

Article

## Part I: A Critique of River Out of Eden: Introduction

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### ABSTRACT

Darwinism as generally interpreted in the modern scientific paradigm claims that chance events and rare random mutations, only a few of which bestow a survival advantage, shape the evolution of life in the biosphere. We have all experienced accidents and know that we must be careful to anticipate and avoid them if we can. We do have the intelligence to learn from past experience and behave accordingly in the present in our efforts to ensure a positive future. In this way we have an evolving capacity to span and integrate events in space and time. The Darwinian paradigm however denies that the evolutionary process possesses any capacity to adjust according to feedback from past experience. Only blind accidental mutations determine the course of evolutionary events over great spans of time, it is claimed. Only a rare few of these mutations bestow a survival advantage that select in favor of the branching limbs of the evolutionary tree. The arguments in favor of this belief as expressed by Richard Dawkins are critically assessed and shown to be lacking in supporting evidence.

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

In the academic world it is usual for scientific contributions to be assessed by a peer review process that for all of its weaknesses is better than nothing. A peer review process can cut both ways, however. Biases inevitably come to play, as they do in all human endeavors, and a peer review process can often serve as much to promote them as to expose them. It is only over time, sometimes over periods of centuries, that biases gradually get weeded out from our garden of acceptable ideas.

In our current social environment, there is a tendency for certain academic ideas to get publicly extolled in popular editions, asserting views as established truth without confirming evidence to support them. This is a little disconcerting, since lay people have been educated to believe that science is a highly disciplined search for truth, based upon solid empirical evidence. We have seen the results. We drive cars. We have television sets and computers. It may therefore come as a surprise to some of us that strong biases and political pressures often prevail in scientific circles.

In Part One of this series of articles, we will be examining scientific biases that are currently favored in evolution theory. Richard Dawkins [3-5] is to be commended for his popular writing in this regard, for he has attempted to publicly address many questions posed by skeptics of the evolutionary process as viewed by Darwinists. In doing so he has opened the way for public

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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 [1]. More information is available at my website [2].

examination of the issues involved, for they concern us all. Darwinism is taught in our schools and it inevitably influences the thinking of future generations and the direction that our cultures will take.

Since literary works of a popular kind sometimes use the mantle of science to cloak biased views in the guise of truth, it is important that they be critically assessed. The scientists that write them have no conscious intention to deceive the public. They believe in the social value of what they are doing and they are conscientiously committed to their jobs. That's why they write. However subtle their biases may be they also wish to swing the tide of public opinion behind them. Science must sell itself as a worthy endeavor, as it should. We cannot get along without science.

The public, of course, is usually in no position to assess the merits of ideas preached from the pulpit of science. These are learned people who are experts in their field and highly respected. They must be right. Since there is normally no peer review in the public domain there is a good chance that many will believe the views that an expert expresses. In the interests of a little balance it should therefore be permissible for someone to take an academic writer to task over ideas that he publicly champions as truth.

I don't mean to single out Richard Dawkins for personal criticism. I'm sure he is a conscientious man who is very committed to doing his job well. He also shows signs of being inconsistent with some of the extreme views he expresses in his book "*River out of Eden*." [3]. And he may well have moderated his views since his still popular book was first published in 1995. The book is nevertheless instructive because of the ideas it promotes that warrant the most critical examination. As one of the most vocal proponents of views that have become firmly entrenched in the academic community, the book betrays a powerful scientific bias, without the support of empirical evidence.

Richard Dawkins is the author of a number of popular books including *The Blind Watchmaker* [4] and *The Selfish Gene* [5], books that by their title tell where he is coming from. He is promoting the Darwinian concept that the evolutionary process is the blind indifferent result of rare random mutations, a few of which accidentally endow a survival advantage that environmental selection pressures consequently favor. Some Darwinists have taken a more moderate line in recent decades, but not those of Dawkins' persuasion. As Dawkins himself claims, they have all but achieved a closed shop in scientific circles and they are promoting their beliefs as gospel to the general public, as we might expect.

