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Debate on The Evolution Delusion

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Every month, on the MarketFaith Ministries website, I post a short video about the implications of worldview thinking concerning various topics. You can check those out at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/category/videos>. Not too long ago, I posted one on the topic of naturalistic evolution. I had recently read evolutionary biologist and radical Atheist Richard Dawkins' book, *The God Delusion*. While I post these videos on the MarketFaith Ministries website (see this one at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2020/02/the-evolution-delusion>), they are actually hosted on YouTube. Since I don't have any problem with them being seen on YouTube, I have it set up so people can view them there, as well.

Normally I don't get a lot of comments on YouTube from these videos, but when I post one about evolution, I almost always get attacked by people who believe in it. This latest video was no exception.

In this case, there were two people who came after me. While these two conversations occurred simultaneously, I have separated them here to make them easier to follow. As is my usual practice, I have not edited these, so you will find some typos, misspellings, and other errors. It is my hope that by reading these conversations, you will not only gain a better understanding as to why naturalistic evolution is not true, but also personal confidence that you, too, can deal with people who attack the Christian faith based on this topic.

Note: There are some places where one of the respondents quoted my previous remarks in order

to address them. To make it easier to follow, I have italicized my words.

Test Test

1) To date nearly every aspect of our world has been accounted for by science, without any god necessary. We know evolution is a fact, we know evolution and natural selection are well tested and verified scientific theories. We know the earth had billions of years in which life could have evolved. We observe the fossil record showing a movement from simple lifeforms to more complex. It's not any stretch of the imagination to accept that life started naturally on the planet. We will never have as much evidence of this as we would like but it's far more likely than any suggestion any theist has ever made.

2) Incorrect. There is science to back it up. We can observe the simplest forms of life we observe or have observed and look at what combination of naturally occurring matter may have led to this simple life form. The hard aspect is trying to figure out what the initial conditions for life beginning to exist was. Nobody is talking about the first life being complex, such as a plant or animal cell today. Rather scientists look at amino chains as a possible candidate.

3) There is no scientific distinction between micro and macro evolution. That is something only the scientifically ignorant try to insist must exist. There is no barrier between micro and macro evolution. If someone takes a step away from their house (micro) a million times (macro) they have traveled a long way. Again this micro/macro argument is a creationist talking point but is not a scientific objection.

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4) Incorrect. We know that populations have gone through drastic physical changes over time. This is not in doubt and not debated within the scientific community. We know whales were once land animals, that fish moved to land and that birds have dinosaur ancestors. If you don't know this that is not a problem for science, it's your own ignorance.

5) You mentioned the mechanisms for evolution earlier. Change in allele frequency over time due to random mutations and natural selection. That is all. Again, you don't know what you are talking about so of course you can't properly represent the science. This is what always happens, creationists who don't understand science repeat creationist lies and act like they have some amazing insight into a field of study they don't know anything about.

TLDR: This guy doesn't understand evolution or science but insists it has to be wrong. Typical ignorant creationist.

Freddy Davis

@Test Test 1. It is simply not true that nearly every aspect of our world has been accounted for by science. That is just false on its face. And, while natural selection is well verified, macro evolution has no scientific basis whatsoever. It is a conclusion based on a naturalistic philosophical construct, and is totally and completely unverified by empirical science. As for the fossil record, it is data. Data has to be interpreted, and will be interpreted based on the philosophical base of the one doing the interpreting. If you want to prove your point, you must prove philosophical naturalism to be true using empirical science. Until you do, your point is simply not valid.

2. Everything you have said is speculation. There is no actual science to back it up. Simply observing a result does not lead to the conclusion you have made without first assuming the truth of your philosophical foundation.

3. Prove that using empirical science and you win the argument. But until you do, you have done nothing more than express a religious doctrine.

4. We do not "know" these things. These are conclusions that can only possibly be true if philosophical naturalism is true – which is totally unproven. If you want to win this argument, you must prove it is even possible, and do it using empirical science. So far, that has simply not been done.

5. Stating a theory and proving it using actual science are two different things. You have stated the theory, now show it in a lab and you win. Until then, your point is nothing more than a religious statement.

I'm sorry that you feel the need to resort to insults to try to intimidate someone into agreeing with you. If you want me to agree with you, then prove your conclusion using the tenets of your own beliefs. Until then, it is you who are lacking in credibility.

Test Test

@Freddy Davis 1) Incorrect. Again your ignorance is not an argument. There is no difference between micro or macro evolution. Just as there is no difference between taking 1 step away from your house or a million. One just has more steps. I don't need to prove physical naturalism is true at all. The science works, makes predictions we can verify. If you have an alternative please give evidence for it that makes predictions and is falsifiable. I'll wait while you give an excuse as to why you can't.

