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## Desperate attempts to discover ‘the elusive process of evolution’

A review of *The Altenberg 16: An Exposé of the Evolution Industry* by Suzan Mazur

North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 2010

reviewed by [Walter J. ReMine](#)

Because this book was written by an evolutionist, creation scholars will especially love it. *The Altenberg 16* looks at the rivalry in science today surrounding attempts to discover “the elusive process of evolution”. Its centerpiece is the by-invitation-only symposium held at Altenberg, Austria, in July 2008, attended by 16 evolutionary scientists, called the Altenberg 16 (figure 1).

“[W]hile the Altenberg 16 have roots in neo-Darwinian theory, they recognize the need to challenge the prevailing Modern Synthesis, *because there’s too much it doesn’t explain* [emphasis added]” (p. vii).

“The Altenberg 16 ... recognize that the theory of evolution which most practicing biologists accept and which is taught in classrooms today, *is inadequate in explaining our existence* [emphasis added]” (p. 19).

“A wave of scientists now questions natural selection’s role, though fewer will publicly admit it” (p. 20).

“Evolutionary science is as much about the posturing, salesmanship, stonewalling and bullying that goes on as it is about actual scientific theory. It is a social discourse involving hypotheses of staggering complexity with scientists, recipients of the biggest grants of any intellectuals, assuming the power of politicians while engaged in *Animal House* pie-throwing and name-calling: ‘ham-fisted’, ‘looney Marxist hangover’, ‘secular creationist’, ‘philosopher’ (a scientist who can’t get grants anymore), ‘quack’, ‘crackpot’ ...

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‘A wave of scientists now questions natural selection’s role, though fewer will publicly admit it.’

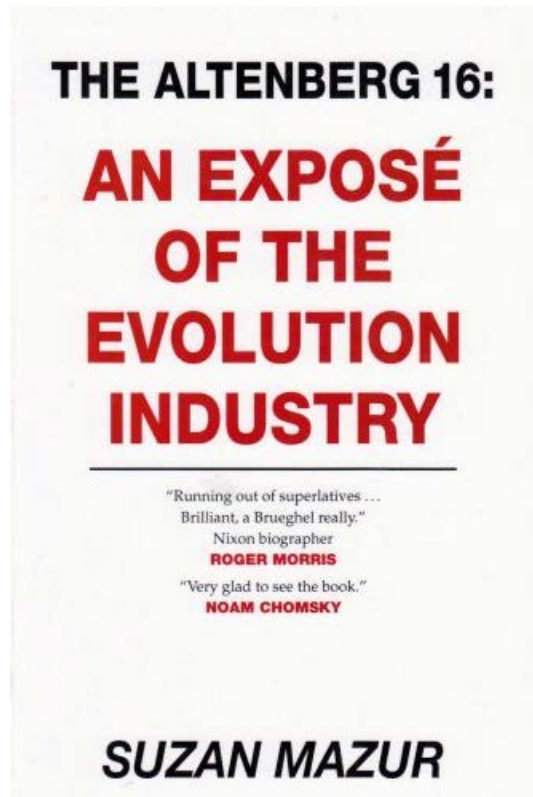
“In short, it’s a modern day quest for the holy grail, but with few knights. At a time that calls for scientific vision, scientific inquiry’s been hijacked by an industry of greed, with evolution books hyped like snake oil at a carnival.

“Perhaps the most egregious display of commercial dishonesty is this year’s celebration of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*—the so-called theory of evolution by natural selection, i.e., survival of the fittest, a brand foisted on us 150 years ago.

“Scientists agree that natural selection can occur. But the scientific community also knows that *natural selection has little to do with long-term changes in populations* [emphasis added, ellipsis in original]” (p. v).

Good reporting

The book gives numerous statements that creation scholars will cheer. I therefore expected its author, Suzan Mazur, to offset those by giving the usual,



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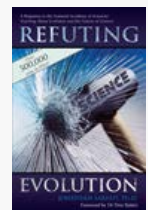
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‘Scientists agree that

obligatory, condemnation of creationists or the usual, stern (but empty), warning that ‘creationists will find nothing useful here’. I was pleasantly surprised these were absent from her prose. Though Mazur is an evolutionist, she is clearly a serious reporter, committed to the reporter’s craft of excluding her own views. The book is careful reportage throughout. She asks pointed questions of many evolutionary scientists, and gives lengthy transcripts of their responses, along with biographies, and observations about their appearance, manner, habits, and hobbies. It’s unlikely a creationist reporter could have gotten these same evolutionists to open up that much.

## Natural selection is insufficient

The book openly acknowledges the insufficiency of explaining evolution via *natural selection* (i.e. mutation and recombination plus various forms of selection)—and documents this point with statements from leading evolutionary scientists.

“We are grappling with the increasing feeling ... that we just don’t have the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to make sense of the bewildering diversity and complexity of living organisms” (from the invitation to attend the Altenberg conference, p. 31).

