

# Darwinian Common Descent: Fact, Faith or Both?

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“I’m a Christian, I don’t believe in evolution!” This is a common refrain from many a sincere believer. However, it is usually not true. The average Christian doesn’t reject Evolution *per se*, but rather the Darwinian Theory of Descent with Modification by means of Natural Selection. The former is a fact. The latter is a theory, though many outspoken Darwinian proponents claim it to be just as much a fact as gravity or heliocentricity.

Before we can look at the issue of Darwinian Common Descent (DCD from here on), we must understand the terms, which are often thrown around ambiguously by all sides of the evolution debate. Evolution, as stated above, is a fact; for evolution is nothing more than “any change in the frequency of alleles within a gene pool from one generation to the next.”<sup>1</sup> Evolution can be observed in a lab as organisms adapt to become immune to various pesticides or drugs. This type of evolution is not controversial and is accepted by almost everyone. Douglas Futuyma, in his *Evolutionary Biology* textbook however gives a broader definition:

In the broadest sense, evolution is merely change, and so is all-pervasive; galaxies, languages, and political systems all evolve. Biological evolution...is change in the properties of populations of organisms that transcend the lifetime of a single individual. The ontogeny of an individual is not considered evolution; individual organisms do not evolve. The changes in populations that are considered evolutionary are those that are inheritable via the genetic material from one generation to the next. Biological evolution may be slight or substantial; it embraces everything from slight changes in proportion of different alleles within a population (such as those determining blood types) to the

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis and Barnes, Biology, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, p.974 cited in Moran – What is Evolution?

successive alterations that led from the earliest protoorganism to snails, bees, giraffes, and dandelions.<sup>2</sup>

Here can see where the controversy begins; for Futuyma, there is no difference between simple change over time (which is easy to demonstrate) and DCD (which is highly speculative). For ardent Darwinian proponents, DCD is a FACT. It is only a theory insomuch as gravity is only a theory. “All life forms arose from ancestral forms that were different...No person who pretends to any understanding of the natural world can deny these facts anymore than she or he can deny that the earth is round, rotates on its axis, and revolves around the sun.”<sup>3</sup> This form of evolution, also known as macroevolution, is different from the kind of evolution (microevolution) that we can observe all around us. The term macroevolution was first coined in 1927 by Russian entomologist Iurii Filipchenko and popularized in 1937 by Theodosius Dobzhansky;<sup>4</sup> it refers to “any evolutionary change at or above the level of species”<sup>5</sup> and is the result of “the combined effects of microevolutionary processes.”<sup>6</sup> Macroevolution is the cornerstone of DCD and, despite the boasts of its adherents, is a controversial theory. One of the most influential, as well as oldest living Darwinian proponents, Ernst Mayr makes this clear towards the end of his most recent book on evolution: “To be sure, there are particular evolutionary *theories such as those of common descent*, origin of life, gradualism, speciation, and natural selection, but scientific arguments about conflicting theories concerning these topics do not in any way affect the basic conclusion that evolution as such is a fact. It has taken place ever since the origin of life (emphasis

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<sup>2</sup> Futuyma, Evolutionary Biology as cited in Moran – What is Evolution?

<sup>3</sup> R.C. Lewontin “Evolution/Creation Debate: A Time for Truth” cited in Moran – Evolution is a Fact and a Theory.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Wilkins – Macroevolution.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

mine).”<sup>7</sup> However, despite its being technically considered a theory, DCD is seen by Mayr as “perhaps the greatest intellectual revolution experienced by mankind.”<sup>8</sup> He goes on to note the vast power of DCD:

There seemed to be a basic conflict between the overwhelming diversity of life and the observation that certain groups of organisms shared the same characteristics. Thus there were frogs, snakes, birds, and mammals, yet the basic anatomy of all of these so different appearing classes of vertebrates was very much the same, yet totally different from that of an insect. The theory of common descent provided the answer to this puzzling observation. When certain organisms share a series of joint characteristics, in spite of numerous other differences, it is due to the fact that they had descended from the same common ancestor. Their similarities were due to the heritage they had received from this ancestor, and the differences had been acquired since the ancestral lines had split.<sup>9</sup>

