

In describing a sequence of sounds as a melody, I am situating the sequence in the human world: the world of responses, intentions, and self-knowledge. I am lifting the sounds out of the physical realm, and repositioning them in the *Lebenswelt*, which is a world of freedom, reason, and interpersonal being ... I am describing what I hear in the sounds, when I respond to them as music. (p. 66)

Like the *Lebenswelt*, the presence of God will suffer eclipse in a culture increasingly given to scientism. Interestingly, Scruton speaks of the “real presence” of God in the midst of the early Israelites as a kind of concealment. Such divine hiddenness may be necessary, according to Scruton, since God “lies outside the space-time continuum” (p. 9) and yet this raises a pressing question concerning how God’s presence may be manifested in the empirical realm (p. 11). Chastened by this hiddenness, we must be aware that while human concepts and beliefs about God may disclose, they also conceal (p. 10). Nevertheless, scientism’s denial of the *Lebenswelt* hopes to secure a permanent silence about the sacred which this powerful book seeks to repel.

Reviewed by Lloyd W. J. Aultman-Moore, Professor of Philosophy, Waynesburg University, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

THE GAP: The Science of What Separates Us from Other Animals by Thomas Suddendorf. New York: Basic Books, 2013. 358 pages. Hardcover; \$29.99. ISBN: 0465030149.

This is a book about the human mind, and how the human mind differs from that of other animals, including primates. We can envision the future (alternate realities), and we possess a mental framework to express these visions (language and culture). The author, Thomas Suddendorf, calls these “nested scenario building” and an “urge to connect.” Suddendorf makes a case for these two facets of humanity as constituting the gap between the capacities of the human mind and those of other animals.

Suddendorf frames this book in the evolutionary context of what happened along the way from primitive ape to modern human being. As there are no Neanderthals around anymore, and we know little about them and our other forebears, he redirects his focus to our nearest extant relatives: apes. He then proceeds to discuss how we study the minds of apes and humans and highlights the limits of such inquiry. Suddendorf is very good in this respect. Throughout the course of the book, he continues to highlight the limits of scientific inquiry. He also does not shy away from contrasting the two opposing paradigms in which the observations are interpreted: a roman-

tic paradigm that is poised to imagine human-mind likeness where there is none; and a killjoy paradigm ready to strip away humanness in favor of behaviorist explanations. Suddendorf tries hard to walk the middle of the road between the two paradigms while keeping the reader’s options open.

Suddendorf focuses on six spheres of the human condition: language, mental time travel, mindreading (the ability to read body language and infer the subject’s thinking), theorizing (the ability to conceive of abstract ideas and examine them), culture (the ability to learn and retain learning across generations), and morality. These he contrasts with the animal faculties of communication, memory, social reasoning, physical reasoning, tradition (yes! animals learn and that learning does seem to spread and be preserved in populations over time), and empathy. I will preserve for you the joy of reading the book by not elaborating much further on these points. Suffice it to say, the gap between these six qualities are, in Suddendorf’s opinion, bridged by nested scenario building and an urge to connect.

The nested scenario building is, as Suddendorf explains it, the ability not only to retain memories and learning but to reimagine those memories and learning into new ideas. In doing so, we can project ourselves into the future (we can, for example, anticipate consequences from actions and so derive a sense of ethical accountability from empathy) as well as imagine new things and invent. These abilities, Suddendorf argues, are not visible in other animals. While apes may be able to “ape” humanness, their impression is, in his opinion, only skin deep.

Apes, and many other organisms, are social but humanity takes it further. We seek society; we want to make contact with others and share our experiences. I give, as an example, my hobbies of tropical fish keeping and orchid growing. Visit a society meeting and the average age is well over 60 years of age. This is not a particularly tech-savvy demographic, but if you visit the internet, there is no shortage of webpages, forums, and groups discussing these topics. We (whether we are 19 or 90) seek each other out to share our experience. What is more, we spontaneously organize to share information with like-minded people. With communication, we create culture where there previously was none. In part, the reason why young people cannot be separated from their phones is because there is a deep, inexorable desire to connect with others. Suddendorf discusses what makes us human and reveals our carnal nature that, left untempered by morality, can backfire into social self-destructive culture.

