

## Creationism Today by Andrew Miles

Creationism is a broad term that encompasses many different theories from believing that the world is flat to using scientific occurrences to back up religious beliefs but all believe that life occurred or was created by a higher power (ie God). However, here I shall be discussing only a few of the main creationist theories that exist today and the arguments used by believers against evolution. I shall also contribute and discuss my view about creationism today. Despite the apparent domination of the theory of evolution when it comes to our existence, creationism is still popular throughout the world although more in some places than in others. For example, in Europe evolution is the most common whereas in the Middle East it is the opposite. However, it is not always one or the other in America there is a very mixed view on which is the “correct” theory which has lead to various legislations dictating what can and cannot be taught in schools [1].

One of the more popular theories that is included under the general term of creationism is Young-Earth creationism (YEC). YEC’s believe, as written in the Bible, “that the Earth is 6000 to 10000 years old, that all life was created in six literal days, that death and decay came as a result of Adam & Eve's Fall, and that geology must be interpreted in terms of Noah's Flood” [2] including the fossil record. Despite this literal reading of the Bible, YEC’s still believe in a heliocentric (sun-centred) solar system. It was the YEC’s who, in America, started the push to have creationism taught in schools instead of evolution. This was obviously met with much controversy in America and indeed by the rest of the world. The YEC’s and other creationist groups are now pushing for the requirement of both evolution and “scientific alternatives” to be taught in schools.

In recent years one such group joining the “scientific alternatives” or “creation science” front are the Intelligent Design (ID) creationists. ID creationists believe that certain biological structures are far too complex to be described by the apparent random and indirect nature of evolution and descend from William Paley's argument that God's design could be seen in life. [2] William Paley was a theologian who argued that biological organisms resembled exceptionally crafted machines and therefore must have been created by an extraordinary

craftsman who was identified to be, by Paley, God, the “Intelligent Designer”. ID creationists have been the dominating group in their fight for alternatives to evolutionary theory to be taught with evolution since the YEC’s beliefs were deemed to not be a valid science by the Courts in America. Intelligent Design, on the other hand, can make an argument of a supernatural conscious act being responsible for life sound more scientific and convincing than any argument coming from Young-Earth creationists.

Although the two examples given above of creationism appear to see evolution as just plain wrong, some forms accept certain aspects of science or of things that have been scientifically proven. Old-Earth creationism, Progressive creationism, Evolutionary creationism and Theistic creationism are just a few of the many different varieties that combine some aspects of science with religious beliefs.

Progressive creationism is a common, Old-Earth creationism view. Old- Earth creationists believe that life was created by God but accepts all evidence for an ancient, or old, Earth. The Progressive creationist modification is that all modern science is accepted except modern biology. They believe instead that God created different kinds of organisms in the sequential order seen in the fossil records and any improved organisms were created specially by God. Progressive creationists even believe the Big Bang occurred although they see it as “evidence of the creative power of God”. Evolutionary and Theistic creationism differ only by religious beliefs not by scientific ones. The Evolutionary side of things says that nature has no existence independent of God and allows interpretations consistent with both a literal reading of the Bible and objective science. The Theistic side believes that God creates through evolution almost as if the Earth and indeed the Universe is His canvas. Although exactly how much of the creation is his own work varies throughout believers, it accepts all modern science and gives God credit for things as yet not described by science, for example, the human soul. The Theistic creationist form, incidentally, is believed by the Pope. [2]

As stated earlier, in the Middle East creationism is almost unopposed as the belief to why we all exist today which is due mainly to their culture still being based on and around religion. They also take a literal reading but from the Qu’ran believing that Allah created the

Earth and that the Qu'ran is the true word spoken not that in the Bible. Despite this, a few liberal movements in Islam have meant that recently there are a few believers in evolution. These liberal movements, known as interpretation-based or progressive Islam, depend on different interpretations of Islamic holy scripts and books, i.e. the Qu'ran and Hadith, which define Islamic Law. [4]

The stories and statements made in these books are re-interpreted by liberal Muslims personally instead of using any traditional Muslims views, to adapt their beliefs for the modernising world. This is especially favoured by Muslims living in countries where Islam is a minority religion. As with most forms of creationism, the exact beliefs and interpretations vary throughout liberal Muslim communities but there is a general agreement on a few beliefs. Opposition to slavery as a whole is generally agreed upon which was allowed by the Qu'ran and human rights issues are a major point with various stories in the Qu'ran now being interpreted as being for such humanitarian efforts. Feminism is also allowed by some liberal Muslims with some liberal Muslims women no longer agreeing to the wearing of a veil, which the traditional Islam requires. Homosexuality can also be allowed by some liberals although this still open to great and heated debate as it goes greatly against the natural boundaries put in place by Allah. This not the only form of creationism now present in the Middle East. Recent contact between the Middle East and the western world has spawned groups of Muslims who believe in the Intelligent Design and Young-Earth type creationist beliefs.

