



Think & Believe

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The Big Question

By Dave and Mary Jo Nutting

For years creationists have been hammering away at the supposed evidence of evolution, showing it just doesn't hold water. Scientifically, evolution is on very shaky ground, yet millions of people around the world accept it as truth. Why?

It has become apparent to us that most people who believe in evolution do so simply because it's the only model they've been taught. They've never seriously investigated the issue, so they accept unquestioningly what their teachers and textbooks say. Even if they have some doubts, they often believe the "experts" know what they're talking about.

What about the teachers? For the most part, teachers teach what they've been taught. In addition, they usually closely follow the textbook, which is generally very evolutionary. Most teachers don't have (or take) the time to study the evidence themselves. In addition, many are afraid to "rock the boat," so they teach evolution even if they personally aren't totally convinced.

So now we've passed the buck to the colleges, universities, and textbook writers. Why do they teach evolution? Even at this level, many instructors have not really investigated the evidence for themselves. They've become convinced that evolution is true from their high school and introductory college courses. Often they see holes in the theory in their area of expertise, but they are firmly (but falsely) convinced that there is strong evidence in other fields. There is surprisingly little critical communication between disciplines, so the confusion continues. Textbook writers continue to present evolution as a fact and show picturesque sequences complete with imaginary transitional forms. Students continue to be brainwashed by this biased and often false presentation. Besides this, they are continually bombarded with evolution presented as fact on TV and in magazines, museums, national parks, etc.

Somewhere behind all of this is a relatively small group of individuals who are philosophically committed to evolution. They hold evolution as part of a world and life view and are not particularly concerned that it is not substantiated by scientific evidence. They have faith that at some time

in the future it will be. Meanwhile they quite successfully pass their faith on to others.

What can creationists do? Probably the most important task we have is to expose evolution for what it really is — a faith, a philosophical belief system, and not a scientifically proven fact. People need to be made aware that they do have a choice. Although scientific evidence enters into the decision, neither evolution nor creation can be proven scientifically. The choice is this: could time, chance and natural processes create a complex, organized universe, or could it result only from a plan, purpose, and creative power?

The choice is yours. Remember, your decision involves faith, but it should be consistent with observable reality. Study the facts yourself — don't allow yourself to be brainwashed.

The Hopeful Monster!
(See Spotlight on Science)



NOTES & QUOTES

■ In 1979, Luther Sunderland conducted a series of interviews with paleontologists at 5 leading natural history museums as part of a study related to a revision of the Regents Biology Syllabus for the state of New York. The following quotes are taken from his book, *Darwin's Enigma*. (See Book Review)

I admit that an awful lot of that [imaginary stories about the history of life] has gotten into the textbooks as though it were true. For example, the most famous example still on exhibit downstairs (in the American Museum) is the exhibit on horse evolution prepared perhaps fifty years ago. That has been presented as literal truth in textook after textbook. Now I think that is lamentable, particularly because the people who propose these kinds of stories themselves may be aware of the speculative nature of some of the stuff. But by the time it filters down to the textbooks, we've got science as truth and we've got a problem. (Dr. Niles Eldridge, Interview, 1979)

- Later, in an interview on ABC Television in 1981 Dr. Eldridge was asked for evidence for evolution. His answer is quite interesting, especially in view of his answer to Sunderland 2 years before:

Ahh, the horse is a good example. Here's an effectively modern horse which is a million years old, but we can all recognize it as a horse. And as we go deeper in lower layers of rock, back further in time, we excavate successively more primitive horses. Here's one that is two million years old. They are becoming less and less obviously horse-like 'til we get back sixty million years ago and here is the ancestor of the horse which doesn't really look much like a horse.

- Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, one of the leading proponents of the new model called punctuated equilibrium realizes the transitional forms are missing in the fossil record, regardless what most textbooks say. Note what he said during the question and answer period following a lecture at Hobart College in 1980:

The fundamental reason why a lot of paleontologists don't care much for gradualism is because the fossil record doesn't show gradual change and every paleontologist has known that ever since Cuvier. If you want to get around that you have to invoke the imperfection of the fossil record. Every paleontologist knows that most species — most species — don't change. That's bothersome if you are trained to believe that evolution ought to be gradual. In fact it virtually precludes your studying the very process you went into the school to study.

