

# THE DAWKINS DELUSION

Dean Taylor



The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. (51)

Now you've got that off your chest how about some science Mr Dawkins. You talk about there being the appearance of design in nature yet you reject the notion of a designer. Why is that?



Design doesn't work as an explanation for life...because it raises bigger questions than it answers. (169)

What questions?

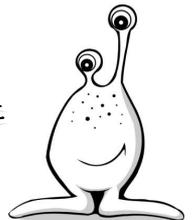
Who designed the designer? (147,188)

You appear not to understand that the question of whether or not there is a designer is entirely separate from the question of the nature or origin of the designer. If alien visitors to Earth discovered a wrist watch they would be able to infer the existence of a designer without knowing anything about who the designer was or where the designer came from. According to your logic the aliens should conclude that the watch was not designed simply because accepting that it is designed would raise bigger questions.

Design doesn't work as an explanation for this object... because it raises bigger questions than it answers.

What questions?

who designed the designer?



This is crazy! If your best rebuttal of the design argument is simply to say that it raises bigger questions then I think you should be more honest and admit that in reality you reject the notion of a designer for no other reason than you don't like the idea of there being a designer.

Having rejected a designer you are left only with chance to explain the origin of the complexity of life.



Chance is not a solution, given the high levels of improbability we see in living organisms. (145)

I couldn't agree more. But if life wasn't designed and it didn't arise by chance what are we left with?

Natural Selection is the only workable solution that has ever been suggested. (147)

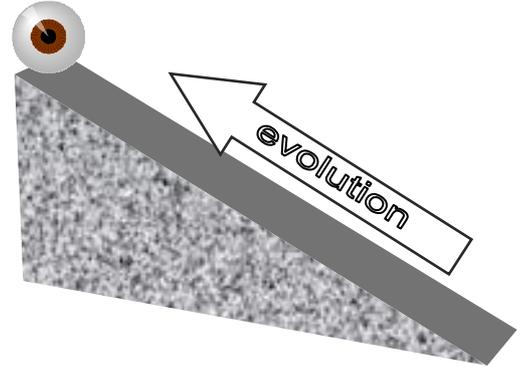
Hold on Mr Dawkins! There are three major problems with this statement.

1. Darwinism relies on chance mutations upon which Natural Selection acts. So in explaining the evolution of life there is no difference between Natural Selection and Chance.
2. Secondly – and more fundamentally - Natural Selection can only act once we have a self-replicating organism so it cannot begin to explain the origin of the complex information stored in DNA.
3. Natural Selection is not a 'workable solution'. It does not and cannot increase *complexity* (or the *information* to code for that complexity. Or the *improbability* as you like to refer to it). To suggest otherwise is dishonest at the very least.



Natural Selection is a cumulative process which breaks the problem of improbability up into small pieces. Each of the small pieces is slightly improbable, but not prohibitively so. When large numbers of these slightly improbable events are stacked up in series, the end product of the accumulation is very very improbable indeed, improbable enough to be far beyond the reach of chance. (147)

In *Climbing Mount Improbable* I expressed the point in a parable. One side of the mountain is a sheer cliff, impossible to climb, but on the other side is a gentle slope to the summit. On the summit sits a complex device such as an eye...The absurd notion that such complexity could spontaneously self-assemble is symbolised by leaping from the foot of the cliff to the top in one bound. Evolution...goes round the back of the mountain and creeps up the gentle slope to the summit: easy!



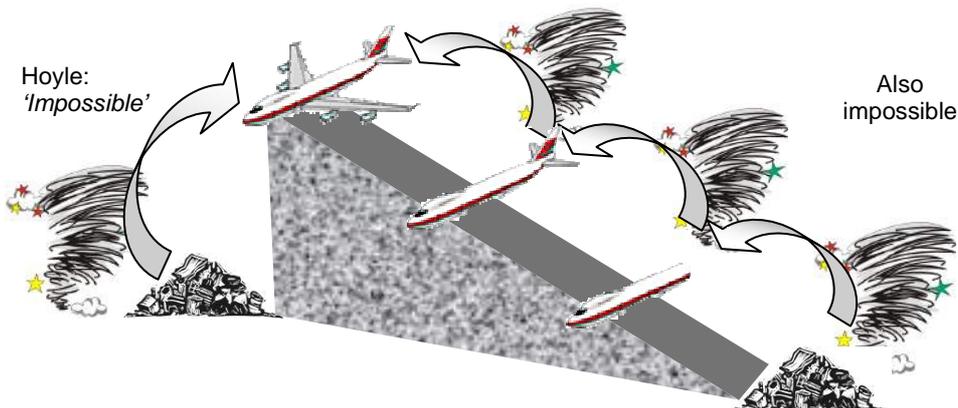
Easy? Let me tell you what a journey up your 'mount improbable' really represents. It is a series of events running contrary to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics; that fundamental law of the universe which results in bananas turning to mush, Boeing 747's ultimately falling apart and water flowing downhill. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Law – which is never broken - states that things can only move down the mountain from complex to less complex, from ordered energy to less ordered energy, from high information content to less information content. Consider water. It can only flow downhill. You can try to argue that it is more probable that the water will flow up the slope than the sheer cliff but the reality is it will do neither. Consider the 747. What was it Sir Fred Hoyle said?