Mayr then goes on to assert “the fossil record provides abundant evidence for common descent.”<sup>10</sup>

Darwin’s theory of common descent with modification has become the reigning worldview among mainstream scientists. As Curtis and Barnes note: “Since the publication of *The Origin of Species*, the important question, scientifically speaking, about evolution has not been whether it has taken place. That is no longer an issue among the vast majority of modern biologists.”<sup>11</sup> Once again, Futuyma drives the point home even more forcefully:

[T]he statement that organisms have descended with modifications from common ancestors – the historical reality of evolution – is not a theory. It is a fact, as fully as the fact of the earth’s revolution about the sun. Like the heliocentric solar system, evolution began as a hypothesis, and achieved “facthood” as the evidence

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<sup>7</sup> Mayr. What Evolution Is. p.264

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.9

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 22

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> cited in Moran – Evolution is a Fact and a Theory

in its favor became so strong that no knowledgeable and unbiased person could deny its reality.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, DCD has become the only acceptable theory/fact for explaining the diversity of life on earth within the scientific community. As stated above, DCD is driven by macroevolution; and macroevolution, it is claimed, is driven entirely by a process known as Natural Selection.

Natural Selection is the term used to describe the two-step process by which a random mutation in an organism's genotype (genetic makeup) produces a characteristic that enables the organism to survive better in its environment than other organisms that lack this characteristic. In time, the better-adapted organism produces more offspring, which share the parent's genotype (genetic makeup) thus preserving the parent's phenotype (outward characteristics). Over a long period of time an entire population comes to resemble the original surviving parent. This process of random mutation and natural selection is seen by adherents of DCD to be capable of producing all of the diversity on earth from a single common ancestor. Outspoken Darwinist Richard Dawkins likens Natural Selection to William Paley's famous Watchmaker:

All appearances to the contrary, the only watchmaker in nature is the blind forces of physics, albeit deployed in a very special way. A true watchmaker has foresight: he designs his cogs and springs, and plans their interconnections, with a future purpose in his mind's eye. Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and *which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life* (emphasis mine), has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker (emphasis original).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker p.5

Mayr agrees with Dawkins as to the two-step process of Natural Selection being “responsible for the enormous, often quite bizarre diversity of the living world”<sup>14</sup> and notes that it consists of the “virtually simultaneous actions of two seemingly opposing causations, chance and necessity.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, while natural selection affects the eventual genotype of the organism, it first directly affects the organism’s phenotype.<sup>16</sup>

Dawkins feels that Natural Selection is “the only workable explanation that has ever been proposed, for the existence of life’s complex design”<sup>17</sup> and uses various theoretical examples to demonstrate its ability to produce complex information through purely random processes which are subjected to computer-simulated selection.<sup>18</sup> While not appealing to computer-simulations, Mayr puts forth what he considers to be many irrefutable examples of Natural Selection producing DCD. His examples include the fossil evidence for a smooth transition from reptiles to cynodonts to mammals,<sup>19</sup> that of Eocene artiodactyle ungulates to modern whales,<sup>20</sup> homology between different species,<sup>21</sup> similarities between species in their embryonic stages,<sup>22</sup> the recapitulation of “gill slits” in humans during development,<sup>23</sup> the universality of the genetic code,<sup>24</sup> and the anatomical, fossil, and molecular similarities between human beings and African apes.<sup>25</sup> According to Dawkins, Mayr, and a host of others from many different scientific fields, random mutation plus Natural Selection is not only capable of explaining the entire

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<sup>14</sup> Mayr, 228

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 229

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 129

<sup>17</sup> Dawkins, 317

<sup>18</sup> A critique of these examples will be given later in this paper.

