



BELIEFS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF LIFE AND ITS DIVERSITY OF FORMS

Which of the following philosophical viewpoints/beliefs best describes your personal beliefs about the origin of the universe, the origin of life, and the diversity of species present on earth today? If none of these descriptions adequately describes your beliefs, please try to articulate what you believe in one paragraph or less.

The following descriptions are excerpted with permission from the author of "What is creationism", *Talk.Origins Archive*, by Mark Isaak, <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/wic.html>

Flat Earthers

Flat Earthers believe that the earth is flat and is covered by a solid dome or firmament. Waters above the firmament were the source of Noah's flood. This belief is based on a literal reading of the Bible, such as references to the "four corners of the earth" and the "circle of the earth."

Geocentrism

Geocentrists accept a spherical earth but deny that the sun is the center of the solar system or that the earth moves. As with flat-earth views, the water of Noah's flood came from above a solid firmament. The basis for their belief is a literal reading of the Bible. "It is not an interpretation at all, it is what the words say." Both flat-earthers and geocentrists reflect the cosmological views of ancient Hebrews.

Young-Earth Creationism

Young Earth Creationists (YEC) claim a literal interpretation of the Bible as a basis for their beliefs. They believe that the earth is 6000 to 10,000 years old, that all life was created in six literal days, that death and decay came as a result of Adam & Eve's Fall, and that geology must be interpreted in terms of Noah's Flood. However, they accept a spherical earth and heliocentric solar system.

Omphalos

The Omphalos argument, first expounded in a book of that name by Philip Henry Gosse (1857), argues that the universe was created young but with the appearance of age, indeed that an appearance of age is necessary. This position appears in some contemporary young earth creationist writing. For example, Whitcomb & Morris (1961, p. 232) argue that earth's original soils were created appearing old.

Old Earth Creationism

Old-Earth Creationists accept the evidence for an ancient earth but still believe that life was specially created by God, and they still base their beliefs on the Bible. There are a few different ways of accommodating this view with modern science.

Gap Creationism (also known as Restitution Creationism)

This view says that there was a long temporal gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, with God recreating the world in 6 days after the gap. This allows both an ancient earth and a Biblical special creation.

Day-Age Creationism

Day-age creationists interpret each day of creation as a long period of time, even thousands or millions of years. They see a parallel between the order of events presented in Genesis 1 and the order accepted by mainstream science.

Progressive Creationism

Progressive Creationism is the most common Old-Earth Creationism view today. It accepts most of modern physical science, even viewing the Big Bang as evidence of the creative power of God, but rejects much of modern biology. Progressive Creationists generally believe that God created "kinds" of organisms sequentially, in the order seen in the fossil record, but say that the newer kinds are specially created, not genetically related to older kinds.

Intelligent Design Creationism

Intelligent Design Creationism descended from Paley's argument that God's design could be seen in life (Paley 1803). Modern IDC still makes appeals to the complexity of life and so varies little from the substance of Paley's argument, but the arguments have become far more technical, delving into microbiology and mathematical logic. A common tenet of IDC is that all beliefs about evolution equate to philosophical materialism.

Evolutionary Creationism

Evolutionary Creationism differs from Theistic Evolution only in its theology, not in its science. It says that God operates not in the gaps, but that nature has no existence independent of His will. It allows interpretations consistent with both a literal Genesis and objective science, allowing, for example, that the events of creation occurred, but not in time as we know it, and that Adam was not the first biological human but the first spiritually aware one.

Theistic Evolution

Theistic Evolution says that God creates through evolution. Theistic Evolutionists vary in beliefs about how much God intervenes in the process. It accepts most or all of modern science, but it invokes God for some things outside the realm of science, such as the creation of the human soul. This position is promoted by the Pope and taught at mainline Protestant seminaries.

