Evolutionary Evils and the Goodness of God

The Problem of Animal Suffering for Christian Theism

John R. Schneider
Charles Darwin (1809-1882)
“Nature Red in Tooth and Claw”

Who trusted God was love indeed And love
Creation's final law— Tho' Nature, red in
tooth and claw With ravine, shriek'd against
his creed— (Alfred Lord Tennyson, In
Memoriam, 1849)
Changing Times

• *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1845, Robert Chambers (1802-1871)
• Became a bestseller in the 1840’s, and paved the public way for acceptance of Darwinism.
• Tennyson was moved by the bleakness of planetary history amid grieving over a friend’s death.
• Tennyson touches *emotively* on the *philosophical* and *theological* problem of natural evil that was looming larger then.
Can a Christian also Be a Darwinian (or Vice Versa)?

• To put it a little more precisely: Can anyone be a really rightly thinking and believing Christian and at the same time believe (or at least be open to believing) that the teachings of Darwinian or evolutionary science are true?

• This general question frames the particular subject of my presentation, which is focused on evolutionary evils, especially the evil of animal suffering as reported by evolutionary science.
Declarations of War

Quite a few Christians and Darwinians alike answer with a resounding “No!” They see unresolvable conflict between key teachings of Christianity and evolutionary science. To accept Christianity as true entails that Darwinism is false (and vice versa).
Jerry Coyne, one of world’s leading genetic scientists, avowed atheist, and founder of the website, “Why Evolution Is True.” Refers to anyone advocating “peace” between them as “Accommodationists.” (This is not a compliment.)


http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com
On the Other...

Ken Ham: Founder of the website and corporation, “Answers in Genesis.” Ham is the world’s most prominent spokesman for today’s “YEC.” Ham denounces Christians who accept evolution as “compromised.” (This also is no compliment.)

Peace in the “Valley of Darwin”? 

Despite the support for “warfare” between Darwinian science and Christian faith, some serious thinkers assure us that apparent conflicts can be resolved, and that there can be intellectually honest “peace” between Christianity and Darwinism.

No “Deep Conflict”

Other Ambassadors of Peace “Evolutionary Creationism”

Francis Collins, *The Language of God*, 2006. Also a Christian, and leader of the team that mapped the human genome. Founder of BioLogos, a think tank devoted to Christian “peace” with evolutionary science.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Collins
Recommended Resources on Evolutionary Creationism

http://biologos.org/resources/find/Essay
Plantinga’s “Peace Plan”

- Plantinga identifies six “theses” that are essential to evolutionary science as a whole, and are thought by some people to be in conflict with certain essential teachings of Christianity. He argues that none of them creates “deep conflict” with Christianity (rightly understood.) “Deep” conflict would be a conflict that “defeats” theism.

- I will go through the “theses” first and then look briefly at reasons for making Christian “peace” with them.

- Eventually, I propose that Christianity can make a fairly easy “peace” with all except for one of them, and the main part of the presentation is focused on Christian conflict with it.
The Essential ‘Theses’ of Evolutionary Science

(1) The thesis of an *Ancient Cosmos and Earth*

According to geologists using a variety of reliably independent means of measurement, the earth is around four billion years old. Likewise, physicists generally calculate the cosmos as 13.7 billion years old.

(2) The thesis of **Evolutionary Progression** from the simple to the complex.

The full history of species begins with a simple single cell and advances by degrees to the “speciation” of more complex forms, finally to the self-consciousness, moral awareness, and creativity of modern human beings.

http://ponderingconfusion.com/papers.php?id=increment
(3) The thesis of *Descent by Modification* (species emerged via process of gradual change).

Species are not “immutable,” but subject to significant genetic changes that over time graduate into biologically new species. (Here: whales graduated genetically to become four-legged land mammals.)
(4) The thesis of **Common Ancestry** (all species descend from a common single-celled ancestor)

Closely related to (2) and (3): the evolutionary progression and modification is genetic, so that all species, including ours descend from a common source. Here: one ancestral branch—primates—growing from a common ancestral source.
(5) The thesis of *Mutation and Natural Selection* ("Darwinism," or "survival of the fittest").

