

Re: A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE

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- *From:* "g" <gillawton@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 16 Sep 2005 13:50:37 -0400 (EDT)
-

John,

Am preparing to go on a trip, and must be brief.

Without the buzz words, there are some assumptions that are clearer, and can be gotten at and, also, some gaps.

Before I go on, let me be quite frank in saying I admire the amount of thought you have put into your ideas.

At the same time, I cannot agree or disagree with any. I have only questions and give you my solemn promise that I will be attentive and receptive to some explanations in response to them.

>>From first quick reading, I sense you have an aversion to mathematical models and computer simulations.

I do not feel that either -- where used as an adjunct to reason -- is totally misleading.

What most certainly IS HELPFUL to those researching any enormously complex thing -- such as physicists must do in tracking the distributions of certain spectral patterns in the light from certain kinds of stars -- such as the likely path of a hurricane -- such as distributions of certain bone characteristics among literally tons of paleontological specimens... I discern a problem to arise where, as it were, the tail takes over and begins to wag the dog. That is: When, for example, a purely ivory tower kind of thinking becomes reliant upon a rationale that was ventured to explain what little data was known at a former time, in a formal discipline, and then insists that new data which does not fit that rationale is extraneous.

Those who trace the ideas of Karl Marx through the thinking of some of the best minds of his time, found those ideas quite clear, quite capable of fitting much of the data, quite logically compelling. It was only over time that it became increasingly evident that Marx's ideas -- no matter how much based upon old data, no matter how obvious its logic on paper, simply has not panned out well, anywhere. At the same time -- on paper -- capitalism could be shown, on paper, to pose some logical pitfalls that jump right out at you. (And, indeed, there has not been ANYWHERE an experiment with either a pure democracy or a pure capitalistic economy, with absolute laissez faire in the political domain and the economic domain. Nobody in his right mind

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would expect that to work. But, neither would one attempt to design and build a prototype automobile engine that works with pure, unrestricted explosions, either... by which I mean that powerful systems must be designed in such a way as to harness and control the source of power, lest it simply blow up the experiment. Systems which work best have constraints (including wise REstraints, in systems relying in part upon human judgment).

But, sorry, did not mean to go to generalization.

In short, we could make a computer algorithm for a Marxist economy and, if we assume that all else is equal (as all else NEVER IS) then, with a bit of tweaking, I have no doubt we could get it to "run" in such a way as to come out looking great on our computer stats, and produce some printouts of beautiful curves... on paper.

In a nutshell, we would have proved on paper that "there is something to a rationale," if it were carried out in a special setting.

We could make a computer algorithm that would work perfectly for perfect people. And we could take the result and make that work in human society... provided we first dispensed with all the imperfect people.

But NOTHING I have said here is meant to from science (or politics, or economics, or weather predicting...) the intelligent use of the great ideas of great synthesists of the past, nor the abstractification of formulas that seem to work on paper, nor computer simulations that can work beautifully if we isolate them and tweak them sufficiently.

Where science recognizes the limits of such "tools" (a concept broadly inclusive of great ideas, models for synthesizing data, and algorithms to use as _aids to clear thinking_ we would be inefficient in refusing to use them.

Any tool can be used unwisely or for harm — a surgeon's scalpel can be used to rob a victim, or cut his throat; an automobile can be driven at high speed across a playground full of children; the electricity that lights our homes can be misused in such a way as to burn them down...

But, getting back to the tail-wagging-the-dog analogy, I would concur with what I believe might be your perception that some of Darwin's ideas, and some formulas of limited application, and some computer algorithms are ONLY as meaningful as the judgment of their users... and no better.

Science is no better than the level of judgment that can be brought to it.

Some would change for the better the things we can, while some would hang on to the past.

Some would change things for the worse, even though some of those would mean

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well in that process.

Ah but twa the giftie gie us WISDOM, wherewith to discern _the difference_.

Will be away for a few days.

