THE CAPABILITIES OF SCIENCE IN THE FORMATION OF A MODERN WORLDVIEW

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Abstract

My purpose in this paper is to review relevant literature regarding the use of science and evolutionary theory as a basis for the development of a personal worldview. The development of a useful, truth-providing worldview is an important part of intellectual and spiritual growth. It is also important that a person be able to discern the worldviews of others. It is asserted that the formation of a modern worldview requires more than an understanding of science and evolutionary theory. Because the formation of a worldview deals with the question of truth, only a creationist based worldview will prove fruitful. Science in and of itself is incapable of creating a useful worldview because it is subjective in nature.

Introduction

> I am convinced that for a person to be fully conscious intellectually he should not only be able to detect the world views of others but be aware of his own—why it is his and why in the light of so many options he thinks it is true. (James Sire, 1976).

Throughout modern history, human beings have attempted to answer questions and obtain knowledge about their world in a variety of ways. Experience, authority, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, the scientific method, and revelation from God are all methods that have been used historically to find knowledge. Many have used an eclectic approach as they combined one or more of these ways of knowing. Some have rigidly stuck with only one method, the scientific method, of finding knowledge. These ways of knowing are used by individuals for the purpose of gaining a knowledge base upon which a worldview is built.

The Purpose of Worldview Formation

It is my assertion that formation of a modern worldview necessitates more than just knowledge and understanding of the scientific method (science in general) to reach truth. I believe a source of knowledge outside of science must be considered in order to form a comprehensive worldview. More specifically, I assert the basic presupposition that only a "Christian Creationist" framework will lead to the formation of a truthful, and therefore a fruitful, worldview.

The primary concern regarding the formation of a worldview should be the question of truth. What is ultimate truth and how is it translated into the formation of a worldview? Science itself is not seeking to answer this question. According to Donald Ary (1990), science "seeks not absolute truth but rather theories that explain and predict phenomena in a reliable manner."

However, the formation of a worldview must include within its framework the idea of seeking after truth. This should be the ultimate purpose in forming a worldview. If truth-seeking is not one's ultimate purpose, the whole exercise of worldview formation becomes folly. All that is accomplished is the compiling of a never-ending string of knowledge into a useless matrix of unconnected ideas.

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Science and Worldview Formation

In terms of science and worldviews there are two basic alternatives. Watson makes this clear when he states that:

> . . . the theory of evolution, a theory universally accepted not because it can be proven by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible (Watson, 1929, p. 233).

Douglas Futyma echoes a view similar to Watson's:

> Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not they must have developed from preexisting species by some process of modification. If they did appear in fully formed state, they must have been created by some omnipotent intelligence . . . (Futyma, 1983, p. 197).

Futyma and Watson bring the controversy into clear focus. The issue is one of belief, either in evolution (as Watson advocates) or in the clear teaching of scripture, which states "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Watson, however, is at odds with Donald Ary's view of science as merely a theory to explain phenomena. Watson and many others elevate the theory of evolution to factual science. This is done although evolutionary theory does not bring to the table the ability to explain and predict phenomena in a reliable manner.*

*Dr. Walter Brown in his book *In the Beginning* offers 127 categories of scientific evidence which show that the theory of organic evolution is invalid; that the universe, solar system, earth, and life were recently created; and that the earth has experienced a worldwide flood. This evidence is in contradiction to the theory of evolution.

By advocating the blanket acceptance of evolutionary theory, the boundaries and capabilities of science in explanatory terms are extended to a new realm. Science moves into the realm of metaphysics and belief. Watson's reason for such a leap of faith is based solely on the rejection of the "incredible" alternative view known as creationism. The scientific evolutionary worldview is based, not on truth or even a scientific evaluation, but on the rejection of the alternative.

The fact that evolutionary theory affects thinking in other disciplines (and thus one's knowledge base and worldview formation) is explained by Julian Huxley:

> The concept of evolution was soon extended into other than biological fields. Inorganic subjects such as the life-history of stars and the formation of chemical elements on the one hand, and, on the other hand, subjects like linguistics, social anthropology, and comparative law and religion, began to be studied from an evolutionary angle, until today we are enabled to see evolution as a universal and all pervading process (Huxley, 1955, p. 272).

This universality is advocated by Huxley in calling for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to adopt evolutionary theory as the worldwide standard. Huxley emphasized this when he stated:

> It is essential for UNESCO to adopt an evolutionary approach . . . the general philosophy of UNESCO should, it seems, be a scientific world humanism, global in extent and evolutionary in background . . . Thus the struggle for existence that underlies natural selection is increasingly replaced by conscious selection, a struggle between ideas and values in consciousness (Huxley, 1979, pp. 35, 36).

