

## Outline for Theological Compatibilism and Animation: Object of Wrath

- I. Introduction
  - a. Posit the relationship of the animation and the animator
    - i. Present examples of the animation interacting with the animator
      1. Early cartoons
        - a. Windsor McCay
          - i. Gertie the Dinosaur
        - b. Max & Dave Fleischer
          - i. Koko the Clown
          - ii. Felix the Cat
        - c. Disney/Ub Iwerks
        - d. Others(?) TBA
      2. The literal sense
        - a. Any/all animation
    - ii. Briefly mention the relationship of any artist and their art as a parallel to compatibilism – but animation better displays the act of creating a new/separate will
- II. Brief definitions and foundational ideas
  - a. Determinism, indeterminism, and compatibilism
    - i. Aristotle
    - ii. Hume
    - iii. Kant
    - iv. Augustine
    - v. Calvin
  - b. Introduce and define theological compatibilism
    - i. Determinism created by a personal being
    - ii. Determinism is metaphysical in nature
    - iii. Acting agent is not physically or psychologically forced into choices; entirely based on the nature of the agent
    - iv. Imply the parallel of animator/animation and God/man, but clarify the implicit problems and safe assumptions
    - v. Refer to appendix 1 where terms are expounded and Biblical examples given
  - c. Does the animation have freewill?
    - i. The animator's view
    - ii. The perspective of the creation
      1. Epistemic capability
      2. Must have self awareness to contemplate freedom
      3. The will is *always* bound to the animator's
        - a. The illusion of freedom
          - i. Acts entirely by it's nature – something instilled by the creator
          - ii. Makes decisions based on desire

- iii. In extreme circumstances, a choice still exists – full coercion is impossible if any will is present

- III. When the animation reacts to the animator
  - a. Re-introduce the notion of the animated creature having a “freewill” and briefly describe the definition of the term *as it relates to theological compatibilism*
  - b. Things to consider when another mind is involved
    - i. Responsibility for the creation’s actions
    - ii. The animator’s rights over the creation
    - iii. The intentions and purposes of the animation vs. those of the animator
      - 1. Discuss a single action having two wills
      - 2. The animator having an intention for the action as well as the creation’s will as separate, but intertwined, results
  - c. The determined state is not fatalism
    - i. The animator is personal
    - ii. The creature understands himself to be making choices
      - 1. Bases new choices on past experiences
      - 2. Understands the circumstances wrought by choices
  - d. The nature of the will within a determined circumstance/action
    - i. Makes decisions based on desire or what the creation understands to be a choice
    - ii. Entirely dependent upon the creature’s understanding, not the reality of the situation. If the creation does not feel coerced and makes decisions based on expectations then the creature will understand itself to have a certain degree of freedom to their will.
      - 1. Supposing there is a will, reiterate the possibility of the creator having two purposes; one for the action, the other for the will of the creature
- IV. The hypothetical: “What if cartoons had a genuine ‘mind’ that allowed them to think and operate in a such as way that they considered themselves free?”
  - a. Introduce the “planes” of the animator vs. those of the animation
  - b. The temporal planes
    - i. The creature
      - 1. Linear and bound by present experience, the creature is limited in his understanding because he only knows the world that has been created for him
      - 2. Incapable of mentally inhabiting coinciding moments; the creature lives in *his* “now”
    - ii. The artist
      - 1. Able to see and understand all contingencies of the plot that he has set out to create

2. Resides outside of the story and is able to view all moments of the creature's existence simultaneously
- c. The creature is entirely reliant upon the creator for existence, understanding, and fulfillment in all things including action and thought
  - i. A creature can only do that which the artist has enabled him to do
  - ii. A creature only has knowledge that has been given to him
  - iii. A creature is two-dimensional and 'dead' in comparison to the creator, who is infinitely more alive and real than that which is made by his hand
  - iv. A creature is not equal to his animator, but may possess qualities and characteristics of the creator – as many as the creator desires to place within the creation
- d. The artist has the freedom and ability to do as he pleases with his creation
  - i. A third-party would not question the rights of the painter to the paint, nor the animator to his cel drawings
  - ii. The act of creating is ultimately for the artist's, not the creation's, satisfaction

V. Example: *Duck Amuck*

- a. Introduction to the premise of the animation
- b. The planes of Daffy Duck
  - i. What was the nature of his will?
    1. Un-coerced
    2. Acted according to his nature/personality
    3. Not entirely free
      - a. Entirely reliant upon the animator for existence, understanding, fulfillment
      - b. Only able to do that which the animator allowed, or granted, him to do
      - c. Would not do something contrary to his nature
      - d. Unknowingly will-bound
  - ii. Daffy's experience is linear and knowledge of the situation is limited by the amount of information that Bugs Bunny has provided for him
  - iii. His actions are determined by circumstances handed to him, but even the movement of his body is driven by the animator – guided steps, but a willful walk
  - iv. Daffy has a mind and voice *outside* of the circumstances
    1. A voice without a mouth
    2. A mind without a body
      - a. A consistent mind in spite of changes in physical existence
- c. The planes of Bugs Bunny
  - i. Does as he wishes to Daffy
    1. Is not hindered and does not question his own actions
    2. Daffy is there to please him

