

2.4 Self-cognition and genes

Our individual lives will have irreversibly passed once we have died. We cannot benefit after our death from anything we do before it. Thus, all rewards will have to be in this life, and not an imagined afterlife.

This simple assertion completely disqualifies religions from the competition of sense-giving explanations.

Do we live to have offspring?

The idea that we live to procreate is at least based on our genetic program.

But I and my genes are not the same thing. Sure, biologically, my genes use me to procreate themselves. And because each of us is the result of the procreation of his or her genes, and because, furthermore, each of us is the product of genes that were better than other genes in reproducing themselves, and thus us, the idea of living to procreate indeed is firmly rooted in our existence.

However, this concept of nature is totally shattered with the advent of self-cognition. A major aspect of self-cognition is the awareness of each of our individual deaths. Self-cognition enables me to recognize that my individual interests can be quite different, and even the opposite, of the interests of my genes.

My own interest is to be sexually satisfied (because this is the ultimate pleasure), and to die a comfortable death. The interest of my genes is to replicate themselves, and, for the purpose of procreation, even live through the worst of torture. Suffering is the negation of my interests; but the negation of the interests of my genes would be not to replicate.

Self-cognition allows us to dissociate ourselves from our genes, and for this reason alone, self-cognition quite possibly is a dead-end mutation. We just haven't reached our own termination point yet. Logically, based on our ability of self-cognition, we do not live to have offspring.

Logically, only ultimate sexual satisfaction, and after that, a comfortable death, are values that are in tune with our interests, not the interests of our genes.