



pts' QUOTES & NOTES

DESCENT WITH A MACRO-MUTATION.

AN EVOLVING DIALOGUE: THEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES ON EVOLUTION. 2001. JAMES B. MILLER, EDITOR. TRINITY PRESS INTERNATIONAL. HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA.

A revision of:

An Evolving Dialogue: Scientific, Historical, Philosophical and Theological Perspectives on Evolution. 1998. James B. Miller, editor. American Association for the Advancement of Science. Washington, DC.

Composition of both books:

- Reprints or revisions of papers published in the 1990's or late 1980's.
- Grouped into five sections with brief introductions by JBM.
- First four sections are identical in the two editions.
- 1998 version: Fifth section consists of five articles addressing the topic of "Evolution and Ethics."
- 2001 version: Substitutes a completely new fifth section consisting of six articles devoted to the "Intelligent Design Movement."
- The purpose of the book, stated by JBM in his introduction:
"The purpose, then, of this volume is to provide a multidisciplinary educational resource for college, university and theological seminary educational settings, that will contribute to a constructive understanding of the dialogue between science and religion on the topic of biological evolution." [Page 4.]

JBM's introduction to "Theological Perspectives"

"There are at least two religious approaches to science. One is to try and discern a religious meaning in the picture of the world drawn by science. The other is to explore the implications of scientific findings about nature for traditional theological ideas." [Page 327.]

JOHN R. DURANT. — A CRITICAL-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. [1987]

"If today we continue to be worried about the relationship between Darwinism and Christian belief, more often than not it is because we are faced either with science masquerading as theology or with theology masquerading as science. Only history can show us the full extent of the damage that is done by such pretence." [Page 266.]

On Special Creation: [Pages 266-9.]

Rooted in European philosophy and science of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Three core ingredients from classical Greece:

- Plato's Idealism of "pure and immutable forms".
- Aristotle's teleological view of "final causes".

- Classical taxonomy—based on Aristotle’s *scala naturae* and the search for “general principles by which organic species could be classified on the basis of observed structural similarities and differences of form and function”.

“On this view, the living world is portrayed as a static array of diverse forms, each of which is primarily distinct from all others by virtue of its unique divine origin. ... We may refer to this view as the ‘special creation theory’ of organic origins.” [Page 268.]

Consequently:

“Theoretical explanations of organic origins were dominated by a synthesis in which the Christian doctrine of creation was tied to a very particular set of philosophical beliefs ... [which] were overwhelmingly idealist and teleological; and they were used to support the scientific notion that species (or other natural kinds) are primitively distinct.” [Page 269.]

“The theory of evolution by natural selection fulfilled the promise of the special creationist tradition; but it also destroyed that tradition by undermining the particular alliance of philosophy, theology, and natural science upon which it rested. In a Darwinian universe, there was no place for Platonic idealism and no place for Aristotelian teleology; above all, there was no place for special creation.” [Page 272.] .]

{pts—See also Amundson R. 1996. Historical Development of the Concept of Adaptation. in: Rose MR, Lauder George V., Eds. Adaptation. San Diego: Academic Press. p 11-54.}

“Darwin made redundant centuries of philosophizing and theologizing about organic origins. What is vitally important to notice, however, is that neither in aim nor in effect did he undermine the Christian doctrine of creation itself. Rather, by separating that doctrine from its two-centuries-long marriage of convenience with Greek philosophy and classical natural history, Darwin forced the radical re-examination of the relationship between theology and natural science.” [Page 273.]

“Officially, at least, contemporary evolutionary biology is precisely what Darwin himself intended it to be: an entirely naturalistic body of knowledge which makes no direct contact of any kind with matters theological. Individual scientists are generally regarded as being free to hold any personal views they like on matters of philosophy and religion; but as soon as they are tempted to claim scientific authority for these views, they are seen as stepping beyond the domain of evolutionary biology and into that larger field that [William] Gladstone wished to leave to the poets, the philosophers, and the theologians.” [Page 274.]

“Today, it is at least possible to distinguish between conventional Darwinian evolutionary biology and that larger evolutionary world-view constructing enterprise that is represented by men like [Julian] Huxley and Teilhard.” [Page 275.]

{pts—The Intelligent Design Movement refuses to make this distinction.}

STEPHEN J. GOULD — NONOVERLAPPING MAGISTERIA [1997]

“The net [magisterium] of science covers the empirical realm: what is the universe made of (fact) and why does it work this way (theory). The net [magisterium] of religion extends over questions of ultimate meaning and moral value. These two magisteria do not overlap, nor do they encompass all inquiry (consider, for example, the magisterium of art and the meaning of beauty)” [Page 319.]

“This resolution might remain all neat and clean if the nonoverlapping magisteria (NOMA) of science and religion were separated by an extensive no man’s land. But, in fact, the two magisteria bump right up against each other, interdigitating in wondrously complex ways along their borders. Many of our deepest questions call upon aspects of both for different parts of a

full answer, and the sorting of legitimate domains can become quite complex and difficult.” [Page 319.]

