

In *Mind and Cosmos*,¹ Thomas Nagel rejects materialist naturalism yet also rejects what some might view as the logical alternative, namely some form of theism. Much attention has recently been focused on nontheistic alternatives to materialist naturalism. If we consider non-equilibrium thermodynamics as considered by Ilya Prigogine in *Order Out of Chaos*² and the notion that systems in tension can give way to new structures unpredictable (apparently in principle) from their antecedents along with the general concept that any system is, in a sense, more than the sum of its parts, perhaps we can reflect on genomic science as a potential contributor to the inquiry. Given that genomics is the study of the whole (genome) in relation to its parts (genes); and given that "the whole" in this case is what guides the construction of a living being we might well ask what is the nature of the "being" in "the being?" We might consider this the correlative question in biology that is raised in quantum physics and cosmology regarding what we are astonished to find as properties of time and space. While this paper is primarily a philosophical investigation of the contribution concepts of the genome may play in non-materialist accounts of rational consciousness (and therefore identity), it will also address practical questions regarding the presentation of genomic science and the technologies it spawns within religious communities.³

¹ Nagel, Thomas (2012). *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² Prigogine, Ilya; Stengers, Isabelle (1984). *Order out of Chaos: Man's new dialogue with nature*. Flamingo.

³ As principal investigator on the NIH ELSI grant, *Faith Forum on Genetics*, (2005) serving 21 religious communities, I have thought much about this question.