Huxley has support from many in the scientific community. These scientists see evolutionary theory as the ultimate explanation for all things; thus evolutionary theory has reached the status of "god." What is the basis of this conclusion? It is subjective, because it only exists in the mind of men. Recall that Watson stated evolutionary theory could not be proven by the evidence.

When comparing the creationist paradigm and evolutionary theory, some may maintain that the evolutionary paradigm deals with facts and the creationist paradigm deals with faith. This is a false conclusion. The truth is both paradigms are firmly grounded in certain unprovable presuppositions. Both explanations must be accepted on a faith basis. In creationism, the faith presuppositions are based on the holy scriptures. For example the writer of the book of Hebrews said, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). In the evolutionary paradigm, the faith presuppositions are based on ideas and conjecture from the minds of men.

The reality that evolutionary theory is based on faith is supported by those from both the Christian theist worldview and the evolutionary worldview. For example,

> The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory-is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation—both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof (Matthews, 1971, p. xi).

Planck, in support of the creationist view states:

> Anyone who has taken part in the building up of a branch of science is well aware from personal experience that every endeavor in this direction is guided by an unpretentious but essential principle. This principle is faith—faith which looks ahead. It is said that science has no preconceived ideas: there is no saying that has been more thoroughly or more disastrously misunderstood. It is true that every branch of science must have an empirical foundation: but it is equally true that the essence of science does not consist of this raw material but in the manner in which it is used. The material always is incomplete . . . [it] must therefore be completed, and this must be done by filling the gaps; and this in turn is done by means of associations of ideas. And associations of ideas are not the work of the understanding but the offspring of the investigator's imagination—an activity which may be described as faith, or, more cautiously, as a working hypothesis (Planck, 1936, quoted in John E. Silvius, 1985, pp. 6-7).

If evolutionary theory is based on faith and creation theory is based on faith, what makes one more truthful than the other? The evidence holds the key.

Roots of the Evolutionary Worldview

The scientific approach according to an evolutionary worldview is built upon integration of induction and deduction. This modern day scientific method is attributed by some to Charles Darwin (Ary, 1990). His endeavors in the pursuit of knowledge and development of the theory of evolution led to this particular scientific approach. In a letter Darwin wrote:

> My first note-book (on evolution) was opened in July of 1837. I worked on true Baconian principles, and without any theory collected facts on a wholesale scale, more especially with respect to domesticated productions, by printed inquiries, by conservation with skillful breeders and gardeners, and by extensive reading. When I see the list of books of all kinds which I read and abstracted, including

> whole series of Journals and Transactions, I am surprised at my industry. I soon perceived that selection was the keystone of man's success in making useful races of animals and plants. But how selection would be applied to organisms living in a state of nature remained for some time a mystery to me.
>
> In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic inquiry, I happened to read for amusement "Malthus on Population," and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long-continued observation of the habitats of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favorable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavorable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. Here then I had at last got a theory by which to work (Darwin, 1899, p. 68).

There is no doubt among scientists that natural selection exists as a mechanism and that it works. The issue is whether or not new species can be produced from existing ones, as theorized by Darwin. The answer appears to be a resounding no. The evidence is nil at this point in history. Several leading scientists have also come to this conclusion. For example, Dr. Cohn Patterson states:

> There is no doubt that natural selection is a mechanism, that it works. It has been repeatedly demonstrated by experiment. There is no doubt at all that it works. The question of whether it produces new species is quite another matter. No one has ever produced a species by mechanisms of natural selection. No one has ever gotten near it and most of the current argument in neo-Darwinism is about this question: how a species originates and it is there that natural selection seems to be fading and chance mechanisms of one sort or another are being invoked.*

Writing about the famous moth experiments, Matthews states:

> The experiments show the effects of the predation on the survival of the dark and of the normal forms of the Peppered Moth in a clean environment and in one polluted by smoke. The experiments beautifully demonstrate natural selection—or survival of the fittest—in action, but they do not show evolution in progress, for however the populations may alter in their content of light, immediate or dark forms, all the moths remain from beginning to end *Biston betularia* (Matthews, 1971).

Darwin's idea of "favorable and unfavorable variations" was a move away from Baconian induction. His idea was soon labeled as natural selection. His argument for natural selection is a deductive one in a syllogistic form. This can be seen in the following example:

1. living things reproduce (major premise),
2. living things show variations,
3. these variations can be favorable or unfavorable (minor premise), and
4. therefore, variations with favorable effects will succeed, unfavorable ones will be destroyed and the result will be change (conclusion).

