

CHRISTIAN CREATIONISM AND SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTIONISM

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Abstract: The question regarding the origin of man is one of the oldest ones. But it came again at the surface of wondering with the anthropological revolution caused by Charles Darwin in the 19th century with his evolutionary theory about natural selection. Nowadays, after more than one century, after the scientific crisis, after the Intelligent design debate, on calmer water, the truth about creationism, evolutionism and their relationship seem clearer. But before assuming a certain position concerning those two it is needed a process of understanding the roots of such visions, their intentions, and their consequences.

Keywords: anthropogenesis, Charles Darwin, Creationism, Evolutionism, human nature, Intelligent Design, physics & metaphysics, the origin of man, Theology & Science.

Introduction

The answer regarding the origin of man was for centuries a matter of religion and the theological answer was the only authority. But once with the discovery of Charles Darwin concerning the natural selection and the laws of biological evolution started a revolution of anthropogenesis. This new perspective got into crisis the theology and its position concerning nature and origin of man. Therefore, this is how it started the tension between Christian Creationism and Scientific Evolutionism. The further questions caused by this tension are: “Who’s right?”, “Do we have a choice?”, “Can be both right?” In this article, I tried to answer such questions. Firstly we must understand what evolutionism and Darwinism are really about. Secondly, extreme positions are to be avoided, as ideological Evolutionism or Theological fundamentalism. Between faith and reason has to be a balance. Hence, between Evolutionism and Creationism, there can be peace.

1. Charles Darwin and the revolution in science anthropogenesis

On the question of the origin of man, until the 19th century, in the European cultural environment, Catholic theology has a monopoly, proposing

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the biblical answer. But once with Charles Darwin, on the background of the increase of the epistemological prospect of British positivism and empiricism, the anthropogenesis dilemma entered the spectrum of sciences, producing a revolution of the size of the Copernican one. If Copernicus's basic discovery was that cosmic creatures were governed by the rotation movement, Darwin's basic discovery was the theory of organic evolution¹. These two revolutions can be seen together as a single two-stage scientific revolution. They are fighting for the autonomy of science in the field of questions which until then theology and philosophy did not want to give up. But this must not lead us to a net antinomic separation between the two of them, but to a complementarity that we will be dealt with later in this article. Darwin takes the Copernican science further by finding natural laws, modeled on the cosmic ones, for biology².

The building of such an epistemological edifice cannot be separated from the cultural framework and the influences around Charles Darwin. In his youth, he was a young man in love for nature, love that will turn into a real career of a naturalist that will find great delight in concluding based on thorough and sustained observations³. That is why it has gone beyond broad responses about life on earth, wanting to contribute to increasing knowledge about nature. These ambitions are also due to the socio-cultural environment which had such expectations of him; more specifically, he wanted to thank his father, a doctor of his profession. Many other scientists around Darwin who helped to train and chisel his critical sense can join the list of the sources of expectations⁴. So the theory of evolution is more than a theory of an ambitious researcher, it is the fruit of a cultural environment, deeply marked by British empiricism.

But, just as no mind leaves anything behind without a handful of writing, the scientific revolution needed Charles Darwin, who devoted his life to science; he wanted to contribute his knowledge, his aim being to serve science, not to attack theology or philosophy. A little proof of this is that, before devoting itself fully to natural sciences, he studied theology (1828-1831) – the Anglican Seminary in Cambridge – for two years, seeking to

¹ Sigmund Freud considers that these two revolutions are two strikes that hurt the ontological ego of man, strikes that shook the pedestal of the anthropocentrism. The first demolished the centrality of his home, the Earth, and the second canceled the privilege of being above all creatures. See S.A. FREUD, „A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis”, în M. ADLER, ed., *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 54, Chicago 1993, 562.

² FRANCISCO J. AYALA, *Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion*, tr. ro.: *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, Curtea Veche, București 2008, 59-60.

³ The introductory study of Mircea FLONȚA to, *Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, tr. rom.: *Autobiografia lui Charles Darwin*, Humanitas, București 2017, 10-11.

⁴ *Autobiografia lui Charles Darwin* (The introductory study of Mircea FLONȚA), 17.

study the laws of nature through the easy rhythm of life there⁵. Unfortunately, the empirical spirit in which he was raised by his father and his educators led him to a coldness toward theology and philosophy that he “did not understand”, the reason for declaring that the time spent was largely a waste of time; But not entirely, because he met Professor Henslow whose friendship led him to Cambridge Ray Club, a scientific circle where his aspirations began to take shape⁶. The next major step he took toward a research achievement was his voyage on the board of the *Beagle* from 27 December 1831 to 2 October 1836 with Captain Robert Fitzroy⁷. During this journey, it was possible to gather scientific observations based on which the theory of organic development exposed in *The Origin of Species* will be developed. Following what Darwin reported on this trip in his diary we can understand the meaning and origin of applying an evolutionary theory in the anthropological spectrum. They could at least be considered pretexts. For example, the revulsion concerning slavery shows that naturalistic interests did not conflict with the principle of human dignity. And as for the switch from animals to man, it was improved in his case by the meeting with the Fuegians natives which are described by him like this:

Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures and inhabitants of the same world. It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the lower animals can enjoy: how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians! At night five or six human beings, naked and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals⁸.

