



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.94-100>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### CREATION, BETWEEN POTENCY AND ACTIVATION, VERSUS EVIDENCE AND EVOLUTION AT RICHARD DAWKINS

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#### *Abstract*

The problem of life and the existence of the universe has always been of concern to mankind. There have been no historical periods in our becoming, in which man was not fascinated by the miracle of life and did not ask questions about the beginnings. Of course, every historical age has expressed its beliefs according to the power of understanding and the ability to express reality. Antiquity was convinced that the world was the work of the gods, to whom they paid special attention, through liturgical acts. It was not a unitary expression of mankind in this regard.

**Keywords:** Creation; evolution, Richard Dawkins;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of life and the existence of the universe has always been of concern to mankind. There have been no historical periods in our becoming, in which man was not fascinated by the miracle of life and did not ask questions about the beginnings. Of course, every historical age has expressed its beliefs according to the power of understanding and the ability to express reality. Antiquity was convinced that the world was the work of the gods, to whom they paid special attention, through liturgical acts. It was not a unitary expression of mankind in this regard. The only exception was made by a minority in Asia Minor, who was convinced that life and the universe had their origin in God-Yahweh, a Person God, who had uncovered himself to man and talked to him. But everything was passed on from generation to generation, verbally. About two thousand years before Christ, Yahweh called upon a man - Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees, to come to Canaan and with him conclude a Covenant, verbally, without writing anything of it. Only in 1500 BC, Yahweh commanded a descendant of the one with whom he had the Covenant to document in writing about the beginnings of the universe and of life.

This was Moses. God-Yahweh revealed to him the truth, that He created the world, and Moses had to pass the knowledge received from God through the filter of his human reason and to express it in intelligible terms, so that by reading, the man, can understand its origins and purpose on earth. This truth



was embraced only by the descendants of Abraham, although all humanity was invited to know it. Theologically speaking, the world, as God's work and expression or materialization of Divine Love, was invited, through the creation of mankind, to a partnership of eternal love with its Creator. Having been invested with absolute freedom, mankind could always refuse this invitation. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His coming into the world, God renewed the invitation made to the mankind - the partnership of eternal love. Christ has revealed a way of life, which, if we assume it, if we follow him, we become the sons of God. This is Christianity, which does not exclude anyone and does not force itself, on the contrary! This explains why, until the dawn of modernity, mankind continued to be divided, in terms of the response to the Universe and the beginning of life on Earth. But regardless of whether the answer to this invitation was, Christian or not, the world was eminently religious.

## **2. CHANGING THE RELIGIOUS PARADIGM**

The French Revolution marked the turning point in history, when God was driven out of the world and mankind returned to the values of antiquity. The phenomenon is far from being fully explored and understood, because the secularist and materialist ideological assault on French society had eastern roots in the Russia's illuminated tsars behavior. What is noteworthy is that, although striving towards irreligious, the communards have proven that man can not live without a divinity. This is how we explain the gesture of the statue of the goddess of Reason on the altar of the Notre-Dame cathedral, as well as the various liturgical processions and acts brought to it as an expression of a return to the practice of a natural religion.

Between the French Revolution (1789) and the mid-nineteenth century the issue of life and the universe seemed to reside inside a shadowy cone. But with the publication of the Origin of Species (1859), the spirits became inflamed. It was believed that religion in general and Christianity would falter because of Darwin's theory. Because "the triumph of Darwinism involves the death of God, which prepared the replacement of biblical religion with a new faith based on evolutionist naturalism. The new faith would become the foundation not only of science, but also of governance, laws and morals" (Ieromonah Serafim Rose, 2001, p. 6).

. But not all scientists of the time embraced, or agreed on, the ideas of evolution, "some of the most brilliant scientists in the world - from Richard Owen and Louis Agassiz in 1860 to Richard Goldschmidt and Otto Schindewolf in 1940 - (which) showed the scientific community the embarrassing difficulties of the Darwinian theory ..." (Ieromonah Serafim Rose, 2001, p. 7). Still the theological academic community was caught off guard and for a century it did not taken its stand. The birth of quantum mechanics and physics, in 1920, changed the parameters of the problem and the academic community was invited to reassess its view of the universe in general and of human existence in particular! In this regard, Stephen Hawking referred to the principles of quantum physics that "were developed in the first decades of the twentieth century, after Newtonian theory proved inappropriate for describing nature at an atomic or subatomic level" (Stephen HAWKING, 2012, p. 54). Also the American neurosurgeon Dr. Eben Alexander, remembering Werner Heisenberg (and other founders of quantum mechanics), was convinced that "he made such a strange discovery that it would take a long time for the world to assimilate" (Dr. Alexander EBEN, 2013, pp. 147-148.), because in the case of quantum physics, "In the case of quantum physics, physicists are still working to figure out the details of how Newton's laws emerge from the quantum domain" (Stephen HAWKING, 2012, p. 55).

