



J. W. Haas, Jr.

Essay Book Review

From Intelligent Design to Quantum Divine Action—Recent Accounts of God and Nature

J. W. Haas, Jr.

This unique, inexpensive work provides an evenhanded view of the ID story and a wider look at current ways that Christians view God's directing hand in nature.

INTELLIGENT DESIGN: William A. Dembski & Michael Ruse in Dialogue by Robert B. Stewart, ed. Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 257 pages, index, notes. Paperback; \$22.00. ISBN: 9780800662189.

Intelligent design (ID) continues to be a hot-button topic. The March 2008 issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (PSCF) alone contains five reviews of new books on the subject. Can there be room for another? Yes, when it includes ID as part of a useful broad survey of realms of knowledge claimed to be metaphysical in nature—even though the title filters out this point.

The current volume emerged in part from a conference sponsored by the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum in Faith and Culture held at the Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta, Georgia, February 3–4, 2006, before an audience of 850. The venue had been moved from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary due to the destructive effects of Hurricane Katrina on campus facilities. Robert B. Stewart, conference director and seminary professor of philosophy and religion, has drawn together authors and topics with an even hand.

Intelligent Design (ID), championed by Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson, emerged in the late 1980s from three

intellectual streams which Donald Yerxa has described as (1) the underdetermination of evolutionary theory, (2) the emergence of anthropic arguments, and (3) the search for new theistic approaches to offset the naturalistic stance of mainstream evolution.¹ From the start, the American Scientific Affiliation provided opportunities for discussion of ID at annual meetings and in *PSCF*. In 1996 the Seattle-based Discovery Institute became the organizational base for the ID movement.

Johnson's "Wedge" strategy comprises three general approaches—scientific research and publication, publicity and opinion-making, and cultural confrontation and renewal—with the goal of destroying materialism and reinstating Christian values in education and society.² It was clear to the ID pioneers that they needed to win over the evangelical laity and scientists as well as the general public. To this end, a plethora of conferences, lectures, books, academic papers, interviews, and blogs have spread the message.

Fifteen years later, a 2005 Gallup poll found that 31% of Americans favored ID over natural selection as an explanation for the development of species. Yet, creationist organizations quickly disowned ID because it would not denounce evolution. The ID movement also lacks clarity for many because of changes in emphasis when one moves out to a non-Christian culture. In addition to many articles in *PSCF*, Robert T. Pennock's *Intelligent Design Creationism and*

John W. (Jack) Haas, Jr. served as professor of chemistry at Gordon College from 1961–1995. Following ten years as editor of *PSCF*, he became an editor of the ASA website. A physical chemist with research interests in electrochemistry and carbohydrate reaction mechanisms, he was inspired to work on historical aspects of science and Christianity at a 1987 seminar led by Ronald Numbers and David Lindberg. His publications in this area include studies of the response to science of British Methodists from John Wesley to those of the early twentieth century. He is elder, organist, web page editor, and Sunday school teacher at First Presbyterian Church, Ipswich, MA.

Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives offers a full treatment of the many sides of a debate which engages Christians, militant atheists, politicians, scientists, cultural pundits, and those seeking an alternative to evolution.³

In the title chapter of *Intelligent Design*, William Dembski, ID's foremost spokesman, and Michael Ruse, anti-ID philosopher of science, offered well-honed presentations and good-humored dialogue that pulled no punches. A panel of conference speakers then offered follow-up comments.

Martinez Hewlett's "The Evolution Wars: Who is Fighting with Whom about What?" discusses the infamous warfare metaphor in the context of the recent Dover, PA, school board trial. Hewlett, a molecular biologist and writer on science and religion, defines science and lists the three criteria for theories to be useful: "The model must have explanatory value ... have predictive value and be fertile ... [and] must be falsifiable" (p. 45). He provides a short historical sketch and description of evolution and finds the current neo-Darwinian model acceptable in the light of these criteria. Hewlett locates the war in what he dubs "Ideological Shrink-Wrapping" by atheists, social Darwinians, and eugenicists—whose views challenge the core of Christian faith. ID fails when measured by the values of scientific fruitfulness and falsifiability and thus adds to the shrink-wrap. Hewlett offers, instead, theistic evolution as a productive model that enables science to flourish, separates primary from secondary causes, emphasizes God's purpose for nature, is consistent with incarnational theology, and values scientific vocations.

