

EVOLUTION IS IMPOSSIBLE

If you repeat a lie often enough, people will eventually to come to believe it.¹

Before presenting the argument leading to the conclusion encapsulated in the title to this paper we will follow the advice of the late Dorothy Sayers and define terms, establish distinctions, and lay down principles.²

Terms, Distinctions & Principles

A. Terms.

What does the term *evolution* signify? The word is taken from the Latin verb *evolvere*, to unroll or unfold; to disclose or unravel. It is used in two ways in English. It indicates, in the first place, the faculty of a species to adjust so that, for example, progressive generations of a species of moth in a particular area develop an alteration in colour to address circumstances that otherwise might lead to the species' end; that enables viruses to 'mutate' to survive the impediment imposed by new medicines. This, so-called *micro* evolution, is simply development *within* a species expressing part of the scope built into it. The faculty demonstrates the maxim of Aristotle that nature does not default in necessities. It is a similar faculty that allows dogs to be as various as the Doberman and Dachshund, and horses as various as the Shetland and the Thoroughbred. Every breeder of stock in flora and fauna is familiar with it. Our knowledge of the ambit of species is limited, but one thing is clear: every species has a framework and *micro* evolution cannot transgress its limits.

In the second place, *evolution* refers to the changes alleged to have enabled one species, or group of species, to develop from another (as e.g., birds are alleged to have developed from reptiles). By imaginative extension, this alleged faculty is said to account, through development from the simplest living cell to animals of the highest sophistication, for the appearance of every natural thing. This is so-called *macro* evolution. It is *this* signification of the term that we address here.

The word *impossible* means something which is incapable of real existence. In our use of the word we do not mean that a theory *cannot be conceived to be* true, but that it *cannot be* true. Critical to the understanding of the issue is the distinction between mental being and real being. The way something exists in mind does not necessarily reflect its existence in the real, or provide any guarantee of its real existence.

Cause is that which exercises influence unto the be (*esse*, existence) of a thing dependent in regard to be.

B. Next, the order of procedure—in two parts.

First, any consideration of the subject *evolution* must be based on reason and not on opinion—no matter how eminent the opinion holder; no matter how widespread it

¹ Attributed to Joseph Goebbels (1887-1945), propaganda minister for Adolf Hitler.

² In her celebrated 1947 Oxford paper, *The Lost Tools of Learning*.

may be held, whether by a single person or by half the world, whether by scientists, social commentators, philosophers, journalists, or the populace at large.³ Again, the subject must be considered in the light of reason, not ideology. It must be grounded in facts and not in conjecture or imagination. It must be *objective*—conformed to reality, not *subjective*—existing only in mind.

C. *Secondly*, the human mind can operate in one of two ways, inductively or deductively. *Induction*—proceeding from effects to cause—is the mode of science, of criminal detection, of the court room.⁴ Because it depends on sufficiently enumerated samples (effects) of the universal subject (cause) to which it argues, and the ambit of the samples necessary may be hidden, induction frequently fails to attain certitude. So the scientist pronouncing a judgement about the subject of his studies, may discover he has acted on insufficient data; and a jury, misled by a defect in the evidence, may convict the wrong man.

Deduction—which proceeds in the opposite fashion, from cause to effect—is the mode of Euclidian geometry, of mathematics, of logic and of much of Aristotelian metaphysics. Here the effect is contained in the cause: if the cause is certain, the effect is certain.⁵ Thus, because these effects (known as corollaries) are contained in the cause, it is certain that the internal angles of a triangle total 180° , and that the square on the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. For the same reason it is certain that $2 + 2 = 4$. Certain, also, is the conclusion in the following deductive argument, known as a syllogism:

Man is mortal.
But John Smith is a man.
Ergo, John Smith is mortal.

Accordingly, to reach certitude on this much debated topic, our investigation ought to proceed *deductively* and not *inductively*.

D. The next issue concerns the fact that *evolution* is a theory about *being*, that is, about the essence or nature of natural things. The argument must, then, take place at the level of being—a higher level than that at which science operates, for science judges of things only according as they are observable and cannot offer conclusions about its objects save in terms of observations;—a higher level than mathematics, for even though it is applied in reality, as in calculating change at the cash register, the rate of descent of an airliner, or the stress that may be tolerated by a bridge structure, mathematics deals primarily with mental being.

³ Least of all the vacuous conclusions reached in television panel chat shows where the participants, speaking at cross purposes, pretend to solve the problems of the universe in twenty minutes.

