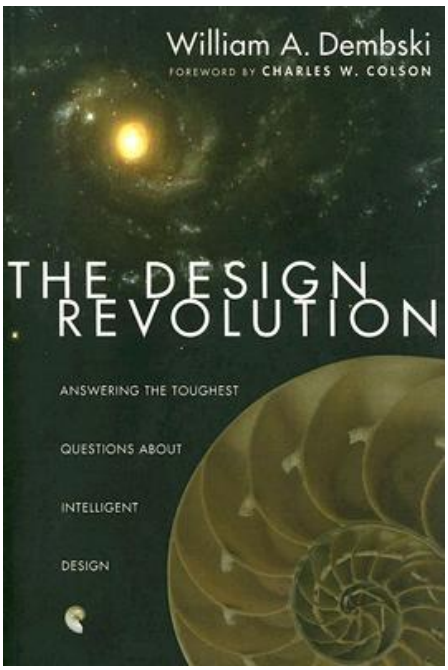

The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design

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A 2005 Gold Medallion finalist. Is it science? Is it religion? What exactly is the Design Revolution? Today scientists, mathematicians and philosophers in the intelligent design movement are challenging a certain view of science--one that limits its investigations and procedures to purely law-like and mechanical explanations. They charge that there is no scientific reason to exclude the consideration of intelligence, agency and purpose from truly scientific research. In fact, they say, the practice of science often does already include these factors! As the intelligent design movement has gained momentum, questions have naturally arisen to challenge its provocative claims. In this book William A. Dembski rises to the occasion clearly and concisely answering the most vexing questions posed to the intelligent design program. Writing with nonexperts in mind, Dembski responds to more than sixty questions asked by experts and nonexperts alike who have attended his many public lectures, as well as objections raised in written reviews. The Design Revolution has begun. Its success depends on how well it answers the questions of its detractors. Read this book and you'll have a good idea of the prospects and challenges facing this revolution in scientific thinking.

The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design Details

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From Reader Review The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design for online ebook

Daniel says

Okay, I actually thought this was a good book and very thought provoking. Now to let everyone know I looked at all the negative critiques of this book. Before I read the book. Several of these published here were also, posted on Amazon as critiques of the book. The caveat with these people criticizing the book is: they say that they read the book, but in reality it's very obvious they haven't, They criticize his last book, No Free Lunch, and they attack the character of William A. Dembski. This is all without addressing any of the arguments presented in the book. I offer no reasons why someone would impugn a book by not reading it; I also have no idea why someone would lie about not reading it. I also read some of the scientific arguments against the book. I want to especially mention Jeffery Shallot's review: He is the worst proponent not only does he claim to have read the book, but all he does is talk about NFL (No Free Lunch), and continually disparages the character of William A. Dembski. In short all the arguments I've read so far, are not approached from an logical or even scientific point-of-view, but from an emotional, response. Read the book yourself and then make a judgement.

Branyon May says

One of the most important aspects of this book is its defining and describing what the concept of Intelligent Design is and is not. The scope and theoretical construct of design is fundamental to so many areas of science, and the evidence, inference and example of intelligent design follows the same pathways of reason.

Michael says

This book is designed as a question-answerer for the most common questions/criticisms of Intelligent Design. Not really a sit-down-and-read all-at-once book... by nature of the format there is necessarily some overlap in the answers.

Dembski proves himself a scholar not just in mathematics, but holds his own in philosophy, language, and science. His insights into the problems at hand are keen. He has a knack for exposing the faulty logic hiding behind facades of scholarship.

Technical at time, but readable.

Erroll Treslan says

The following is my Irreligiosity column from the October 1, 2011 edition of the Owen Sound Sun Times which was inspired by reading this book:

By now most people are generally familiar with what has come to be known as the theory of intelligent

design (“ID”). ID has become a favored concept among creationists and anyone having a religious persuasion that finds it hard to accept that life as we know it arose from inorganic matter. But what exactly is ID? In the words of one of its most famous proponents, philosopher/mathematician William Dembski, ID claims that: “there are natural systems that cannot be adequately explained in terms of undirected natural forces and that exhibit features which in any other circumstance we would attribute to intelligence".