Some genetic changes produce changes that enable the organism to adapt, survive, and to flourish in its environment. This Natural Selection is the **main** (not only) process in the **origin** and **enduring existence** of all species, including ours.

http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/bergstrom_02
We could discuss a sixth thesis: the thesis of Naturalistic Origins of Life. But not everyone includes this thesis in the theory of evolution proper.
Plantinga:

“... none of these seems to cut against providentialist religion. Clearly, that sort of religion is compatible... with the idea that the earth is ancient.... The same goes for the thesis that the diversity of life has come about by a process of descent with modification and that all creatures are genealogically related.... And the same goes for Darwinism.... God could have created life in all its diversity by way of such a process, guiding it in the direction he wants to see it go, by causing the right mutations to arise at the right time, preserving certain populations from extinction, and so on.” (Where the Conflict Really Lies, pp. 55-6)
Are the “Peace Protesters” Right?

• Contrary to some popular opinion, they are almost certainly right about theses (1)-(4).
• Conflict with these four theses is due almost entirely to employment of “Simple Literalism” to the first chapters of Genesis.
• Genesis 1-11 understood as a simple report of events exactly as they happened requires the reading of 6-day YEC, and to belief in divine fiat, not by descent and common ancestry.
• But very good reasons exist for not reading and using Genesis in this “simply literal” way. We can come back to this point in the Q & A.
Deborah and Loren Haarsma: offer a valuable “registry” of various approaches to the Bible as inspired, but also as open to the thesis of an Ancient Earth. They also provide helpful readable summaries of the evidence for an Ancient Earth, among other theses of evolution.
More Recommended Reading

Denis Lamoureux: Offers a very incisive discussion of evolutionary science and Scripture, written with college students in mind. He has a very helpful discussion of both the evidence for evolution and discoveries that illumined Genesis to be read with not-so-modern eyes.

Davis Young & Ralph Stearley: They show in detail that the thesis of an Ancient Earth (abandonment of Flood Geology) grew from universal agreement among geologists on implications of stratigraphic evidence, worldwide, and that it was not the product of “secular” attitudes towards the Bible, as often claimed by leaders of today’s YEC.

https://www.bibleandscience.com/images/Creationists.jpg
So Is Peace at Hand, Then?

• For many thinkers, conflict between Christianity and evolutionary science grows from thesis (5) Natural Selection.

• The rest of the presentation is focused on why this sense of conflict exists, why it matters, and on attempts to resolve it, including my own.

• Unfortunately, I don’t see any (including my own) as wholly satisfying (some a lot less so than others.)
Avoiding Abstraction

• In the abstract, we might well judge Natural Selection to be a **morally neutral**, or maybe even **morally good**, process, and so as a means of creation compatible with the character of a **morally perfect**—just and loving—God.

• Plantinga: “God could have created through **such a process**, **guiding it in the direction He wants to see it go** by **causing the right mutations to arise at the right time, preserving certain populations from extinction, and so on.**”
Natural Selection and the “Darwinian World”

• Darwinian Natural Selection doesn’t refer to a process in the abstract. It refers to the key natural formative process animating what I call the “Darwinian World” (DW). The DW refer to the biological world envisioned systemically on two horizons of time—roughly speaking, its systemic present and its unfathomably long prehistoric past.

• So unveiled, the DW creates a distinctly new “Darwinian Problem” (DP) of God and natural evil.

• The DP is especially formidable if focused on pain endured by animals due to nature’s systemic design.
The “Darwinian Problem”

• The DP is gaining force in arguments for non-theism, and getting growing attention from defenders of theism.

• The DP is especially difficult for Christian theism, because of its stress on the justice of God coupled with parental love for all creatures and things (John 3:16).
Stating the Darwinian Problem

• The “Darwinian Problem” grows from recent discoveries showing that “natural evil” is deeply inscribed in the design of geological and biological systems. (“Natural evil” was “old news,” but this inscription of evil by design was devastating for people who celebrated cosmic harmony, especially via Newton’s physics.)

• It also grows from recent discoveries unveiling an unimaginably long and epochal history of the earth and species—most of it in a vast pre-human past. This diachronic horizon of the DW puts the problem of natural evil in a dramatically new light.
The Diachronic dimension of the DW

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Planetary and Biological Time

The diagram illustrates the timeline of geological epochs and the dominant animals of each era. It is divided into two main eras: Cenozoic and Mesozoic, with the Cenozoic further divided into Quaternary and Tertiary periods. The Mesozoic era includes the Cretaceous, Jurassic, and Triassic periods. The Paleozoic era is divided into Pennsylvanian, Mississippian, Devonian, Silurian, Ordovician, and Cambrian periods.