“NOMA also cuts both ways. If religion can no longer dictate the nature of factual conclusions properly under the magisterium of science, then scientists cannot claim higher insight into moral truth from any superior knowledge of the world’s empirical constitution.” [Page 324.]

“NOMA permits—indeed enjoins—the prospect of respectful discourse, of constant input from both magisteria toward the common goal of wisdom.” [Page 325.]

Quotable Quotes:

- “I then remembered the primary rule of intellectual life: when puzzled it never hurts to read the primary documents—a rather simple and self-evident principle that has, nonetheless, completely disappeared from large sectors of the American experience.” [Page 318.]
- “—but I had never read the document in full (not much of an impediment to stating an opinion these days.)” [Page 318.]

JOHN F. HAUGHT — DOES EVOLUTION RULE OUT GOD’S EXISTENCE [1996]

- Sets forth four “positions” for the relationship between science and religion:
 1. “**Conflict**”—Exemplified by both scientific skeptics (e.g. Richard Dawkins) and biblically literalist “creationists.”
 2. “**Contrast**”—Science and religion occupy totally separate domains, with no common border. NOMA in extreme.
 3. “**Contact**”—Science and religion, while having separate domains, abut along a common border across which they intimately interact. Gould’s NOMA.
 4. “**Confirmation**”—Views the domain of religion as providing the matrix in which the domain of science is embedded.

{pts—See Chapter 4 in Ian Barbour’s Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues, Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, in which he sets forth four similar positions titled “Conflict”, “Independence”, “Dialogue”, and “Integration”}.

“If our primary question to the Bible is one of scientific curiosity about cosmic beginnings or the origins of life, we will surely miss its real intentions. Since the text was composed in a prescientific age, its primary meaning cannot be unfolded in the idiom of twentieth century science. But that is exactly the demand put upon the Bible by scientific creationism. Needless to say, such an expectation ends up shriveling to prosaic dust a collection of deeply religious writings designed to open us to the ultimate mystery of the universe.” [Page 343, under “Conflict”.]

“At heart creationists and other fundamentalists are sincerely and understandably troubled by the failings of the post-Enlightenment world. They deplore the breakdown of authority, the diminishment of “virtue,” the absence of common purpose, the loss of a sense of absolute values, and the banishing of a sense of sacred mystery from our experience. For many creationists the notion of “evolution” sums up all the evils and emptiness of secularistic modernity. Creationism, in other words, is responding to something much more complex than the conflict between religion and science.” [Pages 343-4, under “Contrast”.]

"There is no more theological difficulty in the remorseless law of natural selection, which is said to be impersonal and blind, than in the laws of inertia, gravity or any other impersonal aspects of science. Gravity, like natural selection, has no regard for our inherent personal dignity either. It pulls toward earth the weak and powerful alike—at times in a deadly way. But very few thinkers have ever insisted that gravity is an argument against God's existence. Perhaps natural selection should be viewed in the same way." [Pages 345-6, under "Contrast".]

"Evolution is more than just another innocuous scientific theory that theology can innocently ignore....Evolutionary science deepens not only our understanding of the cosmos but also of God. Unfortunately, many theologians have still not faced the fact that we live in a world after and not before Darwin, and that an evolving cosmos looks a lot different from the world-pictures in which most religious thought was born and nurtured....When we think about God in the post-Darwinian period we cannot have exactly the same thoughts that Augustine, Aquinas, or for that matter our grandparents and parents had." [Page 346, under "Contact".]

"Religion can be said to support or "confirm" the evolutionary picture of nature, not by providing any additional scientific information—which is not religion's function anyway—but providing part of the general picture of reality which has made evolutionary science historically possible." [Page 349, under "Confirmation".]

On the Role of Chance. [Page 347.]

"Chance is quite real. It is a concrete fact of evolution, but it is not one that contradicts the idea of God."

If God is love and the cosmos is to exhibit free will, then:

"There has to be room for indeterminacy in the universe, and the randomness in evolution is one instance of it."

ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON, C.S.J. — ON CHANCE & DIVINE PROVIDENCE. [1996]

"Theological reflection today should endeavor to speak about God's relation not to an ancient nor medieval nor Newtonian world, but to the dynamic, emergent, self-organizing universe that contemporary natural science and biological sciences describe." [Page 354.]

"Twentieth-century science has brought to an end the mechanistic view of the world associated with Newtonian physics and has replaced it with a dynamic, open-ended view of the world in which some events are in principle unpredictable, although in retrospect they may make sense. This holds true for events at very small and very large magnitudes of space as well as for events through long reaches of time." [Page 355.]

"Taken together, scientific understanding of the indeterminism of physical systems at the quantum level, the unpredictability of chaotic systems at the macro level, and the random emergence of new forms through the evolutionary process itself undermine the idea that there is a detailed blueprint of unfolding plan according to which the world was designed and now operates. Rather, the stuff of the world has an innate creativity in virtue of which the new continuously emerges through the interplay of chance and law....The world develops, then, neither according to anarchy nor according to teleology, but purposively if unpredictably." [Pages 256-7.]

