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HARVARD'S WIZARD OF OZ

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In his recent *Time* commentary, "Dorothy, It's Really Oz,"¹ Stephen Jay Gould, professor of geology at Harvard and New York University, takes on the Kansas State Board of Education. In so doing, he manifests a tremendous affection for fairy tales.

First, in Gould's world of make-believe, "evolution is as well documented as any phenomenon in science" -- as well documented "as the earth's revolution around the sun." It is truly amazing that a professor living in an age of scientific enlightenment would make such a dogmatic declaration. It is equally amazing that *Time* would print it. While a preponderance of evidence can be adduced in support of the earth's revolution around the sun, the same cannot be said for evolution. Evolutionary biology, for example, cannot account for metaphysical realities such as Gould's ego and his ethos. Nor can evolution satisfactorily account for irreducibly complex biochemical systems apart from a designer.² Biochemist Michael Behe explains that what happens when a photon of light hits a human eye was beyond nineteenth century science. As science has advanced, such black boxes are being opened, revealing an "unanticipated Lilliputian world" of enormous complexity that has pushed the theory of evolution beyond the breaking point.³

Furthermore, in Gould's make-believe world, "Science and religion should be equal, mutually respecting partners, each the master of its own domain."⁴ In reality, such compartmentalization works only in the land of Oz. In the real world, what one believes scientifically has a direct impact on his or her religious persuasions.⁵ For example, the evolutionary paradigm led Darwin inexorably to a religion of racism and sexism. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin speculated that "at some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world."⁶ Under the subheading, "Difference in the Mental Powers of the Two Sexes," Darwin went so far as to attempt to persuade devotees that "the chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shewn by man's attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than can woman."⁷ In

sharp contrast to Darwin's evolutionary dogma, Scripture makes it clear that all humanity is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27; Acts 17:29) and that there is essential equality between the sexes (Gal. 3:28).

Finally, it should be noted that Gould's contention, as cited in *Time*, that "the hard bony evidence for human evolution...exceeds our reliable documentation of Caesar's life" is pure poppycock. The existence of Caesar can be proven beyond the peradventure of a doubt through such means as legal evidences. The same cannot be said for the "hard bony evidence" for Gould's mythological apemen. Considering the history of bone boondoggles that have bestowed fame and fortune on their finders who often play fast and loose with the facts, one would think a tinge of humility is in order. Instead, Gould's article employs *ad hominem* slurs (e.g., "religious Fundamentalists," "anti-intellectualism"), labels creation science as "oxymoronic,"⁹ and judges the Kansas Board of Education as having "narrowly partisan religious motivations."

In light of Gould's characterization of creationists, it may be instructive to note that some of the greatest scientists the world has ever known were defenders of a creation view of origins. Robert Boyle, the father of modern chemistry as well as the greatest physical scientist of his day, was an outstanding apologist for the Genesis account of origins. Isaac Newton, a prodigious intellect who developed calculus, discovered the law of gravity, and designed the first reflecting telescope, strongly defended the biblical account of creation. Louis Pasteur, well known for the process of pasteurization and for utterly demolishing the concept of spontaneous generation, was devoutly religious and strongly opposed Darwinian evolution. A host of other great intellects who were also creationists could be cited, including Johannes Kepler (scientific astronomy), Francis Bacon (scientific method), Blaise Pascal (philosopher/mathematician), Carolus Linnaeus (biological taxonomy), Gregor Mendal (genetics), Michael Faraday (electro-magnetics), and Joseph Lister (antiseptic surgery).¹⁰ Even Albert Einstein, one of the greatest intellectuals of modern times, was inevitably drawn "to the conclusion that God did not create by chance, but rather that he worked according to planned, mathematical, teleonomic, and therefore -- to him -- rational guidelines."¹¹

In contrast to Gould's rhetoric and emotional stereotyping, these men were deeply committed to reason and empirical science. Like them, we would do well to test the theory of evolution in light of the laws of science instead of trying them in the court of public opinion. Gould is misguided in his assertion that "Dorothy followed her yellow-brick road as it spiraled outward toward redemption and homecoming (to the true Kansas of our dreams and possibilities)" while "the road of the newly adopted Kansas curriculum can only spiral inward toward restriction and ignorance." The reality is that Gould's yellow brick road is a detour away from constructive dialogue and toward constrictive demagoguery, while the Kansas decision is blazing a trail toward "redemption and homecoming."

Gould pontificates, "The Kansas Board of Education voted 6 to 4 to remove evolution, and the big Bang theory as well, from the state's science curriculum...[and thus] transported its jurisdiction to a never-never land where a Dorothy of the new millennium might exclaim, "They still call it Kansas, but I don't think we're in the real world anymore." Again, he is misguided. In the real world, the Kansas Board of Education simply gave local school boards the option to test the creation and evolutionary models for origins in light of the empirical laws of science.

I salute the Kansas Board of Education for recognizing that a system in which all of the information on one side of an issue is represented and all of the information on the other side is repressed is by definition indoctrination rather than instruction.

— Hank Hanegraaff

NOTES

- 1 Stephen Jay Gould, "Dorothy, It's Really Oz," *Time*, 23 August 1999, 59.
- 2 The elliptical orbit of the earth around the sun obeys Newton's well-understood laws of motion and gravitation. However, nothing even remotely analogous can be said of biological evolutionary theory, which is further plagued by an inability to account for first life, information in the genetic code, lack of transitional fossil forms, consciousness and other nonphysical qualities of life, and so forth.
- 3 Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 8-10.
- 4 Many of Gould's fellow materialists disagree with him on this issue, holding that science and religion occupy overlapping, not distinctly different, domains (see Richard Dawkins, "When Religion Steps on Science's Turf," *Free Inquiry*, Spring 1998, 18-19). Indeed, both Christianity and science make factual claims about reality.
- 5 Even Gould seems to understand that one's science has a practical causal relationship to spiritual and ethical beliefs. Thus, he condemns the recapitulation theory's role in post-Darwinian racism. (See Gould, "Dr. Down's Syndrome," *Natural History*, April 1980, 144.)
- 6 *The Descent of Man*, ch. 6, sect. "On the Birthplace and Antiquity of Man," in Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed., *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 49, *Darwin* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 336.
- 7 *Ibid.*, ch. 19, 566.
- 8 Despite paleontology's long history of controversy concerning what indeed constitutes the "facts," sometimes the *hard facts* are not in dispute (e.g., fossil A has a particular form and age). It is then in the *interpretation* of the facts (e.g., such and such explanation best accounts for fossil A) that unwarranted naturalistic presuppositions guarantee a naturalistic, hence evolutionary, explanation. If some scientific facts are best explained by appeal to an intelligent designer, the question-begging presupposition of naturalism gravely hinders science.
- 9 The charge that creation science is oxymoronic is particularly odd since "historians and philosophers of science are most universally agreed that theistic science is science and cannot be ruled out as such by demarcationist criteria" (which criteria involves "a set of necessary and sufficient conditions that some theory...must embody to count as science"). (J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 20.)
- 10 See Henry M. Morris, *Men of Science, Men of God* (El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1990).
- 11 A. E. Wildersmith, *He Who Thinks Has to Believe* (Costa Mesa, CA: T.W.F.T. Publishers, 1981), 70.