

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

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THE DEAN OF EVOLUTION

A Review of Ernst Mayr's Latest Book

by Henry M. Morris*

With the passing in recent years of the three most revered scientific spokesmen for evolution—Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, and now Stephen Jay Gould—Professor Ernst Mayr is left as the unquestioned dean of the modern evolutionary establishment.

Gould, Asimov, and Sagan were all three extremely prolific and brilliant writers. All three were atheistic professors at prestigious eastern universities (Gould at Harvard, Asimov at Boston University, Sagan at Cornell), and all three were effusive and vigorous anti-creationists. They were formidable opponents (but eminently quotable), and we miss them. All three died at relatively young ages.

But that leaves Ernst Mayr, long-time professor of biology at Harvard. Dr. Mayr was born in 1904 and is (at this writing) still very much alive, and nearing the century mark. Dr. Gould recently called him "the greatest living evolutionary biologist and a writer of extraordinary insight and clarity" (in a jacket blurb on Mayr's latest book).

Mayr's New Book

And that book is the subject of this article. Its title is intriguing—*What Evolution Is* (Basic Books, 2001, 318 pages),—

for if anyone could speak authoritatively on such a subject, it should be Professor Mayr. In his adulatory foreword, Jared Diamond, another leading modern evolutionist, concludes: "There is no better book on evolution. There will never be another book like it" (p. xii).

That evaluation should give any reader very high expectations. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Mayr first shows his disdain for creationism, not even considering its arguments. He simply says:

It is now actually misleading to refer to evolution as a theory, considering the massive evidence that has been discovered over the last 140 years documenting its existence. Evolution is no longer a theory, it is simply a fact (p. 275).

He dismissed the evidence for creation as unworthy of further discussion. "The claims of the creationists" he says, "have been refuted so frequently and so thoroughly that there is no need to cover this subject once more" (p. 269).

Ignoring Creation Evidence

He himself, however, has apparently not bothered to read any creationist or secular anti-evolutionist scientific books or articles. Or at least that is what one would

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infer from the fact that none of them or their arguments and evidence are even mentioned in his book.

No mention is made by Mayr, for example, of creationist expositions of the amazing created designs in living systems, nor of the effects of God's curse on the creation, or of the significance of the great flood in understanding the geologic record. He does not even acknowledge the significance of naturalistic catastrophism or of such scientific concepts as complexity or probability. Current ideas about "intelligent design" are never mentioned. The origins of all things are due to time, chance, and natural selection, no matter how complex and interdependent they may be, according to Professor Mayr, who had been (along with Julian Huxley, George Simpson, and a few others) primarily responsible for the so-called modern evolutionary synthesis (or neo-Darwinism) back in the 1930s and 1940s.

Neither does Mayr seem aware that there are now thousands of credentialed and knowledgeable scientists (including a great many biologists) who reject evolution, giving not even a nod to the Creation Research Society, or to ICR, or any other creationist organization. He does occasionally refer to God or to Christianity, but only in passing, and always in a context that indicates that he does not believe in either one. He, like his three younger colleagues, is an atheist, and this naturally constrains him to ignore any possible theological implications of the origins issues.

The Alleged Evidence for Evolution

Mayr's new book is beautifully written and does contain much good material, but it will not convert many to evolutionism, even though he does devote a chapter to what he thinks are the evidences for evolution. These evidences are essentially the

same as those used 140 years ago by Darwin in the *Origin* (fossils, comparative morphology, embryological similarities and recapitulation, vestigial structures, and geographical distribution). Mayr adds nothing new to these arguments, ignoring the fact that creationists (and even a number of evolutionists) have long since refuted all of them. He does devote a brief section to the more recent "evidence" from molecular biology. But that also has been vigorously disputed by a number of specialists in this field, especially the supposed evolutionary relationships implied by the molecules. Even Mayr admits that "molecular clocks are not nearly as constant as often believed" (p. 37), but he does not mention any of the numerous contradictory relationships implied by these biochemical studies (e.g., the well-known genomic similarities of humans and bananas).

As do most evolutionists, Mayr spends much time in discussing microevolution, whereas modern creationists only reject macroevolution. He devotes five chapters to microevolution and only one to macroevolution. This particular chapter is quite long, discussing many speculative theories about how macroevolutionary changes might be produced, but there is one vital deficiency. He gives *no* example of any macroevolutionary change *known* to have happened. In other words, macroevolution seems never to have occurred within the several thousand years of recorded history. Thus, *real* evolution (as distinct from variation, recombination, hybridization, and other such "horizontal" changes) does not happen at present. Where, we would ask Professor Mayr, are there any living forms in the process of evolutionary change? He gives no examples, of course, because there are none.

As far as pre-human history is concerned, Dr. Mayr does insist that the fossil

record documents past evolution. He cites the usual claims—horses, *Archaeopteryx*, mammal-like reptiles, walking whales, etc.—which are very equivocal, at best, and have all been shown by creationists to be invalid as transitional forms. Instead of a handful of highly doubtful examples, there ought to be thousands of obvious transitional forms in the fossils if evolution had really been occurring. Yet Mayr admits,

Wherever we look at the living biota, . . . discontinuities are overwhelmingly frequent. . . . The discontinuities are even more striking in the fossil record. New species usually appear in the fossil record suddenly, not connected with their ancestors by a series of intermediates (p. 189).

