

metaphysical naturalism (i.e., studying natural mechanisms vs. postulating only natural mechanisms)

COUNTERING DARWINIAN DOGMA

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Focus issue on BWH

to avoid entrenched confusion caused by shifting definitions and rhetorical tactics designed to protect the dogma from scientific critique

The Blind Watchmaker Hypothesis (BWH)

--see Richard Dawkins (leading Darwinist), The Blind Watchmaker

--claims appearance of design is misleading, since all organisms, including ourselves, are products of purposeless, gradual, naturalistic evolutionary process employing random variation and natural selection

--the Darwinian mutation-selection hypothesis is sufficient to (and did) create complex organs such as eyes and wings, and new body plans such as those of moths, trees, and humans

Difficulties with the BWH:

(first three relate to problem of using artificial selection to prove natural selection)

- 1) Intelligent purposeful design is the opposite of a non-intelligent, purposeless process
- 2) Variation in the genotype is not evidence for major new innovations
- 3) Though BWH assumes infinite capacity for variation, the experiments (fruit flies) and observations (peppered moths, dog breeding) prove that capacity for variation is limited
- 4) New helpful mutations must appear on schedule, at just the right time (like a miracle); "just so" stories (ala Kipling) re/ how elephant got trunk, tiger its stripes, bat its wings
- 5) Problem of survival during incipient stages (half a wing likely to inhibit survival)
- 6) Multiple effects of mutations, many of which harmful
- 7) Natural selection is generally formulated (tho need not be) as an untestable tautology: "the fittest is the one that survives."
- 8) Fossil record shows abrupt appearance of all new body plans (phyla, higher taxa); transitional forms required by BWH absent, so are the millions of failed experiments.
- 9) Pattern in fossil record is sudden appearance followed by stasis (persistence for millions to hundreds of millions of years).
- 10) Pattern of extinctions is primarily catastrophic (mass extinctions) rather than gradual replacement