Respect and goodwill,

g

"John Edser" <edser@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:dgdjng\\$1e8j\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:dgdjng$1e8j$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

>

> "g" <gillawton@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote

>

> Hi Gil,

>

> Firstly, my apologies for any delay. I depend of receiving sbe as an email
> sent by Josh . However, nothing was sent to my email address this week.

>

>>> Popper's refutation tool is the only thing that can

>>> remove evasion because it prohibits it _entirely_.

>>> I employ Hamilton's Rule as a litmus test of gene centric Neo Darwinism.

>>> The rule cannot possibly do what Neo Darwinists insist that it can:

>>> provide an empirically based rationale for the evolution of organism

>>> fitness altruism within nature. The Neo Darwinists that post here refuse

>>> to take any responsibility for the consistent misuse of this model.

>

>>snip<

>> Let me see if I can break down the above and ask you to explain it as you

>> would to a bright fourth grader:

>>>I employ Hamilton's Rule as a litmus test of gene centric Neo Darwinism.

>> If I had never heard of Hamilton's Rule nor Darwinism nor New Darwinism,

> and

>> if I had never used litmus paper to test the ph of something, and you

> really

>> wanted to explain this, how might you word it?

>

> JE:--

> Ok. Some very powerful guys think they can explain why some living things

> appear to help each other even when this provides a risk of almost certain

> death to the helper. To be able to do so they made up some maths called

> "Hamilton's Rule" which they say provides an correct explanation as to how

> this type of behavior evolves in nature. While mathematical models are ok

> they cannot replace reality. For example, your favorite scaled down model

> of

> the titanic, while true in many details, cannot even support your pet cat

> in

> our pond let alone 1000's of people in the open sea like the real titanic

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- > did before it sank. Even worse than that your model actually has one side
- > removed just so we can see the engine room etc more easily so it would not
- > even float! A reduced size model that can float is called "simplified"
- > while
- > a model boat that cannot even float is called "oversimplified". The only
- > reason these models even exist is because they help us to understand the
- > things that we know and love. It would be really silly if anybody said
- > that
- > their favorite model can replace the thing they were modeled from.
- > However,
- > this type of silly business appears to be happening a lot these days by
- > people who should know better. In a study called "Neo Darwinism" a model
- > called "Hamilton's Rule" (which is a model just like a model boat) was
- > used
- > to replace the idea it was modeled from which in this case was a really
- > good
- > idea put forward by Darwin and Wallace over 150 years ago. Models can be
- > very useful because they are much easier and cheaper to study than the
- > real
- > thing. However they become more than useless if they attempt to replace the
- > reality they were modeled from. This type of silly business appears to be
- > happening a lot these days so the model called Hamilton's Rule may be
- > useful
- > to study to try to find out why. This is like using those bits of paper
- > called "litmus paper" that are in your chemistry set. These turn pink/red
- > for acids like lemon juice or a shade of blue for alkalis like baking soda
- > except that this time we are testing the difference between truth and
- > untruth in Neo Darwinism using Hamilton's Rule as a litmus paper.
- >
- >>> JE
- >>> The rule cannot possibly do what Neo Darwinists insist that it can:
- >
- >> Again, if I had never heard of Darwin nor of Neo Darwinism, how would you
- >> explain to me that there are some people who believe (whatever) and what
- > it
- >> is they believe that you do not.
- >
- > JE:–
- > Darwin and Wallace explained how one species can evolve from another in
- > such
- > a way that anybody in the world could test the truth or untruth of it for
- > themselves but only if they could think. Sadly, most people cannot think
- > so
- > their idea made a really big stink. It challenged the accepted idea which
- > could not be tested, that each species remains fixed because it was only
- > believed they were separately created. Neither Darwin or Wallace knew what
- > exactly was passed on from parent to parent but a monk called Mendel who
- > lived before Darwin and Wallace had already worked that out doing some
- > experiments on plants. Sadly, neither Darwin or Wallace ever found that
- > out.
- > After Darwin and Wallace died Mendel's experiments were rediscovered.

