

ARTICLES

Influences of Evolutionary Theory in the Thinking of Teilhard de Chardin and Stephen Hawking

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Abstract: Darwin's theory has obvious echoes in both the cosmological theology of Teilhard de Chardin and the cosmological physics of Stephen Hawking. The catholic theologian, like Darwin, forgets that consciousness cannot be born from what it has no consciousness, and the British physicist wants to know the beginnings from what the present indicates, but he stumbles in his argument. If he accepts Edwin Hubble's theory of the expansion of the universe and arrives, running through time, at the singularity called the Big Bang, he concludes that the idea of the Big Bang is good to explain a beginning, but it states that science could not explain why the universe was the way it was after the big bang, that is, why it developed so harmoniously and perfectly arranged? Hawking has moments of sincerity when he claims that he needs God to complete his script, but it gives him a task that the researcher wants and not that God wanted.

Keywords: Theory of Evolution, Orthodox Theology, Teilhard de Chardin, Stephen Hawking, Deism

1. Introduction

The theory of evolution is perhaps the most obvious deist innovation of the modern man, with stringent consequences in contemporaneity. The fight against this theory is not the object of the present study, but we just feel obliged to specify that the development of this theory was not the effect of a spontaneous discovery², but one of the many ways "made" with the aim of separating man from God both by his origin, by his existence throughout history, but also by asserting another

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² It is no coincidence that the theory of evolution appears only five years after the French Revolution, being initiated by Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus. For an in-depth study of the controversial issues concerning the spread of this theory, see Malcolm Bowden, *The Rise of the Evolution Fraud* (Bromley: Sovereign Publications, 2008).

purpose of the human life. Beyond the fact that this theory is rather a belief³, a doctrine, a philosophy and not a scientifically proven fact⁴, the endpoint was to inoculate the idea that to be modern means to be evolutionary, as if man were more ashamed to be the creature of God than to have as ancestors the savage (imaginary, actually) Cro-Magnons or Neanderthals.

The theory of evolution is extremely topical and for this reason we consider it necessary to analyse this pseudo-scientific vision, because it is still an essential pillar of deism. The modern revolution, although based on many of the countries of Western Christianity, did not know how to handle the situation. The promoters of “emancipation” wanted to separate man from God also through his origin. They needed a “scientific” argument. Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus, prepared the ground. In the modern age, the results of any scientific endeavor were interpreted against religion and God. The research was made on the basis of preconceived ideas. The obvious evolution in nature, such as the development of man from the human embryo to maturity, the growing of a tree from a small seed, was brought as proof of the theory, which is not true, because we are talking only about a development or variation occurring within the same species⁵. Thus, any discovery was perceived only as a man’s triumph over God, instead of admiring the wonders of the God’s fascinating creation available to man.

2. Evolution, a Philosophical-Scientific Theory

As many researchers admit, the theory of evolution is rather a philosophical doctrine, “a separate point of view on reality, with its own premises and distinct philosophical and theological deductions. Particularly in theology, it offers an *intentional alternative* to Orthodox Christianity in terms of several key dogmas”⁶. It was precisely developed for the purpose to create another belief, because, after all, theory is a belief, as J. H. Randall, an evolutionist himself, states:

“At present, biologists admit that, actually, we know nothing about the causes of the origin of the new species; we must resort to the scientific belief and admit that they occur due to chemical changes in the embryonic protoplasm”⁷.

Only if we meditate, without having too much anatomical knowledge, on the human body, we would definitively intuit how baseless the theory of evolution is, because “man is not a sum of billions of cells or organs. That neither the liver,

³ J.H. Randall, *The Making of Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mufflin Company, 1940), 475.

⁴ Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man* (California: Platina, 2000), 182-3, 206.

⁵ Rose, *Genesis*, 26.

⁶ Rose, *Genesis*, 183.

