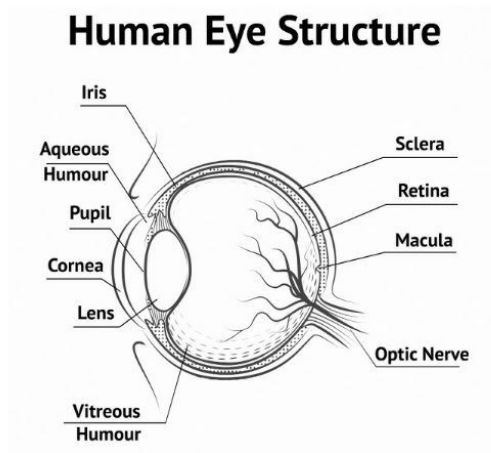
V. Challenges of life—To create that internal equilibrium, life must:

- A. "The laws of physics and chemistry drive everything unrelentingly toward equilibrium with the environment. In contrast, life insists upon a separate and distinct equilibrium. This requires continuous energy and precise regulation in a complex and coherent choreography. Life must control its own outcomes in the face of forces working constantly to destroy it." [Equilibrium]
- B. "Life has another extraordinary capability. It can reproduce itself. Living things make copies of themselves that can make copies of themselves, and they do this from the inside ..."
- C. "No non-living object in the known universe can achieve both homeostasis and reproduction, and, notably, this includes anything designed and engineered by even the best human engineers."
- D. "The evidence tells us that these capabilities are required for life. They are *prerequisites* for life, not *outcomes* of it." [This is just the first example of many of the 'chicken and the egg' dilemmas for abiogenesis.]

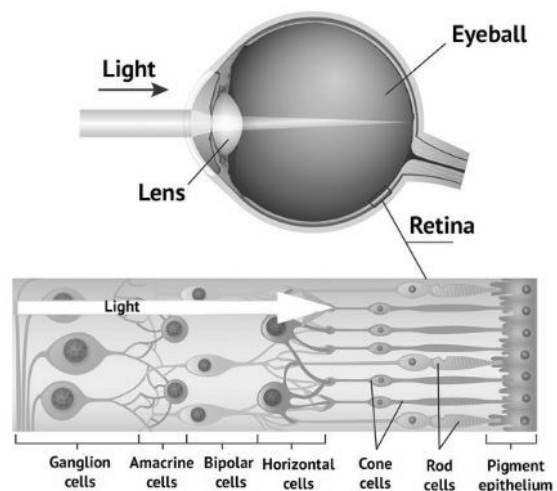
VI. Required functions for life

A. All life requires the following functions for which specific systems must be in place:

1. Containment (cell wall or membrane or skin)
 2. Specialized gates (allowing some things from the environment in, and keeping others out)
 3. Chemical controls
 4. Structure
 5. Modular subunits
 6. A transportation system
 7. Energy production
 8. Materials production
 9. Information (to guide it all)
 10. Information processing
 11. Waste removal
- B. From a systems standpoint, all these 11 require (this is the design aspect):
1. Specialization
 2. Organization
 3. Integration
 4. Coordination
- C. From an assembly and fabrication (action) standpoint, these all require:
1. Fabrication processes
 2. Assembly processes
 3. Operation processes
 4. Failure prevention processes
- D. The Human body has 11 basic systems to account for all of these functions
- E. Homeostasis – to achieve this, the body employs three main tool types:
1. Controls
 2. Signaling (consider the process of breathing – when we need more oxygen, or less)
 3. Metabolic Processes
- F. Examples:
1. Vision



STRUCTURE OF THE RETINA



What follows is a summary of the biomolecular process at play.² When a photon of light enters a rod cell, the smaller 11-cis-retinal molecule attached to the larger rhodopsin protein changes shape to become 11-trans-retinal, and this in turn causes rhodopsin to change its shape as well. This starts a cascade of several chemical reactions involving several different molecules that ultimately results in the

reduction of an important signaling molecule in the cell called cGMP. The sudden drop in cGMP causes the rod cell to no longer send out its neurotransmitter (glutamate), which normally inhibits the nearby bipolar cell. With the inhibitor removed, the bipolar cell sends an electrical signal to the ganglion cell, which then sends a signal along the optic nerve to the brain. The entire process occurs in a few pico-seconds—“about the time it takes light to travel the breadth of a single human hair.”³ (A pico-second is one trillionth of a second.) Speed is essential if we are to experience vision as instantaneous. And it’s crucial that we do. In most situations, it wouldn’t do much good if you didn’t see what was happening until some while after it occurred.

