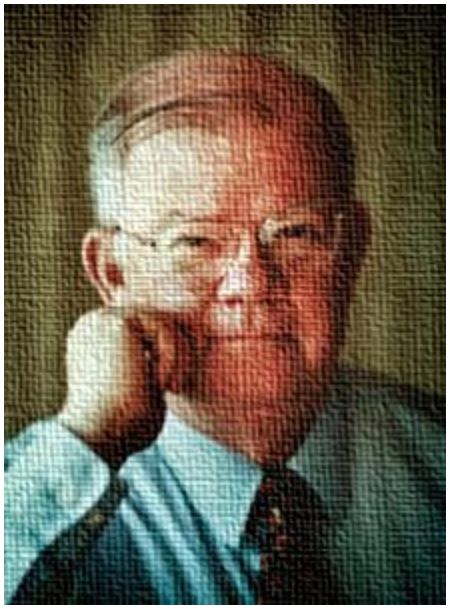
The Intelligent Design Movement: Exposing the Scientific Bankruptcy of Neo-Darwinian Paradigms



Phillip E. Johnson

The intelligent design movement is exposing the scientific bankruptcy of neo-Darwinian paradigms. Whether lawyer or mathematician or scientist, intelligent design theorists are showing that neo-Darwinian paradigms cannot explain the complex specified information found in DNA. These paradigms also cannot explain the rise of complex molecular machines as found in proteins and cellular structures. I would like to introduce you to some intelligent design theorists as a gateway for

you exploring their books. Many Christians are unaware of the exciting progress made in exposing the scientific bankruptcy of neo-Darwinian paradigms for macroevolution by both Creation scientists and intelligent design theorists in the last thirty years.

A Lawyer Tries Darwin

In 1991 Phillip E. Johnson, a lawyer, published *Darwin on Trial*. The title of the book is a reference to how American courts have made decisions about the teaching of Darwinism or Creationism in public schools. Johnson mentions how the Louisiana state legislature passed a law in 1981 that required that if teachers taught Darwinian evolution in the public-school classroom that they also needed to inform their students about creation science. A federal judge promptly ruled this law unconstitutional and claimed that it involved an "establishment of religion." As if the Louisiana state legislature had created a new state church for the federal government! And then in 1987 the U.S. Supreme Court in its infinite wisdom by a 7-2 majority also ruled the state law as unconstitutional. Liberal Justice William Brennon penned the majority opinion that the law was unconstitutional because it was made "to advance the religious viewpoint that a supernatural being created humankind." (Johnson, 1993, p. 6) This claim is astonishing given the statement in the founding document of the United States, the Constitution, which states that all men are created equal. The reference is clearly to a supernatural being creating men equal. It is no wonder that the Roman Catholic conservative jurist, Antonin Scalia, dissented, writing: "The people of Louisiana, including those who are Christian fundamentalists, are quite entitled, as a secular matter, to have whatever scientific evidence there may be against evolution presented in their schools, just as Mr. Scopes was entitled to present whatever scientific evidence there was for it." (Johnson, 1993, p. 7)

Johnson also entitles his book, “Darwin on Trial”, because of the famous Scopes trial of the 1920’s. As I write these words, I am in the library of the Core Academy in Dayton, Tennessee. Last night I walked around the historic courthouse in Dayton where the Scope’s trial occurred. The full trial did not occur in the courtroom. It was moved outside because such great crowds wanted to attend. Tomorrow I hope to get a tour of the museum that is in the basement of the courthouse. When I walked around the courthouse last night, the place was quiet. The courthouse and the area around it were a bit dilapidated. But the courthouse was a happening place in 1925 when crowds gathered to hear the arguments of the prosecution and defense. The Tennessee legislature had passed a statute prohibiting the teaching of the evolution of humans from apes. The Butler Act reads:

House Bill No. 185
Butler

An Act prohibiting the teaching of the Evolution Theory in all the Universities, Normale and all other public schools of Tennessee, which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, and to provide penalties for the violations thereof.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the Universities, normale and all other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the state, to teach any theory that denies the story of Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.

SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That any teacher found guilty of the violation of this Act, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, shall be fined not less than One Hundred ($100.00) Dollars nor more than Five Hundred ($500.00) Dollars for each offense.

SECTION 3. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act take effect from and after its passage the public welfare requiring it. Passed March 13, 1925.