Each period is depicted with a time scale showing millions of years ago. The dominant animals of each era are illustrated alongside the timeline.
The *Prima Facie* “Darwinian Problem”

- The problem is often stated in a *prima facie* form, not as a *formal* argument against Christian theism.
- In this form, it just seems *obvious on its face* that the design of nature is not divine.
- In this presentation, I won’t go into *formal* evidential arguments designed to show the irrationality of theism. Those formal arguments capture the *prima facie* intuition that the DW was not designed by an omnipotent and wholly good God, and that the DW contains overwhelming evidence for *non-theism*, and maybe even *strong atheism*. 
Terrestrial Conditions of Natural Selection

• One aspect of the DW and DP: the terrestrial conditions for Natural Selection, while remarkably creative and sublime, are also extremely violent, brutal, and deadly. The theistic moral question is “why God would design those conditions that way.

• Note: the natural evils arise *inevitably* from the constants, laws, and processes involved in formation of the cosmos and the earth.
The Lisbon Quake in 1755
Impact of the Lisbon Quake

• Comparable to that of the Holocaust as a paradigm case of horrendous evil for people living at the time.

• It framed the thinking and writing of Voltaire (*Candide*), David Hume (1704-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and disposed them strongly against accepting commonplace arguments from design for theism.

• As if to mock providence, the infamous huge brothel was among very few buildings left standing!
A More Recent “Paragraph” from “God’s Second Book” (230,000 dead in minutes)
Terrestrial Conditions and Animals

• Catastrophic events in nature cause horrific suffering and death for *human* beings, but they also cause similar suffering and destruction for *non-human* creatures and things.

• The DW reports such “natural evils” in forms that seem to *defy* available *moral* explanations.
The Vast Indifference of Heaven

- Awareness of *occurrent* systems and forces that produce earthquakes and violent weather events had made it harder than ever to see than as *morally targeted* occurrences, and not as morally *indifferent* and *random* occurrences.

- One of few buildings left standing in Lisbon was the city’s largest brothel. (The quake struck during mass on All Saints Day, most churches turned to rubble, a large portion of Christian population brutally injured or dead. A *tsunami* finished off survivors who fled to boats just off shore for refuge.)
The “Broken Narrative” of Species

- But unveiling of the “diachronic” horizon of the DW made the *prima facie* problem much worse.
- Rather than a seamless evolutionary narrative, it disclosed a “broken narrative” of *epochs*, each one ending catastrophically, only to be replaced by yet another.
- The epochal narrative of *extinctions* was devastating to defenders of simple arguments from design.
“The Great Dying”

The Permian Extinction: The Great Dying. 252 million years ago, probably initiated by Super Volcanoes in Asia. 96% of species died.

All life descends from the “elected” 4%. 
Natural Selection at a Distance: A Tree of Life
Tree of Death and Aesthetics

• On close scrutiny, the Tree of Life looks more like a Tree of Death, most of its branches now dead (99.5% of species gone), and a relative few limbs left—including our own.

• This “pruning” by Natural Selection made life miserable for those who appealed to the *aesthetic grandeur* of evolution, as they still could do more successfully on appeals to design in *astronomy*.

• I will face this difficulty at the very end.
The Great “Loom” of Selection

• Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887): a “grandeur” of divine design in the “progress” of evolution?
“A Series of Worlds”

William Whewell (1794-1866), England’s leading Christian apologist. Was dumbfounded by discovery through sedimentary layers and fossils that the history of species looked like a “series of creations,” unlike what one expected on traditional theism. (The Plurality of Worlds, 1853 (published before Darwin’s works).p. 63.)

http://www.victorianweb.org/science/whewell.html
Biological Tragedy and Horror

• Meanwhile, the DW reported yet another kind of “natural evil,” surprising and vexing for supporters of theism.