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This giant leap made in the scientific research community, allowed theologians and others who did not share the evolutionist vision of the world, to differentiate themselves from the materialists and evolutionists. This happened at the great event which marked 100 years from the publishing of the Origin of species, also known as the Darwin Centenary. Only then there have been contradictory voices which upheld that the universe and life are the product of divine creation. In the meantime, there have been a plethora of works which look at both the material evolution of the world and also at the existence of a Creator, the author of existence.

### **Research Proposal – Creation, between potency and activation versus evidence and evolution at Richard Dawkins**

Evolutionism and the materialism had and still have numerous supporters, even in academic environments. But the most active ones of the 20th century have been Anthony Flew and Richard Dawkins. The former, after advocating his whole life the supremacy of materialism and evolutionism, at the age of 80, had the courage to confess that God Exists! Although being labeled as a philosopher of the night, which presented darkness as light and made the source of general existence and world order from complete chaos (Ioan Gh. SAVIN, 2002, p. 127.), still had the power to overcome himself! He was so touched when he discovered the intelligence behind the innerworkings of DNA, that he proclaimed God exists! Once again, it has been proven that the chaos which was believed to sit at the foundations of existence, is nothing but what Boutroux said, „the word with which we cover our own ignorance and which before explaining anything, it demands renouncing any attempt to explain, even the abdication from thinking itself”( Ioan Gh. SAVIN, 2002, p. 132). He was postulating the existence of a Supreme Intelligence. We can only imagine how evolutionists have reacted, when one of their own has deserted! The most acid reaction was the one of Richard Dawkins, which accused his friend of being senile. But Flew’s reply was full of nothing but dignity: „I have to underline that my discovery of the Divine has been concerned purely with the natural, without any reference to any supernatural phenomena. It was an exercise in, what we traditionally call natural theology. This had nothing to do with any of the existing religions. I did not imply I had any personal experiences of God or any other experience of the supernatural or miraculous kind. In short, my Divine discovery was a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith”( Antony FLEW, Roy VARGHESE, 2007, p. 93).

In this context, Richard Dawkins published *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*(Richard DAWKINS, 2006. He had tried, since 1976 , to revolutionize Darwin’s evolutionary theory by introducing into the scientific research a new term, namely the meme, a term that has generated a new field of research: the domain of memetics . He argues, with this new hypothesis, that there is not only an evolution at the biological level, the species, or a natural selection, but also a cultural one. If within natural evolution we speak of genes, as replication units, in the case of cultural evolution we are talking about memes. Dawkins argues that as genes propagate into the genetic background, moving from one body to another, the memes propagate into the memetic background, moving from one brain to another through a process that can be called imitation or meme. Dawkins’ hypothesis completely changed the essence of Darwinian theory, because it postulated evolution at the genetic level and not at the species level. On the other hand, he introduced a new component in discussion - the cultural evolution, by which he expanded the scope of the notion of evolution, but, implicitly, emphasized his fragility. Unfortunately, Professor Dawkins’ attitude proved to be a fundamentalist one, perhaps fueled by the religious fundamentalism that marked the beginning of the third millennium. It is painful to overshadow your liberty and to label those who have other beliefs than your own, but it is more painful to use the umbrella of science and to offend those who do not share your ideas. Thus he speaks of "the pride of being an atheist ... because ... it is a matter of praise, because atheism almost always proves a positive mental independence and a healthy intellect" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 14.). He allows himself to preach insults to religion, which is the root of all evil (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 11), be convinced that his work will have miraculous effects on faithful readers ( believing readers who will open it will be atheists when they finish it - Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16), although he acknowledges that there are also "square-headed believers ... who will remain immune to any argument, proving resistance after so many years of indoctrination in childhood, through methods that have matured over the centuries" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16). It would be enough to stop at these considerations, because we realize that R. Dawkins, first of all, did not understand what Christianity is: an invitation to a partnership of love with God, or a way of life to which man is invited to adhere. In whose name science allows to label , those who respond to this invitation, square heads? By denying the existence of God, he is considered a god, having the freedom to judge those who do not share his views! Not to mention freedom. If he has the freedom not to believe, why don’t Christians have the freedom to believe what they want? The slogan faithful in faith or believe in faith(Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 18) is also an offense to those who, unable to explain their feelings, conclude that they have a faith. In Dawkins’ mind, the existence of religion has brought all evils to humanity, that is why it postulates and fights for a world without religion, in which atheism is the only religion.

