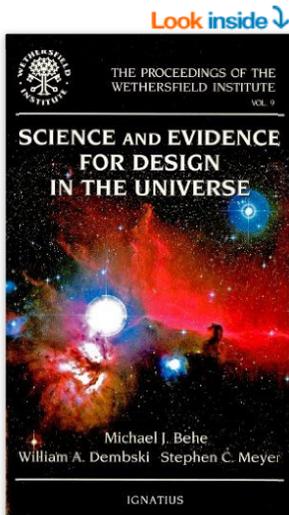


< Back to results



Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe (The Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute Vol. 9)

Paperback – October 20, 2003

by Michael Behe (Author), Michael J. Behe (Editor), William A. Dembski (Editor), & 1 more

49 customer reviews

Book 9 of 4 in the Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute Series

See all 2 formats and editions

Kindle \$13.08

Paperback \$10.05

Read with Our Free App

43 Used from \$1.55 33 New from \$6.06

Read more



The Amazon Book Review

Author interviews, book reviews, editors picks, and more. [Read it now](#)



See all 2 images

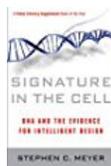
Frequently Bought Together



+



+



Total price: **\$34.55**

Add all three to Cart

Add all three to List

One of these items ships sooner than the other. [Show details](#)

This item: Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe (The Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute Vol... by Michael Behe Paperback **\$10.05**

[Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution](#) by Michael J. Behe Paperback **\$9.99**

[Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design](#) by Stephen C. Meyer Paperback **\$14.51**

Share

Buy New **\$10.05**

Qty: 1

List Price: \$14.95 Save: \$4.90 (33%)

Fast, FREE Shipping with Amazon Prime

Only 12 left in stock (more on the way).

Ships from and sold by Amazon.com. Gift-wrap available.

Yes, I want FREE Two-Day Shipping with Amazon Prime

Add to Cart

Turn on 1-Click ordering for this browser

Want it Tuesday, Feb. 14? Order within 13 hrs 56 mins and choose One-Day Shipping at checkout. [Details](#)

Ship to:

Select a shipping address:

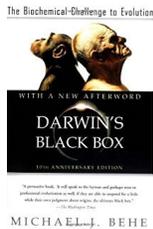
Buy Used **\$5.54**

Add to List

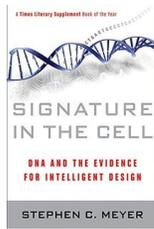
Have one to sell?

Sell on Amazon

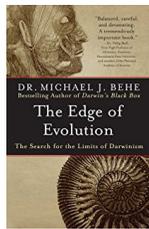
Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought



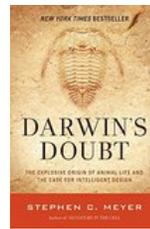
Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution



Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design



The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism



Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design

Editorial Reviews

About the Author

Stephen C. Meyer received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in the philosophy of science after working as an oil industry geophysicist. He now directs the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington. He authored *Signature in the Cell*, a (London) Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year.

Michael J. Behe is a Professor of Biological Science at Lehigh University, where he has worked since 1985. From 1978 to 1982 he did postdoctoral work on DNA structure at the National Institutes of Health. From 1982 to 1985 he was Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Queens College in New York City. He has authored more than forty technical papers, but he is best known as the author of "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution." He lives near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with his wife and nine children.

William A. Dembski is an associate research professor in the conceptual foundations of science at Baylor University as well as a senior fellow with Seattle's Discovery Institute. His most important books are *The Design Inference* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *No Free Lunch* (2002).

