

Evolution: The Grand Experiment by Carl Werner

Reviewed by Ruth Beechick

The first chapter here tries to show both sides of the evolution controversy “fairly.” For instance, here are the two sides presented on page 8 of this book:

These scientists [who reject evolution] cite multiple “lines of evidence” that evolution did not occur, including gaps in the fossil record, problems with the big bang theory, the amazing complexity of even the simplest organisms, and the inability of scientists to explain the origin of life using natural laws.

Scientists who support evolution state that the evidence for the theory is clear and overwhelming. They offer observations of natural selection in action, the evolution of birds from dinosaurs, the evolution of whales from a land animal, and the evolution of man from apes, as some of the most convincing proofs for evolution.

These arguments do not meet head-on. For example, the evolution side does not explain a recent theory of sudden changes, rather than gradual, by which it tries to meet the “gap” argument. And the creation side does not counter that natural selection only removes features and does not add any.

But hang in there. The rest of the chapters tell important arguments that do meet head-on. The first is spontaneous generation, which scientists believed at least since the time of Aristotle. In the 1600s a scientist set out to prove it. He gathered some wheat, put it in an open jar with sweaty underwear, and in three weeks mice appeared. Proof that mice come from wheat and dirty underwear, right?

Another “proof” was to leave raw meat in a jar for two weeks, and maggots “spontaneously” appeared. In 1668 a scientist showed this was wrong by placing cheesecloth over the jar so flies could not get in and lay their eggs to hatch into maggots, the larval stage of flies. Dr. Louis Pasteur performed clever experiments that finally refuted the theory of spontaneous generation that scientists had believed for over 2000 years.

That science history is shown almost more with full-color photos than with text, as the graphic design is by Audio Visual Consultants, whose series of videos can accompany the book.

The next argument is “acquired characteristics,” that says if a horse stretches his neck to eat food, then a longer neck is passed on to the following generations. If you build large muscles, then your children will be born with larger muscles. Also, if a bear does not use its back legs, they are shed and the next generations can turn into whales. Darwin proposed this whale theory and believed in acquired characteristics all his life. After he died, a scientist cut off the tails of mice for twenty generations, but the mice were always born with tails. Modern knowledge of DNA also does not support the theory of traits being passed down because of use and disuse of body parts.

Darwin's major mechanism for evolution was "natural selection." Stronger animals do better in competing for food or adapting to environment, so more of them survive. Darwin called this natural selection, or survival of the fittest, and many scientists today still believe this is how evolution occurs. But selection only *removes* the weaker and does not add new parts. Furthermore, the changes are only varieties within a species. Never new species. By selective breeding, people can make smaller dogs or larger tomatoes (within the limits set in their genes). But they cannot turn a dog into a new species.

Since small changes do not evolve into new species, could there be accidental large mutations? That's what evolutionists proposed next. Each of the thousands of "letters" in the DNA must be in proper location and proper sequence. Thus it is a statistical impossibility to produce an accidental improvement this way. More text now than photos explains all this.

So evolution is not by spontaneous generation, not by acquired characteristics, not by accidental mutations. Fifteen more chapters tackle more mistaken theories as well as a fraudulent one. Together they provide a solid course with much science information and with key arguments for the major controversies on the origin of life and on plant and animal evolution theory. This will arm students to meet today's propaganda that is throughout society and in the universities.

For grades 8 to 14. A teacher manual is available for those who might want it. It gives objectives, class discussion questions, and tests.

Biographical Information

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Dr. Ruth Beechick has taught hundreds of people to read, all ages, and many methods, and she is happy to see a commonsense book like Thogmartin's directed to homeschoolers. Her own newest book is World History Made Simple: Matching History with the Bible (www.HomeschoolingBooks.com or 1-800-421-6645).