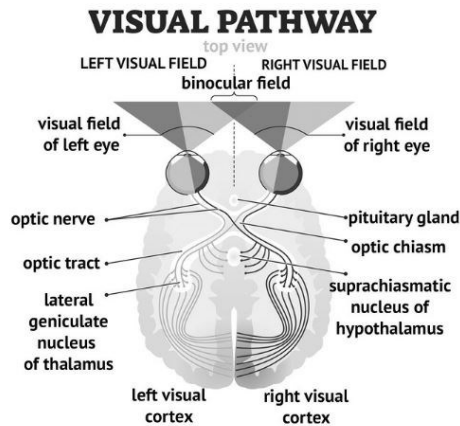


Figure 10.5. The pathway for visual information from the retina to the visual cortex.

2. Hearing

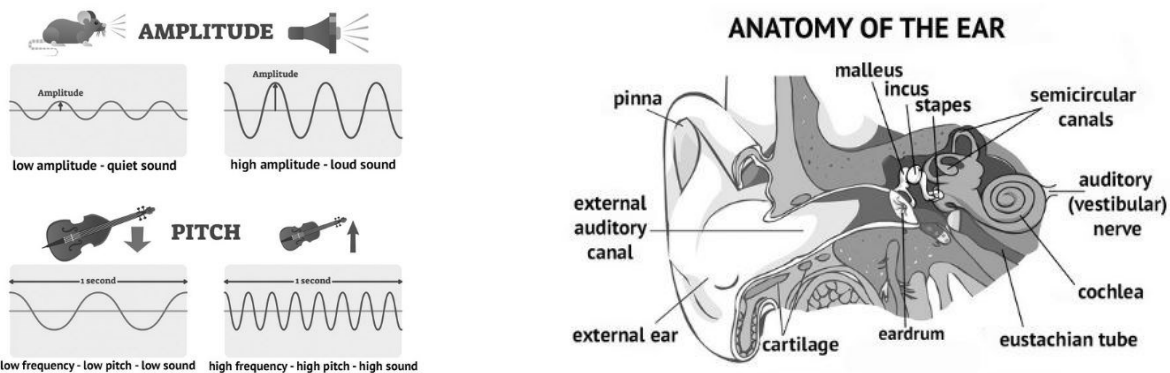


Figure 11.1. Amplitude and pitch in sound waves.

The decibel system compares sound intensity to the lowest level at which the human ear can detect sound. Thus, zero decibels (0 dB) is the minimum threshold for human hearing. Conversational speech is normally around 50 dB. A jet engine can be as loud as 150 dB. In between are rustling leaves (20 dB), a garbage disposal (80 dB) and a chain saw (120 dB). The decibel system is logarithmic, so the scale represents changes in the order of magnitude. A difference of ten decibels equals ten times the loudness, so normal speech at 50 dB is 10⁵ (one hundred thousand) times louder than the threshold of hearing; and a jet engine, at 150 dB, is 10¹⁰ (ten billion) times louder than conversational speech. ...

The human ear can detect sound when the eardrum is displaced by as little as one-tenth the diameter of a single hydrogen atom. Yet it can also hear and correctly interpret sounds with acoustic pressure levels approaching the loudest sounds produced in nature (~1 kilopascal (kPa)).

Laufmann, Steve; Glicksman, Howard. *Your Designed Body* (p. 201). Discovery Institute. Kindle Edition

Introduction to Probability Theory

Take 10 coins numbered from 1 to 10.

The probability of drawing the #1 coin on the first draw is 1 in 10 (as it is in the case of each numbered coin – you have one chance in 10 of drawing any one coin). However, the probability of drawing the #1 coin on the first draw and the #2 coin on the second draw is 10×10 (the probability of one event following another event is the product of each event happening separately). So, on the average, you will draw and #1 coin following by a #2 coin (on the first two draws) 1 in 100 tries. So how long would random chance take to “count to ten” in a row?

That would be $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 = 10,000,000,000$ or once in every 10 billion tries would you draw all ten coins in numerical order!

