

Evolution, what for?

Commentaries to *The Science on the verge of an extended reason. Evolution and man in light of the biological and metabiological sciences*, by Mr. Rafael Jordana Buttica.

This is the third time I take part in these seminars. The previous ones commented on *The unexplained conscience* by professor Arana and *Truth*, by professor Segura. I was hesitant before accepting because of the nature of the material and my own amateurism on the field. I then read the books, understood them, enjoyed them and I believe even contributed somehow to both "*ongoing investigations*".

In this third occasion I accepted Fernando's invitation. Even though I hadn't met professor Jordana, the subtitle of his book enunciated some matters directly linked to the ideas I've been working on some sixteen years now: the origin and purpose of the evolution of the species, including ours. And we've both been doing so under the umbrella of biological sciences, as he says.

I read the book with great interest. It's a very good book, rigorous and easy to read at the same time. Concise, current and complete, which takes a lot of work, and has excellent visuals both in form and in depth. My congratulations and gratitude to professor Jordana for his effort and the outcome of said endeavour. Also, my thanks to Unión Editorial and to the "Francisco de Vitoria" Institute for the editing.

I would like to comment on many aspects of the book but, given the time and space available, I'll go directly to some of the important ideas I believe he's missing, which are missing from similar books dealing with the same issues as well.

Professor Jordana devotes the second part of his books to biological evolution and the origins of man, also biologically speaking and, as I pointed out before, he does a wonderful job. But I didn't notice him pose the question of the *why* or the *for what* of evolution. He doesn't wonder about the causes, for the origin and the end of evolution. It's only normal, they are obvious questions, generally speaking, evolutionists don't dwell on them. They describe the history of evolution, better every time, but they don't talk about its origin or purpose.

In my meagre knowledge, I've only seen these issues raised by the atheist evolutionists, who called themselves socio-biologists: Edward O. Wilson and, specially, Michael Ruse whom as a philosopher, deals widely with the subject. In some of his books he asks himself – *to evolve, what for?* only to recognize he doesn't know. The object of evolution is evolution itself, it's his only response. And then, unconvincingly, he adds that the end of evolution might be progress, and so, he admits, the evolutionists belonging to his school of thought are engaging in what's called the *naturalistic fallacy*.

A personal anecdote: The first man to whom I exposed my ideas was Mr. Tomás Trigo, who, in 2010, edited with EUNSA the document of the International Theological Commission: "In search of a universal ethics: A new way of looking at natural law", of compulsory reading in my opinion. In the presentation to the book, Mr. Tomás regretted the poor response to the document and Monsignor Ladaria would highlight in the introduction the urgency and importance Pope Benedict would give the subject. They both compelled me to resume my abandoned work and send Mr. Tomás some 24 pages with my ideas. It was November 2013. He answered kindly right away and encouraged me to continue warning me of the risk of the naturalistic fallacy. Then I saw Ruse and his group admit to falling for that same fallacy pointed out by Hume and Moore, but I also noticed that my hypothesis solved the problem. My resulting ethical principle was very different to the so-called evolutionistic ethics. End of the personal note. Footnote: Mr Tomás Trigo has just edited with EUNSA "Caring for creation" where, alongside others, professor Jordana and himself write about "Laudato si", also very commendable lecture.

Another group of more serious evolutionists, cited by professor Jordana, didn't or wouldn't see and give their firm opinion on these matters, or they would just partially raise them. I'm talking about Myer, Dobzhasky and Gould, who adopt the biological concept of species and presume that all species tend to survive. They acknowledge it but don't make the concept explicit, possibly due to its obviousness, and don't see the importance of using it and making it explicit.

As many of you know, my idea or basic hypothesis says that *all species have the vital objective of surviving and the prime imperative or mandate to try*, without prejudice of pursuing other spiritual or transcendent goals.

In other words, all or some of the first living beings received the mandate to live and transmit life. Some of them or, at least the one they call LUCA, was able to obey the order and had some offspring which multiplied itself. And its descendants, some more than others, evolved forming groups and species that tried, and still do, to remain in time, to endure: to survive. It looks like some 5 million species made the cut, half of them still unknown. It seems like all the current ones, known and unknown, make less than 2 percent of the total ever in existence.

