



"Seeing Ourselves through Another's Eyes"

When I was in the fifth grade attending a one room country school in rural Kalona, Iowa, our teacher, Hobert Yoder, introduced us to the poetry of Robert Burns. I was especially impressed with Burn's poem, "To a Louse," which describes the creeping advances of a vulgar louse on the dress of a fashionable lady, who is oblivious to the invasion of the ectoparasite. Was the invader a member of *Pediculus humanus* (body lice) or *Pediculus capitis* (head lice)? We can only guess. However, the poet's contrast is striking—an elegant lady infected with pediculosis! Through another's eyes, we discern a vastly different picture than what is perceived by the poet's subject, Jeany! Burns concludes the poem with these words:

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

The ideas of the poem carry a powerful truth—we frequently miss seeing our personal "lice," when we fail to grasp inadequacies of our theories or gaps in our understandings. When our "lice" are detected by others and are pointed out to us with gentleness, do we defend our foible pretensions and errors or do we gratefully acknowledge the great service another's eyes have done for us?

In the scientific community we frequently dialogue, debate, and exchange contrary ideas. Sometimes the discussions are vigorous as we passionately defend specific ideologies that are dear to us; other times

the interactions are more contemplative and tentative. Dialogue can serve a powerful function by helping participants re-examine presuppositions and foundational concepts through other eyes. Occasionally even an "ugly, creepin, blastit wonner" is identified!

This issue contains three dialogues that discuss significant questions: (1) What bridges conversations between physical scientists and theologians? (2) How can big bang cosmology be reconciled with energy conservation? (3) Does Intelligent Design invalidate naturalism? For each of these three questions a dialogue ensues, which is initiated by a proponent, who suggests the presence of specific "lice" within a stated position. A respondent provides an alternative or counter response. And finally, the initial proponent replies by either reaffirming the earlier identification or by conceding that a "crowlin ferlie" may have been misidentified.

As a reader you are invited to use your magnifying lens to examine the issues in these three dialogues. Maybe "out o' sight, below the fatt'rels, snug and tight" you can identify a hidden member of the order Phthiraptera. Our dialogue writers have generously exposed their potential vulnerabilities to the broader scientific community by participating in an open dialogue. If you identify a specific "louse," you are invited to join one of the dialogues by writing your gentle response and submitting it to the Editor for publication as a Letter in a future issue of our journal.

Happy hunting,
Roman J. Miller, Editor

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