Book Reviews

Who should be reading this book? I think if you are interested in moral philosophy, theology, and cognitive neurobiology, then this book will offer many insights into these fields. If Suddendorf is correct, experimenting on rats and mice and chimpanzees will not unlock the mystery of “humanness” as the mystery simply is not to be found in these animals. Also, if we aim to build a moral society, then we must know something of our nature that urges us to seek each other out. I just read an article by Rabbi Warren Goldstein (“Alternative Reality: Why We Misunderstand Faith” on Jewishworldreview.com) on the human desire to recreate our reality and communicate. Sadly, what Rabbi Goldstein describes as evidence for a divine human soul now seems less supernatural, but still, there is a large gap between animal and human nature that should lead us to understand that we are very special—and to whom much is given, from him much will be required—but I digress. Goldstein’s point is that faith is our reimagining of reality into what God wishes us to become. Paul’s emphasis on our carnal nature is also relevant as we bring with us, through our evolution, many potentially negative traits (*yetzer hara*, to borrow the Jewish idea) that can be put to good use (toward *tikkun olam*) but that can, without a sound worldview (a *faith*) in which to interpret reality, just as well be used to break and destroy our world (to cause *ra* and *rasha*). If we are to accept the Divine invitation to “let us [God and you, me, and others] make humankind” we must know and understand what our starting materials are.

Who would enjoy reading this book? I would think any biologist would find this book interesting. Psychologists and neurobiologists would also find it interesting and informative as to the human condition. Nonprofessionals with an interest in behavior or social pathology would find this a rewarding read, full of interesting material on human development and social experiments. I, as a new parent, found it fascinating to find the ideas of human development espoused by Suddendorf recapitulated in my growing son. The book does a great job of taking what little we know about the behavior of human ancestors and presenting it in the context of what it is to be human.

Suddendorf encourages us to know ourselves. I would like to echo this encouragement: read the book and get to know yourself a bit better.

Reviewed by Tyrone Genade, Department of Biology, Northwestern College, Orange City, IA 51041.

As space permits, *PSCF* plans to list recently published books and peer-reviewed articles related to science and Christian faith that are written by our members and brought to our attention. To let us know of such works, please write to patrick.franklin@prov.ca.



SCIENCE & BIBLICAL STUDIES

NAVIGATING GENESIS: A Scientist’s Journey through Genesis 1–11 by Hugh Ross. Covina, CA: Reasons to Believe Press, 2014. 298 pages, endnotes, indexes, appendixes. Paperback; \$19.95. ISBN: 9781886653863.

In *Navigating Genesis*, Hugh Ross presents readers with his attempt to engage in a reading of Genesis 1–11 in a way that promises to “ultimately satisfy intellectual curiosity” (p. 13). While Ross’s engagement with the conclusions of much modern scientific inquiry is often interesting and seems (from this outsider’s perspective) to be well researched, his commitment to a particular way of reading the Bible, coupled with what appears to be a near-total disregard for academic biblical scholarship, makes this book profoundly frustrating to read. A complete list of the various problems in the book is far beyond the scope of this review, but I will present here several key issues indicative of the kinds of problems one finds throughout, and which, taken together, create a work that is fatally flawed.

From the beginning, Ross displays a tendency to brush aside or disregard significant problems in his argument regarding Genesis 1. For instance, he goes to great pains to indicate that, contrary to the entire interpretive history of Genesis 1, God did not *create* light and darkness on the first day of creation, but that light *appeared* (pp. 38–39). This is a necessary argument for Ross’s conclusions, since he believes that Genesis 1 offers us a scientifically accurate (if not exhaustive) account of the beginnings of the world. If one is to suggest that the creation of light precedes anything that might produce light, as the text seems to suggest, one has a rather significant problem. Ross solves the problem in two ways, both of which are difficult to accept.

First, Ross proposes a (to my knowledge) unique reading of Genesis 1:1–2 that involves a shift in observer perspective (pp. 28–31). He suggests that the “observer’s vantage point [in verse 2] is clearly identified as ‘the surface of the deep’ ... over the waters” (p. 31). In point of fact, the text does not identify any “observer” at all, nor is there any clear indication of a shift in “vantage point” (or of the existence of an initial “vantage point”). The entity that broods over the waters is the *rûach ‘elôhîm*, the spirit of God, and there is no indication whatsoever that this entity is narrating the account. In terms of perspective, all of Genesis 1 appears to occur from the divine perspective, or from what we would usually call a third person omniscient perspective. This