

What Darwin Got Wrong

Intelligent Design Proponents Welcome Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini to the Growing Ranks of Darwin's Critics

http://www.evolutionnews.org/2010/02/what_darwin_got_wrong_intellig.html

posted Feb 8, 2010

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: More and more people are abandoning the sinking ship of Darwinian evolution; too bad so many have fallen for the lie for so long.

Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini are arriving late to the Darwin doubting party, but are welcome attendees none the less. Below are some welcoming remarks from leading scientific voices in the intelligent design community.

We just received a review copy of "[What Darwin Got Wrong](#)", the new book attacking Darwinian evolution by Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, two thoroughly materialistic scientists. Why does that matter? Because typically materialists have been the most ardent defenders of Darwin's theory of natural selection. With the publication of this book, that is likely to change.

For those of you wondering what this is all about let me back up to 2007 when Fodor published his first piece of heresy in the London Review of Books, "[Why Pigs Don't Have Wings](#)". That article led to Stanley Salthe, another materialist scientist who doubts Darwinian evolution (and has signed the [Dissent From Darwin](#) statement to boot), to convene an e-mail discussion group that became what is now known as the *Altenberg 16*.

Science writer Susan Mazur [reported on that meeting](#), and later wrote an entire book about the 16 scientists who were basically affirming what we'd been saying here at ENV for years -- Darwinian evolution is dead. She wrote:

What it amounts to is a gathering of 16 biologists and philosophers of rock star stature -- let's call them "the Altenberg 16" -- who recognize that the theory of evolution which most practicing biologists accept and which is taught in classrooms today, is inadequate in explaining our existence. It's pre the discovery of DNA, lacks a theory for body form and does not accommodate "other" new phenomena.

She also reported what Fodor had experienced after going public with his initial doubts about Darwin.

When I called Fodor to discuss his article, he joked that he was now in the Witness Protection Program because he'd been so besieged following the LRB piece. ... Fodor also told me that "you can't put this stuff in the press because it's an attack on the theory of natural selection" and besides "99.99% of the population have no idea what the theory of natural selection is".

To his credit, he has stuck with his position, and has taken it to the next level by publishing *What Darwin Got Wrong*.

Since these doubts aren't anything new to many scientists who've been saying this for years, I thought I'd ask them what their initial thoughts about this book are. Here are a few responses.

On his website David Berlinski, author of *The Deniable Darwin* [writes](#) in part:

What is encouraging about Jerry Fodor's and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini's arguments in *What Darwin Got Wrong* is just that Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini had the nerve to make them. What is discouraging about their arguments is just that it has taken them so long to acquire their nerve. Where have you been fellahs?

Every argument that they advance others have advanced before them. Who in particular? Me, for sure. I have called attention to the striking analogy between Skinner and Darwin for more than fifteen years now.

Jonathan Wells, author of [The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design](#) writes to say:

Darwinian propagandists would like the public to believe that there is no scientific debate about the adequacy of evolutionary theory--though scientists have actually been debating it ever since *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859. Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini's book, *What Darwin Got Wrong*, is the latest contribution to this long-standing scientific controversy.

Darwin considered natural selection--survival of the fittest--to be the "most important" mechanism of evolution, but Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini (like many scientist before them) argue that it is not. Although they accept Darwin's idea that living things are descended from a common ancestor, Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini cite abundant evidence against natural selection.

They call much of the "vast literature" on this subject "distressingly uncritical" and write "it is high time that Darwinists take this evidence seriously."

So the scientific debate continues--the debate that Darwinian propagandists say doesn't exist.

Michael Behe, author of [*The Edge of Evolution*](#) writes to say:

The smoke from Darwin's 200 birthday candles had barely dissipated when Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini announce "What Darwin Got Wrong" — evolution's mechanism. Natural selection just can't cut the mustard, they explain. But since the proposal of a natural mechanism for evolution is the very reason for Darwin's scientific and cultural importance, his achievement apparently has been way overblown by pretty much the entire biological community. Now, I wonder who else has been saying that for the last few decades?

Stephen Meyer, author of [*Signature in the Cell*](#) writes to say:

Fodor correctly understands that natural selection, Darwin's designer substitute mechanism, lacks the creative power that has long been attributed to it. Natural selection by definition only "selects" or favors functional advantage. What we have learned in biology over the last 50 years shows that at every level in the biological hierarchy -- whether we are talking about novel genes, proteins, molecular machines, signal transduction circuits, organs, or body plans -- functional advantage depends upon the occurrence of a series of vastly improbable and tightly coordinated mutational events. Careful quantitative analysis has shown that these events that are so improbable as to put thresholds of selectable function well beyond the reach of chance. The selection and mutation mechanism does not work because the mechanism of natural selection depends on too many improbable things going right before there is anything to select at all.