2) Incorrect. Science works on the basis of observation, models that

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make predictions and falsifiable hypothesis. You can whine all you want but you have made no objection to the science so we can dismiss your argument.

3) This is not religion, it's basic science. Again that you lack the scientific education of a child is not my problem. Until you can demonstrate you have even the basic education of science there is no need for me to do anything. Your ignorance is not my problem.

4) Yes we do know them. We've observed it in the wild and in the lab, we've developed models that make predictions we can test. Again, your ignorance is not my problem.

5) No, a theory is the highest for(m) of scientific understanding. A scientific theory is well tested, understood and provides not only explanatory power but allows us to make predictions. That is why we have atomic theory, gravitational theory, germ theory, plate tectonic theory, etc. Your ignorance is not my problem.

Freddy Davis

@Test Test 1. Your statement is simply factually false. Physical naturalism? I'm not sure I know what that is. However, philosophical naturalism is the religious belief you are promoting, and if you want to be taken seriously you do have to use the tenets of the beliefs you are promoting to demonstrate the validity of those beliefs. I don't really know what science you are talking about since you have not actually shown any. Science is a methodology that uses experiment and observation to draw conclusions. It is not a belief system. And, science has not demonstrated that naturalistic evolution is even possible. Your illustration is flawed in that taking a step is not the same as the evolutionary process. For your conclusion to be true based on your beliefs, you must show, using experimental science,

that it is possible for less complex life forms to evolve to more complex forms by some natural biological process. Science has simply not shown it is possible. You are the one claiming it can. I'll be the one waiting for you to back up your claim. It is not true just because you claim it.

2. I think we all know how science works, but you have not given me any science. You have asserted a philosophical approach to understanding reality without giving any verification that it is actually true. You seem to think that I don't believe in the scientific method. That is simply false. It is just that in the case of naturalistic evolution, there is no science.

3. You don't seem to know how to make the distinction between science and philosophy. You have asserted that naturalistic evolution is based on science, but have not shown me any science to back up your claims. All you have done is to make a philosophical claim that naturalistic evolution is possible. Until you show the science, all you have done is express your faith (your religious belief) that it is possible. Your claim at this point is simply false.

4. Yes, populations of various living things have gone through a lot of changes over time, but the kinds of changes you are proposing have not been proven by science. We do not know that whales were once land animals, that fish moved to land and that birds have dinosaur ancestors. That is certainly what would have to happen if philosophical naturalism is true, but it has not been demonstrated by science. With all of the changes that have been scientifically observed based on natural selection, ducks are still ducks, and dogs are still dogs. Prove naturalistic evolution is possible using empirical science and you win the argument, but until then all you are offering is your belief in philosophical naturalism.

5. I don't have any problem with proposing theories. However, for a theory to be accepted as fact, it must be proven to be true using empirical science. There are still many holes in evolutionary theory that cannot be demonstrated to be true in the way you have asserted. Naturalistic evolution can only be true if philosophical naturalism is true. If you want to win this argument, that is what you must prove.

Test Test

@Freddy Davis I'm sorry, but you are just too f___ing stupid and too much of a liar to educate.

Freddy Davis

@Test Test Wow! That's a very intelligent reply. Instead of using profanity to try to put me down, perhaps you would be better served to actually give an intelligent response to my replies. You have not simply not done that. And until you do, you have really said nothing. You have expressed your opinion based on a naturalistic worldview, but have certainly not made your case. Prove, using your own worldview beliefs, that naturalistic evolution is even possible. At that point, you can call me stupid. Until then, you have only made yourself look petty.

Conclusion

At this point I never heard back from @Test Test.

[Here begins the discussion with the second person.]

lhvinny

This is a straight up lie. The scientific literature documents plenty of examples of macroevolution, both in the lab and in the wild.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny This is only true if you define macro evolution in a way that only includes natural selection. There is a point beyond which science cannot show this to happen. Your statement is simply not true.

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis I define macroevolution the way biologists define the term. If you are using a different definition, then you are no longer addressing the claims of science, meaning you are again being dishonest.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny I really don't care about your definition. You never addressed the actual problem. There is a point beyond which science cannot show evolution to happen. Account for it using empirical science. Until you do, your point is mute.

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis I am well aware that you do not care what science says about things. This was already demonstrated in your video.

You have not presented an actual problem with evolution, only a misrepresentation of it. Until you actually present a problem, the only thing I need to address is your dishonesty, which I already have.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny What are you saying? I am a very strong proponent of science. The problem is not that I don't believe in science, but that you are asserting things as science that have not been demonstrated by science. I am still waiting for you to share the "actual science" that addresses the problem of macro evolution. Instead of proving me wrong based on actual science, all you have done is accuse me of being anti-science. There is a point beyond which science has not been able to demonstrate that evolution is possible. Show me the science. Until you do, all you are promoting is naturalistic philosophy, not science. Your assertion is a statement of faith, not of science.

