

Biology



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The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution, Richard Dawkins Chapter 10-13 “Imagine a world without islands,” the opening line of chapter 9 introduces the idea of an island as biologists define it. (Dawkins, Ph. D. FRS, FRSL) This argument is continued in chapter ten as well. Each segment of land or water that is surrounded by another form of terra can be called an island. According to Science Daily an online scientific research related news site an island is, “any ecosystem, say a forest, surrounded by barriers” (ScienceDaily). The idea of an island in the science of biology and evolution advances the idea of species evolutionary patterns. While the arguments have been made and supported for the use of fossils, and for the use of various short lived species of creatures there is still the variations of species in some areas versus others. Dawkins readily admits that he has no idea where the initial split occurred for species, however, he further clarifies by stating that given the common genetic heritage and the proliferation of biological islands separations and splits in various species is only a matter of time. Speciation is the term used by biologists to define the splitting of a species into daughter species. Creationists have adopted the idea of speciation to explain the variances that are obvious with the use of a small boat and the idea that two of every kind of animal was aboard. According to Carl Wieland of Creation. Com, “Virtually all creation theorists assume that Noah did not have with him pairs of dingoes, wolves and coyotes, for example, but a pair of creatures which were ancestral to all these species, and probably to a number of other present-day species representative of the ‘dog kind’.” (Wieland) Unfortunately, creationists still rely on a much shorter time period which cannot explain the lengths of time needed for each major shift and even for the minor shifts in various dog breeds and canine sub

species. The evolutionist's argument is for speciation which can occur as a result of geographical separation or climate related issues. The movement of the earth's plates comes next in the progression of information. Plate tectonics is described and defined in detail and as one author says, "Tectonic plates probably developed very early in the Earth's 4.6-billion-year history, and they have been drifting about on the surface ever since-like slow-moving bumper cars repeatedly clustering together and then separating." (USGS) This movement of various large continents through time accounts for much of the speciation that has occurred. Some creationist researchers have postulated a much more rapid separation of the plates in particular, Andrew Snelling a young earth creationist postulates the following, "But it is just what is expected with extremely rapid formation of new oceanic crust and rapid magnetic reversals during the Flood" (Neyman). These claims are referring to the accepted theory by both old earth creationists and evolutionist in that the separations took millions of years. Chapter 11 delves further into the various genetic approaches and the very real physical commonalities as well as differences that support an evolutionary approach. The question is raised regarding the obvious design flaws (relating the species to the environment and so on) that exist within many species including humans. Dawkins brings up the laryngeal nerve which follows an extremely long path for something that could be accomplished much shorter. This nerve in particular travels from the brain down and around a piece of a lung and back up to the larynx. Creationists state that, "There are branches of the RLN going above and below the larynx (both branch off the vagus) that would allow some preservation of function if either one is severed." (Sherwin) This explanation is beneficial and

makes sense. Until more is discovered about the actual machinations of this particular nerve it seems that lay people like me may need to just accept that both explanations have merit. It should be noted that Dawkins uses several pages to explain the various approaches and ideas behind this particular nerve. Chapter twelve introduces the idea of an arms race of sorts between predators and prey, and this includes vegetation and animal life. One example is the cheetah and the gazelle, which by simple observation you can see that the cheetah has become the ultimate predator of the speedy gazelle while the gazelle has evolved in a manner that suggests the evasion of the cheetah is a primary pattern. Dawkins makes a subtle yet good argument that if there is an intelligent designer than why create such obvious competition when one could avoid the "sport" resulting in the gazelles death. The last chapter, 13 brings together the book and shows the reader that while there are some areas where questions can be asked, the overall result is that evolution is as mentioned in the first paper both a fact and theory. The last line of the book is evocative and well written. We are surrounded by endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, and it is no accident, but the direct consequence of evolution by non-random natural selection - the only game in town, is the greatest show on earth. (Dawkins, Ph. D. FRS, FRSL) Dawkins, Ph. D. FRS, FRSL, R. The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution. First. United Kingdom: Transworld, Freepress, 2009. Print Neyman, G. "A Catastrophic Breakup: A Scientific Look at Catastrophic Plate Tectonics." Creation Science Rebuttals Answers Magazine. Volume 2, Issue 2, 2007. Web. 22 Apr 2011. http://www.answersincreation.org/rebuttal/aig/Answers/2007/answers_v2_n2_tectonics.htm ScienceDaily, . "Study Illustrates Diversification, Speciation In Biological "Islands"." Science <https://assignbuster.com/biology/>

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