• Natural Selection did not just occur under unfavorable conditions for most creatures, but also “created” a great variety of species that seemed better suited to tragedy and even horror than a book declaring the “glory of God.”
Darwin’s Real Doubt

“I am bewildered. I had no intention of writing atheistically. I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the *Ichneumonidae* with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice.

http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2814. To Asa Gray, 1860
The *Ichneumon* on Steroids

Scientists now know of ten species of *ichneumon* (one of which injects a virus into caterpillars to disable it while being eaten alive inside).
The Plague

• Discoveries of microbial diseases with sophisticated deadly designs—*Yersinia pestis* (bubonic plague) is equipped with a “syringe” than injects cells into the victim.

• Discovered, 1894.
Parasites

Heartworm infestation in dog
The Problem of Buffy and Natural Evil: Did He who Made the Heartworm Make Thee?
“Diachronic” Tragedy and Horror

• The sense of biological tragedy and horror is amplified on the “diachronic” horizon for the obvious reason that it expands the amounts, kinds, and distributions of evolutionary evils afflicting and often thwarting the thriving of billions of animals.

• But further, recent discoveries in fossilized amber seem to make the DP even worse.
Prehistoric Biting Fly

http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/01/08/scientists-biting-insects-may-have-killed-off-dinosaurs/
Autopsy of a Dinosaur

In the light of their research, the authors speculated on what an autopsy of a common ornithopod (bird-footed bipedal dinosaurs) would have revealed. If an autopsy had been made... it would have revealed many parasites and pathogens inhabiting the tissues. Some, like amoebic dysentery, malaria, and ascarid roundworms, would have caused lesions in the gut, liver abscesses, and distorted blood cells. But the actual cause of our dinosaur’s death would have been listed as *leishmaniasis*, a protozoan disease. Just like other members of the herd, he was victim of an emerging pathogen that was decimating the Cretaceous world. They submitted that the evolutionary success of such “micro-predators” decimated the entire ecological existence of the dinosaurs. ([Poinar and Poinar, What Was Bugging the Dinosaurs?](#))
Why Such Natural Horror?

• On the “Diachronic” horizon, especially, and in the light of its “broken” epochal narrative, it’s hard to see what God-justifying reason there could be for an organism transmitting such horrific disease and death.

• Darwin himself was keenly attuned to the spiritual problem raised by the results of his science.
“A being so powerful and so full of knowledge as a God who could create the universe, is to our finite minds omnipotent and omniscient, and it revolts our understanding to suppose that his benevolence is not unbounded, for what advantage can there be in the sufferings of millions of lower animals throughout almost endless time?”

“What a book a Devil’s chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful blundering, low, and horribly cruel works of nature.”

Darwin Correspondence Project, letter no. 1924, http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-1924

Darwin Correspondence Project, letter no. 2814 (To Thomas Hooker).
The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive; others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear; others are being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst and disease. It must be so.

R. Dawkins, 132.
So Is War On?

• So far: I propose that the systemic natural evils reported by the DW do provide a *prima facie* reason to doubt the *omnipotence* and (especially) *goodness* of God to innocent sentient non-human creatures. I propose that progress towards “peace” *begins* with grasping the power of the problem.

• But what’s to say about it, if anything?
Giving God-justifying Reasons: *Theodicy*

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)

“*Theodicy*” (from *theos* and *diké*): giving a God-justifying reason for evil(s).
Is a Christian Theodicy Viable?

• Quite a few Christian thinkers believe that a Christian Theodicy is possible.

• Very generally, there are four main candidates vying for acceptance.

• I will treat them more briefly than they deserve due to limits of time. (We can come back to any of them in the Q & A.)
Four Theodicies on the Evolutionary Suffering of Animals

• (1) Neo-Cartesian Theodicy: proposes that animals do not really suffer, at least not in a morally important fashion.

• (2) Lapsarian Theodicy: animal suffering is the moral consequence of a world-ruinous and world-transformative Fall—either human or angelic.

• (3) Only-Way Theodicy: such evolutionary natural evils are inevitable in any comparably good world as ours, supporting a plenitude of life, including morally conscious and authentic personhood.

• (4) Skeptical Theism Theodicy: if theism is true, we should expect not to know the God-justifying reason(s) for many evils, including this one.
(1) Neo-Cartesian theodicy

Animals are organic machines, not sentient creatures.

