

Darwinian Evolution; Scientific Theory or Religious Philosophy?

By Jay Wegter

I. Naturalism's claim to provide a material explanation for all phenomena (including human origins and behavior) is a *philosophic* endeavor, not a *scientific* endeavor.

The impact of Darwinian evolution was not in the details of mutation and natural selection, but in something far more significant—a new *criterion* for what qualifies as objective truth. Darwinism led to a naturalistic view of knowledge. Thus, if naturalism is valid, then philosophic and theological absolutes such as Goodness, Truth, Justice, Morality, and Beauty are fraudulent, or merely symbols of human aspiration without any objective existence (Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 154).

A. Darwinism sought to debunk Christianity's truth claims. Naturalism has relegated Christianity to the realm of the non-objective. Prior to Darwin, most thinkers in America assumed the unity of knowledge based on the conviction of a single universal order established by God—encompassing both natural and moral order. Darwinian evolution shattered this unity of knowledge. Religion and morality were relegated to upper story, non-cognitive, categories (p. 155). (Note how naturalism 'split' the Western mind.)

B. Secularism pits 'science' against the Bible; making the two appear to be mortal enemies. The Bible and the history of science show that this is a false dichotomy. For some 300 years after the scientific revolution, Christianity and science were thought to be completely compatible and mutually supporting. The stunning complexity of the created world was NOT viewed as a challenge to belief in God, but as confirmation of His wisdom and design—researchers '*thought God's thoughts after Him*'. Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727), and Boyle (1627-1691) felt called to use their scientific gifts in praise to God and in service to humanity. The application of science in medicine and technology was justified as a means of reversing the effects of the Fall by alleviating suffering, toil, and tedium and to assist man in fulfilling the *dominion mandate*—Ps 8; Gen 1:26-28. By contrast, Darwinism explained life's origins strictly by natural causes (naturalism). As a result, science and religion were increasingly depicted as mortal enemies (p. 155).

C. Darwinism functions philosophically like a universal acid. In 'explaining everything', it dissolves all other worldviews and all other universals. It corrodes away all traces of transcendent purpose and morality. As author Daniel Dennet says, "[it] eats through just about every traditional concept and leaves in its wake a revolutionized world-view." Dennet informed his audience (PBS 8 part series, "Evolution") that Darwin's great accomplishment was to reduce the design of the universe to a product of "purposeless, meaningless matter in motion." No lab test could affirm Dennet's assertion; it not a scientific theory at all; it is a personal religious philosophy (p. 156).

II. The Devastating Flaws in Evolutionary Theory:

A. The 'Icons' of evolution are debunked by empirical science, but are still found in textbooks.

There are four sets of illustrations ("Icons" of evolution) that used most frequently in high school and college textbooks. Our young people are no doubt familiar with them. We need to know how to evaluate these illustrations. It is heartening to know that these "Icons" of evolution have been debunked, and do not provide evidence for Darwin's theory.

1.) **Darwin's Beaks** -- Darwin found that during drought the beaks of Galapagos Finches increased

slightly in size; enabling them to access a wider variety of foods during dry spells. During normal rainfall the beaks returned to normal size. Was this “evolution happening before our very eyes,” as one scientist hailed? No, the change turned out to be nothing more than a cyclical fluctuation. The change in no way put the birds on a path to evolving into another kind of bird. It was simply an adaptation that increased survivability in dry weather. Rather than making a new bird, the minor adaptation allowed the finches to *stay finches*. Evolutionists distorted the findings, claiming proof of evolution. In reality there was no permanent alteration in the finches, the change was reversed when normal weather patterns returned (pp. 159-160).

2.) **Dysfunctional Fruit Flies** – Fruit flies reproduce a very high rate. Thus changes can be observed in a relatively short amount of time. When exposed to radiation and toxic materials; mutations were induced (larger wings, smaller wings, extra sets of wings, shriveled wings). In each case none of the mutations proved to be a design improvement and probably none of the mutated fruit flies would have been able to survive in the wild. None the less, evolutionists cited one of the mutations as an apparent evolutionary advance—one fly had two sets of wings. But the extra set of wings was not an improvement, the mutated wings did not move, they were *dysfunctional*. They hung there, weighing down the fly. After a half century of mutating fruit flies, geneticist Richard Goldschmidt summarized the experiment by saying that even the accumulated mutations would only produce an extremely odd, and dysfunctional fruit fly. Accumulated changes do not fill in the details necessary to make a new kind. Instead you need an overall design. Variations within a kind bump up against a ‘wall’—a genetic barrier of fixed limitations *that prevents evolution* (pp. 160-161).

