

Re: Any comments? (Evolution – was Answers to Pete)

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- *From:* "Oliver Wong" <owong@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 10 Apr 2006 17:29:14 GMT
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"LX-i" <lx0007@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:6ea53\\$443805cf\\$45491d7a\\$22496@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:6ea53$443805cf$45491d7a$22496@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

No, it's

[gravity is]

a "Law" – which makes it not a theory anymore. :)

From Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_law

<quote>

A physical law, scientific law, or a law of nature is a scientific generalization based on empirical observations of physical behavior. They are typically conclusions based on the confirmation of hypotheses through repeated scientific experiments over many years, and which have become accepted universally within the scientific community. However, there are no strict guidelines as to how or when a scientific hypothesis becomes a scientific law.

</quote>

From Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory>

<quote>

In science, a theory is a logical (thus often mathematical) model of the world (or some portion of it) which predictions either have been tested through numerous experiments, or were verified through empirical observation. In other words, for scientists "theory" and "fact" do not stand in opposition, but rather support each other, are logically consistent with each other – for example, it is a fact that apple dropped on earth has been observed to fall towards the center of the planet, and the theory which explains why apple behaves so is the current theory of gravitation.

</quote>

Maybe you are using the words "theory" and "law" in a different way, but according to the definitions I am familiar with (which seems to be in agreement with my friends, and with Wikipedia), the fact that gravity "is a law" doesn't mean it "isn't a theory anymore".

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More specifically, the terms "Law of Gravity" and "Theory of Gravitation" refer to two different, but related concepts (which I won't get into for now). The main point is that there does exist something call "Theory of Gravitation", which is compatible with the predictions made by the "Law of Gravity". The fact that "Theory of Gravitation" is a "theory" does not imply that we are unsure about the existence of gravity; rather, we know gravity exists, we just don't fully understand how it works yet. Similarly with "Theory of Evolution", we know that evolution occurs, we just don't fullt understand how it works yet.

Gravity can be proved and demonstrated.

I don't think you can "prove" gravity. What you could do is verify that our theories of gravitation are consistent with all other scientific theories that we have (they are), and we could try to make a prediction using the theories of gravity, and then perform an experiment to see if the prediction holds (e.g. "I predict the orbit of mercury will not be a perfect ellipse, but rather, will be perturbed by gravitational forces of the other planets in such and such a manner"). Similarly, we can check that our theories of evolution are consistent with all other scientific theories (they are), and we could try to make a prediction and see if it holds (no example, as my background in biology isn't very strong; maybe someone else can supply one?).

Without exception, every piece of "proof" I've seen for evolution (as a theory of how we got here, not just observed "natural selection", which is somewhat believable) has been debunked.

I think what you are calling "proof" is more commonly referred to as "evidence".

It's called the "theory" of evolution because it cannot be proved.

I disagree that that is the reason it's called "theory", though I agree that evolution cannot be "proved" in the same sense that gravity (or gravitation if you prefer) cannot be "proved".

I would say that it would never be called the "law" of evolution, but I wouldn't put it past some of these textbook writers to try to slip that in at some point in the not-too-distant future.

I think you're associating too much importance to the terms "law" and "theory". Just because someone out there calls something a "law", doesn't mean that its claims are actually true. Instead, listen to the contents of the theory, and judge for yourself whether they sound reasonable or not. If your curiosity is sufficiently high, ask for a repeatable experiment and try to perform it yourself.

Someone might tell me there are invisible particles call "gravitons" which are shot out of matter, and when these gravitons hit other matters, they cause an attractive force (instead of some sort of repulsive force as you might expect from particles colliding off each other). Initially, this sounds like pure nonsense to me, but if that person were to then suggest I try an experiment of releasing a ball near planet Earth, and observing whether it "falls towards" Earth, I'd see that this is indeed what happens. Somehow, the Earth is affecting the behaviour of the ball, at a distance, with seemingly nothing connecting the two masses. I now have to reassess my belief in this graviton theory (though if I investigate further, I will soon find out there are other theories available as

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well).