Product Details

Paperback: 180 pages

Publisher: Ignatius Press (October 20, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0898708095

ISBN-13: 978-0898708097

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces ([View shipping rates and policies](#))

Average Customer Review:  (49 customer reviews)

Amazon Best Sellers Rank: #974,128 in Books (See [Top 100 in Books](#))

#237 in [Books](#) > [Christian Books & Bibles](#) > [Theology](#) > [Creationism](#)

#1475 in [Books](#) > [Religion & Spirituality](#) > [Religious Studies](#) > [Science & Religion](#)

#4939 in [Books](#) > [Science & Math](#) > [History & Philosophy](#)



New York Times best sellers

Browse the New York Times best sellers in popular categories like Fiction, Nonfiction, Picture Books and more. [See more](#)

Important Information

Ingredients

Example Ingredients

Directions

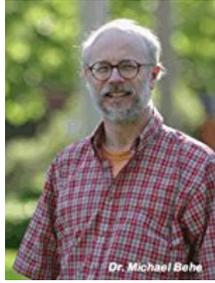
Example Directions

More About the Authors

Discover books, learn about writers, read author blogs, and more.



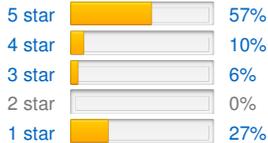
William A. Dembski



Michael J. Behe

Customer Reviews

49
4.0 out of 5 stars



Share your thoughts with other customers

Write a customer review

[See all verified purchase reviews](#)

Top Customer Reviews

4.0 out of 5 stars | A Primer on Intelligent Design

By [NYJ](#) on January 10, 2001

Format: Paperback

This book is a compilation of three essays (first 113 pages) which study the possibility of intelligent design from a physics, mathematical and philosophical aspect. The remainder of the book (approximately an additional 80 pages) make up the appendix which supplies three additional essays which speak about Intelligent Design and seek to address specific criticisms against this theory. The first appendix, entitled Answering Scientific Criticisms of Intelligent Design, is written by Michael Behe, a biochemist, and is possibly the best chapter of the entire book. For a primer on what "intelligent design" is considered to be by its proponents, this book would suffice. I would highly recommend this book to those who are interested in this subject.

4 Comments | 234 people found this helpful. Was this review helpful to you? [Report abuse](#)

4.0 out of 5 stars | The universal as witness; evidence and the universal probabilities

By [Ingrid Heyn](#) on April 5, 2006

Format: Paperback

For those who are philosophically opposed to the notion that the universe may have been designed, the root of objection is not based on scientific evidence. It has become a mantra, a dogma, an article of faith to declare loudly that "evolution is a proven fact", but the statement needs to demonstrate that it asserts something true. If evolution is a proven fact, the scientific community that believes in evolution does not need to be shy. The evidence doesn't need to be hidden. Bring it out; let all seekers after truth and reality observe it. I may say that I have not come across any such evidence, and my fields are biochemistry and physics with a strong interest in mathematics. It's certainly possible there is information I haven't examined. I would love to know about it... but so far, evidence itself does not support a universe in which life came about by chance, necessity or a combination thereof.

This book explicates the problems that the Theory of Evolution has in its broadest sense as well as in a more explicit mechanistic sense. The articles comprising it are for the most part extremely well

Customer Images



Most Recent Customer Reviews

4.0 out of 5 stars | **useful for learning.**
Intelligent discussion on college level.
Published 4 months ago by sunnydaye

5.0 out of 5 stars | **Five Stars**
5stars
Published 20 months ago by Jodo

4.0 out of 5 stars | **"One of the more frequent questions people ask about intelligent..."**
"One of the more frequent questions people ask about intelligent design is whether any scientists actually support ID theory. [Read more](#)
Published 24 months ago by dpopl4ama

4.0 out of 5 stars | **A Very Tedious Read**
I have the utmost respect for Behe, Dembski, and Meyer. So one might wonder as to why I rate this book with only 3 stars? [Read more](#)
Published on December 26, 2014 by K. Burns

5.0 out of 5 stars | **Five Stars**
Excellent treatment

written. I should mention that the second article, the first of those written by Stephen Meyer, I found a little tedious but only because the author used therein a style that I consider rather heavy, repeating one concept and restating it in different words without adding anything in the restatement. I felt that the article could have been condensed by at least half without losing any sense. Yet WHAT Stephen Meyer was saying was interesting... and the second article written by him in the book had no such internal repetition and was highly readable. I have had to conclude that Stephen Meyer has experienced readers or audience who have failed to follow his philosophy-of-science and implications-of-probability-bounds arguments before... and he's taking no chances (pun intended) of the meaning of his writing being misunderstood. That he is a highly intelligent man with a great deal to impart on the very meaning of science and the implications of data is undeniable.