3.) **Doctored Moths** – The case for evolution has been seriously damaged in recent years by reversals in ‘key evidence’. Nonetheless, these “Icons” continue to appear in textbooks as ‘proofs’ of evolution. The case of the peppered moths of England has been one of the most touted ‘proofs’ of evolution. During the industrial revolution, coal soot stained the trees in urban England. The speckled grey moths lost their natural blended camouflage against the now dark tree trunks. The moths became easy pickings for the birds. In a short time the peppered moths showed a population increase of a darker phase that blended with the sooty tree trunks. Is this a showcase for natural selection as evolutionists claimed? No, it came to light that the dark phase moths have always existed and that the moths underwent a population shift (the lighter moths on the sooty trees dropped in number because they could be easily spotted by birds). A population shift is a far cry from evolutionary change (pp. 161-162).

4.) **Haeckel’s Embryos: Most Famous Fake** – Depicts stages of a human embryo side by side with embryos of fish, amphibian, reptile, and bird. The point is that similarity between embryos is intended to show common ancestry. Darwin himself stated that *Haeckel’s embryos* constitute “by far the strongest single class of facts in favor of his theory.” Darwin was misled. The idea that each embryo ‘replays’ all the prior stages of evolution (*ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny*) has proven to be bogus. The ‘fake’ factor is that Haeckel intentionally fudged on his sketches. His colleagues rightly accused him of fraud. But only recently has the scientific community begun to expose the drawings as fraud—yet the same and similar drawings continue to appear in textbooks! Biologically/genetically speaking it is incorrect to say that we start out as something less than human. The human embryo is human from day one. Our genetic code is there from day one. Haeckel supported race-based eugenics and national socialism (pp. 163-165).

B. There is a lack of evidence for evolution in the fossil record. The bankruptcy of gradualism is illustrated by the systematic gaps in the fossil record. Gaps are expected: God created living things to reproduce ‘after their kind’, not to evolve into another kind (Gen 1:12, 21, 24-25).

Darwin predicted that paleontology's examination of the fossil record would yield the evidence for gradualism (an 'infinite' number of intermediate forms between species). The exact opposite has occurred. Since 1980, the 'Macroevolution' conference in Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History paleontologists told biologists what they least wanted to hear. Namely that the fossil record does not, and never will, support the Darwinian scenario of a smooth continuum of life forms from simple to complex (Evol 'tree'). Instead the fossil record shows a pervasive pattern of gaps between kinds with no transitional forms. The lack of evidence in the fossil record sent scientists scurrying to find an alternative mechanism; the new mechanics (punctuated equilibrium) suggests that evolution occurred rapidly in small populations thereby leaving no trace in the fossil record. This is wild and reckless speculation with all the fossil evidence standing against it (pp. 165-168).

Geologic Column

Geologic Column

Cambrian Explosion

No intermediates or Ancestors to early Vertebrates

Morphological Distance (no evidence of Darwin's tree)

Below the Line: Blind unproven Speculation

C. Mutation and natural selection do not form a creative process. For a mutation to be beneficial, it must add information. There are no examples from nature of non-created codes. DNA is designed to prevent things from evolving. A mutation is a net loss of information.

Genetic Entropy

Mutation

D. Darwin tried to prove that things only 'appear' to be designed (Rom 1:18-20). So how does one prove a great design is un-designed? Because of a religious and philosophic pre-commitment to naturalism, the results of scientific investigation (for Darwinians) was restricted to natural causes alone. These scientists are not free to follow the evidence where it leads; even when it points away from naturalism to intelligent cause and design. *Evolutionist Richard Dawkins* notes, "Even if there were no actual evidence in favor of the Darwinian theory . . . we would still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." Dawkins has suggested that humans may have been intelligently designed by alien life forms which evolved (Interview of Dawkins by Ben Stein).

