

Evolution and the anthropocene: Science, Religion, and the human future. How does human individuality factor into the thinking about evolution?

This video was recorded at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History on May 22, 2016

David Sloan Wilson: 00:26

(silence) Thank you very much. That was a very [inaudible 00:00:29] comment. So let me just pick out a couple pieces of it. Something very interesting about human morality at a small scale is that it has a kind of a yin and a yang. On the one hand is very individualistic because bullying and disrupted self-serving behaviors is the one thing you can't do. So in a hunter-gatherer society, you can't push me around. You can't tell me what to do. On the other hand, we will agree to do something and we'll all do that. So there's a communitarian side and a vigilant individual side, which I think provides a good balance. The great challenge, of course, is to scale that up. And that's what's very hard, maybe even impossible, to establish a consensus on what the Omega Point should be on a very large scale. (01:19) I want to make another point, however, that there are certain kinds of super organisms that we would not value as humans. And the beehive variety is one of those, but actually it's quite disturbing that if you look at the way human society is going, including extreme division of labor is causing people to do things that are mindless basically. And so mindless all the intelligence is existing at the societal level. What any individual does in their workplace, for example, is so repetitive that they're given no opportunity to think at all. And so human society in some ways is developing in an ultra social direction that we should actually resist so that we're not the kind of society in which the individuals have become... Have lost their intelligence basically, which could happen. So I think there's one of the dystopias that we want to avoid.

[Return to the web page for this video, "Evolution and the anthropocene: Science, Religion, and the human future. How does human individuality factor into thinking about evolution?"](#)