

Review of two books: *the selfish gene...* and... *the extended phenotype* both by richard dawkins new york, oxford university press, 1976, 352 pages new york, oxford university press, 1982, 313 pages

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Perspective

Prompted to review *The Selfish Gene* by an article in *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 28, 2006, I found a pseudo-scientific fantasyland by an ethologist pretending to be psychologist, geneticist, theologian, philosopher, statistician, and know-it-all host as if for CBS News. The library loaned me a 1989 edition of *The Selfish Gene* which has two new chapters (12 and 13) that add little but more pretend proof of microscopic behavioral super constriction into analytic fantasies that are intriguing interesting fairy tales totally unverifiable. Like so many Galileo wannabe scientists drowning in their own grandiose unverified claims, Dawkins is in denial of the universe and mankind but not himself.

We are survival machines -- robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes (Opening paragraph to the Preface to the 1976 first edition). (I ask: Really? How does he know that? And, has he ever heard about homosexuals?)

Totally overwhelmed with evolutionary theories accepted in a scientifically uncritical unreflective manner, Dawkins buys into natural selection totally as neo-Darwinism (Darwin with genes) and he believes in "speciesism" meaning that no species has any priority over another. Nothing intimidates like the pomposity of a scientist afflicted by logorrhea on a subject outside his field unless it is a human PETA animal worshiper.

Chapter after chapter cuts the same pile of ordure in different ways resulting in a perseveration of "genemanship" (Chapter 6).

What is the selfish gene? It is not just one single physical bit of DNA. Just as in the primeval soup, it is *all replicas* of a particular bit of DNA distributed throughout the world. If we allow ourselves the license of talking about genes as if they had conscious aims, always reassuring ourselves that we could translate our sloppy language back into respectable terms if we wanted to, we can ask the question, what is a single selfish gene trying to do? It is trying to get more numerous in the gene pool. Basically it does this by helping to program the bodies in which it finds itself to survive and to reproduce (Pg. 88). (Could this guy write for Disney or what?).

This and most of the rest of the book is like playing with one of those hand held computer games which dull our childrens' minds. "The license" this guy takes about genes having "conscious aims" is a mere herald of a cornucopia of license to come.

Another big theme is "ESS - Evolutionarily Stabilizing Strategies". And, man, this guy has got the microbehavioral answer for everything. His is the anthropomorphization of the universe and all complicated "creatures" in it. A thousand years ago, this author would be worshipping trees. Of course, all his "creatures" are machines -- and

Samuel A Nigro M.D

Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, USA

Correspondence: Dr. Samuel A Nigro M.D., Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, 2517 Guilford Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, USA, Tel 216 932-0575, Email sam@docnigro.com

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without a doubt, history testifies that man choosing to be a machine is a monster using "Ancient Stabilizing Strategies" (that is ASS not ESS) which apply well to Dawkins.

One of his chapters is entitled "You Scratch My Back, I'll Ride on Yours"... and I know what he means from reading the book. He makes you want to whiney and stomp your feet.

I was pleased to finally find the originator of the "mene" concept: what he calls in Chapter 11 ("Menes, The New Replicators."). To enhance suggestibility, Dawkins admits seeking a "monosyllable" that sounds a little bit like "gene" (He doesn't know it, but that is propaganda). So, in his inflated conceited arrogance, Dawkins throws out genes as a sole basis for evolution and promotes his own metaphor of "menes" as cultural-behavioral phenomena which impact on evolution.

God exists, if only in the form of a meme of high survival value, or infective power, in the environment provided by human culture (Pg. 193).

We are built as gene machines and cultured as mene machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of selfish replicators (Pg. 201).

Now wait a minute ... we are robotile machines conditioned by genes and menes but all of a sudden there is an element of free will and independent freedom? This is a guy who refuses to see God in nature and never heard of Thomas Carlisle's unselfish perception: "Nature, which is the time vesture of God and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish." No gene there; no mene either; just unselfish respect for God versus Dawkins' selfish neurotic theophobia.

His new Chapter 12 is basically an obsessional entrapment in game strategies, especially the classical "Prisoners Dilemma" game, replicating himself with the intensive obsessive style of scientists in spite of themselves. His Chapter 13 is entitled "The Long Reach of the Gene" and it obviously reaches as far as the end of his arm, and almost to the end of his nose. That there is a "selfish gene" would seem to be totally proven by looking at Richard Dawkins himself. He is a selfish phenotype but he generalizes so that everyone else is too. And he has a reaction formation to virtues as well as an allergy to the Roman Catholic Church. No doubt, he is an ILL (Incorrigible Liberal Loon -- another gene group yet to be discovered). To believe in genes, menes, strings and not angels is laughable.

In this 1989 publication of his first book, Dawkins professes his book *the extended phenotype* is the best thing he's ever written or read. So naturally I went and got a copy of it. He announces that this book is "unabashed advocacy" in his first line on page 1. In other words, while his first book is fantasy land, this one is pure propaganda. That he uses the female pronoun "her" instead of the correct gender neutral "him" throughout the book, reveals Dawkins to be incorrigibly iconoclastic of not only tradition but the Oxford English Dictionary. In *the extended phenotype*, Dawkins states: "For me, writing is almost a social activity..." and that certainly rings true because the book is most assuredly not scientific activity.

These books remind that Galileo's proof of the earth revolving around the sun was based on totally wrong calculations of the ocean's tides so that, although he happened to be right, Galileo never proved what he claimed so he never had the right to make grandiose claims in his day because he did not prove it. It remains to be seen if Dawkins' claims in these books, as based on tedious anthrophmorphising from ants to wasps, will be anything more than ethological fairytales, much like Galileo claiming his calculations demonstrated heliocentrism when they did not (Are scientists human or not?). Dawkins' metaphor madness and obsessive/compulsiveness could be called witchcraft. He perseverates with everything, special pleads on every page and provides good demonstrations of *non-being* research (that is a joke!) He reminds me of Freud's psychobabble and intense fabrication without proof. The metaphor holds that Dawkins is to biology what psychoanalysis claims (erroneously) it is to mental functioning. From his references it is obvious that most likely all ethologists are desperately attempting to explain the world by mathematical game theory theophobia with a touch of astrology thrown in.

Dawkins admitted central thesis of *the extended phenotype* is: "An animal's behavior tends to maximize the survival of the gene 'for' that behavior, whether or not those genes happen to be in the body of the particular animal performing it" (Pg. 233). He proves that by the study of beavers and lakes instead of ocean tides.

To understand more about Richard Dawkins, one must quote Tom Bethell's book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Science* (Pg. 210):

This notion that there is somewhere a computer model of the evolutionary development of the eye is an urban myth. Such a model does not exist. There is no model anywhere in any laboratory. No one has the faintest idea how to make one. The whole story was fabricated out of thin air by Richard Dawkins. The senior author of the study on which Dawkins based his claim -- Dan E. Nilsson -- has explicitly rejected the idea that his laboratory has ever produced a computer simulation of the eye's development.

Dawkins suffers from manic grandiose over thinking with metastatic fantasizing totally irrelevant to anything except fellow ethologists and anyone dumb enough to think there is some reality there. It is hyperlogic and the best that could be said about it is that it is "cute."

Ethologists like Dawkins know that frogs and loons do not really understand or believe in man similar to the fact that some men do not believe in God. But frogs and loons do not have Dawkins' books which are themselves proof of Original Sin along with his denial of all man's charity and virtuous history. The things people imagine to deny God, and some people are so selfish, they sell selfishness. Like this author. Others like him will suck it up.

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