⁴ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has his detective hero, Sherlock Holmes, assert that he is engaged in 'deduction' as he follows clues to a murderer, and insist that his conclusions are as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid. [cf. *A Study in Scarlet*, ch. 2]. It is so much nonsense. Holmes' fictional activities involved *induction*, not *deduction*. That his method was capable of arriving at a false conclusion from the evidences was well demonstrated by Colin Dexter in a redaction of the Holmes mystery *A Case of Identity*. Cf. *A Case of Mis-identity*, in Dexter's *Morse's Greatest Mystery & Other Stories*, London, 1993.

⁵ See the *Appendix* for an extract from Maritain's *Introduction to Logic* illustrating the distinction.

The argument must occur at the level where a thing is considered not as manifesting sensible phenomena, nor as it is measurable, but *as it is a being*, that is, as an exerciser of existence; in other words, at the philosophical level. But straightaway a problem arises. For to the modern understanding, philosophy produces no certitude, only a multitude of private views which have little to do with reality; philosophy is nothing but opinion.

There is a reason for this disquiet, a cause almost 500 years old, whose influence has gained momentum enormously in the last forty years. We will not go into that here. Suffice it to say that there is only one philosophy that can assure us of the truth, the philosophy which accurately reflects reality. It is that to which we appeal, the metaphysics of Aristotle corrected in the light of his greater vision by the thirteenth century Italian Dominican philosopher, St Thomas Aquinas.

E. Finally, some logical principles.

What is a principle? Aristotle defines it as “that wherefrom something proceeds in any manner whatsoever”.⁶ A *logical* principle is an immediate truth, a judgement immediately known, shedding light on reality. We are ratiocinative beings: that is, we arrive at the truth by progressive steps through the working of intellect on facts in the light of principles. Without principles we are as blind men and, as Christ remarked, if the blind should lead the blind both will fall into a pit.⁷

Supreme Principle—the principle of non-contradiction

All reasoning begins with this principle which is succinctly put in three assertions (“A” here stands for any element of reality):

A is A;

A is not non-A;

Between A and non-A there is no third.

This is the fundamental logical principle. If a man refuses to acknowledge its truth he cannot speak. For every acceptance or rejection of a proposition presupposes it.

Principle of Reason of Be

Of whatever is, there is a reason of be, (or more colloquially, nothing comes from nothing).

Being is understandable and this, the first principle of reality, exemplifies that truth. It is the principle to which the child appeals from his earliest years with his constant plaint ‘Why?’ and demonstrates that the native intellect of the child sees better than professors of secular philosophy that there is no element of reality that does not have a cause.

Principle of Indeterminacy

That which can be many, is not from itself one of the many.

⁶ *Metaphysics* V, i

⁷ Luke 6: 39

If water from itself was hot, wherever there was water, there would be hot water. But water can be both hot and cold. Whatever it is that makes water be hot, then, is something other than water—e.g., the sun, or a fire. A man can be alive and can be dead. Whatever it is that makes (and keeps) him alive, then, is something other than the man himself.

Principle of Receptivity

Whatever is received, is received according to the mode of the recipient.

Water poured into a bucket takes the shape and the capacity (i.e., the mode) of the bucket; it cannot exceed that capacity or shape to match in these respects, for instance, the water poured into a bath. Words spoken in the presence of a dog and of a 5 year old boy: "Take the bucket and put it in the shed", are received according to the capacity of each. To the dog the words are but sounds. But because the boy is a recipient of a qualitatively higher mode than the dog, he takes from the sounds the realities they signify. In a similar fashion, the intellect of one man may be more powerful than that of another, the former understanding with ease the content of some statement that the latter will gather only with difficulty and much illustration.

Principle of Diverse Reason

The same cannot be the reason of opposites.

The cause of heat in the water is opposite to that which will render it cold.

Principle of Causal Proportion

Cause is proportionate to effect and effect to cause.

One does not set about lighting a room by beating a drum, nor fill a room with sound by turning on a light. In each case a cause proportionate to the effect to be produced is required.

Principle of Finality

Every agent acts for the sake of an end.

The principle is self-evident. The builder builds a house to shelter his family. The shoemaker repairs shoes to make a living. A man uses a computer to assist him with his work. A woman makes a dress to clothe herself fashionably. It applies no less in the natural world. A tree drops seeds that its species may be propagated; the bird builds a nest in which to produce and nurture its young; the fox chases the hare to feed itself; and the hare flees the fox to preserve its life.