René Descartes ("Cartesius," 1596-1650)
Animals don’t really suffer

C. S. Lewis: Animals lack “trans-temporal consciousness” essential to capacity for real suffering
Animals don’t really suffer

Michael Murray thinks Neo-Cartesian theory may be true. Non-human animals lack HOT (Higher Order Thinking) and the brain structure (frontal neo-cortex) needed for qualia.
Animals Don’t Really Suffer

So also prominent apologist William Lane Craig.
Animals Lack “HOT” (Higher Order Thought)

• The main thread of the argument: Animals do not have mental states of consciousness that could enable morally considerable experiences of suffering.

• A theistic argument: Since God is good, God would not afflict innocent animals with such unnecessary horrific suffering. Therefore, on theism, they don’t!
Why Not Accept Neo-Cartesian Theodicy?

- First, the *prima facie* suffering of many animals places a very heavy burden of evidence to the contrary on Neo-Cartesian Theodicy.
- Most people who are familiar with animals will accept this perception of animal emotions as sufficient to end the conversation. (My vet: “I’ve never encountered one of these ‘Cartesians’ in my operating room.”)
*Prima facie* evidence is enough for most people.
Arguments against Neo-Cartesian Theodicy

• (1) HOT is not a necessary condition for morally significant suffering (we are rarely “in” that mental state anyway, and many human beings never are, yet we presume they can suffer.

• (2) Animals clearly have “trans-temporal” consciousness sufficient for enabling “retention” and “protension” (Husserl’s phenomenology of conscious minds.)

• (3) Animals exhibit physiological symptoms of suffering similar to those of human beings.

• (4) Various parts of the brain (not just the frontal neo-cortex) seem to enable qualia in animals.
Many studies show past reasonable doubt that animals have states of pain and pleasure that matter to them, and so should matter to us.
Ethology: Jonathan Balcombe

Useful summary of recent ethology supporting belief that the mental life of animals includes real suffering and real joy.
Franz de Waal: famed primatologist. He represents growing opinion that there is no room for debate, except over how “low” suffering goes in the phylogenetic order.
Other Reasons: Suspicion and Practice

(5) Neo-Cartesian Theory is easily de-constructed as self-interested ideology (as in saving theism) and/or as economic expedience (as in food production and blocking legal complexities on admission of animal “rights.”)

(6) Unviability in practice: If you won’t put your Neo-Cartesian theory into ethical practice, why should anyone accept it in your “religious” practice of theodicy?
(2) Lapsarian Theodicy

- If animals really suffer as reported by the DW, some Christian thinkers naturally infer that such suffering-causing systems in nature could not be the purposeful designs of God.
- By default, then, natural evil must owe its existence to the actions of God’s creatures, instead. They find support in the narrative account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2-3.
- Some Christians in history (not all) proposed that natural evils exist as the moral aftermath of a Fall that ruined Paradise—Act Two in the drama of Paradise, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained.
- Not many, but a notable few Christian writers persist in offering Lapsarian Theodicy now.
Genesis and Eden

*Genesis seems to explain natural evil as the consequence of a *human* Fall. (More on another opinion, later.*)
For in the sad disorder which followed the fall of Adam.... It is appropriate for us then to consider what a dreadful curse we have deserved, since all created things, both on earth and in the invisible heavens, which are in themselves blameless, undergo punishment for our sins; for it has come about that they are liable to corruption not through their own fault. Thus the condemnation of mankind is imprinted on the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures. [On Romans 8: 20-22]
The Obvious “Diachronic” Problem

• Contrary to what Calvin and other pre-Darwinian theologians thought, “natural evils” occurred for unimaginably long spans of time before human beings made their appearance on the planet.

• So how could the Fall of human beings be the temporal cause of “natural evils endured under evolution by billions of animals?”
A Trans-temporal Fall?

William Dembski, *The End of Christianity*: the Fall of Adam and Eve was “trans-temporal,” i.e., it’s effects extended backwards and forwards in time, just like effects of Christ’s works did.
An Angelic Fall?

Greg Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*: Theodicy of a “trans-temporal” human Fall is unconvincing. We should appeal to an *angelic Fall*, instead.
After Satan fell, he and his cohorts ruined the laws and systems of nature. (C. S. Lewis, Alvin Plantinga, among others, propose that accepting this explanation can be rational.)
Legends of the Fall?