On the basis of his second article, I will be happy to read further writings of his.

Michael Behe is always a pleasure to read. His writing is clear, and his examples are apt. His article will be familiar in most aspects to readers of his ground-breaking "Darwin's Black Box", but the follow-up article, in which he responds to criticisms of the examples and arguments used in that book, is interesting and unambiguous. What comes through clearly is that criticisms were either a) science-based or b) philosophy-based. The science-based criticisms are remarkable for their failure to challenge the biochemical irreducible complexity argument and to find real examples that contradict the evidence presented by Behe. In fact, every example presented with the intent to break down Behe's argument and specific examples not only fails to do so, but inadvertently supplies evidence that SUPPORTS Behe's argument. To go into detail here would be inappropriate and far too lengthy - but Behe's rebuttal is on the basis of biochemical evidence. Let those reading this review be challenged to read the book themselves and judge on the basis of what Michael Behe has written - not opinion, not selective examples, but real and soundly scientific examination of evidence. You need not purchase the book if you're opposed to its concepts - but why not borrow it from your local library? If you are not a biochemist, have next to you while you read it a biological science or biochemistry textbook. Make sure it's an advanced level textbook so that the incredible and complex reality of the systems Behe is discussing can be checked by you in terms of the details. Better still, those who are not biochemists might find enormous pleasure in studying this field just as laymen - the complexity of life is a rewarding and fascinating study, particularly (for me) on the chemical level where complexity is unmistakable.

William Dembski's writing concerning specified complexity is highly informative, and I was drawn to his style of writing, which is clear and has a nice quality that combines information with accessibility. This was the first piece of writing I'd read by Dembski, and it led me to read with great pleasure his other books - books which impress by the scope and detail that he includes. Do not mistake - readers may disagree with William Dembski's viewpoint, but if they are intellectually honest, they have no business stating that his writing is scientifically flawed, intellectually incapable, or riddled with unproven assumptions. Au contraire. His work, on the basis of his published writings, is honest and demonstrative of a high degree of original and intelligent thought with a strong commitment to the evidence.

I should mention several things that might worry potential readers: all three writers are convinced by the raw data of the universe that the universe exhibits unmistakable evidence of design. Intelligent Design is a theory that states design can be detected, not by waving around a Bible, but by the evidence of the universe - the universal bound, probability theory, biochemistry, biology, these are the fields which yield information on this. Intelligent Design makes no claim about who this designer might be, what the purpose of this designer might be, etc. Critics of Intelligent Design who believe they are inflicting a killing blow by saying, "But there's no redundant pathway for this or that, so how intelligent is that?" are, I'm afraid, revealing that they have not read this book. Intelligent Design is so clearly delineated that a reader could scarcely miss it without wilfully deciding to close their eyes - and if a reader still remains confused, he is referred to Dembski's "The Design Revolution" where questions and answers are presented with the purpose of enlightening those who have become confused because they've assumed a meaning for Intelligent Design that comes from their own opinion or what has been said OF the Intelligent Design theory.

Secondly, I note that some reviewers have explicitly rejected Intelligent Design because they say it has philosophical or religious implications. That's irrelevant in assessing a theory and evidence, though. Neo-Darwinism has philosophical or religious implications, and that doesn't affect whether or not it is TRUE. The EVIDENCE ALONE ought to be that which is examined, and explicitly Darwinism has redefined the meaning of science since the propagation of the theory, upon the assumption that common descent is a fact. I contend that it's not up to scientists to redefine words - it's up to those who are experts in semantics. And particularly it is highly suspect to redefine a word so as to exclude

Published on November 19, 2014 by Oldfrjon

★★★★★ Five Stars

Must read for all you budding Scientists to be !!!!!

Published on July 19, 2014 by Dan Brewton

★★★★★ If you are interested in exploring the question, "Are ...