Philosopher William Lane Craig's chapter, "Naturalism and Intelligent Design," asks: "Can one embrace both evolutionary theory and nonnaturalism?" in the light of the ID critique. He concludes that Dembski holds a weak form of naturalism which "... implies not atheism, but what we might call theistic indifferentism" (p. 59). In general, "It is mistaken ... to think that evolutionary theory commits us to atheism or the nonexistence of nonnatural beings" (p. 60). In turn, Craig finds that an evolutionist need not be committed to antiteleological, methodological, antisupernaturalistic, and pragmatic forms of naturalism. "Antiteleological and methodological naturalism may commit us to evolutionary theory, but the reverse is not the case" (p. 65). His complaint is "not the prohibition of the supernatural in science but the exclusion of teleology in nature." Craig asks:

What happens to evolutionary theory if we do not assume, metaphysically or methodologically, antiteleological naturalism? If we permit design hypotheses to compete on a level playing field with the evolutionary hypothesis, which emerges as a better question? I honestly do not know the answer to that question (p. 71).

Craig joins Dembski in the charge that evolutionary theory has been unable to come up with satisfying mechanisms for particular complex biological systems. The scientist responds, "Give us time." Who has the stronger faith? Back to square one!

The cultural confrontation dimension of the Wedge strategy receives attention in the chapters that describe legal issues related to incorporating ID into public school curriculum. Chapter 4, "The Collapse of Intelligent Design," represents Wesley R. Elsberry and Nicholas Matzke's somewhat shrill account of the landmark *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District et al.* school board case that attracted international attention in 2005. The two were active on the side of the eleven community plaintiffs who sued their school board for requiring the introduction of ID into the biology curriculum and for adopting the ID textbook, *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins*. The plaintiffs were represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and Pepper Hamilton LLP and advised by the National Center for Science Education. The school board was defended by the Thomas Moore Law Center which had been avidly looking for an ID test case.

Curiously, the Discovery Institute (DI) played little part in the proceedings. Five DI board members had volunteered to be expert witnesses. However, three, including Dembski, withdrew without testifying. The Institute submitted an *amicus* brief to the court of peer-reviewed and peer-edited articles (p. 82). Despite that, DI's biology expert Michael Behe's testimony would contain the admission:

There are no peer-reviewed articles by anyone advocating for intelligent design which provide detailed rigorous accounts of how intelligent design of any biological system occurred.⁴

As the trial wore on, the media frenzy and behind-the-scenes behavior of the participants evoked memories of the *Scopes v. Tennessee* case eight decades ago. To most observers, the case for ID was not ready for prime-time in the courts.

However, Baylor legal scholar Francis J. Beckwith's chapter, "Intelligent Design, Religious Motives, and the Constitution's Religious Clauses," finds constitutional room for ID in public schools. He analyzes earlier court cases that struck down anti-evolution statutes because they promoted either a biblical view over science (*Scopes*, Epperson 1968) or a balanced treatment that placed both views on the student table (*McLean v. Arkansas*, 1982; *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 1987). The issue for Beckwith is the "religious motivation baggage" that *allegedly* accompanies anti-evolution and/or design arguments. A statute will fall if the motive or purpose of its advocates can be demonstrated to be religious—one reason for Judge Jones's

Essay Book Review

From Intelligent Design to Quantum Divine Action – Recent Accounts of God and Nature

dismissal of the policy in the Dover case. Beckworth considers this judgment as “both logically fallacious and constitutionally suspect” (p. 95). He then argues a constitutionally consistent view, that “a law’s purposes and a legislator’s (or a citizen’s) motive are conceptually distinct.” I suspect that few readers would disagree with his point regardless of the validity of the other reasons for Judge Jones’s decision.