The most typical example used to support ID is the bacterial flagellum which is a spinning hair that functions as a kind of outboard motor for bacteria. ID theorists will point to the fact that the theory of evolution is unable to explain how such an “irreducibly complex” system could arise. However, using ID as an explanation here makes as much sense as asserting the flagellum was teleported from another dimension. It is the very definition of an argument from ignorance: "I can't figure out a natural cause so I'll assert a supernatural cause".

Supporters of ID will tell you that biological systems are too complex to have arisen by chance and therefore must have been designed. The problem with this reasoning is that what appears to be a fluke might not be a fluke – perhaps we will soon discover that replicating proteins (the basic building blocks of life) arise naturally upon a confluence of certain as yet undiscovered factors and commonly arise on planets with earth-like conditions. Isn't lightning striking a primordial soup far more plausible than positing a magic wand?

Dembski has written: "... when we find specified complexity in nature which no embodied, reified or evolved intelligence could plausibly have placed there, it is a straightforward inference to conclude that some unembodied intelligence must have been involved." This logic fails – as physicists would say “it’s not even wrong”. What Dembski calls a straightforward inference, I call attributing ID as the cause for something he cannot yet explain. Do we rule out a designer? Of course not. But how does positing a designer further the inquiry and how does Dembski propose to rule out unknown natural causes/mechanisms? Also, why are ID supporters so quick to rule out other theoretical possibilities and rule in a supernatural wand waver? The answer should be obvious: ID fits in nicely with the Christian belief in an unembodied deity who was the first cause of the origins of life on earth.

If you want to have some fun with a supporter of ID, ask them a couple questions. First of all, if the designer was embodied, wouldn’t he/she/it have to be as complex as what they designed? If so, why doesn’t the supposed designer require a designer? [Removing the design requirement from the supposed “creator” is a textbook example of the logical fallacy known as “special pleading”] If the designer was unembodied, how would it interact with the natural world? If the ID proponent is honest, they will have to admit that they have no answers to these questions. I've found this same explanation in one of my favorite books: “Then he'll land in a fish bowl. He'll manage just fine. Don't ask how he'll manage. That's his job. Not mine”. Dr. Seuss , If I Ran The Circus (Random House, 1956).

Ultimately, the search for ID in biological systems is akin to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) in space or the science of cryptography which discerns intelligently specified information out of apparently indecipherable code. The problem for ID is that it is very difficult for its theorists to present testable hypotheses. What do they expect to find? The 10 Commandments encoded in our DNA? In any event, I encourage ID theorists to set up viable experiments to prove that the bacterial flagellum has an intelligent cause and is not the product of naturalistic causes.

Christian analytic theologian Randal Rauser has tidily summed up ID as follows: "ID is not a scientific theory. Rather it is a claim in the philosophy of science regarding what kind of causes can be appealed to in scientific theorization". This description hits the nail on the head. If ID supporters wish to speculate that a supernatural cause explains the origin of life on earth, they should go ahead and prove it. Work is well

underway to prove otherwise.

Greg says

Very good read. It finally answers the question of whether ID is Creationism. And, as I understand ID through this book, it is not. However, it doesn't appear to have passed scientific muster, either. There's a lot of math-babble to the point where the words tend to meld together (Specified Complexity mixed with Random Chance etc...). But if you want a medium-level introduction to ID with a little bit of religio-political posturing, then this is the book for you.

Randy says

It is puzzling to me that today in the information age, confusion abounds about the nature of intelligent design. It is not a conceptually difficult idea that is claimed, and yet misrepresentations abound. Dembski's book, therefore, is invaluable at setting the record straight. It consists of 44 short chapters, each of which is only 6-8 pages long and deals with a specific question that he has encountered about intelligent design. Taken as a whole, the intelligent design position is sharply clarified and in so doing, the main objections often simply melt away. Now of course, intelligent design may yet prove to be false, but the key claims cannot be engaged until it is clear what they are.

