

The Fossil Record Defends Evolution

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Editor:

As a physical anthropologist I have followed Mr. Baumgardner's elaborate defense of creationism with great interest. While I am intrigued by Mr. Baumgardner's introduction of philosophy's mind-body problem into the debate on evolution, I am anxious to hear what his alternative explanation is for the "pattern of fossils" observed in the geologic record. More specifically, I am curious what alternative explanation Mr. Baumgardner might present to account for the intermediate forms observed in the hominid fossil record such as *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus*. In my view there exists compelling evidence in support of an evolutionary explanation for the existence of these intermediate forms: Compelling evidence such as the increase in cranial capacity and the overall complexity of the brain over time, or changes in locomotor anatomy to accommodate bipedal locomotion, or even socialcultural changes such as the development of language and changes in subsistence strategies.

Paleontology, like any science, is continuously searching for better models of explaining the natural world around us. This means the continual testing and revision of existing models. Current evolutionary theory may not be the only testable model for explaining the origin and diversity of species, but at the moment it is the best model. If we are to achieve a better understanding of the origin and diversity of species on the planet, then merely demonstrating "gaps" in the fossil record isn't enough, we must replace the existing model with a testable alternative.

This is Mr. Baumgardner's opportunity to present a testable alternative, an opportunity to cast aside the mind-body problem and forget about simple-to-understand arguments on salt accumulations in the oceans, an opportunity to defend creationism.

Michael Schillaci