

Resurrection: The Rebirth of an Old Religion

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February 12, 2009

The hoopla over Darwin on his 200th Anniversary reflects the resurrection of an old religion, called Epicureanism. It's now called "Secular" Humanism, a religion promoted in Universal Unitarian Churches, where pews are filled with Atheists, Freethinkers, Agnostics and Skeptics. Its tenets are supported by Institutions of science, academia and even public schools.

"Secular" humanists believe in human reason and modern science over Divine wisdom that has been tested by thousands of years of human experience. Reason sounds good, but can be disastrous when poorly informed or driven by a problematic bias.

"Secular" Humanists believe life has arisen from material or natural causes driven by "unguided evolutionary change." As random variation and natural selection describe an unguided process, modern evolutionary theory serves as the genesis account for that religion.

While Muslims are called to prayer five times a day, and Christians are invited to pick up their crosses daily, materialists are more laid back. They worship once a year on Darwin's birthday. Since, they are the captains of their own ships, they don't take direction from a higher power. Rather, they are on the lookout for favorable winds that blow life to-and-fro across a troubled sea.

The credit for natural selection is given to Darwin, but Epicurus and Lucretius published the idea in the second century BC. They were enamored with the ideas of Democritus, who speculated that all phenomena can be reduced to different kinds of atoms and voids. The Epicureans argued that chance combinations of the atoms would be naturally selected by their changing environment. An eye could emerge by chance, because they believed the universe is a self-existing infinite realm. With an infinite number of trials any event becomes likely.

Epicurus placed his faith in this materialistic genesis story because it rendered God superfluous, thereby freeing humans from Divine control. Materialism provided the foundation for a new religion that relied on reason to guide life toward pleasure and away from pain. Epicureans competed with Theists in antiquity just as modern "Secular" Humanistic do today.

Based on Darwin's work, John Dewey and his followers resurrected Epicureanism, with the publication of the first Humanist Manifesto in 1933. It announced non-theistic Humanism as a new religion designed to replace traditional religions deemed obsolete. It was to be taught in public schools, but the Supreme Court killed that idea in 1948 when it outlawed religion in the classroom. To circumvent this result, they now call the set of beliefs they proclaimed to be a religion, "science."

Constitutionally, the label given a belief system is not controlling. What matters is how the beliefs function. A belief is religious if it pertains to a matter of ultimate concern like the cause, nature or purpose of life and it functions in the life of its possessor as a competing belief functions in the lives of a traditional theist. Thus, Atheism, Secular Humanism, Transcendental Meditation, Scientology and Wicca have all been held to be religions.

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Doctrine and worship are important to all religions. Atheism and Secular Humanism are no exception. Their dogma is materialism, the idea that life just arises from materials and forms of the past. They worship Darwin as others worship Jesus and Mohammed. Unfortunately, many modern institutions of science have embraced the dogma by officially excluding objective consideration of any evidence implying an intelligent cause or casting doubt on evolutionary theory itself. Those who question its claim are “*Expelled,*” as “*no intelligence is allowed.*”

If the evidence confirmed materialism, then maybe it could be called science. But, that’s not the case. Modern cosmology shows the universe to have a finite beginning, rather than an infinite existence. Material causes have difficulty accounting for themselves and appear “fine-tuned” for life. No coherent speculation exists for the origin of the genetic code or the origin of the information and lengthy “messages” necessary to get life started. Although random mutation and natural selection may explain some bio-diversity, an awareness is emerging that Darwin’s idea has limits. The 21st Century is seeing a revolution in biology, as scientists are scrambling to find a new theory that will explain the data without an intelligent cause.

Neither Darwin nor Dewey had access to the new scientific knowledge that points to an author of biological information. To ensure the rest of us also remain in that state of ignorance, a robust public worship of Darwin and suppression of dissent is critical to the rebirth of this old religion.