A substitute teacher named John Scopes who didn't know whether he had taught Darwinism in a classroom, stepped forward to challenge the new law. Dayton, Tennessee became a "media circus" due to the spotlight shown on the creation/evolution debate by the New England media and the fact that two prominent lawyers volunteered to argue for the prosecution and defense. The lawyer for the prosecution was the aging William Jennings Bryan who was incompetent when it came to speaking about creation science. He was a prominent southern Christian who had three times been selected as the Democratic candidate for the presidency of the United States. Bryan happened to interpret the days of Genesis 1 as long periods of time. Phillip E. Johnson writes that Bryan "opposed Darwinism largely because he thought that its acceptance had encouraged the ethic of ruthless competition that underlay such evils as German militarism and robber baron capitalism." (Johnson, 1993, p. 5)

The defendant and evolutionary science were defended by a team that included "the famous criminal lawyer and agnostic lecturer Clarence Darrow." (Johnson, 1993, p. 5) The case was a public relations nightmare for William Jennings Bryan, who died shortly after the trial. In the end, Clarence Darrow "admitted that his client had violated the statute and invited the jury to convict." (Johnson, 1993, p. 5) The judge fined John Scopes $100. On appeal, the Tennessee Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Butler Act although they "threw out the fine on a technicality." (Johnson, 1993, p. 5)

The Scopes trial had become a trial of Christian Fundamentalists who lived in small towns in the south. The judge and jury were the New England media and the urban elite. The trial was portrayed as a public relations disaster for Creationism. H.L. Mencken, a prominent atheistic journalist with an acidic pen, took the opportunity to attack southern fundamentalist Christians. Mencken supported Nietzsche's atheistic philosophy and the German philosopher's philosophy of the

Ubermensch (Beyond-Man, Overman, or Superhuman). Mencken used his acerbic wit to attack Christianity and frame the trial. After the trial, Darwinists put together a play and movie that presented the case as a "public relations triumph for Darwinism." (Johnson, 1993, p. 5) The Eastern media presented the trial as a triumph of reason and enlightenment over the anti-intellectual ignorance of southern Fundamentalists. The movie and the essays of H. L. Mencken led to a caricature of supporters of Creationism and implied that evolutionary thought was sophisticated, worldly, and scientific. John Scopes was the hero who fought for freedom to teach enlightened views in the face of the old-fashioned dogmatism of the Fundamentalists. Philip E. Johnson describes the portrayals of the Scopes trial as legends: "The legend tells of religious fanatics who invade a school classroom to persecute an inoffensive science teacher, and of a heroic defense lawyer who symbolizes reason itself in its endless battle against superstition." (Johnson, 1993, p. 4)

Johnson decided that he would, as a legal scholar, evaluate the theory of macroevolution about which even the Supreme Court had glibly made legal decisions. Judicial decisions implied that Darwinism was science and that science, by definition, had to be done within the confines of an atheistic Naturalism. As a Professor of Law, Johnson decided that he would use the ordinary standards used in trial courts to determine whether Darwinism was objective science. He wrote: "I approach the creation-evolution dispute not as a scientist but as a professor of law, which means among other things that I know something about the ways that words are used in arguments." (Johnson, 1993, p. 8) Johnson was offended by how the Supreme Court had thrown around the words "science" and "religion."

> As a legal scholar, one point that attracted my attention in the Supreme Court case was the way terms like "science" and "religion" are used to imply conclusions that judges and educators might be unwilling to state explicitly. If we say that naturalist evolution is *science,* and supernatural creation is

> *religion*, the effect is not very different from saying that the former is true and the latter is fantasy. (Johnson, 1993, p. 7)

As a professor of law, Johnson had spent his career "analyzing the logic of arguments and identifying the assumptions that lie behind those arguments." (Johnson, 1993, p. 12) And it is lawyers who are above all concerned with evidence. In the criminal courtroom, it is evidence of a crime that convicts. In the family courtroom, it is evidence of infidelity on the part of a husband that can lead to a judgment of a great amount of alimony being granted to the divorced wife. Johnson decided that he would evaluate the evidence for macroevolution. He would use his legal background as a grid for weighing the evidence for Darwinism. He wanted to weight "the evidence to see whether a mechanism is known that can accomplish the large-scale changes which the theory of evolution supposes to have occurred, such as the change from single-celled bacteria to complex plants and animals, from fish to mammals, and from apes to men." (Johnson, 1993, p. 12) "The question I want to investigate is whether Darwinism is based upon a fair assessment of the scientific evidence, or whether it is another kind of fundamentalism." (Johnson, 1993, p. 14)