Professor Mayr still says that the fossils are “the most convincing evidence for the occurrence of evolution” (p. 13). Yet he also says that “the fossil record remains woefully inadequate” (p. 69). Thus, as creationists have often pointed out, there is no *real* evidence of either present or past evolution.

We have repeatedly noted also that the scientific reason why this is so is because real evolution to any higher level of complexity is impossible by the law of entropy, which states the proven fact that every system of *any kind* “tends” to go toward lower complexity, unless constrained otherwise by some pre-designed external program and mechanism.


Yet Ernst Mayr seems either to ignore or misunderstand this key argument of the creationists. Here is what he says:

Actually there is no conflict, because the law of entropy is valid only for closed systems, whereas the evolution of a species of organisms takes place in an open system in which organisms can reduce entropy at the expense of the environment and the

sun supplies a continuing input of energy (p. 8).

And that’s all he says about one of the key arguments against evolution. This ubiquitous dodge of the evolutionists has been discredited again and again by creationists, and one would think that this “greatest living evolutionary biologist” in this “best book on evolution” would at least take notice of our arguments! At least half of America’s population, according to many polls, are creationists, apparently agreeing more with us than with Mayr.

An open system and external energy are, indeed, *necessary* conditions for a system to grow in complexity, but most definitely are *not sufficient* conditions. The question is just *how* does the sun’s energy produce complexity in an open system? The fact is that the application of external heat energy to an open system (such as from the sun to the earth) will *increase* the entropy (that is, decrease the organized complexity) in *any* open system, if that’s all there is. This is a basic principle of thermodynamics, and neither Mayr nor any other evolutionist has answered this problem. Evolution seems to be impossible by the known laws of science.

Professor Mayr does not deal with the theological or Biblical evidences, of course. For those who believe in God and the Bible, on the other hand, creation—not evolution—is, to appropriate Mayr’s words, “simply a fact.” Evolution is merely a belief held by many who “willingly are ignorant” (II Peter 3:5) of the strong evidences and arguments for creation, and who don’t even bother to consider them. In the words of the apostle Paul: “Where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (I Corinthians 1:20). 

IF AN IDEA AGREES WITH SCRIPTURE, DOES THAT MAKE IT UNSCIENTIFIC?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

It has become common for evolutionists to claim that science and religion are two different spheres of endeavor, which do not overlap. The oft-repeated mantra, “Evolution is science while creation is religion,” has appeared in education law and teacher guidelines. But what it really means is that evolution and science are true, while creation and religion are something other than true; relegated to the realm of myth, perhaps.

I was debating the campus evolutionists at a major university several years ago when he blurted out, “If a concept is part of Christianity, if it’s taught in the Bible, it doesn’t belong in public education. It might even be right, but science must look for another answer”!

I’m certain the professor won’t defend the implication of his statement once he reads this article, but the statement in one form or another often finds itself in school board hearings and media releases. It is time to expose its absurdity and provide a ready answer to it.

Remember that Christianity and Scripture claim to deal with truth—real objective truth. To delete all concepts mentioned in Scripture and supporting Christian doctrine from the science classroom would mean losing some key concepts, including, to list just a few:

The sun puts out heat (Psalm 19:6), teaching God’s abundant provision for creation.

Gravity (Matthew 10:29), teaching God’s loving concern for all His creation.

The Hydrologic Cycle (Ecclesiastes 1:7), teaching God’s sovereign control over nature.

The Principle of Isostasy (Isaiah 40:12) promising Earth’s ultimate renewal.

A Spherical Earth (Psalm 103:12), teaching God’s forgiveness of our sins.

The Size of the Universe (Isaiah 55:9), teaching God’s vast superiority over man.

The Unaccountable Number of Stars (Jeremiah 33:22), teaching God’s concern for the people of Israel.

Atmospheric Movement (John 3:8), illustrating the work of the Holy Spirit in a classic salvation passage (v.16).

The Importance of Blood to Life (Leviticus 17:11), in a passage dealing with atonement for sin.

Differences between Animals and Distinctness of Man (I Corinthians 15:39), explaining the nature of the resurrection.

Rotation of the Earth (Job 38:12–14), God’s knowledge dwarfs man’s knowledge.

This list revealing the Biblical basis for science could be extended considerably. Note that each scientific truth is coupled with an essential Christian doctrine. Should science delete these scientific concepts, just because they are part of Christianity? How absurd!

Creation is also a vital Christian doctrine, yet its claim of the separate origin of each plant and animal type as seen in Genesis 1:11–12, 20–21, and 24–25 is bolstered by biology observation, but denied by the unobserved evolutionary myth of common ancestry of all life.

Yes, creation is in Scripture, but so what? It’s still true. Science teaching should be about the teaching of truth, not unobserved ideas about the past. Our classrooms would see greater benefit by deleting the nature myth of evolution, and including all scientific evidence, even if it is compatible with Scripture. 🌿



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