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WHY EVOLUTION IS NOT TRUE

Bhakti Madhava Puri, Ph.D.



Are physics and chemistry sufficient to provide a basis for a theory of everything? The worldview of materialist naturalism that forms the foundation of neo-Darwinian evolution, Big Bang cosmogony, and molecular biology in general has been subjected to challenge for its monumental failure to explain life, consciousness and other mind-related aspects of reality. Two recent books, *Why Evolution is True* by Jerry Coyne [1], and Thomas Nagel's *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* [2], both authors being atheists, reflect the deep rift we find, not only in the religious conflict between creation and evolution, but in the fundamental awareness we all have that we are more than just molecular matter. This common sense understanding can only escape the notice of a particularly

shallow ideological dogmatism that insists it has all the answers based solely on its unprecedented technological success.

Not that the modern theories of physics have even given us a complete understanding of matter. There are major unsolved problems in the field including the failure to unify the general relativistic theory of gravity with quantum mechanics (with devastating differences in the calculation of the cosmological constant on the order 10^{120}), or the resolution of the mystery of dark energy and dark matter in the universe, and so on. Regarding the latter, Lee Smolin [3] writes:

“Fully 70% of the matter density in the universe appears to be in the form of dark energy. Twenty-six percent is dark matter. Only 4% is ordinary matter. So less

than one part in 20 is made out of matter we have observed experimentally or described in the standard model of particle physics. Of the other 96%, apart from the properties just mentioned, we know absolutely nothing.”

Materialists consider matter to be real, yet the term “matter” is still not well-defined across a widely varying range of contexts. Mass represents the quantity of matter, but does not define it. Thus massless particles such as photons cannot be considered matter, but energy. Energy requires a generating source. While mass and energy are related according to Einstein’s equation, $E=mc^2$, the energetic source is unexplained or tautologically identified again with mass.

Beyond the ontological problems of scientifically defining matter, the phenomenal failure of biochemistry to explain living organisms has become increasingly apparent with the advancement of research in that area. Common sense distinguishes between non-living matter and organic life, between the natural mechanisms that characterize material systems and the natural teleological (goal-directed) character of living organisms. Thus the attempt to reduce life to a mere mechanistic phenomenon amounts to eliminating life as a distinct category of reality. It is only to be expected that the result of such an attempt must end in failure due to a category mistake.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote, “There will never be a Newton of a blade of grass.” [4] In other words, even with all our scientific knowledge, all the scientists in the world working together, would not be able to make a single blade of grass. Despite scientist’s apparent knowledge of photosynthesis, they are utterly helpless to produce even a small grain of wheat from chemicals. Yet the smallest wisp of life readily produces the vast abundance of verdant Nature without laboratories or any sophisticated equipment. Scientists can modify the chemistry of food, but they cannot produce it from those same chemicals. This means that ultimately their

daily bread comes, not from scientists, but from the primordial Life that underlies all Nature. Scientists may boastfully claim that God is an unnecessary hypothesis for their understanding of the universe, yet they remain completely dependent for their very sustenance upon the inscrutable Life that makes Nature possible. Still Godless science claims the loyalty of many intellectuals in the name of evolution. But why? Simple questioning of the most basic claims of scientific materialism is enough to dislodge its most imperial asseverations. Are we witnessing what social psychology documents as paradigmatic “groupthink”, in which intellectual conformity trumps reasonable understanding? Such a possibility is not without precedent and, as Kuhn [5] and others have shown, it is not something to which science can claim immunity.

Thomas Nagel, professor of philosophy and law at New York University, writes (*pg. 128*) [2],

“I have argued patiently against the prevailing form of naturalism, a reductive materialism that purports to capture life and mind through its neo-Darwinian extension. . . . I find this view antecedently unbelievable—a heroic triumph of ideological theory over common sense. . . . I would be willing to bet that the present right-thinking consensus will come to seem laughable in a generation or two.”

While the origin of life is beyond the explanatory and laboratory endeavors of modern science, evolutionists claim their theory is not challenged by that repeatedly established fact. The presumption that a mechanistic theory can explain organic life in Nature underlies the idea that such life is subject to evolution as the result of the mechanistic processes of Nature. If life is an inherently purposeful feature of Nature, then capricious modification by mere mechanical means would be inadequate for properly explaining its behavior. Empirical confirmation of this fact comes from numerous lines of evidence, such as long-term stasis found in the fossils of the geological column, exquisite self-

monitoring in proof-reading and error correction at the genetic DNA level, predominantly fatal results of random mutations, and so on, which show that living organisms exhibit a sensitive, regulated, purposeful nature for self-preservation, actively resisting change or evolution, as well as showing adaptive flexibility, but within the limits of their species.