Johnson became known as "the most respectable academic critic of evolution." (Johnson, 1993, p. 157) But Johnson was not interested in arguing for Creationism or even against evolution *per se*. He would later write:

> The argument of *Darwin on Trial* is that we know a great deal less than has been claimed. In particular we do not know how the immensely complex organ systems of plants and animals could have been created by mindless and purposeless natural processes, as Darwinists say they must have been. (Johnson, 1993, p. 158)

Johnson placed a spotlight on how Darwinists wed together naturalistic philosophy (an ideology) with empirical science. He writes that he is perceived as a "critic of evolution" because he dares to "distinguish between naturalistic philosophy and empirical science, and oppose the former when it comes cloaked in the authority of

the latter." (Johnson, 1993, p. 158) Johnson exposed the presupposed atheistic naturalism as the ideology that Darwinists appear unable to distinguish from their attempts at empirical science. Of course, all kinds of presuppositions about the nature of science, the history of science, and how science develops also lie beneath the surface of any attempts at empirical science. Johnson saw that

> Naturalistic evolution is not merely a scientific theory; it is the official creation story of modern culture. The scientific priesthood that has authority to interpret the official creation story gains immense cultural influence thereby, which it might lose if the story were called into question. The experts therefore have a vested interest in protecting the story, and in imposing rules of reasoning that make it invulnerable. (Johnson, 1993, p. 159)

Following the huge impact that *Darwin on Trial* had, Johnson published additional works on the topic, including *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism*.[1] The title of this book showed Johnson's concern with how the ideology of philosophical naturalism (and atheism) is wedded to Darwinism so that Neo-Darwinists can make power plays in which they limit genuine science to their own Darwinian science.

Michael Behe on Irreducible Complexity

The biologist Michael Behe has used his insights into biochemistry to unveil the irreducible complexity of organisms. He has demonstrated why natural selection and chance mutations cannot explain the existence of organisms that possess irreducible complexity. He has brilliantly used the example of a simple mousetrap to explain irreducible complexity. In *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, Behe developed the concept of irreducible complexity and famously argued that the bacterial flagellum is an example of irreducible complexity. Behe has had a great impact on the development of the Intelligent Design movement

[1] Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism*. (Intervarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL; 2000).

by his definition of irreducible complexity and his famous illustration of this concept in the biochemical complexity of the bacterial flagellum.

Charles Darwin recognized the challenge posed to his theory of macroevolution if examples of irreducible complexity could be found in the creation. He wrote: “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.” (Darwin, Origin of Species, 1988, p. 154) Behe has demonstrated the existence of such complex multicellular organs.

Behe entitled his book *Darwin’s Black Box* to signify that Charles Darwin had no idea of the astonishing complexity of living systems that modern biochemistry would unveil. “Darwin was ignorant of the reason for variation within a species (one of the requirements of his theory), but biochemistry has identified the molecular basis for it.” (Behe, 1996, p. x) He uses the term “black box” because “*Black box* is a whimsical term for a device that does something; but whose inner workings are mysterious—sometimes because the workings can’t be seen, and sometimes they just aren’t comprehensible.” (Behe, 1996, p. 6) In Darwin’s day biology and biochemistry was a black box because his contemporaries did not understand the chemistry of life. Darwin knew nothing of DNA or RNA. He didn’t know about the structure of molecules.

The 20th century involved the opening of Darwin’s black box. Behe argues that what has been revealed in the limited way in which the black box has been opened is that “we are left with no substantive defense against what feels to be a strange conclusion: that life was designed by an intelligent agent.” (Behe, 1996, p. 252) Instead of finding simplicity as Darwin’s black box began to be opened, moderns are shocked to find “systems of horrendous, irreducible complexity” in living cells. (Behe, 1996, p. 252)

To what does the term “irreducible complexity” refer? Behe defines what he means by an irreducibly complex biological system:

> By *irreducibly complex* I mean a single system comprised of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. (Behe, 1996, p. 39)

An irreducibly complex system is evidence of intelligent design and creation. “Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on.” (Behe, 1996, p. 39)

The Mousetrap as Irreducibly Complex

Behe uses the example of a mousetrap to demonstrate how one can recognize a biological system as irreducibly complex. It is true that a mousetrap is not a biological system, but it does have (1) a function and (2) a number of components just like any biological system. The function of a mousetrap is to “immobilize” and kill a mouse that is a pest. The mousetrap has the following components:

(1) Wooden Platform
(2) Metal Hammer
(3) Holding Bar
(4) Spring
(5) Catch Release
(6) Metal Bar to Hold the Hammer Back
(7) Staples

Behe asks whether “all the components are required” for the mousetrap to function properly. (Behe, 1996, p. 42) Could one component be missing and yet the

mousetrap still catch mice? Behe concludes that if any of the components was missing, the trap would not function.

