

Science Tear Sheet #1. Science, the Scientific Method, and Worldviews

Nearly all public high school and college science textbooks treat Darwinian evolution as a scientific fact, claiming overwhelming evidence that evolution occurred, and that the only debate concerns how it occurred. Multiple examples or “proofs” of evolution are included in the textbooks to support the claimed factual basis of evolution. Do such claims and proofs, in truth, present rock-solid proof that evolution has occurred and is a scientific fact?

Science has historically been defined as involving the search for causes and the best explanation of natural phenomena (examples of natural phenomena include gravity, the weather, and chemical reactions). Modern science has its roots in the work of the churchmen or Scholastics of the middle ages (such as Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, and Albert Magnus) who recognized that all domains of learning should be accorded their own methods, that science depended on experimentation, and that truth in one domain (such as science) cannot conflict with truth in other domains (such as religion).

In the early 1600s, Francis Bacon ushered in a return to the experimental methods that had been largely abandoned in the Renaissance. Following further development, the approach is now called the *scientific method* and consists of the following steps:

1. Identify a problem or area of investigation; find out what is known about the subject.
2. Gather information, make observations, take measurements. Based upon observations and research, formulate one or more hypotheses that appear to account for and explain what has been observed and measured. The objective is to find the best explanation for the data and observations; in other words, it must have explanatory value.
3. Make predictions regarding observations that should result if the hypothesis is true; design and conduct experiments that would falsify the hypothesis if it is not true.
4. Analyze the results of experiments and accept, reject, or modify the hypothesis such that it is in agreement with all experimental results and/or observations.
5. Share the hypothesis and experimental results and observations with others who can similarly conduct experiments and confirm or falsify the results and hypothesis.
6. After the accumulation of a significant amount of experimental and observational data by many independent investigators who have attempted to falsify the hypothesis under a variety of conditions, it may be elevated to a theory, and eventually to a law, if repeated attempts at falsification have failed.

One should note that the origin of life and the universe cannot strictly follow the steps described above, as each involved unique, one-time events that cannot be repeated in a laboratory. Also, given the vast ages said to be required for Darwinian evolution to occur, it has not been directly observed or demonstrated by the scientific method. Instead, research relating to origins and evolution relies heavily upon forensic science, which predicts what evidence would be found were evolution to have occurred in the past or if the universe had an origin. Forensic evidence supporting the theory of evolution would include transitional fossil forms, as well as evidence that there exists a random, unguided mechanism that could actually lead to complex new organs and new species types over time.

One need not consider forensic science as being necessarily unreliable although, in practice, such evidence is often interpreted to support the conclusions that one hopes to find. Specifically, it is very important to recognize that certain views of the world or of ultimate reality (also called one’s worldview, ideology, or personal philosophy, which address questions such as *Where did I come from?* and *Why am I here?*) are only consistent with the denial that the supernatural exists. Such a worldview is commonly called naturalism, materialism, or humanism. Humanistic worldviews dominate academia, especially academic science.

Surveys have shown that approximately 95 percent of National Academy of Sciences biologists hold a materialistic philosophy. Once this worldview is adopted, there is a tremendous temptation to interpret all scientific evidence as supporting Darwinian evolution, as this is the best explanation of life's diversity that is independent of a supernatural Creator. Evolutionists have even gone so far as to redefine science, not as the best explanation of natural phenomena, but as the best naturalistic explanation of phenomena. Notice that when this redefinition occurs, the scientist is no longer free to pursue the evidence where it leads and Darwinism, being the best naturalistic explanation of life's diversity, is declared as a fact of science, even though it may fit the actual evidence poorly. Consider the following quote from Harvard evolutionary biologist Richard C. Lewontin:

We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because **we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism**. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹ [bold emphasis added]

In the book *Repairing the Breach*, the authors define *deception* as *the deliberate misrepresentation of facts or evidence to further oneself or one's worldview* and explain that deception is often associated with various violations of sound scientific investigation; among them, whenever 1) questionable methods are followed, or fraud occurs; 2) speculative conclusions based on limited and imperfect data or experiments are misrepresented as being very reliable; 3) ideology or the quest for fame or funding distorts the objective interpretation of evidence; 4) unsupported and speculative conclusions are extended beyond the proper boundaries of science and into philosophy or theology; and 5) adequate peer review is likewise tainted by unsound methods or ideology.

The authors go on to compare the most common “proofs” of evolution in high school textbooks against the scientific literature and conclude that false and deceptive information is placed in high school textbooks in an effort to influence the worldview of trusting students. They explain that the proofs for Darwinian evolution are not supported by the real evidence, but are promoted as being true to unsuspecting students for philosophical reasons. The individual proofs of evolution examined by the authors of *Repairing the Breach* are summarized in Science Tear Sheets 2 – 16, which are available at www.restoringtruthministries.org and can be copied and distributed for free.

For Discussion:

1. If education consists of discovering the truth, discuss which of the following definitions of science can best lead to the truth and is consistent with a true education: a) Science is the search for the best explanation of natural phenomena, b) Science consists of the best naturalistic explanation of phenomena. What possibilities are excluded in the second definition of science and why do you think science has been redefined in this manner by some?
2. Do you believe it possible that textbooks would deliberately deceive students about the evidence for evolution? How would you know if deception were occurring? What motivation would be behind such deception? (Hint: Discuss the quote from Richard C. Lewontin above.)

3. Do educators have the right to deceive students in an attempt to instill a particular worldview? Who has the ultimate right to direct the moral and religious beliefs of students (parents, educators, or the state)?
4. If deception is occurring, how can truth be restored to the science classroom?
5. How do the answers to *Where did I come from?* and *Why am I here?* depend on one's views of origins?

Note: the discussion above is copyrighted material by Restoring Truth Ministries, LLC, and is a condensed version of the material in *Repairing the Breach: Explaining the Systematic Deception Behind the War of Worldviews and How Christendom Can Turn the Tide* by John M. Wynne and Stephen A. Wynne. The book can be ordered from www.restoringtruthministries.org. This Tear Sheet and additional Tear Sheets can be downloaded from the website, copied, and distributed without payment to Restoring Truth Ministries, LLC, provided that copies are distributed without charge to the recipients.

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Students and teachers are encouraged to make this material part of the discussion of Darwinian science. Where schools are not willing to allow criticisms of Darwinism, it is all the more important for the Tear Sheets to be distributed outside of class and for students to ask questions about the deceptive Darwinian claims presented in textbooks.

ⁱ Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," *The New York Review*, January 9, 1997, p. 31.