

Review: Nathan Lents, *Human Errors: A Panorama of Our Glitches, From Pointless Bones to Broken Genes*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, UK, 2018

Pages: 233

Deluded Darwinist Blind to Design

Confusion reigns in the mind of Lents, who oscillates between statements of brute facts about how evolution ‘works’, and invoking the whole gambit of Intelligent Design language to describe the ‘defective’ human body. Cognitive dissonance at its finest.

Wrist bones useful as a ‘box of rocks? Eye retina wired ‘backwards’? Deadly trachea with only one tube for air and food? Just take Lent’s word it’s all poor design (though he wouldn’t know how to design anything comparable).

He even has a chapter on discredited ‘Junk DNA’ idea, for which he seems to have been smoking Richard Dawkins’ books.

The epilogue goes off into expected territory for a woke materialist evolutionist: climate change; global warming; searching for the aliens; and transhumanism.

The ultimate defeater of Lent’s thesis is even if bad design were accepted, *it is still design and demands a designer!*

The only redeemable quality is the basic biology taught.

Introduction: Behold the Blunders of Nature (pp. ix-xiii)

“There is no shortage of words ... dedicated to how well the body usually works.”

By exploring human shortcomings, we can peer into our past. Each flaw ... tells a story about our species' evolutionary history. Every cell ... every letter in our DNA has been subjected to the harshness of natural selection.

We have retinas that face backwards, the stump of a tail, too many bones in our wrists, nerves that take bizarre paths and harmful lymph nodes.

“Evolution is messy”.

Some flaws are “incomplete adaptation”.

“Our ankles have seven pointless bones”.

Wings have been invented in many separate lineages.

“For an animal with a complex body plan, growing new limbs is not an option”.

“Most of the contents of our genomes are completely useless”.

“Mutations are random and often destructive, but they are also, somehow, the source of all human greatness.” [xiii]

I) Pointless Bones and Other Anatomical Errors (pp. 1-33)

The human arm and the bird wing perform totally different functions but have striking structural similarities.

All quadruped vertebrates have the same basic skeletal chassis, modified as much as possible for each animal's unique lifestyle and habitat. [p2]

Hyperopia causes short eyeballs, so that light fails to focus before hitting the retina.

Presbyopia (“old-man sight”) begins age forty and is caused by lens stiffening.

The eye can sense a single photon.

Six percent of males are colourblind, more than females since the recessive mutation is on the X chromosome.

Photons must travel around the photoreceptor eye cells to hit the retina at the back.

“Nature ‘invented’ the camera-like eye at least twice.” [p7]

Axons of millions of photoreceptors converge at the optic disc to make the optic nerve, however, having two eyes compensates for the blind spot created as a result.

Sinuses are used to humidify the air. The mucous collection duct is located at the *top* of the sinus cavity [most likely to assist with drainage during sleep. However, colds can trigger bacterial infections due to poor drainage by cilia.

“In many mammals, smell ... and the structure of the entire snout was designed to optimize this sense.” [p12]

The Recurrent Laryngeal Nerve (RLN) is actually a pair of nerves.

“The RLN is more than three times longer than it has to be ... is there a functional reason ... Almost certainly not.” [p14-5]

“[The RLN] originated in ancient fish.” [p15]

The human neck is a glaring vulnerability; having one tube for both digestive and respiratory systems. A cartilage flap the epiglottis must cover the trachea opening when eating so food doesn't enter the lungs.

“Universal poor design demonstrates the physical constraints that evolution has to work with. Mutations are good for making small incremental tweaks but they cannot be used to execute full-scale redesign.” [p18]

“Random mutation – the basic mechanism of evolution.” [p20]

Mesenteries are connective gut tissue.

The ACL connects femur and tibia, holding upper and lower leg together. It cannot be isolated and exercised to strengthen, and also has a low blood supply making healing difficult.

Whereas humans use legs to bear most of their weight, the crooked ape legs mean they must use muscle instead.

“Evolution even added bones to the lower back to allow for the sharper curve.” [25]

“For a body to take shape, thousands of genes must be activated ... natural selection flips these switches randomly, like a chimpanzee at a typewriter.” [p28]

“The wrist itself has *eight* ... bones tucked in there like a pile of rocks – which is about how useful they are to anyone.” [p28]

The coccyx has 4-5 vertebrae fused in C shape (“it has no function ... It also bears much weight while you are in a reclined or seated position”). [p30]

II) Our Needy Diet (pp. 34-63)

C assists at least eight enzymes, including those necessary for collagen construction as well as the extracellular matrix (ECM). A weak ECM causes tissue loss, brittle bones, and bleeding.

Most animals make C in their livers, however, humans can't due to the gene GULO, which evolutionists claim a mutation has broken.

“Why go to all the trouble of making vitamin C when you already have it in your diet?” [p47]

Large intestinal bacteria make B₁₂, however, it is only absorbable in the small intestine.

Insufficient thiamine (B₁) damages nerves and weakens muscles (including the heart). The vitamin is high in rice husks (why brown rice is superior to white).

The body can't make linoleic or alpha-linoleic acid.

By old age, the body can only absorb 10% of Ca.

An estimated 2B have some form of anaemia.

Plant Fe is harder for the body to digest; it is best absorbed with C (which acts as a catalyst up to 6X).

Polyphenols reduce Fe absorption. Ca also does so (by up to 60%).

“It as probably blind luck that saved our forebears in more than a few instances.” [p58]

“....the shortsighted way that evolution programmed our bodies ... we are hardwired for obesity.” [p60]

III) Junk in the Genome (pp. 64-92)

“There are vast expanses of our genome ... that do not have any detectable function Indeed, it may very well turn out that a large portion of so-called junk DNA actually serves some purpose.” [p64]

“*True* genetic junk .. broken genes.” [p66]

“DNA's ability to copy itself is a miraculous feat of evolutionary engineering.”

“Only 3% of the letters in your DNA are part of words; most of the remaining 97% is gobbledegook.” [p67]

Since copying the entire genome is energy intensive, so-called ‘neutral’ mutations are an oxymoron.

Copying errors and DNA mutation must affect sperm and egg cells in order for them to be inherited.

8% of DNA is claimed to be virus insertions.

“Animals with very high mutation rates will be ... more genetically malleable over long periods (assuming they don’t go extinct because of all those mutations).” [p90]

IV) Homo sterilis (pp. 93-125)

Sperm must swim 17.5cm to reach an egg at a speed of 1.4mms^{-1} ; each cell is only $55\mu\text{m}$. A corkscrew shape means they can’t turn left.

Ovulation only occurs three days over a complete cycle.

Implanted embryos have only ten days on average to prevent menstruation, and so secrete HCG.

Breech (feet-first) births have a 3X mortality risk due to umbilical cord constriction which cuts the baby’s oxygen supply.

A lithopedion (stone baby) occurs when the IS calcifies an embryo which has lodged in the abdomen

Menopause is an evolutionary conundrum since in most animals females can reproduce up to death.

V) Why God Invented Doctors (pp. 126-156)

A septal heart defect allows blood flow between left and right ventricles.

VI) A Species of Suckers (pp. 157-195)

“Our brains are like computers that evolved.” [p176]

Epilogue: The Future of Humanity (pp. 196-233)