A system is irreducibly complex if it "has no functional precursors." (Behe, 1996, p. 43) There is no way for a mousetrap to evolve by having just a few components at first. The item would not be a mousetrap. "If the wooden base were gone, there would be no platform for attaching the other components. If the hammer were gone, the mouse could dance all night on the platform without becoming pinned to the wooden base." (Behe, 1996, p. 42) If any one of the many components was missing from the mousetrap, it could not function to catch mice. It would not be a mousetrap. There is no way that this artifact could evolve as a mousetrap.

Behe also identifies the necessity of "minimal function" for any functioning biological system. "Almost any device with the fine components of a standard mousetrap will nonetheless fail to function. If the base were made out of paper, for example, the trap would fall apart." (Behe, 1996, p. 45) So Behe defines "minimal function" as "the ability to accomplish a task in physically realistic circumstances." (Behe, 1996, p. 45)

Biological systems are far more complex than mousetraps.

> Biochemistry has demonstrated that any biological apparatus involving more than one cell (such as an organ or a tissue) is necessarily an intricate web of many different, identifiable systems of horrendous complexity. The "simplest" self-sufficient, replicating cell has the capacity to produce thousands of different proteins and other molecules, at different times and under variable conditions. Synthesis, degradation, energy generation, replication, maintenance of cell architecture, mobility, regulation, repair, communication—all of these functions take place in virtually ever cell, and each function itself requires the interaction of numerous parts. (Behe, 1996, p. 46)

Given the fact that "each cell is such an interwoven meshwork of systems" it appears far-fetched that "multi-cellular structures could have evolved in step-by-step Darwinian fashion." (Behe, 1996, p. 46)

The Bacterial Flagellum as Irreducibly Complex

Behe famously demonstrated how the bacterial flagellum possesses irreducible complexity. The flagellum is "a marvelous swimming device." (Behe, 1996, p. 70) He writes that "Some bacteria swim by rotating their flagella." (Behe, 1996, p. 70) The "flagellum acts as a rotary propeller." (Behe, 1996, p. 70) Behe describes the marvel that is the bacterial flagellum:

> The flagellum is a long, hairlike filament embedded in the cell membrane. The external filament consists of a single type of protein, called "flagellin." The flagellin filament is the paddle surface that contacts the liquid during swimming. At the end of the flagellin filament near the surface of the cell, there is a bulge in the thickness of the flagellum. It is here that the filament attaches to the rotor drive. The attachment material is comprised of something called "hook protein." The filament of a bacterial flagellum, unlike a cilium, contains no motor protein; if it is broken off the filament just floats stiffly in the water. Therefore the motor that rotates the filament-propeller must be located somewhere else. Experiments have demonstrated that it is located at the base of the flagellum, where electron microscopy shows several ring structures occur. (Behe, 1996, p. 70)

The bacterial flagellum has mechanical elements similar to what one finds on a boat motor. There is a rotor or the part that rotates and there is the stationary part in which the rotor spins.

Behe states: "The rotary nature of the bacterial flagellar motor was a startling, unexpected discovery." (Behe, 1996, p. 70) Scientists were also surprised that the bacterial flagellum receives energy from "a flow of acid through the bacterial membrance." (Behe, 1996, p. 72) Behe describes the bacterial flagellum as irreducibly complex: "Because the bacterial flagellum is necessarily composed of at least three parts—a paddle, a rotor, and a motor—it is irreducibly complex. Gradual

evolution of the flagellum, like the cilium, therefore faces mammoth hurdles." (Behe, 1996, p. 72) It is no surprise that Behe exposes that "No scientist has *ever* published a model to account for the gradual evolution of this extraordinary molecular machine." (Behe, 1996, p. 72) The bacterial flagellum includes hundreds of complex proteins to function. Behe concludes:

> In summary, as biochemists have begun to examine apparently simple structures like cilia and flagella, they have discovered staggering complexity, with dozens or even hundreds of precisely tailored parts. It is very likely that many of the parts we have not considered here are required for any cilium to function in a cell. As the number of required parts increases, the difficulty of gradually putting the system together skyrockets, and the likelihood of indirect scenarios plummets. (Behe, 1996, p. 73)

Behe's Mathematical Work

Michael Behe has also contributed to our understanding of the improbabilities of natural selection and random mutations producing new specified information. Although he is a biologist rather than a mathematician, he has traced the edge of evolution. In *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism*, he demonstrates what the limits of Darwinism are. He shows that it is possible for there to be random mutations that effect the loss of information. Mutations can occur within a species that result in micro-evolution. But he has demonstrated the astounding improbabilities involved with natural selection and random mutations producing any new, functional information that is complex and specified.

The mathematical possibility of humans experiencing a single tiny mutation that involved only the "shift of two amino acids" would involve waiting

> a hundred million times ten million years. Since that is many times the age of the universe, it's reasonable to conclude the following: *No mutation that is of the same complexity* of chloroquine *resistance in malaria arose* by Darwinian *evolution* in the line leading to humans in the past ten million years. (Behe, *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism, 2007, p. 61)*

And this is only a tiny change. What if two mutations of this same limited complexity needed to occur independently of each other to produce a beneficial change. Then the impossibilities go even further through the stratosphere. And this says nothing about the complex and supposedly required mutations required to produce molecular machines.

William A. Dembski: Intelligent Design as a Theory of Information

Another leading proponent of Intelligent Design is the mathematician William A. Dembski. Dembski's scintillating and revolutionary work develops the nature of information found in DNA. One of Dembski's central contributions to the intelligent design debate is his mathematical formulation of information theory. The philosopher Rob Koons refers to Dembski as "the Isaac Newton of information theory, and since this is the Age of Information, that makes Dembski one of the most important thinkers of our time. His 'law of conservation of information' represents a revolutionary breakthrough."

What makes Dembski's contributions so important for the Intelligent Design movement is that he develops his views on information theory as a mathematician. He understands the possibilities and probabilities involved. What makes him such a dangerous foe of macroevolution is that he brings a mathematician's understanding of the outrageous improbabilities involved in new functional information being added to DNA by random, chance mutations. Phillip E. Johnson writes that "William Dembski has taken our intuitions about intelligent design and formulated them rigorously both in philosophical and mathematical terms." (Johnson, The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism, 2000, p. 15)

Dembski explains what is meant by a theory of information:

> The mathematical theory of information focuses on the transmission of signals across a communication channel. What enables these signals to convey information is that they admit multiple alternate possibilities—in other words, they are contingent. (Dembski, 1999, p. 154)

He adds that "To convey information a communication channel must allow a multiplicity of distinct possible signals, any one of which might be sent." (Dembski, 1999, p. 154)

Complex Specified Information (CSI)

More is necessary than the possibility of information. More is also necessary than the probability that information could be communicated. It may be complex information, but it also needs to be specified. Dembski calls information that is not only complex, but also specified: "complex specified information" (CSI). (Dembski, 1999, p. 159) For example, your credit card number is an example of complex specified information. Your 16-digit credit card number is a complex number. The amount of actual, functioning, assigned credit card numbers given out by VISA is far less than the possible numbers they could assign. Your exact credit card number is complex. Have you memorized it? I doubt it. Not only is it a rare number out of the possibilities found in a 16-digit number, but your number involves specified information. Dembski writes: "The complexity of this number ensures that a would-be thief cannot randomly pick a number and have it turn out to be a valid VISA number. What's more, the specification of this number ensures that it is your number, and not anyone else's." (Dembski, 1999, p. 159)

Dembski has contributed to the intelligent design movement by specifying how one can recognize design. This matter is relevant for his theory of information. How can one identify whether a possible communication channel includes functional information or not? Dembski looks at this same question from the perspective of archaeology. How does an archaeologist conclude that he has found a human artifact rather than a rock that was carved by wind and rain? Dembski's answer: "Whenever we infer design, we must establish three things: *contingency*, *complexity*, and

specification." (Behe, 1996, p. 128) He unpacks these three concepts that infer design:

> Contingency ensures that the object in question is not the result of an automatic and therefore unintelligent process that had no choice in its production. Complexity ensures that the object is not so simple that it can readily be explained by chance. Finally, specification ensures that the object exhibits the type of pattern characteristic of intelligence. (Dembski, 1999, p. 128)