The main objection about intelligent design is that is an argument from ignorance, falling into god-of-the-gaps thinking by invoking divine action at every point where science at the moment doesn't have an explanation. What intelligent design actually claims is the following:

1. Intelligent agents sometimes leave empirical indicators, or fingerprints, in the world; examples include Mt. Rushmore, written texts, soundwaves carrying vocal communication. On the basis of these indicators we can infer intelligent rather than natural causation. This much is uncontroversial, but it gets controversial when we get to the second claim:

2. The natural world has such empirical indicators of intelligence. There is, in the natural world, in those domains that are properly the study of natural science, observable, empirical evidence of intelligence.

Dembski clarifies this idea further by formalizing it into an argument consisting of three premisses and a conclusion:

Premise 1: Certain biological systems exhibit a feature called specified complexity.

Premise 2: Evolutionary biology does not know how biological systems with that feature originated.

Premise 3: In everday experience we know that intelligent agency has the causal power to produce systems that exhibit specified complexity. Many things produced by human intelligent designers exhibit this feature - for example, the internal combustion engine.

Conclusion: Therefore, biological systems that exhibit specified complexity are likely to be designed.

Premise 3 is the crucial connecting premise that is left out by people who say that ID is just an argument from ignorance (we don't know how it happened, therefore God did it). Design theorists, in attributing design to systems that exhibit specified complexity, are simply doing what scientists do generally, which is to attempt to formulate a causally adequate explanation for the phenomenon in question. Specified complexity is a marker for the presence of information, and our uniform and repeated experience is that information always comes from minds, from intelligence, and not from unguided natural processes. Thus when one makes a design inference one is not arguing from ignorance, but making a positive case based on what we do know, employing standard scientific reasoning by making an inference to the best explanation.

An example from the movie "Contact" shows that this kind of reasoning is already accepted within the scientific community. Jodie Foster's character is an astronomer working for the SETI program (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). She picked up a signal from outer space that she concluded was not noise but came from an intelligence. What was it that allowed her to come to that conclusion? It was just this: Was the signal random? No. Was it merely ordered? No. What allowed her to infer intelligence was that the signal contained the first twenty prime numbers in a row. Now, not only is that improbable (or complex), but there's a way to specify that sequence independently of the fact that it's the one she picked up; namely we already know that the prime numbers are a special set of numbers. Thus the conjunction of improbability and independent specifiability indicated the presence of specified complexity, a marker for intelligence which in turn our uniform experience tells us always comes from minds.

Now why is it that a SETI researcher hasn't stopped doing science when she concludes that the scientific evidence is best explained by intelligent design, but a scientist is accused of doing just that when the focus is shifted from outer space to molecular biology, and an identical reasoning process leads to a design inference?

Intelligent design is revolutionary because it looks at reality in an entirely new way. In the nineteenth century when Darwin formulated his theory it was thought that there were two fundamental entitites in nature - matter and energy. At the beginning of the twenty-first century we recognize there is a third fundamental entity - information, that is not reducible to either matter or energy. How do we know this? If you hold up two computer disks, one blank, and the other filled with software, and you ask the question, what is the difference in mass between these two as a result of the difference in information content, the answer of course is zero. That is because information is a massless entity; it is immaterial. You can no more explain the origin of information by materialistic explanations than you can the written text on a page by the laws of the chemistry of ink and paper.

Evolutionary biology is faulty because it tries to make natural causes do the work of intelligent causes. But intelligent design does not throw out the whole of evolutionary biology and satisfy itself by merely pointing out instances of design. No, it adds to the explanatory toolbox of science that Darwinism untilizes; it does not take away from it. It still sees a role for natural causes, but it does not inflate that role beyond what the evidence indicates. The relationship between ID and Darwinism is something like that between Einstein's theory of relativity and the Newtonian mechanics it replaced. Einstein's theory did not make Newtonian mechanics worthless, it just greatly limited its scope of applicability. ID is not looking to reinvent the wheel, but just to have the conceptual tools to deal with the flow of information in biological systems that Darwinism lacks.