“*Basically I don’t think anybody knows how evolution works [emphasis added]*” (Jerry Fodor, p. 34).

“Oh sure natural selection’s been demonstrated ... the interesting point, however, is that it has rarely if ever been demonstrated to have anything to do with evolution in the sense of long-term changes in populations. ... Summing up we can see that the import of the Darwinian theory of evolution is just unexplainable caprice from top to bottom. What evolves is just what happens to happen [ellipsis in original]” (Stanley Salthe, p. 21).



**Figure 1.** The Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, where ‘The Altenberg 16’ evolution summit took place.

practitioner of neo-Darwinism but advances in molecular genetics, evolution, ecology, biochemistry, and other news had led him to agree that neo-Darwinism’s now dead” (Lynn Margulis, p. 278).

“The point is, however, that an organism can be modified and refined by natural selection, but that is not the way new species and new classes and new phyla originated” (Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, p. 314).

## Why is natural selection insufficient?

The book identifies key areas where natural selection is not a sufficient explanation, but discusses those only briefly and superficially. Mazur could have done a better job explaining these problems that are driving evolutionary scientists up the wall. I’ll greatly expand the discussion here.

One area is obviously the origin of life, since natural selection can’t operate until *after* life has begun. Yet modern science has revealed breathtaking complexity of the simplest known self-reproducing lifeforms. To explain away these difficulties, evolutionists are claiming the existence, on Earth, of countless lifeforms *unlike any known lifeforms*. They have no evidence of that; instead they are trying to keep their worldview from being falsified, by floating untestable explanations. In addition, evolutionists are now offering unknown processes of ‘self-

*natural selection can occur. But the scientific community also knows that natural selection has little to do with long-term changes in populations.’*



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“There are people spouting off as if we know the answer. We don’t know the answer” (Stuart Kauffman, p. 54).

“Darwinism and the neo-Darwinian synthesis, last dusted off 70 years ago, actually hinder discovery of the mechanism of evolution” (Antonio Lima-de-Faria, p. 83).

“Do I think natural selection should be relegated to a less import role in the discussion of evolution? Yes I do” (Scott Gilbert, p. 221).

“She [Lynn Margulis] sees natural selection as ‘neither the source of heritable novelty nor the entire evolutionary process’ and has pronounced neo-Darwinism ‘dead’, since there’s no adequate evidence in the literature that random mutations result in new species” (Mazur, p. 257).

“At that meeting [Francisco] Ayala agreed with me when I stated that this doctrinaire neo-Darwinism is dead. He was a practitioner of neo-Darwinism but advances in molecular genetics, evolution, ecology, biochemistry, and other news had led him to agree that neo-Darwinism’s now dead” (Lynn Margulis, p. 278).

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assembly' and 'self-organization' (and associated terms like 'plasticity').

Another key area is the origin of higher taxa, especially the origin of phyla and classes. According to evolutionists themselves, the origin of all the animal phyla occurred within (or very near) a brief geological twinkling of an eye, known as the Cambrian Explosion. This is a big problem in itself.

But it gets worse. Stephen Jay Gould noted that the fossil sequence shows the most disparate (most different) biological designs tend to show up *first!* Followed by the slightly less-disparate designs. Followed by the still less different designs. Until, lastly, the last slight bits of interspecies biological diversity are filled-in at the very end of the process. The general trend in the fossil sequence is: the various phyla show up first, later various Linnaean classes are filled in, and still later various Linnaean orders are filled in ... and so forth. Gould called this pattern 'disparity precedes diversity'. And evolutionists cannot blame this sequence on an 'incomplete fossil record', as they often try to do.

That contradicts the expectations of Darwinism (and neo-Darwinism), which expects slow change that, over time, will *gradually accumulate* to large differences. In short, Darwinism expects the most disparate designs to show up *last*, not first. This is contradicted by the fossil record. (To be honest, to most people not emotionally invested in the matter, it falsifies the Darwinism.) Something is wrong at the core of Darwinian theory.

But it gets still worse. Recent discoveries in genetics are adding another interesting new challenge to the problem. Developmental biologists have observed a small set of genes coordinating organismal development of body plans—and *these are present across the multicellular kingdom, in the various phyla and classes*. Evolutionists call this the 'Developmental Genetic Toolkit'. According to evolutionary thinking, this complex toolkit *must* have originated in some common ancestor to all the phyla. But that common ancestor must have existed *prior to* first appearance of these phyla—in other words, prior to the Cambrian Explosion. The common ancestor (whose identity is still unknown) *must* have existed in the Pre-Cambrian— prior to the origin of multicellular life. In short, the genes that control body plans had to have originated when there were no bodies. The genes that control embryological development had to have originated when there were no embryos.

"At the point when the modern animal body plans first emerged [half a billion years ago] just about all the genes that are used in modern organisms to make embryos were already there. They had evolved in the single-celled world but they weren't doing embryogenesis [Mazur's braces]" (Stuart Newman, p. 52).