<sup>19</sup> Mayr, 15

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 17

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 26

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 28

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 30

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 40

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 235-236

history of life on earth, but indeed is the *only* explanation for life's history. In spite of the confidence the majority of scientists have in Natural Selection as the mechanism of DCD, there have been many objections raised against the creative powers of Natural Selection as well as the examples put forward by Dawkins, Mayr, and other Darwinian proponents. We will now look at the limits of Natural Selection's role in the development of life on earth.

In The Origin of Species, Darwin himself realized that the power of Natural Selection could be falsified. Of this, he is very aware: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."<sup>26</sup> With regard to this admission, Dawkins states:

One hundred and twenty five years on, we know a lot more about animals and plants than Darwin did, and still not a single case is known to me of a complex organ that could not have been formed by numerous successive slight modifications. I do not believe that such a case will ever be found. If it is – it'll have to be a *really* complex organ, and, as we'll see in later chapters, you have to be sophisticated about what you mean by 'slight' – I shall cease to believe in Darwinism.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of this humble admission by Dawkins, whenever such a case is presented to him, Dawkins as well as the Darwinian establishment as a whole either ignore it or give a "Just So story"<sup>28</sup> as to how it could have arisen. For example, when presented with the complexity of the eye, Darwinians describe the hypothetical change from a light-sensing spot on an organism to a fully functioning eye with various developmental steps in

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<sup>26</sup> Darwin cited in Dawkins, 91

<sup>27</sup> Dawkins, 91 Given the tenacity with which Dawkins clings to DCD, it is likely that such a case will indeed never be found—found to be satisfactory for him to reject DCD, that is.

<sup>28</sup> Dembski, Intelligent Design. p.182

between.<sup>29</sup> However, molecular biologist Michael Behe feels that such “explanations” are not explanations at all:

The eye, or indeed almost any large biological structure, consists of a number of discrete systems...and Dawkins rightly points out the separability of the components. Dawkins, however, merely adds complex systems to complex systems and calls that an explanation. This can be compared to answering the question ‘How is a stereo system made?’ with the words ‘By plugging a set of speakers into an amplifier, and adding a CD player, radio receiver, and tape deck.’ Either Darwinian theory can account for the assembly of the speakers and amplifier, or it can’t.<sup>30</sup>

Behe’s point is that even on the smallest levels, the cells and processes involved in the formation of the eye are entirely too complex to organize themselves by chance one step at a time into the modern eye.

When presented with an inaccurate challenge to the evolution of the bombardier beetle by a Young-Earth Creationist, Dawkins corrects the inaccuracy (with much humor and satire) and then proceeds to explain that the bombardier beetle developed its defense mechanism as it “pressed into different service chemicals that already happened to be around.”<sup>31</sup> But Behe is quick to point out the inadequacy of this line of argument:

Dawkin’s explanation for the evolution of the system rests on the fact that the system’s elements ‘happened to be around.’ Thus evolution might be *possible*. But Dawkins has not explained how hydrogen peroxide and quinines came to be secreted together at very high concentration into one compartment that is connected through a sphinctered tube to a second compartment that contains enzymes necessary for the rapid reaction of the chemicals.<sup>32</sup>

Behe then goes on to suggest that in order for a Darwinian account of the bombardier beetle to be viable it must first show the stages of beetle development in all their complexity and then must demonstrate how Natural Selection could get us from one to

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<sup>29</sup> Mayr, 206

<sup>30</sup> Behe, Darwin’s Black Box. p.39

<sup>31</sup> Dawkins, 86-87

<sup>32</sup> Behe, 34

the next.<sup>33</sup> Behe's challenge is not unreasonable given the fervor with which DCD by means of Natural Selection is proclaimed as scientific fact.