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis State the "problem of macro evolution."

If you were a strong proponent of science, why are you using terms in ways that science does not use them?

My use of the term macroevolution is the way biologists use it. Macroevolution has been directly observed.

If you are claiming macroevolution has not been observed, then you are using the term in a way not used by biologists.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny You seem to be hung up on a particular term, but are ignoring the actual problem that is being addressed. Perhaps you don't realize that actual evolutionary scientists realized the problem I have brought up, so have sought to narrow the definition of the word in a way that tries to deflect from the problem. In spite of the deflection, it doesn't solve the problem. In your case, since you don't seem to understand the implications of my use of the word, I tried to simplify things for you and actually defined the problem in other terms. Are you going to keep playing semantics, or are going to address the actual problem?

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis The only thing you have shared is the term "problem of macro evolution." You have not defined it. Until you define that term, I can not do anything other than ask you to define it, which I did.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny Though I have not formally defined it, I have explained it several times. Let me see if I can make it simpler. It relates to the belief that the process of natural selection is capable of progressing beyond what can be demonstrated by science. As farmers and botanists (and evolutionary biologists) breed plants and animals, the breeding can progress to a particular point, but not beyond. There is a limit. Macro evolution would be the progression beyond that limit to increasingly complex life forms. Macro evolution is what would be necessary for one kind of living thing to progress to the point that it became a different kind. You do realize, don't you, that the tree graphic that purports to show the evolution of less complex life forms to more complex forms is not based on actual science, right? You do realize, don't you, that the pictures that show the evolution of man from monkey to homo sapiens is not based on actual science, right? They are simply artists renderings of the beliefs of philosophical naturalism.

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis If you are talking about specifically the March of Progress, you are correct. That is not a depiction of what actually happened. Can you cite anyone who claimed it is? The March of Progress shows a linear progression, which is not how evolution works. Evolution is about branching and divergence.

There is hard science showing our common ancestry with the other extant monkey and ape species, as well as our relation to extinct monkey and ape species, and also showing that special creation does not account

for the actual data we see (Bontrager et. al. bioRxiv 2016 *). There is hard science showing that biological complexity increases over time in a stable environment (Adami et. al. PNAS 2000 **).

Which tree of life you are referring to will determine if it is based on actual science or not, so clarification on your part is necessary. At least some certainly are based upon actual science, such as the one produced by Hug et. al. and seen in their paper "A new view of the tree of life," Nature Microbiology 2016. ***

"Macro evolution is what would be necessary for one kind of living thing to progress to the point that it became a different kind." "Kind" is not a taxonomic term used in evolutionary biology, and therefore would never be used by biologists to define macro evolution. Thus, defining the problem of macro evolution in terms of kinds demonstrates that your "problem of macroevolution" attacks a claim evolutionary biologists do not make. It is a misrepresentation, as I predicted it would be over 6 hours ago. I use the terms as biologists do, demonstrating that I actually care what science says and claims. Your use of this definition solidifies my position that you are choosing to not use the scientific definition of macro evolution in favor of the creationist non-scientific definition.

Yes, there are boundaries within evolution. Those are expressed and spelled out within the laws of biological evolution. How you define "kind" (since kind is not a scientific taxonomical term) will determine one of two scenarios: 1) Kind refers to a change that biological evolution does not claim occurs, or 2) Kind refers to a change that biological evolution has direct evidence of occurring. It is a lose-lose situation for you.

[Notes]

* This uses a statistical model and not actual experimental science. You can prove anything by statistics based on the presuppositions going in.

** This is based on computer modeling. This also depends completely on how the program is written, not on actual experimental science.

*** Groupings of life forms are made based on the presuppositions of naturalistic evolution without giving evidence that they are actually true. The scientists have created their own approach to determining the evolutionary path of the various organisms based on similarity. Similarity does not necessarily indicate direct connection as is assumed. This does not even address the actual evolutionary process and seeks to use similarity to imply connection.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny I fully recognize that the word "kind" is not a taxonomic term used within evolutionary biology. However, since evolutionary biologists do not recognize a difference between micro and macro evolution, there is not an official term available to use. I was hoping you would understand the distinction I was making. But again, the problem is not in the semantics, but in the actual science. Your lecture to me about the use of this term is not accepted. Also, I was not representing the diagrams I referenced as an actual representation of how you believe evolution works. I was referencing it as a depiction of the naturalistic philosophy that your belief is built upon - which absolutely is true.