⁷ Randall, *The Making of Modern Mind*, 475.

nor the kidneys, neither the stomach, nor the brain and the skeletal system are independent. Man, as a whole, can only be thought of biblically; not scientifically. Moses is more valid than the latest evolutionary novelty of science”⁸. Indeed, if you look at man as a whole in both his physical and psycho-somatic structure, we come to the same conclusion. In addition, the man’s longing for immortality removes him from the animal genealogical chain in which Darwin places him. This is an obvious example mentioned by Father Sophrony Sakharov in one of his speeches: “At the beginning of the Russian Revolution in 1917 there were debates about atheism, and the Minister of Education, Lunacharsky, said: ‘I was given the opportunity to travel a lot and visit many cathedrals, I saw many works of art, architectural marvels, I heard gentle songs, but I did not see God therein’. Then, an old doctor got up and said: ‘I am a surgeon. I am now retired from my ministry, but I will tell you about my past. I was given the opportunity to perform a lot of surgeries, skull trepanations, open-heart surgeries, seeing the heart, feeling the human brain in my hands, but I did not see reason therein’. What a great mystery, concludes Father Sophrony. What is the brain? A ‘piece of meat’. - And however the thought of eternity is born in it! This phenomenon is of an entirely different nature”⁹.

The fact that the theory of evolution has represented and still represents today a life perspective rather than a scientific one that essentially supports deism is clearly noticed from other statements of Randall. He argues that the new world is no longer interested in the two poles that define the existence of man and creation, their origin and purpose, but only in the focus on research on nature in itself. This is his argument:

“But in spite of these difficulties, the beliefs of men today have become thoroughly permeated with the conception of evolution. The great underlying notions and concepts that meant so much to the eighteenth century, Nature and Reason and Utility, have largely given way to a new set better expressing the ultimate intellectual ideas of the Growing World. Many social factors conspired to popularize the idea of development and its corollaries ... Perhaps the fundamental emphasis brought by Evolution into men’s minds has been upon the detailed causal analysis of the specific processes of change. Instead of seeking to discover the end or purpose of the world-process as a whole, or to discern the ultimate

⁸ 322 *de vorbe memorabile ale lui Petre Țuțea* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1977), 78. Regarding the internal structure of the human body, evolutionists, in order to confirm their theory, claimed that some “rudimentary” organs of man are remains of the evolution. But it has been recently proven that all these organs (thyroid gland, thymus, coccyx, pineal gland, ear muscles, tonsils, appendix) have a well-defined utility in our body; H. Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, Master Books (Arkansas: Green Forest, 1985), 75.

⁹ Archim. Sofronie, *Cuvântări duhovnicești*, volume I, trans. by Hmk. Rafail Noica (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2004), 229-30.

cause or ground of all existent things – the fundamental task of earlier science and philosophy – men have come to examine just what the process is and just what it does in its parts. They have rejected the contemplation of a fixed and static structure of Truth, and adopt instead the aim of investigating all the little truths which experimentation can reveal. Not that Truth which is the source of all truths, lifting man’s soul above all human experience to the realm of the eternal... but the patient, tireless and endless search after an infinity of finite truths in our experience – this is the present-day goal of all scientific and philosophical endeavor”¹⁰.

3. The Influence of Evolutionary Theory on the Theology of Teilhard de Chardin

Unfortunately, although evolutionism has been deconstructed “objectively and not at all from religious positions, by many scientists, many Roman Catholic theologians and even Orthodox, for fear of not being categorized as “unevolved”, have embraced the Darwinian theory, adding just a few theological amendments¹¹. Due to the lack of verticality towards those scientists with claims of theologians, philosophers, etc., who formulate conclusions other than those resulting from scientific researches, very many believers have the complex of inferiority as a life perspective and, finally, as people. Father Seraphim Rose does not praise such an unfounded dismay: “Modern science is considered to be the ‘knowledge’ by excellence and the Orthodox believers hesitate against its prestige, often apologizing for believing what seems to be ‘unscientific’, contenting themselves with pietism or ‘religious feelings’, the only place where the official scientific community allows faith today. But true Orthodox Christianity is quite different. It is not connected with any current of modern thought; it is a knowledge superior to science and it does not, in any case, need to apologize to a form of inferior knowledge”¹².