If you drew and recorded one coin every five seconds, day and night, it would take over 1,500 years, on average, to succeed once in drawing the coins in the correct numerical order. That is how much time it would take random chance to complete the task. However, an 8-year-old could draw out each coin and put it in numerical order in just a few minutes. This is the difference between random chance and intelligence.

How long would it take random chance to spell “evolution”?

There are 26 letters in the English alphabet, so to draw an “e” by chance would happen, on average, once in 26 tries. However, to spell the nine-letter word “evolution” by chance would be 1 in $26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26 \times 26$ (or 1 in 26^9) = 5,429,503,678,976. If every five seconds, day and night, a person were to draw (and then record and replace) an alphabet square (say from a Scrabble game), you could expect random chance to spell “evolution” about once every 800,000 years! How long would it take random chance to spell out the phrase “the theory of evolution”?

To spell that phrase requires drawing 23 letters and spaces in order, from 26 letters and a space from the Scrabble tiles. So, random chance would be able to accomplish this task, on average, every 1 in 27^{23} (27 multiplied by itself 23 times) or approximately once in 834,390,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or once in 8 hundred million trillion trillion draws. To get an idea of the size of that number, let’s imagine we have a machine that can draw, record, and replace, our Scrabble tiles at the speed of light, which would be roughly a billion draws per second! Working at the rate, day and night, random chance would spell “the theory of evolution”, on average, once every 26,000,000,000,000,000 or once every 26 quadrillion years!

If you add the element of using capital and small letters (and a space) the chance of spelling, “The Theory of Evolution” jumps to 1 in 4,553,500,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. Our machine drawing at the speed of light, would require 140,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years to complete the task. That is 28 trillion times the assumed age of the earth!

Or your average 8-year-old could do it in a few minutes. That illustrates the difference between random chance and intelligence. DNA contains approximately 3 billion base pairs making up approximately 30,000 genes. How long would it take random chance to generate one strand of DNA? Now, you can do the math!

Following the Evidence—on Atheism

“If we are only matter, nothing matters.” Eric Metaxas in *Is Atheism Dead?*

- I. “Old Atheism” - a *very* brief historic background
 - A. Mostly rejecting pagan gods, but replaced ‘the gods’ with an eternal universe
 - B. Number one problem for “old atheists” - where did this all come from?
 - C. An early American option (in the wake of the Enlightenment) - Deism (God created the world—like a clock maker—but then lets it run on its own) - Thomas Jefferson
 - D. Agnosticism—Atheism’s non-committal cousin
- II. The “New” Atheism
 - A. Empiricism to Modernism—we don’t need God to get to truth—science will do it
 - B. The Impact of Evolution
 1. On science—life comes from random chance (no need for a Creator)
 2. On religion—Evolutionary vs Original Monotheism (see attached)
 3. On culture—newer is always better; the future will be better than the past
 - C. Nietzsche—God is Dead (the groundwork for post-modernism)
 1. In the end, if there is no God, there is no meaning to life
 2. With no real hope, Nietzsche turned to “eternal reoccurrence” - but not by logical conclusion
 - D. The Four Horsemen—rage against religion (there is no God, but religion is bad)
 1. Richard Dawkins
 2. Daniel Dennett
 3. Sam Harris
 4. Christopher Hitchens
- III. Actual Arguments of Atheism
 - A. Antony Flew—we should assume atheism; the burden of proof is on the theists
 1. (In response) Not necessarily—that itself is an assumption
 2. Follow the evidence—which led to Flew’s changing his mind (and position) - because the evidence is in—there is design everywhere in the universe, and therefore, a designer!
 - B. Faith is anti-reason
 1. Reason alone is necessary
 - C. Science alone can provide certitude, and certitude is necessary to “know the truth”
 - D. Time and chance are sufficient to produce life (if the universe is eternal)
 - E. The problem of evil
- IV. Answers to the arguments for Atheism
 - A. “Burden of proof” is an assumption—follow the evidence!
 - B. Faith and Reason are friends, but faith has to come first
 - C. Certitude is not available (beyond “I think therefore I am”)
 1. Some assumptions (faith must be made); true for science too
 2. For creatures (derived—contingent—beings) this is predictable (to be expected)
 - D. Time and chance are not sufficient to generate life—all the evidence points away from chance
- V. Arguments against Atheism
 - A. Nothing comes from nothing (so says all the evidence)
 - B. Materialism cannot produce meaning (if no God, why rage?) (Peter Hitchens)
 - C. Atheism is a road from nowhere to nowhere
 1. The 2nd law of thermodynamics “things tend toward disorder, not order” - (did anyone notice this is directly the opposite of evolution?)

