

numerical, sensory, or whatever) the expression “purely physical” is on a par with talk about square circles. Moreover, Alexanian shifted the idea of ontological reduction from the one I found religiously objectionable and rebutted, to the claim that some sets are either “equated” with one another or are empty. But kinds of properties-and-laws are not sets; kinds do not have “members” and what is qualified by each kind is a matter of contingency. By contrast, sets do have members and each is necessarily a member of the set. Besides, I gave a fairly detailed circumscription of the senses of “reduction” I found objectionable so it is hard to understand why a completely different idea is treated in response.

Finally, my non-reductionist argument would equally defeat the notion that a proper ontology can be a “set theoretic analysis of the whole of reality.” The idea of a set is derived by abstracting from the quantitative aspect of creation and thus can neither encompass nor explain its nonquantitative properties and laws.

Notes

- ¹Roy Clouser, “Prospects for Theistic Science,” *PSCF* 58, no 1 (2006): 2–15.
²P. G. Nelson, “Reduction in Science,” *PSCF* 58, no 3 (2006): 253–4.
³Moorad Alexanian, “Set Theoretic Analysis of the Whole of Reality,” *PSCF* 58, no 3 (2006): 254–5.

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Free Will and Incarnation

David Siemens¹ questions my attempt to understand free will and incarnation scientifically.² Concerning my explanation of free will, he asks: “What mechanism or process sets up the balanced state [in the brain], produces awareness of it in the decider, and then consciously switches it?” The best answer I can give to this is as follows.

As a child grows, its brain develops by cells multiplying and differentiating according to the child’s genes, and by the whole structure interacting, through the nerves and sensory organs, with the rest of the body and the outside world. This leads eventually to activity among the neurons that the young person experiences as an awareness of having to think about and make a decision. So far this is a bottom-up process, determined by physics and chemistry.

My hypothesis is that, once this point has been reached, a top-down process becomes possible. This is when the young person’s consideration of the options facing him or her gives rise to a physically balanced state (bifurcation point) in the brain. In this circumstance, I suggest, the young person’s thoughts themselves can, by proceeding along one line rather than another, determine the direction the brain takes. This then constitutes a free choice.

David Siemens also asks, in relation to my treatment of the Incarnation: “if personality is a function of brain how does a nonphysical spiritual being have a personality?” My answer to this is that personality resides in *patterns* among neurons, not in the neurons themselves.³ A spiritual being can therefore have a personality if it has an organ with components that can take up similar patterns to those in the brain. In my treatment of the Incarnation,

I assumed that the preincarnate Son had such an organ with patterns in it (I speak humanly⁴). I further assumed that, when the Son “emptied himself” and became an embryo, the Father retained these patterns in his memory, and then, as Jesus grew up, ensured that they were reproduced in Jesus’ brain.

Notes

- ¹David F. Siemens, Jr., “On Freedom and Incarnation in Nonreductionistic Materialism,” *PSCF* 58, no. 2 (2006): 165.
²P. G. Nelson, “Neuroscience, Free Will, and the Incarnation,” *PSCF* 58, no. 1 (2006): 86–7.
³Cf. P. G. Nelson, *Big Bang, Small Voice: Reconciling Genesis and Modern Science* (Latheronwheel, Caithness, Scotland: Whittles, 1999), 109–10.
⁴Romans 3:5.

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Creationism or Methodological Naturalism: A Response to Finlay, et al.

In “Creation versus Creationism,” (*PSCF* 58, no. 3 [2006]: 236–9), Finlay, et al. criticize Christians who attack and debunk “evolution,” yet their article is a classic example as to why thinking Christians should reject “evolution” as promoted by the scientific community. Thinking Christians accept naturalistic microevolution but understand that compelling evidence for the naturalistic evolution of humans from a common ancestor with the chimpanzee and for the naturalistic generation of new families of proteins does not exist.

