

Re: this is the time to pray

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From: Beth (*BethStone21_at_hotmail.NOSPICEDHAM.com*)

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Evenbit wrote:

> *Beth wrote:*

> > *Well, except, of course, if "evolution" is to be presumed correct*

> > *then the division of "species" is nothing more than a subjective*

> > *judgement itself...they all "evolve" from one another in a*

> > *continuous process and the "dividing lines" are really just*

> > *invented by humans (though usually based on easily identifiable*

> > *traits in most cases)...*

>

> *A direct result of man's desire to classify everything.*

Indeed; An inherent human denial of "intertwingularity", as Ted Nelson put it (with a touch of deliberate "irony" there, giving it a jargon name and "classifying" it all himself...though, the term "intertwingularity" has to be given an award for its inherent mocking stupidity as an actual jargon term for anything...he has a sense of humour, for sure, as that word itself is so tinged with "deep irony", you can't help laughing...it's a ludicrous name by which to call anything...but, of course, that's the point...he's taking the mickey out of such "jargon" and "classifying phenomenon" as he does so...a more subtle wit than mine...I would have gone for a "surrealist" edge and just called it a "banana" or something...which isn't as funny ;)...

> > *Hence, the difficulty here is that we really need a rather*

> > *LARGE-ISH "evolution" to be completely sure...as noted,*

> > *there's no dispute a dog and a cat are completely different*

> > *"species"...that "leap" is so large that*

>

> *It all depends on the number of pixels you cram onto the screen.*

Yeah, nice analogy...so long as people "get" the whole pixel thing...they probably do here, due to the (supposed) topic of the group...but, generally, you say "pixels" and people do that "blank stare, Gallic shrug and incoherent mumble" thing in response, known as the "WTF response" ;)...

> *Hmm... they both have a spinal column.*

Vertebrates...

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> *They both reside on land (hence four limbs).*

"Hence"? Spiders have eight limbs...centipedes have just under a hundred legs...slugs and snails have no legs or arms at all...your logic ain't "following" properly here ;)...

> *They both are mammals (hair and live birth). They both have claws. So far, they are the same animal. Wait, one has a snout and the other doesn't -- different animals now.*

Cats also have nine lives, dogs just the one...

Though, interestingly, as metaphorical "Fortean" rain phenomenon, there is, indeed, no discernment...as "it rains cats and dogs", apparently with no feline / canine "bias" in the animal-based rainfall...

It's a tricky call...whether you go with the inherently flawed "observation" model or the inherently flawed "metaphorical" model of classification...perhaps the "metaphysical" model? The Ancient Egyptians thought cats were worship-worthy animals...tying in with their apparent "nine souls" metaphorical character...hmmm, cats are, thus, "different species" by warrant of them being "god beasts" or something, perhaps? ;)...

> > *mean ;)...but a different "breed" of dog? A poodle versus an Alsatian? In a*
>
> *How about pitting domesticated breeds against a non-domesticated breed?*
> *The common dog -vs- Siberian Huskey? How about taking it one step further -- common dog -vs- wolf???* *Experts claim a wolf cannot be domesticated and suggest you have large acreage and a tall fence if you want to keep them. However, there are many around the world who keep a wolf as a pet in the same way one would keep a common dog. Scientists claim that wolf DNA _is_ dog DNA, so go figure...*

Ah, it's that old "nature / nurture" chestnut...there's evidence on both sides that the other is full of crap...two and two has not yet been commonly add together to the four that they are, thus, probably BOTH full of crap that either "dominates" and must the other irrelevant...

And dog DNA is _evolved_ from wolf DNA...saying it's "the same" is not quite right...but I know what you mean...oh, indeed, as usual: A contradiction in the "standard claims"...the wolves can't be "domesticated", they say...but then, also, dogs "evolved" from wolves, as people "domesticated" these superior hunting animals for domestic purposes, as "working animals"...ummm, so, like, _some_ of them must have been at least marginally "domesticatable" for that to have happened...but it makes sense: Wolves are incredibly good hunting "pack" animals (the usual proverbial "hunter")...humans slowly work out a "symbiotic" thing with the wolves...the usual human "deal" with animals: We look after you and that kind of crap, you help us get food (or, indeed, you _ARE_ our food, in the case of cows and pigs :)...the animals get "protection" out of the deal (as

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humans are good at that kind of thing :) and the cows and pigs get fed up and stuff...the human end of the "bargain" is to use the carcass as food and clothing and such, one day in the future...of course, "biased" symbiosis in that the animals never really had a "say" in this (what with, you know, not being able to talk :))...