D. Must be more than materialism

1. From Lewis (*Transposition* and *Is Theology Poetry?*) - the evidence is that there is something more than materialism (the desire for meaning is evidence itself), and logically speaking, faith (accepting God and the spiritual aspect of life) can make room for science, but if there is “only science” - it cannot even make room for itself
2. “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” C.S. Lewis in “*Is Theology Poetry?*”, part of the book *The Weight of Glory*

Two more books to add to the reference list:

Lanier, W. Mark, *Atheism on Trial: A Lawyer Examines the Case for Unbelief*, IVP Press, Downers Grove, Ill, copyright 2022, ISBN 978-5140-0226-1

Poplin, Mary, *Is Reality Secular?: Testing the Assumptions of Four Global Worldviews*, IVP Press, Downers Grove, Ill, copyright 2014, ISBN 978-0-8308-4406-7

Neighboring Faiths

Session 1—Definitions

I. The Box—the basics of epistemology

- A. Objective Reality—Objective (Absolute) Truth
- B. Subjective Reality—Subjective (Relative) Truth

II. The Definition of Religion

Religion (1) unifies our existence by providing the core values from which we derive meaning and goals and (2) directs us beyond the mundane routine of everyday existence. ... The feature of religion that directs us beyond the mundane is called “transcendence.” Transcendence can come to us in many different ways, through supernatural agencies or through metaphysical principles (for example, the greatest good or the first cause), an ideal, a place or an awareness, to mention just some of the possibilities. (Corduan, p. 21)

- A. *“A religion is a system of beliefs and practices that provides values to give life meaning and coherence by directing a person toward transcendence.” (Corduan, p.21)*

III. The Origin of Religion

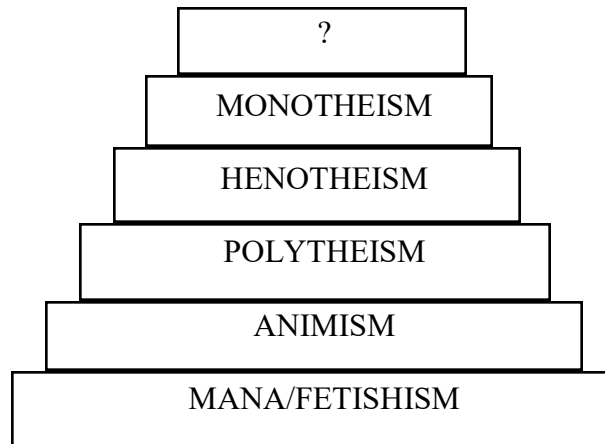
A. The “Modern” Subjective or Psychological Approach

1. The subjective approach reasons that the origin of religion is in our subconscious beliefs
2. Religion is an intrinsically human phenomenon rather than a product of an encounter with an external reality
 - a. Schleiermacher: Religion begins with a feeling, specifically the feeling of absolute dependence, not a set of beliefs
 - b. Feuerbach: The concept of God is actually a combination of idealized human traits. Thus, in the final analysis, a person who worships God is really worshipping an ideal self-image.
 - c. Freud: Religion is the subconscious need for a father image. Therefore, at root, religion is a symptom of psychological immaturity.
 - d. Rudolf Otto: The religious impulse comes from an encounter with the consciousness of holiness. Picture yourself thinking about God as you are kneeling in a majestic cathedral or gazing at an imposing mountain vista. Suddenly you are overwhelmed by a feeling of God’s greatness and majesty; for a moment you have encountered holy reality. You sense you have touched the untouchable. This feeling has two components, a consciousness of fear and awe leads you to an awareness of your insignificance and you shrink away. Simultaneously, you experience a feeling of attraction. *Mysterium tremens* and *mysterium fascinans* respectively.
 - e. Jung: Religion is an expression of the subconscious which manifest themselves in “symbolic archetypes” that are common across cultures. It is the “meaning” in the religious mythology that matters. Joseph Campbell has popularized this understanding.
3. Religion is product of subconscious feelings and thoughts expressed in symbols and therefore is rooted in subjectivity. (It’s not what you believe, but how well you believe that matters.)