Within this basic idea lays the origin and end of evolution, not the potential transcendent first and last causes. The vital imperative is part of the natural law, if it exists, dictated by God, if He exists. If God does not exist, the mandate would have emerged from nature itself, or by chance, or from no one. There's no scientific way to find out who or what created life or commanded living beings to carry it around until they passed it on to their descendants. But this primal mandate, this vital imperative has forever existed and all species obey them, and it's the reason why LUCA tried and survived and evolve. To evolve, not to keep on evolving. To live not to keep on living. To evolve and to live to survive. Living is what we do, *what it is*. It's good and necessary, but it's not *the goodness essential*. Surviving is *the duty of being, the goodness essential*. There's no naturalistic fallacy there.

In short, and to answer the question implicit in the title: *the end of evolution is survival and the vital imperative is in its origin.*

To me, the idea is both obvious and crystal clear. I think one of the reasons why it's never been noticed before has to do with the fact that atheistic evolutionists don't like the idea because it would mean there's an external Client or Principal. And those who believe in an external Agent, creator, legislator and maintainer cannot prove its existence. And none of them thought of this neutral idea, which I believe to be true and which happens to be valid *veluti si Deus daretur y etsi Deus non daretur.*

On the other hand, philosophers, believers or non-believers, don't usually like the concept of species and so work with man as an individual to whom they consider a material being, or material and spiritual, or *complete* and with an immortal soul. To many biologists, the species exists only very recently as a subject capable of evolution and they keep thinking of individual organisms as subjects to evolution.

That might be why none of them have seen the *base or fundament* of the common and universal behaviour of living beings, nor their natural vital objective. This objective is the one we follow unbeknownst to ourselves, obeying the vital imperative and the norms of each group or species, with varying results depending on the level of freedom and capability belonging to each species. These norms are implicit in the deepest corners of our *brains*: from the elemental ones of amoebas to ours, big and complex as they are.

Expanding on the former commentary, the basic idea and its complementarians can be summarized, which in the book of professor Jordana belong to the core of the issue, specially the one I call basic hypothesis or idea. After that, we'll comment on some paragraphs of the book referring to questions related to them.

1.- **Basic idea.** Again: *Our species, like any other known species, has the vital prime objective to survive and the imperative to try, other superior or transcendental goals notwithstanding.*

I'll now develop some aspects of this idea:

1.1 *Justification.* According to Mayr, and professor Jordana seems to agree, the biological hypotheses are usually justified by historical causation. In this case, as far as we know, all known species have tried, first and foremost, to survive (*DRAE: to remain in time, endure*). To that end, each and every one of them have adopted different methods and strategies. This consistent behaviour seems to allow us to deduct that the *universal primary purpose to survive* exists.

I understand this hypothesis is falsable according to Popper's contrasted idea (2008, 127) that given the possibility of there being any case to refute it, it doesn't. To this effect, homo sapiens is a species and, as such, it also has the vital imperative to try and survive, other goals notwithstanding.

1.2 *Strangeness*. When I put this idea in clean form in September 2000, I also put down my estrangement for not having seen it already enunciated, applied and disseminated. To me it was obvious and tremendously important as it gave sense to the behaviour of all species, including ours. And, as I was retiring in 2001, I pledged to dedicate the rest of my life to clarify, contrast and spread these ideas. I still do. I believe that if the idea is true, there's a few reasons why it hasn't been seen by so many wise men exposed to it, amongst others:

- *Considering species as individuals*, as entities capable of trying to survive. Not genes, or individual organisms only. I focussed on the species. Professor Jordana dedicates ample and learned attention to the various concepts of species but, for my part, I used the biological one, as is customary. I believe my idea is valid for the rest though.
- To the former already accepted truth, I joined survival as a prime objective for the species. Growth, reproduction, evolution, progress, wellbeing, dignity or peace are partial goals or means to achieve the prime objective. That is to say, the same species are the object of themselves as active subjects.