I'm not sure what you are trying to represent as "hard science" related to an increase in biological complexity. Changes do occur in the course of natural selection, and if you define certain changes in particular ways, you can probably justify using that terminology. However, all you have referenced is data without recognizing the interpretive framework by which you are interpreting the data. There is no hard science showing our common ancestry with the other extant monkey and ape species, there is only a conclusion that there must be common ancestry, and various kinds of speculation about how that might be possible based on naturalistic philosophy. There is no demonstrable biological mechanism that allows for the kind of jump you are speculating about. I get accused so often of believing in a "God of the gaps" (which is not an accurate characterization of my beliefs), but you are doing nothing more than proposing a "nature of the gaps." As you have admitted, there are boundaries that exist, but contrary to your assertions, there is no actual science that demonstrates that

those boundaries can be crossed in a way that would be necessary to accomplish the kind of evolution you are proposing. There is a reason the Theory of Evolution continues to be a "theory."

Interesting that you would say that "'kind' refers to a change that biological evolution does not claim occurs," when that kind of change is exactly what evolutionary biologists claim about natural selection. It is the belief that increasingly complex life forms can evolve from less complex forms - beyond what actual science can demonstrate to be possible. Since you don't seem to want to let me use the word "kind" to make my point, I am not sure what word I should use to address your objection. Perhaps I should coin a word (though you would still object since you don't acknowledge the distinction I am making). Still, the problem of overcoming the issue I have noted exists. You do not believe what you believe based on actual empirical science. You believe it based on your belief in philosophical naturalism - which is a religious point of view.

Ihvinny

@Freddy Davis *"I fully recognize that the word "kind" is not a taxonomic term used within evolutionary biology. However, since evolutionary biologists do not recognize a difference between micro and macro evolution, there is not an official term available to use."*

Thank you for admitting that your words do not represent the claims made by evolutionary biology.

"I was hoping you would understand the distinction I was making."

It is impossible to understand distinctions when you use terms that are not well defined.

"But again, the problem is not in the semantics, but in the actual science."

The actual science defends the claims of evolutionary biology. If they defend your position or not depends upon your ability to define your terms. Yes, semantics are important, because you are using the terms in a way not used by the field of science you are arguing against. Until we are using similar terms, your comments will continue to address a misrepresentation of evolutionary biology, making this nothing but a red herring.

"I'm not sure what you are trying to represent as "hard science" related to an increase in biological complexity. Changes do occur in the course of natural selection, and if you define certain changes in particular ways, you can probably justify using that terminology. However, all you have referenced is data without recognizing the interpretive framework by which you are interpreting the data."

I gave a reference to the science that shows that biological complexity increases under evolutionary processes, exactly as you wished. It is clear from your response that you have not bothered to read it, as your statements that follow this are addressed within the research I cited. Your reply here gave away the fact that you choose not to check out references you asked for. Your unwillingness to check out the sources provided to you is your problem, not mine, and certainly is not a problem for the claims of biological evolution.

"There is no hard science showing our common ancestry with the other extant monkey and ape species, there is only a conclusion that there must be common ancestry, and various kinds of speculation about how that might be possible based on naturalistic philosophy."

I gave a reference to the science that shows that common ancestry best explains the data. I even mentioned that they investigated special creation as part of the study. Your statements show that you have not bothered to read the reference material you asked for. It is silly for you to ask for references if you are not even going to bother looking at the references when they are provided.

"There is no demonstrable biological mechanism that allows for the kind of jump you are speculating about."
There is no speculation. The mechanism is there. The science backs up my position. I provided references. You chose to ignore them.

"There is a reason the Theory of Evolution continues to be a "theory."

I am sorry that you either failed or did not understand the lesson in secondary school about what theory means in science. With gravity did not exist, the theory of gravity (known as General Relativity), would not

exist. If germs did not exist, Germ theory would not exist. If atoms did not exist, Atomic theory would not exist. Likewise, if evolution did not exist, the theory of evolution would not exist.

"Since you don't seem to want to let me use the word "kind" to make my point, I am not sure what word I should use to address your objection."

I didn't say you could not use the word kind. What I said is that science doesn't have a taxonomic definition for that word, and thus does not address it. I then offered you the opportunity to define the word "kind," and I made a prediction about your possible definitions. Provide a definition.

"Interesting that you would say that "'kind' refers to a change that biological evolution does not claim occurs," when that kind of change is exactly what evolutionary biologists claim about natural selection."
Until you define what the word "kind" means, this statement is meaningless.

"It is the belief that increasingly complex life forms can evolve from less complex forms - beyond what actual science can demonstrate to be possible."