From *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions* by Winfried Corduan, copyright, 1998 IVP Press

B. Evolutionary Approach

1. For the last 200 years (until the later part of the 20th century) scholarly investigation of religion's origin took an evolutionary approach.
2. This approach rests on two basic assumptions
 - a. A general commitment to the evolutionary view of life—beyond biology, we evolve psychologically, and sociologically
 - b. An anthropological methodology. Cultural anthropology assumes that “primitive” man created “primitive” cultures. As man evolved, his culture and understandings also evolved.

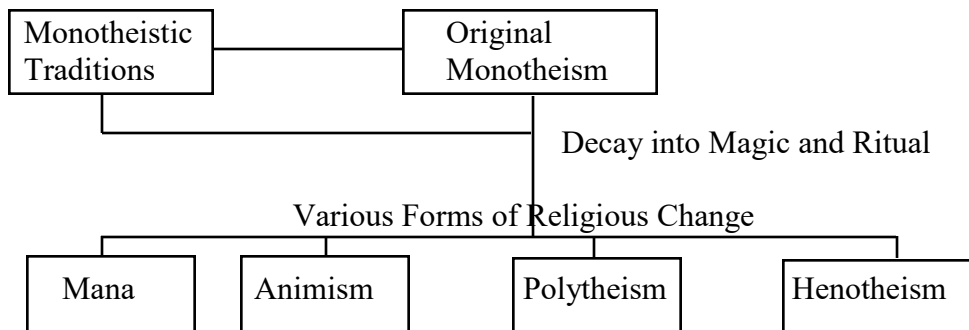


- c. Mana/fetishism—the belief in a spiritual force. This force is universal, but not evenly distributed. Some places, or objects (a doll or stick or bone) possess more “force” than other. Such an object, called a fetish, is then preserved and venerated. The ability to recognize and manipulate this force gives one power. This form of religion we call “magic.” Magic may be defined as the manipulation of spiritual forces in order to bring about a desired result. Note the components of this definition. Magic involves some form of manipulation, namely, some action by the human being. Furthermore, magic is goal oriented.
- d. Animism—the next step in the evolutionary development of religion visualizes spiritual forces in terms of personal spirits. From the Latin *anima*, which means “soul,” animism recognizes many forces pictured as personal beings. There are two basic types of spirits: nature spirits and ancestor spirits. Because spirits are not all-powerful, it is possible to control them. A medicine man, witch doctor, or shaman is someone who is adept at getting the spirits to cooperate.
- e. Polytheism—the difference between animism and polytheism is really a quantitative not qualitative one. The transition from animism to polytheism may occur in three different ways: (1) promoting an exalted ancestor spirit to divine status, (2) promoting nature and household spirits to divine status and (3) personifying abstract principles. The sum total of gods and goddesses within a particular religion is referred to as its “pantheon” - for example, the ancient Greek or contemporary Hindu pantheon. Polytheism includes belief in magic and fetishes.
- f. Henotheism— in this stage people recognize many different gods but worship only one. henotheistic worship may also have a geographical basis: one god is thought to have exclusive domain over a specific region.

- g. Monotheism—the evolutionary model views monotheism as the highest step of development. People finally come to realize that there is only one God. According to the hypothesis, monotheism was first accepted by the Jews (under Moses). The God of monotheism is the author of moral directives for creation. God is alone God, and God alone is worthy of worship. Magic and fetishism largely drop out at this stage.
- h. Beyond gods? The evolutionary model has no reason to stop at monotheism. There is no objective claim for belief in an actual deity. Logically, and historically, this approach leads to the Subjective or Psychological approach. Religion is, by its nature, understood as purely subjective.