If you are interested in exploring the question, "Are space-time and life forms as we know them the product of thoughtful design, or random impersonal 'natural' processes? [Read more](#)

Published on July 9, 2014 by Tom Tilton

★★★★★ The evidence for intelligent design is everywhere

More and more scientists are coming to the realization that it appears the universe was designed somehow specifically for the creation of man, on this planet at this time in cosmic... [Read more](#)

Published on June 17, 2014 by WSV1975

★★★★★ A good book for tuning your own personal paradigm.

A very intelligent book about the philosophy of science and how it relates to Descent and Design. Takes an open mind and will challenge both sides of the debate.

Published on June 13, 2014 by Chris Larson

★★★★★ GreAt book

Great book really informative. The arguments presented are serious and scientific and they have not been refuted. [Read more](#)

Published on May 27, 2014 by mgl

Search Customer Reviews

Search

competing theories a priori from examination of evidence. To force a particular filter for examination of data, and to force fields of research, based upon a faulty definition of science (by assuming natural mechanics are sufficient to describe the origin of life and those systems in nature exhibiting specified complexity) is a logical error of such magnitude that it creates a blinding supernova of unthinking assumption, and is already creating frustration and dead ends in scientific research.

To make it clear: whether a scientist believes in God or not is irrelevant to an examination of data. Examination of data is the first responsibility of that type of science which seeks to establish observable laws and phenomena, because without data confirming predictions, the various fields of science become nothing more than an enjoyable free-wheeling exercise in imagination. Theories are NECESSARY, though, in order to create predictions (often based on conditional arguments arising from a particular theory) which can then be tested. Historical science is, however, a different kettle of fossil fish. It is non-verifiable in the sense that the past cannot be recreated. But studies of origins are either equally unfalsifiable or equally falsifiable.

It is almost ludicrous that this book has garnered so many reviewers, in the sense that many excellent titles on Amazon have not even a tenth of the number of reviews. Are so many people reading this book? Having read through the reviews here, I cannot conclude that. At least half of the reviews are scathingly attacking the idea, not the book. I venture to say that the majority of the reviewers who have given low ratings for this book have done so without reading it. Perhaps some have read reviews of it. Perhaps some have read a carefully chosen extract from it on a website, together with anti-extract rhetoric designed to show the many "errors" the book has. But to have actually read the book would reveal a common dishonesty with out-of-context quotations when quoted by someone whose philosophical stance is diametrically opposed to that espoused by his opponent.

That is why I say simply... read the book. Judge its scientific credibility on the basis of what it says, not on the basis of what someone says it says. Do not be like those who read books such as "How to Learn Kafka In Ten Minutes" or "Easy Plato For Busy People" or "Einstein Made Simple!" or "Feynman for Dummies". If you want to know what Plato wrote, you read Plato, not someone's hashed-up interpretation of his writing. If you want to understand Einstein's Theory of Relativity, read his published papers - they're not out of print, and the man was a genius. If you want to read about the oft-quoted (tediously over-quoted) idea that the world believed in a flat earth at certain points in history and in certain cultures, it might just be a good idea for you to read the published primary sources rather than quote a frankly ludicrous modern retelling of history. You are guaranteed to be astonished by the cartographic and underlying geographical knowledge and assumptions of the ancient world, and the astonishing misinformation disseminated by people who have taken on board as fact modern myths that have no supporting data.

