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Feb. 12 is "Darwin Day" -- Secular Americans Celebrate B'day of Evolution Champ

By Duncan Crary

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This Feb. 12 marks the 196th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth!

The day has special significance for America's nearly 30 million nonreligious people. In the humanist community, Feb. 12 is "Darwin Day."

"Darwin has become an all-purpose icon for humanists, who champion reason and science while rejecting superstition and dogma," said Matt Cherry, executive director of the Institute for Humanist Studies in Albany, N.Y. "Darwin is the definitive rebuff to fundamentalism."

In 2004, a Gallup poll found that only one-third of Americans believe Darwin's 19th century theory of evolution is a credible scientific theory. The same poll found that 45 percent of Americans believe God created humans in their present form roughly 10,000 years ago.

Massimo Pigliucci, Ph.D., a professor of evolutionary biology at SUNY-Stony Brook and author of the Web column "Rationally Speaking", is shocked by how few Americans have a basic understanding of evolutionary biology and the nature of science in general.

"If people had a better understanding of both we wouldn't be embarrassed in front of the rest of the world by cases such as the one currently going on in Dover, Pa., where administrators are walking around local classrooms talking about 'intelligent design' and other nonsense," he said.

Pigliucci's course on "Evolution, Creationism and the Nature of Science" is available at the Continuum of Humanist Education, the online school of the Institute for Humanist Studies.

Though an unofficial humanist holiday, Darwin Day has been steadily gaining popularity in the humanist community since it first appeared in the early 1990s. Not long after the event took hold, the International Humanist and Ethical Union decided against making Darwin Day an official holiday. Board members at the time argued that humanists should not ape saints days or elevate humanist heroes to the status of secular idols.

Yet many humanists simply see Darwin Day as a way to celebrate scientific thinking and progress. Humanists are quick to note that science has evolved since the time of Darwin. But that, according to humanists, is a tribute to Darwin and to science.

"Science should be celebrated as something that makes our lives better -- just like family, love, nature, civil rights and the many other things we already celebrate," said August E. Brunsman IV, executive director of the Secular Student Alliance.

The Secular Student Alliance is an Ohio-based nonprofit educational organization. This year, the SSA supplied Darwin Day idea packets to more than 50 college campus affiliates. Serious ideas include

lectures and debates. Some lighthearted possibilities include hosting an Evolution Banquet with Primordial Soup, or wearing ape costumes and handing out parodies of the disclaimer stickers that have appeared on biology textbooks in some states. The stickers were recently found to be an unconstitutional violation of the first amendment.

Duncan Crary is the editor of the Humanist Network News, a free weekly e-zine published by the Institute for Humanist Studies, <http://www.HumanistStudies.org> The IHS offers online courses in humanism, a philosophy maintaining that science and reason are the best means to promote human welfare. Humanists accept that people can live happy and ethical lives free from religious or supernatural convictions.

The Non – Spatial Natural Selection (NSNS) or The NSTP Theory of Evolution

By Dr Kedar Joshi

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Some Background –

'To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree. Yet reason tells me, that if numerous gradations from a perfect and complex eye to

one very imperfect and simple, each grade being useful to its possessor, can be shown to exist; if further, the eye does vary ever so slightly, and the variations be inherited, which is certainly the case; and if any variation or modification in the organ be ever useful to an animal under changing conditions of life, then the difficulty of believing that a perfect and complex eye could be formed by natural selection, though insuperable by our imagination, can hardly be considered real.'

– Charles Darwin, On Natural Selection

'Natural selection is the blind watchmaker, blind because it does not see ahead, does not plan consequences, has no purpose in view.'

– Richard Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker

The Non – Spatial Natural Selection (NSNS) or The NSTP Theory of Evolution

Darwinian theory of natural selection is not a complete theory of evolution, rather far from it. There is, in addition, yet a dramatically different kind of natural selection where the non – spatial universal intelligence (or software) modulates the (conceptually) spatial species (or structures) and consequently selects them in order to execute the plan of design. The Darwinian natural selection is Spatial Natural Selection (SNS), while the later one, being a specific case or application of the NSTP theory, is Non – Spatial (Computational) Natural Selection (NSNS), which should now be called as Joshian Natural Selection. NSNS, through its idea of non – spatial computational intelligence creating orderly spatial illusion, answers the hardest biological problems such as the problem of cell development and differentiation () or the problem of newly minted protein settling into the correct shape (), which the Darwinian theory of evolution, or, in general, the SNS completely fails to answer. And it is very clear that the Joshian (Non – Spatial) Theory of Evolution is at the heart of evolution, not the Darwinian (spatial) theory of evolution. In effect, the Darwinian theory of evolution is severely incomplete and hardly, if at all, answers how life develops.

The watchmaker is not blind but extremely intelligent, powerful, and a great foreseer.

– Joshi

What is life ?

– Erwin Schrodinger

From the NSTP theoretical perspective life is of two kinds :

1) Pseudo life – As space is a form of illusion to non–spatial mind, all spatial entities have pseudo life.

2) Real life – As feelings/consciousness is real/physical/material, all conscious entities, like I, have real life.

– Kedar Joshi

None

The Non – Spatial Natural Selection (NSNS) or The NSTP Theory of Evolution

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