

7. After which teleology became controversial, though not unimportant, to science. See Bergman, J., Condemnation of terms such as “purpose” and “design,” *Creation Matters* 11(4):1–4, 2006; Williams, A., Explaining design away: A review of *Darwin and Design* by Michael Ruse, *Journal of Creation* 18(3):31–34, 2004, <creation.com/ruse3 >; Allen, C., Teleological Notions in Biology, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2009 Edition, Zalta, E.N. (Ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/teleology-biology/>, 26 April 2009.
8. Cf. Williams, ref. 7.
9. In other words, the goal certainly should *not* be hermetically sealed disciplines (philosophy, theology, science) that never talk to each other. Bacon’s problem on this point was that he tended to absolutize the natural sciences and the empirical method. Within a few generations, this turned into a claim of epistemological priority for empirical science over all other disciplines (philosophy and theology included). Garroutte, E.M., The positivist attack; in: Smith, C. (Ed.), *The Secular Revolution*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2003; see also Dembski, W.A., *Intelligent Design*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pp. 122–27, 1999. It is important to emphasize, though, that Bacon himself probably would have been unhappy with this radicalism. Bacon did not discard metaphysics or teleology: see his acknowledgment that teleology is a proper pursuit as long as kept separate from physical scientific inquiry, in *Advancement of Learning*, Wright, W.A. (Ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2.7.7, pp. 118–120, 1885.
- In its strong form, the epistemological exaltation of science became the (discredited) verification principle in philosophy: what cannot be “verified” empirically is meaningless. The basic (and embarrassing) problem with verificationism was that it could not be verified empirically itself. See Bahnsen, G.L., *Always Ready*, Covenant Media Foundation, Nacogdoches, TX, pp. 207–11, 1996.
- For more criticisms of Baconianism and its effects, see: Sarfati, J. and Wieland, C., Culture wars: Bacon vs Ham, Part 1, *Creation* 25(1):46–48, 2002; Weinberger, L., Whose god? The theological response to the god-of-the-gaps, *Journal of Creation* 22(1):120–127, 2008, <creation.com/gaps>; and Weinberger, L., The problem with naturalism, the problem with empiricism: A review of *Science’s Blind Spot: The Unseen Religion of Scientific Naturalism* by Cornelius Hunter, *Journal of Creation* 22(2):28–31, 2008, and references therein.
10. Genesis 1:28, *Geneva Bible* (1599).
11. Cf. Brooke, ref. 2, pp. 42–51.

Darwin dissent book— ultimately disappointing

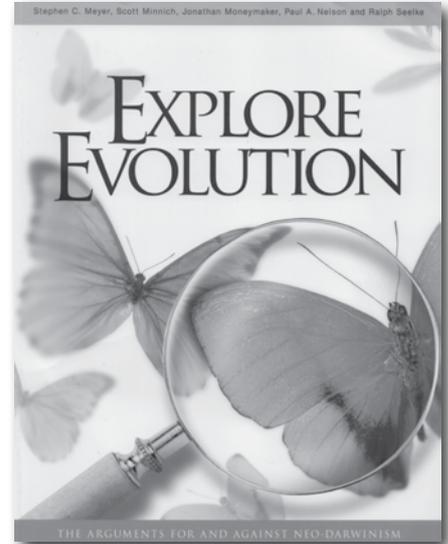
A review of
*Explore Evolution: The
Arguments for and Against
Neo-Darwinism*

by Stephen C. Meyer, Scott
Minnich, Jonathan Moneymaker,
Paul A. Nelson and Ralph Seelke
Hill House Publishers,
Melbourne, 2007

Carl Wieland

This recently released offering by various people affiliated with the ID movement certainly provides the exploration its title promises, and does so in a very professional manner. Well produced and presented, it clearly sets out and explains (at senior high or junior university level) pro-and-con arguments for the various categories of evidence relevant to the evolution question.

Forexample, homology (anatomical and molecular), fossil succession, embryology, biogeography, natural selection/mutation as a creative agency, etc. are well covered, with impressively up-to-date references. There is little doubt that students who work through this overview of evolution’s strengths and weaknesses will learn more about evolution than most. This can only be a good thing overall. Most people who believe in evolution do so not because they have a good understanding of the arguments, but quite the opposite. It is only when evolution’s strengths and weaknesses are deeply understood that they can be evaluated rationally; even most scientists believe in evolution not because they understand it well, but because most other scientists believe likewise. To ensure that more people learn about evolution “warts and all” is a major step towards overcoming such psychosocial objections to creation.