The comments offered here are not intended to contest that chance events play a part in the evolution of life. We know from our own experience that accidents happen and some of us have a better capacity to cope with them than others, resulting in a certain survival advantage. There is every reason to believe that similar influences have helped to shape the development and adjustment of species in the natural environment.

What is contested is the exclusive view that this is the *only* creative agent at work in the universe, or that it is the most important. In the case of human experience most of us assume there is an intelligent process at work in the human mind that allows us to cope creatively with random accidents. But Darwinists deny that there is any intelligence whatever at work in the evolutionary

process. They believe that the universe is a vast sea of random atomic, molecular and radiation collisions, with no coherent universal order behind it other than these local chance collisions. This is a universal world view that they implicitly accept as the only foundation of the entire universe. There is no evidence, much less proof, to support such an extreme position. It is a blind belief, a rock solid bias [6].

Accidents happen. They must be accommodated and adjustments made for life to continue. But we may not correctly assume from this that all events are determined by accident. There is also a system of order that pervades the universe, from atoms to galaxies and stars, and from the simplest bacterium to plants and animals and humans. All things in the universe are interrelated and interdependent, whether by gravity, light and electromagnetism, or by the chemical bath that we swim in. There is gravitational and electromagnetic communication between the stars just as there is physical and chemical communication between living species.

This is only part of the picture. We shall see that there is also tensional communication between the galaxies and stars. There is a synchronicity to their collective being and to the atomic synthesis that takes place in the centers of stars in the process of integrating space and time. There is also communication between the species through universal hierarchies that are an expression of an evolutionary order to the creative process on every level. Self-similarity pervades the structure of all phenomena through which we are able to integrate and make sense of our everyday experience.

In touching on some of this as we go along, we shall see that the cosmic order that pervades the universe is implicitly intelligent. The nature of this *System* of order has been explored elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, however we shall see here that there are persistent clues as to how intelligence works right under our noses, with the evidence spread far and wide.

Because there is no practical paradigm of how intelligence works currently available, science is left with accidental cause as the only alternative. It is this bias that will be under critical examination here. It will also be shown that an alternate paradigm is possible that can find practical application in science and that offers a far grander view of the universe with an intelligent role for humans to play.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The “*System*” inherent in the cosmic order was first introduced in a general way by the author in *Fisherman’s Guide: A Systems Approach to Creativity and Organization*, New Science Library (Shambhala), Boston, 1985. It has been developed in more rigorous fashion in *Science and Cosmic Order: A New Prospectus*, and in many articles freely available at [www.cosmic-mindreach.com](http://www.cosmic-mindreach.com).

<sup>2</sup> The bias began to form with the emergence of western science three to four centuries ago, but its origins reach back to Aristotle. The essence of the bias is a refusal to acknowledge that universal influences are operative in the cosmic order of things. In the development of physics, for example, action-at-a-distance has been shunned like the plague. All events are believed to be the result of local influences operative in a space-time continuum. General Relativity theory has reduced space and time to a continuous field with a curvature to account for apparent gravitational action-at-a-distance. More recent experimental evidence of quantum events confirm quantum correlation-at-a-distance. Universal influences in the natural order of things do keep cropping up, despite our most ingenious inventions to dispense with them.

With these thoughts in mind, one of Richard Dawkins' books, entitled *River Out of Eden*, will be critically reviewed point by point and chapter by chapter, beginning with the preface. This book will thus serve as a basis for a critical review of Darwinist ideas in general.

## References

1. Robert Campbell, *Downsizing Darwin: An Intelligent Face for Evolution*. MindReach Library (1996).
2. <http://www.cosmic-mindreach.com>
3. Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*. Basic Books (1996).
4. Richard Dawkins, *the Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*. W. W. Norton & Company (1996).
5. Richard Dawkins, *the Selfish Gene*. Oxford University Press (1990).
6. [http://www.cosmic-mindreach.com/Truth\\_Bias.html](http://www.cosmic-mindreach.com/Truth_Bias.html)