Subsequent chapters in *Intelligent Design* were chosen to broaden the scope of the conference. Oxford University theologian Alister E. McGrath’s “Dawkins, God, and the Scientific Enterprise” examines the place of Charles Darwin’s ideas in Dawkins’ high-profile form of atheism. McGrath has debated Dawkins on occasion yielding nothing to arguments which he refers to as atheistic fundamentalism—“antireligious embodiments, characterized primarily by their dogmatism, refusal to take alternatives with any intellectual seriousness, and their hectoring aggressive rhetoric” (p. 101). A former atheist, he ably demonstrates holes in Dawkins’ arguments—circular argumentation, basing a universal worldview on a provisional scientific theory, and his too-easy dismissal of critiques of logical positivism.

Darwin, at the close of *Origin of Species* (1859), predicted that a future account of psychology would be based on the evolutionary ideas that he had been describing. Slow to gain scientific status, this field today might be described as the study of the physical nature of brains, how brains process information, and how the brain information-processing programs generate behavior. Biola University philosopher J. P. Moreland offers a theistic ID approach to psychology in his chapter “Intelligent Design and Evolutionary Psychology as Research Programs”—a natural extension of the ID concept to the most complex of biological systems. Moreland’s proposal is very similar to his 2001 paper “Intelligent Design Psychology and Evolutionary Psychology: A Comparison of Rival Paradigms.”⁵

Moreland proposes a Christian approach (IDP_C) to counter the standard naturalistic evolutionary psychology (EP_N). His model is grounded with ontological commitments concerning the being and nature of God, God’s freedom to act, and God’s value properties exemplified by humans as moral activities, sin, and much more. IDP_C’s epistemological/methodological commitments recognize the value of both first-person and third-person descriptions of living organisms. A top-down approach is critical in contrast to the bottom-up approach used to investigate molecular behavior. IDP_C methodology “will embrace both event/causal covering law explanations for phenomena as well as irreducible personal explanations for phenomena” (p. 120). For Moreland:

IDP_C implies that psychology should be defined not primarily as a study of behavior, and certainly not primarily as a study of the brain and its mecha-

nisms related to behavior, but as a study of the soul/self and the different aspects of consciousness intrinsic to it (p. 123).

Moreland next examines EP_N and finds it wanting.

Hal N. Ostrander moves beyond biological complexity and the science of human behavior to questions involving the nature of the universe—its history and structure. In “Because ‘Cause’ Makes Sense: The Anthropic Principle and Quantum Cosmocauality,” Ostrander offers a theistic cosmology based on two versions of the anthropic cosmological principle. The phrase “anthropic principle” was coined by theoretical astrophysicist Brandon Carter, in his contribution to a 1973 Kraków symposium honoring Copernicus’s 500th birthday. Various prominent physicists picked up on the term which became a topic of much public interest and controversy within the scientific and apologetic communities. The subject has been marked by a lack of clarity in definitions of various terms.

Accepting the Tipler and Barrow definitions, Ostrander bases his thinking on the *weak anthropic principle* and the *strong anthropic principle*. The weak anthropic principle takes note of the fact that a host of physical and cosmological properties are restricted to particular values at various places in the universe for life to exist. The strong anthropic principle is seen as an organizing meta-principle that directs the laws of nature to a desired purpose—provision of enough time to get things done. Ostrander draws together these ideas in the form of a theistically instantiated anthropic cosmological principle.

Ted Peters, Stanley Jaki, John Polkinghorne, and Howard J. Van Till are among those who have written on the subject in theistic terms. Scientists and philosophers of little or no religious persuasion have commented in religious language over the fine-tuning of fundamental physical constants, lengths, times, mass of particles, and cosmic coincidences of singular value for carbon-based life to be possible. Ostrander views a six-member theistic set of causal powers (material, formal, instrumental, final, efficient, and sufficient cause) that works with the anthropic cosmological principle to produce a cosmos inhabited by human life—something to ponder in more detail.