"No chance, no evolution of the universe. If it were not such an impossible oxymoron, chance might even be called a law of nature itself. Chance, consequently, is not an alternative to law, but

the very means whereby law is creative. The two are strongly interrelated and the universe evolves through their interplay.” [Page 358.]

{pts—Shades of Sewall Wright!}

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI — THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN MOVEMENT [1998]

“According to Darwinism, undirected natural causes are solely responsible for the origin and development of life. In particular, Darwinism rules out the possibility of God or any guiding intelligence playing a substantive role in life’s origin and development.” [Page 439—opening sentences of essay.]

“The most severe challenge to theology over the last two hundred years has been naturalism. Within western culture, naturalism has become the default position for all serious inquiry. From biblical studies to law to education to art to science to the media, inquiry is expected to proceed only under the supposition of naturalism. ... By making the design in nature evident, Intelligent Design promises to cure western culture of this unfortunate Enlightenment hangover.” [Page 442.]

“Naturalism looks to science to justify its rejection of purpose in nature.”

{pts—the phrase “undirected natural causes” appears five times in the first two pages. Bitterness and anger towards science show throughout the article.}

RAYMOND E. GRIZZLE — A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROPONENTS OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN [1995]

- Originally published in the journal of the evangelical American Scientific Association.

“Compared to traditional arguments from design, there is one crucial difference for me in the current push for ID—the attempt to make design a part of science. In contrast, I view traditional arguments from design as pointing beyond science to our Creator. This difference is at the core of why I remain unconvinced of the overall merits of the movement.” [Page 509.]

- Grizzle offers three explicit suggestions to the ID movement:

“The primary suggestion I offer to proponents of ID is to disconnect explicitly and emphatically your argument from arguments for eliminating MN [Methodological Naturalism] as a restriction on science. Stop arguing for a ‘theistic science’.” [Page 510.]

“My second suggestion to proponents of ID is to stop stating or implying that MN is just an “arbitrary” restriction on modern science....It has been a major force within the scientific community generally for centuries....It persists as perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of what many consider to be a general definition of science.” [Pages 511-2.]

“The final suggestion I make to proponents of ID is simply to admit that science and religion are different in at least some respects, then decide how they are different.” [Page 512.]

“I doubt anybody in the ID movement will heed my first suggestion—to disconnect his or her argument from arguments for eliminating MN as a restriction on science. At this point, most ID proponents have far too much invested in what I feel are revisionist arguments for modern science which center on eliminating MN.” [Page 511.]

{pts—Contrast Grizzle’s comments with those of Dembski’s 1998 article on the ID Movement.}

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI — INTELLIGENT DESIGN AS A THEORY OF INFORMATION [1997]

"Actualization-Exclusion-Specification, this triad constitutes a general criterion for detecting intelligence....Actualization establishes that the possibility in question is the one that actually occurred. Exclusion establishes that there was genuine contingency (i.e. that there were other live possibilities, and that these were ruled out). Specification establishes that the actualized possibility conforms to a pattern given independently of its actualization." [Page 482.]

"Specification is the only means available to us for distinguishing choice from chance, directed contingency from blind contingency. Actualization and exclusion together guarantee we are dealing with contingency. Specification guarantees we are dealing with a directed contingency." [Page 482.]

"The word "intelligent" derives from two Latin words, the preposition *inter*, meaning between, and the verb *lego*, meaning to choose or select. Thus according to its etymology, intelligence consists in choosing between...."Intelligent design" is therefore a thoroughly apt phrase, signifying that design is inferred precisely because an intelligent cause has done what only an intelligent cause can do, make a choice." [Page 484.]

{pts—Dembski ignores natural selection, which makes his ideas irrelevant to discussions of biological evolution.}

KENNETH R. MILLER. — LIFE'S GRAND DESIGN. [1994]

"Evolution, unlike design, works by the modification of pre-existing structures. Intelligent design, by definition, works fresh, on a clean sheet of paper, and should produce organisms that have been explicitly (and perfectly) designed for the tasks they perform. ... The hallmark of evolution is the modification of pre-existing structures. An evolved organism, in short, should show the tell-tale signs of this modification. A designed organism should not." [Page 463.]

"Evolution produces organisms that are well-adapted, but not necessarily well-designed." [Page 465.]

"If the DNA of a human being or any other organism resembled a carefully constructed computer program, with neatly arranged and logically structured modules each written to fulfill a specific function, the evidence of intelligent design would be overwhelming. In fact, the genome resembles nothing so much as a hodgepodge of borrowed, copied, mutated, and discarded sequences and commands that has been cobbled together by millions of years of trial and error against the relentless test of survival. It works and it works brilliantly." [Page 469.]

"To the deeply religious, evolution may not be seen as a challenge, but rather as proof of the power and subtlety of the creator's ways. The great Architect of the universe might not have written down each DNA base of the human genome, but He would still be a very clever fellow indeed." [Page 470.]

- The book can be ordered on-line through AAAS at <http://www.aaas.org/spp/dser/evolution/perspectives/edorder.htm>