Finlay, et al. provide data that compare similarities between the human and chimpanzee genomes. They conclude, “Chimps and humans are related genetically.” Thinking Christians would concur, but genetic relatedness is not evidence for any agency that could cause genetic alterations.

Yes, “Humans differ from chimps by about 200 large duplicated or deleted segments.” However, such segments of DNA could be identical whether they were generated, altered or deleted by naturalistic processes or by an intelligent agency. Since DNA does not reveal causative agency, neither do RNA, proteins, homologous structures or fossils.¹ In macroevolution, causative agency cannot be determined from scientific data, and it is not naturalistic by default.

Without any supporting data, Finlay, et al. state dogmatically, “The differences between chimp and human genetic sequences reflect natural genetic processes.” Such unfounded statements concerning agency are a major reason for Christian opposition to “evolution.” Rather, scientists should ask, “Is the naturalistic evolution of *Homo sapiens* from a common ancestor with the chimpanzee probable?” If one were to ask Charles Darwin, he would have responded by saying that there were endless variations,² innumerable progenitors,³ and an unlimited number of generations.⁴ His invocation of the infinite has fogged rational thinking.

What are the facts? *Homo sapiens* evolved from a common ancestor with the chimpanzee about 7 million years

ago and fewer than 1 billion ancestors were born per year. Therefore, less than 1 million generations and fewer than 10^{16} individual ancestors existed. With these constraints, is naturalistic causation remotely probable? Did genetic deletions and duplications occur in a specified order? Did random codon alterations require a specific codon change elsewhere within a gene to maintain enzymatic function or structural integrity? Thinking Christians want to know the answers before ascribing genetic alteration to naturalistic processes alone, and, until then, a naturalistic evolution remains hypothetical.

While duplications and deletions may be naturalistic, the generation of DNA coding for new families of proteins is not naturalistic. The enzyme, cytochrome-C, as found in at least sixty diverse species, has twenty-seven specific amino acids, each located at a specific site along the protein chain. The probability of naturalistically sequencing the appropriate codons for these twenty-seven specific amino acids is one chance in 10^{35} per try.

A reasonable assumption can be made that, over the last 1 billion years, fewer than 100 individual vertebrates were hatched or born each year for each square meter of Earth's surface. Fewer than 10^{26} individual vertebrates ever existed on Earth. Each individual vertebrate is equivalent to one try toward a naturalistic generation. The number of tries falls short by a factor greater than 1 billion.

The combined total of all individual fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals fails to have the necessary potential to naturalistically sequence a mere twenty-seven specific amino acids. A genetic flight program was assembled for pterosaurs, for birds, and for bats. Each required the appropriate sequencing of far more than twenty-seven specific amino acids. Naturalistic evolution does not have the potential to generate one flight program, much less three. The naturalistic generation of new families of proteins is a highly irrational scientific hypothesis.

What did Finlay, et al. mean by "natural genetic processes?" Are these processes restricted to methodological naturalism? If so, certainly the next previous step was consistent with methodological naturalism, as the one before that, all the way back to a chemical soup in a warm little pond. Under methodological naturalism, God's creative activity and sovereignty evaporate like a morning mist.

Yes, thinking Christians should debunk and attack "evolution" as currently promoted by the scientific community. Unfortunately, generations of children are being turned against science because of bad science.

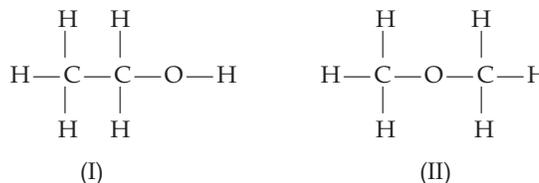
Notes

- ¹Fredric Nelson, "Needed: A New Vocabulary for Understanding Evolution," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (March 2006): 30.
- ²Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: The Modern Library, 1993 Modern Library Edition), 25.
- ³Ibid., 165.
- ³Ibid., 34.

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Correction

Formula II below was typeset incorrectly in the September 2006 issue on p. 253. The correct formula is printed below.



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