Nathan Albright says

It should come as little surprise that as someone who has taken to reading (or, more often, re-reading) classic works on intelligent design [1] that I should find this a particularly wonderful book. Although I may not always admit it, I have long had a taste for drama and a particular enjoyment of debates, whether as an observer or a participant, and this book is clearly the work of someone who is quite fond of controversy and debate. In the hands of a less able writer, I would feel myself more than a bit biased for liking the content, and in the hands of a writer whose worldview was less friendly to my own I would likely find this book far more irritating. As it is, the worldview is one I happen to share and the book is immensely well-written, showing a strong degree of persistence on the part of the author in dealing with genuinely tough questions and giving them good answers, whether or not they are answers that people really want to hear. The author takes seriously his role as a truth-teller and that makes this book all the better for it.

The material of this book, which takes up more than 300 pages, are the answers to 44 questions in six parts. The first part of the book looks at basic distinctions, defining intelligent design and comparing it to optimal design and apparent design, looking at creation, dealing with the question of theology and religious motivation, and contrasting the approach with the design argument of natural theology. The next eight questions deal with detecting design, looking at the design inference, the relationship of design and chance and necessity, various ways of looking at specified complexity, the explanatory filter, reliability, assertibility, objectivity, and so on. After this comes six answers to questions relating to the subject of information, pointing out the importance of information to life and showing how the receptivity of creation to information allows a designer a great deal of freedom to impart meaning and information to it. After this the author answers eight questions dealing with various issues arising from naturalism, including discussions about the supernatural, different varieties of naturalism, questions about the identity of the designer or regress, and the progress of science. After this the author answers seven fierce challenges to intelligent design, including the argument from ignorance, eliminative induction, the supposed defeater argument of Hume, the demand for details, displacement, and the question of whether Darwinism and intelligent design are the only games in town. After this the author closes with a hopeful look at intelligent design as a new kind of science, looking at aspirations, mechanism, testability, the significance of Michael Behe, peer review, the "wedge," research themes, and the question of discipline.

This book is a classic example of a writer defeating the defeaters, turning arguments and leading questions into opportunities to show appropriate distinctions and also to point other writers within the Intelligent Design community toward approaches that could bear fruit in future research. One can get a feeling from this book that the author has much less fondness for, say Phillip Johnson, than he does for Denton and Behe, given his attitude about Johnson's "wedge" strategy. That said, where this book is at its best is in its patient handling of areas of complaint and in the way that the Dembski closes this book with an optimistic call for

positive research programs to be developed with an ID framework, something that has started to become the case with new developments in what was falsely labeled as junk DNA as well as discoveries about the virulence of bacteria being relate to problems of dysteleology and issues of chromosomal damage in the origins of cancer. Now, if only someone could write some good ID textbooks for schooling, that would be a sight to see and something to review.

[1] See, for example:

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...

https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2014...

Helio says

Since 1984 (before ID proponents put in an appearance) I have been critical of Evolutionary Theory (ET) but find both that and Creationism are merely two dimensional solutions to a five dimensional problem. One might think that Intelligent Design (ID) would be of interest to me - they have made many of the same arguments against ET as I had formulated in the 80's. However for Dembski to say that Intelligent Design is not the same as Creationism is like saying your house is not the same as your home (because your house is made of wood and you pay taxes, whereas your home is where you live and watch television - see his Chapter 2, pages 38-40 for a similar non-sequitur distinction).

I did get a few things out of the book such as (I added some commas to help comprehension):
* page 28 "People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of truth but on the basis of what they find attractive." (Blaise Pascal in his "Art of Persuasion")
* page 33 "Intelligent Design does not try to get into the mind of a designer and figure out what a designer is thinking." > This a major difference between me and them - I do try to get in the mind of designers (perhaps it is from my science degree in Archaeology).
* page 36 concept of Michael Behe's irreducible complexity (I have read "Darwin's Black Box" 1996) and the example of "flagellum - an acid powered rotary motor ... that spins at 20,000 rotations a minute..." that Dembski brings up half a dozen times in other chapters (e.g. pages 110, 148, 216, 276, 278 & 319).
* page 57 - trying to explain why the term "Intelligent Design" is needed. I am in agreement with the detractors that it is redundant but perhaps needed account ET co-opting the usage of the word Design (and