I've not seen anything that indicates this to be the case.

"Also, I was not representing the diagrams I referenced as an actual representation of how you believe evolution works. I was referencing it as a depiction of the naturalistic philosophy that your belief is built upon - which absolutely is true."

It is not a representation of my beliefs, nor of any belief others of my beliefs are based upon. You are wrong.

"Still, the problem of overcoming the issue I have noted exists."

As far as I can tell, the only thing to overcome is your dishonest as a creationist who will not define "Kind" and "macro evolution" in ways that can, and are, addressed by the science that you deny.

"You do not believe what you believe based on actual empirical science."

You haven't even addressed what I actually believe yet. Your examples, by your own admission, are not meant to be representative of my beliefs.

"You believe it based on your belief in philosophical naturalism - which is a religious point of view."

It is your position that having a religious point of view is a bad thing? That is the implication your statement gives. And no, I am not a philosophical naturalist, so, it would be nice if you would stop making assumptions about my position and actually define your terms to defend your case.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny Your last comments seem to indicate that your arguments are not what you actually believe, and that you are nothing more than a troll. If that is the case, you will always come up with some counter argument (even things that are not true or that move the argument in directions that really don't further the discussion) simply to string the argument out. So, before we go any further with this, and since you have give me a reason to question your motives, let me ask straight up: Do you believe the tenets of philosophical naturalism? Do you believe that the natural universe is all that exists and that everything in every part of reality can be explained using the natural laws of the universe?

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis No, I do not assert that all that exists is part of this universe, nor do I assert that everything can necessarily be explained by natural law. This is mostly because I am not aware of any method by which I could test such a claim. I do not hold the view of philosophical naturalism, as I said in my previous comment.

There is no contradiction between acceptance of biological evolution and not holding to the tenants of philosophical naturalism. All science, including biological evolution, does not require holding philosophical naturalism. This is demonstrated by the fact that most people who hold beliefs in the supernatural, including

gods, also accept biological evolution as true. I can offer names of several professional biologists, anthropologists, paleontologists, and other experts in fields who believe in one or more gods and also completely accept the claims of biological evolution.

Having answered your question, I look forward to your provision of a definition of kind.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny No, before I attempt to once again give you an answer regarding "kinds" that fits within your understanding of reality, I need to know what your understanding of reality is. You deny that you believe in philosophical naturalism, yet your arguments are based completely on that belief. You seem to be saying you hold to some kind of hybrid belief system where you reconcile the beliefs of philosophical naturalism with something else. What is that something else?

Of course believing in the validity of the scientific method does not require holding to philosophical naturalism. I think I have made it pretty clear that I, myself, believe that it is a valid way of studying the natural world.

Also, it is not true that most people who hold beliefs in the supernatural, including gods, also accept biological evolution as true. But that comment is totally a red herring. Even if it were true, that would not solve this new problem that you have introduced with your seemingly contradictory statement about what you believe. The fact that many people hold beliefs that are internally contradictory does not, in fact, demonstrate that it is a viable belief.

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis Use of methodological naturalism is all that is required to study biological evolution, just like every other science. My arguments are based on that, not philosophical naturalism. You are wrong. I do not hold the belief that the natural world is all there is, so there is no need for me to reconcile that claim with anything. I find that claim unverifiable so I do not hold it.

When it comes to scientific claims, I, and everyone else in the profession, uses methodological naturalism, and that is what is used to confirm biological evolution as well, as seen within the scientific research I cited for you.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny But you have not demonstrated using methodological naturalism that naturalistic evolution is possible. I did look at the articles you used as justification for your case, and, if I am reading it correctly, there seems to be huge holes in their methodology and conclusions. The use of a statistical approach is only as good as the source of the statistics, and still don't prove the underlying problems associated with common ancestry. It appears that the article about increasing complexity is based on a computer model (which is written based on the biases of the programmer). The Tree of Life study also depends on assumptions about connections between different organisms that are not empirically demonstrated (ie. If certain things are true, then this must be how they are connected.). What is not shown is whether or not those underlying presuppositions are actually true. This last issue gets to the source of my entire objection to your approach to naturalistic evolution. It is tied to a particular belief about the structure of reality that cannot be demonstrated to be true using empirical science.

The biggest problem with your argument, though, is that even though you deny it, the argument itself is based on the presuppositions of philosophical naturalism. It assumes that the natural laws of the universe can account for the existence of all life forms, creates a philosophical model that would allow for it, then searches for data that can be put together in a way to support it. Using this approach, it is the beliefs that are the foundation, not empirical science, and the beliefs have to be accounted for. They simply are not.