Generally, if the premises are true the conclusions are necessarily true. However, Darwin made a leap in logic. He concluded that there would be change from one species to another. The problem is where is the evidence for such a conclusion? This has been the crux and focus of much effort on the part of evolutionary scientists for over 136 years. What has been the result of this search?

The fossil record does not hold the answer. It is a record of stasis, which is the absence of change—not the change predicted by Darwin. There are in fact several "living fossils" appearing today in the same forms they supposedly had millions of years ago. This stasis is confirmed by such notable evolutionary authorities as Stephen J. Gould who states:

> Stasis is now recognized as an intriguing puzzle by evolutionists. No definitive resolution is in sight, but geneticists and embryologists have offered this counsel, I am tickled that our often maligned profession (dull, descriptive paleontology) has provided such a puzzle to kings of the theoretical mountain (Gould, 1991, p. 16).

Gould even sheds more light on the issue when he admits that the fossil record best fits a creationist model.

> . . . our ability to classify both living and fossil species distinctly and using the same criteria fit splendidly within creationist tenets. But how could a division of the organic world into discrete entities be justified by an evolutionary theory that proclaimed ceaseless change as the fundamental fact of nature? (Gould, 1979, p. 18-26).

The evidence truly does fit a creationist model. Billions of highly complex fossils such as corals, jellyfish, mollusks, and crustaceans are found in the Cambrian sedimentary deposits without a single trace of the needed Darwinian transitional forms.

Darwin had another agenda beyond just proving that natural selection existed. He was interested in showing that God was not part of the process. This is asserted by Julian Huxley, who states:

> Darwin pointed out that no supernatural designer was needed; since natural selection could account for any known form of life, there was no room for a supernatural agency in its evolution . . . we can dismiss entirely all idea of a supernatural overriding mind being responsible for the evolutionary process (Huxley, 1979, p. 45).

*Dr. Colin Patterson, on the subject of Cladistics, in an interview on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) television, March 4, 1982. Dr. Patterson is Senior Paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History, London, England.

Most modern evolutionary scientists, even though the evidence is lacking, insist on viewing the theory as established fact and a foundation of all science. For example, note the words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,

> Is evolution a theory, a system or a hypothesis? It is much more: it is a general condition to which all theories, all systems, all hypotheses must bow and which they must satisfy henceforward if they are to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines of thought must follow (de Chardin, 1965, 218).

Purves and Orians help to bring the discussion into a concise focus:

> Biology (and all other major disciplines of Western thought) began a major change in paradigm a little over a century ago with the general acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. The change over has taken a long time because it required abandoning many components of a different worldview. The pre-Darwinian world was thought to be a young one in which living organisms had been created in essentially their current forms. The Darwinian world is viewed as an ancient one . . . in which he would not recognize former living organisms of the future if we were transported forward in time, nor organisms of the past if we were transported back in time. Acceptance of this paradigm involves not only the acceptance of the process of natural selection, it also involves accepting the view that the living world is constantly evolving, but without any future "goals" (Purves and Orians, 1987, p. 19).

Purves and Orians openly state that the decision to accept Darwin's view regarding the origin of life is based on a choice. By rejecting the creationist view of God as Creator, they accept evolution as "god" instead.

Others have written about this new found "god" in more vivid terms. For example, Jeremy Rifkin writes:

> Evolution is no longer viewed as a mindless affair, quite the opposite . . . one eventually winds up with the idea of the universe as a mind that oversees, orchestrates, and gives order and structure to all things. We no longer feel ourselves to be guests in someone else's home and therefore obliged to make our behavior conform with a set of preexisting cosmic rules. It is our creation now. We make the rules. We establish the parameters of reality. We create the world. And because we do, we no longer feel beholden to outside forces. We no longer have to justify our behavior, for we are the architects of the universe. We are responsible for nothing outside ourselves, for we are the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever (Rifkin, 1983, pp. 188 and 244).

Rifkin helps one see many of the real issues behind the acceptance of evolutionary theory as a worldview. He boldly asserts that evolution gives order to the universe. This assertion is given without one shred of evidence.

Second, Rifkin makes it clear this "god of change" affects behavior and beliefs. He claims that the absolutes of creationist's God's (preexisting rules) are not relevant. He then states who makes the rules—man. Clearly, humanism is his religion of choice. In a final act of blasphemy he states there is nothing outside of the mind of man.

This argument against an objective standard outside of the mind of man is nonsense. If one buys this argument it logically follows that truth can be established only in the minds of men. This is the essence of what he is saying. This leads to absurdity, for among the billions of persons on the planet, we wonder who holds the truth? With this line of reasoning we then see the crucial issue—there must be an objective truth outside of the mind of man. There is truth outside of man and that truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ the Creator.