Experiment) with no shame as part of Darwin mechanisms. The part about "optimal design" is helpful but not so much the section on "apparent design". Perhaps the question is there such a thing as Unintelligent Design? The Japanese have annual awards for such endeavours.
* page 60 whence noting Octupi (yeah I know it is "incorrect" but it facilitates communicating better than "Octupodi") have correctly wired retina but there is no evidence it is better at resolving objects.
* page 68 "Far from rejecting the design argument, Kant objected to overextending it."
* page 69 "... if the gravitational constant were slightly larger , stars would be too hot and burn too quickly for life to form. ...if the gravitational constant were slightly smaller, stars would be so cool as to preclude nuclear fusion and with it the production of the heavy elements necessary for life."
* page 75 "The whole point of the design inference is to draw such a distinction between natural and intelligent causes."
* page 82 "The complexity in specified complexity refers to improbability."
* page 118 "...the number of possible proteins of length 200 and the maximum number of pairwise collisions of particles throughout the history of the universe ... that the known universe hasn't had time since the big bang to run through all the possible proteins of length 200 even once." Stuart Kauffmann in his 2000 book "Investigations". Or as I put it "There isn't enough time and matter to devise one gene (let alone millions of them)" > each gene is a separate creation (event) and recognizing that may help solve (get behind the mind of) who or why of the intelligence behind it.
* page 144 "...Francis Crick's theory of 'directed panspermia' ...the seeding of life from outer space". I was aware of Crick's supporting the notion of alien intervention but not the term for it.
* page 206 "Geologists as late as late as 1960 confidently asserted that the geosynclinal theory provided the answer (to how mountain ranges originate)." page 207 "Within ten years... the theory plate tectonics, which explained mountain formation through continental drift and sea floor spreading, had decisively replaced geosynclinal theory." I had a geologist friend who, in the sixties, had bumper stickers make up to say "Stop Continental Drift" (directed at the theory).
* page 224 "Organism repair themselves, watches do not."
* page 225 "There is no known instance where something exhibits functional interdependence of parts, adaption of means to ends, and so on, without being designed."
* page 263 "Getting design without a designer is a good trick indeed. Darwin was like a magician performing far enough away from his subjects that he could dazzle them - until somebody starts handing out binoculars. Darwin's idea was a good trick while it lasted."
* page 269 "We can show how, with the technological resources at hand, the ancient Egyptians could have produced the pyramids. By contrast, material mechanisms known to date, offer no such insight into biological complexity. Cell biologist, Franklin Harold in 'The Way of the Cell' (2001) remarks that in trying to account for biological complexity, biologists have thus far merely proposed 'a variety of wishful speculations'." Dembski and Harold may be unfair here in that some biologists may be Creationists.
* page 270 "Critics of evolution who say it is merely a theory don't go far enough. It doesn't deserve to be called a theory - at least not when purporting to account for the emergence of biological complexity. ... evolutionary theory isn't so much a theory as a pile of promissory notes for future theories, none of which has been redeemed since the publication of Darwin's 'Origin of Species' almost 150 years ago."
* page 277 "Even the simplest bacterial flagellum requires around forty proteins for its assembly and structure. All these proteins are necessary in that in that lacking any of them, a working flagellum does not result."
* page 282 "According to Popper, one mark of a good scientific theory is that it is highly refutable in principle while consistently unrefuted by the evidence in practice."
* page 284 "With respect to biological design, humans are in the same position as a dog in the back of a pickup. The dog hasn't the foggiest idea how the pickup was put together and doesn't know any other dogs who understand how it was put together. Our incomprehension over biological design is the incomprehension of the dog in the pickup."