• Why do many leading philosophers and theologians of science reject Lapsarian Theodicy?

• The main general reason: Lapsarian Theodicy does not provide adequate God-justifying reason(s) for “natural evils” (and probably not for “moral evils”), but in fact makes the problem of apparent divine culpability worse.

• How so?
Original Cosmic Fragility

• **Michael Murray**: “lapsarian” accounts fail as theodicies of natural evil largely because they rest on belief in **Original Cosmic Fragility**.

• His main thought: considering the high stakes (the well being and destiny of all God’s beloved creatures and), we naturally suppose God (in omniscient omnipotence and love) would create a nearly **unbreakable** world. But the Lapsarian Theodicies require presuming that God did not.

• **What God-justifying reason exists then for Original Cosmic Fragility?**
Implausible Moral Psychology

• Let’s say we accept Original Cosmic Fragility as a morally good thing for some reason. The next problem pertains to God’s purported putting of unreliable creatures (or any creatures at all) in charge of its well being and destiny.

• Consider our nuclear arsenal: we would put the most psychologically and morally reliable person possible in charge of a system that if mismanaged or misused would cause unimaginably great evil.

• But the alleged outcome (the Fall) proves to the contrary—the creatures in charge were not very reliable at all, or else they wouldn’t have failed as they did.
Augustine’s Solution: the Original Beatific Vision

• Augustine (354-430) was made keenly aware of this problem by opponents.

• In reply, he proposed that the first human beings were endowed with powerful supernatural gifts of knowledge, love of God, and enjoyed the Beatific Vision under utopian circumstances in Eden.

• So they were entirely unexcused for what they did (likewise Lucifer before them). All blame for the consequent evils falls on them, and none on God, who created them.
The Dilemma of Beatific Wickedness

• Critics (including me) complain: no one in this beatific state of knowledge, love of God, and “clothed by grace” in the constant presence of God, would have any “pro” disposition to wickedness.

• And without that “pro” disposition, it would have been psychologically impossible for them to sin—much less to commit the wickedest sin imaginable for any creature.

• Attempts to explain how they could sin this way inevitably create a dilemma by appealing to their unreliability in some form, and so we are faced again by the culpability of God for entrusting the lives of all creatures and things to them.
The Problem of Moral Impropriety

- Many critics of Augustinian teaching on Original Sin have focused on the moral impropriety of afflicting the entire human race with what amount to “punishment” for the moral wrongdoing of a first man and woman.
- The problem gets worse when we consider appeals to the Fall as moral accounts of suffering by animals, especially as reported by the DW.
- “Lapsarian” theodicies all seem to make God into someone enraged beyond all proper moral constraint, too like the father, who flies off the handle at his children and cuts off a puppy’s leg in response.
Proposed Solutions

- **Dembski**: God afflicts animals so terribly in order for “therapeutic” reasons, only instead of Hick’s “school” of Soul Making, he says that God has authorized the existence of a bloody and violent “insane asylum” so that we humans can “see” just how serious our sin is.
- Of course no humans were around to “see” any of this suffering for most of its millennia.
- **Boyd** proposes instead that the Mighty Angel Lucifer was given charge over nature, and after he fell God unleashed this nearly omnipotent Fiend on innocent animals.
- I submit that neither explanation quite reaches the point of biblical moral propriety
The Problem of Cosmic Transformation

• If we think that nature was once a Paradise, given the systems and inhabitants of the DW, how are we to imagine its systemic and physical transformation?
• The systemic moral character of the DW is a continuum of processes and events going back to the formation of the universe and planet.
• What can it conceivably mean to think of these physical constants and genetic forms as a transformation of Paradise Lost.
• There is no trace of a transformation of this kind in evidence of physics, geology, or genomics (where dramatic morphological changes would presumably show up.)
Science and Polygenism

Other problems:

– **Genomic polygenism**: there could not have been merely *two* ancestral human beings.

– **Genetic common ancestry**: the first modern humans (*homo sapiens*) would have had a non-human psychosomatic heredity. Hard to see how they could have been suited for the role that lapsarian theodicy has them play.

– **Implausible hermeneutical scenarios**: YEC “script” requires wholesale rejection of evolution and stages like a “farce.” OEC “script” involves problems already described. EC “script” involves these same problems plus more.