Evolution is Not Science
June 2000

This is Essay1a in a series of debate topics between CSFNM and NMSR.

Arguing for the resolution, on behalf of CSFNM: Roger Lenard.

Evolution is not Science; it fails to meet standards required by legitimate technical inquiry. Evolution is a naturalistic philosophy concerning how life may arise if only natural physical laws, time, and chance are allowed to operate. It isn't science because evolution disallows subjection to empirical and analytical requirements of falsification. Evolution fails to meet standards that allow an orderly transition from speculation to established scientific fact.

Science is causal. A detectable, verifiable occurrence produces predictable outcomes. Evolution purports causality because: 1. There is a geologic fossil record indicating progress over time from a common ancestor to the "filling of every available niche with life"; 2. It maintains a melioristic cause: Survival of the Fittest; and, 3. Mutations, accumulating over time, produce new entities, more capable of operating in the available environment. If true, evolution should be observable today. Evolutionary rhetoric purports new transitional forms; none withstand skeptical peer review.

Opposing 1., the geologic record is a testimony to rapid appearances of species sans transitional forms with intervening stasis. Further, great extinctions occurred so perhaps less than 1% of all species to ever have existed are still alive today. There is no indication that many of the now-extinct creatures are incompatible with today's environment; they haven't re-evolved to fill every available niche.

Darwinism maintains that mutations accumulate gradually over millions of years to result in a reproductively more successful offspring. There is no fossil evidence for this because, it is claimed, changes occurred at the boundaries of a population insufficiently large for the fossil record. Punctuated Equilibrium is also evolution, however, it purports that changes occurred saltationally, over geologically short periods of time, so rapidly that there is no evidence of transitional forms. Two claims without evidence - a violation of causality.

A cause cannot simultaneously be something slow and cumulative with many transitional forms and rapid and deterministic with none. No amount of rhetorical legerdemain or technical prestidigitation can call such didactic premises equivalent. If evolution is to graduate from a hypothetical wasteland into the realm of science, it must first determine what it is and is not, only then can it become science.

Opposing 2., survival of the fittest is a tautology. New species are more fit because they survive, they survive because they are more fit - without a single coherent causal factor defining the relationship between fitness and the necessary genetic changes. This is philosophical psycho-babble - not science.

Finally, evolution claims mutations accumulate as either gradual (Darwinism) or rapid (Punctuated Equilibria) advancements. As causal mechanisms, mutations are particularly problematic; virtually all mutations are harmful or lethal. Few, are at best neutral and no known truly beneficial mutations occur in recorded science.

If evolution is to graduate into real science, it must transition from the 19th century where speculative transitional forms are used to explain how groups morphed into another. Modern biochemistry indicates there are many different pathways from one species to another, depending upon the protein or enzyme reference selected. Since genes code for more than one trait, presently, it's impossible to ascertain the required transition probabilities allowing migration through a transitional form. If present biochemical references are any guide, the morphological transitional form may be more distantly displaced than the end species. The genetic coding required for a transitional form may not result in a viable offspring. At the most fundamental level, evolution is 19th century speculation unable to calibrate itself with modern biochemistry.

Science is well-defined and highly restricted. A theory integrates empirical findings into a unified framework with the fewest inconsistencies. A theory must be well-defined and restricted so that it can be determined what it is not. As the late Nobel Laureate Richard Feynman put it, science must be in a continual process of falsification. Evolutionists define evolution as "Descent with modification". This statement is so general that its veracity goes unchallenged while saying absolutely nothing scientific. Descent with modification can equally apply to dropping a Ming vase, or the micro-evolutional changes associated with information loss through transcription. Because it cannot be falsified evolution is not science.

Science requires that the theory "fit the data" not the reverse. This means all of the data, even inconvenient data showing complex organisms appearing prior to simpler forms. If there are no transitional forms the theory must explain their lack without resorting to magic (Punctuated Equilibria), or without calling every new discovery a transitional form (Darwinism). Evolution is in complete disarray. It has no explanation for "self-replicating systems" arising unsolicited out of atoms and molecules, it cannot explain protein biosynthesis, it cannot decide whether RNA or DNA came first or even what constitutes life. Evolution does not explain the single-handed orientation of RNA/DNA, how it arose in that configuration from an ambidextrous molecular world, nor how it avoided observed racemization while the first DNA was being formed. Evolution alternatively claims that birds evolved from reptiles or they didn't (rife with technical frauds). Evolution is explained by some to be the technically indefensible act of massive accumulations of order, information and complexity so that the world is melioristic; other theories claim that the evidence shows a (more scientifically viable) descent into disorder and loss of genetic information. That such an epistimological dislocation can be called science requires suspension of coherent thought.

Good science is validated by falsification. This presumes knowledge of what is to be falsified. Unfortunately, evolution, while, admitting debate within the context of evolution, does not admit the whole theory to be subject to falsification. When queried about evidenciary paucity Richard Dawkins stated: "We don't need evidence, we know it to be true". The theory is claimed to be true by fiat - only (all) the details are in question. Aptly questioned by Colin Patterson of the American Museum of Natural history to evolutionists: "Can you tell me anything you know about evolution ... any one thing ... that is true? Candidly, one evolutionists claimed: "I do know one thing, it ought not to be taught in high school" - we agree.