Indeed, there were even prominent “theologians” who were ashamed of the biblical stories, of the real and wonderful acts of Christ, of His saints and martyrs, because they were rendered according to a straightforward way of thinking, and not to a scientific way. In his figurative way of speaking, the scientist Petre Țuțea asserted that “there was a book written by an American scientist who tried to justify the Bible on scientific grounds. That was nonsense. The Bible needs science as much as I need Securitate”¹³. One of these “theologians” is the

¹⁰ Randall, *The Making of Modern Mind*, 475-7.

¹¹ For instance, the Big Bang theory was officially accepted at Vatican in 1951 for the same fear of not being classified as anachronistic.

¹² Serafim Rose, *Genesis*, 182.

¹³ *322 de vorbe memorabile ale lui Petre Țuțea*, 22.

Roman Catholic Teilhard de Chardin, who saw in the theory of evolution a new revelation with religious value. Trying to create a system of thought that harmonizes sterile theology, alien to the Church's tradition, with evolution, he ended up in pantheism, recognizing the earth as its only fulfillment: "The world (its value, infallibility and kindness) - which, when everything has been said and done, is the first, last and only thing I believe in"¹⁴. In another place he says: "Now the earth can embrace me in its gigantic arms. It can fill me with its life, or return me into its dust. It can adorn itself with all the charms, with all the horrors, with all the mysteries for me. It can intoxicate me with the fragrance of his reality and unity"¹⁵.

It is obvious that, by adopting the evolutionary lines of thought, he could not get anywhere higher than *into dust*. As such, those reference points of Christian eschatology are removed, because, being distorted the teaching about "Alpha" – namely, the orthodox teaching of Genesis¹⁶ – we come to a caricature of that "Omega" of the creation¹⁶. In order to reconcile evolutionism with Christian eschatology, Teilhard suggests that the intrinsic evolutionary process of the world will force Christ to come a second time¹⁷, as a confirmation of the world's reaching its apogee in spiritual perfection. The reality is exactly the opposite, because it is indisputably observed that there is an inverse proportionality between the pathway of the Church and the pathway of history. The world is deepening in apostasy, in the most ardent desire for committing sin, in occult practices and in division. Christ foretold this "evolution" of the world in the last days, when the Church would become "a small flock," so Christ rhetorically asked whether He would find faith on earth at His Second Coming. Actually, the whole history is nothing but a permanent selection of people for Heaven.

Teilhard de Chardin believed that by developing a "theology" harmonized with the then fashionable scientific theories, he would achieve an effective apostolate by trying to bring the world closer to God or to give Roman Catholicism an honorable image, beautified and adapted to new discoveries. He actually created more confusion. The Church of Rome has fallen into this deception since the twelfth century, when in university studies theology would be transformed into a simple speculative preoccupation of the spirit, separated from the living experience of the grace in the life of the Church. The consequences were the known ones: "On the background of a Roman Catholic Church fallen from the unity of the Church, with a rationally "proven" God (of concepts), with a precarious theology of grace and rituals, it was natural for both intellectuals and

¹⁴ Teilhard de Chardin, *How I believe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 11.

¹⁵ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper & Row), 154.

¹⁶ Serafim Rose, *Genesis*, 242.

¹⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* (London: Collins, 1965), 304.

theologians of the Middle Ages to launch into other theories or epistemological visions, on all levels, mainly scientific and magical, reaching the division created by the Reformation, as a result of these visions”¹⁸.