Indeed, they cannot be a solid argument for the anthropogenic thesis, but it can explain how Darwin reached such conclusions. Moreover, this was not the way forward for the evolutionary theory and its anthropological implications. To understand Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* underlying we must start from his head-work: *The Origin of Species*, the expression of the theory of natural selection and evolution. The first theory of the evolution that is widely exhibited belongs to a French naturalist named Jean-Baptiste de Monet, Lord of Lamarck (1744-1829). He, in *Philosophie zoologique*, starting from *the legacy of acquired characters*, proposes a

⁵ *Autobiografia lui Charles Darwin*, 89.

⁶ *Autobiografia lui Charles Darwin*, 98.

⁷ *Autobiografia lui Charles Darwin*, 105.; during this voyage Darwin noted all of his discoveries and events in the *The Voyage of a Naturalist Round the World*.

⁸ Charles DARWIN, *A Naturalist’s Voyage Round the World The Voyage Of The Beagle*, 225.

rather metaphysical phrase: life has an inherent tendency to improve itself. His successor will be one of the masters of Darwin: Geologist Sir Charles Lyell⁹. It is the latter who has adapted the evolutionary theory in geology, which Darwin will also do by analyzing the soil types encountered during his journey around the world: the island of Fernando de Noronha, 20 February 1832¹⁰, and debating the comments with Lyell by mail. Based on this geological principle, it sought to demonstrate its biological applicability by comparing different species of plants and animals, comparisons that were regularly sent to researchers in England. And the title under which the biological evolution will lie is to be the “natural selection”, the head-discovery of Charles Darwin:

Can it, then, be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should sometimes occur in the course of thousands of generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favorable variations and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection. Variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection and would be left a fluctuating element, as perhaps we see in the species called polymorphic¹¹.

The direction of this discovery was initially to explain an adaptable organization of the organisms; since natural selection does not directly involve changing and diversifying species. The organisms benefit from modifications favorable¹² to their environmental adaptation for survival and perpetuation. To get to the specialty, meaning to see the emergence of a new species derived from another, a long gradual process must be followed.

Today it is relatively easier to understand the natural process Darwin has developed because we have much more advanced scientific data than it was available to him. And at the base of these, there is an Augustinian monk, Gregor Mendel. When Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, this monk was experimenting with peas in Brunn (Austrian-Hungary) getting to discover the laws of genetics¹³. Seventy years later, the findings of this

⁹ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion*, tr. ro.: *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, Curtea Veche, București 2008, 50-52.

¹⁰ Charles DARWIN, *A Naturalist's Voyage Round the World The Voyage Of The Beagle*, 11.

¹¹ Charles DARWIN, *The Origin of Species*, Collins Classics, Londra 2011, 77.

¹² Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 68.

¹³ Andreas WAGNER, *Arrival of the Fittest*, tr. ro.: *Ce nu știa Darwin*, Editura Litera, București 2016, 18.

monk have been the basis of molecular biology whose parents are Watson and Crick. DNA research will be developed on this line¹⁴.

Returning to Darwin, however, despite the genetic data shortage, he managed to design the laws of biological evolution on man by using his available observations. But the road to the decision to assert itself and the nature of man has been difficult. *The Origin of Species* does not mention the case of man, by caution. But not all of them showed the same caution in their statements. Shortly after the publication of the theory of natural selection, anthropological assumptions also emerged. In 1863 Charles Lyell publishes *Antiquity of man* in which he states that the discovered human fossils attest to a relatively recent human history. After him, Thomas Henry Huxley talks about man, monkey, and brain in *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*¹⁵. Also for the anthropological applicability, Herbert Spencer will give a new name to the natural selection from *The Origin of Species*: "survival of the fittest"¹⁶. Pushed by these and by many others who globalized the evolutionary perspective Darwin publishes: *The Descent of Man*. The position from which it starts is that although the man in his arrogance should be considered a divine creature, appears into him a structure of his animal origin¹⁷. HE was forced to speak out especially when Robert Chambers launched the hypothesis of the origin of the man from the monkey in *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. He is joined by numerous disputes on the subject, the most resounding of which is the episode between Thomas Henry Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford who placed man between angel and monkey¹⁸.

The opinion he supports in his work is:

We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect which has penetrated the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin¹⁹.

¹⁴ Andreas WAGNER, *Ce nu știa Darwin*, 30.

¹⁵ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, Wordsworth Classics of world literature, Londra 2013, XII-XIII.

