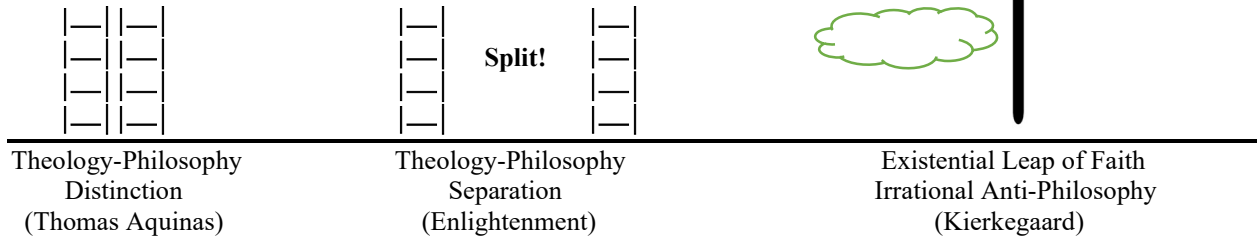


Lecture 6: Darwinian Evolution

January 27, 2020

Evaluation of the Fact-Value Split in Francis Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason*:



Introduction

Before reading Genesis, let us first consider the Origins Debate.

Otherwise, many of us will not give Genesis a fair hearing.

Significance of the Creation-Evolution Debate

Theism vs. Atheism ← goes both ways (Dawkins as a “intellectually satisfied atheist” vs. Anthony Flew)

History of Religion

Social Darwinism } popular due to the 19th-century belief in progress

Definition of Evolution

Species-to-New-Species Process – “descent with modification” (Darwin)

Kinds of Evolution

Lamarckian Evolution – acquired characteristics are inherited by offspring

Darwinian Evolution – natural selection (“survival of the fittest”)

Slight variations that enable a population to adapt better to its changing environment are preserved.

Mendelian Revolution – the discovery and acceptance of the “unit gene” (c. 1900)

Neo-Darwinian Synthesis – natural selection through favorable genetic mutations

Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859)

“...one long argument...”

Yes! Quite surprising at first! Truly a *natural philosophy* from a true *naturalist*!

For what?

Species are mutable.

Natural selection is a *law* of nature. ← Darwin did not believe in chance.

Against what?

Natural theology in “a straw-god argument” (Jonathan Wells).

According to Darwin’s Unitarian background, each species is created for its precise spot.

“I determined to collect blindly every sort of fact, which could bear any way on what are species... At last gleams of light have come and I am almost convinced (quite contrary to the opinion I started with) that species are not (it is like confessing a murder) immutable.”

—Charles Darwin to Joseph Hooker (January 11, 1844)

← a true naturalist

← self-awareness, fear

Is this decide?
(from David Herbert)

Assessment

Cosmogony – the genesis of the world is a *history* question

Interdisciplinary Study – by necessity, but is scientific naturalism able to give such a Big Picture?

Explanatory Power – which explanation has the most causal adequacy?

What would be a witness to evolution?

Past Records

Geological Column

Fossil Record

Geographic Distribution

Present Processes

Genetics / DNA

Homology – Anatomical & Molecular

Adaptation