- a. Daffy's actions and attitude towards Bugs fulfills his purpose until Bugs is finished with him – Bugs' pleasure is the determining and driving factor
- ii. Bugs' knowledge and understanding of Daffy's situations is complete and total. He guides and directs the paths that Daffy takes, rarely overriding what Daffy understands to be his freewill
- iii. In Daffy's world, Bugs has true freedom

VI. *Object of wrath* breakdown and exposition

- a. The plot
  - i. A psychologically troubled creature attempts to kill a bird, even after being shown he cannot and then told by the artist that he may not.
  - ii. The animator, creator of both the creature and the bird, is shown to be producing the story
  - iii. The artist has the creature kill the bird, but then resurrects the bird to frighten the creature. The creature is then burned in a fire as punishment for his actions
- b. Thoughts and intentions within the design
  - i. Two modes of tension are present
    - 1. The creature's frustration in trying to kill the bird
    - 2. The feelings exchanged between the creature and the animator
      - a. Important to note the difference between the bird and the creature. The nature of their wills are different – one is passive, seemingly innocent, while the latter is active and defiant – but these outward actions only reflect the epistemic reality for each object's mind
  - ii. The creature fails his attempt to kill the bird
    - 1. Because the failure is unnatural, the creature should be confused or aware that "something's going on"
      - a. By ignoring the action of the spear, the creature shows persistence
  - iii. The animator is shown drawing the cel frame
    - 1. Shows the determinism set forth by the creator
  - iv. Speaks through the mind of the mouth of the creation
    - 1. The creation reflects the thoughts of the creator
      - a. Flows from the creature being a part of the animator
      - b. The creature reflects the thoughts and intentions of the animator
  - v. The creature makes a second attempt to kill the bird and a sign of authoritative tone gets in the way and the creature shows his hateful nature by scowling at the law
  - vi. The animator speaks to the creature

1. The creature is aware of the animators presence but suppresses this knowledge in pursuit of his desires
  2. The animator is not speaking to himself, he is talking to another willful agent – this is the key to compatibilism; a need for a second will
- vii. The animator has the creature kill the bird
1. Two wills behind the single action
    - a. The creature desires to kill the bird because he thinks he is hungry, but he does not *need* food; he is unable to digest and is able to exist without killing the bird. To kill the bird is a reflection of the creature's nature and selfish reasoning
    - b. The animator desires to show his anger, or hatred, towards a defiant action and develops a story that allows him to portray his feelings. At the same time, the animator is in full control of the situations developed by him and is never frustrated by the plans of the creature
- viii. The creature ignores the act he had just committed and begins to start a fire to cook the bird
- ix. The animator returns life to the bird
1. In doing so, he further torments and frustrates the plans of the creature
  2. Demonstrates his control over the circumstances
  3. Shows his power to defy what the creature understands to be normal experience – the animator surprises the creature
- x. The creature is destroyed
1. The flame was started by the creature so that he may eat the bird – the selfish act
  2. The flame was started by the animator to kill the creature that he designed for the purpose of destroying. The flame is a sign of judgment not for the action, but the heart and nature of the creation
- xi. Final Shot
1. Reveals the working environment of the artist
  2. Further represents the difference in temporal planes between the artist and the animation
    - a. The artist does not inhabit the time-space of the animation
    - b. The animation is bound to its own reality. The parallel of acting for a movie and later viewing the filmstrip, but for the case of animation, it is possible to understand that reality for the creature is extended each time a frame is produced. Understanding the artist to be producing frames for the animation at an extremely fast rate would allow

for both the artist and the animation to exist but in separate realities. The key is to understand that although reality for the animation is continuously moving, because the artist is producing the frames and chooses to hang them up, he is able to view all moments of the creature's existence simultaneously

- c. The last shot also shows the artist's perseverance in creating the story; it shows that he feels the need to produce it and emphasizes that it is important to him because the entire setup of the "studio" chair was developed to create and see all moments of the storyline

- c. Christian theological parallel

- i. Understanding the Sovereignty of God

1. Immutable decree
    2. John Calvin's unabashed description
    3. John Piper summary

- ii. Why "Object of Wrath?"

1. Romans 9 and Ephesians 1
      - a. The pot of common use, the object of scorn, as opposed to the object of mercy and love
    2. Proverbs 16
      - a. The wicked are created for the purpose of destroying them
      - b. Men's tongues and footsteps are guided
    3. The object exists for the purpose of showing God's wrath. The creation has a nature that hates God and does all in its power to displease and oppose him, and in doing so fulfills its purpose to be judged
    4. Like Duck Amuck, the animator has chosen to create an agent that allows him to display his anger against willful pride and selfishness

- iii. Example: The Assyrian King

## VII. Conclusion

- a. *Object of Wrath* was intended to be a study in understanding the nature and function of theological compatibilism
- b. Mention the limitations of animation – the cel drawings do not have their own wills yet
  - i. How artificial intelligence enhances the metaphor
- c. Describe the right that the artist has over his medium and that he is the arbiter of the creation. How does this relate to Duck Amuck, Object of Wrath, and the Christian worldview