Natural selection cannot solve that problem: it cannot 'look ahead' and create an embryological toolkit for some future use. It cannot develop the 'tools' for making multicellular bodies when there are no multicellular bodies. Natural selection is insufficient, so once again evolutionists are appealing to mechanisms of self-assembly and self-organization.

Stuart Newman's paper, which "served as the centerpiece of the Altenberg symposium" (Mazur, p. 12), claims that all 35 or so animal phyla physically *self-organized* by the time of the Cambrian explosion, and selection *followed later as a 'stabilizer'* of the self-organized novelties.

"Look, when Sherman stresses that the sea urchin [which has no eyes] has, in-expressed, the genes for the eyes and for antibodies (genes that are well known and fully active in later species), how can we not agree with him that canonical neo-Darwinism cannot begin to explain such facts?" (Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, p. 321).

This problem, from genetics and the fossil record, is scientifically solid and firm—but the evolutionists' solution is not. Yet Mazur inverts the proper handling by giving a superficial description of the problem. Few of her readers will understand what is driving evolutionary scientists to such desperate lengths.

## Testability and experimental demonstrations

The evolutionary ideas of self-assembly and self-organization have two faults. First there is insufficient experimental demonstration.

"Self-organization is of course an important component, *but not much has been discovered beyond generalities*. *The immense amount of intricate detail* that geneticists and developmentalists have been discovering over the years *dwarfs general metaphors like autoevolution and even self-organization* [emphasis added]" (Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, p. 322).

Moreover, these evolutionary explanations lack scientific testability, or seriously risk that they could potentially be empirically falsified. Nobody seems to know how to test these.

"I think self-organization is part of an alternative to natural selection. Let me try to frame it for you. In fact, it's a huge debate. The truth is that we don't know how to think about it" (Stuart Kauffman, p. 291).

Due to this *two-fold scientific failure*, these mechanisms can kindly be called hyperbole, or just plain hype—not science. These do not meet the requirements for science that evolutionists endorsed in all their court cases. But this deficiency is not discussed in the book.

As we would predict for an evolutionary book of this type, it suggests no need whatever for testability of evolutionary explanations, in fact it scarcely mentions testability. Meanwhile evolutionists elsewhere resolutely demand testability from creation theories. This book is another example of the evolutionists' routine double standard: One standard (testability) required of creation theory; and a far lower standard required of evolutionary theory.

## Evolutionary epistemology

Here is how evolutionists arrive at what they 'know' about origins:

1. they take evolution as an unshakeable 'fact', and
2. science provides compelling evidence *against* many evolutionary explanations.

Those are taken together as evidence *for* the remaining evolutionary explanations—no matter how flakey, unsupported, or unscientific. This method of knowing runs deep within the evolutionist mindset. Evolutionists are constitutionally unable to 'see' evidence against evolution, even when hitting them in the face. *The Altenberg 16* provides an example. There are many examples.

There is so-called 'convergence', which is superabundant in life. For example, evolutionists claim vision arose more than forty separate times, and that a complex eye like yours—with a lens and retina—originated at least five separate times, as it is found separately in vertebrates, cephalopods (octopus/squid), annelid worms, jellyfish, and a spider (figure 2). Such origins have not remotely been demonstrated experimentally, and though these designs are complex, their similarity cannot be explained:

- ▶ by common descent, or
- ▶ by atavism (i.e. the masking, and later un-masking of genetic traits), or
- ▶ by sideways transposition of traits from one lineage to another (such as by lateral gene transfer, or endosymbiosis).

Wikipedia



**Figure 2.** Jumping spider eyes. Evolutionists claim that the complex eye—with a lens and retina—originated at least five separate times, as it is found separately in vertebrates, cephalopods, annelid worms, jellyfish, and spiders.

Those are merely the three versions of simple inheritance that evolutionists actively employ in their storytelling. But all three of these simple explanations are eliminated by the data. (Note: this was necessary to meet the goals predicted by Message Theory.<sup>1</sup>)

Evolutionists are left with their *least-easy, least plausible* 'explanation' of the situation—the bald-faced, unscientific claim for the *independent origin* of similar biological complexities. In short, these are strong *anti-evolutionary* evidences. Given the incredible flexibility of evolutionary storytelling, '*convergences*' are as *anti-evolutionary as they can be*.

Ironically, the more profound the antievolutionary evidence, the more the evolutionist sees it as evidence *for* the incredible power of some evolutionary mechanism! All evolutionists interpret convergence as evidence *for* the incredible power of natural selection.

Evolutionists instinctively recognize convergence as antievolutionary evidence, because they tend to *avoid* it in venues where evolution is not assumed as fact, such as debates with creationists. The evolutionist method is to set aside

the *anti-evolutionary* evidences long enough to conclude evolution is a 'fact', and then later reinterpret those as evidence *for* some evolutionary mechanism.