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> Mendel
> had found out that only things called genes are passed on from parent to
> children. These coded for some of the things we can observe about
> ourselves
> like eye color, how tall we are or what color skin that we have. The
> people
> who attempted to join what Mendel had found out to what Darwin and Wallace
> had found out were called "Neo Darwinists". They had a really hard job
> ahead
> of them because each one of us has many genes but we pass on just a jumble
> of half of them to each of our children. Darwin and Wallace's idea stated
> that parents can be selected for or against in nature without anything
> that
> knows what it is doing. This may seem silly but can be proven to happen in
> nature. They called this very important process "natural selection". It
> was
> this they said caused the evolution of one species into another but only
> over very long periods of time. Darwin and Wallace allowed nature to
> select
> individual parents but the Neo Darwinists decided to allow nature to
> select
> individual genes in just a mathematical model of what was actually
> happening
> in nature because this was much easier. In nature individual genes are not
> selected, only individual parents, each of which have about 30,000 genes
> which are all selected at once every time just one parent is selected.
>
>>> JE:–
>>> provide an empirically based rationale for the evolution of organism
>>> fitness altruism within nature.
>
>> If I did not know the meaning of 'empirically based,' nor what a
>> rationale
>
>> is, what everyday words could be used to state your meaning here.
>
> JE:–
> For nature to be able to select things (even though nobody anywhere is
> making a selection) a measure called "fitness" is used. This just means
> how
> well you fit in with your surroundings. Taller people often play
> basketball
> better than shorter people whereas shorter people are often make better
> weight lifters. This is why over time, the players in each game tend to
> become a certain body type. This is something like natural selection
> because
> the game of sport and not just a person is doing the selecting. This sort
> of
> thing is called a "rationale" simply because it makes sense. In nature,
> parents with more fitness marks are selected for and those with less
> selected against, no matter if they like it or not. As a result many

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> genes
> are selected for and against each and every time just one individual
> parent
> is selected for or against. Because all of this can be observed within
> nature it is called an "empirically based" rationale which means it makes
> sense of nature. If it could only ever be observed as just numbers on a
> bit
> of paper it would be called a model. The model that each gene is selected
> and not each parent is only ever observed as just numbers on a bit of
> paper
> so it is just a non empirically based logic, i.e. does not make sense of
> nature just a model of nature. What we call science is only interested in
> what actually happens in nature so what happens as just numbers on bits of
> paper must also be what actually happens in nature to make any sense.
>
>> Now, as for the term 'altruism,' it is another fuzzy term.
>> I know my saying that will drive at least one sbe contributor you and I
> know
>> and like up the wall. But what that one never seems to answer is the
> basic
>> question of how he would explain its meaning without using that buzz
>> word.
>
> JE:—
> The correct term is: "cost".
>
>> If a word is a fuzzy buzz word, and a person has no ability to find any
> less
>> ambiguous way of explaining something he claims to understand... that
> leaves
>> me no choice but to wonder whether "quotations" and formal
>> definitions comprise true understanding.
>
>> Have you ever taught classes. I have.
>
> JE:—
> Yes I have. I have the utmost respect for the naïve honesty of most
> questions asked by students, particularly what is often incorrectly
> referred
> to "obvious" or "silly" questions. One of the best questions I have ever
> been asked was: "do two dead halves of a sheep equal one live sheep"?
>
>
>> And if you have, then you will know
>> by experience what I am talking about when I say that there are students
> who
>> can memorize things all day long and spit them out on exam papers; but it
> is
>> a rare and rewarding experience to find a student who can explain
> something
>> equally as clearly as the text book he learns from, or even MORE clearly

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>> than the book version.

>

>>snip for brevity<

>

> JE:–

> Yes, the more gifted students (IMHO) asked more "stupid" questions and did

> either worse OR better on standard tests.

>

> My Regards,

>

> John Edser

> Independent Researcher

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> edser@xxxxxxxxxx

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• **References:**

◆ **Re: A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE**

◇ *From:* John Edser

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