If Darwin, when he outlined his vision of over evolution, in his work *The Origin of Species*, he made it clear that the innumerable links he proposed without evidence would be complemented with the development of scientific research, we must say that the phenomenon it was the other way round; as scientific research advances, evolution is invalidated! Actually, Anthony Flew is the most terrible argument in this respect! The simple fossil research which - although they are invoked by evolutionists in support of their theory - confirms not evolution, but creation. If the fossils confirm evolution then we should "find in the oldest layers of rock the most primitive forms of life, and then gradually, as we climb through different beginnings, more and more complex forms of life." (Dr. Farid ABOU-RAHME, 1998, p . 70.). In reality things are totally different, because - in the same layer - sudden complexions of billions of animals appear, thus contradicting evolution. On the other hand, if evolution were true, new forms of life should emerge gradually and not suddenly, preserving some of the characteristics of their ancestral groups. Thus, if "fish gave rise to amphibians more than 50 million years ago - as evolution claims - there should be millions of fossils presenting transient forms, that is to say, fossils with partial fins and partly legs; or be half the fish and half of the amphibians.

"Also, if the reptiles gave birth to the birds several million years ago, then we should find the fossils that have some of the previous members and some of the wings, or half reptiles and half birds." (Dr. Farid ABOU-RAHME, 1998, p .70). It is noteworthy that there is not even one transient form in the entire fossil inventory known today. Moreover, once "with increasing collection of fossils, many discontinuities tend to become increasingly more pronounced and regular absence of transitional forms is not confined to mammals, but is an almost universal phenomenon. It can be argued that such transient forms do not meet because they did not exist." (GG SIMPSON, 1944, p. 107.)

But returning to the claim of Mr. Dawkins to present evidence of evolution, we should note that he operates very much with probability and chance. To build axiomatic theses, leaning only on hazard, but in the name of science, it is a greater boldness than that imputed by him to religion. Moreover, since the beginning of his book, he acknowledges that "uninformed opposition is ... stronger than I remember ever being", but he claims he will make "a review ... of the evidence that the theory of evolution is a reality as hard to challenge as any other scientific reality" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 5).

From the theological perspective, and especially Christian-Orthodox, things are extremely clear. We explained above that we all know what we know about the beginning of the universe and the emergence of life on earth we owe to Moses. A simple analysis of the text of the Revelation, written by him, uncovers the mystery of existence. Although the Hebrew language has a low volume of words, it is extremely precise in expression. As in Russian, we find the perfect and imperfect aspect of the verbs, through which we know whether the action is finished or is in progress, or how in Greek we have more verbs to love, leaving no room for confusion, so do the things in Hebrew . It is enough to point out that Moses, in the description of the act of divine creation, used different words, but they are translated, at least in Romanian, by one and the same verb or noun. Let us consider only the verb to make and the words heaven and earth. Thus, we read : " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ... And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. " (Genesis 1: 1-3 ; 7-8). The first time Moses uses the verb *bar* - the Elohim *bar* - In the beginning God created, which he does not repeat again and which means doing from nothing; then he uses the verb *asah*, which means doing of something. In this first day, we read: The And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters., that is to say , the infusion of heaven and earth, the laws of existence, or the laws of life.

We can not accept that the universe and everything that exists has extremely clear laws, and they are the expression of the hazard! From the beginning God has given these laws so that the whole creation fulfills its meaning, its purpose. The man discovers the unpredictable laws in every eve of history, he marvels, but he has the feeling that he is the work of the hazard! How many other laws will not be discovered until the end of the ages?! In this way we understand the word " The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. " ( Psalm 19, 1), or " For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:... " (Romans I, 20). We must also point out that that in the translation of the Creation Reference the word heaven is met on the first and second day,