C. Original Monotheism

1. Original Monotheism locates the beginnings of religion in God. Virtually every religious culture carries a vestige of monotheism that can be identified as a variation of the following 9 point description.
 - a. There is one God who has personhood (as opposed to being an impersonal force)
 - b. God is referred to with masculine grammar and has masculine qualities
 - c. God apparently lives in the sky (heaven)
 - d. God has great knowledge and power
 - e. God created the world
 - f. God is the author of standards of good and evil
 - g. human beings are God’s creatures and are expected to abide by God’s standards
 - h. human beings have become alienated from God by disobeying God’s standards
 - i. God has provided a method of overcoming the alienation.
2. Original Monotheism asserts that religions developed as a result of a falling away or decay of monotheistic beliefs. Magic, ritual, polytheism, animism, and all the systems identified in the evolutionary model are a result of a move away from faith and obedience to fear and manipulation.
3. Three basic inferences of original monotheism
 - a. First, there is one decisive change—the move away from monotheism.
 - b. Second, there is no clear pattern in which this departure typically took place. Monotheism could turn into henotheism, polytheism or animism. But one thing is certain: as monotheism is left behind, ritual and magic increase.
 - c. Third, once monotheism is abandoned, change usually continues to occur.
4. A religious culture, left without strong guidance, will tend toward increased ritual and magic. (Ritual is defined as a series of repeated actions that are performed in order to bring about a desired result.)



IV. Of the three approaches, only original monotheism takes the objective reality of God seriously. Both the psychological approach and the evolutionary approach assume from the start that there is no objective deity. Religion is merely subjective.

Following the Evidence—on Revisionist History

“History is more or less bunk.” Henry Ford, Chicago Tribune, May 25, 1916

“History is the interpretation of the significance that the past has for us.”

Johan Huizinga, *The Task of the Cultural Historian*

- I. What is History? - My conclusion is that history is both:
 - A. Things that have happened in the past—this is the raw material of history
 - B. The meaning, value, useful lessons of the past

- II. Context: A Brief History of History
 - A. For a long time thought of as a very dubious area of study—why? While everyone recognizes that events have happened,
 1. Problems with the reliability of the accounts
 2. What do you do with accounts that disagree
 3. What was the reason for keeping the history (who was paying for it)
 4. What about the bias of the historian
 5. What questions are being answered—what happened, why did it happen, how it is happen, and what is the significance for us
 6. How much information is 1st hand accounts and how much is only from earlier historians

- III. Dictionary Definition
 - A. the branch of knowledge dealing with past events
 - B. a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, person, etc., usually written as a chronological account; chronicle; ex. *A history of France; a medical history of the patient*
 - C. the aggregate of past events
 - D. the record of past events and times, especially in connection with the human race
 - E. a past notable for its important, unusual, or interesting events: *a ship with a history*
 - F. acts, ideas, or events that will or can shaped the course of the future; immediate but significant happenings: ex. *Firsthand observers of our space program see history in the making*
 - G. a systematic account of any set of natural phenomena without particular reference to time: ex. *A history of the American eagle*
 - H. a drama representing historical events: ex. *Shakespeare’s comedies, histories, and tragedies.*

- IV. Basic components of history
 - A. The events themselves
 - B. The “telling” of the events
 1. Selecting which elements of the event (and combination of events) are worth telling (this is inherently subjective—it reflects the opinions of the historian)
 2. The meaning or lessons to be derived (also, inherently subjective)

- V. German scholars from the Enlightenment suggested two words for the two categories
 - A. *Historie*—the events themselves that happened (this is thought of as being “objective” - the “bare events”)
 - B. *Geschichte*—the telling of the events (which is inherently subjective) and the interpretation of the meaning of the events (which is also inherently subjective)
 - C. The original idea was to suggest that you could have an element of objectivity in the “facts” of what happened, and the historian’s job was to get “back” to those facts

- D. Later, the skepticism grew (as with Albert Schweitzer, who wrote the book, *In Search of the Historical Jesus* and concluded he could not be found—only the accounts of others were there and how reliable were they?) to the point of questioning if we could know anything about past events
- E. This opened the door for “revisionist” history—to go back and reinterpret the events or question the validity of the “facts” and presenting other facts (and factors) that had not previously been considered
 - 1. Recognizing that there are always some assumptions that are being made in “determining the facts” as well as interpreting those “facts” has left “modern” history merely a “construct” which is wholly subjective having lost any objectivity
- F. This also opened the door on “owned” history, i.e. “women’s history”, “black history”, “history from below” (history as seen from the oppressed rather than the powerful)
- G. “Many thinkers maintain that the totality of human history, in spite of the apparent arbitrariness of various historical events, possesses a large organizing theme, meaning, or direction. Of course, efforts to find meaning or direction in history have been criticized by thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze, who claim that it is a grave mistake to look for meaning where none can exist, because history is best characterized by discontinuities, ruptures, and various time-scales. But, many, in spite of the diversity of their religious, philosophical, and ideological backgrounds, have been much interested in finding the directionality of history. They can be put under three distinguishable categories: Theological, "metahistorical," and progressivist interpretations.”
(From *The New World Encyclopedia*)

