

Book review *the god gene*

Perspective

Book Review of *The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired into Our Gene*, by Dean Hammer, (2004) Doubleday, New York, USA, pp. 241.

George Orwell's book *1984* has all the people doing a daily five minute hate program to exercise their hatefulness. Such would be welcome compared to what we have now from Hollywood, the major networks and books like this. Perhaps I protest too much, but *The God Gene* is dishonest in that the book describes an instinctual genetic basis for meditation and reflection states which the author calls "spirituality" admitting overtly that such is neither "God" nor "religion." "Some feeble association of this type of "spirituality" with churchgoers is described but there is nothing firm about it. Thus the use of the word "God" is a transparent public relations advertisement promotional ploy -- basically dishonest.

The author does not accept "God" but instead "spirituality" meaning "meditation" as a genetic instinct associated with the discovery of a specific individual gene identified with vaguely described self-transcendent scale of spirituality from a Roman Catholic researcher named Cloninger. Not to give details of this self-transcendent scale on which he relies so heavily is frustrating. I had to do a crash literature search and believe it is safe in saying that this self-transcendent scale has very little to do with the divine transcendentals (matter, identity, truth, oneness, good and beauty). The self-transcendent scale has to do with the dereistic feel-good self-hypnosis which the so-called scientist unscientifically alludes to be an identification with God.

Furthermore, Hammer gets into the "meme" business -- identified as "self-replicating units of culture, ideas that are passed on from one individual to another through writing, speech, ritual and imitation" (Pg. 13). Philosophically, the "meme" is nothing more than a "construct" artificially labeled "scientific" so that it is palatable to non-believers and unphilosophical (unscientific, actually) donuts who have neither beginning, end nor middle. The artifice is that memes and genes sound alike. How clever. And this from scientists?

Essentially, Hammer claims to identify genotypes which are associated with "spiritual" activities as meditation. That the brain would have an area for such could be confirmation of theological relevance because revelation needs Scripture which requires a brain *reflecting on reflection* (consciousness squared C). The ability to focus more deeply in ecstatic, self hypnotic, self emergence could be the neuropsychological accompaniment of "religion" as well as "spirituality." "Indeed, Latin (as the highest angelic hierarchy) requires a definite understanding which goes beyond the superficial also. That brain areas are found to exist linked to genes for dereistic meditation ("spirituality") would seem important (although perhaps it may be more important to find the genes for bizarre beliefs, lying, and just plain obstinant malevolence -- no doubt studies of journalists, scientists and mullahs would be very productive).^{1,2}

The book is worshipless, without decent intellection, without reason, without revelation, without consciousness squared (C2),

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without inspirational stories to create imagination, and without metaphysical engagement. He has no Apostle's Creed and is basically theophobic, intellectually dishonest, believing that a moaning phoneme circus is "spirituality." Hammer.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

1. Nigro SA. The attainment of psychological freedom. *Social Justice Review*. 2002. p. 176-179.
2. Nigro SA. Angels as words. *Pro Ecclesia*. 2001. 14 p.