and the word earth in the first and third day. The reader might think it's a mistake, or a repetition. In reality, things are totally different. On the first day, God created the heaven and the earth, that is, the spiritual world and material world. The heavens of the second day refer to the physical sky, the heavenly vault, and the earth on the third day refers to the Earth and has its origin in the land of the first day. We understand, then, that God created, in the beginning, the spiritual world of angels and matter, to whom he gave the laws of existence, and in which he was biting life in all its aspects. Potentially, the entire creation, presented on other days by Moses, was virtually encompassed in the earth or matter of the first day. God has activated, day by day, some of the power smoldering in the earth of the first day! We do not analyze the logic and chronology of the emergence or activation of the kingdoms, but we make it clear that if the whole creation is the work of the commandment, the word of God, man is the fruit of the work of His hands. Here's how Moses plays this moment : " And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis II, 7). What does that mean? That man is made of matter that obeys the laws of life and can therefore live without Receiving God's call, though His call is to become like God. Then that man is made of matter, earth, contains in his body all the minerals that exist naturally in the universe, but in a proportionality so well adjusted that the slightest imbalance would result in the loss of life - the bios; this is also proof of this truth! We have in common with all living creatures – the bios, which makes us meet the same elements, from the smallest life form to the human being. DNA is what fascinates and proves that life does not have its own source but postulates a previous, all-knowing and omnipotent existence, a Creator! Antony Flew, discovering the intelligence that operates in DNA exclaimed God Exists!, quite late, for pr. Stăniloae had noted since 1978 that "The Logos or Word of God has been in the world from the beginning on the one hand by the rationale of things, which are faces created and sustained by His eternal reasonings, on the other, by human persons, who in their living rationality are the faces of His hypostasis, created with the purpose of thinking the rationale of things together with Divine personal Reason in a dialogue with Him "( Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, 1978, p. 7).

In the face of this truth, proven by science today, how could I, with the greatest confidence , endorse Hazard, as the author of the universe and life? If we read carefully the book *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*, presented as the "clearest, more comprehensive and more exciting review of Evidence of Evolution in Biology"( Cover IV, of the book *The Greatest Show on Earth*), we find that axiomatic statements are deduced from suppositions, assumptions, imaginations, hypotheses and theoremes . Extremely generous is with the formulas such as: suppose if we find it, it can not be demonstrated ... but good sense treats it as a reality, it seems very likely, if we leave the premise... it necessarily results... as it will have been, we must admit, without taking into account the phrases that contradict! We sum up to three examples (although there is an abundance of them in the book) : theoretically, You can daisychain your way back, theoretically for millions of years using petrified forests, although in practice dendrochronology is only used on archaeological timescales over some thousands of years. And the amazing thing about dendrochronology is that, theoretically at least, you can be accurate to the nearest year, even in a petrified forest 100 million years old. You could literally say that this ring in a Jurassic fossil tree was laid down exactly 257 years later than this other ring in another Jurassic tree! If only there were enough petrified forests to daisychain your way back continuously from the present, you could say that this tree is not just of late Jurassic age: it was alive in exactly 151,432,657 BC! Unfortunately, we don't have an unbroken chain, and dendrochronology in practice takes us back only about 11,500 years. It is nevertheless a tantalizing thought that, if only we could find enough petrified forests, we could date to the nearest year over a timespan of hundreds of millions of years.( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, pp. 104-105) ; So if you want to date a rock which is billions of years old, you must be satisfied with an error of plus or minus tens of millions of years (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p.105); we don't need fossils in order to demonstrate that evolution is a fact. The evidence for evolution would be entirely secure, even if not a single corpse had ever fossilized..( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 159 ); We don't know how our ancestors rose on to their hind legs. We need more fossils.( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 221); But, we think nothing can do better for the irony of science, and what this can mean for Mr. Dawkins, than the passage in which he strives to convince us how and when life began on earth! Here is what he says: " We know a great deal about how evolution has worked ever since it got started, much more than Darwin knew. But we know little more than Darwin did about how it got started in the first place. This is a book about evidence, and we have no evidence bearing upon the momentous

