

On Worldviews and Logical Implications: A New Model

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In consideration of the various ways in which Darwinism was applied during the period explored in this paper that many readers may not expect, it became apparent that some kind of model might be useful to explain how certain people came to certain conclusions while others did not. When contemplating whether or not a particular belief *ought* to lead one to consider another belief is especially important for modern day adherents to Darwinism, who should like to continue to embrace the theory consistently but not wind up forced to accept propositions they may find morally reprehensible though they seem to follow logically.

The kind of model one might turn to would be W.V. Quine's 'web of belief.' This model adequately explains how we give weight to some beliefs more than others and how they may 'tug' at nearby beliefs, but it does not explain why it is that particular beliefs tend to lead to other particular beliefs.

By way of example, most eugenicists were also materialists of some fashion. There were, however, some Christian eugenicists. These tended to be protestant, and not Roman Catholic. But one strains to find a eugenicist who was one of those much maligned young earth creationists! There seems to be something in the belief system of young earth creationism that positively precludes them from becoming eugenicists. Can it simply be because of their rejection of Darwinism? But the Roman Catholics have historically been willing to accommodate Darwinism, and yet they steadfastly have been opposed to eugenics, as well. How are such things to be explained?

A model is intended to be an approximation of how the real world works, and to the extent that it is any good, will allow one to make predictions about future observations while making sense out of existing observations. Models are not complete descriptions, by definition.

They are only useful up until the moment they aren't. What follows is a model that may explain the surprising connections that eugenicists made from Darwinism as well as why Darwinists today tend not to make the same connections.

Imagine that a worldview is a massively large building with innumerable rooms within it. Each room is a proposition, attitude, approach, or preference. When one enters a room, they draw closer in proximity to other rooms. Which rooms are closer is not due to individual preference, but rather the way the world really is. Thus, if one 'room' is the proposition "There is a bowl of vanilla ice cream in front of me" a slew of other 'rooms' open up adjoining that proposition, such as "I like vanilla ice cream, so I will eat it", or "I don't like vanilla ice cream and will eat it, anyway" or "I don't like vanilla ice cream so I will not eat it" or "I will pick this ice cream up and throw it in my friend's face." These rooms are all immediately adjoining the first room, but there are some rooms reality prevents from existing. For example, there may be an adjoining room where one says, "I will ride the bowl of ice cream to the moon" but since this is not physically possible, there are very few rooms that are adjacent to *that* room. (One of those rooms is the conclusion, "I may be going insane.")

Similarly, other rooms are precluded from being adjoining or even in the same vicinity because the reality that underlies ideological landscapes do not allow them to be close. One does not get from "There is a bowl of vanilla ice cream in front of me" to "I am now going to throw six million Jews into concentration camps" through a single step, or even through many, many steps.

In the case of a deductive argument, rather than a preference, there may only be one way in or out of the room. If one enters the room, they must either continue on through the logical conclusion or they must retreat from the room. Choosing not to press ahead to the conclusion

may in fact constitute retreating from the room, and re-entering a nearly identical room, but with a few more exits. Or not; perhaps no exit is available at all, and one must simply follow the original path.

Certain paths open up certain rooms just by the nature of reality and the viewpoints being considered. If one viewpoint is "humans are just animals" there will be two natural implications 'adjoining' that room, "therefore we will treat animals like humans" or "therefore we will treat humans like animals." It would be extraordinarily difficult to find a path out of the room "humans are just animals" that nonetheless proceeds to act as though humans are not just animals. Perhaps such a path can be found by crawling through a ventilation shaft or hacking one's way through the wall, hoping that that on the other side is a viewpoint that retains human dignity. It is not impossible, but the path of least resistance suggests a small number of adjoining and easily accessible 'rooms.'

Once in the "therefore we will treat humans like animals" room, we find ourselves considering the various ways we have treated animals. We have bred them, culled them, sterilized them, eaten them, experimented on them--dead and alive, or even alive until dead. Once in this room, it is difficult not to consider these kinds of pathways without first leaving the room the way one has come, and then also leaving the "humans are just animals" room.

Similarly, the "therefore we will treat animals like humans" room will consider the various ways that we have regarded humans, and then treat animals the same way. For example, 'human' rights will be extended to animals. As a case in point, there have been some, like Cass Sunstein, who believe that animals ought to be able to press their case in court against humans.¹

Darwinian theory thrusts people into the "humans are just animals" room. There is no easy way out of this room, because the rear entrance is guarded by a very large man named

¹ Find source

Scientific Fact. Most people are not keen to tangle with Scientific Fact, and indeed find his company comforting. Scientific Fact is often taken to be a reliable guide who is able to shed light on which paths through the building are safe. However, if Scientific Fact takes you to a room with adjoining rooms that make one uncomfortable, his prominent presence prevents you from making an easy retreat. Add to that the internal fortitude necessary to stand up to the ridicule that will be heaped on somebody if he chooses to leave behind Scientific Fact.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, many materialists were thrilled that Scientific Fact had brought them into the Darwinism room, and didn't see any particular problem with either of the two natural choices set before them. If anything, they found that those choices were also interconnected in many ways, so that in choosing to emphasize one, this did not necessarily mean completely abandoning the other. But it was more than that: Scientific Fact had brought them into the Darwinism room via the "interpret all reality without reference to God" hallway. Previously, atheists and materialists struggled to make an ally out of Scientific Fact. Reflecting this deficiency in their worldview, Richard Dawkins has famously said that Darwin was the one who finally made it possible to be an intellectually satisfied atheist.²

We might say that Materialism was a guide just as Scientific Fact is a guide, so that in the end, it was inevitable that they would end up in the Darwinism room.

