

Chicken and Egg Resolved

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An age old question is: Which came first, the chicken or the egg. That question was resolved several decades ago. Now it is time to pass that word around.

Begin by considering: What is a chicken? It is a life form that has a particular set of properties. Among them is that it is obviously numbered amongst the living. It is also a bird with all the attendant properties of a bird. Within the species of birds, it has certain characteristics such as size, shape, and temperament, and behavior. I will not attempt to completely define a chicken, but we know one when we see it.

A chicken is differentiated from other birds by these characteristics. Comparing its size with that of a sparrow or an Albatross is easy and obvious. Again, there are very many differentiating characteristics that may be enumerated. We can extend that enumeration to some rather great lengths.

However, the final arbitrator is the DNA of the chicken. This is true for all known forms of life. It is the DNA that determines our characteristics and the species to which we belong.

It does bear mentioning that there are many variations of DNA between each and every individual of a particular species. That does not diminish the importance of DNA.

These differences arise primarily through sexual reproduction. (For this purpose, all other sources of change are disregarded.) Specifically, there are three events leading to these changes. The first two are Meiosis. When the female generates an egg and when the male generates the sperm, these cells are not identical copies of the parent. This is the beginning of species evolution.

The next phase is the combination of the egg and sperm at the time of conception. The egg and sperm combine to create a new entity. During the combination, the DNA from the two parents are combined into a third entity that has a combination of DNA. It is very similar to each parent, but it not exactly like that of either parent.

It is at this phase that the new individual takes on characteristics that differ from both the two parents.

It is at this phase that the child had taken a step in evolution.

That step may be very small in terms of differentiating the child from the parent, or it may be rather significant. Not that significant has a very relative meaning. It does not mean that two legged parents can began four legged offspring. That is essentially impossible. But it does mean that the child does have measurable differences from the parents.

Further, it does not mean that every, or any, change in the child's characteristics will be passed on to children and will forever change the race of its parents. It does mean that the child does have inheritable characteristics that differ from the parents. This is a step in evolution.

The change in inheritable characteristics occurs at the time of conception. Chickens are numbered amongst the list of living things that procreate via sexual reproduction. That is the only time that sexually reproducing living things change their inheritable characteristics. The egg differs from the two parents.

Therefore:

The egg came first.