4. Stephen Hawking’s Cosmic Evolutionism

Recently, a new theory of evolution has been developed, that considers the universe as a whole and whose premises were offered a century ago, but taken over and adapted by some researchers, the most fervent of which is St. Hawking. Before presenting the design of this theory, it should be noted that Hawking was a faithful follower of Darwinism. He synthetically reproduces the Darwinist creed that he unreservedly appropriates, as it follows: “My answer is based on Darwin’s principle of natural selection. I admit that an early life form from a random combination of atoms appeared on earth. This early life form was probably a large molecule. This molecule was probably not yet a DNA, because the chances of a whole DNA molecule forming by random combinations are small.

The early form of life had to reproduce. The uncertainty principle and the random thermal movements of atoms have given rise to a number of errors in reproduction. Most errors were fatal to those organisms: they either did not survive or could not reproduce. Such errors could not be passed on to future generations and disappeared. By pure chance, a few errors were beneficial. Organisms carrying these errors have been favored by surviving and reproducing. Thus, they tended to replace the original unimproved organisms [...]

Gradually, as evolution continued, the central nervous system developed [...] The human race has taken evolution to a new level. We are very similar to apes both in terms of body and DNA, but a small change in our DNA allowed us to develop language [...] *In the last ten thousand years no significant biological evolution or change in human DNA has occurred* (highlight belongs to the author)¹⁹.

It is not difficult to note that the argument of St. Hawking is rather a script in which he combines the data of science with chance and imagination, directing that evolution where he would like to get, according to his preconceived premises²⁰. Too many coincidences! In fact, Hawking needed Darwin’s evolutionism for his new approaches involving space physics. He could not accept creationism, which

¹⁸ Ștefan Voronca, “Originile viziunii științifice asupra lumii în creștinismul occidental, contextul și urmările acesteia în planul vieții creștine,” in *Ortodoxia*, no. 4 (2018): 214.

¹⁹ Stephen Hawking, *Visul lui Einstein și alte eseuri*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 131-2.

²⁰ There are numerous studies that prove how childish this “evidence” of evolutionism is: Henry M. Morris, *The Long War against God* (Michigan: Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1989); John D. Morris, *The Young Earth*, Master Books (Arkansas: Green Forest, 1994); H. Morris, *Scientific Creationism*.

has been even scientifically proven as far as the human sphere is concerned, because this view would have collided with his desire to issue a unified theory about the beginning, functioning and evolution of the universe exclusively by itself, so based on physical laws. Anyone who reads the British professor's books cannot fail to notice that Hawking's argumentation is more like an exposure to a movie during which one feels sometimes euphoric, sometimes hopeless. Hawking gives the impression that through the discoveries of physics man rises above the entire universe, contemplating the greatness of all the galaxies, and the *uncertainty* that throws the "emperor of the universe" without a parachute into the dark abysses of the same giant universe suddenly creeps out from the shadows. In other words, the teacher strives to somehow remove God from the equation of the history of the universe or to enter, himself as a man, abusively, without God, "into the mind of God", he who descends, as he said above, from apes. We think that modesty and the sense of reality are lacking here. Therefore, Hawking's speech does not at all comfort the reader's spirit, confirming and refuting everything. The professor contemplates himself, delighted by his "own" reason with which he juggles the notions of physics and galaxies, rather than offering a clear explanation or conclusion.

St. Hawking admits some unprovable theories, such as the Big Bang, the theory of uncertainty, etc., because they also support his approaches. He himself states that the Big Bang theory has its great weaknesses that overturn science in general, but Hawking accepts it because he is interested in the idea of singularity as the beginning of the universe, so this theory fits into his preconceived model of explaining the universe: "We only know what has happened since the Big Bang, we could not determine what happened beforehand. As far as we are concerned, events before the Big Bang can have no consequences, so they should not form part of a scientific model of the universe. We should therefore cut them out of the model and say that time had a beginning at the Big Bang"²¹.

