

Chapter 6 and 7 summary: finding darwin's god



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Chapter 6 and 7 Summary: Finding Darwin's God Kenneth R. Miller illustrates in chapter 6 how religion and science have come to see each other as enemies and he explains the unreasonable motivations of each. Miller puts forth the argument that both science and religion believe that the existence of one disproves the other. Miller does not agree with this premise, but rather sees both as having their role in society. However, he also understands the reality that some use science as a club to eliminate religion. Likewise he sees religion make efforts to discredit science. He points out the argument made by Richard Dawkins that says a materialist evolutionary world would be only "blind, pitiless indifference" (171). It is because religion seeks to restore some amount of hope for values that they reject evolution. It is not on scientific terms. It is only because it eliminates the opportunity to possess moral virtues and therefore becomes the enemy of evolution. In the section "A Dangerous Idea", Miller explains the importance of the debate and says, "at issue is nothing less than the independence of human thought and reason" (178). He further states that applying evolution to social activity will, as Edward Wilson says, doom the very idea of God (183). Miller describes what he sees as a "fabric of disbelief" among intellectuals (184). This academic arrogance results in a belief that there are no absolutes. He contends that this concept in the minds of the ordinary man would tear apart society. Miller says, "If evolution is capable of breaking the legal and moral ties between criminal behavior and the individual, the very foundations of our society are at risk" (189). Miller reinforces his belief in both science and religion by asking, "But what if both sides are wrong" (190).

Miller answers the question in chapter 7 by using physics to explain the validity of both evolution and God. He tells of the history of civilization as

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being highlighted by scientific discoveries, each one unmasking a God. As the God's retreated, man sought to unravel the mystery of life. He states that by discovering the basic material building blocks of life, everything " could be reduced to the predictable meshwork of cosmic gears" (197). But here is where both sides have gotten it all wrong. His science lesson explains in layman's terms how atoms move in an unpredictable fashion. Though the bigger picture may seem cohesive, underneath the surface is a sea of randomness. It is here that the " predictable causality ... breaks down" (201). It is therefore that Miller asserts that extreme materialism breaks down (203). We may be able to make sense of the statistical order, but we are helpless to predict the future. We can't predict evolution. He explains that this inability is a product of the way DNA mutates. It does not go through a gradual process, but rather takes a quantum leap. Miller contends that though this does not prove the existence of God, it does " allow for it in an interesting way" (213). Yet, religion rejects this notion and relegates God to be " banished to a period in the past" (218). God can create, but he doesn't mutate. In raising the possibility that both science and religion may be wrong, Miller has demonstrated the limitations of science and its inability to explain human nature. He has also put religion to the test by illustrating the illogical constraints that creationism places on God.

Works Cited

Miller, Kenneth R. *Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution*. New York: Harper Collins, 1999.