Dembski connects intelligent design with his information theory: "To infer design by means of the complexity-specification criterion (see section 5.3) is equivalent to detecting complex specified information." (Dembski, 1999, p. 160)

Dembski explains the implications of CSI for evolutionary biology: "Natural causes cannot generate CSI." (Dembski, 1999, p. 175) But "there is nothing to prevent natural causes from taking already existing CSI and expressing it in biological systems." (Dembski, 1999, p. 175) Neo-Darwinism claims that natural selection and random mutations can explain the existence of complex specified information in living organisms. "Caught up in the Darwinian mechanism of selection and inheritance with modification, evolutionary biology has failed to appreciate the information hurdles organisms need to jump in the course of natural history. To jump those hurdles organisms require information." (Dembski, 1999, p. 180) Neo-Darwinism lacks "a mechanism for innovating irreducibly complex biological structures" because "it utterly lacks the informational resources." (Dembski, 1999, p. 180) Dembski explains what he thinks is the challenge facing Neo-Darwinian biologists:

> To sum up, evolutionary biology needs to be reconceptualized in information-theoretic terms. An evolutionary biology thoroughly cognizant of information theory is one whose chief task is to trace informational pathways. In tracing these pathways evolutionary biology must place a premium on rigor. Detailed informational pathways need to be explicitly exhibited—the just-so stories of Richard Dawkins will not do. (Dembski, 1999, p. 182)

Dembski continues to raise the bar for Neo-Darwinists, putting them on an impossible journey: “Finally, empirical evidence—and not metaphysical prejudice or aesthetic preference—must decide whether an informational pathway exists at all.” (Dembski, 1999, p. 182) And then Dembski challenges Neo-Darwinists to do what his mathematical work shows to be impossible—namely, to demonstrate common descent from the existence of informational pathways. He states: “To establish common descent requires showing that certain informational pathways connect all organisms.” (Dembski, 1999, p. 182)

The probability of Neo-Darwinists identifying such informational pathways that could be evidence for common descent is nil.

The mathematicians are demonstrating this. The possibility of one new, helpful piece of complex specified information coming into existence by natural selection and random mutation is out of this world improbable. The idea that there are informational pathways by which complex molecular machines that contain vast libraries of complex specified information might have evolved by natural selection and random mutations has become all the more laughable with the first peeks that we have had in the 20th century into Darwin’s black box.

Dembski’s Naïve Claims about a Presuppositionless Intelligent Design

Dembski, for all his strengths, makes naïve claims about Intelligent Design scientists over against Creationist scientists. He claims that Intelligent Design lacks religious presuppositions and is scientifically objective because it rejects the historicity of the creation account in Genesis 1-2. Evolutionists perceive that the doctrine of Intelligent Design implies that a designer needed to intervene in a miraculous way to create irreducibly complex life forms. They perceive intelligent design proponents as affirming the existence of a designer who is a creator who miraculously and immediately brings into existence creatures that He designed.

From the perspective of a Neo-Darwinist, this worldview does not differ much from the view of young earth Creationists that biological systems did not evolve over great periods of time due to a macroevolution that used the instrumentality of unguided natural selection and random mutations but came into existence by fiat creation. The only difference between the Intelligent Design proponents and the Creationists is the time period in which this occurred.

Intelligent Design scientists fear being tarred and feathered by the Neo-Darwinists as "Creationists." To avoid this epithet, proponents of Intelligent Design (some of whom are confessing Christians) try to distinguish themselves from young earth creationists. Dembski tries to do just this:

> Consequently it is mistaken and unfair to confuse intelligent design with scientific creationism. Intelligent design is a strictly scientific theory devoid of religious commitments. Whereas the Creator underlying scientific creationism conforms to a strict, literalist interpretation of the Bible, the designer underlying intelligent design is compatible with a much broader playing field." (Behe, 1996, p. 252)

Intelligent design is compatible not only with the great religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) but with Deism and even Plato's demiurge. "Unlike scientific creationism, intelligent design does not prejudge such questions as *Who is the designer?* Or *How does the designer go about designing and building things?*" (Behe, 1996, p. 252)

After Phillip Johnson's exposure of the philosophical naturalism that underlies Darwinism, it is inexcusable that Dembski remain so naïve about the fact that presuppositions underly any scientific work. He is playing the game that only intelligent design theorists do objective, unbiased science. He does not perceive that the rejection of Genesis 1-2 as historical is a presupposition in his whole approach to the investigation of origins. If he rejects the biblical explanation of origins, this does not mean that he has no presuppositions that will guide his study of origins. His

work is filled with presuppositions about geology, the age of the earth, and biological systems. Even agnosticism about origins is a worldview and presupposition that of necessity shapes the nature, method, and direction of scientific investigation. If one will not take God as an authority about how He created His world, then one will posit other authorities as Dembski does. He trusts the authority of evolutionary geologists and cosmologists even though their claims contradict what the Creator writes.