Behe gives other examples of biological systems that he feels are irreducibly complex and therefore cannot be accounted for by Natural Selection such as cilia, bacterial flagella, blood clotting, intra-cellular transport, and antibodies. Some of these systems have been shown to be reducible, however a few such as the bacterial flagellum have yet to be explained in detail.<sup>34</sup> Behe notes that Biologist Lynn Margulis has challenged molecular biologists to name a single, unambiguous example of the formation of a new species by the accumulation of mutations and that her challenge has yet to be met.<sup>35</sup>

Besides the problem of explaining complexity, DCD by Natural Selection also suffers from unrepeatability and unobservability. Even Mayr concedes "evolution is a historical process that cannot be proven by the same arguments and methods by which purely physical or functional phenomena can be documented."<sup>36</sup> However, he goes on to state that it can be inferred by observations and that these observations "would make no sense in any other explanation."<sup>37</sup> Earlier we saw the observations Mayr and Dawkins offer as proof for DCD. Let us look at them more closely.

In his most recent book What Evolution Is, Mayr shows two illustrations of what he considers to be proof of macroevolution leading to different species—that of reptiles to mammals and Eocene artiodactyle ungulates to whales.<sup>38</sup> The only problem is that

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Dembski – Lecture given at the University of Georgia, 2001

<sup>35</sup> Behe, 26

<sup>36</sup> Mayr, 13

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15, 17

these illustrations are highly speculative, particularly that of the whales. Mayr simply asserts that the fossils depicted are related by descent with modification without offering any proof as to how the phenotypes actually changed. Rather than telling us how these organisms evolved, Mayr engages in “hand-waving” by merely stating that they did. DCD is a plausible explanation, but certainly not the only explanation—one could just as easily appeal to design or special creation given only these fossils.

Mayr next appeals to homology to support DCD. Homology is defined as similar characteristics in different species that are “derived by evolution from an equivalent characteristic in the nearest common ancestor of the two species.”<sup>39</sup> He uses the example of bones from a human, cat, whale and bat, labeling the homologous structures in each. The only problem is that in order to prove DCD from homology, one must assume DCD happened in the first place. This is circular reasoning at its worst. Homologous structures could just as easily be explained by design. As Casey Luskin notes: “it is still entirely possible that homology, which sometimes fits common ancestry, is really due to common design, where the Designer used certain blueprints over and over again while creating certain organisms.”<sup>40</sup>

Mayr presents the famous embryonic drawings of Ernst Haeckel as yet another proof of DCD. However, it has been pointed out by Jonathan Wells and even acknowledged by Futuyma and Gould that Haeckel altered his drawings in order for them to appear to be more similar than they really are.<sup>41</sup> The truth is, at their earliest stage of development, the embryos depicted in Haeckel’s drawings look nothing alike. That Mayr doesn’t acknowledge this but only states that “Haeckel had substituted dog embryos for

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 26

<sup>40</sup> Luskin – “Icons Still Standing”

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Wells, Icons of Evolution p.108

the human ones, but they were so similar to humans that these (if available) would have made the same point,”<sup>42</sup> is disappointing to say the least. Mayr then appeals to the recapitulation (reappearance during development) of gills in human embryos as further proof of DCD. The problem with this “proof” is that the pharyngeal folds that Mayr terms “gills” are not gills at all; they are small folds that develop into such structures as the inner ear and the parathyroid gland. As Wells notes: “they are never ‘gill-like’ except in the superficial sense that they form a series of parallel lines in the neck region.”<sup>43</sup>

Mayr, as well as Dawkins regard the genetic code as strong evidence for DCD. Their reasoning is that the genetic code is the same for all living organisms.<sup>44</sup> Dawkins regards this as “near-conclusive proof” of DCD.<sup>45</sup> Though the universality of the genetic code fits well with the theory of DCD, it fits just as well with a design theory—organisms share a genetic code because they are created from the same elements by the same designer to inhabit the same planet obeying the same laws of physics and chemistry.

