

Excluding God from Science Forces Science to Explain Everything

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Marvin Mueller, in his 1/29/97 letter, continues to insist that a rigid exclusion of God and the supernatural is an inherent and essential aspect of science. As I have pointed out on other occasions, while exclusion of God and the supernatural is fundamental to an atheist view of the world, it is by no means essential for authentic science. In fact, imposing such a constraint on the scientific process invariably leads to error. The reason this is so is simple. Excluding God requires science to explain everything. Imposing this severe requirement on the scientific enterprise prevents science from acknowledging and addressing the inherent limits of its explanatory capabilities. The debate here is not really over the day-to-day application of the scientific method but rather over the limits of science.

To help understand this truly significant problem, let us consider the issue of the origin of matter and energy. The first two laws of thermodynamics tell us on one hand that matter/energy cannot be created or destroyed by any means we can identify and on the other that matter/energy inexorably loses its capacity to do mechanical work. The latter implies matter/energy does not have an infinite past. These two laws of nature -- probably the most rigorously tested of any of the physical laws we know -- are in obvious logical conflict. They point to a limit. They point to a state for which they cannot simultaneously apply. True science permits, even welcomes, such a conclusion. But an atheist framework which insists science must explain everything cannot readily entertain this conclusion -- it is a contradiction of the 'rules' to admit there exist limits to what the laws of chemistry and physics can explain. So various speculations are put forth to attempt to paper over this difficulty. I maintain the actual problem is an epistemological one, namely, a superfluous 'rule'.

A further example involves the nature and origin of symbolic information. Einstein pointed to this as one of the profound questions about the world as we know it. He could identify no means by which matter could bestow meaning to symbols. As I have argued on other occasions, symbolic

information, or language, represents a category of reality distinct from matter and energy. There is a gulf, the so-called 'Einstein gulf' between matter and meaning-bearing symbols sets. In this information age, little argument needs to be given that linguistic information is objectively real and that its reality is separate from its matter/energy substrate. In human experience we connect most symbolic information with human mental processes. But how does one account for symbolic language as the magic ingredient from which all living organisms develop and manifest such astounding capabilities? A version of science that foolishly requires the laws of chemistry and physics explain all reality, even non-material reality, I suggest, leads to an erroneous, yes, even absurd answer to this question.

Imposing atheist metaphysics on science seriously compromises the ability of science to discover the true limits of its methodology and to reach correct conclusions on important ultimate questions. Indeed, the issue of what the scientific enterprise is all about is a vitally important one -- one I believe needs to be actively scrutinized and examined, especially in a community such as ours. A recent book I can recommend that treats this and related topics on the nature and history of science is *The Soul of Science* by Pearcey and Thaxton.

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