I have read most of the neo-Darwin literature - much of it was required reading. During my university studies, my questions and requests for data were shunted aside as irrelevant, and I was expected to "believe" in neo-Darwinism as an article of faith, on pains of being considered unscientific if I did not. I still preferred to make up my own mind on the basis of evidence... and to this day, I have the same approach. It is important to read Dawkins, Gould, etc., plus the published literature and published experiments in the journals - or at least, I found it important, because I wished to see (and continue to wish to see) what real evidence such an important theory has. I liked Dawkins' clear style, but his lack of substance and substitution of assumption for fact often frustrated me. Gould's ideas were always interesting, even though I felt they belonged more in science fiction than hard science. I would be fascinated and surprised to learn that those who believe tooth-and-nail in the Theory of Evolution as the explanation for life on earth have actually read all the books on the subject of Intelligent Design which they certainly imply they have. Why? Because Intelligent Design makes sense ON THE BASIS OF THE EVIDENCE, and ON THE BASIS OF SCIENTIFIC EXAMINATION OF EVIDENCE. This book, to be specific, has certain arguments and a clear, unambiguous presentation of why neo-Darwinism, relying on naturalistic mechanisms of chance and necessity, actually does not provide a plausible explanation for the evidence. I would be bemused and pleased were my review to be instrumental in convincing anyone who thinks they know about Intelligent Design but haven't actually investigated it other than as a theory to shoot down by reading counter-arguments against it... to actually... read this book. I would that all human beings would think clearly and examine information without allowing bias to prevent an honest assessment. That's my hope. Honest assessment. Not brainwashing, not fine but empty rhetoric. Just honest assessment. By ALL MEANS read the counter-arguments. But don't do that without reading the arguments countered first... and not out of context. Read the book, then criticise. That's fair. If readers end up disagreeing, at least they would then do so on the basis of awareness and knowledge of what they criticise.

To the three authors of this book: thank you. Ultimately I enjoyed your writing, and I have found my

interest in probability theory rekindled. I will continue to enjoy researching the complex systems in biological organisms, and I will always look for the universe to provide evidence, not my own wishes.

To sum up: it's no crime to have a philosophical, religious or metaphysical belief amounting to certainty. But that philosophical, religious or metaphysical belief MUST NOT filter out theories arising from the evidence. In other words, an intelligent appraisal of data should not include straitjacketing the data. One can PREFER a particular interpretation. One can BELIEVE in a particular interpretation. One can allow other factors (philosophy, metaphysics, religion, etc.) to impact upon one's belief of which interpretation or theory is correct. But that's got nothing - absolutely nothing - to do with real assessment of raw data. True science is not about commitment to a particular belief. It is about the great search for what is, because what is leaves unmistakable signs in the very complexity that specifies it - this we know without doubt. The human race did not know that a hundred years ago, before the strides in knowledge that encompass biochemistry and physics. A genuine search for truth in the universe's physical nature ought to be bounded by NO presuppositions. If the universe arose by chance, it won't be "proved" by disqualifying any other theory before the evidence is examined. If the universe arose by design, it won't be "proved" by assuming it is so. Assumption is a hindrance to honest assessment of the physical data - and a scientist ought not to put his assumptions in place BEFORE his assessment of data.

Let the evidence itself speak for itself.

12 Comments | 81 people found this helpful. Was this review helpful to you? [Report abuse](#)

||| | Forget the critics

By A Customer on October 9, 2001

Format: Paperback

I have to give this book 5 stars to counter-balance the two reviews that slam this book. It is obvious that neither reviewer has read this book, in part or in total. Intelligent Design is not creation science. It accepts evolution (i.e., common descent), gradual change over time, and natural selection as a fine-tuning mechanism of life. It merely suggests that the formation of life is guided by intelligence - the exact question of how that intelligence performed its work, or who that intelligence is, is left open. (It could be anything from aliens to Zeus.) Intelligent Design has caused Darwinian Fundamentalists to react with alarm because Darwinism is the central facet of their world view. Their objections are more philosophical than scientific (I've yet to read ONE negative review of an ID book that contains any science whatsoever). Darwinists have been the Grand Inquisitors of academia and are crushing real science. While Physics, Astronomy, Genetics, and other fields are literally taking quantum leaps into the future, evolutionary Biology has barely advanced past the early 1900s thanks to the the Fundamentalists' insistence that all evidence be construed, however obliquely, to support the notion that natural selection and random mutation can account for all life on earth. Read about ID and make up your mind. Don't listen to Fundamentalists like Ken Miller and Richard Dawkins who are long on rhetoric and short on science.