Simon Conway Morris gives convergence a book-length discussion.<sup>2</sup> He documents countless examples of astounding convergence, and, taken together with his assumption of evolution as 'fact', he is forced to conclude that convergence is *inevitable*, and extraterrestrial life, if it produces higher lifeforms, would likely produce bilateral large-brained humanoids, much like ourselves! Natural selection is *that* powerful! Convergence is *that* inevitable! What is the evidence that convergence is inevitable? Answer: that it *exists*, abundantly—no further evidence is needed. To evolutionists, sufficient experimental demonstration is not required of evolution, and neither is scientific testability.

Another example. The classical Darwinians sought to identify ancestors and used these as their central predicted evidence for evolution. (If they had succeeded, I would be an evolutionist today.) In various ways they created illusions, and their research program took 120 years to collapse. They failed because clear-cut ancestors and lineages are systematically absent. Therefore, starting in the mid-1970s, evolutionists sought to reformulate their theory (and their predictions, and their so-called 'evidence') so as to have no need for identifying the ancestors. The cladistic methodology then rose to prominence, and it never identifies real ancestors. Likewise, punctuated equilibria theory rose to prominence largely because it attempts to explain away this central failure of Darwinism.

Evolutionists began to acknowledge three profound *anti-evolutionary* patterns in the fossil record:

1. absence of change—non-change or 'stasis'—throughout the existence of fossil species
2. the systematic existence of large morphological gaps between lifeforms (i.e. the systematic absence of gradualism), which Stephen Jay Gould famously called, 'the trade secret of paleontology')
3. systematic absences of clear-cut ancestors and clear-cut lineages.

Evolutionists used these *anti-evolutionary* evidences, taken together with the 'fact' of evolution, as evidence *for* a new theory of evolutionary mechanism. If you locked yourself in a room with little but those things, you would eventually come out with their theory, punctuated equilibria, in all its essential details.

Items 1 and 2 were used as evidence for 'rapid evolution' at the origin of new species. But unknown to most people, item 3 gives the theory much of its distinctive character. According to the theory, evolution occurs predominantly at branching events (called speciation), in sudden rapid bursts, in random (largely non-adaptive) directions—thereby *scrambling* any lingering appearance of clear-cut ancestors and lineage. The theory was specially designed to *scramble* lineages and make the identification of ancestors 'indecipherable'. Evolutionists embrace this theory, despite its lack of experimental demonstration and lack of scientific testability. The theory is now well-protected, because ironically, the only way to *refute* it would be to provide convincing evidence for evolution.

As another example, take von Baer's laws of embryology (figure 3), which remain central to our best description of the patterns of embryo development. Those patterns happen to be *anti*-evolutionary evidence, especially the tendency for embryos to soon display their most-generalized characters and then continue in-sequence to display less-generalized characters, and eventually to display their most specialized characters. Put crudely, a given embryo soon displays the characteristics of its phyla, followed by the characteristics of its Linnaean class, then its Linnaean order, then family, and so forth. This embryological sequence—from generalized to specialized—is quite awkward for evolutionists to explain. Can you recall any evolutionist ever trying to explain von Baer's laws? The problem is so difficult; I can find no ready example of evolutionists ever explicitly trying to explain them. Instead, their answer was implicitly given, as Recapitulation Theory. The theory can be derived by locking oneself in a room with little but von Baer's laws, together with the 'fact' of universal common descent. You would come out of the room with Recapitulation Theory, in all its essential details.



**Figure 3.** Karl von Baer (1792–1876). von Baer's laws of embryology explain the 'anti-evolutionary' patterns of embryo development, which proceed from most-generalized characters, to less-generalized, and finally to their most specialized characters, as embryos grow.

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*But to evolutionists, all evidence supports some evolutionary mechanism. It cannot be otherwise. It simply must be so, because evolution is a 'fact'.*  
 ”

But Recapitulation Theory requires highly peculiar mechanisms, for which there exists no serious experimental demonstrations. Nonetheless, evolutionists widely promoted those recapitulation mechanisms as *real*, and foisted it all off on schoolchildren, even for many decades after evolutionist researchers privately knew it was false. Though recapitulation was thought finally expunged by Stephen Jay Gould (in his 1977 book *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*), it is still widely held today—because evolutionists possess no better answer. The central evidence for 'recapitulation mechanisms' is the *anti*-evolutionary evidence from embryology, taken together with the 'fact' of evolution.

For another example, look at the origin of life. Take the universe of ideas, and subtract all that don't take naturalistic origin of life as a fact. Then further subtract all ideas that have been scientifically refuted. The remainders are what textbooks teach about the origin of life—regardless of how flakey, undemonstrated, or untestable. Here the textbooks omit the real science. What we really know—scientifically—is the many ways the origin-of-life *didn't* happen naturalistically. Creationists now scientifically own the origin of life issue.