E. Evolution's prior commitment to philosophical naturalism demands that nature be considered as operating in a closed system of cause and effect. This unquestioned dogma concerning the definition of science permeates the public education system. One high school textbook says, "By attributing diversity of life to natural causes rather than to supernatural creation, Darwin gave biology a sound scientific basis." Notice how the textbook equates "sound" with philosophic naturalism. Once philosophic naturalism is adopted as the 'lens' to view all of life, then it follows that in order for one to be consistent, he must get rid of the concept of *divine creation*. Darwinism is not really based on empirical finding, it is a deduction from a naturalistic/materialistic worldview (pp. 168-170).

Richard Lewontin of Harvard admitted that "We are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and set of concepts that produce material explanations." He admitted, Darwinians have 'stacked' the deck in favor of materialism lest we let a "divine foot in the door." How does Lewontin's core assumption (materialism) affect his conclusions? Darwinian scientists pretend that they operate in a 'philosophy free' zone. In reality, they do not want their faulty presuppositions and philosophies examined. A major part of our strategy as faithful Christian apologists is to explain the dogma by which evolutionists make their conclusions.

III. How does Darwinism affect Culture?

A. Have we been ‘fooled’ by our selfish genes? Darwin’s bankrupt explanation of human behavior destroys rationality. Schaeffer saw that everything hangs on one’s view of origins. If you start with *impersonal forces* operating by chance (naturalism); then, in time you will end up with naturalism in moral, social, and political philosophy. Naturalism, when taken to its logical conclusions for morality, suggests that our genes *deceive us* into thinking that there is “disinterested objective morality binding upon [us], which all should obey” (pp. 208, 209).

B. If all behavior is *adaptation* (the consequence of ‘selfish genes’), then there can be no such thing as *objective morality* (Eph 4:17-19). “*Religion is a brain malfunction that kicks in at a certain level of evolutionary advancement*” (Atran and Boyer). The above can only take us deeper into absurdity and ethical darkness. Evolutionary psychology suggests that maternal love is nothing more than genetic self-interest and infanticide is as ‘normal’ as maternal instinct (pp. 210-212).

C. No one can live a worldview of *total determinism* (with man a mere *biological machine*—and every decision determined by the forces of evolution). But, if the very possibility of objective truth is undermined by evolution, then evolution itself cannot be true. Do Darwinian ideologues really think their own ideas evolved? If all ideas are not really true, only ‘useful’ for survival; then evolution is not true either. Why should the rest of us pay any attention? Another way to evaluate a theory is by submitting it to the practical test; Can we live by it? If one is testing naturalism, the answer is, ‘No!’ for if man is nothing more than a biological robot, then moral freedom and human dignity have no rational basis (pp. 216-217).

D. Evolution fails as a moral guide: Darwinian psychology suggests that human values are a product of natural selection; morals are but ‘*mental mutations*’. Author Robert Wright (*The Moral Animal*) indicates that the things we believe about *morality, personal worth, and objective truth* lead to behaviors that get our genes into the next generation. According to Wright and his cohort who buy into determinism, human (free) will is an illusion; part of an “outmoded worldview.”

If morals are a matter of preference, then they do not constitute an immutable standard that is built into the very fabric of the universe. Darwin was wrong; Stalin’s murderous campaign proved it. Stalin killed millions of his own people in his attempt to construct an officially atheistic state (run by secular creeds). If human rights are not inalienable (anchored in our Creator), then the state may grant them or remove them at will. (See “Darwin’s Deadly Legacy,” by James D. Kennedy).

If we are but ‘*survival machines*’ utterly dependent upon our genetic masters, then what is the source of freedom? Dawkins’ answer: “rebel against the tyranny of our selfish replicators.” But where does the ‘power’ to rebel come from—is it the only thing about us that is not determined and genetically programmed? How could we make an ‘un-Darwinian’ decision? Dawkins has discomfort about offering a genetic excuse for immorality. Since Darwinism cannot provide it, his view of freedom and responsibility that is clearly ‘*stolen*’ from the Christian worldview!

IV. What is our Christian Response in deconstructing Darwinism?

A. Refuse to place God’s truth in a religious, subjective category. Christianity’s truth claims encompass all reality. The essential issue in the initial clash of worldviews comprises the following question: “Is the universe made by intelligent design; or by blind, non-cognitive *forces*?” To which shall we direct our energies? This is the ‘Christian wedge of truth’ that wonderfully streamlines the

debate. Since God's 'fingerprints' are everywhere in creation, the evidence for intelligent design is ubiquitous. All men are immersed in a sea of divine revelation (Ps 19; 33; Rom 1:18-23).