- So Gould recognizes the problems with gradualism and has espoused the idea of punctuated equilibrium, but there are many problems with that model too. Norman Macbeth, author of the book, *Darwin Retried*, made the following statement in an interview with Luther Sunderland in 1982:

... Many people, like Gould, are now saying Goldschmidt was on the right track, although he never produced a mechanism that you could document. . . . Goldschmidt recognized that he was, to some extent pipedreaming, but he felt it necessary to pipe dream because the synthetic theory offered nothing. He was driven to this because the fossil record offered no evidence of gradual change. I sympathize with Goldschmidt personally, but I do not espouse the idea of a hopeful monster because, as any fool can see, it is extremely difficult to document, in fact, impossible. This is not a scientific theory; it is only a statement that shows we are in such terrible shape that we have to admit that the changes must have been on the order of a miracle.

■ Punctuated equilibrium makes good material for children's literature. For example, our son just completed reading *The Enormous Egg* by Oliver Butterworth. The story? A hen lays an egg and out pops a dinosaur. That's backwards as far as the accepted evolutionary scheme of things, but maybe he's got something. After all, Goldschmidt had no trouble with the idea of a reptile laying an egg and hatching out a bird!

Then there's the Dr. Suess story, *Horton Hatches an Egg*. After poor Horton endures a trying year of "egg-sitting" for an irresponsible mother bird, what hatches? An elephant-bird, of course, looking like a baby elephant with wings. Fairy tales? Sure. Maybe believers in punctuated equilibrium are in the wrong department!



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Punctuated Equilibrium

Think back a moment to your high school textbooks. Do you remember how evolution was portrayed? Maybe you recall pictures showing the change from fish to amphibians, or the famous "horse series" showing the evolution of the "modern" horse from its "primitive" ancestors. These pictures still occur in many texts, despite the fact that there is no direct fossil evidence to support this gradualistic evolution.

The lack of fossil evidence supporting evolution has been called "a well-kept trade secret among paleontologists." In fact, the recognition of "gaps" in the fossil record is so widespread that many paleontologists are now turning to a new model called "punctuated equilibrium."

Punctuated equilibrium is still evolution, but it differs in rate from the more gradualistic neo-Darwinian models. In fact it is often known as the "quantum speciation" mechanism, the idea being that evolution proceeds by jumps rather than by slow, cumulative changes. It is based on the observation that major categories of plants and animals appear suddenly in the fossil record, already complex and functional and remain relatively stable, exhibiting no evolutionary change until extinction. These observations are entirely consistent with the creation model, but many evolutionists will not even consider it.

The major problem with punctuated equilibrium is that there is *no known mechanism* by which this kind of evolution *could* occur, nor is there any direct evidence that it *has* occurred. It is based on the *lack* of evidence of change. This is especially ironic when you pause to remember that "evolution" means "change."

Actually this idea is not new. Back in the 1930s and '40s a very similar idea was proposed by Schindewolf and Goldschmidt. While recognizing that most major mutations are harmful and would produce "monsters" that could not survive, they hypothesized that occasionally a "grossmutation" might occur that would produce an entirely new form. For example, a reptile lays an egg and a bird hatches out. This is often referred to as the "hopeful monster." Although most present-day adherents to the model don't believe it happens quite that fast, they do believe it happens too fast, geologically speaking, to be preserved in the fossil record. The problem again is that such a happening has never been observed, and there is no known genetic mechanism by which it *could* occur.

When evolutionists resort to "hopeful monsters" and similar imaginary creatures, they are simply grasping at straws. Why not seriously consider the creation model instead?

The Famous Horse Series

The horse series is often used as evidence of evolution in textbooks. The commonly pictured line-up shows the little "horse" (*Eohippus* or *Hyracotherium*) followed by successively larger and more "modern" looking horses. It looks very convincing on paper. However, there are some major problems in using this so-called "series" as evidence of evolution.

First of all, just because you can line up several objects in order of size does not necessarily mean they evolved from one another. There is great variety in the size of horses living today, all the way from the miniature horses two feet tall to the giant Belgium workhorses. They do not show evolution, but simply the great variety that is possible within the basic genetic makeup of the horse.