1 Comment | 246 people found this helpful. Was this review helpful to you? [Report abuse](#)

||| | Theological Wars, Dirty Tricks & Pseudo-Science

By H. J. Spencer PhD, renegade-Physicist on December 7, 2015

Format: Paperback | **Verified Purchase**

This book needs to be read by everyone who, mistakenly, thinks that the Ancient War between Religion and Science is over – especially by those who think that the scientists emerged victorious. This war has been fought by generations of intellectuals since Ancient Greece (when it was limited to Mind versus Body) and became vicious after the rise of Modern Science around 1700. It is a fundamental article of science today that Darwin's Theory of Evolution must be believed as 'true and proven' if one is to be regarded as a 'real' scientist; this is particularly true for members of that aggressive tribe known as biologists. A similar Act of Faith is expected from physicists, who are expected to affirm that the Big Bang really happened and created the universe as we see it today. Particle physicists have been recruited for this war and their 'discovery' of the 'Higgs boson' is seen as providing further 'real' evidence for the foundations of these metaphysical battles. As a renegade physicist, who views many of the modern claims of theoretical physics as wrong, (see my review of "The Higgs Fake" by Unzicker) and also as a scientist who has looked long and hard for scientific evidence for the validity of Darwinism, I have no hesitation in stating that the three sincere intellectuals authoring this book have made a strong case that the universe manifests characteristics of structured

design. Their position is that there is very good evidence for investigating the hypothesis that Intelligence is responsible for the primary design, while natural selection following random variations (the scientific position) is a far weaker theory, which has failed logically and empirically.

Since many of the proponents of "Intelligent Design" are committed Christians (I am not) and are associated with the Christian-supported "Discovery Institute" or similar organizations, such as the Catholic "Wethersfield Institute" (who promoted these presentations, at one of their conferences), then many readers, who see themselves as firmly in the scientific camp will NEVER read this type of book. This is a great mistake as these deep metaphysical issues define the very essence of any civilization. Simply, rejecting the ideas of one's opponents without examination is an admission of one's intellectual weakness and dangerously dilutes the intellectual roots of society. I will return to this key issue at the end of this review.

The three initial essays are of variable length and quality. The shortest (35 pages) and most powerful is the one written by Michael Behe. He is a self-confessed Catholic professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, who quickly restates his theory of "irreducible complexity" that shatters the slow, incremental model change of Darwinian Evolution, where each new step in every subsystem must provide improved survivability for the 'lucky' entity (and thus more descendants than other ones). The prototypical subsystem example is the simple mousetrap [p.119] that fails to function until all its four major parts are present and in place. Behe restates his biochemical examples from his best seller ("Darwin's Black Box") that shows the molecular basis of the huge proteins (derived from DNA) to make the biological systems for cilia (tiny, hairlike organelles) that are vital for digestion, requiring over 200 different kinds of protein parts; the bacterial flagellum with its 40 complex components also needed for both independent motion of bacteria and the trillions of necessary assistants carried within mammalian guts. The finest example is the blood-clotting systems [p. 141]. This particular case was 'rebutted' by blood-clotting expert Russell Doolittle, in his widely known review of Behe's "Black Box", who claimed that the scientific research of others [Bugge et al] refuted Behe's example. Here, in Behe's second essay he answers his scientific critics by showing how these critics failed to look deeply enough at these complex processes, pointing out that their critique relied on many duplications of parts of critical genes, already present, that were evidence of ancient survival 'tricks', not new, unique evolutionary precursors of vital system components. As Behe states: "Genes with similar sequences only suggest common descent – NOT the mechanism of evolution that is assumed to be natural selection." [p. 142] The pro-Darwinists are begging the question of HOW evolution occurs – processes that were invisible to scientists of Darwin's generation (hence 'black box'). The 'how' of evolution has continued to challenge even the best of modern evolutionary biologists, at the level of molecular dynamics. Indeed, redefining 'species' to avoid the deeper problem of mating pairs of new biological entities has never been demonstrated theoretically or experimentally.

