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Darwin in Fantasyland

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Do you know what's doing in the world of Darwin, dinosaurs, and DNA? I don't mean textbook stuff. Evolution, of course, has long existed in *two* general theories: (1) The well-groomed scenario in schoolbooks, seeping scientific certainty, and (2) the state of perpetual, if genteel, war among the Exalted Poobahs of Neo-Darwinism. These fellows do systematic violence to one another. There's not a significant particular of the theory that has escaped the ridicule of the evolutionists themselves. They smash theory with speculation, destroy hypothesis with conjecture, and obliterate supposition by shooting it with assumption (and try to keep their voices down so the creationists won't hear).

Now it's worse. Darwin's family is breaking up and some of the children are leaving home. Not since *Origin of Species* (1859) has there been such a brouhaha among the fossils. It's a revolution in evolution. Can you believe it? Darwinism, old and new, is on its way to the garbage can – that body of "scientific truth" that has for generations separated thinking men from the intellectually unwashed. If you're a creationist, however, don't get too excited; it's not evolution that's going, only Darwin. He's being replaced by the new magic. I'll explain.

Darwin did not create evolution (the theory evolved), he made it respectable by describing a mechanism of change: natural selection. By this he meant that the environment kills some animals quicker than others. (Neo-Darwinism defines it that some animals have more offspring than others.) This simple fact became *the* effective agency of evolution. "Differential mortality," given enough time, has within it's blindness and brainlessness the wherewithal to make encoded DNA out of dirt, Shakespeare out of slime, and music out of mud. Natural selection, according to the textbooks, has all the creative power and wisdom of God – if there was a God.

With Darwin, evolution became the rage; everything had to be thought of in evolutionary terms. Scientists noticed, however, that Darwin hadn't said enough about change. He had outlined only the *survival* of the fittest; nothing had been said about the *arrival* of the fittest. Darwin failed to explain where nature got the collection from which to make her selection.

For a while some evolutionists fiddled around with an earlier theory of change: Lamarckianism. Lamarck said that giraffes were born with longer necks because mamma spent so much time straining for the greenery in the treetops. Evolution limped along with Lamarck for a while. It got a new shot of scientific respectability from the emerging science of genetics. Gregor Mendel and Hugo de Vries demonstrated that changes in reproductive systems produced variety within kinds. De Vries coined the word "mutation" (change).

Evolutionists landed on the mutation with both feet and Neo-Darwinism was born. Mutations, it turned out, are the raw material for natural selection. Neo-Darwinism promised that tiny changes (microevolution) will gradually accumulate into the new kinds (macroevolution). Evolutionists happily filled the textbooks with examples of microevolution (black moths, blind fruit flies, et al.) and assured one and all that evolution was now proved.

Creationist scientists have been pointing out that (1) there are no undisputed transitional forms in the fossil record, (2) the overwhelming tendency in genetics is *against* change, (3) gradualism is a totally inadequate explanation for the complexity evident in the biological order, (4) the mathematics don't work – the theory is magnificently improbable, and (5) all the "evidence" for macroevolution consists of complicated descriptions of what *might* have happened – extrapolations from microevolution. The standard response of the evolutionist establishment has been to declare that all non-evolutionists are, thereby, nonscientists. School children are told to believe that the evidence is there because "all scientists" say it's there, like the emperor's new clothes. But that's not what they've been saying to one another.

Challenges – About 1940, University of California geneticist Richard Goldschmidt (*The Material Basis of Evolution*) blew the whistle. He said it was time to admit the true nature of the fossil record and admit the failure of theoretical gradualism. He said paleontology couldn't find the transitional fossils for a very simple reason: they aren't there. Goldschmidt held that the theory should be brought in line with the evidence; it should think of quantum leaps rather than tiny changes shading into one another over the vast stretches of time – for example evolutionists should admit that a reptile laid an egg and hatched a bird (the "Hopeful Monster").

If that weren't enough, Goldschmidt explained that minuscule rearrangements in the cells and genes *couldn't* produce what is found in nature. To support this point, he challenged fellow evolutionists to explain in detail the gradual evolution of eighteen structures, including the comparatively simple feather. No takers. Evolutionists dismissed Goldschmidt as a lunatic; they shouted even louder that the emperor (secular humanism) is indeed clothed in scientific truth.

In the past three decades, evolutionists by the hundreds have bailed out. The fight for creationism is being led by some of the world's finest scientists. Evolutionists pretend that the creation-evolution debate is a case of Elmer Gantry, a sweaty consternation, shouting absurdities at Albert Einstein. Not so. Example: I have before me a copy of a speech by Colin Patterson, senior paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History in London and editor of its journal. It was presented at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (November 5, 1981). Title: "Evolution and Creationism." Patterson dropped a bombshell by announcing that he woke up one night with the realization that "I had been working on this stuff for twenty years and there was not one thing I knew about it." He went on to demonstrate that evolution is "an anti-theory that conveys anti-knowledge."

Now the latest: Evolution's new wave is being led by Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould. As editor of *Natural History*, journal of the American Museum of Natural History, Gould has been reworking evolutionary theory. In May 1977 he pointed out that "the rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology."

In June of that year Gould predicted the vindication of Goldschmidt – the revival of the "Hopeful Monster." Evolution's popedom let out a scream that could be heard all the way back to the late stone age. Gould wisely backed off, disavowed any connection with Goldschmidt's thesis, and proceeded to restate the basic hypothesis in different language.

With Gould, gradualism is out and natural selection has nothing to do with macroevolution, i.e., exit Neo-Darwinism. He does not, of course, solve the genetic problem: *why* and *how* a new species springs up. He simply asserts *that* it does.

You should know two things about all this: First, that as evolutionism follows Gould, it is tacitly admitting that the creationists have been right all along about the nature of the evidence. Second, the Neo-Darwinian gradualism saturating schoolbooks and course outlines is officially nonscientific.

Gould overcomes the scientific absurdities in evolutionary theory by simple declaration. Mutations have the demonstrated inability to jump puddles; now, by Gouldian fiat, they vault over oceans. He is the fairy godmother of evolution, who waves his magic wand over Cinderella's coach and turns mice into horses. Gould's magic words are not "bippety-boppety-boo"; he prefers "punctuated equilibria."

One more thing: Gould troubled himself to testify in Arkansas, where creationism lost its shirt in court. It appears he wants to enforce textbook evolution by law while he and his friends debate whether their private version is science. An essay in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 14, 1982) warns evolutionists not to debate creationists. Evolutionists always lose, it seems, because their adversaries are "incredibly well prepared" and they "know how to manipulate the media." That's the plan: Don't debate; legislate.

Remember the words of Hilaire Belloc:

Bit scientists who ought to know

Assure us that it must be so.

Oh! Let us never, never doubt

What nobody is sure about

Confusion to the enemy!