

Seven Mortal Wounds to Macroevolution That Often Get Ignored

Dr. Robert DiSilvestro

This writing is fairly old. It will be revised and updated soon.



This writing raises problems with proposing the origin of species without any intelligent design. This writing does not address problems with purely naturalistic explanations for the origin of life (though very substantial issues can be raised there too).

1. A group of mathematicians told biologists that statistics don't support Darwin's model for species change. This happened almost 50 years ago, but has never been revisited to any great extent. A good discussion of this interchange can be found on pp 38-39 in Darwin on Trial by Phillip Johnson.
2. An article in the prestigious journal Science said the fossil record doesn't support Darwin. The article was called: Did Darwin Get It All Right? (Science 267:1421-1422, 1995). The article is now quite old, but to my knowledge, no rebuttal has ever appeared. The main idea was that the fossil record does not show transitions between species, but finished products. This idea was not new, but the article said that new fossil discoveries weren't changing the observed pattern. Some scientists counter this problem by evoking the theory of punctuated equilibrium. This theory modifies Darwin's ideas in a way that is supposed to explain the fossil problems. However, this article in Science says that this theory has little data to back it up. This article prompted no flood of letters to the journal objecting to the accuracy of what was said.
3. An article called: "Rarity as Double Jeopardy" presented strong data against punctuated equilibrium (Nature 394:229-230, 1998).
4. The Cambrian Explosion fossil record shows complex life features without a gradual build up. This not saying that no fossils predate this time period. However, the Explosion shows a substantial slice of an early fossil record with no evidence of gradual change. The relatively small response to these implications caused one Chinese paleontologist to characterize the difference between Communist China and the US. In China, one cannot criticize the government but can criticize Darwin. In the US, one can criticize the government but can't criticize Darwin (<http://www.exploregod.com/how-darwin-failed-his-own-test>).
5. Life's molecular machines show signs of irreducible complexity. This has not been ignored in the sense that no responses have been given. However, the critical responses

have often not been scientifically solid. The expression “irreducible complexity” was publicized in a book called Darwin’s Black Box by biochemist Michael Behe. This idea notes that if a small part of molecular machinery is changed, the machine stops working properly. This goes against the Darwin idea that machines start out working a little bit and gradually improve through evolution. I wrote a rebuttal to criticisms of Behe’s book: <http://www.leaderu.com/science/disilvestro-dbb.html>. This writing was done quite a few years ago, but the ideas still hold.

6. Caterpillars metamorphosis into a butterfly defies Darwinian explanations. An interesting discussion of this occurs at this site:

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/forum/index.php?topic=35294.0>.

None of the commenters seem to be proponents of intelligent design. Even so, some of the commenters admit that they don’t know how to explain this from a Darwin perspective. Others offer weak explanations.

7. When dog breeding takes species away from average, the animals become fragile.

Very large and very small dogs are very fragile and would have a hard time surviving without human care. This raises the question: how could one species evolve to another when even limited changes creates fragility? I put this question to a discussion board a number of years ago. Someone suggested that the instability results from too much inbreeding. However, a number of people reacted by saying that inbreeding does not explain what has happened.

A natural question to ask is: If these wounds pose such big problems, why are they not recognized by many scientists? Many scientists do recognize this problem, but few forums exist for them to express their opinion. Scientific journals will not publish research that takes the direction that design can be involved in nature. In fact, one journal recently retracted an article when letters objected that the possibility of design was mentioned in the article. In addition, most scientists focus on their own goals and jobs, which do not require critical thoughts about evolution. As a result, most scientists just take the word of other scientists that evolution explains the origin of species. In other words, most scientists have never really thought critically about the issues for themselves.

Also, some scientists feel uncomfortable with alternatives to saying evolution explains the origin of species. This makes them unwilling to accept any questioning of current evolutionary theory.

Lastly, many scientist readily accept “just so stories” about evolution. These stories write off criticisms by giving a hypothetical story of how some particular evolution process could have worked. However, these stories are not backed by any evidence or even strong theory that the processes worked this way.