

Is Genetics a Matter of Faith?¹

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Who gave strength to Abraham's arm?

Soren Kierkegaard

...the idea that statements about 'material things' as much need to be verified is just as wrong as, and wrong in just the same way as, the idea that statements about 'material things' as much must be based on evidence.

John L. Austin

I.

One of the most interesting aspects of biology is that it has become a *mutant* of religion and politics. If three hundred years ago the name of Jesus had been the “magical word” that nobody doubted, nowadays Jesus’ name has its *analogy* in the sacred name of the *gene*. History teaches us that it is very easy to criticize the past without seeing the mistakes of the present. In the act of bigotry, the *Inquisitio*, the Protestant morality and the recalcitrant feeling of a tight moral system and religion, are matters of fact we could slightly compare with current biology. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost form the magical number of Christianity; DNA, the Gene and the Chromosome are the sacred Trinity of biology, wherein the bishops are the geneticists. There is no reason to criticize and mock religion as current biology does. The biologists are doing the same thing with their arena that ministers and priests did some time ago with religious and normative morality. Biology and religion have their own ethics and *corpus episcopandi*, the former being related to entities that “no one” has seen yet (atoms, molecules, genes, electrons, etc...):

“A DNA molecule is too small to be seen, but its exact shape has been ingeniously worked out by indirect means.” (Dawkins, 1989;pg.22)

Similarly, religion deals with entities that “no one” has seen yet either (Angels, Virgin Mary, Holy Ghost, etc...). In 1680 a religious tribunal condemned Galileo Galilei because of a simple and plain sentence: “The earth moves around the sun”, and the tribunal said: “that is an heresy because the Bible says *this...*”.

This kind of *philosophical fascism* is currently professed by science in many aspects, biology is just one of them. The Holy Ghost and the Gene are “fantasies” that “no one” has seen yet. This is partially true because at least we could find people who have had a mystical experience where they saw some kind of entity with a remarkable religious meaning: God for instance as a mystical and inner experience. Yet, geneticists try to perform within science with the same role than Bellarmino did with Galilei. No known geneticist could say : “ I have talked to or felt or seen a Gene”. Grottesquely, under a lack of argument, the geneticist says that a

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gene, a DNA (macro)molecule, has not been *seen but it does exist*. My question is: What kind of dirty game is this?

This is called “science” just because we have been educated to believe it is “science”, when in fact it is a new *ideology*. I apologize to say and to disappoint the readers, but I do NOT defend the *creationism*, and by the way, I consider it to be simply a product of a conservative and a bigoted group of North Americans against Darwin. My position arises from a radical view of history and philosophy of science. Geneticists say they have the “key” to the future, to the illnesses; they say to have the answer to the mystery of life. Genetics has not seen a DNA molecule, but “its shape has been ingeniously worked out by indirect means”. This sounds very flattering, but it is not a very good argument. Bellarmino did not see the Holy Ghost and the truth about salvation, but we could say he *ingeniously worked it out by indirect means*. Also, this is not an out-of-step article about *The Selfish Gene*. Actually this book can be considered somewhat interesting, and with a particular touch of elegance, opening questions of vital importance for philosophy. Matters like selfishness, sex, behavior, etc., are focused from a biological and Darwinian view: “the biology of selfishness and altruism” (Dawkins, 1989; pg.1):

“Our genes may instruct us to be selfish, but we are not necessarily compelled to obey them all our lives.” (Dawkins,pg.3)

I see here a philosophical similarity with the concept of *passion*. Now, I wonder: is *gene* an obscure word for *passion*? In a philosophical sense I perceive *gene* as a concept, in the same way that the Copenhagen School of Physics interpreted the atom:

“The Copenhagen view of reality is therefore decidedly odd. It means that, *on its own* an atom or electron or whatever cannot be said to ‘exist’ in the full, common-sense of the word.” (Davies&Brown,1986;pg.24)

II.

Hence, *gene* could be interpreted as an obscure word still not being studied, where the word “*passion*” could fit as well. Anger, hatred or melancholy are forms of *passion* that could have a “model” into the genetic mechanics. My idea here is to foster a dialogue between science and religion, between matter and soul, between *sense and sensibility*. We can painfully see that when genetics is applied to Psychiatry for instance, it says that mental illnesses such a schizophrenia, have their own origin in the genetic code. I argue that position for the sake of spirit! I stand with the anti-Psychiatry School whose main representative, R.D. Laing, pointed out the above stated thought, and he considered living beings as a mix of chemistry and spirit. It is the social complex *which* influences the individual mind and produces a biochemical disequilibrium that produces schizophrenia. Yet, schizophrenia *per se* produces the biochemical unbalance. This unbalance, in normal science, is said to come from and affect genes and so on. Thus, Genetics keeps the dogmatic position that behavior is encoded in genes. Due to this, it would be a great incongruence to maintain that schizophrenia has a *genetic* origin. My thesis leaves room for Spirit. Reducing schizophrenia to a genetic possibility is basically incoherent and dogmatic. There is no any scientific *proof* as to say schizophrenia has a *genetic basis*, and therefore it is a hereditary mental illness. In the same manner, there is no any scientific evidence as to claim certain patterns of behavior such as anger, melancholy or selfishness have a genetic background: Is this just a child pretext and a kind attempt to justify Adam’s sin? A gene-molecule for schizophrenia does not exist, just as there is none for selfishness:

“Genes do indirectly control the manufacture of bodies, and the influence is strictly one way: acquired characteristics are not inherited. No matter how much knowledge and wisdom you acquire during your life, not one jot will be passed on to your children by genetic means.” (Dawkins, pg.23)

If there is no genetic code for wisdom, I do not see *why* must have a genetic code for madness! If a providential *sapientia* cannot take form into the mechanics of a gene, how and why does schizophrenia have

to be “sculpted” into a gene? No reasonable proofs, only “theories” and dogmatic positions that has been historically argued. Here, genetics is the new inquisitorial tribunal: to defy it means to be condemned. To say that due to an electrophoresis is possible to separate proteins and to corroborate them through this system, that does not guarantee that the protein model held by modern biochemistry is a hundred per cent true. But, with regard to the chromosomes, it is easy to see them on a microscope, mainly if they are onion’s chromosomes, but its more light molecules, that is, DNA as well as genes, should be addressed as a *possibility*, but not as a fact at all. I do not think that genes have the categorical encodement of behavior. In this issue I believe biologist are mixing up mind and matter. Mind is different from matter, but this does not means it cannot act upon matter. In fact, matter is a *derivation* from mind, a grotesque creation our mind. Matter exists because of mind just creates it. Genetics perceives the matter as unified with the mind, when clearly are pretty distant and different. Mind can modulates matter and of course, it does. Indeed, this does not result that every mind has supernatural powers of *telekinesis*. The essence is Biology *unconsciously* represents mind as a powerful tool with *telekinetic* characteristics, namely *the power of mind over matter*. The situation claimed by Biology is this: there are certain properties innate to genes -supposing the gene really exist. Those properties are translated as “pattern of behavior”: anger, madness, selfishness, altruism, etc...and so on. Additionally, a living body is suppose to have genes with these characteristics. A lion is furious because of its “fiery genes”. The lion attacks and is not so friendly because it possesses this mysterious “fiery-gene”. Thus, this “fiery-gene” is repartee all over its body and neurons for sure. Biologically, the lion is not compelled to accept the order and impulses of this “fiery-gene” all its life, but in fact, the lion *behaves* like a lion because of a multiple serial of genes similar to the ‘fiery-gene’. On the other hand, my view is that the lion behaves like a lion just, because he is a lion. That is.

Although the example is not totally perfect, it can be useful to illustrate what I want to. The Lion’s Argument is basically inconsistent, having in mind that this is the kind of argument that Biology and Genetics hold, Biology and genetics are doing a good team-work in respect to this fact: to exterminate the spirit. I recognize I believe deeply in spirit and spirits, but this does not authorize me to say my position is the best, when the fact is it is just a *possibility* to consider. After underline this, I say Genetics is misunderstanding the role of mind though culture and history. Actually, Genetics sees mind as a product of genes, when it is diametrically different. If genes produce schizophrenia, then it must be accepted either/or::

- a- There are “schizophrenic genes” *per se*.
- b- It is the schizophrenia *which* modifies genes.

The -a- possibility makes me laugh, and to remark there is NOT any thing-in-itself called “fiery-gene” or “pathological-gene”, I do not care if it is called as onco-gene or a schizophrenic-gene. This is a ridiculous mistake that arose from a misconception of the philosophical problem of *cause-effect*.