> > *The problem being that a minor genetic change can actually bring*
> > *about large "visual" difference...or a massive genetic change*
> > *could happen with nothing particularly "obvious" or "visual" to*
> > *see...you know, the relationship between what we see and what's*
> > *going on genetically _ISN'T_ that simple...*
>
> *Like a garden plant developing a resistance to blight. Also remember*
> *that a genetic change is NOT necessary for natural selection (or*
> *unnatural) to take place. Say you have a herd of zebras of mixed race.*
> *What do you have left when you go through the herd and kill all the*
> *zebras that are white with black stripes? Right, only the black ones*
> *with white stripes are left.*

Yes; But, in a sense, "natural selection" is one thing...and "mutation" and "evolution" is another..."evolution" works by "natural selection" BUT, indeed, not always the same thing...I've, no doubt, been totally sloppy in my use of language throughout my posts and confused the two repeatedly, I'm sure...

> > *proofs and weird methods of getting "proof" (throwing balls out of*
> > *the Leaning Tower of Pisa?*
>
> *Throwing a hammer and feather out of the Leaning Tower would prove*
> *nothing. But throwing someone's balls out might get that person's*
> *attention. ; -)*

Ahem Galileo threw two balls of the exact same dimensions but having different weight because they were made from different material...the purpose being to demonstrate that the pull of gravity is NOT related to their "weights" at all but to "air resistance"...being of the same shape and size, the "air resistance" was the same but the weights were different...if gravity had something to with weight, they'd hit the ground at different times...if to do with "air resistance" instead, then they'd hit at the same time...standard scientific principle: "isolate" the variable you want to test (that it is the only thing that differs between two experiments)...

And, indeed, they both struck the "observer" at the bottom of the tower on the head at the same time...this was revealed by there being _two_ cartoon bumps sticking out the top of his head...no, okay, that last bit was just a crap joke...they hit _the ground_ at the same time, not a person...but, well, I thought I'd add the cautionary note that, in the name of science, it is not acceptable to throw things off heights onto people's heads :))...

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> > *Indeed, if one is happy with "proof" by a different means, then,
> > arguably, it's already here from the use of "evolution" in things
> > like "genetic algorithms" or making "simulations"...this might be
> > the best route to search for "proof" (especially to programmers
> > on this group :)...you know, showing in reality is quite
> > difficult to do to some peoples' satisfactions...so, approach it
> > differently...with a "simulation", you could prove "natural
> > selection" (not "biological", perhaps, but that "natural
> > selection" as a general principle really does work because you set
> > up a "simulation" of it with a computer program and, without
> > "biasing" the programming, that the program itself displays
> > "natural selection" without any "bias" or "intervention" to make
> > it do that...as I say, "genetic algorithms" kind of do that
> > already...
>
> *There have been many projects in this area, but I have my own ideas on
> a better way of doing it.**

Ah, good...I thoroughly approve...after all, there's only so many times you can do the exact same experiments over and over again before falling asleep :)...

> *Use ASM opcodes as the DNA building blocks
> and use polymorphism (from virii fame) as a reproductive means.
> Institute rules to govern when the beings should breed and die
> (population control) and how much control you are willing to give them
> over the computer. Perhaps one strain will evolve into a clone of
> Outlook Express? Another into IE? And we will discover that Gill
> Bates & Co. got it right in the first place? ;-*

Except "evolution" doesn't guarantee "right" or "best", merely "good enough"...and, as that is roughly the Microsoft policy ("Fix security? No, this is 'good enough' to make profits...we don't care if there's a better way to program it" :), then, you never know, it probably would "hack out" IE or Outlook by "pure randomness"...that was, after all, roughly how Microsoft themselves did it all :)...

