

The Piltdown Man Hoax of Christianity

Although Charles Darwin's Theory has come under attack many times within the scientific field (where it was intended to be applied), it is thriving in fields it was never meant to explain. The problem with the theory is that many people (including Darwin himself) were often fooled into thinking they could make any kind of prediction they want with it. In truth, it is more accurately described as "pseudo-science," as it is more of a tool to help researchers look for connections. It cannot make the kinds of predictions deemed necessary by Karl Popper to be considered "real" science. While Popper was specifically thinking of Sigmund Freud when he separated pseudo-science from science, Darwin did the same thing with his theory that Freud did with his. In neither case can theories formed by them be demonstrated as being falsifiable, as both theories allow for facts to be interpreted subjectively. There is a certain degree of "art" necessary to use them effectively, and some people are better at this artistic element than others.

The critical case in point is the infamous Piltdown Man hoax. In 1912, parts of a skull were found whose features fit exactly what anthropologists were looking for in their "missing link" hypothesis. For 41 years, this "artifact" remained "proof" that the missing link hypothesis was correct. The problem was that the skull fragments were a fake, and they had rather obvious inconsistencies (which included the filing down of certain parts). It is not surprising that a forgery was attempted, as Darwin's Theory "predicted" a very specific appearance of what would be the "Holy Grail" discovery of mankind's development. It is surprising that the world's leading authorities on evolution and fossils didn't question its authenticity for almost half a century despite growing skepticism by a few of their members. Perhaps more than a few were guilty of deceit as well, but I am prepared to believe that most of them simply saw what they wanted to see and experienced an extreme form of cognitive dissonance.

But while the scientific community has downgraded Darwin's Theory to being a useful tool, others still rely on it too much, especially when it comes to religious matters. And I think we should pay special attention to the above lesson, because if the experts of the community this theory was specifically created for were so misguided when they encountered the greatest possible expression of their studies, how much less should this theory be considered valid when used by non-experts to describe a field they have not taken the time to fully understand?

The most tragic consequence (at least in measurable terms) we have of misusing Darwin's Theory can be seen in the socialist experiments since the beginning of the 20th Century. Darwin, who was a devout atheist, theorized a "niceness gene" existed to show that Christianity did not cause the improvements in the world since the time of Christ. As far as Darwin was concerned (as well as those who studied him), Jesus just happened to be the first to observe this change. This view was shared by Karl Marx, and is a fundamental assumption of all political socialism. However, nothing but death and suffering have followed in the wake of socialism. It is estimated that about 60 million people were murdered by their own governments in the name of socialism (most through slow starvation, but Mao Tse Tung preferred to bury victims alive, and Adolf Hitler gassed most of his victims), and probably at least that many more from the wars made to expand socialism outside the host nation. So not only has Darwin's theory embarrassed the very branch of science Darwin created, but the world has suffered heavily by misusing it in other fields of human interest. Including religion.

Efforts to discredit Christianity began with Darwin himself as mentioned above, but he has inspired a systematic attempt by others to "explain away" religion in general and Christianity in particular. For this paper, I want to talk about the efforts being made to show that Christianity is

merely an evolution of earlier pagan religions, which are easily disproved, and in particular, that Christianity exhibits many myths and rituals that can be seen in other religions. While most who suggest this do limit themselves to the religions of the Middle East, I have seen some "studies" that suggest Jewish and Christian influences came for other parts of the world!

Now, to be fair, Darwin's Theory can certainly help one understand how relationships exist between two similar things, and it can help one find such relationships. But relationships are only part of the story. We also have to take other things into context. One such context is time. If, a thousand years from now, the DNA in my bones is compared to that of my parents, will they know who begat whom? In this respect, as so much of our culture is dependent on Christian thought, we often find those who assume Christian ideas can be found in other religions. This, in turn, seems to suggest (even at the subconscious level) that the only difference between Christianity and other religions is that Christianity must be more cutthroat than the others because Christianity survived while the others did not.

I recently had a conversation with a co-worker who was upset that Native Americans were displaced by Europeans, and is glad that some have bravely held on to their culture. Obviously, this encompasses so much more than merely religion, but for primitive cultures it is impossible to separate religion from any other meaningful discussion of their culture. And the struggle between the Native Americans and the Europeans is too massive to make discussing a specific incident here productive either. But if we look at the colonization of the Americas as a whole, I do want to address the question of whether or not the aborigines were better left alone. The two cultures were incompatible at every level -- there was no middle ground to be had. One culture or the other had to dominate. Any "compromise" was merely a truce that gave each side a chance to prepare for the next round.

