

Dawkins' weasel

I just received my first issue of my first *TJ* subscription (volume 15(2)) and was interested to note that it contains two creationist critiques of Richard Dawkins's 'weasel' computer program: a paper by Bergman and correspondence by Truman. Dawkins described his computer analogy in order to contrast the idea of random selection that creationists have advanced (for the purpose of demolishing it) with a multi-step selection model that more closely resembles the ideas of evolution. In this issue of *TJ*, both critics point out reasons why they feel that Dawkins' computer analogy does not provide valid support for evolution.

Your readers might be interested in an alternative analogy that, I feel, models the principles of random mutation and selection rather more convincingly than Dawkins' 'weasel' program, and that avoids some of the weaknesses that 'weasel' critics have pounced on. In particular, this alternative model involves a real biological phenomenon fully supported by experimental evidence, and there is no 'target sequence' selected in advance. The phenomenon I refer to is the 'affinity maturation' of antibodies in which somatic mutation and selection of antibody genes lead to improvements in the function of our immune responses. I have described how this happens in a Web essay. I don't claim that this antibody analogy 'proves evolution', but I think it does argue strongly against the creationist claim that random mutation and selection cannot bring about functional improvements in protein structure.

Edward E. Max
Bethesda, Maryland
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

[Max's ideas and a thorough rebuttal are available at <www.trueorigin.org/spetner1.asp>].

Geocentrism

Danny Faulkner's 'Geocentrism and Creation'¹ purportedly counters

my book, *Geocentricity*.² Although the article is lengthy, it is shallow and often misrepresents geocentricity, geocentrists, the history of the Copernican Revolution, its evidences, and the authority of Scripture. It fails to deal with any of the hard issues, viz. the stance of the Scripture and that of modern science on the matter and the scientific arguments pro and con, but prefers to launch into *ad hominem* arguments, lifting quotes out of context, and misrepresenting the modern geocentric case.³ All three areas of the geocentric arguments, namely, historical, scriptural, and scientific, received a short shrift.

Historical arguments

Faulkner seems ignorant of the true nature of Copernicus's model. It was not centered on the Sun but on the center of the Earth's orbit, making it more complicated for Earth-based calculations than was the original Ptolemaic model. By criticizing *geocentrism*, born of the notion of the crystalline spheres and simplified in the Ptolemaic model, and by dismissing without definition *geocentricity*, Faulkner sets up a straw man, easily demolished. In *Geocentricity*, the same model that Faulkner demolishes is also demolished. Those interested in the distinction between geocentricity and geocentrism, and the definition of heliocentrism (none of the words are in the dictionary), are referred to *Geocentricity*.²

Scriptural arguments

The only reason I'm a geocentrist is because the Scripture demands it. It is nice that science happens to support that position. Faulkner spends his efforts on peripheral scriptures, admitted to be such in *Geocentricity*. Here are the hard scriptures.

If Genesis 1:1, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' is a clear statement of creationism, then isn't Ecclesiastes 1:5, 'The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose' an equally clear statement of the immobility of the Earth? And what of Joshua 10:13?

'And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, ... So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.'

The Sun is said to stand still. God could have said 'And the Earth stopped turning so that the Sun appeared to stand still', but he didn't. If the inspiring Spirit glossed over the heliocentric truth, how is it the Spirit of truth? Isn't God's creative power such that his very speaking 'the sun stood still' would instantly transform the acentric cosmos unto geocentric? Bible scholars argue that God cannot lie because if he ever did, then the 'lie' would immediately come to pass and no longer be a lie. This, because God spoke the universe into being when it was not. To be consistent, shouldn't those that reject the geocentric model also reject the creationist model?

Or consider Malachi 4:2?

'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.'

Here the Sun, as a type of Jesus, is said to arise, clearly referring to the resurrection. How, then, can a believer insist that the word 'arise' is literal truth when referring to the resurrection here, yet at the same time insist that it is not literal truth when applied to the Sun in this same verse? And if the heliocentric model is true, then no one before Copernicus could possibly have guessed the 'heliocentric truth.' What else will science 'reveal' that is currently misunderstood by Bible believers: evolution?

Scientific arguments

Faulkner barely touches on the scientific issues although those take up a third of Bouw's *Geocentricity*. Most of those he does touch are rather historic than scientific, such as his insistence that the phases of Venus disprove geocentricity once and for all.

Introductory texts present the heliocentrism as a proven fact, just as they do evolution, but more advanced texts admit that the geocentric model is just

as viable as the Copernican.⁴ Indeed, it is dangerous to rely on textbooks of which Kuhn has said that it is in the best interest of science that these should sometimes lie.⁵ The evidence for geocentricity is such a case. Science is properly concerned only with relative motion (Leibniz, Berkeley, Mach, Einstein's general relativity) and so geocentricity is not really a scientific matter but is rather philosophical or theological. It is the third heaven that determines the case.⁶ Hence, the argument is purely theological.