With these preliminaries out of the way, let us turn to the deductive argument.

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The Argument

A theory which does not conform to reality is impossible.

But the Darwinian theory of evolution does not conform to reality.

Therefore, the Darwinian theory of evolution is impossible.

Nota bene: The first line of the syllogism (called the *major* premise) sets forth a principle (i.e., a logical cause). The second line (called the *minor* premise) sets out a fact. The third line is the conclusion (i.e., the logical effect). The conclusion follows *only if both principle and fact are proven to be true*. Let the reader weigh the elaboration that follows and make a judgement.

The principle

A theory which does not conform to reality is impossible.

Theory names a preliminary judgement of the mind. *Impossible* (as said above) means something which cannot be true. The true (i.e., logical truth) is the identity between what is asserted about reality and reality. Once these elements are understood, the principle stated is self evident.

The fact

The Darwinian theory of evolution does not conform to reality.

Darwinian theory is grounded in the contention that the essence or nature of every natural thing is sufficiently explained by matter developing under the influence of chance and the passage of time. This contention is elaborated in the *Appendix*.

1) *Time* is not a cause of material being but the measure of its successive existence, as a ruler is not a cause of a piece of wood but the measure of its dimensions.

2) Neither is *chance* a cause. Chance is an accidental consequence arising on the effects of convergent causes. It exists only through relation to a particular cause or causes. In this way it exists in the mind of one whose knowledge is limited to such cause or causes. But in an absolute sense chance does not exist, for nothing follows on the causes which is not solely attributable to them.

The man whose digging to plant a tree uncovers buried treasure regards his digging as a happy chance. The fighter pilot who, firing his guns at an enemy aircraft accidentally strikes a parachutist, regards his shooting as an unhappy chance. In the first example the causes are the act of one man in burying treasure and that of another in digging a hole; in the second, the act of one man in descending through the air by parachute and of another firing an aeroplane's guns.⁸ One who knew where the treasure was buried and where the tree planter was going to dig could foresee how the two causes might converge. As could one who had an overview of the trajectories of the aeroplane and the parachutist.⁹

⁸ In both cases there is ontological convergence; in the second, there is also temporal convergence.

⁹ This becomes clearer if we remove the accidental character. If instead of digging to plant a tree, the digger follows a plan showing where the treasure is buried, his finding of it will not be a matter of chance. And if, in lieu of shooting accidentally at the parachutist, the pilot shoots intentionally at a manned barrage balloon, the effect is the same but there is no question of chance.

A dog breeder may regard it as chance when his black bitch, joined to an unknown black dog of the same breed produces a white pup in her litter. But he will not do so thereafter because he will know the bitch has in her inheritance a gene which may produce that result.

A card game, a game of chance, is premised on the fact that each player knows only the value of the cards he holds. But one who knows the cards held by each of the players knows that the game will be won by the best hand, provided the player has the skill to use the cards to advantage.¹⁰ A lottery is determined by a random selection of numbers. A ticket holder with numbers that correspond with those selected is said to win by chance. But the selection (the effect) follows necessarily on the interplay of the converging causes, whatever the means chosen to determine the selection. An intellect of sufficient power and knowledge of their operations could see how the converging causes produced the selection that results.

Chance adds nothing, therefore, to the causes whose accidental convergence gives rise to it.¹¹

3) The Darwinian contention, accordingly, amounts to this—that matter alone is a sufficient cause for the variety of material things and the intricate order which surrounds them.

4) But the *Principle of Indeterminacy* precludes this as a possibility. If matter can (for instance) be a tree, a dog or a man, it cannot from itself be any one of these three, but there must be some other cause (causes) that makes matter to be (each of) a tree, a dog and a man. Matter is the principle of *unity* among the three—for each of them is something material: it cannot be the principle of their *variety*, for their variety is an opposite character to their unity and *the same cannot be the reason of opposites*.

5) Moreover, matter cannot dispose itself in the realities tree, dog or man unless it is brought to this by some cause *extrinsic* to itself, as wood, metal and glass cannot dispose themselves in the reality which is a house unless they are brought to this by a builder. That is, matter requires an *efficient cause*, or agent, in order that it be realised as a tree, a dog or a man.

6) Further, that matter manifest itself in these realities requires that there be, in each case, a cause which specifies (or determines) it to assume its reality. Matter alone is insufficient to explain why each is different.

7) Hence it can be seen that matter operates as a cause to this extent only, that it is *what is determined*. It does not determine. Inasmuch, then, as Darwin's theory

¹⁰ So, the card cheat prospers in the degree to which he can replace the element of chance with knowledge of his opponents' hands.