Mayr’s final proof of DCD is the evidence of transition from ape to man. “No well-informed person any longer questions the descent of man from primates and more specifically from apes. The evidence for this conclusion is simply too overwhelming...”<sup>46</sup> His evidence consists of three parts: 1) The anatomical similarity between primates and humans, 2) the intermediate stages between early and modern man, and 3) the molecular similarities between humans and chimpanzees. We saw earlier how anatomical similarity can only demonstrate DCD if DCD is assumed to begin with. The same is true for molecular similarities—they can just as easily be seen as evidence for

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<sup>42</sup> Mayr, 28

<sup>43</sup> Wells, 106

<sup>44</sup> Mayr, 40

<sup>45</sup> Dawkins, 270

<sup>46</sup> Mayr, 235

common design. Mayr's appeal to the smooth transition of the hominid fossil record however, must be looked at more carefully. Mayr himself concedes "most hominid fossils are extremely incomplete. They may consist of part of a mandible, or the upper part of a skull without face and teeth, or only part of the extremities. Subjectivity is inevitable in the reconstruction of the missing parts."<sup>47</sup> Fellow Darwinist Gould agrees, "[m]ost hominid fossils, even though they serve as a basis for endless speculation and elaborate storytelling, are fragments of jaws and scraps of skulls."<sup>48</sup> Appealing to the work of the work of various studies, Luskin comes to the following conclusion:

"So what fossils are there to link the chimp-like members of *Australopithecus* with the fossils of the genus *Homo*, which basically represents modern humans? The answer is noting. Between the two are great skeletal differences with regards to locomotion and a large gap in brain size, with nothing in between. The 'missing link,' it would seem, is still missing."<sup>49</sup>

To put the hominid fossil record in perspective, Constance Holden, writing in *Science* states: "The primary scientific evidence is a pitifully small array of bones from which to construct man's evolutionary history. One anthropologist has compared the task to that of reconstructing the plot of *War and Peace* with 13 randomly selected pages."<sup>50</sup>

As one can see, Mayr's "proofs" of DCD aren't quite as strong as he makes them out to be. Even less credible are the supposed demonstrations of Natural Selection created by Dawkins using computers. To demonstrate the apparent ability of blind chance plus Natural Selection to create complexity from randomness, Dawkins appeals to the power of "cumulative selection."<sup>51</sup> Dawkins takes the Shakespearean line METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL and asks us to imagine a system whereby all

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<sup>47</sup> Mayr, 239

<sup>48</sup> Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* 1980 p.126 cited in Luskin – "Icons Still Standing"

<sup>49</sup> Luskin – "Icons Still Standing" cf. footnotes 49, 50, and 51

<sup>50</sup> cited in Wells, 220

<sup>51</sup> Dawkins, 47-49

twenty-eight character spaces are randomly assigned a letter such as WDLTMNLT DTJBSWIRZREZLMQCO P. Dawkins then notes that if there are letters in this ‘generation’ that are in the right spot to spell out the target sequence, they are retained and the process is repeated. Thus, one could arrive at the target sequence in around fifty or so ‘generations.’ Dawkins compares this to Natural Selection’s ability to generate complex organs by small incremental steps.

The problem with Dawkins’ ‘demonstration’ of Natural Selection’s ability is that throughout the entire process, intelligence is the guiding factor. The computer knows what the target sequence is and selects letters that match it at every step. There is nothing natural about this process. Dawkins, Mayr, and Darwin all state very clearly that Natural Selection is unguided and non-teleological. If Dawkins’ simulation demonstrates anything, it is the power of intelligence-guided selection rather than Natural Selection. Dawkins’ second ‘demonstration’ suffers from this same weakness. For in the case of his “biomorphs,” he himself is the one guiding the process by choosing which “creature” looks most like a desired shape.<sup>52</sup>

As we can see, the various ‘proofs’ and ‘demonstrations’ of Natural Selection to produce DCD put forth by some of the top Darwinian proponents are all highly subjective and fit well with other views of biological development such as Intelligent Design. Appealing to some of the above-mentioned problems with Natural Selection producing DCD, as well as noting Natural Selection’s complete inability to explain the origin of the very information it is passing on from generation to generation, Dembski offers the following view:

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp.52-74

...let us be clear that the Darwinian mechanism of selection and inheritance with modification will continue to occupy a significant place in evolutionary theory. Nevertheless its complete and utter dominance in evolutionary theory—that selection and inheritance with modification together account for the full diversity of life—will have to be relinquished. As a mechanism for conserving, adapting and honing already existing biological structures, the Darwinian mechanism is ideally suited. But as a mechanism for innovation irreducibly complex biological structures, it utterly lacks the informational resources.<sup>53</sup>

Dembski is correct in his critique of the ability of Natural Selection to account for all of the biodiversity on the planet throughout history. As is Behe when he asks “Can we really extrapolate the results of simple drug-resistance in a virus to the development of enormously complex biological traits in every phylum throughout time?”<sup>54</sup> Stephen Meyer agrees:

“Few biologists dispute that natural selection produces small-scale ‘micro-evolutionary’ changes such as those in the size and shape of Galapagos finch beaks. But many now doubt that the Darwinian mechanism explains the large scale ‘macro-evolutionary’ innovations necessary to build new organisms (such as birds) in the first place. Thus, developmental biologist Scott Gilbert of Swarthmore University argues that ‘natural selection explains the survival of the fittest, but not the arrival of the fittest.’”<sup>55</sup>

However, such critiques are unwelcome in mainstream science mainly because DCD by Natural Selection or “Darwinism,” has become almost a religion to many of these scientists. For many, DCD is more faith than fact.

University of Arizona Philosophy professor Jim Lippard, himself a believer in DCD, is honest in his evaluation of some of his fellow Darwinian proponents: “When commitment to a particular theory is greater than commitment to scientific methods, the scientist becomes a ‘true believer’ who falls back upon irrational modes of defense. This analysis is frequently applied to creationists, but unfortunately there are times when it

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<sup>53</sup> Dembski, 180

<sup>54</sup> Behe – “Fatuous Filmmaking”

<sup>55</sup> Stephen Meyer – “Darwin’s Public Defenders”

applies to the opponents of creationism as well.”<sup>56</sup> Perhaps the greatest example of a “true believer” in Darwinism is Dawkins. In his introduction to *The Blind Watchmaker*, he states “Darwinism encompasses all of life...It provides the only satisfying explanation for why we all exist, why we are the way that we are. It is the bedrock on which rest all the disciplines know as the humanities...Darwinian evolution, as one reviewer has observed, ‘is the most portentous natural truth that science has yet discovered’. I’d add, ‘or is likely to discover.’”<sup>57</sup> Lest anyone be swayed from the faith by lack of evidence, Dawkins assures them that “[t]he present lack of a definitely accepted account of the origin of life should certainly not be taken as a stumbling block for the whole Darwinian world view, as it occasionally – probably with wishful thinking – is.”<sup>58</sup> For Dawkins, DCD is a settled issue in spite of its difficulties: “Of course it is difficult to pin down the precise identity of ancestors, and there is a good case for not even trying to do so. But to make statements that encourage others to conclude that there never *were* any ancestors is to debauch language and betray truth. (emphasis original)”<sup>59</sup> In other words, DCD may be examined, but never spoken against. Indeed, even among scientists DCD is not to be criticized. Meyer quotes theoretical biologist Danny Hillis as saying, “There’s a feeling in biology that scientists should keep their dirty laundry hidden...there’s a strong school of thought in biology that one should never question Darwin in public.”<sup>60</sup> Upon publication of his book *Icons of Evolution*, which criticizes textbook publishers for including misleading examples of DCD and for not teaching the controversy of DCD, he was severely criticized by mainstream scientists. In a critique of Wells book, Tamzek

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<sup>56</sup> Jim Lippard – “How Not To Argue With Creationists”