Does the fact that the person never mentioned the word "Law" have anything to do with the outcome of my experiment? If he had said "Law of Gravity" instead of "Graviton–Theory", would I have been more likely to blindly believe him without conducting my own experiments?

Nobody has time for that, unless maybe there was a comparative religion class and as an elective class I think that would be ok. And if they want to say a prayer at a football game, that's ok – it's voluntary and you aren't forced or expected to participate. But it should not be required in any way, there are people who want the freedom not to believe in religion or keep their views private. It's about respecting everyone, not just the majority.

No, anymore it's about *us* respecting *them*. I would absolutely *love* hearing a public figure stand up and say something like...

"Look, if you don't like prayer, you don't have to bow your head, and you don't have to pray in your heart – you can sit and do a crossword puzzle for all we care. But we are *going* to have this prayer – the majority of people want it, it's traditional, and we're not going to change our way of doing business because *you* are offended. There are lots of things that *you* do that offend *us*, but we don't demand that you cease them; rather, we're told we have to be tolerant of it. Well, what's good for the goose is good for the gander – so tolerate *us* for a change.

This country is free – but, if you're offended by the principles with which we operate, or our pledge, or our motto, our outgoing immigration is even more lax than our incoming. If you're offended by the pledge, then turn in all your money too. Surely "In God We Trust" is just as offensive as "Under God"! If you can stomach it when you buy your groceries, then you can stomach us and our traditions."

I'd vote for that guy or girl in a heartbeat.... I'm sick and tired of "tolerating" with no "tolerance" in return.

I'd prefer that public figure's policy of "I don't care what you do; go ahead and do crossword puzzles if you want" than the policies I've personally experienced. I went to a private highschool where prayer would occur right before Lunch. I don't even know what religion this school was affiliated with. All I know was that if I stayed seated during this ceremony, I'd get into trouble. So I stood up, and bowed my head, and kept my eyes closed.

It didn't bother me much. I mean, standing (as opposed to sitting down) for a few seconds every day was not very high on the list of things I didn't like about school (having to do homework was much higher). As a matter of principle, though, it would have been nice if I had a choice to not participate.

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I am curious to see why you don't think evolution is a science.
Couldn't it be compatible with religion? I don't see the conflict?
Why couldn't God have created the universe to evolve and change the way
Evolutionary theory is trying to determine?

He could have – I'd imagine that He would have told us that though.

Maybe He has (e.g. via fossils and all that), but "some of us" did not accept his messages.

Like I said, I'm not opposed to the "natural selection" part – there are certainly areas of biology where this applies. But expanded all the way out to suggest we started as "goo", then just "happened" to be on this planet that just "happens" to have an atmosphere conducive to life, where we just "happened" to evolve into all different species of bird, animal, insect, and human – and that the complexity of our DNA, which scientists today are *still* working to figure out, just "happens" to work in the precise and orderly way that it does – all this just flies in the face of the quite scientific theory of entropy. Things go from order to disorder, not the other way around.

If there exists a self-replicating "thingy", then it's logically inevitable that our world would be full of these thingies, as soon as at least one of them exists. Richard Dawkin's argument his book "The Replicators" is that it's actually not that difficult for one of these self-replicating things to "just so happen" to come into existence.

As for entropy, it only applies to a closed system. The Earth is not a closed system because it receives energy from the Sun.

I can't believe that more people believe all that than believe "oh, a deity must've made it". :)

Holly and my point is that people can believe both. I'm surprised that you perceive more people favoring evolution over creationism (from my exposure to American media, it seems like the opposite is true in America).

I agree that observation can support theories. What I don't agree with is expanding those observations to areas to which they were never intended to explain. And, no one has ever observed evolution – that's the kicker. By it's definition, it's impossible to observe – and people say the *Bible* is hard to believe? I'd much rather believe holy men and scribes over the years that the writings of one man...

I'm surprised by these assertions. What do you think the definition of evolution is, and why would this definition make it impossible to be observed? Informally, to me evolution refers to a gradual change in the phenotype (i.e. physical characteristics of their bodies) of a species over time. And this has certainly been

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observed (notice how the bone structure of ancestors of humans differ from the bone structures of modern humans, for example).

– Oliver

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