VI. The impact of the theory of evolution on history

- A. The theory of evolution has been applied to history (even when it is not recognized)
 - 1. Evolution gives history “directionality” that is assumed to be inherent, not interpreted
 - 2. Evolution brings in the idea of “progressivism” - that the direction of history is always to the more advanced and better

VII. A Critique of “Modern” History

- A. The model of *Historie* and *Geschichte* is useful, unless you lose sight of the fact that our inability to go back into the past and examine it empirically, does not change the reality that certain things happened and others did not. We cannot lose the objective nature of *Historie*. Just because Schweitzer couldn’t “find” the historical Jesus, does not mean he did not exist!
- B. The “meaning” of history is first, an assumption and one that a materialistic view (only matter exists) has no basis for making
- C. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture gives the Bible a unique place in history, as history, in that it is the only truly “authoritative” history since God’s “opinions” are not “opinions”, but facts! What the Bible records (when it is recording history) are both, what happened and the meaning of it for us!
- D. Using the meaning of Salvation History given us in the Bible, gives us the values and guidelines needed to do the work of history—determining both what happened and what it means!
- E. Hence, history has meaning, it has direction, and God is still at work within it! Praise God!

The Emperor's New Clothes – by Hans Christian Anderson

Many years ago, there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The King's in council," here they always said, "The Emperor's in his dressing room."

In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.

"Those would be just the clothes for me," thought the Emperor. "If I wore them, I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away." He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.

They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest old thread which they demanded went into their traveling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.

"I'd like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth," the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbors were.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."

So, the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.

"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colors. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."

"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it's beautiful -it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colors!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."

"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colors and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.

The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.

The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms, he couldn't see anything.

"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.

"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colors and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."

All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old, trusted officials-the ones who had been to the weavers-he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible!

Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people! - Oh! It's very pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.

His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's very pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."

Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."

Then the Emperor himself came with his noblest noblemen, and the swindlers each raised an arm as if they were holding something. They said, "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle," naming each garment. "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."

"Exactly," all the noblemen agreed, though they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off," said the swindlers, "we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another. They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something - that was his train-as the Emperor turned round and round before the looking glass.

"How well Your Majesty's new clothes look. Aren't they becoming!" He heard on all sides, "That pattern, so perfect! Those colors, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit."

Then the minister of public processions announced: "Your Majesty's canopy is waiting outside."

"Well, I'm supposed to be ready," the Emperor said, and turned again for one last look in the mirror. "It is a remarkable fit, isn't it?" He seemed to regard his costume with the greatest interest.

The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle. Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn't dare admit they had nothing to hold.

So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said, "Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!" Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

"But he hasn't got anything on," a little child said.

"Did you ever hear such innocent prattle?" said its father. And one person whispered to another what the child had said, "He hasn't anything on. A child says he hasn't anything on."

"But he hasn't got anything on!" the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, "This procession has got to go on." So, he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.

Putting God Back in the Center of Everything— Where He Belongs!

*“Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” C. S. Lewis from *Mere Christianity**

I. The Problem of Transposition and the Promise of Transposition

A. The view from “below” - if only the material exists, there can be no transcendence

1. “It should be recognized that the functionalism, structuralism, and empiricism toward which the human sciences are inclined keep them in a dualistic Newtonian world, where the person of the investigator is bracketed for the sake of objectifying the findings and meeting the canons of an empirical test. However, in contemporary physics, the hardest of sciences, it is recognized that the observer is an irreducible part of what must be accounted for in any scientific investigation. In Niels Bohr's understanding of subatomic phenomena and in Heisenberg's (a student of Bohr) uncertainty principle, to mention only two, it is evident that all observations at this level are observer conditioned.” James E. Loder
2. “The temptation on the part of the ardent empiricist is to bring ultimate purpose, meaning, and the uniqueness of persons under the canons of the empirical method. To distort the object of inquiry to fit the method is surely poor science; each object of scientific study should be permitted to say how it is to be known.” James E. Loder
3. “Newton's uncritical and mechanistic assumptions about Euclidean space and clock time controlled and restricted what he could conceive about God and the universe. Thus, his objectivist, Arian view of God essentially sacralized an erroneous, dualistic view of the natural order and its relation to that God. Maxwell, on the other hand, started not with the natural order but with a theological position. He claimed that God created things in a nondualistic, realistic, irreducibly relational way. Theology shaped his mind, his view of reality, and his science. Maxwell's idea of objectivity was not depersonalized empiricism, but the objective reality of the transcendent God. Thus, his famous formulation of the electromagnetic magnetic field must be seen as a physical expression of the relational reality evident in all creation and supremely in God's triune being and God's relation to the contingent being of the natural order.” James E. Loder. *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*