Why doesn't the Darwinism room lead people today to enter into the rooms where one contemplates sterilizing or even exterminating their fellow man? As this paper will show, we cannot be so certain that this is not in fact happening. We recall that Osborn said that "eugenics must follow new policies and state its case anew" in order to achieve Galton's "high goals." But why was this necessary at all? In a word, the Nazis had so fouled up things that even people who

² God Delusion, find page.

had previously endorsed every other aspect of the Nazi eugenics programs couldn't bring themselves to continue along the path. Certainly, others wouldn't join them.

In short, Scientific Fact and Materialism stands behind people, preventing them from leaving the Darwinism room, but the Holocaust and History stands in front of them, blocking their way into the adjoining rooms. There were always obstacles into the other rooms, but because of the great power and might of Scientific Fact and Materialism, these obstacles were easily overcome. Holocaust and History are much more formidable.

David H. Hirsch, in his book *The Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz*, put it this way: "Purveyors of postmodern ideologies must consider whether it is possible to diminish human beings in theory, without, at the same time, making individual human lives worthless in the real world." (Hirsch, 165)

That is precisely the situation that Darwinists are in at present. It is now a known fact of history just what can happen if human lives are rendered "worthless in the real world" and very few would like to see such things again. However, the room they are standing in is very close to that particular room, whether they like it or not.

How, then, can there be Darwinists who are not Materialists? How can it be that Roman Catholics, for example, could wander around the Darwinist room without also embracing the "humans are just animals" premise?

Well, for one thing, the Roman Catholics do not have Materialism as their guide, so though they may enter the Darwinist room, they do so through a different entrance.³ But it is more than that, and it must be more than that, because otherwise once people of completely

³ Antony Flew, reflecting on a quote on the implications of "Darwin's work: 'Once man himself was accepted as a natural product of the evolutionary process, the rest of the Cartesian compromise could hardly be maintained.' It was this obvious extension of the Darwinian theory, rather than the actual argument of the Origin, which was the occasion of Bishop Wilberforce's scurrilous attack at the British Association meeting of 1860." See pages 54-55.

different viewpoints arrives at the same propositional destination, all of the available outcomes ought to be present before them. It may be that, being accompanied by Theism, certain routes are not open to them, but I don't think this adequately models what is happening.

It is perhaps better explained as, in entering the Darwinist room via a different entrance, they also step into it via a raised path or catwalk that passes through the room. While they may be in the room, they are nonetheless hemmed in by the rails of the catwalk in such a way that while they might be able to look at the "humans are just animals" implications, they cannot possibly immerse themselves in it, without jumping off the catwalk altogether, abandoning their Catholicism.

So it is that you can have people from completely disparate perspectives on occasion arrive at the same 'locations,' but not able, as we observe, to consider the same 'paths' out of the location they presently find themselves in. Indeed, there may be adjoining rooms available to our Catholics finding themselves in the Darwinist room that are not available to others, who came in by a different path.

But even this does not completely account for our observations. It would appear that the width of the walls separating certain rooms can be very thick or very thin, so that in cases where it is undesirable to walk through the door (the path of least resistance) into the logical implication of the room you are in, one may have varying degrees of success in staying out of those undesirable rooms. Where the rooms have thick walls, no hacking away at them allows escape. If the rooms have thin walls, the feat can sometimes be done.

Unfortunately, sometimes a wall can be so thin that one falls through them, completely unexpectedly. This may be the case for abortion on demand proponents who believe they are fighting for 'reproductive choice' but end up advancing Osborn's eugenics causes.

And there is still even one more component that we may need to add to the model: sometimes, one does not voluntarily enter a particular room. They are perhaps forced into the room by the 'guides' that have brought them that far, but other times it appears that ideological inhabitants of an adjoining room are powerful in their own right, and come unbidden to carry off those who come too close. This may account for the virulent racism seen in the Nazi brand of eugenics. Having come as far as they did, they came close to a lair of monsters that hauled them the rest of the way, and in turn, made them also into monsters.

So it might be the case that whatever 'guide' we bring into a room with us, and no matter how much we intend to refrain from entering some of the more 'undesirable' logical implications, those implications themselves may brutally force themselves upon you. The sole recourse may be to not draw close in the first place.