The natives believed that animals influenced human and worldly affairs. The colonists believed man lorded over animals and the world. The natives sought paradise through personal honor and glory; the colonists sought paradise through helping others. Between the two American continents, there was one and only one tribe that had a written language, but the majority of colonists were literate and made it a priority to teach the natives how to read. There was simply no way for these two cultures to exist together.

One might suggest that the colonists should have returned from where they came and left the natives alone. This "live and let live" approach to the question has a certain appeal in today's culture, but it does not match the cultures of either the colonists or the natives. The Christian maxim of "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12) was married to a missionary command by Jesus -- "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). For the Christians, saving their own souls meant that they were to save the souls of others. As for the natives, they had no code to suggest the colonists were wrong for being there. It is the norm in nature for the "survival of the fittest" (Darwin) and dominate, and the Native Americans had a culture grounded in nature. They could not claim they had possession of the land first, as they believed the animals ruled the lands. A stronger argument is that the colonists destroyed the natives' culture (or at least came close to it). But now we must ask if this was a culture worth keeping. Certainly the Incas (South America) thought that the other native cultures were not worth keeping, as they systematically assimilated all they came across. But pointing out that the colonists were not doing anything different than at least some of the natives were doing to themselves is not a good argument either, so let us look at this in a little more detail.

First of all, all Native Americans embraced war as a way of life. For the natives, to be made a prisoner was to lose one's honor and therefore be ineligible to enter paradise (Happy Hunting Grounds).

As a result, "lucky" prisoners were tortured to death so they could regain their honor and enter paradise (many pagans in the rest of the world, such as the Vikings, did so as well). The "unlucky" prisoners were allowed to live as slaves in this world and then exist in torment in the next life. In Meso- and South America, wars were often fought for the sole purpose of gathering multitudes of prisoners they could offer as sacrifice to their insatiable gods throughout the year. It is believed that the largest temples executed hundreds of prisoners at a time in assembly line fashion during the most important feasts. Sacrificing over a dozen at a time appears to be the norm. Furthermore, cannibalism was widely practiced by the priests and nobility during these ceremonies throughout South America.

Although colonists brought along a lot of evil, none of the subject races of the Aztecs and Incas (the greatest Native American empires during the colonization period) appeared to hesitate in supporting the Spanish in taking them down. Christian missionaries brought literacy, medicine and a much less violent religion to the natives (with mixed success). Efforts to integrate the natives were tried, and the French, Spanish and Portuguese were widely (if not completely) successful while English efforts mostly failed (for reasons I won't get into here). The violence the natives did to the settlers in return is generally glossed over by historians, and is more horrific than most people want to hear about anyway. Again, it is not that the Native Americans were less vicious than the settlers that is the problem, but the fact that the Native Americans lost. There are several accounts from the 1800s of people living in the "wild West" complaining that those in the East, who felt sorry for the Native Americans, did not know what these people were like. This is interesting, because similar sentiments are found by settlers in Colonial America about the continental European homelands. So, while one culture or the other had to go, it is not so clear that the people of either culture were worse off for how things turned out.

Since the historical lines between Christianity and the Native Americans are so clearly drawn that no mistake can be made of one having evolved out of the other (except in the case of a few extremists), we can use these lessons to help separate the Jewish/Christian myths from the pagans they were surrounded with in the Middle East. The Jewish faith arose amid pagan religions that were arguably even more bloodthirsty than the Native Americans. If nothing else, the Middle Eastern pagans were literate (or at least the leadership was), and therefore could be more efficient in their endeavors. Yet we see the Hebrews rising above the barbarity while their neighbors were perfecting their horrendous practices. Like in North America, the Middle Eastern nations worshiped animals while the Hebrews ate animals. But it is in terms of what we call "social justice" today where the Hebrews really stood out. Their pagan neighbors would wipe out entire extended families in revenge for a small slight, but Hebrews limited revenge to "an eye for an eye" (i.e., make the punishment fit the crime). Whereas their neighbors would slaughter children by the hundreds to bloodthirsty gods, the Hebrews abhorred human sacrifice. While their neighbors looked at women as *public* property, the Hebrews recognized women as being the property *of their husband*. What is commonly referred to today as a "horribly barbaric" Jewish culture was really the nascent stage of the ethics that are taken for granted today. Indeed, we see a steady progression throughout the Bible of ethical behavior that was designed to improve the human condition, and it clearly developed into what our society calls "common decency" today. But if what the Jews faced was the worst of what paganism had to offer, then the worst of paganism was destroyed by the best paganism had to offer: the Romans.