¹⁶ This formula will be took over by Charles Darwin in further editions of *The Origin of Species*.

¹⁷ Charles DARWIN, *Notebook C*, 196.

¹⁸ The debate is best remembered today for a heated exchange in which Wilberforce supposedly asked Huxley whether it was through his grandfather or his grandmother that he claimed his descent from a monkey. Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, XI.

¹⁹ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, 647.

The main premise is that man must be counted among other organic beings²⁰. And that is precisely the hurt that man's "ego" gets. After having had to give up his cosmic position (with heliocentrism), he is now in a position to give up his privileged status among the creatures. He is counted as one of the other creatures. To this is added the hazardous character of the natural selection to which it is subordinated. Whereas natural selection is an "opportunistic" process, so its specialization is subject to the occurrence²¹; therefore, it would seem that man as a species appeared incidentally, in other words, the man in his glory might not have appeared as a species. And what he wants to make out of this work is, first and foremost, whether man comes from another pre-existing form; secondly, how this process took place; and thirdly, what the specific differences between these human races would be.

The first argument in favor of the thesis of human evolution as a species from a lower organic being is comparative anatomy. Bischoff²² admits, for example, that the structure of the human brain is identical to that of the orangutan. And this is not the only similarity: Man and the Orangutan are compatible with the same diseases. However, men are genetically similar to chimps too, among other things by tastes: the chimpanzees have been noticed to like cigarettes and drinks²³. Other anatomical arguments are the animal rudiments that are found in the human body: the muscles of the forehead, the body hair, the posterior molar, the Appendix vermiform, the coccyx bone (the remnant of the tail). The conclusion they lead to is that we cannot talk about separate creative acts given the similarity of structures²⁴.

Although Darwin's plea makes use of positive, concrete arguments, his reasoning is insufficient, two more puzzles remain that run counter to his hypothesis: the consistent difference between the monkey and man, which, although explained with the available data at that time (proposed only as of the apparent, behaviorist and contextual difference), today when both the monkey and man genome were deciphered, appears as impossible to overlook. Each consists of more than 3 billion letter combinations and differs by more than one percent. It also differs in important aspects that have not been satisfactorily eluded by *The Descent of Man*: language, technology, art, ethics, religion²⁵. And the second dilemma is the brain's leap to

²⁰ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, 3.

²¹ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 94.

²² Theodor Ludwig Wilhelm von Bischoff (28 October 1807 in Hannover – 5 December 1882 in Munich) was a German physician and biologist contemporary with Charles Darwin.

²³ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, 11.

²⁴ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, 14-25.

²⁵ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 23-24.

reason. Although Chapter II and III of *The Descent of Man* trying to compare the mental abilities of man and lower animals, it seems to find among lower animals as well: emotions, curiosity, imagination, motivation, progress, language, consciousness, esthetic sense, beliefs, superstitions, morality, sociability, judgment, etc.²⁶; however, it does not explain the leaping that man makes from instinct to rational thinking and which other creatures do not realize. In potency, it would seem that other animals are not far from man, but the present state shows a clear break, impossible to pass. Moreover, these arguments concerning animal intelligence were referred to by Frances Power Cobbe in an Article in 1872 as science fairytales²⁷. We could say the same by seeing man's religion compared to the dog's love of his master²⁸. To us today, who have both a more complex science and a more complex man from the intellectual, cultural, social point of view. According to these Darwin's arguments no longer seem convincing. But despite these changes, the two basic dilemmas remained the same: how could a monkey become man and how his brain gave birth to thought. Even the long-called dispute of the missing link has been clarified: all stages of human development have been discovered²⁹, from "Lucy" – the name given to one of the oldest human fossils – passing through the "connecting link" – *Australopithecus afarensis* – to *Homo sapiens*³⁰.

The responses given by biology concerning these similarities and differences of the man with other organic creatures open the way for a philosophical and theological understanding of man in the splendor of his specificity and uniqueness. Some may place the specific human distinction on the hands of the soul, an entity indistinguishable from science, an entity justified by the mystery side that the human being represents for naturalistic research.

2. „The intelligent design” creationism

Although Darwin had not intended to involve the fruit of his biological research into the horizon of philosophy and theology, it was inevitable. Starting from the innocent principle of the natural selection, the epicenter of Darwin's concerns, it was reached at *The Origin of Species* – an expression of the theory of evolution – then its application to the man debated in *The Descent of Man*. Once the statement of human evolution as a species

²⁶ Charles DARWIN, *The Descent of Man*, 29-83.

²⁷ Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904) was an Irish writer and a feminist social reformer. Darwin's theory conflicted with the equality of dignity between men and women that she supported: "Women are worse than men; they have smaller brains".

²⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 51.

²⁹ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 23.

³⁰ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 123-124.

was formulated, there was inevitably a conflict between evolutionism and creationism. What Darwin began timidly and without heart continued the followers, but especially the “performers” of the evolutionary theory.