After admitting the "Big bang", Hawking recognizes, however, that "science could not explain why the universe was as it was immediately after the big bang"²². Elsewhere, when he encounters similar obstacles, he says he has to turn to God's idea²³, as if God were one of the theories of physics that covers the unfathomable shadow areas. This is not an honest attitude. As in the case of the Darwinian natural selection, even after the Big Bang everything in the universe was arranged so well and perfectly! The earth and the planets revolve around the sun in their orbits, being attracted by the sun's gravity, but not so attracted as to be swallowed by the sun and turned into ashes. In addition, the distance between earth and

²¹ Stephen Hawking, *A brief History of Time* (n.p.: 1988), 66.

²² Hawking, *Visul lui Einstein*, 94.

²³ Hawking, *Visul lui Einstein*, 95.

sun is conducive to human life, fauna and flora. Weird coincidences! Also, the stars are static because they are “linked” together by the force of gravitational attraction and thus no general chaos occurs. All these things and much more, in the view of some researchers, are the product of the Big Bang!?

If Einstein strongly supported the static character of the universe, showing, on the basis of his observations and calculations, that it is well anchored in the spider web of the very precise physical laws, with Edwin Hubble (1929) it is argued that the universe is expanding, that galaxies are flying away from one other. But the Hubble’s theory was taken up mainly by St. Hawking, because it was useful in building his scientific pathway to the origins of the universe: “Edwin Hubble’s 1929 discovery of the expansion of the universe has completely changed the discussion about its origin. If we start from the current state of the galaxies and go back in time, it turns out that there was a time, about ten or twenty thousand million years ago, when all the galaxies must have been at exactly the same place. At that moment which constitutes the singularity called the big bang, the density and curvature of the universe must have been infinite”²⁴.

Hubble’s theory has been related to the Big Bang theory, so the expansion of the universe has begun in the great explosion of that original singularity and it continues to this day. For Hawking, the theory of expansion is important from two perspectives: first, because, following in “the footsteps” of this expansion, he reaches the singularity of the Big Bang that he needed, and second, this theory is useful for proving that the universe self-conducts and self-regulates to the extent that he asserts an intrinsic determinism in the nature and functioning of the universe. For him, “it does not matter much whether this determinism is due to an almighty God or the laws of science”²⁵. However, in order not to risk too much, according to the Dostoevsky maxim: “If we believe in God and He does not exist, we have lost nothing, but if we believe in God and He exists, we have lost everything”, St. Hawking also states that “it can be said that the laws of science are the expression of the God’s will”²⁶.

The expansion of the universe, which has begun with the Big Bang, as an extremely hot singularity, is seen as the pathway of the formation of the universe and implicitly of the earth. This expansion coincided with the gradual and rapid cooling of the particles temperature, which is also true on Earth where at first the existence of living beings was not possible due to lack of oxygen. Hawking imagines, however, that the hot rocks removed a gas from which the earth’s atmosphere was formed as protection. The formation of oxygen is attributed to macromolecules that, consuming hydrogen sulfide, released the oxygen needed to

²⁴ Hawking, *A brief History*, 94.

²⁵ Hawking, *Visul lui Einstein*, 138.

²⁶ Hawking, *Visul lui Einstein*, 138.

form organisms and trigger the evolution at the end of which the human race is²⁷. Although the scenario is satisfying, Hawking is honest with himself and admits that this movie does not, however, remove some essential and uncomfortable questions, such as: why was the early universe so hot? Why, after the explosion, is the universe so homogeneous on a large scale? Why ...?²⁸.

Although at first glance the view on the universe described by Hawking seems to be a novelty in science or a step forward for humanity, this scientific-philosophical system is, in essence, nothing more than a return to ancient Greek thought and Gnostic and deistic heresies from the first Christian millennium. It seems that Hawking does not differ much from the ancient philosophers or heretics to whom the Holy Fathers overthrew the systems of thought on cosmogony in such a lucid and reasoned manner. From the professor's whole system of thought two important conclusions come out: the universe has neither beginning nor end, as Aristotle claimed, being self-contained and absolute, and a second, purely deistic, variant states that God was nothing than an ordinator of the disordered universe, that He later allowed it to govern itself by the laws imprinted on it by Him. These are, specifically, his words: "The idea that space and time may form a closed surface without boundary also has profound implications for the role of God in the affairs of the universe. With the success of scientific theories in describing events, most people have come to believe that God allows the universe to evolve according to a set of laws and does not intervene in the universe to break these laws. However, the laws do not tell us what the universe should have looked like when it started - it would still be up to God to wind up the clockwork and choose how to start it off. So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator?"²⁹.