Methodological Materialistic Evolution

Materialistic Evolution differs from Theistic Evolution in saying that God does not actively interfere with evolution. It is not necessarily atheistic, though; many Materialistic Evolutionists believe that God created evolution, for example. Materialistic evolution may be divided into methodological and philosophical materialism. Methodological materialism limits itself to describing the natural world with natural causes; it says nothing at all about the supernatural, neither affirming nor denying its existence or its role in life.

Philosophical Materialistic Evolution

Philosophical materialism says that the supernatural does not exist. It says that not only is evolution a natural process, but so is everything else.

Non-Christian Creationism

Islamic Creationism

Contemporary Islam has a greater tendency to literalism than Christianity does. The Koran is taken by almost all Muslims as the direct and unaltered word of Allah, and Genesis is considered a corrupted version of God's message. However, the creation accounts in the Koran are more vague and are spread among several surahs (chapters) (2:109-111, 7:52-57, 16:1-17, 40:66-70, 41:9-12, 42:28, 65:12), allowing a range of interpretations similar to those described in part 1. Most Islamic Young Earth Creationism is imported directly from the USA.

Vedic Creationism

Hinduism speaks of a very ancient earth. One book influenced by Hindu belief argues that anatomically modern humans have existed for billions of years.

American Indian Creationism

The term "American Indian" refers to hundreds of groups with at least as many stories of creation. Deloria has put together a version of creationism which takes from many Native American cultures. It says that originally there was no essential difference between people and animals, that giant people and megafauna once coexisted, and that people and animals shrunk in stature after the golden age came to an end with the earth being ravaged by fire from volcanism.

Not Easily Classifiable Positions

Raelians

The Raelians believe that life was created by scientists from another planet. The scientists continue to visit earth and were mistaken for gods.

Panspermia

Panspermia is the position that primitive life, in the form of bacteria or other microbes, was carried to earth from other star systems. Other life evolved from there.

What do you believe?

Please write your answer here:



ORIGINS OF MODERN HUMANS

Read the attached research news report and answer the following questions.

1.) Briefly describe the two hypotheses for the origin of modern humans discussed in this article. Give the name of each hypothesis, and describe the proposed explanation offered by each for the origin of modern humans.

2.) Classify each of the following statements as to whether *the article* presents the information expressed by the statement as “known fact” or “theory”.

- a) Mitochondria are the cell’s energy producing organelles.
- b) Mutations in mitochondrial DNA occur randomly and accumulate at a constant rate.
- c) The number of breeding adults in the prehistoric human population was around 10,000.
- d) Neanderthals and other archaic humans once existed throughout Eurasia, Africa, and Australia, but the mechanism by which they evolved or were replaced by modern humans remains uncertain.
- e) Modern humans arose in Africa and then migrated throughout the world replacing existing populations of Neanderthals and other archaic humans,

f) Modern humans evolved from a population of archaic humans spread throughout Eurasia, Africa, and Australia.

g) Living indigenous Australians share skeletal and dental features with humans who inhabited Indonesia at least 100,000 years ago.

3) Are there any statements the article presents as fact that you question or disagree with?

4) Which hypothesis do think is likely to represent a more accurate explanation of how modern humans came to be?

5.) Why do you think the hypothesis you chose is likely to be more accurate? Please explain the evidence to support the hypothesis you favor as it is presented in the article. Explain why you find this evidence more convincing than the evidence for the alternate hypothesis.

6.) Choose from the descriptions of beliefs about creation/evolution a belief, which you consider to be very different from your own. Try answering questions 3, 4, and 5 again from the viewpoint of someone holding this belief.

Write the name describing the viewpoint from which you are answering the questions below.

6-3) Are there any statements the article presents as fact that you question or disagree with?

6-4) Which hypothesis do think is likely to represent a more accurate explanation of how modern humans came to be?

6-5.) Why do you think the hypothesis you chose is likely to be more accurate? Please explain the evidence to support the hypothesis you favor as it is presented in the article. Explain why you find this evidence more convincing than the evidence for the alternate hypothesis.