event that was the start of evolution on this planet. It could have been an event of supreme rarity. It only had to happen once, and as far as we know it did happen only once. It is even possible that it happened only once in the entire universe, although I doubt that. One thing we can say, on a basis of pure logic rather than evidence, is that Darwin was sensible to say 'from so simple a beginning'. The opposite of simple is statistically improbable. Statistically improbable things don't spontaneously spring into existence: that is what statistically improbable means. The beginning had to be simple, and evolution by natural selection is still the only process we know whereby simple beginnings can give rise to complex results" (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, pp. 438-439). Where the author of the book strives to convince us of the soundness of the evidence of evolution, he is powerless to say a word about the beginnings of life. He even recognizes that " We have no evidence about what the first step in making life was, but we do know the kind of step it must have been. It must have been whatever it took to get natural selection started. Before that first step, the sorts of improvement that only natural selection can achieve were impossible" (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 441). It is obvious that although he declares his ignorance, he still knows, putting the probability into play. He does not know, but says that "Before that first step, the sorts of improvement that only natural selection can achieve were impossible. And that means the key step was the arising, by some process as yet unknown, of a self-replicating entity." (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 441). Oscillating between accepting the doctrine of spontaneous generation, dismantled by Louis Pasteur's experiment and the operation of natural selection, before the appearance of life, Mr. Dawkins proves to be a good source of scientific information, a good journalist, but obviously deficient in the logical chapter. The primordial atmosphere, different from the current one, the absence of free oxygen at first and then its necessity (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 440), importance and molecules of DNA or RNA to which it does not stop, there are other proposals that would be the emergence of life. It really enriches our inventory of scientific evidence, stating: " It is now possible to estimate that there are upwards of a billion planets in our galaxy, and about a billion galaxies. This means that, although it is possible that ours is the only planet in the galaxy that has life, in order for that to be true, the probability of life arising on a planet would have to be not much greater than one in a billion." (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 444). How many unknowns are introduced in this equation!

#### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In 1977, after his being appointed Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Justin I have only surprised a few aspects of Mr Dawkins' book, which, although he wants to present as scientific evidence, is likely to be very embarrassing. The study of his work would bring more testimonies in support of what we said. Conferences, television shows, newspaper articles can be supported on such scenarios, but a book that is claimed to be scientific can not appeal to statistics to demonstrate the emergence of life! That is why, between the godifying Hazard and accepting an Almighty Creator, All Wise, a Parent who wishes to make his work eternal, the preferable choice is the pilgrimage to godification!

Christianity remains the most wonderful way of life in which man is invited to become like God, if he does not succeed, God is not guilty! But Mr. Dawkins, referring to the authentic religion, revealed, and formalizing himself for the mistakes of some religious people, was able to insinuate the following: " When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called Religion" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16.).

#### **5. RESEARCH METHODS**

In the rendering of this material we have used the simple method text analysis and explanation, exegesis or ermination. But I also have recourse to identifying the terms that reduce the allegedly scientific value of the work, Mr. Dawkins, who is a well-known scholar of scientific knowledge, a diligent colporteur of this information, but also an exceptional writer. It is obvious that it gives more weight to a probability of one to one billion than a historical event - the existence of Jesus Christ!

#### **6. FINDINGS**

The ultimate goal of our approach is to convince ourselves that there is a big difference between the scientist and the scientific data newsmonger. If the scientist is humble, respectful, willing, aware that

there is no limit to knowledge, especially after the early 20th century findings, that of quantum physics, the scientific data newsmonger is arrogant, triumphant, contemptuous and even dictator like; who does not share his point of view is retrograde, square head, etc. Either Mr. Richard Dawkins, though poses as a scientist proves a scientific data newsmonger, but still on pilgrimage towards truth. We are confident that his former friend, Anthony Flew will inspire him to anchor in the Truth, also proven by the outcome of scientific research.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we must proclaim the truth confessed by Eastern Christianity, at least as follows: We are the work of a Creator, called to become like Him, meaning gods. Although we have been created from earth (adamah, clay), and through this we have common parts with the whole Universe, our call is to live according to the model of Christ and be again the sons of the Creator. Christianity is an invitation to deification, or a pilgrimage from earth to heaven, the essence of life being the partnership of love with God, expressed through a partnership of love with all creation or existence! In this sense we can speak and accept evolution, but within the strict framework of one and the same species, and not transition from one species to another. We have a common Creator, but no common ancestors. Everything we know about the transition from the Lucy monkey to humans, to the humans of Java, to Nebraska, to Neanderthal, etc., although they have been proved impostures, somehow are still kept as axiomatic. Moreover, why should this surprise us, since Ernest Haeckel's drawings, as a result of proven talent and not evidence of evolution, condemned by some Universities of the time, are still used in biology books, dictionaries or encyclopedias! We live in the era of sensationalism and man is hungry for it.. When we read the book of Mr. Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth* we are impressed by the abundance of information and masterful weaving of words, but if we look at what percentage is supported on the probability, then we realize that science to him is more religious than our faith! But we have to admit: we have no right to condemn, it is the right of every man to choose what he thinks and how he lives. What we know and proclaim is: Christianity as a way of life is the Creator's invitation to become His fellows!

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