Let’s see the -b- possibility, this one is more plausible. Let’s say a person *P* “has” a mental illness denominated “schizophrenia”. This person obviously has a behavior *B*, which has been entitled as “schizophrenic”. Well, Genetics says that the schizophrenia of *P* has a gen responsible of that behavior *B*. That is to say, *B* can sculpt genes and to *fix* the pattern of behavior to the next descendant. Therefore, schizophrenia is hereditary. This would be a perfect argument sociologically talking, for a capitalist society where not only the money but also the behavior is heritable. In a Marxist “realm”, if you want to make you own money, you need to work for it, no way you are going to dependent on a “hereditary” wealth; with regard to behavior, it is easy to say that if you wish your personality, you have to work for it, you have to modulate your own behavior, no way your personality is going to be a heritable-thing. On the other side, this has a Nazis origin as “pure race” concept. It is not surprising to say many aspect of modern science and medicine come from Nazism. Theories about a misreading of the struggle of species or about the superman of Nietzsche, can derive in those odd system. To illustrate what I man with a *genetical* origin of Nazism from determinism, I quote the following passage:

“...sterilization and euthanasia of persons with chronic mental illnesses was discussed at a psychiatric convention in Bavaria in 1931 and published the same year in leading journals.” (Rabbi J.I. Schochet, Spring 1998; pg.2)

Or this other:

“The major trial of doctors at Nuremberg was held during the second stage of the trial. It essentially dealt with medical experimentation...The greatness of medical trial comes forth in the 10 criteria for Permissible medical experimentation:

COMMANDMENT #1: The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.

This is where we get informed consent from. Now those of you who are physicians work with consent all the time. *I don't know how many of you knew its origins were Nuremberg.*” (Michael Brenbaum, Spring 1998; pg.5)

I wish to point out that the main issue here is how Genetics, Biology and Psychiatry have been influenced by this kind of statements and determinism. And this is painfully evident. One more time, the mixing up of the problem mind-matter or mind-body is seen from a mistaken perspective, where human and living beings are just *machines* without any feeling or spiritual sentiment. This is clearly a sad position. So, in the case of a person with a “genetical schizophrenia” I do prefer to pick up the -b- position where the mentioned gene “sucks” by itself the mental illness. My focus is to say that if this person “has” this kind of behavior *must* have a bilateral relation between her/his mind and /her/his genes. That is to say, A can interact and modulates his/her own genes from the own force of his/her behavior or mind. This is called *telekinesis*. Science have already done the dirty play of training people to believe that *telekinesis* is just a kind of fantasy able to move things from the distance and without any contact. Consequently, this is seen like some kind of trick-or-tree and commercial magic. Yet, if we analyze very carefully the situation of Biology with regard to the relation between gene and culture, we have to conclude that Genetics is promoting a *hidden notion of telekinesis*. What I mean is that it itself contradicts its postulates. This kind of telekinesis I call it *biological telekinesis*. Let's say: Imagine a person with a stressed life working on a financial desk, and some day feels a strong pain on his/her left shoulder. This pain goes from his/her left shoulder till his/her left forearm. The pain is so terrible that he/she goes directly to emergencies. There are doctors diagnose him/her a heart attack. The stressed life have acted upon his/her physical body, that is obvious. On the other hand, if we choose other example where the subject feels a big pain in his/her stomach, and then, doctor diagnose an ulcer; now, the effect is caused by a stressed life too. Yet, and here is the point, in this case Biology has already dictated that ulcer is produced by a bacteria called *helicobacter pillory*. Now, the function of mind over body has been already deleted by those investigations. This is a faux, and it should be treated as such.

III.

Where is the pertinence of my examples? The pertinence is here: Biology “accepts” openly the influence of a stressed life upon the heart and physical body, that is to say that the stress is picked up by the brain and mind, and those *act directly* on the body. Thus, there is a distant action between the brain (mind?) and the matter (body). Accepting mind can *acts* over the body means to accept mind can control matter and even to modify it. To accept *telekinesis*, in this sense the *biological telekinesis*. E.O. Wilson have discussed already the relation between gene and culture (Wilson,1998). This relation is interesting in the sense that culture affects directly genes imposing patterns of behavior. Hence, the possibility of finding a “primitive” gene within a “primitive” culture could be justified. I disagree deeply with this opinion. Once again, biologists do not allow any empty space to *spirit*. Because Man is Spirit, as Hegel said. I understand I am claiming a mystical or metaphysical position, perhaps closer to Chardin, but this does not delete my main statement, where the virtual knowledge should to respect and to open its doors to inner “values”. I am talking about “values” like emotions and morality. If I am not a Christian this does not give me any permission to kick on other moralities or scientific views with a Christian perspective. If I were a Christian, this does not allow me to repel non-Christian people, just under the law of the *translated* Bible. If I were a biologist this does not make me immortal and sage, as to push other theories that are claiming a more spiritual values. Perhaps, and here is the *quid ignotum*, we are all of us talking about a same thing: a strong feeling of *faith* in something. *Faith* in Christ, *faith* in feelings, *faith* in spirits, *faith* in philosophy or biology. Thence, why not Genetics could be a

matter of faith? Now, the open question is: When *faith* is *faith*, and when is it mixed with attachment and bigotry?

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