

they are able to find reasonable natural explanations for the sighting, but in 2% of the cases there is not enough information to reach any definite conclusions.

From this, the atheist might conclude that since 98% of cases have natural explanations, those cases that cannot be readily explained likely also have natural explanations that we are unable to discover. Since no evidence of demon-caused UFOs has been found, that hypothesis can be put aside as highly unlikely.

On the other hand, the theist might conclude that since 2% of the UFOs cannot be explained and we cannot rule out supernatural causes, as many as 2% of UFOs are caused by demons.

The problem with the theistic point of view is that it opens the door for any conceivable supernatural explanation whenever something is unknown. And when you're dealing with something that does not obey natural laws and cannot be scientifically investigated, such explanations may quickly become unfalsifiable and therefore useless.

To download additional tracts or purchase a copy of *Ask Yourself to Be Moral*, please visit blog.iamanatheist.com



WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE FROM IGNORANCE?

A Question of Moral Atheism

from blog.iamanatheist.com



©2009 D. Cancilla. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License

that since we have next to no information on what existed before the Big Bang it's impossible to draw any conclusions about it. Everything that exists that we have been able to investigate in details seems to be fully explainable naturalistically, so relying on past experience it is reasonable to expect that when we are able to investigate what came before the Big Bang we will find nothing supernatural. But until such time as more information is available, the atheist is fine with having no certainty about where our universe came from. Being right is more important than being certain. Let's look at another example of this type of thinking (inspired by the book *Lights in the Sky and Little Green Men*). Every year, there are hundreds of people who see unidentified flying objects (UFOs). What percentage of these unidentified lights are attributable to the work of demonic forces? Assume that an atheist and a theist working together investigate 1,000 UFO sightings. In 98% of the cases,

ONE COMMON DIFFERENCE between atheists and theists is evident in the different ways that they handle ignorance. You might say that theists sometimes treat ignorance as evidence for something, while atheists don't treat it as evidence at all. Perhaps the most common example of this difference involves how theists and atheists treat the Big Bang. Both atheists and theists agree that our universe is not timeless but rather began with the Big Bang. But the Big Bang brings with it a question: what came before the Big Bang? An atheist might argue that only God is sufficient to create a universe since we know of no physical process with that kind of power. We have no way of telling what came before the Big Bang, and since it is possible that the universe's creation was supernatural in nature and we have proof of no natural explanation, the Big Bang is evidence for the existence of God. An atheist looks at the situation rather differently. An atheist might agree that if God existed, God might create a universe, but an atheist would also admit

ONE COMMON DIFFERENCE between atheists and theists is evident in the different ways that they handle ignorance. You might say that theists sometimes treat ignorance as evidence for something, while atheists don't treat it as evidence at all.

Perhaps the most common example of this difference involves how theists and atheists treat the Big Bang.

Both atheists and theists agree that our universe is not timeless but rather began with the Big Bang. But the Big Bang brings with it a question: what came before the Big Bang?

A theist might argue that only God is sufficient to create a universe since we know of no physical process with that kind of power. We have no way of telling what came before the Big Bang, and since it is possible that the universe's creation was supernatural in nature and we have proof of no natural explanation, the Big Bang is evidence for the existence of God.

An atheist looks at the situation rather differently.

An atheist might agree that if God existed, God might create a universe, but an atheist would also admit

that since we have next to no information on what existed before the Big Bang it's impossible to draw any conclusions about it.

Everything that exists that we have been able to investigate in details seems to be fully explainable naturalistically, so relying on past experience it is reasonable to expect that when we are able to investigate what came before the Big Bang we will find nothing supernatural. But until such time as more information is available, the atheist is fine with having no certainty about where our universe came from. Being right is more important than being certain.

Let's look at another example of this type of thinking (inspired by the book *Lights in the Sky and Little Green Men*).

Every year, there are hundreds of people who see unidentified flying objects (UFOs). What percentage of these unidentified lights are attributable to the work of demonic forces?

Assume that an atheist and a theist working together investigate 1,000 UFO sightings. In 98% of the cases,

they are able to find reasonable natural explanations for the sighting, but in 2% of the cases there is not enough information to reach any definite conclusions. From this, the atheist might conclude that since 98% of cases have natural explanations, those cases that cannot be readily explained likely also have natural explanations that we are unable to discover. Since no evidence of demon-caused UFOs has been found, that hypothesis can be put aside as highly unlikely. On the other hand, the theist might conclude that since 2% of the UFOs cannot be explained and we cannot rule out supernatural causes, as many as 2% of UFOs are caused by demons. The problem with the theistic point of view is that it opens the door for any conceivable supernatural explanation whenever something is unknown. And when you're dealing with something that does not obey natural laws and cannot be scientifically investigated, such explanations may quickly become unfalsifiable and therefore useless. To download additional tracts or purchase a copy of Ask Yourself to Be Moral, please visit blog:iamanatheist.com

©2009 D. Cancelli. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License



from blog:iamanatheist.com

A Question of Moral Atheism

WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE FROM IGNORANCE?



QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on blog.iamanatheist.org. Thanks!
