

Evolution Highly Improbable III: A response to David Thomas's computer model

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Editor:

David Thomas, in his 6/25/97 letter, claims to be able to accomplish in less than 10 minutes on his computer what I claimed was impossible with 10 billion trials per second for 30 billion years for each atom in the universe -- namely, identifying a functional protein 200 amino acid sites in length. How did he achieve such an astounding feat? The answer actually is quite simple. He merely fed the correct answer into his process at each and every step. After each generation in his supposed evolution simulation, he tests the 'children' sequences against the correct target sequence and selects the best half to be 'parents' for the next (mutated) generation. Testing against the target sequence and folding the results into the process at each step is the trick that enables his process to match the target in a very small number of steps. The logical fallacy in this procedure is that biological systems do not work in this manner. No selection can occur unless the protein has functionality. My 6/11/97 example, which Mr. Thomas is claiming to reproduce, has only one functional sequence among all the 10 to the 130th power candidates.

To try to help clarify what Mr. Thomas is doing, suppose we apply his procedure to the goal of winning the Daily Millions jackpot in the New Mexico Lottery. If we know ahead of time the winning set of six numbers (each between 1 and 21), we can test 12 different sets of numbers against the winning set, keep the 6 sets closest to the target, create 12 new sets that are mutated versions of the six surviving sets, and then repeat these steps. One requires at most 20 iterations of this procedure to match exactly the winning set of numbers.

If we were actually buying lottery tickets at a dollar apiece for each set of numbers, we could win the \$1,000,000 jackpot by spending no more than $20 \times 12 \times \$1 = \240 ! This would be a lucrative scheme indeed if it really worked.

Instead of 1 in 9,261,000 odds of winning the million dollar jackpot per ticket, the odds would become 1 in 240. But then if I knew the winning combination ahead of time, I would submit the winning numbers using a single ticket, collect my \$1 million check, and forget Mr. Thomas' computer program altogether.

I suspect Mr. Thomas is not even aware his scheme is a fraud. My guess is he merely imitated a similar procedure described in the book "The Blind Watchmaker" by evolutionist Richard Dawkins. This rather obvious scam is widely circulated in evolutionist circles to demonstrate the supposed ease with which "selection, mutation, heredity, and time" accomplishes the miraculous. But evolution simply does not 'know' ahead of time the incredibly special amino acid sequences that characterize living system proteins. Just how special they are I illustrated in my 6/11/97 letter.

How can otherwise intelligent people be so thoroughly duped? How can groups who call themselves 'New Mexicans for Science and Reason' and 'Citizens for Excellence in Science Education' commit such astonishing blunders and be so oblivious? The apostle Paul gives some insight in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, "Professing to be wise, they became fools ... for they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

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