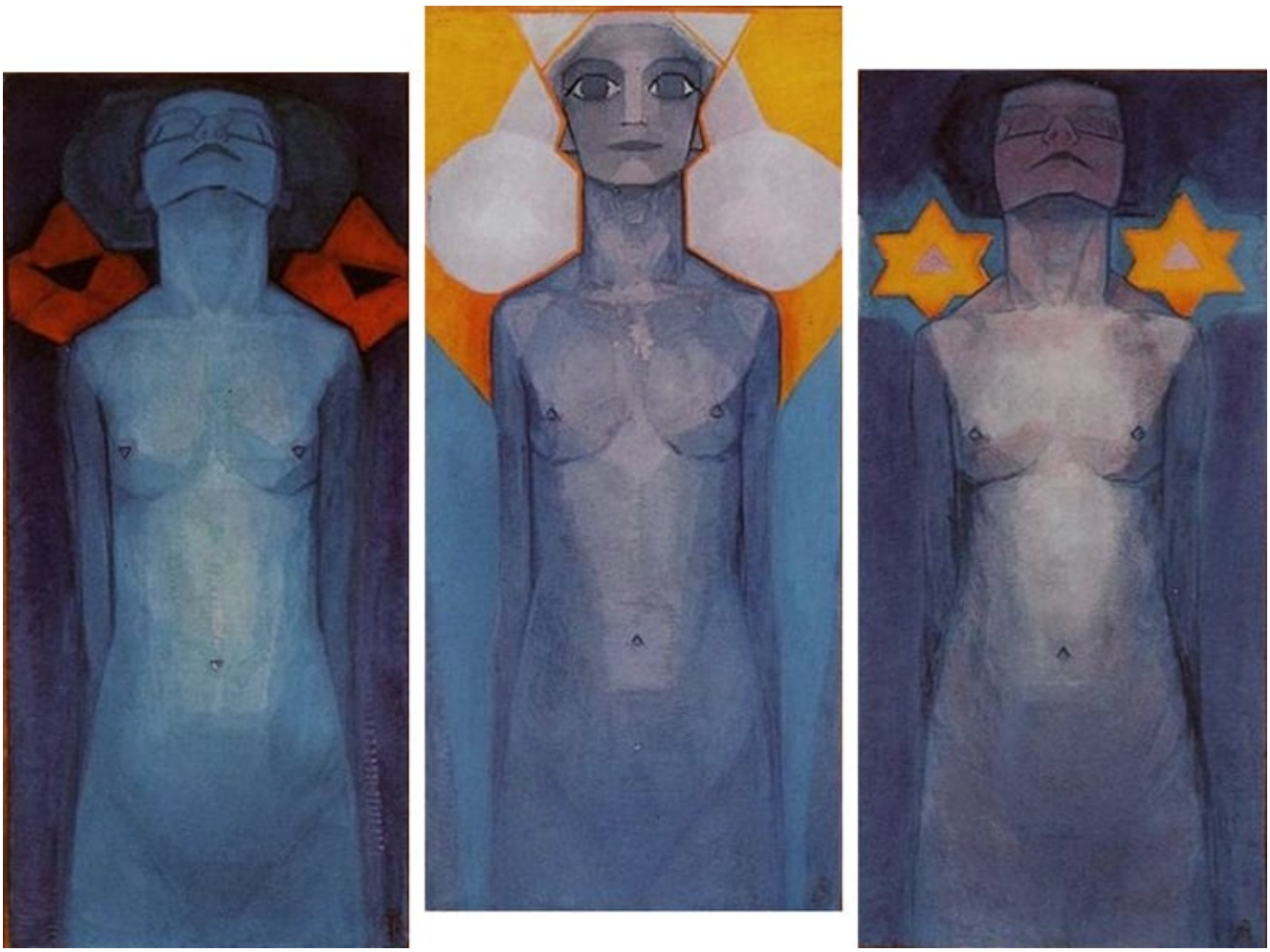
# Darwin Down

by **Robert Lewis** (May 2020)



*Evolution,* Piet Mondrian, 1911

**I have some problems with** Darwin. And no—The Creator hasn't spoken to me.

As Charles Darwin, the Father of Evolution, would have it, the shaping of life on the planet earth, or why all life forms are as they are, is a result of a weeding out process commonly

referred to as natural selection or “survival of the fittest.” Random mutations are preserved (selected) or eliminated (selected out) according to their suitability in a given environment. If, during an extended dry spell, a yellow field of soya turns brown, the yellow butterflies that would normally be camouflaged from aerial predation become visible and, in all likelihood, be eliminated while the freak (mutated) brown butterflies (now rendered invisible) will survive and multiply. Thus, in a contest of the fittest, at least for this illustration, the brown butterfly triumphs.

