

REASONABLE SPECULATION?  
The "Theory of Evolution and the World of Reality"  
Bruce Schweigerdt, MA  
November 1992

In reference to evolution and all that flows from it, responsible textbooks will (and generally do) employ two key words to describe the phenomena: *speculation* and *reasonable*. Not so the "California Science Framework for Public Schools."

A case in point is the high school biology textbook *Biological Science: An Ecological Approach* (6th edition, page 349, pub. 1987) which begins its section on organic evolution by asking if its speculations are reasonable. After laying-forth its case, most thoughtful students would be able to conclude that a dogmatic assertion like ". . . cell ancestors formed. . . they began to grow. . . (and) they evolved. . ." is simply speculation and it is not reasonable to draw a conclusion that life subsequently evolved.

The Framework, on the other hand, does not use the word "speculation" (except on page 214), and uses the term "reasonable" to bludgeon the student who is not inclined to believe in evolution as fact:

"At times some students may insist that certain conclusions of science cannot be true because of certain religious or philosophical beliefs that they hold. This is a difficult problem for these students and their families, and such difficulties should be acknowledged and respected. It is appropriate for a teacher to express in this regard, 'I understand that you may have personal reservations about accepting this scientific evidence, but it is *scientific knowledge about which there is no reasonable doubt* among scientists in this field, and it is my responsibility to teach it because it is part of our common intellectual heritage.'" (p20, emphasis added)

In reference to long spans of time (millions and billions of years) the Framework speaks dogmatically:

"(I)t is probable that future discoveries may give us a more precise age for the earth than the currently accepted rough value of 4.54 billion years, a value that has changed by only 0.01 billion years in over three decades of research. But we know that the new value will not be 10,000 years or 100 billion years." (p15)

One NPS naturalist at Arches National Park tried to demonstrate for his audience what 300 million years means in geological time by using this analogy:

- Suppose one foot-step to equal 100 years -
- Each mile walked would equal 560,000 years -

Question: How many miles to equal 300,000,000 years?

Answer: 535 miles - the distance from Arches NP to somewhere in Idaho.

Implication: We can live with that! Most of us, if we had to, could walk that distance without too much difficulty. Therefore a speculative abstract could be made to seem reasonable!

Question: Is it reasonable, and would it be responsible to believe this illustration? It certainly sounds nice, and even looks reasonable on paper. But something is drastically wrong with the illustration. An intellectual trap has been set for the unsuspecting, non-critical observer. To believe that this story is reasonable is to yield to wild (and irresponsible speculation). For the proposition upon which the illustration is based is a false premise.

Let's be more realistic with our analogies. We don't walk through life 100 years at a time, but instead one day, yea, even one step at a time.

Suppose each step then, to equal one (1) second of time. Taking a leisurely stroll through life, averaging 15 miles per day, a person would need to walk around the world 10,500 times in order to equal 300 million years!

Now that thought is irrational and totally unrealistic; and that is only 300 million

years! According to the uniformitarian evolutionist, the earth is almost 5 billion years old. It would take an extraordinary amount of faith (encouraged by a great deal of foolishness) to believe in such a notion.

The same can be said for the entire notion of evolution. Charles Darwin, thought by many to be the father of evolution, was a spurious scientist at best, and his two testaments (*Origins of Species*, and *Descent of Man*) are not books of science. Darwin uses the phrase "we may well suppose" 800 times and wins for himself a high place among the unconscious humorists by his efforts to explain things that are not true. To wade through one of his works means simply to have digested a philosophical abstract of much verbiage!

It is indeed comforting to this educator that when I run the idea of this much speculating past my students they invariably use the word "guess" to describe what is going on. True, guessing it is; "conjecture" is perhaps the more academic way to put it.