So, if you say you believe something else along with your naturalistic beliefs, you do need to reconcile what you have been arguing for with that something else. I would like to know what it is so that I can discuss it without having to play footsies regarding semantics. Do you have a reason for wanting to hide it?

lhvinny

@Freddy Davis I am glad you included the phrase, "if I am reading it correctly."

The tree of life study does not assume connections. Those connections are made purely based upon the data present. The computer program is not fed information regarding what "should be" connected to what, but instead simply shows the divergence pattern for the data that is inputted. Since you already read the study, I will not rehash how large their database was, nor will I go over the statistical impossibility for the 16 gene study to give the same results consistently for the tree formation if the pattern were not actually there.

Regarding the computer simulation for complexity, you suggest that there is bias in the programming. Demonstrate that the coding for the simulation contains such bias. Show me where the program organisms have anything in their programming that is fishy.

Regarding the study that shows that common ancestry is confirmed and special creation is not harmonious with the data, you mention the "underlying problems associated with common a ancestry." What are these problems? This is the first time you have brought up this problem, and it reeks of a shifting of the goal posts.

There are no underlying assumptions that have not been demonstrated to be true regarding these studies.

Variation among offspring is a verified fact. Genetic inheritance from parent to offspring is a verified fact. These are the only two "assumptions" necessary to draw phylogenomic trees.

It doesn't matter how many times you say it, neither I nor biological evolution require philosophical naturalism. There is nothing in my philosophy, nor methodological naturalism, that requires our reality to be purely physical. A deistic god that set up life, or the universe, such that life would evolve naturally is completely consistent with evolutionary biology. A world in which organisms have a spiritual nature undetectable by scientific means is completely consistent with evolutionary biology. The existence of forest spirits, djinns, ghosts, or anything like that requires no change to evolution. It would be wise to stop spreading the falsehood that biological evolution requires philosophical naturalism. Biological evolution requires, like all sciences, methodological naturalism only.

Biological evolution does not require that natural law account for the existence of all life forms. This is because biological evolution would not necessarily apply to lifeforms not of this planet, if there are any, and it does not apply to the first life forms, as evolution is an explanation of biodiversity, meaning that life must exist before evolution is even a thing. However, even if at some point we learn that life initially emerged naturally, that does not mean one must adopt philosophical naturalism. As stated before, a deistic God setting up the universe such that life would emerge naturally from those initial non-life conditions would still not fall under naturalism. I cannot tell if your flawed perspective is based upon dishonesty, parroting of incorrect teachings, your fallen victim of black and white thinking, or something else. Regardless, I have no interest in entertaining your mischaracterization of my position further.

Present the "underlying problems associated with common ancestry," your definition of "kinds" so that we can put to bed the "problem of macro evolution," and specific examples of bias or problems within the studies cited for you that actually demonstrates you read the studies instead of giving vague, general, nonspecific objections that, as far as I can tell, hint that you, at best, skimmed abstracts.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny I am a bit mystified at your accusations that I am mischaracterizing your position since you have steadfastly refused to say what it is. If I am mischaracterizing it, it is because you are being deceitful with your

responses. The only thing I am able to respond to is what you actually write, and EVERYTHING you have written concerning evolution is based upon beliefs that emerge from philosophical naturalism.

You have made a couple of references in your latest post to Deism, but even there you are not saying that is what you believe. You are using it as nothing more than a means of trying to cover for gaps in your naturalistic explanations. The very concept of Deism is more speculative than either Philosophical Naturalism or Christian Theism, as there is literally NOTHING to commend it – no natural evidence or revelation. Are you saying you are a Deist, or are you simply playing the troll game of throwing out answers to try to cover for the gaps in your answers?

You also threw out speculation about how naturalistic evolution could be compatible with animistic beliefs. That is just weird. There is nothing in what you said that gives any reason to believe it, or even consider it. Just because you can imagine something does not mean it is true, or even possible. That was a completely meaningless comparison. You don't, and can't, know whether not they are compatible.

And your comments about abiogenesis muddies the water even more. You see, this is why I asked you to quit playing footsies with your beliefs so that we can actually converse on a level that gets to the bottom line. I really would appreciate it if you would just be honest about this.

As for your responses regarding the articles: seriously? You do realize, don't you, that data must be interpreted, and the interpretive framework determines the conclusions one draws from the data? You can take the same data and, using different interpretive frameworks, come up with completely different conclusions. For instance, an evolutionary biologist will take the data about the diversity of life forms and explain it by asserting naturalistic evolution, while a Christian will explain it asserting God's creative act. Same data, different conclusion. The real answer is not found in the data, but in the interpretive framework. So, the real work is to determine which interpretive framework is true. That is why I keep pointing back to the gaps in the evolutionary model. There is no known (demonstrated) biological mechanism that is able to account for the diversity of life forms that exists on earth. There is a lot of speculation, but no actual science to back it up.

