

There has been much controversy on the subject of evolution versus creation. The debate has even influenced the way our school system is run. Many people associate evolution with atheism and creationism with theism. Is this association necessary? Is it possible to harmonize belief in God with evolution? Is creationism simply based on the Bible, or does it have a scientific and philosophical basis? This essay will attempt to answer these and other questions, but it will focus on the theories of progressive creationism and theistic evolution. It will also attempt to show why progressive creationism seems more plausible than evolution.

Progressive creationism claims, first of all, that the universe was created by an all-powerful God. Like evolutionists, progressive creationists believe that the universe is billions of years old. This differs from a young-earth creationist, who says that the universe is only about 6000 years old, and was created the way the Bible literally says. Unlike evolution, progressive creationism holds that God created many species which haven't changed very much in the earth's history.

Theistic evolution, on the other hand, also says that God created the universe, but that life changed a lot over time. Some theistic evolutionist may believe that ordinary matter arranged itself to form life, while others believe that God started by creating the cell, for example. They all believe that through natural selection, those early single-celled organisms evolved into the vast number of life forms we have today. Of course, a person with such a view will find it even more difficult to harmonize the early chapters of the Bible than even the progressive creationist would.

Allow me to briefly explain the theory of evolution. It is based on the principle of natural selection, which means that organisms change over time because only the fittest survive. For example, if a number of birds of different color live in a tree, the one whose color is closest to that of the tree will be harder for predators to see, so it will be more likely that this bird will survive (and produce offspring), and the others will be more likely to die. Therefore, over a long period of time, the birds in that area will change color to match the color of their surroundings.

No one can deny that natural selection exists - organisms do change over time, and new "species" can evolve from old ones. What the theory of evolution does, however, is suggest that over a very long period of time, (i.e. a few billion years), tiny single-celled living things have changed into the advanced life forms we know today. This proposition is not so obvious or easy to accept.

First let us deal with the reasons people have of accepting theistic evolution. One of the main strengths of the theory of evolution is that we have finally been able to explain everything, even life, through natural processes. This is the idea of Occam's Razor. Of course, for an atheist, this is attractive because it supposedly means that God isn't necessary. But I think even some theists have an idea that God prefers to do things naturally instead of intervene. In other words, He only performs miracles when absolutely necessary, if ever. Since evolution could take place, the theistic evolutionist reasons, it would be most natural for God to create life this way.

To answer this argument, let me first distinguish between 2 types of miracles. The first type is God directly intervening in reality (i.e. overthrowing the natural laws). I shall call these unnatural miracles. The second type is God causing an event naturally, but the event seems so unlikely that we call it a miracle (for example, someone spontaneously recovering from an illness). I shall call these natural miracles.

As we shall see, evolution could only occur through a natural miracle. It is simply very unlikely that single-celled organisms could reach their present state of complexity. It would be next to impossible that matter could combine in the proper arrangement to form life as we know it.

This seems to indicate that theistic evolutionists believe that God only performs natural miracles. But they must believe that God created the universe - isn't this an unnatural miracle?

Furthermore, I see no reason why God would completely avoid unnatural miracles, especially since He can supposedly do anything. We must ask why God would ever want to work unnatural miracles.

I think at least one reason God performs miracles to draw attention to certain important events. That is why there were many more miracles occurring in biblical times than there are today - because those were more important times. Certainly God could have accomplished all the events in the bible without miracles - he can do anything. But then people would dismiss them as less important.

Applying this to creation/evolution, I would say that the coming into existence of life, or at least the human race, is special enough to warrant a miracle. Certainly God could create life through evolution, but it seems to me that he would prefer creation. It would just emphasize all the more how important living things are to God.

Evolutionists have also argued that even though we don't know exactly how evolution works, it is gradually becoming clearer as our science improves. Unfortunately, this isn't a very convincing argument except to say that evolution could happen; it doesn't show that it has. We still need a positive reason to believe in evolution.

Now let us move to the arguments for progressive creationism. One important thing to remember in the debate between evolution and creation is that evolution is not necessarily more scientific than creation. The debate is not religion versus science, as many would have us believe - it's one scientific theory versus another. The fact is, macroevolution - the process of a single-celled organism changing into a complex one - has never been observed. Furthermore, the origin of life is a singularity - an event that has only happened once. Our modern science is based on observing an event many times in a lab before being sure that a hypothesis about the data is correct. Therefore, at least with our present level of science, philosophy and probabilities are going to have to come into play in this debate.