> > *And the other point about "natural selection" many often miss is that
> > because it's always applied to biological things, as that's the
> > "context" Darwin found it in, they either don't realise or forget
> > that it's a _general principle_...you know, if _ANYTHING_
> > "reproduces" and gets "naturally selected" (by whatever
> > mechanism), then it should display "evolution"...self-forming
> > "solutions"...which is how these "genetic
>
> *Natural Language, for instance. Just look at the _evolution_ of the
> English language for evidence of natural selection at work.**

Of what hence thou speakest? Verily, ist thine tongue known yet, forsooth, doth it equal bode tidings strange, good sire...

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- > > *yourself struck by lightning twice standing in the same place ;)*...
- >
- > *Actually, it is a myth that it doesn't strike twice in the same place.*
- > *Physics actually favors it striking more than once in the same place.*

I know; It was "metaphorical" usage...

- > *Otherwise, flouresent and neon lights would not work.*

Neon lights work by being struck by lightning twice? How do they manage that? They place the neon light factories in stormy places and fly a kite above the factory directing it to a batch of neon lights? Seems a pretty surreal manufacturing requirement ;)

- > > *Anyway, yes, "linear progression"...NOT guaranteed at all...there is,*
- > > *in fact, exactly the same (grossly unlikely) odds of a gene "mutating"*
- > > *back to its previous state than "going on" to something else (_IF_ the*
- > > *previous state is still "good enough" to pass the "environmental*
- > > *fitness test"*
- >
- > *Plenty examples of that in the fossil record.*

Very good; I was talking about "natural selection" in a generalised context, though, of course...nice, if there's "confirmation" in the fossil record...but I'm working in the opposite direction: Work out what the "properties" of "natural selection" are, then see if things like "the fossil record" compare favourably...rather than looking at the "fossil record" and presuming that it's "natural selection" and that everything it displays must, therefore, be a property of "natural selection"...it really needs to be tackled from both directions (for full "proof", then "evolution is possible" isn't sufficient..."things other than evolution aren't possible" is also required to demonstrate that it is attributable only to "evolution"...indeed, perhaps there's also another – as yet unnoticed – phenomenon working alongside "evolution"...after all, before Darwin, no-one suspected "natural selection" either...it's the age old "mistake" that defies logic: Presume that you know everything there is to know, even though you KNOW that those before you presumed exactly the same thing and were wrong in that presumption...another "theory" may come along which, for example, "works alongside" evolution to explain some other facets of "the fossil record" and that NOT everything in that "fossil record" is solely attributable to "evolution"...indeed, there are some examples out there that appear to "defy" simple "natural selection" alone...this suggests "incomplete" and I'd like to stick with "strict science" and drop the "politics" in order to find out what those "incomplete" bits might be :)...

For instance, the most obvious unanswered question is "where are the intermediate species?"...this is a NON-TRIVIAL question...because they clearly aren't there when we look, as would be expected by "natural selection" alone...you know what I mean? "Observation" rules in this context, not "personal politics"...this doesn't in any way mean "evolution

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is wrong", of course...but it does suggest "perhaps we've NOT got ourselves the complete picture of what's going on here just yet"...there are also – I can't remember the exact details of the top of my head but they are often quoted "problems" – examples which logically defy "natural selection" too...as I say, I'd need to look up the exact details but, off the top of my memory, there's some bird or something that has two stomachs...and one stomach is the usual "digestive" kind...while the other one simply contains a toxin...now, it is observed that animals _avoid_ eating this bird thing because it has this "toxin" in its second stomach...but the question is how could this state of affairs "evolve" by "natural selection" _ALONE_? It would bizarrely _require_ that the bird is eaten for this to "evolve" as a "defence" and for the other animals to _die_ in order to "evolve" the sense not to eat it...but if they die, then how do they "evolve" this? As I say, I'm just recalling the "basic details" of it...I'd need to look it up to get the exact "paradox" clearly but it's something similar to this...and even strongly opinioned evolutionists are forced to admit that it _IS_ a "problematic" situation...because the exact situation as observed seems to require an "evolution" from dead animals, which is logic nonsense...

Of course, my point isn't that this example "proves evolution wrong"...but it _is_ admittedly "problematic"...and there are a few well-known cases found in nature that really do appear to "defy" strict "natural selection" _ALONE_...then, generally, the "speeds" of some things seem unintuitive...you know, some things appear to be "evolving" very quickly while other things "evolve" at an excruciatingly slow pace...again, this is not anything to do with "wrong"...but it seriously is causing many of the strongest evolutionists to confess that there is probably a touch of "incompleteness" to this all...