Which brings us back to the articles again. What you are calling divergence patterns do not demonstrate connection. In fact, there is no way to know whether or not these are even actually divergence patterns. Statistical probability does not demonstrate anything (as that too is computed using a particular interpretive (biased) framework). And if you really believe that computer models do not have built in biases (any computer model, not just this one), I have some land down in South Florida I would like to sell you. Computer programs do what the programmers tell it to do, with the particular parameters they set.

Finally: Of course there are variations among offspring. I'm not sure I even know why you put that in there. Micro evolution (what I accept as natural selection) is a process that is not only recognized by scientists, but is used by botanists and farmers to breed varieties of plants and animals to meet various needs. But the changes that can be created only go so far. There is a point beyond which change can no long be pushed. Natural selection ends at that point (contrary to the speculations of naturalistic evolutionists). Macro evolution is the belief that natural selection can go beyond that. So, my definition of "kinds" relates to the groupings of life forms that exist within the boundaries of micro evolution.

Even though you don't seem to want to accept it, God does exist and he has revealed himself and his ways. You will find that revelation in the Bible. Perhaps you should expand your horizons a little and check it out.

Ihvinny

@Freddy Davis My position is that some phenomena we experience are explained by natural law. Examples would include things like disease, biological diversity, attraction of objects with mass, etc. Other things are not yet explained by natural law, and may have non-natural explanations. Examples would include the origin of the universe, the insides of black holes, non-earth life (if it exists), etc. We know that there are limits to our ability to explore the natural world, and certainly no way for us to explore realms that may be beyond the

natural world. Because of these limits in my ability to explore things, I reject the claim "the natural world is all there is" as unverifiable. I likewise reject the claim "all that is can be explained by natural law" for the same reason. Therefore, I cannot call myself a philosophical naturalist. The understanding that some things are part of the natural world or that some things are explained by natural law does not require one to think everything is. Biodiversity, like cells, atoms, germs, and gravity, is one of those things that is part of the natural world and is explained by natural law. That's it. So, again, no, my beliefs regarding evolution are not based in philosophical naturalism. This has been explained to you several times. Your continued desire to assert that they are makes you a liar.

The examples using deism and animism are simply there to show that evolution can be compatible with perspectives other than philosophical naturalism. Your opinions about deism or animism are irrelevant. Your opinions about Christian theism and atheism are also irrelevant. And no, a particular view does not need to be shown to be actually correct in order to tell if it is compatible with another. I do not need to demonstrate that the Platonic forms, or Jainism are actually correct in order to be able to compare and see if the two ideas are compatible. No aspect of animism nor deism contradict the tenants of biological evolution: namely that organisms reproduce with variation, and that this variation is subject to selective forces in the struggle to procreate, and that this leads to divergent patterns of reproductive viability.

For the record, you were the one who brought up abiogenesis, not me, when you mentioned "all life." I am sorry that my following suit is somehow a problem to you.

No, this is not a case of "same data, different interpretations," as lying creationists love to claim, and have tried to claim for decades. Likewise, there is no single "Christian interpretation" of data that shows evolution to be true, since acceptance or rejection of established science, and which parts of established science are accepted or rejected, varies depending upon the denomination or, sometimes, the individual. The tired old creationist "this is a battle of world views" nonsense didn't work for Ken Ham 8 years ago, and it doesn't work for you now either.

When you are studying how effectively models represent reality, statistical match is exactly how you go about demonstrating that. The fact that the common ancestry model matches the real data regarding primates while the special creation model greatly differs from the real data regarding primates tells us exactly what I said: common ancestry matches reality while special creation does not.

I challenged you to point out where in the programs used in the complexity study there was a bias towards the results of increased complexity arising from lower complexity. That challenge to defend your claim remains open.

Unaddressed in your response was an explanation of what you call the underlying problems with common ancestry. You mention that there are base ideas about evolution that are not explained or observed. I already shared exactly what those base ideas about evolution are, and you seem to accept them as demonstrated. This is why I mentioned them; I hope that clears up your confusion about why I included them.

I find it interesting that you equate the terms "natural selection" and "microevolution." This, of course, represents another instance where the creationist tries to use the scientific terms in a way that are not the same as the scientific definitions. It is almost as if the creationist is purposefully pushing for equivocations. Unfortunately, this makes your definition of "kinds" to be a meaningless tautology, since you define kind as any change that can be accounted for by natural selection (microevolution). Of course macroevolution would be beyond microevolution. The disconnect, then, seems to be only in the realm of what would fall into the micro evolutionary region. You define this region through the example of there being boundaries to what can arise via evolution. Fortunately for you, science has defined and discovered those boundaries.