Islamic creationism is incredibly popular in Turkey which many see as the centre of creationism in the Middle East and is where a very active writer called Adnan Oktar resides using the internet to help spread his ideas about creationism and indeed, religion as a whole. He is considered the "leading Muslim advocate of creationism"[6] and has written a tremendous number of books (and still is) arguing against evolution using the pen name Harun Yahya after prophets Aaron and John and subscribes to the Old-Earth version of events as described earlier. In a report written on his website [7] he too makes the connections between science and religion calling Intelligent Design creationism as a "new scientific concept" and promoting the idea that scientific discoveries happen **because of** religion, not apart from it, so that the use of science against any theological beliefs

cannot be credited as “science will return to its authentic and true paradigm: A search for the discovery and definition of the great design and harmony in the natural world, the artefact of God.” [7]. This is just one of many arguments used today against evolution by all creationists which range from changing creationism into a science to trying to make science itself look like its falling apart.

One general argument used by creationists is to say things like “random chance cannot explain the complexity of life” or that “the probability of creating life is far too low to be created by chance” which, on its own, is not enough to prove evolution wrong and creationism right. Statements like the one above are usually told by those who are not strict creationists. Strict creationists’ use scientific reasoning’s to disprove evolution. Saying that evolution “violates the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics” (entropy) is a popular statement as is saying that “Occam’s razor proves a God-made universe” the latter being a philosophical statement made during the medieval period by William of Occam [8].

This is also used in another argument whereby hardcore creationists attack science as a whole not just evolution on its own. Another argument is to look at the fossil record. This is arguably the strongest argument put forward by creationists, saying that there are gaps in the record, that there is no succession of appearance and that humans and dinosaurs did actually walk the Earth at the same time. Also, any apparent order of fossils found is due to Noah’s Flood which is also responsible for the Earth’s geology [9].

The dating of rocks is also argued to be inaccurate due to wrong assumptions like, for example, decay rates of radioactive sources are not constant however this is not actually true. There are other forms of argument which don’t carry such a scientific background as the ones above and are born through things as simple as just not wanting to believe that evolution is true. Statements like “Evolution is the work of Satan” or hasty generalisations such “as parts of the Bible are true so it must therefore all be true” are not generally used in creationism today as they don’t really add any weight to the overall argument of creationism vs. evolution.

Trying to write this essay objectively without any bias was tricky when the majority of sources and references on the subject of creationism are biased in one way or another! Because of this I would like sum up by briefly discussing a few curious aspects of creationism today I noticed while researching this essay.

Creationist theories whereby science and religion have been combined always indicate to me that God himself is responsible for evolution in some way and it isn't a case of one mighty act of power but more like lots of little acts of power constantly changing organisms' appearance, intelligence etc. This does seem a bit strange to me as why would an omnipotent being gets things wrong in the first place? Or is He just changing the scenery on purpose so we all have something nice to look at, be it in the world today or in the world of yester-year, yester-decade or yester-millennia!?

It does seem that creationists only ever try and "disprove" the theory of evolution and, as the only other alternative, therefore "prove" that creationism is true. (The "" are there because I am not entirely sure how it is possible to disprove something that hasn't even been entirely proven!) Stating that "evolution cannot be tested in a lab" is also not a definite statement condemning evolution to failure as I am almost certain no one can carry out an experiment that proves a higher power being responsible for life, especially those who believe in the one-time action(s) of a supernatural or Godlike being. Although it is not perfect, there is still a lot more substantial evidence that points our origins in the direction of evolution than in that of creationism.

I do find it rather ironic that a religious concept such as creationism is using "scientific" reasoning in order to disprove evolution, its hated scientific rival. The argument using the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics and entropy is obviously used carelessly as any actual scientific research would show that although the nature of things is to always become more disordered, it is only for a closed system. The Earth and indeed life is not a closed system as it receives energy from the Sun as well as other forms of radiation [9].

Should "creation science" be allowed to be taught in schools, which form would be taught? If all were to be taught equally that's fine,

although evolution should still be taught as one of the many theories and still just as equally especially as, some creationists claim, “science is just a religion”. If one specific form of creationism was to be taught over the others who defines which one that should be? Schools? The Courts? Parents? This is an argument that, should it happen, could last longer than evolution vs. creationism in general as there are believers in all camps and none have any more evidence than the others that defines their beliefs as “correct”.

Creationism today is something that, I feel, is fighting a losing battle even though it obviously intends to fight until its dying breath. Although religion and therefore creationism will probably never disappear, there still overwhelming evidence in favour of evolution compared to that of creationism. Literal readings of the Bible lead people to believe the world was flat and that the Earth was the centre of the solar system, both of which have been now completely disproved by science yet there are still people who apparently believe one or the other. In conclusion, creationists see evolution as the single most powerful threat to their beliefs and are determined to not let it destroy any remaining hold that religion has on the world. I can't blame them, it would be terrible to realise you had devoted your life to a creation.

## References

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