The fundamental error of Hawking's dialectic consists in the premises from which he starts in the knowledge of the universe and God, namely he wants to know everything through the prism of the concepts and categories of our nature and limited experience. Moreover, God is not included in the equation of his thought as God, that is, a Person with absolute attributes in all directions, but an entity adjusted to the requirements of the model to be scientific to such an extent that man seems to be superior to that divinity "created" by Hawking. Whatever its kind, human gnoseology is dependent on "the analogous relationships to the

²⁷ Hawking, *A brief History*, 141.

²⁸ Hawking, *A brief History*, 141-2.

²⁹ Hawking, *A brief History*, 165.

created things and it does not extend to the uncreated ones”³⁰ and for this reason the aspects that go beyond the sphere of the created things can be perceived only *together with the Uncreated One*. Hawking’s claim to come to know “God’s thought” means to know His nature or essence, so to be like God, but the reality does not show us this. Some patristic explanations were offered by Father and Professor John Romanides in this regard: “By participating in God’s work, man knows only what God reveals to him. If man participated in the experience of deification to the nature of God, he would have all the knowledge that the Holy Trinity has. And, since man knows that he does not have all the knowledge of the Holy Trinity, for this reason it is considered blasphemous to say that man participates in the being of God. Man is not, indeed, partaker of the nature of God”³¹. “Only the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are divine beings. Only God knows His own nature. The Father knows His nature, the Son knows His nature, the Spirit knows His nature. Thus, the knowledge of the nature of God is in the possession of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. This knowledge is not in the possession of men. Therefore, man knows about God only what he knows from revelation, in the experience of deification”³².

5. Conclusions

The British professor’s books directed at the general public are far from informing about new research or discoveries, but they subliminally convey a new conception of life. More precisely, he induces the idea that humanity and the whole universe exist on their own and that any religious tradition has no value. Hawking believes that mankind is in an area suspended between uncertainties. As if we are awakened from a hypnosis and do not know what happened to us, but he promises that, through science, he will enlighten us about our origin and our purpose, and thus the human race shall triumph. So, as the British newspaper *The Independent* stated, by reference to *A Brief History of Time*, this science developed by Hawking contains the premises of a cult system³³, that is, a new religious view without God, His place being taken by the mankind itself or, more precisely, by the science (Darwin’s evolutionism also had such a reception). Unfortunately, people, learning certain pompous scientific theories and notions, such as the Big Bang, the Big Crunch, the expansion of the universe, the black holes, the collapse of the universe, “more hystories”, etc., although they do not

³⁰ Ioannis Romanidis, *Teologia patristică*, trans. Gabriel Mândrilă (Bucharest: Metafraze, 2011), 225.

³¹ Romanidis, *Teologia patristică*, 173.

³² Romanidis, *Teologia patristică*, 173.

³³ Hawking, *Vișul lui Einstein*, 45.

understand them, they accept them *by faith*. Their effect is subtle and vile, acting on the Christian religious basis of our lives. Even if the Christian Revelation is not directly and violently denied, its truth is still grouped among those relative social products, because it is science that gives us absolute perspectives of our existence. In reality, God-opposing scientists only describe within certain limits the splendor of God's created universe, and although they observe its functioning on the basis of precise mathematical and physical laws, they still want to develop a unified theory in order to prove that this huge mechanism is absolute in itself. The obvious conclusion would be that mankind is also self-sufficient and, therefore, it may build its future depending on how it imagines this horizon, and the possibilities on this pathway are seen in technology.