Hoyle said that the probability of life originating on Earth is no greater than the chance that a hurricane, sweeping through a scrapyard, would have the luck to assemble a Boeing 747. (137)

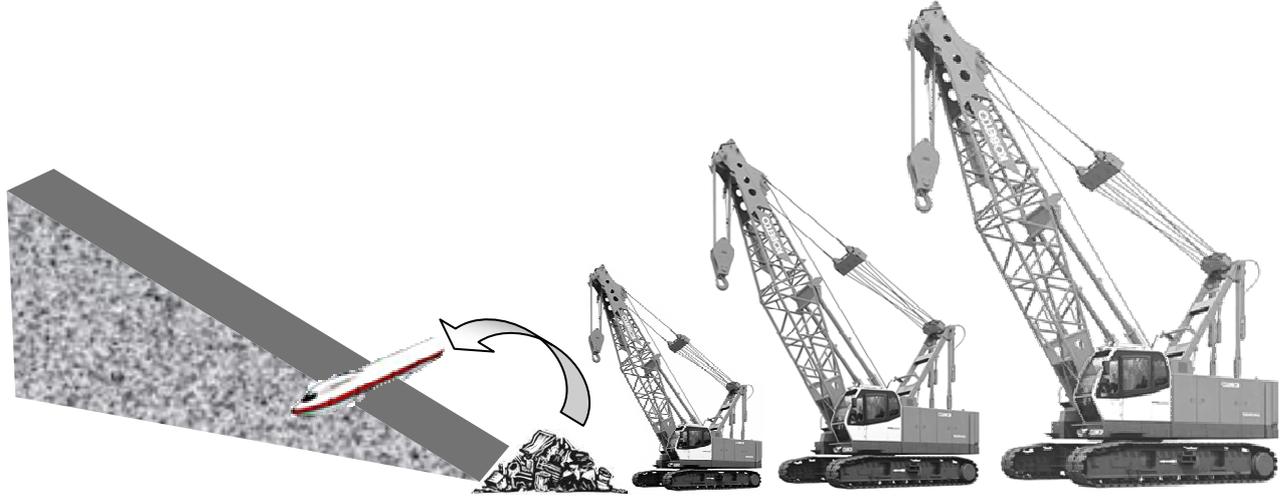


This, in a nutshell, is the creationist's favourite argument - an argument that could be made only by somebody who doesn't understand the first thing about natural selection.

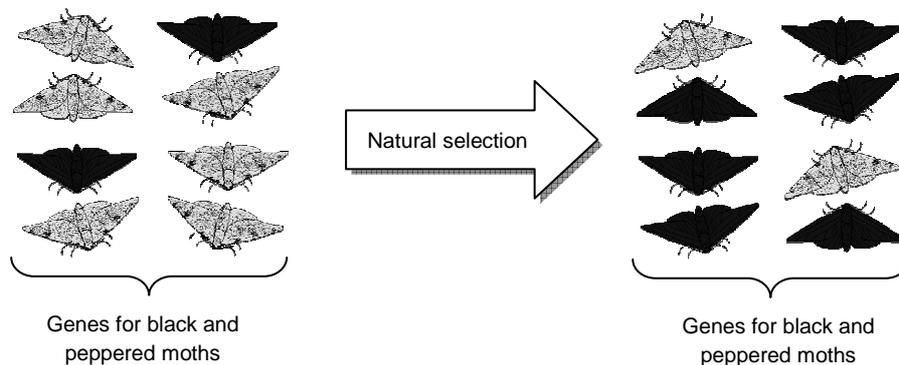
No – I think it is truer to say that your argument that natural selection can succeed in climbing mount improbable could only be made by somebody who doesn't understand the first thing about the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. Of course chance cannot construct a complete 747 but neither can it assemble it in stages.



You seem to ascribe some mystical power to natural selection in explaining the origin of complexity. You even refer to it as a 'crane' capable of constructing complexity. Your construction analogy is an interesting one. While it is true that if such a mechanism existed it might explain the origin of complexity there are one or two fundamental things you seem to have missed. First the crane mechanism has to be more complex – or more information rich - than the object it is constructing (the crane mechanism includes the crane, its operator and the operator's instructions). In the same way that a car factory is more complex than the cars it produces or the computer programmer is more complex than the program he or she writes. You then have the problem of explaining the origin of the crane (and its operator and operator's instructions). This must have been constructed by a more complex mechanism – perhaps another crane which was constructed by a yet more complex crane and so on ad infinitum. It's strange that you cannot see this flaw in your argument Mr Dawkins. You invoke a 'crane' whose existence requires explanation while you refer to God as a 'skyhook' but then proceed to reject Him on the very basis that His existence would require explanation.