The discovery of numerous processes of genetic mobility within organisms has upended the traditional conception of evolution based on mutation/selection. The theory of neutral mutations target changes beneath the influence of selection, the phenomenon of genetic transfer scrambles any attempt at building simple tree-like structures of progressive evolution, and mathematical probability calculations undermine the possibility of there having ever been an evolutionary development of the basic biochemical ingredients of even the simplest bacterium. These are only a few of the underlying issues that challenge evolution even before the intractable problem of explaining how consciousness and other mind-related phenomena could have arisen from insentient matter. Not only is the idea of neo-Darwinian evolution proving to be false, it is increasingly being recognized as obstructive to a proper development of a completely new systemic science of biology. Physiologist Denis Noble writes, [6]

“If the value of a scientific theory lies in its utility then Neo-Darwinism has been of negative value in physiology. The reasons are that the theory itself is confused about what genes are and what attributes may be ascribed to them. It is also incompatible with more recent developments in molecular biology.”

An adequate science of Nature would have to be able to explain the existence of mind and consciousness in the universe. The physical sciences have failed and cannot be expected to provide such an explanation. A metaphysical commitment to material reductionism is an ideological presumption, not a scientific conclusion. It is neither obvious how

consciousness could have originated from matter, nor how it could ever be expected to do so. As Nagel remarks, “It is an assumption governing the scientific project rather than a well-confirmed scientific hypothesis.” No sufficient evidence has ever been produced to mitigate this fact. Given the intricate complexity of a living organism, that only increases with our advancing knowledge of its details, the probability that life is the chance product of nonliving matter acting under the influence of the laws of physics and chemistry is unthinkable.



Despite such serious scientific objections, it is quite symptomatic of the extreme ideological nature of the issue when atheistic scientists of the stature of Francis Crick, for instance, nonetheless brazenly seek to establish the materialist creed of naturalism, “You’, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules. . . . Who you are is nothing but a pack of neurons.” [7] Another materialistic atheist, Richard Dawkins writes [8], “The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.” This reductionist agenda conceives that every action is determined by a preceding physical cause that can ultimately be traced back to the Big Bang. As Andrew Ferguson [9] put it, “A materialist who lived his life according to his professed convictions – understanding himself to have no moral

agency at all, seeing his friends and family as genetically determined robots – wouldn't just be a materialist: He'd be a psychopath." Of course, no one actually experiences the world as a materialist, but to embrace such a world view would be to lead a schizophrenic existence that might lead to being a psychopath.

The debate over evolution is not just between theists and atheists. Some of the more interesting challenges appear between atheists themselves. Jerry Coyne, atheist scientist, for example, champions evolution, while atheists Fodor and Piatelli-Palminiri [10] make a devastating attack on the heart of evolution theory, natural selection. They bring up long standing problems with natural selection, which has always been the weakest link in Darwin's theory. They succinctly pose the problem,

"How can natural selection distinguish between, on the one hand, phenotypic traits that affect fitness and, on the other hand, their endogenously linked phenotypic correlates... selection [cannot] apply differentially to coextensive properties."

Furthermore, they suggest doing away with the "scientific" idealism of evolution entirely and replacing it with the narrative of the actual natural history of an organism.

"[I]f you wish to explain the effects that a phenotypic trait has on a creature's fitness, what you need are not its history of selection but its natural history. And natural history offers not laws of selection but narrative accounts of causal chains that lead to the fixation of phenotypic traits. . . . Darwin made the same sort of mistake that Marx did: he imagined that history is a theoretical domain; but what there is, in fact, is only heterogeneity of causes and effects. . . . As far as we can tell, this is slowly becoming the received view in evolutionary biology."

Science has come to represent two different things: (a) a body of knowledge, and (b) a method for

acquiring knowledge. The problem arises when it is forgotten that there is no independent body of knowledge for science apart from its method – it keeps changing according to the results of the latest findings of the scientific method. The method is not to be abandoned because of those who would like to replace it with a fixed body of knowledge, which then becomes ideology. If biogenesis is hypothesized as the law of Nature, and we observe that life comes from pre-existing life in all our experience, while the hypothesis of abiogenesis, that life comes from matter, is never backed by any observation, then according to the scientific method – which one is to be accepted as true scientific knowledge? Obviously, the one backed by empirical observation. It is necessary to get free of ideological "knowledge," and return to science as a method for gathering evidence that may lead to conclusions beyond the material naturalist view of Nature, and conforms to what we experience and rationally understand about the world in which we live.

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