

Guest Editorial

Evolution as Manifestation of Cosmic Order

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ABSTRACT

During Darwin's time the biblical Genesis account was considered by many scholars to be allegorical and various ideas about the transmutation of species were already in circulation. Influenced by findings on the Beagle trip that embarked in 1831 and by communications with others, including A.R. Wallace who had a nearly identical theory, Darwin eventually published his famous book *On the Origin of Species*. His idea was that small heritable changes over a long period of time can endow a survival advantage in a process of natural selection that can lead to new species. However, the process was regarded as random without plan or purpose. It met with opposition and various amendments until it became generally accepted scientific dogma in the 1930's and 1940's. Work on genetics was believed to solidly confirm the theory, however very recent DNA findings, small RNAs and heritable epigenetic factors are currently beginning to call it into question again, quite apart from arguments for creationism or intelligent design. The views of an ardent proponent of the Darwinian paradigm will be critically assessed in detail followed by a review of compelling evidence for hierarchical organization as a pervasive feature of the cosmic order, from the physical evolution of the cosmos to biological evolution on the planet Earth.

Key Words: Charles Darwin, Alfred Wallace, Theory of Evolution, Cosmic Order, intellegent direction, spirituality, atheist, Richard Dawkins.

When Charles Darwin published his famous book *The Origin of Species* in 1859, he began a debate that has, if anything, gained in intensity over the years. With modern techniques of probing genes the debate has taken on new proportions. A new breed of biologist, armed with a genetic arsenal, is attempting to reduce the whole of life to the mindless perpetuation of DNA sequences. It is intended to be consistent with cosmological implications of the physical sciences. In its passion for unity science reduces life to a meaningless enterprise, an accident without pattern, plan or purpose. This is the grand vision that science offers to lend humanity a sense of cohesion and lead us through the new millennium inspired with hope and direction.

On close examination it becomes apparent that there is no hard evidence to support the exclusive interpretations that many biologists place on their findings and new discoveries are exposing flaws in their logic. The mindless claim for the evolutionary mechanism is itself a blind belief lacking in substance. At the same time many of us sympathize with Darwin's disenchantment with the Biblical interpretation of the creative process. In the context of his time one can understand his need to reinterpret the evidence that he found in a new, more coherent and intelligent way. So he came up with the idea of accidental mutations which may, in some cases,

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Note: The articles presented in this issue are based on my book "Downsizing Darwin: An Intelligent Face for Evolution" self-published in 1996 [3]. More information is available at my website [2].

endow a greater survival advantage leading to a natural selection of those mutations, and consequently to the emergence and adaptation of new species according to environmental pressures.

There is abundant evidence to indicate that life has evolved up through the lower species, and adaptation according to natural selection is surely a part of it. But there is also abundant evidence to indicate that there is intelligent direction implicit in the evolutionary process, unfortunately all of it ignored by science. Such questions are forbidden in the halls of science. It seems that mainstream science insists on placing itself in opposition to anything remotely suggesting spiritual overtones. And yet science openly strives to close the book on the whole story of creation, to create a belief system with itself as the only authority, a book it believes must ultimately be accepted by all people for all time. It's a grand dream that many scientists have. One might even call it an open conspiracy. They would deny us all a spiritual reality, deny there is any transcending basis to values, deny there are any moral issues implicit in experience, and consign us all to oblivion. It is a truly strange phenomenon. To any intelligent impartial observer something is off the rails. We are destroying ourselves through dogma, either the dogma of science or that of religion, and there doesn't appear to be any way to turn.

With these thoughts in mind the following articles are written in two parts. Part 1 is a critical review of the most outspoken hard line Darwinist's thinking, as expressed in one of his books (Not required reading). Richard Dawkins is a very high profile figure in the academic community. But it is not enough to ferret out the countless flaws in the thinking that pervades evolutionary biology. One must offer a more credible alternative mechanism consistent with the evidence. It is to this end that Part 2 is devoted to *An Intelligent Face for Evolution*. To simply call it intelligent design is not enough. We must understand how intelligent processes work if an alternate methodology is to find practical scientific application.

In short, Richard Dawkins [4-7] proudly defends Darwinism in his popular book *River Out of Eden*. A river of genes springing from the blind fortuitous survival of DNA sequences is the sole determining factor in the evolutionary process. Only DNA sequences he insists. But his supporting arguments are riddled with flaws. How strange that the whole of evolutionary biology should be infected with contradictions. Blind belief without foundation is flaunted as vigorously as any repressive religion. Nor is creationism the only option. The evidence across the broad sweep of time and space confirms that the evolutionary process unfolds in an ordered way that is implicitly intelligent.

Further, intelligence by its nature spans time and space. It integrates history. It is a living process that may learn by trial and error but reinvests that learning up through hierarchical levels in the long climb toward sentient awareness. Left exclusively to genetic linkages, lessons from whole lineages of extinct species spanning eons would be lost forever. Even plants display some sentience, from vascular systems that reach for the sky, to flowers that attract pollinating insects, anticipating processes extended in space and time. The invertebrates from flatworms to flies explore an array of sensory-motor systems spanning space and time at accelerated rates. The vertebrates from crocodiles and cows to chimpanzees add conscious reflection of emotional patterns, providing ever higher discretionary capacities to span space and time. Lastly, language empowers humans to integrate the whole of space and time through extended ideas. But this left-

brain capacity invites a right-brain spiritual sense of propriety. And both brains are fueled by an emotional apparatus harnessed to the ancient brains of the crocodile and horse integrated into our cerebral anatomy. We three-brained creatures are specifically structured to span space and time. With anciently rooted aspirations fueled by our animal brothers we are obliged to reach for another rung in evolution's ladder and grasp the essence of intelligence implicit in the cosmic order.

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