2.-**Broad altruism**. Ours is a social species and, as such, the former idea gets complemented with a broad altruism: instinctive, reciprocal, onerous, free of charge, pure...It includes the instinctive altruism of ants, the reciprocal of primates, and the selfless one of man. It is the most efficient and effective way to try and survive as a social species.

There's much written on altruism but with a reductionist vision and different criteria depending on the individual, intention, purpose, material or moral retribution. I call broad altruism to all acts or omissions that favour others, such as working, producing, trading, thinking, teaching, helping...

3.- **A universal biological and ethical principle**. These two biological ideas are the base and fundament for the behaviour of the species, including *homo sapiens*.

In the case of man, a rational and moral being, this implicit principle of the natural law must be made explicit through a *universal ethical principle* that says: *It's good/better that which done altruistically, is good/better for the survival of the species*.

4.- **Fitting these ideas on professor Jordana's book**. Rereading professor Jordana's excellent book through the glasses of previous ideas, there's much to be said. I'll cite and comment on some paragraphs trying not to take them out of context.

On page **22**, he says: *Life does not exist on its own, only living beings exist*. I agree. And that's why these living beings, these species, have so much interest in perpetuating themselves. Teilhard confirms it in "Science and Christ" (Taurus: 1968, 62): *"...the profound conviction that being is good, meaning: a) its preferable being to not being..."*.

On page **56**, commenting on Husserl he says: *"modern man has allowed himself to be dazzled by the prosperity given to him by the cultivation of positive science, at the same*

time deviating from the very important and decisive questions pertaining humanity". I agree. But the bigger problem lays in the nonexistence of an explicit idea or common principle that answers to what are the important and decisive questions for humanity.

It's also worth mentioning that, as it's obvious but not expressed, *man, modern humanity* is the *subject* allowing itself to be dazzled. Humanity itself is the *object* affected by the important questions to achieve an objective unstated as a species. We need to consider humanity as the subject/object and act accordingly.

On page 58: *"undoubtedly, from a biological point of view, man is an animal and his physiological activities corresponds to that of a mammal..."*

I think one of the causes why my ideas haven't been seen by philosophers it's because they don't pay any mind to this affirmation. They look upon the "complete" man, the one of a different nature to animals and they see his behaviour from the point of view of a different spiritual nature. Also, believers add to it an immortal soul.

My ideas refer to man as a biological being. A living, animated being. On the creatural level of monsignor Ladaria, on the *residual concept* level of Rahner, that's where the vital imperative of surviving as a species works. (Corral: 2015, 232 to 241)

Contrary to the previous, I think biologist haven't seen my ideas because they don't see species as active subjects. They see animals as individual organisms, and man as another animal whose physiological activities conform to those of a mammal, even if a special one.

Page 60. *"the ethical consequences of this approach are well known..."*

I think professor Jordana is talking about the atheistic scientific approach, but keeps talking about the individual man, about the *self in itself* as a subject, as a complete individual man. *"A whole man, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will"* from the *Gaudium et Spes*. On that plane he doesn't agree, understandably, with the atheistic reductionist scientific.

For my part, I subscribe the citation in cursives, but *the ethical consequences...known* could be eliminated or greatly mitigated if, for the sake of a common ethic, Man could be considered as a whole, as humanity, whose *explicit* universal ethical principle would be the survival of humanity itself with altruism as a means. Believers would consider Man as subject of the *"be fruitful and multiply"*, *"care for creation"* and *"love one another"*. Nonbelievers would consider man as the biological social species we already are, it seems.

I think many of the problems of science professor Jordana poses between believers and nonbelievers could be solved at this level. I'm talking about the very much debated differences between reason and faith.

This agreement on biological ethics, which is at the core of the natural law, would allow to tackle the differences from a common neutral place and the problem of not having a common universal ethical principle would be solved given that the lack of such principle puts the existence of humanity at risk and challenges the implementation of specific ethics that favour the wellbeing of the biggest number of men, now and in the future.