B. The view from “above” - if God does exist—it changes everything!

1. “Einstein's thought did not make everything relative; it made some things relative that we thought were absolute, but the speed of light remained the determinative invariant. Metaphorically, this book might be conceived of as a search for the speed of light equivalent in the open-ended, multivariant relationship between theology and the human sciences.” James E. Loder.

II. Relationality as ontologically prior to rationality

A. God has made us for Himself in a relationship, of which knowledge and rationality are only parts for a fuller experience between creature and Creator

B. This means our experience of life will always be deeper and more profound than our understanding of it—God wants us to know Him, not just know about Him

C. This does not mean our relationship with God is irrational, but that the reality of the relationship will include, but also transcend our rational understandings

D. This is the “mystery” of our faith, and a mystery is not a secret

1. A secret is information you can understand but are not given access to

2. A mystery is when all the information is given and you still cannot understand it all
 - a. An example: it is no secret my wife loves me, it is a mystery as to why
- E. Understanding any transposition from “above” requires revelation—that which is higher must choose to reveal itself, and it must do so in terms which are understandable on the lower level (hence, transposition of what is “outside of one’s experience” into something “inside one’s experience”)

III. Relational Theology

- A. “We are created to be in relationship with God. This relationship is to be characterized by uniqueness, unity and reciprocity.” Balswick, et.al. in *The Reciprocating Self*
 1. Uniqueness—each of us has a unique relationship with God
 2. Unity—we belong first to God, and then to one another as members of His “Body”
 3. Reciprocity—our identity is in our relationship to God and to one another—individuality and corporate identity
- B. Our real identity is found not so much in “who” we are, but “whose” we are

IV. Back to the Beginning—Defining “Reality” as containing two primary aspects

- A. The Objective aspect
 1. Objects (including particular ideas) have their own existence, separate and apart from our knowledge or experience of them—the objective aspect of Reality
 2. This aspect of reality is open to rational examination and is the aspect of reality we all share
- B. The Subjective aspect
 1. This is the aspect of Reality (including ideas) whose existence is dependent (subject to) our knowledge and experience of them
 2. The subjective aspect is “assigned” (given a value, meaning, significance) by the agent that has the capacity to grant such a value, meaning, significance
 3. This is an aspect of Reality that is very “real” (for example our feelings about something) but it is not necessarily permanent—it owes its existence to the agent and thus stands or falls with the agent which “calls it into existence”
 4. This is the aspect of reality that can be “appreciated” by others, but not really fully shared as it will bear the uniqueness of the foundational agent

V. Rationality and Resonance

- A. Rationality is a marvelous tool for things within our objective experience
- B. Resonance is an understanding that should be expected when relating to the truth of things that are transcendent (it is the way in which a transposition of higher to lower is experienced)

VI. Heaven

- A. “‘To him that overcometh I will give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.’ What can be more a man’s own than this new name which even in eternity remains a secret between God and him? And what shall we take this secrecy to mean? Surely, that each of the redeemed shall forever know and praise some one aspect of the Divine beauty better than any other creature can. Why else were individuals created, but that God, loving all infinitely, should love each differently? And this difference, so far from impairing, floods with meaning the love of all blessed creatures for one another, the communion of the saints. If all experienced God in the same way and returned Him an identical worship, the song of the Church triumphant would have no symphony, it would be like an orchestra in which all the instruments played the same note. Aristotle has told us that a city is a unity of unlikes, and St Paul that a body is a unity of different members. Heaven is a city, and a Body, because the blessed remain eternally different: a society, because each has something to tell all the others—fresh and ever fresh news of the ‘My God’ whom each finds in Him whom all praise as ‘Our God’. For doubtless the continually successful, yet never complete, attempt by each soul to communicate its unique vision to all others (and that by means whereof earthly art and philosophy are but clumsy imitations) is also among the ends for which the individual was created. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*”