

Avoiding Religious Dogma in Origins Science

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This is just a brief initial treatise and I welcome any critical feedback.

Is it possible to avoid religious dogma in Origins Science?

Firstly a quick reminder of two key definitions: Science and Methodological Naturalism.

“Science: The study of the structure and behaviour of the physical world.”

(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>)

“Methodological Naturalism: Concerns itself with methods of learning what nature is and that the scientific method confines itself to natural explanations.”

(<https://en.wikipedia.org>)

Based on these key definitions it is obvious that day to day observational science, lab test science and applied science must employ Methodological Naturalism. It makes sense that a Rocket Scientist cannot say that magic is going to make their rocket fly, this would endanger the lives of many people. And our day to day repeatable, observable science confirms that the supernatural does not interfere.

So I am not questioning our practice of day to day science. The question I am pondering is this:

What happens when Methodological Naturalism is applied to Origins Science, the origins areas of Cosmology, Geology, Palaeontology and Biology?

Firstly, is Methodological Naturalism normally applied to Origins Science? The following quotes, both of which are directly referring to an Origins Science situation, help to answer this question.

Helen Fields said: “invoking the hand of God to explain natural phenomena breaks the rules of science” (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/dinosaur-shocker-115306469/>) and;

Judge John E Jones III said: “Supernatural explanations are not part of science.”
Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District trial. (<https://ncse.com/library-resource/kitzmiller-v-dover>)

These (and many others) confirm that it is normal practice to apply Methodological Naturalism to Origins Science.

There are two consequences of this practice that I find troublesome:

1. Scientists must suppress any notion that what they are observing was supernaturally created, regardless of the evidence. The concept of supernatural creation is not allowed and so scientists and science journals are not free to contemplate if something was supernaturally created, they must keep to natural explanations regardless of the evidence.

This does not seem to align with normal freedoms of scientific inquiry.

2. It causes a starting premise of 'everything evolved' and removes the falsifiability of naturalism because supernatural creation theories are not allowed to be an option.

To keep this paper short I will just focus on the second consequence and the obvious question that follows:

In Origins Science should Methodological Naturalism be falsifiable? The following references help answer this:

"In so far as a scientific statement speaks about reality, it must be falsifiable." Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 316. (First published 1935).

"Falsifiability is a basic axiom of the scientific method."
(<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/falsifiability/>)

It seems that falsifiability is one of the key principles in science. And since the foundation of science is naturalism then it makes sense that naturalism itself should be falsifiable. If it is not falsifiable then it is just religious dogma and we do not want that.

So, in Origins Science how would one falsify naturalism? I see two key ways to achieve this.

1. Carry out a complete critical analysis of supernatural creation theories and be open and honest about any shortcomings.
2. Carry out a complete critical analysis of naturalistic evolution theories and be open and honest about any shortcomings.

In brief it seems to boil down to this: If supernatural creation is refused as an option then Naturalism is just religious dogma and if naturalistic evolution is refused as an option then Creationism is just religious dogma.

Therefore the starting premise of Origins Science should be something like this: "Maybe some things evolved, maybe some things were created, or maybe it all came about some other way, I will just follow the evidence where it leads".

In conclusion I propose that we need a new science journal called 'Origins Science' that critically analyses all falsifiable theories of origin. On the inside cover it should have a clear statement as to why we have a special journal just for Origins Science. A statement something like the above logical analysis showing how Methodological Naturalism needs to be falsifiable in Origins Science so as to avoid religious dogma.

(Again this is just a brief initial treatise and I welcome any critical feedback. Please contact me at philandrews04@gmail.com)