Philosopher and theologian Nancey Murphy further considers divine action in her chapter, “Science, Divine Action, and the Intelligent Design Movement: A Defense of Theistic Evolution.” She sketches the history of divine action from the medieval period to the present, concluding that Christians are left with the choice of an interventionist (dare we say “God-of-the-Gaps”) creation or an immanentist noninterfering God closely associated with (perhaps part of) creation.

Murphy finds traditional theistic evolution, progressive creationism, and ID as wanting in terms of accounting

for divine interaction. She then offers Robert J. Russell's idea founded in quantum thinking that "God performs special, intentional, but non-interventionist acts at the indeterminist quantum level" (p. 155). Theistic evolution *would* be the ideal position if it could avoid interventionism or immanentism.⁶ As Murphy explains it,

God is immanent in all of the entities and processes at the quantum level, sustaining them in existence ... God's cooperation consists in God's participation in all deterministic processes, and in not interfering with the basic nature of the creatures he has made (p. 163).

Evolution involves both variation and selection. Russell has listed the sorts of mutations affecting variations that involve quantum rather than classical deterministic processes and that are noninterventional and thus invisible to science.

John Polkinghorne then turns an outsider's eye to what he dubs an "old kind of theistic defense dressed in new intellectual clothes" (p. 168). This involves the ID claim that certain parts of nature must be explained as the result of a designer. He reminds the reader of what science is and is not—emphasizing its limited role as a method and its inability to answer questions involving meaning and purpose. Science is further limited in the quantum world whose "facts" appear indeterministic.

In evaluating ID as a defense of metaphysics, Polkinghorne offers a brief overview of the science and theology involved. He finds five elements of science to be important: (1) fragmentary accounts, (2) intrinsic unpredictabilities, (3) relationality, (4) evolving and emergent complexity, and (5) fine-tuned potentiality. At one point he notes:

We could say that Hoyle felt that he perceived intelligent design present in the world. This world would, of course, be quite different from the ID movement's claim to discern a different kind of intelligent design present in the detailed structures of some living beings. The former relates to the rules of the cosmic game; the latter refers to specific moves in that game (p. 172).

Theology offers three important concepts: (1) creation, (2) kenosis, and (3) providence. Finding ID to fall short on these scientific and theological lines, Polkinghorne offers a complex version of theistic evolution which finds "God present both in the chance and in the necessity of creation" (p. 177).

Oxford research fellow in mathematics John C. Lennox examines the place that ID plays in the current debate over faith and science writ large. He is frustrated by the unintended consequences of the strategies employed to broaden the reach of the concept—dismissing theological

questions, focusing myopically on biology, and ignoring philosophy of science. He then offers a thorough discussion of these ideas, including fundamental questions concerning information. He concludes with the comment: "The evidence of God is to be seen mainly in the things that we do understand and not in the things we don't" (p. 195).

Ken Keathley's "Flat or Round? The Sixth Century Debate over the Shape of the Earth" shows us that the framework of faith—science discussion—has been with us for a long time. He contrasts the (unexpected) dismissal of ID by American creationists using the sixth-century debate between John Philoponus and Cosmas Indicopleustes. Both were Christians. However, Philoponus based his arguments on evidence and reason while Cosmas based his view of a flat earth on the Bible and evidence which confirmed Scripture. Cosmas claimed that a true Christian must accept the biblical account of creation and the cosmos or be a pagan. Philoponus regarded Cosmas's case as the "braying of an ignorant ass" (p. 199). In turn Cosmas once remarked: "How great is your knowledge! How great your wisdom! How great your intelligence! How great your inconsistency!" (p. 201). Philoponus felt that Cosmas was a bad exegete. Cosmas was (correctly) dubious about the other's acceptance of Ptolemaic cosmology. Keathley concludes that Philoponus wins because he directly engaged nature rather than examining it through the filter of Scripture. Creationists insist on the same filter in rejecting ID strategies. Keathley suggests that the ultimate fate of ID will depend on its scientific fruitfulness.

