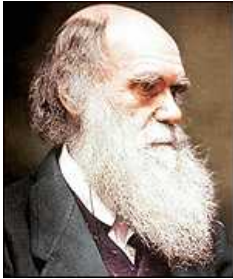


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Don't Trust a Theory You Cannot Sing

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The theory of evolution, inevitably expanded into a worldview, must explain *everything*, if it explains *anything*. Rightly understood, evolutionary theory attempts to explain virtually all dimensions of reality. As evolutionists like Daniel Dennett explain, the theory becomes a “universal acid” that burns away all other explanations.

Can evolutionary theory explain the existence of music among humans? Charles Darwin argued that music is rooted in the courtship rituals males develop toward females. In other words, he argued that music is directly tied to the sex drive and the need to procreate.

In Sunday's edition of *The Boston Globe*, Drake Bennett offers an analysis of music in light of evolutionary theory in “Survival of the Harmonious.” As he explains:

The evolutionary benefits of our affinity for food (nutrition) and sex (procreation) are easy enough to explain, but music is trickier. It has become one of the great puzzles in the field of evolutionary psychology, a controversial discipline dedicated to determining the adaptive roots of aspects of modern behavior, from child-rearing to religion.

Some evolutionary psychologists suggest that music originated as a way for males to impress and attract females. Others see its roots in the relationship between mother and child. In a third hypothesis, music was a social adhesive, helping to forge common identity in early human communities.

And a few leading evolutionary psychologists argue that music has no adaptive purpose at all, but simply manages, as the Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker has written, to “tickle the sensitive spots” in areas of the brain that evolved for other purposes. In his 1997 book “How the Mind Works,” Pinker dubbed music “auditory cheesecake,” a phrase that in the years since has served as a challenge to the musicologists, psychologists, and neuroscientists who believe otherwise.

The truly radical character of evolutionary theory should be readily apparent in these few paragraphs. Given the naturalistic reductionism of the theory, *everything* must be explained in purely natural terms — no outside influence, design, or interference.

Thus, music must be just one more accident of evolutionary development, whatever its specific function. This stands in contrast to the Christian worldview's claim that music is a divine gift — a language of song and sound. The Christian believes that God created music as a gift to His creatures, and as a means for us to offer true worship. The evolutionist's argument for the meaning of music is as sterile as their argument for the meaning of life. No wonder there are no great evolutionary hymns. Don't trust a theory you cannot sing.

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