So the notion of a 'crane' is no solution to the origin of complexity. But in any case no such crane exists! Natural selection constructs nothing. It is powerless to increase complexity. In fact the genetic information which codes for the complexity in living things can only be either conserved or reduced. I think you need to return to school Mr Dawkins. Think of some of the classic examples of natural selection. How about the schoolbook favourite - Peppered moths?



Fewer of the black moths were eaten by birds after increasing pollution on trees camouflaged them. This simply resulted in the relative proportions of genes which code for the two varieties of moths to change within the population. Where's the new information Mr Dawkins? Where's the increase in complexity? Natural selection added nothing. Indeed if none of the peppered variety had survived we would have lost genetic information. Surely a man of your intellect can see that a process which only removes individuals - and ultimately genes - from a population could never be responsible for adding anything to it.

Without a 'crane' we are back to a random process like Hoyle's hurricane in a junkyard to explain the alleged increase in complexity and the corresponding genetic information.

And just how much information are we talking about Mr Dawkins?



The potential information content of a human cell is equivalent to the entire 30 volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica 3 or 4 times over.



Wow. That is a **lot** of information. What was it you said about information at the start of chapter 4?



The Darwinian is challenged to explain the source of all the information in living matter...I shall show in this chapter, Darwinian natural selection is the only known solution to the otherwise unanswerable riddle of where the information comes from. (138)

Mr Dawkins, I have read this chapter carefully but I can find no explanation as to the origin of even one bit of information in living matter. What I do see is your repeated mantra that natural selection must have done it.

This chapter has contained the central argument of my book. (187)

I see no argument in this chapter but in *The Blind Watchmaker* you introduced the idea of an 'evolutionary algorithm' in an attempt to explain the origin of the information / complexity. My version of your argument runs like this. You consider the origin of a small piece of information in the form of a short string of characters - such as;

**IN•THE•BEGINNING•WAS•THE•WORD**

Now it would take a monkey tapping randomly on a keyboard an average 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 attempts to achieve this.



Cover the Earth with billions of monkeys tapping furiously for billions of years and they still wouldn't generate this modest amount of information.



Clearly chance cannot account for the encyclopaedic information content of living things and you recognise this.



We can accept a certain amount of luck in our explanations, but not too much.

Your solution was to propose that whenever a randomly generated character matches a corresponding one in the target sequence it becomes locked. The remaining characters continue to be randomly altered. Now it is inevitable that the target sequence will eventually be achieved. And in as few as around 40 attempts in this case.

- 1<sup>st</sup> attempt      JDDTKSKTJKOQ•SAPKCXYM•IKZT•HD
- 10<sup>th</sup> attempt    ID•THTFIRYKDNIPG•BAMGTHE•ROOD
- 20<sup>th</sup> attempt    IN•THFLE•KIKNING•WAL•THE•WOOD
- 40<sup>th</sup> attempt    IN•THE•BEGINNING•WAS•THE•WORD

It seems like a magical solution to the origin of information. But it isn't. The fatal flaw is that for this to work the target sequence must have been previously programmed into the computer. In other words the information wasn't created – it already existed!

Mr Dawkins despite acknowledging that the challenge to the Darwinian is to explain the origin of the information in living matter you have failed to put forward any workable solution. One has to wonder why you are so intent on this belief of yours that Darwinian evolution happens. Perhaps you've seen evidence of information being added to the genome. So let me ask you directly. Can you give me **any** example of a genetic mutation or an evolutionary process which can be seen to increase the information in the genome?



Of course you can't! You've already been asked this question in a recorded interview and your 20 seconds of silence followed by your request to have the camera switched off have made it a YouTube hit. You know full well that no process has ever been observed to add any information to the genome. Neither will such a process be observed any more than water will be observed flowing uphill or a Boeing 747 will be observed assembling itself from scrap. All oppose the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics. Let me remind you of Arthur Eddington's words;

*"If your theory is found to be against the second law of thermodynamics, I can give you no hope; there is nothing for [your theory] but to collapse in the deepest humiliation."*



Ye cannae change the laws of Physics!

Your obsession with denigrating religion, rejecting any notion of a designer and therefore restricting your explanation of the natural world to material causes alone has clouded your scientific judgement Mr Dawkins. A good scientist pursues the full range of possible explanations whereas you've decided in advance to reject the design argument for no other reason than you cannot explain the designer. As a result you've left yourself no option but to believe the impossible.

Mathematics has explained the impossibility of the essential proteins of life forming from their amino acid building blocks. Information theory has explained the impossibility of new information arising in DNA. Physics has explained the impossibility of increasing complexity. Biochemistry has identified numerous irreducibly complex systems and structures in living things which could never have arisen by a series of gradual changes.

You argue that an entity capable of creating a universe must be 'highly improbable'. But consider these wise words of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle;



When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

Hey - that's my line!



All page references from 'The God Delusion' by Professor Richard Dawkins, Black Swan publishing 2007 ISBN-10: 055277331X