But to evolutionists, all evidence supports *some* evolutionary mechanism. It cannot be otherwise. It simply *must* be so, because evolution is a 'fact'.

## The concealment of funding

Lynn Margulis saw that government funding for evolutionary research comes in a disjointed manner from various distinctly separate government agencies and departments, rather than from a coherent single entity. So she, together with other evolutionists, wrote a letter to the National Science Foundation [NSF] urging it to set up a single entity, especially for funding evolution research.

"So we talked about ways of putting pressure on the National Science Foundation to set up an evolution section. ... This would lead to reduction of redundancy and save money for the funding agencies. ... Anyway, I deduced that the NSF scientist-bureaucrats were conflicted about our letter. The woman [representative from the NSF] assigned to answer us wrote to say there were so many American citizens opposed to evolution that if the NSF put chemistry, geology, etc. into a single evolution division, it would be like sticking out our heads to be chopped off. Such a proposal, no matter its intellectual validity, would surely not fly! She said the NSF thought it would strengthen evolution science by avoidance of the word 'evolution' and not by centralizing research activities" (Lynn Margulis, pp. 263–

264).

This shows how a centralized government can relabel things and partition a large funding stream in various confusing ways, so as to intentionally obscure where taxpayer money is going—and intentionally get around the will of the people. Evolutionists use this maneuver, and Mazur reports no objection to it. Evolutionists feel justified in intentionally withholding key information from the public. This is consistent with their belief system that morals are merely products of evolution.

## Censorship

Mazur calls attention to the existing censorship against non-Darwinian ideas. She opposes that censorship, and rightly so. Creationists experience far heavier censorship against their ideas. Yet her explanations for the censorship are nearly identical to what creationists say.

“The commercial media is both ignorant of and blocks coverage of stories about non-centrality of the gene because its science advertising dollars come from the gene-centered Darwin industry. ... . At the same time, the Darwin industry is also in bed with government, even as political leaders remain clueless about evolution. Thus, the public is unaware that its dollars are being squandered on funding of mediocre, middlebrow science or that its children are being intellectually starved as a result of outdated texts and unenlightened teachers” (Mazur, p. ix).

“The mainstream media has failed to cover the non-centrality of the gene story to any extent. ... this has to do largely with Darwin-based industry advertising, editors not doing their homework and others just trying to hold on to their jobs” (Mazur, p. 104).

“The thinking is we can no longer pretend evolution is just about Darwinian natural selection even if that’s what most biologists say it’s about and textbooks repeat it” (Mazur, p. 105).

“The consensus of the evolution pack [i.e. the science blogs] still seems to be that if an idea doesn’t fit in with Darwinism and neo-Darwinism—*keep it out*” (Mazur, p. viii).

“Unless the discourse around evolution is opened up to scientific perspectives beyond Darwinism, the education of generations to come is at risk of being sacrificed for the benefit of a dying theory” (Stuart Newman, p. 104).

“One reason that so little progress has been made in this area is that perfectly valid scientific concepts that employ nonadaptive evolutionary mechanisms are rarely considered because of the hegemony of the neo-Darwinian framework” (Stuart Newman, p. 131).

Lynn Margulis reveals how the established worldview (evolution) enforces unity within its ranks:

“[P]eople are always more loyal to their tribal group than to any abstract notion of “truth”— scientists especially. If not they are unemployable. It is professional suicide to continually contradict one’s teachers or social leaders” (Lynn Margulis, p. 275).

## Self-censorship

Disinterest by the mainstream media is one thing, but Mazur is especially alarmed with the self-censorship by evolutionary leaders themselves. Why are they keeping the American public in the dark? She asks why have the two major evolution conferences of the year “been hosted outside the United States”? Why in foreign languages? She is alarmed “The English-speaking world may not be getting the message” (p. 217). Why are evolutionary leaders not getting the message out? She repeatedly returns to this puzzle.

“I asked [Eugenie Scott, from the National Center for Science Education—the NCSE] what she thought about self-organization and why self-organization was not represented in the books NCSE was promoting? She responded that people confuse self-organization with intelligent design and that is why NCSE has not been supportive” (Mazur, p. 101).

More precisely, the NCSE “does not recommend textbooks for schools *if those texts include a discussion of self-organization*” (p. 254).

Eugenie Scott’s statement is nonsense. No matter what the new evolutionary theories may be, no-one will confuse those with intelligent design. She’s trying to blame her opponents for something within the evolutionist camp. I’ll explain her mischief later.

Mazur then asks Stuart Newman: “To what do you attribute the reluctance to distribute literature about self-organization by organizations like the National Center for Science Education?” (p. 131). He gets a little closer to the truth.