And that's not unusual...if you weren't a religious person then, pre-Darwin, you were even more in such a situation...you know, you didn't believe the various "creation" stories but, not yet realising "natural selection", you, indeed, couldn't offer an alternative explanation (indeed, once Darwin supplied it, there's an awful lot of not-always-scientific "over-enthusiasm" because, for once, there is a _SERIOUS_ "counter argument" possible for such people...unfortunately, in the end, nearly everything in the human sphere boils down to "politics" and it pokes its nose in where it's not wanted – strict science does not want or need such things...it just does its job seeking truth, the "politics" and "philosophy" of what these truths mean is NOT a concern of "science" itself (though, "science" does work _through_ "scientists" and, being human, they aren't always "immune" to such things...indeed, science is a _DISCIPLINE_ and to do it properly, you do need to "curb that enthusiasm" to a degree...you know, exercise that "self-discipline" in your conduct...at least, keep your "politics" out of your "experiments" :) – which is unfortunate, from the "scientific" point-of-view)...oh...and, by the way, there were _PLENTY_ of aesthists throughout all of history...it's not "modern" like that at all...what's "modern" is actually having some _serious_ "grounds" with which to counter religious arguments from "science" and similar providing "alternative explanations"...which is another point: Many aesthists and agnostics claim that their opinions are

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"modern" and do that old "in the 21st century, surely people don't believe such things anymore?" stuff...there is nothing "modern" about either perspective...they are as old as humans have existed...indeed, you'd get a more "secular" argument out of Plato than you would Newton (or even Darwin originally, pre-discovery...and he changed to _agnostic_ so didn't abandon a "Deity" completely, just not any one of the "standard Deities" :), despite, according to this "modern" argumentation, things should be expected in reverse to that...also, on the same grounds, it's actually a potentially dangerous concept to presume that "modern" makes people different...sorry, there's a danger of confusing "memetics" and "genetics" there...all humans "believe" things and often have this stupid "surrender to the Golden Cow" instinct...and that is dangerous in _ANY_ time period...you know, you might not believe in "Aries, God of War" but, still, people surrender to the new "false gods" and sacrifice people on a "modern"-style altar instead...in that sense, humans _genetically_ ain't changed an iota from those times, however "memetically" things have evolved...indeed, there's little that annoys me more than the "in the 21st century" types of argument...oh, yes, that's right...at 11:59:59 on the 31st December 1999, it was perfectly "okay" to commit genocide...but, a second later, the "laws of the universe" changed...okay, people don't mean that exactly when they talk about this stuff but there is a touch of that kind of bizarre rationalisation to it...indeed, it's that same old "pseudo-Darwinism" that's _VERY DANGEROUS_ thinking...and that's, unfortunately, not completely "theory" that it could be dangerous...the Holocaust had a "pseudo-Darwinist" grounding to it as well...oh, indeed...you really _CAN'T_ presume that if "religion" is wrong and that if everyone is convinced of "science" then wars and genocides will stop...on the contrary, the greatest genocide that has ever occurred in all of history, happened _because_ of a _darkly twisted_ version of "Darwinism"...there is no "Salvation" in this direction, in and of itself...humans must _STILL_ "face their demons", whether we mean this literally or only metaphorically...and, to be honest, that seems to me the greater "priority"...after all, what use is being "right", if you're dead? The killing needs to stop first..._THEN_ we can discuss the other stuff...indeed, I feel the same way about the "environmental" stuff too...all the argument is about "greenhouse gases"...now, I ain't saying that this isn't necessarily an important topic...but it's "priorities": Deal with the most important points first...the "most important" should never be placed at the mercy of the "trivial"...

Anyway, I started ranting there...back to the main point: I do think "evolution" is correct and, thus, I'm actually insisting that it is _represented_ properly...because pushing it as "complete" when it appears not to be so...pushing it as "proof God is dead", when that isn't "proved" at all and that isn't what's most significant about it is, anyway (I think the fact that it demonstrates inherent _equality_ – that we _ARE_ all from the same place and that "differences" are comparatively minor things, not great "barriers" of conflict – is a non-trivial political point it throws up)...