However, survival of the fittest plays only a minor role regarding species’ attributes because nearly all adventitious (chance) mutations are neutral, that is neither selected nor selected out, until a change in environment directly engages the mutation. Taking Homo sapiens as an example, we can hypothesize an infinite number of radical mutations, none of which would significantly impact his relationship with his non-mutated co-frères: having a sixth finger, a third eye looking out from the back of a head, a thigh muscle-tendon combination that would allow him to run significantly faster. And while the extra finger would provide the mutant with a decided advantage during a Bach piano competition or on the pitching mound, he will not prevail over or replace his 5-fingered counterpart. They will co-exist side by side.

Life on earth began as one cell, but when this single cell mutated into a multi-cellular organism, single cell life didn’t disappear or was found unfit in favour of multi-cellular life. They were able to share and thrive in the same environment while multi-cellular life enjoyed certain advantages in more stressful environments.

If from the outset of life on earth it were either/or, the advantaged mutated organism would always be selected at the expense of the unmutated one (the two-celled organism survives, the one-celled doesn’t; the organism with vision survives, the unseeing one doesn’t), and there would be no variety of species, but simply a single evolution of one life form. Most mutations are not tested in a crucible of fitness, which accounts for the incredible variety of life on earth and its estimated 8 million species.

“There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly,” wrote architect and inventor Buckminster Fuller, a musing that implicitly casts doubt on Darwin’s theory of evolution.

With the approach of winter, monarch butterflies begin their annual 3,000 mile migratory trip from Canada to Mexico. Once in Mexico, they reproduce then die (an event not related to incontinent tortilla consumption), leaving their offspring to make the long and danger-fraught return trip to El Norte, an undertaking that, in consideration of the numbers, must boggle the mind. The Mexican-born butterfly, weighing approximately 0.5 grams, and with a brain no larger than the head of a pin, manages to find its way back to a faraway country it has never seen, and to the exact same address where its progenitors dwelt.

But there was a time when butterflies were not required to migrate, when climate was favourable to a sedentary existence. This all changed with the dawning of the ice-age that favoured butterflies with the innate ability to perceive the danger posed by the coming cold, and endowed with the strength and navigational savvy to find their way to a warmer climate;

butterflies without these traits perished. As the ice advanced, the butterfly was pushed farther and farther south; as the ice-age receded, the butterfly followed the warming temperatures northward.

What Darwinism doesn’t explain is the migratory instinct. Why would butterflies, comfortably ensconced in a hospitable southern environment, want to leave and undertake a harrowing months-long journey of 3,000 miles, only to stay for no more than half a year, and then undertake the harrowing journey back? Following the warmth, or escaping the cold makes good evolutionary sense, but Darwinism cannot account for the migratory instinct and neither does the homing instinct because butterflies that undertake the migratory voyage are born in Mexico and are already at home and would have evacuated their comfort zone only under dire stress. However, we know that as prolific pollinators, they are needed in the north and, sure enough, in response to this need, they incredulously find their way there and northern flowers and fruit trees are handsomely provided for. Among the defenders of Darwin, some will argue that the plants, for their own survival, must have evolved something in their nectar that when consumed by the butterfly alters its DNA, compelling it (that is the offspring) to return to Canada when the temperature warms up. We must suppose in the age of secularism that any answer is better than deity.