The second-best essays are those written by the young Stephen Meyer based on his Ph.D. philosophical history of science dissertation at Cambridge in 1991 and elaborated in his book ("Of Clues and Causes: Analysis of Origin of Life Studies"). He is currently an associate professor of Philosophy at Whitworth University (a private, Presbyterian liberal arts college in Spokane, WA) and a director of the Discovery Institute's Centre for the Renewal of Science and Culture. Here, Meyer reminds us that although the Creationist argument for Design long dominated Western thought (not, coincidentally, while under it's religious intellectuals), it had lost the support of most scientists and philosophers by 1900 (probably due to Darwin and LaPlace's bogus nebular-stability theory). This began to reverse after 1960 with the recognition that many of nature's physical constants (like the strength of the electric charge e and Planck's constant of action h) must take on very narrow range of values (completely without any deeper theory) to fine-tune for the possibility of human life, now referred to as the Anthropic Principle. Ridiculous physics theories, such as Everett's Multiverse theory have been proposed as 'scientific' explanations, when their characteristics should place them deep in the theological tradition, leading to absurd propositions that: "any event that could happen must happen somewhere in some possible universe". [p.61] This is now viewed as the most popular scientific theory for the origin of life (and everything!!) but, of course, we can never derive any information from any other universe – a real challenge to any empirically based epistemology, such as natural science. This special pleading speaks volumes of the desperation of so many scientists to seek materialistic or so-called 'naturalistic' explanations. Meyer does a powerful job of describing the implications of the discovery of DNA on the difficulties of generating complex living cells by 'chance' mechanisms (one in 10^{65} odds), when linear time (even 13 billions years) is hugely inadequate and has now been rejected by most Origin-of-Life specialists since about 1960. Only infinite time spans offer finite probabilities but as Mora said in 1963: "Using such logic, we can prove anything". [p.76] As de Duve has written: "A single, freak highly improbable event can conceivably happen. But a series of improbable events does not happen naturally." Meyer recounts [p.80] how extreme-Darwinist, Richard

Dawkins falls into the simple error of deriving a pre-defined (teleological) target sequence by holding each 'desired' choice until all are achieved, illustrating how "behaviorist biologists" cannot be relied on to provide accurate biochemical examples; such computer simulations demonstrate the need for intelligent agents to select some options and exclude others i.e. to create information. Bad software illustrates what happens when limited intelligent agents fail to design well.

Meyer also emphasizes the critical difference between Natural Laws that describe the world (often using mathematical equations) and explanations that cause natural phenomena; reminding readers that Newton produced a mathematical scheme for predicting simple gravitational situations but refused to offer any explanation for "gravity". Worse, differential equations (the most popular technique) are only useful for describing highly deterministic or predictable relationships between antecedent conditions and consequent events. Most physical "laws" simply assume a vanishingly small time gap between these two states i.e. they casually make the "Continuum Assumption". Meyer is a powerful advocate for "the design inference constituting an inference to the best explanation". Excluding these possibilities demonstrates an a priori commitment to a limited class of possibilities.

The most disappointing contributions in this book come from the most academically qualified of the trio: William Dembski – with Ph.D.s in mathematics and philosophy (from Chicago and Illinois) plus a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary. His approach (and photo) suggests a reincarnation of one of the medieval Dominican fanatics conducting a hearing for the Inquisition. His first essay herein, launching the book, provides a general theory of intelligent design 'detection'. This is a clever lawyer's trick for defining the Rules of the Game; indeed, it turns the tables on his opponents, who attempted to dismiss Design as "non-scientific" by predefining what it means to be a 'science' today. He correctly points out that humans often infer intelligence from the evidence of their activities. His focus is on the notion of "highly improbable" events and "specific" requirements – characteristics of many complex processes found in nature and especially in biological entities. Dembski reminds us that the idea of 'chance' (random, causeless) as an explanation for the world goes back to the Epicureans, while the Stoics preferred necessity and design. The critics of chance saw it, at best, as a placeholder for current ignorance. Newton's Principia promoted necessity to the forefront but many New Scientists vigorously rejected Design, recognizing its implications leading to theological explanations. These Enlightenment thinkers were often mathematicians (as were many of their Catholic opponents) and (like Plato) were overly impressed by the power of timeless abstractions, such as number and geometry. This intellectual and fundamental bias is still widely held amongst many academics (like Dembski) and most scientists, who are still convinced by the appearance of numbers in their theories and in the results obtained in their empirical observations. However, just because a few experiments agree to impressive precision with experimental measurements does not mean that our theories are on the right track: Ptolemy's model was vastly better (judged by numerical confirmation) than Copernican models. Meanwhile, the domination of numbers continues to overwhelm our civilization, even though most citizens exhibit (and use) only a small fraction of the properties of this ancient abstraction. Dembski goes to great length to 'prove' (using numbers) that complex patterns ('specification') cannot arise from chance. The heart of his argument relies (like so much of science) on appeals to human experience: we know we are 'agents' because we believe we are responsible for initiating events in the world – we intuitively reject the idea of determinism as a sword that would destroy our very civilization. By analogy, we extend this belief to the universe as a whole; hence the need to imagine a 'Super-Agent' capable of creating everything. As a philosopher, Dembski recognizes that Naturalism (or materialism) is a metaphysical position and not a scientific theory based on evidence but materialism does offer a great simplification. He also points out the Latin meaning of the word intelligence, which implies the "ability to choose between (options)". As an intellectual (and crypto-theologian), it is not surprising to find that Dembski chooses (clever) mind over (dumb) matter.