The True Base for Worldview Formation

In reality it was creationist-based thinkers (thinking the thoughts of God), and not Charles Darwin who established the basis for modern science. These men include a veritable hall of fame of scientists. Among them are Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Johann Kepler (1571-1630), Robert Boyle (1627-1691), James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), Michael Faraday (1791-1867), Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), Lord Kelvin (1824-1907), and Gregor Mendel (1822-1884).

The foundation that many of these men laid was in place long before Darwin and his infamous book of 1859: The *Origin of Species*. It should also be noted that the fruits of the labor of many of these men are of much greater "scientific importance" than Darwin's unproven theory of evolution. Among their notable "scientific" contributions were the following: Lord Kelvin's absolute temperature scale, Pasteur's law of biogenesis, Linnaeus' classification system, Newton's law of gravity, and Bacon's scientific method. This is just a sample of the accomplishments of men who based their thinking on God's Word.

These men established limiting principles for the discipline of science. These men viewed science as properly limited by (1) the senses and thus being empirically based; (2) an understanding that there is order in the universe; (3) quantitative nature of measurement; (4) a corrective nature which relies on replication, and (5) cause and effect or the law of first cause.

Thus, they have laid the foundation for a useful world view based on supernatural creationism. John Silvius clarifies how supernatural creationism fits into worldview formation:

> On the basis of faith in God's objective revelation, Christians can conceive a reality beyond the senses, and make rational judgements that shape their view of a sovereign God, His creation, and His

sustaining power and purposes. This epistemology is the basis for a Christian world and life view, or worldview (Silvius, 1985, p. 5).

On the other hand, Darwin's thinking regarding the theory of evolution caused a paradigm shift and thinking that was not God-centered. This shift led to the modern day worldview based on the theory of evolution.

The Crucial Symmetry of a Creationist Paradigm

Science can be defined as a framework of information dealing with the design and the causal (or working) relationships of material and time-space aspects of the cosmos. Creationist theology, on the other hand, presents and verifies the knowledge of God as revealed in the Holy scriptures of the Bible.

It is evident that science has extended our understanding of our universe. This can be noted from the fact that we are exploring new realms on three fronts; space, the past, and the minute. Science thus pushes us toward thinking of things beyond our understanding of our senses. We begin to think of things of the heavens, the past, and the invisible. This thinking is not foreign to scripture. The believer is told to set his mind on the things above (Colossians 3:2), and Christ created all things (even those things which are invisible) (Colossians 1:16). We are also instructed to remember the Creator and the things He has done. This type of reasoning requires thinking about things of the past (Genesis 1-11).

Without such a basis for looking at these new realms, science is pushing our thinking into a realm of speculation. This is true since science cannot be done in a vacuum. Some context is forced to arise out of the exploration of data. Some assumptions must be made for data to be translated into knowledge.

The scientific method supports two basic assumptions: (1) truth can be derived from observations, and (2) phenomena conform to lawful relationships. Because the scientific method relies on observations (the use of our senses), a scientist must have faith that his senses are giving him an accurate picture of the natural world. Thus it is clear that "science requires faith" based on assumption number one.

Assumption number two leads to the same conclusion. Because a "scientist must have faith" that there is order in the universe and that he can discover this inherent order. At this point in the discussion it becomes clear that there must be something beyond man. Clearly man did not impose the order in the universe. The evolutionary worldview explanation of this issue would be that the order came out of the matter from which the universe came. This begs the question because it leaves us questioning the source of matter itself.

One's worldview is based on a belief system requiring faith in some object or thing that is outside of the individual holding the particular worldview. Thus truth is outside the mind of man and is, therefore, objective. This objective truth is not dependent on man for its validity, which is consistent with the teaching of scripture (Romans 1:17-20, Hebrews 11:3).

The idea of such an objective standard broaches the question "what is truth"? The Romans passage deals with the non-believer's response to truth, in "that which may be known of God is manifest in them . . . Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." This passage teaches that even though man knows there is a God he is in denial of the evidence of the creation because of his rebellious nature. This denial and rebellion leaves the non-believer "without excuse" or defenseless (Romans 1:20).

In contrast, the Christian is encouraged to examine reality carefully (I Thessalonians 5:21). The Christian is encouraged to study and understand the earth and universe. The Christian is confident that truth is knowable.

In and of itself science is incapable of creating a worldview for mankind. Because it limits knowledge to the subjective mind, there is no way for science to evaluate itself or to create an explanatory structure for itself. In contradiction, creationism constructs a worldview from truth outside of man and then actively and obediently uses scientific evidence to explore the scientific workings of the mysteries in the universe.

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