¹¹ This presents the Darwinian with a problem for he denies the existence of any cause but the material. We address this a little later. Note that while he holds this theoretical position in relation to the sources of natural things, he does not hold it when dealing with the real world of everyday life.

ascribes to matter the office of *the determining cause* of natural things, it misconceives its nature.

8) The determining cause (which we refer to hereafter by its proper name, the *formal cause*, or *form*) has itself to *matter* as a recipient. *Whatever is received is received according to the mode of the recipient*, and the varieties of natural things, e.g., tree, dog and man, are sufficiently distinguished from each other in this that, in each, matter is received in a form distinct from the other. That one may be more noble than another arises from the fact that the form of one is more noble than the form of another.

9) Since *form* is, by definition, not material, it is incapable of alteration; that is, *form is immutable*. This is the reason why, from generation to generation, natural things do not vary except in accidentals. It is the reason why each natural thing retains its identity even though afflicted with the inevitable consequences of materiality—growing old, infirm and dying. And, since *there is proportion between cause and effect*, form is the reason why trees never reproduce anything but trees; dogs never anything but dogs; and men, never anything but men.¹²

10) Hence, it is *impossible* that the *form* of any natural being (*which determines it to be what it is*) could be transmuted into that of another; and accordingly, the very ground on which Darwinian evolutionary theory is based is false.

11) Further, the theory fails to acknowledge the fourth, and most crucial of the natural causes, the *final cause*, the end for the sake of which the agent, the *efficient cause*, acts in producing the natural thing for *every agent acts for the sake of an end*.

12) The distinctive mark of finality in nature is order, characterised by a marvellous ordination and subordination from the least to the greatest of its component parts. But *cause is proportional to effect and effect to cause*. Hence, the cause of order is an ordering cause. But the cause of order is intellect, and accordingly, the *efficient cause* of nature is intellectual.

13) Darwinian theory asserts that chance suffices to explain the immense variety of natural things if it is allowed a sufficient period of time. But chance is not a cause, only the accidental consequence of effects of convergent causes. It matters not, then, whether the accidental interactions of series of convergent causes was given the scope of *an infinite period of time*, without the intervention of intellect they could never produce order. But intellect does not achieve its ends (*final cause*) by chance, but by *efficient, formal and material* causation.

14) Accordingly, the appeal by Darwinian theory to chance is vacuous, albeit consistent with the irrational claim implicit in materialism that reality is without reason. In truth, the appeal to chance is an endeavour, by sleight of hand, to invoke the force of causes other than the material cause while denying their existence.

¹² The principle applies even though generators are instrumental, not principal, causes of their offspring.

15) Moreover, Darwinian theory ignores (takes for granted) the fundamental distinction in any natural thing between *what* it is, its nature or essence, and *that* it is, its existence (*esse*, or be). There must be a cause of the one no less than of the other, for *of whatever is, there is a reason of be*. No natural thing can be the reason of its own existence.

Summary of the argument—the *material* cause of any natural thing is *what is determined*; the *formal* cause is *what determines* it to be what it is; the *efficient* cause is that which places the form in the matter; and the *final* cause is the end for the sake of which the efficient cause acts. To all these, which go to make up *what the thing is*, there must be added, to bring about *that it is*, existence (*esse*, or be).¹³

16) It follows that the Darwinian theory of evolution does not conform to reality.

Conclusion

Therefore, the Darwinian theory of evolution is impossible.

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Confirmation from Science following the Inductive Method

With the *deductive* argument here presented the reader may wish to compare the *inductive* arguments advanced against the various elements of Darwinian theory by molecular biologist, Dr Michael Denton, in his *Evolution, A Theory In Crisis*¹⁴. His attack, in particular on the assertion that the immense variety of natural things has occurred as a result of nothing but chance, makes compelling reading. We will not trouble to summarise his arguments here but set out the conclusion at which he arrives after a thorough analysis of the scientific evidence. It accords with what has been proven above.

“Neither of the two fundamental axioms of Darwin’s macro evolutionary theory—the concept of the continuity of nature, that is, the idea of a functional continuum of all life forms linking all species together and ultimately leading back to a primaeval cell, and the belief that all the adaptive design of life has resulted from a blind random process—have been validated by one single empirical discovery or scientific advance since 1859. Despite more than a century of intensive effort on the part of evolutionary biologists, the major objections raised by Darwin’s critics such as Agassiz, Pictet, Bronn and Richard Owen have not been met.”¹⁵

Michael Baker

8th December 2009—*Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin*

¹³ On the doctrine of causality and chance see Aristotle (*Physics* II, iii-vi; *Metaphysics* V, 2), and St Thomas Aquinas (*In II Physics* 10 & 11; *In V Metaphysics* 2, 3)

¹⁴ London, 1985.