Those interested in pursuing the physical arguments are referred to:

- Gerber, P., *Zeitschrift für mathematik physik*, 43:93, 1898.
- Thirring, H., *Physikalische Zeitschrift*, 19:23, 1918.
- Lense, J. and Thirring, H., *Ibid.*, p. 156, 1918.
- Barbour, J. B. and Bertolli, B. *Il Nuovo Cimento*, 38B(1):1, 1977.
- Mach, E., *Die Mechanik in Ihrer entwicklung Historisch-Kritisch Dargestellt*, Prague, 1883.

Gerardus Bouw
Cleveland, Ohio

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Faulkner, D., Geocentrism and Creation, *CEN Tech. J.* 15(2):110–121, 2001; p. 110.
2. Bouw, G.D., *Geocentricity*, Association for Biblical Astronomy, Cleveland, 1992.
3. For instance, Faulkner chides Bouw's 'use of the word "nebulae" ... that has been out of favour for decades'. The word appears in a quote from a 1932 paper by Kennedy and Thorndike.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 154. Also, Hoyle, F., *Astronomy and Cosmology*, W. H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco, p. 416, 1975.
5. Kuhn, T.S., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962, 1970.
6. Browne, P.F., *J. Phys. A: Math & Gen.*, 10:727, 1977.

Danny Faulkner responds:

In his response to my paper Gerardus Bouw accuses me of things that he is guilty of in his geocentric writings or in his response. For instance, he levels the

charge of launching *ad hominem* attacks, but offers no specific examples. Merely asserting such a charge does not make it true. Never have I accused Bouw of anti-Biblical beliefs, witchcraft, or plagiarism. Bouw has leveled these accusations and more, such as the insinuation of murder,¹ against Kepler. An excellent book has just been published about great Christian men of science² that contains a chapter on Kepler. Recently I ask one of the authors of that book about Kepler. She has extensively researched Kepler and was not aware of any evidence of the above mentioned accusations against Kepler.

Bouw states that I lifted quotes out of context. The one example that he gives in a footnote is my chiding of his out-of-date use of the word 'nebulae'. He claims that my reference refers to a quote from a 1932 paper that he cited. Such a quote does indeed appear on the page that I referenced. If that were the end of the matter, then I would indeed be wrong. However, the next line of text after the quote in Bouw's book (and presumably penned by Bouw) uses the word 'nebulae' in the sense meant in 1932; this was the quote that I intended. What I was objecting to was Bouw's unqualified and unclarified use of the word in an archaic sense. Bouw's defense here is itself an example of quoting out of context.

I am puzzled how Bouw can state that I spent my efforts on peripheral scriptures. I responded to passages that were part of his argument. If these were indeed peripheral passages, then why did he include them in his book? I did not give full treatment to certain Biblical passages as some would like for two reasons. One reason was space—the article was near the limit of size for the *TJ* already. The other reason was an inadequacy on my part to author a full treatment. If you will read the last sentence of the first paragraph of my conclusion, you will see my desire to see someone more qualified than I to do this. Overall, I find Bouw's Biblical arguments for geocentricity lacking.

Bouw claims that I fail to understand the geocentric model or else engage in straw-man argumentation. If I have

failed to understand his model, I am convinced that it is because Bouw has confused the reader. In his book he insists that the heliocentric theory was accepted in the seventeenth century without any real proof. As such, Bouw seems to claim that the geocentric model, the *status quo* of the time, should have prevailed. What Bouw does not clearly state is that the Ptolemaic model was the *status quo* of that time. Bouw wants to substitute the Tyconic model when we are not paying attention. Then he wants to modify the Tyconic model so that it can explain parallax, aberration of starlight, and annual Doppler motions, none of which the original Tyconic model could do. Furthermore, he insists that those who disagree with him must defend the original Copernican model, which he says that I am ignorant of. Why does he continue to attempt to hang the albatross of the original Copernican model around our necks, when, as he himself implies, no one has believed that model for a very long time? Yet Bouw is free to modify the Tyconic model to fit newer data. We need a consistent set of ground rules.

Bouw states that I barely touched on scientific issues. In such a brief article I could hardly discuss all the scientific issues raised in Bouw's 350-page book. I did discuss perhaps the crux of the modern scientific issues, general relativity. My discussion included philosophical issues, common misunderstandings, total eclipse data, VLBI measurements, perihelion advance of Mercury, and periastron advance of binary stars. In my article I demonstrated that Bouw improperly handles some of the data concerning these matters and fails to mention other pertinent data. Please re-read the second paragraph of my conclusion to see that I wish someone with more expertise in general relativity than I to write a follow-up to what I have done.