After Darwin, the academic world and not only was marked by this conflict between evolutionism and creationism. The mere idea of common ancestors for men and monkeys has given rise to a strong reaction in certain traditional religious circles³¹.

To understand the nature of this conflict, we need to understand the parties that are in opposing positions. The issue of evolutionism is not a scientific dimension, although this is what some want³², because regardless of the results of the disputes between creationism and evolutionism, regardless of the percentage of public opinion³³, the theory of evolution is one of the few theories that stand based on scientific evidence. So, this dispute doesn't happen in science laboratories, but in the public domain, more specifically in trial rooms where the trial sentence depends on the evolutionary or creationist majority public opinion. The reason for such a situation relates directly to the reason for the aversion of Darwin's theory: not the theory itself, but its implications, and especially its deviations.

One of the representative trials that staged the conflict is the “monkey trial”, a 1925 trial in Dayton (Tennessee, USA) which judged a teacher for teaching a class of students the evolutionary theory. During this process, a science teacher had prepared a broad plea against evolutionism, which he had never spoken, but which was published *post-mortem*:

Our fifth indictment of the evolutionary hypothesis is that if taken seriously and made the basis of a philosophy of life, it would eliminate love and carry man back to a struggle of tooth and claw. The Christians who have allowed themselves to be deceived into believing that evolution is a beneficent or even a rational, process have been associating with those who either do not understand its application or dare not avow their knowledge of these implications. Let me give you some authority on this subject. I will begin with Darwin, the high priest of evolution, to whom all evolutionists bow³⁴.

In the continuation of this plea, the fight of creationism seems to be not for the scientific veracity, but for the soul of the man who would be affected

³¹ Thomas LEPELTIER, *Darwin hérétique. L'éternel retour du créationnisme*, tr. ro.: *Darwin eretic*, Rosetti Educațional, București 2009, 135.

³² Members of the creationism part who'd like to place the conflict in the horizon of science by involving pseudo-scientific proves against evolutionism.

³³ Michael SHERMER, *Why Darwin matters*, tr.ro.: *De ce e Darwin important*, Humanitas, București 2015, 18.

³⁴ Bryan William JENNINGS, „Bryan's Last Speech: The Most Powerful Argument against Evolution Ever Made”, *Skeptic*, IV/2(1996), 88-100.

by the implicit undermining of religion by the evolutionary hypothesis. So, as Calvinist Theologian Charles Hodge says, Darwinism is seen as a form of atheism, and that is enough reason to be countered³⁵.

Another iconic process between evolutionism and creationism was the one in Dover, 2005: „KitzMiller *et al.* Against the regional school district of Dover”. At the heart of the discussion was the publication *Of Pandas and People*³⁶, school support used as a teaching manual of the Intelligent Design in the school. In this process, the authors state that:

Intelligent design means that various forms of life began abruptly through an intelligent agency, with their distinctive features already intact. Fish with fins and scales, birds with feathers, beaks, wings, etc. There may be gaps in evolution, not because many forms of transition have mysteriously failed to fossil, but because they never existed³⁷.

In other words, most of them are not interested in scientific validity, but in the fact that the acceptance of evolutionism might induce their children to give up God³⁸. So, the enemy was not Darwin, but the “derivatives” of his theory. The evolutionary theory, however, thorough studies may be in its horizon, does not have the main focus on the affirmation of atheism. We find in *The Descent of Man* the following statement concerning God:

The question [religious faith in human nature] is of course wholly distinct from that higher one, whether there exist a Creator and Ruler of the universe; and this has been answered in the affirmative by some of the highest intellects that have ever existed.

Therefore, although it challenges the quality of man as *naturaliter religiosus*, questioning whether the man is by nature faithful when it comes to God’s existence does not question it, but places it outside the area of competence, in his own life declaring himself more as an agnostic than an atheist.

Yet the association of evolutionism with atheism is not entirely unfounded but is based on the experience of people regarding the fruits of this theory, the “scientific” justifications of social Darwinism and its derivatives: Militarism, Imperialism, Eugenia³⁹. Among those who have made use of Darwinism in a harmful way for mankind, as the social desolation, were the parents of the great political ideologies that have devastated Europe and not only: Nazism, Fascism, Communism.

³⁵ Thomas LEPELTIER, *Darwin eretic*, Rosetti Educațional, București 2009, 135.

³⁶ Percival William DAVIS – Dean KENYON, *Of Pandas and People*, Houghton, Dallas 1993.

³⁷ Percival William DAVIS – Dean KENYON, *Of Pandas and People*.

³⁸ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 47.

³⁹ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 49.

As an example of such an instrumentalization, not far from the historical experience of the Romanian people is communism. The mirror of what the process implies, namely additions to Darwin's theory, criticisms, reflexes, is the preface of the work *The Origin of Species* translated during the communist period in Romanian, the preface drafted by the communist scholar Vasile D. Mirza⁴⁰. He highlights the problems of Darwinism – elements that do not fit to the Communist ideology – the fight for the development and spread of Darwinism (or rather the communist form of Darwinism). The great difference between Darwin and Communism was that Darwin placed him outside his area of competence, while communism expelled him out of the possibility of existence.

