

Creation or Evolution?

By

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G. A. Kerkut, a non-Christian biologist who himself accepted the concept of evolution, observed that candidates he examined for the Ph.D. in biological science did not even know there are scientific arguments against evolution, and were equally unaware that in accepting a naturalistic basis, with no divine Mind guiding it, one also accepted a number of far-reaching implications that cannot be proved but are of philosophical or religious nature.^{1 2}

The moral of this is: It is wise to know what the implications are of the fundamental ideas you accept.

There are currently only two seriously considered explanations for the origin of the earth and all it contains: creation, or evolution. In the latter case “evolution” is the general theory of evolution and comprises the creation story of metaphysical naturalism—“metaphysical” because it deals with origins. There are far-reaching implications arising from acceptance of either of these explanations.

Limits of the natural world

Britannica defines naturalism as follows:

Naturalism, in philosophy, [is] a theory that relates scientific method to philosophy by affirming that all beings and events in the universe (whatever their inherent character may be) are natural. Consequently, all knowledge of the universe falls within the pale of scientific investigation. Although naturalism denies the existence of truly supernatural realities, it makes allowance for the supernatural, provided that knowledge of it can

¹ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 396). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc. From: *Christianity Today*

² Gerald Allan Kerkut (or G. A. Kerkut) (19 August 1927 – 6 March 2004) was a noted British zoologist and physiologist. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_A._Kerkut

be had indirectly—that is, that natural objects be influenced by the so-called supernatural entities in a detectable way.³

This is a definition that carefully avoids the idea of God as an immanent Creator but allows a slight deference to deism, which provides for a deity that preserves and governs all things by means of second causes.

Present day scientists who take comfort in the limitations imposed by naturalism are like Adam and Eve who, after their temptation, tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden to conceal themselves from the presence of the Lord. Adam and Eve even sewed fig leaves together to hide their nakedness. Thus they were motivated by their guilt. Sin arouses conscience, and makes one an adversary of God. Naturalism is an attempt to push God away, and it arises from a refusal to have God in one's knowledge.⁴

Naturalism rests on the assumption that the entire universe is a closed system of material causes and effects. The assumption is a fundamental error in thinking. The error lies in the assumption that “all phenomena are covered (or accounted for) by laws of science.”

The scope of a problem

At least one other reason is apparent in the embrace of naturalism; that is, a reason other than the outright refusal to consider God as a First Cause. It apparently arises from the urge to solve a problem in a way similar to the work of engineers and programmers.

When a software programmer writes a program he must of necessity limit the scope of his work to a manageable extent because it is rarely possible to rewrite an entire software system to solve a minor problem. When the work on the new or replacement program is limited to necessary inputs and outputs the programmer can then work in confidence that the replacement will function properly within its limited scope and deliver the result expected by the requirements without impairing

³ Ref.: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/naturalism-philosophy>

⁴ Genesis 3:7-8; Romans 1:18-32.

the overall system. Such reduction of problems into sub-problems or subsystems is common among designers and programmers. For example, apps or applications are programs that are designed to have a limited scope in their functions, and to operate within the larger breadth of the overall operating system. Even the operating system itself performs its functions within the larger system of hardware and software that comprise a functioning computational and communication system.

Naturalism is in a sense a way to limit the scope of the system to be analyzed. So it is similar to the method of designers and programmers.

While it is true that the natural world is a system that contains material causes and effects it would be a mistake to assume that we could arbitrarily limit the scope of the system to an estimated number of causes and effects and say that there are no more outside of these. The natural world is a large system, and it greatly resists detailed analysis of all its functions. When we consider that the world in which we live is only a smaller part of a much larger universe then the problem of analysis increases in such complexity that detailed analysis becomes virtually impossible. Even so, it would be a logical mistake to assume that the very size and complexity of the material universe rules out external causes and effects.

This is true conceptually, but more so because we have testimonial evidence that there are causes that exist beyond our material world perceptions. The world, indeed the universe, is not a closed system. We only see the material world (or universe) as a closed system because it affords a method of analysis similar to the methods of engineering system designers and programmers.

But there is the other reason for naturalistic conception.

The second condition

The reason why some people cannot see that there are causes outside the universe for effects within the universe is because they will not see. The Apostle Paul expressed the same idea in his defense before the Roman governor, Festus.

Acts 26:8 “Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?”

Festus could not see because he would not see. To him it was incredible.

D. M. S. Watson who was a British biologist, said,
“...the theory of evolution itself, [is] a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.”

Watson’s reason for rejecting God as Creator was similar to that of Festus regarding the resurrection. To Festus the resurrection was extraordinary. It was too far outside the realm of probability as he regarded things that were likely to happen. It was for him like the people who hold naturalism for their philosophy. They have found a comfortable place where they believe they can account for everything that happens, and that belief includes nothing but material causes. But they are mistaken. And the belief rests on a fallacy, an erroneous belief that there are no supernatural causes.

The test of truth

It is common among people who hold prejudices, or people who accept religious dogmas to do so without testing the truth of their beliefs. Irving Copi wrote concerning belief in such absolutes versus scientific belief,

“... every scientific explanation is regarded as a hypothesis, it is regarded as worthy of acceptance only to the extent that there is *evidence* for it. The term “evidence” as used here refers ultimately to experience; *sensible* evidence is the ultimate court of appeal in verifying scientific propositions. Science is *empirical* in holding that the sense experience is the *test of truth* for all its pronouncements. Consequently, it is of the essence of a *scientific* proposition that it be capable of being tested by observation.⁵

Therefore, if the proposition has not been tested using the above criteria then it is not science. For example, evolution of

⁵ Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1966. p. 423-424.

life from non-living material has not be tested using the criteria cited by Copi; it is, therefore, not science.