Those boundaries are outlined by Dollo's law of irreversibility * and the law of monophyly, ** both of which are laws of evolution. Thus, it appears to me that you simply need to recognize that biological evolution operates within those boundaries, claims that those boundaries cannot be breached, and never claimed that they were breached. This falls back to a prediction made days ago: you would define "kind" in such a way that evolution

does not claim a change in kinds would occur. Any claim by you, based upon your definitions, that says evolution teaches a change in kinds, is a misrepresentation of evolution.

[Notes]

* An organism never returns exactly to a former state, even if it finds itself placed in conditions of existence identical to those in which it has previously lived ... it always keeps some trace of the intermediate stages through which it has passed.

** Every living species of organism is still a modified version of what it evolved from.

Freddy Davis

@lhvinny First, calling me a liar does not advance your case. As I have said before, I was responding to what you actually wrote. I do appreciate, though, that you have finally given me something more concrete to work with.

Since you have finally given a bit of explanation concerning your point of view, I do see why you don't consider yourself a philosophical naturalist. That said, when it comes to your assertions about the Theory of Evolution, your arguments are completely based on philosophical naturalism. You have begun with the assumption that the laws of the natural universe can account for the diversity of life forms on earth without even knowing a biological mechanism that can definitively account for it. Evolutionary biologists have various speculations about how that might happen, but there is no science that is able to demonstrate that it is even possible. You believe it because of your worldview beliefs.

You may have intended your examples using Deism and Animism to show that evolution can be compatible with perspectives other than philosophical naturalism, but it doesn't show that at all. Just because you can imagine scenarios does not speak at all to the viability of those connections. In order to show the kind of compatibility you are asserting, you would have to define various (unknown) components of those beliefs and show how the connections are possible. You can't do that, however, because you are asserting elements that you don't know the components to. You don't even know if a deistic God exists, and if he did, you don't know anything about who he is, his purposes, or what he is like beyond your speculations about why he would create a natural universe in the first place. And since you don't know anything about the spirits that might be a part of an animistic reality, you can't know anything about how that might affect what goes on in the natural universe either. You really don't, and can't, know whether or not any aspect of Animism nor Deism contradicts the tenants of biological evolution. Your speculations might be good fodder for a science fiction story, but are rather meaningless when it comes to trying to connect naturalistic events with non-natural concepts in the way you are advocating. It is 1000% speculative. Just because you can imagine something does not mean it is possible.

Seriously? You insist that I define for you what I mean by "kinds," then you dismiss my definition because it does not fit with what you recognize. I already dealt with your dismissal before, and you have done exactly what I said you would. The truth is, there is no science in your definition, only an assertion that "real scientists" don't accept what I have said. But until you can actually show the biological process that allows for more complex organisms to emerge from less complex ones, your arguments are meaningless. And throwing in Dollo's Law and the law of monophyly do not help your case at all. These laws say nothing about whether or not naturalistic evolution is possible – they only assume that it is true, much like the studies that you are still trying to defend (It simply cannot be proven that when you are studying how effectively models represent reality, statistical match is exactly how you go about demonstrating that. Or that the common ancestry model matches the real data regarding primates while the special creation model greatly differs from the real data regarding primates. You would have to have a great deal more data about the actual process of naturalistic evolution than actually exists [or about the way God did special creation] to be able to make a statement like that.) Once again you have begun with a premise and are trying to prove the premise rather than showing any actual science that demonstrates it is possible. [By the way, I can't believe you brought up the Ham-Nye debate. You obviously had no understanding of the implications of Ham's arguments. He blew Bill Nye out of the water, and Nye didn't even realize it. Obviously, you didn't either.]

Virtually all of your arguments are based on a single assumption (that naturalistic evolution is possible). And all of your argumentation (and "evidence") sets out to prove the assumption without ever addressing the most important element. What is the demonstrated biological mechanism that allows for naturalistic evolution to take place? And, if you really believe the law of monophyly, where did the variety of life forms come from in the first place? In some ways it almost appears that you are suggesting creationism.

I know that you look with disdain on my beliefs about the existence of God – specifically that he is the God of the Bible. But how do you know it is not true? How do you know God has not actually revealed himself propositionally so that we can know who he is, what he is like, and his purposes. In actual fact, he has provided a way for us to know him in a personal relationship. In fact, you, yourself, can know him if you will.

Conclusion

At this point Ivinny quit corresponding. This is a rather typical response when a person comes to the realization that they are not able to win their point outright. It is my hope and prayer that, at the very least, Ivinny would be jarred into reconsidering his rejection of Christ and come to know the only one who can truly answer the longings of his heart.

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