* page 285 "Another aspect of testability is predictability. A good scientific theory, we are told, is one that predicts things. If it predicts things that do not happen, then it is tested and found wanting. If it predicts things that do happen, then it is tested and found successful. If it does not predict anything then what? ... For instance, natural selection and random variation applied to single celled organisms offers no insight at all whether we can expect multi-celled organisms much less whether evolution will produce the various body plans for which natural history has left us a record."
* page 286 "... Darwin's theory has no way of predicting just what sorts of adaptive changes will occur. 'Adapt or go extinct' is not a prediction of Darwin's theory but a logical truth that can be reasoned out independently of the theory. Indeed, it was reasoned out before Darwin, and reasoned out by design advocates, no less."
* page 286 "Darwin's theory has absolutely no predictive power... why else did Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge need to introduce their theory of punctuated equilibrium if the fossil record was such an overwhelming vindication of Darwinism?"
* page 295 "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."
* page 305 "Thomas Kuhn ... the old guard never opens its arms to scientific revolution ..." Seems this is not totally valid - just review Dembski's note on Continental Drift replacing Geosynclinal Theory (GT) (page 206) in ten years - all those GT proponents would not have died in one decade .
* pages 312-313 "The picture of technological evolution that emerges out of TRIZ (study of hundreds of thousands of patents) maps amazingly well onto the history of life as we see it in the fossil record and includes the following: (a) New technologies emerge suddenly as solutions to inventive problems. Such solutions require major conceptual leaps (i.e. design); (b) Existing technologies can, by contrast, be modified by trial-and-error tinkering; (c) Technologies approach ideality and thereafter tend not to change; (d) new technologies, by supplanting old technologies, can upset the ideality and stasis of the old technologies, thus forcing them to evolve in new directions ... or by driving them to extinction."
* page 317 "... second-order steganography ... would provide decisive confirmation of intelligent design." A 1988 episode of 'Star Trek: the Next Generation' used this as a plot device where hidden messages were strewn throughout DNA of different species in the galaxy.

Lynn Margulis work is mentioned on page 261. That is now three recent books I have read that have referred to her groundbreaking work ("The Wizard and the Prophet" and the book on leatherback turtles). I have marked her book "Acquiring Genomes: A Theory of the Origin of Species" as TO READ.

Jon says

Excellent explanation and defense of Intelligent Design as a legitimate and superior scientific theory to Darwinism.

Mike says

This book has a lot of information in it, no pun intended. I learned a lot about design, information, and lots of theories. It isn't an easy read and it takes a while to get through but Dembski lays out a handful of great points and arguments. A great read for anyone interested in learning about design and the scientific power that it holds.

Dora says

A good book for those who want to know the basics of intelligent design.

Ray says

This book really is a stunning accomplishment. Dembski is a real master at organizing a tremendous amount of material and getting straight to the point. The result can be slow going for the non-specialist like myself, but very rewarding.
Despite all the desperate attempts to silence ID, they are not going away. Chapter 41 (Peer Review) alone is worth the cover price -- it shows the lengths to which the neo-Darwinian establishment will go to belittle and marginalize any creative attempts to question them. Whatever you think of ID and the debates, this chapter will interest anyone who cares about free speech and about the growing illiberal nature of the academy.

Dembski, like several others in the ID movement (see Jonathan Wells, or some of the contributors to Mere Creation), is one of the great intellectual athletes of this generation: a Ph.D. in math from Chicago, another Ph.D. in philosophy; graduate and post doc degrees in theology (Princeton Seminary), computers, biology, etc. from places like Princeton U. and MIT, with a huge corpus of writings. He's a renaissance man who really is able to master several disciplines and show connections between them. That makes his books so fun and engaging even for people without special interest in science.

Of all his books, I found this one probably the most engaging, and most able to help me see how ID ties into a larger framework of worldview issues.

Rahell Omer says

This was the first publication by Dembski that I read, although I had heard of him many year before now.

Dembski argues for Intelligent Design - ID by means of "Specified Complexity". That's the crux of his argument. I had even read a lot about Specified Complexity, but since this was directly from Dembski, it was different. (If you want, you can just search for Specified Complexity and take it from there).

What is specified complexity - SC?
Imagine a combination lock whose dial is numbered from zero to thirty nine and that it has three alternating directions, so you will have 64,000 (40x40x40) possible combinations. Now imagine another lock but with zero to ninety nine and must be turned in five alternating directions, so you will have 10,000,000,000 (100x100x100x100x100) possible combinations.
The Greater the complexity, the smaller the probability.
*So the "complexity" in SC refers to improbability.
And the "specified" in SC refers to conditionally independent patterns. If adding our knowledge of the pattern to a chance hypothesis did NOT alter the event's probability under that hypothesis, then it is a conditionally independent pattern.