Page 62. Talks about nature and says, rightly so: *“what must be done is to manage it as to leave it in the best conditions to future men, for it belongs to them as well”*.

Before this sentence, he has already described four types of *bad* ecologists. I agree, but his criticism needs to make explicit the main motive why we must care for the environment: our survival and that of future men. The survival of the species. Such an obvious motive is often circumvented, but is vital that we make it explicit and consider it because motivation and politics change all the time (Corral: 2016, 96). He could have end the sentence with *“...for it belongs to them as well as a means to the survival of our species”*. At least until we can live in other habitats.

Page 64. He suggests *“a certain solution to the crisis in science...”*, to the problem of dualism and materialism. He says: *“...as far as I know, from within the positivist approach, showing the inadequacy of such approaches”*.

He builds his ideas on the difference between the abstraction *“life”* and living beings. I think he tries to justify the necessity of having Someone put life on the inert to bring living beings into existence. Although he admits the possibility of a living being emerging from the primordial soup.

The attempt is praiseworthy but materialists will keep on thinking the soup didn't need any cook to produce life. Both materialists and professor Jordana, do not account for the importance of living beings trying and keep on trying to sustain life and pass it on, as well as transmitting the instructions so their offspring can do the same.

I believe my basic idea, biological and natural, suggests the possibility and rises the probability of a Client who orders living beings to live, *and live for...*and that objective is the persistence of life. For that, as prof. Jordana says, living beings must endure. All of them? They all have the mandate. That's why the different species exist, as a way to survive in the many and changing environments. They evolve to that end: not to live, but to survive. Living is what it is, and surviving is what it must be. And so we avoid the naturalistic fallacy that the self-called atheistic socio-biologists (Wilson, Ruse) admit on perpetrating, reluctantly and just because they cant find another solution so far (Corral:2015,204)

We ignore the final *what for* of surviving, but that is another question with other non-resolved issues by science and mixing those up might have been the cause of not seeing this basic idea sooner.

Ortega remembers in *“the rebellion of the masses”* that the etymology of upload is to load, putting something on someone's hands. As a species, men are uploading life for

the collective. And the mandate includes loading it until we transmit it to our descendants, and trying for them to do the same in time. Not living, but breeding, and take care of their offspring and their environment so they can do the same (Coraal: 2016, 23)

In the animal kingdom there's more radical examples of this. In page 59, prof. Jordana exposes the case of an ephemeral insect that takes sixteen years to be ready to reproduce, and dies as soon as it does. Or the effort, egg laying and death of salmon. The priority lays not on living, but perpetuating the species, surviving. And *for that*, living is necessary. Living in this *stratum*, as prof. Segura would call it, is a means to the objective of life surviving through the species.

If this happens to be true, as I suspect, Genesis is the first book of science dealing with the basis of evolution, and it says a lot about whoever wrote or inspired it. Later on, Jesus confirms the other biological truth: altruism/love is the best way for humanity to survive, the most efficient as it looks for the wellbeing of others and the most effective also because that wellbeing leads to a higher ability to survive as a species.

On page **85**, he mentions Mayr's peripatric speciation: a small group of individuals gets physically separated from the rest and, in time, becomes a different species altogether.

I can't resist the opportunity to review here my thoughts on the peripatric speciation that might have been drawn from an isolated couple between 10.000 and 200.000 years ago somewhere in the African horn or the Middle East. As Mayr would say "...this population, sprung from a single female, would contain just a small percentage of the genes of the parental species...this founding population might have experienced a drastic genetic modification, quickly transforming into a new species". (Mayr, 2016,200).

If this former occurrence, biological as well as natural, were true, the book of Genesis would become an excellent natural history volume written using metaphoric language. Thus, both versions on the apparition of Man (religious and atheist) could be reconciled. Only the matter of divine intervention would be pending, but that's another issue, the Great Question about the existence of God.

