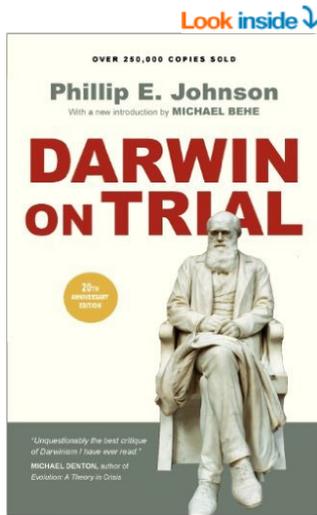


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Edition, November 5, 2010

by Phillip E. Johnson (Author)

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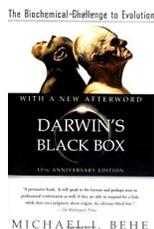
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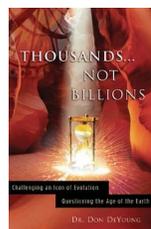
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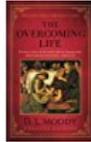
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Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

In his own era, Darwin's most formidable opponents were fossil experts, not clergymen. Even today, according to the author, the fossil record, far from conclusive, does not support the presumed existence of intermediate links between species. A law teacher at UC-Berkeley, Johnson deems unpersuasive the alleged proofs for Darwin's assertion that natural selection can produce new species. He also argues that recent molecular studies of DNA fail to confirm the existence of common ancestors for different species. Doubting the smooth line of transitional steps between apes and humans sketched by neo-Darwinists, he cites evidence for "rapid branching," i.e., mysterious leaps which presumably produced the human mind and spirit from animal materials. This evidence, to Johnson, suggests that "the putative hominid species" may not have contained our ancestors after all. This cogent, succinct inquiry cuts like a knife through neo-Darwinist assumptions.
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From Library Journal

Dissecting the writings of Gould, Futuyama, Darwin, and Dawkins with a trenchant sword, law professor Johnson uses an attorney's reasoning to scrutinize the scientists' logic in defining the theory of evolution. Contending that science has distorted research rules to exclude Divine Creation in explaining the diversity of life, Johnson challenges the tenets of natural selection and the evolutionary evidence from fossils and genetic and molecular sources. In the closing chapters, he deals with Darwinism in education and in religion, stating that the evolutionary theory is protected for its "indispensable ideological role in the war against fundamentalism." While the book presents a skewed view of the scientific process, occasionally losing all pretense of objectivity, it may be of value to lay readers seeking a creationist perspective on evolution.
- Frank Reiser, Nassau Community Coll., Garden City, N.Y.
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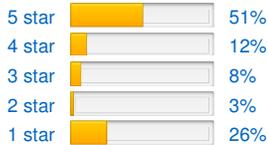
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Top Customer Reviews

 **A superb introduction to the creation/evolution debate**

By A Customer on April 20, 1999

Format: Paperback

Although most of his arguments are not new, Johnson brings the most important points together in a remarkably concise yet comprehensive format. He has a gift for summarizing the research in each field, then explaining and elucidating the implications of an issue, in just enough words to make it understandable.

He points out the mind-boggling complexity of structures like wings and eyes, but does not dwell on these descriptions like some critics, for he realizes that nearly all informed people agree that living things are that complex. The Darwinian Richard Dawkins writes, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose," but insists that "Natural selection is the blind watchmaker, blind because it does not see ahead, does not plan consequences, has no purpose in view. Yet the living results of natural selection overwhelmingly impress us with the appearance of design as if by a master watchmaker, impress us with the illusion of design and planning."

The premise that appearance can be misleading is not unreasonable. Scientists proved the appearance of the sun revolving around the earth to be an illusion. The problem, which constitutes Johnson's central scientific premise, is that there is no evidence that natural selection has the immense creative power Darwinians attribute to it. The Darwinian claim that the numerous theoretical difficulties with Darwinism are false is based not on scientific fact but almost entirely on pure speculation.