In an Afterword, Wolfhart Pannenberg offers a sweeping view of creation. In claiming that Christian faith in God the Father cannot be separated from the belief that he is the Creator of the world, Pannenberg insists that "Christian faith in creation must relate positively to the world of nature as it is described by the sciences" (p. 210). "The biblical report on creation has its authority in its function of providing an example for using the natural science of each period in the task of describing God's action in the creation of the world" (p. 211). Offering a sweeping survey of how this has played out, he notes Faraday's concept of bodies as effects of fields of force as offering new possibilities for God's influence in nature. Parallels between biblical salvation history and long-term processes in nature—a history of nature—encouraged new types of thinking for those bound to earlier static views of the natural order. Divine action can be seen as continuous in a lawful framework through which "his Spirit is creatively sustaining and animating his creatures" (p. 218).

A detailed set of notes expands on chapter content and offers further resources. This unique, inexpensive work provides an evenhanded view of the ID story and a wider look at current ways that Christians view God's directing hand in nature. ♦

Essay Book Review

From Intelligent Design to Quantum Divine Action – Recent Accounts of God and Nature

Notes

¹See Donald A. Yerxa, "Phillip Johnson and the Origins of the Intelligent Design Movement, 1977–1991," *PSCF* 54, no. 1 (2002): 47–8.

²Excerpted from a report by Phillip E. Johnson, Berkeley, CA, April 16, 2001.

Approximately ten years ago, I formulated the Wedge strategy with two related goals. The first was to legitimate the topic of intelligent design, and hence the critique of Darwinism and its basis in naturalistic philosophy, within the mainstream intellectual community. The second was to make the critique of naturalism the central focus of discussion in the religious world, replacing the deadlocked debate over the Genesis chronology which had enabled the Darwinists to employ the "Inherit the Wind stereotype" so effectively. The goals are intertwined because the approach which is capable of challenging the dominant philosophy in the

secular world will also tend to attract the most interest in the religious world. Likewise, the secular world finds it fairly easy to ignore a view which it can categorize as marginal in the religious world, but very difficult to ignore a view which has widespread and growing public support.

www.asa3.org/archive/asa/200104/0313.html

(accessed February 12, 2008)

³Robert T. Pennock, ed. *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).

⁴Quote from *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, 400F Supp. 2d 707.

⁵J. P. Moreland, *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 29 (December 2001): 261.

⁶Robert John Russell, "God's Providence and Quantum Mechanics," www.counterbalance.net/physics/qmprovid-frame.html (accessed February 12, 2008).

A Call for Book Reviewers

The readers of *PSCF* have long appreciated the many insightful reviews published within its covers. Reviews have been assigned to whoever requested a particular book first. Out of fairness to ASA members with different post delivery times and to assure the best fit between reviewer and book, *PSCF* is planning to **initiate book reviews by invitation**. If you would be open to being asked to contribute to this interesting and important service of writing a book review, please send a brief email to psfranklin@gmail.com that describes your areas of interest and expertise, preferred mailing address, and phone number. This information will be entered into a database that will bring you to the book review editors' attention when a book of interest to you and *PSCF* readers becomes available for review. Of course, when a book is offered to you by email or phone for review, you would still be able to accept or decline the mailing of the book at that time.