¹⁵ *Evolution, A Theory In Crisis*, London, 1985, p. 345

APPENDIX

- A. Extract from Jacques Maritain's *Introduction to Logic* illustrating the distinction between deduction and induction.

"This difference has its roots in the very nature of our mind, which cannot attain to truth except it base itself upon two kinds of essentially different principles: upon sense data and singular facts known through sense experience – the material principle of all our knowledge (from which all our knowledge is derived); and upon self-evident, self-known intelligible truths – formal principles of all our knowledge (first principles by which all our knowledge is demonstrated).

"To show how a conclusion derives from previously known universal truths, or in the terminology of the ancients, to 'resolve' a conclusion into the intelligible truths upon which it depends (and finally into the self-evident truths), is to proceed by the deductive or syllogistic method (*resolutio formalis*). To show how a conclusion is disengaged, so to speak, from sense experience, in other words, to resolve the conclusion into the facts from which our mind extracts it as from matter (*resolutio materialis*) is to proceed by the inductive method.

" In the syllogism we remain upon the intelligible plane, we move from one point of this plane to another, as a submarine that navigates horizontally upon the surface of the ocean. By induction we attain to the intelligible plane—we move from the sensible plane to the intelligible plane—as a submarine that navigates vertically upwards from below. It is in this sense that Aristotle and St Thomas teach that we have but two means of acquiring knowledge: viz., the syllogism, which proceeds from universal truths; and induction which proceeds from singular data. For all our knowledge depends formally upon first self-evident truths, and derives its origin materially from the singular and concrete reality perceived by the senses." [London (Sheed & Ward), 1937, pp. 258-9]

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- B. *Darwinian theory is grounded in the contention that the essence or nature of every natural thing is sufficiently explained by matter coupled with the operations of chance and the passage of time.*

[Note: To illustrate this contention, we adopt here the inductive method of science.]

"Darwin's theory implies that all evolution had come about by the interaction of two basic processes, random mutation and natural selection, and it meant that the ends arrived at were entirely the result of a succession of chance events."¹⁶

These two, 'random mutation' and 'natural selection', were the vehicles, as it were, by which chance operated. We should add to this assessment of Dr Denton one further influence Darwin claimed assisted in the realisation of his theory, the facility of the survival of the fittest. We consider each in turn.

Random mutation

¹⁶ Dr Michael Denton, *Evolution, A Theory In Crisis*, London, 1985, p. 43.

Mutation may occur episodically within a species so as to produce an atypical individual. But it never occurs so as to cause the individual to exceed the boundaries of the framework of its species, except perhaps in the case of a monster, which languishes and dies. There is no evidence that mutation has ever occurred in an individual of a species which has resulted somehow in the appearance of a new species.

To the working of intellect, under the influence of his ideology, Darwin sought to add the colour of imaginary being. It was sufficient if one could *imagine* that such an event had occurred for him to claim that it must have occurred.

Natural selection

The world is familiar with *artificial* 'selection'. Stock breeders, whether of fauna or flora, are engaged in the activity every day, breeding from existing stock varieties to fit parameters they have chosen. But each breeder knows well that there is a limit that he cannot transgress—the framework of the species. Until the work of Augustinian priest, Gregor Mendel [1822-1884] exposing the laws of genetics was recognised, this activity was conducted largely by trial and error.

There is ample evidence that 'selection' may occur naturally. An example currently in the news because there have been instances of their interbreeding, is the compatibility between the Grizzly Bear and the Polar Bear. It may well be that the two are but variants of the one species. The variation between the two, in colour and in habit, is ample evidence of natural variation to cope with different conditions. But there is no evidence that 'natural selection' has ever occurred so as to permit the development of one species into another.

Again, in making this claim, Darwin indulged his imagination, rather than his intellect.

Survival of the fittest

As with 'natural selection', there is no doubt that the conflict between members of certain species of plant or animal favouring the victor, even from their earliest moments of life, assists in promoting the vigour of such species. There is no evidence that this facility has ever enabled one species to develop into another.

The same comment about Darwin and his imagination applies.