Unlike the Middle Eastern gods (gods of war, infanticide and profits), the gods of the Romans were of agriculture and the home. There was no logical reason that Rome could survive a war against Carthage, much less utterly defeat them. Carthage owned the whole Mediterranean, with only a few scattered tribes in Italy holding out. They had overwhelming numbers and the wealth to field any sized army they cared to. Carthaginians treated conquered nations fairly well, allowing them to share in the

wealth they created. Why did Rome continue to fight when it would have benefited them to join? Why did Rome put even more armies in the field after suffering defeat after defeat? Why did they fight on, when ally after ally switched sides? Why did Carthage fail to capture Rome when all Rome had left was a small garrison force left after Hannibal's victories? G.K. Chesterton claims it was because the Romans could not accept a vassalage that would destroy their families (child sacrifice in particular), while Carthage could not understand that anyone would not think of profits before anything else (I find the parallels between Rome's and Carthage's outlooks with the abortion issues of today quite striking). Rome's piety won out over Carthage's economic theory.

But by Christian standards, the best paganism had to offer still came up short. The practicalness of Roman thought may have allowed love, justice and kindness to co-exist with it under certain circumstances, but it was still by their standard. Furthermore, mercy had no place in Rome. If a city submitted to the Romans, it was protected by Roman law and the Roman army. It was relatively easy for the city leaders to become Roman citizens themselves. Taxes the commoners had to pay were often less than what their own rulers were levying on them. But if a city resisted, every man and dog within the city was put to the sword, the youth sold to slavery, and the women were first raped and then either killed or sold into slavery. But perhaps nothing in history demonstrates better the combination of civility and cruelty within a culture than the pageantry of the gladiator games, which were held everywhere within the empire.

It was the Christian belief that justice was due to everyone, and that mercy was to be the rule instead of the exception. All pagans sought sacrifices to make their lives better; Christians sought to give of themselves to make others better. All pagan religions (like that of the Romans described above) would start off exciting and wondrous, but with time became mundane and atrocious; Christianity constantly finds itself renewing. While pagan religions, over time, became more and more cruel, we find the Judaeo-Christian beliefs becoming more and more enlightened. These are only a few powerful examples of how Christianity is not just another religion that outlasted others. There really is nothing from any other religion that suggests Christianity could have evolved in such a way. Therefore, if we apply Darwin's Theory with an eye on the empirical evidence, we see that Christianity (and its Jewish roots) does not evolve as expected. These anomalies need to be explained as they are too radical to be ignored in good faith. These anomalies are a significant piece of evidence that perhaps there is something supernatural influencing the Judaeo-Christian faith.

Unfortunately, those applying evolution to Christianity (such as Richard Dawkins and his ilk) are making the same mistake anthropologists did with the Piltdown Man. They are looking at what they want to see, and not the parts that would discredit their beliefs. They look at specific examples of Christians *not* acting in accordance with Christian teachings (such as the Spanish Inquisition, or in giving Native Americans blankets contaminated with Small Pox), or associating Christians with any atrocity done in the name of religion (such as the current unrest in the Middle East made by Muslim radicals). After cherry-picking their evidence, they then suggest that, like the pagans of old, Christianity is just one more religion that will lead man to a horrible end. Of course, those who blame religion in bringing pain and misery to mankind have yet to offer a single solution that isn't worse. The 120 million or so systematic deaths that occurred in the name of atheistic Socialism in the 20th Century are either conveniently ignored, or hypocritically explained away as being "for the better good." Like the anthropologists before, they ignore the obvious evidence that this is the wrong conclusion. Christianity still fights for human dignity and continues to grow in its understanding of what this dignity should look like. When considering the legitimacy of Christianity, it does not matter if its progress has been imperfect, what matters is that it is progressing, and progressing in a measurable degree.

In contrast to the Christian efforts to improve itself, whatever horrors paganism has brought into the world were in keeping with their stated beliefs. Islam is more nuanced on this matter because they are very fragmented on what it is they believe. While many Muslims are indeed respectful of human dignity, this lack of consensus means those who commit crimes against humanity are still acting in accordance with their religion. Socialism, by its very premise, denies the individual in favor of the collective. In socialism, no suffering on the part of an individual is too great for the collective. When looking at all the alternatives, we find that an atrocity committed by a Christian can only be considered worse than an atrocity committed by a non-Christian in the sense that the Christian was being hypocritical. Put another way, one can only accuse a Christian of committing a heinous act if one adopts Christian morality.

Darwin's Theory, although useful if used properly, is not science. Its value is in helping one to look for connections, but it does not prove such connections are valid. Once one believes one has found a connection, one must still find evidence that such a connection is valid. While superficial similarities do exist between Christianity and other religions, one of the defining characteristics of religion is a life view on how one is supposed to live their life. When we compare Christianity to pagan and socialism (considered by many to be a godless religion based on the life view criteria), we see just how unlike Christianity is from them.

Raymond Mulholland
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