Another problem is that the classic horse series is not found anywhere in the world, except in textbooks. Fossil horses occur around the world in various rock layers. In fact, some occur in layers *below* their supposed evolutionary ancestors. That's somewhat like the grandson being born *before* the grandfather. That's obviously not consistent with the evolutionary model.

Another major problem is that there are no intermediates between the various horses found in the fossil record. For example, some fossil "horses" have tooth structures that indicate that they were browsers. The others have teeth like modern horses, specially suited to grazing. How did this transition take place? The fossil record gives no clue.

There is also a problem in demonstrating the "change" ~~from multiple toes to one toe.~~ Although the various forms are often lined up and given as evidence of evolution, there are no known transitions between these rather distinct forms. Each form was completely developed and evidently fully functional. In addition, there is evidence that 3-toed horses lived at the *same time* as one-toed horses. Thus, this does not show evolution.

Fossil horses appear to be extinct members of the horse family, showing the great variety present in the genetic make-up of the group. Huxley once made the statement that it would take a million favorable mutations for the horse to evolve. That's a lot of lucky "mistakes." David Raup, curator of the Chicago Museum of Natural History, has said that the horse series needs to be greatly modified or discarded. It's time for textbook writers to reevaluate what they are putting in the texts for students to learn. Much false and out-dated information is still being presented as fact.

Book Review

Darwin's Enigma by Luther Sutherland (Master Books, 1984) is an enlightening journey into the evolutionary camp. The author bases most of the book on interviews he conducted with paleontologists in five leading natural history museums in 1979. These interviews were conducted as part of a study initiated by the New York State Education Department to review the treatment of theories of origins in the state's Regents Biology Syllabus. The book contains numerous excerpts from these taped interviews. It is extremely interesting to read the candid answers given to questions about the nature of the fossil record.

We highly recommend this book. It gives good insight into the problems recognized by experts in the field but ignored in high school and college texts. (See Notes and Quotes) (Available from Alpha Omega Institute for \$5.95 + \$1.00 shipping.)

!!!Special News!!!

During the past year we received our tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, so your donations to Alpha Omega Institute are tax-deductible. We would appreciate being included in your year-end donations.

Recent Events

Dave recently had the opportunity to take part in what was meant to be 2 debates at a local public high school. Since an evolutionist was not available for the first debate, Dave was free to give a full presentation. It was received favorably. The second debate went as scheduled. The opponent, however, didn't answer the scientific points brought up except to cast doubt on what Dave was saying since it didn't agree with what most "reputable" scientists say. We hope the students saw through the smoke-screen. We look forward to more good opportunities in the future.

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Would you like additional information about any one of the condensed articles or on another subject that we haven't even touched upon as yet? Write to us and we will gladly send you some.

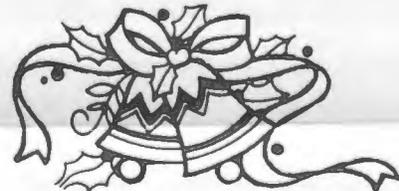
Holiday Greetings!

The holiday season is upon us again. It hardly seems possible that another year has passed so quickly, but it has been a good year. We appreciate your prayers, your support, and your interest in creation. This work could not continue without the participation of many committed individuals.

As we think back over the past year, several highlights stand out in our minds. We are thankful for the interest and enthusiasm expressed in our seminars and lectures. We are grateful for the many opportunities we have had to share the message of creation, including the opportunity to speak in public school classrooms on several occasions. We are encouraged by the favorable comments we have received about this publication and are excited by the increase in subscriptions. We truly appreciate the number of you who have begun to support this ministry on a regular basis. Your financial assistance has been very valuable. We're also thankful for the volunteers who have helped with publication of the newsletter, maintained mailing lists, worked on correspondence, etc.

We look forward to 1986, and continue to ask for your support. We have experienced some opposition during the past year, which means we must be making *some* impact anyway. Many strongly committed evolutionists do not want the evidence for creation to become known. They have had a monopoly in the schools and media for too many years, and will not give it up easily. We need your continued prayers and financial support to enable us to get the other side to students so they can make their own decision in this vital issue.

We wish you all a very happy holiday season, and encourage you to relax and enjoy spending time with your family and friends — and don't forget to thank our wonderful Creator for the miracle of life.



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