It should never be forgotten that despite Darwin's title in 1859, he did NOT propose a theory of the origin of SPECIES but offered a possible, natural scheme for the origination of VARIETIES within species, resembling humans' ability to emphasize characteristics within a given species, resulting in many breeds (varieties) of animals, such as are found with the many breeds of dog. However, these are all still dogs (actually wolves, sharing the common DNA that allows all these varied examples to inter-breed).

This book demonstrates that the oldest War of Ideas is still being fought vigorously but intellectual dishonesty and hidden political agendas are now being used far too often in our less brutal age. These metaphysical disputes demonstrate which unproven MYTHS will dominate a civilization. The long history of Christian intellectuals controlling Western civilization demonstrate that such fanatical believers in the invisible (or "transcendent" to use their own terminology) will persecute (to death) anyone who dares to disagree with them, who might weaken their faith in their own abstractions. As

such, I (like many scientists, I suspect) vigorously oppose any form of theologically controlled society.

None-the-less, too many scientists have demonstrated their own psychopathic lack of empathy for too many others in society as they conduct research for military organizations; this research (like viruses) is potentially so lethal as to destroy all of humanity.

Far too many careers in science, over the last 50 years, have been constructed around unchallenged group assumptions, so that few professional scientists dare join the Christian opponents of modern science's most cherished BELIEFS. We now know that Group-Think (building on deep, ancient tribal notions of loyalty) and careerism limit the range of ideas that are examined within accepted institutional boundaries.

The bottom-line is that ALL intellectuals must be distrusted when they recommend actions based only on their own need for metaphysical certainty. Caution must be the watchword, while imagining future possibilities remains a useful role for this small group of humanity possessing powerful imaginations. Each competing ideas-group demonstrates how self-serving some intellectuals can become, especially when working in large, well-funded 'believing' organizations.

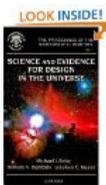
One final thought is that the concept of time lies at the heart of nature and its deep mystery has blocked humans from any analysis beyond Design versus Chance. If we allow for backwards causation (perhaps travel into the past) future descendants of humans may turn out to be the ultimate originators of intelligent design for the whole universe. Just a thought, but well out of any box – black or otherwise

As one who gained much from reading this enjoyable book, I can only plead again for a more extensive index and a larger, global bibliography. Their absence prevent an otherwise well-deserved 5 star rating.

8 Comments | 6 people found this helpful. Was this review helpful to you? [Report abuse](#)

[See all verified purchase reviews \(newest first\)](#)

Set up an Amazon Giveaway



Amazon Giveaway allows you to run promotional giveaways in order to create buzz, reward your audience, and attract new followers and customers. [Learn more about Amazon Giveaway](#)

This item: Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe (The Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute Vol. 9)

What Other Items Do Customers Buy After Viewing This Item?