Dembski wants/tries to formulate SC in a scientific manner i.e. to be considered a credible scientific criterion by which design can be detected. His line of reasoning is this, is the pattern in question contingent (i.e. not necessary)? If yes, then is it complex? If yes, then is it specified? Yes, then it is designed.
If only he convinced you SC does exist, then he has won the argument. His ways of making SC a scientific theory is:

1- A probabilistic version of complexity
2- Conditionally independent patterns
3- Probabilistic resources
4- A specificational version of complexity
5- Universal Probability Bound (search for this, it is amazing!)

I didn't quite understand these five ingredients, maybe I wasn't ready for it, but that is what you need to be convinced with the whole book. With these 5 he proves that SC is a scientific merit, not religious. And then upon this premise he goes on to answer the objections against ID. Objections like God of the Gaps, ID is a religious merit, ID doesn't provide any explanation, etc.. that were making troubles for me were answered sweetly!

It is important to know that he doesn't try to disprove Evolution or some sort of thing, he just tries to put some limits to it just same as Einstein's Relativity put some restrictions for Newtonian mechanics.

I want to conclude with this line to make you read this book, "Through his techniques of design detection as well as his organizational efforts, Dembski is making the revolution he describes in this book happen. If Thomas Huxley was 'Darwin's Bulldog', then Dembski is the man with the leash and the obedience training techniques to bring to Darwinism into check." Edward Sisson.

John says

A Primer on a Pseudoscience Masquerading as Science

Advocates of Intelligent Design claim that their hypothesis has no relationship at all with religion - especially of the fundamentalist Protestant Christian variety - so it is most curious that the foreword to this relatively terse tome is written by none other than fellow Brunonian - and former Nixon administration official and imprisoned Watergate affair conspirator, now born-again Christian - Charles Colson. I'm sorry, but having Colson write the foreword to this book is an implicit acknowledgement of the religious - not scientific - origins of the "Intelligent Design" movement. Despite Dembski's claims to contrary - including an ingenious, but badly flawed, series of arguments based on probability theory and statistics - Intelligent Design is not a scientific theory at all (I had the pleasure of meeting him after an Intelligent Design debate held a few years ago at the American Museum of Natural History which also included as participants; fellow ID supporter Michael Behe, philosopher of science Robert Pennock, and fellow Brunonian and Professor of Biology, Brown University, Kenneth R. Miller. Dembski did not understand the simple statistical question I had raised pointing to a serious flaw in his probability theory which he cited in support of "Intelligent Design".). Why isn't Intelligent Design a scientific theory? The answer is obvious. It isn't a scientific theory since it does not create any testable hypthoses necessary for scientific research. In stark contrast, every scientific theory I know of, ranging from Einstein's Theory of General Relativity and Quantum Mechanics to the Theory of Evolution via Natural Selection which was developed independently by both Charles Darwin and Alfred R. Wallace, does create testable hypotheses. Instead, Intelligent Design is quite simply the latest

manifestation of an outmoded, scientifically rejected idea of a "Great Chain of Being" first proposed back in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries which was rejected by late 18th and early 19th Century scientists - many of whom were also devout Protestant Christian clergymen - as not being consistent with existing zoological data. Instead of reading this book, I strongly encourage potential customers to purchase instead Robert Pennock's "Tower of Babel" (It contains a devestatingly brilliant critique of Intelligent Design.), Kenneth R. Miller's "Finding Darwin's God", Eugenie Scott's "Evolution Vs. Creationism", or Niles Eldredge's "Darwin: Discovering the Tree of Life", the companion volume to the new American Museum of Natural History "Darwin" exhibition, which will eventually tour other museums in North America and the United Kingdom.

(Reposted from my 2005 Amazon review)

Brian says

Follow-up to No Free Lunch, Dembski continues to lead the Intelligent Design movement. This book focuses on current debate issues (43 rebuttals) and less on actual theory. A good read.
