

# Review of: "[Commentary] Biology as a postmodern science: Universals, historicity, and context"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Hi Hippokratis,

I am reviewing your "Biology as a postmodern science..." and in doing so suggesting that there are better approaches/responses to the hegemony of biology/science than post-modernism and the like. I will start with (reviewer) Jonathan Edwards' concluding paragraph for some perspective,

>>"I thought post-modernism was a word that had finally disappeared from discourse as being completely useless, but maybe not. It seems to be against reason. Since science is based on analysing empirical evidence using the best reason we have, post-modernism seems at least to have been of no relevance to science. "<<

From a scientific perspective Edwards' point is well taken. But I am not doubling down on Edwards' physics-defines everything and thus nukes any meaningful alternatives including those considered in metaphysics. In fact this review is pointing that there is plenty of evidence that science (beginning with physics) is wrong about life. And thus there are reasons for intellectual activity considering deeper perspectives on life and thus forgoing the ongoing superficial responses (under whatever names).

First, for a frank statement on the scientific perspective on life (by a prominent biologist and I believe she was the daughter of a prominent physicist):

>>"[a]ll of us, and scientists are no exception, are vulnerable to the existential shudder that leaves us wishing that the foundations of life were something other than just so much biochemistry and biophysics. The shudder, for me at least, is different from the encounters with nihilism that have beset my contemplation of the universe. There I can steep myself in cosmic Mystery. But the workings of life are not mysterious at all. They are obvious, explainable, and thermodynamically inevitable. And relentlessly mechanical. And bluntly deterministic. My body is some 10 trillion cells. Period. My thoughts are a lot of electricity flowing along a lot of membrane. My emotions are the result of neurotransmitters squirting on my brain cells. I look in the mirror and see the mortality and I find myself fearful, yearning for less knowledge, yearning to believe that I have a soul that will go to heaven and soar with the angels."<<

That is the scientific vision of life and I can't imagine meaningful wordplay in this context (including the author's "Cosmic Mystery") amounting to anything significant. The author was Ursula Goodenough and the source was her neo-religious book "The Sacred Depths of Nature".

Now for a quick rebut here I turn to some prodigy literature by Darold Treffert (in his “Islands of Genius”).

>>"By age five Jay had composed five symphonies. His fifth symphony, which was 190 pages and 1328 bars in length, was professionally recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra for Sony Records. On a *60 Minutes* program in 2006 Jay's parents stated that Jay spontaneously began to draw little cellos on paper at age two. Neither parent was particularly musically inclined, and there were never any musical instruments, including a cello, in the home. At age three Jay asked if he could have a cello of his own. The parents took him to a music store and to their astonishment Jay picked up a miniature cello and began to play it. He had never seen a real cello before that day. After that he began to draw miniature cellos and placed them on music lines. That was the beginning of his composing.

Jay says that the music just streams into his head at lightning speed, sometimes several symphonies running simultaneously. "My unconscious directs my conscious mind at a mile a minute," he told the correspondent on that program [Treffert 2010, pp.55-56]."<<

Any serious look at unusual behaviors quickly leads one to wonder where the extreme confidence surrounding biology, neuroscience, .... ultimately physics came from? It is trivial to find accepted behaviors that are extremely unlikely to be consistent with science's vision.

Behind this there is of course science's imagined miracle worker, DNA. And 20 years into extensive searches looking for expected DNA origins this has turned out to be an extensive "absolutely beyond belief" failure (which as far as I am aware of has drawn zero interest from intellectuals). I give citations for introductions to that situation below.

Finally, amidst the litany of DNA-based miracles that are supposed to have propped up the evolution of life (and its ongoing complexity) there is at least one metaphysically relevant one. As "Paul Bloom, a professor of psychology and director of the Mind and Development Lab at Yale University, [has written], "The universal themes of religion are not learned... They are part of human nature... Creationism – and belief in God – is bred in the bone". Somehow then as intellectually-aware people we are to supposed believe that our dualistic and religion-resonant innate perspectives fell out of natural selection and are stored in DNA. However crudely accurate such perspectives might ultimately be, I suggest no one really has a clue how this could have happened.

Keep questioning science and good luck with your work.

References:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/11/10/495>

and

<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=121211>

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