Incidentally, Bouw's discussion of general relativity is an example of Bouw's confusing argument. In his book he clearly rejects general relativity, but in a rebuttal that recently was on his Web-site he argued that general relativity supports geocentrism. Which

is it? Confusion continues in his letter by the early statement that ‘it is nice that science happens to support ... [his] position’, but in his final paragraph he says ‘geocentricity is not really a scientific matter but rather is philosophical or theological’. This contradictory message is repeated in his book—absolute motion cannot be determined scientifically, but science can prove that we are not moving. Again, which is it?

On this issue of my alleged failure to understand models, Bouw has misrepresented me. He stated in his letter that I insist ‘that the phases of Venus disprove geocentricity once and for all’. I never said anything of the sort. In discussing the phases of Venus, I wrote that the modification of the Ptolemaic system that Bouw suggested to explain the phases of Venus would have destroyed the Ptolemaic system as much as what Galileo was doing. Further in that paragraph I stated that Bouw correctly pointed out that Venereal phases do not distinguish between the Tychonic and heliocentric models. I cannot understand how Bouw could completely confuse my very clear writing on this question.

I can only conclude that he did not carefully read what I wrote or that he is deliberately engaging in misrepresentation, all the while accusing me of the same.

Danny Faulkner
Lancaster, South Carolina
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Bouw, pp. 186–187. In his book, Bouw references Marshall Hall’s book on this matter. I briefly discussed this in my earlier review of Hall’s book. Bouw could claim that he was merely quoting Hall, but such a scurrilous charge is best made with confidence or not made at all.
2. Mulfingher-Orozco, J. M., Mulfingher, G. and Mulfingher, M., *Christian Men of Science: Eleven Men Who Changed the World*, Ambassador Emerald International, Greenville, 2001.

Away with the nothingness

In his letter to *TJ*,¹ Stowell shows that I have failed to explain part of

my cosmology well enough. While commenting on Newton’s article, Mr Stowell briefly remarked about my article, saying, ‘Humphreys’ bounded universe has a sphere of space, matter, and energy surrounded by nothingness ...’¹

That’s not what I was trying to say. My cosmology has a (three-dimensional) sphere of space, matter, and energy surrounded by (three-dimensional) space. That space is empty of matter and energy (at least for a considerable distance beyond the matter), but it is the same sort of space that is in the matter-occupied region. And, as I tried to explain,² space is some kind of material, not a ‘nothingness’.

The confusion may come from my attempt (in both the video and the book) to clarify the usual ‘balloon’ analogy describing the big bang theory. That analogy confines our normal three-dimensional space to the surface of a hypersphere expanding in a *hyperspace* of four spatial dimensions (none is time). But even there, hyperspace would not really be a ‘nothingness’. It would merely be a space different than the one to which we are confined.

I don’t blame anyone for being confused about these things. Cosmology is a confusing subject. Many of the practitioners thereof have neglected to try to explain key parts of their own theories to the rest of mankind. Perhaps that is because even they are confused. But let’s not add to the confusion by injecting ‘nothingness’ into my theory!

D. Russell Humphreys
Albuquerque, New Mexico
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Stowell, W., Nothingness, *TJ* 15(3):55, 2001.
2. Humphreys, D.R., *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*, Master Books, Colorado Springs, p. 67, 1995.

Uranus turns up the heat

I enjoyed the paper on the thermal condition of Uranus very much.¹ I

hadn’t realized that, unlike Jupiter, Saturn or Neptune, Uranus emits essentially no excess heat. After reading this report, I can see why this is a problem for the standard evolutionary model for the origin of our solar system, based, as it is, upon planetesimal accretion.

Evolutionists are confronted with possibly three options here:

1. Uranus formed in the past with no heat energy from accretion and thus does not radiate any real excess heat from internal sources today. I.e. Uranus formed via planetesimal accretion *cold* and has stayed cold ever since.
2. Perhaps Uranus is just too old. Uranus formed first, long before our Sun and thus has lost all its heat. Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune radiate excess heat so these planets are much younger than Uranus.
3. Uranus was created during the Creation week described in Genesis chapter 1:1–2:3 and its recent origin did not involve a lot of heat of accretion from a nebula disk revolving around our Sun.

Ouch! Evolutionists would not like any of these options, I suspect.

Rod Bernitt
Upper Marlboro, Maryland
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Henry, J., The energy balance of Uranus: implications for special creation, *TJ* 15(3):85–91, 2001.