These would be the main reasons for the aversion against evolutionism: the attempt to eliminate the harmful ideologies and philosophies from the root, the evolutionary theory which scientifically managed to justify any action. It is like attempting to counter Islam because of the terrorist threat. On the other hand, this attitude was well framed by a general opposition to science, the crisis of the anthropocentrism whose pedestal had collapsed, the anguish of natural determinism⁴¹.

Since Darwin until nowadays, the most passionate enemies of evolution are adepts of the "Intelligent Design" whose thesis is that God created the world suddenly, just as we see it today. They bring in favor of this hypothesis scientific arguments that deliberately follow Newton's resignation, which at the end of physical laws, in the absence of an ultimate law, based everything on a miracle of God⁴². The same thing is done by these creationists. The pioneering project is William Paley's *Natural Theology*, who says that only an all-powerful Creator can justify the perfection and functionality of the organisms⁴³. The argument for such a statement refers to one of the metaphysical causes of Thomas of Aquino concerning the being. So, all are "things created by God first, and kept by him till today"⁴⁴.

The argument for this "Intelligent Design" is rather a counter-argument for evolutionism since all scientific reasoning and evidence seek to deny an evolution rather than prove a designer. Among the reasons can be listed: the anthropic principle (man's adaptability would be a mask of the Universe made for man), the project deduction (supported by the false dilemma that it would not be distinguished in nature), the explanatory filter (only a

⁴⁰ Charles DARWIN, *Originea speciilor*, Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, București 1957.

⁴¹ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 53-54.

⁴² Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 75.

⁴³ Cf. Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 165.

⁴⁴ John RAY, *Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*, 1691.

God can justify the irreducible complexity of nature), the preservation of information (the impossibility of new genetic information coming out of anything), the second law of thermodynamics (entropy) makes evolution impossible⁴⁵.

These judgments claiming a scientific authority – claim that real scientists like Stephen Hawkins have already dismantled them – have also been added biological facts: the perfection of the human eye as an argument of the irreducible complexity that postulates a designer⁴⁶; the gaps in the fossil record that fill the human evolution album, which is no longer a plausible argument, as the “missing link” is no longer missing⁴⁷. Moreover, the argument of the shortcomings, whatever they were invoked, was overtaken by Richard Dawkins’s convergent evidence⁴⁸.

Adding up all these attempts and failures of the Intelligent Design to the conflict in the scientific perspective we come not only to the conclusion of its weak plausibility in the face of evolutionism but also the understanding of the true nature of the Intelligent Design.

The absurdity that their project would be scientific rather than religious is evident in the case of “Dover”, where more detailed attention is asked to reveal that the Intelligent Design and the study of its followers consist of religious strategies stemming from previous forms of creationism. The promotion of religion is sought at the expense of science, eventually presenting them as adversaries in the horizon of truth⁴⁹. They try to transfer in the field of science the conflict between Christianity and secular humanism that they read in evolutionism. But science is not a religion, and in this context, it is a collateral victim.

The argument that the Intelligent Design is not about science was prompted by another trial in the tension between creationism and evolutionism, a trial in Arkansas in 1981 that was based on US Law No. 590, which provided for a fair time allocated to creationism and evolutionism in the school schedule. This law was attacked by the claim that creationism is not science. True science is described through several points in this context: compliance with the laws of nature, explanations in terms of natural (not supernatural) laws, testable in the empirical world, acceptance of the provisional status of the conclusions, falsification. But creationism has entrenched in unquestionable axioms defended by offensive (attacking

⁴⁵ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 77-112.

⁴⁶ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 174-178.

⁴⁷ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 32-33.

⁴⁸ Richard DAWKINS, *The Ancestor’s Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 2004.

⁴⁹ Francisco J. AYALA, *Darul lui Darwin către știință și religie*, 166-167.

evolutionism). The accusation against favoring the Intelligent Design in school was: „The law unacceptably supports religion by advancing religious belief that a supernatural being created humanity”⁵⁰.

Defensive speeches in which the Intelligent Design seeks to separate itself from religious creativity appear to be the last safeguard of its scientific status, but an unsuccessful attempt. If the insufficient arguments, the direct attacks on science, the interference of natural and supernatural in a speech that is intended to be naturalistic do not convince the true nature of this project, then more telling can be two concrete aspects: political and economic. Since the theory of the Intelligent Design failed to gain ground among scientists, it turned to political strategies, turned to legislative power, and the advantage of the majority, and in this way trying to impose this theory by law⁵¹. Or a real scientific theory will never choose such an affirmation, but a real scientific theory is self-imposed.