Don't reduce religion to non-cognitive categories. God's revelation is addressed to Total Reality: to reason and to faith (Ps 8; Ps 139; Ps 145; Eccl 7:13, 14; Is 40). The effect of Darwinism was to switch *religion as knowledge of the truth* to *religion as a faith leap* (i.e. God has no purpose in the world, He only exists for the psyche, and the subjective and the artificial). Today's students have absorbed the *fact/value split*—that science is about 'facts' and religion is about values. And values are only subjective, personal, or social preferences. The idolatrous goal of naturalism is to give everything a materialistic explanation (pp. 176-177).

Christianity does make claims about the origin of the cosmos; the character of human nature; the events of history. Therefore it is totally unfair to place Christianity's truth claims in the upper story (the non-cognitive realm). When we talk about the Christian worldview, we must speak about *objective values; moral truth*; not personal values because the latter is used of the *upper story*. God's revelation is addressed to reason. Don't move onto the unbeliever's turf by reducing religion to non-cognitive categories disconnected from truth or evidence (p. 178). Objective truth is only possible and knowable in God's world—Psalm 36:9 ("In Thy light we see light")—a world created, upheld, ruled, and interpreted by God—for His glory.

B. Emphasize that God's 'fingerprints' of design are everywhere in creation (Ps 104). Darwin never denied the evidence for design, but his goal was to show that the evidence for design could be accounted for by purely natural forces: 'things only *appear to be designed*'. Actually, God's world is a '*book*' packed with information; all men are bathed in light (Jn 3:19-21; Ps 19). Information does not come from blind, material forces, but only by an intelligent Agent. The organic world really is a *book* packed with complex biological information. Modern scientists are increasingly faced with the fact that information is just as crucial as matter itself. Some physicists now "regard the physical world as made up of information, with energy and matter as incidentals" (p. 246).

Once we entered the computer age, it became evident that information is never an accident (even viruses are designed). Information requires a programmer; it must be stored, retrieved, read, and protected from corruption (viruses). Then, with the discovery of DNA, a researcher dared to ask, "Who put the information in the nuclei of cells?" Francis Crick, discoverer of DNA described a cell as a minute factory, "bustling with rapid, organized chemical activity. Nature invented the assembly line some billions of years before Henry Ford." Biologists cannot even describe the cell without resorting to the language of machines, programming, design, encoding, and engineering.

Intelligent design proponent Michael Behe coined the term, "irreducible complexity." It refers to the minimum level of complexity that must be present before such a tightly integrated system can function at all. The mouse trap is Behe's favorite illustration of irreducible complexity. One cannot gradually improve the function of a mouse trap by adding parts. All the parts must be there in order to catch mice at all. Countless structures in nature demonstrate the truth of irreducible complexity—the entire system has to be present from the beginning in order to perform at all.

C. Stress that Darwin's theory fails his own proposed test, "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." With the explosion of knowledge from molecular biology, it appears that Darwin's theory has indeed broken down. The universe gives evidence of being well-designed; bodies and cells all give evidence of a pre-existing blueprint. Naturalism (which birthed Darwinism) is a failed worldview; it cannot explain the nearly infinite

examples of design in the universe. Naturalism cannot give understanding of God, the world, or man (1 Cor 1:21; Col 2:8; Prov 1:7). By challenging naturalism in science and origins, biblical creation provides the basis for challenging naturalism in theology, morality, politics, and every other field. How greatly this is needed, for naturalism is making its quest to dominate the remainder of culture—seeking to take over every aspect of human life and society.

D. Learn how to construct a case for intelligent design in origins (Job 38-41). Information does not arise from natural forces within matter but has to be imposed from outside by an intelligent agent. God claims to have designed the creatures, their behavior, and the creation systems spoken of in the book of Job. Learn to use the ‘wedge of truth’ to tear down assumptions.