“I think there is a challenge that self-organization and plasticity in general presents to Darwinian theory ... . To my mind, self-organization does represent a challenge to the Darwinian, i.e. the modern synthesis and the perceived understanding of evolutionary theory. ... [P]eople are concerned that if they open up the door to non-Darwinian mechanisms, then they’re going to allow creationists to slip through the door as well [emphasis added]” (Stuart Newman, pp. 131–132).

Evolutionists are again blaming creationists as a factor that keeps evolutionists silent.

“I think that abandoning Darwinism (or explicitly relegating it where it belongs, in the refinement and tuning of existing forms) sounds anti-scientific. They [the many contributors to non-Darwinian evolutionary theories]fear that the tenants of intelligent design and the

creationists (people I hate as much as they do) will rejoice and quote them as being on their side. They really fear that, so they are prudent, some in good faith, some for calculated fear of being cast out of the scientific community” (Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, p. 317).

Mazur writes, “This is a big debate, which the media is not covering. It’s reached a crescendo and a lot of people are saying there’s a sea change happening” (p. 252). Meanwhile, at nearly the same time, the National Academy of Sciences published its book, *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*, as a denunciation of intelligent design and a defense of teaching only evolution in the public schools.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the NAS book omitted the crescendo of controversy and painted a false picture of unity about evolutionary theory and origins. Mazur pans it as “a very general book” and wryly asks Niles Eldredge about its ‘simplicity’. He responds:

“No. I mean look, when you’re fighting school boards who want to adopt Intelligent Design, you’ve got to write in very basic terms. It is a political problem. And there’s always a problem, as you know ... in communicating science to the public and being clear about it [Mazur’s ellipsis]” (Niles Eldredge, p. 329).

Eldredge adopts the usual justification: when dealing with the public, simplification is necessary— so long as the simplification *favours* evolution. If the simplification were to *dis-favour* evolution, evolutionists would soon discover their tongues and loudly denounce it.

(Note: It would be helpful if evolutionists dealt with origins in the same way they wanted their opponents to deal with it. *Habitual ‘simplification’ in one’s own favour* can be a form of dishonesty.)

Mazur objects that the NAS book didn’t include any ‘additional ways’ to consider, such as self-assembly and self-organization. So Eldredge answers:

“No, because it’s all regarded as speculative and on the forefront and stuff ... . What they’re trying to do [in the NAS book] is say where we are now, where we’re comfortable, where we can actually say that this is the way people really do think for the most part” (Niles Eldredge, pp. 329–330).

Eldredge is comfortable omitting the new evolutionary explanations, because *those* are ‘speculative’. But the *problems* aren’t speculative; they’re rock solid scientifically, and Eldredge/Mazur did not object to omitting those from the NAS book.

The self-censorship can now be explained. The new evolutionary mechanisms of self-assembly and self-organization arise from the evolutionists’ attempts to answer overwhelming problems that are scientifically rock-hard and straightforward to describe. But the evolutionary ‘answers’ are flakey, fluff, undemonstrated, and untestable—not scientific.

That explains why evolutionists prefer venues where evolution is taken as ‘fact’—say, at their by-invitation-only conferences. That explains why evolutionists *avoid* ‘self-organization’ for the general public, such as the NAS book. That explains why Eugenie Scott and the NCSE *actively oppose* including ‘self-organization’ *in school textbooks*. The NCSE is America’s leading anti-creation organization, and they don’t want ugly questions rising, such as: “What is the evidence for self-organization?” Because the answer would be: “The evidence *for* ‘self-organization’ is the overwhelming problems faced by evolutionary theory, taken together with the ‘fact’ of evolution?” This won’t look pretty in classrooms.

“Silence is the strongest weapon. The disregard for science’s ethical principles is widespread” (Lima-de-Faria, p. 91).

Suzan Mazur observes self-censorship in America, and she searches sincerely for its causes. But the dark truth is that she has censored her own book. Because she’s an evolutionist, she withheld from her readers a robust discussion of the many serious problems that are forcing evolutionists to such desperate solutions as self-assembly and self-organization.<sup>4</sup> I would welcome a sequel from her documenting these in the same professional, journalistic (unbiased) fashion with which she’s handled the majority of the material.

“

*Silence is the strongest weapon. The disregard for science’s ethical principles is widespread.*

”

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2. ReMine, W.J., [review of Life’s Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe](#), by Simon Conway Morris, *J. Creation* **20**(2):29–35, 2006. [Return to text](#).
3. See detailed refutation, Sarfati, J., [Science, Creation and Evolutionism](#), 8 February 2008. [Return to text](#).
4. I discuss these issues at length in ReMine, ref.1. [Return to text](#).


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## Readers' comments

 **Graham P.**, New Zealand, 2 November 2012

Wow! Great review.

 **Robert N.**, Australia, 2 November 2012

Surely this:


"Unless the discourse around evolution is opened up to scientific perspectives beyond Darwinism, the education of generations to come is at risk of being sacrificed for the benefit of a dying theory" (Stuart Newman, p. 104).