On pages **98 to 106** he widely addresses the concept of species. His erudite exposition reveals its many current definitions (24 so far). It allowed me to discover Torretti's excellent body of work (*note 115*) on the proliferation of the concept of species.

I've used the biological concept of species found in Mayr and Dobzhansky which the author also cites and would probably be valid with any of them. And even though he doesn't specifically say so, I think he would accept their thesis, specially Dobzhansky when he says: "*The human genre, like other species using sexual reproduction, makes for a mendelian population. And, more exactly, is an ensemble of subordinated mendelian populations interconnected amongst themselves...*" and "*...a mendelian population constitutes a supra-individualistic evolutionary system*". (Corral: 2016, 34).

The panel on page **122** that groups the hominid fossils is a wonder in itself. I believe it to be an excellent hypothesis on the linear evolution of our species. My idea can also be attached to it, with some minor adjustments.

From page **127** on, the text poses some questions I dare not approach. I would only dare say to prof Jordana, from my amateurism, that I don't think intelligence is what separates man from beast. I believe all animals, all living beings possess a vital intelligence which allowed extinct species to live and allows the survival of the current ones. I think materialists will prevail in this. If something makes man different from the rest, it would be the conscience. Specially the conscience which allows him to be aware of himself, not the moral conscience. Animals could own this last one already: they can plan ahead, they know when they've done something good or bad and can predict the consequences, even though they might not be aware of it. That would be the difference, they have no conscience of Good and Evil. But, these are just digressions from an amateur.

On page **132**, I concur with father Lorda, cited on the note 146 when he says: "*...nor has it existed in the history of science an account so similar to the one in the Bible*". His lecture in the University of Navarre on the origins of man is worth watching.

On page **157**, the last one, he says: "*Man is, by his most intimate nature, a social being and cannot live or deploy his qualities nor can he reach his goals without relating but in co-existentiality*".

I completely agree with this statement, but I'm going to work out some concepts and I hope prof. Jordana will agree with the interpretation:

1º.- *Man is, by nature, a social being.* If, like it says on Genesis 1.27 and 2.7, (EUNSA: Sagrada Biblia: 2010, Tomo 1, 50 y 54) God intervened personally in his making, He made it social right away (2.18) seeing that "*it's no good for man to be alone*". If man evolved from a former species, that species was already socially aware, be it 2 million years ago, 10,000 or anything in between. Therefore, Homo sapiens was, by heritage, of social nature from the moment of his birth as a species. Even if this speciation was peripatric, as it probably was.

2º.- The priority goal for Homo sapiens to achieve is, according to my basic idea, the same in all known species: the survival of the species. That goal is, henceforth, implicit in the intimate nature of each individual as a common universal mandate. It's also inscribed in Gen. 1,28 as a mandate to Man as an individual as well as the generic Adam, for the sake of believers. The order is clear: *Be fruitful and multiply...*

The complete man, according to humanists and believers alike, can also have some superior and transcendent goals to which the sentenced of prof. Jordana can be applied. But, even though I agree with him, I dare not give my opinion on the matter due to my lack of knowledge on the subject.

3º.- Going back to *Homo sapiens*, I also coincide with professor Jordana in the fact that man cannot reach his priority goal outside of society. *To live is to live together*, Ortega said. This cohabitation allows him deploy his qualities to live individually and to develop the capabilities to try and achieve his goals, either as a group or as a species.

According to my idea, broad altruism is the main quality *Homo sapiens* has developed and has to keep on using to try and achieve the priority goal of the species and the partial ones that help him to do so: group and individual wellbeing, happiness, peace, dignity, justice... and all the virtues and positive values that favour the cohabitation and group efficiency.

It would seem that we Christians are doubly obligated to be altruistic: not only naturally, but by the commandment of love, dictated and exemplified by Jesus.

Corollary: After all that's been said, I'll repeat my proposal of a universal ethical principle: it's good/better that which, done altruistically, is good/better for the survival of the species. I believe this principle to be true and valid for everybody. I look for and are grateful for prof. Jordana's opinion, as well as any one reading these lines.

J. Corral, Madrid 17.2.2017