Learn to see the entire cosmos through the lens of biblical worldview (Ps 36:9). The doctrine of biblical creation (with its theme of divine design) allows us to see the cosmos through the lens of a comprehensive worldview. *Biblical creation takes* Christianity immediately into the realm of objective truth. The Christian worldview puts us in a position to *think God’s thoughts after Him*; it puts us in the ‘*supernaturalist’s chair*’ whereby we view the world with the penetrating awareness of eternal things, and God’s control (2 Cor 4:17-18). Only the Christian worldview lets a person recognize the full range of reality. We defend the biblical truth as ultimate reality (pp. 204-205).

E. Explain that the first cause of order, uniformity, and rationality cannot be chaos. LOGOS doctrine (that Christ is the source of all order and rationality) is the only basis for objective truth and reality (Jn 1:1-18). Darwin reduced ideas to ‘*mental mutations*’—selected solely for survival value. In so doing he killed truthfulness, morality, and creativity. The reality of the *Logos* in the material realm underscores the reality of the *Logos* beyond the material—the *Intelligent Agent of design* who is the source of creation’s order, information, and rationality (Col 1:15-20).

F. Make it your focus to teach your children why they may have confidence in the Christian Worldview; it is the only way they will be able to survive the cognitive warfare. Naturalism has attempted to craft “a single grand naturalistic image of man.” The only way to stand against such a comprehensive naturalistic worldview is by articulating a Christian worldview “of equally comprehensive and far-reaching power” (Abraham Kuyper). A total truth, all-encompassing worldview is the only way to survive the cognitive warfare (pp. 223-225).

V. A proposed strategy in responding evangelistically to a Darwinist:

1.) Begin with the confidence that the unbeliever lives in God’s world, NOT the world of their imaginings. Thus, the unbeliever’s problems stem from his claim to be autonomous, independent of his Creator. The unbeliever’s system does not correspond to reality because he is suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18). He cannot live his presuppositions; his view of reality doesn’t fit the world as it is, so he ‘borrows and steals’ from Christian worldview (to get morality, meaning, rationality, etc.).

2.) Regardless of the unbeliever’s presuppositions, he has to live in God’s world. That means that the unbeliever’s guilt is just as real as the splinter in his hand, or the weeds in his backyard. When the unbeliever attempts to justify his rebellious presuppositions, he is stating the opposite of what he knows in his conscience. The Holy Spirit works conviction through these points of tension as we faithfully share the truth. *We use questions and dialogue:* “Why is a runaway teen trapped in prostitution a tragedy?” “Why was the Jewish Holocaust a moral outrage?” “If naturalism actually explained reality; how would it be possible to think an undetermined thought?” “What is your authoritative truth standard?”

3.) Press the antithesis (push the worldview collision) by stating that ‘big bang chaos’ is a woefully inadequate first cause of logic, personhood, justice, meaning, unity, love, goodness, beauty, morality, etc. These universals of human existence (*transcendentals*) cannot be traced to chaos or material causes. Show that one cannot account for personalism from a meaningless, impersonal, un-designed, purposeless universe. Most unbelievers are not dyed in the wool atheists. Most will admit the existence of a deity; but will not define Him according to biblical theism. Ask: “Which is foundational to all reality? Blind, purposeless chance, matter, and motion; OR, an Almighty personal God?” “Only one can be ultimate.” “How can the chaos of the big bang be an adequate comprehensive cause of all human existence and experience?” “If prime reality is material and impersonal, wouldn’t that make us a cosmic accident?”

Conclusion: In order to engage our culture, we must be willing to enter a *cognitive battle over origins* (Rev 4:11; 10:5-7; 14:6, 7). It is commonplace to say that Americans are engaged in a ‘culture war’ over values and conflicting moral standards. ***But we must always remember that morality is derivative—its stems from an underlying worldview.*** If we are to effectively engage unbelievers; we must be willing to engage the underlying *cognitive* war over origins. Creation is foundational to Christian worldview. We teach a ‘*single reality*’ because it was created by one omnipotent all-wise God.

Given the biblical account of divine creation, it follows that knowledge comprises a single whole. The doctrine of creation supports confidence in the unity of truth. As Christians, called by Christ to fulfill the Great Commission, we will not retreat by allowing Christianity to be shunted aside to the *value* sphere. We must be willing (under the Lordship and leadership of Christ) to throw off *metaphysical timidity* (about the nature of reality) and take the offensive.