Book Review Editors

Rebecca Flietstra (Point Loma Nazarene University)

3900 Lomaland Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
rflietst@pointloma.edu

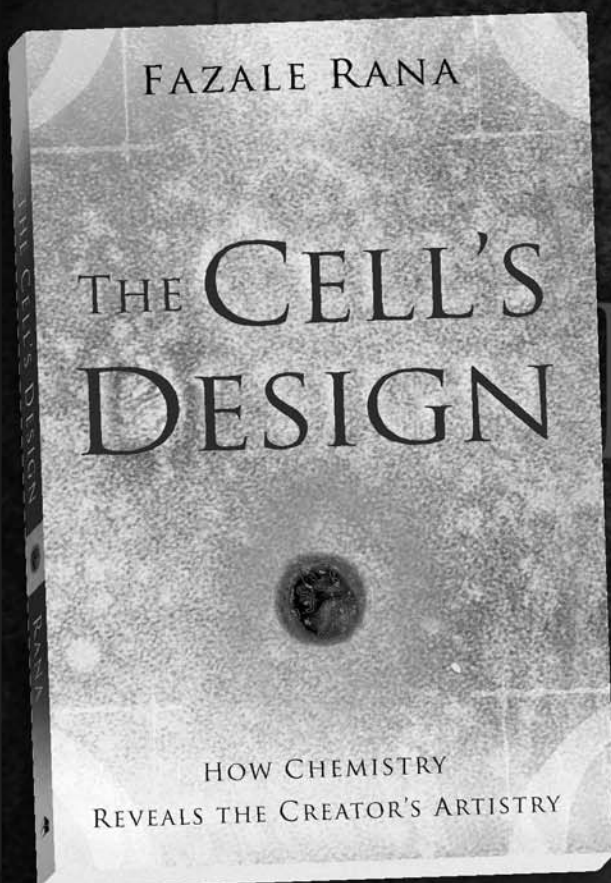
James C. Peterson (McMaster University Divinity College and Faculty of Health Sciences)

1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 4K1 Canada
peterso@mcmaster.ca

Arie Leegwater (Calvin College)

1726 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4403
leeg@calvin.edu

HOW CHEMISTRY REVEALS *the* CREATOR'S ARTISTRY



The Cell's Design

HOW CHEMISTRY REVEALS THE CREATOR'S ARTISTRY

Fazale Rana

9780801068270 • 336 pp. • \$16.99p

Armed with cutting-edge techniques, biochemists have unwittingly uncovered startling molecular features inside the cell that compel only one possible conclusion—a supernatural agent must be responsible for life. Destined to be a landmark apologetic work, *The Cell's Design* explores the full scientific and theological impact of these discoveries. Instead of focusing on the inability of natural processes to generate life's chemical systems (as nearly all apologetics works do), Fazale Rana makes a positive case for life's supernatural basis by highlighting the many biochemical features that reflect the Creator's hallmark signature.

This breakthrough work extends the case for design beyond irreducible complexity. These never-before-discussed evidences for design will evoke awe and amazement at God's creative majesty in the remarkable elegance of the cell's chemistry.

"As I sat in a class on cell biology at MIT, a thought kept going through my head: *This cannot have just happened;*

someone must have made it this way! I am not the only one who ever thought this. In this book Dr. Rana takes us on a far more detailed tour of the inner chemistry of the cell and shows why that intuition is indeed well-founded; in fact, many new discoveries in biochemistry only make the conclusion stronger. Like William Paley's *Natural Theology*, which aimed to overwhelm the skeptics with example after example of 'contrivance,' or design, Dr. Rana's book builds a strong cumulative case for design, and thus a Designer, from the way the cell works. Those of us who know the Designer can rejoice with awe at the magnificence of these designs, and we can pray that this book will help those who do not know the Designer to seek after him." —**C. John Collins**, professor and chairman, department of Old Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary

"Zoologist Richard Dawkins defines *biology* as 'the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.' Fazale Rana's book plausibly argues that we are dealing with more than the appearance of design. In his well-researched, carefully argued book, he further advances the case for the complex cell's actual design. The remarkable phenomenon of the cell is one that naturalism is profoundly hard-pressed to explain." —**Paul Copan**, Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University



Available at your local bookstore, www.bakerbooks.com, or by calling 1-800-877-2665

BakerBooks