But scientific evidence is not the only type of evidence. There are different types of evidence that might be considered to establish the truth or falsity of a claim.

“Adducing evidence” is the legal term for presenting or producing evidence in court or law for the purpose of establishing proof. When lawyers use the term “evidence” in this way, they have in mind what epistemologists would think of as “objects of sensory evidence” Evidence, in this sense, is divided conventionally into three main categories: oral evidence (the testimony given in court by witnesses), documentary evidence (documents produced for inspection by the court), and “real evidence”; the first two are self-explanatory and the third captures things other than documents such as a knife allegedly used in committing a crime.⁶

The evidence we have today to support the idea of a Creator is mainly documentary. For example, the Apostles were witnesses to the person and works of Jesus of Nazareth. They and their companions produced documents that attest to the reality of His life among them, and to certify the accounts of the things that He did. They argue in their writings that His death and resurrection actually happened, and that the resurrection is proof of God’s supernatural power acting to attest to His sovereign rule over the natural world.⁷

An impediment to belief

The Creator is the ultimate Cause and He exists independently of the material universe with its system of causes and effects. If a person rejects the idea that there is a Creator as is the case in naturalism, then creation is not possible because—

⁶ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evidence-legal/#ConEviWhaDoeEviRefLaw>

⁷ Acts 17:24-31.

to them—there is no Creator. But if a person accepts the idea of God then creation becomes distinctly possible.

Yet, it is clear that the universe exists. So, there must be an explanation for its existence. Unfortunately, we cannot run an experiment of the kind that Copi described to determine where the universe came from; nor can we return to those days and witness the beginning. We must accept the testimony that has been left for us.

A Latin phrase:

The Latin phrase: *ex nihilo nihil fit* means: out of nothing nothing comes; or from nothing, nothing is produced; it is a law of nature.⁸

Robert Jastrow said in the preface to his book, *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*:

“The scientific story of creation touches on the central problems of man's existence: what am I? How did I get here? What is my relation to the rest of the universe? The ideas are simple and beautiful; they can be expressed in clear language, without the use of jargon or mathematics. The story of man's origins goes far beyond the concepts of Darwin; it begins earlier than the time of our tree-dwelling ancestors, and much earlier than the period, several billion years ago, when the lowest forms of life first appeared on the face of the earth; it crosses the threshold between the living and the non-living worlds and goes back in time to the parent cloud of hydrogen out of which all existing things are descended.”⁹

The universe, and life itself, must come from something. Since the material universe is not self-caused. But that the universe arose spontaneously, or that life arose from purely material causes as Jastrow alleges in his preface—“...from a

⁸ Merriam Webster. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ex_nihilo_nihil_fit.

⁹ *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*, by Robert Jastrow - Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

parent cloud of hydrogen out of which all existing things are descended.” is an idea that is far from scientific fact. Science can be tested and this hypothesis can not. Jastrow’s proposal is far more difficult to believe than to say, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Spontaneous existence of the universe from nothing, life arising by chance combination of material elements, are both unreasonable by the system of reason common to man.

John Haldane, a scientist, once suggested to Monsignor Knox that in a universe containing millions of planets it was inevitable that life would appear by chance on one of them. “Sir,” said Knox, “if Scotland Yard found a body in your Saratoga trunk, would you tell them, ‘There are millions of trunks in the world—surely one of them must contain a body?’ I think they still would want to know who put it there.”¹⁰

There are conclusions that transcend customary assumptions and yield themselves only to common sense.

The God of the Bible is transcendent—beyond, over, and above nature. The laws of nature do not bind God.

All of nature, and all powers in nature are finite, but the God of the Bible is infinite. No finite power can produce the change from non-being into being, but infinite power can. The Apostle Paul wrote,

Rom. 4:16 For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, “A father of many nations have I made you”) in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

The writer of Hebrews said,

Heb. 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

¹⁰ Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1990, p. 84,

- This does not say that the worlds were made from nothing, but whatever they were made from we can't see it.
- In other words, the worlds are a creation; and the God of the Bible can call it into existence if He chooses.

Creation is rational

The idea of creation of the material universe is rational because it rests on reliable testimony. Consider this: If there were two ideas, one of which you must choose; and then of the two ideas there is one recommended by another man with limited capabilities such as yourself; but the second idea is recommended by a man who healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, raised other people from the dead and who himself rose from the dead after burial for three days. Which man would you believe? Whose testimony would you assign the greater weight? The answer is clear.

Moreover, the idea of creation of the universe is not irrational because it does not claim that anything sprang spontaneously into existence without an adequate cause.

Robert Jastrow also wrote the following in *God and the Astronomers*:

A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe, but if it does, science cannot find out what that explanation is. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth." To which St. Augustine added, "Who can understand this mystery or explain it to others?" The development is unexpected because science has had such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time.... Now we would like to pursue that inquiry farther back in time, but the barrier to further progress seems insurmountable. It is not a matter of another year, another decade of work, another

measurement, or another theory; at this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.¹¹

Jastrow ably described the limitations of the scientific method. The scientific method is a tool, and it is wise to know the limitations of a tool.

The God of the Bible is the Existing One. All knowing; all powerful. God is eternal.

So, if there is a God of the type described in the Bible, then nature did have an adequate First Cause: God.

And creation is possible.

¹¹ Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1990, pp. 84-85. *God and the Astronomers*, New York: Norton, 1978.