The second is the economic fact: the route of money. While asserting scientific interests, behind the funding of all evidence contrary to evolutionism (since any research requires resources), the followers of the Intelligent Design are supported in their research by traditional religious associations, especially by the evangelical Christians, who do not avoid stating their intentions with which such donations are made: „to contribute to the preaching of the Christian Gospel”, „the full integration of the Bible law in our lives”⁵². All these betray the true identity of the Intelligent Design: a religious movement disguised as science.

The mistake of the Intelligent Design is not the promotion of Christianity, nor the support for creationism, but the fight against evolutionism. Christianity and evolutionism are not enemies. Faith and science are not mutually exclusive but must engage in constructive dialog. As in any dialog, it must be based on ownership of identity and mutual respect. The wrong approach of Intelligent Design is to confuse religion with science and vice versa. The dialog between creationism and evolutionism is complementary, not contradictory.

The statement of a biology teacher in a Christian educational institution can be put forward as a summary of this:

As a Christian, part of my system of beliefs is that God has the ultimate responsibility. But as a biologist, I must examine the evidence. Scientifically speaking, I do not think that Intelligent Design is very useful because it does not offer things that are refutable – there is no way to show that they are counterfeited.

⁵⁰ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 124-125.

⁵¹ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 116.

⁵² Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 116.

Extracting deductions from divinity does not seem to me to be the function of science, because it is very subjective⁵³.

Once properly perceived the functions of science and theology, their responses to the origin of the world and, implicitly, man, complete each other: thus, the scientific theory of evolution does not contradict God's role as Creator, and theology can state the freedom of science.

So, to be able to affirm the possibility of a theological response on the origin of man without conflicting with Darwin's theory, we need to understand the difference between a theological and scientific response.

3. The compatibility between creationism and evolutionism

Despite what scientific findings attest based on natural evidence, the Christian cannot claim God without claiming that he is *the Creator of heaven and earth*:

The significance is that creation is the foundation of all God's saving plans. It shows forth the almighty and wise love of God, and it is the first step toward the covenant of the one God with his people. It is the beginning of the history of salvation which culminates in Christ; and it is the first answer to our fundamental questions regarding our very origin and destiny⁵⁴.

It is one of the central declarations of the faith of all Christian confessions, so it is an indisputable belief. This raises the question of its alignment with the evolving data of science, leading to the conflict between religion and science mentioned above. But the real problem is the narrow perception of the creationism idea that is often confused with a strict package of beliefs⁵⁵. It is enough to note the various conclusions reached by the meeting between scientific evolutionism and Christian creationism.

A first conclusion we have already seen in the previous chapter is the war between creationists – especially followers of Intelligent Design – and evolutionists, in which scientific and pseudo-scientific debates interfere with religious apologies⁵⁶.

Another type of conclusion is the attempt to merge between evolutionism and creationism. This model states that religion and science are two ways of looking at the same reality. In this way, the „days” of the Biblical story of the creation in Gen 1 could be metaphors of some great biological

⁵³ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 138.

⁵⁴ *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 51.

⁵⁵ Denis ALEXANDER, *Creation and evolution. Do we have to choose?*, tr.ro.: *Creație sau evoluție. Trebuie să alegem?*, Curtea Veche, București 2010, 11.

⁵⁶ Thomas LEPELTIER, *Darwin eretic*, 7-8.

era⁵⁷. This scheme is also adopted Yuval Noah Harari in *Sapiens*, using biblical images in the headings of chapters describing epoch of evolution on earth: „the tree of knowledge”, „a day of the life of Adam and Eve”, „the Flood”⁵⁸.

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), who had initially been a supporter of pure Darwinism, returning to Charles Darwin’s Lamarckian bases, laid the foundation for the concept of creative evolution or of „orthogenesis”. According to this conception, living organisms would have been endowed by God with his own creative capacity, thus becoming the intermediary agents of God’s creation, the evolution is understood in this sense as the very creative act committed by God⁵⁹. God is considered in this landscape as the “Grand Clockmaker” at the end of Newton’s plea, who, once the project of creation is launched, becomes a distant God, beyond the cosmos.

On the other hand, if we go along the line of scientific creativity, the argument discourse, subjected to logical discursiveness, leads, in an attempt to reconcile religion with science, to the naturalization of divinity. The result of such an investigation is the identity between God and the laws and forces of nature. And this sentence coincides with the pantheism and denial of a personal God⁶⁰.

Between this ontological parallelism and the pantheism that lies at the other extreme, the concept of panentheism is placed: „creation is part of God, but not exhaust the infinite of his being”⁶¹. This panentheism is itself presented in three versions, thus increasing the extent of variations in the horizon of reconciliation by the fusion of religious creationism and evolutionary science. The three versions are *the soteriological panentheism* (creation is “in God” not as implicit but as free of divine nature, and this creation is continuous, and is in a constant process of perfection until it manifests its true divine nature); *expressionist panentheism* (based on German idealism affirms that in creation the divine spirit is expressed as a source and culmination in God); and *bipolar panentheism* (God who is concomitant, timeless and identical to himself, but also temporal, spatial and influenced by the world)⁶². Despite these apparent solutions, the path of fusion is not entirely satisfactory, since both theological and scientific discourse, carried out to the end and spared by the blade of compromise,

⁵⁷ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 147.

