

The Game Changers: Mendel, Evolution, DNA.

What could be more repugnant on moral and aesthetic grounds than Natural Selection, there seems nothing natural about it and the selective process of death the driving force. Yet nothing better explains our origin. No wonder there is a constant desire to overturn this applecart. It is not a great theory of prediction and Popper has called it a metaphysical research area. The idea that those most suited to an environment survive and pass their adaptation on does seem like a tautology..of course, they would wouldn't they. It appears now as a fact but if a fossil of homo sapiens did turn up dated 400 million years before mammalian evolution that would destroy the theory. This seems very unlikely. It is only a short time when from a purely scientific point of view the theory was untenable. According to the energy equations available up to the end of the 19th c the sun could only be 20 million years old (Kelvin), far too short for evolution. Then we had Rutherford and nuclear forces and all was restored.

There has been resistance by distinguished figures eg Nabokov, but the theory appears irresistible. The best way out is to hope that the brain of our ancestor around 150 thousand years ago was altered through mutation, via the divine, giving us language. In that way we become "the model organism for study by the gods" probably said ironically in his Nobel speech. Which again brings me to the heart of these problems for my next essay-Time.

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