So it is laughable that Dembski dares to claim: "Intelligent design is a strictly scientific theory devoid of religious commitments." (Behe, 1996, p. 252) It is trite to say that Jews, Christians, and Moslems can all affirm intelligent design—since all adherents to all three religions affirm a designer and Creator. But Dembski is sneaking in a philosophical that is not trite; the idea that there is something like a "strict" scientific theory that is devoid of religious or philosophical presuppositions. This would contrast with the philosophical naturalism of Neo-Darwinists. It would also contrast with the presuppositions that Christians have about the existence of the holy Trinity as the Creator. Dembski is sneaking in the philosophical claim that only Intelligent Design proponents formulate wonderfully objective and biased-free theories that are strictly scientific. Phillip Johnson should have cured proponents of intelligent design from using words and empty phrases to redefine the nature of science in a power grab to justify one's own personal preferences about how to approach scientific investigation. Dembski needs to read Abraham Kuyper and Cornelius Van Til—both of whom recognized that a rejection of Christian belief did not mean that atheists lacked their version of philosophical and religious presuppositions.

How could it be more scientific to trust foolish, ignorant human authorities rather than the Creator. Dembski ought to tremble before the God who interrogated

Job and who will one day judge him. God asked Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4).

Dembski acts like it is a virtue to be agnostic about who the Creator is. This is a religious presupposition. It is no virtue to do science without humbling oneself before God the Father Almighty who is the Creator of heaven and earth. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is idolatry to do scientific work for any other ultimate purpose than the glory of the triune God. Dembski should imitate Job, who, after being rebuked by his Creator, said: "I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

Stephen C. Meyer: The Signature in the Cell

One of the leading proponents of Intelligent Design today is Stephen C. Meyer. Whereas Phillip E. Johnson has passed away and Behe and Dembski are from an older generation, Stephen C. Meyer is now in his prime. He first made a splash in 2009 with the publication of *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*. In 2021 his long-awaited book, *Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries that Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe*, arrived on bookshelves. If one wants to get a sense of the exciting progress made in challenging neo-Darwinian formulations, there is no better place to start than by reading Meyer's books.

Meyer makes an argument for intelligent design based on "the information—the digital code—stored in DNA and the other large biological molecules." (Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design, 2009, p. 7)* James Watson and Francis Crick "discovered the structure and information-bearing properties of DNA." *(Meyer, Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, 2009, p. 14) They solved "the secret of how the cell stores and transmits hereditary information." (Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design, 2009, p. 14)* But there is a mystery they did not

solve. “This is the DNA enigma—the mystery of the origin of the information needed to build the first living organism.” (Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, 2009, p. 14)

Our technological age provides us with a vocabulary to describe the marvels of DNA. Meyer writes that “That living systems also contain information and depend on it for their existence makes it possible for us to understand the function of biological organisms by reference to our own familiar technology.” *(Meyer, Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, 2009, p. 14) He uses the technological language of information processing, storage, and retrieval to describe DNA and cell structure.

> After the early 1960s advances in the field of molecular biology made clear that the digital information in DNA was only part of a complex information-processing system, an advanced form of nanotechnology that mirrors and exceeds our own in its complexity, storage, density, and logic of design. Over the last fifty years, biology has advanced as scientists have come to understand more about how information in the cell is stored, transferred, edited, and used to construct sophisticated machines and circuits made of proteins. (Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, 2009, p. 14)

Stephen Meyer’s recent book, *Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries that Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe*, is in many ways a step forward in one argument for the existence of God, the argument from design. Atheologians have supposed that with the rise of Darwinian macro-evolution that the argument from design had lost all force. Meyers is so interesting because he takes the traditional argument from design to new levels of scientific rigor as he builds on the progress made by intelligent design theorists within the last thirty years. Stephen Meyer now works for the Discovery Center, a think tank that promotes work in intelligent design.