



The Unbounded Bridge of Emergent Evolution. REVIEW:
Jacob Klapwijk, *Purpose in the Living World: Creation and
Emergent Evolution*

Author(s): Mark W. Westmoreland

Source: *Spontaneous Generations: A Journal for the History and
Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2009) 243-245.

Published by: The University of Toronto

DOI: [10.4245/sponge.v3i1.6105](https://doi.org/10.4245/sponge.v3i1.6105)

EDITORIAL OFFICES

Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology
Room 316 Victoria College, 91 Charles Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1K7
hpsat.society@utoronto.ca

Published online at jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/SpontaneousGenerations
ISSN 1913 0465

Founded in 2006, Spontaneous Generations is an online academic journal published by graduate students at the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto. There is no subscription or membership fee. Spontaneous Generations provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Unbounded Bridge of Emergent Evolution
Klapwijk, Jacob. *Purpose in the Living World: Creation and Emergent Evolution*. Translated by Harry Cook. 322 pp. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.*

Mark W. Westmoreland[†]

Klapwijk's philosophical investigation into the question of the evolution of life results in a defense for emergent evolution, which, in his account, overcomes the failures found in other accounts of evolutionary theory. Speaking critically of both intelligent design theory and reductive strands of naturalism, he demonstrates how religion and science do not entirely exclude one another. The two may each draw from and report to what may appear as two exclusive epistemic boundaries. Klapwijk's assertion, however, is that epistemic boundaries cannot adequately and instantaneously account for or restrain knowledge of emergence. Each discipline views the evolution of life from its own observatory and, in the process, neglects those aspects of life that remain in the shadows. A general theory of emergent evolution, according to Klapwijk, attempts to uncover all the nuances of life.

Purpose in the Living World is divided into fourteen chapters that are accessible to a general, educated audience and allow for one to have the freedom to jump around the text with ease. Chapters one and two raise the question of whether or not life has a purpose. The second chapter highlights four creationist views of origins: Young Earth creationism, Old Earth creationism, Dembski's theory of intelligent design, and contemporary German creationism associated with Gitt and Scherer. After pinpointing the failures of each creationist view, Klapwijk describes several attempts to reconcile science and religion. The chapter ends with discussion of the practical intent of the creation stories and Augustine's theory of time as creature.

*Received May 2009. Accepted August 2009.

[†]Mark W. Westmoreland teaches Philosophy at Penn State-Brandywine and Neumann University, both of which are located in the suburbs of Philadelphia, PA. He earned his B.A. in Literature and Interdisciplinary Honors from Union University and his M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Memphis. After a brief hiatus, Mark has returned to graduate school for his second M.A. in Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. His research interests include Continental Philosophy, Race Theory, and Philosophy of History and Culture. He and his wife/partner Laura, a ceramic artist, live outside of Philadelphia and enjoy hiking, gardening, and playing with their kittens.

Darwin's theory of descent and neo-Darwinism are the foci of Klapwijk's third chapter. Shedding light on Darwinism's CVST algorithm—competition, variation, selection, and genetic transmission—and stressing Darwin's emphasis on the biological context of life, Klapwijk asserts the need to keep distinct the boundaries between cosmic and biological evolution. In this same chapter, he also distinguishes between ontological naturalism and methodological naturalism while pointing out the ambiguity of what one means by "naturalism." Concluding with the question of whether or not continuity exists between inanimate and animate nature, Klapwijk engages Paul Churchland's eliminative materialism and claims that ideology "no longer functions in the context of discovery, i.e., as a challenging research perspective" (p. 52). The charge against ideology in science is raised in chapter four, where Klapwijk marks out the difference between ideologies of naturalism and actual scientific theories of evolution. Chapter five discusses the scientific theories on the durability of biological species and the necessary reevaluation of God, time, and taxonomy. The emergence theory of Conwy Lloyd Morgan and Samuel Alexander and its pros and cons are taken up in chapter six, which concludes that a proper theory of emergence must "choose consistently an empirical, non-metaphysical approach" to evolutionary theory.

Klapwijk claims that "the second half of this book takes a systematic turn" (p. 8). He begins the seventh chapter by comparing emergence to a vibrant melody. A melody has meaning beyond the mere resonance of sound waves. Klapwijk employs this analogy to explain the different organizational levels in nature. His schema portrays four distinct levels of organization found among objects in the world: physical, pre-biotic/biotic, vegetative, and sensitive. Emergent evolution requires a further distinction on the level of entities—minerals, bacteria, plants, animals, and humans—and on the level of modal functions—physical, biotic, vegetative, sensitive, and mental. The line of emergence moves both vertical and horizontal in its development. In the following chapter, Klapwijk continues this line of thought in relation to John Searle and Paul Checkland. He concludes here that ontological stratification must be articulated modally and empirically founded in order to avoid the pitfalls of metaphysical speculation and distracting ideological commitments. Chapter nine raises the question of what it means to be human and the evolution of personhood. This investigation leads Klapwijk to a discussion of philosophy of mind, e.g., David Chalmers. He claims that philosophy of mind over-emphasizes a third-person perspective and fails to reconcile this with one's first-person perspective of subjective experience.

In the tenth chapter, Klapwijk returns to the relationship between science and religion by providing an Augustinian perspective on

evolutionary science. He understands faith “not as an extension and completion of reason but as a source of inspiration and as a hermeneutic frame of reference for rational knowledge” (p. 191). Chapter eleven gives an account of holism and the implications of understanding the world as habitat, or life-world. Klapwijk relies on Martin Heidegger’s notion of “being-in-the-world” and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s account of typological diversity, which is schematized in idionomic spheres: cosmosphere, biosphere, phytosphere, zoosphere, and noosphere.

Klapwijk, in chapter twelve, expresses his own foundational claims in response to Herman Dooyeweerd’s own philosophical claims concerning typological laws. By escaping Dooyeweerd’s hidden essentialism, Klapwijk asserts that “biological laws are not typically but only modally determined. They present themselves as a limited set of universal, level-bound principles but with germinative power and an inconceivable adaptive ability” (p. 254). His criticism of Dooyeweerd leads Klapwijk to consider more questions regarding the emergent process in chapter thirteen. He again raises the question of the human person by discussing John Paul II’s response to evolutionary theory and evaluating hominization in light of our knowledge of various hominoids. The final chapter concludes Klapwijk’s systematic account of emergence. By comparing the theory of emergent evolution and evolutionary naturalism, he returns to the question of purpose. Is there meaning or purpose in an evolutionary context? Clearly, Klapwijk responds in the affirmative. According to him, the epistemic boundaries between science and religion reveal the truth of emergence. While science can shed light on the organizational levels of nature, religion can affirm the purpose that is found within the living world.

Readers of *Purpose* will find Klapwijk’s use of footnotes to be of great help in so far as they point to other textual passages as well as external sources that may aid the reader in her or his investigation into a particular topic. He also includes a well-kept index and provides several figures to serve as schematic representations of his more complex elaborations. Those who appreciate the use of multiple sources, will find *Purpose* to be a pleasant surprise. By using an abundance of sources, Klapwijk investigates his concerns with the breadth and depth required by such an exercise. For those interested in the relationship between religion and science, Jacob Klapwijk’s *Purpose in the Living World: Creation and Emergent Evolution* is one to add to this year’s reading list.

MARK W. WESTMORELAND
Villanova University
mww15@psu.edu