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Preston, Christopher J., "Synthetic Biology: Drawing a Line in Darwin's Sand"

Preston, Christopher J. “Synthetic Biology: Drawing a Line in Darwin’s Sand.” *Environmental Values* 17, no. 1 (2008): 23–39. doi:10.3197/096327108X271932 .

Maintaining the coherence of the distinction between nature and artefact has long been central to environmental thinking. By building genomes from scratch out of “bio-bricks,” synthetic biology promises to create biotic artefacts markedly different from anything created thus far in biotechnology. These new biotic artefacts depart from a core principle of Darwinian natural selection—descent through modification—leaving them with no causal connection to historical evolutionary processes. This departure from the core principle of Darwinism presents a challenge to the normative foundation of a number of leading positions in environmental ethics. As a result, environmental ethicists with a commitment to the normative significance of the historical evolutionary process may see synthetic biology as a moral “line in the sand.” (Source: The White Horse Press)

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