Perhaps the most famous argument for creationism is that there is a certain order to the biological structure of living things. The information in cells is similar to the "letters in a written language" (Geisler, 139). This seems to point to a creator, because it is highly unlikely that matter would arrange itself in such a way by chance. Note that this argument is only an argument against the version of evolution which says that life evolved from regular matter. A theistic evolutionist could easily get around it by claiming that God created the cell, which evolved into the various forms of life we have today. But the creation of the cell is as much of a miracle as God creating all life in its final form.

An evolutionist could still believe that life came from matter by saying that if matter hadn't arranged itself in this way, we wouldn't be here to experience reality, so it's really the only arrangement a living thing would expect. Still, it seems to me to be so improbable that matter would arrange itself to form life that this arrangement itself is a miracle. In fact, for someone who believes in God, it seems like far less of a miracle for him to simply create life directly, especially since he must have caused the universe itself to simply pop into existence.

Evolutionists must believe that an organism could evolve into a different organism, given enough time. However, it seems as if there is a limit to how much an organism can change. The terminology often used is that horizontal change is possible, but not vertical change. For example, all of Darwin's finches could have evolved from one finch, since they are all similar - they have a beak, two eyes, etc. But a bird cannot evolve into a dog because they are completely different! There are two reasons for this. First organisms can only mate with their own species. Second, their body can never gain a new function. For example, sight cannot emerge where no sight existed before, and new organs can't develop. The limit on natural selection is the improving of functions that the body already has. At least that's what it seems like, and that's all that has been

observed.

There is another reason why evolution on a grand scale is not likely to occur. The ecosystem in the present time is very interconnected. If one species on the food chain dies out, a lot of other ones will become extinct too. But the theory of evolution says that life as it exists today built up through a series of steps. On the contrary, it seems that the delicate balance of nature could not exist in those previous stages - all life would become extinct long before it reached its present stage.

The same point can be said of living cells, as well. The cell is like a complex machine. All the different parts of the cell have a function to perform. If you removed one part, the rest of the cell would cease to function. Therefore, it is not likely that its functionality could be built up through a series of steps.

The theory of evolution may be in conflict with the second law of thermodynamics. This law says that usable energy is decreasing, or that matter and energy tend to reach equilibrium. But the theory of evolution says that matter became more complex over a long period of time, even reaching the unbelievable complexity required to sustain life and human intelligence.

Finally, the fossil record, which one would initially expect to prove the theory of evolution beyond doubt, actually does quite the opposite. There seem to be periods in history when organisms suddenly changed rapidly or appeared, then remained unchanged for a long period of time - quite contrary to evolution's slow changes. Evolutionists have tried to answer this by saying we are missing some fossils or only have a certain limited sample of them, but until we see some evidence of this, I see no reason to believe it.

There is also a more philosophical objection to evolution, at least theistic evolution. The problem is, I feel things - pain, happiness, etc. I am composed of many cells, yet I have some kind of unity - that is, I have only one soul or mind. But if God directly created only single-celled organisms, they must have combined to form more complex organisms. If each single cell had a mind, then they would combine to form multiple minds - but I have only one. The only other options are that God gave us minds at some arbitrary stage of evolution, or that minds somehow "evolved" - and neither of these theories seem very plausible or compatible with theism.

All of this reasoning has implications on the teleological argument for God's existence. This argument says that there is a certain order to the universe that must have been created by an intelligence. This order is usually presumed to be the structure of living things. However, even if evolution is true, I think the teleological argument still holds. Evolution is just one way God could create living things. As we have seen, it is still extremely improbable that evolution could happen without a divine mind to guide it. So with that in mind, I say that the teleological argument still works independent of whether creation or evolution is true.

Despite all the arguments for creation or evolution, I think it is still good to keep an open mind in this debate. The fact is, none of us were there to observe the beginning of the universe, or know for sure that it had no beginning. The best we can do is make educated guesses in this matter. It is possible that God could have created life through either through direct creation or evolution.

Nevertheless, I have hopefully demonstrated that theistic evolution does, indeed, seem to be almost an oxymoron. An atheist may indeed use evolution to try to explain why God doesn't have to exist, but only because it goes along with a naturalistic world view. Considering the lack of real scientific evidence for evolution, a theist should choose creation.

### **Bibliography**

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