Johnson is not a scientist, but his central thesis is philosophical. Darwinians insist that considering divine intervention is unacceptable because science is committed to purely natural explanations. The problem is, how do scientists know "a priori" that natural processes alone are sufficient to produce the diversity of life on earth? Some may argue that this assumption is well-grounded, but scientists do not have the exclusive authority to tell us whether a "philosophical" assumption is true or not.

His scientific data are all from reputable scientific sources. To this date I have not seen a single valid criticism revealing a major inaccuracy in the data - and I have read many reviews of the book, some by prominent scientists. Stephen J. Gould's review tried to point out several minor inaccuracies, but he misquoted and distorted the book to make that point.

Most of Johnson's factual premises are tacitly conceded by Darwinians themselves. One example: David Raup, an internationally renowned paleontologist, made some remarkable concessions in an essay supposed to "refute" creationism. He wrote the following: (1) Darwin wrote that if smooth evolutionary transitions were not found in the fossil record, his general theory would be in serious trouble. (2) More than a hundred years later, after a tremendous expansion of knowledge about the fossil record, the situation is more or less the same. "We may actually have fewer examples of smooth transition than we had in Darwin's time because some of the old examples have turned out to be invalid when studied in more detail." (3) This can still be reconciled with Darwin's theory in various ways, and although Raup conceded that a more inclusive theory may take its place in the future, he

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Excellent read. Honest and logical presentation of how Darwinism has scientific underpinnings but is ultimately a pseudo science and a kind of religious dogma.

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 **Simple Genetics Has Trumped Evolution**

rejected creationism largely because of the belief in a young earth. While Raup's defense may have seemed reasonable, especially to those who take for granted that all creationists believe in a 'young earth,' Raup directly implied that scientists accept Darwin's theory in spite of the fossil evidence. None of the anti-creationist literature with which I am familiar - and I am well-read on the issue - directly contradict what Raup wrote. But with rare exceptions, they try very hard to conceal this implication he was forthright about.

Johnson is careful to avoid certain fallacies earlier critics have made - such as the claim that natural selection is inherently tautological, that it involves pure 'chance,' that evolution is 'unfalsifiable,' etc. Some reviews of the book, such as one by Eugenie Scott, caricatured his arguments to make it sound like he'd just rehashed old discredited criticisms. In fact, Johnson repeatedly demonstrates an awareness of how Darwinians respond to criticisms of their theory, and he takes these well into account.

The biggest criticism I have of Johnson is his frequent vagueness on whether he is attacking just the theory of natural selection or common ancestry itself. Some proponents of intelligent design, such as Darwin's Black Box author Michael Behe, accept the doctrine of common ancestry. I agree with Johnson that Darwinians use the word 'evolution' vaguely to suppress distinctions between different meanings of the term, but he also seems to be saying that common ancestry is too vague a doctrine to be evaluated independently of Darwinian natural selection. The book would be more persuasive if he was clearer where and when he is criticizing each doctrine.

Many of Johnson's articles and essays written after the book are worth reading, but he exhibits a certain shallowness in debating the scientific details of his position with Darwinians. Many other proponents of intelligent design - many of whom are trained scientists - while perhaps not as accessible, support his basic viewpoint with ultimately greater depth and clarity. I particularly recommend the following links:

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||| Excellent for starters

By [R. R. Morris](#) on November 27, 2011

Format: Hardcover | [Verified Purchase](#)

After reading so many books on evolution and science since the 1970s by secular or even the atheistic writers (Sagan, Dawkins, Hawking and plenty more), this is the first book I bought written by a creationist author. I must admit I'm surprised at the awful passion "rational" non-creationists have against this book. Prof. Johnson highlights just a few of the many faults, inconsistencies, flaws and "just-so" stories factually related to evolution. Much of what he shows are the concepts, thoughts, ideas, theories and proposals common evolutionists (including those mentioned above) believe and from the very books they write for us to read ourselves (as quite a few, I have). Yes, the book is now twenty years old, and some modifying is in order, but by and large the book exposes the many problems evolution really does entail. Many people accept evolution (at least, partly) because they see no other option. Those that believe in God (something science can't negate) see another option, possibly even a better one. Let the theory of evolution's true faults be exposed. The first step in solving a problem is acknowledging it!