⁵⁸ Yuval Noah HARARI, *Sapiens. Scurtă istorie a omenirii*, Polirom, București 2017.

⁵⁹ Thomas LEPÉLTIER, *Darwin eretic*, 122-123.

⁶⁰ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 150.

⁶¹ Niels Henrik GREGERSEN, *Dumnezeu într-o lume evoluționistă*, Curtea Veche, București 2007, 13.

⁶² Niels Henrik GREGERSEN, *Dumnezeu într-o lume evoluționistă*, 15-16.

leaves no room for such reconciliation. The major risks involved in such a process are: pantheism, naturalization of God, God as the null hypothesis in the scientific speech, calling for a miracle as a scientific argument; all can be summarized to a compromising mixture for both science and religion between natural and supernatural.

A third possible conclusion is the pattern of the separate worlds. This model was named by Stephen Jay Gould “nonoverlapping Magisteria”⁶³. Although religion has sought to respond in most respects until centuries ago, now, faced with science, it must clearly outline its epistemological area of competence and recognize its status as real science. In other words, a clear distinction must be made between science and religion and between their areas of competence, without any conflict but with a meaningful dialog and fruitful cooperation⁶⁴.

The conflict between science and religion marked the 20th century, but since a few decades ago, things have started to change under this pattern of separate worlds⁶⁵. This conversion of attitude is fundamentally anchored in a clarification of the concept of creation itself, concerning the evolution and, above all, in the perspective of Christian theology.

Divine creation, first of all, is not a scientific hypothesis that could be subjected to the empirical criterion of falsification, as expressed by the philosopher Karl Popper⁶⁶. The creation does not refer to a physical transformation of things, nor a movement of forces, nor a change of background or surface. But creation extends beyond the particular phenomena and interrelated links between things; it is not about the beings that already exist or about their changing, but the very mystery of existence. As Aldous Huxley wrote: „The only mystery is one of the evolving matters containing the potentialities of the spirit”⁶⁷. By this, the identity of the creation appears metaphysical, which is beyond the physical nature of the evolutionary naturalism. In the horizon of metaphysics, nothing can exist by itself. We perceive this when we become aware of our existence – „I am” – which does not come from us but depends on an outside being⁶⁸. Thus from the concrete being, which is the creation, the passage is made to the being itself – God-Creator. This passage is not empirical nor experimentally verifiable⁶⁹.

⁶³ Stephen Jay GOULD, „Nonoverlapping Magisteria”, *Natural History*, nr. 2(1997), 16-22.

⁶⁴ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 147-148.

⁶⁵ Jean GUITTON – Grichka BOGDANOV – Igor BOGDANOV, *Dieu et la science*, Grasset, Paris 1991, 30.

⁶⁶ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 148.

⁶⁷ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, Fayard, Paris 1973, 2.

⁶⁸ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, 2.

⁶⁹ Battista MONDIN, *Manual de Filozofie Sistematică 3: Ontologie, Metafizică, Sapientia*, Iasi 2008, 162.

For this reason, the speech of the creative process attributed to the Creator can no longer be developed in the horizon of the speech of creation itself, which is, of natural science. Going forward, a scientific discourse limited by physical concepts proves that metaphysics may be unreasonable, as a change in the perspective of being must also lead to a change in the epistemological perspective⁷⁰. Otherwise, the physical argument of the metaphysical Creator could cause an overturn of the situation by inevitably closing down the reasoning within the boundaries of materialism⁷¹.

Therefore, the creative model, which fits in a parallel plan to that analyzed by natural science, refers not to be made in a certain way, but to be a part of the very fact of *being*, beyond any other category of being and any process endured by created beings, according to the three metaphysical principles: causality, participation, and finality⁷². In Teilhard de Chardin's terms, the creationism which theology supports – set in parallel to science – is described as follows: „to be created within the Universe is to find in that *transcendental relationship* with God that configures and shares us, and anchor us in the very master of his own being”⁷³.

Once this horizon of creativity has been established, by placing it following evolutionism, some consequences can be drawn, because of the interdependency between physical and metaphysical. The first consequence is that the creative act thus becomes a continuous act. Because, for the creature, beyond any physical evolutive processes would endure, the very act of *existence* remains unaltered and permanently dependent on the divine act of being. It is a *present relationship* with the absolute being. In whatever way the creature may be, and by man excellence, these specifications are, become, and differ under the potency of God-Creator. Another consequence is the link between creation and any creative evolutionary process: at the end of the argument and questions concerning the origin, there is a threshold between nothing and existence, which only God, the uncaused being in itself, can cause⁷⁴. This is the true faith in the divine creation: not that of a God who „rolls up his sleeves” and weeps the creation out of the “clay of nothing”, but that of the transcendence of God which created everything from nothing, which *was not* previously he made it *be*⁷⁵. Applying this principle to man, we see that God is his Creator not in the light of an *ad litteram* reading of *Gen* 1-3, but under his being dependent upon the

⁷⁰ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, 3.