The authors are skilled communicators and teachers. They really bend over backwards to be fair to evolution, which might win them a few points with their intended audience. But if they think that this will gain them a seat at the table of mainstream discussion in educational circles, one strongly suspects this will be for naught. The philosophical stakes are far higher than some civil discussion about scientific issues. Their evolution-committed opponents, with their vast superiority in societal, academic and media “clout”, will see no reason to give an inch of ground. To them, evolution is fact, the key plank of sacred materialist dogma. The study of evolution-related issues is to such adherents not a question of “whether evolution”, but only “how did evolution...”. So anything which serves to highlight doubts about this belief system is to them at best an annoying distraction from the main game, at worst something which threatens to take science and society back into the “dark ages” when most westerners believed the Bible. Did I mention the “B-word”, so carefully avoided in ID circles? Well, yes. Ultimately, no matter how much

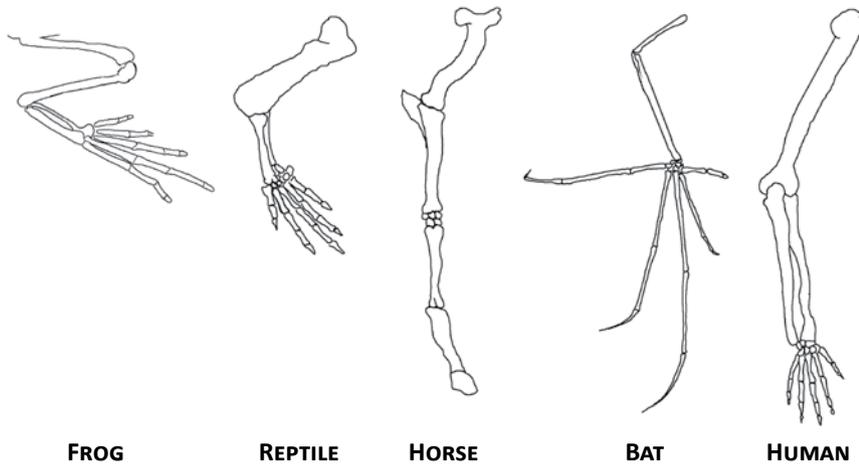


Figure 1. Homology (such as the arrangement of bones in the forelimbs of various creatures, as illustrated here) is one of the many topics covered well in *Explore Evolution*—making the book’s “long-ages are fact” stance all the more disappointing.

evolutionists profess that evolution is no threat to religion, God’s Word is what their hostility is aimed at. It has long seemed to me that IDers are wasting time and effort in protesting that they’re not on about any specific designer, etc. etc. If the purpose is to defuse the vehemence of the attacks on their work, it hasn’t worked to date. In fact, the more that ID authors attempt to dissociate their work from any hint of biblical motivation, even where such a dissociation accurately reflects their position, the more they seem to go from being seen as just sneaky to being *supersneaky*. To the holders of the keys to secular power, IDers are engaged in just another way of slipping biblical creation (and thus biblical morality, and all the rest of it) back onto the table.

Perhaps this is one reason that *Explore Evolution* makes it clear from the outset that it intends to disappoint those who take Genesis as the history it was intended to be. Another such reason may have to do with the different arena this time around for IDers. Whenever one points out that a major weakness of the ID movement (along with many strengths) is its failure to present a coherent model of the past (a story of origins), there are protestations. We are told that ID has every right to circumscribe its sphere of involvement, and that by sticking to design vs non-design, ID is not making

any statements about Genesis history, either for or against.

But whatever merit these arguments may have possessed for other ID work, they don’t apply to *Explore Evolution*. This should not be surprising, because a comprehensive exploration of the arguments for and against today’s evolutionary model of origins is simply not going to be coherent if it was to avoid all comment about the history of life on Earth. That’s why the authors of *Explore Evolution*, once they set out to deal with such matters as fossil succession, have little option but to state, implicitly or explicitly, where they stand on such areas as the age of the earth. It’s not rocket science to realize that, once you venture into such areas, neutrality about the age issue is not an option. You either believe that the fossils represent a tape-recording of vast ages, or you don’t. Which is another way of saying that you either believe in the global Flood of Genesis or you reject it.

Accordingly, this book makes no bones about its acceptance of the anti-Flood position as unalloyed fact. Right on page one of the introduction, in fact, we have the first clear indication that for these authors, Genesis cannot be true history. They say that “for nearly all of the history of life on Earth, there was no one to observe these events”. In case the reader of this review thinks that *Explore Evolution* is here not

necessarily referring to the standard view of an immensely long period of “pre-history” without people, about twenty pages later we have statements such as “530 Ma ago” intended to be taken as established fact.

That is all a great pity, really, especially considering that this unfortunate acceptance of the “millions of years” stance will make little difference to evolution’s stalwart defenders. There is some really useful and well-presented stuff here that could round out many a creationist’s knowledge. In fact, in most of the areas covered, it is one of the best overviews of the arguments currently available. For this reason, biblical creationist organizations may be tempted to stock it and just turn a blind eye to these aberrations. After all, at the time that Michael Behe wrote *Darwin’s Black Box*, it was known that he was far from on side with biblical creationism, yet its use by many creationist organizations, including CMI, was very valuable and helpful to many people.

However, Behe’s book was not doing what *Explore Evolution* does, i.e. making truth-claims that fly in the face of what a ministry like CMI, for example, stands for—real Genesis history. It is not as if these aberrations are quarantined in one corner, either; by their very nature, they form a part of the book’s intellectual fabric, as was probably the intent. So for biblical creationists to stock and promote *Explore Evolution* would undoubtedly sow a great deal of confusion in many minds.

One can wish it well, and hope that it serves to overcome some of the naturalistic prejudice in biology in the minds of its readers.

At the same time, one can hope that those same minds will not be hopelessly muddled by its naturalistic assumptions in things geological. In short, one can hope that the good it could achieve will not be outweighed by the negative influences it could exert. Unfortunately, though I would love to be wrong, I think that this is likely to be a forlorn hope.