Prof Johnson seems to dwell on tautology more than needed but otherwise, the book is an excellent "starter" for those that don't turn a blind eye to the theory of evolution and it's many facets that are highly debated among top evolutionists themselves, not to mention between evolutionists and creationists.

Admitting I believe in a Creator (though not the young earth theory) may superciliously add a lot of "Not Helpful"s to this review, (though I tend to read the posts with the most "Not Helpful"s first anyway, as others do too), please keep in mind, the point of the review is to evaluate the book itself, not to state (or vote) personal problems with individual opinions of the reviewer. I do highly recommend the book. It doesn't go into very great detail, but it reveals plenty of the problems going that the theory of evolution creates for the average reader and up. Over 30 pages of research notes to endorse what Prof Johnson writes is also helpful. Excellent book!

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||| This book is even confirmed by its critics

By [Stephen Hitchens](#) on April 26, 2008

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||| Really interesting

Really interesting take on this subject, based on logical conclusions drawn from available scientific evidence.

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Format: Hardcover

I have finally read this book, after years of reading criticisms of it, and I am amazed at what a good case Johnson actually makes and how woefully inept most of his critics have been.

For those who have not read the book, Johnson argues the following points:

- * The scientific establishment, rather than defending evolution against criticism, has determined that no such criticism shall take place.
- * Evolution is defined so loosely that no criticism of it is possible.
- * The term "natural selection" is a tautology and so explains nothing.
- * The experimental evidence for Darwinism does not provide "any persuasive reason for believing that natural selection can produce new species, new organs, or other major changes, or even minor changes that are permanent."
- * Darwinians are so clever at finding evidence that confirms their theory and explaining the evidence that appears to contradict it, that it looks as if all the evidence is supportive.
- * The theory of sexual selection contradicts the theory of natural selection.
- * Haeckel's hypothesis that "ontology recapitulates phylogeny" is still taught in schools despite being completely discredited more than a century ago. (This I know to be true, as I still teach a syllabus which requires it.)
- * Darwinian theory is not falsifiable, because its supporters cannot or will not make the risky predictions which would allow it to be falsified.
- * Anyone who questions the orthodoxy of scientific naturalism, or Darwinism in particular, is rigorously persecuted by the scientific establishment.

This must be one of the most vilified books ever written. Johnson is repeatedly accused by critics of trespassing into an area in which he has no expertise, as his whole professional career has been devoted to the practice and interpretation of law. These critics appear not to have noticed that this book is a response to a legal decision. He is also accused of trying to prove the case for creationism, whereas his introductory chapter states explicitly that he is not defending creation-science and his book does not address the Biblical accounts of creation." (p.14)

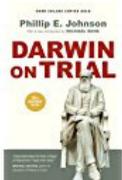
In addition, Johnson is accused of the following: misunderstanding the scientific process and rules of evidence, misrepresenting the works of respected scientists, discrediting the fossil evidence, neglecting the evolution of plants, poor reasoning, inability to frame an argument, abysmal writing, taking criticisms of creationism personally and acting like a spoilt child when his book is criticised. There is one important respect in which the book is out-of-date: it was published in 1993, several years before the completion of the human genome project, and can thus give no account of the enormous weight of genetic evidence which has poured in since then. But I think Johnson can hardly be blamed for this.

And yet, the astonishing thing is that hardly any of these critics (even the small number who have actually read the book) have even mentioned, much less refuted, his major arguments. Thus his book, unlike the theory he is criticizing, has withstood the test of falsification. From a scientific point of view, this is the strongest possible confirmation that he is right.

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