The common cow, *vitula eligans*, doesn’t have four stomachs *per se* but rather four digestive compartments. But there was a time when the cow had only one compartment. According to Darwinism, the prototype of a 2nd inchoate stomach one day appeared and since it was a neutral mutation, there was no reason for it to be eliminated by natural selection. So, cows with one stomach and cows with a stub of a second stomach were

living together, just as at one time in the history of life on earth unseeing organisms were sharing the same environment with the prototype of a seeing one. Over time the stubbed stomach evolved into a functional digestive compartment, which gave the 2-stomached cow an advantage over cows with a single compartment, and then again with the third over the second and so on. What Darwinism doesn't explain is why the one-, two-, and three-stomached cows didn't survive since the cow with a single stomach didn't disappear when the inchoate stub of a second stomach emerged. In our present age, both seeing and unseeing organisms co-exist, unspeaking chimps and speaking humans co-exist, dumb and intelligent creatures co-exist, so why don't single, doubled, and tripled stomached cows co-exist? Evolutionary theory forces the conclusion that something in the cow's diet changed which decisively favoured the emerging two-stomached cow, and then the three-stomached one—and so on.

In respect to the evolution of language, why didn't Homo Habilis or Homo Erectus, Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon survive when they had a decided communication advantage over non-speaking apes? Noam Chomsky, who is not a creationist, writes:

> "Evolutionary theory is informative about many things, but it has little to say, as of now (1972), about questions of this nature . . . In the case of such systems as language . . . it is not easy to imagine a course of selection that might have given rise to them."

Since the transitional species mentioned above were vastly more evolved and fit than the apes, they should have easily survived. The argument that they weren't as intelligent as Homo sapiens and were selected out doesn't hold because intelligence wasn't necessary otherwise the apes wouldn't have

survived.

The mere existence of the missing link theory implies that natural selection cannot explain the evolution of life from the single cell to something as complex as a creature with vision and sentience. The theory—the theological equivalent of agnosticism—implies tens of thousands of links, or necessary mutations, that culminate in human intelligence.

Except in survival of the fittest contests, and consistent with the extraordinary variety of life on earth, the superseded species (the one-celled organism) usually survives, albeit having lost a taxonomical position (to the multi-celled organism) in the pecking order. As marine species evolved into amphibious and then land-dwelling creatures, marine life didn't disappear. There is no evidence, paleontological or otherwise that, at some point in the evolution of the cow, only those with two digestive compartments were found fit and those with one were selected out, and the same regarding the three- and four-stomached cow. Smarter and more capable than the surviving apes, Homo Habilis and Homo Erectus disappeared but we don't know why and Darwinism can't explain it.

Shouldn't Darwin's devotees be asking: To what are we conceding if we grant that the disappearance of intermediary species is as much a mystery as the evolution of species' attributes?

In the accusing light of the insufficiency of Darwinism as an explanation of why all life forms on earth are as they are, all attempts to explain the unexplainable are equally valid in

the eye of the beholder. The theist is convinced that God is responsible for the way we are, for the way the cosmos runs, its origins. Anthropology proposes that Homo Erectus was lazy and was wiped out by Homo sapiens. Germ theorists hypothesize that there might have been a particular species-specific, lethal germ that would have left the apes intact but decimated Homo Habilis and then Homo Erectus, but not those mutants that eventually evolved into Homo sapiens. These same germ theorists predict that in the event of a nuclear holocaust, those individuals possessed of exceptional immunity to radiation will survive and evolve into the next species.

Darwin's grand theory of evolution works best in either/or situations; however, it cannot account for the thousands of random mutations resulting in something as specialized as the eye. At every point in the evolution of vision, the next mutation could have been other than what it was—and most of those mutations would have been neutral, that is not selected out. What happened to them all? Reiterating what Chomsky said earlier in respect to language, "it's not easy to imagine a course of selection that would have given rise to it."

Perhaps the prudent position to take is to give Darwin his due when and where it is due, and no less the same to what cannot be accounted for, just as we should remind ourselves that all theories collapse before the fact that we still don't know how the inorganic evolved into the organic, how something dead became something living.

Human beings are uniquely endowed with the competence to wonder about things, and among the possible things over which wondering can casts its wide net is its origins. And if at the end of the day the sum of world knowledge and ingenuity is

left wanting in accounting for that improbable faculty (to wonder), it shouldn't deter us from making it the signature value that provides for the ascent of man both as an anthropology and ontology.

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**Robert Lewis** was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. He has been publislhed in *The Spectator.* He is also a guitarist who composes in the Alt-Classical style. You can listen here.