
Science & Technology

Darwinism dethroned by the evidence

by Vin Berg

Citing much biological and paleontological data, 150 evolutionists attending an international conference in Chicago concluded that hypotheses based on Charles Darwin's Malthusian ideology cannot account for evolution of higher species from lower. The results of the late October conference could promote some new breakthroughs in biological and medical science.

For 40 years, biology has been dominated by a form of molecular Darwinism called the "Modern Synthesis," whose main architect was Julian Huxley. According to the Modern Synthesis, random mutations at the gene level, called point mutations, produce genetic variations within a species population. Scarcity of available resources enables only "the most fit" to survive and procreate. This creates gradual, continuous shifts in the genes of a population, so-called microevolution. These gradually accumulate, leading to speciation—the appearance of genetically distinct, reproductively isolated species.

The "Modern Synthesis" led to increasing frustration among both biologists and students of the fossil record because, frankly, it didn't fit the evidence. Recent biological data defying interpretation according to this theory raised the frustration to a pitch, and in October's Chicago conference, entitled, "Macroevolution," there occurred what might be called a coup.

The coup was carried out by the paleontologists, but they had plenty of support from the biological community. The *microevolution* of the "Modern Synthesis" does not lead to *macroevolution*, they concluded. While it might account for small variations within a species, it cannot account for the evolution of major differences that result in higher-order (taxonomic) developments.

Paleontologists have long known that speciation occurs abruptly. For example, 70 million years ago, small rodent-like mammals, which had remained virtually unchanged for tens of millions of years during the dinosaur age, underwent abrupt morphological transformations that produced species as different as a whale and a mouse in only three million years. The fossil record is replete with such discontinuities.

Darwinists, beginning with Darwin himself, argued that evolution had occurred gradually, but paleontologists had simply failed to find all the "missing links." But there are no "missing links" worth speaking about, concluded the Chicago conference participants. "Certainly the record is poor, but the jerkiness you see is not the result of the gaps, it is the consequence of the jerky mode of evolutionary change," argued Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard.

"The record is not so woefully incomplete," added Steven Stanley of Johns Hopkins, author of a book, *Macroevolution: Pattern and Process*, refuting Darwinian "gradualism" with paleontological evidence.

Roger Lewontin, a Harvard geneticist, asserted that "macroevolution" is very clearly *directed* in a way that Darwinian doctrines cannot explain. And Guy Bush, a University of Texas geneticist, proposed an alternative to the Modern Synthesis, arguing that evolution was chromosomal. Using biological data, he established that chromosomal rearrangements could prosper in species organized in harems, for example. This would reproduce chromosomal changes in a large number of offspring, some of which might later interbreed in turn.

If the conference participants kicked Darwin out, however, they failed to address the question of what *causes* chromosomal arrangements, or any other possible mechanism of evolution.

In a March 1980 article in *Fusion* magazine, "Evolution: A Riemannian Approach to Biology," Carol Cleary of the Fusion Energy Foundation used Guy Bush's evidence to argue that the most rapidly evolving species—like placental mammals at one time—constitute a singularity, acting collectively to create a new, more differentiated environment, with a net increase in biological energy flows.

Cleary also pointed out that cancer can be approached as the inverse of evolution—entropy. Cancer may represent chromosomal rearrangements under conditions of entropic drops in energy throughput.

At a recent Washington symposium on aging and cancer, evidence was presented that cancer is a result of unrepaired chromosomal reordering, not point mutations. John Cairns of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London reported that the cancer rate of patients with Bloom's Syndrome, an inability to repair chromosomal rearrangements, is 100 times higher than the general population. George Martin of the University of Washington established a similar correlation in patients with Werner's Syndrome, a rare disease involving premature aging.

A shift in cancer work to a broad basic research program involving studies in cancer, immunology, genetics, cell kinetics and structure, and evolution—using such techniques as recombinant DNA—could produce fundamental progress in biology.