

Genetics and biochemistry do not admit evolution as science.

November 2000 - NMSR Rebuttal to CSFNM Essay

Arguing against the Resolution, for NMSR: John Geohegan

This is Essay 3B (Response) in the NMSR/CSFNM Debate Series.

In essay 3a, Roger Lenard erects a straw man and then attacks it unsuccessfully. He would have us believe that "Evolution claims that undirected, random process [sic] account for observed order, complexity and information in living entities." As proof he cites a biology text for ninth and tenth grades which indeed says that evolution is random and undirected but is referring to the lack of long-term goals. The rest of the essay is an attack upon the idea, stated eight times in as many paragraphs, that random undirected processes couldn't be responsible for the information and order we see in nature.

Actually biologists are in strong agreement with the creationists thus far, but they insist that natural selection is a non-random process which directs evolution toward improvement through non-random survival. If Lenard could convince us that evolution couldn't occur by means of a selection process, he would have a strong argument. As it is, his attack is misguided. Randomness of mutations is often misunderstood. In evolutionary theory it means that mutations occur with no bias toward increase or decrease of fitness, but the causes of mutations are understood and certain mutations are much more probable than others.

Richard Dawkins says, "the great majority of people that attack Darwinism leap with almost unseemly eagerness to the mistaken idea that there is nothing other than random chance in it (1)," and sets about to destroy the myth that Darwinism is a theory of "chance." Lenard appears to believe the myth.

Lenard's essay is shot through with many blunders. Among them: He claims that RNA is a sugar. He restates Michael Behe's argument of irreducible complexity by referring to the generally unknown (and misspelled) Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction. Dave Thomas's Essay 3a article easily refutes the argument. Lenard claims that thousands of gigajoules are required to form information-bearing sequences in an unspecified amount of DNA. Such a large energy, equivalent to detonating 238 tons of TNT, suggests he has forgotten somewhere divide by Avogadro's number, equal to .6 trillion trillions. He claims once an organism dies, "racemization rapidly results and energy is released as the energy degenerates." Racemization refers to molecules of amino acids "flipping" from left-handedness to right until the proportions are roughly equal. The process takes millions of years and is used as a method of dating old proteins (2). No significant energy is released nor is information quickly degenerated; witness the studies of ancient unfossilized organisms. Lenard has offered us untitled, undated, and unpublished references. Even arguing for something believed by biologists, he is unconvincing.

Those of us who understand evolution recognize it to be a cumulative process, directed by nonrandom survival, though not toward a distant goal. In arguing against lack of direction and randomness, Roger Lenard has merely argued against his own misconceptions.

References.

- 1) Dawkins, Richard. 1986. The Blind Watchmaker. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company. p. xi.
- 2) Gardner, Martin. 1990. The New Ambidextrous Universe: 3rd rev. ed. New York: W. H. Freeman and Co. pp. 115-125.

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