⁷¹ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, 3.

⁷² Battista MONDIN, *Manual de Filozofie Sistematică 3: Ontologie, Metafizică*, 162.

⁷³ Teilhard de CHARDIN, *vision du passé*, Seuil, Paris 1957, 188.

⁷⁴ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, 5-6.

⁷⁵ Claudiu DUMEA, *Pagini dificile ale Vechiului Testament*, Sapientia, Iasi 2011, 28.

being itself as being. And a third conclusion that we can draw from this relationship between physics and metaphysics is that if we cannot make a physical speech about God the Creator, we cannot say anything about the creative process itself. This process is the transition from transcendent to immanent, but which remains entirely dependent on the transcendence of the Creator. And if the creative act belongs to the transcendent Creator, the act itself is transcendent and therefore cannot be shaped in physical terms. That means, we cannot say scientifically how God created, and under no circumstances can we establish an identity relationship between the world as we see it today and the „world of the first day of creation”⁷⁶. We know that God is the cause of the being of all things seen and unseen⁷⁷; he continues the creative act by permanently sharing his being to all things created; he is the deplorable part of the being toward which all tends through continuous perfection. Thus, creationist belief makes way for the natural acts that science captures. So the world is not static, but dynamic, dependent on God, but autonomous in its laws and phenomena. Science is right to analyze these laws and phenomena, but not the horizon beyond them, as Pope John Paul II asserts: “Observation-based sciences describe and measure multiple life manifestations with increasing precision and correlate them with the timeline. The moment of transition to the spiritual cannot be the subject of this kind of observation”⁷⁸.

In this speech, the Pope claims that for a reconciliation between science and theology in the context of the evolution-creation dispute the solution is that the body and soul should be ontologically distinguished, that is to say, be placed in different horizons, without creating split and dualism in man. The man remains the same, unique and complete, but is looked at from two different prisms: one scientific which analyzes the biological aspect of evolution, and one theological one which concerns the existence of man as *imago Dei*. Thus, we can serve the discovery of the anthropogenesis both the naturalistic discoveries and the Christian creative faith since the epistemological horizons have been clearly outlined⁷⁹.

And the fact that Christians, without any risk of compromise of their own religious identity, can accept evolutionism is not only theoretically and speculative, but also practical. A 1996 study in the US reached the

⁷⁶ Marie-Joseph NICOLAS, o.p., *Évolution et Christianisme*, 7.

⁷⁷ After the confession of the belief of the *cineeno-constantinopolitan symbol*, „I believe in one God, the Father of the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, of the seen and of the unseen”.

⁷⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Pope John Paul II's message to members of the Pontific Scientific Academy* (October 22, 1996): <http://www.vatican.va> [accessed on 25.03.2020].

⁷⁹ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 151-152.

following result: 39% of US scientists supporting evolutionism believe in God⁸⁰. Other such surveys conducted in the years after the fall of the year revealed that in practice, people do not have difficulties in accepting both scientific evolutionism and the creationism of their Christian faith in their private life. This shows that there should not be an incompatibility between Christian faith and scientific findings, but can, on the contrary, be engaged in fruitful cooperation. On the one hand, the new scientific discoveries, which are increasingly extensive, instead⁸¹ of exhausting any space offered to God, open up the wider areas, becoming the expression of God as *mysterium tremendum atque fascinans*. On the other hand, the separation between religion and science is necessary, since if God were restricted to a scientific speech, then he would have been limited by the Spatial-temporal boundaries of our language, he would not have been perceived as eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, etc.; and the materialism of science, without being perceived as exclusive, it was necessary for us to distinguish the transcendence of God⁸².

Conclusion

In conclusion, the scientific revolution and the removal of Charles Darwin's anti-centric pedestal, by putting its theology and responses to the crisis, has succeeded in bringing the true nature of theology and its answers to the eye. Thus, like a patient who has suffered in a doctor's healing process, we must not enter into a conflict but reap the benefits of a painful process. Once he has assumed his own identity, from both science and theology, the dialog he leads to will be fruitful. Only under such a fair relationship between science and theology can each state an appropriate response to the great subjects, including the origin of man.

⁸⁰ Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 153.

⁸¹ The fascination of the mystery of nature that talks of the mystery of the supernatural God, read in quantum physics J. GUITTON – G. BOGDANOV – I. BOGDANOV, *Dieu et la science*.

⁸² Michael SHERMER, *De ce e Darwin important*, 157.