Is enough for England to rethink it's censorship of teaching science in the school classroom?

 **Suban J.**, India, 2 November 2012

Its a wonderful review.I thank God for your wonderful zeal to defend the authority of scriptures.I often wonder why the CMI/ID movement do not raise this "criminal" distortion and fallacy in a court of law? Why does this lie have a "Free Lunch" and get away with "zero accountability"? well, thats just my curiosity.

Let me take this oppourtunity to thank you for your love for the fellow brethren and serving christ faithfully.May God be the glory.

 **Jeannette P.**, United Kingdom, 2 November 2012

"Because this book was written by an evolutionist, creation scholars will especially love it."

How very true! I only read the first section of this review and laughed so much that I "had" to stop reading to get my breath back!

Psalm 2 comes to mind, God LAUGHS at the folly of those who think they can defeat Him. Its good to be able to laugh along with Him. Although the ignorance of man without God is sad too.

With all due reverence, I wonder if (to put it in merely human terms) He hardly knows whether to laugh or cry at our foolishness.

Thank you for alerting us to this amazing book!

 **Jack C.**, Australia, 2 November 2012

When Jesus returns there will be no more doubt by non-believers about how the theory of evolution is a heap of rubbish in terms of explaining the origin of the species. Meanwhile, CMI is doing a wonderful job of presenting the case for a Creator.

 **Michael M.**, United Kingdom, 2 November 2012

I have just been looking on Amazon.uk re this book. It didn't surprise me to find a lengthy report attacking the character of the author Suzan Mazur. Those who dare criticise the religion of evolution better be prepared for a character assassination.



**S. GILLES Z.**, Canada, 2 November 2012

I have been an avid consumer of your materials for years but have never commented. However, after reading this article, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate EVERYONE at Creation Ministries International for the exceptional job you are doing.

Articles like this, highlighting the many weaknesses in the Darwinian explanation for our origins - from the very evolutionists who claim to be its adepts - are precious material for those of us trying to inform our friends and family's on the subject.

Understanding the obstacles you must all face daily at CMI, I encourage you to find the will to continue in the fact that you ARE making a difference.

May the Lord our God richly bless all of his "faithful servants" at CMI and around the world...

**Curtis C.**, United States, 2 November 2012

"They [the many contributors to non-Darwinian evolutionary theories] fear that the tenants of intelligent design and the creationists (people I hate as much as they do) will rejoice and quote them as being on their side. They really fear that, so they are prudent, some in good faith, some for calculated fear of being cast out of the scientific community"

The importance of this quote is huge. "Hate"? This is an admission that they are intentionally skewing science because of a motivation of hatred towards certain people—not the ideas held by the people, but the people themselves.

People need to hear this quote. Thank you so much for bringing it out here.

**Gordon S.**, United Kingdom, 2 November 2012

It seems clear that many evolutionists are wedded to a materialistic world view. This appears to me to be the opposite error to that of the so-called Christian Scientists, which is, to quote Mrs Eddy: "Divine metaphysics explains away matter. Spirit is the only substance and consciousness recognised by divine Science" (Science and Health page 278). Rather, Paul speaks of both "flesh and spirit" ([2 Corinthians 7:1](#)).

**Stephen K.**, United States, 2 November 2012

I LOVE this part - so perceptive!

Here is how evolutionists arrive at what they 'know' about origins:

they take evolution as an unshakeable 'fact', and

science provides compelling evidence against many evolutionary explanations.

Those are taken together as evidence for the remaining evolutionary explanations—no matter how flakey, unsupported, or unscientific. This method of knowing runs deep within the evolutionist mindset.

I am startled by how bankrupt the evolutionists confess themselves to be when cozily settled in the old mansion to discuss their woes. And yet, they continue to close ranks against Biblical creation. "We may not always be right, but we're never wrong!"

**Doug T.**, United States, 4 November 2012

Wow! I can't believe she was able to even get this published!

**D. S.**, Australia, 6 November 2012

What a staggering article, and what a thought-provoking book it sounds. I would be most interested to read it.

The separation between what can be proven, what can be surmised and what we wish to persuade or convince people of can only ever be filled by faith, whether your faith is in God or evolution.

If you take the bible (NT), the earliest documents still extant date a century or 2 after the events they depict, but the process of

cross-referencing other copies from other places and translations allows a high degree of textual certainty ie what we have today convey as accurately as possible what the NT writers wrote. We can (and should) ask questions to verify the authenticity of the details, and do what we rationally can to ascertain the facts of the matter, but there is still a gap between those documents and the events which can only be filled by faith.

The gap between the scientific facts and what evolution would persuade us to believe is great and seems to be getting wider. There are only so many Appleby explanations you can use (ie explanations that don't explain, but you wanted an explanation so here's an explanation). And to plug the gap for evolutionists, there is only faith, lots and lots of faith, indeed far more faith than any Young-earth creationist who only has to believe in a God. Evolutionary faith is of the most abject and decrepid sort, unaware of itself, blind or blinded, or too dishonest to own itself. And if dishonest to themselves, how can we expect them to be honest to others.