<sup>57</sup> Dawkins, x

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 166

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 284

<sup>60</sup> Meyer – “Darwin’s Public Defenders”

criticizes Wells for not proposing a better explanation and states that until the controversies are resolved, there is no real advantage of putting it into textbooks.<sup>61</sup> However, this seems to go against the very nature of science as the search for the *truth* concerning the way in which nature operates. In this same article, Tamzek quotes Robert Hagen as saying that “we should accept it (DCD) until nature prompts someone to think of one that is better or more complete.”<sup>62</sup> In other words, science should always appear to have the answers even if there are serious problems with those answers. This is definitely not science at its best. Bernard Ramm’s remarks on DCD, made almost a half-century ago, still hold true today:

If evolution is to ‘stick’ as a scientific theory it must establish *precise theory*. In spite of the fact that as yet no precise theory is forthcoming, the evolutionists have unbounded faith in the *vague theory*. This is not science at its best...Are other theories accorded the status of facts or truths if they are theories without verified mechanisms?” (footnote)...All we are trying to assert at this point is a call for a clear recognition that the theory of evolution is a probability statement. Its life must not depend on dogmatism of biologist, but on the actually forthcoming evidence and data. This data may increase the status of the theory, or weaken it or even destroy it. It is not true to scientific epistemology to give it the benediction of finality or to even treat it as a scientific sacred cow.<sup>63</sup>

For Darwinians such as Mayr, however, DCD is the only viable answer because there is “no other natural explanation.”<sup>64</sup> And indeed, this is the crux of the matter—DCD is built on the assumption that the natural world is all there is. Any appeal to forces outside of nature are rejected *a priori*. This rules out any design in nature leaving DCD as the only possible answer to the question of life’s origin. The facts themselves didn’t lead Darwin and his later followers to the theory of DCD; their naturalistic worldviews did. The facts to which Darwinian proponents appeal can certainly be seen to fit naturalistic DCD, but

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<sup>61</sup> Nic Tamzek – “Icons of Obfuscation”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. p.269-270

<sup>64</sup> Mayr, 39 cf. Dawkins, 119

they can just as easily fit a host of other worldviews such as Intelligent Design. Initially, scientific endeavor began as an attempt to explain creation; however, DCD is a scientific endeavor that attempts to explain away any idea of a creator. To claim neutrality as to its religious or philosophical worldview is completely inaccurate.

Many minds have struggled with the intriguing implications of the evolutionary process, especially as it relates to humankind...the role of God in the affairs of humankind has been relegated by many to the place of myth. But in the end it seems they have succeeded only in replacing one set of myths with others. We are all incurable believers!<sup>65</sup>

DCD is a naturalistic theory that has yet to be thoroughly proven and in order for it to be accepted by the average critical thinking person as a fact, it should be able to withstand any and all lines of inquiry. If it is unable to do so, then an individual has every right to reject DCD and the naturalistic worldview upon which it is built.

It is most unfortunate that Darwin's theory of common descent with modification by means of Natural Selection has attained the level of adherence that it has with the large amount of subjective evidence that is put forward as its "proof." It is even more unfortunate that for some it has become an all-encompassing worldview:

"So enormous, ramifying, and consistent has the evidence for evolution become that if anyone could now disprove it, I should have my conception of the orderliness of the universe so shaken as to lead me to doubt even my own existence. If you like, then, I will grant you that in an absolute sense evolution is not a fact, or rather, that it is no more a fact than that you are hearing or reading these words."<sup>66</sup>

This is most unfortunate indeed, for DCD by means of Natural Selection is far from proven; and until it is, mainstream science should be open to criticism and revision and with humility realize that theirs is not the only viable account of life's history. It is fitting to end an examination of this subject with Lippard's words: "The creation versus

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<sup>65</sup> Templeton and Herrmann, The God Who Would Be Known p.163

<sup>66</sup> H.J. Muller cited in Moran – "Evolution is a Fact and a Theory"

evolution debate is already one which tends to generate more heat than light. To attempt to gain converts by means other than reasoned argument supported by evidence is to engage in a war of propaganda, in which the first casualty is truth.”<sup>67</sup>

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