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Remembering – not to be "attacking" but simply factual – that "false Darwinism" (Aryan "master race" nonsense) is just as responsible for wars and genocides as religion ever was before or since (in a sense, with the massive extent of the Holocaust, it was almost as if it was "catching up" in "body count" terms, in a manner of speaking)...and, you know, examine the evidence: If this is true, then was "religion" ever "responsible" for wars and genocides? Or are we talking about a human problem and "killing religion" will simply NOT serve as a "solution" whatsoever? Because when "religion" was used, it was always an EXCUSE every single time, anyway...indeed, inspection of these "religions" demonstrates that they are actually advocating AGAINST such practices...often incredibly explicitly so that those who defying it are, in fact, NO kind of "example" of that religion whatsoever...

Indeed, Bush has two eyes...Bin Laden has two eyes...then, clearly, all the mess in the modern world is the result of having two eyes! Quick, let's poke everyone's eyes out! No, it's not that simple...and that's NOT the problem...and the exact same thing applies to Bush and Bin Laden using "religion" as their excuses...they may have this in common but it does not necessarily equate that we have a "correlation"...

For instance, there is a shown statistical "correlation" between people who own personal computers and those who own microwave ovens...but this does NOT imply that there's "cause and effect" in operation here...as if buying a personal computer mandates buying a microwave oven...indeed, the likely actual "cause" is that there another "hidden variable" in this equation...that the "correlation" is that those who are not "technophobes" are likely to go out and buy lots of modern technology – like PCs and microwave ovens – while those who "fear technology!" are more likely to stay away from both...I would contend that this is the same because there are plenty of examples – indeed, the VAST MAJORITY by a large measure – who are "religious" and do NOT display any "bloodthirstiness" to wage constant war on innocent people randomly...one always has to be wary of making "false correlations" between things because it is, indeed, incredibly easy to do so...looking only at your "PC and microwave sales figures" alone, there IS an apparent "correlation"...and, yes, you, in a sense, only realise your potential "mistake" by looking at the wider picture and looking at other facts and figures as well...

And, the truth is, there are examples of "religious" people who oppose war...of religious people like Rev. Martin Luther King and Gandhi who fought their "conflicts" with completely peaceful means because of their religious beliefs...and when did the inherently non-violent Buddhists ever wage a world war? And, yes, there are counter examples in the Spanish Inquisition and Crusades and – unfortunately many – other examples too...equally, with "religion" extracted out of the equation, there have been plenty of examples of completely non-religious "land conquest" wars and, as noted, some "pseudo-Darwinistic" genocide in the Holocaust...

If one looks at, indeed, the "wider picture" we see that we'd be being far, far too "hasty" to start drawing "correlations" between any set of beliefs

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and the causes of war...drawing "correlations" is always an activity to do very cautiously because, as noted by the "PC and microwave" common example (which are actual real figures that really do, in isolation, seem to imply an apparent "correlation" between the two), it's so easy – far too easy – to jump to a false conclusion, when you actually haven't got the full facts and figures (indeed, you might even think you've got the full facts and figures...but, of course, if you don't know about them, then you won't actually know you're missing them...hence, really, the "safe" method is to automatically presume that there's always things out there you don't know and that you'll keep an "open mind" and listen to new "facts and figures"...indeed, it's arguable that it is the LACK of such "open minds" that displays an even BETTER "correlation" between beliefs and the causes of war...that "religion" is not peculiar in being the sole thing to sometimes generate "closed minds" and THAT "closed mindedness" has a far better correlation: Nero believed himself an "infallible god", the Nazis believed completely in a "superior master race", many a leader has waged war because they claim "God wants it"...the far better "correlation" here is closed–minded arrogance as a better potential "cause of war"...hence, my serious words of caution: If one displays "closed–minded arrogance" (of any "breed") then ARE you any better than those you accuse? Historically speaking, the evidence implies that, no, you're not...and, indeed, if you can't see this, then that's what marks a person as a "danger" because their mind is so closed that it might be "beyond all Hope" to get rationality back into their thinking processes..."religion" doesn't cause this...various forms of "self–righteous literalism" and such, though, can stem from "religion" and sometimes cause it...but that's really the person, not the beliefs)...

> > *Sensible general advice, really...when things get too big or heavy to
> > manage, then employ some "outside help" (especially when
> > pregnant)...*
>
> *It wasn't me! ;–)*

Though, I bet not from want of trying, eh? ;)

Beth :)