Hugh Ross wrote in "More than a Theory" pertinently that in China they are not free to criticise the government but they can criticise Darwin, but in USA they are free to criticise their govt but not Darwin. Guess which country has an alarming drop in interest in science

#### → Shaun Doyle responds

Very true. We would however point readers to [this review](#) of Hugh Ross's *More Than a Theory*.

● **Lincoln P.**, United Kingdom, 6 November 2012

The article fails to mention that the symposium was called by Massimo Pigliucci. This needs to be added as it is generally expected that the organiser of a conference is usually noted when referring to the conference and Pigliucci has a notorious antithesis towards Creationism so it sets the tone of the conference.

● **Brian H.**, United States, 9 November 2012

Concerning this article, I was wondering; how credible can this author be considered? That is; can her quotes be reliably used to demonstrate the weakness of the current evolutionists' case or is there a hazard that she may have modified the quotes to sensationalize her story? I was wondering because when I went looking for more information about this book I found that it had a number of critics who claimed it was a gross distortion of what actually occurred at Altenberg. I recognize that anyone who is critical of evolution is likely to come under fire, but that does not in and of itself tell me if the material in the book is reliable. How do you go about determining the truthfulness of what you find in such books? If a source is misquoted, is there a place they object to? Which reviews are worth listening to concerning a text's reliability?

Thanks for any light you can shine on the subject,

Brian

#### → Shaun Doyle responds

The fact is the notion that neo-Darwinism is vastly inadequate for explaining microbes-to-man evolution is not all that controversial when evolutionists talk among themselves. It's been suspected by evolutionists for at least [50 years](#), and widely acknowledged among evolutionists for at least [30 years](#). It's only controversial in the public eye because neo-Darwinism has been presented dogmatically to the public as evolution for 50 years now. Of course, if the public sees the huge question marks scientists have about fundamental evolutionary processes (which is what it is), then they're liable to start thinking we creationists have a point. That is the absolute last thing practically all evolutionists want because then fewer people would listen when they write us off as idiots, psychos, and liars. This is of course what Mazur documents, especially with reference to orthodox neo-Darwinian popularizers like [Eugenie Scott](#). There's some good quote fodder in her book (the statements are rather more blunt than usual, which is refreshing), but none of what these evolutionists are saying is new.

An excellent parallel is [Stephen J. Gould](#). He was vehement in his attacks on 'gradualism' in the 1970s with his '[punctuated equilibrium](#)' idea because it simply didn't fit the fossil record. However, when creationists started using his material against evolutionists in the 1980s, he closed ranks with the evolutionists and toned down his rhetoric. He was an evolutionist first, after all. Nevertheless, he never changed his views—he just learnt how to nuance them so they sounded less critical of evolution. His personal comments reflected a much wider trend among palaeontologists and evolutionary systematists in the 1970s and 1980s (see [Cladistics, evolution and the fossils](#)).

These evolutionists will make a distinction between 'neo-Darwinism' and 'evolution'—'evolution' is naturalism applied to the history of life, and is thus the fundamental assumption that cannot be abandoned. However, 'neo-Darwinism' (random mutation + natural selection) is a particular hypothesis about how evolution works, and thus it can (theoretically) be abandoned without abandoning evolution (see e.g. [Evo-Devo refutes neo-Darwinism, supports creation](#)). The problem for these evolutionists is that everything they propose to either supplement or augment neo-Darwinism as the main evolutionary mechanism are vague and fuzzy. That is perhaps the biggest problem 'orthodox' neo-Darwinian popularizers (e.g. Eugenie Scott, Richard Dawkins, Jerry Coyne) have with this—all the attempts to replace neo-Darwinism as the main evolutionary mechanism are vague speculations that usually sound like nods to creationism (though they're not meant to be). So given the choice between a bad explanation we understand and vague speculations, the popularizers unsurprisingly stick with the devil they know.

In the light of that history, the question of whether Mazur sensationalized some of what she said is rather moot. Such statements are not new and are not uncommon. And ascertaining whether she did becomes a game of 'he said, she said', so it's hard to know. But since such notions are relatively common among evolutionists, unless the critics have solid proof that she took what these people said out of context and sensationalized it, I would say she's innocent until proven guilty. Moreover, the reviewer of the book is someone who has conducted an extensive review of evolutionary literature (see Remine's book *The Biotic Message*, and [our review](#)) and found much of the same thing, though admittedly not always as blunt (which is not really surprising, since Mazur is quoting what people said, but ReMine was quoting what people wrote in academic discourse). Bearing in mind that I have not personally read Mazur's book (which I would recommend you do for yourself), there is no reason to give her critics the benefit of the doubt before reading the book.

Comments closed



The Bible declares: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

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